Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
CRCOG Transportation Committee Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2013
Introduction

- Why the Project was Initiated
- About Downtown New Britain
- Master Plan Goals
- Master Plan Overview
- Master Plan Study Areas and Examples
- Master Plan Implementation & Construction
- Take Away Points
Why the Project Was Initiated

- **2008 Redevelopment Study for Downtown NB** which recognized the need for transportation & streetscape improvements

- Realization that New Britain was faced with a Golden Opportunity with *CTFastrak* & when opportunity knocks you need to seize it

- *CTFastrak* will ultimately be judged based on ridership, projects that best supported bus ridership should be highly fundable

- **Transit Oriented Development** - downtown New Britain needs to transform itself into a safe, attractive, and pedestrian environment to optimize the potential for T.O.D.

- **We Needed a Plan** - *HUD Sustainable Communities Grant* awarded to NB through CRCOG helped fund that plan
About Downtown New Britain

There are many good things to say about New Britain & there are many things to capitalize on:

Opportunities - Downtown NB already has the key ingredients of a livable downtown:

• Compact & highly walkable area
• Shopping & restaurants
• Affordable residential housing in the downtown & through-out the City
• Historical and Cultural destinations like Broad Street’s “Little Poland”
• Strong Arts Community & the NB Museum of American Art
• Very strong Parks System
• Public facilities (CCSU, Library, Hospital)
• These we couldn’t easily create if they didn’t already exist....

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
About Downtown New Britain

Downtown New Britain also faces many Challenges:

- **Roads & Transportation:**
  - Many roads overly wide & not pedestrian or bicycle friendly
  - Route 72 Construction split Downtown – non-pedestrian friendly bridges create a barrier, Rt. 72 Construction also took down over 450 downtown properties and businesses

- **Aesthetics:**
  - Streetscape looks dated & tired, and there’s no continuity throughout the downtown

- **Safety:**
  - Downtown NB doesn’t feel safe, large homeless population contributes to this

- **Poor Prior Planning Decisions:**
  - Urban Renewal Efforts in 1970’s demo’d many historic structures including NB’s downtown Theater “The Strand”

- **Population:**
  - High percent of NB’s population lives well below CT’s typical earnings and standard of living

**Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain**
**Master Plan Goals**

1. **Place Making**
   - Create a consistent, distinct & attractive streetscape throughout entire downtown
   - Capitalize on the City’s art & history to create public interest
   - Create public spaces that will draw people to the downtown

2. **Livability**
   - Right size roads through road diets to establish the correct balance between vehicles, pedestrians, and other users
   - Create an area that best supports TOD

3. **Connectivity**
   - Re-link both sides of the downtown split by Route 72
   - Improve pedestrian linkages
   - Make New Britain bike friendly
   - Improve wayfinding signage

**Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain**
Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
Master Plan Overview

Major Accomplishments

1. Traffic Analysis for Road Diets
   • Determined how much excess pavement from the downtown roads could be reallocated to better uses such as sidewalks, bike lanes, etc...

2. Design Standards
   • Established design standards for aesthetic streetscape treatments and amenities throughout entire downtown. Includes brick type, color, & patterns, wayfinding signage, and several other items.

3. Conceptual Designs for Critical Areas
   • Conceptual designs were prepared for the core downtown area, and specific specialty areas such as Central Park, Central Station Local Bus Hub, and the Main Street Overpass of Rt. 72.

4. Valuable Tool for Pursuing Grant Money
   • City has been awarded over $7.5 million in competitive grant money to fund projects identified in the Master Plan

5. Established an Implementation Strategy
   • Preliminary phasing for construction projects identified

6. Established Stakeholder and Community Buy-in
   • Master Plan major decisions made after significant discussion and through consensus decisions by a Stakeholder Working Group

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
**Master Plan Overview**

**DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE WORKING GROUP**

- Oversaw the project since it began in October of 2011
- Group has changed and grown since it began, not a really formal working group lately

**Responsibilities & Commitment:**

- There because have an area of expertise, are representing a stake holder group, or both
- Responsible to share information with other stakeholders and bring it forward to the Working Group
- Make well educated, informed, and unified decisions
- To understand of complete streets, streetscape enhancements, goals we’re trying to achieve
- Provided local input to City’s Consultant Team

- Still involved as implementation phases continue

**PROJECT CONSULTING TEAM**

- Urban Engineers (Philadelphia Planning Division)
- Richter & Cegan Landscape Architects
- Rumney Associates (Wayfinding and Historical Signage)

**Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain**
The Complete Street Master Plan broke Downtown New Britain into five (5) distinct Study Areas.

- **Study Area 1: City Hall, Central Park, CTfastrak & Downtown Core**
  - Study Area 1 is the largest of the study areas, and includes the core area of the project and the core of downtown. It is home to City Hall, Central Park and its Civil War Monument, several historical and commercial buildings, and the gateway BT train station for CTfastrak.

- **Study Area 2: Broad Street & Little Poland**
  - Study Area 2 focuses on a section of Main Street and New Britain’s Broad Street, known locally as Little Poland. This area is currently the most successful mixed-use commercial corridor in the downtown.

- **Study Area 3: Main Street Shopping District**
  - Study Area 3 primarily focuses on East Main Street (S.R. 174) along its frontage at New Brite Plaza, the largest retail shopping area in the downtown.

- **Study Area 4: Arch Street Latino District & Linkage to Hospital of Central CT**
  - Study Area 4 primarily focuses on Arch Street, which connects downtown to the Hospital of Central Connecticut. Arch Street is moving towards becoming the Latino cultural center of New Britain.

- **Study Area 5: South Main Street Gateway**
  - Study Area 5 includes South Main Street, Elm Street and the Harry Truman Overpass, all of which are on State Route 71. This study area contains New Britain’s Courthouse and Franklin Square Green, which was reestablished as part of the City’s Arch Walk Way project.
Master Plan Study Areas and Examples

Central Park Area & the Winged Glory
Civil War Memorial

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
# Master Plan Study Areas and Examples

## Broad Street “Little Poland” Area Design Challenges and Solutions

### Existing Conditions:
Broad Street from Hawes to South has a pedestrian-friendly scale. Recent streetscape improvements have provided a clean, open freeway leading up to Hawes Street, but overhead utilities pose a challenge. While recently completed construction limits the ability to make major changes, the addition of pedestrian amenities - from street furniture to on-street improvements - should be the focus of future improvements.

### Design Challenges:
- 47 curb-to-curb street (1½ travel lanes with 1 parking lane)
- Overhead utilities interrupt the streetscape.
- Lack of street trees. Overhead utilities are a major challenge in the remaining sections to be completed.

### Design Solutions:
- **Create a gateway into Little Poland**
  - Reflects its unique identity with public art, sculpture, and specialty signage.
  - Continue Broad Street streetscape pattern, including stamped concrete pavement.
  - Add bump-outs and crosswalks to better pedestrian crossing distances at intersections.
  - Add new street trees and planters.
  - Points additional ornamental pedestrian lighting.

### Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain

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**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Elements</th>
<th>Plan Elements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pedestrian lighting</td>
<td>New Ped Lighting</td>
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<td>Driveways</td>
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<td>Trees</td>
<td>New Trees</td>
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<td>Parking Meters</td>
<td>Bike Lanes</td>
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<td>Wayfinding Signs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scuplure</td>
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**Diagram:**

- Streetscape Plan
- Existing Area
- Design Concepts
Master Plan Study Areas and Examples

Design Standards

Based on the planning and design work in the Master Plan, design standards were developed to provide the City with a palette of design elements and materials to take planning to implementation, and to provide a consistent guide for future development in the downtown core. This chapter contains the design standards which have been defined, including the following typical items: sidewalks, sidewalk pavers, curbing, bike lanes, crosswalls, and amenities such as furnishings, decorative lighting, street tree types, and signage. In the case of some elements, options have not been made for a specific standard. In these cases, options are shown for consideration in the future.

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain

Sidewalk Treatments

Pavers
At the beginning of the master planning process, several different pavement styles and patterns were examined and discussed. A simple, rich, traditional look that also wears well was desired. For the downtown area, traditional brick pavers and colors — Whitacre Green Brick Paver Blend (66% no. 36 Red Sunset, 20% no. 33 Antique, and 20% no. 35 Dark Antique) — were selected. The beauty and richness of this brick palette complements the downtown architecture and provides visual interest to the pedestrian spaces. For other areas, such as Broad Street, stamped concrete or match casting treatment is to be used.

Cast-in-place Concrete and Brick Pavers Sidewalk
Master Plan Study Areas and Examples

Chapter 3: Principles of a Livable Community & Complete Streets Design Methodology

Rethinking Parking

Parking is a critical component of transportation and an important part of a economically viable downtown. Parking must be balanced, however, as providing on-street parking presents trade-offs which include potential development opportunities, bike lane configurations, and providing open space. Part of the goal of walkable environment is to encourage the "park once" concept.

Parking was a very important issue to the Working Group. As part of the master plan process, New Britain's parking was inventoried. The conclusion was that downtown New Britain does not suffer from a lack of parking; it is not necessarily in the right location.

As a result, New Britain's approach in the master planning process was to consider the issue of parking carefully, identifying key locations where parking is needed, and formulating an incremental approach to implementation. An example of this is a 13-space parking lot built adjacent to the new Police Station. This use serves a need today, but will ultimately be a transit-oriented development site, as the opportunity arises.

The Master Plan also provided the opportunity to explore innovative concepts in parking, including back-in angled parking and shared parking. These and other downtown parking issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Downtown Area Parking

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
Master Plan Study Areas and Examples

Wayfinding and Historical Signage

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
Master Plan Study Areas and Examples

City-wide Bike Connectivity

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
Master Plan Implementation and Construction

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
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Costs in Millions (Estimated): Total: $26.8*

COMPLETE STREETS CAPITAL PROJECTS

**Phase 1 – Muni. Parking / Main & Chestnut Streets**
Completed in Dec. 2012

**Phase 2 – Main, Chestnut & Arch Streets**
In Construction, scheduled to be complete Dec. 2013

**Phase 3 – Central Park / Main & West Main Streets**
In Design, to be Bid Summer 2014 & in Construction Fall 2015

**Phase 4 – Broad Street (Horace to Burritt)**

**Phase 5 – Arch Street (to Hart)**
In Design, Construction Scheduled for Fall 2014, Receiving $1.5 in new program LOTCIP Funding for this project

**Phase 6 – Elm & South Main St. / Franklin Square**
Scoping Phase, Construction TBD

**Phase 7 – Columbus & Bank Street (Bus Livability)**
Scoping Phase, Design to Begin Spring 2014, Construction Bidding Scheduled for Summer 2015

**Phase 8 – Main St. Overpass over Route 72 Overpass**
City working with State on a High-Level Planning Effort for this project

**Phase 9 – Main & East Main Streets**
Scheduled for Design to Begin 2015, Construction early 2016

**Phase 10 – Washington and Columbus Streets**
Scheduled for Design to Begin 2015, Construction early 2016

**Phase 11 – Harry Truman Overpass**
Not active, long term plan

**Phase 12 – Medians, Crosswalks, Paving**
Design & Construction schedule TBD
Master Plan Implementation and Construction

Complete Streets Capital Projects

1. City Awarded six (6) State and/or Federal Grant to funding Construction totaling over $8.0 mil.

2. By the time the Complete Streets Master Plan was complete:
   - The First Phase of Construction was complete
   - The second Phase project had construction over 50% complete
   - The construction contract had already been awarded for the fabricating and installing downtown Wayfinding Signage
   - Three (3) other projects project were in design for bidding in 2014
   - The City was heavily engaged in a high level planning effort with the State of CT for the Main Street Overpass over Route 72

3. City established a $7.0 mil. Municipal Bond for Downtown Streetscape Improvements
Phase 1 - Muni. Parking Lot / Main & Chestnut Streets
Images shows the Design Standards adopted for Downtown Streetscape which will be carried out throughout the rest of the downtown.

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
Master Plan Implementation and Construction

**Phase 2** – Involves Main Street, Chestnut Street, and Arch Street

- Major implementation of streetscape design standards adopted by SSWG
- First major pedestrian improvements through road diets
- Approx. 60% intersection of the Main, Chestnut & Arch Street intersection
- Head-out / Back-in Angled Parking Chestnut Street & continued transition to Parking Pay Stations
- Construction scheduled to be essentially complete by Dec. 2013
- City awarded State T.O.D. grant for $750k towards construction

**Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain**
**Phase 2 Streetscape Improvements** – Addressing the pedestrian scale of the downtown through road diets. The Main, Chestnut, and Arch Street intersection alone is getting approx. a 60% reduction in size.

**Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain**
**Phase 2** – Introduces Head-out Angled Parking on Chestnut Street

- Approved by NBPD Commission as Legal Traffic Authority
- Used Successfully in Many other US Cities
- Will be First Head-out Spaces in CT

**Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain**
Phase 7 – Bank Street and Columbus Blvd. (Bus Livability)

Columbus Blvd. Central Station Option for Local Bus Connectivity & Livability

- Being pursued as a project using $1.6 FTA Bus Livability Grant
- Traffic analysis performed to verify that the concept works while still providing an acceptable LOS for vehicles
- Project will feature a “gateway” roundabout around the existing sculpture
- Improves local bus connection to CTFastrak buses
- Improves access to the downtown from the east
- Greatly improves access to the Szczesney Garage
- Involves pedestrian improvements and streetscape improvements consistent with the Complete Streets Master Plan
- Project has an estimated cost of $2.9 mil.
- City pursuing other grant to supplement FTA grant
- Design to begin in the spring of 2014

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
When Opportunity Knocks….

- Gateway Station to CTfastrak located in center of downtown NB
- ConnDOT & FTA have invested millions in CTfastrak
- CTfastrak’s success will be based on ridership
- Pedestrian friendly, livable communities best support transit & bus ridership. In NB major Complete Streets improvements are needed in NB to create that kind of environment
- Complete Streets type pedestrian friendly & livable environments also optimizes the potential for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Successful TOD increases transit ridership

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain
When Opportunity Knocks....

- Due to ridership New Britain has a shared interest with the State & Federal Government to make Complete Streets improvements downtown.

- New Britain needed a good plan to get there which, through CRCOG, the HUD Sustainable Communities Grant enabled us to develop.

- The small investment by HUD ($212,500) in NB’s Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain provided the necessary tools for NB to successfully acquiring approx. $8.m mil. in construction funding.

- True Opportunity is rare. When Opportunity Knocks you need to seize it.

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain