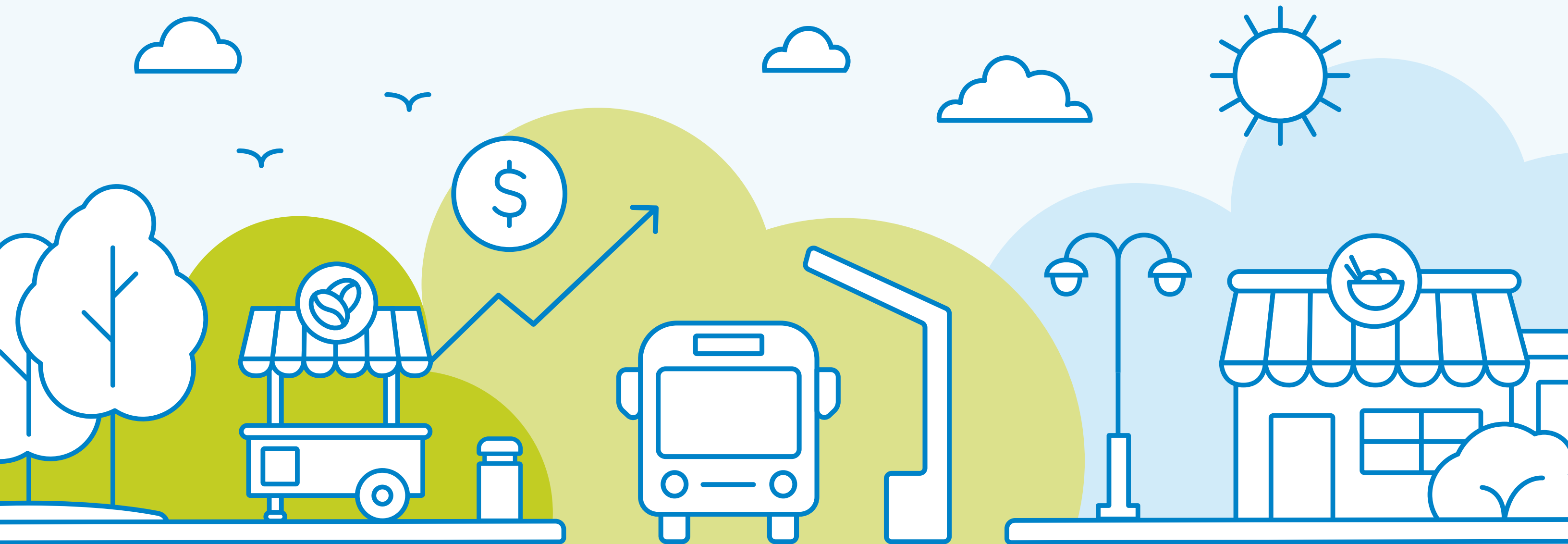




Complete Streets, Stronger Economies

How safer streets support economic growth



Smart Growth
A M E R I C A



National Complete
Streets Coalition

Acknowledgments



Smart Growth America helps create healthy, prosperous, and resilient places to live for all people through research, advocacy, and direct community support. Our work spans housing and land use, transportation, and economic development to find solutions to communities’ most pressing needs. We work with elected officials at all levels, real estate developers, chambers of commerce, transportation and urban planning professionals, and residents to improve everyday life for people across the country through better development. Learn more at www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Project Team

Smart Growth America project team: Dustin Robertson is the author of this report with support from Courtney Cole. Edits and additional contributions were provided by Eric Cova, Eileen Pomeroy, and Heidi Simon. This report was released in July 2026.

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National Complete Streets Coalition

The **National Complete Streets Coalition**, a program of Smart Growth America, is a non-profit, non-partisan alliance of public interest organizations and transportation professionals committed to the development and implementation of Complete Streets policies and practices. A nationwide movement launched by the coalition in 2004, Complete Streets is the integration of people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks. www.completestreets.org

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Graphic design provided by Caption Design.

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About the report

What do Complete Streets mean for local economies? For more than two decades, Smart Growth America has documented the numerous benefits of safer streets. Time and again, research has pointed to a consistent theme: when streets are designed for everyone, businesses thrive. This report builds on that foundation, showing how Complete Streets can be adapted and scaled to help communities respond to changing social, cultural, and economic conditions.



What informed the report

This report draws from recent literature on Complete Streets and economic development (with a particular focus on local business and economic outcomes), illustrating those findings through a series of case studies. Together, the report highlights the numerous economic benefits that cities and towns across the country are experiencing by investing in Complete Streets, while also providing examples and resources that practitioners and decision makers looking to implement a Complete Streets policy in their own communities can use.

How we made this report

This report combines highlights from preexisting literature from academics and practitioners with conversations and on-the-ground insights from communities and local leaders. To identify the case studies, we launched a public call for examples and received dozens of submissions, from which we identified communities of different sizes and contexts for deeper analysis. From there, we spoke with local government employees, business owners, developers, community members, and other partners to better understand how Complete Streets investments have affected economic activity in practice.

What informed the report

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, and building streets that provides safe travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. This approach can lead to communities that are **healthier, more vibrant, and economically stronger**. However, Complete Streets is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and actual street designs can vary depending on the place and transportation needs of a community. Some Complete Streets elements include **sidewalks, bicycle lanes, curb extensions, crosswalks, and curb ramps**.

In this report, we specifically look at **projects** that aim to **improve mobility and safety for all road users**. While some are branded as “Complete Streets,” others use terms such as “streetscape improvements.” Every selected project in this report involves a different community context and needs, and as a result, each community is starting from a different place. The nature, scale, timeline, and data available in each of these cases do not allow simple comparisons across the different cases. However, each case study shows meaningful progress toward a Complete Streets goal. Taken together, they provide insights about the impacts of Complete Streets projects on local economies.

Measuring Complete Streets impact on economies



Research on Complete Streets consistently shows that streets designed for all users tend to support stronger local economies (see Annotated Bibliography). The priority economic metrics will vary based on audience and use. For example, a local elected official may be most interested in employment and increased sales tax while a business owner may be most concerned with sales and property values. Even so, the overwhelming message is clear: Complete Streets mean business!

Including economic performance measures in routine data collection about Complete Streets can help track progress, increase public transparency, and encourage future development that prioritizes all road users. However, many governments and agencies do not or cannot collect such data, leaving important outcomes

unmeasured. Some indicators appear in the literature less frequently due to measurement difficulties and scarce data, rather than lesser importance. Examples include environmental improvements, private investment, mode shift, and public opinions.

This report illustrates the transformative power Complete Streets can have on local economies, but the case could be even stronger if more consistent data were available. We encourage communities to consider the economic factors and potential benefits of Complete Streets prior to starting a project to demonstrate the full impact. Partnerships between transportation agencies, economic development, planning, and public health partners can support better data collection for tracking and evaluating Complete Streets outcomes.



Fredericksburg, Virginia

Photo by Nils Huenerfuerst on Unsplash

Economic impacts of Complete Streets

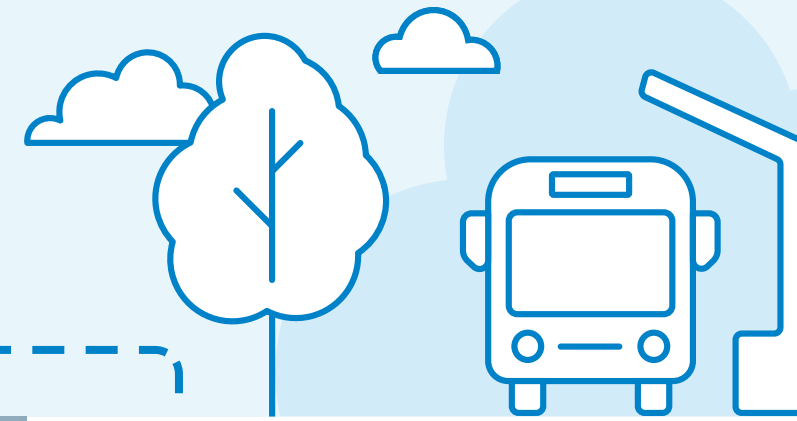
Cost savings	
The economic losses associated with traffic crashes and inadequate physical activity. Crashes have significant direct and indirect costs, including property damage, medical costs, and legal expenses, along with lasting impacts on victims and their families. Safer streets can lead to lower costs for individuals, governments, and society more broadly. Increased physical activity, or more walking, biking, or transit use because of Complete Streets, can reduce long-term healthcare costs.	• The Governors Highway Safety Association estimates that the financial costs of pedestrian fatalities amount to tens of billions of dollars per year. • The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation calculates that the comprehensive loss due to traffic crashes amounts to over \$2,000 for every man, woman, and child in the state. • Inadequate physical activity in the U.S. leads to an estimated \$192 billion per year in healthcare spending.
Employment	
The number of people working in each area. Complete Streets projects can support job growth either through new businesses opening or by enabling existing businesses to expand their workforce. This can be measured through the number of new jobs created or the employment rate in the surrounding neighborhood.	• A study that compared 14 different corridors across the U.S. that received street improvements to support walking, biking, and rolling against 14 control corridors found that street improvements had either positive or non-significant impacts on employment. • In a study of Complete Streets in 16 different places, areas with Complete Streets added jobs 22 percent faster than the rest of the counties' areas overall.
Number of businesses	
The total number of businesses operating in each area. This can be expressed as a simple count of businesses, the number of new businesses that open, or the percentage of properties that are occupied or vacant.	• New York City streets that were part of the Open Streets Program have lower vacancy rates than the citywide rate. And certain corridors have vacancy rates far below other streets in the same neighborhood. • After street improvements in West Jefferson, North Carolina, the number of vacant storefronts and apartments downtown dropped from 33 to three.

The following metrics offer a starting point for demonstrating the economic impact of Complete Streets. These tables summarize several study findings across six economic impact metrics and shows how they can be applied to transportation safety projects.

Property values	
The economic value of real estate in a given area. Walkable areas are in high demand, and when combined with limited supply in communities across the country, this can lead to higher property values.	• Survey results from the National Association of Realtors show that people want to live in walkable places and many, especially younger generations, are willing to pay extra to do so. Property value increases were reported in Lexington, Kentucky, and West Jefferson, North Carolina, following street improvements.
Sales	
The volume of business activity that occurs during a certain period, measured in several ways, including sales, revenue, or number of customers.	• A review of studies found that retail or food service businesses on or near improved corridors saw positive or nonsignificant economic impacts. • In a survey of 150 merchants in Buffalo, New York, 71 percent reported that their sales were about the same following a Complete Streets project on their corridor, while 26 percent said their sales were more or much more. • In Seattle, a pilot project to pedestrianize Pike Place Market boosted sales by 6.5 percent. • In Waterbury, Vermont, restaurant meal sales increased by 26 percent following a Main Street reconstruction project.
Tax revenue	
Income collected by governments from individuals and businesses. Increased economic activity on a street can lead to greater tax revenue from sales, property, occupancy, and other taxes.	• Just a few years after a street redesign in Lancaster, California, tax revenues increased by 96 percent. • According to a study of small cities in Minnesota, Complete Streets projects resulted in significantly higher property taxes. • In this report, the tax revenue for West Jefferson increased significantly following street improvement projects.

For more on tracking Complete Streets performance measures, see [Smart Growth America's guide](#).

Findings & strategies to maximize economic benefits of Complete Streets



📍 Park City, Utah

Photo by Olivia Hutcherson on Unsplash



Complete Streets are good for business.

Across the different types of communities included in this report, Complete Streets projects showed various economic benefits. These findings are reinforced by the literature review conducted by Smart Growth America (see Annotated Bibliography). Although the design and impact of projects can vary depending on the setting, external factors, and the level of investment, but communities saw long-term growth in the indicators listed above across the case studies included in this report.

Elected officials, city staff, public health and healthcare systems, businesses, business improvement districts, and community organizations can all play a role in advancing Complete Streets investments that can strengthen local economies and support healthy community design. For more about how each of these groups can contribute to creating more active and healthy communities, see [this site](#).

Complete Streets provide benefits to a wide range of places.

Literature on the economic benefits of Complete Streets includes studies of communities of all sizes, from large cities to small towns, and in many different states, including [Florida](#), [Minnesota](#), [Ohio](#), [Louisiana](#), [New York](#), and [California](#). This report includes cases from six states ranging in population from 1,200 people to more than 700,000.

These examples cover a range of contexts, including downtown corridors, small-town main streets, tourist areas, residential neighborhoods, and more. Projects do not have to be in large, urban, or well-resourced communities to make changes to streets that benefit local economies. We found projects, no matter how big or small, that leveraged existing strengths and resources and improved local economies across several metrics.

Even communities with streets designed to prioritize vehicles and/or whose economies relied heavily on industries related to vehicles, such as [Automobile Alley in Oklahoma City](#), can be made more walkable, safer, and economically vibrant with the right engagement and support.



Strategic planning and strong outreach can mitigate business losses and other negative consequences of construction.

Any road construction project can create short-term disruptions, but proactive planning and community engagement can lessen the potential negative impacts on businesses and residents. Governments implementing Complete Streets projects can develop a **robust plan for community engagement** ahead of construction that includes specific strategies for connecting with local businesses and residents to address their concerns.

A key component of engaging with local business owners is understanding the nature and needs of each business. Early and frequent communication can increase project transparency and reduce uncertainty.

In **Lexington, Kentucky**, and **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, city governments coordinated closely with businesses to minimize any potential adverse impacts associated with Complete Streets construction. For communities looking to implement a Complete Streets policy, local governments and their partners can explore grants and other funding sources to offer tailored support to the businesses affected by construction. In 2025, the Maryland Department of Transportation awarded **\$2 million in grants** to small businesses affected by the construction of a new metro line.



Complete Streets are an important part of revitalizing downtowns.

Complete Streets provide key connections between neighborhoods.

Patience is key, benefits increase over time.

The literature review conducted by Smart Growth America and the conversations with communities from across the U.S. demonstrated that many cities and towns can struggle to maintain and/or build the economic and social vitality of their downtown areas. In creating this report, it was found that improving transportation in economic centers can attract people and businesses in rural, suburban, and urban settings.

Even outside downtown and main street areas, our findings suggest that Complete Streets can serve as essential connections that allow people to travel safely to jobs, schools, and grocery stores and support local economies. Places where people cannot access businesses and services in a safe and practical manner may be especially interested in putting their finite resources toward this approach to increase potential economic benefits.

Some economic benefits that come from Complete Streets will only become visible over years. As areas improve transportation safety and accessibility, they can attract more people and economic activity, leading to increased sales, tax revenues, and property values. However, during our conversations, we learned that some economic impacts could occur much faster by promoting upcoming projects or providing support during construction.

Whether benefits are experienced immediately or not, mapping out the expected benefits and tracking results can help maintain momentum, maximize positive impacts, and support the case for future improvements.

In this report, **West Jefferson, North Carolina**, **Xenia, Ohio**, and **Oxford, Mississippi**, demonstrate the transformative impact Complete Streets can have on **downtowns** in **rural settings**. They also show how changing even a single street can transform a community.

In **Baton Rouge, Louisiana**, and **Lexington, Kentucky**, Complete Streets approaches helped connect residential and commercial areas, allowing residents to reach their everyday destinations safely and addressing gaps in networks of street designs that support biking & walking.

In **Xenia, Ohio**, and **Lexington, Kentucky**, the areas around Complete Streets projects saw investment & new businesses before the projects were even fully complete.



Quick-build demonstration projects can test solutions to make streets better for people and businesses.

Quick-build safety demonstration projects allow communities to pilot Complete Streets concepts using low-cost, temporary materials. Quick-builds or pop-up demonstrations offer a practical way to gather feedback, build support, and refine design before making more permanent investments. Even without significant funding or support to do a massive street redesign, cities and towns can test different Complete Streets components to demonstrate how a more walkable, business-friendly street would work in practice. To learn more about implementing pop-up or quick build demonstration projects in your community, [click here](#).

In [Baton Rouge, Louisiana](#), a coalition of residents, community organizations, and local businesses used paint and other simple materials to test what a street designed to prioritize the transportation safety and convenience of people walking and biking would look like.

Complete Streets can help cities and towns adapt to new business trends.

The U.S. is seeing a shift toward the “experience economy.” People are increasingly spending money on experiences like dining and social spaces. That means when it comes to customer experiences, the entire context of a business can be important, including how a customer will travel there and how the surrounding area looks and feels.

For example, restaurants in a walkable or transit-accessible Main Street or downtown area that is surrounded by other businesses, shade and landscaping, and public areas can offer an especially enjoyable experience from start to finish. When planning and strategizing for their community’s future, decisionmakers can consider how Complete Streets can help local businesses capitalize on growing business trends like the experience economy.

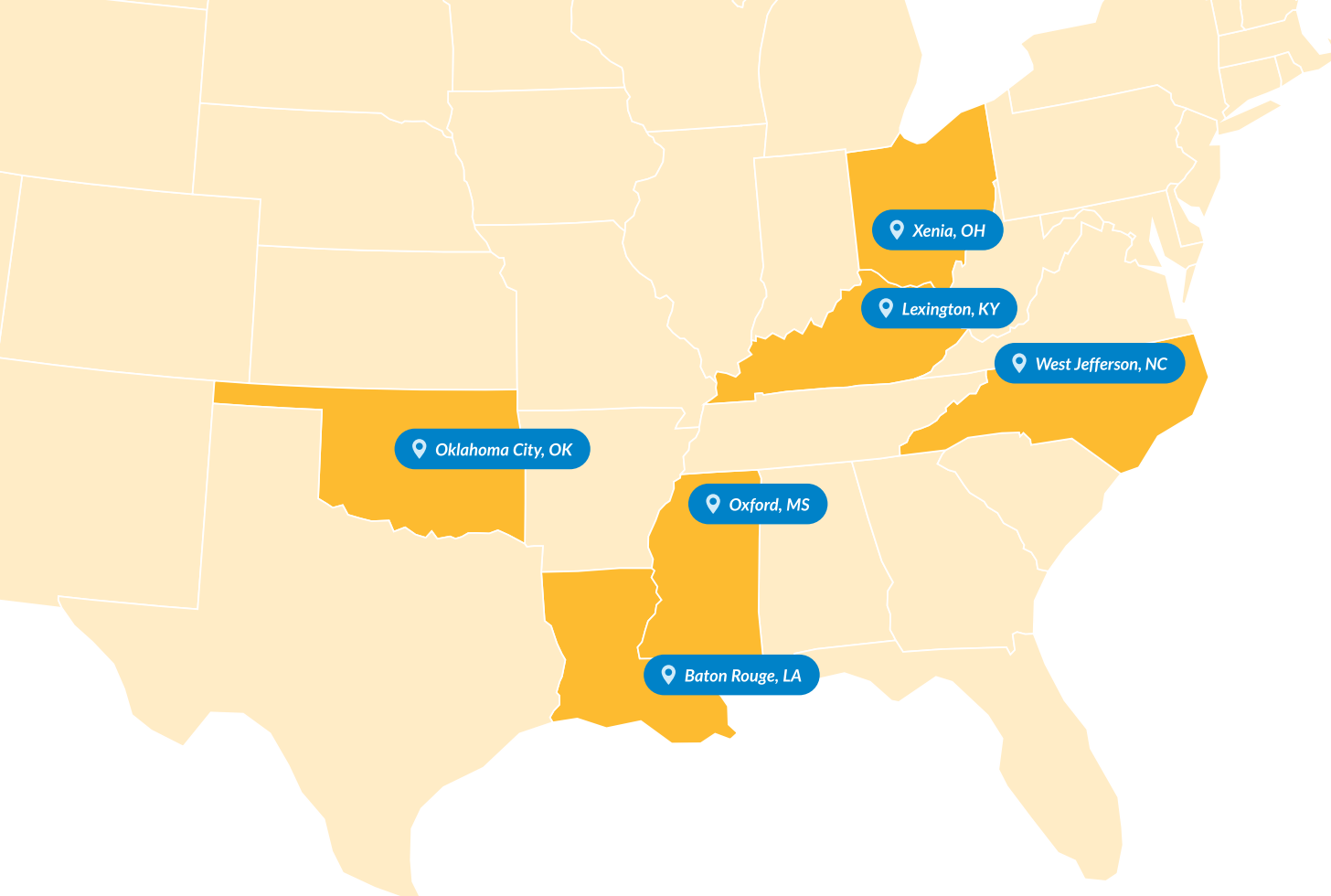
[Automobile Alley in Oklahoma City](#) provides an example of a walkable corridor that houses a combination of retail and experience-based businesses that are supported by Complete Streets.



Policies and plans help institutionalize success.

This report highlights how business owners and government officials can champion long-term changes through transportation and land use policies and plans to support continued improvements over time. The majority of case studies included in this report already have a Complete Streets policy or similar policies in place. Complete Streets policies can help institutionalize success and support communities as they take steps to strengthen individual health and economic vitality.

To learn more about Complete Streets policies and the components that strengthen them, see the [Best Complete Streets Policies Report 2025](#) and [Smart Growth America's Complete Streets policy scoring framework](#).



Complete Streets supporting healthy economies: community stories

The following pages highlight cities and towns across the U.S. that are taking important steps toward healthier and safer streets while simultaneously supporting their local economies. The nature, scope, timeline, as well as characteristics of each case study vary, and as a result, each case study looks a little different.

As noted earlier, inconsistent data collection informs the measured benefits of individual projects. This report emphasizes the importance of data collection before, during, and after a Complete Streets project and encourages communities to consider how they might strengthen their own data collection efforts to continue championing Complete Streets in the future.



📍 Indianapolis, Indiana

Photo by Brian Ashworth on Unsplash



“

We knew if we could do it in West Jefferson, we could do it anywhere.

Dean Ledbetter

North Carolina Department of Transportation

1,436

POPULATION
(2024 Census Estimate)

\$42,827

MEDIAN INCOME
(2020-2024)

2011

COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY ADOPTION

2.2 mi²

LAND AREA
(2020)

West Jefferson, North Carolina

Streetscape improvements fuel economic renaissance

In 2011, the town of West Jefferson, NC, collaborated with the Appalachian Regional Health District and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to make downtown safer and more pedestrian-friendly. The street improvement project replaced traffic signals with four-way stops, added new pedestrian crosswalks, curb extensions, and more. Almost immediately, the changes led to an economic boom that continues to this day.

Image: Shortened crosswalk on North Jefferson Avenue | Courtesy of the Town of West Jefferson

Meet West Jefferson

West Jefferson is a small town nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of northwest North Carolina. Throughout the 20th century, industrial activity from furniture, textiles, and agriculture drove the local economy. As those industries declined, the town showed signs of economic stagnation, disinvestment, and empty storefronts by the early 21st century.

In 2010, the town created a [Comprehensive Pedestrian Master Plan](#), and a year later, the town adopted a Complete Streets resolution. These guiding policies, along with strong collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Appalachian Regional Health District, led to a street improvement project in late 2011.

The project started as a routine resurfacing and drainage improvement project, but NCDOT officials asked the town whether it would like to include additional improvements. Town said yes. The project replaced two traffic signals with four-way stops on Jefferson Avenue, a state-owned road and the town’s main thoroughfare, and added new pedestrian crosswalks, curb extensions, and other improvements to slow traffic and make downtown more walkable.

The positive economic [impact](#) of the street improvement project was swift and evident. Existing businesses saw increased activity, and the number of vacant storefronts and apartments in the downtown area dropped from thirty-three to three.

Transforming West Jefferson

West Jefferson’s renaissance did not end with the initial project. Building on their early success, the town made similar improvements to other adjacent, locally-owned roads, including West Second Street, Back Street, and Main Street, making those streets safer and more walkable. Similar results followed, with new businesses opening along those corridors as well.

Today, West Jefferson is a vibrant town with thriving businesses serving both residents and visitors. The town continues to invest in improvements such as beautification projects and an upcoming 40-mile state trail connecting West Jefferson to neighboring Boone, and parks and natural areas.

West Jefferson’s success has inspired other communities to pursue similar improvements. Town Manager Brantley Price says he receives regular requests from representatives of other towns to come visit and observe the West Jefferson approach.

“

The projects and changes in neighboring towns...its safe to say they would not have happened if it wasn’t for West Jefferson.

DeanLedbetter
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Year	Sales tax received (2010-2015)
FY 10-11	\$252,247.08
FY 16-17	\$379,797.00
FY 18-19	\$412,391.35
FY 20-21	\$517,605.00
FY 22-23	\$659,598.31
FY 24-26	\$710,316.00

Community impacts

Changes to the look and feel of West Jefferson are clear at the street level. The project also contributed to:

- **Reducing vacancies along the project corridor.** Vacancies have remained low since initial improvements began in 2011, and property values have risen.
- **Growing the job market.** According to 2010 Census data, there were 891 jobs in the town. By 2023, that number had grown to 2,179 jobs.
- **Increasing tourism and the investment it brings.** Since the improvements, West Jefferson has become a destination for tourists. According to Brantley, a three percent occupancy tax for short-term accommodations like hotels brings in over \$100,000 annually, all of which is spent to improve and promote the town.



Without these projects, the town would be deserted, we would still be boarded up.

Brantley Price
Town Manager of West Jefferson, North Carolina



Images: Corner of North Jefferson Avenue and East Main Street before and after improvements | Courtesy of Dean Ledbetter

Perspectives from a local business

Mark Beck bought the West Jefferson Hotel in 2019 with the goal of restoring the 1917 building he saw as the “heart of the community” to its former glory. He reopened the hotel in 2025, and Mark says business has been very good so far, especially in warmer months when tourism picks up.

Mark recognizes the importance of a vibrant, walkable streetscape and has even added his own touch to it—a musical bench with the notes to “Keep on the Sunny Side” along the hotel wall.

What the story tells us

Walkability improves quality of life.

More walkable streets have been good for residents, visitors, and the businesses that serve them in West Jefferson. In West Jefferson, street improvements not only improve safety for all road users, but helped spark economic improvements, benefitting local residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Collaboration across government agencies helps deliver results.

Smart Growth America’s work regularly demonstrates that strong partnerships between local governments and state departments of transportation can be mutually beneficial and have positive and lasting impacts. The Jefferson Avenue street improvements started as a routine resurfacing and drainage project but

“

The town was dead. After the projects, it came back, almost instantly.

Mark Beck

Owner | Jefferson Hotel

evolved to include street design elements that helped downtown West Jefferson improve walkability, which resulted in increased economic activity. The partnership and close collaboration between the town and NCDOT and the Appalachian Regional Health District has been key to the town’s ongoing success.

Momentum builds over time.

Early success on Jefferson Avenue led to similar improvements on nearby streets with similar results. West Jefferson’s progress also inspired **neighboring towns** to implement their own street improvements for walkability, showing how one project can influence new projects and continued improvements over time.

Thank you to Dean Ledbetter, Mark Beck, and Brantley Price for their time and expertise in producing this case study.

Renovated West Jefferson Hotel



Supporting the case: Complete Streets on state-controlled routes

Many businesses are located along state-owned routes, which can present **challenges to implementing local Complete Streets** efforts, since design authority lies with the state rather than the municipality. However, collaboration between state departments of transportation and local governments can improve transportation safety and connectivity along these routes, which brings economic benefits for businesses in turn. Two examples of collaboration between state departments of transportation and local communities include:

Waterbury, Vermont

Between 2019 and 2021, the town of Waterbury and the Vermont Department of Transportation collaborated on a \$21 million **Main Street reconstruction**. The project included upgraded sidewalks and curbing, along with streetscape amenities such as benches, lighting, bike racks, and wayfinding signage. Restaurant meal sales in Waterbury today are around 26 percent higher than before the project (2018) based on **state tax records**.

Columbia, Missouri

The City of Columbia, the Missouri Department of Transportation, and the Loop Community Improvement District are currently collaborating on an improvement plan for Business Loop 70, thanks to a **\$2 million Reconnecting Communities planning grant**. This corridor serves as an entrance to the city and is home to many businesses, but it currently lacks safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

329,751

POPULATION
(2025 Census Estimate)

\$69,479

MEDIAN INCOME
(2020-2024)

2022

COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY ADOPTION

283.6 mi²

LAND AREA
(2020)

📍 Lexington, Kentucky

New multimodal linear park connects neighborhoods and drives economic development

In 2022, Lexington, Kentucky, completed Town Branch Commons, an innovative, award-winning public-private park and trail system running through the heart of downtown, accompanied by street redesign efforts. The two-mile trail gives people a safe place to walk and bike across the city, connecting visitors and residents to Rupp Arena, several parks, and other everyday destinations. Connected to two additional trails, the corridor is part of a network totaling 22 miles. Since its completion, Town Branch Commons has sparked economic activity around the trails, including new businesses, development, and private investment.

Meet Lexington

Located in Kentucky's north-central Bluegrass region, Lexington is the state's second-largest city. Known as the "horse capital of the world," Lexington has a deep connection with horse racing, and iconic horse farms are found throughout the region. Today, Lexington boasts a strong, well-rounded economy.

The story of Town Branch Commons

Town Branch Commons runs west-east along the historic path of Town Branch Creek, now buried through the heart of Lexington's downtown, providing a safe, comfortable, and protected space for walking and biking. The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) completed the Town Branch Commons Corridor in 2022, **funded** through a combination of federal, state, and local sources. These included a \$14.1 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant, \$3.6 million federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Grant, \$2.9 million federal TAP Grant, \$7.1 million Kentucky Infrastructure Loan, and \$11.8 million of local dollars.

Town Branch Commons features numerous attractions and amenities throughout the corridor, including parks, an art garden, and water features. Beyond improving transportation safety and transportation options through the heart of the city, the corridor also incorporates native plants, hundreds of new trees, and stormwater management features, contributing to a more resilient city.

The project, which has transportation safety and enhanced mobility for all at its core, aligns with

the policies and plans made by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government over the last decade, including a 2022 **Complete Streets Policy**, a 2023 **Complete Streets Action Plan**, and a 2025 **Vision Zero Resolution**.





Sidewalk view of the Town Branch Commons

“

The corridor demonstrates how Complete Streets investments can support small businesses and strengthen the local economy by transforming transportation infrastructure into an active civic space.

Brandi Peacher

Director of Project Management,
Office of the Mayor — Lexington

Community impacts

Several years after its completion, Town Branch Commons is delivering measurable economic, environmental, and social improvements to the people of Lexington. A [recent study by researchers at the University of Kentucky](#) recorded some of the improvements brought to Lexington as a result of the project:

- **Kicked off new construction.** The corridor spurred the development or renovation of six commercial, multi-family residential, and mixed-use projects near the trail. Of these projects, two were constructed before Town Branch Commons was completed, demonstrating that economic benefits can occur or be anticipated prior to or during Complete Streets projects.
- **Served as a catalyst for additional investment.** The project helped attract more than \$110 million in municipal, grant, and philanthropic funding for three parks and a career technical education center. [Gatton Park on the Town Branch](#) is a shining example of this, as the largest private and philanthropic contribution along the project.
- **Increased foot traffic to local businesses.** Seventy-three percent of survey respondents said that they frequent nearby businesses and restaurants when they visit Town Branch Commons.

Lexington made intentional efforts to ensure that everyone had access and would share the benefits of Town Branch Commons. The city prioritized the historically Black neighborhood of East End near the eastern end of the corridor that was previously disconnected from other neighborhoods. Working with community partners including the Bluegrass Community Foundation, the city conducted [extensive community engagement](#) to guide improvements to two neighborhood parks as part of the project.

Also at the eastern end of the corridor, the city supported the development of the MET, a mixed-use residential and commercial development completed in 2021 that includes several small businesses, including a restaurant providing employment opportunities for people formerly incarcerated.



Supporting the case:
safer streets and thriving
economies

Lexington, Kentucky, demonstrates that what’s good for business can also be good for transportation safety. In addition to the positive economic impacts, the Town Branch Commons project has also brought **measurable improvements for road safety** along the corridor:

- Vehicular speeds declined 16.5 percent
- Crashes resulting in injuries decreased nearly 70 percent



Sidewalk view of the Town Branch Commons

What the story tells us

Draw on multiple sources of funding.

Town Branch Commons combined federal, state, city, and private funding to support a transformative project that no single source could have supported alone.

Consider projects that benefit all residents.

Communities such as Lexington that take deliberate steps to ensure that Complete Streets projects include all residents can guide improvements that produce economic and transportation safety benefits for the community-at-large.

Communicate early and often during construction.

The efforts made by Lexington to reach out to businesses and residents before and during construction demonstrated that such efforts can help minimize disruption, support planning, and keep potential negative impacts short-term.

Thank you to Brandi Peacher and Sal Sánchez for their time and expertise in producing this case study.

Image: Gatton Park on the Town Branch

“

In comparison to where we were 5-6 years ago, it’s much more vibrant...for Lexington, it’s huge. It makes things feel closer. They always were, but now you realize it.

Sal Sánchez
Owner | A Cup of Commonwealth

Perspectives from a local business

One business that has seen the entire Town Branch Commons story unfold is A Cup of Commonwealth, located just off the corridor and next to Thoroughbred Park. Owner Sal Sánchez opened the cafe in 2013 and has been in the same location ever since. He saw the area as a crossroads of the city, but one lacking the right kind of connection between neighborhoods.

Town Branch Commons has helped change that. Today, Sal sees a steady flow of pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists passing by and visiting his shop. He also praises the city’s considerate

approach to construction, which phased the project work, provided frequent updates to business owners, and engaged him and other establishments while planning for the potential impacts of construction.

Today, A Cup of Commonwealth is thriving, and Sal feels that Town Branch Commons plays a role. Even though rent in the neighborhood has gone up in recent years, so have his sales, which he credits to an influx of first-time customers, including tourists and weekend visitors using the trail system.



26,425

POPULATION
(2025 Census Estimate)

\$56,029

MEDIAN INCOME
(2020-2024)

N/A

COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY ADOPTION

13 mi²

LAND AREA
(2020)

📍 Xenia, Ohio

Reclaiming identity and boosting business with Complete Streets

Xenia, Ohio invested in places for people to walk and bike, reflecting a Complete Streets approach that prioritizes safe and convenient mobility for everyone. After making the most of a regional trail system, the city is now a destination for trail users, and new visitors have expanded economic opportunities for local businesses.

Image Top Left: Cyclists in downtown Xenia, Ohio | Courtesy of the City of Xenia

“

[Bike connections] are what keeps tourism alive, what keeps a lot of businesses that are on the bike path alive.

Adam Martin

Real Estate Developer & Entrepreneur | Xenia, Ohio

Meet Xenia

In the small southwestern Ohio city of Xenia, you'll find historic buildings alongside modern architecture—a mix that reflects the community's resilience after decades of challenges, including severe tornado damage to its downtown. Today, the evidence of these events is overlaid with signs of the prosperous, connected place for people who walk, bike, and roll that Xenia is becoming.

Walking, biking, and rolling have long been a part of Xenia's identity. The city was even given the nickname “Bicycle capital of the Midwest” for its role as a hub for regional trail connections. Over time, that identity faded from the public's memory, and even from the physical landscape, as symbols like Xenia's water tower were repainted.

Despite this shift, the trails that inspired Xenia's title remained in place. In recent years, the city implemented a Complete Streets approach informed by its 2013 Comprehensive Plan that leveraged the multi-use trail system still running through the city.

BEFORE

Xenia's water tower before and after it was repainted in 2013 | Courtesy of WHIO TV 7 & Dayton Business Journal

AFTER



Map of trails converging in Xenia, Ohio | Source: Greene County Parks & Trails

The South Detroit Street projects

Four major multi-use trails meet in Xenia, linking the city to surrounding communities and destinations across Greene County and beyond. These trails serve roughly **5,500 users per day who spend \$16 million in the region every year.**

As the city developed its 2013 Comprehensive Plan in collaboration with community members, leaders noticed a crucial gap in walking and biking facilities in the heart of their downtown on South Detroit Street. They recognized that fixing the broken connection could improve connectivity, transportation safety, and economic health.

As a small community, Xenia needed outside funding to complete the project. City Planner Brian Forschner worked diligently alongside colleagues to educate the community, build broad support, and secure grant funding to make it happen.

Image Bottom Right: Bike lane at 2nd and Detroit in Xenia, Ohio | Source: City of Xenia

“

In 2014, we got a consultant on board to do a safety study, which helped us to get a grant. We did a walk audit, where our regional planning agency helped us facilitate a group of diverse stakeholders to walk around downtown and really see up close where the problems are. Everybody in that group could see we had to do something about these two dead-end bike paths.

Brian Forschner

City Planner of Xenia, Ohio



BEFORE



AFTER



In 2017, Xenia set out to close the four-block gap in its trail network. But the project wasn't just about updating the trail for cyclists. It also included crossing beacons, pedestrian refuges, and improved intersections to drive more foot traffic to local businesses.

City officials reached out early and often to businesses the project would affect. That outreach resulted in a project that reflected the wants and needs of the community.

“

We held a lot of workshops, I went door-to-door downtown talking to businesses, and we mailed flyers out to every household describing why we were doing this project.

Brian Forschner

City Planner of Xenia, Ohio

The project not only improved access to existing local vendors, but also attracted new businesses. Devil Wind Brewery opened on South Detroit Street before the project was even complete. The decision paid off, with the brewery **reporting increased sales** after the project’s installation.

Adam Martin, a real estate developer, entrepreneur, and longtime resident, cited safe access for people traveling by all modes of transportation as a significant factor in choosing a location for his new business—a combined retail and community gathering space located just a block away from the project site.

Community impacts

The South Detroit Street improvements are leaving a mark on Xenia beyond just the changes to infrastructure and public spaces. The project has also contributed to:

- **Connections to regional opportunities.** The project made Xenia accessible to the broader trail networks that attract **1.6 million users each year, generating millions** in spending across the region.
- **Better roadway safety.** Crashes in the **project area have decreased by 34 percent** since the protected bike lane was installed, making downtown a more attractive destination for locals and visitors.

Image: Mural in Xenia, Ohio paying homage to its connection to cycling | Source: Beaver Creek News Current



“My new business will combine retail and a third space where people can gather and stay. Proximity to the bike path, of course, will be huge. My rental properties are purposely on the bike path for the same reason.”

Adam Martin
Real Estate Developer & Entrepreneur | Xenia, Ohio

“Increasing pedestrian traffic will increase the amount of unique small businesses in our downtown, and give Xenia the ability to be a destination. Having these unique experiences would drastically help not just my business, but the city as a whole.”

Adam Martin
Real Estate Developer & Entrepreneur | Xenia, Ohio



Looking ahead

The South Detroit Street project motivated Xenia officials to make safe mobility and economic growth priorities as the city embarks on major development in their downtown. Xenia’s next chapter will be guided by their award-winning **neXtPlan**, a comprehensive roadmap that prioritizes revitalizing downtown, expanding green spaces, and improving pedestrian access.

Part of this work will include collaboration with the Dillin Corporation to redevelop a shopping center on South Detroit Street into a mixed-use and highly walkable “**Market District**.” Business owners are optimistic about the benefits revitalization will bring to the local economy.

Image Top: Map of plans for Xenia’s Market District development by the Dillin Corporation, the city’s partner for the project | Source: The Dillin Corporation

Thank you to Adam Martin, lead of Loxley/Martin and entrepreneur, and Brian Forschner, city planner at the City of Xenia, Ohio, for their time and expertise in producing this case study.

What the story tells us

Let your community inspire projects.

Every community has a unique history and assets. Xenia’s happened to be its connections to an extensive trail network. Historic landmarks, natural attractions, and existing hubs for essential community services can serve as a foundation and inspiration for Complete Streets projects that support a thriving economy.

Investing in places to walk, bike, and roll can lead to increased spending activity.

Safe options for traveling by walking, biking, or rolling are a valued amenity. Xenia’s investment in improving those connections demonstrates how doing so attracts new visitors, new businesses, and new spending.



719,849

POPULATION
(2025 Census Estimate)

\$68,656

MEDIAN INCOME
(2020-2024)

N/A

COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY ADOPTION

606.2 mi²

LAND AREA
(2020)

📍 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Converting Automobile Alley into a walkable business hub

Recent improvements making the Automobile Alley neighborhood of Oklahoma City (OKC) safer for people walking have drawn new visitors and businesses to the area. Street improvements to the North Broadway corridor also provide important lessons about how to minimize construction impacts on nearby businesses during Complete Streets improvements.

Image: Shop Good on Automobile Alley

“

It’s hard to remember back in the 80s and 90s, but this street would have been completely abandoned.

David Holt

Oklahoma City Mayor, speaking at a ribbon cutting ceremony | Source: The Journal Record

Meet Oklahoma City’s Automobile Alley

Located in downtown Oklahoma City, Automobile Alley gets its name from the city’s automobile dealerships that once lined North Broadway, a street that runs through the heart of the neighborhood. The area is known for its extremely wide right-of-way roads, with [local legend](#) saying that North Broadway was built wide enough to allow a wagon and team of horses to turn around. By the end of the 20th century, the area saw significant economic decline, with many buildings vacant and boarded up.

In recent years, the city combined federal funds and private investment to restore Automobile Alley into a flourishing district. Today, it’s home

to retail shops, restaurants, event spaces, an escape room, and cultural institutions such as the Oklahoma City Repertory Theater and Factory Obscura.

The latest improvement to the area, a \$5 million [Better Broadway Streetscape project](#) funded by a temporary penny sales tax and completed in November 2025, aimed to improve walkability and transportation safety for all people using the road. Upgrades included planting trees along the street, crosswalk striping at every intersection, flashing pedestrian signs at two locations, and shortened crosswalks that reduced the average crossing distance from 75 feet to 45 feet.

Community impacts

Year	Visitors	Visits
2024	812,600	2.4 million
2025	1.2 million	2.9 million

Because the Better Broadway project was only recently completed, there’s not enough data to draw concrete conclusions about its impact. But early signs seem promising of how the project is contributing to a brighter future for the community, including:

- **Drawing people to the neighborhood.** The number of visitors to Automobile Alley increased by half a million people over the last two years, according to city officials.
- **Expanding jobs and retail opportunities.** Businesses along Automobile Alley currently employ 3,600 people, and new businesses are relocating to the area, including a popular local bookshop and a mixed-use project with a park, hotel, offices, and retail space over nearly six acres.



“We’re a retail storefront and depend on foot traffic. The street used to be incredibly fast, which is horrible for retail.”

Traci Walton
Co-owner of PLENTY on Broadway



Perspectives from a local business

PLENTY on North Broadway

In 2012, Traci Walton and her daughter Brittney co-founded PLENTY, a small business specializing in books, lifestyle products, and meaningful gifts with an emphasis on sustainability. Their shop, which sits in a 1920 building that was once a Chevrolet dealership, takes advantage of the former showroom’s large footprint by offering spaces to rent for weddings, receptions, and meetings, blending traditional retail with the experience economy while preserving local culture.

Traci lives a short distance away from the shop and appreciates the recent improvements to the neighborhood. Although the construction caused

some disruptions, the city and contractors worked with PLENTY and other businesses to make sure business could continue, providing ramps to ensure customers could still access nearby stores during peak hours. The construction company even helped install decorative ramps before one of their weddings.

Before the improvements to the area, Traci’s mother would not visit her store due to how dangerous it was to cross the street. She recounted that it “was like Frogger trying to cross the street.” Previously, customers would come into her store and then get in their cars and drive away. Now, they are able to stay in the area longer and walk along the corridor, visiting multiple stores and restaurants in one trip.

Shop Good

Justin Falk and his wife, Audrey, own Shop Good, a local store that specializes in T-shirts and art by local designers. The store has a retail space in the front, and they produce many of their products in the back. They moved to Automobile Alley in 2010, and to the current location on Broadway in 2017. Since then, Justin and Audrey have seen important changes to the neighborhood, which they strongly support.

Justin appreciated the high level of engagement from city officials during construction of the Better Broadway project. Work was completed on an efficient block-by-block basis, minimizing disruption to businesses. This stood in contrast to past projects, when poor communication left business owners feeling neglected, confused customers, and concerned about reduced foot traffic.

North Broadway used to be very wide, allowing cars to speed as fast as 45 miles per hour. Today, Justin describes the look and feel of the area now as “busy, in a good way.” Even though the area still lacks bike lanes, he said that traffic is slower and crossing the streets is easier, which is reflected in the number of visits and visitors recorded. For Shop Good, business is booming—2025 was their best year yet for sales.

Image right: Street redesign on Automobile Alley shows the block-by-block approach



“Automobile Alley is now very walkable. Lots of other neighborhoods downtown are not. And that’s been a problem.

Justin Falk

Co-owner of Shop Good

What the story tells us

Better mobility can draw in new visitors and customers, fueling a thriving economy.

Automobile Alley’s Complete Streets improvements helped revitalize a historic neighborhood, opening doors to new kinds of business, including retail and the “experience economy,” activities such as arts, culture, food, and events.

Successful Complete Streets projects can build momentum for future improvements.

The Better Broadway project serves as an important model for future projects in Oklahoma City. The city was recently awarded a **\$25 million Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant** in January 2026 that it will use to make improvements to ten different corridors that lack safe infrastructure for walking, biking, and shopping.

Collaboration with businesses before and during construction can help reduce disruption.

Both PLENTY and Shop Good have been in Automobile Alley for years. During that time, they have seen multiple construction projects on the street, some of which previously inconvenienced business owners.

Speaking about the recent streetscape project, both Traci and Justin described how they appreciated the city’s and contractors’ considerate approach to minimizing any negative impacts on their businesses. Their businesses are both thriving today, and they consider the temporary disruptions worthwhile for the community improvements.

Thank you to Traci Walton and Justin Falk for their time and expertise in producing this case study.



222,795

POPULATION
(2025 Census Estimate)

\$49,994

MEDIAN INCOME
(2020 2024)

2024

COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY ADOPTION

86.32 mi²

LAND AREA
(2020)

📍 Baton Rouge, Louisiana

When business supports community-led improvements, everyone wins

Rather than waiting for Complete Streets projects to be planned, residents and community organizations can drive change. Baton Rouge, Louisiana, demonstrates how community organizations, businesses, and residents can lead demonstration projects to initiate long-term improvements that benefit the entire community.

Image: Volunteers used paint and plants to create a barrier that protected the shoulders of Perkins Road near numerous businesses

“

Everyone in our neighborhood has a story of almost getting killed on this street.

Mysti Byrnes

Organizer | Perk Up Perkins



Meet Baton Rouge, home to Perkins Road

Baton Rouge is Louisiana's capital, second-largest city, and an important port located on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River. Today, the city faces several transportation challenges, including a lack of sidewalks and bike lanes to protect pedestrians and bicyclists and several interstates and wide arterial roads that cut through the city. [Dangerous by Design](#) regularly ranks Baton Rouge among the deadliest places for pedestrians. Even though officials passed a 2024 Complete Streets policy that made [Smart Growth America's list of best new policies](#), significant challenges remain.

Image: Street crossing on Perkins Road

Julie Gerdes Becnel (left) and Mysti Byrnes (right),
the two residents behind Perk Up Perkins



“

At the demo day, one person said, ‘I wish this was every day!’ and several asked, ‘When are we doing this again?’

Julie Gerdes Becnel

Organizer | Perk Up Perkins

Perk Up Perkins

Julie Becnel and Mysti Byrnes had no background in transportation or planning, but they were concerned about their children’s safety while crossing nearby roads and determined to do something about it. They focused on Perkins Road, a large east-west thoroughfare in their neighborhood. Perkins Road lacks sidewalks and safe crosswalks, even though it divides a mostly residential south side from a commercial north side filled with small, locally owned businesses.

Julie and Mysti worked with other residents and organizations such as AARP, the Center for Planning Excellence, Keep Tiger Town Beautiful, and Strong Towns to launch “**Perk Up Perkins**.” Together, they started a petition calling for street improvements signed by more than 730 residents and 30 local business owners, led walk audits to identify potential areas for street improvement projects, and held public meetings to share information and gather community input.

In August 2025, their work culminated in a Perk Up Perkins demonstration day. This festive community event brought together families, local restaurants, and other nearby businesses while testing new transportation **safety demonstrations** and **pop-up** improvements. They received city approval to have volunteers paint on the road and install planters along the side that lacked sidewalks, creating a physical barrier that protects pedestrians.



A resident receives information about Perk Up Perkins

Businesses along the corridor played an active role in the event. One cafe hosted planning meetings for the group. A local restaurant donated pizzas for volunteers. Several restaurants offered specials during happy hour, and nearly 40 businesses donated gift cards or gift baskets for a raffle. Other businesses set up pop-up stalls for the day. Bringing local businesses and residents together helped maintain momentum from the initial demonstration event.



Community impacts

The demonstration day and the group’s ongoing efforts have already left lasting changes in Perkins. The momentum achieved from these initial efforts has led to the following benefits:

- **Permanent street design changes that improve safety.** The Baton Rouge City Council approved plans for an improved crosswalk at one intersection, providing better access for residents to the businesses in their community. The city is now planning additional sidewalk and crossing improvements along the corridor.
- **Creating Complete Streets champions.** The project and demonstration day raised awareness about the benefits of Complete Streets among residents and business owners.
- **Inspiring new dreams and plans.** There’s still more room for improvement. Going forward, partners would like to see reduced speed limits and a new pocket park.

Thank you to Julie Gerdes Becnel and Mysti Byrnes for their time and expertise in producing this case study.

What the story tells us

Casting a wide net in community engagement efforts can pay off.

A multi-pronged approach to community engagement can help raise awareness and support for community improvements. Perk Up Perkins organizers met with the mayor’s office and city council to discuss their concerns, but they also regularly spoke with business owners, organized a petition and a demonstration day to bring in the broader community, and continued holding conversations with residents at every opportunity, including trick-or-treating and book club meetings.

Quick-build projects can visualize the benefits of Complete Streets.

Volunteers in Baton Rouge used simple, low-cost materials such as paint and planters in road safety projects, showing people how a permanent redesign could look and feel. Quick builds and demonstration projects are low-cost, feasible actions that can help build community support and collect information to share with decision-makers.

Partnerships are the foundation of success.

Organizers in Baton Rouge worked closely with other community organizers and **dozens of local business owners**. These partnerships helped them share the workload and broaden their campaign, amplifying their message to more people.



26,775

POPULATION
(2025 Census Estimate)

\$64,451

MEDIAN INCOME
(2020-2024)

2015

COMPLETE STREETS
POLICY ADOPTION

26.62 mi²

LAND AREA
(2020)

📍 Oxford, Mississippi

From COVID-19 economic struggles to opportunities

Oxford, MS, turned economic struggles related to COVID-19 into opportunities for local businesses. Through a combination of policy and street improvements, city officials have worked to make it easier to walk, bike, and spend time in its commerce corridors—and supporting activities that drive the local economy has fueled the growth they have experienced since.

Image: Outdoor dining in Oxford, Mississippi | Source: City of Oxford



Meet Oxford

Oxford, Mississippi, appears on “best of” lists with titles like “6 Main Streets Where Mississippi Comes Alive” and “Mississippi Historic Main Streets You Need to Visit.” As the home of the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), it is not surprising that Oxford draws many visitors every year. Despite its relatively modest population of about 25,000 people, hundreds of thousands regularly visit the small town for football games and other university events. While only Mississippi’s 14th-largest city, Oxford is the [state’s fourth-most-visited city](#).

But Oxford is more than a college town. Its population has grown by more than five percent between 2020 and 2024, partly due to investments made by city officials to create safe, vibrant spaces that visitors and residents can enjoy and use to travel by walking, biking, or rolling.

The East Jackson project

In 2019, the city began a Complete Streets project to widen sidewalks and improve safety on East Jackson Avenue, a busy street downtown. When COVID-19 hit, the project expanded to address new needs.

Businesses across the world worked to adapt and innovate at the onset of the pandemic, and Oxford’s were no exception. Curbside pick-up and contactless transactions became critical to their survival. To help businesses and protect the local economy, the city converted parking

spaces into temporary outdoor dining areas, and a **nearby garage made parking still accessible for visitors**. These changes **were incredibly popular**, prompting city officials to explore whether these temporary changes could become permanent, delivering long-term benefits for local businesses.

City staff contracted a local engineering and landscape architecture firm to develop plans for the project, which they completed in August 2021.

“

At the time, there were no real design standards or anything set up. We knew that we should probably go back to the drawing board and see if there’s a way to reframe this project and find a way to incorporate a more permanent solution while also providing safer facilities for all users of that area of town.

Ben Requet
Director | City of Oxford Planning Department



Restaurant patrons enjoying outdoor dining facilities in Oxford | Source: Bham Now



Outdoor dining area along East Jackson Avenue in Oxford | Source: City of Oxford

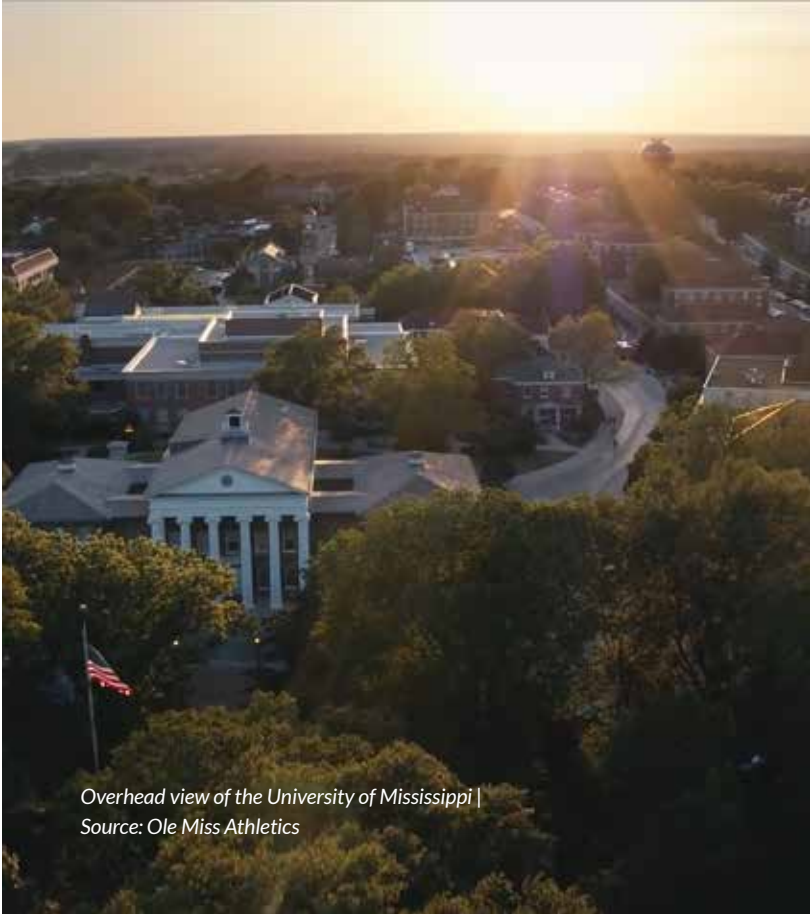
The project transformed the avenue, widening the sidewalk on both sides of the street and adding brick pavers to rededicate parking spaces for community use and outdoor dining. Large trees that provide shade now line the corridor, and new lighting on both sides of the street improves visibility and safety for pedestrians and drivers alike.

Oxford’s success was in part due to a unique approach to funding the project. The project created a new public space that the city can rent out for events, establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between Oxford and local businesses while generating a long-term funding stream for future improvements.

Community impacts

Oxford’s initiatives were critical in their recovery from the negative impact of Covid-19. Between March and December 2020, Oxford **lost \$674,420** in tax revenue from local tourism. This project helped Oxford successfully adapt to changing economic needs and support local businesses along a major commerce corridor, as illustrated by its ability to:

- **Restore commercial revenues.** By the end of 2021, commercial revenues bounced back from **pandemic-era lows**, reaching **\$172.6 million**. That number marked an annual increase of **more than 18 percent**, nearly reaching their **all-time high of \$177.6 million**.
- **Support a growing tourism economy.** Tourism-related tax revenue reached \$16.2 million, supplementing city costs and resulting in **\$840.59 in tax savings per household**. Oxford’s economy continues to grow, with the small city hosting **1.6 million visitors between 2022 and 2023 and generating approximately \$208.5 million in revenue**.
- **Foster future improvements.** Oxford is building on its initial success by continuing to invest in walking and cycling infrastructure, creating new attractions for visitors and providing new opportunities for local businesses.



Overhead view of the University of Mississippi | Source: Ole Miss Athletics

“

We’re starting to think about trail adjacent development—or “TADs”—creating satellite economic development adjacent to green spaces that people can safely walk and bike to. We want to leverage the facilities that we already have and identify the need for new facilities as we continue to grow

Ben Requet

Director | City of Oxford Planning Department

What the story tells us

Consider testing changes before making them permanent.

Installing improvements as temporary changes, as Oxford did with outdoor dining spaces during the pandemic, lets cities respond quickly to community needs and gather feedback and data from local businesses. This can build trust between city officials and its business community, improving community resiliency and response in the future.

Turn challenges into opportunities for new partnerships.

While turning a challenging situation into an opportunity for local businesses, Oxford officials sought to strengthen relationships with the business community. These efforts helped them address immediate revenue concerns

from restaurant owners and improved their installation of projects that combine road safety and increased economic growth in the future.

Taking chances can pay off.

When Oxford set up temporary outdoor dining, they did not know whether it would address restaurants’ concerns over the new strategy. Officials made sure to listen to business owners’ needs while testing new free and low-cost approaches to bring in more customers. Following the success of the temporarily installed spaces, the city was able to use that feedback and develop standards and a long-term system for future project implementation.

Thank you to Ben Requet, Director at City of Oxford Planning Department for his time and expertise in producing this case study.



Bustling market in Oxford | Source: Visit Oxford

References used in the development of this report

American Journal of Health Promotion. (2025). *Inadequate aerobic physical activity and healthcare expenditures in the United States: An updated cost estimate.*

This peer-reviewed article estimates the healthcare costs associated with insufficient physical activity in the United States. The authors found that inadequate physical activity accounts for approximately \$192 billion annually in healthcare expenditures.

American Planning Association. (2024, August). *Complete streets drive housing, jobs, and retail gains.* <https://www.planning.org/planning/2024/aug/complete-streets-drive-housing-jobs-and-retail-gains/>

This article summarizes findings from research on 26 Complete Streets corridors across 16 counties. The analysis found that Complete Streets corridors outperformed surrounding areas in job growth, population growth, housing demand, and leveraged private investment.

Center for New Urbanism. (2021, April 26). *Setting the standard for main street transformation.* <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2021/04/26/setting-standard-main-street-transformation>

This case study examines the transformation of Lancaster Boulevard in Lancaster, California. The project is presented as an example of how street redesign can catalyze economic activity, business growth, housing development, and job creation.

Litman, T. (2026). *Evaluating active transport benefits and costs.* Victoria Transport Policy Institute. <https://www.vtpi.org/nmt-tdm.pdf>

Litman provides a comprehensive review of the benefits and costs associated with walking and bicycling investments. The report synthesizes research on public health, transportation efficiency, economic productivity, environmental impacts, and safety outcomes.

National Center for Transit Research. (2015). *Capturing the benefits of Complete Streets.* <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/29663>

This report uses case studies from several U.S. cities to evaluate the outcomes of Complete Streets projects. Findings indicate that corridors with Complete Streets improvements generally performed as well as or better than comparison locations on economic, safety, and mobility measures.

National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research. (n.d.). *Creating thriving, activity-friendly communities.* <https://www.nccor.org/nccor-tools/create-thriving-activity-friendly-communities/>

This resource provides a framework for measuring community outcomes related to active transportation and physical activity. It identifies economic indicators such as employment rates, business activity, property tax revenue, and retail sales that can help communities evaluate the impacts of transportation investments.

Smart Growth America. (n.d.). *Complete Streets spark economic revitalization.* <https://healthy.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/CompleteStreets.pdf>

This fact sheet compiles examples of economic benefits associated with Complete Streets projects, including increased retail sales, higher commercial occupancy rates, job creation, tourism spending, and property value appreciation.

Osterhage, D. R., Acolin, J., Fishman, P. A., & Dannenberg, A. L. (2024). *Economic impact on local businesses of road safety improvements in Seattle: Implications for Vision Zero projects.*

This peer-reviewed study examines taxable sales data before and after roadway safety improvements in Seattle. The authors found no statistically significant negative effects on nearby business activity.

Smart Growth America. (2015). *Safer streets, stronger economies.* <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/knowledge-hub/resources/evaluating-complete-streets-projects-a-guide-for-practitioners/>

This report analyzes outcomes from 37 Complete Streets projects nationwide. Findings indicate improvements in safety, walking and bicycling activity, employment growth, property values, and private investment.

Smart Growth America. (2023). *An active roadmap: Best practices in rural mobility.* https://wordpress.smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/SGA-Rural-Transportation-Field-Scan_Final_7.27.pdf

This report examines strategies for improving mobility in rural communities through multimodal transportation investments. Drawing on case studies and best practices from across the United States, it highlights how walking, bicycling, transit, and demand-responsive transportation can improve access to jobs, healthcare, education, and commercial centers.

Smart Growth America. (n.d.). *Complete Streets stimulate the local economy.* <https://www.weymouth.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2873/Complete-Streets-Stimulate-the-Local-Economy>

This fact sheet summarizes evidence showing how Complete Streets investments can support business growth, create jobs, attract private investment, and increase property values.

University of California, Davis. (2021). *Economic impacts on local businesses of investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: A review of the evidence.*

This literature review synthesizes findings from 23 studies examining the economic effects of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investments. The review concludes that active transportation projects generally produce positive or neutral impacts on adjacent businesses, even when parking or travel lanes are reallocated.

University of Minnesota. (2022). *What economic impacts do Complete Street projects have on small Minnesota cities?* <https://www.cts.umn.edu/news/2023/september/completestreets>

This report investigates the economic effects of Complete Streets projects in small Minnesota communities.

Van Leuven, A. J. (2021). *The impact of Main Street revitalization on the economic vitality of small-town business districts.* *Economic Development Quarterly.*

This peer-reviewed study evaluates Main Street revitalization programs across nearly 500 communities in four Midwestern states.

Portland State University. (2019). *Understanding economic and business impacts of street improvements for bicycle and pedestrian mobility: A multi-city multi-approach exploration.* https://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/research/project/1161/Understanding_Economic_and_Business_Impacts_of_Street

This research project evaluates bicycle and pedestrian improvements across 14 corridors in six U.S. cities. The authors found little evidence of negative economic impacts and identified several examples of increased sales and employment following improvements.

Studies and resources about economic benefits of Complete Streets

Name	Source
Assessing the economic effects of context sensitive main street highways in small cities	University of Minnesota (funded by MnDOT)
Capturing the Benefits of Complete Streets	National Center for Transit Research (prepared for Florida DOT)
Complete Streets as a Redevelopment Strategy	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Cityscape
Creating Thriving, Activity-friendly communities	National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research
Economic Impact of a Walkable and Bikeable Ohio	Ohio Department of Transportation
Economic impact on local businesses of road safety improvements in Seattle: implications for Vision Zero projects	Injury Prevention
Economic impacts on local businesses of investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: a review of the evidence	Transport Reviews
Evaluate the Impacts of Complete Streets Policy in Louisiana	Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/Federal Highway Administration
Evaluating Active Transport Benefits and Costs	Victoria Transportation Policy Institute
Foot Traffic Ahead	Smart Growth America
Inadequate Aerobic Physical Activity and Healthcare Expenditures in the United States: An Updated Cost Estimate	American Journal of Health Promotion

Name	Source
Measuring the Impact of Complete Streets Projects: Preliminary Field Testing	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority/New York State Department of Transportation/GObike Buffalo
Pop-Up Placemaking Tool Kit	AARP
Safer Streets, Stronger Economies	Smart Growth America
Setting the standard for main street transformation	Congress for the New Urbanism
Storefront Activity in NYC Neighborhoods	New York City Department of City Planning
The Impact of Main Street Revitalization on the Economic Vitality of Small-Town Business Districts	Economic Development Quarterly
Understanding Economic and Business Impacts of Street Improvements for Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility - A Multi-City Multi-Approach Exploration	National Institute for Transportation and Communities
Walk Audit Tool Kit	AARP



Smart Growth
A M E R I C A



National Complete
Streets Coalition

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