Chatham Urban Track
2018 Walkability Assessment Report

Presented by:
TransOptions
Mayors Wellness Campaign
Put your community in motion.
Chatham Urban Track
2018 Walkability Assessment Report

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Disclaimer:

TransOptions’ staff are not engineers or licensed planners. All suggestions are based on examples completed in other communities as well as recommendations provided by walkability assessment participants. Any infrastructure improvements require future consultation with a licensed engineer or planner. NJDOT should be consulted for infrastructure improvements along state roadways.
Introduction:

The Chatham Urban Track is a self-guided walking tour that runs the full length of Main St. (Rt. 124) in Chatham Borough which has had 15 crashes involving pedestrians from 2006-2016 (See Appendix A, pg. 17). The Chatham Urban Track aims to provide access for people of all ages and abilities as well as providing economic, environmental, health, and social benefits.

In order to assess the safety and walkability of the Chatham Urban Track, a walkability assessment was conducted on Monday, April 23, 2018. A walkability assessment is an event where community members walk a designated route to identify safety hazards or concerns that make it difficult or unsafe for usage. Recommendations can be made at the end to highlight opportunities that will make the route walkable for all ages, abilities and comfort levels. During the walkability assessment, the Chatham Urban Track was broken into 4 four sections (see Chatham Urban Track Walkability Assessment Route Map, pg. 16) that were observed and analyzed for accessibility, safety, condition, and comfort. Representatives from TransOptions, the Mayors’ Wellness Advisory Committee of the Chathams, Chatham Borough, Chatham Police Department, Tri-Town 55+ Coalition, and additional community volunteers participated in this assessment.

The walkability assessment was organized and facilitated by TransOptions.

TransOptions is a non-profit Transportation Management Association (TMA) that has been delivering programs that improve mobility, the environment and quality of life in northwestern New Jersey for over thirty years. As a TMA, TransOptions is tasked with implementing strategies and programs that address traffic congestion, economic development, air quality, walking, biking and driving safety and livability issues.

For this report, the Chatham Urban Track is divided into three sections, each representing a microcosm of the community with its own distinct characteristics:

- **Apartments-School-Business Destination District:** Division Ave./Brooklake Rd. intersection to RR Plaza North/Coleman Ave. intersection

- **Historic Business District:** RR Plaza North/Coleman Ave. intersection to Hillside Ave./North Hillside Ave. intersection

- **Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor:** Hillside Ave./North Hillside Ave. intersection to Parrot Mill Rd./University Ave. intersection

*Note: Further information on recommendations listed in this report can be found in the 2017 NJDOT Complete Streets Design Guide.*

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1 These crashes had a number of causes, some of which are not due to driver or pedestrian inattentiveness.
Accessibility and Safety:

Accessibility:

*Apartments-School-Business Destination District*

There is easy access to the Chatham Urban Track via the Division Ave. Park and Ride lot which connects pedestrians to South Main St. In order to access the North Main St. side of the Chatham Urban Track, pedestrians must cross three streets at the intersection (Division Ave., Main St., and Brooklake Rd.). These intersections have low visibility crosswalks which are partially faded and difficult to see, creating unsafe crossings. The intersection is also missing signals to help pedestrians cross the street.

For additional access to the Chatham Urban Track, an old municipal driveway next to the Chatham United Methodist Church and Wells Fargo Bank at Van Doren Ave. should be repaved for usage. Students utilize this path after school and residents use it to access adjoining areas.

*Source: Google maps*
Historic Business District
In order to access the North Main St. section of the Chatham Urban Track, pedestrians have to pass through busy parking areas and cross a busy intersection at Fairmount Ave. and RR Plaza North. During rush hour, there is increased traffic flow with many idling cars along the route. In order to access the South Main St. section of the Chatham Urban Track, pedestrians must cross through a busy intersection at Passaic Ave. and Main St.

In addition to passing through busy intersections, the parking lots on the North side of Main St. behind Rotary Park and off Center St. are hard to find. Providing better signage for parking off Main St. can provide easier access to the Chatham Urban Track.

Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor:
Parking to access the Chatham Urban Track is located at Shepard Kollack Recreational Park. Sidewalks are continuous from Shepard Kollack Recreational Park along Parrot Mill Rd. towards Main St.

Accessibility Recommendations:
- Pedestrian crossing signals should be installed to meet ADA requirements at Division Ave./Brooklake Rd. and Main St. intersections
- More signage should be installed to alert people of parking access
- Pedestrian crossing signs should be located at and prior to crosswalks/intersection
- Create additional access via the old municipal driveway at 446 Main St.

Safety:

Apartments-School-Business Destination District
The Chatham Middle School entrance is busy with vehicle traffic during drop off and pick up hours. Cars leaving the middle school driveway force pedestrians to wait before crossing. Students leave the middle school in large groups and are known to jay-walk across the street to the CVS plaza instead of crossing at the crosswalks. This area is congested at times due to high volume in commuter traffic, people going into the CVS plaza, and students getting to and from school.

Wide planting strips and wide shoulders along Main St. in this section of the Chatham Urban Track act as buffer between pedestrians and traffic creating a safer walking environment.

Historic Business District
At several intersections, drivers seemed distracted and inattentive towards pedestrians at crossings and were observed not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks. Drivers were observed yielding to pedestrians at the Coleman Ave. and Main St. intersection crossing where there is high visibility signage above the crosswalks. This high visibility signage may be a factor in drivers expecting pedestrians to be crossing and yielding, and should be considered at other high volume crossing locations.
Specific areas of concern:
- Crossing N. Passaic Ave. at Main St.- drivers do not yield to pedestrians in crosswalk-participants in the assessment were almost struck by a car while in the crosswalk and wearing reflective vests
- Crossing Main St. from S. Passaic Ave. - drivers were observed speeding and do not yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. Two pedestrians were almost struck crossing Main St. by a car turning left from N. Passaic Ave.

**Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor**
Drivers entering and exiting Rt. 24 were observed speeding, causing dangerous situations for pedestrians crossing at Parrot Mill Rd. and University Ave.

**Safety Recommendations:**
- Install speed Sentry radar signs at University Ave. and Parrot Mill Rd. to alert drivers of the changing speed limits and how fast they are traveling
- Install flashing and high visibility pedestrian crossing signage at the Passaic Ave. and Main St. intersections
- Install traffic slowing measures within the Historic Business District
- Use the existing signage at the Coleman Ave. and Main St. intersection crossing as a reference for signage to put at other busy crossing locations
- Install more visible signage for parking lot locations
Crossings and Intersections:

**Apartments-School-Business Destination District**
The main concerns within this section of the Chatham Urban Track are the long block length, the low-visibility of crossings, and the need for additional pedestrian signage and signals. Truncated domes within this section of the Chatham Urban Track are visible but in some areas are covered by dirt, worn down, and in need of replacement.

The 3-way crossing at Division Ave. / Brooklake Rd. and Main St. intersections is lacking a pedestrian crossing signal to inform pedestrians when and when not to cross. Currently this intersection contains push buttons but no visible walk/don’t walk signals. Pedestrians are unable to see when the light changes for them to cross. Installing Accessible Pedestrian Signals will provide tactile and audible cues for when to cross.

High visibility pedestrian crossing signs and “state law stop for pedestrians in crosswalk” signs should be installed at all non-signalized intersection crossings and be consistent. Business and apartment driveways should contain crossing signs to alert drivers they are entering a pedestrian zone and to look first for pedestrians and then cars. The Chatham Middle School and CVS plaza are busy locations with high numbers of pedestrians and drivers. More high visibility signage should be located in this area.

The crossing signal at Van Doren Ave. is audible (beeps) to alert pedestrians when they should cross. These audible signals are a good example of what to place in areas missing crossing signals or in areas in need of replacement signals. The one at Van Doren Ave. is quiet and should be louder.

**Historic Business District**
The main safety concerns that were observed within the Historic Business District were speeding, drivers inattentive to pedestrians in crosswalks, jay-walking, low-visibility crosswalks, conditions of road crossings, as well as worn and low-visibility truncated domes.
Specifically at the Passaic Ave. and Main St. intersections, there were observed concerns with deteriorating curb ramps, crosswalks, and truncated domes, as well as cars blocking crosswalks, a cluster of signs potentially obscuring “no turn on red” traffic signage, and a short turn arrow (17 seconds) which causes drivers to speed up through the intersection.

In addition to drivers being inattentive to pedestrians in crosswalks, pedestrians are known to jay-walk by the public library, post office, and chase bank as well as stand on curbs and too close to corners. A traffic safety officer that was present in one of the observation groups also pointed out that push buttons at crossings are underutilized by pedestrians.

Audible pedestrian crossing signals are located at the offset intersection of North Hillside Ave./Hillside Ave. creating a safer intersection crossing for people with disabilities using the Chatham Urban Track. This intersection should be used as an example for other intersections throughout the Chatham Urban Track.

Specifically dangerous intersections that were observed were:
- North Hillside Ave/Hillside Ave. and Main St. – cars cut each other off, bad traffic flow
- Crossing Main St. at South Passaic Ave. – observed two pedestrians almost get struck by a turning car in the crosswalk
- Crossing North Passaic Ave. at Main St. – observed a pedestrian in high-visibility vest almost get stuck in the crosswalk

These intersections warrant high visibility signage that flashes when pedestrians are crossing the road. Additional enforcement measures should be taken at these locations.

**Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor**

Within the Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor, the major concerns at intersections and crossings are the speed of drivers entering and exiting Rt. 24, the amount of time given for pedestrians to cross the street, the condition of crosswalks, and the availability and condition of detectable warning strips/truncated domes.
Crosswalks throughout this section of the Chatham Urban Track had broken, cracked pavement that also contained holes in some areas. This creates an unsafe crossing for pedestrians.

Areas of specific concern along this section are:
- Summit Ave. and Main St. - Large broken asphalt holes are present
- Minton Ave. and Main St. - Crosswalk asphalt is cracked and lifted
- Parrot Mill Rd. and Main St. – Large sections of asphalt are missing causing pedestrians to walk outside the crosswalk in an effort to avoid the damaged surface. Drivers were also observed speeding

In addition to the condition of crossings, the light at the Main St. at Parrott Mill Rd./ University Ave. intersection was observed to make pedestrians wait too long to cross which can encourage jay-walking. Additionally, the traffic signal did not allow enough time for pedestrians to cross the entire intersection before the light began to change. This can create situations where pedestrians are in the middle of an intersection or encourage pedestrians to run across.

**Crossings and Intersections Recommendations:**

**Signage:**
- Install additional “stop for pedestrians” signage in the road and along active driveways
- Flashing pedestrian crossing signage or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons should be installed at major crossings (example: RR Plaza North in Chatham, Bloomfield Ave. at Montclair Train Station). Signage that flashes only when pedestrians are crossing should also be considered.
- Install Accessible Pedestrian Signals at crossings consistently throughout the Chatham Urban Track and make sure that audible crossing signals are loud enough (the one at Van Doren Ave. should be louder)
• Install traffic signal count down timer to alert both pedestrians and drivers of how much time is left before the light changes
• Install speed sentry signs at the Rt. 24 ramps to alert drivers of speed limit changes and speeding

**Infrastructure:**
• Installing dashed-line lanes that continue through the intersection for drivers to see where the lanes continue at Hillside Ave. and North Hillside Ave. offset intersection
• Add crosswalk where business driveways lack sidewalks (ex: TD Bank on South Main St.)
• Repave roadway where crosswalks are present but in poor condition to provide smooth and even crossings
• Install traffic calming measures at high volume crossings and intersection (CVS plaza, Historic Business District) to slow traffic and increase line of sight
• Consistent high visibility detectable warning strips/ truncated domes should be present at all crossings throughout the Chatham Urban Track
• Eliminate parking close to crosswalks to increase line of sight for pedestrians and drivers
• Consider mid-block crossings at long blocks lengths and popular jay-walking locations
• Paint all crosswalks uniform with ladder or continental stripping
• Consider raised crosswalks at busy intersections (Passaic Ave. and Main)

**Policy:**
• Town-wide pedestrian and driver safety campaigns
• Pass a “no crossing the street while on cell phone” ordinance for pedestrians

**Crosswalk Conditions:**
Crosswalks along Main St. are low visibility with some degree of fading and asphalt damage. The majority of the crossings along Main St. are standard design (two parallel lines) while some more visible ones use Zebra design stripping.
The majority of street crossings along Main St. contain detectible warnings or truncated domes, however they are not consistent and in a variety of conditions. Truncated domes should face the direction of the crossing and be highly visible (colored red, yellow, bright blue). There are areas where truncated domes are worn down, broken, low-visibility, or covered and in need of replacement. Especially in the Historic Business District, truncated domes are very worn down and are a concrete-like material which makes them low-visibility.

Crosswalk Design:
Crosswalks along the Chatham Urban Track should be uniform and consistent. For highest visibility, all crosswalks should be repainted with ladder or continental striping.

“Standard crosswalk striping often has very poor visibility to motorist, particularly on higher-speed roadways or where the striping has faded. Ladder or Continental striping is preferable in most situations because it significantly improves that visibility of the crossing to motorists and maintains this visibility better as it ages” (2017 NJDOT Complete Streets Design Guide).

The Historic Business District section of Main St. contains red stamped concrete crosswalks. Due to the red coloring, these crosswalks have lower visibility at night. To increase visibility, white striping alongside the crosswalks should be repainted and widened. Flashing pedestrian signage at low visibility crossings will increase visibility as well.

Source: 2017 NJDOT Complete Streets Design Guide
Pedestrian Facilities:

Sidewalks are continuous throughout the length of the Chatham Urban Track on both sides of Main St. Overall, the majority of sidewalks along Main St. have some degree of damage ranging from minor to severe. There are certain areas of greater concern that are priority, but the entire sidewalk route should be repaved where needed and maintained.

**Apartments-School-Business Destination District**

The majority of sidewalk panels along this section are old, cracked, raised, or unstable and uneven surfaces. New sidewalks should be installed to create a safer walking environment and avoid tripping. Mature tree root uplift and old sidewalks that are now washed out and crumbling create areas of concern along this section of the Chatham Urban Track.

In addition to sidewalk conditions, some sections of sidewalk at sloped driveways along Main St. have a cross slope instead of staying level especially at the middle school entrance and apartment driveways. This cross slope creates a situation where pedestrians and wheelchair users need to work against gravity making for greater difficulty keeping balanced. *(2017 NIDOT Complete Streets Design Guide 2017)*. To create an easier sidewalk to navigate for people of all ages and abilities, sidewalks should continue straight across the driveway and not slope with the design.
Specifically on the South side of Main St. the sidewalk follows a PSEG right-of-way. A pipeline marker near the Division Ave. Park & Ride lot leans into the walkway creating a hazard for pedestrians.

This section of the Chatham Urban Track contains a large planting strip creating a barrier between pedestrians and vehicles and also created shade and aesthetics. When there were smaller planting strips, the road had a large shoulder that created a large buffer between pedestrians and the road.

**Historic Business District**

There are multiple areas through the Historic Business District where sidewalks, aprons, and pavers are raised, cracked, unstable, and in different states of disrepair. In the Historic Business District, it is the shop owner’s responsibility to repair the sidewalks and pavers at their store front.

Sidewalks from Coleman Ave. and RR Plaza North down to Fairmount Ave. have minor problems to address. Areas of greater concern are located between Fairmount Ave. and Hillside Ave. /North Hillside Ave. The main concerns over sidewalk conditions in this section of the Chatham Urban Track are that the sidewalks have a cross slope from the store front that can make for uneven walking. Trees in this older section are more mature and cause greater displacement from their roots. The corners at the intersections are the worst areas in disrepair where the brick pavers meet the curbs and create an uneven transition. At certain sections, the curbs themselves are cracked. Lastly, gas caps are located in the middle of the walking path and several are raised above the brick pavers creating serious tripping hazards. Due to the high level of pedestrian activity that this section attracts, sidewalks should continue to remain wide continuously.
In addition to the condition of the sidewalks, outdoor seating at businesses was observed to encroach into the walkway specifically at Yo Lotta Luv on North Main St. and Chatham Sandwich Shop on South Main St.

![Outdoor seating at Yo Lotta Luv blocking entire pedestrian path](image)

**Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor**
This section of the Chatham Urban Track transitions from brick paver sidewalks to concrete resembling the Apartments-School-Business Destination District. The main concerns in this section are sidewalks being in different stages of disrepair from cracking, uplifting, and being made from older material. These sidewalks should be repaved to create a clean transition throughout the section.

**Pedestrian Facilities Recommendations**
- Designate areas for outside business furniture to avoid creeping into sidewalk path
- Repair broken and/or unstable sidewalks and pavers
- Replace worn or broken truncated domes with high visibility colors (i.e. red, yellow)
- Create an allocated budget for sidewalk and paver repairs in the Historic Business District where store owners are responsible for maintenance. This may lessen the financial burden and therefore make repairs more likely to be completed.
- Make curb cut flush to the road and truncated domes to avoid tripping hazards at crosswalks and corners
- At sloped driveways, make sure sidewalks continue straight instead of having a cross slope.
- Send notices to the owners of businesses where repairs need to be made.
Pedestrian Comfort:

Throughout the Chatham Urban Track, pedestrian amenities lack consistency. There are benches, trash/recycle receptacles, and street lighting for pedestrians located in specific areas but should be more consistent.

**Apartments-School-Business Destination District**

North Main St. lacks pedestrian amenities such as benches, public restrooms, and water fountains. South Main St. has benches located at the Garden Apartments and Kings grocery store but more should be added.

There are limited trash receptacles along this stretch of Main St. with 2 located on South Main St. at the Division Ave. lot and Van Doren Ave. intersection. One trash receptacle is located on North Main St. north of Van Doren Ave between the Wells Fargo Bank and Chatham United Methodist Church.

Additionally, there is no lighting scaled for pedestrians on either side of Main St. Street lighting for the road is located on the South Main St. side. Lighting scaled for pedestrians should be installed throughout the Chatham Urban Track, especially at active driveways and crossings to make pedestrians more visible to cars.

Throughout this section of the Chatham Urban Track, trees created a partially shaded, aesthetic walking environment. Shade trees could be planted throughout Main St. to create shade for comfort and also aesthetics. Tree limbs should be maintained and low lying branches should be trimmed.

A small pocket park exists on the corner of Lafayette Ave. on South Main St. creating a potential sitting area for pedestrians.

**Historic Business District**

Pedestrian lighting is located in the main downtown area of the Historic Business District but is lacking from Coleman Ave. to Fairmount Ave. with limited lighting south of the Library of the Chathams. There are also limited public restrooms along Main St. Public restrooms are available at the library but are not always available in other areas of the Historic Business District.

Throughout the Historic Business District, there is increased congestion due to cars stopping to park on the street and make turns. This heavy traffic volume and idling cars create an air quality issue. Measures should be considered to decrease congestion.
At the intersection of Center St. and Main St., traffic signage is too low and causes concern for pedestrians walking on the sidewalks. The bottom of signs should hang above 7 feet high to avoid interference.

From Fairmount Ave. to Hillside Ave./ North Hillside Ave. there are several pedestrian amenities including benches, pocket parks and parklets, as well as pedestrian scaled lighting. There are areas on South Main St. where there are gaps in overhead coverage. Additional greenery could be added in the form of shade trees and flowers to mitigate these gaps and create more shade and beautification.

Located on North Main St. there are two small park and seating areas for pedestrians to rest and enjoy. One is located on the side of the Library of the Chathams and the other one is located across from Fairmount Ave. next to Drip Coffee. These locations should be used as examples for creating other seating areas along the Chatham Urban Track.
**Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor**
Outside of the Historic Business District, there are minimal places to rest and no benches. Pedestrian lighting is also lacking in this section of the Chatham Urban Track and should be installed for a safer, more visible walking environment.

More shade trees could be planted throughout the Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor. There are shade trees along this route but they are segmented and should be continuous to optimize comfort.

**Pedestrian Comfort Recommendations:**
- Install more benches outside the Central Business District, especially in the Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor and on North Main St. from Brooklake Rd. to Coleman Ave.
- Install both trash and recycle receptacles throughout the Chatham Urban Track
- Install water fountains throughout the Chatham Urban Track
- Provide locations with dog waste bags to encourage cleaning up after pets
- Provide public restroom facilities for pedestrians
- Install pedestrian lighting especially near driveways, schools, and side streets to make pedestrians more visible to cars, and create a well-lit walking route
- Plant more flowers and shade trees, especially throughout the Historic Business District and Rt. 124 to 24 Business Corridor
- Make sure the bottom of signs stand at 7 feet tall to reduce interference with pedestrians
- Consider limiting street parking to alternating side of the street to allow for a turn lane. This will break up congestion in the Historic Business District
- In areas where the sidewalk is narrow, a concrete buffer can be added to create a wider walkway.
Appendix A: Crashes Involving Pedestrians, Main St. Chatham Borough

Since 2006, there have been 15 crashes that involved pedestrians. These crashes range in severity and cause.

In both 2006 and 2013, there were two crashes that involved a pedestrian

In both 2011 and 2015, there were three crashes that involved a pedestrian

Of the crashes involving pedestrians,

- 2 resulted in incapacitating injury
- 5 resulted in moderate injury
- 5 resulted in some injuries (pain category)
- 3 were classified as property damage

Source: New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety Crash Analysis Tool, Numetric