On July 22, 2013, TSTC teamed up with 40 high school student interns and their mentors from the Greater Newark Conservancy’s (GNC) Newark Youth Leadership Project to conduct a Complete Streets Audit in the neighborhood surrounding the Greater Newark Conservancy on Prince Street in Newark.

During the first half of the workshop, students learned about the principles of Complete Streets as well as similar efforts taking place throughout New Jersey. Following the classroom portion of the day, students conducted walking audits in various parts of Newark, and were encouraged to take on the point of view as a pedestrian, cyclist, senior citizen, someone with a physical disability, a young child or a parent/babysitter with young children.

Upon returning to the classroom, each group presented its findings. Students flagged the lack of bike lanes and bike racks, fading crosswalks, speeding cars and trucks, broken or missing sidewalks and a lack of bus shelters as common problems facing people who use Newark’s streets. While the students highlighted the bike and pedestrian amenities they saw, like bike lanes and ADA-compliant curb ramps along Jones Street, they were astute to notice that many of these improvements seemed to be implemented as spot treatments — not as part of a thorough Complete Streets overhaul.

**Why such an audit?**

Newark adopted a Complete Streets resolution in September 2013. With 40% of residents not owning a vehicle, many rely on public transit, bicycling or walking to get around day to day. Most GNC students are not of the legal driving age and thus must rely on transit, biking or walking as a main form of transportation. No matter where the students live, they all end up at GNC—what better place to conduct the audit than in their own back yard!

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**Newark-at-a-Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population*</th>
<th>City of Newark</th>
<th>Essex County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>277,727</td>
<td>787,744</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newark makes up 35 percent of the population in Essex County. It is the largest city in the state of New Jersey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commute Mode**</th>
<th>City of Newark</th>
<th>Essex County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Facts</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus Stops</td>
<td>944</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Routes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail Stations</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Existing Conditions: Problems Identified Near Greater Newark Conservancy

LEGEND
- Greater Newark Conservancy Study Area
- Speeding
- Sidewalks missing/in poor condition
- Need bike lane
- Missing crosswalks
- Missing curb ramp
- Pedestrian signal broken
- Bus stop- no shelter/seating
- Existing bike lane
- Park
- School

Graphic: Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Findings

The major concerns documented during the Complete Streets Audit can be placed into four categories, as follows:

**Pedestrian Infrastructure** – The Audit found several infrastructural problems on sidewalks and streets in the area immediately surrounding the Greater Newark Conservancy that harm the pedestrian and cyclist environment. These problems detract from the walkability in the corridor and should be addressed to improve safety and access for all users of the roadway:

1. Unmarked or poorly marked crosswalks;
2. Lack of or broken pedestrian crossing signals;
3. No security cameras;
4. Cracked, damaged, obstructed and narrow sidewalks and curb ramps; and
5. Curb ramps improperly aligned with crosswalks or missing.
Bicycle Infrastructure – The Audit also uncovered many examples of the lack of bicycle infrastructure and where dedicated bike lanes were found, the audit revealed other issues that contribute to a poor pedestrian environment, namely:

1. Lack of dedicated bike lanes (Springfield Ave., S. Orange Ave., MLK Blvd., Mercer St. and Court St.);
2. Incomplete bike network connecting to Greenway (intersection of Jones St. and Springfield Ave.) bike lanes limited to Jones St. only;
3. Insufficient bike parking amenities; and
4. No shoulders/wide travel lanes (Court St., S. Orange Ave.).
**Mass Transit Access** – The Complete Streets Audit area is served by several bus stops. The condition, amenities and locations varied significantly within the audit area. The results of the Walk Audit found:

1. Lack of adequate lighting, lack of shelters, lack of places to sit;
2. Location of bus stop on Jones St on a curve posed safety concerns;
3. Significant discrepancy between amenities at traditional NJT bus stops versus GO Bus (Springfield Ave.);
4. Lack of crosswalks near bus stops; and
5. Need for clearer signage.

**Driver Behavior** – In addition to the issues listed above, surveyors also found that certain driver behaviors were harming the pedestrian experience within the audit area. These issues include:

1. Speeding motorists, especially on streets with wide lanes (Springfield Ave. and S. Orange Ave.); and
2. Drivers making aggressive turns, passing on right and failing to stop for pedestrians.
Potential Solutions

Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations:

1. Repaint faded crosswalks or paint new crosswalks where they do not exist;
2. Install high-visibility thermoplastic crosswalks to improve motorist awareness of pedestrian activity;
3. Repair broken push-to-walk buttons and install where missing;
4. Repave sidewalks as needed to repair dangerous pavement conditions;
5. Maintain vegetation;
6. Installation of pedestrian scale lighting; and

Bicycle Infrastructure Recommendations:

1. Dedicated bike lanes along MLK Blvd, Springfield Ave., S. Orange Ave;
2. Install “Share the Road” signs as needed; and
3. Place bicycle parking at key locations near businesses, schools, parks, residential buildings.
Mass Transit Access Recommendations:

1. Install and maintain bus shelters;
2. Repair and construct sidewalks leading to bus stops;
3. Provide ample seating and trash cans at stops; and
4. Link bus stops to crosswalks.

Driver Behavior Recommendations:

1. Implement a “road diet” along Springfield Ave., S. Orange Ave., MLK Blvd.; and
2. Increase enforcement of speeding and motorists who fail to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

Overall Recommendations:

- Improve cleanliness of corridor, perhaps through a Newark civic volunteer organization.
- Create a Complete Streets Policy implementation plan for the City of Newark.
- Encourage community engagement in future bicycle/pedestrian planning within the City.
For More Information

The July 2013 walking audit was organized by Janna Chernetz, NJ Advocate (TSTC), Kathi Ko, Research & Development Associate (TSTC) Ben Rosenblatt, Intern (TSTC) with significant support from the Greater Newark Conservancy, Newark Youth Leadership Program.

This memo was written by Janna Chernetz and Kathi Ko.

For more information, contact Janna Chernetz (TSTC) at janna@tstc.org or 212.268.7474, Kathi Ko (TSTC) at kathi@tstc.org or 212-268-7474.

About GNC and TSTC

 Greater Newark Conservancy promotes environmental stewardship to improve the quality of life in New Jersey's urban communities. Founded in 1987, the Conservancy has four program areas: environmental education, community greening and gardening, job training and advocacy for environmental justice.

 The Newark Youth Leadership Project (NYLP) is a year round job and leadership training program which provides Newark, NJ high school and college youth with job training experience, leadership development, and exposure to different career options in environmental and horticultural fields and opportunities for pursuing a college education. In addition, interns are given the chance to participate in outdoor horticultural activities that they would probably never experience otherwise. Through this program the Conservancy seeks to improve conditions in the urban community by increasing employability and earning potential. The year round NYLP has now been in operation for over ten years and has had hundreds Newark youth participants.

 Administrative Office & Urban Environmental Center of New Jersey:
 32 Prince St.
 Newark, NJ 07103

 Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing car dependency in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Leading environmental and planning organizations formed TSTC in the early nineties as a response to the mounting economic and environmental costs of automobile and truck dependence and promising reforms in federal transportation policy. TSTC marshals the talents of the region’s most effective environmental and transportation policy watchdogs into a dynamic combination of community and campaign organizing, technical analysis, and media and legal advocacy. Its board of directors consists of senior staff from the founding organizations, as well as representatives from industry and academia.

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