Planning for Sustainable Brownfield Redevelopment

EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA – WEST WARD CONNECTIVITY PLAN

SITE STATISTICS

- **Community**: Easton, Pennsylvania
- **EPA Regional Lead**: Patricia Corbett, corbett.patricia@epa.gov
- **Site and Use**: Key brownfields in the West Ward can be reused as destination and development nodes, public parks, and civic destinations to improve neighborhood mobility with improved connectivity
- **Technical Assistance**: Site Design

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The West Ward neighborhood (Easton, Pennsylvania) has an historic urban street grid that is largely intact, with distances between important activity nodes relatively short. However, the current bike and pedestrian environment within the neighborhood does not offer dedicated bike facilities along the streets. Non-automotive users who travel along most streets and between important destinations, such as the Easton Area Community Center, the Easton Area Public Library, and the Paxinosa Elementary/Cottingham Stadium campus find the environment disjointed, unappealing and unsafe. Similar difficult conditions exist for bike and pedestrian travel connections between regional amenity areas like the Karl Stirner Arts Trail and Lafayette College. Because the West Ward has a good network of streets with strong urban frontages, a dense residential population, and a number of high activity and development nodes, the neighborhood has the potential to be a walkable and bike-friendly community.

Figure 1. Current street example in Easton.

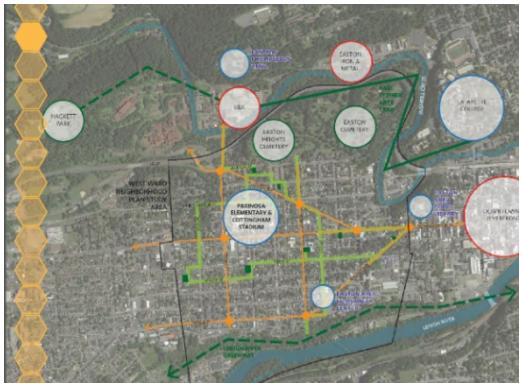

Figure 2. Proposed Connectivity Plan connecting landmarks.

PROJECT CHALLENGE

Current street and infrastructure challenges present challenges to accessing investments in former brownfields such as the Silk Mill and Easton Iron & Metal (EIM) projects and limit the opportunity for these projects to provide services to the larger community. Safety and accessibility issues are found throughout the neighborhood. Most streets do not include current best practices such as compliant curb ramps, marked crosswalks, and adequate lighting -all of which are necessary to promote safe movement for users.

Figure 3. New design for Northampton Street.

HOW EPA HELPED

EPA's land revitalization technical assistance support to the city included:

- Coordinating a three-day visioning workshop with local city officials and key stakeholders to develop project redevelopment goals and objectives.
- Connecting current and past brownfield redevelopment projects, such as the Silk Mill, as destinations to strengthen mobility.
- Creating a connectivity plan for the West Ward which highlighted a hierarchy of corridors with mobility design feature improvements.

COMMUNITY'S NEXT STEPS

- The city is considering how to set up ***demonstration areas*** within the neighborhood to help test proposed changes and see what the community accepts or supports. This may include painting wider bulb-outs at intersections, striping the road to help narrow the lanes, and placing temporary (potted) landscaping within these areas to force a subtle movement from the vehicles.
- The city could host a special event along the corridor which shuts down a specific road to help promote and increase ***bike awareness***. Welcoming bikes and pedestrians to coexist in the space can help build support for the future design elements along that road and throughout the community.