

# Complete Streets: Changing Policy

March 2015



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## What are Complete Streets?



Complete Streets are streets for everyone, no matter who they are or how they travel.



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# What are Complete Streets?

Safe   Comfortable   Convenient



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# What are Complete Streets?

Safe   Comfortable   Convenient



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## Complete Streets policies

Ensure that the entire right-of-way is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide safe access for all users



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## Complete Streets:

Is a high-level policy direction

Changes the everyday decision-making processes and systems

Represents an incremental approach

Has long-term results



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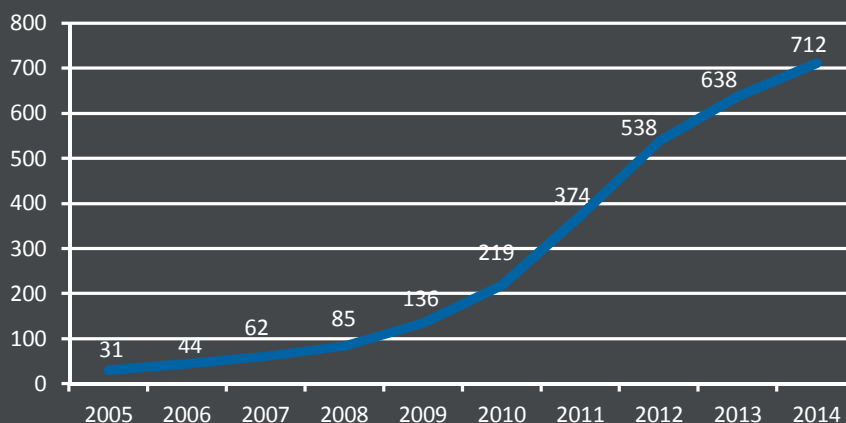
## Complete Streets is not:

- “ One %special+street project
- “ A design prescription
- “ A mandate for immediate retrofit
- “ A silver bullet; other issues must be addressed:
  - “ Land use (proximity, mixed-use)
  - “ Environmental concerns
  - “ Transportation Demand Management



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## Policy adoption accelerates



Smart Growth America (2014). *Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2014*



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## Policies adopted at all levels

By the end of 2014:

States : 30\*

MPOs : 58

Counties : 58

Cities : 564

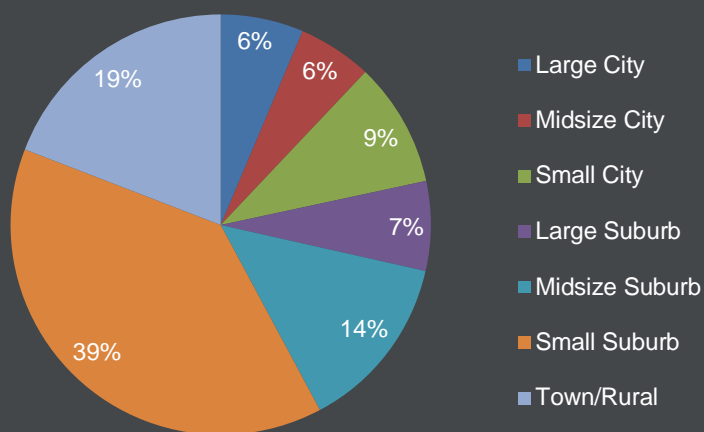
**Total : 712**

*\*Including Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia*



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## All types of communities

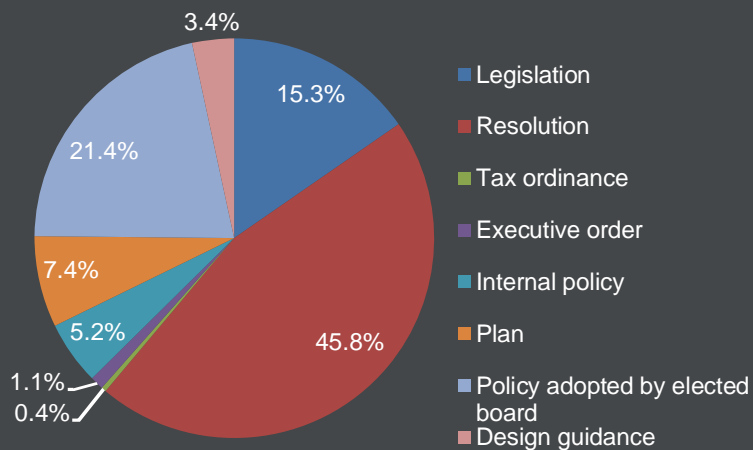


Smart Growth America (2014). *Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2014*



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## All types of policies



Smart Growth America (2014). *Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2014*



## Why adopt a policy?

To change practice, integrating the needs of all road users into *everyday* transportation planning and design practices.





## Why adopt a policy?

To gradually create a complete network of streets that serve all users.

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## Why adopt a policy?

To save money: in the long run, retrofit projects always cost more than getting it right the first time.

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# Why adopt a policy?

To provide innovative transportation planners with the political and community support for doing things differently.



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# Why adopt a policy?

To apply solutions across a community and address systematic inequities.



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## Why adopt a policy?

To create fast, low-cost, and high-impact changes in your community.



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## Goal: Successful Policies

1. Sets a vision.
2. Includes all users and all modes.
3. Applies to all phases of all applicable projects.
4. Specifies and limits exceptions, with management approval required.
5. Emphasizes connectivity.
6. Is understood by all agencies to cover all roads.
7. Uses the best and latest design standards and is flexible.
8. Complements the community's context.
9. Sets performance standards.
10. Includes implementation steps.



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# Goal: Successful Policies

The image displays three book covers side-by-side. The left cover is titled "Dangerous by Design 2014" and features a photograph of a street with a large pothole. The middle cover is titled "COMPLETE STREETS local policy workbook" and has a blue and white design. The right cover is titled "The Best Complete Streets Policies of 2014" and features a photograph of a wide, pedestrian-friendly street with people walking and a bicycle. All covers include the logos for Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition.

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National Complete Streets Coalition

Dangerous by Design 2014  
May 2014

COMPLETE STREETS  
local policy workbook

Smart Growth America  
National Complete Streets Coalition  
www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Smart Growth America  
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The Best Complete Streets Policies of 2014  
February 2015

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## Vision

What do you want from your streets? What will consistently rally support from the general public and elected officials?

The image shows a wide, paved street with a yellow curb on the left and a white curb on the right. The street is lined with mature trees and parked cars. The sky is clear and blue. The overall scene depicts a well-maintained, pedestrian-friendly urban environment.

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## All users & modes

A clearly stated directive to include the needs of all people, regardless of how they travel, into the everyday transportation decision-making process.

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## All projects & phases

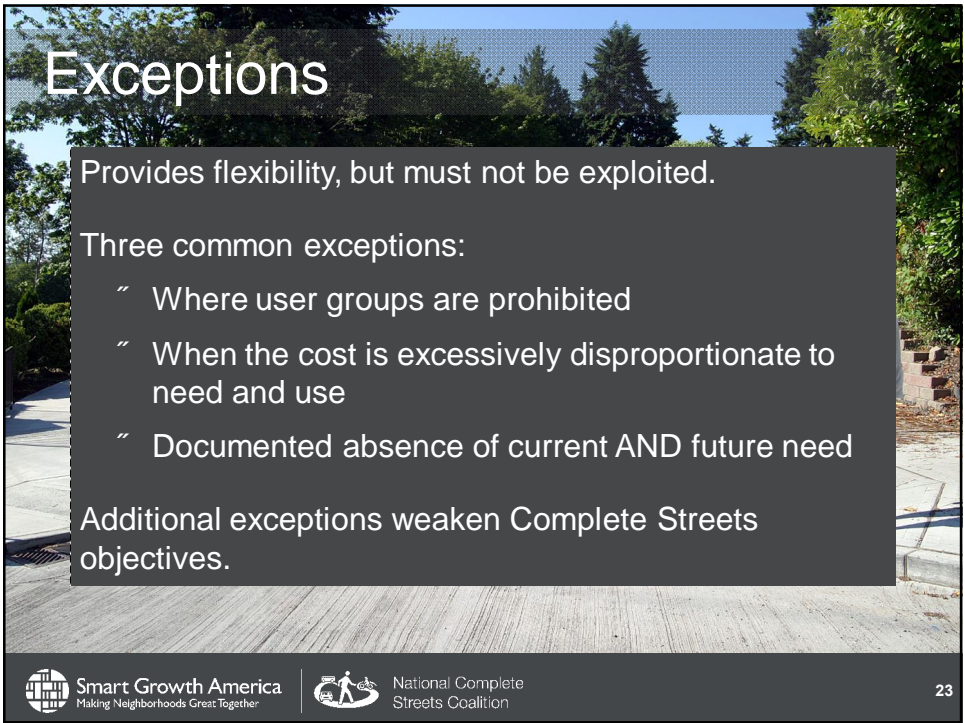
Integrate Complete Streets into planning, planning, design, construction of all projects:

- “ New construction
- “ Reconstruction
- “ Rehabilitation
- “ Repair
- “ Repaving
- “ Major maintenance
- “ Operations

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# Exceptions


Provides flexibility, but must not be exploited.

Three common exceptions:

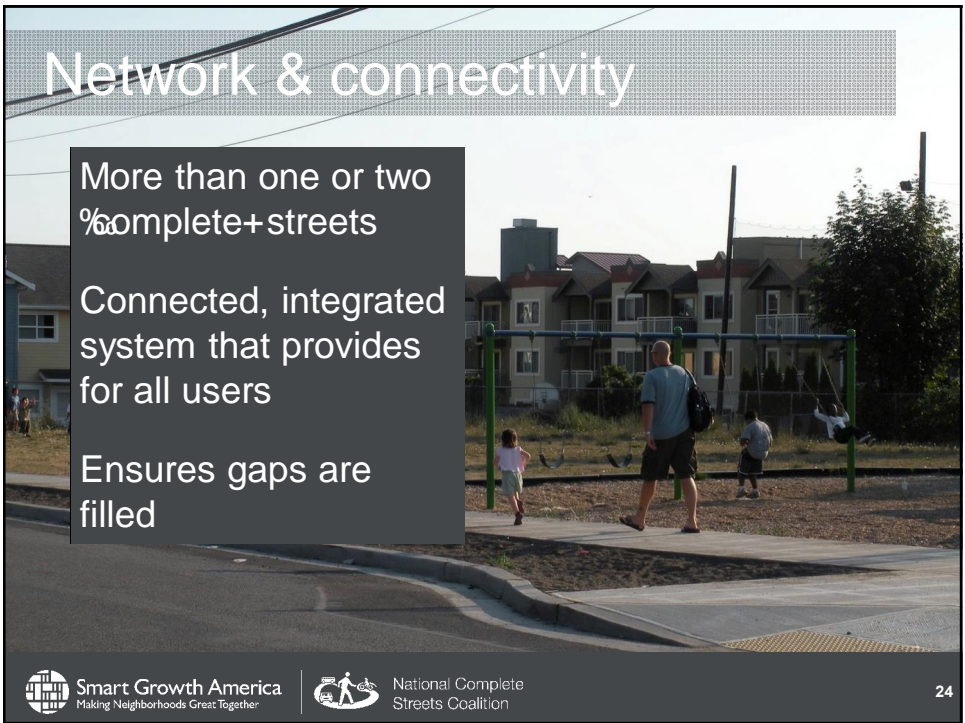
- “ Where user groups are prohibited
- “ When the cost is excessively disproportionate to need and use
- “ Documented absence of current AND future need

Additional exceptions weaken Complete Streets objectives.

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# Network & connectivity

More than one or two %complete+streets

Connected, integrated system that provides for all users

Ensures gaps are filled

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## Other agencies

Many agencies have a stake in the funding, planning, and development of our streets.

Create partnerships

Communication between jurisdictions and agencies at all levels

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## Design guidance & flexibility

Use the best and latest design standards available

Allow for flexible approaches to design

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## Context sensitivity

Design relates well to type of neighborhood and buildings

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## Performance measures

- Systematic collection and reporting of data
- Ensures compliance with policy goals
- Enables informed decision-making
- Short and long term

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## Tool: Policy Workshops

- “ Bring together stakeholders and decision makers
- “ Encourage open dialogue about challenges and solutions
- “ Outside expert instructors lend credibility, offer national expertise
- “ Develop appropriate policy for your community
- “ Understand common implementation steps, develop work plan



[www.completestreets.org/workshops](http://www.completestreets.org/workshops)

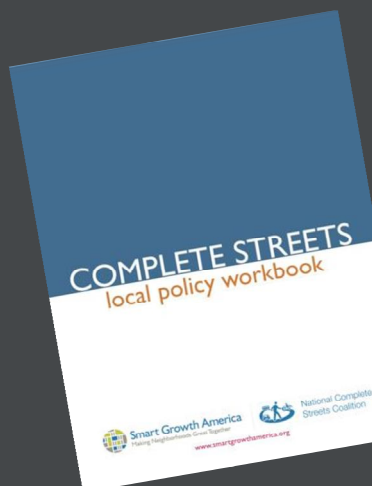


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## Tool: Policy Workbook

Detailed discussion of & questions to ask at each step in developing a policy

- “ Right type of policy
- “ Understanding current process
- “ All 10 elements of ideal policy
- “ Planning for implementation



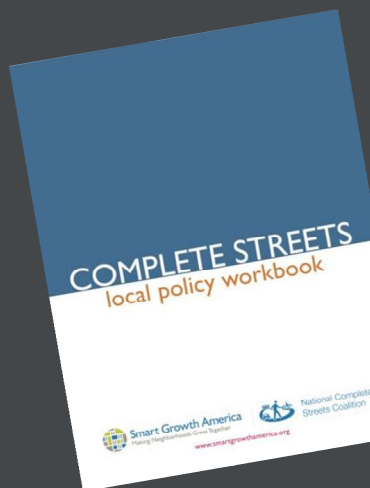
[www.completestreets.org/policyworkbook](http://www.completestreets.org/policyworkbook)



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## Tool: Policy Workbook

- “ Use in tandem with Policy Analysis
- “ Work with other stakeholders to answer questions, write language
- “ Draw from best practices, develop best language for your community



[www.completestreets.org/policyworkbook](http://www.completestreets.org/policyworkbook)



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## Tool: Policy Analysis



- “ Compare your policy to policies in similar communities
- “ Find highly-rated policies to serve as models
- “ Rate policy as you write it
- “ Use to inspire implementation activities



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## From Policy to Practice

Effective implementation means:

Organizing implementation activities

Restructuring procedures, policies, and programs

Rewriting or updating design guidance

Offering training opportunities to transportation staff, community leaders, and the general public



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## Results: Seattle, WA

2013 population: 652,405

Area: 84 square miles

In 2011 and 2012:

= **51** pedestrian countdown signals added

= **21** school zones with improved signage

= **22** blocks of sidewalks built

= **30** miles of bike lanes/sharrows installed

= **1,637** street trees planted

= **88,000** additional hours of transit service secured

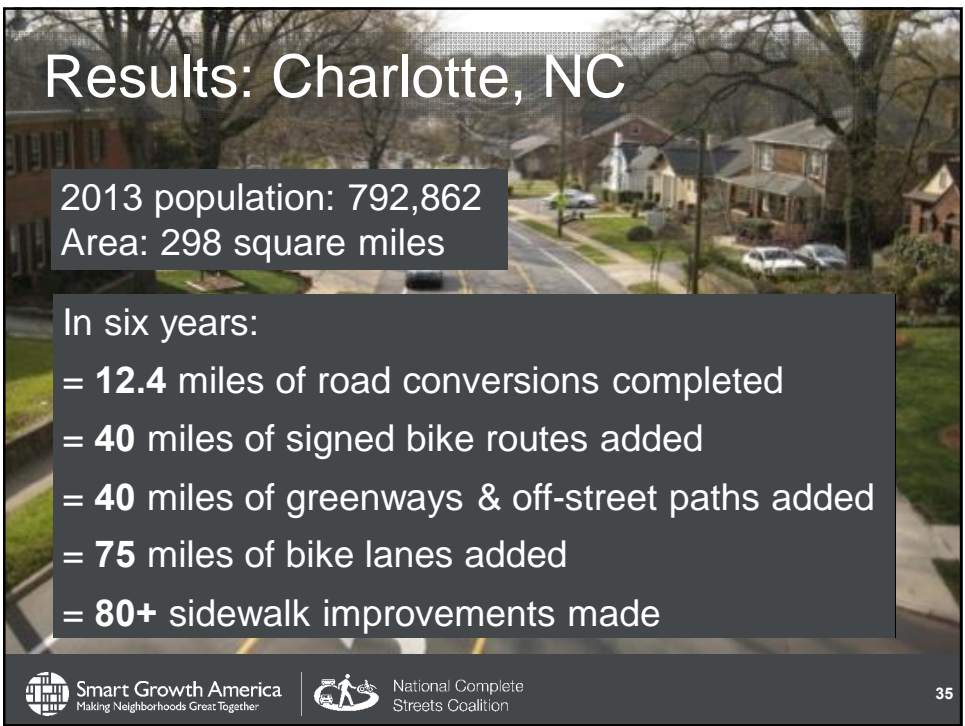


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## Results: Charlotte, NC

2013 population: 792,862  
Area: 298 square miles

In six years:

- = 12.4 miles of road conversions completed
- = 40 miles of signed bike routes added
- = 40 miles of greenways & off-street paths added
- = 75 miles of bike lanes added
- = 80+ sidewalk improvements made

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## Results: Minneapolis, MN

2013 population: 400,070  
Area: 54 square miles

Through 2010

- = 17.8 miles of bike routes with sharrows added
- = 36.3 miles of bike lanes added

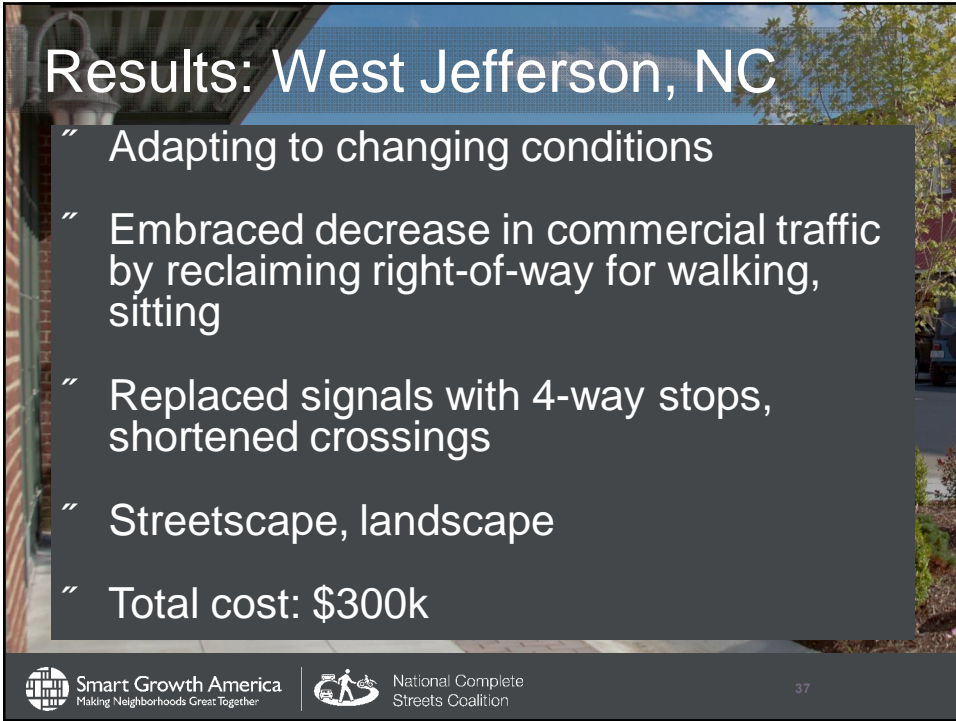
Between 2007 and 2014

- " Estimated daily bicycle traffic increased by 73%
- " Estimated daily foot traffic increased by 25%

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## Results: West Jefferson, NC

- “ Adapting to changing conditions
- “ Embraced decrease in commercial traffic by reclaiming right-of-way for walking, sitting
- “ Replaced signals with 4-way stops, shortened crossings
- “ Streetscape, landscape
- “ Total cost: \$300k

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## Results: West Jefferson, NC

- “ \$500K in new private investment
- “ 10 new businesses
- “ 55 new jobs
- “ Vacancies dropped from 33 to 5
- “ Tourism up 19%

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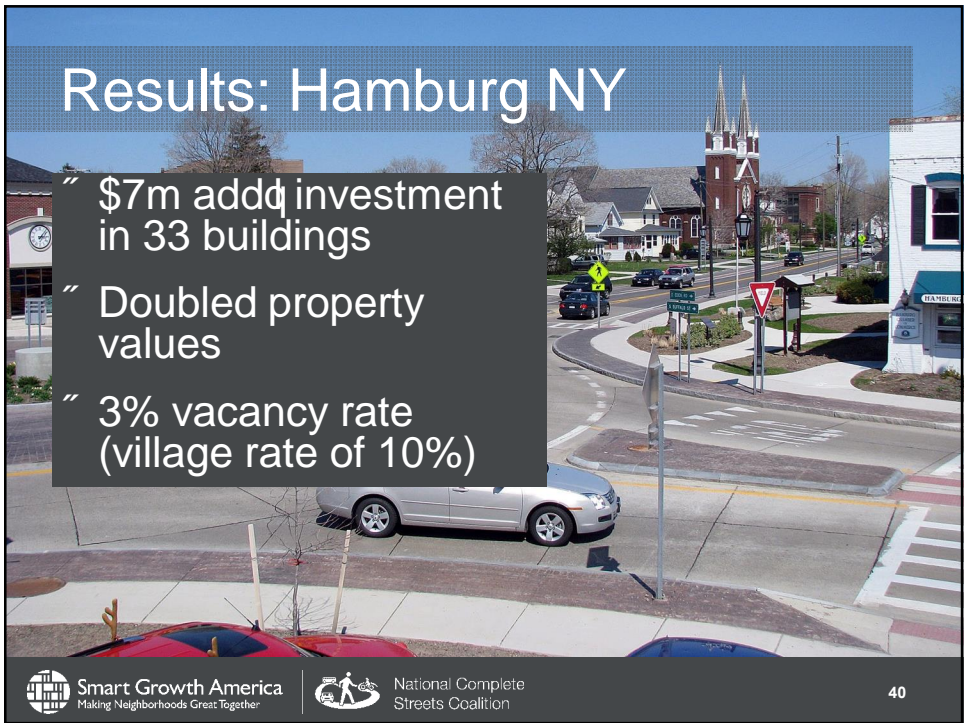
## Results: Hamburg NY

- “ Narrowed lanes
- “ Modern roundabouts instead of signals
- “ Crosswalks, curb extensions
- “ %Safety lanes+are de facto bike lanes
- “ Total cost: \$20m

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## Results: Hamburg NY

- “ \$7m addl investment in 33 buildings
- “ Doubled property values
- “ 3% vacancy rate (village rate of 10%)

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## Myrtle Beach, SC

- “ 5-lane road along main street → two auto lanes, two bicycle lanes, and a turn lane
- “ Also: sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, landscaped medians




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## Myrtle Beach, SC

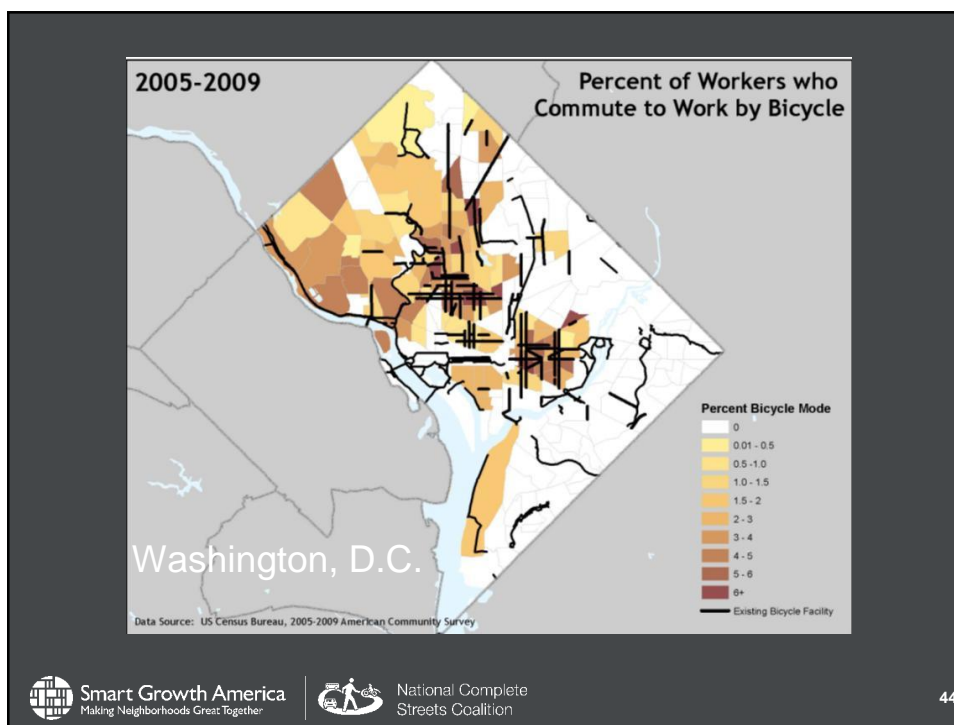
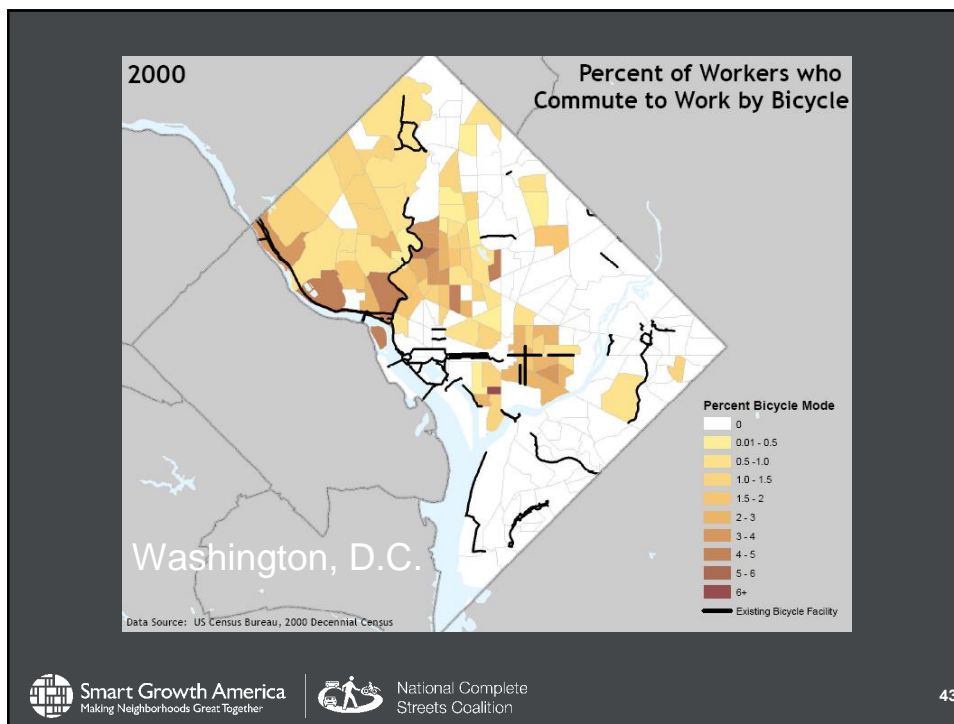
- “ Collision frequency dropped by 400%
- “ Collisions less severe
- “ Average daily traffic decreased from 15,000 to 13,000 vehicles
- “ Increase in people on bikes and using transit



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For more information

- “ Model policies & reports
  - “ *Best Complete Streets Policies*
  - “ *Local Policy Workbook*
- “ Implementation resources
- “ Latest news

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[www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)



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## National Complete Streets Coalition Steering Committee

AARP	Institute of Transportation Engineers
AECOM	National Association of City Transportation Officials
Alliance for Biking & Walking	National Association of Realtors
America Walks	Nelson\Nygaard
American Planning Association	Smart Growth America
APTA	SRAM
American Society of Landscape Architects	Stantec
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals	SvR Design Company



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Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide.

[www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

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