Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities

National Complete Streets Coalition

Safety Demonstration Projects

Washington State Complete Streets Leadership Academy

Airway Heights, Arlington, and Wenatchee

Who we are

Smart Growth America is a national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for, and leading coalitions to bring better development to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring that more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. Learn more at **www.smartgrowthamerica.org**.

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. Learn more at **www.completestreets.org**

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Introduction

Drivers struck and killed 53,435 people while walking throughout the United States between 2010 and 2019, and the annual number of people struck and killed increased by an astonishing 45 percent over that time period.[1] Traffic safety got even worse during the global COVID-19 pandemic that started in early 2020, despite the fact that Americans drove significantly less as a result of stay-at-home orders. NHTSA's estimates for 2020 showed the largest projected number of fatalities since 2007—an increase of about 7.2 percent compared to 2019.[2]

Communities also made unprecedented innovations in the use of public space during the pandemic. Activity-friendly public spaces became critical components of community life during the COVID-19 crisis, not only to access essential goods and services but also to protect physical and mental health. As municipal and state governments put in place new guidelines and restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus, many cities turned to quick-builds and temporary installations to reallocate street space and expand other outdoor spaces for retail, outdoor dining, exercise, and for socializing outdoors while safely social-distancing. While some of these installations received pushback for lack of community input or lack of emphasis on historically underserved neighborhoods and people making essential travel—highlighting the critical importance of meaningful community engagement—many of these projects successfully made streets safer for those using them and demonstrated new possibilities for the use of public space traditionally allocated to car travel.

Done right, quick-builds like those implemented by many cities during the pandemic are also a great way for cities and states to change the decision-making process and culture around street design by showing the public what is possible through fast, flexible design interventions.

Quick builds and demonstration projects

Quick-builds, also known as demonstration projects or tactical urbanism projects, are temporary, low-cost improvements that test changes to street design, allowing communities and transportation departments to try new ideas and gather feedback about a tangible redesign concept before proposed changes are made permanent. They also provide elected officials a low-risk method to see how their community reacts before committing to a permanent solution or policy change.

To test out creative approaches to safer street design, the National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC) launched the **Washington Complete Streets Leadership Academy** in early 2020 in partnership with the Washington Department of Transportation (DOT) and Washington Department of Health (DOH) and Washington Transportation Improvement Board (TIB). Working with the state partners, NCSC selected three cities—**Airway Heights, Arlington, and Wenatchee**—through a competitive process to build skills in safer street design, creative placemaking, and community engagement. All three selected cities had a Complete Streets policy already in place and were working to implement that policy.

Each city engaged a team of multidisciplinary stakeholders to participate in a series of workshops, culminating in planning and implementing quick-build demonstration projects on a local street in their city. NCSC and the Washington Transportation Improvement Board partnered to provide stipends of $15,000 to each city to support purchasing temporary materials for their projects.

1 https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/
2 https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/2020-fatality-data-show-increased-traffic-fatalities-during-pandemic

Proven safety countermeasures

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) promotes specific road treatments that are proven through research to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities.[1] The three demonstration projects within this report used a range of these proven safety countermeasures that are recommended by FHWA, including: road diets, median and pedestrian refuge islands, crosswalk visibility enhancements, bicycle lanes, and walkways.

Crosswalk visibility enhancements | **Median and pedestrian refuge islands** | **Bicycle lanes** | **Road diets** | **Walkways**

1 Read more about the FHWA proven safety countermeasures here: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/

The impacts of COVID

While NCSC launched the Complete Streets Leadership Academy in early 2020 and initially planned to deliver the workshops in-person, NCSC put the program on hold for a full year starting in March 2020 based on the pressing needs each city faced in response to the pandemic. The program resumed in March 2021 but all workshops were conducted virtually. The cities also faced and overcame new challenges in planning and implementing their demonstration projects as a result of the pandemic: staff turnover since the program launched in 2020, competing priorities, less representation from public health staff on the project planning teams, restrictions on in-person community engagement, and more challenges in planning socially distant events to draw people to the temporary projects and collect feedback.

Despite the challenges, the three cities all implemented successful demonstration projects during the summer of 2021. Importantly, all three cities have a population under 35,000 (under 10,000 in Airway Heights' case), and relatively small teams of city staff, demonstrating that even small, relatively low-resource communities can plan and deliver successful quick-build projects.

The following three short case studies highlight the successes and lessons learned from these demonstration projects. They show how each city slowed travel speeds or increased active travel in the area, collected meaningful feedback about the projects, built community ownership, started or continued crucial conversations about the importance of safety for people walking, biking, and rolling in their community, and even made experimentation fun for people in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Airway Heights, WA

King Street demonstration project
Budget: $8,693 / Demonstration length: One week

The city of Airway Heights, located just west of Spokane, is experiencing fast-paced growth. A lack of connectivity to goods and services has contributed to a pressing issue of food insecurity. King Street, running through a residential area near the heart of the city, provides key connections not just to stores on a major commercial corridor to the south but to Sunset Elementary (the only school within city limits) and Sunset Park. Unfortunately, the intersection adjacent to the park and school is a difficult place to walk, bike, roll, and even drive. Parking placement and uneven lanes force drivers to make awkward turns. Incomplete sidewalks and poorly placed crosswalks have led students to walk on the side of the road and even into a private resident's lawn. By collaborating with multiple community partners, the Airway Heights team made valuable use of limited resources to create a traffic-slowing pavement mural, establish new crosswalks, fill in sidewalk gaps, and create a vibrant COVID-safe public gathering space. Their quick-build project successfully generated excitement and ownership from the surrounding community, increased walking and biking activity, and ultimately resulted in a safer route.

With a population of about 10,030, Airway Heights is a small city experiencing fast-paced growth. (At the time of this project, the city's population had increased over 63 percent in ten years.) Located just west of Spokane, the city derives its name from its proximity to the Fairchild Air Force Base. It is bounded by the base at one end and the Spokane International Airport on the other. The city includes both the Kalispel Tribe and Spokane Tribe land with housing, employment, and recreation opportunities. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, twenty-one percent of the population is low-income with limited resources, and one of the most pressing issues for the community is food insecurity.

To address these needs, the Airway Heights team chose the King Street and 10th Avenue intersection for their week-long project. King Street provides a connection to the major connecting highway, US-2, home to most of the city's retail outlets and grocery stores. The intersection at 10th Avenue, located near the heart of the city, borders Sunset Park and Sunset Elementary, the only school within the city's limits and a frequent destination for students walking and biking. King Street is also a key north-south route for connecting residents to the main residential area to the north and west of this site. By making King Street safer and more inviting, the team hoped to encourage more active transportation, bring the community together in a public space, and improve connectivity with the rest of the city.

Planning the project

Consisting of five people (including a traffic engineering consultant), the Airway Heights team was small but mighty, and their budget was limited. The team envisioned converting part of the intersection to temporary park space, but with no movable tables and benches to work with and limited traffic control equipment, the team quickly realized they would need to think outside of the box to make their project a success. They rented and borrowed equipment to guide traffic and pedestrians and enlisted the help of artists to help design the space and make it more inviting.

Understanding the risks presented by COVID, the team was careful to make their project a self-experience and not encourage mass gatherings. They provided large-scale games for multiple age groups, including life-size Jenga, tic-tac-toe, Connect Four, and frisbee. The team worked on a tight timeline to get the project up for the last week of school before summer break to ensure students and parents would be walking in the area and able to experience it.

The Airway Heights project team hard at work during the installation of the quick build elements.

The team used social media to invite people to see the project and talk about their experience at the site. When people visited the park, they would spot signage with a QR code for a survey, where they could share their reactions and feedback. Paired with a pre-project survey, this helped the team evaluate how the project influenced visitors' perceptions of the intersection.

For one day, the team brought in a Ben & Jerry's ice cream truck. The high volume of pedestrians attracted to the ice cream truck brought in valuable feedback, though the team removed walking count data for this day from their overall evaluation of the project so that they could get a more accurate sense of how people interacted with the space.

Before the project, staff members raised concerns about equipment theft and vandalism. For that reason, the team was careful to use as much heavy, non-mobile equipment for their demonstration as possible. But far more effective at eliminating the risk of damage was the community's willingness to take ownership of the project. Without prompts from the Airway Heights team, multiple people who lived near the project said they would keep an eye on the area to make sure all materials were left alone. There wasn't a single incident of theft or vandalism throughout the demonstration.

The team received a great deal of help from the community, so they decided to pay it all forward. They donated all materials they purchased for the project (including edible plants used as landscaping) to local programs and community members.

Slowing traffic and activating a neighborhood

King Street is wide, making it easier for drivers to speed through the largely residential area. The T-intersection at 10th Avenue includes parking and uneven lanes, creating awkward turning movements for drivers. Though this is a frequent site for kids walking to and from school, there is no continuous sidewalk, and crosswalks are sparse and poorly positioned. Before the project, one crosswalk to the school ended in a private citizen's lawn. The team set out to create an inviting space, slow traffic, provide safer access to the school and park, and deliver a positive experience for the community along the way.

Google Street View imagery from 2013 of King Street looking south to the intersection with 10th Street.

To help slow and ease the flow of traffic at the intersection, they enlisted the help of artists to create a mural with pavement-marking spray. The colorful artwork slowed cars and attracted pedestrians. They rented traffic control equipment and chalked pathways for students and pedestrians to get to school and travel around the park safely. To set up and take down their space, the team solicited help from the local correctional center work crew program. And to track the success of their project, they borrowed Miovision and Eco Cameras from Spokane County and the Washington State Department of Transportation, which documented the flow of

pedestrians and traffic before and during the event.

To further improve health outcomes and slow traffic, the team incorporated edible landscaping like fruit trees and berry vines. These were an educational and functional resource that guided the flow of travel and raised awareness about the possibility to add new and diverse plant life to the park.

Over 100 families walked and biked into the demonstration project area in one day over the course of the week-long project many more enjoyed the project. The team doubled pedestrian and biker activity. Survey responses reflected the project's effectiveness, including perceived reduced speeds while the demonstration was in place. As traffic slowed, local perception of the area shifted, and people began to see the area as a safe, convenient place for walking and biking. In addition, the community's willingness to take ownership of the project spoke to its positive impact. As the team takes steps to turn their demonstration into a reality, they have already made one small, lasting change: the crosswalks they painted have been converted to permanent crossings.

The project area during the demonstration event and activation.

Lessons

You can have a big impact with a small budget and small team.
With a few creative ideas and help from the surrounding community, the Airway Heights team put together a successful, engaging project without going over their modest budget of $8,693. Inexpensive resources like pavement paint and games activated their space. Renting and borrowing items, receiving help from volunteers and local partners, and discovering the unexpected resource of community buy-in all helped make this project into the success that it was.

Quick-build projects are a fun way to see how a project will work.

The Airway Heights team's quick-build project allowed them to test their design in real time and gain valuable data to support their project's efficacy. The bike and pedestrian usage statistics and survey responses will be key to arguing for permanent changes to the area. The project also created fun photo opportunities that help strengthen the team's case for design change. Most importantly, the quick-build project was an engaging way to illustrate how a few changes could improve safety and convenience for the whole community.

Creating community ownership is vital

The community of Airway Heights felt pride in having this sort of project in their city center. It helped them visualize what their growing community could be like in the future. In addition to providing positive feedback in their surveys, the community made their support of the project no secret when they voiced their willingness to protect it from vandalism and theft. This community ownership was a vital (and free!) resource the team relied on for the duration of their demonstration, and it spoke to the level of support the community had for the improvements the Airway Heights team had made. As the project lead, Heather Trautman said, "people really felt through this experience doing the demonstration project that Airway Heights was growing up as a town…[it] made everyone feel that they were really making progress on how we would be as a community in the future."

Partners involved:

- Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- SRTC (Spokane Regional Transportation Council)
- Washington State Transportation Improvement Board
- City of Airway Heights
- Center for Disease Control
- Smart Growth America
- Spokane Transit Authority (STA)
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Spokane County
- Northwest Seed & Pet
- Ben & Jerry's
- Spokane Arts
- Airway Heights Department of Parks and Recreation
- Airway Heights Public Works Department

Arlington, WA

Smokey Point Blvd. demonstration project
Budget: $7,500 / Demonstration length: Three weeks

Arlington is a small city along I-5 about 20 miles north of Everett on the extreme northern edge of metro Seattle. A team from the City of Arlington installed a temporary pedestrian crossing and median refuge at Smokey Point Boulevard, a major north-south arterial on the western edge of town with a history of speeding issues, and a neighborhood street that leads to a public park. The team wanted to create safe, accessible walkways to connect residents to the park while helping the community envision a more walking-friendly corridor in line with future mixed use redevelopment coming to the area. Through the Washington Complete Streets Leadership Academy, the team aimed to improve safety, educate residents and drivers about the importance of slower speeds and better walking access, and make the project temporary but reusable in order to do similar pop-up crossings elsewhere along the corridor. The project successfully slowed driving speeds, and sparked important conversations about the future of the community.

One of the changes that became permanent following the temporary project was the addition of the new paved shoulder at the far left here, replacing a gravel shoulder.

The City of Arlington adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2018 and launched a citywide Complete Streets program, but the concept is still new to many residents. The Arlington team hoped to use their demonstration project to increase awareness about the need for safe walking, biking, and rolling access and prompt important conversations about tradeoffs between car mobility and active travel in their growing community. The main goals for the project, located at the T-intersection of Smokey Point Blvd and 180th Street NE, were to establish greater visibility and collect feedback for a permanent project planned along the corridor, improve safety for residents, connect them to an underutilized park to the west, and reduce traffic speeds. The city got the word

out about the project to residents through door flyers and social media.

Smokey Point Boulevard looking north at 180th Street NE before the intervention. Imagery from Google Street View.

Smokey Point Blvd is known for being a busy traffic corridor with few protected pedestrian crossings. At the start of the project, even the most basic infrastructure was sorely lacking—sidewalks on Smokey Point Boulevard ended entirely a few blocks south of this intersection and shoulders were too narrow to provide a safe alternative. The area largely developed during the second half of the 20th century as the city grew westward towards I-5 and suburbanized, and while much of it is currently residential and low-density, the city knows growth will be coming to this corridor whether they encourage it or not. The city has proactive redevelopment plans for Smokey Point Boulevard to make it more like a town center through rezoning and mixed-use housing. The project team hoped their demonstration could build awareness about these coming changes and help prompt a community dialogue about the future of the area. The city also chose this location to bring more attention to the lower economic and previously underinvested and ignored past of this part of the community, as well as highlight an underutilized park at the end of 180th St NE.

Planning the project

The Arlington team developed a design concept for a painted crosswalk at Smokey Point Blvd at 180th St NE to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross safely. The team chose to install a center median refuge protected by physical barriers. The main materials used were reusable rubber curb bumpers with reflective paint, catch basins filled with dirt and plants to try to replicate the feel of a landscaped median envisioned in future plans for the corridor, and street candle sticks, temporary tape and reflective paint. Project staff largely chose reusable materials with the hope of doing similar pop-up crosswalks elsewhere along the corridor.

The demonstration project added a new crosswalk, a new shoulder, zig-zag lines to signal the need to slow down, reflective bollards and curbs, and plastic planters in the middle of the road—successfully slowing traffic. Average traffic speeds normally exceed the posted speed limit thanks to the long sight lines, wide lanes, and other design cues encouraging faster speeds.

A local project partner, Panattoni Development, widened the shoulder leading up to the installation. With sidewalks lacking on both sides of the street, this new shoulder will permanently make the crossing more walkable and accessible for pedestrian use. The team reduced the posted speed limit to 25mph, coupled with new signage along the corridor highlighting and explaining the change. The team also painted zigzag fog lines and tapered lane transitions on Smokey Point Boulevard to give drivers a cue to slow down.

Challenges during COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 complications made it difficult to get Arlington's project up and running. With the Complete Streets Leadership Academy on hold for nearly a year, the city faced staffing turnover and limited capacity when the program restarted, making it more difficult to build the level of buy-in that the core planning team enjoyed before the pandemic. The project had full support from representatives in the city's Maintenance and Operations Department before the pandemic, along with the city council and the health district, but many of those team members had left their positions or were not able to participate when the program restarted. The pandemic also meant cancellation of a summer market that would have taken place weekly in the park to the west of the site, reducing the number of people accessing the crosswalk.

COVID also affected the process of community engagement. While the team would normally have held in-person meetings to solicit input and help residents get a better understanding of the plan leading up to the project, they were not able to do so when the program restarted in 2021. Instead, the team sent out flyers, placed articles in the newspaper, and held conversations with residents. They also partnered with the local high school's National Honor Society to help with public outreach and engagement by putting out informational door hangers in the community. While these methods were fairly effective, the project team knew they wouldn't be getting the level of engagement possible under better circumstances. However, engagement increased after the demonstration project was in place, illustrating why quick-build pilot projects themselves can be such powerful engagement tools. The project provided a real example of what permanent changes, especially to the road design, could look like, making the results highly visible for everyone, moving from the theoretical to the concrete—and giving residents time to react while there is still flexibility to change aspects of the design.

Successfully reducing speeds and sparking an important conversation

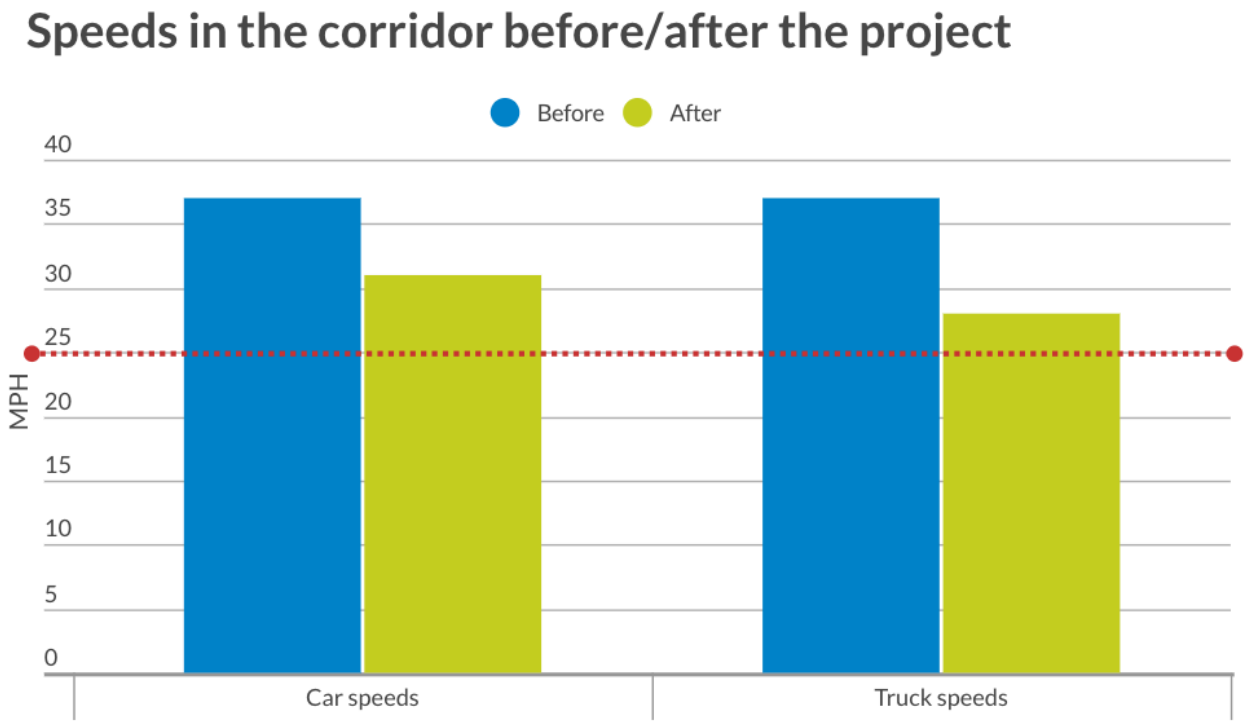
Once the demonstration project was up and running, the Arlington team received lots of feedback, both positive and negative. While people trying to walk and bike in the area generally responded favorably, many drivers were unhappy about the reduced speeds. But as one cyclist pointed out, the project did accomplish one of its core goals: more drivers did stop to let people cross:

> *"A couple evenings ago, I decided to ride a bike through the demonstration area to see if the new marked crosswalk & signage/speed would make a difference. And I believe it did. As I approached the crossing, I gave a slowdown/stop signal & dismounted at the crosswalk. One truck flew by—legally, as I had not entered the walk—but seemingly in a rush. But what was interesting is that when I turned around to check before crossing, a car had already stopped & was waiting for me to cross. That is very unlike the typical behavior I have witnessed running/riding on/over Smokey Point Boulevard."*

The team also received a number of complaints that the height of the catch basin planters reduced visibility for people in lower profile vehicles. Since demonstration projects have the benefit of being flexible, the Arlington team responded by proposing to remove the catch basins for the remainder of the project. However, due to fears about liability, instead of removing only the planters, the maintenance and operations team removed the entire installation early. Staffing turnover worked against the Arlington team in this case with a new department director—who was unfamiliar with the project and its purposes—taking over while the Complete Streets Leadership Academy program was on hold. While the purpose of projects like this is to try new things, make changes and learn from them with input and support from the local community, this outcome highlighted the importance (and challenge) of having everyone involved on the same page throughout the process.

The Arlington team also faced similar challenges with the city council and some members of city staff, as well as a general lack of familiarity about the need for Complete Streets from many members of the public. Some stakeholders didn't understand the purpose of the project and what the team was trying to achieve. The project highlighted the importance of having both political support and a cross-department team aligned and communicating openly throughout the process. The complications from the pandemic also led to competing priorities and limited capacity which made it difficult to keep channels of communication open and the goals aligned during crucial moments of decisions about the project once it was up.

However, despite the initial pushback and untimely early end of the project, the Arlington team successfully achieved all of the project's core goals: they saw average car speeds reduced from 37 mph to 31 mph along this part of the corridor and average truck speeds decreased from 37 mph to 28 mph. The project team also succeeded in sparking needed conversations about tradeoffs in their community: between car throughput and safety for people walking, biking, and rolling, and between what this corridor looks like today and what it could become if the city thoughtfully manages the growth it knows will come. Some of the concerns raised by residents during the process pointed to broader lessons as well, including that residents will inevitably bring larger frustrations about their community's transportation network into their reactions to specific projects.



Lessons

Don't be afraid of setbacks—you can't make change without some growing pains

The Arlington project faced a number of challenges over the course of the project, especially staffing turnover and limited capacity. The team persevered through those challenges and turned a frustrating turn of events (the early removal of the project) into an example of why demonstration projects can be such powerful tools in prompting necessary conversations in growing communities: they provide space for those conversations while there is still time to be responsive and make adjustments before putting any permanent infrastructure in place. Other cities should follow the example to continue to push for initiatives they want to see implemented in their communities—even if they take longer than expected or encounter hurdles. And despite the challenges, the project still achieved its core goal of reducing speeds. Nova Heaton, the project lead, said it well: "You can't be afraid to fail. If you're afraid to fail you really can't succeed, especially at new ideas. Guidelines change all the time, and they change because we try new things."

Bring everyone to the table from the start, and take the time to rebuild buy-in when key stakeholders change

One of the project's biggest issues was its early removal by the city's maintenance and operations department, which arose partially from a lack of understanding about the project's purposes by the department's leadership, ultimately making it so fears about liability outweighed the perceived benefits. Getting the public on board is always a challenge, but it's made even more difficult when the internal project team hasn't gotten everyone who has a role in the project aligned. In Arlington's case some of these challenges were difficult to avoid: they had broad buy-in initially, but the pandemic, staff turnover, competing priorities, and relatively quick timeline of the Complete Streets Leadership Academy program all made it difficult to recreate that level of buy-in when the program restarted. But their lessons can help other communities avoid similar challenges—rebuilding internal support from scratch can feel like a major setback, but it is worth the time and effort.

Demonstration projects can help raise broader needed changes

The project team intended to use the temporary crosswalk to educate their community about the need for safer, slower speeds and raise the visibility of their broader Complete Streets work. But some of the feedback they heard went far beyond the corridor itself, pointing to larger frustrations with traffic and poor access elsewhere in the community. This was a huge wake up call for the project team. Many residents simply would not be able to separate those larger frustrations from their reactions to individual projects (temporary or otherwise). This insight raised a need to update Arlington's transportation plan, provide a forum where residents can air those frustrations and have a real impact, and do more engagement about where the city is headed in the future.

Partners involved:

- City of Arlington
- Snohomish County
- Snohomish County Health District
- Community Transit
- Panattoni Development Company
- Clark Construction
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Transportation Improvement Board
- Smart Growth America

Wenatchee, WA

Methow and Orando demonstration project
Budget: ~$9,500 / Demonstration length: One week

Wenatchee, WA, a small city with a history of successful quick-build Complete Streets projects, took the opportunity presented by the Complete Streets Leadership Academy to address a pressing safety need. The complex, offset four-way intersection of Methow St., Orando Ave., and Okanogan Ave. is one of the top five most dangerous in Wenatchee. The area is also home to the highest number of low- and moderate-income and minority households, and holds the highest rate of chronic disease and obesity in youth. The majority of the households are zero- and single-car homes. The Wenatchee team designed their project to improve safety and health outcomes by reducing dangerous conflict points for users of all modes while maintaining connectivity with area businesses, social services, and the surrounding communities. With the use of a pop-up event that pulled in local stakeholders and a well thought-out engagement strategy, they gained a better understanding of community goals and created a strong case for funding the final project.

Wenatchee, WA is a small city of about 35,000 people a few hundred miles upstream of Portland, OR on the Columbia River, just east of the Cascade Mountains. The city adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2016 and has done several quick-build Complete Streets demonstration projects in the years since to engage residents, help drive a cultural shift, and raise awareness of the benefits of Complete Streets. Several of those demonstration projects ultimately led to permanent change at the sites.

With those successes under the city's belt, the Wenatchee project team turned to the complicated intersection of Orondo Avenue, Methow Street, and Okanogan Avenue. Orondo Avenue, the largest of the three streets, typically has two lanes of westbound traffic and one lane of eastbound traffic, with parking strips on either side. Pedestrians crossing Orondo in the crosswalk have to travel through all four lanes of traffic, plus parking, in an

already dangerous intersection. The Wenatchee team wanted to reduce conflict points for both nondrivers and drivers and reduce car speeds to make active transportation a safer and more convenient option. Methow Street, a 35-foot wide one-way street perpendicular to Orondo Avenue, resembles an alley, but provides a connection between the city and county government campuses. It is flanked by businesses, on-street parking, and low-income housing. The Wenatchee team hoped to make it easier to access the businesses and services along the street and provide an improved option for non-motorized transportation users.

To ensure their project properly met the community's needs, the team created an engagement plan that took into account the largely Spanish-speaking population residing in this neighborhood. Their plan included a pop-up market event at the intersection and neighboring park to attract people to the area and collect feedback about the temporary street design changes in real time. By the end of their project, they hoped to improve access to local destinations, increase active transportation in the area, and improve safety in this dangerous corridor for users of all modes.

Building an engagement strategy for a successful project

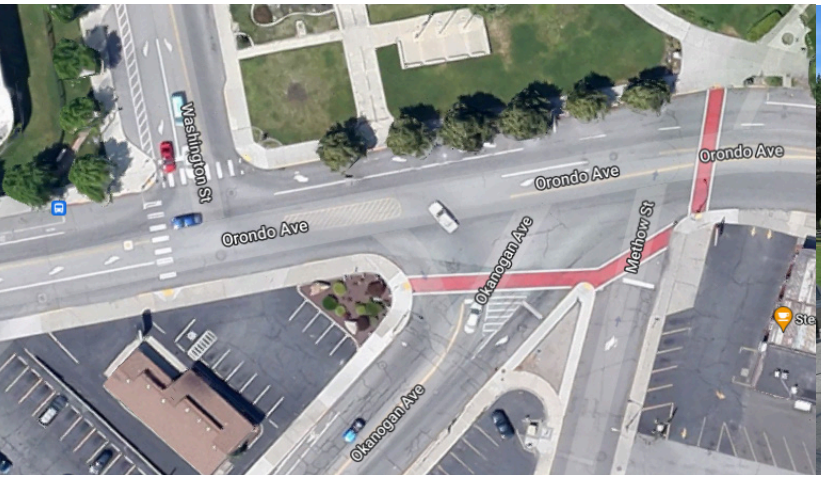
To help determine who to reach out to at different stages of the project, the Wenatchee team first created an engagement timeline. They identified 1) who would be affected by the project, like local residents, 2) who would need to have a say in the project, like the mayor, and 3) who would help design and build the project, like the team's partners. Once they knew who they needed to ask and why, they were able to decide when and how to reach out to each group.

So that they could effectively incorporate input, the Wenatchee team knew that they needed to maintain some flexibility in the implementation of their project. They thought about what types of feedback they could incorporate at different stages of the project's design and implementation, and what feedback they'd need to save and address after the pop-up was finished. Late feedback was part of the process, too. The team discovered that when reaching out to local businesses, input could change as they moved up the level of command. Because of this, they received important feedback that altered a significant part of their pop-up later than they expected. However, because they'd started the engagement process early and had planned to be flexible based on community input, they were able to be responsive and incorporate the feedback successfully before the event took place.

Thanks to their timeline, by the time the pop-up project was set up, the team had already gone through several stages of design, incorporating the feedback they'd received early on from a pre-event survey and input from multiple local sectors, helping ensure the project's success.

Planning safer, healthier, and more convenient corridors

This four-way intersection required complex changes. Orondo has two westbound lanes. The left is a through lane, and the right lane becomes a right-turn only lane in the middle of the intersection forcing through vehicles to merge before exiting the intersection at this point for a right-turn at the next intersection to the west. Drivers would often misuse the right-turn only lane to cut off drivers in the through lane, creating a chaotic scene. In addition, with four lanes and curb parking, Orondo was a particularly wide street for pedestrians to cross, putting them in harm's way for an unnecessarily long time.



An aerial (left) from Google Maps shows the complex intersection with street names. The red crosswalks visible here are from the demonstration project, pictured on the right.

To enhance safety for drivers and pedestrians, the team merged the two westbound lanes prior to vehicles reaching the crosswalk. This allowed them to enter the intersection in a single lane with right-turning vehicles creating a natural reduction in overall speed of vehicles. They also used the parking to provide a protected bike lane and extended the reach of the curb which ultimately reduced crossing distance for pedestrians.

Though the community was concerned that reducing the number of lanes would increase traffic, there was no noticeable difference in traffic over the course of the pop-up. Instead, many community responses described a more pleasant driving experience, because they no longer had to worry about being cut off by drivers in the right lane. In addition, by simply merging these lanes, the team drastically reduced speeds on two streets. The team also added an eastbound bike lane on Orondo Street which reduced the lane width and increased the need for drivers to take additional caution when turning right from Orondo onto Okanogan.

The team also altered the route from Orondo to Methow Street. Methow connects county facilities on the north side of Orondo and city hall to the south on Methow, and is bordered by a bank, restaurant, insurance agency, parking, and low-income apartment complex. To ease the flow of traffic to these locations, the team closed a half-block of Methow Street. This provided space for a community plaza environment, removed a conflict point of traffic onto Orondo and reduced the crossing demand for pedestrians traveling east or

The bike lane added to the westbound portion of Orondo, left, eliminated space that some drivers would use to illegally pass cars in the left travel lane. The half block of Methow that was closed, right, provided space for the pop-up community events during the project, in addition to removing another conflict point from the complex intersection.

west along Orondo. The half-block option maintained vehicle access and parking for the local businesses and apartments from their normal route off of Yakima Street. Because the one-way Methow Street had a dead end, the team rechanneled it to be a two-way cul-de-sac.

Creating space for meaningful community input during the project

The Wenatchee team planned a pop-up market event during the demonstration project. They planned to collect significant feedback from local residents about the reconfigured streets during the pop-up, so it was important to make sure residents would attend. Before the event, the Wenatchee team issued a press release about the site selection and the project. To encourage attendance, they distributed bilingual flyers, postcards, and posters to the 52 percent Spanish-speaking local community and encouraged residents to share their input. They did their best to include groups that might not think to join a transportation event, including dance groups, cultural performers, zumba instructors, artisans, food vendors, and local community-based organizations. Throughout their engagement, the team made it clear that they wanted to take each group's experiences and ideas into account.

The half block that was closed on Methow provided space for the pop-up events and community engagement during the project.

During the event, the Wenatchee team made sure they created space for community ownership. Local vendors, sponsors, and organizations sold products, danced, and otherwise made use of the new plaza space on Methow. Throughout the project, they supported a bilingual team of communicators to mingle with the crowd and encourage input.

The Wenatchee team built a clear, highly visible process to engage the community and keep accountability at the event through a simple exercise. The team collected ideas during the event on a sticky note board. When a resident raised a concern, the team used it as an opportunity to work with that resident to come up with a solution in real time. They asked residents how the design could be updated to address the concern, and next to each complaint, they placed a sticky note with the solution. In some cases, if the requested changes were minor, the team made them while the project was up. For larger changes, the project team will be able to point to those tangible examples of community recommendations to show how they responded to local feedback and strengthen their case for future funding to implement something permanent.

At all stages of the pop-up demonstration, the Wenatchee team emphasized that the pop-up was temporary, and a key opportunity for the community to make their voices heard before permanent change. At the end of the event, the team thanked the volunteers, sponsors, community organizations, and local residents who came. By demonstrating that they valued community input and describing how they would incorporate the feedback, the team built trust within the community in which these projects would be implemented. These efforts before and during the pop-up event paid off—the week-long demonstration received zero formal complaints, a testament to the power and success of the Wenatchee team's engagement efforts.

Lessons

Encourage community ownership—and make it fun

At every stage of their project, the Wenatchee team touched base with local stakeholders to make sure they had a strong understanding of the community's goals. They made sure to bring in as many different voices as possible, from local businesses to cultural groups. This combined input helped them build trust, but most importantly helped them create a better pop-up experience and develop an even stronger final design. By bringing in dancers, local food, and vendors to their market event, the team made it feel like a true community gathering, and a fun evening out. They created a setting where people wanted to stay and enjoy themselves while providing feedback.

Keep implementation flexible

Before the pop-up was installed, the Wenatchee team went through multiple rounds of feedback, adjusting their plan each time. By developing an engagement strategy and thinking critically about what types of changes could be made at different stages of implementation, the team was able to maintain the level of flexibility necessary to effectively incorporate feedback—even when they received feedback later than they expected.

Be solution-oriented

The team was intentional about collecting feedback during the pop-up event, and whenever they heard a concern, they figured out how the issue could be addressed. Focusing on solutions helped show that they were listening to community input and also helped the team turn concerns into recommendations they could apply to their final design.

Partners involved

- City of Wenatchee
- WSDOT
- Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council (CDTC)
- Chelan-Douglas Health District (CDHD)
- Community organizer Teresa Bendito,
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Transportation Improvement Board
- Smart Growth America

Project team and local partners

Complete Streets Leadership Academy project team

- Rayla Bellis, Smart Growth America
- Beth Osborne, Smart Growth America
- Anushka Thakkar, Smart Growth America
- Nathan Polanski, MIG | SvR
- Alex Dupey, MIG | SvR
- Stephen Lee Davis, Smart Growth America
- Ben Stone, Smart Growth America

State partners

- Chris Zipperer, Washington State Department of Health
- Charlotte Claybrooke, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Chris Workman, Transportation Improvement Board

City of Airway Heights

- Heather Trautman, City of Airway Heights
- Zachary Becker, City of Airway Heights
- Jami Hayes, Spokane County
- Barry Greene, Spokane County
- Rachelle Bradley, Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Sev Jones, Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Jason Lien, Spokane Regional Transportation Council
- Tara Limon, Spokane Transit Authority
- Charlene Kay, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Greg Figg, Washington State Department of Transportation

City of Arlington

- Nova Heaton, City of Arlington
- Launa Peterson, City of Arlington
- Debora Nelson, City of Arlington
- Jay Downing, City of Arlington
- Ryan Morrison, City of Arlington
- Sarah Lopez, City of Arlington

City of Wenatchee

- Brooklyn Holton, City of Wenatchee
- Gary Owen, City of Wenatchee
- Matt Shales, City of Wenatchee
- Maxwell Nelson, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Riley Shewak, Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council
- Lael Isola, Wenatchee Planning Commission
- Ann Henning, City of Othello

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Streets Coalition