

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF NEW LONDON ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Mission Statement



The Public Library of New London serves the needs of the New London community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas and information through a variety of library materials, services, and experiences.



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Dear Community Members,

During 2022, the Public Library of New London was able to rebound from the difficulties encountered due to multiple COVID-19 problems that included library closures followed by abbreviated hours; staffing quarantines and illnesses; and programs limited to online participation. We were able to take advantage of the time the Library was closed to the public to review our programs and re-visit our institutional priorities.

The Library has resumed normal business hours, and our in-person children's and adult programs are back – all of which would not have been possible but for the dedication of our staff. We have become a popular destination for the area's teens.

Other in-person programs we were able to bring back in 2022 include the chess club, cooking and nutrition workshops, movie night, take and make craft kits, volunteer opportunities, book clubs, and a Job Club. All of these programs have been possible through generous support from our donors, supporters, and partners.

Priorities for 2022 also included long-overdue maintenance projects such as repairing the roof. Looking towards the future in 2023, we have recently submitted grant proposals that, if awarded, will enable us to bring all bathrooms into ADA compliance, purchase new carpeting, and undertake other building projects.

The Public Library of New London is a vibrant community center whose mission is to *serve the needs of the New London community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas and information through a variety of library materials, services, and experiences.* In 2022, the staff successfully strived to meet the expectations and needs of the patrons through exciting programming, relevant informational sessions, and personal assistance.

We look forward to continuing to work to meet the needs of our community in the coming year and we welcome you to the Library!

-Madhu Gupta, Executive Director, Public Library of New London

Letter from the PLNL Board of Trustees

The Public Library of New London is pleased to announce that in 2022-2023 it has “returned to normal” after the past several years of Covid closings and precautions. In particular:

- The Library has returned to its pre-Covid hours, seven days a week.
- In-person programs and workshops have resumed: there were 661 Library-sponsored programs this past year.
- 204 non-Library sponsored meetings were fulfilled.
- The Teen Room is busier than ever: 132 programs were attended by 1,683 teens. Cooking, baking, and gaming activities were especially popular, and the Teen Book Club was well-attended.
- 59 Children were enrolled in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative.
- The Library hosted 81,744 visits last year.
- The Lawyers in the Library programs remain well-attended.
- The Library has won a CT State Construction Grant for:
 - o Improving the Teen Reading Room space on the main floor.
 - o Making the main floor bathroom ADA compliant.
 - o Updating the lower-level bathroom.
 - o Replacing a damaged window on the lower level.
 - o Replacing carpeting in the main reading room and on the Mezzanine.
 - o Repairing and bringing the LULA elevator back into service.



The Board of Trustees recognizes the extra lengths our professional staff went to for our Library to continue to offer services and to remain relevant during a most difficult time for all concerned. It's that commitment to our mission and our patrons that makes The Public Library of New London an invaluable and reliable resource to all our community!

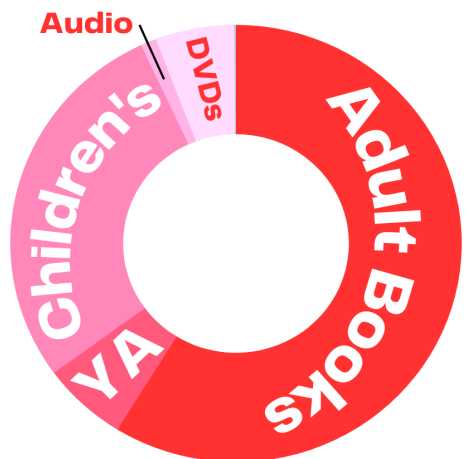
We transform lives!

- Daneen Roth, President
Public Library of New London Board of Trustees



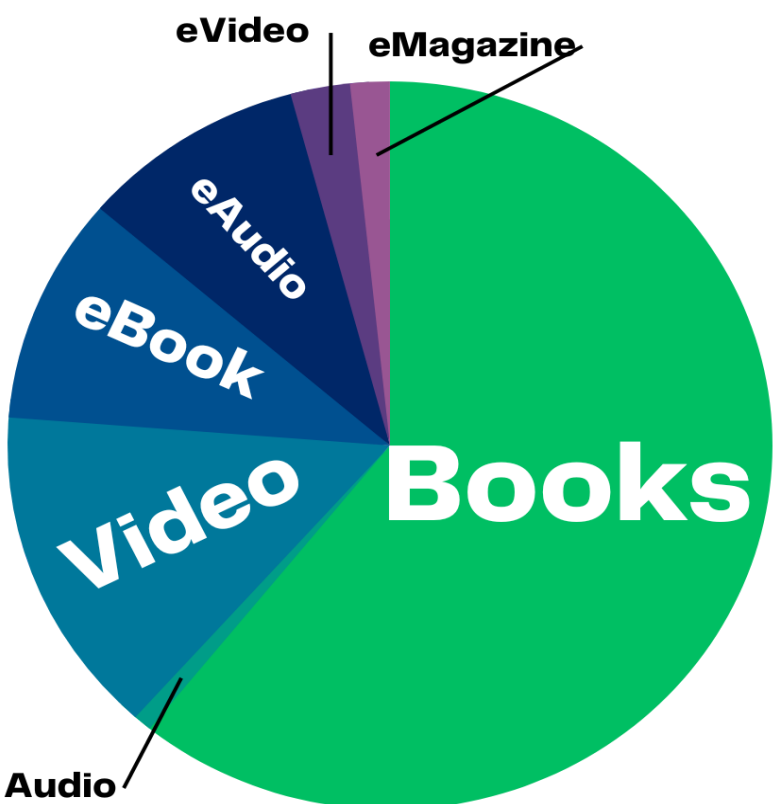
71,705 Total Physical Materials

42,159	Adult Books
4,395	YA Books
20,193	Children's Books
809	Audiobooks/CDs
4,061	DVDs/Videos
88	Other Materials
5,298	Holds Places



40,046 Items Circulated

31,713	Books
406	Audio
7,632	Video
5,245	eBook
4,963	eAudio
1,312	eVideo
873	eMagazine



81,744 Visitors

5,870 Card Holders

15,977 website visitors

790 New Cards

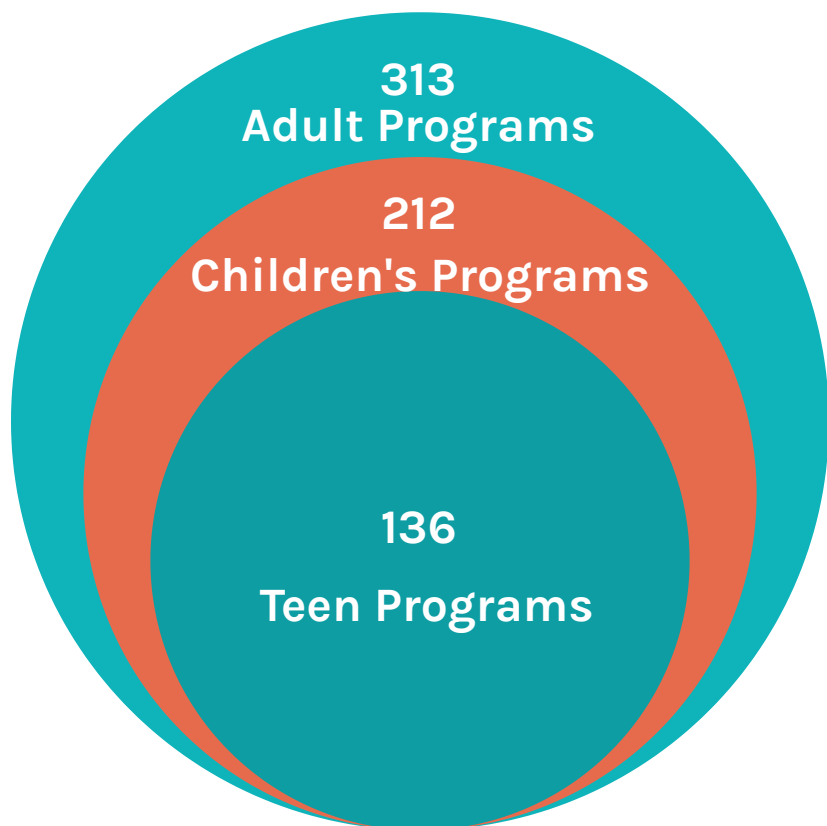
2,809 Facebook Followers

9,874 Reference Questions Answered

7,512 Sessions on Public Computers

2,658 Hours Open in 2022

661 Library Programs



10,827 Program Attendees

Circulation

During the past year, our circulation department has worked hard to provide excellent customer service to our patrons. Library items have circulated over 50,000 times, including our hotspots, which have circulated over 140 times. The availability of hotspots has been a service our patrons have enthusiastically received.

Over 700 patrons have received a new library card, including many teens with our new Teen Card. Museum passes were checked out 101 times and over 1300 movies were streamed through Kanopy, our streaming service. We notarized 196 documents, and patrons are very appreciative of this service since many places have stopped notarizing documents after the pandemic.

Through our LION Interlibrary loan service, we loaned out 5,658 items and 282 items through the State Library RequestIT program. We also borrowed 3,338 items through LION and received an additional 47 items through the RequestIT program.



The Public Library of New London's Adult Services Department had a busy year marked by the development of exciting new programs and services, along with the return of several familiar programs that have proven popular among members of our community. One of the biggest highlights of 2022 includes the successful continuation of our Lawyers in Libraries program, a free, monthly legal clinic that offers our patrons pro bono consultations with local attorneys. In terms of attendance, these sessions are consistently at or near capacity every month, and continuously receive positive feedback from participants. We thank Horgan Law Offices, Suisman Shapiro Attorneys-at-Law, and our other partners for making this program possible, and we look forward to continuing these sessions for as long as there is a demand for them.

Our chess club made a return this year, and has seen a steady number of participants every week. The game of chess experienced a spike in popularity during the pandemic, and we are encouraged to see people of all ages playing matches each Saturday morning.

Similarly, our non-profit workshops resumed in 2022 and have remained popular, with 69 total participants attending our three spring sessions. The department is currently working on booking additional workshops for the fall.

In 2020, the PLNL offered its Seed Library to the public for the first time. Participants are allowed to take up to 10 seed packets from the seed library per year, and are encouraged to donate seeds in order to support the continuation of the program. After modest participation each of the first two years, we are happy to report that more than 90 patrons have either received or donated seeds since April 2022. To keep up with the demand, the PLNL plans to begin offering this service year-round.



Left: The New London Chess Club remains a consistently popular endeavor for enthusiasts of all ages.



Above: Volunteers and staff gave back to New London by helping to clean up the city for Earth Day.

Left: A tour of Connecticut College's Arboretum was a great opportunity for patrons to explore the natural beauty of southeastern Connecticut.

Below: Various plant swaps held at the Library were an excellent way for plant parents of all kinds to socialize, trade plant cuttings, and learn more about caring for plants.



Along those lines, the PLNL's assessment of our community has revealed a strong interest in other programs and services related to urban gardening, plants, and protecting the natural environment. Fortunately, our partnerships with various community organizations have enabled us to meet that demand. In July, we worked with members of New London trees and the Connecticut College Arboretum to provide a guided tour of the college's arboretum. The event was a huge success, and we are already planning a second tour in the spring. We also hosted two indoor plant swaps to further indulge our community's interest in gardening. Each event saw more than 30 people in our community room exchanging houseplants and sharing their gardening tips. This program was so popular that we continued to receive inquiries after each event had already ended, so we have continued to offer the exchange as a passive program within our adult reading room.

Finally, the PLNL is very proud to report that we saw unprecedented participation in Adult Summer Reading this year, with nearly 80 different patrons registering for the program. Our participants read more than 160 books and attended many of our programs tied to this year's theme, Beyond the Beaten Path. The PLNL partnered with local organizations to bring a National Parks presentation to our library, along with a well-attended Master Gardener workshop. We hope that the enthusiasm for summer reading carries into 2023.

During 2022 the Children's Department brought back in-person programming after pandemic closures, expanded our Take & Make program to meet demand, and focused on community outreach. With the opportunity for in-person events we were able to hold weekly craft programs, invite local organizations to host programs, and bring back story time programming. During STEAM month in April we had local organizations like the Society of Women Engineers, Niantic Children's Museum, and Lyman Allyn Art Museum run programs for kids from Pre-K through 8th grade. New London Trees helped us celebrate Earth Day with Seed Planting for kids!

Each month we held 3-5 in person craft programs for families. One of our most popular programs was Crayon Melting where we used the new Teen Room oven to melt down old crayon pieces into new crayons. Since redesigning our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program last year, we had 51 kids sign up and 3 kids complete the entire program! We finished the year with our Summer Reading Kickoff Concert in June with children's performers Judy Pancoast and Judi Jones, book giveaways for all ages, games, and free pizza donated by our neighbor Woodfella's.

Below: The Summer Reading Kickoff Concert at the city pier featured hula hooper Julie Jones, live music, pizza, and games.





Above, left: Children plant and decorate their pots at an event hosted with New London Trees's Daneen Roth



Above, right: the Society of Women Engineers taught children all about structural design and earthquakes during their Seismic Shake Up program.

Our Take & Make program became even more popular as we reopened to the public. From February to June we gave out, on average, over 300 kits a month. We focused on all ages offering a variety of kits each month for ages birth-3, 3-5, and 6-12 including at least one STEAM kit. We also offered Interactive Movie kits that include a script of prompts and a set of props to use while watching the movie, enough materials for four people so the whole family can participate. Each month we gave out 60 kits total for three different movies.

With the opportunity to have patrons back in the library we invited local schools back for library visits. We worked with teachers to get classes signed up for library cards before their visit so everyone could check out a book. The Salvation Army's Boys & Girls Club came for weekly visits with their afterschool program to play with our toys and use the computers. They attended many of our weeknight programs! We visited classrooms to talk about library programs and library cards, and did story times at TVCCA. The Library participated in Family Engagement Nights at the elementary schools to get families signed up for library cards and attended the monthly Birth to 8 Early Childhood Community Gatherings at BP Mission. We attended many community events including the Juneteenth Celebration at the Hempstead Houses where we gave away 100 books and educational craft packs.



Above: Our variety programs during Summer Reading included learning how to make one's own California rolls.

Over the course of the past year, the Teen Department has come into its own and cultivated a consistent crowd of teens enthusiastic to visit the library. We have provided a wide variety of events and programs for teens, from presentations by professional cosplayers to virtual Magic the Gathering events to educational cooking programs, all in order to make positive impacts on our patrons. As we look at the future, we plan to keep providing a variety of experiences that reflect the diversity of our community and engage with local teens across the city.

One of the programs that has been consistently popular have been our weekly drop-in Dungeons & Dragons games. After retooling the formula of our previously successful virtual D&D for in-person attendance, we have a consistent 4-6 teens attending our weekly programs. Throughout the sessions, teens have been able to focus on developing their improvisational, organizational, and storytelling skills, coordinating their group of characters through adventure after adventure.

We have also been able to offer free gaming sessions for our patrons during our weekly Game On programs. Once a week, the Teen Room becomes a game room, as we offer our Nintendo Switch and a variety of board and card games for free play. In our time hosting our gaming sessions, we've been able to provide access for games and experiences that might otherwise be inaccessible for teens in a safe space where teens are able to express themselves.



Above: Our May 4th event not only featured tabletop games courtesy of Citadel Game Cellar, but also a guest librarian.

Below: Teen Cooking Club has been a popular way for teens to not only learn about the fundamentals of cooking for themselves, but also for expression through food.

Below, right: Teens compete in Super Smash Bros. during our Game On! program.



Starting from when the Teen Activity Room opened, one of our most well-attended programs has been the Teen Cooking Club. Utilizing the Teen Room's kitchenette, patrons have made bread, stew, and various desserts from scratch, and incidentally learning skills needed for college and beyond.

Outside of programming, one of the department's major successes was in regards to providing snacks for our teen patrons. Although we do offer programming involving food on a regular basis, hunger does not share such a schedule. In order to help combat this, we have partnered with Fiddleheads Food Co-op to provide free snacks for our teen patrons. We will continue this partnership into 2023 and beyond, as this provides a direct impact for teens in our community.

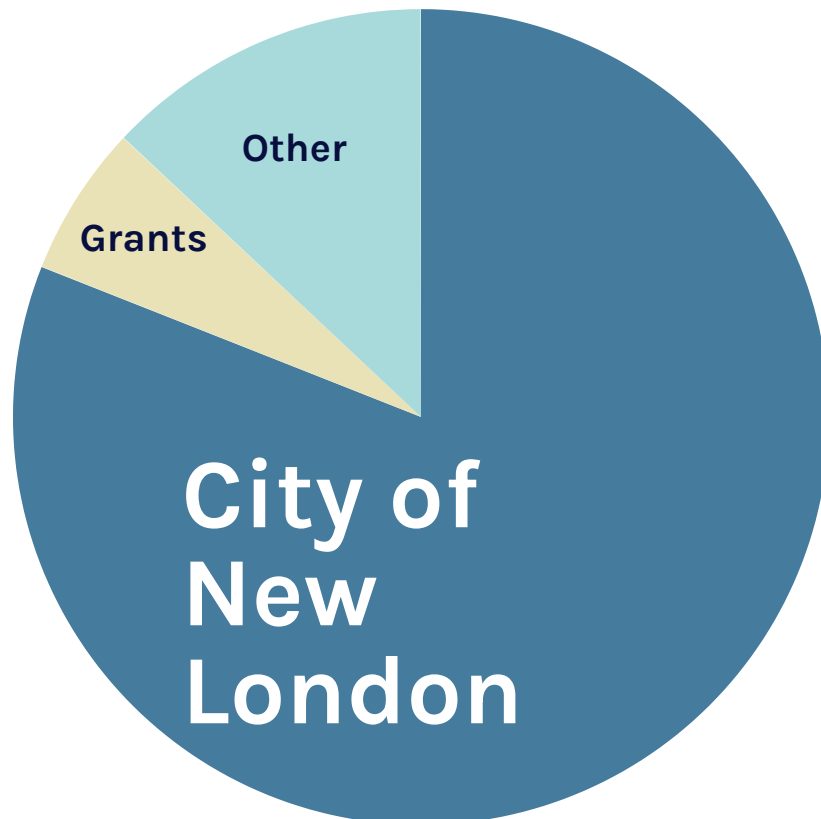
The Teen Department has also made strides to be visible to our community, as we performed outreach at New London High School, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, and around the city. Highlights include class visits to the Teen Activity Room, tabling at New London Pride, and multiple lunchtime library card signups at NLHS. Going out and talking face-to-face with teens and parents has been instrumental into how we've grown as much as we have over the past year, and we plan on continuing to be a constant presence within the community.



Library Budget 2021-2022 FY: \$998,200

Library Revenue:

City of New London	81%
Grants	6%
Other	13%



Library Expenditures:

Wages and Benefits	63%
Library Materials and Services	12%
Building Operations and Materials	14%
Other Operating Expenses	11%

Library Expenses



Thank you Adopt-A-Book Donors!

Seanice Austin
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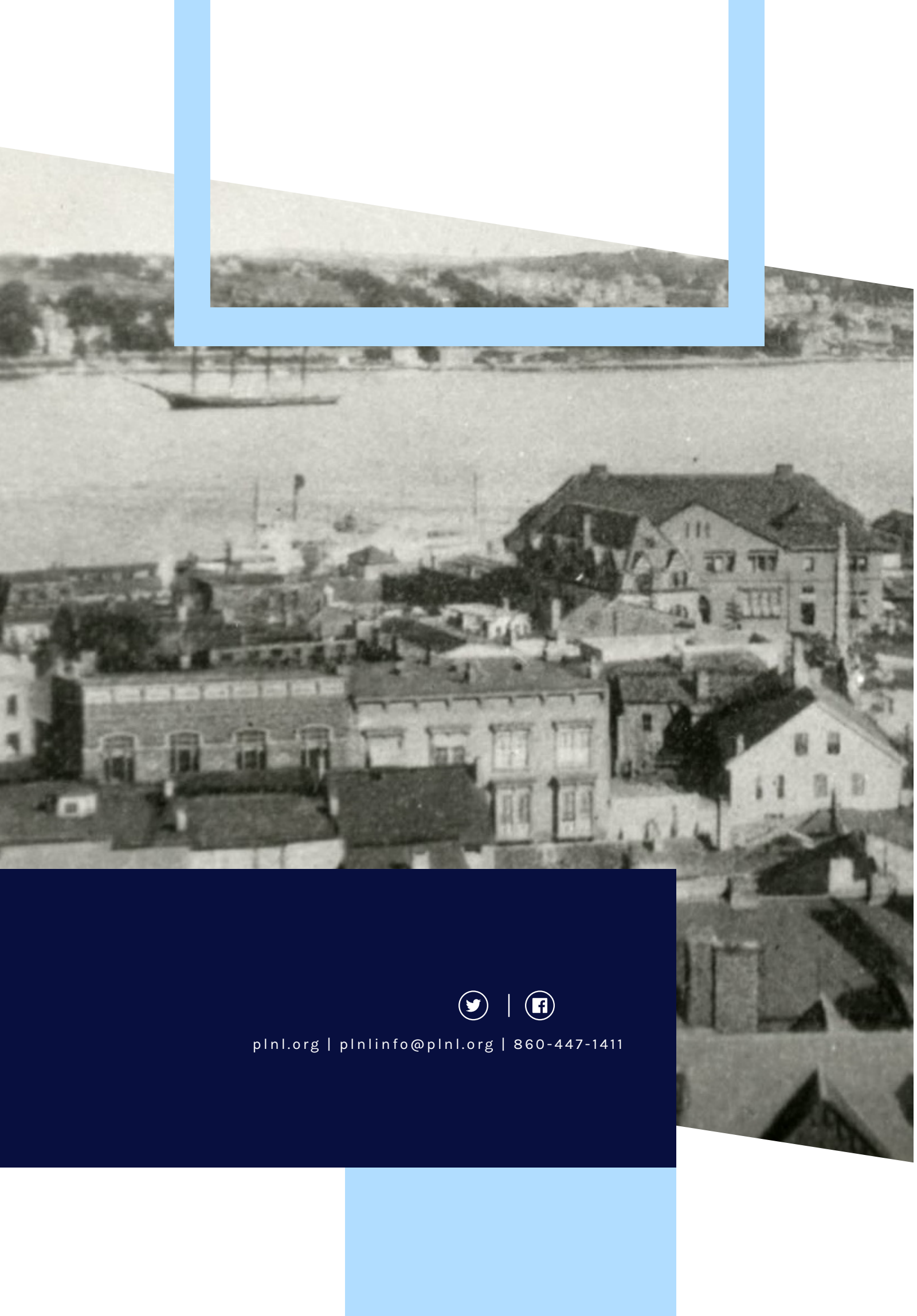
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