



**Smart Growth America**  
Improving lives by improving communities

# Final Report

October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2018  
Assistance Agreement No. PI 83610901

# Contents

1) Overview & introduction	4
2) Geographic impact	4
3) Workshop tools	5
4) Applications for each year of the program	9
5) Workshops delivered	9
6) Workshop outcomes	13
7) Follow-up conversations	13
8) Complete Streets Consortium	26
9) Tennessee Consortium Series	26
10) Colorado Consortium Series	28
11) Consortium Series distance learning modules	29
12) Overall lessons learned	30
13) Lessons learned from unsuccessful workshops	35
14) Close	36

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A** Quarterly Report: Q4 2018 (July 1, 2018 to September 30, 2018)

**Appendix B** Links to Next Steps Memos

**Appendix C** Database of application materials and workshop presentations

**Appendix D** Summary of Media Coverage of Workshops

**Appendix E** List of Local Leaders

## Overview and introduction

Smart Growth America (SGA) received an EPA Assistance Award on August 30, 2011 for the project period of 10/01/2011 through 09/30/2018. The assistance identification number for this award is PI-83610901. As prescribed in the cooperative agreement, Smart Growth America (SGA) is required to submit a final report on all major activity undertaken in the period. This report covers the overall performance period as well as the fourth quarter of Year 7 of the cooperative agreement—the period of July 1 through September 30, 2018.

The work encompassed two Smart Growth America project managers over the performance period:

- Roger Millar (2011 to 2015)
- John Robert Smith (2015 to 2018)

## Geographic impact

Initial Geographic Impact. Over the seven years of this grant, the SGA team and its subconsultants conducted 90 workshops across 40 states. This included 84 workshops delivered during Years 1-6 under the Building Blocks program. Under the Complete Streets Consortium program (Year 7), an additional six workshops were delivered. This included a series of three in-person workshops delivered separately in two states (Tennessee and Colorado) over the course of several months.

Ongoing Geographic Impact. In addition, the Distance Learning Modules produced under the Consortium program have been made available as a pilot program to communities in three other states that applied to participate in the Consortium program but were selected as “runners up” during the competitive application process—Arizona, Florida, and Hawaii. The Distance Learning Modules offer the opportunity to expand the lessons learned from the consortia to new places. It was the intention of EPA, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and SGA that the final product would live on, offering tools that can be accessed on a fee basis by other communities moving forward. This will extend the good work of the consortia effort. Urban planners will be able to earn continuing education credits for viewing the modules and successfully completing the associated quizzes. SGA has completed the two beginner-level modules specified in our agreement with EPA. Due to the success of the pilot, SGA is pursuing additional funding to create intermediate- and expert-level modules as requested by the pilot participants.

## Workshop tools

For the first five years of the Building Blocks program, SGA offered a choice of 12 workshop tools that applicant communities could select from when applying. The tools and a brief description of each one follow.

- Implementing smart growth 101: Smart growth strategies help towns and cities across the country grow stronger economically by using land strategically, making the most of existing resources, and using public funds to catalyze private development. Yet many communities face barriers or are uncertain how to implement smart growth. This workshop draws on SGA's expertise to provide actionable steps that the community can use to overcome the barriers to smart growth and build stronger economies now and for generations to come. *Provider: Smart Growth America*
- Planning for economic and fiscal health: Growth-sensitive policies can help communities save money now, reduce their liabilities for the future, and use targeted investment to spur economic development. This workshop draws on successful private and public sector lessons to help local leaders foster smart growth communities that cost their taxpayers less to build, run, and maintain. This workshop first presents the latest lessons in how smart growth saves money for local governments, makes money for businesses, and is integral for the long-term fiscal and economic health of the community. Using an interactive and hands-on method, the workshop then shows how to apply these lessons in the community. *Provider: Smart Growth America*
- Regional planning for small communities: This tool helps smaller communities understand how to plan for and manage growth in a regional context. The workshop helps regions develop the capacity to identify where growth is most likely to occur and to create strategies for managing that growth to preserve community character while enhancing economic competitiveness and quality of life. *Provider: Smart Growth America*
- Sustainable land use code audit: Audits of local land use codes are being undertaken by an increasing number of communities that recognize their zoning and subdivision regulations are an important key to long-term sustainable development patterns and practices and economic growth. These code audits examine 10-12 sustainability issues such as energy conservation, renewable energy, and community health that are chosen by the community. The SGA team provides an assessment of barriers and regulatory gaps in the codes to attaining community sustainability goals in these areas and potential implementation strategies. *Provider: Smart Growth America and Clarion Associates*
- Smart growth zoning codes for small cities: Smaller cities and rural areas often have very different growth and development issues from their big city cousins, but their zoning codes are often drawn from the same templates. This workshop will offer a menu of "quick fixes" that local governments can adopt in their zoning codes to address land use with strategies tailored to small cities and rural areas. *Provider: Smart Growth America and Clarion Associates*

- Complete Streets: Complete Streets policies ensure that all future street projects respond to the needs of everyone using the roadway. These workshops help communities set new priorities for transportation investments, write Complete Streets policies, and tackle implementation challenges. Three distinct workshops are offered to meet the needs of communities at different stages of Complete Streets familiarity:
  1. **Laying the Foundation for Complete Streets** introduces the Complete Streets concept and its benefits, and gives participants a chance to try out some Complete Streets planning tools during small group exercises.
  2. **Policy Development** helps participants start to develop a policy customized to their community. Through small group exercises, participants compare existing practice to Complete Streets policy models, identifying the critical elements to include in a new policy.
  3. **Policy Implementation** helps participants identify ways to more effectively implement their policies. Participants learn how to change their transportation decision-making process to routinely balance the needs of all users. They also learn the four steps to Complete Streets implementation and best practices in tackling issues such as limited right of way, costs concerns, balancing user needs, and new street classification systems.

*Provider: Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition*

- Walkability audit: The audit is an assessment and training workshop that includes a technical presentation, a walking tour of the specific focus area of the workshop, partnership-building activities, visioning exercises, a short design session, and the creation of a working group. The workshop can be developed to accommodate local needs and contexts, and has been effectively used in all regulatory environments. A community-wide or stakeholder presentation by the team can be made in the evening. *Provider: Smart Growth America and the Livable Communities Institute*
- Transportation performance measurement: This assistance provides an introduction to transportation system performance measurement and reporting. Based on broad, inclusive public conversations about desired future conditions, communities can establish objectives-driven planning, programming, and design processes coupled with monitoring and reporting methods that improve the accountability and effectiveness of their transportation programs and systems. *Provider: Smart Growth America and Charlier Associates, Inc.*
- Parking audit: This tool provides a neutral setting where an impartial parking expert can evaluate local policies and practices and offer advice based on the state of the practice, with an emphasis on what works well and what should be avoided. The audit can be community-wide or can focus on a specific district. *Provider: Smart Growth America and Charlier Associates, Inc.*
- Implementing Transit-Oriented Development 101: This tool provides technical assistance to communities interested in transit-oriented development (TOD) and how it can help a region shape growth. It will help the community define successful TOD and provide an overview of TOD at the regional, corridor, and station area

scale. *Provider: Smart Growth America and Strategic Economics*

- Cool planning: This workshop seeks to actively involve communities in the process of finding solutions that can be implemented at the local level to slow climate change. Specific community development, land use, and transportation planning techniques can enable communities to reduce their carbon footprints and will be covered in depth in this workshop. The workshop will draw on a technical assistance team that has facilitated hundreds of smart growth and sustainable community development presentations, programs, and workshops in communities across the U.S. *Provider: Smart Growth America and Otak, Inc.*
- Using LEED ND to accelerate the development of sustainable communities: The planning and development of sustainable communities can be accelerated through local government leveraging of the LEED for Neighborhood Development (ND) rating system. This workshop teaches local government staff a three-step leveraging process:
  - 1) **Identifying** ND-eligible lands;
  - 2) **Catalyzing** projects on those lands; and
  - 3) **Amending** land-use and transportation plans to expand eligible land supply and improve vicinity conditions so as to increase achievable ND points.*Provider: Smart Growth America and Criterion Planners*

Three additional tools were added in subsequent years of the program:

- Fiscal Impact Analysis (Year 5): A technical assistance workshop that provides education about the opportunities and costs related to different development patterns through use of a fiscal analysis model that accounts for increased cost efficiencies associated with denser development. The model includes a variety of public revenues and costs to help calculate how using compact development strategies can help a local government's bottom line. This model illustrates the connection between local land use planning and regulations and the future economic and fiscal health of municipalities and regions. *Provider: Smart Growth America*
- (Re)Building Downtown (Year 6): This tool helps communities create walkable development quickly and efficiently. The SGA team helps local public officials clarify local challenges and identify strategies to do this, including improving regulations for land use, establishing clear public investment practices, and reforming administrative processes. We also work collaboratively to develop data-driven policy arguments to demonstrate the benefits of walkable downtown development. *Provider: Smart Growth America*
- Complete Streets Consortium (Year 7): This tool is designed to assist communities in implementing Complete Streets policies. Taking what SGA learned delivering our stand-alone Complete Streets tool, the Complete Streets Consortium Series delivers three workshops to three municipalities or regions within the same state. The three jurisdictions come together to form a consortium, apply as one, and receive the workshops over the span of a couple of months. As with the standard

Complete Streets workshops, the Consortium Series workshops are tailored to local contexts and barriers to Complete Streets implementation. The Consortium Series presents a great opportunity to work on Complete Streets implementation, but also to enhance relationships with other communities and state agencies.

During Year 6, SGA reduced the number of workshop tools available, eliminating:

- Regional planning for small communities
- Smart growth zoning codes for small cities
- Walkability audit
- Transportation performance management
- Implementing transit-oriented development 101

The elimination of these workshops was supplemented by the addition of the fiscal impact analysis (first made available in Year 5) and (Re)Building Downtown. The final list of workshops offered in Year 6 was as follows:

- Implementing smart growth 101
- Planning for economic and fiscal health
- Fiscal impact analysis
- Sustainable land use code audit
- Complete Streets
- Parking audit
- Cool planning
- Using LEED ND to accelerate the development of sustainable communities
- (Re)Building Downtown

The changes described above were in response to applicant demand and need. They also ensured that the workshop offerings were reflective of the most current national trends in economics and fiscal changes impacting communities. This allowed SGA to focus on the workshops that communities found to be most transformative—such as Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health. SGA was also able to strengthen the program and deliver it more cost-effectively by drawing from increased in-house expertise, reducing its reliance on subconsultants. Each deletion or addition of a workshop tool was approved by SGA's EPA Project Officer.

In Year 7, only the Complete Streets Consortium Series, described above, was offered. These workshops were offered using Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funding administered by EPA. As this is a new program, SGA's experiences delivering it are described later in this report.

## Applications for each year of the program

The following table summarizes the number of applications received during each program year:

Program Year	Number of applications received
Year 1 (2011)	89
Year 2 (2012)	65
Year 3 (2013)	98
Year 4 (2014)	112
Year 5 (2015)	66
Year 6 (2016)	57
Complete Streets Consortium	21*

## Workshops delivered

As noted above, a total of 90 workshops were delivered over the course of the program, including 84 under the Building Blocks program (Years 1-6). In Year 7, two Complete Streets Consortium workshop series were delivered, each consisting of three workshops. Workshops occurred in 40 states over the course of the seven years of the program.

The first table below summarizes the total number of workshops delivered during each project year, the specific workshop tool delivered, and their locations.

Program Year	Community	Workshop Tool Delivered
Year 1 (13 workshops delivered)	Deerfield Beach, FL	Complete Streets
	New Orleans, LA	Complete Streets
	Kimberly, ID	Cool Planning
	Eastport, ME	Cool Planning
	Tacoma, WA	LEED ND
	Newark, OH	Parking Audit
	Byram, NJ	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Gwinnett County, GA	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Northern Maine Development Commission (Caribou, ME)	Regional Planning for Small Communities
	Hershey, PA (Derry Township)	Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities
	Pima County, AZ	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
	Pittsburgh, PA	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
	Greer, SC	TOD 101
Oklahoma City, OK	Transportation	

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Workshop Tool Delivered</b>
		Performance Management
Year 2 (22 workshops delivered)	Houston, TX	Complete Streets
	Virginia Beach, VA	Complete Streets
	Cuyahoga County, OH	Complete Streets
	Boulder, CO	Cool Planning
	Chula Vista, CA	LEED ND
	Missoula County, MT	Parking Audit
	Winchester, CT	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Buena Vista Charter Township, MI	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Charlotte, NC	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Fairfax, VA	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (Silverthorne, CO)	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Truckee Meadows RPA (Reno, NV)	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Port Isabel, TX	Smart Growth 101
	Dauphin County, PA	Smart Growth 101
	Graham County, NC	Smart Growth 101
	Campbell, NY	Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities
	Park Forest, IL	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
	Blue Springs, MO	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
	Cincinnati, OH	TOD 101
	West Baltimore (Harlem Park), MD	TOD 101
	Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, IA	Transportation Performance Management
	Carlisle, IA	Walkability Audit
Year 3 (18 workshops delivered)	Hot Springs, AR	Complete Streets
	Memphis, TN	Complete Streets
	Portsmouth, NH	Complete Streets
	Kenosha, WI	Complete Streets
	East Central Florida Regional Planning Commission (Orlando, FL)	Cool Planning
	Kaua'i County, HI	Parking Audit
	Anderson, CA	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Huntington, WV	Planning for Fiscal and

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Workshop Tool Delivered</b>
		Economic Health
	Indianapolis, IN	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, IA	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Pasco County, FL	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Person County, NC	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Queensbury, NY	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes (Montana)	Smart Growth 101
	Green River, WY	Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities
	North Central Texas Council of Governments / City of Cedar Hill, TX	Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities
	San Diego, CA	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
Year 4 (14 workshops delivered)	Salisbury, MD	Walkability Audit
	Indianapolis, IN	Complete Streets
	Sanford, FL	LEED ND
	Columbia, MO	Parking Audit
	Bentonville, AR	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization, WY	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Fort Pierre, SD	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Spokane, WA	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Tucker County, WV	Regional Planning for Small Communities
	Franklin, TN	Smart Growth 101
	Macon-Bibb, GA	Smart Growth 101
	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization / Alcoa, TN	Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities
	Charlottesville, VA	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
	Knoxville, TN	TOD 101
Year 5 (10 workshops delivered)	SeaTac, WA	TOD 101
	Huntsville, AL	Complete Streets
	Lowell, MA	Complete Streets
	Kansas City, MO	Parking Audit

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Workshop Tool Delivered</b>
	Anchorage, AK	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Longwood, FL	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
	Pittsburg, KS	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health / Fiscal Impact Analysis*
	Quitman, MS	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health / Fiscal Impact Analysis*
	Chattanooga, TN	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health / Fiscal Impact Analysis
	North Little Rock, AR	Smart Growth 101
	Royal Oak, MI	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
Year 6 (6 workshops delivered)	Fitchburg, MA	(Re)Building Downtown
	East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (Appleton-Neenah-Oshkosh)	Complete Streets
	Tulsa, OK	Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health / Fiscal Impact Analysis
	Osage Nation (Oklahoma)	Smart Growth 101
	Pagosa Springs, CO	Smart Growth 101 / Fiscal Impact Analysis*
	Sitka, AK	Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
Year 7 (2 series of three workshops delivered)	Chattanooga-Knoxville-Nashville, TN	Complete Streets Consortium
	Arvada-Aurora-Westminster, CO	Complete Streets Consortium

\* These fiscal impact analyses were paid for under a USDA Rural Development cooperative agreement with Smart Growth America

The second table provides the total number of times each workshop type was delivered over the course of the program (not including the Complete Streets Consortia).

<b>Workshop Tool</b>	<b>Number of workshops delivered</b>
Complete Streets	13
Cool Planning	4
LEED for Neighborhood Development	3
Parking Audit	5
Planning for Economic & Fiscal Health	23
Planning for Economic & Fiscal Health / Fiscal Impact Analysis	2

<b>Workshop Tool</b>	<b>Number of workshops delivered</b>
Regional Planning for Small Communities	2
Smart Growth 101	9
Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities	5
Sustainable Land Use Code Audit	8
Transit-oriented Development 101	5
Transportation Performance Management	2
Walkability Audit	2
(Re)Building Downtown	1

Almost without exception, each workshop presentation team contained at least one former local elected official at the county or municipal level. The composition of the presenters makes a critical difference in the delivery of the workshop. This is because local elected officials are more engaged and more trusting of the process when there is another long serving local elected official involved in the presentation.

## Workshop outcomes

Following the in-person delivery of the workshop, each community received a detailed next steps memorandum summarizing the process and the observations of the SGA team. Our workshop presentations and recommendations are in no way “canned” approaches, but are highly customized recommendations based on these observations and the project team’s experience working in other similar communities across the country. This report, which the community was allowed to review and comment on before it was finalized, helped local leaders take the right steps after the SGA team left.

Each community also agreed to provide SGA with three progress reports following their receipt of the final next steps memo—at one month, six months, and 12 months. This created a layer of accountability that ensured the community went to work right away. The progress reports also provided SGA with a sense of the progress each community was making as well as how well the workshop content was received by both stakeholders and other citizens.

These follow up communications demonstrated that recipient communities have embraced the technical assistance they received under this program as a very positive and helpful investment in their future.

For EPA, these workshops elevated the citizens’ and local elected officials’ understanding of EPA’s broad commitment to communities’ economic health and cultural vitality.

## Follow-up conversations

In preparing this report, SGA held follow up phone calls with the majority of communities who received a workshop under this program but where it had been longer than a year since their final progress report was submitted to SGA.

The SGA team spoke with 58 of the 67 previous recipients of Building Blocks technical assistance under this program where it had been longer than one year since the community delivered their final progress report to SGA. On these calls, many communities

told us that the impacts of the workshop they received lasted far beyond the one-year reporting period. This section provides summaries of each community's individual assessment of its own progress and of any continuing impact of SGA's technical assistance.

We expect to receive final progress reports from the following communities after the end of the grant period.

- Chattanooga, TN (Year 5)
- Fitchburg, MA (Year 6)
- Osage Nation (Year 6)
- Pagosa Springs, CO (Year 6)
- Sitka, AK (Year 6)
- Tulsa, OK (Year 6)

As with other progress reports, we will post these to our website and provide them to EPA. The majority of the Complete Streets Consortium progress reports will also come in after the end of the grant. We will receive and post all of these reports without charging EPA.

What follows captures a brief description of the communities' assessment of the resilience and lasting impact of the workshop they received on their decision-making and investment choices.

### **Complete Streets**

*Note: For the Complete Streets workshops, the specific type of workshop (as described above) is indicated for each community.*

#### *Deerfield Beach, FL (Year 1) – Policy Development*

Deerfield Beach is moving forward in conjunction with its metropolitan planning organization to complete the items in a Complete Streets implementation plan and is working towards a second phase of that document. The public response so far has been overwhelmingly positive and Complete Streets practices are becoming an accepted priority in Deerfield Beach, despite leadership and staff changes since SGA's workshop. The visibility of Complete Streets will increase as a miles-long project along Hillsboro Boulevard—the city's biggest to date—moves forward. The city hopes it will demonstrate on a much larger scale what Complete Streets can offer the city.

#### *New Orleans, LA (Year 1) – Policy Implementation*

The workshop delivered a change in mindset towards Complete Streets and helped to overcome barriers. It led to an implementation strategy for Complete Streets, initially at the project level and now at a more formal level within the municipal government. Many of the same staff remains involved and there is a positively evolving mindset within the Department of Public Works—the lead agency for Complete Streets—and with elected officials. The Louisiana DOT also recognizes New Orleans' leadership and the two have a strong relationship around Complete Streets. Use of the term "Complete Streets" also played a key role in winning a local bond issue to allocate \$4 million to Complete Streets implementation in New Orleans, which will help put more projects on the ground and allow elected officials to see how people like them.

*Houston, TX (Year 2) – Policy Implementation*

The workshop, focused on the city's Museum Park Super Neighborhood, was widely attended. It was a turning point not only for projects within the neighborhood, but also across the city, unifying visions and work already underway. The workshop is still part of the city's "planning psychology" and their Complete Streets policy has been codified. The Texas Department of Transportation readily acknowledges the need for Complete Streets in Houston and has not pushed back against the city's efforts in this area.

*Virginia Beach, VA (Year 2) – Laying the Foundation for Complete Streets*

While there had been hesitant efforts toward Complete Streets prior to the workshop, the community has since embraced them and they are now a part of their transportation planning process. Complete Streets principles are included on the city's website and in their comprehensive plan. Despite elected leadership and staff changes, Complete Streets have been successfully institutionalized in the city's planning and design practices and continue to shape them. Public works and engineering staff responsible for designing right-of-ways now understand the benefits of the city's Complete Streets policy. When projects come up for design, elements of Complete Streets are included. Through the Virginia Department of Transportation's Smart Scale program, Complete Streets projects are competitive for new funding because they serve all users.

*Hot Springs, AR (Year 3) – Policy Development*

The workshop that the community received not only led to enactment of a Complete Streets ordinance for the city, but it has led to implementation of Complete Streets to their maximum benefit. Complete Streets have the support of their local elected body and this helps the city staff best serve their citizens by providing a transportation network that works for all users of all abilities.

*Kenosha, WI (Year 3)*

*\*\*No staff familiar with the workshop remains\*\**

*Memphis, TN (Year 3)*

*\*\*No response received\*\**

*Portsmouth, NH (Year 3) – Policy Implementation*

The workshop provided one more tool for their Complete Streets toolbox and continues to frame their decision-making process today, including the city and region's vision and planning. It helped the city take their existing Complete Streets policy and institutionalize it. Complete Streets have become a way of life. The progress report requirement was helpful in creating accountability for continued movement towards their goals and also helped staff keep the city council updated.

*Indianapolis, IN (Year 4) – Policy Implementation*

The workshop served to reenergize and inform the city's existing Complete Streets working group, including its work plan. The energy generated by the workshop has not abated, but rather has continued to engage a large and committed working group.

## **Cool Planning**

### *Eastport, ME (Year 1)*

As is often the case in smaller cities and towns, one or two people take ownership of projects. When they cease that effort, the work tends to fall on fallow ground. That appears to be the case with several of the initiatives that came out of SGA's workshop. Recognizing the need to continue working on the issues discussed at the workshop, the city is looking for new ways to help those who cannot pay for improvements to their homes that will save money. A community organization also continues to provide heating oil to those households who need it.

### *Kimberly, ID (Year 1)*

Since the workshop, Kimberly's downtown has come back to life. Today, their downtown is nearly 100 percent occupied, a significant shift from the past where many buildings sat vacant for many years. The city's tax base is shifting from heavily residential to one that now includes more commercial. Kimberly has seen a shift in both its elected officials and support staff, but it has continued to apply the lessons of the workshop to its downtown.

### *Boulder, CO (Year 2)*

The city's transportation master plan has nine measurable objectives that can be traced back to the workshop. The influence of the SGA workshop and the Cool Planning toolkits helped create a springboard for the city's work around the integration of land use, transportation, and climate planning over the past five years. It will continue to shape and color the city's decisions made moving forward. Despite a new mayor and council members since the workshop, Boulder's commitment to the work and vision remains strong.

### *Cuyahoga County, OH (Year 2)*

While the county has disseminated their Complete Streets toolkit as a community resource and incorporated it into numerous master plans, actual implementation within their jurisdiction has been a challenge.

### *East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (Year 3)*

The workshop continues to be an important tool in shaping the planning for the eight counties the council serves. Cooperation and coordination between the counties, their city centers, the State of Florida, and the council has resulted in significant projects and joint efforts coming to fruition. This is especially significant in a part of the country that developed almost solely as an auto-centric culture. Regardless of the issue, the regional partners have worked together to leverage a significantly improved quality of life and an economic development strategy focused around a sense of place.

## **LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND)**

### *Tacoma, WA (Year 1)*

The city felt that inclusion of LEED ND standards within two neighborhoods could be an asset to both the neighborhoods themselves as well as to Tacoma's overall smart growth and sustainability efforts. Tacoma didn't end up doing anything formal with LEED ND within those neighborhoods, but exploring LEED ND as a development model was gratifying because it supported their vision of growth for the neighborhoods. The city believes that the two neighborhoods today would rate as gold or platinum under the LEED ND scoring

rubric, if they had pursued certification. The LEED ND workshop served as a valuable lens to closely examine two focus neighborhoods and to validate their vision for their future.

*Chula Vista, CA (Year 2)*

The workshop helped kickstart local efforts to create a vision of what could be for the future of Chula Vista in terms of energy efficiency and development patterns. It planted a seed that has become institutionalized in the planning and development community as well as the city as a whole. City staff has adopted the mindset that you have to have a good neighborhood plan from the start, which includes resources, services, and connectivity. They recognize that a neighborhood can't just be solely residential but must provide services and connect to other daily needs.

*Sanford, FL (Year 4)*

Through the workshop, the community has been able to create planning overlays and supporting ordinance changes that are being considered and acted on as the community moves forward. The workshop has also informed the goals and objectives of the city's comprehensive plan. It also led to the implementation of other specific projects and programs that reinforce the city's entire LEED ND process.

**Parking Audit**

*Newark, OH (Year 1)*

\*\*No response received\*\*

*Missoula County, MT (Year 2)*

There have been staff and leadership changes at the Missoula County Fairgrounds, leading to a disconnect between the workshop and the present staff. However, an ultimate commitment to reduce asphalt dedicated to parking and increase the use of alternative transportation is clearly shared among the present staff. Implementation has moved forward on several key projects within the fairgrounds, bolstered by the design guidelines governing the fairgrounds. These design guidelines include parking requirements, as suggested at the original workshop. As in any predominantly frontier state, the political will to develop in a way that is not solely dependent on the automobile is sometimes difficult to muster. But progress has been made on biking and pedestrian friendly access, especially around the University of Montana, the town center and, to a degree, the midtown area of Missoula as well. The workshop also educated the county commissioners who hired the current fairgrounds director with the understanding of the importance of this person possessing an urban design background.

*Kaua'i County, HI (Year 3)*

The parking audit served as a catalyst for a TIGER project that was ultimately awarded funding. It also influenced the thrust of discussions around long-range community planning and economic development within the rural county. In particular, it shaped how the county thinks about and approaches parking in relation to economic development.

*Columbia, MO (Year 4)*

The parking audit workshop raised public awareness of parking supply and demand as well as growth issues. Through a lengthy public engagement process, a series of proposals and recommendations have been created and are moving towards consideration and ultimate

adoption. The workshop proved a useful tool for future land use and parking decisions. Steps have been taken in data collection around parking demand—and the community now seeks the professional expertise needed to understand and respond to that data.

### **Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health**

*Byram, NJ (Year 1)*

\*\*No response received\*\*

*Gwinnett County, GA (Year 1)*

While the original staff that supported the efforts stemming from the workshop are no longer engaged in their governments, the lessons have been embraced by the county and have continued under their own power to make sweeping changes. The county sees smart growth as investing in their future by ensuring that new development will lead to economic prosperity and ensure that it protects the county's finances.

*Buena Vista Charter Township, MI (Year 2)*

Even though Buena Vista Charter Township lost a competition with Saginaw to site the Delta College "Saginaw Center" satellite campus, they did learn the importance of the economic development strategy of creating a sense of place. The township will continue to frame their future decisions as a local government around these issues. A number of struggles have limited the ability of the community to implement their goals, but they remain committed to this approach to breathe new life into neighborhoods, existing residential tracts, and the downtown itself.

*Charlotte, NC (Year 2)*

The workshop coalesced various plans and visions from several city departments into a focused strategy for the development and redevelopment of neighborhoods. It also helped the city create lists and prioritize projects to identify those with the greatest potential to result in change. This will lead to the greatest positive impact of the citizens and the most fiscally sustainable impact for city budgets.

*Fairfax, VA (Year 2)*

The workshop both informed and continues to inspire comprehensive plan updates, zoning code amendments, public investments, and the land use strategy for the City of Fairfax. Since the workshop, this vision has been institutionalized within the government and the private sector. It is borne out through investment in more walkable land use centers and pedestrian infrastructure. Elected officials in Fairfax have had to make tough decisions but through the workshop and other opportunities, they have a better foundation for why a connected street network is desirable. They also better understand why the city is investing in street connectivity rather than merely widening existing roadways. This knowledge equips elected leadership to respond to community members concerning the reasoning behind these investments.

*Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (Year 2)*

Northwestern Colorado is a dynamic region, with an economy based on both agriculture and recreation-based tourism. The workshop's focus on economic and fiscal health has helped spur new investment in the area. It has also helped to tackle affordable housing—which has become an important regional issue since the workshop—and land use

preservation to support a more ecologically and economically sustainable future.

*Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (Year 2)*

The workshop proved to be perfectly timed for the crisis in which the community found itself at the time of application: recovery from the recession. It helped refocus the discussion from one of significant concern about the present circumstances to a broader vision for the future. The local leadership, newly elected at the time of the workshop, began to see new ways to articulate the decisions that they would make moving forward, helping to institutionalize new practices. For these new leaders, the timing of this conversation was critical: it foreshadowed where the region would get to today. The lessons learned and the strategies developed continue to be on the front burner for the region—and have only grown in terms of their importance as the community grows.

*Winchester, CT (Year 2)*

A number of the original staff who participated in the workshop are no longer with the town. However, the essence of the workshop, especially the focus on reuse of historic structures and on walkability, has had a big impact. While the workshop occurred at a tumultuous period in Winchester's history, the town is now stable and financially secure. Many projects around Northwest Connecticut Community College and elsewhere in downtown have come to fruition. The town's revised zoning ordinance and the continued deeper involvement of the college administration has also paid dividends for Winchester.

*Anderson, CA (Year 3)*

\*\*No response\*\*

*Des Moines Area MPO (Year 3)*

The workshop continues to resonate among the MPO staff and elected officials. The methods to achieve healthy sustainable growth are understood and embraced. However, the MPO doesn't have ultimate decision-making power on many issues. There are those in the MPO who strive for smart growth development, while others are less comfortable or familiar with its implementation. And while some communities in the region that lack space to grow out have taken smart growth issues more seriously, others with ample space have been slower to realize its positive value.

*Huntington, WV (Year 3)*

The workshop has stimulated immediate return to fairly remarkable investment within the heart of downtown. Without much city intervention, one full downtown block has been renovated and is at capacity. This project is serving as a catalyst for further downtown revitalization. In a limited number of remaining blocks in the downtown, the city continues to engage the public in future investment decisions. A number of the recommendations Smart Growth America provided were long-term in vision, and they continue to inform the community as they work towards transforming downtown into a more vibrant space that fully incorporates access to the Ohio River. These strategies include the possibility of forming a downtown business improvement district. The success has radiated out to the university, generating interest and improvements in adjacent neighborhoods, particularly four specific neighborhoods targeted by the mayor.

*Indianapolis, IN (Year 3)*

Fiscal health is a priority for the mayor, which has helped the workshop continue to resonate in the community. These concepts have moved from theory to application as local leaders examine different land uses in the community, moving towards a more descriptive (versus prescriptive) model. They are also studying the fiscal impact of implementation, creating models that are more predictable regarding revenue return. Updated planning documents have incorporated the workshop concepts.

*Pasco County, FL (Year 3)*

The county and two of its cities—Port Richey and New Port Richey—have embraced the recommendations of the workshop. These governments have continued their collaborative efforts since their last progress report. They have also aggressively moved towards implementation of plans and projects in such a way that they have changed the landscape and economic development potential of the county. Pasco County and their municipalities are on the cusp of starting to see some real change. The city councils and county commission have joint meetings twice a year and everyone—elected officials and staff alike—sees the cumulative effect of working together. That cooperation is a critical piece that was missing before the workshop.

*Person County, NC (Year 3)*

The materials hanging on the assistant county manager's office wall serve as a reminder of the workshop's lessons. It is a conversation starter that helps her get feedback from anyone who enters her office. The workshop informed and helped the county implement several of their proposed planning strategies and continues to shape the thinking of their planning staff. However, the workshop recommendations have been institutionalized much more within the county planning staff than among the board of commissioners. County board members remain skeptical of planning. They need more education around the benefits of county-level planning, but staff turnover has hampered that effort. To counter this, the staff is working on some educational efforts that will help get the smart growth message out to them. A remaining challenge is figuring out how to go from concept to putting the county's vision on paper and then achieving public buy in.

*Queensbury, NY (Year 3)*

The workshop helped incentivize development along the town's Main Street that has led to some limited redevelopment in the focus area. The workshop also led to some zoning changes for development within the town. However, national and regional trends in retail and population have affected Queensbury and there is no economic development entity focusing on Main Street. These factors have limited the continued redevelopment of the workshop study area. Significant turnover of the town's elected board has also contributed to challenges in realizing the full benefits of the workshop.

*Bentonville, AR (Year 4)*

Since the workshop, zoning changes in downtown have led to new housing types. The workshop also led to changes in the city's development review practices so the right people are at the table earlier in the process. All of these changes have occurred despite turnover on the city council and planning commission. Most of the new members on these bodies have been receptive to these concepts and offer positive feedback.

#### *Fort Pierre, SD (Year 4)*

The workshop came at a key juncture in the city's history—the planning for its bicentennial anniversary. The workshop, combined with the city's landmark 200th anniversary, served as a catalyst that led to a revived focus on the city's history and culture. It got the citizens talking and coalescing around a similar vision and direction for the city's future. The workshop led to more engagement of local stakeholders as well as more regional partnerships, including joint efforts with the county. Across the board, the city has been able to leverage everything that the workshop taught them to create a package of programs and activities. This included a historic and cultural marketing plan celebrating the city's unique features. Fort Pierre's success positively contributed to other things the city's leaders were moving towards – including new joint efforts between the city and county.

#### *Spokane, WA (Year 4)*

Examining the financial results achieved along Spokane's East Sprague corridor over the 2.5 years since SGA's visit proves the value of the workshop. There have been measurable improvements in assessed property values, new housing units, average annual incomes, safety, and higher paying jobs. The workshop results have been a guiding benchmark among city staff. Building on the East Sprague corridor's success, Spokane has moved on to other corridors where they applied the lessons learned from the initial effort. Planning, investment, and public engagement were all parts of these continued efforts. The work in other parts of the city has produced similar positive economic impacts.

### **Regional Planning for Small Communities**

#### *Northern Maine Development Commission (Year 1)*

The workshop transformed how local officials see their region and helped them understand the need to plan regionally. Rather than seeking development at all costs, the region recognizes that development must be targeted so that the unique aspects of each community that make it special are preserved. The workshop has also helped generate other grant opportunities for the region, particularly around Brownfields cleanup and additional technical assistance opportunities.

#### *Tucker County, WV (Year 4)*

The workshop was the first such effort in the region that engaged the public in the discussion of regional planning. Since the workshop, changes to planning guidelines for the county and its communities and the acquisition of professional planning staff capacity allow the county to continue to lead sustainable planning efforts as they grow. Unlike many small, rural communities, Tucker County is actually experiencing growth, particularly among younger people.

### **Smart Growth 101**

#### *Dauphin County, PA (Year 2)*

The workshop continues to inform the land use planning within the region to achieve more fiscally sustainable results and more community cohesion. For example, the principles within the county's comprehensive plan follow workshop topics—even if they are not stated the same way.

*Graham County, NC (Year 2)*

Several projects based on workshop strategies, such as the Santeetlah Bike Trail and the Robbinsville High School Greenway, were completed following the workshop and are great assets to the community. These projects have led to public health improvements. Another outcome the workshop is a change in mindset as to how to plan for the county's future and implement projects in a smarter, more sustainable, way. This has impacted projects far outside the initial scope of the workshop.

*Port Isabel, TX (Year 2)*

\*\*No response received\*\*

*Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes, MT (Year 3)*

\*\*No response received\*\*

*Franklin, TN (Year 4)*

The workshop continues to guide the community's planning and visioning efforts. A successful land use plan update is now being paired with a zoning code update that will reduce inconsistencies between the two documents. The community is moving towards Complete Streets despite the lack of a city policy. While affordable housing remains an issue, they are committed to tackling this challenge.

*Macon-Bibb County, GA (Year 4)*

The workshop has had a significant impact on the community, including staff, local elected officials, and other stakeholders. The community's numerous successes in public participation and at the neighborhood planning level deserve note. Citizens were reluctant at first to embrace smart growth principles, but have done so in the ensuing time since the workshop. The county commission has similarly embraced smart growth.

**Smart Growth Zoning Codes for Small Cities**

*Derry Township, PA (Year 1)*

The program helped the township fine tune their visioning with residents and neighborhood organizations. The workshop helped the community create a roadmap for finishing its comprehensive plan, which was approved in late 2015 (four years after the workshop). The recommendations that came from this program also informed revisions to their zoning ordinance by helping identify a more narrow scope of changes to achieve their goals. The new ordinances encourage more infill and mixed-use development over developing conservation areas. While township leaders had a sense of their needs and commitment prior to the workshop, it helped them focus their more diffuse commitment into specific actions for their future.

*Campbell, NY (Year 2)*

The workshop helped locals focus on the specific issues facing the community and helped the community understand how to pursue comprehensive plan and zoning code updates, including a stricter floodplain regulation. While some comprehensive plan milestones have been missed and the community is looking to get back on track, Campbell now understands the need to focus development outside of the floodplain.

*Green River, WY (Year 3)*  
\*\*No response received\*\*

*North Central Texas Council of Governments / City of Cedar Hill, TX (Year 3)*  
The workshop lessons were applicable to both the eventual site of a DART rail station and the city's historic downtown. It led to a refocus on Cedar Hill's city center, including the incorporation of density into the redevelopment efforts. The workshop also helped the city develop multifamily housing units across the city. The COG took six recommendations from the workshop and tried to apply them to the 12 county areas with mixed success. These recommendations formed the basis of a regional discussion regarding transit-oriented development and form-based codes.

*Knoxville RTPO / Alcoa, TN (Year 4)*  
The workshop was catalytic in engaging a large portion of the citizens of the Alcoa area in discussions of future land use and growth in the community. This vision has led to a focus on specific areas highlighted in the workshop and new construction. There is no real downtown in Alcoa today and the workshop focus area will serve as the community's downtown. The workshop also resulted in zoning code changes to allow new building types that encompass a greater mix of uses.

### **Sustainable Land Use Code Audit**

*Pima County, AZ (Year 1)*  
The land use code audit empowered the county's stakeholders and they received a fresh perspective and several key insights on their barriers towards sustainable development. The issues discussed at the workshop and the resulting recommendations are becoming the norm in the county. And the county's elected officials, who have largely remained stable since the workshop, understand the principles behind staff recommendations.

*Pittsburgh, PA (Year 1)*  
\*\*No information\*\*

*Blue Springs, MO (Year 2)*  
The workshop participants now recognize the impact that the city zoning codes have on sustainability. In addition, they have had detailed discussions throughout the process—at the workshop and through the code rewrite—on multimodal transportation options. Through discussions at the workshop, new issues not previously on their radar came to the attention of city leaders—particularly community health and safety issues such as bicycle parking standards. The dialogue that began with the workshop continues to this day.

*Park Forest, IL (Year 2)*  
The workshop supported staff's existing understanding of zoning codes but also educated their elected officials, giving them the ability to articulate the need for sustainable land use practices. The public has also embraced it in personal ways as they've chosen more sustainable practices in their businesses and homes. The workshop topics have become institutionalized, being expressed as common language in many aspects of the community life.

### *San Diego, CA (Year 3)*

The audit and workshop helped inform and empower the community to address present codes and future choices in a way that has laid the groundwork for a more sustainable and vibrant community. It continues to shape the patterns of growth and development since the workshop despite changes in city staffing. These changes are accepted as the way the city does business.

### *Charlottesville, VA (Year 4)*

At the completion of the reporting process for the workshop, a number of projects and initiatives were in the queue to be voted on by the city council, funded, and implemented. In the ensuing two years, many of those have been accomplished including a bicycle plan and solar panel installation codes. The audit has reinforced the city's commitment to sustainability and to applying its principles in their future decision-making.

## **Transit-Oriented Development 101**

### *Greer, SC (Year 1)*

The workshop helped create a greater awareness of TOD and other issues within the community. This has slowly but surely begun to guide decisions at the local and regional level. Greer is gradually beginning to see development projects implemented along the focus corridor including filling in sidewalk gaps. In addition, the state DOT, which participated in the workshop, has also begun to incorporate TOD and multimodal transportation infrastructure into their project planning and design.

### *Cincinnati, OH (Year 2)*

The workshop proved to be foundational for development along the Cincinnati Streetcar corridor. The conversations that are happening in the region today about multimodal transportation, economic development, and transportation are broader than the precursors held during the workshop. But it is clear that what was discussed at the workshop continues to contribute to today's conversations.

### *West Baltimore (Harlem Park Neighborhood Council), MD (Year 2)*

While the ultimate goal of the workshop was to develop TOD along Baltimore's proposed Red Line subway, which was defunded by the State of Maryland, it still created a conversation and spirit of cooperation between the different neighborhoods in West Baltimore. These connections across West Baltimore have been ongoing and the neighborhoods are now singing in concert more than they were prior to the workshop. The workshop helped the Harlem Park Neighborhood Council understand best practices that other neighborhood groups are utilizing around economic development and other local issues. They also recognize that by working together instead of independently, the neighborhoods become collectively stronger.

### *Knoxville, TN (Year 4)*

The workshop process helped cut across department silos and other barriers leading to a full discussion of the importance of transit and land use across city departments. That interdepartmental conversation continues to be a positive force. The next steps memo continues to be relevant and acted upon by the city—shaping land use, transit, and mode choice across the community. The workshop also assisted the city in thinking through and identifying corridors that were well primed for TOD and redevelopment. It helped them

pinpoint where to roll out some of the workshop concepts. Most critically, it is helping them move beyond planning and into strategic implementation.

*SeaTac, WA (Year 4)*

The workshop helped shape decisions in such a way that the city is positioned for the continued acceleration of TOD and mixed use development. The city has already delivered changes to its planning guidelines and is in the process of implementing promising TOD projects in and around existing transit service and service extensions. SeaTac has been able to run with the next steps crafted from the workshop thereby guiding and informing the investment decisions of SeaTac and neighboring communities.

**Transportation Performance Management**

*Oklahoma City, OK (Year 1)*

The workshop helped the community undertake the visioning that led to the incorporation of the most aggressive of three possible growth scenarios for the future of Oklahoma City being included in its comprehensive plan, which was adopted in 2015. The workshop also helped Oklahoma City create the framework for future master planning through inclusion of performance metrics to evaluate its success. This effort has also helped shape other documents that are connected to the vision captured in the comprehensive plan.

*Des Moines Area MPO (Year 2)*

The workshop not only was of value in helping set performance measures that can inform their transportation plan, funding, and project selections, but it also informed the statewide debate concerning additional gas tax revenue. The workshop also helped open policymakers up to performance measures and to incorporate the performance measures into decision-making for projects. This is becoming institutionalized despite some turnover in council members and changes in the MPO board.

**Walkability Audit**

*Carlisle, IA (Year 2)*

The walkability audit raised and maintained the community's awareness to connectivity and walkability. It has either helped or been a primary shaper of ongoing street and road design for the future of Carlisle. There have been physical street design changes in and around the middle school with the gradual implementation of bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, and trails. These will continue, along with work at the other school campus as well as a future Highway 5 corridor project that will slow traffic along that roadway.

*Salisbury, MD (Year 3)*

The lessons learned from the workshop continue to shape the community's design, planning, and implementation as Salisbury seeks to maintain a vibrant sense of place for the future with sidewalks, lighting, bike lanes, farmers markets, and tree canopies. At the same time, it has looked back to its major assets, in particular improving its connection to the Wicomico River. The freight rail, which has divided the city in the past, is now being considered a potential amenity as a walking and biking venue within the freight provider's right of way. This is a bold vision and in its earliest stages.

# Complete Streets Consortium

Because the Complete Streets Consortium is a new offering made available only during the final year of the program, we are providing a more detailed analysis of the structure and outcomes of each component of this program.

## Tennessee Consortium Series

### **Composition of Participant Teams**

The Tennessee Consortium Series brought together three groups of 10 participants from each of the selected jurisdictions—the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Nashville MPO), Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization (Chattanooga TPO), and the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (Knoxville TPO). Each regional agency took a different approach to building their cohort. For example, the Chattanooga TPO invited participants from many different municipalities and counties within their jurisdiction along with TPO staff, while the Knoxville TPO focused their team on the City of Knoxville, including staff from the city, the TPO, Knox County, and the Knoxville Area Transit agency. The Nashville MPO's cohort fell somewhere in between, including representatives from the MPO, the City of Nashville, and one other nearby jurisdiction. As a result, this program ultimately brought together participants from a total of 18 different jurisdictions throughout Tennessee.

### **Program Challenges and Advantages**

Because SGA led exercises and discussions throughout the three workshops with 18 different jurisdictions, this presented certain challenges. These included opportunities for each regional team to collaborate on setting measurable goals, establishing performance measures, and reviewing which of their internal guiding documents must be revised to support Complete Streets implementation. The Knoxville team was able to approach these exercises with ease by focusing their conversation on the City of Knoxville. However, the Chattanooga and Nashville teams were forced to keep their discussion at a high, abstract level because of the breadth of jurisdictions represented within their cohorts. While they still benefited from the exercises and were able to apply what they learned to their own jurisdictions afterwards, they were not able to work on these exercises with the same level of specificity and detail as the Knoxville team.

Another challenge of working with so many different jurisdictions was participant engagement. Although SGA consistently communicated with all participants via email, there were noticeable differences in engagement depending on how proactive each team was about supplementing our communications. For example, the Chattanooga and Knoxville team leads were both extremely proactive about wrangling their participants, including coordinating additional meetings and check-ins between the workshops. As a result, their teams were consistently present and engaged at the in-person workshops. The Nashville team did not match this level of engagement. Their attendance as a cohort was noticeably worse, and their team lead was somewhat less responsive than her counterparts in Chattanooga and Knoxville.

Despite those challenges, working with participants from so many different local, regional, and state jurisdictions had certain advantages. A key goal of the Consortium Series was to build a cross-jurisdictional cohort to advance Complete Streets implementation not only in the jurisdictions SGA worked with directly, but also throughout the state. Thanks to the breadth of participants in these workshops, there is now a peer network to drive the Complete Streets movement in the Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville regions as well as in Tennessee as a whole. Participants were very vocal about how meaningful it was to have the opportunity to speak and work with their counterparts from other jurisdictions within and beyond their regions.

## **Program Outcomes**

SGA submitted final next steps recommendations to the three Tennessee regions on June 21, 2018. Each region has since provided SGA with a one-month progress report documenting their accomplishments since the final workshop in January. These progress reports are summarized below.

One of the main goals of this program was to build better working relationships within and across jurisdictions. All three regions have seen improved collaboration on Complete Streets since the conclusion of the Tennessee Consortium Series.

- In the Nashville region, stronger relationships between the MPO and local jurisdictions has helped them design better Complete Streets projects and build support for comprehensive planning efforts.
- In the Chattanooga and Knoxville regions, the Consortium Series teams have held regular meetings to coordinate on data collection, local and regional planning, and funding and designing Complete Streets projects.
- All three regions have also continued to work more closely with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to incorporate Complete Streets improvements into repaving projects, improve safety for people walking and biking on state-owned roads, and train staff on best practices in Complete Streets project design.

This improved collaboration has already led to benefits in each region.

- The Nashville Area MPO is working closely with local partners to redesign the intersection of Nolensville Pike and Elysian Fields Road to make it safer for people walking and biking.
- The Knoxville region, through improvements to its bicycle and pedestrian crash database, was able to measure the benefits of Complete Streets projects, including a road diet on Cumberland Avenue that reduced the average number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes over a seven-month period from 3.5 to 0.
- And in the Chattanooga region, local and regional jurisdictions are working together to compile a database of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and identify high priority gaps in their sidewalk and bikeway networks.

During each workshop of the Complete Streets Consortium Series, the teams visited areas that highlighted key challenges each region is facing to implement Complete Streets. All three regions have taken concrete steps to overcome these challenges.

- At the Chattanooga workshop, we visited Ooltewah-Ringgold Road, where poor street connectivity made it difficult for people to reach nearby schools and grocery stores without taking long, circuitous routes across major roads. Since the workshop, the Chattanooga TPO has launched the People Places Paths project to study street connectivity across the county and identify opportunities for improvement.
- In Nashville, we visited Charlotte Pike, a major bus corridor with few to no sidewalks and crosswalks, especially at major bus stops. The Nashville Area MPO has since updated its project selection criteria to look more closely at how proposed projects will impact walking and biking rates, improve safety, and provide better access to grocery stores, hospitals, parks, and public transit stations.
- Finally, in Knoxville, we saw examples of how sprawling land use can make it difficult to create walkable, bikeable places—even with Complete Streets—when we visited Broadway. To encourage denser, more walkable development, the Knoxville TPO has been working with the City of Knoxville on Recode Knoxville, a project to update the city’s outdated zoning ordinance with particular emphasis on how land use can support Complete Streets.

## Colorado Consortium Series

### **Program Structure**

The second iteration of the Complete Streets Consortium Series benefitted from lessons learned from the previous series. Although this program still brought together three separate teams, these teams were nominated by local rather than regional jurisdictions, and SGA was able to offer the Colorado teams guidance to choose more effective cohorts. As a result, many of the challenges resulting from the overcomplicated structure of the first series did not carry over to the second. Each cohort represented a single jurisdiction: the City of Arvada, the City of Aurora, and the City of Westminster. The cohorts also shared five additional representatives from state and regional partners, including the state department of transportation and the regional transit agency, health department, and council of governments.

### **Program Challenges and Advantages**

This more geographically focused assortment of organizations meant that participants from the Colorado Consortium Series still benefited from discussions and collaborative exercises across jurisdictions while also maximizing their ability to focus on specific goals, performance measures, and guiding documents within each jurisdiction. Additionally, SGA was able to communicate lessons learned about the vital role of the team leads up front, resulting in more consistent attendance and engagement throughout the series.

### **Program Outcomes**

As a result of the Colorado Consortium Series, participants improved working relationships across departments within jurisdictions as well as across local and regional agencies. All three cities intend to draft and adopt Complete Streets policies to guide their implementation efforts moving forward. SGA has not yet received progress reports from

these jurisdictions. However, our next steps recommendations provide each city with specific guidance and sample language to adopt strong, enforceable, customized Complete Streets policies that pave the way for Complete Streets implementation and reinforce the lessons learned through this technical assistance.

## Consortium Series Distance Learning Modules

### Program Structure

When SGA interviewed applicants for the Complete Streets Consortium Series, five cohorts were selected as finalists. However, due to funding limitations, NCSC was only able to conduct in-person workshops with two of these five cohorts. To extend the reach and breadth of our technical assistance offerings and allow us to reach a more extensive audience at lower cost, SGA developed and piloted two distance learning modules. These modules are designed for individuals to complete at their own pace from a computer. They include recorded audio and visual presentations, interactive quizzes and activities, and pre- and post-assessment quizzes. SGA eventually hopes to develop additional intermediate and advanced modules to build off this beginner-level content.

To pilot test this new format of technical assistance, SGA invited participants from the remaining three finalist cohorts to participate. This includes the teams from Arizona (City of Tucson, Pima County, and Pima Association of Governments), Florida (Palm Beach MPO, Miami-Dade MPO, and Broward MPO), and Hawai'i (County of Kaua'i, County of Maui, and County of Hawai'i). Seven of these nine jurisdictions agreed to participate in the pilot – the Counties of Kaua'i and Maui declined due to strained staff capacity resulting from recent severe weather events.

### Program Outcomes

To measure program effectiveness, participants take an identical assessment quiz before and after completing each module. Scores improved notably from the beginning to the end of both modules, which demonstrates that participants successfully retained new knowledge from the courses. In Module 1, the average score on this assessment increased from 79 percent to 95 percent, and about three quarters of participants answered every question correctly on the post-assessment quiz. In Module 2, the average score rose from 83 percent on the pre-assessment to 97 percent on the post-assessment, with 88 percent of participants achieving a perfect score after completing the module.

Response to the distance learning modules was generally very positive. 58 percent of participants believed the modules were the appropriate level of difficulty, while the rest thought these beginner modules were slightly too easy. 78 percent of participants thought the modules were the appropriate length, though some individuals believed they were slightly too long or slightly too short. Additionally, 78 percent of participants stated they learned new things in the modules, 81 percent found the modules engaging and interesting, 73 percent thought the content was valuable for their day-to-day work, and 86 percent enjoyed the online, interactive format.

Finally, participants also provided comments on their experience interacting with the modules. Select comments are included below:

- “Very well put together course for people with little or no knowledge of Complete Streets.”
- “This was a clear and understandable training on Complete Streets. I would love to share it with as many folks as possible at Tucson DOT.”
- “Both modules were easy as I am engaged in complete streets activities and familiar with the issues. For someone not familiar with complete streets, the modules are very instructive.”
- “I'd like to see more Complete Streets learning modules.”
- “I am familiar with the complete streets approach and perspective, and the two phase tutorial was a very valuable refresher. The pace, layout, and overall light hearted/easy to understand approach was very informative and fun to follow!!”
- “They were very informative online learning modules. I already knew much of the information, however if I went in blindly, I would have learned a lot of very useful and interesting information.”

## Overall lessons learned

### Most important lessons learned

The section below details all of the lessons SGA has learned throughout the 90 workshops we've hosted in 40 states over the past 7 years. Although each of the more than a dozen lessons learned below are important, the following three “lessons learned” will be most impactful on future programs of this type offered by EPA in the future:

1. The **application process** required communities to self-select, ensuring their commitment to participating in the technical assistance and carrying the work forward.
2. **Involvement of local elected officials** during the interview process as well as the delivery of the technical assistance reinforced the political will for implementation.
3. **Workshop customizability** allowed SGA to tailor each workshop to the specific community's history, present conditions, and future aspirations.

Additional information about these three lessons learned, as well as other lessons learned, is included below.

### Application process

During an application window early in each year of the program, interested communities were able to apply to Smart Growth America using a standardized application form submitted along with support letters from the community's local elected leadership. The SGA team then reviewed and scored each complete application to shortlist approximately one-third of each year's applicants. Individual calls were held with the listed contact on the application form of each shortlisted community. SGA also expected the community's mayor or other prominent local elected leader to attend and participate in the call. This demonstrated their commitment to the technical assistance effort and its goals, ensuring that the application was not simply filed by an overzealous staffer without broader support.

Based on the scoring and the additional information collected on the calls, SGA selected recipients and alternates for the year.

This competition for selecting recipients is a critical strength of the Building Blocks program. We know that each applicant community is enthusiastic about the potential of working with our team of experts. In other similar programs where the agency has chosen who SGA works with, the local buy in of the workshop's purpose and goals has not been as quick or as deep among either stakeholders or the public.

### **Involvement of local elected leaders**

The SGA team has also found that direct conversations with local elected leadership are important. During phone interviews with highly ranked applicants, SGA expected that the mayor or other chief executive of the jurisdiction would actively participate. This also extends to the post workshop follow up—that individual should be active in implementing the recommendations provided by the SGA team.

Beyond the interview and application process, long-serving former local elected officials on SGA's staff participated in delivering the technical assistance. This reinforced the political practicality of the workshop and helped moves the conversation from the theoretical principles of smart growth to the reality of implementation.

### **Workshop customizability**

While each workshop is based on a specific tool developed by SGA, the content of the workshop is tailored for the community based on research prior to the visit, the community engagement, and tour. Presentations are continuously adapted up to and including the day of the workshop to fit the needs.

As part of SGA's assessment process prior to delivering technical assistance, SGA conducts detailed interviews with communities to better understand their history and present conditions. SGA also participates in a site visit at the start of the technical assistance to observe present conditions directly then adapt the content accordingly. Throughout the workshop, SGA continues to amend the presentations and best practices shared to best suit the needs of the community. Finally, SGA works closely with the community to develop and refine its aspirational vision, which is a critical product of the workshop.

In addition to customizing individual workshops, SGA also developed new tools, described in more detail earlier in this report, in response to applicant needs and emerging national demographic and economic trends. In brief, these new tools included:

- (Re)Building Downtown, addressing local communities' desire to create a sense of place at the heart of their community.
- Fiscal impact analyses to allow communities to understand how to make the best development decisions under constrained local government budgets that maximize public investment choices.
- The Complete Streets Consortium, a multi-jurisdictional workshop that addressed interest by multiple levels of government within a single state to produce broader statewide impacts around Complete Streets policy development and implementation.

Like their predecessors, these new offerings were highly customizable and adaptable to meet specific community needs.

On occasion, SGA found a certain apprehension towards and misunderstanding of planning among the general populace. The presenters were nimble enough to articulate the goals and outcomes of the workshop in a way that was open and transparent, ameliorating the public's concerns. The adaptability of the workshop tools to the unique needs of each community as well as each tool's lack of rigidity made the workshops much more directly relevant to the community in which it was presented.

### **Memorandum of understanding**

Another critical component ensuring the program's success is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with selected communities. One important clause of the MOU helped ensure continued engagement by requiring each community to submit three progress reports—at one-month, six-month, and twelve-month intervals following receipt of the final next steps memorandum. As noted earlier, this requirement ensures that the community retains some accountability to create change locally and also encourages them to begin implementing the recommendations of the next steps memo quickly.

The “pay back” clause of the MOU also ensures that selected communities must repay SGA and ultimately EPA for incurred expenses to date if they change their mind in the middle of the program about hosting the SGA workshop. This requirement was added in the middle of the program, following the cancellation of a workshop in Seattle described in more detail below. The repaid funds could then be made available to other communities.

### **Workshop structure and format**

The workshop structure over the two-day visit normally included a tour of downtown and/or other focus areas followed by a public presentation (made during or immediately before/after a meeting of community's public elected body whenever possible) on the first day. The second day consists of an all day workshop for invited stakeholders and elected officials. The SGA team has already had extensive contact with the community by the time they arrive in town. In addition to the call they had with the community during the selection process, SGA also held up to three conference calls with the community to discuss workshop topics and logistics in detail. For communities receiving a fiscal impact analysis, additional calls were normally required to scope the work, ensure the necessary data was made available, and answer any questions. When possible, the results of the fiscal impact analysis were presented to the community via a conference call or webinar, prior to the visit by the presentation team.

During the preparatory period preceding the workshop, the community also provided the SGA team with additional information and resources in advance. SGA found that this format works especially well. Although some communities requested a longer invite-only workshop in lieu of the public presentation, the majority of participating communities opted for the public event. SGA found that a public event the evening before the workshop lowered the fear or intimidation factor among community members regarding why the team is visiting.

However, one community that chose the longer workshop option felt that a public presentation would be “preaching to the choir” in that the attendees who would actually show up would already be familiar with national trends. They thought it would be better to engage invited guests in a conversation on these issues rather than explaining them in a lecture.

While the SGA team found that the public presentation followed by a daylong workshop was the ideal format for most communities, the presenters recognized that the community staff and leaders knew their audience the best.

### **Next steps memorandums**

As with the workshop content, SGA’s follow-up recommendations are also specific to each community. Our presenters are not simply facilitators who record what they hear the community say and then write it up in a final report. While our next steps memorandums do include a summary of the workshop discussion, our recommendations go much further. They take into account everything the team has seen and heard throughout the process. This includes the preparatory conference calls and other background research, the tour, comments at the public presentation, the discussion among the invited stakeholders at the workshop, as well as the SGA team’s reflections upon returning home.

As a result, SGA is able to deliver a set of highly specific and customized next steps to the community. The next steps memorandum is as important to the SGA team—and the community—as the workshop itself. All recommendations are created with a sensitivity to what the community can accomplish and deliver. The full intent is to push them to accomplish more than they believe possible without overwhelming them.

The next steps memorandum also makes it clear to the community what their initial actions should be following the workshop. It keeps the momentum generated by the workshop alive and helps guide the community’s leaders on a path forward.

### **Progress reports**

The requirement of a one-month progress report offers a good starting point for the work that the community must do. While this schedule may seem rushed initially, it actually forces the community to focus and begin to work on their recommended action items right away. The three progress reports during the calendar year following the workshop and delivery of the next steps memorandum lead to a sustained local commitment to the work.

### **Program administration**

The program was initially supported by a series of interns, each remaining on staff for approximately six months. SGA learned over time that using temporary staff as support for this program was not ideal due to the need to retrain each new employee. A team that included the project manager and a designated permanent associate assigned to the project made the entire program more efficient.

The EPA staff, including the program officer assigned to our grant gave proper oversight and never tried to directly shape the delivery of technical assistance or SGA’s selections of communities to work with.

### **Broad applicability of smart growth principles**

There is now a broad understanding that smart growth principles are fiscally beneficial to local governments, metropolitan areas, and rural areas alike and they have been well received across many jurisdictions in different parts of the country. When presented with an overview of current demographic and economic trends, local stakeholders of all backgrounds and political persuasions were able to grasp the economic advantages of these principles and the positive outcomes for their citizens. Land use choices and government investment decisions that yield a high return on investment for their citizens were outcomes that resonated across all sectors.

While EPA is targeted by some for its regulatory actions, local, state, and federal officials readily see the value of the technical assistance funded through the Office of Community Revitalization's Building Blocks program.

### **Intertwining of Fiscal Impact Analyses with workshops**

The fiscal impact analysis offered to several communities under this program (Chattanooga, TN and Tulsa, OK) – using the communities' own cost and other data – puts these concepts into real financial projections. This analysis allows the community to see in real dollars the costs of the decisions they make about future growth patterns needed to accommodate new residents and jobs. The intertwining of this analysis with the economic and fiscal health workshop tool provides the recipient communities with a robust understanding of how their development practices and decisions impact their local economy and the community's overall budget. In Year 5 and Year 6, USDA Rural Development funding supported EPA Building Blocks workshops by allowing SGA to provide a fiscal impact analysis for several smaller cities and rural places in addition to a workshop funded by this program: Pagosa Springs, CO; Pittsburg, KS; and Quitman, MS. It is important to note that regardless of the size of the community -- Tulsa, Oklahoma (population 403,000) or Pagosa Springs, CO (population 1,838), the fiscal impact analysis is an impactful tool.

### **Pairing of EPA Building Blocks and other federal funding**

The pairing of EPA Building Blocks communities with separate USDA Rural Development funding allowed these programs to naturally support one another. The funding allowed SGA to provide additional services to help these small communities plan for a fiscally healthy future. Before others embraced the broadness and applicability of these principles to small towns and rural places—and their positive economic and fiscal impacts—SGA was reaching out to small towns and tribal communities that were hungry for this type of technical assistance.

The pairing of EPA Building Blocks and USDA Rural Development funding further demonstrated to these communities that the federal government can be a partner to small, rural communities who are looking to implement their vision of a prosperous future.

In addition, the Complete Streets Consortium was funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), demonstrating that agency's recognition of the connection between walkable and bikeable communities and improved public health. This program offers another avenue to demonstrate the positive impact federal agencies can have on local communities.

### **Value of the Complete Streets Consortium**

While the Building Blocks workshops brought individuals into the same room to plan together for their future— in some cases for the first time in recent memory—the Consortium Series brought several communities together. This was one of the many benefits that communities in Tennessee and Colorado found from this program.

As noted above, the program improved collaboration in Tennessee around Complete Streets both within and between the three regions. In Colorado, working relationships improved across departments within jurisdictions as well as across local and regional agencies.

In the future, this type of program and workshop structure could easily be applied to the other workshop tools offered under the EPA Building Blocks program. The program provides space for both recommendations applicable to all three jurisdictions and individualized ones for each participating community. It could, for example, involve a county government along with one or more jurisdictions within it to help them plan together for their future while improving their working relationship.

As noted earlier, the Distance Learning Modules will live beyond the life of this grant. The two introductory level modules will be supplemented by additional intermediate and advanced level ones—and made available by SGA on a fee basis, including continuing education credits for urban planners.

## **Lessons learned from unsuccessful workshops**

### **Notasulga, Alabama**

On March 19, 2012, three SGA staff traveled to Notasulga, AL, to conduct a Smart Growth 101 workshop provided by SGA under this grant. Before the presentation even began, the mayor canceled the workshop in response to vocal pushback resulting from a misunderstanding of the workshop's purpose among the general public. The meeting in Notasulga marked the first time SGA staff have encountered this type of disruption, though the conspiracies cited by those opposed were familiar. Following the cancelled workshop, the SGA team prepared a next steps memorandum as required by the MOU, focusing on the most appropriate tools and strategies given Notasulga's needs, as communicated and observed in preparation for the cancelled workshop.

SGA's experience in Notasulga led to the preparation of a "lessons learned" document. The document outlined changes to the community selection process, workshop preparation, and site visits. This report was delivered to all SGA staff in April 2012 to ensure the lessons learned resonated beyond the EPA Building Blocks team.

## Seattle, Washington

About two weeks prior to the scheduled workshop date, the city of Seattle canceled their TOD technical assistance workshop. The cancellation came directly from the mayor's office out of concern for political fallout. The workshop focus area, Judkins Park, is a highly diverse, mixed-income neighborhood. The city had two or three projects in process but the public perceived them to be disruptive, so they opposed the projects. Because of these concerns, the mayor's office decided to hold off on any discussion of new developments in the area. It is important to note that these concerns were not present when Seattle originally received the award, but grew over the months leading up to the workshop.

The cancellation was a surprise and was unlike any experience SGA had with any other community under the program. The city and its mayor clearly communicated their interest and intent to go through with the workshop and continued to display this commitment until its cancellation. Unfortunately for both this program and the city itself, the situation and political pressure in Judkins Park reached the point where the mayor felt this dramatic and sudden measure was necessary. By the time of cancellation, all of the preparatory work was done, consultant time had been billed, and travel booked. While SGA could recover the travel costs, SGA had already expended staff time and paid consultant fees in preparation for the workshop. SGA sent the city an invoice for these expenses and Seattle paid it in full. With the recovery of these expenditures, SGA was able to reroute the funds to other workshops.

The "pay back" clause of the MOU was critical in allowing SGA (and EPA) to recover the incurred expenses from the City of Seattle.

## Close

The work embodied in the EPA Building Blocks program is personal for John Robert Smith as someone who served for 20 years in a strong mayor form of local government. Any successful mayor or other local executive would insist that his department heads and program leads work collaboratively across departments to deliver the best possible services and products for the people they serve. This is both efficient and fiscally responsible.

We are grateful that USDA and CDC also saw the value of these programs and saw the potential of jointly funding these programs. We appreciate this opportunity to partner across federal programs and agencies.

Smart Growth America is extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with EPA's Office of Community Revitalization under the Building Blocks program over the past seven years. Our team gained deeper insight being exposed to these more than 90 places of all sizes. Each place had similar, yet unique, needs. We sharpened our skill in articulating issues and solutions in ways that would be clear, understandable, and actionable by the workshop attendees in each community – and in ways directly relevant to their specific needs.

Our first EPA Project Officer, Lynn Desautels, provided a firm yet kind, steady guiding hand – and always kept us focused and accountable. Charles Gurkin has provided the same level of dedication to this effort. We thank each of them for their involvement.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue this work as there still is much left to do. We hope to work with EPA again on future interdisciplinary work to positively impact communities around the country.

Any successful team must be guided by a vision and statement of principles that unites their work. For SGA, our guiding belief – our North Star – is:

*We envision a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient.*