



Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Planning for Economic & Fiscal Health

Report and Suggested Next Steps

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to our technical assistance award with the City of Tulsa, this Memorandum constitutes Smart Growth America's final report summarizing the recent *Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health* workshop, and suggesting possible *Next Steps* the city could take to craft a vision for the future development of the focus areas addressed during the workshop.

John Robert Smith and Chris Zimmerman, representing Smart Growth America (SGA), met with local leaders and residents on July 18 and 19, 2017 to provide assistance via the *Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health* tool, supported by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Sustainable Communities. Under the same cooperative agreement, SGA also conducted and delivered a *Fiscal Impact Analysis* to Tulsa for the subject focus areas. While results of this analysis are woven into our recommendations below, please refer to the separate report for more information on the methodology and results.

Following a productive discussion with various stakeholders — including residents, advocates, city and local agency representatives, business owners and elected officials — the following *Next Steps* are recommended:

- 1. Continue to invest in downtown Tulsa even as a future vision for the focus areas discussed in the workshop is refined and implemented.**
- 2. Invest in the redevelopment of the Pine and Peoria corridor as a catalyst for future redevelopment of the other focus areas as well as other locations within Tulsa.**

3. **Create a long-term plan for each of the other focus areas that defines how the community would like to see them redeveloped over the coming decade.**
4. **Ensure the redeveloped focus areas include Complete Streets principles.**
5. **Create an implementation committee to move these recommendations forward – or assign / charge Tulsa Economic Development Commission and / or Vision Steering Committee with this responsibility.**

Need for assistance

The goals of the City of Tulsa's comprehensive plan, adopted most recently in 2010, came out of discussion of the city's vision for its future – which included many smart growth principles. The plan represents a significant change in how Tulsa looks at its future growth and recognizes that the city's economic development is tied to the plan. As of late 2016, per the city's application for this program, only 26% of the plan's 296 action items remain to be initiated including many related to smart growth principles. Most targeted investment and incentives have occurred in downtown and greenfields, rather than existing vacant and underutilized areas elsewhere in the city.

At the same time, the city's departments have experienced budget cuts due to decreasing sales tax revenues as a result of:

1. Internet sales
2. Suburbanization of the sales tax and
3. Cyclical nature of the oil and natural gas markets.

In 2016, Tulsa residents approved a sales tax plan expected to produce over \$800 million in the next 15 years. The sales tax revenue will pay for public safety, economic development and transportation improvements – including \$11 million for the Citywide and Beautification, Commercial Revitalization and Rt. 66 Reinvestment program.

Tulsa has a large amount of strip commercial, popular during the 1970s and 1980s. Targeting aging and antiquated strip shopping centers (and the roadway intersections that accompany them) will be a major focus for utilizing the revenues generated. Tulsa hopes to retool these areas with new types of development (in accordance with Vision Tulsa and the comprehensive plan) that allows retail to flourish.

The city sought technical assistance from Smart Growth America to understand how to direct the new tax revenues to spur economic development in these underutilized areas. They sought data- and fact-based confirmation that smart growth in these areas was the right approach despite doubts expressed by many citizens and other stakeholders. They also wanted to understand how compact, walkable development could impact the city's budget and generate revenue, both for the city and for

developers. In short, the city needs a toolkit for the redevelopment and revitalization of these commercial areas in accordance with Vision Tulsa and the 2010 comprehensive plan. They need their local developers to understand both why and how they would want to pursue smart growth – as well as what the barriers to redevelopment are.

For these reasons, a Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health workshop was extremely timely for Tulsa as it helped the community think about how to leverage the exciting potential for redevelopment presented by the focus areas. Pursuing smart growth offers the community an opportunity to work together to create an economic future that is more sustainable, fiscally healthy and economically diverse. The SGA team was excited to see the interest in and passion for the community among the several dozen individuals present at the workshop.

Workshop Review

SGA's technical assistance visit began on July 18th with a tour of the focus areas in Tulsa. The focus areas selected by the city – for both the workshop and the companion fiscal impact analysis were:

71st and Memorial – This area is the site of the Woodland Hills Mall, a large regional shopping center. The area is overparked – of the more than 350 acres comprising the mall, 118 acres are devoted to parking. There are also concerns about access management as well as congestion on the major arterials surrounding the mall. Other strip retail surrounds the mall. This is a primary sales tax generation area for the City of Tulsa.

Pine and Peoria – This neighborhood lacks a marketable neighborhood-serving center. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is in development along Peoria Avenue so redevelopment opportunities may exist as a result. There is a focus on employment for this area. No grocery store exists in north Tulsa and retail is also limited.

23rd and Southwest Blvd (Route 66) / Eugene Field – This area is among the closest of the focus areas to downtown, serving as a transitional zone from other parts of the city. It includes large parcels prime for redevelopment. There is currently a large concrete factory in the area as well as a city facility for industrial shops and engineering functions. The area, which is served by Route 66, has tourism potential from this historic roadway.

21st and Yale – Located near the Tulsa County fairgrounds, this area used to have a Sears and another big retail store (Gordman's). Sears was there for 60+ years. Today, there is other retail to the north, including a grocery store, Target, and Lowe's.

These localities are important nodes in the community and played a key role in the

discussions at the workshop as well as the recommendations in this next steps memo.

The workshop occurred over two days – an evening and a half day. The city felt that extending the workshop for invited stakeholders to two days in lieu of an evening public presentation would provide the most impact.

On the first day of the workshop, the technical assistance team gave an overview of the workshop's outline, purpose and goals. They described the emerging national demographic and economic trends at play across the American landscape. The SGA team examined the economic impact of 20th century suburban development patterns, discussing the trend of migration by both Baby Boomers and Millennials to vibrant city and town centers. The presentation considered the emergence of the Millennial generation as the predominant driver of economic demand and the workforce sought by today's job creators, emphasizing that generation's interest in walkable, bikeable, vibrantly social towns and cities.

Following the main presentation by the SGA team, Dawn Warrick, Director of Planning for the City of Tulsa, provided the local perspective on economic development opportunities. She connected the national case studies back to local trends in Tulsa as well as where the city envisions going in the future.

On the second day, the SGA team first presented the results of SGA's fiscal impact analysis. The analysis included a comparison of the net fiscal impact for infrastructure over the next 20 years under three scenarios:

- Continuing current trends
- Comprehensive plan focus areas
- Focus areas + higher density targets

For more information about the methodology and results of the fiscal impact analysis, refer to the companion report provided by SGA.

The workshop then explored the trends presented the previous evening as they pertain to the past and future of the focus areas in Tulsa. Focusing on creating a sense of place, the SGA team narrated photos of communities from across the country – that have successfully implemented smart growth development to revitalize struggling suburban retail corridors that are competitive in the 21st century. These case studies included Mizner Park in Boca Raton, FL; Belmar in Lakewood, CO; Mosaic in Merrifield, VA; as well as Columbia Pike and Shirlington in Arlington, VA.

The workshop then moved to a presentation of the mechanics of good urban design,

focusing on land use and streetscape design. Finally, the SGA team applied these design principles specifically to Tulsa, focusing on how the community might retrofit the Woodland Hills mall. The goal is to remake areas like those in Tulsa as more compact and walkable spaces where people come to shop, eat, and linger. The SGA team intended the presentation to help participants envision how these corridors in Tulsa could redevelop in the future – which they would later discuss in small groups.

The remainder of the workshop was devoted to small group discussions and presentations back to the larger group. The participants broke up into four groups, each discussing one of the four focus areas within the city of Tulsa. The groups each received a large paper map for their chosen area showing existing land use as well as a notepad for brainstorming. The SGA team noted that each of the four groups took a different focus area – no two groups had the same one. This ensured a robust discussion including all four of the focus areas.

The question asked of each group for their respective focus area was:

To create a more economically diverse and sustainable area, how would you modify the land use and overlay a street grid to produce a more viable development?

The groups brainstormed specific land use changes, streetscaping, and other amenities that would reimagine their focus area as an inviting and walkable place that brings in new retail and customers. They also drew these changes visually on their map.

For a list of participants for each day of the workshop, refer to Appendix A.

Note: *The intent of these workshops is neither for Smart Growth America to create a plan nor bind the communities to any particular course of action, but to assist ongoing regional efforts to create a more vibrant, successful region, consistent with the goals of their envisioned plans.*

The built environment and fiscal and economic health

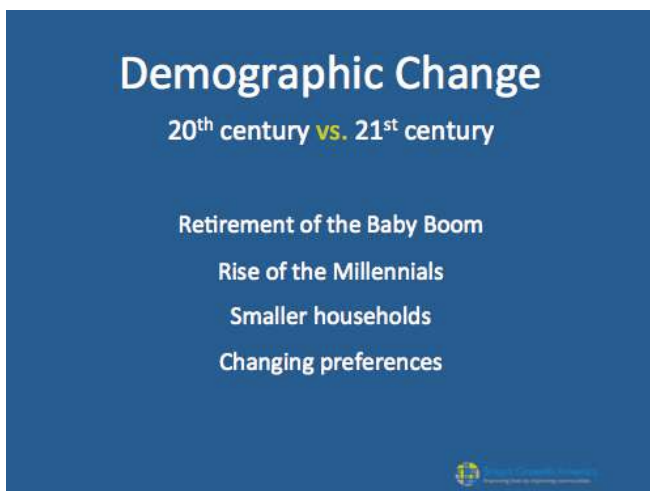
Communities around the nation are always concerned about their fiscal and economic health. This is especially true of small towns and rural regions.

Fiscal health means a local government's bottom line: Does the life cycle cost of a project's investment—upfront infrastructure, ongoing service provision and eventual repair and maintenance—cost more than what it produces in tax revenue?

Economic health includes the general economic well-being of the community and its region: How does new investment and development add to or detract from the creation of economic competitiveness, fiscal efficiency and sustainability, jobs, jobs access, retention of local talent, cultural identity and wealth?

In approaching these questions for Tulsa, as in any part of the country today, it is important to bear three trends in mind:

Our nation’s demographics are changing in a way that profoundly affects the housing market in large cities and rural areas alike.



Demographic trends are moving the housing market strongly away from conventional suburban housing.¹ The two biggest demographic groups in the nation—retiring Baby Boomers and Millennials (18-39 year-olds) — both express strong preferences for a more walkable, urban/village lifestyle. Indeed, a growing percentage of Millennials prefer to live without cars altogether or to live a “car-lite” lifestyle. The vast majority of net new households being formed have no

children at home, and most of them are one and two-person households – which are much more likely to prefer a walking lifestyle. Furthermore, the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has fallen below population growth, while the demand for public transportation has been rising steadily. These trends are a complete departure from those experienced for decades in the 20th century.

¹ See; “The Changing Shape of American Cities,” Luke J. Juday, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia, March 2015.

“Demographic Reversal: Cities Thrive, Suburbs Sputter,” William H. Frey, Brookings Institution, State of Metropolitan America Series, June 29, 2012.

The formula for economic growth is changing.

The 21st Century Economy

- Creativity, knowledge, innovation
- Importance of networking, interaction
- Demand for skilled workers

"A region's most important source of competitive advantage is its workforce. . . it's the pool of talent that attract firms, particularly in the knowledge economy."

-- Ania Ania Wleickowski,
Harvard Business Review, May 2010

 Smart Growth America
Promoting Smart Growth Communities

Business growth used to be driven by large corporations that operated in a fashion that was both private in ownership structure and linear in manufacturing and production. In the past, new research breakthroughs occurred in sealed research laboratories controlled by the companies that owned them. Manufacturing and other business processes occurred in assembly-line situations, with little interaction across or inside industries. These conditions

led to communities that featured large, sealed-off campuses and tended to be linear in their arrangements.

Today, business growth is driven by collaboration among many types of entities — private companies, research institutions, universities, and others — that must interact frequently and work together creatively. This trend requires cities and communities that encourage interaction and collaboration — the opposite of the older model described above. How communities are designed directly impacts their ability to create interactive and collaborative environments.

Most significantly, the innovation economy, as it is sometimes called, depends heavily on skilled workers. The companies that are driving innovation are pursuing highly educated talent, especially among Millennials. Increasingly, companies find it necessary to locate in places where their target workforce wants to live. Increasingly, that means walkable communities.

People on the move are looking to relocate to places with a high quality of life. In fact, they are willing to sacrifice salary for location. High quality of life is defined more and more by the character of the town center than by the size of a front yard or square footage of a home.

Similarly, the market for retail is changing. Suburban shopping malls and retail centers that thrived for decades are struggling as a result of oversupply and a shift in shopping preferences. With online buying playing a bigger role for consumers (especially for bargain hunters), many are looking for a more authentic experience when they shop in person. Consumers are demonstrating strong preferences for shopping locally at unique establishments that offer handcrafted, regional products. They prefer this

experience to be a short distance from their homes and offices and within a comfortably walkable town center. This is bringing new value to traditional walkable main streets. Tulsa and the focus areas of this workshop are well suited to taking advantage of this shift in consumer choice.



Boise, Idaho (Source: BoiseCentre.com)

Sprawling development patterns are making it more difficult for local governments to balance their budgets.



Development patterns that sprawl outward from a town center require extensive investments in capital infrastructure and ongoing service delivery. Sprawling development requires more infrastructure to serve relatively few people and requires service providers such as firefighters and school buses to travel farther. More compact development patterns reduce both life-cycle infrastructure costs and operating costs.²

A 2013 study by Smart Growth America, *Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development*³, concluded that, compared to conventional suburban development, smart growth patterns can achieve savings of one-third or more in upfront infrastructure cost, and 10% annually in ongoing operating expenses. Smart growth development patterns can generate up to ten times more revenue on a per-acre basis.

More recently, SGA's *Core Values: Why American Companies are Moving*

² For more information, see: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/research/the-fiscal-implications-of-development-patterns/>

³ The full report can be downloaded at, <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/building-better-budgets>.

*Downtown*⁴ examines the characteristics, motives, and preferences of companies that have either relocated, opened new offices, or expanded into walkable downtowns between 2010 and 2015. Smart Growth America partnered with global real estate advisors Cushman & Wakefield to identify nearly 500 companies that have made such a move in the past five years. Of those, Smart Growth America interviewed representatives from more than 40 companies to gain a better understanding of this emerging trend. These companies' new locations are in areas that are dramatically more walkable than previous sites. The average Walk Score of companies' previous locations was 52; the average Walk Score of the new locations is 88. Similarly, Transit Scores grew from an average of 52 to 79 and Bike Scores bumped from an average of 66 to 78.

This trend is visible across the country, in big cities and small ones alike and should be a factor in the economic development strategy of all communities, including Tulsa.

Note: *Not all of these trends will be completely relevant in every situation. Rural communities are more reliant on private automobile ownership, and transit is often less feasible in these situations. But it is important to bear all three in mind in considering the fiscal and economic health of any community.*

Participant viewpoints

The following summarizes each group's discussion:

71st and Memorial (Map A) – The group discussing this location would like to make a more pedestrian-friendly environment that has a clear sense of place and more dense development. They suggested that it have a mix of uses with a name and clear identity. What is now 71st and Memorial should have a public center, not necessarily a greenspace – although they would like to see more trees and parks, particularly focusing on the park that abut adjacent neighborhoods.

The redesigned site should also have a retail “face” addressing traffic and connecting more completely with surrounding neighborhoods. (The first floor should be retail and the top floor residential with shared parking between.)

The group suggested that tax increment financing and tax credits (including low income housing credits) are ways to fund redevelopment. The city or another entity could either acquire parcels for redevelopment or existing landowners could come to consensus around a particular redevelopment pattern incorporating the above goals.

⁴ The report is available for download from <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/core-values-why-american-companies-are-moving-downtown/>

Pine and Peoria (Map B) – Participants in this group hope that the BRT along Peoria results in increased density. The area needs more commercial density including a local grocery store to meet residents’ needs and additional restaurant options. Higher density housing (2-3 story, 4-6 unit buildings) and public / green space would also be assets. Existing homes currently turn their backs to Peoria. There are pedestrian infrastructure concerns – including walkability from senior housing and the need for safer crosswalks at this intersection.

23rd and Southwest Blvd (Route 66) / Eugene Field (Map C) – The group discussing this area recommended a four phase redevelopment that includes the following and keeps open space with recreational enhancements:

- Phase I
 - Multi-use (residential and commercial – restaurants / bars / grocery store)
 - Walkable with public transit access
 - Draw people across the river from downtown to stimulate further development
- Phase II
 - Walkable Neighborhood / residential
 - Tie to Phase IV (described below)
- Phase III
 - Outdoor development
 - Contamination issue
- Phase IV
 - Business / industrial

21st and Yale (Map D) – The group encouraged redevelopment that leverages mid-town and existing infrastructure and that is focused on the northeast side of this intersection. The site currently has residential adjacent to it so the redevelopment should maintain access to these existing neighborhoods. Redevelopment patterns should focus on commercial first and residential second. As with the other focus areas, green space (a park or recreational facilities) should play an important role. With the fairgrounds nearby, additional hotels and restaurants would support that venue. The developer should limit and coordinate access to existing public streets while providing structured parking.

The following summarizes the SGA team’s observations of the assets, opportunities, obstacles / disconnects, and overall actions for success.

Assets

- Comprehensive plan and a funding source that are supportive of smart growth principles – and that provide actionable steps to encourage smart growth development
- Current local government perceived to be supportive of smart growth
- Sales tax revenue to pay for public safety, economic development and transportation improvements – including \$11 million for the Citywide Beautification, Rt 66 and Citywide Revitalization

Opportunities

- Peoria BRT Project
- Several large redevelopable parcels at the 23rd and Southwest Blvd site
- Woodland Hills Mall site offers a large acreage of land suitable to eventually be redeveloped into a town center

Obstacles/Disconnects

- Sales tax revenue declining due to Internet sales, suburbanization of sales tax, as well as the cyclical nature of oil and natural gas
- Automobile-centric culture – need to educate people and encourage them to ride transit; transit needs to be more convenient and reliable
- Historical disconnect between smart growth and economic growth

Actions for Success

Based on the SGA team's observations from the driving tour, the input received during the workshop, and breadth of work in other communities in similar circumstances, we offer the following recommendations and associated action steps:

Recommendations

1. Continue to invest in downtown Tulsa even as a future vision for the focus areas discussed in the workshop is refined and implemented.

Downtown Tulsa as it exists today is walkable with many tall buildings and beautiful churches that the city should celebrate and be proud of. The Tulsa Arts District, comprising the northern portion of downtown is a historic neighborhood serving as a hub for retail, restaurants, and nightlife. There are other major destinations in downtown. For example, the BOK Center is a



major entertainment venue while the Blue Dome District offers other nightlife.

Source: Flickr user Phil Baker

In 2010, Tulsa published the Downtown Area Master Plan which found that downtown Tulsa is vibrant during the day on weekdays, but less so after hours and on weekends. By focusing on additional residences, nightlife, tourism, and conventions, downtown can become activated 24/7. In addition to revitalizing downtown, the Master Plan calls for connecting downtown to the River Parks system.

Between 2010 and 2015, the Master Plan's progress report notes 126 new or redevelopment projects throughout downtown. During the same time period, 4 downtown buildings were added to the National Register of Historic Places, as were six districts within downtown. In addition, 26 projects representing 1,780 housing and lodging units received funding by 2015. Tulsa already recognizes the need to focus on downtown. During visioning for the 2010 comprehensive plan, this was reflected in the number of Tulsans who supported a future focus on housing and employment in downtown. Thus the city and its residents already understand the importance of focusing on downtown.

However, even as the city looks to redevelop its existing suburban strip mall developments further out, it is critical that the city maintain its commitment to and investment in the downtown core. Downtown remains the heart of the city and revitalization of other areas of the city of Tulsa should not come at its expense.

While localities such as the Tulsa Arts District are popular places to spend time after hours and have much to offer the visitor, certain other portions of downtown lack this cohesive identity. Yet all of downtown has much to offer. It is critical not to overlook the potential of any block of it. Revitalizing other parts of downtown need not negatively impact the Tulsa Arts District or other established areas.

Seek to redevelop existing surface parking lots as infill

Downtown currently suffers from an abundance of surface parking lots. In fact, the two parking lots adjacent to the downtown venue where the workshop was held served as an object lesson and point of discussion among those present.

SGA recommends that the city work with the private sector to redevelop existing parking lots and other parcels suitable for dense infill, pocket parks, and other amenities. These redevelopments should include pedestrian infrastructure with special emphasis on placing buildings facing the block with parking behind, underground, or in ramps with ground floor retail.

Focusing on additional residential, retail, and restaurants in downtown will give the district new life as both a place to call home and as a destination for those living in other parts of Tulsa and beyond.

Midtown Circulator/ Downtown Circulator

Tulsa Transit offers the Tulsa Downtown Trolley, a downtown circulator bus on Friday and Saturday evenings every 30 minutes from 6pm until midnight. Various downtown business owners and the City of Tulsa fund the Loop. The fare is free.

While this route serves several important districts of downtown including the Tulsa Arts District, its service hours and route are both limited. As noted above, it currently operates only on Friday and Saturday evenings. The SGA team recommends securing funding to expand the service hours to daytime on weekdays and weekends as well as to other evenings during the week. Further,



Source: Flickr user Tom Baddley

the route could be expanded south to include more areas of downtown. Currently, it does not go further south than 6th Street.

As Route 66 tourist infrastructure, parks, and other waterfront amenities open, these features will bring new tourists to town who are likely staying in hotels located in other areas of downtown. These tourists will also want to explore the Tulsa Arts District for dinner, shopping, or nightlife. Thus, the Loop can be a critical link for them. Expanding the trolley's service area and operating times will allow tourists and others to explore these areas without having to park at each destination. This will reduce parking demand. Finally, the headway (frequency) of the route should be sufficient to ensure that passengers can "hop on, hop off" as they desire without worrying about how long it will be until the next bus comes.

Tulsa has plans for a midtown circulator that would connect additional shopping locations as well as destinations on the river. This service is planned to launch in late 2018 or early 2019. Easy to understand and well-timed connections to the existing downtown trolley route as well as to other transit options will encourage people to travel to their destination entirely on transit.

Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and connections

The southern portions of downtown are located within reasonable walking distance of the Arkansas River and related amenities, including the River Parks East Trail. The city should ensure that easy and safe pedestrian and bicycle access exists between downtown and the trail system as well as other river amenities.

Placemaking and streetscaping efforts

Tulsa should ensure that wayfinding signage for pedestrians, bicyclists, and others call out and point to popular destinations both within downtown and adjacent to it. This may include, but not be limited to, districts within downtown, museums, the BOK Center, the riverfront, parks, Route 66 attractions, and other amenities. Additional markers describing the history of downtown, particularly of designated historic districts and buildings, will help the city recognize and celebrate its history.

A tree canopy, water features, trash receptacles and additional seating throughout all of downtown, perhaps funded by a merchants association, tax increment financing, business improvement district, local tourism tax revenues, or another entity, will be great assets. The tree canopy and water features will help keep the pavement cool in often hot and dry Tulsa. These amenities would beautify the area and encourage people to walk through the downtown by providing comfortable

places to rest during their explorations. In addition to well maintained sidewalks throughout downtown, bicycle racks will also encourage residents to bike to downtown. The community should also seek additional locations in downtown for public art.

The result will be a far more walkable downtown that presents a better face to those who live and work in the district. Improving the health of your heart pays dividends to the health of your entire body. Similarly, focusing on the economic health and prosperity of downtown Tulsa will have the potential to create greater economic energy throughout the city.

Short-term Actions (3-6 months)

- Begin discussions with parking lot owners regarding redevelopment as infill
- Seek funding for expansion of the Tulsa Downtown Trolley to provide service on weekdays and during the day on weekends operated using the existing partnership or through Tulsa Transit once funding is secured
- Continue implementation of Go Plan and Walkability Assessment recommendations.

Medium-term Actions (6-12 months)

- Begin discussions with Tulsa Transit and funding partners to expand the Tulsa Downtown Trolley circulator route both within downtown and potentially connecting to other new or existing routes (such as a Midtown Circulator route) connecting nearby neighborhoods utilizing Vision Tulsa dedicated funding.
- Begin work on any sidewalks identified as needing improvements and design them to be Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant.
- Implement benches and trash receptacles at suitable locations throughout all of downtown such as pocket parks to encourage residents and visitors to rest and linger.
- Install additional wayfinding and historical signage that allows visitors to explore and learn about the history of downtown.
- Consider temporarily repurposing one or more parking spaces as outdoor dining at one or more restaurants during warmer months.⁵

Long-term Actions (12 months and longer)

- While downtown already has some rotating examples of public art through the Urban Core Art Project, create a plan for public art in the downtown that

⁵ As an example, see <http://archive.jsonline.com/business/two-east-side-parking-spaces-replaced-by-14-outdoor-dining-tables-b9982256z1-220860751.html/>

involves the community, both as participants in the process and as artists, likely coordinated by the Tulsa Arts Commission and/or an arts coordinator employed by the city.

- Investigate lighting design to increase pedestrian and safety during evening and nighttime hours.
- Implement a tree canopy and water features at suitable locations throughout downtown as funding allows.
- Consider the application of the following features to increase pedestrian safety and visibility to drivers:
 - Traffic calming techniques such as a planted median in the middle of busier streets
 - Additional signage or raised crosswalks
 - Different pavement types or colors to distinguish crosswalks from the roadway pavement
 - Consider using High-Intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) or Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs)⁶ at key light activity intersections or crossings
- Implement bike lanes to connect the downtown with neighborhoods and recreational destinations.
- Add additional human-scale street lighting around sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as at important destinations, in the downtown. Ensure there is sufficient lighting on connecting routes to nearby neighborhoods.

2. Invest in the redevelopment of the Pine and Peoria corridor as a catalyst for future redevelopment of the other focus areas as well as other locations within Tulsa.

The SGA team recommends that the City of Tulsa select one of the focus areas for redevelopment as a catalyst for potential redevelopment of the other focus areas (as well as other locations in the city) at a later date.

The Pine / Peoria corridor in North Tulsa is a suitable focus area to begin with for several reasons:

- Tulsa's comprehensive plan calls for focus on and investment in disadvantaged neighborhoods
- BRT service along Peoria is expected to begin in Spring 2019
- Public and political support

⁶ For more information on this technology, see <http://www.bikewalknc.org/2015/04/understanding-pedestrian-signals/>

- There is a former grocery store site that is suitable for redevelopment as a mixed use project with commercial and residential

Those present at the workshop expressed hope that this new higher frequency transit service will increase density in this focus area. While there are many examples of transit lines that have brought robust development near stops, there are also examples of stops near transit—even high frequency rail transit—that have failed to attract and support development. Transit alone is not enough. The development policies and land use near stops is every bit as important as the transit itself.

The less fixed and permanent the transit, the more important the land use policy and incentives supporting the transit will be in generating the development sought. What transit can do is help to focus development and concentrate efforts to encourage economic development and economic activity in a particular area. It can also show businesses and developers that the community is committed to the area. The more permanent and unmoving the transit appears to be, the better.

Not all development near transit is Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). TOD is characterized by a concentration of development that supports transit users and drives users to the transit system. The transit, in turn, encourages and serves the development. However, development can occur near transit that does not enhance that transit investment. For example, wide, fast roads near transit stops can make walking dangerous, discourage transit use and make the site less attractive for development. Another mistake is surrounding a transit station with a large parking lot, which essentially separates the transit from the community (and vice versa).

Since the BRT will directly impact the future of the Pine and Peoria focus area, the above is intended to provide some guidance to Tulsa in planning this and future transit networks. By including this focus area in the workshop and creating a Peoria Avenue BRT Land Use Study⁷, Tulsa has clearly already thought about their vision for land use in the corridor. The BRT can help augment these goals although there is no clear evidence yet from other U.S. cities regarding the impact BRT alone can have on economic development and property values.

SGA agrees with the assessment of those at the workshop as well as the comprehensive plan's recommendation that a mixed-use development with

⁷ <https://peoriabrt.wordpress.com/>

commercial (including a grocery store) and residential will be a good first step for this corridor. As this development comes to fruition and the BRT service begins operation, additional redevelopment can occur at other locations along the corridor.

Short-term Actions (3-6 months)

- Create a working group to discuss a unified redevelopment of the major parcels in the Pine and Peoria focus area – particularly a mixed-use vision for the former grocery store site.
- Consider retaining an urban design consultant to help the community implement the vision for the focus area.
- Proactively meet with site owners to discuss partnering with them on redevelopment.

Medium-term Actions (6-12 months)

- Research funding options (such as low to moderate income tax credits, TIF districts, historic tax credits and New Market Tax Credits) to pay for the redevelopment as well as which parcels may qualify for these programs.
- Continue partnering with the site owners to keep the project moving forward.

Long-term Actions (12 months and longer)

- Using available funding sources, implement the community's vision for this focus area.

3. Create a long-term plan for each of the other focus areas that defines how the community would like to see them redeveloped over the coming decade.

While the Pine and Peoria focus area serves as a catalyst for future redevelopment in Tulsa, it is important not to overlook the redevelopment potential of the other focus areas as their present uses come to the end of their useful lives. Planning for their reconfiguration and reuse now in anticipation of change in the near future will be critical to their long-term success. The 71st and Memorial site, in particular, could eventually serve as a town center bringing people from across the region to shop, dine, and linger – ensuring that the region's major sales tax generator remains strong.

The SGA team recommends that Tulsa study each area more extensively and prepare a subarea plan for each focus area that does not already have one. The plans – prepared with extensive community engagement and input – should seek to coalesce around a shared vision for the subject location. This vision should be expressed in the plans both in writing and in a proposed graphical design for how

the redeveloped area will look.

As with the 23rd and Southwest Boulevard site, concentrating development on these sites (versus the edges of the city requiring new infrastructure such as roads and water pipes to serve them) will have a positive net fiscal impact on long-term infrastructure capital and maintenance costs. This was demonstrated in SGA's fiscal impact analysis prepared for the community.

Below are some specific redevelopment thoughts that the SGA team wishes to share about the other focus areas:

23rd and Southwest Blvd / Eugene Field: This corridor is another area ideal for redevelopment. As noted above, this area:

- Is among the closest of the focus areas to downtown, located just across the Arkansas River, a natural attraction itself.
- Includes several large parcels ripe for redevelopment – the GCC Mid-Continent concrete factory (which occupies prime riverfront real estate) and the city-owned industrial and engineering facility
- Is located close to existing and planned Route 66 tourism infrastructure as well as the new Gathering Place for Tulsa park that is currently under construction
- Has a Small Area Plan prepared in 2013 that recognizes the need to incorporate smart growth principles into the neighborhood redevelopment

The City of Tulsa's plan for the focus area includes a regional center along the riverfront (including the concrete factory and city-owned facility parcels), a main street designation along Southwest Boulevard, and a mixed-use center along W. 23rd St.

The city will need to make a decision regarding relocation of its industrial and engineering facility in this area. While the city has expressed trepidation about giving it up, the SGA team believes that it is in the city's best interest to relocate that facility. With the influx of tourism infrastructure, the land on which this facility stands will become too valuable not to redevelop – as will the prime riverfront land on which the concrete factory now stands. The Small Area Plan for this area echoes SGA's belief that these existing facilities should be redeveloped:

“The concrete plant and city maintenance yard, which occupy prime sites

along the river, are barriers to the riverfront for much of the neighborhood. The Plan identifies them as incompatible land uses in their current locations, and recommends that they be moved to other locations in the city so the sites can be redeveloped as mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhoods...New development in these locations will increase access to the riverfront for the existing neighborhoods adjacent to the sites, and unlock exciting opportunities for economic and recreational development.”

The city prepared a Route 66 Master Plan that evaluated a number of potential projects. Those projects located near the Cyrus Avery Route 66 Memorial Bridge across the river scored well in the plan’s evaluation. As the plan notes, “The importance of the bridge to Tulsa’s ability to revitalize its Route 66 corridor is underscored by the fact that the bridge is the major iconic structure remaining along Route 66 in Tulsa County and, as such, is of the most interest to Route 66 enthusiasts.”

The Rt. 66 Experience museum, once open, will bring additional tourists excited about this historic roadway to the edge of downtown Tulsa. While the museum may be slightly too far for many to walk, a walkable district located just across the river with restaurants and retail will encourage them to park their cars and patronize these businesses for lunch or a break as they continue to explore the Route 66 corridor in Tulsa and beyond.

This development can also bring new residents to the edge of downtown. As noted in SGA’s fiscal impact analysis, targeting development in areas such as this where existing infrastructure already exists will allow the city to achieve the best financial sustainability. The fiscal impact analysis also noted that the adjacent downtown district is a “hotspot” for development and redevelopment of a development in this area would likely be a positive impact.

Consistent with the recommendation of those at the workshop who discussed this focus area, SGA recommends a compact and walkable development with a mix of uses to include residential and commercial. Initially, the redevelopment should focus on the designated town center areas, including the existing concrete plant site and city-owned facility. These areas are also located close to the riverfront. Focusing on these areas would also facilitate an extension of the existing downtown circulator bus route – or an entirely new route – from the various districts of downtown. The goal would be to tie this new town center development with

existing downtown neighborhoods as well as the museum and other tourist infrastructure.

Eventually, the redevelopment effort can move to other portions of the focus area, including those designated for main street and mixed-use development.

Of course the project cannot happen overnight. As with Pine and Peoria, the redevelopment of the focus area will happen over a period of years with the success of one portion feeding the success of the next. It will also take coordination with the many developers and landowners who will need to be involved in order to secure their cooperation.

The SGA team recommends that the new developments wrap around any parking lots or structures so the buildings, which can be residential or commercial, face the street and the Arkansas River. This will help to further disguise the parking. The parking should be accessible from side streets or rear alleys to allow the major streets to remain attractive walking environments for pedestrians. This will maximize the best use of the site for those walking between various destinations.

Refer to Appendix B for a diagram showing the SGA team's recommended design of parking facilities.

The city prepared an assessment on repurposing 23rd and Southwest Boulevard in 2011 as well as a small area plan for Eugene Field in 2012. The SGA team recommends that both of these plans be reviewed and updated to reflect changes that have occurred throughout the focus area since the time these documents were prepared. As the city is trying again to receive a HUD Choice Neighborhoods award this year, now is an ideal time to do this.

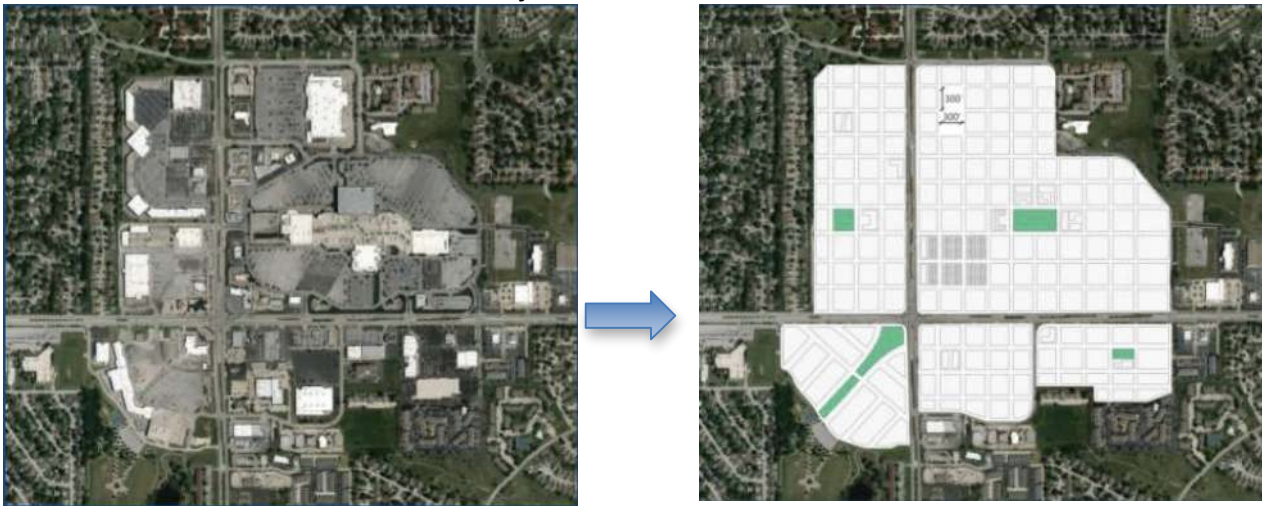
71st and Memorial – As SGA's presentation showed, downtown Tulsa comprises approximately 950 acres and the existing Woodland Hills Mall and surrounding area is 350 acres (including 118 acres of parking lots). A suburban retrofit, as presented, could replace this auto-dependent mall with an urban, walkable town center.

While the mall is likely to remain profitable for the foreseeable future, at some point it will cease to be a highly functioning retail space. The SGA team recommends that the city pursue an incremental approach for redevelopment of this corridor leaving in place retail that continues to function in its intended purpose. By starting with the best candidates for redevelopment and gradually moving to other parcels

as the need arises, the surrounding redeveloped neighborhood will contribute to revitalization of the Woodland Hills Mall site, potentially as a multiphase project, when the opportunity arises.

SGA recommends, as an ultimate vision for this focus area, a conceptual site plan with:

- Walkable 300 foot blocks (similar to downtown)
- Mixed uses and density



As noted above, the SGA recommends that such a redevelopment – particularly in the part of the city with the greatest sales tax generation – be phased to ensure its success. The phasing should gradually redevelop the area by providing new walkable commercial and residential development over a period of years.

Refer to Appendix B for a diagram showing the SGA team’s recommended design of parking facilities.

21st and Yale – This focus area’s location near the fairgrounds makes it an ideal location for new hotels, restaurants, and other related infrastructure. A mixed-use development incorporating these types of services would be a good fit for the area. In addition, the SGA team recommends the city focus on providing more dense retail development with pedestrian and bicycle connections to nearby residential neighborhoods.

Short-term Actions (3-6 months)

- Proactively meet with the owners of strip retail in each focus area to discuss the redevelopment of the site in a manner consistent with the community’s vision.

- Create committees of stakeholders (including residents, business owners, and elected officials) to proactively work for the future of each focus area
- Retail and access management studies would help the city direct efforts for revitalization focusing on commercial, keeping in mind that mixed use retail and commercial with residential is the ideal goal

Medium- and Long-term Actions (6 months and longer)

- Research funding options (such as low to moderate income tax credits, TIF districts, historic tax credits, and New Market Tax Credits) to pay for the redevelopment of these sites – and determine which parcels, if any, qualify for historic designation.
- Update existing small area plans and assessments
- Implement the community’s vision for these focus areas utilizing the momentum created by the ongoing revitalization of downtown as well as the catalytic impact of the revitalization of the Pine and Peoria focus area.

4. Ensure that the redeveloped focus areas include Complete Streets principles.

When Tulsa adopted its 2010 comprehensive plan update, it also adopted the concept of “Complete Streets”. Two years later, the city council adopted, and the Mayor signed, a Complete Streets resolution. In 2013, Tulsa adopted a Complete Streets Procedural Manual⁸ which provides:

- An overview of Complete Streets
- A process for implementing Complete Streets,
- Design elements
- Methodology for analysis
- Performance measures

Refer to Appendix C for a list of helpful Complete Streets resources online.

Taking a Complete Streets policy from paper into practice is not easy, but providing some momentum with specific implementation steps can help. Some policies establish a task force or commission to work toward policy implementation. There are four key steps for successful implementation:

1. Restructure procedures to accommodate all users on every project;
2. Develop new design policies and guides;

⁸ https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1795/completestreetsproceduralmanual_11-26-13.pdf

3. Offer workshops and other educational opportunities to transportation professionals, community leaders, and residents; and
4. Institute better ways to measure performance and collect data on how well the streets are serving all users. Each of these steps requires agencies to think in new ways and, in order to do so they must include a wider range of stakeholders in decision-making.

Medium and Long-term Actions (6 months and longer)

- Incorporate Complete Streets policy into roadway and intersection redesigns as they occur.

5. Create an implementation committee to move these recommendations forward – or assign / charge Tulsa Economic Development Commission and / or Vision Steering Committee with this responsibility.

The workshop hosted by Smart Growth America was a great first step towards revitalizing these focus areas – while not losing sight of the importance of downtown. Tulsa should be proud of its local assets and amenities. Those in the workshop were enthusiastic about the future of the community in terms of its vision and opportunities.

Building local leadership capacity is vital to move these next steps forward. Smart Growth America recommends establishing an implementation committee to take responsibility for these next steps. Members of the committee should come from, but not necessarily be limited to, the following sectors of the community:

- Local governments – City of Tulsa, Tulsa County, INCOG (both elected officials and staff)
- Major employers
- Small business owners
- Healthcare facilities
- Tulsa Convention and Visitors Bureau / Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce
- School districts and higher education
- Other citizens

Alternatively, if the city does not desire to create a new committee for this effort, it may assign the oversight for implementation to one or more existing committees such as the Economic Development Commission and/or the Vision Steering Committee.

It is critical that the city not accept any development in these focus areas as a step forward but which may lead to incompatible land uses. SGA encourages the city's leaders to continue putting the long-term vision and goals of the city (as expressed in the comprehensive plan) ahead of pursuing short-term financial gain comprised of uses incompatible with their long-term strategic vision for the community.

Appendix A: Workshop Sign In Sheets



SMART GROWTH AMERICA Sign-In Sheet
SGA Technical Assistance Workshop
July 18, 2017

NAME	ORGANIZATION	SIGNATURE
Suzanna Averbach	COT	Suzanna Averbach
ART KLAWER	THA	Art Klawer
Kurt Kraft	COT	Kurt Kraft
DAWN WARRICK	CoT	Dawn Warrick
LUISA KMG	THD	Luisa Kmg
TERRY BOLE	COT	Terry Bole
Martha Schultz	COT	Martha Schultz
SCOTT CLARK	TEDC/COT	Scott Clark
Matt Letzig	THA	Matt Letzig
Tern Cole	THA	Tern Cole
Aaron Darden	THA	Aaron Darden
Janet Pieren	TEDC	Janet Pieren
Rose Washington	TEDC	Rose Washington
Maggie Hoey	TYPros	Maggie Hoey
Jason Swartz	MTR	Jason Swartz
Brian Diabie	INCOG	Brian Diabie
Jed Cochran	Sen. Inhofe	Jed Cochran
Kan Kamas	TRC	Kan Kamas



Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities



CITY OF Tulsa

A New Kind of Energy.

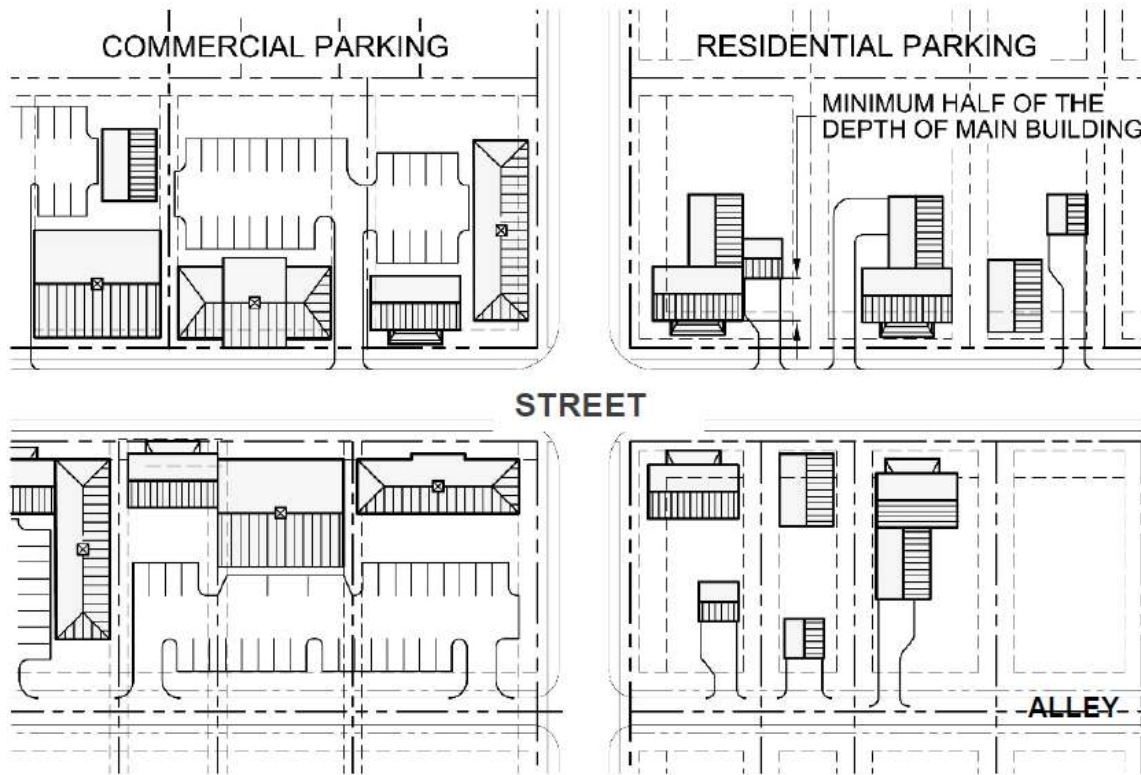
SMART GROWTH AMERICA Sign-In Sheet

SGA Technical Assistance Workshop
July 19, 2017

NAME	ORGANIZATION	SIGNATURE
Suzanna Aberbach	COT	<i>Suzanna Aberbach</i>
TERRY BALL	COT	<i>Terry Ball</i>
Ken Busby	Route 66 Alliance	<i>Ken Busby</i>
James Wagner	COT	<i>James Wagner</i>
Meloyde BLANCETT	OK House of Reps	<i>Meloyde Blancett</i>
Shanese Slaton	LFFF	<i>Shanese Slaton</i>
Natalie Beechle	LFFF	<i>Natalie Beechle</i>
Brian Diebise	INCOG	<i>Brian Diebise</i>
Janet Pierson	TEDC	<i>Janet Pierson</i>
Jessica Brent	2nd Main Street	<i>Jessica Brent</i>
JONATHAN BRODS	Tulsa PD	<i>Jonathan Brods</i>
Jed Cochran	Sen. Inhofe	<i>Jed Cochran</i>
Maggie Hoey	TYPros	<i>Maggie Hoey</i>
PAUL ZACHARY	CITY	<i>Paul Zachary</i>
Nawn Wanick		

Appendix B: Parking Diagram

The SGA team recommends that projects incorporate parking underground, in ramps with ground floor retail, or surface parking as shown in the diagram below.



Source: Marshall, Virginia draft form-based code

Appendix C: Complete Streets Web Resources

While Tulsa has already adopted a Complete Streets policy and procedural manual¹, the following list of Complete Streets resources is provided as a reference to the city in the event any questions or issues arise. Click on any of the links to go to the resource.

Implementation

Once a Complete Streets policy is in place, the day-to-day decisions a transportation agency and community leaders make in funding, planning, design, maintenance, and operations should be aligned to the goals of that adopted policy document. The Coalition helps communities implement their policies by collecting and sharing best practices and examples.

- [Taking Action on Complete Streets](#). This guide describes five types of activities identified by the Coalition that are needed to reorient a transportation agency's work to fully and consistently consider the safety of all users:
 - Planning for Implementation;
 - Changing Procedure and Process;
 - Reviewing and Updating Design Guidance;
 - Offering Training and Educational Opportunities; and,
 - Measuring Performance.
- Resources, activities, and best practices from communities across the country are [available here](#).
- [Answering the Costs Question](#). A handbook and slide presentation that helps transportation professionals, advocates, and decision-makers make the case that implementing Complete Streets won't break the bank.
- [Do Complete Streets cost more than incomplete streets?](#) Shapard, J. and Cole, M. (2013). "Do complete streets cost more than incomplete streets?" Proceedings, Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, 2013. Paper 13-4283.
- [Implementation Resources](#). The Coalition's series of research-based fact sheets on specific elements of Complete Streets implementation is available for download.

¹ https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/1795/completestreetsproceduralmanual_11-26-13.pdf

Topics include: *Costs of Complete Streets; Change Travel Patterns; Ease Traffic Woes; Complete and Green Streets; Networks of Complete Streets; Rural Areas and Small Towns.*

Funding priority systems and programs

- [Project solicitation & evaluation: Scoring criteria](#). Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City, MO region).
- [New Jersey Complete Streets program](#), with links to Local Assistance program
- [Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative](#). See case study in *The Innovative DOT*.

Street design and typology examples

- [Implementing Complete Streets: Major and Collector Street Plan](#). Nashville, TN.
- [Urban Street Design Guidelines](#). Charlotte, NC.
- [Right-of-Way Improvements Manual](#). Seattle, WA.

Road diets

- Federal Highway Administration. (2010). [“Evaluation of Lane Reduction ‘Road Diet’ Measures on Crashes” \[Summary report\]](#). Publication Number FHWA-HRT-10-053.
- Federal Highway Administration. (n.d.). [“Proven Safety Countermeasures: ‘Road Diet.’”](#) Publication Number FHWA-SA-12-013.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. (2013). [“Road Diet Conversions: A Synthesis of Safety Research.”](#) Reported prepared for the Federal Highway Administration DTFH61-11-H-00024.

Other general implementation resources

- [Complete Streets in the Southeast—A Toolkit](#), from the National Complete Streets Coalition and AARP, features best practices in policy development and implementation from the Southeast United States. It also includes customizable outreach tools, such as letters to the editor and op-eds.
- [Completing Our Streets: The Transition to Safe and Inclusive Transportation Networks](#). Barbara McCann's book on the Complete Streets implementation process told through the stories of practitioners.

Blogs and Newsletters

For ongoing news and links to useful resources from across the web, read the [National Complete Streets Coalition blog](#) and sign up for the Coalition’s monthly e-newsletter. The newsletter includes updates on federal, state, and local complete streets policies, other news from the campaign and across the country, and a summary of resources that you can use.

Current and past issues and a sign-up form are [available here](#).

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