NAVIGATING MAIN STREETS AS PLACES

A PEOPLE-FIRST TRANSPORTATION TOOLKIT

MAIN STREET AMERICA®

PROJECT FOR **PUBLIC SPACES**

CONTRIBUTORS PAGE

Main Street America™ has been helping to revitalize older and historic commercial districts since the late 1970s. Today, it is a movement consisting of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the non-profit National Main Street Center, Inc., a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities. Since its founding in 1975, PPS has worked in more than 3,500 communities in 52 countries and all 50 U.S. states. Today, PPS is the central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, resources, expertise, and partners who see place as the key to addressing our greatest challenges.

Navigating Main Streets as Places: A People-First Transportation Toolkit was co-written by the staff of Project for Public Spaces and Main Street America with input and review by external advisors.

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Main Streets are many things. They are economic, cultural, and historic centers. They are small business hubs. They help move people and goods from point A to point B, and they are community destinations in their own right—one of our most underappreciated public spaces.

Despite their many different roles, the transportation design of Main *Streets* has typically been singularly focused: getting cars and trucks through the district as efficiently as possible. This has had a detrimental effect on the walkability, safety, and economic vitality of Main Street districts, which reduces quality of life for residents and threatens the economic sustainability of the entire district.

Since streets are public spaces we should prioritize people in their planning, design, operation, and management. When all of the elements of the street are designed and maintained with the goal of a harmonious, safe, communal, and cost-effective balance of people and vehicular needs, Main Streets can accomplish many outcomes above and beyond moving people and goods.

While transportation is often viewed as a heavily regulated industry that only specialists can control, Main Street and community leaders have a crucial role in influencing their district's transportation network. Not only can they advocate for street improvements that will supplement and enhance the quality of the pedestrian experience, they can take an active role in building consensus and capacity around an overall vision for Main Street—as a street that works for everyone.

WHAT IS A MAIN STREET?

In Navigating Main Streets as Places: A People-First Transportation Toolkit, we use the term "Main Street" as shorthand for commercial districts. Communities do not need to identify or be formally designated as a Main Street to use the ideas, strategies, and processes outlined in this handbook. For more information on how the Main Street America designates a community a "Main Street", please see the Membership webpage.

Navigating Main Streets as Places: A People-First Trans-portation Toolkit, produced in partnership by Project for Public Spaces and Main Street America, provides guidance to Main Street leaders, community advocates, local officials, transportation professionals, and everyone else in between on how to:

- Evaluate streets and transportation through the lens of placemaking;

- Balance the needs of mobility and other street activities; and

- Build stronger relationships with other decision-makers and the community.

This one-stop-shop toolkit features guidance and best practices for rural downtowns and urban neighborhood commercial districts through three platforms: this down-loadable handbook, an online resource library and a multi-part webinar series presented in Fall 2019.

WHAT IS IN THIS HANDBOOK?

Chapter 1 explains why transportation and streets matter for commercial districts by examining their potential costs and benefits across six key areas: equity, safety, health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and community. These considerations better equip Main Street leaders to advocate for people-oriented transpor-tation outcomes in their communities.

Chapter 2 delves into the nuts and bolts of various ele-ments that directly impact the quality of Main Street transportation networks in the areas of streetscape and pedestrian design, vehicular traffic, and parking. For each of these areas, we offer recommendations for infrastructure and programming strategies, as well as innovative policy solutions. Along with a robust community process, these recommendations can be adapted and used to inspire your projects, to share as examples with fellow stakehold-ers, and to create the foundation for streets that positively impact people, place, and the economy.

Chapter 3 helps community leaders and stakeholders understand how to put the knowledge and tools presented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 into action through an inten-tional process of building knowledge, building partner-ships, and building a plan that is reflective of a community's needs and capabilities. This chapter provides actionable steps on how to assess your street conditions, engage your community, and create collective buy-in around your revitalization planning, projects, and programs.

WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

In *Navigating Main Streets as Places: A People-First Transportation Toolkit*, we may use the term placemaking in some cases. Placemaking is about strengthening the connections between people and the places they share. As both an overarching idea and a hands-on approach for improving a neighborhood, city, or region, placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of their community. For more information and descriptions of placemaking please see What is Placemaking? and this video created for the Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking.

TRANSPORTATION MATTERS FOR MAIN STREETS

CHAPTER 1

The transportation networks in and around a commercial district directly and indirectly impact people, place, and the economy. Revitalizing spaces and improving quality of life relies upon thoughtful consideration of how transportation and streets influence the life and livelihood of our Main Streets. These considerations also better equip us, as leaders, to advocate for better transportation design in our own communities.

Whether or not "Main Street" is the official name of the commercial and social core of your city or town, there is no denying that the street itself is a main part of that core. Consider how the concept of a Main Street came to be: as communities settled and grew, storefronts and service providers conveniently located themselves along a particular street, allowing the street to become the physical connector between destinations, the conduit by which people arrived or continued on their way, *and* the geographical center of activity. And today, Main Streets continue to be the heart of many commercial districts and downtowns.

While transportation planning and traffic engineering can seem like complicated fields best left to specialists, Main Streets leaders, community spokespersons, local business leaders, and elected officials can work together to help guide and add valuable insight to the decisions that impact their local streets. Equipped with the basics of why transportation matters and how to effectively express these sentiments, you can begin to shift the conversation from one that considers streets as mere channels for movement to one that acknowledges streets as places—as destinations in their own right.

This chapter will first discuss the concept of **streets as places** and will then outline the important role that streets play in commercial districts by examining their potential costs and benefits across six key areas:

- **Equity**
- **Safety**
- **Health**
- **Economic Vitality**
- **Environmental Sustainability**
- **Community**

STREETS ⬡ PLACES

"We have been building transportation through communities, not communities through transportation."
—DAN BURDEN

Streets are our most fundamental public spaces. They often represent the largest area of public space in a community, and provide the overarching framework by which our cities physically expand and develop over time. Despite their prominence, however, streets are still one of the most overlooked forms of public space because of a status quo that favors the needs of cars. For streets to become better places, we must design, manage, and program them as places for people first.

Because of the assumption that the car is king in America—and always will be—for most of the past century cities and communities have been designed to meet mobility needs rather than human needs, like social interaction, physical activity, or a sense of place.[1] The private automobile has dominated our streets and determined their design for so long that now it can often be hard to see streets as the public resources that they are.

Congestion and capacity concerns after the end of World War II led to designs, plans, and policies in the United States, like the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, that propagated high-speed freeway systems and wider, straighter roads. Ironically, more recent research has found that instead of reducing traffic and congestion, these efforts to increase capacity for cars to move swiftly through residential and commercial areas has increased traffic as wider streets spur people to drive more than they otherwise would have. Today, traffic engineers and planners call this phenomenon "induced demand."

Transforming this car-driven narrative and creating a more harmonious street balance requires rethinking the notion of streets as places. Introduced by Project for Public Spaces, the concept of Streets as Places challenges everyone to see streets in their *entirety*—not just their function in transporting people and goods, but also the vital role they play in energizing social and economic life in communities. Streets as Places positions communities as the owners of their streets, with a right and a responsibility to directly impact how their public spaces look, function, and feel.[2] Envisioning Streets as Places can mean the difference between a monotonous route and a destination to return to, or between a street to bypass and a street to stay on.

Streets as Places as a philosophy recognizes that a street is so much more than the ground surface that vehicles pass over and that transportation encompasses more than motorized vehicles. The street is a system containing both small elements and big functions, including transportation in all its forms.

STREETS ⬡AS⬡ PLACES

A PHILOSOPHY

THE STREET SYSTEM CAN INCLUDE VARIOUS STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS:

SIDEWALKS

TREES

SHADE

STREET FURNITURE

BUILDING FACADES

PARKING FOR CARS, BIKES, SCOOTERS, ETC.

LAMPPOSTS

TRANSIT STOPS AND STATIONS

PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTING

PLANTERS

BANNERS

TRASH RECEPTACLES

WATER FEATURES

PUBLIC ART

FAMILY-FRIENDLY AMENITIES

PET-FRIENDLY AMENITIES

CHARGING STATIONS

OUTDOOR DINING

ALLEYS

PATHWAYS

BIKE LANES AND CAR LANES

CROSSWALKS

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

PEDESTRIAN RAMPS

WAYFINDING

ROUNDABOUTS

TRAFFIC CALMING FEATURES

PUBLIC SPACE

GREEN SPACE

...and elements that may be unique to your street

At a larger scale, a town or city's street system includes a variety of different street typologies.[3] Roads that facilitate efficient travel from point A to point B are essential for the national economy, our mobility, and modern life. Highways are necessary for moving people and goods more quickly. But the streets of our towns and cities—especially Main Streets—need to be more multifunctional to accommodate a greater variety of activities and users.

Within the whole network of streets, Main Street serves the unique function of a *public place* perhaps more than any other street type. It is a place for people to linger, to socialize, to experience; a place where people can connect and be exposed to each other; a place where public culture, community, and civic pride is developed and celebrated; and a place that connects the shop, home, classroom, and workplace.

THE STREET SYSTEM CAN ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES:

MOVING PEOPLE ON FEET AND WHEELS

DELIVERING GOODS

PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES

ARRIVING, DEPARTING, OR STAYING

STROLLING

GAZING

EXERCISING

SOCIALIZING

PLAYING

SHOPPING

WORKING

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

SOCIALIZING

...and activities that may be unique to your street

THE STREET SYSTEM CAN ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORTATION:

PEDESTRIANS

WHEELCHAIRS

BIKES

CARS

TRUCKS AND DELIVERY VEHICLES

TRANSIT OPTIONS (SHUTTLES, BUSES, TRAINS, BRT)

SCOOTERS

SKATEBOARDS

...and modes that may be unique to your street

STREETS AS PLACES

A STRATEGY

As Main Street leaders, you can think of Streets as Places as both an organizing concept for why we should prioritize streets in planning and as a strategy for reimagining neighborhoods. By thinking about the entire history, system, and quality of place that your streets have and contribute to, you can work with your community to find creative solutions for animating social, economic, and civic life.

If you can influence decisions on the design and function of transportation networks and facilities so that they function as public places rather than simply channels for moving vehicles from place to place, you can open the door to visionary community planning and design practices. To help make the case for this broader scope, the remainder of this chapter describes some of the impacts that streets and transportation have on both the quality of life for individuals and for whole neighborhoods. These impacts are organized around the areas of equity, safety, health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and community.

By understanding impacts in each of these six areas you can see the unintended consequences of car-oriented streets and the benefits of streets created with place and people in mind. By comparing these contrasting costs and benefits, we can better account for the compounded return on investment that a people-oriented focus can have.

It is important to note that each of these areas overlap and interconnect. Reducing the costs and accessing the benefits in one area will often lead to additional benefits in another. As in the case of designing for accessibility, achieving one outcome in the public realm often improves other outcomes too. For example, a ramp for a wheelchair user is also useful for a parent with a stroller. Frequent places to sit can help a person with mobility challenges get around more comfortably and also serve as a platform for social life. This goes to show how people-oriented streets can holistically improve the overall quality of life for individuals and for communities.

WITH THE MULTITUDE OF REASONS EXPRESSED IN THIS CHAPTER, IT IS CLEAR THAT OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS—HOW WE DESIGN THEM, HOW THEY FUNCTION, HOW WE *SEE* THEM—TRULY MATTER.

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1, 2 Project for Public Spaces' *Streets as Places Toolkit*
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Credit: Monkey Business Images

EQUITY

COMMUNITY

Credit: Anissa Lewis

SAFETY

Credit: Kyle Thacker

STREETS AS PLACES

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Credit: B. Krist

HEALTH

Credit: Debora King

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Credit: Angie Heiney

> *"Transportation determines how we get to the places where we live, work and play. It is imperative we advance an equity agenda that is people-centered, protects our health, encourages sustainable communities and gives everyone a voice in stimulating a vibrant economy."*
> —JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

EQUITY

STREETS AS PLACES

SAFETY

HEALTH

COMMUNITY

ECONOMIC VITALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

For decades, Americans have been infatuated with the perception of freedom that the car can offer. After World War II, this infatuation, paired with concerns about city congestion and desires for "urban renewal," created a perfect storm of laws and policies—like the Housing Act of 1949 and the Highway Act of 1956—that left lasting, sometimes devastating, marks on the physical and social landscapes of the nation. In many cases, highway construction drove development away from downtowns; "white flight" to the suburban periphery encouraged employers to move jobs from city centers; public transit lost significant investment; and many streets ironically became lasting barriers that divided communities instead of connecting them.

The effects of these policies and others led to the displacement and disenfranchisement of residents in city centers, especially for those without transportation, abundant employment opportunities, and well-located, affordable housing. All of these conditions amplified preexisting inequalities and helped create new ones.

Even though demographics have shifted dramatically over the past 70 years, and equity and mobility advocacy is growing, there are still discriminatory systems, policies, and funding hurdles that communities must overcome to improve how transportation decisions are made and implemented.

Since streets both reflect and shape the communities they serve, they have become incredibly meaningful places for people working to create more equitable cities and communities.[5] Ideally, all members of the community should be visibly engaging and participating in the activities on Main Street[6], regardless of age, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, race, ability, national origin, family composition, or mode of transportation. Main Street leaders have an important role to play in ensuring their communities are inclusive, in fostering a culture of equal opportunity, and in protecting their most vulnerable community members.

THE EQUITY MANIFESTO

PolicyLink has worked with many partners to develop an Equity Manifesto, which concludes that equity is "just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all."[4]

Equity, especially when it comes to streets, has a lot to do with access. Certain road and streetscape designs can cause barriers—both real and perceived—that hinder access to opportunities for some groups and not others. Sometimes it is the physical infrastructure that blocks access, sometimes a streetscape design can feel exclusive, and sometimes it is a history of systemic inequality. Below are some of the ways in which car-oriented streets unevenly impact specific groups and demographic categories:

Carless. Currently many streets are designed with only drivers in mind, despite the fact that at least one-third of Americans don't use this space to drive personal vehicles.[7] They may use the space when using car share or alternate modes of transportation, but when streets are designed with only driving and parking in mind, this one-third of the population has an unequal share of accessible public space.

Age. Children and older adults are disproportionately impacted by pedestrian fatalities and crashes, often because an intersection's design or operation does not provide enough time for them to cross. In comparison to the general population, the Pedestrian Danger Index is more than a third higher for those older than age 50, and almost twice as high for people

75 and up.[8] For children and young adults aged 5-29, road traffic death is the number one non-medical cause of death.[9]

Gender and sexual identity. For nearly every year from 1975 to 2017, the number of men who have died in car crashes has been more than twice the number of women who died.[10] In 2016, 70 percent of pedestrian deaths in the United States were male victims.[11] Research also shows that men typically drive more miles than women and more often engage in risky driving behavior, including not using safety belts, driving while impaired by alcohol, and speeding.[12] Meanwhile, some pedestrians experience gender-based street harassment—unwanted comments, gestures, and actions based on a person's sex, gender, gender expression,

or sexual orientation—which can be heightened by poorly maintained or designed streetscapes.[13,14]

Income. Communities with fewer financial resources are disproportionately impacted by traffic crashes. The pedestrian fatality rate is over 80 percent higher than the national average in counties where more than 20 percent of households live below the federal poverty line.[15] The unaffordability of transportation or car ownership creates additional burdens for low-income communities, especially considering that these communities spend an average of 42 percent of their annual income on transportation, compared to 22 percent for middle-income households.[16]

Race. People of color make up nearly 35 percent of the population, but 46.1 percent of pedestrian fatalities.[17] This can be attributed to the fact that many people of color, especially those that also live in low-income areas, are less likely to own cars than white people, and on average, tend to walk or bike more for transportation.[18] Implicit bias may also play a role in

GENTRIFICATION, EQUITY, AND HOUSING

Though street and transportation improvement projects can increase property values and signal economic vitality, these same outcomes can negatively affect housing affordability. When promoting any new development, Main Street leaders must plan against the displacement of current residents and businesses if there are risks of gentrification. Incorporating anti-displacement policies and conducting public engagement early and often can help ensure that planning and programs protect the needs of all.

In April 2018, PolicyLink launched the All-In Cities Anti-Displacement Policy Network, in which 64 local leaders from 10 cities across the country are promoting a comprehensive toolkit with strategies and policies that combat displacement and promote racial inclusion and equitable growth. Each recommended strategy describes what the policy is, key considerations, who can implement it, and examples of where it is working. Focus areas include: good jobs, economic security, homegrown talent, healthy neighborhoods, housing and anti-displacement, and democracy and justice. Visit Become and All-In City to see their resources on how your community can join the Network.

this discrepancy, as research from the University of Nevada has shown that "drivers are significantly more likely to yield to a White pedestrian in a crosswalk than to a Black or African American pedestrian."[19]

Ability. Despite the requirements and guidance from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines and the Federal Highway Administration Accessible (FHWA) Sidewalks and Street Crossings guidelines, vital transportation services remain inaccessible to individuals with disabilities when those policies are not accompanied by adequate funding and implementation strategies.[20] Poor quality or missing sidewalks make it difficult for those in wheelchairs to get from place to place. Crossing times can be too quick for people with disabilities. Not all public transit stations, buses, and trains provide elevators or ramps needed for universal access. As noted by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), "of the nearly two million people with disabilities who never leave their homes, 560,000 never leave home because of transportation difficulties."[21]

Nation of origin and language. Equitable access can be a challenge for non-native English speakers, particularly when wayfinding and signage on streets and transit systems are non-intuitive and/or only written in English.

Family type. Streets and public transportation facilities that are not accessible by wheelchair are similarly inaccessible when pushing a stroller, and anti-stroller policies can actively exclude or give the impression that families are not welcome. Additionally, in some cases, riding transit as a family—especially with teenagers—can be more expensive than driving, creating further affordability and mode choice impacts for low-income families.

Street user type. Many streets do not provide a fair allocation of street space and continuous connectivity that people require to walk or bike safely. Without the appropriate spaces and networks for active mobility, crashes and fatalities are more likely. For example, Denver Public Works published local statistics showing that compared to motorists, pedestrians were approximately 30 times more likely, motorcyclists were 13 times more likely, and bicyclists were 6.5 times more likely to die in a crash.[22]

MOBILITY EQUITY INDICATORS

The processes by which transportation decisions are planned and implemented do not always consistently or uniformly engage a diversity of community constituents. When decisions are made without intentional, early, and consistent public engagement, they may not fully consider and address the needs of different types of transit riders, who industry experts like TransitCenter differentiate as "occasional" (only use transit for unusual trips), "commuters" (primarily use for work travel), and "all-purpose" (use for all types of trips).[23]

In order to measure progress toward equity in transportation planning, the Victoria Transport Policy Institute has developed five equity objectives and associated indicators that can be expanded, elaborated, and disaggregated to adapt to specific planning requirements. Please see VTPI's full plan for indicators and further detail.

Their five transit equity objectives are:

Horizontal Equity

1. Everyone is treated equally, unless special treatment is justified for specific reasons.

2. Individuals bear the costs they impose.

Vertical Equity

3. Progressive with respect to income.

4. Benefits transportation disadvantaged people (non-drivers, disabled, children, etc.).

5. Improves basic access: favors trips considered necessities rather than luxuries.

BENEFITS OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED STREETS

When streets are planned and designed to accommodate the needs of those most vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions and barriers to access, they accommodate the needs of everyone, and significantly improve equity within a community overall. People-oriented streets provide tremendous benefits beyond reducing costs and inequalities. These benefits include:

Autonomy. Equitable access to transportation services and space for safe movement means more autonomy and independence for vulnerable groups. Those with disabilities can leave their homes and live more independently within their communities and older adults who can no longer drive are better able to age in place. Safer, more equitable streets also provide children with opportunities to walk or bike to school and play outside without parental supervision.

Social mobility. Accessible transportation options allow more people to fully participate in economic and social activities.[24] Travel time savings, expense savings, and access to the full breadth of life-improving services and activities can improve the prospects of upward mobility for a variety of vulnerable populations.

Belonging. When streets are planned with equity in mind they place value on different perspectives, that can make people of all backgrounds, and particularly those from traditionally marginalized communities, feel safer and more welcome in public spaces. The feeling of being invited and welcomed on streets allows everyone to participate in what the community has to offer and encourages people to stay for longer periods of time.

Sense of ownership and stewardship. Because people-oriented streets can be more welcoming, and because they value all users, they can also foster a more equal balance of people taking an interest in the well-being of their streets, becoming civically engaged, and feeling a sense of ownership over public space outcomes. In this way, there can be a higher level of public trust among all types of people, which in turn engenders a greater sense of pride and stewardship for Main Street communities.

LightFieldStudios

Equal access to all the benefits of Main Street. The next sections will go into further detail about how people-oriented streets provide profound benefits for individuals and communities, but it is important to realize upfront that only when equity is addressed in Main Street planning and design will all users benefit from improved safety, health, economic opportunity, environmental outcomes, and community interactions.

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SAFETY

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The bias towards high-speed mobility, traffic efficiency, and street space for cars has made many of our streets unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists, which can pressure more people into using cars in an effort to protect their safety. This vicious cycle further perpetuates both traffic congestion and the likelihood of pedestrian and motorist deaths.

Safety concerns resulting from the perceived risk of crime is another factor that makes individuals less likely to walk and more likely to retreat to car use.[25] The atmosphere of our streetscapes and the practical design of streets can impact both the incidences of crime and the extent to which people fear the possibility of crime. Therefore, in terms of safety from both traffic and crime on Main Street, transportation and streets do matter.

COSTS OF CAR-ORIENTED STREETS

Credit: Mark_KA

Street design and traffic management created with only efficient vehicle movement in mind creates unsafe conditions for those who choose or are limited to other modes of transportation. Components of these unsafe conditions include:

Crashes. The Vision Zero Network has determined that each year in the United States, more than 40,000 people—an average of 100 people per day—are needlessly killed in traffic crashes, and millions more are injured. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also calculated that at the global scale there are 1.35 million deaths caused by traffic conditions annually, making it the eighth leading cause of death.[26] These numbers can be attributed to both speed and design:

> **Speed.** Crashes are more likely to happen at high speeds, and when they do, they are more likely to be deadly.[27] On average, when a car strikes a pedestrian at 30 miles per hour, pedestrian deaths occur 40 percent of the time, but at 20 miles per hour, that number drops to five percent.[28] Particularly pertinent for Main Street leaders to note is that local roads—not high-speed roads such as interstate highways—have the highest percentage of fatal crashes involving speeding passenger vehicles.[29]

> **Streetscape.** When streets don't prioritize sidewalks and crosswalks, the numbers of fatalities and injuries increase. ChangeLab Solutions found that the risk of pedestrian deaths increases from 10 percent to 45 percent when crosswalks are absent from streets.[30] While multimodal accommodations aren't necessary for every street, the lack of them in a community's overall street system can also pose a greater risk for traffic deaths and injuries.

Crime. Whether caused by perceived or real threats, fear hinders many people's use and enjoyment of public spaces, including streets and sidewalks.[31] These perceptions can surface when streetscapes are dimly lit, poorly maintained, have trash and litter, have narrow or no sidewalks, lack appropriate sightlines and visibility, or have a general lack of human activity.[32]

THE VISION ZERO MOVEMENT

A concept that began in Sweden in the 1990s, Vision Zero is a strategy to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries to zero. In the United States, the Vision Zero Network works with communities and cities to mobilize and address the crisis of unsafe streets.

Vision Zero starts with recognizing that pedestrian deaths are not just "accidents" but are preventable crashes resulting from the failures of street design and management. The Vision Zero Network is framed around "the ethical belief that everyone has the right to move safely in their communities, and that system designers and policy makers share the responsibility to ensure safe systems for travel."

Credit: Ben Muldrow

Credit: Ratchat

Credit: Notice Pictures

TERRORISM AND PERIMETER SECURITY

Recently, communities have had to address safety concerns on their streets with the rise of issues related to terrorism and perimeter security when cars and trucks are used as weapons of terror. While some physical barriers may be necessary for addressing this new threat, communities should avoid responding in an ad-hoc manner and ensure that their responses follow core principles that protect residents, workers, and visitors, while also being careful to ease walking, biking, and public transit use. Rather than hastily installing rows of bollards or concrete barriers, for example, some communities have responded by installing trees, bike racks, and raised planters that can double as benches.

Learn more about place-based strategies for incorporating perimeter safety in this article.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a theory and multi-disciplinary approach that recognizes how a climate of safety can be created through designing and managing the physical environment in a way that positively influences human behavior.[33] The theory is based on these factors: natural access control, natural surveillance, territoriality, and maintenance. Learn more about CPTED here.

The theory is based on these principles:

1. **Natural access control:** Involves the design of streets, sidewalks, building entrances, and neighborhood gateways that clearly indicate transitions from public to private or semi-private areas.

2. **Natural surveillance:** Incorporates design that maximizes the visibility of people, parking areas, vehicles, and site activities.

3. **Territoriality:** Utilizes display features that show signs of "ownership" and distinguish between public and private areas, such as sidewalks, landscaping, and porches.

4. **Maintenance:** Addresses the management, maintenance, upkeep, and cleanliness of space that signals a space is well looked after and inhospitable to on-site criminal activity.

When streets are treated as places for people, they become safer spaces for everyone traveling from one place to another or simply hanging out. Some of the benefits of safe streets include:

Saved lives and improved accessibility. Through engineering and policy changes that calm car traffic, reduce speeds, and enhance pedestrian amenities, fears about walking are reduced and more crashes, injuries, and fatalities are avoided.[34,35] These positive changes lessen the fear and discomfort vulnerable users may feel about certain streets, making them more enticing to visit and more accessible for reaching particular destinations.

Reduced crime. In the 1960s, urban activist and writer Jane Jacobs was among the first to herald the importance of "eyes on the street" in making neighborhoods safer. When more people spend time on a street—chatting on a stoop, having dinner in an outdoor café, or gardening in a front yard—there are more people to witness a potential crime, which makes them less likely to occur in the first place. Streets that encourage activity and pedestrian traffic throughout the day, week, and year naturally have more regular eyes on the street and encourage use through a sense of safety.[36]

Sense of security. When streets provide a safe and enticing environment where people can gather, encounter, and socialize with one another, there is greater potential to become acquainted with your neighbors. Knowing your neighbors—shopkeepers, restaurant owners, fellow commuters, families waiting alongside you at the bus stop, street musicians, etc.—can add to one's sense of security on Main Streets.

AUTOMATED VEHICLES (AVS)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration predicts that automated vehicles (aka self-driving cars) will be road-ready by 2025.[37] Indeed, in March 2018, the Consolidated Appropriations Act allocated $100 million for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct research on AV development.[38]

The Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine note that AVs have the potential to dramatically increase safety, reduce congestion, improve access, enhance sustainability, and spur economic development—but there are great risks in widespread deployment of these vehicles without deeper research, contained testing, and thoughtful, place-based policy and regulation development.[39]

As commercial district leaders, you can help ensure that the introduction of AVs into your community realizes those benefits and mitigates the risks by working with your local and state DOTs to craft policies and regulations that reflect your experience and needs. As a champion of people-oriented streets, you can advocate for a deliberate, thoroughly researched approach to integrating these new technologies into your community. *See Chapter 3 for tips on how to engage with your DOT officials.*

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"Everyone should have access to spaces and places that make it safe and easy for us to walk... Walkable communities are good for social connectedness, good for business, good for the environment, and, most importantly, good for our personal health."
—U.S. SURGEON GENERAL VIVEK H. MURTHY

HEALTH

STREETS AS PLACES

EQUITY

SAFETY

COMMUNITY

ECONOMIC VITALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The design of our streets can have profound impacts on public health outcomes. Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization shows that a person's physical environment (i.e. the place a person lives and the streets they use to get around) has a greater impact on their overall health than biology, behaviors, or healthcare.[40,41] The way streets are designed affects access to healthy food, green environments, healthcare services, and to the social opportunities that connect us with other people in the community. Street design also impacts our ability to choose active modes of transportation, like walking and biking.

Being the central hub and connector for a downtown, Main Street can offer the opportunity for residents to access these health-related resources, services, and activities. In this position, Main Streets can play an important role in fostering a culture of health, both directly and by example.

Credit: Starflamedia

Credit: Mississippi Main Street Association

Streets designed primarily for the movement of vehicles have many unintended consequences for public health as they create barriers to opportunities and resources. These barriers and other factors can have cascading negative impacts on the physical, mental, and social health of individuals and communities because of:

Physical inactivity. Physical inactivity is a major contributor to obesity. Streets designed only for cars deny people opportunities for more active ways to get around, such as walking and biking. One study found that every additional hour per day spent in a car is associated with a six percent increase in the likelihood of obesity.[42] Physical inactivity has also been linked to declines in emotional well-being and an increase in mental health disorders.[43,44]

Lack of access to healthy foods. Streetscape barriers and transportation accessibility factor into the ability of individuals and families to obtain nutritional foods. Lack of access to healthy food options and overabundant access to unhealthy options is often linked to poor diets that can lead to malnutrition, on the one hand, and to obesity and related chronic diseases like heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and some cancers, on the other.[45]

Limited healthcare access. Street and transportation networks can also be a factor in regular access to healthcare, especially for those with limited mobility. Poor access to healthcare services limits the promotion and maintenance of personal health, prevention and management of diseases, reduction of unnecessary disabilities and avoidable deaths, and the achievement of health equity for all.[46]

Social isolation. Inaccessibility can limit social interactions and community connection, which can lead to isolation and poor mental health. In turn, isolation and poor mental health can lead to elevated risks for poor physical health, including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, and obesity, as well as many risk behaviors for chronic disease, such as physical inactivity, smoking, excessive drinking, and insufficient sleep.[47]

Air pollution. Vehicle emissions cause air pollution, which is linked to wheezing and breathing difficulties during exercise or outdoor activities; aggravation of asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema; and a higher chance of getting respiratory illnesses, like pneumonia or bronchitis. [48]

THE CASE FOR HEALTHY PLACES (PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES)

In The Case for Healthy Places, Project for Public Spaces synthesizes over 150 peer-reviewed research articles on public health into a set of easily digestible placemaking guidelines and strategies that can be implemented by city agencies, nonprofits, community organizations, healthcare institutions, and others to improve the well-being of their communities. The report explores five themes: Social Support & Interaction, Play & Active Recreation, Green & Natural Environments, Healthy Food, and Walking & Biking.

Light pollution. Parking lots and gas stations necessitated by automobiles and highway-style lighting in downtowns contribute to excessive light pollution, which can be detrimental to health. Studies suggest that exposure to a surplus of artificial light at night causes sleep disorders and increases the risk for obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer in humans.[49]

Noise pollution. Our car-oriented transportation systems cause noise pollution that affects nearly all Americans—urban, suburban, and rural— and contributes to sleep disturbance, hearing loss, heart problems, obesity, depression, and some decreased physical and mental performance.[50]

Avoidable traffic-related injuries and deaths. The abundance of traffic-related injuries and deaths is a great public health concern in the United States. These incidents happen every day, with a daily average of more than 100 fatalities, 20 of which are pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-occupants of vehicles.[51] See the previous section on Safety for further information.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Social determinants of health are conditions in the places we live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes and help explain why some Americans are healthier than others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy People 2020 developed a place-based framework that includes five key areas of social determinants of health:

1. Economic Stability
2. Education
3. Social Community Context
4. Health and Health Care
5. Neighborhood and Built Environment

Credit: Katarzyna Bialasiewicz

Credit: Arby Reed

Research by the Transportation Review Board has found that a healthy life requires access to healthy food, physical activity, economic opportunity, healthcare, and social interactions.[52] Streets designed and planned for the needs of all people, not just the speed and space needs of cars, provide better access to these vital resources and the resulting positive health outcomes:

Expanded participation in physical activity. Streets that include multi-modal options, such as transit, walking, and biking, provide opportunities for more physical activity in daily routines. Regular physical activity is an important factor in improving health and well-being, as it is linked to increased life expectancy and lower risks for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, depression, and some cancers.[53]

Access to healthy foods. Main Streets with accessible public space and a good transportation network can connect people to more healthy food sources. Healthy diets are vital to good health, disease prevention, and the healthy growth and development of children and adolescents. The CDC suggests that a diet of nutritious foods and a routine of physical activity could help reduce the incidence of heart disease, cancer, and diabetes—the leading causes of death and disability in the United States.[54]

Preventative healthcare. When networks are cohesive and streets are accessible they more easily connect people to healthcare services. People-oriented Main Streets can even provide the space for health fairs, pop-up services, and events, which provide a convenient opportunity to access regular preventative healthcare. Prevention helps people stay healthy, avoid or delay the onset of disease, keep preexisting diseases from becoming worse or debilitating, lead productive lives, and reduce costs.

Culture of health. As defined by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a "culture of health" allows good health and well-being to flourish across geographic, demographic, and social sectors, fostering healthy, equitable communities in which everyone has the opportunity to make choices that lead to healthy lifestyles.[55] People-oriented streets provide the opportunities and easy access that allow people to more naturally make healthy choices in their daily lives, thereby promoting a culture of health.

Mental health. People-oriented streets can provide more access to green space, physical activity, social interaction, safe environments, affordable transportation options, and cleaner air—all of which are linked to improved emotional well-being and can help prevent some mental health disorders.[56,57,58]

Credit: BHP Imaging

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ECONOMIC VITALITY

STREETS AS PLACES

EQUITY

SAFETY

HEALTH

COMMUNITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

For centuries, Main Streets—downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts—have been the cultural, economic, and civic centers of our towns and cities. With the advent of shopping malls and car-based transportation planning following World War II, Main Street districts began to lose much of their economic strength as a glut of commercial space flooded the marketplace, and residents moved farther out from city centers and neighborhood districts. Some downtowns tried to beat the suburbs at their own game, but as it turns out, districts that orient their physical spaces around cars and trucks only ensure that drivers move quickly through—when they could stop and stay.

In recent decades, many downtowns and neighborhood commercial corridors have gradually regained economic ground, and new and old generations alike now actively seek out the unique spaces, economic vibrancy, and cultural interaction that older and culturally significant commercial districts offer.

As practitioners and policymakers know, restoring and supporting our districts' economic vitality requires years of work and a deep understanding of the many factors that play a role in the overall success of the district. Since transportation design in commercial districts provides a crucial foundation to these efforts—affecting foot traffic, what businesses can and cannot do, flows of private and public investment, property values, and tourism—Main Street leaders should support the most efficient use of their transportation systems as part of achieving sustainable economic vitality.

The key is to create and support people-oriented streets that mitigate suboptimal development patterns and the need for expensive infrastructure, increase walkability, and encourage investment and entrepreneurship, all with the goal of a harmonious, safe, and cost-effective balance of people's and vehicular needs.

COSTS OF CAR-ORIENTED STREETS

Credit: smodj

Transportation systems that focus on cars and trucks require the expenditure of more economic resources than denser, multimodal systems.[59] These are some of the additional costs that car-centric roadways and streetscapes can impose on communities:

Roadways and infrastructure. When communities focus their transportation systems on cars and speed, they generate increased demand for wider roadways. This focus can create additional costs for taxpayers and negatively affect the local, regional, and state economies because it requires: (1) extra and more costly road construction and infrastructure needs (e.g. paving, installing traffic signals); (2) continued operation and management (e.g. traffic engineers, police); and (3) additional long-term maintenance as heavier cars and trucks put more demands on the road itself.[60] The continued construction, maintenance, and operation of car-oriented roadways and their supporting systems, like parking lots, necessitates endless, often unsustainable spending just to keep things functional.

Excessive parking. When a parking lot has too many continuously empty parking spaces and/or is underutilized for much of the day, a Main Street district's land is not being used efficiently and may be undervalued.[61] Additional development on surface lots could add more residents, storefronts, workplaces, public institutions, or services to the mix, all while improving the district's walkability.

Credit: Photon-Photos

EMPTY SPACES

Empty Spaces, a January 2017 report by Smart Growth America and University of Utah College of Architecture and Planning, studied parking as part of five transit-oriented development (TOD) projects and found that the actual demand for parking added up to only 58 to 84 percent of the amount provided.[62] In other words, even when these TODs supplied less parking than recommended by the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Trip Generation and Parking Generation guidelines, the actual parking demand was still far below the supply.

This report offers many more findings regarding land use and costs of excessive parking. Read more in the underline full report or in this underline digest from the Urban Land Institute.

BENEFITS OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED STREETS

When a commercial corridor is designed and maintained with people as the focus, rather than cars and trucks, more people will stay, shop, connect, and contribute to the community's economic vitality. People-first Main Streets reap more economic benefits because they encourage and create these conditions:

More people visit. Various studies show that accessible, safe, and well-designed streetscapes attract people, increasing foot traffic in the commercial district.[63] Streetscapes designed for people also frequently feature unique, place-based amenities—e.g. historic sites, architecture, music, trails, outdoor recreation, shopping, dining, entertainment, and lodging—that encourage visitors to stay.

Visitors spend more. When walking or using multimodal means of transit (bikes, scooters, etc.), people tend to spend more money per month locally even though they might spend less per visit, because: (1) they are making more trips past shops and businesses per month; (2) they are more likely to spend at other nearby shops; and (3) there are dozens of destinations in a matter of minutes.[64]

Residents stay and new people move there. An enticing, safe, and walkable Main Street attracts people who value density, access, and proximity to everyday necessities and encourages them to take up residence nearby, thereby increasing property and rental values and tax revenues in the community.[65] Walkable commercial districts are seeing substantial and growing rental rate premiums for offices (90 percent), retail spaces (71 percent), and multi-family residential (66 percent)—significantly higher than in more "drivable" suburban districts.[66] Of course, it bears repeating that increases in property value can affect housing affordability, so Main Street leaders must consider strategies to prevent displacement of current residents, should the streetscape development cause rents to rise too high. See PolicyLink's anti-displacement strategies in the Equity section of this toolkit.

Individual economic opportunity. When people have access to more transportation choices and complete transportation networks, they can save significantly on transportation expenses, as well as various additional expenses like healthcare. Households can potentially save nearly $10,000 by using public transportation and living with one less car.[67] Increased personal mobility can also mean access to more opportunities for employment, education, and professional development that can positively impact personal financial outcomes.

"STICKY" STREETS

Vancouver urbanist Brent Toderian describes his concept of "sticky streets" like this: "A street is sticky if as you move along it, you're constantly enticed to slow down, stop and linger to enjoy the public life around you." The activation of public spaces throughout the Main Street signals to residents and visitors that they are welcome there and offers them reasons to stay a while.

PLACE VALUE AND STREETS AS PLACES

In 2016, Community Builders investigated the value of "place" in building and sustaining local economic development. Based on nearly 1,000 surveys of business owners and community members throughout the Intermountain West, their *Place Value* report found:

1. 70 percent of business owners established their residence in a community first, and then decided to start a business later. Less than one-third of business owners moved to a community with the purpose of opening a business.

2. In selecting a location to live, the most highly considered factor for business owners and community members was the overall quality of the community, with 70 percent of business owners responding to the survey describing community character as "extremely important."

3. Walkable, people-oriented streets contribute significantly to the character and quality of a commercial district.

Investment and entrepreneur support.
One of the under-appreciated bene-fits of dense, walkable urban fabric is the proximity of businesspeople to each other and others they need access to, such as Main Street leaders and public officials. Many business interactions must happen face-to-face in order to build trust and com-mon understanding about complex issues.[68] Urbanists and researchers have long documented the impor-tance of proximity and street design in the frequency of interaction. For one, Donald Appleyard's seminal 1970s work *Livable Streets* documented how social interactions were signifi-cantly more frequent on streets with light vehicular traffic.[69] This proximity contributes to the creation of entre-preneurial ecosystems that support new business owners as they develop and grow an enterprise.[70]

Small business support. The dense, granular urban design that often comes with a people-oriented Main Street offers physical and built assets that facilitate economic opportunity for small business owners. In 2013, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) reported that there were 28.8 million small businesses in the United States and that small businesses employ 48 percent of America's private–sector workforce. Walkable, historic, commercial districts are ideal physical locations for these small businesses, new entrepreneurs, and business incubators because they offer smaller storefront spaces that fit well with a small business' size and affordability needs.[71]

ARCHITECTURE AND ECONOMIC VITALITY

No great street is truly complete without the unique buildings and physical assets that frame it. A district's built environment is a major element of what creates a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable local economy.

Main Street leaders should advocate for historic preservation as an important economic development policy, particularly if your town has vacant or underused older and historic buildings that can be converted into income-producing properties or housing.

Transformational building rehabilitations often attract long-term tenants and additional customers and encourage previously uninterested building owners to make changes or continue building maintenance in order to remain competitive.

But of course, no building is an island—its value is affected by its surroundings. Main Street America's Design Handbook explores the power of people-centered design in Main Street districts and the role of quality streetscapes, green spaces, and architecture.

In *Untapped Potential* the National Trust for Historic Preservation explains that we can't afford to waste old buildings: "Old commercial corridors are home to more jobs in new and small businesses, more non-chain businesses, and more women and minority-owned businesses. These corridors harbor more affordable space and different types of housing, allowing for a greater diversity of residents and businesses."

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"The fragile ecology of a city neighborhood and the fragile ecology of the Arctic stand or fall together."
—JANE JACOBS

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

STREETS AS PLACES

EQUITY

SAFETY

HEALTH

COMMUNITY

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Street design is among the most important environmental decisions a community makes, affecting everything from clean air and water to efficient land use and the quality of animal, plant, and human life. A well-designed, people-oriented street encourages environmental sustainability by emphasizing the inherent green features of Main Street districts, including the compact blocks, density, and green spaces that make them walkable and accessible.

STREETS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Global Designing Cities Initiative has created a clear and concise infographic demonstrating the myriad ways people-oriented streets support environmental sustainability.

Please view it here.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED rating system for neighborhood development (LEED-ND),[72] compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods like Main Street districts offer many important environmental benefits:

- They often use land and infrastructure efficiently, preventing the loss of wildlife habitat and farmland and reducing the demand to extend basic services, such as water, power, roads, and sewers, to areas beyond downtown or the central city.

- Their typically multi-storied buildings result in lower utility costs and less demand for energy.

- Their density also reduces car dependency through greater connectivity and design features, such as sidewalks, trees, inviting facades, and limited setbacks, that encourage pedestrian activity and facilitate transit services.

Retaining the compact layout of historic cores, incorporating green and efficient streetscape elements, and reusing older and historic buildings—all core tenets of people-oriented streets—positively contribute to the environmental sustainability and resilience of downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

COSTS OF CAR-ORIENTED STREETS

Though adverse environmental effects of automobile- and truck-dominated roads have long been documented, traditional transportation planning approaches continue to facilitate car-dominated streets. More people drive as population grows, and these adverse effects become more and more dangerous every year—particularly as they contribute to global climate change. These adverse effects include:

Greenhouse gas emissions. Due to their focus on automobiles over other, cleaner modes of transportation, car-oriented streets contribute to air pollution through greenhouse gas emissions, particulate matter, and smog. According to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, transportation currently causes 23 percent of energy-related CO_2 emissions. Without changes in policy, this proportion is projected to grow to 80 percent by 2050.[73]

Flooding. Impermeable road surfaces can cause flooding by preventing rain from soaking into the ground, and aging and poorly maintained road infrastructure only exacerbate the issue. In a national survey of professionals involved in their town or city's flood man-agement, 83 percent of respondents reported having experienced flooding in their communities.[74]

Water pollution. Heavy metal and toxic chemicals from automobiles on our roads cause water pollution, which can disrupt ecosystems and impact human health when contamination reaches drinking water sources. A 2015 report from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency explained that wear and tear of car and truck parts, like tires, brake pads, and fuel combustion, deposit various heavy metals onto the road. The metals accumulate during dry periods, and during wet periods, rain carries them off the roadway and into our sewers and groundwater. Flooding only exacerbates this contamination.[75]

Habitat loss and fragmentation. Car-oriented streets contribute to declines in native animal and plant species populations. In addition to animal fatalities, roads frequently cut through and destroy habitats, disrupting ecosystems and decreasing reproductive success of native species.[76]

Heat Island Effect. Dark road surfaces and parking lots cause heat to become trapped in an area, creating dangerous and unnatural "heat islands." The EPA notes that "on a hot, sunny summer day, the sun can heat dry, exposed urban surfaces, such as roofs and pavement, to temperatures 50–90°F (27–50°C) hotter than the air, while shaded or moist surfaces—often in more rural surroundings—remain close to (actual) air temperatures."[77]

Resource consumption. In sprawling, car-oriented neighborhoods, there is more consumption of already-limited land and water resources as the distance between destinations increases, and more streets and parking lots are constructed. Increases to vehicle miles traveled also increases consumption of fossil fuels.

Research on the myriad benefits of dense and walkable communities has spurred the creation of innovative new materials and systems, and shed light on opportunities to mitigate environmental costs. Increased adoption of these new people-oriented approaches can add up to monumental change toward greener and cleaner streets and result in these environmental benefits:

Reduced climate impact. Walkable, multimodal, and accessible streets make it easier for people to choose active transportation like walking and biking, as well as efficient public transportation like buses and trains. Project Drawdown has projected that with 23 percent adoption of mass or public transit by 2050, 6.6 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions would be averted.[78]

Biodiversity, flood control, and water management. Streets can incorporate shade trees, plants, and green spaces that are essential to environmental sustainability. Greenery improves air quality, reduces rainwater runoff, and prevents and mitigates heat island effects. The use of permeable paving materials also drastically reduces stormwater runoff.

Resilience. The incorporation of flood- and heat island-mitigating materials, design, and planning also makes Main Streets more adaptable to increasingly extreme weather and weather-related disasters. In underscoring the key role of adaptability in sustainable cities, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Research and Policy Lab notes, "Our older neighborhoods show how buildings, blocks, and neighborhoods can absorb change gradually and incrementally. Made up of many similar, small parts, these neighborhoods can absorb economic or climate shocks and come back again, piece by piece."[81]

Energy efficiency and resource preservation. People-oriented streets provide the foundation of compact, dense, walkable historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts, making the efficient use of land and resources easier to achieve than more sprawling, car-oriented, suburban counterparts.[82]

Cooler surface temperatures. A recent study of Tucson's older, walkable blocks, showed that in blocks where the median building age was above the citywide median, surface temperatures were nearly a full degree cooler (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) on average than the parts of the city with comparatively newer buildings. On average, parts of Tucson where at least 20 percent of the structures were built before 1945 have surface temperatures that are a half-degree cooler than parts of the city with fewer than 20 percent of buildings built before 1945.[83]

VALUE OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Center for Neighborhood Technology has published tools, case studies, and practical guides for calculating the value of green infrastructure[79] and for implementing green infrastructure systems.[80]

Credit: Marc Buehler

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SMALL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

A vision for a people-oriented street should not end at the curb. A successful vision incorporates and supports the longevity of adjacent building stock and the sustainability of the local businesses that keep those buildings in use.

In 2013, the National Trust for Historic Preservation published *Realizing the Energy Efficiency of Small Buildings*, a report that identified the potential for significant energy and cost savings in the small commercial buildings commonly found in Main Streets, highlighting the following findings:

- Small buildings are responsible for 47 percent of the overall energy consumed by all commercial buildings.

- Potential energy savings in small buildings range from 27 to 59 percent, depending on the building type.

- Small, neighborhood businesses such as restaurants, grocers, and retailers can improve profitability by more than 10 percent through smart investments in energy savings.

- To research and test these findings, the National Trust partnered with Main Street America on *America Saves*, a three-year research and development program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy aimed at improving access to energy efficiency improvements for business owners in Main Street districts.

Research findings, practical tips, and recommended best practices can be found on their underline.

ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Rehabilitating older and historic buildings is the ultimate form of recycling. When we demolish buildings and haul the scrap to the landfill, we waste their embodied energy—the total energy required for the extraction, processing, manufacture, and delivery of materials to the building site. New construction is almost always more energy-intensive than saving that embodied energy through rehabilitation, even when the new building makes use of recycled materials and energy efficient features.[84]

Furthermore, the older buildings frequently found on Main Streets often have low-tech, environmentally sustainable features that benefit not only the building owner, but also the longevity of the streets they occupy:

- High ceilings and operable windows, allowing for cross ventilation;

- Shutters, canopies, and optimal building siting, which help control sunlight and utilize shade from surrounding trees;

- Construction materials such as wood and masonry, which have higher insulating values and absorb more heat than newer materials like metal and vinyl. These materials were also often native to the area, and last for generations.[85]

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"The street is the river of life of the city, the place where we come together, the pathway to the center."
—WILLIAM H. WHYTE

COMMUNITY

# STREETS AS PLACES

EQUITY

SAFETY

HEALTH

ECONOMIC VITALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Our streets and transportation systems—especially around Main Street districts—determine how people can get to, connect with, and build up their communities, and they can also create the space for communal life to unfold.

Physical features and intentional community engagement are both at the heart of people-oriented street planning and design. Together, the physical elements of downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts and thoughtful community engagement with residents can impact overall connectivity, culture, health, sense of place, and belonging.

People-first Main Streets distinguish themselves by committing to a community-driven process, one that brings diverse stakeholders from all sectors together, inviting them to be proactive participants and guides. It also ensures that the vision is a true reflection of the diversity of the community.[86] *See Chapter 3 for more about how this can be done.*

COSTS OF CAR-ORIENTED STREETS
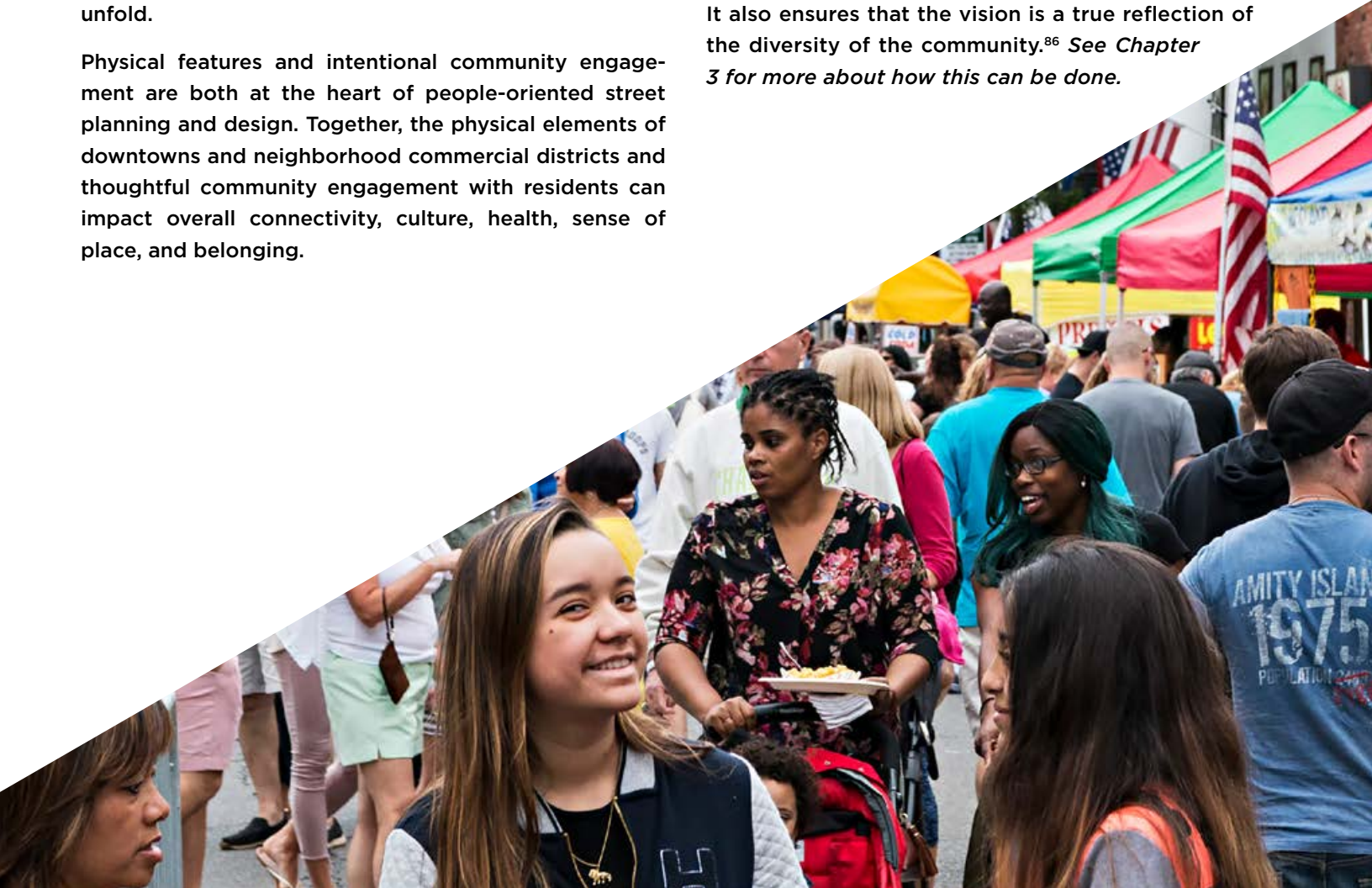
Transportation systems that prioritize cars over people adversely affect people's access to community resources and their sense of community belonging and ownership. Car-oriented streets can create a sense of disconnectedness in these ways:

Barriers to community connection. Physical barriers created by car-oriented infrastructure and fast speeds can cut off residents' access to social gatherings, community centers, and their friends and neighbors, thus severing access to a strong sense of community.[87] As noted in the equity section of this chapter, urban renewal projects in cities across the U.S., bifurcated neighborhoods and cut off access to adjacent areas—disproportionately affecting lower-income people and people of color.

Eroded sense of physical geography. In a 2012 study, planner and urban designer Bruce Appleyard worked with children in two suburban communities to understand how car travel affected their connection to their communities. In the community where residents could bike and walk more easily, he found that children could draw relatively accurate maps of their community, highlighting multiple destinations and places they liked to visit. In contrast, the children who lived in a car-dominated com-

munity drew less-detailed maps that highlighted more areas they considered to be dangerous. Appleyard calls this disconnection from community the "windshield perspective," emphasizing that children need more interaction with their surroundings—as in the people-oriented streets of the first community—in order to cultivate a sense of community.[88]

Credit: © Woodysphotos

Credit: KatarzynaBialasiewicz

Credit: © SasinParaksa

BENEFITS OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED STREETS

By focusing on people, street systems can be major positive forces in increasing community members' access, ability to engage, and social connectedness. The social benefits communities can reap from people-oriented streets include:

Democracy and advocacy in action. In the 2010 issue of *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, a study by the University of New Hampshire[89] described how people who live in walkable communities are more civically involved and have greater levels of trust than those who live in less walkable neighborhoods. This increase in so-called "social capital" is associated with higher quality of life.[90] Streets are where protests and activist marches take place, where people come together to engage, collaborate, and fulfill their democratic and civic rights.[91]

Social cohesion and resilience. People-oriented streets that have sidewalks and shared spaces promote social interaction, the raw material of personal relationships, and community cohesion.[92] Community connectedness, in turn, plays a crucial role in preparing for and responding to natural disasters, public health crises, and threats to public safety.[93]

Sense of place. Streets are integral to community members' sense of place. This "place identity" directly influences a person's sense of self, and how they see themselves in relation to their community, its history, its social life, and its representation in society.

Main Street character. Because Main Streets often serve as both the center of downtown and its primary gateway, they form visitors' and new residents' first impression of the community. They can also serve as the community's main gathering place and as the hub of a neighborhood's distinct social activities.

Credit: tupungato

Credit: Jay Galvin

Credit: Ted Eytan

Effective transit. When design is focused on people—their needs, their homes, their workplaces, etc.—it can also facilitate better transit planning. If planners focus the transit system on meeting the variety of needs and lifestyles of all their residents, the transit system can become more cohesive, efficient, and successful.

Culture and community. With events like parades, music festivals, holiday celebrations, and outdoor art shows, people-oriented streets can connect the cultures and interests of the community and further boost the unique character of each Main Street.[94]

Public trust built from community engagement. In communities where people are the focus of street planning and design, and where commercial district leaders actively seek input from and engage with all neighborhoods and stakeholders, community members' sense of place may be more connected and supported.[95] *See Chapter 3 for more details on community engagement as part of the process for realizing people-first streets.*

DESIGNING FOR PLACE

Celebrating and maintaining a district's unique attributes, density, architecture, and history is integral for creating a sense of place. For example:

- Preserving and appropriately rehabilitating historic and older buildings maintains the original built fabric and distinctive architecture of a commercial district.

- Referencing a district's specific cultural attributes in public art projects and district branding (i.e. street banners and district logos) contributes to a sense of unique community identity.

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CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY   33

NUTS AND BOLTS OF PEOPLE-FIRST STREETS

Creating streets for people requires an understanding of the various components that directly and indirectly relate to commercial district transportation planning and design. Equipped with this knowledge, Main Street leaders can better advocate for design elements, programming strategies, and policies that support people-first streets and improve their ability to communicate with local community partners and transportation officials.

While Chapter 1 explored why people-oriented streets are important, this chapter delves into the nuts and bolts of various elements that directly impact the quality of a Main Street's transportation network, including:

- **Streetscape Design and Pedestrian Network**
- **Managing Traffic**
- **Smart Parking**

For each of these key elements, this chapter offers recommendations regarding infrastructure, programming, education, and management strategies; examples of innovative policy solutions; and case studies of communities that are working to transform their streets into places for people. Along with a robust community process, as outlined in Chapter 3, these ideas can be adapted and used to inspire your own projects, to share as examples with fellow stakeholders, and to create the foundation for streets that positively impact people, place, and the economy.

The extent to which transportation network or street improvements are needed in a community varies according to patterns of use, levels of activity, population density, and the scale of buildings in the area. Your Main Street may need a whole street redesign or transportation system reconfiguration, or you may just need to address a gap here and there based on your local needs. Not every component outlined in this section should be followed in a given project, and any suggestion should always be adapted to your needs. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a place to get started in understanding the complex nature of the elements that contribute to great Main Streets.

BEFORE IMPLEMENTING ANY OF THESE INFRASTRUCTURE OR PROGRAMMING APPROACHES, FIRST UNDERTAKE THE PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS OUTLINED IN **CHAPTER 3** TO GUIDE YOUR DECISION-MAKING.

Streetscape Design and Pedestrian Network

Creating streets for people starts with creating a safe, sustainable, and healthy place for residents and visitors to connect, engage, and support the local economy. Truly the front porch of our communities, successful Main Streets embrace human-scale design and offer seating areas, inviting public spaces, and streetscape amenities that enhance the overall human experience. They are also easy and safe to navigate, with infrastructure and programming that prioritize and accommodate people of all abilities.

This section provides an overview of the physical elements of streetscape design and pedestrian network most relevant to commercial district leaders and stakeholders, as well as policy and programming solutions, so that you are equipped with the tools you need to create more vibrant places for everyone.

KEEP IN MIND *Before planning or implementing any streetscape project, policy, program, or strategy be sure to: engage your community, connect with your transportation officials, and work together to adapt policies and strategies to meet your district's unique needs. See Chapter 3 for guidance on how to get it done.*

PHYSICAL PLANNING AND DESIGN

Simply put, design matters when it comes to whether or not people will be attracted to your Main Street district and want to stay awhile. While there is no one right way when it comes to physical planning and design—in fact, context sensitive approaches are the key to success!—the following elements should be considered when it comes to streetscape infrastructure and pedestrian facility improvements.

Streetscape Amenities

From streetscape amenities benches to murals to trash cans, all offer opportunities to bring the Main Street experience together. Much more than beautification measures, they play a direct role in determining whether residents and visitors will feel comfortable, safe, and welcome in your district. A well-executed and maintained streetscape also plays a role in whether or not a business will decide to locate in your community.

Quality streetscape design considers local history, architectural diversity, local culture, population, current uses, and future uses. While most municipalities' departments of transportation will make the final decisions about design, product selection, budget, and contracting for streetscape improvements, Main Street leaders can be involved from the start to make sure that improvements will benefit the commercial district.

Project for Public Spaces

Key streetscape amenities to consider for your district include:

1 Lampposts and pedestrian-scale lighting. Proper lighting creates a safe environment and ensures that your Main Street sidewalks and public spaces can support activity into the evening hours. Engineers will be responsible for making sure all wattage and illumination requirements are met, but you can request lighting features that are historically appropriate, environmentally-friendly, have a cohesive design, and are pedestrian-scale.

2 Planters or hanging baskets. Plants add color and vibrancy to a streets-cape, create insect habitats, and help mitigate stormwater runoff. Incorporating edible plants can also make the planters a source of fresh fruits and vegetables for local restaurants or residents. Consult with botanists and gardeners in your community to help identify the plants that will thrive in your climate and setting. Before planting, be sure to have a maintenance plan in place and a dedicated agency or volunteer group who will take care of the plants and flowers on schedule.

3 Banners. Banners create visual interest in the streetscape, help support the district's image and events, and promote community pride. Banner design should be consistent with your Main Street brand and the overall design vision for the commercial district to create a consistent and cohesive visual. To create an opportunity for public engagement, you could install temporary banners that have been designed locally or voted on by community members.

4 Seating. Benches and other outdoor seating options not only provide resting places for people in your commercial district while they socialize or wait, but also offer a visual cue to drivers and potential pedestrians alike that a street puts people first. Bench placement is as important as design—locate them at regular intervals in places where people will feel comfortable sitting on them (e.g. not next to a trash can). Moveable seating options, on the other hand, make it easier for people to find their own perfect placement, creating impromptu gathering spaces in plazas or parks.

5 Trash receptacles. Well-maintained and well-placed trash receptacles are essential to a clean and attractive Main Street. If people have to walk more than half a block to throw away trash, most will not do it. Trash bags should be simple for sanitation workers to remove yet be secure and resistant to vandalism and wind.

6 Public art. Artwork in public spaces can help create a distinct sense of place and offer an excellent opportunity to engage the community and support local artists. In some cases, they can even be a traffic calming measure or "mental speed bump," as placemaking expert David Engwicht[1] describes them. Placement, construction, and materials are crucial—take time to think through what makes the most sense for your district.

If the sidewalk is not wide enough to accommodate desired streetscape amenities, then it could either be expanded or the type, number, and location of amenities could be modified. It is important that streetscape amenities do not limit or hinder pedestrian movement.

7 Trees. Trees soften the harshness of the built environment, dampen noise pollution, provide shade, and boost the image of the district; it has even been shown that sales increase at businesses that have trees in front of them! They also aid in a more sustainable and healthy district by mitigating stormwater runoff. Always consult a professional trained in regional horticulture or urban forestry when planting trees. Design considerations for tree selection include ensuring that it does not block the view of storefronts and signs; that it provides sufficient shade; and that it has a small enough root system to prevent damage to the sidewalk, curb, and underground utilities.

8 Other shade. In spaces with fewer trees, consider shade canopies and retractable umbrellas for tables to adapt to weather as needed.

9 Water features. Fountains and other water features can add interesting and engaging visual elements to a public space. They not only add a calming auditory element to your streetscape, but can actually mask or cover up unwanted noise.

10 Family-friendly amenities. Providing family-friendly amenities, such as recreational facilities, playgrounds, and splash pads, can make your commercial district a fun and engaging place for all ages. Providing pet-friendly amenities, such as water bowls and connections to dog parks or dog runs, can also encourage people to stay and hang out.

11 Charging stations and public WiFi. Offering free charging stations and free WiFi is a good way to get people to come and spend time in your community's public spaces. Providing WiFi as an amenity can facilitate social interaction during some solitary activities, support communities during disasters, promote tourism throughout the town, and allow users to easily research Main Street destinations and access online services at all times.

12 Outdoor dining. One of the easiest ways the private sector can contribute to creating a more vibrant commercial district is by providing outdoor dining options. Outdoor seating, tables, and advertising (e.g. sandwich boards) give the impression that something is going on in the district, while providing an additional safety measure by adding more eyes on the street. When outdoor seating is allowed, seating areas need to be wide enough to be comfortable, while at the same time not hindering the flow of pedestrian traffic.

GREEN STREETS POLICY

Green infrastructure uses natural interventions to mitigate environmental stresses, including stormwater runoff, noise contamination, and extreme heat. Design elements could include bioretention planters or swales, biofiltration planters, hybrid bioretention planters, stormwater trees, and permeable pavement. These elements should be selected to meet the unique goals and context of the project site, but may be sited and combined along an entire street to realize the full potential of managing stormwater runoff, improving multi-

modal mobility, and enhancing street aesthetics. Green Streets can also create an opportunity for funding through local utilities, water departments, or the U.S. EPA.

Learn about Portland Oregon's Green Streets program here to learn how they implemented policy measures to promote and incorporate the use of green street facilities in public and private development. Additional resources: NACTO—Urban Street Stormwater Guide, and United States Environmental Protection Agency—Green Infrastructure Policy Guides

Zoning regulates the types of land uses and the form of development allowed within a defined area. Single-use or Euclidean zoning codes have been criticized for negatively affecting walkability and furthering social inequality and economic decline in some communities. More flexible zoning regulations, such as form-based codes that allow a range of land uses like retailing, offices, and entertainment venues, have been shown to better foster more vibrant, walkable, prosperous Main Streets.

Form-based codes (FBC) encourage a built form that supports the public realm, while mitigating the negative effects of previous zoning ordinances, including separation of uses. Rather than focusing on one type of use, FBCs are complex, incorporating multiple physical elements in the code to allow for more flexible uses. Primary elements included in the development of FBCs are: proximity between buildings and structures, building height, facade design, maximum setbacks, street layout, and location of parking.

FBCs support the creation of people-focused streets because they:

- Encourage signage that is pedestrian-oriented and human-scale.

- Control the shape and density of new buildings and other development.

- Control car and bicycle parking requirements to make preservation projects and transit-oriented development more feasible.

- Govern building setback, rear, and side-lot requirements[2,3], which often dictate the continuity and rhythm of a Main Street's facades

- Set requirements for minimum lot coverage and floor area ratios (F.A.R.).

- Permit a variety of uses on upper floors, like housing and small-scale manufacturing.

Incentivize active uses on the ground floor, which prevent retail gaps and supports retail concentration in key district areas.

Zoning ordinances and processes vary state-by-state, as every state has enabling laws that determine the types of zoning local communities can exercise. Furthermore, a state's ability to develop, revise, or adopt new zoning regulations depends on whether it is a home-rule state, which makes it easier to adopt or revise new zoning regulations. Understanding your state's enabling legislation and its home-rule status will help you determine what zoning regulations may be created or revised locally.

Also, consider that changing your district's zoning can be challenging when addressed in an all-or-nothing manner, but commercial district leaders can advocate for a more iterative approach. For example, start local by focusing on municipal streets, before moving on to those owned by the county or state. Or, make temporary amendments, like pilot projects, short-term, or seasonal changes, to test out a new approach, and apply an iterative process of short-term modifications that can lead to long-term positive change.

For a comprehensive look at a variety of zoning types, please see:

Congress for the New Urbanism—Enabling Better Places: User's Guide to Zoning Reform

Main Street America—Main Street Approach Handbook: Design (members only)

Revitalizing Main Street

STREETS AS PLACES FOR ALL

Streets become inclusive and equitable places for all when they are created and maintained with your full community's needs in mind. By understanding and encouraging compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Main Street leaders can advocate for street design that makes it easier for people with disabilities to come to and to go through the district.

Many people think of ADA as being focused primarily on providing *building* access to people with disabilities, but it actually covers a much wider range of design-related elements, including signage, curbs, sidewalks, and street crossings—all of which are crucial to creating people-focused streets. The Federal Highway Administration's Accessible Sidewalks and Street Crossings offers tips on everything from how to design for different abilities to the legal framework of the ADA. ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) give specific design guidance on making streets and public spaces more accessible to people with disabilities. The US Access Board is currently developing new guidelines focused on Rights of Way and Shared Use Paths—stay tuned here.

Pedestrian Network

In addition to creating an inviting Main Street experience and a place where people want to stay awhile, people need to feel safe getting to and through your commercial district and navigating with ease. The type of pedestrian facilities your Main Street requires will depend upon your street type, current and proposed uses, and current and future population projections. However, all Main Streets should properly consider the following three areas when it comes to their pedestrian network: pedestrian flow, pedestrian crossings, and pedestrian wayfinding.

Pedestrian Flow. Sidewalks should be designed in such a way that people feel comfortable selecting their own walking speeds or walking in groups without bumping into other pedestrians. It is helpful to think of sidewalks as being divided into three imaginary lanes:

Next to the building: A "viewing space" lane used by window shoppers, approximately two to three feet wide.

The walking lane: Eight feet, or the amount of space necessary for two pairs of pedestrians, people using wheelchairs, or people using strollers to pass each other comfortably, is the minimum desirable width for this lane. There is no such rule of thumb, however, for the *maximum* width of a walking space; but having too much space is just as undesirable as having too little, as a sidewalk can appear empty if people are distributed over too large an area.

Next to the curb: A buffer lane between people and any trees, signposts, traffic signs, etc., generally a foot-and-a-half wide.

Credits: Historic Kennett Square

Pedestrian Crossings. Pedestrians should be able to cross your Main Street as freely as possible and access businesses and destinations on both sides of the street. Unfortunately, the width of the street and the timings of the traffic signals are often designed only with the needs of vehicles—not pedestrians—in mind. For example, it is not unusual for pedestrians to have to wait for a minute or longer in order to cross the street, and then to have insufficient time to get to the other side before the light changes. It is also not unusual for a crosswalk to be too narrow for the number of people using it, especially since the pedestrian flow consists of two "platoons" of pedestrians who meet in the middle of the street. A final consideration is the alignment of crosswalks[4], which frequently does not correspond with the routes people want to take; this increases conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles as people attempt to cross in undesignated areas.

Two common ways to facilitate pedestrian crossing are to change the crosswalk design and adjust traffic signals. First, changes may be made in the design of the crosswalks—they may be widened or realigned to match pedestrian routes or the actual width of a street may also be reduced through "neckdowns" or through the widening of sidewalks. A second type of change involves adjusting the traffic signals to reduce pedestrian waiting time and/or to increase crossing time. In cities where traffic signal timing can vary over a day, such as those with computerized systems, it may even be possible to change these timings to accommodate periods of heavy pedestrian usage.

Pedestrian Wayfinding. Wayfinding signage is a great tool to lead people to the district and its various amenities and attractions, as well as to local trails and bikeways. Even the smallest design decisions can aid or hinder this navigation ability, so being cognizant of wayfinding knowledge and best practices can be important for improving the user experience on Main Street. Effective wayfinding design and tools can include district banners; pedestrian-oriented maps; biking route guides; transit schedules; directional signage; landmark buildings or public art; the design of pathways themselves; and pavement markings along streets, sidewalks, trails, and waterways. Wayfinding measures should enhance pedestrian circulation and sense of place, while also potentially allowing visitors to discover nearby destinations, historical features, or new routes to walk or bike.

Wayfinding is most successful when it is planned with a system-wide approach, so Main Street leaders are well-positioned to play a key role in organizing a collective wayfinding vision.[5] *See Chapter 3 for processes that can help you organize a wayfinding plan, but here are a few wayfinding tips:*

- Use design consistent with your Main Street branding and architecture.

- Locate signs at every major intersection and at other logical points throughout the district.

- Use historical markers and interpretive signs to communicate a sense of place and generate activity on the street.

- Use trailblazer or directional signs to help point pedestrians and drivers to Main Street, parking, public transportation, public restrooms, the visitor's center, library, and other attractions or anchors.

- Post signs near alleys to indicate parking or alley-facing storefronts.

- Use larger fonts on signs directed at drivers and smaller fonts with time distances for pedestrians.

- Engage your community with a public vote of the design options.

- For more tips, please see the Main Street Approach Handbook: Design (members only)

WAYFINDING APP

Main Street leaders can work with a mobile app developer or utilize an app customization service to create an app that highlights the features that your Main Street has to offer. The app could include map and wayfinding capabilities for multiple modes of transportation and transit routes, while also listing out the businesses, landmarks, spaces, and amenities along Main Street. You might also consider a calendar feature to promote community events, public forums, art shows, and walking or biking tours.

BEYOND DOWNTOWN—TRAIL-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Trail-oriented development is the creation of connections between trails, outdoor recreation destinations, and a commercial district. With this type of development, commercial district leaders work with local trail and outdoor recreation organizations and managing entities to develop well-designed physical connections (e.g. wayfinding, trailheads, path-marking) between trails and the commercial district, and they work with local business owners and entrepreneurs to help them better connect with trail users and visitors. Trail-oriented development is an excellent way to promote active transportation, healthy lifestyles, and healthy communities. The Trail Towns Program offers some practical approaches on getting started.

PROGRAMMING

While having quality streetscape infrastructure and pedestrian facilities is important to creating a people-first Main Street, equally important is having programming in place that supports the physical environment and activates your street. There are a variety of strategies you can employ in your commercial district to spark engagement and connection, and to make it a place where people feel comfortable and safe navigating without a car or bicycle. From strengthening your "place brand" to hosting community events to advocating for programs that promote pedestrian safety, Main Street leaders have a key role in creating the perception of your district as a place to gather.

Consider the following programming strategies to enhance your streetscape and the pedestrian experience:

Place branding. Branding is the process of creating a unique name or image for a product, or, in this case, a place. When Main Streets create a "brand," they establish themselves as a significant and differentiated presence in the city overall with a unique identity that is both relatable and marketable. A Main Street brand can foster an emotional attachment for people—a familiarity that fosters comfort, reassurance, and stewardship, and functions as a blueprint for community-led placemaking events. A Main Street brand can be found in streetscape amenities (through lighting, benches, flower baskets, and banners), in information and wayfinding signage and kiosks, or in social media and marketing materials (through color palettes and logos). Through a well-crafted brand, mayors, Main Street managers, and other local leaders can all make choices that reflect a community's personality and core values in everything from the place's look and feel to its navigation and infrastructure.[6]

Public markets and street vending. Main Street leaders and community advocates can work together with public officials to get public markets and everyday vending incorporated into the street scene. Public markets can include farmers markets, craft fairs, flea markets, night markets, and pre-pared-food markets, and they can operate temporarily, seasonally, or year-round. Markets are more than just business enterprises; they can become public spaces that shape communities and economies for the better. As anchors of community life, public markets can offer entry points for entrepreneurs of many backgrounds, help restore local food systems, improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and spur foot traffic for nearby local businesses.[7]

Showcasing local talent and integrating public art. Every community has discoverable talents among its members that can be showcased on the streets, so Main Street leaders should seek out local talent to help implement their visions and plans, whether that's through art, performance, amenity-building, design, or special events. Interactive public art can be an innovative, inspiring addition to any streets project. Project sponsors can hire artists or partner with various arts organizations to determine how best to integrate creativity into both the community engagement process and the build-out of short-term experiments or long-term improvements. Public and community art can come in the form of artistic objects, murals, statues, performances, immersive experiences, live street theater, or locally-produced films. Public art is most impactful to the public when the artist considers the time, place, context, and human uses in which it is situated. The art itself can potentially spur community dialogue and interaction, provide a landmark destination, generate economic activity, and add to Main Street's overall comfort and sense of place.[8,9]

Safe Routes to School. The goals of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program are to get more children walking and bicycling to school, to improve their safety, and to increase their health and physical activity. When Main Streets are safe and comfortable for children, they also increase rates of bicycling and walking to school, decrease injuries, and help to build confidence and independence. Main Street leaders can be the champions of SRTS programs by working with SRTS advocates and managers in their community, supporting pedestrian safety and infrastructure improvements, being the "eyes on the street" for local youth, participating in educational events, and offering incentives.[10,11]

Community events. By activating the streetscape, Main Street events can not only serve Main Street businesses through foot traffic, they can benefit participating individuals as well as community nonprofits by giving them the opportunity to be recognized by a larger audience. Whether the event is a small-scale parklet or a day-long parade, special events and other celebrations provide an important civic forum for the community. Like branding, events can help enhance the image and promote the Main Street's unique social, economic, and cultural character. Events often benefit from great partnerships like community groups, libraries, museums, and other organizations that have a deep understanding of how activating a street attracts foot traffic, introduces new audiences to the district's programming and products, and brings a community together.[12,13]

AMERICA WALKS

America Walks promotes pedestrian safety and focuses on improving infrastructure networks for walkability and multi-modal transportation. America Walks leads programs like Safer Systems, State Walking networks, and the Walking College to educate and provide resources and networking opportunities to communities and states nationwide. America Walks is also a leader in walkability advocacy, encouraging people to be the change, get involved, and engage their communities.

CASE STUDY

Vision Zero on Chicago's West Side

Launched in June 2017, Vision Zero West Side (VZWS) is a nonprofit pilot program that implements the city's goal of having zero crashes and fatalities by 2026. The program serves four community areas: Garfield, North Lawndale, Near West Side, and Austin. Working with public officials, faith leaders, police districts, neighborhood organizations, and attending community events, VZWS aims to educate these communities on traffic safety strategies, traffic infrastructure, and dangerous driving behaviors. The program coordinates meetings that are open to the public and held at spaces and times convenient for all community residents. Visit Vision Zero Chicago for more information.

Credit: Casey Barnett

Managing Traffic

In the 1960s and 1970s transportation officials' primary goal was to reduce congestion, which often led to automobile traffic moving faster though commercial districts. Now, it is widely understood that congestion in a commercial district is not only a symptom of social and economic vitality, but also a factor that can create a safer experience for drivers and pedestrians alike.

This section provides an overview of infrastructure design, policy, and programming strategies that can be employed to effectively manage all modes of vehicular traffic, and equips you with the knowledge to make sure people can get to and through your commercial district safely, support the local economy, and engage with others, all while having minimal negative impact on the environment.

KEEP IN MIND *Before planning or implementing any transportation project, policy, program, or strategy be sure to: engage your community, connect with your transportation officials, and work together to adapt policies and strategies to meet your district's unique needs. See Chapter 3 for guidance on how to get it done.*

PHYSICAL PLANNING AND DESIGN

While there is no one-size-fits-all infrastructure solution for Main Street district traffic management, all districts should consider traffic calming measures and multimodal transportation facilities when considering physical improvement priorities. Remember, you want people to get to and through your district efficiently, but not so quickly that they don't consider stopping and staying awhile.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures reduce automobile speeds or volumes through the use of lateral and vertical interventions. Traffic calming can be accomplished through[14]:

- lane narrowing

- reduced corner radii

- placement of buildings and trees (not officially traffic calming)

- gateway treatments

- pinch points

- chicanes (serpentine curve) and lane shifts

- medians and refuge islands

- mini roundabouts

- speed humps, cushions, and/or tables

- pavement materials and appearance

- two-way streets

- signal progression

- and diverters

All of these measures can lead to reduced speeds, and therefore reduce crash severity and traffic volumes on local roads, improve environments for pedestrians and cyclists, and enhance the overall sense of place for all street users, including motorists. As leaders in your community, you can coordinate with local transportation officials to find context-sensitive approaches to traffic calming and determine how best to introduce these design elements.[15] Go here for more detailed approaches from ITE Traffic Calming Guidance.

Two of the most popular ways to calm traffic in Main Street commercial districts include two-way conversions and rightsizing (also known as road diets):

Two-way conversions

Converting multi-lane, one-way streets to two-way streets can help reduce the speed of traffic downtown and increase foot traffic and sales by offering better visibility of and access to Main Street businesses. In the right setting, two-way streets are typically safer that one-way streets[16]

and can reduce collisions between cars and cyclists or pedestrians. Two-way streets can also encourage drivers to drive more slowly through a district and take in their surroundings. When planning for these conversions, consider: street jurisdiction, street width, lane use, daily and peak-hour traffic, adjacent building use, pedestrian activity, levels of congestion, and regional transportation network.[17,18]

Street rightsizing

Rightsizing (or "Road Diet") is the process of reallocating a street's space to better serve its full range of users, often simply by "restriping" the road markings. Rightsizing methods could include[19]:

- converting vehicle travel lanes to other uses;

- narrowing lanes;

- adding bike lanes;

- improving pedestrian infrastructure;

- changing car and bicycle parking configuration; or

- adding roundabouts or medians.

Rightsizing can encourage walking and biking, support businesses and the local economy, promote livability, and increase safety and access for all users by reducing speeds and minimizing crashes on streets. Through this approach leaders could consider advocating for the "reorganization" or "re-prioritization" of space to provide more room for pedestrians, cycling facilities, and green infrastructure.[20] Refer to the Project for Public Spaces Rightsizing Guide for more information.

Complete Streets is an approach to street and traffic design that integrates people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of our transportation networks. This helps to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities; to balance the needs of different modes; and to support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments. According to Smart Growth America, "In total, over 1400 Complete Streets policies have been passed in the United States, including those adopted by 33 state governments, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia."[21]

For more detailed information, check out the following websites:

Smart Growth America

American Planning Association

U.S. Department of Transportation

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN MAIN STREET IS A HIGHWAY?

As commercial district leaders know all too well, Main Streets are often located on state highways, which present unique speed, safety, and congestion challenges. In 2017, Colorado Departments of Local Affairs, Transportation, and Public Health and Environment partnered with Community Builders to develop _Colorado Downtown Streets_, a highly visual guide exploring myriad topics, issues, and strategies for creating great streets—especially when they are located on state highways.

Multimodal Networks and Infrastructure

Multimodal transportation networks provide protected facilities for all transportation modes and connect pathways so that people of all ages and abilities can safely and conveniently get to where they want to go by whatever means they would like. Achieving this type of network involves physically connecting sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and transit lanes with appropriate infrastructure, facilities, and amenities, and providing wayfinding measures that allow active transportation users to move easily from one street to another.[22]

Cycling facilities could include bike lanes, bicycle parking, cycle tracks, intersection treatments, bicycle signals, bikeway markings, and bicycle boulevards. Community leaders should work with transportation professionals, as described in Chapter 3, to determine how to appropriately connect the different types of networks within your street contexts, and to request that multimodal access be a part of official transportation planning.[23]

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around transit. This type of development strategy can decrease automobile dependence and encourage physical activity, social interaction, and economic activity. To encourage visitors to stay, engage, and spend their time and money in the district or town, leaders could foster development that is transit-oriented by removing barriers like restrictions on density and minimum setbacks within zoning codes, by providing incentives for developing within areas served well by transit, by reducing or eliminating parking minimums, or by undertaking a more robust planning process.[24,25]

PROGRAMMING

To ensure long-term success with any traffic management infrastructure improvement, it is crucial that leaders work with city officials and business owners to engage the community and visitors in the goals the project works to accomplish. Programming and education strategies from other communities can provide inspiration—what could you adapt for your own community?

Active Transportation Incentives. Businesses can be a major influencer in supporting active transportation behavior by offering incentive programs or sponsoring amenities and infrastructure improvements. Businesses could offer incentives to their employees for walking, biking, or taking transit on their commute to work; provide outdoor bicycle racks for customers or discounts to those who arrive by bike or foot; and sponsor improvements and infrastructure, like parklets, bike share stations, or crosswalks. The League of American Bicyclists' Attributes of a Bike-Friendly Business offers additional ideas that businesses could use to motivate multimodal transportation. Similarly, their Bicycle Friendly Business and Bicycle Friendly America Networks offer rating systems and a network of other bicycle-friendly places. For even more model bike programs from around the country, see this article from People for Bikes.

Bicycle Awareness events. Bicycle Awareness events help community members better understand why multimodal transportation is important and how it works. Since 1956, the League of American Bicyclists has sponsored National Bike Month, providing communities with resources on how to throw events and spread information. At the state level, organizations like Ride Illinois provide information on upcoming Bike-to-Work Days, bike rides, and biking tips, as well as a bike quiz.

Community road safety action programs. The National Safety Council Safety Ambassador Program offers materials, tools, and resources to engage community members who take the lead in promoting road safety measures. In partnership with state agencies and organizations, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the Active Transportation Alliance also offer ambassador programs.

Bicycle/scooter-sharing programs. Bicycle-sharing and scooter-sharing programs make bikes or scooters available for short-term use or rental.[26] For an hourly fee or with a membership, city-wide bike-sharing programs usually provide bikes at docking stations located throughout the city. Users can pick up a bike from one dock and drop it off at another. Scooter-sharing programs usually do not use docks, so pick-up is even simpler; the user receives a code through a mobile phone app, which they then use to activate any scooter near their location. If bicycle-sharing and scooter-sharing programs are too costly for your community members, you can think about partnering with a local business or lodging establishment to create a lower-cost bike- or scooter- sharing program for visitors and community members.

Car-Free Day. Officially beginning in 1994, the Car-Free Day movement encourages drivers to give up driving their cars for one day to demonstrate what their communities would be like without cars on the road. Car-Free Day does not aim to permanently ban cars, but rather to increase open-mindedness about multimodal transportation and to reduce pollution and traffic. World Car-Free Day is celebrated annually on September 22, with cities across the world participating in organized events.

Open Streets. Open Streets is a programmed event where streets are closed to car traffic and open to everything else! For an afternoon, a weekend, or an entire season, spaces for cars are repurposed as public spaces for people, so citizens of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can experience their city streets in a new way. Whether through programming, like walking, bike riding, dancing, eating, or art-viewing, or through demonstration projects, like temporary bike lanes or curb extensions, Open Streets can serve as an experiment to test how people-first street enhancements can improve a street's look, feel, and prosperity. Main Street leaders could advocate for this type of event in their communities and build the partnerships to make it happen. The Open Streets Project is a collective that reflects projects going on throughout the nation, partnering with the consultancy Street Plans and nonprofit 880 Cities to encourage a global movement of mobility and placemaking.

Smart Parking

Parking is plagued with misinformation and exaggerated importance, and parking policies are often based on the opinions—and behavior—of everyone except customers. Does your business district actually have a parking problem? Do the customers think there is a problem? How do you know?

Too often, infrastructure and policy decisions are made based on perceived problems rather than real problems, negatively impacting the health, environment, and economic and social vitality of the district.

This section will take a look at the basics of parking supply, types, uses, facilities, policies, and supportive programming, providing Main Street stakeholders with the context they need to determine whether district parking supports and enhances economic and social vitality, as well as health and environmental outcomes, or whether it detracts from the Main Street experience. With this information, you will be able to correctly prioritize parking improvements through studies and assessments.

PARKING BEST PRACTICES

For a comprehensive digest of parking policies, strategies, and practices, please see _Parking Best Practices: a Review of Zoning Regulations and Policies in Select U.S. and International Cities_.

KEEP IN MIND _Before planning or implementing any parking project, policy, program, or strategy be sure to: engage your community, connect with your transportation officials, and work together to adapt policies and strategies to meet your district's unique needs. See Chapter 3 for guidance on how to get it done._

PHYSICAL PLANNING AND DESIGN

Like every area of transportation, parking planning and design is particular to the specific needs of your community. However, there are basic concepts that all Main Street leaders should be aware of so that you are equipped with the language to communicate with transportation officials and advocate for approaches and policies that put people first.

Parking Supply

Simply put, parking supply is the number of parking spaces available daily for all commercial district users. Builders and developers calculate automobile parking supply by comparing the number of parking spaces to commercial floor space (gross floor area, or GFA), though different commercial settings have different parking supply ratios.[27] In mixed-use neighborhood commercial districts, retail developers often use lower ratios than in suburban development. Numerous studies have shown that downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts need far fewer parking spots than other commercial areas, such as malls and commercial strips.

DEMAND PROBLEM

People go to your district to shop and to gather, not to park. If your district is struggling, it's not because you have a parking problem; you have a demand problem. As parking consultant John D. Edwards states in _The Parking Handbook for Small Communities_, "parking is first and foremost infrastructure, not economic development."

THE MALL DOUBLE STANDARD

Why is it that customers in traditional commercial districts insist on parking spaces that are near businesses (i.e., within 100 feet), but will happily park in a shopping mall's vast lot and walk a much greater distance to the entrance?

This is the so-called "double standard" that customers are widely reported to have. They seem willing to walk relatively greater distances across a mall parking lot than on Main Street, because they know that once inside, they will have a greater variety of stores and greater selection of merchandise. So, in a way, this double-standard behavior is justified: the greater the retail variety or the deeper the business mix, the farther the customer is willing to walk from a parking space to the mall or store entrance.[21]

Ostensibly to maintain a balance of parking supply and demand, municipalities commonly set and enforce minimum parking requirements with any new residential development. This minimum number averages to be about one parking space per new housing unit, though the parking minimum rate varies from municipality to municipality.[28]

Despite the original goal, though, parking minimums can negatively impact the area surrounding the new development by:

- **Increasing housing costs.** The cost of these required parking spots is usually bundled (included in their rent costs), meaning that renters without cars are essentially paying more in rent than their neighbors with cars by subsidizing the additional parking.[29]

- **Increasing the number of drivers on the street.** If parking is bundled, the renter may feel fewer barriers to driving their car.[30]

- **Increasing greenhouse gas emissions.** With fewer barriers to driving in the district, more drivers drive, and thus, more cars create more greenhouse gas emissions.[31]

In response, communities across the country are exploring alternatives to minimum parking requirements and bundled parking. Cities like San Francisco, Portland, Boston, and Seattle have enforced parking maximums for decades.[32] According to a Strong Towns survey, nearly 100 communities nationwide have abolished parking minimums in at least one of their districts, while 45 more are at least considering the removal of the requirement.[33]

Note: *Abolishing parking minimums for new development does not and should not negatively impact ADA parking requirements. ADA requirements for accessible parking are based on the total number of parking spaces in a facility, and it is required to be part of any parking plan your district undertakes.*[34]

This dynamic presents a challenge for you to improve the retail environment and maximize customer conveniences. Potential solutions include angled curb parking in front of stores; easy, safe, and clear pathways for customers to walk among destinations; rightsized streets for increased pedestrian safety and walkability; and a market-driven business mix fronting the Main Street (e.g. retail stores that meet your community needs mixed with necessary non-retail uses, like libraries or doctors' offices) See more in Revitalizing Main Street (members only).

Parking Type

Commercial districts often feature both on-street, or curbside, parking and off-street parking for automobiles and bicycles. On-street automobile parking is generally grouped into three types: parallel parking, perpendicular parking, and angled parking. In some districts, on-street car parking is also designed to be driven in a specific way, either head-in/forward or back-in/reverse. On-street bicycle parking is generally located in a parallel parking spot that features bicycle corrals for short-term parking. On-street parking can be free, metered, or permitted.

In commercial districts, the most common off-street automobile parking is found in parking lots and parking garages, which can be free, metered, or gate-or cashier-controlled. Off-street bicycle parking includes bike racks, bike parking stations, and longer-term bicycle storage facilities, usually near transit hubs.[35,36,37]

Parking Facility Design

While it might not be your role to actually implement the parking facility design, construction, and management, it helps to understand the basics so that you can advocate for the facilities that match the needs and unique physical attributes or your district. For more detailed understanding, please see the *Whole Building Design Guide*'s comprehensive examination of parking facilities.

Off-street parking facilities include parking lots (also known as surface parking) and parking garages (also known as parking decks, ramps, or parkades). Both parking lots and parking garages can be used for both automobiles and bicycles by reserving parking stalls (also known as parking spots or spaces) for bicycle parking using corrals or racks.

Parking *lots* are constructed on the surface, usually at grade level. Users can usually access the lot directly from adjacent streets via one or more entrances. Parking *garages* have more than one level, usually including a surface level and one or more additional levels above or below. Parking garages are more common than parking lots in commercial districts with higher populations, density, and land costs.

Quality, people-first design for parking facilities prioritizes these factors:

Accessibility for all. The facility will follow design guidelines and requirements outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design.[38,39]

Convenience for the user. The facility should be simple and safe to enter, park, and exit, and it should feature efficient lighting, clear stall delineations, and clear parking instructions and signage.

Efficient land use. The facility design should maximize the space it is in by considering its location within the district and by determining width of parking stalls and aisles by user type (e.g., narrower stalls for short-term users, and wider stalls for long-term).

Compatibility with the commercial district's long-range plans. If the district is installing a new parking facility, the facility will not impede pedestrian circulation or street continuity.[40]

Perceptions of safety. Just as described in the safety section of Chapter 1, a parking facility's layout, design details, and lighting configuration all affect the user's perception of its safety.

Depending on parking type, parking infrastructure considerations can also include: lighting, drainage, materials, ventilation, access, and sustainable features (e.g., plantings on a parking deck roof). *See the Online Resource Library for comprehensive parking resources on infrastructure.*

Parking Uses

In addition to parking *type*, commercial districts should also understand parking use and how different *uses* affect the district. Essentially, there are two general types of use: shared (or public) parking and exclusive (or private) parking. By advocating for shared parking, commercial district leaders can help increase the availability of parking in the district without creating new parking lots or garages.

To help increase shared parking, commercial district leaders can advocate specifically for the maximum amount of shared parking possible for your district—at least 50 percent of the total parking. Shared parking does not require public ownership. Private owners can coordinate efforts through public easements, removal of lots from tax rolls, and re-design of several smaller lots into one large lot. To create more opportunities for curb parking, decrease the distance between storefronts, and mitigate safety hazards for pedestrians and vehicles, district leaders can also call for the prohibition of mid-block driveways.[42]

If there is an ample supply and proportion of public parking, there may be no need for the zoning ordinance to require commercial uses to supply private, off-street parking, resulting in lower development costs and a tighter urban fabric overall. Similarly, city stakeholders could collaboratively reconsider setting and enforcing minimum parking requirements with any new residential development. See sidebar details.

SHARED/PUBLIC	EXCLUSIVE/PRIVATE
Available to everyone at most times	Only available to specific people at specific times
Serves mixed uses (e.g. retail, office, service, entertainment, housing)	Serves only those who work, live, or shop at one specific location
Serves different users at different times of the day (e.g. retail shoppers during the day, residents in the evening)	Serves only those who use the specific location when it is open
Extends peak hours over the course of the day	Generally has only one peak time, depending on the location it serves
No zoning ordinance needed when there is ample supply and proportion of public parking	Zoning permit is sometimes required for private lot

Pricing Strategies

Effective pricing policies for automobile parking not only helps commercial districts manage their parking systems, but also helps reduce congestion, improve safety for non-motorized transportation, create revenue streams that can be invested into transportation enhancements, and ensure greater efficiency for the overall transportation system. Parking price can also influence automobile drivers' decisions about how they choose to travel, whether via car alone, through ridesharing, through public transit, or through bicycles and other forms of low-speed transportation.

The two basic pricing policies explored in this section are those that commercial districts will encounter most frequently: fixed-rate pricing and performance-based pricing.[43] For a deeper look at pricing policies across the country, see the U.S. Federal Highway Administration's Contemporary Approaches to Parking Pricing: A Primer.

Parking Benefit Districts

Since the 1990s, cities across the country have adopted parking benefit district (PBD) policies, which allow the local districts to split their parking meter revenue with the city in order to fund local streetscape, transportation, and infrastructure projects. With four distinct neighborhoods in its boundaries, San Diego's Uptown Community Parking District (UCPD) prioritizes local community engagement to plan and implement its transportation enhancements. *Go to the Online Resource Library to read the full case study.*

Credit:Eric Fischer

Fixed-rate pricing. Parking costs do not vary by time of day or location in the municipality. Free parking is considered a type of fixed-rate pricing.

Performance-based pricing. Parking costs vary by time of day, location in the municipality (e.g., the commercial district), and/or the amount of time any one car is parked in the spot. Performance-based parking aims to keep about 15 percent of parking spaces unoccupied during peak hours in an attempt to reduce traffic congestion and cruising.[44]

Parking pricing management and methods vary by type. For more detail on parking pricing policies, please see the Victoria Transportation Policy Institute's Transportation Demand Encyclopedia.

FIXED RATE PRICING

PROS	CONS
Can be implemented with mechanical meters	Requiring frequent increases to keep up with inflation
Simplest to implement throughout a municipality	Encourages "meter feeding," which can increase the number of cars cruising for parking
Does not require parking data collection to implement	Excluding free parking, charges all drivers the same rate, which can negatively affect lower-income areas

PERFORMANCE-BASED PRICING

| PROS	CONS
Addresses complex transportation system problems, such as congestion and cruising	Requires parking data collection to understand transportation issues
Provides consistent revenue to municipality as rates adjust more easily to inflation	More complicated for municipalities to implement
Can be adjusted in multiple ways to meet different goals, such as congestion reduction and road safety	
Targets high-use, high-revenue areas	
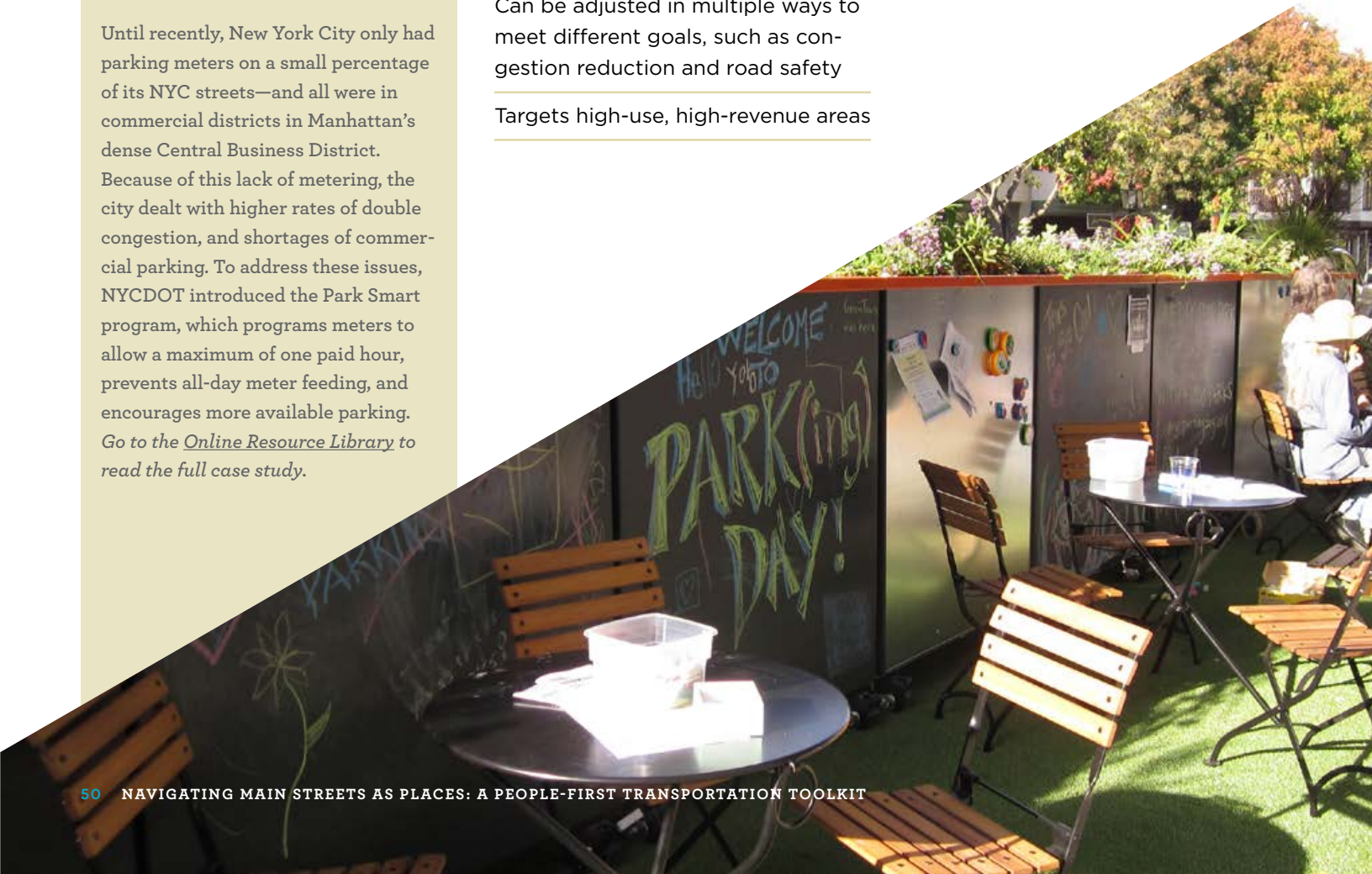
Looking to the Future

As technology advances, transportation systems, options, and parking will change too. New innovations, products, and approaches emerge every six months. More people choose environmentally-friendly transportation options, such as biking, walking, and public transit, and more shoppers choose online or small business retailers over malls and chain retail for their shopping needs.

In light of these societal shifts, communities are rethinking parking policies across the country, and community district leaders should be at the forefront of transportation system innovation, advocating for responsible, measured efforts to adapt technological advances to local needs. Examples of emerging technology-focused policy conversations include:

- Autonomous vehicles (AVs),[45] parking,[46] congestion pricing,[47] and safety[48];

- Public/private partnerships with ridesharing and multimodal transportation companies that increase alternative transportation access for lower-income residents and people with disabilities[49];

- Mobility as a Service (MaaS) models connecting all transportation modes in a community for easier point-to-point trips[50];

- Easy-to-use parking payment systems, such as single- and multi-space meters, pay-and-display ticketing, pay-by-phone apps, in-car meters, license plate recognition, and parking space sensors[51]; and

  - Planning for vacant parking facilities (see call-out on page 18).

Credit: Jim Fenton

Parking may not seem like the most exciting concept to build programming around, but as the parking "problem" continues to be answered in creative ways, new approaches continue to emerge.

Activating Vacant Space. In rural towns and cities alike, commercial districts sometimes have empty or underutilized parking spaces (e.g. surface lots, former building sites) that Main Street leaders can help turn into supportive places for the community through design and programming. These activations can be temporary, seasonal, or permanent, and they can range in scale and ambition. Some ways to activate empty spaces include hosting an outdoor movie, dinner, or concert in a vacant lot; installing a temporary parklet; inviting food trucks or artists into the space; or adding improved lighting, seating, or recreational amenities. Activating empty spaces can be a way to engage community members, lead to a more active and safe area, and contribute to the place's vibrancy.[52,53]

Parklet Programs. Parklets are inexpensive infrastructure additions that take over one or more on-street parking space with creative, attractive, and fun public gathering spots. Oftentimes they are raised up to the level of the sidewalk and their features can include seating, plantings, tables, food carts, games, books, or whatever your community might imagine. Parklet programs and events can be a great way to showcase the Streets as Places philosophy, and to test out placemaking improvements, like new amenities, furniture, road diets, or traffic calming. Parklets are best suited for commercial streets with high foot traffic, so Main Streets provide the perfect site.[54,55]

Park(ing) Day. Starting with a one-space mini-park installation in San Francisco in 2005, Park(ing) Day[56] has expanded into an international movement, with communities "reclaiming" car parking spaces for use as bike parking spaces, green spaces, mini-clinics, parklets, outdoor classrooms, game stations, and more. See the full Park(ing) Day Manual.

Funding for Streetscape and Transportation Projects

Don't let a price tag keep you from pursuing a project. Transportation-focused projects and programs can be implemented incrementally and funding for different stages can come from different sources, including:

PUBLIC FUNDING

- **Bond issues** ask voters to approve or disapprove proposed municipal spending, which could be used to fund streetscape and infrastructure projects.

- **General revenue funds** are unassigned municipal dollars that could be used to fund streetscape and infrastructure projects.

- **Special taxing districts**, such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), levy a tax on the property owners who most directly benefit, which is then used to fund various projects in the district boundaries, including streetscape and infrastructure. In some states, BIDs can use some of their revenue to secure bonds.

- **Tax-increment financing (TIF)** allocates future increases in tax revenue to pay for improvements.

- **Special sales or food and lodging taxes** are additional taxes on specific goods, food, or lodging that are intended to capture tourist and visitor dollars to be used for community projects.

- **State-funded loans and grants** from state agencies like the Department of Commerce, the Department of Economic Development, or the Department of Transportation, are often put toward streetscape and infrastructure projects.

- **Federal grants and loans** from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Highway Administration, etc. can also be applied to local streetscape and infrastructure projects.

Credit: csfotoimages

PRIVATE FUNDING

- **Grants** from national, state, and local foundations can fund staff time, iterative interventions, or provide match for local, state, and federal government funds.

- **Donations** for the purchase of items such as pavers, benches, or plantings cover the costs of specific budget line items.

- **Crowdfunding** describes generally smaller donations from community members, usually gathered via online platform like ioby or Patronicity.

- **In-kind donations** like paint, lumber, or time serve as in-kind funding, meaning they support the work through non-financial means.

GET CREATIVE!

District leaders can utilize their professional and personal networks to help ensure that transportation-focused projects get adequate funding to realize short-term experiments and long-term improvements that will support the community's vision and goals. Main Streets could also work with local banks, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), businesses, or local regional foundations to acquire sponsorships for components or the entirety of a project.[57,58]

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BUILDING A BETTER STREET TOGETHER

CHAPTER 3

People-first, high-quality streets and a transportation network that work for your Main Street can be accomplished in many ways and at varying scales. Whether you are advocating for simple or complex change, this toolkit provides a lens to understand transportation challenges and options to address those challenges through thoughtful engagement with community and transportation officials alike. Since interests may be competing or misaligned, engagement, partnership, and implementation strategies that are place-specific and community-driven will be beneficial to navigating this inherently collaborative process.

In this handbook, Chapter 1 addressed **why** street systems and transportation systems both profoundly affect quality of life and **why** the streets within a commercial district can be such powerful *places* in their own right. It demonstrated how focusing on people first can truly turn Main Streets into equitable, safe, healthy, economically vital, environmentally sustainable, and community-supportive places to be.

Chapter 2 explained **what** basic elements can go into creating streets for people, whether it be physical design and planning strategies, programming ideas, or supportive policies that ensure any improvements prove beneficial to all members of the community.

This chapter bridges both of the previous chapters by showing **how** to get it done. By knowing the "**whys**" and the possible "**whats**," you and your partners can be thoroughly prepared to advocate for changes to your streets or transportation systems that will transform your communities. This chapter will provide guidance on **how** to build knowledge, **how** to work together with other stakeholders, and **how** to implement street improvements that are both sensitive to context and supportive of community well-being.

The guidance provided in this chapter is organized for you to *know your street*, *know your people*, and *use your knowledge* to build a plan for implementation. The key phases of action are:

- **Building Knowledge: Background Research & Street Evaluation**

- **Building Partnerships: Stakeholder Identification & Engagement**

- **Building a Plan: Vision Alignment & Implementation**

Building Knowledge: Background Research & Street Evaluation

As a Main Street leader, you may have noticed a problem with how your streets are functioning and are eager to make a difference. Perhaps it is a desire to attract more pedestrians to your businesses or to support greater walkability in your district. Or perhaps you are passionate about improving equity through transportation access. Great news! By recognizing these passions and desires, you are already proving yourself to be a true advocate and champion for your streets. Keep up the momentum and make a point to really *know* your streets so you understand the root cause of your transportation issue before coming to conclusions. By building knowledge and partnerships at the beginning, you are setting yourself up for informed conversations with stakeholders, officials, and decision-makers toward more context-sensitive streets for people.

This section suggests ways to find out about transportation issues and provides ideas for evaluating your district's streetscape design, traffic flows, and parking conditions. Knowing your street includes having an understanding of a variety of factors, such as: what type of street you are working with, what elements make up the streetscape, how the street is already functioning, how the street is impacting the community, and what kinds of assets already exist for your projects.
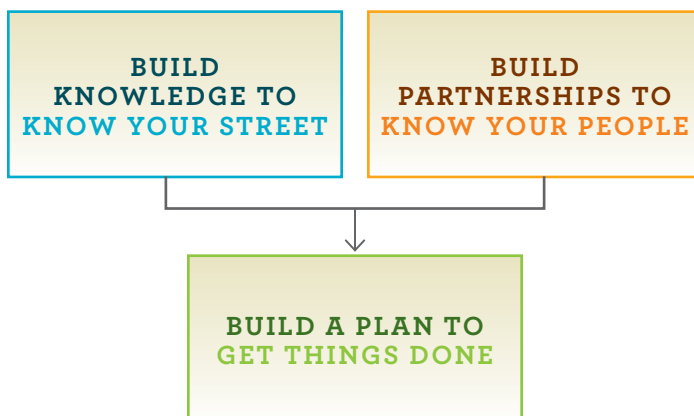
All of these activities can highlight recurring issues, reveal gaps or opportunities, and ultimately inform your priorities for action. When you are ready to create a plan with your community, you will use the knowledge and partnerships you've built together, as well as the inspirations presented in Chapter 2, to prepare implementation strategies that work for your street.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

When faced with articulating the problem you wish to solve, it can be helpful to do some homework on the economic, physical, and cultural conditions of your district's streets. Often, your city, county, or state will have conducted studies, prepared plans, instituted policies, or tallied statistics that will include the information you need. Background research into what factors are at play and what assets may be available to you can help make your case and make your conversations more productive. The baseline facts and data you gather can help inform both the partnerships and stakeholders needed and your vision for implementation. It is this initial legwork that will inform your first conversations with stakeholders, how you might adapt or add to your street evaluation methods, and eventually how you might identify community priorities.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW YOUR STREET

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

BUILD A PLAN TO GET THINGS DONE

KEEP IN MIND *For new projects, basic research and evaluation may come first, though other times, identifying stakeholders comes first. Often, it is a back-and-forth process of researching, inviting stakeholders, and researching again together. Both "Building Knowledge" and "Building Partnerships" are equally important to the initial phases of streets projects and can happen in either order depending on what fits the circumstances in which you are starting.*

KEEP IN MIND *These plans, studies, policies, and tallies relate to the impacts—both positive and negative—that your streets could be having on equity, safety, health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and community, as described in Chapter 1. Reference Chapter 1 for why certain research points may be particularly pertinent to your project.*

An Aligned Approach

Depending on your familiarity with Main Street America and Project for Public Spaces, you may notice that this chapter's content is inspired by the values and processes of both authoring organizations. The Project for Public Spaces placemaking process and the Main Street Approach™ are like two sides of the same coin—while there are slight variations in their look and description, the overall values are the same. Both processes:

- Emphasize the importance of understanding the community and its needs before mapping plans or assuming solutions

- Prioritize community engagement and collaboration

- Adapt to the unique traits, assets, and needs of the specific places in which they are focused at any given time

- Value learning from incremental implementation and evaluation

Since the Main Street Approach and the placemaking process have similar priorities and areas of focus, considering them in tandem can encourage new ways of thinking about work on Main Streets—adding fresh concepts, strategies, and activities to help strengthen engagement, research, and relationship-building. While incorporating transportation and street planning projects and coordinating among experts and stakeholders can be an extremely complex process, this expanded toolkit can be particularly useful in empowering Main Street and community leaders to facilitate the process.

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

DEFINE PLACE & IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

∨

EVALUATE SPACE & IDENTIFY ISSUES

∨

PLACE VISION

∨

SHORT-TERM EXPERIMENTS

∨

ONGOING RE-EVALUATION & LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

MAIN STREET AMERICA

COMMUNITY VISION

MARKET UNDERSTANDING

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

ECONOMIC VITALITY

DESIGN

PROMOTION

ORGANIZATION

QUANTITATIVE OUTCOMES

QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES

If you are not as familiar with our organizations, please see the Online Resource Library *for further details about both the placemaking process and the Main Street Approach.*

ADDITIONAL READING

Much of the text and inspiration for this chapter was pulled from these key resources, which also provide additional tools and commentary beyond what's included in this toolkit:

Project for Public Spaces

What is Placemaking?

A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency (available for free pdf download)

How To Turn A Place Around (available for purchase)

Main Street America

The Main Street Approach

The Main Street Approach: A Comprehensive Guide to Community Transformation (members only)

Community Engagement for Main Street Transformation (members only)

Helpful Research Points

While the specific information gathered will vary from street to street and be based on your communities' particular challenges and needs, the table below offers some potential data points and sources that could help you get to know your street. These data points are often publicly available within municipal, county, and state agencies.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

RESEARCH POINTS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Business inventory	Main Street Manager, BID Director, Chamber of Commerce
Building inventory and vacancies	Planning Department
Sales, property values, or other economic growth factors	Parking Authority
Parking/delivery zones	Transportation Department
Public transportation options	Tourism Department
Visitor information	

EQUITY

RESEARCH POINTS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Population characteristics	Census data
Population trends	Planning Department
Housing types	Housing Department
Accessibility conditions	Engineering/Public Works Department
Costs of living	
Other impact areas segmented by population characteristics (e.g. traffic-related deaths by age)	

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

RESEARCH POINTS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Emissions	Office of Sustainability
Temperature levels	Water Department
Water pollution	Department of Ecology or Department of Environmental Conservation
Flooding cases	Department of Forestry
Animal species and habitats	
Native plant species	
Green space	

IMPACT AREAS

SAFETY

RESEARCH POINTS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Traffic-related deaths and injuries across transportation modes	Engineering/Public Works Department
Frequent crash locations	Police Department
Crime statistics	

COMMUNITY

RESEARCH POINTS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Current plans and policies	Planning Department
Current and planned community projects	Parks and Recreation Department
Community facilities	Police Department
Inventory of events	Community Organizations

HEALTH

RESEARCH POINTS	WHERE TO FIND IT
Physical activity metrics	Health Department
Locations of healthy food resources	Parks and Recreation Department
Locations of healthcare facilities	
Locations of parks and recreation facilities	

IDENTIFYING YOUR FOCUS STREET

Maybe you have already started to recognize certain transportation or street concerns but are not quite sure which street or set of streets will address your desires or concerns. Selecting the official strip of Main Street may be an obvious option, but perhaps focusing on the streets that intersect with Main Street or that run parallel to it have a greater opportunity for reaching your goals.

For research, and later on in project implementation, it is valuable to clearly define the boundaries of your project area. This allows you to employ limits to your evaluations, fact collection, stakeholder identification, and visioning steps, while also making implementation strategies more manageable.

KEEP IN MIND *No matter what street you focus your project on, you must consider the impact any project will have on the entire transportation system in your district.*

See the Online Resource Library for exercises and tools that could help you identify your greatest places of opportunity. For example, Project for Public Spaces' Power of 10+ Exercise.

IDENTIFYING YOUR STREET FUNCTION AND CLASSIFICATION

Street function and classification are complex, especially when we are rethinking streets and transportation for people. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed "functional classification" based on how the street functioned in relation to the overall highway system. Defined as "local," "collector," or "arterials," these classifications helped the FHWA develop design standards and allocate federal funding. Knowing the FHWA functional classification of your Main Street compared with how your city or state DOT classifies it is an important first step. Next, consider if the current classification(s) is/are appropriate for how your Main Street is functioning today. For example, if a bypass was built since the Main Street was originally classified, it may need to be redefined. After looking at the classifications, identify which function your street currently serves, as well as whether it is primarily oriented toward pedestrians, transit, etc., and think about how the classification might be updated.

DOT staff are more willing to be flexible in their thinking about road design if they view it as a Main Street with a local function, as opposed to a regional road critical to the movement of vehicles and goods.

STREET EVALUATION

After reviewing the basic facts, a natural next step is to record *your* observations. Whether you came with a concern in mind or your initial research inspired other ideas you would like to explore, observational street evaluation lets you gain first-hand *experiential* knowledge that can help you refine your future plans—both plans for conversations with officials and plans for projects. This is because on-street evaluations can reveal which real-time issues and opportunities are most frequent or most concerning to people using the street and therefore, which options will most likely address your community's needs.

Street evaluations come in many forms and are great tools for your community members to gather data and examine the various traits of the street together. A quick Google search on street evaluations returns a flood of walkability and bikeability audits, Complete Street audits, and pedestrian streetscape audits—and most include a way to rate conditions, as well as potential solutions. *See a sampling on page 60 and more in the Online Resource Library.*

Street evaluations and audits can be done in a variety of ways, including by foot, on bike, or in a car, but it is best to perform the evaluation in the environment and in a way that allows you to see, feel, and understand what it is really like for all types of users. These audits can be conducted using many different techniques, including (but not limited to); marking a neighborhood map, going through an evaluation checklist, recording observations on a notepad, conducting surveys, or taking pictures or filming.

What all of these evaluations and audits have in common is their recognition that by watching and recording how people are using—or not using—the street and finding out what they like and do not like about getting around on it, you can assess what is working and what is not. You'll be surprised by all of the nuances you notice yourself when intentionally observing your streets and asking questions! *See the call out about Nuances of Human Behavior in Streets on page 59.*

According to the late traffic researcher Ben Hamilton-Baille, driver speeds and human behavior are inseparable. When traffic speeds are greater you may notice that fewer people are chatting while walking or that a parent will hold their child's hand more tightly while near the street. On the other hand, when there is less pedestrian activity, you may notice that traffic goes faster. Even in subtle ways, the designated speed and shape of a street influences human behavior, which is why firsthand observation is an invaluable tool.

Street Evaluation Suggestions

Chapter 2 provided an overview of key transportation policies and strategies related to streetscapes and pedestrian networks, traffic, and parking. The following suggestions align with those areas and can help guide your observations, evaluations, and the questions you ask yourself or others on the street.

THEME	THINGS TO LOOK FOR	QUESTIONS TO ASK
STREETSCAPE DESIGN & PEDESTRIAN NETWORK	**Streetscape:** lighting, plants, trees, banners, seating, trash receptacles, artwork, shade, water features, family-friendly amenities, information kiosks, charging stations, cleanliness	Is it enjoyable to be in this space?
		Is it enjoyable for a child, older adult, or person with a disability, as well?
		Is there evidence of volunteerism and stewardship?
	Pedestrian experience: sidewalks, crosswalks, crossing signals & timing, wayfinding, ramps, refuge islands, auditory and visual cues, crime, unleashed dogs	Is there a mix of ages, genders, and ethnic groups?
		Can pedestrians and those using mobility aids easily walk and roll through this space?
	Cycling experience: bikeways, bike lanes (sharrows, painted, protected), wayfinding, bike parking, bike storage, bike share, bike repair, bike shops	Are the uses of adjacent buildings/spaces visible and inviting to pedestrians?
		Can cyclists easily get to and through the space?
		Are bike amenities safe and convenient?
	Transit: presence of train/bus/shuttle, presence of shelters/stops/stations, transit signage, transit access, predictable schedule	Can transit users easily get to and through the space?
TRAFFIC	**Driver behavior:** speeding, turning, distracted driving	Is the proximity and speed of vehicles intimidating?
		Is the street congested with cars?
	Traffic movement: congestion, volume, deliveries, person pick-up, waste pick-up	Is there a high volume of vehicles at different times of day? Week?
	Roadway: number of lanes, one- or two-way, traffic signs and signals, traffic calming measures, speed limit	Is the street width at a human scale?
		Is it comfortable to mix with traffic?
PARKING	**On-street parking:** parallel parking, angled parking, perpendicular parking	Is there an issue with double parking?
		Do drivers circle the block looking for a space?
	Off-street parking: business-related surface parking, separate surface lots, garages, valet services	Are parking spaces full, empty, or used only during peak periods?

DEEPER DIVE: PARKING STUDIES

As a commercial district stakeholder, you may hear complaints about the type, supply, and location of parking in your district. Taking a deeper dive than a street audit, a parking study can help you understand the realities of these issues and how best to address the community's concerns and solve any parking problem. Specifically, a parking study can help you:

- Quantify the actual supply and demand in your district;

- Determine parking behavior;

- Estimate future parking demand;

- Create new tools for your Main Street program, such as an accurate base map of land uses, ownership, building inventory, parking, and street circulation;

- Survey the community's thoughts and priorities for the district, in addition to parking; and

- Identify weak demand areas and evaluate which un-derused lots may be good locations for compatible infill or placemaking projects.

Parking studies can be informal and abbreviated or long-term and more involved. Either your organization or your munici-pality—or both!—can lead the study. No matter the length, formality, or leadership, all parking studies generally follow a methodology of:

- Mapping;

- Data collection;

- Survey and analysis of parking behavior;

- Survey and analysis of parkers' thoughts and concerns about the district and parking;

- Anticipated future development;

- Analysis of land use in relation to current and future goals;

- Recommendations; and

- Management strategy for implementing recommendations.

See Main Street America's *Main Street Approach Handbook: Design*, 2018

Street Evaluation Resources

There are many evaluation templates, suggestions, and tools that other organizations have developed to help facilitate this process. Some are included below and many more are included in the Online Resource Library for this toolkit. With your partners, you can decide which tool best suits your needs, or you can build your own version that merges multiple evaluation tactics. Your evaluation strategy can be as unique as your community.

Microscale Audit of Pedestrian Streetscapes (MAPS)

AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit (and Leader Guide)

Safe Routes to School National Partnership Walk & Bike Audits

Project for Public Spaces Streets as Places Audit (available by request from Project for Public Spaces)

THINKING LONG TERM: ONGOING EVALUATION

Whether you're initiating conversations with community stakeholders or implementing a project, ongoing check-ins are critical to lasting success. All the data, stories, and information you collect in initial phases remains just as valuable to know throughout every step of the process. By performing regular, iterative evaluations of the street and district during implementation—especially after short-term experiments and while more permanent changes are being put in place—you are able to confirm the validity or your plans, ensure their intended impact, and make adjustments as necessary.

One simple way to evaluate the success of your transpor-tation project as a whole is to conduct regular assess-ments using the same street evaluation procedure followed at the outset, with a few additions that reflect your evolving strategy and lessons learned along the way. For example, if you used a certain street audit to start your process, consider adapting the same metrics or questions that helped you determine your project's goals. With the information collected through ongoing re-evaluation, you can continue to prioritize projects and pursue long-term improvements that will influence the change your community desires.
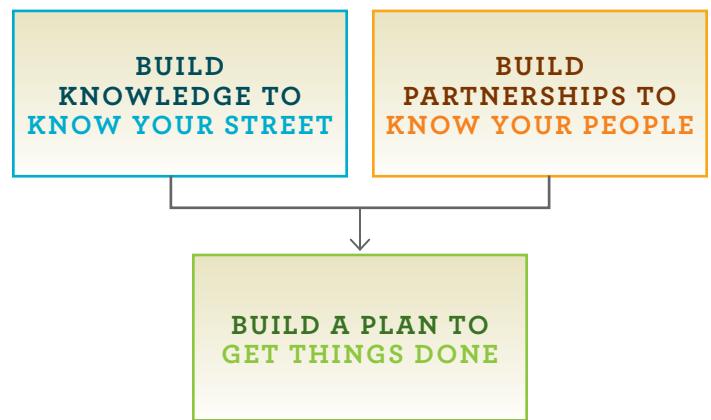
Building Partnerships: Stakeholder Identification & Engagement

Creating a thriving downtown is about making the most of existing street assets and capitalizing on a local community's most valuable asset—its people. In any community there are people who can provide a historical perspective on a particular street, people who hold valuable insights into how the street system might function, and people who can relay which issues are most critical and meaningful. These diverse perspectives provide a powerful basis for why the street system and transportation actually matter for Main Streets, as described in Chapter 1. In addition, drawing upon stakeholders' skills, experience, and time makes it possible to accomplish more with less, thus making the concepts in Chapter 2 more attainable.

By inviting, knowing, respecting, and collaborating with the full range of Main Street stakeholders you can generate the consensus, buy-in, capacity, and leadership from within the community that will help ensure that outcomes are more sustainable. Further, this type of deep engagement inspires the kind of genuine community pride that is the basis for any successful revitalization effort.

This section provides helpful questions to guide your identification and outreach processes, and provides stakeholder profiles that can help you when preparing for conversations or public meetings.

KEEP IN MIND *For new projects, basic research and evaluation may come first, though other times, identifying stakeholders comes first. Often, it is a back-and-forth process of researching, inviting stakeholders, and researching again together. Both "Building Knowledge" and "Building Partnerships" are equally important to the initial phases of streets projects and can happen in either order depending on what fits the circumstances in which you are starting.*

BUILD KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW YOUR STREET	BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

BUILD A PLAN TO GET THINGS DONE

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

In the same way that every streetscape has a unique set of elements and assets, every Main Street community will have a different set of stakeholders that are needed for street improvements to come to life. These stakeholders will continue to change, grow, and evolve throughout the process, but it is always helpful to ensure that community representatives from the public, private, and civic sectors are represented in some fashion.

Use the guiding questions below to start your stakeholder outreach brainstorming.

Ten Helpful Questions to Guide Stakeholder Outreach for Street Projects:

1 **What is the demographic and business profile of the adjacent community?** Consider the different types of residents, workers, business owners, and service providers that would be directly experiencing any potential street changes on a daily basis.

2 **Are there already existing community, land-use, transportation, public space, infill, or other types of town projects going on near your planned location?** If so, communicate with stakeholders in those projects as well, and if projects align, attempt to leverage resources amongst your projects.

3 **Who already manages or serves the space?** Consult with local police, fire, and parks and recreation departments to understand how they might protect or serve the space, and also determine if there are existing district or public space management organizations or owners of privately-owned public spaces.

4 **Who are the entities and professionals you may be working with for implementation?** This could include a wide range of experts: local or state department of transportation officials, civic or transportation engineers, city/town/community/land-use planners, public works departments, social service organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and sometimes even local manufacturers to produce future additions to amenities or furniture.

5 **Who is interested in having things change (and who might be opposed)?** Consider working with organizations serving people with disabilities, Bike/Walk organizations, and other advocacy groups. Get to know the opposing opinions in your community, too.

6 **Are there participants willing to contribute their own talents, skills, funds, or resources?** Think about including artists or arts councils to provide creative input, students and faculty from local schools and universities to contribute research and on-the-ground time, journalists or bloggers to get the word out, and hospitals or public health professionals to support measurements of health benefits.

7 **What formal and informal community networks exist?** Uncover the potential of engaging local neighborhood associations, youth groups, recreational groups, "friends of" groups or clubs, immigrant groups, faith-based organizations, etc.

8 **Who are the network connectors who are trusted by others to provide sound counsel, useful information, and help link people to each other?** Invite Main Street leaders, BID leaders, community group directors, elected officials and their staff into your engagement and project efforts.

9 **Are there any existing funds that could be used to make improvements or to program the space?** Research potential funders, local foundations, your town's chamber of commerce, and tourism boards to see who might be willing to support your work.

10 **Are there existing organizations and potential champions for this space that could provide long-term management and oversight?** As the initial stages of a project come to an end, you will need champions to ensure the place is well-loved over time. Look into community groups or organizations with aligned missions, nearby community centers or libraries that could help program the space, or well-suited city departments and task forces.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Street-focused initiatives require leadership and action at all levels to succeed. However, no single leader needs to have all the answers, and all of us come to a project with our own biases of discipline and personal experience. By acknowledging these facts and providing space for relationship building and collaboration, you can create a more humble, responsive, and attentive process to unfold than a process led by one discipline or interest alone.

Doing a little homework about one another can go a long way. Before meetings with various stakeholders, take the time to fully understand and empathize with each other's roles, key concerns, and limitations. Knowing these aspects about the stakeholders different from yourself can inform how you communicate, collaborate, and build mutually supportive partnerships with them.

The following pages provide two-page profiles for certain segments of stakeholders that can be important for street-focused projects: Main Street leaders; transportation professionals and civil servants; and community advocates. These profiles can help you consider the unique attributes of different types of stakeholders, the value they add, and the ways in which co-creating streets with them can support your implementation plans.

PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION

Knowing your stakeholders brings forth the opportunity to then collaborate and build trusting partnerships with them. The following profiles outline some ways to prepare for conversations and engagements with stakeholders. But regardless of who initiates a conversation with whom, the "rules of engagement" are the same. These five principles can help to hold everyone accountable throughout collaborative processes:

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER TO PARTICIPATE. Make the process fun, engaging, and rewarding for everyone by sharing an open mindset, thinking creatively, and celebrating participation within activities.

RESPECT AND APPRECIATE ONE ANOTHER'S EXPERTISE. Everyone is an expert in some element of the life and function of a public space, whether through occupational, educational, or personal experience. All forms of expertise should be validated in engagement settings. Participation and community engagement should feel like an open, two-way conversation so that all participants can freely share input, raise questions, and make recommendations. Additionally, accommodations should be made in meetings to encourage participation from those members of the community who might not be comfortable speaking up in a public setting (e.g. an anonymous survey).

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP. Because no single person should be expected to know everything, don't be afraid to ask for the assistance you might need in order to fully participate. Likewise, be prepared to support others with your own skills or expertise when you come to public meetings. Helping each other by answering questions and providing assistance will build the trusting, supportive relationships that allow projects and collaborations to succeed.

HONOR DISAGREEMENT. There are pros and cons for nearly every idea, so prepare yourself, your teams, and your community for this inevitability. To honor the value of all community members, it is important that both sides of an argument are given equal opportunity to be shared. Ultimately, this respectful approach could allow for a consensual or middle-ground plan to be developed.

DON'T JUMP TO SOLUTIONS FIRST. Focus your thinking on your perception of the problems, and not your interpretation of the solution. Define the issues of the street first and then work towards building a solid case for why those issues should be solved.

MAIN STREET LEADERS

Given their multifaceted and relationship-focused work, Main Street and other district leaders are well-positioned to open up interdisciplinary dialogues with planners and transportation officials and to lead the intentional community engagement around transportation projects in their districts.

MAIN STREET LEADERS MIGHT INCLUDE…	Main Street program directors, board members, and volunteers | Civic and community leaders | BID leaders | Chambers of commerce | Downtown development authorities or partnership organizations | Historic preservation organizations | Redevelopment agencies | and more…
THEIR PRIMARY CONCERNS COULD BE…	Making sure everyone is involved that needs to be involved;
	Making sure that stakeholders and community members know about the project;
	Ensuring the long-term economic vitality of the district;
	Filling empty storefronts;
	Supporting prosperous, locally-owned businesses;
	Advocating for historic preservation and quality district design; or
	Attracting visitors, consumers, and new businesses.
THEY CAN HELP BY…	Ensuring all efforts connect in some way to long-term district plans and economic vitality;
	Speaking to the other non-transportation needs within the context of the project that are still a part of the holistic street system, such as outdoor dining, seating, trees and shade, lighting, crosswalks, or ADA compliance;
	Managing and evaluating continued community engagement and street placemaking efforts; and
	Building up the capacity of committees and coalitions that support long-term work.
THEIR ROLE MIGHT BE TO…	Facilitate the connections between the community advocates and the city planning and transportation professionals;
	Provide expertise about the economic and cultural values present for the full Main Street context;
	Share Main Street data, research, and findings;
	Sponsor projects and collaborative procedures;
	Organize the process, including the street evaluation, stakeholder outreach, community meetings, visioning discussions, short-term projects, and evaluation efforts; or
	Invite additional stakeholders into the mix.

MAIN STREET LEADERS

BEFORE MEETING WITH THEM MAKE SURE TO...

- Review the Main Street, BID, Chamber of commerce, and town websites to understand the goals of the district and planned events;

- Review their current and past visions, mission statements, district strategies, and action plans, when possible; and

- Consider how their goals might work with potential street and transportation system updates.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS TO CONVERSE WITH AND ENGAGE MAIN STREET LEADERS INCLUDE...

Initial Conversations:

- Call their office;

- Write them a letter or email;

- Talk to them in person, outside, or on your Main Street;

- Build a connection through a business or property owner;

- Reach out to them about a specific concern (eg. transportation, economic, public space accessibility, etc.); or

- Let them know you want to help and ask how you can help them.

Public Meetings:

- Invite them to your group spaces (eg. libraries, churches, YMCA/YWCA);

- Invite them to your meetings (eg. City public meetings); or

- Perform streetscape assessments together.

Building the Partnership:

- Consistently communicate and have check-in meetings;

- Be accepting of compromise; and

- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate.

Staff members of the civic and transportation institutions in your locality can often be your best allies. Most public employees have a strong dedication to public service and have the same hopes for the safety, vitality, and well-being of their community that we all do. They want to be helpful and share their professional skills, within the parameters of their professional or elected roles. By approaching them with understanding and sincerity, you set the tone for productive engagement and implementation.

CIVIC AND TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS MIGHT INCLUDE...	City and land-use planners | Metropolitan Planning Organizations | Elected officials responsible for the area | Mayor's office | Governor's office | Public Health departments | Public Works departments | Police departments | Fire departments | Parks and Recreation departments | Transportation planners | Traffic engineers | Departments of Transportation | Transportation nonprofits | Transit operators | Historic preservation officers | and more...
THEIR PRIMARY CONCERNS COULD BE...	Civic professionals: Ordinances and zoning, tax revenue, public safety, crime, land-use, overarching planning and design compliance, livability, tourism, public health, and well-functioning systems.
	Transportation professionals: Safety for motorists and pedestrians, meeting the needs of all users, the role of the road in the overall transportation system, and characteristics of traffic in the area.
	All: The quality of life for residents and visitors.
THEY CAN HELP BY...	Influencing or collaborating on the plans, designs, and work of other government agencies;
	Providing the necessary technical assistance;
	Helping to create design and planning visuals and guidance;
	Funding projects (DOTs often have the largest public works budgets of any government agency);
	Providing resources and sometimes even existing street amenities, like traffic cones or benches;
	Introducing new policies and procedures; and
	Connecting projects across government departments to ensure efficient, effective use of local, state, or federal funding that has already been allocated.
THEIR ROLE MIGHT BE TO...	Provide governmental or technical expertise;
	Facilitate and partner in implementation steps;
	Connect the community and leaders to the needed contacts in other government agencies;
	Approve permits and new policies; or
	Design, build, and carry out the long-term, infrastructure-heavy, more permanent improvements.

BEFORE MEETING WITH THEM MAKE SURE TO...

- Write a "problem statement" (not a solutions statement) summarizing the transportation or street issue you are concerned about;

- Gain support from friends, family, and other stakeholders;

- Review the department and agency websites to see what projects might already be in the works for your defined street(s);

- Identify which level of government (local, regional, or state) has jurisdiction over the street(s) you are looking at;

- Research already available community engagement programs and the planning processes within the agencies;

- Learn the roles and responsibilities of the different departments you may need to work with to implement plans;

- Find an initial contact, perhaps a local planning or engineering staff member;

- Discover what your contact's role is (and limitations are) within the department they serve;

- Understand when to appropriately insert yourself into projects already moving forward (most often, the sooner, the better);

- Be familiar with the pertinent codes, restrictions, methods of implementation, and best practices advocated by your public agencies; and

- Understand where there is flexibility and opportunity for community input in road design and code specifications.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS TO CONVERSE WITH AND ENGAGE MAIN STREET LEADERS INCLUDE...

Initial Conversations:

- Meet them in their offices or in a neutral space so they are more comfortable;

- Share the values you hope for, what ideas you have, and prepare your justifications for why they are needed for your streets;

- Frame the conversation around a leveling topic or interactive activity that builds bridges and finds common ground;

- Collect examples of public input and support rom conversations, petitions, photos, etc.;

- Share successful examples from other communities that you have heard about;

- Ask them: What project ideas make the most sense to you?

- Ask them: What do you see as barriers to implementing these ideas?

- Ask them: I know that X code seems to be a barrier for this project. In X community, they tried X to remove that barrier. Can we work on a similar solution? and

- Let them know you want to be part of the solution process, and ask how you can help them.

Public Meetings:

- Invite civic and transportation professionals to all of your public meetings about streets projects; and

- Ask them to join you for a walkthrough or street audit to demonstrate the present challenges and opportunities.

Building the Partnership:

- Stay close to the staff managing the planning processes that can affect your street;

- Have conversations with them about the street visions you identify;

- Consistently communicate and have check-in meetings;

- Be at the table whenever related issues are being discussed;

- Be accepting of compromise; and

- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate

For more in-depth information about partnerships and engaging your local city officials, see Project for Public Spaces' A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

No one knows more about the use and story of the streets than the people who travel on them and live and work beside them every day. As such, everyone throughout the community has the potential to become an advocate for their streets. Often, it's just a matter of asking them to participate and to provide their knowledge and skills.

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES MIGHT INCLUDE...	Residents | Workers | Business owners | Neighborhood associations | "Friends" groups or clubs | Community organizations | Community centers | Libraries | Social service organizations | Schools and universities | Students | Retirees | Recreational groups | Arts councils | Youth groups/teams | Immigrant groups | People with disabilities | Funders | Faith-based organizations | Hospitals | Local manufacturers | Media | and more...
THEIR PRIMARY CONCERNS COULD BE...	Their own personal well-being and interests; Their friends and family's well-being and interests; The value the place brings or could bring to the community; Foot traffic, parking availability, and accessibility to their businesses, buildings, or organizations; Options to use alternative transportation modes easily and safely; Rights of vulnerable populations (kids, seniors, people with disabilities, etc); or The way a community vision might impact their livelihoods or operations.
THEY CAN HELP BY...	Providing a range of skills; Sharing their creative ideas; Sharing personal stories and community history; Confirming the reality of data points and experiences; Encouraging behavior change; Volunteering their time to provide leg-work for research or demonstration projects; Joining local planning or zoning boards and commissions; and Spreading the word about your plans among their own social or professional networks.
THEIR ROLE MIGHT BE TO...	Provide expertise about the uses, experiences, and value of the place; Connect people across social networks; Build up public support and momentum; Help build political will; Advocate for the well-being of individuals, communities, and the place; or Provide stewardship over the place.

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

BEFORE MEETING WITH THEM MAKE SURE TO...

- Have fellow community members behind you;

- Explore their missions and how they align with yours;

- Understand the current issues or campaigns they're working on;

- Recognize their areas of expertise and skills; and

- Think about what assets and additional networks they could bring with them.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS TO CONVERSE WITH AND ENGAGE MAIN STREET LEADERS INCLUDE...

Initial Conversations:

- Engage with advocates via social media, email, or mail;

- Build connections through friends, family, and existing connections; and

- Let them know you want to help and ask how you can help them.

Public Meetings:

- Attend or ask to attend their group meetings;

- Meet in a neutral, community-oriented space, or their group's space;

- When you host, hold meetings in different locations at different times of the day to assess when and where the most people from the most stakeholder groups attend; and

- Be intentional about your outreach, and distribute through multiple channels, like social media, surveys, websites, hard-copy flyers, and in-person conversations.

Building the Partnership:

- Have conversations with them about the street visions you identify;

- Consistently communicate and have check-in meetings;

- Be at the table whenever related issues are being discussed;

- Be accepting of compromise; and

- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate.

THINKING LONG TERM: ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION & RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Keeping stakeholders involved and building partnerships with them can make or break the long-term life of your streets as public spaces. In fact, being open to regular re-evaluation of engagement practices and having the flexibility to respond to the changing needs, opinions, and opportunities in the community is what paves the way for streets to become vital *places* that reflect a Main Street's unique character.

As with ongoing street evaluation, community engagement and collaboration require sustained attention and an ever-evolving process. Consider looking back at some of the tools you may have used to reach your different stakeholders and evaluate what might be beneficial to do again or to add into the mix. One simple way to measure the strength of your engagement is to compare who participates at every phase of the project to your original stakeholder identification process (see page 62). If you notice that any particular constituency has consistently been missing or left out, this is an opportunity to alter course. Experimenting with new outreach activities, like pop-up engagements, online surveys, follow-up focus groups, and additional in-depth interviews, can help you continue to grow and diversify your coalition for people-first streets.

Credit: Lake Orion DDA
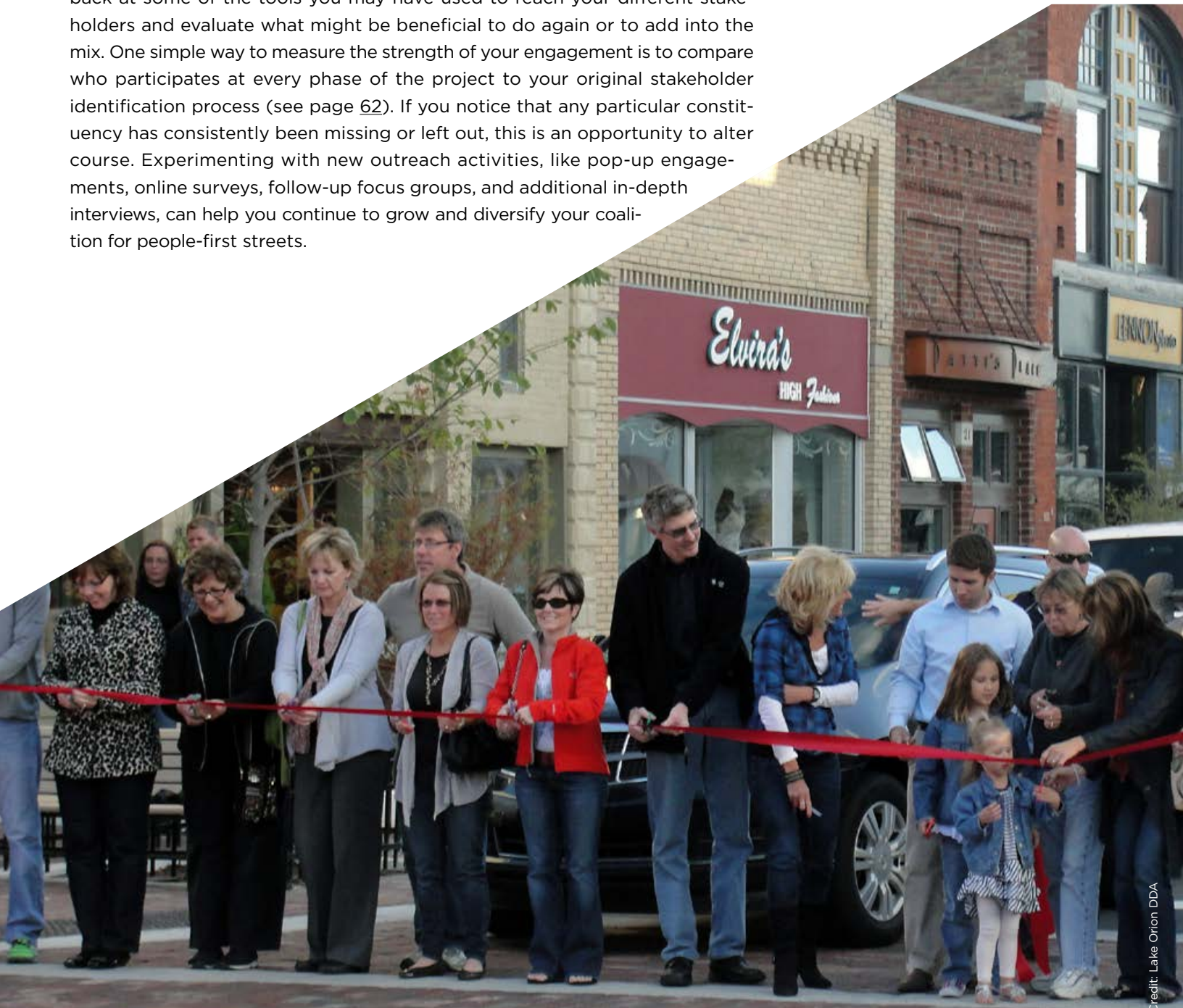
Building a Plan: Vision Alignment & Implementation

Once you have conducted research, completed street evaluations, gathered stakeholders, and shared common concerns, the next step is to prepare your plan of action. This will include developing a vision, or simply aligning with existing goals in your community, and then preparing short-term and long-term implementation steps to fulfill that vision.

This section provides information on creating or aligning your street and transportation plans to community goals and on developing an implementation strategy that recognizes the importance of continued evaluation and adaptation.

KEEP IN MIND *Thoroughly knowing your street and thoughtfully knowing and working with fellow community members and decision-makers creates a solid foundation for your implementation plans and strategies.*
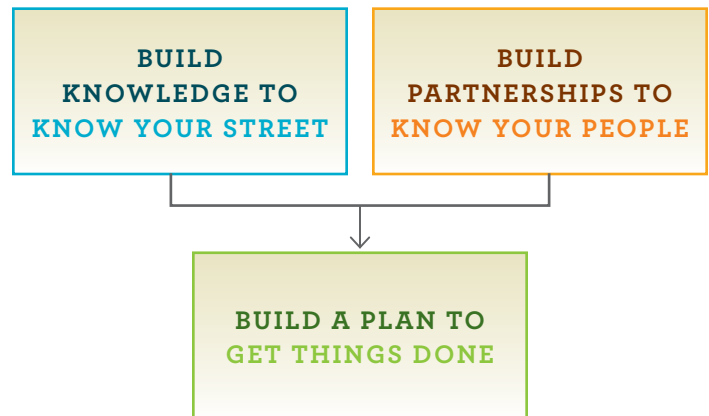
VISION ALIGNMENT

Working together to achieve people-first Main Streets means more than just people working with other people. It also means quantitative data working together with experiential knowledge, visions working cohesively with other visions, and strategies and action plans building off each other. Revitalization projects have the greatest chance of success when all the planning efforts related to the street support one another to the greatest extent possible. That is why creating a street and transportation vision and/or aligning your goals to the existing priorities within your community is a crucial checkpoint before implementation.

The context of your street and the values your stakeholders desire will drive your vision for equity, safety, health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and community cohesiveness on Main Street. It is this vision (or aligned visions) that helps declare what type of place you want your street to be and that helps justify how you will prioritize certain actions over others.

Common elements of a vision document or presentation include:

A mission or statement of goals. Shared goals of stakeholders are the foundation of a Vision. *Tip: This could reflect goals based on one or more of the areas in Chapter 1.*

BUILD KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW YOUR STREET	BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

BUILD A PLAN TO GET THINGS DONE

A definition of how the street or streets will be used, and by whom. The nature of the street guides the goals of those involved. *Tip: Consider creating sample narratives that describe how a certain type of pedestrian might use the street. This definition might require redefining the official street function, as described in Street Function & Classification on page 58.*

A description of the intended character of the space that offers a clear idea of what the space will be. *Tip: Add in adjectives to describe the future of your street or describe how you want users to feel on the street. The specificity of this description helps keep the vision focused.*

A concept plan that outlines how uses and activities will be arranged in the space. *Tip: This is often a visual representation through sketches or drawings on top of maps, which clearly and simply expresses initial arrangement ideas without getting into technical details. Stakeholders with technical expertise can then help assess the feasibility of this concept and identify barriers to implementation.*

Successful examples of similar spaces, parts of spaces, amenities, events, and more. *Tip: See Chapter 2 for example strategies.*

An action plan for short-term and long-term improvements, including potential partners, funding, and people responsible. *Tip: See Sample Action Plan on page 73.*

Reimagining Main Street in Hailey, Idaho

Through the center of Hailey, Idaho runs Highway 75—serving both as the primary corridor connecting towns throughout the Wood River Valley, as well as the literal Main Street for this small mountain town. Recognizing that the wide five-lane street, with high volumes and speeds of traffic, was discouraging a pedestrian-based economy and bisecting the community, the City of Hailey worked with Project for Public Spaces and Community Builders to consider rightsizing the corridor in 2015 (see page 43 for what rightsizing means). The controversial idea had been proposed in the past and the City wanted to put the discussion back on the table. However, the community changed course following the street evaluation and community-wide visioning processes, choosing to focus on Main Street as a place and a destination, not just a roadway corridor.

Through a collaborative process of evaluating the place as a whole—including mapping exercises, surveys, street assessments, traffic data analyses, and having regular conversations with a growing network of stakeholders—they were able to learn the priorities for connectivity, comfort, uses, and livability from the community members themselves. While rightsizing remains a long-term option, they were able to agree on many low-cost, low-risk ways to address their immediate concerns. Most importantly, the community drove the vision, participated in the creation, and became stewards of the street as a *place*.

Find the full report on Community Builder's website and read more in this article. Also, see the Online Resource Library for more case studies that show how others have taken their built knowledge, built partnerships, and created their plans for achieving people-first streets.

IMPLEMENTATION

Know your street? *Check*. Know your people? *Check*. Build a plan? *Let's do this!*

This section focuses on low-cost, low-risk, short-term interventions that will influence the life and livelihood of our Main Streets. Keep in mind great streets do not happen overnight, and people do not need to have all the answers at the start. In fact, with the complexity of street systems, you can expect that tweaks, course corrections, and sometimes complete about-faces will take place over time.

Think big, but start small. That's the key. Take an experimental, iterative approach to implementation. Whether you call it a pop-up project, "Tactical Urbanism," or, as Project for Public Spaces refers to it, a "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC)" approach, the core principles of community vision, collaboration, and citizen-led change remain the same.

Short-term experimentation can come in a variety of different formats and scales, such as:

Amenities. From flexible seating to book kiosks to planters and public art, amenities provide a low-cost means to add activity and comfort. In streetscape projects, safety-related amenities could be added, such as painting crosswalks and adding traffic cones to demonstrate locations for pedestrian havens.

Programming. Regular events can build momentum, showcase local talent, and build new partnerships. While one-off events cannot take the place of ongoing programming, they can help test new ideas and adapt the community vision. *See Chapter 2 for many examples of programming ideas related to streets and transportation.*

Light Development. Temporary structures can provide an alternative to capital-intensive construction. Think about creating structures next to transit stops and stations or repurposing road space with small-scale road diets.

Although a short-term approach is not for every situation (e.g. moving curbs, adding sewers, or building bridges), having an incremental mindset and considering short-, medium-, and long-term actions leaves room for adjustments. Regardless of scale, your implementation plan should always improve the relationship between people and their environment.

A sample action plan might include a list of activations that address your goals, amenities needed for each, partners and leaders that can support, and potential funding sources. Then, prioritize which activations will happen in the short-, medium-, and long-term so a schedule can be established. Also, remember to include opportunities for continued evaluation in that schedule. Below is a sample Implementation Action Planning Worksheet that organizes these points. *See the Online Resource Library for additional action planning tools.*

SAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

ACTIVATION	AMENITIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	LEAD PERSON	FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES	TIME FRAME
Spruce up Main	Themed crosswalks, colorful sidewalks	Arts council, university	Arts council, university	Donations, crowdfunding	Short
Elk Ave Gateway	Visible signage, pop-up retail, food trucks, colorful crosswalk, seating in sunken plaza, book art	Economic development committee, children's museum	Economic development committee, children's museum	City general fund, grants	Short–Medium
Cross Street Road Diet	Shifting the bike lane, narrow street, activate edges, planters, paint bike and pedestrian lane, signage	Walk/bike organization, city approval for lane closure	Planning department	Federal grant	Medium–Long
Parklets on Main	Parklets near restaurants (parks and seating in a parking spaces)	Police, city, arts council, scouts	Main Street or Business Improvement District manager	Donations, arts grant	Short–Medium
Pop-up protected bike lanes during Walk & Bike to School Event	Cones with flowers, chalk paint striped lane and buffer, chalk paint bike symbol, Informational signs at key locations	School, city, police	Bike/walk advocacy group	Police grant, PTA funds, Bike/walk group sponsorship	Short

A QUICK NOTE ABOUT FUNDING

When the community's vision is truly driving a project, will the money follow?

The most successful public space projects tend to use an incremental approach in which the place grows little by little as people become more and more invested. When individuals can see themselves using the space and are participants in its creation, its value grows larger than its costs. Understanding this "perceived value" is the main reason for involving the community in any public space project and is the main factor determining whether many projects succeed or fail, regardless of the money that is being spent.

See Chapter 2, page 52 and the Online Resource Library for further details on how to find funding for your implementation plans.

THINKING LONG TERM: PLACE MANAGEMENT

Great streets go beyond great design. They require the TLC that good maintenance and place management can provide. Given the responsiveness needed to adapt to changing street use at different times of the day, week, and season—not to mention year after year—the challenge you face is to identify a *managing organization* and create a *management plan* for your street. Adapting the management plan in accordance with changing circumstances ensures that the space is well-loved and well-used over time.

A **management organization** could be almost any type of organization, including:

- Traditional Main Street organizations;

- Special assessment districts;

- Community development corporations;

- Redevelopment agencies;

- Downtown development authorities;

- City hall;

- Chambers of commerce;

- Historic preservation organizations; and

- Specialized partnerships or coalitions created for this intended purpose

A **management plan** could include defined responsibilities, such as:

- Keeping the areas on and around the street active through programming;

- Keeping the areas maintained, clean, and safe;

- Caring for planters, green spaces, street furniture, and other streetscape amenities;

- Completing regular re-evaluations of the street (see "Thinking Long-Term: Ongoing Evaluation" page 60);

- Coordinating regular re-engagement exercises or bringing in additional experts, consultants, and partners as needed (see "Thinking Long-Term: Engagement Evaluation & Relationship Management" page 70); and

- Fundraising for larger and longer-term elements of your community's vision.

Credit: Downtown Goldsboro Development Corporation

MOVING FORWARD

CONCLUSION

Main Streets are central places for social and economic activity, and for this reason they have always been more multifunctional than many other types of streets. This toolkit recognizes these significant qualities and encourages Main Street managers, community advocates, business owners, local officials, transportation professionals, and other stakeholders to collectively take responsibility for ensuring that streets in the district are accessible, functional, and beneficial to the entire community.

By first intentionally and respectfully working together (Chapter 3) and then by implementing people-oriented streets and transportation tactics tailored to your unique Main Street communities (Chapter 2), you can begin to access the many positive benefits that a Main Street as a place for people first can provide to your residents, visitors, and community as a whole (Chapter 1).

With all of the possibilities available in this toolkit, getting started and keeping up the momentum can feel overwhelming. To that end, we have included the following principles and checklists to help guide you through the process of transforming your streets for the better using this toolkit.

At every point in your process, these six overarching principles are a set of common goals to communicate with your partners and benchmarks to measure your work against:

- Remember that streets are public spaces, both in terms of public ownership and public access, so they can be and should be for the public. *See Streets as Places page 5 in Chapter 1*

- Consider all types of streetscape elements and functions, as well as the network that your street fits within. *See pages 6-7 in Chapter 1 and page 37 in Chapter 2*

- Incorporate intentional community engagement and collaboration whenever possible. *See Chapter 3*

- Value all people by appreciating the stories they can share, the resources and talents they can provide, and their right to use and access the street. *See page 68 in Chapter 3*

- Understand the unique historical, cultural, economic, social, and environmental contexts that shape the story of your street, as well as the needs of the community before implementing physical changes and solutions. *See page 55 in Chapter 3*

- Incorporate incremental implementation and evaluation methods so you are more prepared to adapt and evolve as needed. *See pages 72-73 in Chapter 3*

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE: BACKGROUND RESEARCH & STREET EVALUATION

☐ Know the costs of car-oriented streets and the benefits of putting people first. *See Chapter 1*

☐ Define a clear location to focus your efforts. *See page 58 in Chapter 3*

☐ Conduct research, considering street types and functions, as well as the surrounding conditions and circumstances. *See pages 55, 57, and 58 in Chapter 3*

☐ Perform street evaluations. *See pages 58-60 in Chapter 3*

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION & ENGAGEMENT

☐ Make a thorough list of potential stakeholders. *See page 62 in Chapter 3*

☐ Do your homework about different stakeholders before community outreach, engagement, and conversations. *See pages 64, 66, and 68 in Chapter 3*

☐ Hold everyone accountable to certain principles of collaboration. *See page 63 in Chapter 3*

BUILDING A PLAN: VISION ALIGNMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

☐ Are there other types of goals or visions for the places near your district?

☐ If yes, think about how you could align your street vision with these.

☐ If no, make sure you develop a guiding vision for your street improvement plans. *See page 71 in Chapter 3*

☐ Seek successful examples to inspire your plans. *See Chapter 2*

☐ Identify tasks, funding, and partnerships that will help accomplish each phase of implementation. *See page 52 in Chapter 2 and page 73 in Chapter 3*

THINKING LONG TERM: ONGOING EVALUATION, RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT & PLACE MANAGEMENT

☐ Revisit your research methods and street assessments to design an evaluation plan for the progress of your implementations. *See page 60 in Chapter 3*

☐ Revisit your engagement strategies and plan to strengthen and formalize partnerships. *See page 70 in Chapter 3*

☐ Incorporate a place management plan into your work. *See page 74 in Chapter 3*

☐ **Celebrate and thank your partners regularly! Doing an in-depth community engagement and street revitalization process is something to be proud of!**

CONTACT US

Please visit the robust, living version of this toolkit and Online Resource Library.

For additional resources, articles, and support please feel free to reach out:

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