

# Executive Summary: Downtown New Britain Station Area

## What Do “Transit Oriented Development” (TOD) Districts Look Like?

Successful TOD districts have a blend of housing, retail, and/or office and a good measure of density, whether job density or housing density. Development is more compact and less dependent on parking and auto use. Infrastructure costs for streets, water, sewer, and utilities are reduced while property values are typically increased.

Other key elements include an attractive, safe and inviting pedestrian environment as well as public space integrated with the transit station and commercial space to create a “sense of place.” Buildings are located near the street edge with several windows and doors on the ground floor. Public streets and walkways are organized in a grid pattern that creates comfortably sized blocks. The districts are usually within a ¼ to ½ mile radius around a station, or a comfortable five to ten minute walking distance.

## Municipal Advisory Committee

The Downtown New Britain Plan was developed with the assistance of a Municipal Advisory Committee which met regularly over the past year. Members of the MAC included:

Arthur Helfgott, Committee Chairperson - Common Council, City of New Britain

Barbara Yezierski - Common Council, City of New Britain

Steve Schiller - Planning Department, City of New Britain

Kenneth Malinowski - Department of Municipal Development, City of New Britain

Ned Statchen - Zoning Board of Appeals, City of New Britain

William Carroll - Department of Municipal Development, City of New Britain

Margaret Baylock - East Side Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Committee

William Millerick - New Britain Chamber of Commerce

Joe Barbeau - Central Connecticut Regional Planning Association

## Implementation

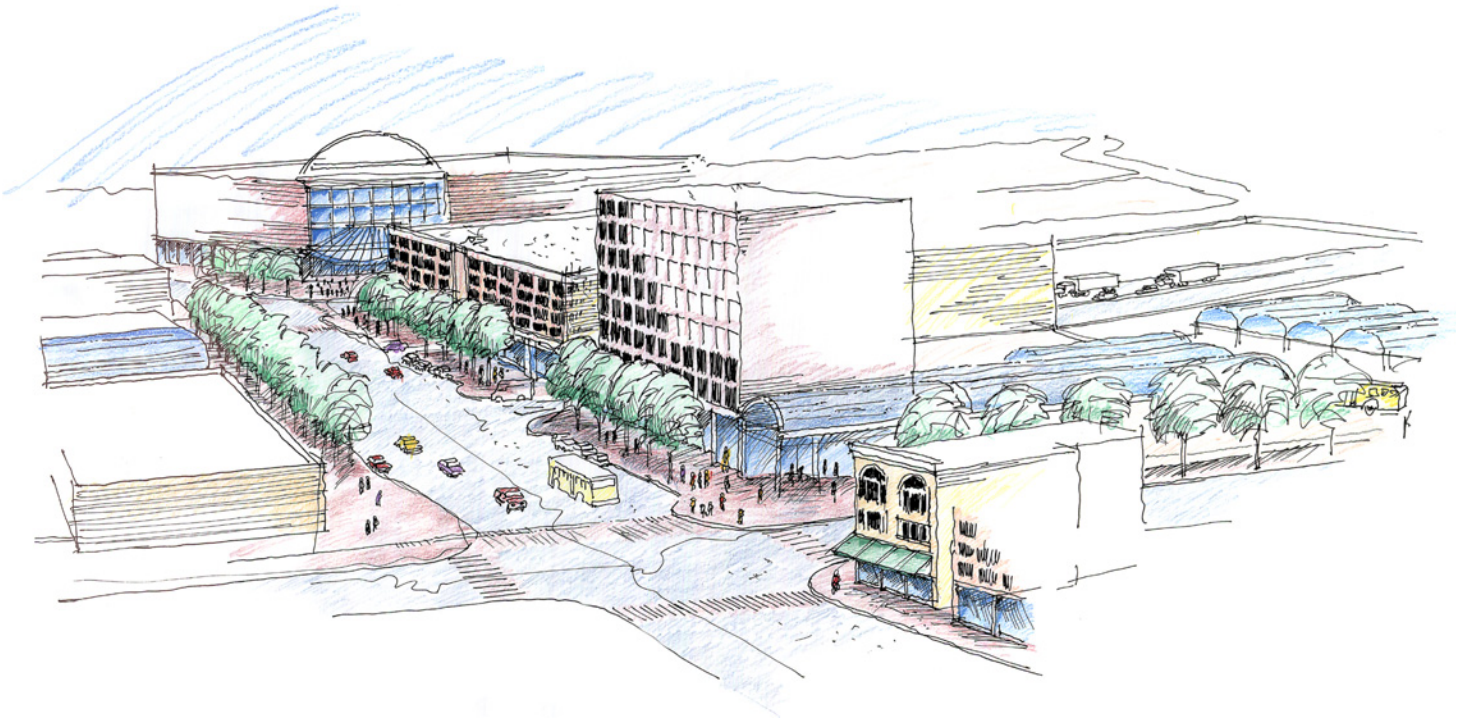
The implementation strategy focuses on the City of New Britain working with ConnDOT, CCSU and other public agencies to develop the transit station, arena, parking garage and associated retail space while continuing to market downtown buildings for rehabilitation projects. The following summarizes the phasing of the key development components:

### Short-Term: 2004-2009

- Consider incorporating station area plan into Plan of Conservation and Development
- Consider adopting TOD zoning district
- Work with ConnDOT on the design of the station and programming of the joint development project
- Work with CCSU to encourage siting of the arena in downtown New Britain
- Work with CT Office of Policy Management on the state office building (if downtown New Britain is selected as the arena site, begin to solicit hotel developers)
- Develop the Intermodal Center/Air-Rights Office Building/Hotel
- Work to secure funding for Route 72 decking
- Identify sources of funds for capital improvements and land assembly
- Continue to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of downtown buildings
- Continue to aggressively market downtown New Britain

### Medium to Long-Term: 2010-2025

- Work with CCSU on development of arena and garage
- Continue efforts to secure funding for Route 72 decking
- Work with CCSU and ConnDOT on development of retail along the Main Street bridge
- Work on developing retail and residential uses east of the Arena
- Continue to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of downtown buildings
- Continue to aggressively market downtown New Britain
- Assemble parcels for development
- Assist property owners and developers in relocation activities as required
- Prepare RFPs for development of publicly owned parcels



**The transit center links downtown to a new arena by creating an active commercial street.** This perspective view shows proposed development at both ends along the Main Street Bridge. The transit center (with seven floor hotel or office space above) is shown in the foreground and a proposed CCSU arena is shown in the background (see plan inside). Wide landscaped sidewalks lined with restaurants and stores will make the bridge over Route 72 a lively addition to downtown New Britain and connect neighborhoods that were severed when the highway was built.

## Station Area Planning Project

The Capitol Region Council of Governments, working with citizens and the City of New Britain, has developed plans for the areas near stations for the New Britain - Hartford busway.

Please examine the development plan shown here to learn how the Downtown New Britain station area could change. The ideas presented here are designed to make the most out of the proposed transportation investment and are intended to stimulate discussion.

Planning around transit (bus or rail) stations is known as Transit Oriented

Development and it has been successful throughout the country. The Pittsburgh busway and the Washington D.C. Metro are examples where districts surrounding the rapid transit systems thrive, adding to the quality of life in these communities.

The New Britain-Hartford Busway Project is a new rapid transit facility being built by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. It is an exclusive 9.4-mile long busway, linking downtown New Britain with downtown Hartford’s Union Station. The busway has stops in New Britain, Newington, West Hartford and Hartford.



Existing view looking north along the Main Street bridge. The transit center is proposed for the former Greenfield’s site.

The goal of this Station Area Planning project is to coordinate transportation and land use planning for the areas around proposed stations in order to enhance economic benefits to New Britain while increasing ridership. The development concept focuses on a strategy to create vibrant walkable districts with easy access to regional transit.

## Why New Britain?

Downtown New Britain was one of six station areas chosen for detailed study. The station location at the edge of downtown, within walking distance of dense neighborhoods and employment centers, creates opportunities to leverage existing and proposed development to enhance a wide area.

## Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main Street • Hartford, CT 06106-5310 • [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org)

For more information or to see the full report contact CRCOG at 860-522-2217 or go to CRCOG’s or New Britain’s websites: [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org); [www.new-britain.net](http://www.new-britain.net)

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Prepared in cooperation with citizens, the Cities of New Britain and Hartford, the Towns of West Hartford and Newington, the Capitol Region Council of Governments, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The opinions, findings and conclusion expressed in this publication are those of the respective Municipal Advisory Committees that served on the project and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Connecticut Department of Transportation and/or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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The Bones / Key Development Principles

The Plan shown here is conceptual. As individual projects evolve over time in response to market conditions, funding opportunities and parcel availability, it will be important that the project designs adhere to the following guiding principles - “the bones” - of the plan:

- Humanize the Main Street Bridge and Truman Overpass with streetscape improvements and active building uses along the sides of the bridges
- North of East Main Street, create new streets that define smaller blocks connected to the historic street grid
- Develop new mixed-use buildings sited at the street edge, with active ground floor uses, to encourage pedestrian activity throughout the project area
- Require new housing to be at densities of 12 or more dwelling units per acre and commercial development to be at densities of 25 of more employees per acre to create a more active 18 hour downtown

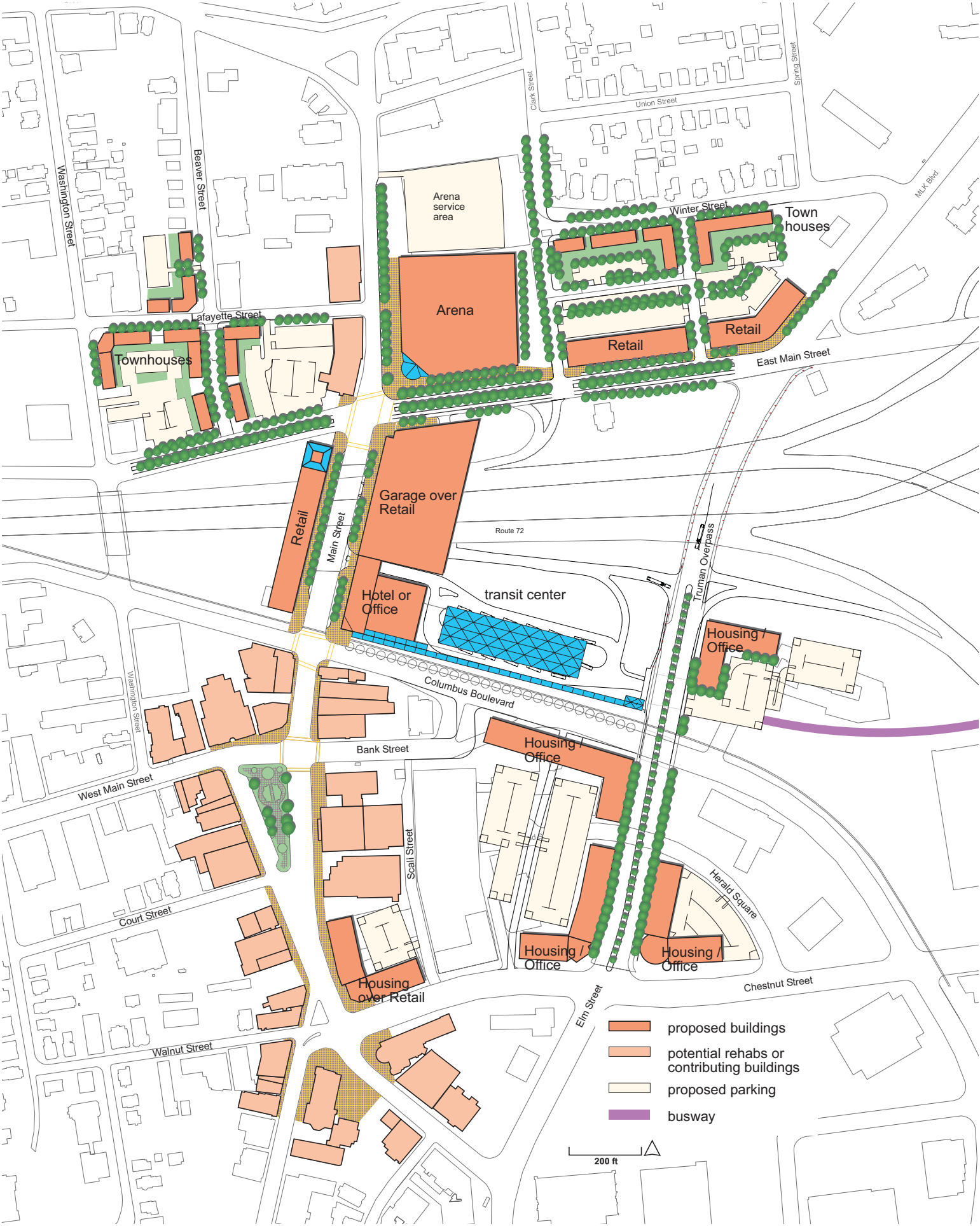
Economic Benefits

The economic benefits from implementation of the transit oriented development/arena improvements in downtown New Britain are significant. Although this plan shows a reduction in retail from the existing plaza, it is assumed that the assessed value and retail employment of the new retail space will be equivalent to the existing underperforming retail space.

Once the new development, summarized below, is fully absorbed, the net new, annual, permanent, sustained economic and fiscal impact would represent 5,037 direct and indirect jobs, \$91 million in payroll, 356 residents and \$3 million in property taxes. All amounts are in constant 2004 dollars, do not include any impact from inflation, and are based upon current construction costs, average payroll levels and property tax rates.

Development Summary Table: Arena Option

Use	Total
Flex Space (Office/Housing)	663,168 sq. ft.
Hotel (above Transit Center)	120 rooms
Residential (north of Transit Center & at Main/Chestnut)	162 units
Retail	130,101 sq. ft.
Arena	6,000-10,000 seats
Garage	1,040 spaces

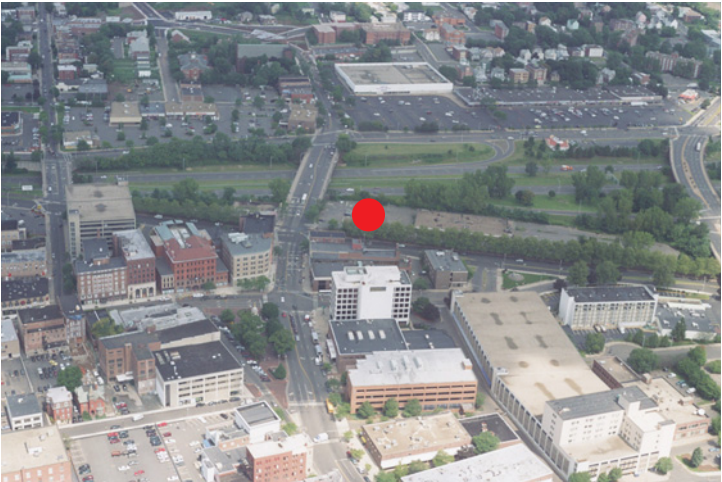


Bringing New Life to Downtown

The concept for downtown New Britain leverages the transit center and Central Connecticut State University's plan for a new arena. While downtown New Britain has been identified as one potential arena location, it is unknown at this point whether or where an arena will be built. The Station Area Plan for Cedar Street station also shows the arena on CCSU-owned land south of that station.

This downtown plan demonstrates that reconnecting the northern and southern sections of downtown across Route 72 is possible and that it can spur new life and activity in downtown New Britain.

With a new development at the northern end of the Main Street Bridge and the new transit center at the southern end, the bridge over Route 72 becomes an important link between the two parts of downtown. The plan envisions the bridge with wide sidewalks lined with trees, restaurants and stores with upper level parking, and a hotel or office building above the transit center. The bridge will feel like an extension of Main Street rather than the existing windswept division between downtown and neighborhoods to the north. (The alternate plan for NewBrite plaza is a combination of housing and retail.)



Aerial view of Downtown New Britain project area, looking north. The station location is indicated by the red dot.