

ECONOMIC DIGEST

Vol. 23 No. 6 A joint publication of the Connecticut Department of Labor & the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

JUNE 2018

IN THIS ISSUE...

Complete Streets' Promise of Economic Benefits 1, 5

2017 Unemployment Rate by Town 2-4

Economic Indicators

- on the Overall Economy 5
- Individual Data Items 6-8
- Comparative Regional Data 9
- Economic Indicator Trends 10-11
- Help Wanted OnLine 15
- Business and Employment Changes Announced in the News Media 19
- Labor Market Areas:
 - Nonfarm Employment 12-17
 - Sea. Adj. Nonfarm Employment 14
 - Labor Force 18
 - Hours and Earnings 19
- Cities and Towns:
 - Labor Force 20-21
 - Housing Permits 22
- Technical Notes 23
- At a Glance 24

In April...

Nonfarm Employment

Connecticut 1,687,100
 Change over month -0.08%
 Change over year +0.52%

United States 148,424,000
 Change over month +0.11%
 Change over year +1.56%

Unemployment Rate

Connecticut 4.5%
 United States 3.9%

Consumer Price Index

United States 250.546
 Change over year +2.5%

Complete Streets' Promise of Economic Benefits

By Al Sylvestre, Research Analyst, DOL

Walking or bicycling to work without competition from speeding motorists is just one benefit of the Complete Streets movement that is making its effects felt in Connecticut. Since the passage of 2009 legislation, the state Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) and its advisors have been working to bring a safer commute together with Transit Oriented Development (TOD) to Connecticut's cities and towns. In addition to a brief outline of Complete Streets principles and benefits, this article describes what its application looks like in two cities and one suburb.

Complete Streets means designing and operating streets that are safe for all users including walkers, people with disabilities, public transit users, and motorized and non-motorized vehicle operators. Design elements that make streets safer for everyone include center medians with trees and vegetation that encourage motorists to travel at safe speeds; sidewalk extensions to shorten crosswalk distances; and so-called road diets that reduce the number of travel lanes while adding parking or bicycle lanes to bring travel speeds closer together. Some places in Britain and European countries even have streets with no sidewalks where design speeds for motor vehicles and pedestrians are very close to one another.

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, universal access to safe movement through Complete Streets incorporates these elements:

- Community-based vision of what it wants Complete Streets to achieve;
- Inclusion of all users, human and

motorized, regardless of age and ability;

- A comprehensive and integrated street network for all transportation modes;
- The latest and best design standards with flexibility to balance user needs;
- Complete Streets that respect community character;
- Performance standards with measurable outcomes; and
- Inclusion of specific steps for policy implementation.

The Tri-State [Connecticut, New York, New Jersey] Transportation Campaign cites these examples of Complete Streets' benefits:

- Support for improved quality of life in residential neighborhoods: The New York City Department of Transportation's Complete Streets redesign of Prospect Park West in Brooklyn added a protected bike lane and pedestrian islands while removing one automobile lane (a road diet). Before the redesign, 74% of cars were speeding and 46% of cyclists were riding on the sidewalk. The redesign made for a 73% reduction in the number of speeding cars and 93.5% fewer cyclists using sidewalks.
- Lower transportation costs: According to Reconnecting America, the typical household spends 19% of its income on transportation. In places with Complete Streets, transportation costs can be 9% of household income.
- Improved mobility for older residents: An analysis by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign finds that in Connecticut, with 19% of its population over age 60, that

-continued on page 5-

-continued from page 1-
age group accounts for 36% of all pedestrian fatalities; Complete Streets can reduce that disparity.

With its compact downtown, New Britain is suited to Complete Streets. The CT Fastrak terminus on Columbus Boulevard motivates developers to bring residential and commercial land uses to the city. Civic assets such as Central Park, Trinity on Main, City Hall, and Central Connecticut State University's Institute of Technology and Business Development Center are within three blocks of one another, a human scale conducive to walking and cycling. With CT Fastrak, CT Transit-New Britain bus service, and nearby public parking as transportation options, people who live and work in downtown New Britain can reach their destinations conveniently and safely. The city's plan to revitalize Central Park will create a space that invites people to gather.

New Britain's downtown is benefiting from projects that include the 38,500 square foot, red brick and limestone Anvil Place at 51 W. Main St, a mixed-use building constructed in 1927 and renovated in 2011 that features a row of three tall, arched windows defining its facade. Its top three floors house 28 rented apartments for people over age 55 while a 6,500 square-foot ground floor open space with mezzanine is suitable for a restaurant, art gallery, or museum. Meanwhile, developers Xenolith Partners and Dakota Partners have broken ground on

Columbus Commons, a \$58 million property of two L-shaped six-story buildings with 160 mixed-income apartments and ground-level retail and office space.

In New Haven, Transit Oriented Development, along with medical science and technology, combine to provide economic development opportunities on the former Route 34 expressway right of way between downtown New Haven and the Union Station transit hub. Downtown Crossing is a three-phase development with a 495,000 square-foot, 14-story medical research, laboratory, and office building at 100 College Street. With Gateway Community College's consolidated campus, opened in 2012, the project encourages increased foot and bicycle traffic as Complete Streets elements that will include wide sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, protected bike lanes, and landscaping.

Montreal developer LiveWorkLearnPlay is redeveloping the former New Haven Coliseum site with mixed-income apartments, retail space, a hotel, and class-A office space. The \$400 million project will create about 4,700 construction jobs and 2,800 permanent jobs on its completion. This second phase of Downtown Crossing is expected to generate \$189 million in annual labor income. Downtown Crossing's third phase will enable development of three acres of land among College,

Temple, and Church streets that had been unavailable as part of the Route 34 expressway right of way. When it's completed, Downtown Crossing expects to yield the city net annual tax revenue of \$1.434 million.

In 2016, West Hartford spent \$800,000 on bike lane pavement markings, including sharrows (double-point arrows with a bicycle symbol advising motorists that they are sharing the road), on nine miles of town streets; installation of 98 textured sidewalk ramps for pedestrian safety; installation of 1.6 miles of sidewalk; and 64 crosswalk enhancements. Since 2003, West Hartford also installed dozens of miles of traffic calming medians with trees and plantings as well as intersection-narrowing sidewalk bulb-outs minimizing pedestrian crossing distances. These quality-of-life enhancements make West Hartford a safer place to live, work, and enjoy recreation for its residents and visitors.

Transportation safety and economic development are the most significant benefits Complete Streets offer. State agencies, regional planning organizations, and municipal officials play important roles in making Complete Streets work for everyone. As the preceding examples show, Connecticut's municipalities offer a variety of contexts in which Complete Streets can lay the groundwork for economic vitality. ■

GENERAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

<i>(Seasonally adjusted)</i>	1Q	1Q	CHANGE		4Q
	2018	2017	NO.	%	2017
General Drift Indicator (1996=100)*					
Leading	125.3	124.1	1.2	0.9	125.6
Coincident	115.4	114.9	0.5	0.4	115.0
Farmington Bank Business Barometer (1992=100)**	135.8	135.4	0.4	0.3	135.8
Philadelphia Fed's Coincident Index (2007=100)***	Apr	Apr			Mar
<i>(Seasonally adjusted)</i>	2018	2017			2018
Connecticut	123.71	120.22	3.49	2.9	123.49
United States	122.91	119.51	3.40	2.8	122.51

Sources: *Dr. Steven P. Lanza, University of Connecticut **Farmington Bank ***Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

General Drift Indicators are composite measures of the four-quarter change in three coincident (Connecticut Manufacturing Production Index, nonfarm employment, and real personal income) and three leading (housing permits, manufacturing average weekly hours, and initial unemployment claims) economic variables, and are indexed so 1996 = 100.

The **Farmington Bank Business Barometer** is a measure of overall economic growth in the state of Connecticut that is derived from non-manufacturing employment, real disposable personal income, and manufacturing production.

The **Philadelphia Fed's Coincident Index** summarizes current economic condition by using four coincident variables: nonfarm payroll employment, average hours worked in manufacturing, the unemployment rate, and wage and salary disbursements deflated by the consumer price index (U.S. city average).