



MAYORS INSTITUTE ON PEDESTRIAN SAFETY 2024 REPORT



Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities



mayors
innovation
project

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AARP LIVABLE COMMUNITIES AND
SMART GROWTH AMERICA, THE MAYORS INNOVATION PROJECT
LAUNCHED THE MAYORS INSTITUTE ON PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
IN 2023 TO HELP MAYORS DEVELOP THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND
SKILLS TO CHAMPION SAFER STREETS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

WHY FOCUS ON PEDESTRIAN SAFETY?

In 2022, 7,522 people were struck and killed while walking on US roadways, a shocking 75 percent increase in such deaths since 2010. This correlates to approximately one pedestrian killed every seventy minutes on US roads.¹ Meanwhile, more than 65,000 pedestrians were injured in that same year, marking an 11 percent increase from the previous year.

The alarming increase in traffic violence has led to historical investments in attention and funding from the federal government—for example, through the 2022 National Roadway Safety Strategy and related Safe System Approach, and by the subsequent launch of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program, part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

While programs like SS4A have directed new resources to state and local governments, substantially more attention and investment is needed to address this national crisis, which does not impact all communities and individuals equally. Smart Growth America's 2024 *Dangerous by Design* found that lower income, non-white, and older adults are disproportionately impacted by traffic violence.

While investment from the state and federal government have been critical, much of this work happens at the local level: from working with partners to direct speed and roadway design choices, to prioritizing safety in new projects, to promoting a safety culture, mayors and other local officials are making decisions every day that influence the safety of their communities. This is often in spite of state and federal priorities that prioritize traffic flow and roadway expansion that make local streets more dangerous.

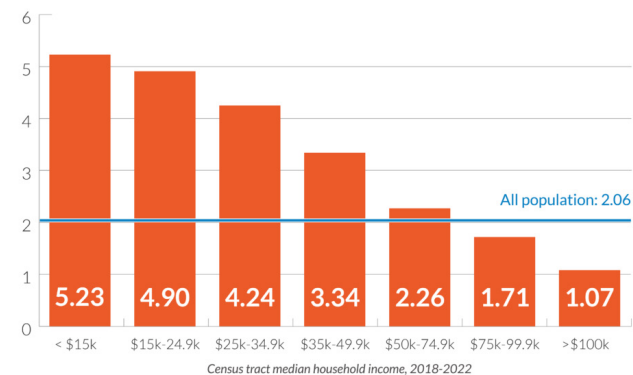
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Cover image courtesy of the city of Boise, ID.

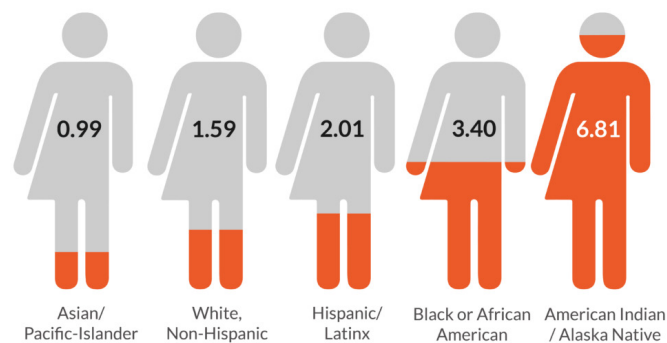
1. Traffic Safety Facts 2022 Data, U.S. Department of Transportation, <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813590.pdf>

Lower-income areas have far higher rates of pedestrian deaths

Pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people by census tract income

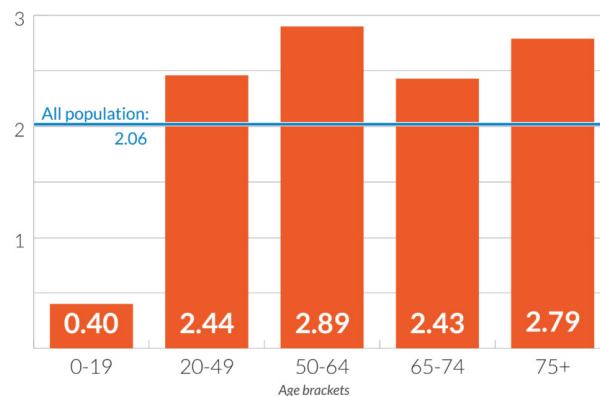


Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 by race & ethnicity (2018-2022)



Adults between age 50-64 are most likely to be killed

Pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 people by age



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, (2024). Fatality Analysis Reporting System.



Source: SGA's Dangerous by Design 2024

https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/aV_dUff

WHAT IS THE MAYORS INSTITUTE ON PEDESTRIAN SAFETY?

The Mayors Institute on Pedestrian Safety (MIPS) is a partnership between the Mayors Innovation Project, AARP Livable Communities, and Smart Growth America to help mayors champion communities that are safe, vibrant, and equitable for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Launched in 2023 as a national cohort opportunity for US mayors interested in prioritizing pedestrian safety, MIPS has to date supported nineteen mayors and their cities over two cohorts. MIPS provides participating mayors and their staff peer learning opportunities, technical assistance, and national recognition to support their work to create safer communities. In early 2025, MIPS will launch its third national cohort, seeking to support a new cohort of ten mayors.

This work is made possible thanks to the support of AARP Livable Communities, which supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities, and rural areas to be great places for people of all

THE AARP COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM HELPS COMMUNITIES BECOME GREAT PLACES TO LIVE FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES. THE 2025 APPLICATION PERIOD IS OPEN NOW THROUGH MARCH 5.



ages and life stages by providing safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life. AARP's most recent Home & Community Preferences survey, released in December 2024, found that while all adults place importance on community attributes like safety and accessibility, those over 50 were even more likely than their 18-49 year old peers to value:

- housing that is located near activities and key services;
- streets that are well-lit with well-marked crosswalks and are accessible, safe;
- easy access to affordable healthy food;
- sidewalks that are in good condition, safe for pedestrians, and clear.²

We know that streets and communities that are designed to be safer for vulnerable populations like children, older adults, and people with disabilities also offer safety benefits to all.

THE 2024 MIPS COHORT

After a competitive application process, ten mayors from around the country were selected to participate in the 2nd MIPS cohort in 2024. In its selection process, MIPS aims for rich diversity in city size, geography, and form of government.



-
- Mayor Matt Tuerk
Allentown, PA
 - Mayor Lauren McLean
Boise, ID
 - Mayor Sean Shultz
Borough of Carlisle, PA
 - Mayor Tim Kelly
Chattanooga, TN
 - Mayor John Vieau
Chicopee, MA
 - Mayor Yasmine-
Imani McMorris
Culver City, CA
 - Mayor Scott Conger
Jackson, TN
 - Mayor Quinton Lucas
Kansas City, MO
 - Mayor Dominick Pangallo
Salem, MA
 - Mayor Ryan Sorenson
Sheboygan, WI
-

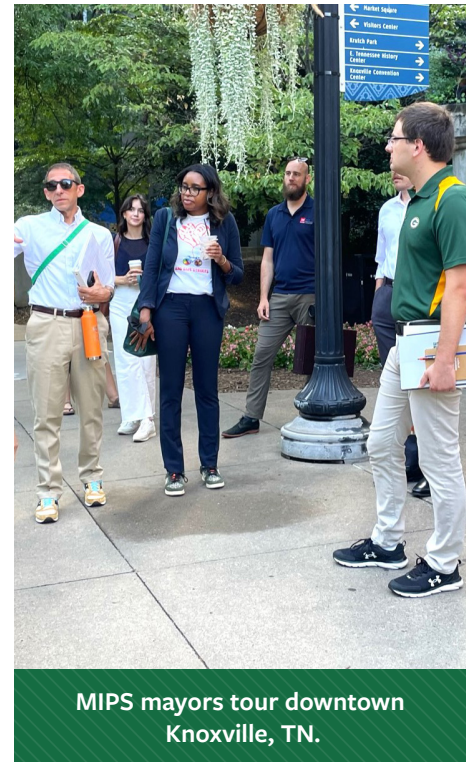
2. 2024 Home & Community Preferences Among Adults 18 and Older, AARP, <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/topics/livable-communities/housing/2024-home-community-preferences-report.doi.10.26419-2fres.00831.001.pdf>

IN 2024, OUR SUPPORT AND SESSIONS FOCUSED ON:

- **Deeply understanding the pedestrian safety crisis and its core solutions.** Anchored by SGA's 2024 *Dangerous by Design*, we discussed the causes of the rise in pedestrian deaths and the top strategies cities need to pursue to protect their communities.
- **Discussions and workshops on communications strategies** to support pedestrian safety, which covered best practices for message framing, public engagement, mobilizing your City Council, navigating issues with state and federal stakeholders, and broadly how mayors can work to create and advance a safety culture.
- **Funding sessions and technical assistance** that highlighted financial resources available to cities, best practices for successful applications, and resources for implementation. Sessions highlighted not just transportation-focused funding such as federal SS4A and the state-administered Transportation Alternatives Program, but also funding like EPA's Community Change Grants program that can support work at the intersection of equitable carbon reduction and equitable safety strategies.
- Discussions of specific **policies and planning efforts** to support pedestrian safety, such as zoning and land use reform and efforts to advance Vision Zero ordinances and action plans.
- The power of **demonstration projects** as catalysts for change. Demonstration projects offer a cheap and easy way to test street improvements, improve familiarity with new design, invite robust feedback, and measure impact.

In addition to virtual sessions, the cohort convened in **Knoxville, TN**, hosted by 2023 MIPS alumni Mayor Indya Kincannon.

The in-person time offered additional opportunities to share knowledge and best practices among cohort members, along with enriching opportunities to tour and experience pedestrian safety infrastructure in Knoxville. In doing so, we had the opportunity to hear from local experts and stakeholders about how they work together with the City to improve safety culture in Knoxville.



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Whether in person or online, each of our sessions were designed to highlight the knowledge and strengths of MIPS partners, alumni, and cohort members, offering opportunities for each to share their challenges and successes — creating peer learning opportunities that lead to action and implementation.

We are grateful to all the guests and speakers who joined us to share their experiences and expertise with participating mayors and their teams. Featured speakers in 2024 included:

- Former Seattle, WA Mayor and America Walks Executive Director **Mike McGinn**, who joined us to share strategies for building political will and a team that is open to innovation.
- 2023 MIPS alumni and Former Emeryville, CA Mayor **John Bauters**, who joined us to discuss strategies for connecting with constituents and prioritizing safety as the number one job of elected officials.
- Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy **Robin Hutcheson**, who helped to develop the National Roadway Safety Strategy and key components of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Robin joined us in Knoxville to support mayors in strategizing how to prioritize safety during times of challenge and setbacks.
- Former City Council President of Minneapolis, MN and multidisciplinary planner **Lisa Bender** of Alta Planning & Design joined us to talk about the communications, engagement, and leadership strategies that supported Minneapolis's historical zoning changes over the past decade.



Mayor Sorenson with residents at Ride with Ryan Bike Tour.



Beth Osborne of Smart Growth America gives a presentation on best practices for street safety in Knoxville, TN.

LIFTING UP COHORT SUCCESS

We believe that peer learning and the sharing of best practices is one of the best ways to spur innovation, especially when local leaders are allowed to discuss these issues candidly.

Our 2024 MIPS participants offered no shortage of great ideas and examples of prioritizing safer streets, including:

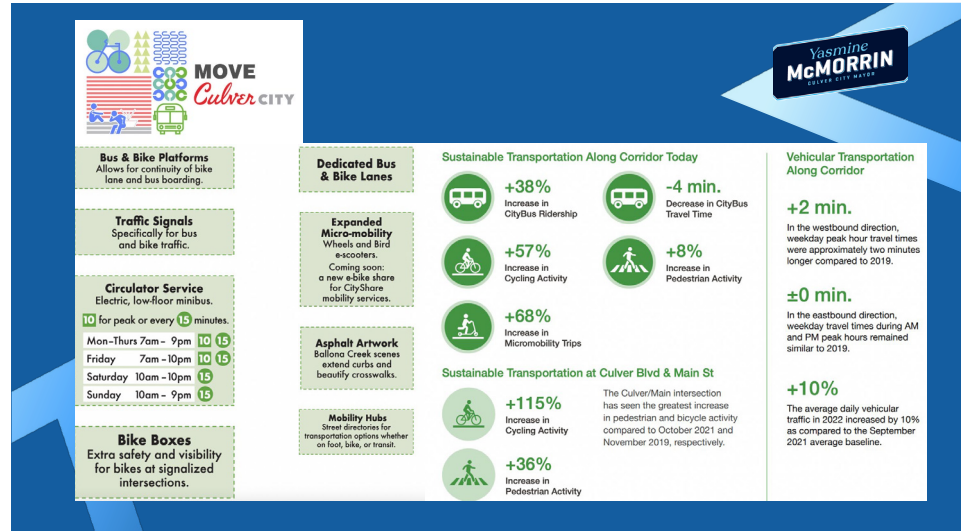
- **Allentown, PA:** Despite having implemented a lot of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and policies, Allentown struggles with a culture that doesn't fully support pedestrian and bike safety. Mayor Matt Tuerk has worked extensively to "walk the walk" and get people on board, for example by focusing on the impact to youth and by working across departments to make sure each of them understands how their work contributes to the safety of individuals and communities in Allentown.
- **Boise, ID:** Mayor Lauren McLean and her team recently formed a joint Task Force with the Police Department and staff from the City and Highway District that reviews each crash and makes recommendations on how fatalities can be prevented. Mayor McLean also stressed the importance of robust community engagement and meeting people where they're at, a key component of the City's historic zoning reform effort in 2023.
- **Carlisle, PA:** Mayor Sean Shultz shared information on the Borough's Vision Zero resolution and use of Transportation Alternative Set Aside funding to phase in multi use paths to get pedestrians on safer and separated parallel paths from traffic. Mayor Shultz emphasized the importance of having a strong strategic plan, having been through several iterations of code reform in support of safer streets and more dense development.
- **Chattanooga, TN:** Mayor Tim Kelly is excited to be investing heavily in pedestrian safety with the support of the public and from multiple federal grants that will improve crossings and connectivity. The City debuted a new Safer Streets website in 2024 to inform people about the city's pedestrian safety work, share crash data, and engage with city officials.

"Having community meetings [and] discussions in a more casual form in parks, at grocery stores, near schools, or even in senior facilities and other places within your city [allows us] to have conversations about how people get around, what people need, what they want, and then work with the partners in our community to make that happen"

— MAYOR LAUREN MCLEAN OF
BOISE, IDAHO

- **Chicopee, MA:** Mayor John Vieau discussed Chicopee's efforts to improve street safety on former state roads, which have accounted for a number of pedestrian fatalities. They've secured a SS4A grant and implemented a flashing beacon that uses red and blue lights (mimicking police) that's been successful in getting drivers' attention. Additionally, the City implemented road diets, speed tables, and a "pace car" that drives around school zones in the mornings and afternoons to make people aware of their speeds and slow them down.

- **Culver City, CA:** Mayor Yasmine-Imani McMorris introduced the cohort to Move Culver City, a dynamic plan to support local businesses, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and experiment with complete streets. The main goal of this project was to change the design of a busy street to prioritize people over cars. From its initial investments the City saw increased bus ridership, cycling activity, pedestrian activity, expanded micro-mobility, and a decrease in bus travel times.



- **Jackson, TN:** Mayor Scott Conger's administration is focused on incremental infrastructure improvements and demonstration projects (incorporating art and paint), aiming to build public support for innovative street design. The City is embarking on a project to enhance safety along a 1.2 mile corridor that adds sidewalks and bike lanes with improved connectivity.
- **Kansas City, MO:** Kansas City has led the country in adopting equitable transportation infrastructure, debuting zero fare transit and other efforts to make non-car transportation safe, easy, and affordable. The City has 300 Vision Zero projects completed or underway, along with more than thirty miles of protected lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Despite these efforts, traffic deaths are on the rise in Kansas City, prompting Mayor Quinton Lucas to dedicate \$4m in new funding to its Vision Zero initiative in 2024.

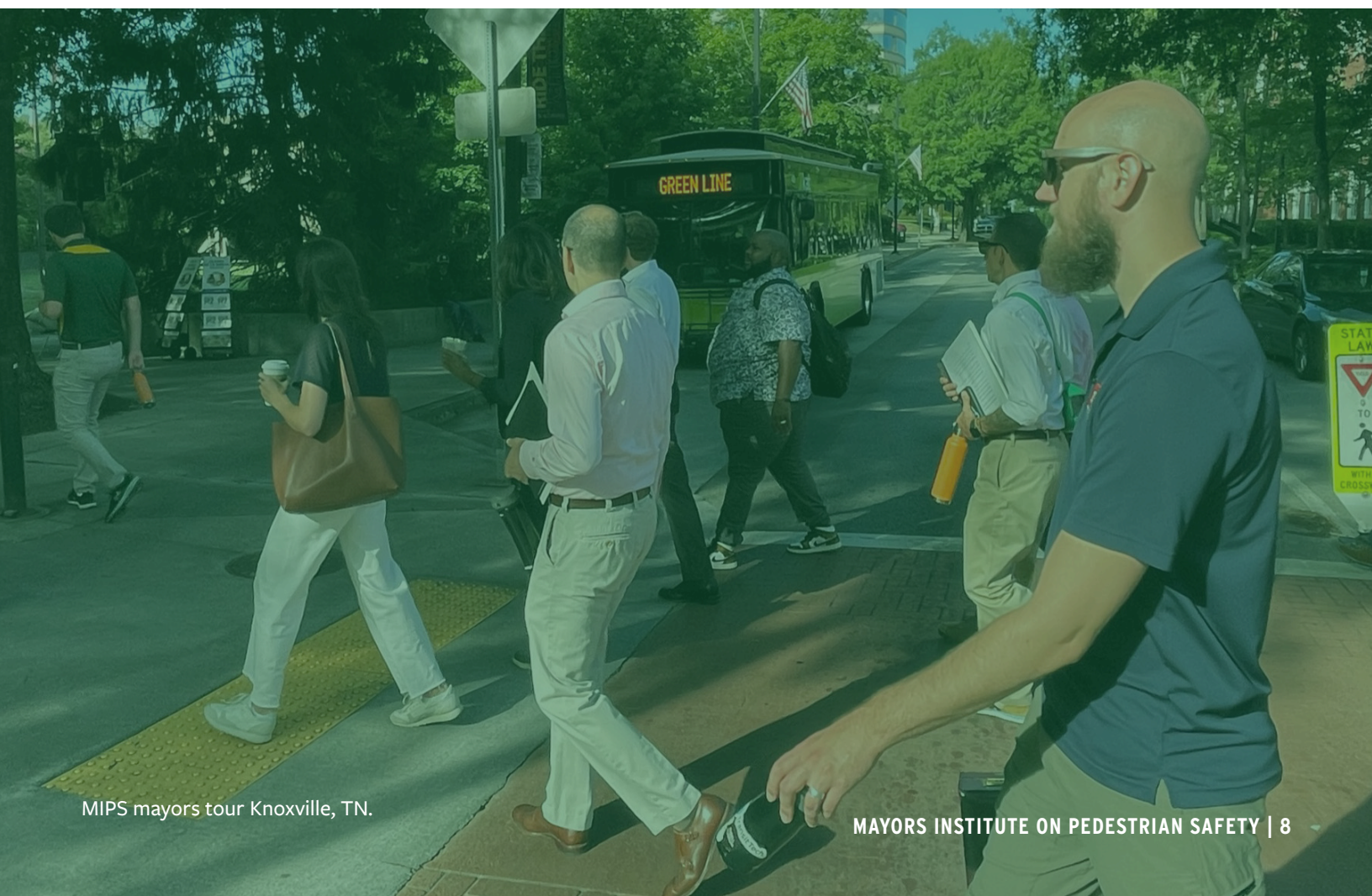
"We want to make sure no matter how you get around, you can do so safely."

— MAYOR YASMINE-IMANI
MCMORRIS OF CULVER CITY,
CALIFORNIA

- **Salem, MA:** Mayor Dominick Pangallo shared information about the City's innovative Traffic Calming Priority Tool, developed by city transportation department staff, that helps take the politics out of decision making and improves equity in infrastructure distribution by prioritizing areas of high use or high prevalence of vulnerable populations along with crash, speed, and lane width data. Once priority is determined, the City installs traffic safety measures on streets that need them most. Pangallo emphasized the importance of creating inclusive processes and ample opportunities for vulnerable populations to engage in the planning process.
- **Sheboygan, WI:** Mayor Ryan Sorenson emphasized the importance of economic and health benefits that come from pedestrian safety projects, as the city has worked to expand safe biking and walking options. In 2024, Sheboygan was awarded a SS4A grant to continue efforts to develop a Complete Streets policy, including a Vision Zero ordinance. The City is also looking at ways to improve connectivity, walkability, and economic development in and around its marina.

"Whether it's a road safety or a development project... [it's important] that you're talking to that vulnerable population."

— MAYOR DOMINICK PANGALLO
OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS



NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF MIPS PARTICIPANTS

MIPS cohort members and alumni are being recognized and rewarded for their commitment to this work. In 2024, nine current and former MIPS communities were awarded Safe Roads and Streets for All funding and three (Allentown, PA; Boise, ID; and Madison, WI) were included among the top 10 safest cities for pedestrians in Smart Growth America's *Dangerous by Design 2024* report. Madison, WI was recently recognized as a national leader in Safe Systems Approach in the 2024 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety annual National Traffic Safety Report.

**READY TO GET STARTED?
APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2025 MAYORS
INSTITUTE ON PEDESTRIAN SAFETY OPEN
JAN. 16 AND APPLICATIONS ARE DUE
FEBRUARY 28.**



FEEDBACK ON THE VALUE OF OUR COHORT

Participating mayors shared that the MIPS cohort experience was helpful in affirming their commitment to street safety, gaining exposure for their work, and learning new ideas from peers and national experts:

“It’s always great to network and learn from other mayors... learning those ideas from this institute and how we’re directly applying it to our complete streets strategy is so successful right now in making our project and programs so much stronger back at home.”

- MAYOR RYAN SORENSON, SHEBOYGAN, WI

“There is a lot of conventional thinking in this space that would tell you that there’s certain things that can’t be done or shouldn’t be done. Seeing other cities using them and using them successfully to save lives and increase economic activity and walkability... is extremely encouraging and important.”

- MAYOR TIM KELLY, CHATTANOOGA, TN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- ★ **Kim Chesser**, State Agency Advocacy Specialist, Rails to Trails Network
- ★ **Steve Davis**, Assistant VP of Transportation Strategy, Smart Growth America
- ★ **Cody Gentry**, Vision Zero Coordinator, City of Knoxville, TN
- ★ **Hayley Howard**, Office of Neighborhood Empowerment, City of Knoxville, TN
- ★ **Robin Hutcheson**, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy and FMCSA Administrator, USDOT
- ★ **Indya Kincannon**, Mayor, City of Knoxville, TN
- ★ **Ron Littlefield**, Former Mayor, Chattanooga, AARP-TN
- ★ **Jon Livengood**, Alternative Transportation Coordinator, City of Knoxville, TN
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- ★ **Mandla Moyo**, Senior Advisor, AARP Livable Communities
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- ★ **Heidi Simon**, Director of Thriving Communities, Smart Growth America
- ★ **Tocarra Nicole Thomas**, Director of Land Use & Development, Smart Growth America
- ★ **Mike Watson**, Director, AARP Livable Communities

ABOUT US

The Mayors Innovation Project is a national learning network for mayors committed to shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and efficient democratic government. We offer high-quality content that emphasizes innovative, actionable solutions and prioritizes peer exchange.

Learn more at mayorsinnovation.org



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