Transport Hartford Academy at The Center for Latino Progress

- 10 teens from different neighborhoods and schools in Hartford
- Selected through youth employment program, their interest
- Summer: 6-week summer program, 20 hours a week
- Fall: 2-3 month after school program, 6 hours a week

Interns visited Art Box Lot, a reimagined empty lot on Park St, designed by Hartford native and planner Raul Irrizarry.

Notes from a group brainstorming session around communications strategies.

Interns meeting with Prof. Mary Donegan of UConn's Urban Studies Dept, at the new downtown Hartford campus.

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Transport Hartford intern Tylon Lindo counted almost 40 curb cuts – some several lanes wide – on just one block of John St, affectionately nicknamed "Lot St" due to the excess of parking pits. Several office buildings, a restaurant, and a school have entrances through the parking lots between Buckingham and Park, but not through a walkable entrance on Main St.

Our team visited Center Church on Main St, the second oldest standing building in the city of Hartford. Dectora Jeffers, a member of the church, guided us on a tour of the building, including colonial maps of the city, Tiffany stained glass windows, a massive mahogany organ, and statues of prominent citizens and church members. The city's charter, hidden from the king in a tree farther south on Main St, was originally from this site.
Transport Hartford Academy: Our Skills

- Time management
- Research
- Reading comprehension & analysis

- Relationship building
- Mapping
- Presentations

Prof. Donegan of UConn lectures on the history of housing and urban development in Hartford.

This map of West Hartford and Hartford from 1937 shows the impact of federal and bank lending decisions. Home ownership rates in 2019 reflect these patterns in almost every neighborhood.
Transport Hartford Academy: What we do

- Field trips
- Debates
- Read & discuss articles
- Organize

- Meet with experts
- Public meetings
- Walk audits
- Canvass

Kimberli Owens of the Albany Ave Streetscape project visited THA to discuss her team's work improving one of the most dangerous roads in the state for pedestrians and cyclists.

Interns conducted a walk audit around Barnard Park and Hartford Hospital, noting hazardous road design and conditions.

At the kickoff Transportation & Climate Initiative public meeting, interns offered feedback on planning, and managed meeting logistics. Over 80 people attended.
Historic architecture in Frog Hollow.

One of the summer's highlights was an acrobatic circus performance in the Hartford Public Library, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Hartford Circus Fire on Barbour St.

Homes on Congress St, a quiet cobblestone street just south of downtown, that we assessed on an early summer walk audit.

Calder's iconic Stegosaurus between City Hall and the Wadsworth Atheneum.
During the summer 2019 program, Transport Hartford interns visited historic Center Church on Main St. Along the Gold St entrance is Stone Field, a controversial installation by Carl Andre. After getting a guided tour of the second oldest standing building in Hartford, the interns engaged in a debate about the artistic, cultural, and community merits of Stone Field. In the distance Center Church has 6 Tiffany (yes, that Tiffany) stained glass windows, featured in the sanctuary. An early map of Hartford, archived at Center Church at the corner of Gold & Main Sts.
What does active transportation look like in a parked car cratering, commuter-catering capital city?

Capitol Avenue is a central artery in Hartford, connecting the West Hartford border to downtown. While Capitol is a primary path for pedestrians, cyclists, and buses, the highway obstructs the sidewalk near Park Place towers, a large office building, Aetna, and the Fast Trak station. On the right, overgrowth blocks the sidewalk. With state and city road ownership changing by the block in some parts, travelers in the capital city experience inconsistent and dangerous conditions due to bureaucratic impasses. Many commuters only see this part of the city from the highway above.

Taken in the winter of 2018-19, the photo above shows a 4-block sidewalk stretch on north Main St where the regional MDC water agency closed sidewalks and provided no alternate path. (No work was happening, but the path remained blocked.) There is no statutory obligation or municipal expectation that MDC alert city authorities or consider pedestrian safety when doing road work across Hartford.

One of the widest intersections in Hartford, where pedestrians are exposed to drivers for long distances, is at the junction of Trinity St, Washington St, and Capitol Ave. Nearby landmarks include the Bushnell Performing Arts Center, the State Supreme Court, and the state Capitol. Despite its prominent location, walk signals at this intersection are antiquated. While building additional parking for state workers, contractors left sidewalks blocked off, exposing pedestrians to oncoming, blind, traffic, for several months.
What does active transportation look like in a parked car cratering, commuter-catering capital city?

Immigration & Customs Enforcement officers park on a sidewalk, blocking pedestrian access in front of the federal building on 450 Main St. ICE pays no taxes to the city. In addition to endangering those walking and rolling with this illegal but unenforced parking posture, ICE vehicles here also encroach on public space that is frequently used to protest federal detention and deportation policies.

"Why aren't pedestrians crossing in the crosswalk?" In the Blue Hills neighborhood, the road stretches on for several blocks without a visible crosswalk. Many drivers don’t recognize or respect "implied" crosswalks, which technically exist at intersections like this.

At left, a vigil to a Hartford man shot by police after being stopped in a speeding car. Data shows that gun violence and traffic violence are both more prevalent in communities of color that experience segregation and poverty than they are in affluent, white communities.

Main St at Park St, facing north from Barnard Park. Wide roads and poor transit facilities surround this neighborhood gateway, where housing developments are being planned, hopefully with accompanying safety improvements?
Transport Hartford Academy: Civic and Community Engagement

At left, THA team visits Wolcott St to meet with Logan Singerman, a community organizer who worked with residents to design a playground and mural in an empty lot, with funding from the city's Blight Remediation Team's Love Your Block grant.

Did you know that Hartford has a city forester? Heather Dionne met the THA team at the foot of a Black Oak in Colt Park to discuss the urban canopy, and the importance of trees (especially old trees) in Hartford. (left)

Above: When city planners and traffic engineers planned a walk audit of Main St, THA interns teamed up to take notes and provide input into the road design.
Transport Hartford Academy: Civic and Community Engagement

Fall interns Shaniya Davies, Keonte Little and Jason Ahmad visit the Hartford Parking Authority's offices on Asylum St to meet with CEO Mingo Gomes. We learned about managing parking assets for the city, sign making, and the appeals process.

After canvassing library patrons to take a survey about multi-modal transportation and climate change, the THA team attended a forum with city council candidates in October.

At left, the team commutes on the Hartford Line commuter rail to attend the 2nd Multi-Modal and Transit Summit in New Haven in November 2019.

In September, THA interns helped the city of Hartford implement a tactical urbanism project to improve crossing safety at the intersection of Main St & Charter Oak Ave. The latter street is named for the tree that once hid the colony’s charter before the Revolution.

The fall THA team attended a lecture by researcher Alon Levy (right) about the state of mass transit in CT, held at Union Station in November.
Transport Hartford Academy, Summer & Fall 2019: Essential Components

- Pay & perk your people
- Team build, meet people where they are
- Mix it up
- Plan & be flexible; set expectations & explain
- Value expertise by partnering & delegating
- Consistency & continuity
- Center the youth, not the adults
The Hartbeat