2014 CT Main Street Awards Gala

Monday June 9, 2014 at 5:30 PM

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261 College Street  New Haven  CT
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Our thanks to
Town Green Special Services District  City of New Haven  Market New Haven
Lori DeStefano  Shelly Saczynski  Chris Ortwein
WELCOME
The Honorable Toni Harp
Mayor, City of New Haven

SPECIAL PRESENTATION
The Connecticut Light and Power Company Award for Outstanding Contributions to Main Street Revitalization

William Warner, AICP

RECOGNITIONS
10 Year Award

Carl Rosa, CEO
Main Street Waterbury

2014 National Main Street Programs
Simsbury Main Street Partnership
Upper Albany Main Street (Hartford)
Main Street Waterbury
Westville Village Renaissance Alliance (New Haven)

2014 CT MAIN STREET AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
2014 Awards of Excellence

Main Street Volunteers of the Year

- New London Main Street: Jordan Whipple
- Simsbury Main Street Partnership: Michelle Muddy
- Main Street Waterbury: Rob Gardner
- Westville Village Renaissance Alliance: Kathleen Bradley

Main Street Board Members of the Year

- New London Main Street: Renee Fournier
- Simsbury Main Street Partnership: Grace Connors
- Main Street Waterbury: Eileen LeMay
- Westville Village Renaissance Alliance: Eric Epstein

Award for Main Street Partnership

Axis901 Main and MCC on Main, Downtown Manchester

First Niagara Bank, Manchester Community College, Town of Manchester

The goal was to create a vibrant center for entrepreneurship, entertainment, culture and education in the heart of this historic downtown. In summary, this is a story of a convergence of interests, a willingness to be creative and take risks for results, and choosing to turn a challenge into an opportunity.

Downtown Opportunities & Challenges:

- First Niagara Bank acquired NewAlliance Bank in 2011, resulting in the loss of 100 jobs on Manchester’s Main Street, and creating surplus real estate for First Niagara.
- MCC had sought for years to establish a physical presence in downtown – to create a space where students would be drawn and the community would be enriched by the college’s programs and resources.
- The Town and Downtown Manchester Special Services District sought opportunities to establish a unique downtown destination to draw new customers and businesses, to promote downtown as a location for arts, entertainment and the creative economy.
Highlights:

- 901-903 Main Street is a Victorian era commercial building, converted from retail to bank by NewAlliance. First Niagara donated the building to the Town, and gave a $500,000 unrestricted gift to the MCC Foundation to be used to repurpose the building for MCC on Main, an arts gallery and classroom space.
- The Town crafted a unique lease structure with the MCC Foundation whereby the Foundation pays all of the operating costs, and is reimbursed with revenues generated from the second floor Axis901 membership and lease payments from Manchester Adult Education.
- The Foundation funded the conversion of the first floor offices into the Dehn Art Gallery, two seminar rooms, and smaller offices and conference rooms.
- The Town, always looking for new economic development opportunities, learned about coworking. Using Town staff from facilities, planning, information systems, and public works departments, created a coworking space on the second floor to attract and support innovators and entrepreneurs.

Major Accomplishments:

- MCC on Main hosts art exhibits, live musical performances, poetry readings, small classes and other events. MCC’s entrepreneurship programs are also migrating to MCC on Main.
- Axis901 provides open work spaces, a kitchen, meeting rooms with conference call and projection capabilities, a copier/scanner/printer, a quiet room, and private offices. A variety of monthly memberships provide entrepreneurs a flexible business environment that provides opportunities for collaboration and support, and brings a new business type and energy to Main Street.
- Axis901 and MCC on Main have increased foot traffic on Main Street and are building a brand as an art/culture venue, a place to learn and share ideas, and a home and resource for innovators, startups, and entrepreneurs. Visitors and members support other local businesses.
- Recently joining Axis901 is Eric Knight, a serial entrepreneur under contract to CTNext, the state funded group building Connecticut’s innovation ecosystem. Eric provides free advice to help entrepreneurs establish or grow their businesses. He has office hours at Axis901 every Tuesday.
- Since July 2012, MCC on Main has had: 12 Gallery Shows; 342 Performances; and 9,000 attendees. Since May 2013, Axis901 has had: 22 members, 60 events and CTNext – 62 appointments, 29 individuals.
- Success attributed to a shared vision of what downtown Manchester can become, a realistic assessment of the possibilities in the marketplace, identification of the community’s desires, a willingness to collaborate and cooperate, and a willingness to take reasonable risks.
Award for Marketing & Communications

Discover NWCT
Northwestern CT Regional Planning Collaborative, Studio Two

Participants: Northwestern CT Regional Planning Collaborative (representing the Towns of Sharon, Falls Village, Goshen, Cornwall, Canaan, Salisbury, Kent, Norfolk); Studio Two; local business owners in the eight towns in the “Secret Corner”; and local historical societies.

The goal is to market Connecticut’s Northwest corner as a region, helping visitors find their way around the Main Street Village Center they are in, but also to help them discover the rest of the Secret Corner.

Opportunities & Challenges:
• The northwest Connecticut “Main Streets” (Village Centers) are relatively small, nestled into the countryside at a crossroads or river bend. Not many of them have the critical mass of shopping or attractions to entice the weekend visitor to come and come again but together, these eight towns’ Main Streets offer a lifetime worth of experiences to discover.
• Like many small towns, the towns in the northwest corner cannot afford active marketing and communications campaigns on their own. Partnering provides a cost effective way to do this.
• It is difficult to attract visitors when Main Street only has a few shops and restaurants, but collaborating on marketing to include other small Main Streets – marketing a region - attracts a larger audience.
• Just creating a brochure, a website or a Facebook page will not attract attention by their mere existence. DiscoverNWCT utilizes a variety of marketing tools to communicate with target audiences, by combining them to reinforce the branding message.

Highlights:
• Social media presence: websites, discovernwct.com, and secretcorner.org gain 150 new visitors per week; Facebook page: DiscoverNWCT has 1,107 followers.
• Secret Corner brochure, distributed to hotels, shops, restaurants, and State visitor centers and the Big E, is now in its 3rd printing (10,000).
• Window clings that identify businesses as part of the Secret Corner – 60 local businesses are participating.
• A series of Welcome signs and visitor information kiosks, with Secret Corner branded materials, are spread throughout the region. Each town has regionally themed signage at the gateways welcoming people to town and directing them to shops, restaurants, and the visitor information kiosks.

Major Accomplishments:
• The NW CT Regional Planning Collaborative facilitated outreach and input from all participating communities into development of the brand of the region and the towns in that region.
• Local small businesses had extensive input into signage design and the website content. They are active participants in the Secret Corner brand, posting materials and window signs in 60 small businesses in the region.
• Town leaders were very active in helping to facilitate the ConnDOT permitting process for the regional signage program. As a result, this Village Center Signage & Wayfinding Program is now codified in ConnDOT’s Village Area Gateway Signage program.
**Award for Events & Programming**

**Wine on Main St., Downtown Waterbury**

Main Street Waterbury

**Participants:** Main Street Waterbury, Terry Boyd, Nutmeg Fine Wines & Spirits, Howland Hughes Center, Downtown Restaurants (Braza Churrascaria, Courtyard by Marriott, Diorio’s, Shamrock Pub & Grill, Tryst Lounge, Signature’s Restaurant, City Hall Café).

The goals were to attract new audiences in an afternoon of exploration, sampling fine wines from across the globe while savoring the cultural richness that Waterbury has to offer; to introduce a number of quality restaurants in downtown to these audiences; and to serve as a new fund raising resource for Main Street Waterbury.

**Opportunities & Challenges:**
- Each September Brass City Brew Fest draws over 2,000 to downtown, which has brought greater respect for the City and has enhanced business in downtown lodgings and restaurants.
- Wine on Main St. was intended to provide yet another social and programmatic opportunity to introduce target audiences to Downtown Waterbury as an entertainment and business venue.

**Highlights:**
- Based on a clever travel theme with a passport for each attendee, they were divided into “tour groups with “flight attendants” who described the wines and their locales, while also pointing out historical buildings and points of interest to their team ensuring that they absorbed elements of downtown Waterbury’s cultural richness.
- The historic Howland Hughes Center on Bank Street was set up as an airport terminal. Each group traveled from “country to country”, experiencing all seven restaurants and a glimpse of the world at each stop.
- Seven participating restaurants, Braza Churrascaria (Rio de Janeiro); Courtyard by Marriott (Madrid); Diorio’s Restaurant (Rome); Shamrock Pub & Grill (Sydney); Tryst Lounge (Paris); Signature’s Restaurant (California); and City Hall Café (Seattle), featured regional wines and built tasting menus from destination locales.
- A local artist, whose studio is located in downtown storefront space, arranged for a number of artists to set up their work at display stations along the tour route, adding color and conversation to the walk.
- Attendees were provided a list of the wines introduced on the tour. Nutmeg Wine & Spirits, a Waterbury liquor shop, offered each of the featured wines at a discount to attendees – and then donated a portion of receipts back to Main Street Waterbury.

**Major Accomplishments:**
- The first Wine on Main St. was an excellent promotional event for Main Street Waterbury and new audiences to downtown: most of the patrons were from locations outside of Waterbury.
- The event engaged and brought out enthusiasm from participating restaurants: they researched and created tasting menus that complimented the wines – and are enthusiastic about participating again next year.
- There were 100 attendees, which met the goal of the promotions committee, ranging in age from 21 to 72.
Award for Renewed Commitment to Main Street

Seymour Downtown Action Strategy

Master Plan for Seymour Greenway & Upland Trail

Participants: Seymour Economic Development Commission, Seymour Downtown Committee, Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce, Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, Downtown Merchants Association, Planimetrics, Milone and MacBroom, State of CT DEEP, and NOAA.

The goals are:
- To change the community’s perception of Downtown Seymour: downtown is the treasure and the heart of the Seymour community, the Naugatuck River is probably the community’s greatest asset and must be connected to downtown, physically and programmatically.
- To change the external perception of Seymour: Downtown Seymour is a small, walkable that invites people to live, work, invest, and play.

Highlights:
- A 2011 CT Main Street Reconnaissance Visit and Walking Tour provided several recommendations intended to help the Town and private sector stakeholders organize around returning social and economic vibrancy to downtown Seymour.
- The Town of Seymour hired Planimetrics to develop the 2012 Seymour Downtown Action Strategy, engaging the community through a series of public input sessions. Planimetrics created a thorough account of the issues facing downtown, and suggested a “Top Ten List” of actions, to help the Town focus its efforts along the lines of the Main Street Four Point Approach, and identify the roles of stakeholders. #10 on the list recommended extending trails and walkways to open up the Naugatuck river front and waterfalls and connecting this unique asset to downtown.
- In 2012 the Town, working with consultants Milone and MacBroom, began developing a Master Plan for Greenway Trails and Linear Park. At the same time, Seymour was collaborating with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the CT Dept of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in creating a $4.25 million Tingue Dam Fish Bypass Ladder to encourage reestablishing migratory fish patterns.

Major Accomplishments:
- The Greenway master plan was adopted by the community in December 2013. The planning document will help create a solid foundation for the Town to continue to invest in Downtown, creating amenities for residents and visitors to enjoy while creating areas for social interaction.
- The design is of a contiguous riverside trail that maximizes pedestrian safety and connects users with the Naugatuck River Corridor, making it a true “greenway” and connecting it to Downtown.
- The Town continues to move forward on the plan, exploring availability of federal transportation assistance to construct the initial phases of the Seymour Greenway Trail and Linear Park.
Award for Public Space

Sponsored by Jasko Development & Webster Bank

Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain

Participants: Downtown Streetscape Working Group, City of New Britain (Mayor’s Office, Public Works, Planning, Parks), New Britain Downtown District, Polonia Business District, CCSU & ITBE, CRCOG, and the Project Consultant Team (Urban Engineers, and Richter, Cegan and Webb Landscape Architects).

The goals of the Complete Streets Master Plan are: to undo damage caused by previous highway construction by re-connecting downtown; to construct an attractive, consistent and cohesive streetscape throughout the downtown area; and to “right size” the downtown road through road diets.

Downtown Opportunities & Challenges:
- CTFastrak’s Bus Rapid Transit system is under construction, with its terminus station in the heart of downtown New Britain. This presented a time of opportunity, and in the coming years transit oriented development opportunities will arise along the CTFastrak corridor.
- Past planning and transportation decisions resulted in a New Britain downtown road network that is overbuilt and greatly favors vehicles over pedestrians, and a streetscape that lacks consistency or interest.

Highlights:
- Most planning projects identify further work to be performed that requires additional investment, and the Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain was no exception. In total over $25 million of Complete Streets / Streetscape enhancement work is identified in this master plan. As a testament to the Complete Streets Master Plan’s success the city was able to use the work performed in the master plan to compete for and win a FHWA TCSP Grant for $1.3 million, a State of CT T.O.D. Grant for $750,000, and a FTA Bus Livability Grant for $1.4 million among other grant monies.
- In urban cities, many planning documents like the Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain are also directly affiliated with a single mayor’s agenda, and are often disregarded if there is a change of administration. The planning and implementation process associated with the Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain has spanned three mayors representing both major political parties, but the strong support for this project by city leaders has never wavered.
- The Master Plan looks at five (5) distinct study areas that when combined make up downtown New Britain. Each of these five areas serves a different purpose, and will require a different level of effort of improvements. The study areas themselves largely focus on the Main Street corridor. Through this Master Plan, the intent is to establish a common look and a district sense of place throughout the downtown area, which will be accomplished through Complete Streets-inspired streetscape design standards that will be constructed as funding becomes available.
- This comprehensive Master Plan includes the following components: Downtown Parking; Bus Connectivity; Wayfinding & Historical Signage; Public Art & Monuments; Bicycle Connectivity; Palette and Design Standards.
**Major Accomplishments:**

- New Britain’s Complete Streets Master Plan has led to increased interest in the downtown by outside developers, and an invigorated belief in the future of downtown by the community as a whole.
- Even before the planning was complete, the City was able to supplement the planning work with nearly $4 million in grant money toward construction of streetscape improvements, some completed, some underway.
- In less than three years the project leveraged a small investment of federal H.U.D. grant money ($212,500), to develop a comprehensive master plan that has already resulted in the city being awarded over $9 million in competitive state and federal grants. Additionally the complete streets construction will help support private investment and job growth downtown, as well as support CTFastrak BRT ridership.
- The planning was managed as a community-based project and run through a working group that involved a wide range of stakeholders, each of which has a vested interest in the revitalization of downtown. The Working Group membership was extremely diverse, both culturally and professionally – from the Broad Street Polish business community, to area artists, to representatives from the local university, to municipal officials and developers.

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**Study Area 1: City Hall, Central Park, CTFastrak and Downtown Core**

*Complete Streets Master Plan for Downtown New Britain*
Award for Economic & Business Development

Sponsored by Webster Bank

The Business Women of Grand Street, Downtown Waterbury

Participants: The Business Women of Grand Street are: The Dutch Flower Lady, Technology Forensics, John Bale Book Company, Fine Craft Jewelers, Dottie’s 2, Princess Lingerie, Brass City Market on Field, Fashion Addict. Additional participants include Main Street Waterbury and Waterbury Development Corporation.

Downtown Opportunities & Challenges:
- Grand Street was designed to be “grand”. When travelers visited Waterbury in the early 1900’s they exited the train station and stepped out into the entrance to Grand Street. From there they found the beautiful municipal complex designed by architect Cass Gilbert, and the series of buildings that give the street its flavorful architectural flair.
- The decline of city wealth in the mid-20th century showed on Grand Street, but the recent restoration of historic City Hall has catalyzed increased business development on Grand Street.
- The City, Waterbury Development Corporation, and Main Street Waterbury have come to recognize that entrepreneurs – micro businesses – are a significant and energetic component, and a major building block for downtown revitalization.

Highlights:
- As a group, the Business Women of Grand Street account for 80% of businesses in Grand Street’s commercial corridor, and they are all niche entrepreneurs.
- Recognizing the strong and sizable presence of women-owned businesses in Downtown, Main Street Waterbury coordinates a highly successful series of Downtown Business Women’s Teas. Held seasonally, these gatherings provide opportunities for business women to meet, network, share their stories and interests, and enjoy interacting with their peers.

Major Accomplishments:
- In addition to successfully operating their own businesses, the Business Women of Grand Street are involved with Main Street Waterbury’s Downtown Business Watch Program; they participate in food and clothing drives to assist downtown residents; and they help plan and coordinate events that bring people and energy to downtown.
- With their window displays, their strong customer service ethic, and enthusiastic participation in Main Street Waterbury’s holiday decorating contests, they have made Grand Street more attractive and welcoming.
- Downtown Waterbury has experienced a revival of Grand Street, due to the willingness of these business owners to invest in the central business district. Grand Street’s vacancy rate has diminished, as nearly all of its storefronts are now occupied. Additionally, the Business Women refer clients to one another and are supportive of one another.
We are proud of Connecticut Main Street Network Members. Our award winners and network of members help create vibrant downtown neighborhoods that attract residents, businesses and visitors.

Apothecary Hall Building
Downtown Waterbury

The Wauregan, Downtown Norwich
Photo by Bruce Becker, FAIA

Main Street, Middletown
photo by David Sousa

Main Street Marketplace, Downtown Torrington
photo by Jack Wallace
Wall Street, Downtown Norwalk

July in the Sky, Historic Downtown Rockville (Vernon)

Downtown Hartford

Grand Opening of Storrs Center, 2013

Westville Village

Photo by Lisa Daly
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Governor Dannel P. Malloy
for his commitment to Connecticut Main Street Revitalization
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At CT Main Street Center we help inspire great Connecticut downtowns, Main Street by Main Street. We serve as the champion and leading resource for vibrant and sustainable Main Streets as foundations for healthy communities.

We bring historic downtowns throughout Connecticut back to life by strengthening our downtowns and village centers. At the local level, we share our expertise and give people the tools to create powerful partnerships and vibrant communities.

At the state level, we are the voice for programs and policies that advance the Main Street way of life in Connecticut.