



# Envisioning Healthy Corridors

LESSONS FROM FOUR COMMUNITIES



Urban Land  
Institute

Building Healthy  
Places Initiative

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*Cover image, top: A corridor in Brooklyn, New York, incorporates many aspects of a healthy corridor, including trees, wide sidewalks, and well-marked bike lanes. (New York City Department of Transportation)*

*Cover images, bottom: The four Phase II Demonstration Corridors are leveraging their existing assets to envision a healthier place for residents and visitors.*

*From left to right: A signalized crosswalk along South Broadway in Englewood (Reema Singh); a stakeholder workshop in Fayetteville, Arkansas (Sara Hammerschmidt); a tour of Bartram's Garden, a National Historic Landmark near Grays Ferry Avenue in Philadelphia (Reema Singh); and a local coffee shop along Rice Street in St. Paul, Minnesota (Sara Hammerschmidt).*

## About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 42,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. In 2017 alone, more than 1,900 events were held in about 290 cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at [uli.org](http://uli.org). Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

## About the Building Healthy Places Initiative

Around the world, communities face pressing health challenges related to the built environment. Through the Building Healthy Places Initiative, launched in 2013, ULI is leveraging the power of the Institute's global networks to shape projects and places in ways that improve the health of people and communities.

Learn more and connect with Building Healthy Places: [uli.org/health](http://uli.org/health).



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# INTRODUCTION

The Urban Land Institute’s Healthy Corridors project, launched in 2014, is using the lens of health to reimagine the future of urban and suburban arterials. In partnership with ULI’s district councils (local chapters) and local and national experts, segments of commercial corridors—referred to as “demonstration corridors”—were selected as pilot sites where new approaches could be tested. A health-equity focus was used to convene cross-sector stakeholders, build consensus around local priorities, and drive both physical and broader systems-level changes.

Selected through a competitive application process, district councils in Arkansas, California, Colorado,

Idaho, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee assembled a wide variety of stakeholders—including residents, business owners, and public health experts, as well as more traditional land use professionals. Stakeholders assessed their respective corridor segments from a standpoint of health and safety to prioritize issues and challenges, gather expert feedback, and begin a plan for implementing changes.

The experiences and lessons learned in the “Phase I” corridors, which began in early 2015—Van Nuys Boulevard in Los Angeles; Federal Boulevard in Denver-Adams County-Westminster, Colorado; Vista Avenue in Boise, Idaho; and Charlotte Avenue in Nashville,

Tennessee—are documented in the 2016 ULI report *Building Healthy Corridors: Transforming Urban and Suburban Arterials into Thriving Places*.

This supplemental piece to the *Building Healthy Corridors* report describes the experiences of the project’s “Phase II” corridors: South Broadway in Englewood, Colorado; College Avenue/Highway 71B in Fayetteville, Arkansas; Grays Ferry Avenue in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the Rice-Larpenteur Gateway spanning St. Paul, Roseville, and Maplewood, Minnesota. The process undertaken by district councils and local stakeholders for these corridor segments began in mid-2017 and ran through mid-2018, with local jurisdictions continuing the work today to transform these corridors into places that better support the health and well-being of those who live, work, and travel along them.

The Phase II corridors followed the activities and processes used during Phase I, but on a more accelerated timeline. Each demonstration corridor formed a cross-sector local leadership group to oversee activities locally, to ensure that health was a focus of all conversations about the corridor, and to help continue momentum for changes along the corridor. The local leadership group planned a local workshop, held in summer 2017, engaging other local stakeholders in understanding how the corridor affects the health of residents and visitors and identifying priority areas on which to focus future work to most effectively improve health and safety.



Typical commercial corridors, found in nearly every community across the United States, are designed to prioritize vehicles over pedestrians and bicycles.

(Laneshift)





*High-speed corridors create unsafe conditions for pedestrians.*  
(Laneshift)



*When the proper infrastructure is missing, pedestrians and bicyclists must create their own paths.*  
(Sara Hammerschmidt)

Members of each local leadership group were also involved in planning national study visits, held in fall 2017/winter 2018. These study visits brought experts in real estate, transportation, economic development, health, planning, and design from across the country to each demonstration corridor to provide a set of recommendations to priority areas identified by the local stakeholders. These three-day study visits included a briefing on the corridor segment (including assets, opportunities, land use, transportation, and demographics of residents), a tour, interviews with stakeholders, and a public presentation of recommendations. The recommendations serve as a guide to help each demonstration corridor create plans and priorities for implementation of real changes in the study area.

Summaries of the activities of each Phase II demonstration corridor are presented in the following profiles. Each profile includes the priority areas identified as barriers to health-promoting revitalization, a summary of the recommendations from the national study visits, and next steps.

For summaries of the Phase I demonstration corridors, along with more details on the Healthy Corridors project, the *healthy corridor* definition and typology, and case studies of best-practice corridors, please visit [uli.org/healthycorridors](http://uli.org/healthycorridors).

# SOUTH BROADWAY • ENGLEWOOD, COLORADO

## The Power of (Re)Connecting

With quirky sculptural streetscape amenities and sidewalk banners that read “Artistic,” “Friendly,” and “Historic,” it is hard to deny the eclectic character of portions of the South Broadway corridor in Englewood, Colorado. Stretching from downtown Denver through the city of Englewood, South Broadway is a major traffic route that facilitates roughly 30,000 to 40,000 vehicle trips daily. Despite proximity to two light-rail stations, the large number of driveways and curb cuts that intersect sidewalks and an absence of formal bike lanes along the north-south corridor make it suboptimal for walking, cycling, and other forms of active transport as well as for individuals with disabilities.

In fact, the historic transportation corridor and surrounding area present many threats to public health, including an abundance of fast-food restaurants, limited walkability, and potential residential displacement. Typical barriers to redevelopment, such as complex landownership and building leases, aging but not obsolete buildings, commercial vacancy, and municipal fiscal constraints, further inhibit the corridor from improving health outcomes.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- » Look beyond the corridor itself and capitalize on assets (e.g., anchor institutions, strong neighborhoods, or transit nodes) that could better connect to the corridor.
- » When identifying nodes for redevelopment, prioritize areas with iconic features that contribute to defining the corridor’s character.

With rapid population growth and climbing housing prices, the corridor is also facing pressures to provide adequate affordable housing options for the low- to moderate-income residents who face threats of displacement. Oversaturated with auto-oriented development and vacant properties, the “Broadway Mile” lacks a formalized structure—such as a business improvement district—to encourage, manage, and steer newly emerging economic and retail growth.



Nevertheless, the area has strong nearby medical assets (including two major hospitals), favorable proximity to downtown Denver, and an influx of millennials and baby boomers, so investors are becoming increasingly attracted to the area’s potential for economic development. Acknowledging that the time is right to capitalize on exciting momentum, ULI Colorado and local partners selected a two-mile (3.2 km) segment of South Broadway between Yale Avenue and Oxford Avenue on which to focus.

This segment is situated in a moderate-income suburban area that connects CityCenter Englewood (a first-generation transit-oriented development) to the historic Broadway

*South Broadway presents an unfriendly environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, with sidewalks adjacent to travel lanes, frequent curb cuts, and no bike lanes.*  
(Reema Singh)



commercial main street and the Swedish-Craig Medical District. Due to the existing assets and location, the South Broadway strip offers significant promise to improve the overall health of residents and visitors alike.

### LOCAL WORK FOR CHANGE

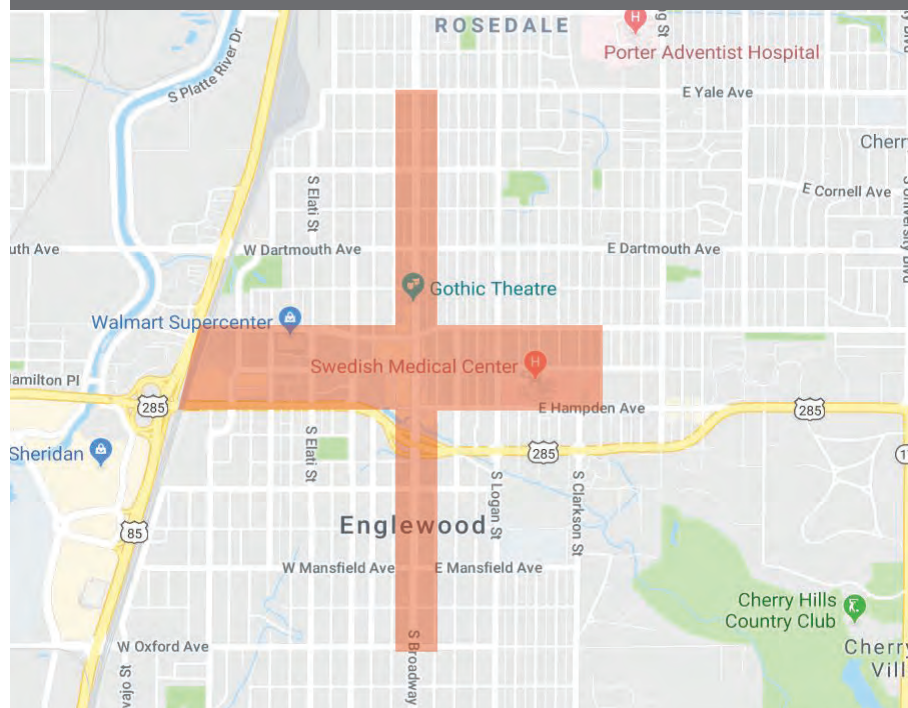
In April 2017, ULI Colorado assembled the South Broadway Local Leadership Group to spearhead the launch of corridor redevelopment efforts that consider public health. On October 10, 2017, ULI Colorado, the city of Englewood, and the South Broadway Local Leadership Group hosted a one-day workshop that convened approximately 30 public, private, and nonprofit community stakeholders to use health as a lens to explore opportunities for corridor redevelopment along the South Broadway study segment.

The workshop included keynote presentations by industry leaders and health professionals to inspire a healthier vision for South Broadway, a walking tour led by local leadership group members, and small group discussions that focused on specific topics to ensure that health is addressed holistically. After identifying key assets and challenges along the corridor, stakeholders discussed health opportunities in the context of mobility and safety, recreation, housing, and commercial development.

Once opportunities were identified, stakeholders conducted a voting exercise to select the ideas that best reflected priority areas and warranted consideration for the corridor's revitalization. These priority areas informed the development of study questions to be examined by a team of national experts in land use, development, and health.

## QUICK FACTS

- » **Length of study section:** 1.75 miles
- » **Average number of lanes:** 4 (2 lanes in each direction)
- » **Average posted vehicle speed:** 30 mph
- » **Transit options:** regional bus to downtown Denver; local circulator shuttle bus
- » **Bike lanes:** no
- » **Sidewalks:** yes, generally in good condition
- » **Household income:** \$30,500 within study area
- » **Corridor population:** 5,980 within one-quarter mile; 13,000 within one-half mile
- » **Ethnicity:** 76 percent white, 16 percent Hispanic, 2.5 percent black, 2 percent Asian, 3.5 percent other
- » **Safety and/or health issues:** many driveways and curb cuts along the corridor
- » **Land use:** commercial/retail district, with adjacent residential neighborhoods
- » **Distinguishing features:** South Broadway traverses the commercial and historic core of Englewood. South Broadway is a primary north-south connection through the entire Denver metropolitan region.



The South Broadway corridor study area (shaded) and surroundings.  
(Google Maps)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A team of ULI members and partners with areas of expertise that aligned with the study questions were recruited for the national study visit in January 2018. Local stakeholders sought advice from national experts on the following:

- » How can South Broadway transform the vehicular character of the corridor to achieve more pedestrian focus and walkability?
- » The city of Englewood has limited capacity and funds to make large-scale capital improvements. What low-cost, high-impact improvements could be made to improve health, community cohesion, safety, and mobility?
- » How can South Broadway be effectively linked to the community activity areas to the west (CityCenter) and the east (Medical District)?
- » The transition between the commercial uses along the corridor to the established residential neighborhoods is abrupt. What is the appropriate scale for future development along the corridor?
- » What strategies can be used to promote new uses on underused sites to create a healthier, more vibrant place?
- » How can South Broadway bring the business community together to share in the future development of the South Broadway corridor?

Key recommendations included the following:

**Look beyond the corridor:** Employ a “two-corridor solution” that considers assets that are aligned east–west (e.g., anchor medical institutions and Englewood CityCenter) in addition to north–south along the South Broadway corridor.

**Envision an east–west health corridor:** Create a health-focused east–west corridor that includes improved infrastructure from CityCenter and the transit station to the hospitals. The infrastructure should be pedestrian- and bike-friendly and include walking paths, and land use changes should include zoning codes that allow mixed-use, street-fronting buildings within existing parking lots. Signage and wayfinding tactics should connect the health corridor to adjacent neighborhoods.

**Enhance the North–South Broadway connection:** Consider innovative ways to enhance the gateway into Englewood from Denver to the north, and establish iconic venues along the corridor, with specific attention to the edges to help strengthen transitions. Reducing the number of through-travel lanes to one in each direction while allocating space for sidewalks and bike lanes, and enhancing and increasing pedestrian crosswalks, would help reclaim the corridor from through-traffic and also help lower vehicle speeds.



*South Broadway stakeholders tour the corridor during the local workshop to explore how to redevelop the area in health-promoting ways.  
(Reema Singh)*



Assets along South Broadway include the Gothic Theater, a former movie theater-turned-music venue built in the 1920s.  
(Marianne Eppig)

### Activate through resident-driven placemaking:

Make the corridor feel safe, not just be safe. To do this, stakeholders should celebrate South Broadway's assets by leveraging innovative and arts-driven programming and inclusive creative placemaking strategies.

### Invest in innovative zoning strategies to expand housing options:

The city should work to promote diverse housing choices by providing multiple options that would allow residents to age in place and expand the number of rental properties. To help catalyze broader housing efforts, the following “quick wins” could be pursued within the city’s zoning code:

- » Simplify the permitted land use tables in the zoning code;
- » Consider increasing rear setbacks in residential zones;
- » Do not regulate different forms by use in the same zoning district; and
- » Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

### Organize with intent—create a business

**improvement district:** Despite past challenges, the South Broadway community should reconsider establishing a business improvement district (BID) using a phased approach, resulting in a formalized nonprofit with professional staff.

## NEXT STEPS

After the national study visit, the Englewood Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the final video and slide presentation from the national workshop in detail over the course of three meetings. The sessions included extended discussions of the implications of and opportunities associated with the experts’ recommendations. Many recommendations are being actively considered by the city of Englewood, including:

- » Considering an ordinance to allow ADUs on residential properties;
- » Positioning Englewood CityCenter for redevelopment with the land use, transportation, and pedestrian connection recommendations of the national experts incorporated into impending redevelopment discussions with property owners;
- » Initiating outreach efforts to potential “champions” (i.e., property and business owners) who may take a lead role in exploring the formation of a business improvement district; and
- » Exploring the concept of a bike-share pilot program in Englewood.

The Healthy Corridors project and national study visit in Englewood amplified the “buzz” in the metro Denver development community that South Broadway in Englewood is an emerging health-focused corridor and district, ready for redevelopment and new connections.



# COLLEGE AVENUE/HIGHWAY 71B • FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

## Navigating State Ownership and Public Perception to Improve Health and Safety

Highway 71B is a well-traveled arterial in northwest Arkansas, spanning over 40 miles and linking the four primary cities in the region—Bentonville, Fayetteville, Springdale, and Rogers. As the northwest Arkansas region continues to grow rapidly, this historic corridor must keep pace and evolve along with the growing population and demand for livability and walkability.

ULI Northwest Arkansas and local stakeholders focused efforts on a two-mile segment of Highway 71B in the city of Fayetteville, known locally as College Avenue. With more than 10,000 jobs and 20 percent of the city's residents located within one mile of this segment, it is an important connector in the community. The corridor segment is situated near many valuable local assets, including two medical campuses, a 15-acre shopping center, and thriving cultural and business districts.

The corridor faces challenges such as negative public perception, disconnected sidewalks and pedestrian access, long-term vacancies,

limited neighborhood connectivity, and vehicle-dominated infrastructure. However, local stakeholders believe that exploring and discussing these issues using a health lens will help increase stakeholder buy-in, and ultimately benefit the greater region of northwest Arkansas.

*The streetscape of College Avenue—the section of Highway 71B that runs through Fayetteville—changes character moving from north to south. (Laneshift)*



### LESSONS LEARNED

- » Prioritize the collection and analysis of demographic data and corridor conditions before building stakeholder support and consider hiring a data collection expert to assist; baseline conditions data are also useful when tracking changes that occur in the corridor area.
- » Consider obtaining local control of the street itself, if owned by the county or state, in order to implement physical changes that best support those who frequently use it.

## LOCAL WORK FOR CHANGE

On September 14, 2017, ULI Northwest Arkansas hosted a local stakeholder workshop that brought together over 60 participants with a variety of perspectives, including real estate, design, public sector, and area residents. Stakeholders toured a segment of the corridor on foot to experience conditions for pedestrians.

Mayor Lioneld Jordan gave his enthusiastic support for making Fayetteville more walkable and multimodal, and using tactical urbanism strategies to make streets safer and healthier places. Participants worked in small groups to discuss assets and opportunities for improvement, which were used by the local leadership group to determine priorities for the national study visit.

The local leadership group also worked with Laneshift, a local consultant, to complete a corridor audit that included documenting baseline physical conditions along the corridor and within adjacent neighborhoods, detailing the demographics of residents in the study area, and interviewing about 20 stakeholders—including corridor residents and business owners—on their experiences navigating the corridor, what a healthy corridor means to them, and what they want to see along College Avenue in the next three to five years.

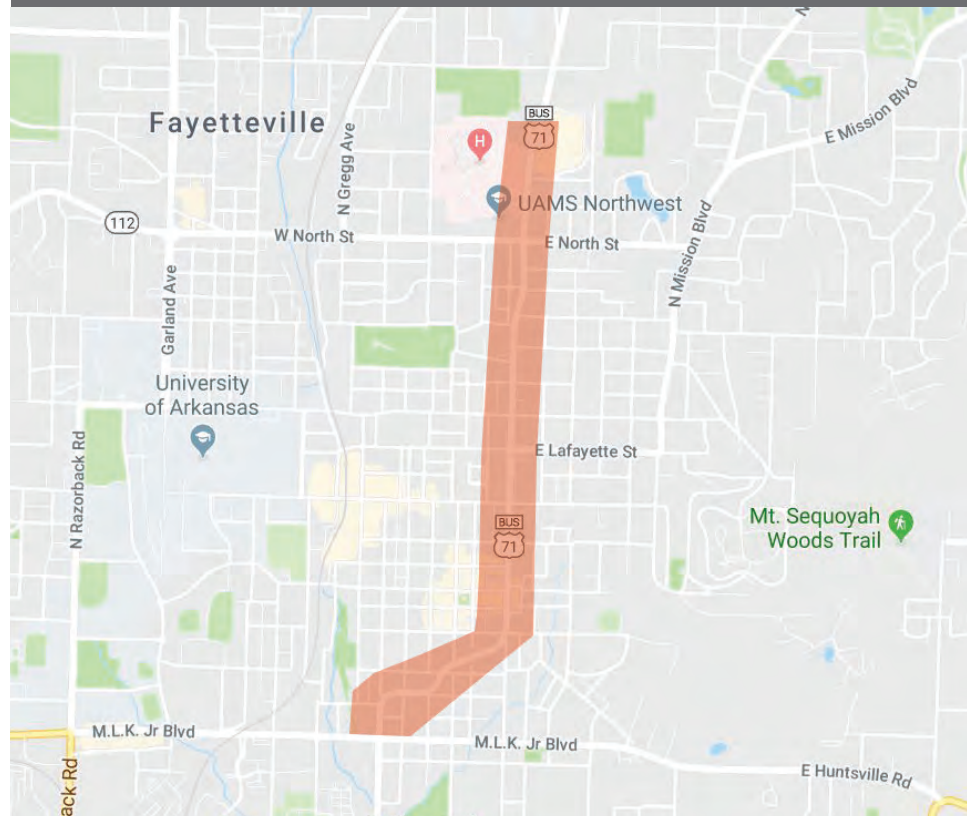
## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fayetteville national study visit was held in February 2018. Local stakeholders sought advice from national experts on the following:

- » What interventions should be prioritized to have the biggest impact on health, and what are strategies to articulate the connections between health and the built environment that will inspire stakeholders to take action?
- » How can the city of Fayetteville work with the Arkansas DOT to either jointly implement smart and healthy design strategies or do a jurisdictional transfer so that the city can control design? How can the costs

## QUICK FACTS

- » **Length of study section:** 2 miles
- » **Average number of lanes:** 4
- » **Average posted vehicle speed:** 40 mph
- » **Available transit options:** Ozark Regional Transit
- » **Bike lanes:** none
- » **Sidewalks:** varies greatly; some areas with new sidewalks and some with no sidewalks
- » **Household income:** less than \$15,000, 27 percent; between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 16 percent; between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 27 percent; between \$50,000 and \$75,000, 12 percent; greater than \$75,000, 18 percent
- » **Corridor area population:** 16,000 households
- » **Ethnicity:** 78 percent white, 8 percent Hispanic, 6 percent black, 3 percent Asian, 5 percent other
- » **Safety and/or health issues:** many vehicle accidents and unfriendly to bikes, though becoming more pedestrian friendly
- » **Land use:** commercial uses directly adjacent to College Avenue/Highway 71B; varying densities of residential



The College Avenue corridor study area (shaded) and surroundings.  
(Google Maps)

and benefits associated with a transfer be quantified?

- » What are ways to use public/private partnerships and creative financing to implement pedestrian- and bicyclist-focused transformations and other community-serving amenities and uses?
- » How can the corridor and adjacent streets be physically reconfigured to establish safe multimodal transportation options and amenities, including connectivity to the Razorback Greenway?
- » As the region experiences rapid growth and density along the corridor is encouraged, what can be done to ensure that housing is developed for people with a variety of incomes, and where should new housing be located along College Avenue?

**Key recommendations from national experts included the following:**

**Design for better movement:** Implement a community engagement process to determine the appropriate needs and priorities for different modes (pedestrians, bikes, buses, and cars). Once these priorities are identified, Fayetteville should consider adopting design guidelines and standards from organizations such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials and employing traffic-calming strategies such as lowering speed limits, enforcing speed controls, narrowing lanes, enhancing streetscapes, and widening crosswalks.

**Reclaim control through local road ownership:** Fayetteville should work with ARDOT—the Arkansas Department of Transportation—to transfer ownership rights to ensure local control of the roadway.

**Prioritize investing in mixed-use, mixed-income developments:** Creating a comprehensive housing strategy, including mixed-income hous-

ing policies, would allow Fayetteville to properly address housing needs across all income levels. The city should also pursue creating financing strategies to secure multiple sources of funding for new development, such as housing trust funds or tax increment financing.

**Embrace creativity to develop lovable, authentic places along the corridor:** Stakeholders should capitalize on the numerous strong assets that distinguish the College Avenue corridor. Food- and arts-focused programming could help create “third places” that appeal to families and nonfamilies alike for evening activities. To foster more engagement, equity, environmental sustainability, and economic development, shared civic assets—including the Razorback Greenway, the public library, Walker and Wilson parks, and the Yvonne Richardson Community Center—also should be embraced.

The experts also recommended a series of quick wins to jump-start redevelopment, including adding programming along the corridor, installing more east–west crosswalks, improving the timing of traffic lights to allow more time for street crossing, and adopting new policies and capturing development value in order to invest in increased housing affordability.

Moving forward, as an overarching priority, the experts recommended that key institutional stakeholders—including the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the Veterans Administration, the American Heart Association, the Washington County Public Health Department, and the city of Fayetteville transportation and planning departments—form a collaborative to collect and share health-focused data, engage community members in key decisions about the corridor (keeping health, equity, and inclusion at the forefront), and host a community conversation about what “density” really means and looks like.



## NEXT STEPS

Leveraging the momentum created during the early 2018 national study visit, College Avenue stakeholders are undertaking a number of activities aimed at creating a better corridor and a healthier region. ULI Northwest Arkansas and members of the local leadership group hosted a series of well-attended happy hours and corridor tours with the community to continue engaging stakeholders around implementation possibilities along the corridor. Several more concrete next steps are being taken to improve corridor conditions, including the following:

- » The city of Fayetteville hired a firm to develop a strategic plan for the portion of the Highway 71B corridor in Fayetteville, which will incorporate findings from the ULI Healthy Corridors project;
- » The city of Fayetteville, through a grant from the Walton Family Foundation, hired a landscape architecture firm to design a “Cultural Corridor” along the Razorback Greenway, connecting downtown Fayetteville to the University of Arkansas Arts District;
- » The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission hosted a three-part speaker series from late 2017 to early 2018 on regional transportation with bus rapid transit (BRT) experts from across the United States in order to evaluate the possibility of BRT along the corridor and gain stakeholder support;

- » The Fayetteville Visitors Bureau continued funding for public art along the College Avenue corridor and throughout downtown Fayetteville; and
- » Small businesses along College Avenue held a NoMa (North Street to Maple Avenue) party on October 13, 2018, celebrating small businesses and the sidewalk and street improvements that were completed in 2018.

In addition, ULI Northwest Arkansas continues to be a leader in the region and is exploring opportunities to fund a strategic plan for the district council that will have a strong focus on creating healthy communities. The strong stakeholder engagement that was evident throughout the Healthy Corridors project process in Fayetteville will be critical to maintain as the city, and the region, strive to make Highway 71B a healthy and safe corridor.

*National experts tour the Razorback Greenway, a regional shared-use trail that runs parallel to College Avenue.*  
(Reema Singh)



# GRAYS FERRY AVENUE • PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

## Capitalizing on Investment, Innovation, and Strong Communities to Equitably Revitalize an Urban Corridor

Grays Ferry Avenue, located just south of Center City Philadelphia, adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania, and a major transportation thoroughfare connecting to Interstate 76, is viewed by local stakeholders as both a prime area for redevelopment and an area that needs equitable improvement. ULI Philadelphia and local partners focused on the 1.25-mile segment of Grays Ferry Avenue between Washington Avenue and Woodland Avenue that bridges the Grays Ferry and south Philadelphia neighborhoods and crosses the Schuylkill River.

Shaped by its industrial past and by the dominance of vehicular transportation infrastructure, Grays Ferry Avenue is an urban corridor with challenges ranging from crumbling sidewalks, to sprawling commercial land uses, to contaminated land and poor air quality. Residents living in typical Philadelphia rowhouses show the highest



rates of environmentally determined public health concerns such as asthma, diabetes, and obesity. Their ability to advance is also hindered by low incomes and poor educational attainment and economic mobility.

*Grays Ferry Avenue hosts fast-moving vehicles traveling to Interstate 76 adjacent to scattered and unprotected bike lanes and narrow sidewalks.*  
(Sara Hammerschmidt)

Despite these challenges, the Grays Ferry corridor has numerous assets. With a strong local energy sector, employment rate, and anchor institutions such as the University of the Sciences, the Pennovation Center, and the University of Pennsylvania, the Grays Ferry and Kingsessing neighborhoods are seeing a lot of momentum. While the neighborhoods face development pressures as nearby areas experience increases in home prices, new residential construction, and an influx of new higher-income residents, longtime residents are invested and want to see the neighborhood protect and uplift those who have deep roots there, as well as welcome new neighbors.

New investment from the University of Pennsylvania, along with imminent commercial and residential development, brings a great deal of opportunity to a once-overlooked neighborhood, but thoughtful planning and policies are needed to ensure that current residents and stakeholders realize the benefits of neighborhood redevelopment.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- » When a large number of stakeholders have an interest in a street or a neighborhood, identify a champion or small group of champions to coordinate decision making and implementation processes.
- » If an area has a number of associated existing or ongoing plans, consider conducting a health impact assessment in order to collect new data and recommend modifications to the plans that improve health.

## LOCAL WORK FOR CHANGE

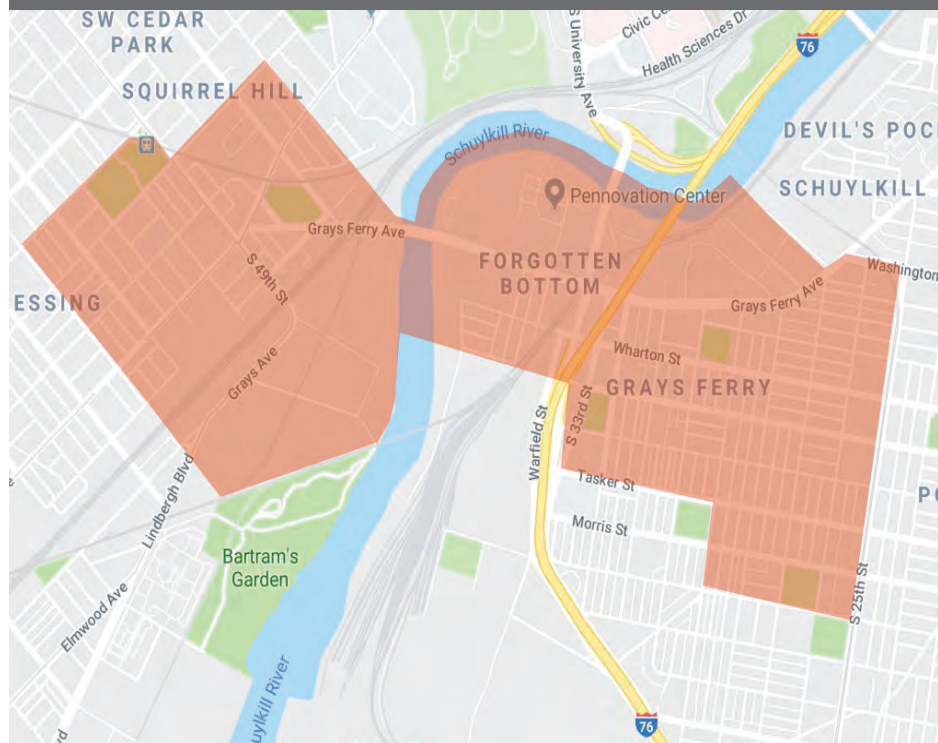
After forming in early summer 2017, the Grays Ferry Local Leadership Group convened a local stakeholder workshop in July 2017. The workshop included presentations, a tour of the corridor and study area, and small group discussions. Presentations provided an overview of planning efforts to date, and showcased current county- and neighborhood-level public health data. Community perspectives on neighborhood assets and needs were highlighted on the bus tour, where neighborhood residents who grew up in the area guided the tours. Small groups also discussed the assets and opportunities in the corridor area, as well as the health of the residents in the context of development, mobility, recreation, housing, and local businesses.

A diverse group of over 50 local stakeholders from 37 distinct organizations and community groups attended the workshop, including residents, landowners, and representatives from local community development corporations and from local, regional, and state agencies and nonprofit organizations. Following the workshop, the local leadership group met monthly to develop the key issues to be addressed by national experts during the Grays Ferry national study visit.

Issues that arose included the need to improve retail quality and business attraction, the physical configuration of the corridor, and strategies to alleviate the serious health conditions created by air-quality concerns (e.g., asthma). Stakeholders also agreed that assigning ownership of various pieces of implementation to specific local entities would be vital to accountability and progress. Over a four-month period, the local leadership group assessed all feedback amassed through its workshop and monthly meetings to formulate a set of prioritized study questions to guide next steps in the subsequent national study visit.

## QUICK FACTS

- » **Length of study section:** 1.25 miles
- » **Average number of lanes:** 5
- » **Average posted vehicle speed:** 30 mph
- » **Available transit options:** bus, trolley, and bike share
- » **Bike lanes:** yes, on Grays Ferry Avenue and Woodland Avenue; about 1 mile in total in the study area
- » **Sidewalks:** yes, in poor condition
- » **Household income:** median for Grays Ferry neighborhood, \$24,223; median for Southwest Schuylkill neighborhood, \$20,268
- » **Corridor area population:** 10,588 people
- » **Ethnicity:** greater than 70 percent African American in majority of neighborhood
- » **Safety and/or health issues:** childhood asthma and diabetes
- » **Land use:** industrial and residential



The Grays Ferry corridor study area (shaded) and surroundings.  
(Google Maps)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The national study visit was held in December 2017. Local stakeholders sought advice from national experts on the following:

- » How can Grays Ferry's community assets and institutions best contribute to supporting equitable development in the neighborhood in the context of social determinants of health?
- » What appropriate programs and strategies are available to attract businesses that serve unmet needs of the surrounding residents and improve retail quality to appeal to future tenants?
- » What aspects of the built environment need to be changed or improved in order for residents to access the means for a healthier lifestyle?
- » How can the corridor be reconfigured to balance multimodal safety and connectivity with auto-centric travel demands?
- » What are design and regulatory strategies to improve air quality in the area, mitigating impacts of older housing stock, industrial uses, and the interstate and major arterials?

Using information gathered from briefing materials, a corridor tour, and approximately 50 stakeholder interviews that included local residents, the group of visiting experts assessed the assets and challenges of Grays Ferry Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods. The study visit concluded with a public presentation of a set of recommendations that focused on infrastructure and land use changes, jobs and business attraction, mitigating health concerns stemming from air quality, and equitable economic development strategies.



Key recommendations included the following:

**Road infrastructure:** Improve on-street conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists by adding pedestrian priority buttons at certain crossings, widening sidewalks, adding lighting, adding bike-share and protected bike lanes, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connections across the river, and incorporating wayfinding and signage along the corridor and the Schuylkill River Trail. Improve existing bus transit by enhancing shelters and implementing free transfers.

**Green infrastructure:** Focus greening efforts in adjacent neighborhoods, including leveraging ongoing stormwater management programs to create neighborhood amenities, implementing strategic front-porch enhancements to

*Despite its proximity to strong anchor institutions, Grays Ferry is still characterized by vestiges of its industrial past, including vacant buildings and an uninviting pedestrian environment.*  
(Derrick Lanardo Woody)

*Stakeholders attend a resident-guided walking tour during the local workshop in July 2017 to experience the corridor as a pedestrian.*  
(Reema Singh)



encourage outdoor living and neighborhood cohesion, increasing the tree canopy within the neighborhood's interior, and focusing on programming, quality, and connectivity of four neighborhood parks.

**Land use:** Prioritize building affordable, infill housing on vacant land and on lots with vacant buildings, leveraging the Land Bank and Housing Trust Fund.

**Jobs and new businesses:** Provide a physical space for a small or entrepreneurial business development center; conduct retail studies in the Grays Ferry corridor area; and leverage local real estate expertise when looking at redevelopment opportunities.

**Equitable economic development:** Empower novice developers and entrepreneurs through training, access to capital, and identifying developers interested in purchasing properties and leasing to entrepreneurs; and create opportunities for targeted workforce development for health care workers, youth, and returning citizens.

**Improving health outcomes:** Create a “Grays Ferry Healthy Housing Coalition Pilot” to focus on indoor air quality in older homes; explore the possibility of relocating current toxic uses, including the waste transfer and Sunoco facilities; and empower residents to act on their own behalf regarding health concerns.

**Engaging stakeholders:** Many Philadelphia-area stakeholders have a vested interest in the study area, and the experts recommended two key ways to bring them together:

1. Use a health impact assessment (HIA) process to bring together stakeholders, including residents who could help collect data. Experts suggested using the HIA to help assess existing planning documents for the study area.



*The national team of experts tours neighborhoods adjacent to Grays Ferry Avenue to see key local assets, including Bartram's Garden along the Schuylkill River.*  
(Sara Hammerschmidt)

2. Form a long-range action and implementation committee to establish a bold, strategic, and results-driven assessment and redevelopment scheme that plans for growth over the next 20 to 35 years. This scheme should include land use changes, transportation, infrastructure improvements, accessibility, health impacts, and industrial use analysis, and be focused on jobs, businesses, and housing along Grays Ferry Avenue from Woodland to Washington.

## NEXT STEPS

The Grays Ferry corridor project involved a large number of community stakeholders, who contributed as sources of local information and as members of the local leadership group. A major next step for the Grays Ferry corridor is to identify the right champions from this stakeholder group to partner with other organizations and funders to prioritize and implement the recommendations from the national study visit.

Specific actions under consideration include completing a health impact assessment and implementing a project to demonstrate a healthier future along the Grays Ferry corridor, which may include a greening or temporary transportation intervention. In addition, partners at the University of Pennsylvania—a key leader and champion for this effort—will convene to continue research intended to further generate health-related outcomes in Grays Ferry and southwest Philadelphia as a whole.



## A Corridor at a Crossroads: A Multi-Jurisdictional Revitalization Effort

The Rice Street–Larpenteur Avenue Gateway corridor area is in need of investment that supports residents, which include large former refugee and immigrant populations. The corridor falls within the jurisdiction of three cities—St. Paul, Roseville, and Maplewood—as well as Ramsey County. ULI Minnesota and local partners, including key stakeholders from all three cities and the county, are working on a two-mile segment of Rice Street, extending from Maryland Avenue to County Road B. As it crosses Larpenteur Avenue, in the middle of the study segment, Rice Street forms the east–west border between the suburban cities of Maplewood and Roseville. Larpenteur Avenue serves as the northern border for St. Paul.

The urban form varies between St. Paul and the Maplewood/Roseville border, but the study segment generally epitomizes post–World War II development—vehicle-focused infrastructure, drive-through fast-food restaurants, strip commercial centers

with large parking lots, and gas stations. The corridor and adjacent neighborhoods have seen no significant investment in public infrastructure or private development in many decades. Local residents are worried about pedestrian safety and traffic speeds.

However, the area has a number of valuable assets, including a 250-plot community garden, a local sports complex, a lake with park land, and several public schools. The Rice-Larpenteur Gateway corridor, through the partnership of the three jurisdictions, has strong potential to become a safe, healthy, well-connected, and economically vibrant area for local residents.

### LOCAL WORK FOR CHANGE

In September 2017, a half-day workshop helped orient stakeholders from the three

*Incomplete sidewalk connections along Rice Street force pedestrians to forge their own paths to ensure safety.*

*(Sara Hammerschmidt)*

### LESSONS LEARNED

- » Collect and use corridor data to formulate health-related and community-supported goals and priorities.
- » Create a formalized collaborative agreement when dealing with a corridor that crosses multiple jurisdictions to help ensure that the jurisdictions are aligned on future plans and accountable to community members and to each other.





jurisdictions around a vision to improve health for those who live, work, and travel in the study area. The workshop included presentations from local and national experts about the corridor's current state as well as its potential. One presentation featured a local gateway corridor visioning plan conducted by consultant Perkins + Will, which included results from a healthy corridor audit. A walking tour concentrating on health-focused observations of the corridor was followed by small group discussions. Report-outs identified how existing conditions compare with those of a healthy corridor, as well as the assets and opportunities present in the area.

Priorities that emerged from the workshop, attended by about 35 stakeholders, included the need to align and capitalize on existing assets; strategies for pedestrian-focused street and land use improvements that better serve the neighborhood and make the area safer and more aesthetically pleasing; and a way to coordinate and manage the responsibilities for implementation when multiple jurisdictions are involved. Participants concluded that the current design of the corridor is the opposite of what is wanted for the future.

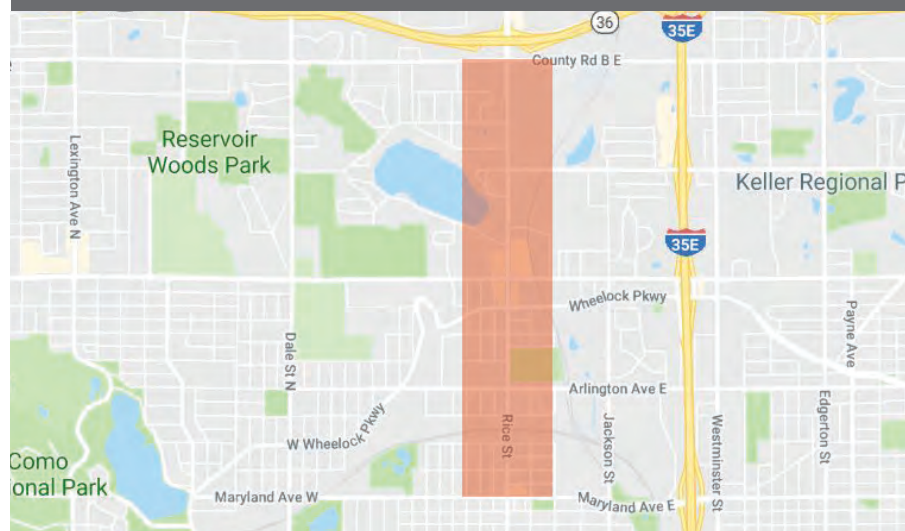
## RECOMMENDATIONS

The national study visit was held in November 2017. Local stakeholders sought advice from national experts on the following:

- » How can a system be created to harness the cultural assets and identity, as well as the grassroots efforts evident along the corridor?
- » What are the best methods to mitigate resident and business displacement while encouraging new development and investment?
- » What are national examples of short-term/temporary pedestrian improvements that can be implemented while the long-term, hard investments needed are being determined?

## QUICK FACTS

- » **Length of study section:** 2 miles
- » **Average number of lanes:** 3 to 6 lanes of traffic, varying from urban to suburban scale
- » **Average posted vehicle speed:** 35 to 45 mph; actual speeds range from 45 to 50 mph
- » **Transit options:** bus
- » **Bike lanes:** partial, most shared with traffic
- » **Sidewalks:** located on both sides of the street, with some gaps
- » **Household income:** \$35,689, average; 34 percent below the poverty level, 72 percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
- » **Corridor population:** about 17,600; 6,700 residential units on or adjacent to the corridor
- » **Ethnicity:** 65 percent nonwhite, 14 percent refugees
- » **Safety:** The areas along the corridor are perceived to be unsafe and unfriendly to pedestrians. With low ownership of cars in the area, walking and transit are critical to the daily needs of residents to get to work and shop for goods.
- » **Land use:** A mix of older housing and commercial strip businesses (including auto and boat dealers, restaurants, ethnic grocery stores, medical services, and drugstores). Publicly owned land uses include a county park, a water service facility, a school bus garage/parking, two schools, and a recreation center. The housing consists of single-family detached homes, duplexes, and multifamily residences.



*The Rice Street-Larpenteur Avenue Gateway corridor study area (shaded) and surroundings.*

(Google Maps)

- » What are best practices or innovative multi-jurisdictional collaboration methods and models to ensure that necessary improvements are implemented along the corridor and that community engagement is supported over the long term?
- » What innovative public or public/private partnership financing and strategies are needed to systematically implement and fund improvements?

**Key recommendations included the following:**

**Form an inter-jurisdictional collaborative:**

Create a new organization, the Rice and Larpenteur Gateway Collaborative (RLGC), to lead redevelopment and enhancement initiatives on behalf of the three partner cities and the county. The collaborative would include representatives from Roseville, Maplewood, and St. Paul; three Ramsey County commissioners; and a community representative. A dedicated staff person should be hired on contract to manage this collaborative, with funding contributed by all three cities and Ramsey County, with St. Paul serving initially as the fiscal agent for the RLGC.

Key tasks would include seeking philanthropic funding, building capacity among community members, building a partnership structure, and helping prioritize and carry out public infrastructure improvements to attract developers to the neighborhood. Within all tasks, health would be the leading priority, and the RLGC would work with the community to identify goals and indicators that indicate a healthy community in the areas of housing, employment, transit access, and access to healthy food.

**Embrace holistic community engagement:**

Meaningful and holistic community engagement is key to bringing together the diverse groups who live in this area and giving them a sense of agency and voice in delivering short- and



long-term improvements. Strategies such as storytelling and innovative arts projects can be used to include residents of different abilities, languages, cultures, and generations, and emphasizing health opportunities will help in prioritizing improvements.

**Conduct a community branding exercise:**

The lack of a name or sense of identity for the area referred to as the Rice-Larpenteur Gateway Corridor was perceived as a mental barrier to treating the intersection as part of a shared community as well as attracting outside investment by private developers. A community-based branding exercise was recommended to use local conversations to extract and identify the values and assets in the corridor and drive civic participation.

**Pursue and celebrate short-term wins:**

Stakeholders, most importantly the three jurisdictions, should focus short-term implementation on improvements that follow principles of universal design and that can be seen and felt by the community. These projects should be conceived and prioritized with community input. Some ideas to consider include curb extensions into a traffic lane, protected by bollards or posts; use of shipping containers for temporary food or retail outlets; wayfinding signs to identify walking and biking distances to neighborhood amenities; and road restriping and lane reductions to improve street safety.

*Wide traffic lanes and fast-moving traffic contribute to unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists along Rice Street.*

*(Reema Singh)*

**Plan for the future:** Though the data reviewed by the experts reveal no immediate threat of commercial or residential displacement resulting from redevelopment of the corridor, the entire national team acknowledged the importance of planning ahead to address that threat. Local entrepreneurship and ownership—for example, land banking, encouraging nonprofits/foundations to buy and own land, and encouraging high-leverage financing for businesses—are strategies for reducing commercial displacement.

To address the threat of residential displacement, the partner cities should take an inventory of the share of the housing stock owned by nonprofit and for-profit organizations and individual homeowners to determine appropriate strategies for avoiding displacement.

A thoughtful, phased approach, beginning with the formation of the RLGC, was proposed to help carry out these recommendations. Once the RLGC is created, the following steps should be taken:

- » Execute a memorandum of understanding for Rice-Larpenteur redevelopment activities that includes St. Paul, Maplewood, Roseville, and Ramsey County;
- » Create an action plan;
- » Identify lead community partners and advisory group members;
- » Select three low-cost and short-term priority projects that can be executed; and
- » Raise philanthropic and government support to fund the action plan and priority projects.

A message emphasized by the expert panel is to make health the primary element in all messaging and actions related to the corridor area: use data provided by the Healthy Corridor Audit Tool and the health impact assessment conducted by Perkins + Will to formulate



health-related goals for the communities and to help set priorities. Leading with health is a powerful way to bring stakeholders from all responsible jurisdictions together with community members to create a safe and vibrant neighborhood in the area around the Rice-Larpenteur Gateway.

*The corridor area offers plenty of opportunity for physical improvement, including several commercial strip centers that are separated from the street by large surface parking lots.*  
(Reema Singh)

## NEXT STEPS

The first step of the Rice-Larpenteur Gateway redevelopment—informed by both the Perkins + Will plan and the experts’ recommendations—is for the three cities to adopt that plan as part of their own comprehensive plans to ensure that future land uses are aligned with redevelopment recommendations. The RLGC then should be created to ensure that the cities and Ramsey County are unified in their future plans and accountable to each other and the community.

The RLGC will guide the creation of design standards and zoning ordinances for redevelopment in the corridor area. Eventually, road improvements along Rice Street in the Gateway area will ensure that the corridor is safer and more pedestrian friendly, starting with improvements south of Larpenteur.



# COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE HEALTH ALONG CORRIDORS

Though each demonstration corridor, both from Phase I and Phase II, has characteristics that are unique to its context, there are nonetheless common recommendations from the Healthy Corridors project's national study visits that can be applied to a broad cross-section of commercial corridors in need of reconfiguration and revitalization. The below-referenced best practices in creating healthier corridors and corridor areas are distilled from the expert recommendations from each of the eight national study visits that occurred between 2016 and 2018.

**Lead with health:** Maintain a focus on health throughout the corridor redevelopment process and seek out partners who can bring this perspective, including environmental justice organizers and advocates for communities of color, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. Communicate widely how the changes to the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods will improve the health of those who live, work, and travel in the area.

**Get organized:** Formalize partnerships, collaboratives, or committees with participation and leadership from cross-sector professionals, residents, and business owners.

**Authentically engage community members in the corridor revitalization process:** Consider creative and new strategies that specifically target under-represented communities. Look at employing strategies such as storytelling or model-making to engage people of all ages, abilities, and cultures.

**Change policy and planning:** Use tools and strategies such as mixed-use zoning, form-based codes, and other land use regulations; reduced vehicular speed limits; and affordable housing programs and policies to improve the safety of the road and the function of the surrounding area for all people.

*Implementing policy such as a form-based code can eliminate large parking lots and create safer and more attractive environments for pedestrians.*  
(Jack Byerly)





*Physical improvements to the corridor should prioritize safety and connectivity for all users, along and across the roadway.*  
(Reema Singh)

**Improve infrastructure and connectivity along and across the corridor:** Consider improvements to existing or the addition of new sidewalks, bike lanes, transit stops, and intersections, and design and locate them to prioritize the health and safety of all users and the connectivity to destinations.

**Emphasize equitable economic development:** Expand business development

opportunities for local businesses, provide grants and low-interest loans to small-business owners, and create opportunities for workforce development for corridor-area residents.

**Embrace arts and culture through placemaking and placekeeping:**

Use programming and other strategies to highlight arts and culture, create unique experiences, and foster equitable

community engagement and participation. Use these opportunities to create an authentic, community-driven identity for the corridor area. Placekeeping ensures that when placemaking strategies are used, the historic and cultural values of the place and the importance they have to the existing community residents are retained.

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*Envisioning Healthy Corridors: Lessons from Four Communities* is a supplemental report to the 2016 ULI publication *Building Healthy Corridors: Transforming Urban and Suburban Arterials into Thriving Places*, which explored ways to transform automobile-oriented commercial corridors to better support the health and safety of the people who live, work, and travel along them.

This supplemental report describes the experiences of and lessons learned from the four demonstration corridors that participated in the second phase of ULI's Healthy Corridors project and provides a set of common recommendations from both phases of the project that can be implemented to improve health along commercial corridors.



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