

Private Sector Associates of
The United States Conference of Mayors

United States Conference of Mayors
Business Council 2025 Best Practices Report

Mayors and Businesses Driving Economic Growth

2025



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The United States Conference of Mayors is the official non-partisan organization of cities with each city represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.



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Foreword

The United States Conference of Mayors is proud of the members of the Mayors Business Council and the work they have accomplished with cities to improve the quality of life in America's cities. Working together, our cities have become more livable and more competitive, and the economy is growing stronger every day.

The United States Conference of Mayors Business Council Best Practice Report: Mayors and Businesses Driving Economic Growth showcases outstanding and innovative public/private partnerships submitted by the Mayors Business Council to inspire other cities and companies to work together in addressing the economic challenges facing cities and our nation.

Mayors and business leaders agree that creative public/private partnerships are a major force in shaping cities of the 21st century and experience has shown when businesses and local governments work together, our cities benefit and our nation is stronger.

The Mayors Business Council has been an integral part of the structure and activities of The United States Conference of Mayors for almost 30 years. Central to the mission of our Business Council is the goal of both improving the business environment in cities and sharing the successful public/private partnerships that take many forms with benefits ranging from economic development and environmental improvements to better schools, a more educated workforce, and connected cities through technology.

The Conference looks forward to strengthening its relationship with the business community by nurturing and celebrating the new and creative partnerships between cities and businesses.

Tom Cochran

CEO and Executive Director

The United States Conference of Mayors

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AECOM: Reconnecting Detroit: The I-75 Cap Project

Project Description: The I-75 Cap is a major public-private initiative led by the Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the City of Detroit. The project reimagines a recessed stretch of Interstate 75 as a new civic commons—restoring community connectivity lost in the mid-20th century. The concept developed with support from AECOM and other partners envisions three separate platforms that will cap the freeway, linking Downtown Detroit and the neighborhoods to the north. The site will include pedestrian paths, green space, public plazas, and infrastructure to enhance mobility, sustainability, and cultural engagement in central Detroit.

Challenge: The construction of I-75 in the 1950s severed key neighborhoods in Detroit's core and diminished community cohesion. The area remains physically divided, restricting movement between vibrant districts and limiting neighborhood growth. This project addresses the challenge of restoring connectivity and improving public space in a highly tracked corridor. The goal is to reintegrate these neighborhoods and support a more united downtown environment, addressing longstanding urban development issues with forward-thinking infrastructure.

Impact: The I-75 Cap Project will transform a physical barrier into a bridge between communities. By reconnecting major districts, the project enhances walkability, promotes local business activity, improves urban livability, and creates new public gathering spaces. Green infrastructure will manage stormwater and introduce environmental benefits. This revitalized corridor will attract visitors and investment while strengthening the social and cultural fabric of the city—serving as a national model for freeway capping and corridor revitalization.



Cap design creates a student-focused public space and a hub with pop-ups and retail.



The Cap concept identifies three caps: each has a unique identity and is strategically placed.

How-to: AECOM brought expertise from national freeway capping projects to assist the City of Detroit, MDOT, and DDP with project development. The process began with feasibility and technical assessments, followed by concept design rooted in community vision and mobility needs. Three distinct cap zones—East, Central, and West—were identified for their potential to enhance district connections and public life.

Design workshops, site studies, and stakeholder meetings informed a plan that balances historical context with future-focused infrastructure. The project includes multimodal access, public amenities, and resilient infrastructure. Partnerships across public agencies, philanthropic funders, and local organizations were key to advancing design and funding strategies.

Implementation planning prioritized operational sustainability, safety, and flexibility for year-round use. This collaborative approach ensures the cap will deliver long-term value to residents and visitors while reactivating underutilized space in Detroit's core.

General Tips: Freeway capping projects succeed when cities align engineering with placemaking, ensure strong stakeholder engagement and integrate design into broader urban goals. Emphasize mobility, economic activation, and long-term operations from the outset. Partnering across sectors—including civic, philanthropic, and private—helps accelerate progress and build trust. The I-75 Cap Project demonstrates that infrastructure can reconnect communities while supporting modern city needs.

Budget: Visioning Study: \$600k; Capital Budget: \$250-\$300 million

Funding Sources: Private funding, Federal grants, State grants

Additional Investment: Yes. Philanthropic funding and business contributions enhanced planning, design, and programming elements.

Tags: Innovation, Environment impact, Impact on city economy, Jobs created, Increased tourism, Business benefits, Community Connectivity, Public Space Enhancement

Contact:

James Fidler
Downtown Detroit Partnership
james.fidler@detroitdetroit.org

Mike Kirk
Sr. VP AECOM
mike.kirk@aecom.com

American Forests: Trees as Infrastructure: Growing Equity, Public Health, and Resilience to a Changing Climate

Project Description: American Forests supports Mayors across the country in cities such as Allentown, PA; Boise, ID; and Phoenix, AZ by leading public-private partnerships that transform urban forestry into a tool for climate resilience, social equity, and economic opportunity. We help cities close tree canopy gaps in historically underinvested neighborhoods—improving health, reducing heat, and creating green jobs. Through public-private partnerships with Mayors, we deploy a comprehensive approach to helping communities at both the local and national levels adopt and implement smart tree planting and maintenance practices, while improving the wellbeing of all urban residents.

Our Tree Equity program focuses five areas: (1) Helping municipal leaders advocate for and commit to equitable tree cover as an essential part of their cities' infrastructure; (2) delivering science-based forestry knowledge and guidance to plant and maintain their trees canopies, (3) helping community leaders unlock public and private funding for urban forestry, (4) developing local urban forestry labor forces through training and work experience, and (5) building national partnerships with allied organizations.

Challenge: As the impacts of extreme weather events take hold of U.S. cities, trees are lifesaving infrastructure that can regulate temperatures and minimize flooding. Yet not every community has equal access to healthy urban forests. According to American Forests' renowned Tree Equity Score, which maps the tree canopy of 2,600 urban areas in the country, disinvested communities tend to have 25-30% less tree cover and can be 6-13°F hotter than the national average.

In Allentown, PA, Mayor Matt Tuerk and American Forests are addressing hazardous trees in the public right of way by conducting a tree inventory and developing an urban forest management plan to guide the pruning, removal, and replanting of 300 new trees. "Poor air quality has been a major public health challenge, contributing to our status as the number one asthma capital of America and the city with the highest number of asthma-related emergency department visits," said Mayor Tuerk. "Trees are responsible for improving air and water quality, protecting residents from deadly heat and severe weather, increasing green space that boosts property values, and creating local economic opportunities."

Impact: "Boise is building a resilient city full of opportunity and looking to lower utility costs and protect residents' unparalleled access to outdoor space and recreation. Urban forestry funding is invested into planting trees in areas of high urban heat and low tree canopy," said Mayor Lauren McLean. "There have been incredible outcomes in the community as a result of these funds. Boise's tree canopy provides much-needed shade, which naturally cools homes during our hot summers, saving residents and businesses money — all while expanding beyond Boise to revitalize the regional economy."

Our vision around creating greener, healthier U.S. cities through trees is more important than ever. We are committed to enabling as many cities as possible to advance Tree Equity by utilizing our tools, resources, and technical and financial support to create lasting change. By developing best-in-class guidance and deploying our tree expertise via convening, coaching, and consulting to city leaders — cities are conducting assessments to understand where trees are needed most, making data-driven decisions, building urban forestry workforces, and more.



Mayor Kate Gallego (photo credit: City of Phoenix, AZ)

How-to: To date, we have supported 200+ cities in taking action mayors to make a data-driven commitment using our Pathway to Tree Equity.

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego was the first mayor to commit her city to achieving Tree Equity and has developed a Shade Phoenix Plan to plant and maintain 27,000 trees over the next five years.

"As Phoenix continues to experience rising summer temperatures and more frequent extreme heat events, it is more important than ever to expand shade coverage from both trees and built structures," said Mayor Gallego. "We know from lived experience what a difference shade makes in our daily lives, which is why I'm excited to bring forward our new plan to cool our city and keep Phoenix residents more comfortable. We will plant thousands of trees intentionally in areas of our city where they're critically needed, and of course, where they can thrive long-term."

American Forests works with mayors to develop a data-driven Tree Equity goal, creates the communication materials needed for a proclamation, and works with local leaders to help make their community a leader in the Tree Equity movement.

We can provide initial consultation for city staff and partners to assess urban forestry programs and develop a plan to initiate or strengthen approaches to achieving Tree Equity.

General Tips: The Shade Phoenix Plan has a total cost of \$60 million over five years. Additionally, partners across the country have received subawards from American Forests ranging from \$50-75K for planting events in communities most in need.

The industry standard ROI of investing in healthy urban trees is 225%. For every \$1.00 invested, there are \$2.25 in benefits — ranging from energy savings, air quality improvement, stormwater runoff prevention, improved public health, and more. Although the upfront costs of planting and maintaining trees is high, the long-term benefits and services provided by trees are far worth the initial investment.

Budget: Project cost varies city by city, depending on a variety of factors including project scope, population, and area of focus along the Pathway to Tree Equity.

Funding Sources: Private funding, Foundations, Federal grants, State grants, General purpose city funds, Corporate Partners

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Environment impact, Jobs created, Increased tourism

Contact:

Allentown, PA
Veronika Vostinak
Sustainability Coordinator
Veronika.Vostinak@allentownpa.gov

Phoenix, AZ
Lora Martens
Urban Tree Program Manager
lora.martens@phoenix.gov

Alana Tucker
Senior Director, Strategy and Partnerships
atucker@americanforests.org
202-737-1944

AtkinsRéalis USA Inc.: City of Clearwater's Vulnerability Assessment with City Simulator

Project Description: Clearwater, located on a peninsula along Florida's west coast between the Gulf and Tampa Bay, is home to a burgeoning economy driven by its impressive natural beauty, beaches, and waterway access. To improve the City's preparation for future extreme weather events, a vulnerability assessment, powered by the AtkinsRéalis City Simulator tool, was conducted to create a digital twin and model the potential impacts of flooding and extreme heat on the community over the next 80 years. The planning-level tool empowered the City to stress test assets and infrastructure and then simulate mitigation scenarios to evaluate effectiveness and return on investment. From the City's perspective, the project was one of the first steps in developing a citywide approach to sustainability and resilience. Clearwater plans to use the results of this assessment to secure funding to form and implement mitigation strategies. By taking proactive measures now, the City aims to build a more sustainable and secure future for its residents.

Challenge: The project sought to improve resilience to future extreme weather events. The City Simulator digital twin is comprised of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) features depicting transportation and infrastructure systems, housing and demographics. It also includes a virtual population conducting daily activities and being disrupted by future extreme events.

Hazards considered included storm surge, sunny day tidal flood, rainfall flooding and heat wave. Assets considered included building stock, critical assets and the road and stormwater control systems. Key metrics included disrupted activity such as commuting and damage to buildings and infrastructure due to floods. Adaptation and mitigation actions tested included elevating homes and roads, buyout programs, seawall elevation and tree planting.

Scenario-based analysis functions focused on certain flood-prone neighborhoods in the city and on specific large projects that are candidates for grant funding. They now plan to expand their use of the tool to capital planning, land use planning and additional grant funding opportunities.

Impact: The assessment determined Clearwater could face a 24% increase in the intensity of rainstorms, a rise in sea levels of around 3.25 feet, and a 300% surge in extremely hot days by the year 2100. AtkinsRéalis provided results and recommendations from the assessment in a final report which included charts, tables, and graphics projections. A summary presentation was provided to City Council and the public. The data-driven process provided Clearwater with informational resources needed to apply for grants that support additional research and implementation of strategies in the natural and built environment. The report created a roadmap for the community with potential costs and identified geographies that may be suitable for future resiliency investments. The effort not only outlined a portfolio of actions the City can take but also highlighted steps individuals can apply to reduce risk to their own property.

How-to:

- Collect data related to topography, asset and infrastructure locations, socioeconomics, hazards (flood and heat), and climate projections.
- Use City Simulator to evolve a digital twin of the city and generate synthetic tide, rainfall, hurricanes, and temperature events over 80 years.
- Evaluate results via the vulnerability explorer function of the tool to generate tables and visuals highlighting the impacts to houses and infrastructure.
- Add specific areas of interest into the tool to evaluate the cost-benefit of selected actions.
- Run the scenarios to identify a portfolio of actions visualized in a map and catalogued in a table ranked on return-on-investment.
- Gather input from stakeholders and public meetings to help determine next steps, such as perform more detailed studies on preferred scenarios, identify opportunities for funding-based updates to the tool, begin capital planning with data-driven climate insights, and provide public education.

General Tips: The project relied on expertise from a Project Action Team from the City's PM team, key individuals who could provide day-to-day input, and a Technical Advisory Committee comprising stakeholders from City leadership and external groups involved in resilience planning. Team interactions led to customizations including new visualizations of data and interactive tools for optimizing results.

Multiple scenario-planning sessions were held with stakeholder staff representing stormwater, environmental, planning, and city management. Sessions focused on how scenarios could align and supplement ongoing activities with the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, and GreenPrint 2.0 (the City's sustainability plan).

Budget: \$200,000

Tags: Innovation, Cost savings, Environment impact, Impact on city economy

Contact:

Cassie Cordova
Sustainability Manager City of Clearwater
Cassie.Cordova@MyClearwater.com
(727) 444.8004

Stephen Bourne
Project Director, AtkinsRéalis Fellow
Stephen.Bourne@AtkinsRealis.com
(478) 250.5357



Adding more shade trees in Clearwater Beach is among the resilience actions that can be implemented.



City Simulator's Vulnerability Explorer helps communities project and visualize future conditions.

Black & Veatch: Planning a Resilient Charleston

Project Description: The Charleston Integrated Water Plan (CIWP) is a model for cities grappling with the challenges of watershed management and urban planning. As with many coastal areas, water is central to Charleston's story. The city is built on an estuary in South Carolina's Lowcountry where three rivers converge into an inlet on the Atlantic. Inundation is common as flooding from rain, groundwater, storm surge and high tide occurs naturally, regularly. Working with a team of engineers, urban planners, climate scientists and public policy and community engagement experts, the city crafted the 25-year CIWP framework to address water management in coordination with Charleston's economic and community development goals. Embracing the connection between water and Charleston's goals, the plan aligns critical infrastructure, governmental resources, environmental sustainability and economic vitality. Its lessons in integrated, community-centered approaches provide an adaptable blueprint. Embracing interdisciplinary collaboration, multi-scale interventions and community-centered engagement, the CIWP shows how cities can see water not as a threat but an essential tool for driving sustainability and growth.

Challenge: How to manage flood waters has been an issue for Charleston since colonial days. While the city has worked steadfastly to address the issue, in recent years the frequency and strength of wet weather events and sea level rise has intensified the challenge. Inundation from king tides, which can happen during sunny days when no storm is around, occurred 38 times in 2015. That was triple the amount Charleston experienced in 2000. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the city's sea level has risen 13 inches in the past 100 years – with half of the total occurring in the most recent 20 years. NOAA estimates that the sea level in Charleston will rise another 14 inches by 2050 and tidal flooding will affect the city 180 days a year by 2045. Via the CIWP, the city sought to broaden its approach. Instead of traditional solutions focused solely on containment or drainage, Charleston embraced a variety of interlocking strategies to protect its citizens and neighborhoods, preserving both Charleston's future economic vitality and critical environmental resources.

Impact: Breaching traditional silos, the CIWP integrated the disciplines of stormwater management, urban planning and environmental protection, providing a cohesive framework focused on the investment needs of today and the future. At the heart of the plan is Charleston's economic vitality. It protects the area's economy and guides development of infrastructure, prioritizing transportation networks and utility infrastructure. The CIWP recommends elevation-based zoning, limiting development to safer areas and reserving low ground for future marsh migration, sea level rise, and ecological restoration. It provides a summary of recommended projects that span a variety of strategies, scales and approaches, seeing one larger, connected system with several smaller projects or features within. As Charleston grows, this prioritization will support future strategic infrastructure investments. Additionally, by embedding flexibility and adaptive management into the plan, Charleston positioned itself to evolve alongside shifting climate realities. Altogether, the CIWP charts a course to bolster the city's resilience, supporting funding strategies, policy guidelines and future benchmarking efforts.

How-to: The CIWP provides a foundational strategy for managing flood risks and embracing water's place in delivering benefits to the Charleston community. Information was shared, input from engagement events discussed, preliminary recommendations developed, and questions and concerns received. The team targeted over-burdened communities in its outreach and formed an Equity Working Group to promote collaboration, leverage environmental justice data and focus on new federal programming.

The team:

- Identified planning areas based on major watersheds and the flood risks per area..
- Compiled a flood risk overview including sea level rise, water level, rain and hurricane data. Groundwater monitoring was also completed to supplement the flood risk assessment.
- Assessed the community's natural and built environments, including landform typology, elevation, natural habitats, transportation and infrastructure.

The team mapped out optimal strategies to manage water using seven categories: defend, adapt, reserve, drain, store, slow, and grow – identifying 100 potential projects that span a variety of strategies, scales and approaches.

General Tips: The CWIP focused on holistic success for the city. Analyzing infrastructure performance and modeling scenarios to account for sea level rise, increased precipitation and land use changes, the team established benchmarks for infrastructure design and urban planning so investments are effective today and in the future. The CWIP proposed drainage and green infrastructure projects, improved tidal gates and coordination with regional transportation and land-use policies. At the neighborhood level, it focused on flood-prone areas to propose solutions such as retrofitting streets with permeable pavement, enhancing community green spaces and elevating homes and infrastructure. This maximized impact and made the plan relatable and actionable at the community level.

Budget: \$1 million

Funding Sources: General purpose city funds

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Environment impact, Impact on city economy, Business benefits

Contact:

Kaylan Koszela
Director of Resilience
koszelak@charleston-sc.gov
(834) 371.9643

Clinton O. Robinson, P.E. FACEC
State & Local Government Affairs
P: (913) 458-3999
M: (913) 638-6974
robinsonco@bv.com



Charleston Water Plan: a model for integrated watershed management and urban planning



Adaptive, integrated flood control planning - driving safety, sustainability and vitality citywide

Boston University: Anti-Displacement Assessment Tool (ADAT) for City of Louisville, KY

Project Description: Boston University (BU) was contracted by the Louisville Metro Government to develop a tool to measure displacement risk from urban development in the city. The team included Director Loretta Lees and Postdoctoral Research Fellow Kenton Card from BU's Initiative on Cities, and Andre Comandon from the METTRANS Transportation Consortium, who developed the tool with the Louisville Office of Housing & Community Development. The Anti-Displacement Assessment Tool (ADAT) is organized in an online dashboard that visualizes the predicted impact of new subsidized residential developments on neighborhoods. The public nature of the dashboard streamlines the planning process by allowing developers, city officials, and the public to inform themselves about the impact of projects in real time. The ADAT provides neighborhood context for proposed residential projects. It asks developers to complete a Project Impact Tracking Form (e.g., proposed levels of unit affordability), and then situates projects within the neighborhood context, for instance, what existing residents can afford to pay. A matrix provides recommendations on how the city should channel resources to meet local needs.

Challenge: Louisville's Housing Needs Assessment, produced every 5 years, found that the city has a deficit of 36,000 homes affordable to households earning 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and a shortage of 14,000 homes for those earning 50% of AMI. By contrast, for residents earning 150% of AMI, there is a surplus of 21,000 homes. Lower income residents from historically Black communities are increasingly struggling to live in the city. Smoketown, one of the few places where Black communities were allowed to live after the Civil War, was 80% Black and 16% white in 2010; by 2020, it was 65% black and 27% white. The city's 2019 Housing Needs Assessment said: 'The urgency to prioritize anti-displacement initiatives in these areas cannot be overstated'. Independent Councilman Jecorey Arthur, together with the Louisville Tenants' Union, led a grassroots campaign to draft and pass the nation's first Anti-Displacement Ordinance in 2024. The ordinance mandated that the city assess the risk of displacement for any publicly supported project and required the creation of an Anti-Displacement Tool to inform those assessments.

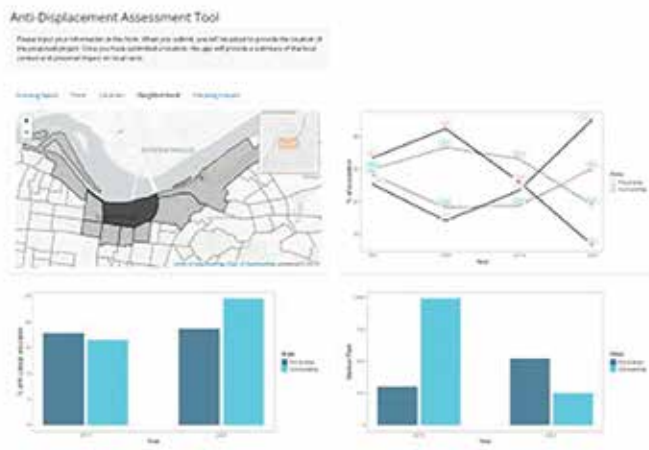
Impact: Public funds for housing development will no-longer displace low-income, long standing Black communities, in Louisville, KY. The ADAT is pro-development but anti-displacement. Publicly subsidized housing development that does not increase the risk of displacement has nothing to worry about; developments that are likely to displace low income, minority ethnic groups, will be rejected and developers will need to go back to the drawing board.

How-to: The open-source tool includes a web form where users input information about a proposed project; the tool crunches the data and reaches a conclusion about its likely impact on current residents. The tool first calculates a specific location's displacement risk level, which is determined by a simple algorithm using data from the Census Bureau, the Louisville Metro Government, and private data providers. Each risk level — low, medium, or high — is associated with a set of requirements, such as the share of affordable units each project must contain. The higher the risk, the more stringent the requirements. In the second step, a user provides data about a development project to determine if it satisfies the requirements associated with the neighborhood's risk level and is eligible to receive city support. In theory, the community can use the process to leverage changes from developers to make projects more affordable. The image shows the census block group where the project would be located and the surrounding block groups. Outputs in the next image are demographic change (% and number of Black and White people), change in the share of college educated adults, and change in median rent.

Budget: 44,449

Funding Sources: Louisville Metropolitan Government

Tags: Housing Development and Affordability; Anti-Displacement Policy



ADAT Dashboard

Contact:

Laura Grabowski
Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development
Laura.Grabowski@louisvilleky.gov

Loretta Lees
Director of the Boston University Initiative on Cities
llees@bu.edu

Cornerstone: Fires Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA)

Project Description: Cornerstone began its work with Lawton Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce in the fall of 2018. The city of Lawton and Fort Sill Army Post, to include its Fires Center of Excellence and Cross Functional Teams, are located about 85 miles southwest of Oklahoma City. Cornerstone's work with Lawton Fort Sill is primarily focused on defense authorizations and appropriations but also includes assisting the Lawton Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce, the Fires Patriots and the Lawton Fort Sill Working Group with the development of their annual federal legislation agenda, identifying issues that are a priority and are critical to the wellbeing of Lawton Fort Sill and the U.S. military, and keeping them apprised of all issues of interest to Lawton Fort Sill and the newly created Fires Innovation Science and Technology Center Accelerator (FISTA). FISTA's mission is to invest in industrial development and activities that support the Army's needs and requirements, technology gap fillers, and program shortfalls. Lawton's investment laid the foundation for additional support by state and federal government and key industries.

Challenge: The Lawton Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce hired Cornerstone to help them navigate the complex defense authorizations and appropriations landscape. Given the strategic importance of both the city and Fort Sill Army post, Lawton Fort Sill needed expert guidance and advocacy to secure legislative support. Cornerstone's expertise in defense and government engagement, as well as engagement at the state level, was essential to advancing critical initiatives such as the FISTA and ensuring continued development and transformation efforts on downtown and on Fort Sill Army Post.

Impact: Lawton Fort Sill has achieved growth over the past several years unseen in most communities. In three years, the FISTA has grown from zero to 25 defense contractors and academia currently working on high-tech programs for the Department of Defense. It completed construction of over 125,000 square feet that includes defense contractor suites, prefab suites, a Conference Center, and a Welcome Center. It is currently constructing a STEM Center which will include a maker space, metal shop, wood shop, 3D Print Shop, and Additive Manufacturing, anechoic chamber, and Special Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF).

How-to: The birth of the FISTA began with a Five-Year Strategy on its vision and priorities, which included the development of centers of excellence that foster innovation and create the next generation of opportunity. It was an entire community approach from businesses and government engagements supporting the warfighter and our military. Cornerstone works with the Lawton Fort Sill Community on developing and executing their vision that includes policy and funding requests, engagements with federal agencies, engagements with industry, identifying growth opportunities, and strengthening the federal government ties between Lawton Fort Sill and the federal government.

General Tips:

- Invest in yourself
- Market yourself
- Understand who your customer is and what their requirements are, both now and in the future
- Understand your areas of expertise, or areas of growth
- Understand the current and future workforce to include the pipeline for that workforce
- Utilize traditional and social media to communicate awareness and maximize opportunities
- Develop and update a Five-Year Strategy
- Remain engaged at the local, state, and federal level

Budget: \$65 million

Funding Sources: Federal grants, State grants, General purpose city funds, Industry/business funds

Additional Investment: Lawton has invested over \$21 million into the FISTA to date in the acquisition and renovation of the Lawton Mall – a 600,000 square foot complex with an estimated total cost of approximately \$65 million – which has become the FISTA. FISTA and its partners included legislative language and competed and secured millions of dollars in funding directly supporting Department of Defense and Army efforts to develop and field capabilities for the warfighter.

Tags: Innovation, Cost savings, Impact on city economy, Jobs created, Business benefits



FISTA Ribbon cutting with Oklahoma Congressional Delegation

Contact:

Dewayne 'Larry' Burk
Deputy City Manager, City of Lawton, OK
Larry.Burk@lawtonok.gov
Cell (580) 351-8019

Lizzie Imber
Vice President, Cornerstone
ImberL@cgagroup.com
(850) 661-5668

Deloitte: Transforming City's back-office operations with Oracle ERP Cloud (ATLcloud)

Project Description: Deloitte implemented a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Human Capital Management (HCM) system to transform the City of Atlanta's legacy financial, procurement, budgeting, payroll and HR systems onto a modern, integrated, cloud-based platform that could more efficiently serve the needs of the City's 500,000+ residents and 9,000+ employees. For local governments, the City was an early adopter in the transition of all ERP and HCM functionality to a cloud-based solution.

The project aimed to standardize business processes across the City, as many variations and exceptions had developed over time. The project aimed to simplify business operations and increase efficiency by automating workflows, reducing time-intensive processes, and digitizing the City's many paper forms. In addition to business efficiencies, Atlanta Information Management (AIM), the City's IT department, wanted to reduce maintenance and operation costs of the system, make the system easier to enhance in the future, and improve data security.

Overall, the City forecasts that these efficiencies, combined with the decreased maintenance required for the new system, would reduce the total cost of ownership.

Challenge: The City of Atlanta had not updated or modified their legacy system in over 10 years. This presented several challenges. The system did not meet all the city's current needs, and in the absence of system updates, departments reverted to manual processes. This required a dedicated effort to identify all the shadow operations that were being used. The project could not simply "lift and shift" existing functionality, as the implementation team had to investigate and evaluate current business processes operating outside of the system as well. Years of manual processes led to variation and lack of standardization. City employees developed their own work arounds, which were not consistent, even with the same department. The project wasn't simply updating one set of processes, it required the team to gather a wide variety of perspectives on what workers did, why they did it, and how they did it. Keeping current with security patches and updates was also a challenge for the city. Moving to a cloud-based, software as a service (SaaS) solution offered the latest in data security with updates that were applied automatically.

Impact: The City has realized many benefits due to the implementation such as improved operational efficiency across departments and increased time savings by adopting standardized, automated, digital processes.

Since the implementation, the City has realized these benefits:

- 40% decrease in 10-year total cost of ownership
- 80% increase in paperless transactions
- 50,000 self-service transactions that didn't require City employee support
- 59,000 fewer printed pages required to support the hiring process
- 78% fewer manual invoices created
- 75% faster budget book preparation
- 30% faster payroll processing



How-to: There were several factors that led this project to success.

1. Enterprise transformation made the project more complex; a pure technical upgrade could not have achieved all the operational efficiencies the City realized.
2. Keeping business leaders and City employees informed and engaged from the outset was important. They were invested and accountable for implementing a comprehensive and through change management and communications process.
3. The system was designed, developed and validated. With an Agile approach, there were regular system reviews throughout the development process. Business leaders, City employees, and end users could see progress through direct review of the system and provide actionable feedback.

General Tips: Moving to a cloud solution allowed the City to enable a more flexible work from home policy. The City could have never adapted to a remote work environment on the old system as manual processes would not have been executable. Paper forms were reduced and everyone had secure access to the system to execute their role.

The project also highlighted the need to focus on data quality and cleansing. Much data in the legacy system was incomplete or incorrect as it had not been updated over time. City employees investigated and corrected thousands of records before loading data into the new system. This required an intensive data validation and reconciliation processes. This focus on data quality resulted in the new system going live without payment issues and much smoother financial processes resulting in improved data quality and an enhanced employee experience.

Funding Sources: General purpose city funds

Contact:

Youlanda Carr
Deputy CFO
ycarr@atlantaga.gov

Aman Kapoor
amakapoor@deloitte.com

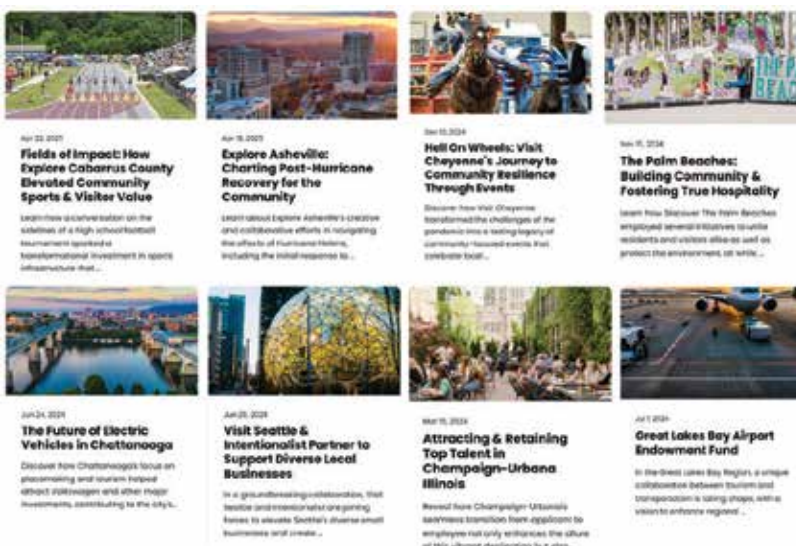
Destinations International: The Destination Effect

Project Description: The Destination Effect highlights real-world examples of how destination organizations use destination promotion to support community success. Through brand management, placemaking and enhancing quality of life, these organizations play a vital role in strengthening local economies and fostering civic pride. The DestinationEffect.com website features a growing number of case studies that showcase this work in action, offering insights into how destination marketing contributes to long-term community resilience, equity and economic opportunity.

Challenge: The Destination Effect highlights real-world examples of how destination organizations use destination promotion to support community success. Through brand management, placemaking and enhancing quality of life, these organizations play a vital role in strengthening local economies and fostering civic pride. The DestinationEffect.com website features a growing number of case studies that showcase this work in action, offering insights into how destination marketing contributes to long-term community resilience, equity and economic opportunity.

Cities today face intense global competition to attract talent, investment and opportunity. A major challenge is ensuring that their community stands out in a crowded and dynamic landscape. Without strategic destination promotion, cities risk being overlooked.

Impact: The examples featured on DestinationEffect.com, demonstrate how destination organizations are working on behalf of their communities to drive cultural, social and economic investment through destination promotion. These efforts go beyond attracting visitors, they help foster community pride, support local businesses, enhance public spaces and contribute to the long-term vitality of the destination. By aligning tourism strategies with resident priorities, these organizations play a key role in building more resilient, inclusive, and prosperous communities.



How-to: Mayors can strengthen impact by bringing their destination organization into the fold early when planning major initiatives. Whether the focus is downtown revitalization, workforce attraction, cultural investment or community engagement, destination organizations have the tools and experience to help communicate these priorities to both residents and external audiences. These organizations are more than tourism marketers; they are brand stewards for the city.

Partnering with them allows mayors to shape how the city is perceived, highlight the progress being made and demonstrate how public investment improves quality of life. By aligning messaging and strategy, mayors and destination organizations can work together to deliver measurable benefits for residents and build a thriving, future-ready destination.

General Tips: In many of the examples featured on DestinationEffect.com, the connection between the city and its destination organization is often in partnership with the mayor or a member of the mayor's office or a city council representative.

Ideally, a senior city official involved in economic development, communications or community engagement can serve as the primary project manager or liaison. This ensures alignment on shared priorities and enables seamless collaboration between the city and the destination organization to maximize impact for the community.

development, communications or community engagement can serve as the primary project manager or liaison. This ensures alignment on shared priorities and enables seamless collaboration between the city and the destination organization to maximize impact for the community.

Tags: Impact on city economy, Jobs created, Increased tourism



Contact:

Advocacy & Research Department at Destinations International
advocacy@destinationsinternational.org

Flock Safety: Scaling Safety: A Public-Private Partnership Blueprint for Safer Communities

Project Description: Under the leadership of Mayor Matt Tuerk and Police Chief Charles Roca, the City of Allentown, Pennsylvania, launched a bold initiative to build a safer, more connected community. With crime as a top priority, city leaders recognized that reversing negative trends required more than traditional methods—it demanded targeted investments in both people and technology.

By adopting Flock's License Plate Reader (LPR) and Gunshot Detection technology, the department freed up resources, allowing officers to focus more on proactive policing and community trust-building.

The impact of this public-private partnership was undeniable. Allentown saw meaningful progress in reducing crime and improving community safety. With public safety as a foundation, Allentown is building momentum toward greater community well-being, economic growth, and an improved quality of life for all who live and work there.

Challenge: Mayor Matt Tuerk and Police Chief Charles Rocafaced a pressing challenge: how to maximize limited police resources while improving community engagement and public safety. Officers were stretched thin, making it difficult to prioritize meaningful interaction with residents. Chief Roca emphasized the need to invest in areas that would save time—freeing officers to focus on what matters most: building trust and preventing crime. The department needed tools that would reduce administrative load and help shift officers from reactive to proactive roles in the community.

That's where technology came in. Flock Safety's License Plate Recognition (LPR) and Gunshot Detection solutions help officers respond faster and smarter. Gunshot Detection delivers alerts in under 60 seconds—filtering out false alarms like fireworks—so officers can act when it matters most. LPR alerts officers when a vehicle linked to a crime passes by, helping prevent incidents before they escalate. And with powerful search tools, Flock saves officers hours of manual review, giving them back valuable time to focus on keeping Allentown safe.

Impact: The results from investing in technology were significant: in 2024, Allentown recorded its lowest homicide rate since 1989—just four homicides—as well as reductions in aggravated assaults and shots fired. Residents reported feeling safer, and the city reinforced public safety as a foundation for economic investment and growth. The partnership is a model for how technology can support well-trained officers in creating safer, more thriving communities.

How-to:

1. Start with a Clear, Community-First Mission: Begin by identifying the core problems you're trying to solve—whether that's rising crime, limited officer availability, or underreported incidents like gunfire. In Allentown, leadership recognized that time—not willpower—was their most limited resource. They committed to using technology as a tool to free up officers for proactive policing and community engagement.

2. Prioritize Transparency and Public Education Before Deployment: Community trust starts with clear communication. Consider taking the following steps before activating any new technology:

- Attend neighborhood and community meetings to listen to concerns and answer questions.
- Hold a public press conference to explain how the technology works, what data is collected, and how privacy is protected.
- Frame the technology as a tool to support—not replace—human connection and public trust.

3. Secure Sustainable Funding: Allentown leveraged grant funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to make the investment financially viable. Identify local, state, or federal funding sources that can offset costs and ensure long-term success.

4. Train Your Officers for Effective, Ethical Use: Ensure every officer is trained on how to:

- Responsibly use the technology within legal and ethical guidelines.
- Integrate it into their daily workflows to reduce administrative tasks.
- Leverage it to focus on proactive policing and community interaction.

5. Monitor, Measure, and Communicate Results: Tracking data helps build long-term support. Allentown regularly reviews crime trends to measure impact and share outcomes with both leadership and the public.

6. Keep People at the Center of Your Strategy: Allentown's leaders made it clear: the goal was not just solving crimes faster, but allowing officers to spend more time building trust, being visible in neighborhoods, and strengthening relationships with residents.

Funding Sources: General purpose city funds

Tags: Other: Public Safety

Contact:

Charles Roca
Charles.Roca@allentownpa.gov

Sydney Calkins
Corporate Communications Manager
sydney.calkins@flocksafety.com
(770) 533-0825

Jacobs: Anacostia Waterfront Initiative: Key Transportation Elements

Project Description: Launched in 2000 the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) is a public/private sector program seeking to convert the historically underdeveloped areas along the river in D.C. into a world-class waterfront. The public sector led by DDOT leads strategic planning, program management, stakeholder coordination and regulation compliance.

Challenge: The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) has faced numerous challenges, but through strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration and innovative solutions, many of these obstacles have been addressed. One significant challenge was the coordination and integration of multiple large-scale infrastructure projects. The replacement of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, addition of the two ovals on both sides, and the decision to transform South Capitol Street into a grand urban boulevard demonstrate how AWI addressed these challenges.

Initially, the project faced hurdles related to environmental approvals, stakeholder coordination and funding constraints. Jacobs helped navigate these issues, proposing a fixed bridge alternative, which not only met the technical and aesthetic requirements but also saved DDOT \$150 million in construction costs.

Impact: One of the most significant impacts of AWI is the environmental restoration of the Anacostia River by implementing green infrastructure projects, such as the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail. It encouraged healthier lifestyle, connected communities, and access to waterfront amenities contributing to reduced pollution, improved water quality, and increased biodiversity. In addition, the D.C. Clean Rivers Project has eliminated 96% of stormwater overflows into the Anacostia River. These efforts have turned the river into a cleaner, healthier ecosystem, benefiting wildlife and residents.

AWI has also dramatically improved urban connectivity. Projects like the replacement of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, 11th Street Bridges, the construction of the Parkside Pedestrian Bridge, and several miles of trails along the riverbanks have enhanced transportation infrastructure, making it easier for all transportation modes to access different parts of the city. These improvements have reduced traffic congestion, promoted multimodal transportation, and connected neighborhoods that were previously isolated.

How-to: Program development began with comprehensive strategic planning and defining scope led by DDOT. Jacobs played a crucial role by providing technical expertise, project management, design reviews, construction oversight, environmental compliance and public outreach.

Key Projects and Milestones include:

- South Capitol Street Corridor and Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge: Jacobs led the preliminary design, environmental approvals, and procurement processes, saving DDOT \$150 million.
- Anacostia Riverwalk Trail: Jacobs provided design review and construction management for the Kenilworth segment of the trail, securing a \$10 million TIGER grant for the project.
- Parkside Pedestrian Bridge: Jacobs designed and managed the construction of this bridge, providing a direct connection between neighborhoods and the Minnesota Avenue Metro Station.

General Tips: Incorporate green infrastructure, stormwater management and innovative design to enhance the ecological health of the river. Jacobs' team ensured compliance with NEPA and other regulations, securing necessary permits and using mitigation measures.

Budget: \$10 B over 30 years beginning in 2003

Funding Sources: Municipal bonds, Federal grants, Federal formula grants (NHPP, STBG, CMAQ), Federal discretionary grants/IJA (RAISE, MPDG, BIP, RCP, SMART, PROTECT, etc.), TIGER grants, ARRA, funding, GARVEE bonds, and local match/contribution (PAYGO capital, Highway Trust Fund, General Obligation (GO) bonds, short-term bonds, and Income Tax Secured revenue bonds.

Additional Investment: Private developer contributions to select projects investment

Tags: Innovation, Environment impact, Impact on city economy, Jobs created, Increased tourism,



Anacostia Watershed Society Cycling along Anacostia Riverwalk Trail



Frederick Douglass Bridge Shared Use Path

Contact:

Ravindra D. Ganvir, P.E.
Deputy Chief Engineer Infrastructure Project
Management Administration
District Department of Transportation
(202) 671-4689
ravindra.ganvir@dc.gov

Chris Conroy, P.E.
Jacobs
(571) 296-5020
christopher.conroy@jacobs.com

Joon: Closing the Gap: Accessible, Effective Mental Health Care for Youth Ages 13-24

Project Description: Seattle partnered with Joon, an app-based teletherapy platform specializing in youth ages 13-24, to expand access to care for Seattle youth. The program overcomes barriers like cost, stigma, & logistics by offering free, evidence-based therapy.

Joon, in partnership with Seattle schools, offers a unique online community that connects youth with peers, reduces stigma, and creates a supportive space for mental health conversations. This approach empowers youth to find care, and increases program adoption and participation—leading to measurable impact across the community.

Challenge: Youth mental health has become an increasingly urgent issue in Seattle. In 2023, 50% of Seattle Public Schools 8th graders and 71% of 12th graders reported feelings of anxiety, with one in three 12th graders reporting feelings of depression. Factors such as gun violence and the impact of the COVID-19 exacerbate these feelings, underscoring the need for accessible mental health support services for young people.

Youth in Seattle faced gaps in care, including long waitlists, limited resources, and a shortage of licensed clinicians. They encountered systemic barriers such as cost, lack of culturally competent care, stigma, and difficulty engaging with mental health support—particularly in underserved or marginalized populations.

Since partnering with Joon, Seattle youth have seen reduced wait times, with appointments available 2-3 days from referral. Additionally, more than 50% of program referrals come from community staff and peers, highlighting the community's trust in Joon's ability to provide effective care.

Impact: Joon uses an app-based model to make therapy easy to access—a highly successful model for Seattle youth. Over the last 15 months, Joon has facilitated over 3,000 sessions to nearly 300 youth aged 13-24 in Seattle.

Seattle youth who participated in therapy at Joon experienced a 46% reduction in anxiety symptoms and a 34% reduction in depression symptoms. Youth also demonstrated a 0% suicidality rate after 12 weeks of therapy.

Seattle's program demonstrates how Joon's platform reaches youth who can be difficult to engage in traditional approaches, including those from marginalized communities, youth not enrolled in school, and those hesitant to seek help. By offering a safe, accessible experience, Joon connects with these populations and provides support in a non-judgmental way—resulting in measurable improvements in mental health.



How-to:

- Seattle partnered with Joon to pilot a teletherapy solution, using a model designed to be replicable in other communities:
- Joon contracted through Seattle Human Services to close access gaps by offering evidence-based care via Joon's mobile app. Within weeks, Joon was fully operational.
- Joon collaborated with Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Housing Authority, and local youth-serving nonprofits. Each partner received branded outreach materials and referral pathways.
- Care Coordinators guide youth from referral to first session. Therapy happens online, removing barriers like logistics, transportation, and stigma.
- With strong clinical outcomes and high youth engagement, Seattle expanded its investment. In July 2024, Joon used pilot data to respond to a competitive RFP & was awarded a \$2M contract to grow the program through 2026.

General Tips: Joon helps identify diverse funding sources for pilots (beyond city budget dollars) like grants from non-profits or deferred funding plans. This allows cities to engage mental health programs and determine efficacy quickly without significant upfront investment.

Further, Joon accepts insurance, including Medicaid, distributing the cost of care across public infrastructure systems designed to support youth. Through partnerships with grant providers, Joon enables access to therapy scholarships for youth, further expanding funding flexibility and enabling cities to maximize care dollars.

Moving fast with highly measurable, low (or no) cost pilot programs that demonstrate efficacy and build trust accelerates the city's ability to successfully find and fund scaled programs that make a meaningful difference.

Budget: The pilot program funded by Seattle had a cost of \$50,000. As youth in the program showed measurable improvements in mental health outcomes, incremental funding was allocated to expand services and ensure continued support.

Funding Sources: General purpose city funds, Private Insurance and Medicaid

Additional Investment: To reduce friction in accessing care, we collaborate with partners to efficiently verify coverage and minimize costs wherever possible. Joon accepts insurance, including Medicaid, to support the sustainability of the program. We also enable youth to access therapy scholarships through a partner grant providers.

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Cost savings, Youth Mental Health Care

Contact:

Michelle Wong
K-12 Mental Health Advisor, Department of Education and Early and Learning
youthmentalhealth@seattle.gov

Danielle Juris
Head of Programs and Product, Joon
danielle@joon.com
(919) 604-2262

Meridiam: Reconnecting Communities and Reducing Congestion through Public-Private Partnerships

Project Description: Meridiam, along with a partner, upgraded and enhanced Colorado's "Central 70" corridor – a previously overly congested highway that runs through the heart of the City of Denver. The Central 70 corridor is an economic engine for the City and greater Denver metro area. It connects 1,200 businesses, carries over 200,000 vehicles per day, and serves as a critical link toward Denver International Airport. The project was delivered under a design-build-finance-operate-maintain concession agreement, which saw Meridiam lead the development of one new Express Lane in each direction, removal of an aging 53-year-old viaduct, lowering of the interstate between Brighton and Colorado boulevards (1.4mile, 2.25km), and creating a 4-acre park over a portion of the lowered interstate by Swansea Elementary School. The park now reconnects the Elyria and Swansea communities, which had been divided for over half a century by the viaduct.

City Challenge: All over the country, communities like Elyria and Swansea stand divided by aging infrastructure that once took priority over the needs of local residents. At the same time, those infrastructure investments are often overly congested and in a state of disrepair. Working with the Colorado Department of Transportation and the citizens of the Denver area and local Elyria and Swansea communities, Meridiam and its partners leaned into the needs of the state, the commuting public, and the communities Central 70 serves. The result was a transformational investment that reduced travel times, provided choice for commuters, and became a central bridge for two communities that had long been divided.

Impact: As part of the public-private partnership, Meridiam committed to hiring local workers from communities directly impacted by the project and focused on the use of a main contractor employing 100% union labor. During construction, goals for hiring local, minority, and women workers—as well as apprenticeship targets—were not only met but exceeded. The Central 70 corridor is now benefitting from reduced congestion and a safer road design, including advanced roadway technology, updated sidewalks, widened shoulders for vehicle pull-off and emergency response, more direct on- and off-ramps, over 100 environmental mitigations and 20 new bridges. The Project provided \$2 million for affordable housing in the Elyria-Swansea communities. Meridiam and its partners established a long-standing relationship with a local non-profit food recovery operation to provide free, high quality, fresh food; over 7 million meals were served in 2023 and 100 volunteer hours were performed within the community. In April 2023, Meridiam and its partners established a scholarship fund for Denver youth through a partnership with the Denver Scholarship Foundation. The fund will provide 10 scholarships each spring and fall semester for the long-term benefit of local students who pursue post-secondary education. To date 26 scholarships have been awarded through this program.

"We want Central 70 to serve as a blueprint for the development of community-centric, environmentally and socially responsible highways across the nation." – Nicolas Rubio, Meridiam Chief Executive Officer, Americas.

How-To: In this project delivery model, the private developer takes responsibility for the Design, Building, Financing and Operating and/or Maintaining (DBFOM) the asset over an extended period. P3s are most suitable for projects that will benefit from innovation, long-term operations and maintenance, can be monetized or financed through creative user fees or low-cost financing, and, importantly for Meridiam, where sustainability and resilience are priorities for the city.

In the case of the Central 70 Corridor, the state had an aging viaduct that divided a community and hundreds of thousands of commuters relying on that infrastructure to get to and from work every day. The Corridor was an economic engine, and the state needed to balance all these needs while also caring for the broader transportation network in Denver and throughout Colorado. By engaging with Meridiam and its partners in a P3, the state and private sector collaboratively crafted a model that balanced those priorities and resulted in a successful, transformational project that improved people's lives.

General Tips:

- The city should prioritize building capacity to understand the structure and long-term value proposition of a P3. This can include identifying and engaging experienced legal and financial advisors who can support the development of the project along with the city's team.
- Much like the collaboration that happens through USCM, engaging the private sector leaders in infrastructure development and delivery will provide an opportunity to learn about the latest advances in innovative project delivery. Industry loves solving complex problems – just ask!
- Foster an environment of open-minded collaboration, not just between government and the private sector, but within government itself. The most successful infrastructure projects have a champion at the top who can inspire their agencies to work together, engage the community, and move forward with thoughtful enthusiasm. And where there are roadblocks along the way like outdated local codes or procurement practices, look to USCM and other cities that have had success in the past for solutions.

Contact:

Tom Curtin
Senior Policy Advisor
t.curtin@meridiam.com
O: (202) 960-2513
M: (202) 417-5781



Motorola Solutions: Mount Vernon Advances Community-Focused, Tech-Driven Policing with AWARE Room

Project Description: With over 71,000 residents within its 4.4 square miles jurisdiction, Mount Vernon is the eighth largest city in New York state, the second most densely populated city in the state and the 11th most densely populated city (with a qualifying population over 50,000) in the United States. Made up of urban and residential areas, Mount Vernon sits just north of the Bronx and features direct transport links to all areas of the New York Metropolitan Region.

To address the unique set of public safety challenges such an area faces, the Mount Vernon Police Department (MVPD) worked with Motorola Solutions to create its state-of-the-art AWARE Room. The AWARE Room provides police command staff with a centralized, real-time view of public safety situations, such as 911 emergencies, enabling faster and more informed responses. It pulls in video from the city's fixed and mobile security cameras and license plate readers, as well as security cameras at community businesses that have signed on to collaborate in crime prevention and response. AI-enabled analytics help detect unusual activity and automatically alert AWARE Room staff to events that may require their attention.

Challenge: MVPD is responsible for the safety and security of the city's residents, places and property. With a staff of approximately 170 at its disposal, that is a significant task. In 2024, the department responded to over 41,000 calls for service, from minor traffic violations to serious assaults and homicides. Meeting that demand requires around-the-clock focus and responsiveness in such a densely populated area.

Mount Vernon has networks of both public and private cameras across the city; however, the systems were disparate and the police department had no way of unifying these video sources when an incident occurred. Each camera network also needed to be accessed individually to view and share video footage, which made keeping up with activity and incidents as they occurred extremely difficult.

MVPD required greater real-time intelligence and analytics for more effective policing. The city also wanted to leverage existing technology investments to streamline those disparate resources and easily access critical data.

Impact: By enhancing MVPD's ability to detect, analyze and respond to incidents as they unfold, the AWARE Room is helping first responders get to the scene of 911 calls faster and locate missing people or stolen vehicles more quickly. The centralized and connected technology is enhancing the department's efforts to tackle crime, and MVPD has achieved a nearly 10% reduction in violent crime over the past year. Officers are no longer just responding to crime; they are proactively using timely and actionable information to build a safer community.

MVPD's real-time data and video streams are now unified into a common operating picture, and priority intelligence is easily surfaced and shared. AWARE Room staff have real-time access to public cameras around the city, while license plate recognition (LPR) software flags vehicles of interest and their location, which is proving particularly effective in addressing crimes of opportunity, such as larcenies and catalytic converter thefts. The AWARE Room helps reduce response times, helping officers be more informed throughout incidents, leading to more positive outcomes and safety for officers and the community alike.

How-to: Motorola Solutions builds and connects technologies to help protect people, property and places in cities like Mount Vernon. The company's solutions - from critical communications devices and networks, to video security and command center software powered by AI - help to facilitate critical collaboration between public safety agencies and enterprises to improve safety and security outcomes.

MVPD worked with Motorola Solutions to develop its AWARE Room, which utilizes Motorola Solutions' CommandCentral Aware software to unify data and video, identify threats and share intelligence. CommandCentral Aware enables MVPD to connect, view and control real-time camera feeds from disparate video sources to provide additional eyes and ears on the scene.

The software integrates seamlessly with the Avigilon cameras installed around the city as well as LPR technology provided by Motorola Solutions. AWARE Room personnel can help locate persons and vehicles of interest, see events as they unfold and instantly provide this vital information to officers in the field, all from one system. AI-enabled video analytics help detect unusual activity and automatically alert AWARE Room staff, minimizing the chances of incidents being missed. This enhances MVPD's threat detection and allows AWARE Room staff to stay abreast of developing situations, even in the city's most densely populated areas.

The AWARE Room provides MVPD with the tools it needs to effectively see, assess and respond to incidents, helping to keep officers and residents safer.

Funding Sources: State grants

Tags: Community-Focused, Tech-Driven Policing



Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard at the opening of the Mount Vernon AWARE Room

Contact:

Tim Allen
Director of Communications
Tallen@cmvny.com

Mike Leonard
michael.leonard@motorolasolutions.com

MURAL Real Estate Partners: Revitalizing Community-Public Private Partnership

Project Description: MURAL develops deep partnerships with municipalities through our master planning consulting assignments and development projects located in the communities we serve, unlocking critical incentives that make these types of projects financially successful. Our team collectively has decades of experience throughout the Country unlocking value through public private partnerships.

MURAL utilizes alternative financial tools through relationships with public agencies to support the capital stack, many tools include:

- Tax incentive including abatements, credits and rebates
- Federal, local and state Grant and Subsidies
- Waivers for permits and impact fees
- Government bond financing through TIFs and DIFs
- Establish BIDs
- Leverage relationships with transit and other infrastructure authorities to create value

These alternative financing sources enable MURAL to deliver impactful mixed-income housing and neighborhood-serving retail.

Challenge: Pike & Rose North Bethesda, MD

An integral partner in the successful implementation of the White Flint Sector Plan, a visionary framework aimed at transforming a suburban commercial corridor into a vibrant, walkable, and transit-oriented urban center.

Through sustained collaboration with Montgomery County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the team led the development of Pike & Rose, one of the first large-scale mixed-use projects to break ground under the new sector plan.

The project was a catalyst for broader redevelopment, aligning with the County's goals for dense, urban placemaking near transit, centered around the White Flint (now North Bethesda) Metro station.

Extensive coordination with county planning and transportation departments supported street grid redesign, open space planning, and pedestrian-focused infrastructure.

The development contributed significantly to the County's economic development and housing objectives, setting a precedent for future public-private collaborations within the White Flint district.

Impact: What used to be a dilapidated shopping center on 24 acres of parking lots, Pike & Rose transformed the area into a vibrant and thriving mixed-use neighborhood. Pike & Rose remains a model for transit-adjacent revitalization, demonstrating how public vision and private execution can come together to deliver long-term community value.

Project size and program description:

- Transit Oriented, Mixed-Income. Mixed-Use Development
- 24 acres
- 2,000,000 SF built
- 1-acre Urban Park
- Mixed-Use (retail, office, residential, performance venue, car dealership, hotel, parking garages)
- 765 residential units
- 3 parking garages, approximately 700+ parking spaces

How-to: Through sustained collaboration with Montgomery County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the team led the development of Pike & Rose, one of the first large-scale mixed-use projects to break ground under the new sector plan.

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Extensive coordination with county planning and transportation departments supported street grid redesign, open space planning, and pedestrian-focused infrastructure.

The development contributed significantly to the County's economic development and housing objectives, setting a precedent for future public-private collaborations within the White Flint district.

Budget: \$715M

Funding Sources: Private funding, Municipal bonds

Tags: Innovation, Environment impact, Impact on city economy, Jobs created, Increased tourism



Pike and Rose before (top) and after (bottom)

Contact:

Ike Leggett
Former Montgoemry County Executive
councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov

Robin Zeigler
Rzeigler@muralrealestate.com

National Apartment Association: The Apartment Career Credentials Empowering Student Success (A.C.C.E.S.S.) Program

Project Description: The A.C.C.E.S.S. Program is designed to attract young people to apartment careers. The program addresses the disparities in living wage and housing affordability in the Greater Charlotte region. Focusing on providing career opportunities to economically disadvantaged high school students who did not see college as an option, our program took a multilayered approach to building a skilled labor pipeline for our region's multifamily industry while also breaking cycles of poverty.

Following an initial partnership established with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), A.C.C.E.S.S. established a program with two core elements:

- Embedded access to industry leading, professional and career-changing credential certificate programs – including the National Apartment Association Education Institute's (NAAEI) Certified Apartment Maintenance Technician (CAMT) and Certified Apartment Leasing Professional (CALP). Experienced, trained members of our association teach the courses to high school students.
- A centralized hub for high school students to learn, experience and activate rental housing careers in a fun, interactive and engaging ways.

Challenge: Housing affordability alongside living wage disparities greatly impact our Greater Charlotte region. Working collaboratively with the public school system – and through our innovative program, A.C.C.E.S.S. is working to make a real impact.

In 2019, for example, five of the six students in our summer program went on to be hired by members of the Greater Charlotte Apartment Association for \$15 an hour pay rate.

As we've worked to improve since 2019, the program has:

- Adapted the curriculum to better meet the high school audience, improving learning outcomes for participants.
- Moved away from a fast-track summer program to a program conducted at their schools and as a part of their regular school day, helping streamline the process and overcome transportation challenges faced by many students in our area.

Housing is undoubtedly an area where our students can make a lasting impact in their community. Upon graduation, students leave the program not only with the training and confidence they need to positively improve the apartment communities that they serve, but also a professional credential and the tools and equipment needed to succeed in their new career.

Impact: Beyond what has been mentioned, the A.C.C.E.S.S. Program often directly supports students whose families are housing cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of their household income on housing each month. Students in the program are not only able to access entry level jobs that pay well above the minimum wage, but many of these jobs also provide opportunities to access housing at a discount. This benefit has the potential to greatly impact students and their families by providing housing stability.



Students engaged in classroom session.



Students sharing their enthusiasm for the program

How-to:

- Reach out to the National Apartment Association (NAA). NAA can connect you with one of more than 141 state and local affiliate partners to help implement this project in your local community.
- Make lasting connections with your local school district, NAA affiliate partner and your municipal team to establish and garner support for the program. Local instructors can be recruited through your local NAA affiliate partner.
- Secure space for training (school or community center)
- Get additional buy-in from your local community members and partners - including teachers, parents, students and all other stakeholders.
- Raise the funding
- Execute the program and make a lasting impact right in your local community

General Tips: These projects take time to mature – start with a pilot program, grow and learn over the course of several years. Also, unexpected setbacks can happen: The first A.C.C.E.S.S. Program pilot took place in 2019, and it was expected that it would grow in 2020. The COVID-19 Pandemic had other plans, but the program continued to grow in other ways through the creativity, tenacity and engagement of stakeholders.

Budget: Approximately \$30,000 in the initial pilot year (2019) – with instructors volunteering. Food, tools and curriculum supplies are the largest expenses. While instructors volunteer, we always provide small thank you gifts as a token of appreciation.

Funding Sources: Private funding, Foundations

Additional Investment: The Greater Charlotte Apartment Association's staff time has been vital to the success of this program. Staff recruited instructors and prepared them to teach the teenage students. The staff served as mentors to students, too. – keeping them on track and motivated. The staff also promoted the program to attract students by participating at their own high school through career fairs and career days.

Tags: Jobs created

Contact:

Ashlee' Campbell
Director of Career Technical Education
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
ashlees.campbell@cms.k12.nc.us

April Capone, Director
External Affairs and Affiliate Engagement
National Apartment Association
Acapone@naahq.org (203) 915-9594

National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention: Move with the Mayor®

Project Description: Loneliness, chronic stress, and lack of preventive care are rising public health challenges that put millions of Americans at increased risk for heart disease, stroke, and mental health disorders. Recognizing that cities are on the front lines of this crisis, the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention expanded its Move with the Mayor® (MWTM) platform to help mayors create healthier, more connected communities through seasonal, ready-to-use campaigns.

More than 200 mayors in 39 states have used MWTM to improve the health of their cities' workforces, strengthen community resilience and vitality, and reduce drug overdose deaths. MWTM equips local leaders to improve health through physical activity, mental wellness, adult immunization, and cross-sector collaboration.

Challenge: Mayors must meet the health needs of their communities while navigating limited budgets and competing demands. Many lack dedicated public health infrastructure, making it difficult to respond to issues like social isolation or chronic disease prevention. MWTM bridges this gap by providing free, fact-based strategies, messaging tools, and technical assistance to help mayors lead on health and well-being.

"Physical and mental well-being is incredibly important," said Tigard, OR, Mayor Heidi Lueb. "You can't give from an empty bucket. It was a great reminder to our community that they also need to take care of themselves. And it's more fun when we do it together."

Impact: Mental Health & Physical Activity: In Spring 2025, 50+ mayors joined the MWTM Mental Health and Physical Activity Challenge, hosting 100+ events to help residents move, connect, and thrive. Public events and digital outreach framed mental health as a community priority, reducing stigma and boosting access to connection and support.

Mayors in 10 cities recorded video PSAs that exceeded national social media benchmarks.

In Dumfries, VA, Mayor Derrick Wood launched the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) initiative to address limited access to nutritious food and wellness resources. Partnering with the Boys and Girls Clubs, the program teaches kids to grow produce, cook healthy meals and build healthy habits. Mayor Wood's leadership and personal story positioned Dumfries as a model for health-first leadership. "As mayors, we are only as effective as how we empower our people," he said. "If their mind, body, and soul are in a good place, then we all have a thriving community."

Flu Prevention: The 2024 MWTM campaign focused on flu prevention, especially among high-risk groups. 8 mayors recorded PSAs with local pharmacists. The videos exceeded national benchmarks and raised awareness.



Mayors empowering their communities to connect, move, and thrive. Move with the Mayor® participants promoting health and community resilience.

How-to: MWTM gives mayors a step-by-step blueprint to launch public health initiatives quickly and effectively:

- Seasonal campaigns: Mental health and physical activity in the spring; flu prevention in the fall and winter.
- Roadmap tool: Cities assess policies, infrastructure, and gaps using an interactive planning resource.
- Events: Mayors lead or join community events like walks, rides, or exercise classes.
- Messaging: Cities receive ready-to-use graphics, captions, and press templates.
- PSA support: Select cities receive assistance to film and promote video PSAs.
- Peer learning: Mayors share lessons through webinars and national learning opportunities.
- Technical assistance: The National Forum offers individualized support throughout the year.

General Tips: MWTM's impact goes beyond the campaign calendar. Cities are encouraged to use the tools year-round and strengthen results by:

- Inviting local health departments to co-host events or offer screenings.
- Reviewing community health needs assessments (CHNAs and CHIPs) to identify shared priorities.
- Co-branding initiatives with trusted partners like schools, parks, and hospitals.
- Cross-promoting events via municipal and health department channels.

Budget: Participation in MWTM is free. Cities need only assign a liaison and dedicate time to implementation.

Funding Sources: Federal grants

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Cost savings, Environment impact, Impact on city economy, Jobs created, Increased tourism, Business benefits, Improved community health

Contact:

Mayor Derrick R. Wood
hondwood@dumfriesva.gov, (703) 798-2359

Jen Childress, Director of Programs
jen.childress@nationalforum.org, (515) 422-4498
John Clymer, Executive Director
john.clymer@nationalforum.org, (202) 903-7303

Salesforce: Kyle, TX transforms 311 contact centers and makes a bigger impact across the community using AI

Project Description: Kyle, TX, is redefining the modern municipality. After seeing Kyle grow 10x, the city embraced it as an opportunity to build a stronger, more thriving community. The team re-platformed Kyle's 311 system on Salesforce, turning it into an operational foundation that brings data on service requests from any city department together on one, deeply unified digital platform. Then they expanded it further with AI, using the city's newly centralization as the digital backbone to support automation, tracking, reporting, predictive models that are both reliable + responsible, and agents. Metrics include: 1st call resolution rate = 88.2% (ie: 9 of 10 asks are solved during 1st call). 21% via web or app, showing strong multi-channel use in just 2 months.

"So many cities are scared of change, shy away from growth, and thus squander the opportunity. But we wanted to embrace it. We saw it as a chance to be the innovative leader of Hays County." Mayor Mitchell.

"To work in city government is to be in the data management business, & our ability to harness that is empowering. Seeing work translate into real outcomes drives this sense of purpose & builds team culture." Bryan Langley, City Manager.

Challenge: Texas' population grew by ~563,000 residents last year, the highest increase in population of any state. Kyle just exploded, growing from around 10 K to 100 K residents in just 2 years. And while this ultimately brings talent and opportunity into the state, it also places pressure on community leaders to absorb this growth, providing the infrastructure to support more people. "Lots of cities solve this by adding services as needed. You have 10, 15, 20 departments all hiring staff and setting up phone lines or email aliases. Before you know it, there are 75+ phone numbers residents have to sort through for service, only to call the wrong one, be transferred, and still sometimes end up with someone new who doesn't know the answer to their question. That's not a good experience, and it's not in line with our vision or brand," said Jesse Elizondo, Assistant City Manager.

"It also doesn't help us manage a growing city. When information is spread across departments, leadership doesn't have a complete view to see what's happening and make meaningful changes," said Joshua Chronley, Assistant Director of Administrative Services.

The team had to do things differently.

Impact: People: "Working in a call center is a grind. By the time you get to Friday afternoon, you've answered 6,000 calls and it's hard to find the patience and energy for that 6,001st call. Our AI agents can field the more menial of those 6,000 calls, preserving our staff to handle the complex questions that require more time and empathy." Ie: AI is helping Kyle extend people, especially important in public-facing roles where the employee experience often dictates the customer experience.

Process: Instead of using dashboards like stagnant spreadsheets, the team is using them to zero-in on red flags and get the specificity they need to address the root of the problem. "Instead of treating dashboards like static spreadsheets, the team uses them to spot red flags and uncover root issues. While Public Works was focused on handling street repairs as they came in, they hadn't seen a supply shortage forming. When repair times slipped, the dashboard data revealed the missing materials. That insight helped them respond quickly—restocking supplies and avoiding further delays. Now, data helps them stay ahead instead of just keeping up."

How-to: The team re-platformed Kyle 311 on Salesforce Public Sector Solutions, turning it into an operational foundation that brings data on service requests from any department together on one, deeply unified digital platform.

Frontend UX: People can submit service requests via phone, online, or mobile app. Top service requests and recommended categories (with descriptions) offer self-navigation options that not only streamline intake but also help ensure the ask reaches the right department. SLAs are included up front, giving users expected resolution time. It integrates with Kyle's GIS mapping, enabling users to tag the location. They can also upload photos, access multi-lingual support, look at open tickets by map and search by ticket number or list, mitigating duplicate requests. Featured articles offer readily-available information on FAQs, again reducing the number of asks that might otherwise stack up and delay service.

Backend EX: Info is stored in individual case records in Service Cloud, creating a 360-degree view that staff uses to review details, assign next steps, tag experts, follow up on status, and work cross-functionally with teams from any department to close the case. Geolocation, automatic case routing and resolution tracking optimize time-to-close.

Comms: Telephony integration provides Kyle with real-time call management tools that support high-quality customer service. Supervisors and managers can monitor live calls, review call recordings and use that insight to coach staff continuously. This ensures frontline agents are supported and trained to handle each interaction with professionalism and care. Marketing Cloud complements this by linking case records to user profiles, enabling the team to send personalized email or SMS updates as they make progress on a case based on the user's opt-in/opt-out preferences.

Tableau visualizes data in reports and dashboards. Sandbox allows them to test new features and functionalities before going live.

Budget: Our budget was \$1 million. After centralization of call center agents and efficiencies created with software and process improvement we ended up breaking even on the entire project.

Funding Sources: General purpose city funds

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Cost savings, Business benefits

Contact:

Jesse Elizondo
Assistant City Manager, City of Kyle
jelizondo@cityofkyle.com

Karol Ruiz
Public Affairs Manager
karol.ruiz@salesforce.com

Siemens Corporation: Siemens Fort Worth Hub: Powering Data Center Growth and Workforce of the Future

Project Description: Siemens' newest manufacturing hub in Fort Worth, Texas is a testament to the power of public-private partnerships to advance U.S. manufacturing and train the workforce of tomorrow.

Working directly with city officials, Siemens accelerated the permitting process, strategically phased project construction, and developed a comprehensive tax incentive program. Simultaneously, the team leveraged Siemens Technomatix 3D modeling digital tools for shop floor planning, validation, and optimization. As a result, Siemens delivered a cutting-edge manufacturing facility tailored to the rapid growth of the data center industry – in just 14 months.

The Siemens Fort Worth facility stands out for its innovative workforce development strategy. Siemens recruited former educators as training specialists to lead instruction on advanced manufacturing processes used both within the facility and nationwide. These instructors bring educational expertise to technical training, using real production equipment to deliver practical, hands-on learning. Furthermore, the program addresses critical skills gaps across all experience levels, helping to build a resilient and future-ready manufacturing workforce.

Challenge: The Siemens Fort Worth project directly addresses two critical challenges facing cities today: the growing demand for electrical infrastructure and the urgent need for a skilled manufacturing workforce.

As energy needs surge – driven in part by the rapid expansion of data centers – this facility supports the development of essential and efficient electrical infrastructure to meet those demands.

Through an innovative training model, Siemens is revolutionizing workforce development. By recruiting former educators as technical trainers, the program ensures complex technological concepts are taught using proven educational methods. This approach bridges technical skills gaps for both entry-level workers and experienced professionals seeking to upskill.

Lastly, the program democratizes access to careers in advanced manufacturing, creating a sustainable talent pipeline that benefits constituents and strengthens the regional economy.

Impact: The Siemens Fort Worth facility is making a significant impact on both the regional economy and the future of workforce development. By 2026, Siemens expects to create up to 800 new jobs in the area, while also setting a new standard for advanced manufacturing training.

The comprehensive training program has boosted employee engagement and satisfaction, equipping workers with the skills and confidence needed to thrive in advanced manufacturing careers. Since opening in October 2023, the facility has exceeded expectations, increasing production rates and surpassing monthly goals, with equally impressive employee retention metrics.

The innovative approach to training has resulted in a reduced turnaround time from onboarding to production floor – especially for those that are not from a manufacturing or production background.

Fort Worth is a blueprint for modern manufacturing workforce development. The success of this program demonstrates how forward-thinking training strategies can accelerate economic growth while creating sustainable, long-term career pathways.

How-to: The successful development of the Siemens Fort Worth manufacturing facility illustrates how streamlined municipal processes combined with innovative workforce development can transform industrial development. The project's rapid 14-month completion and subsequent workforce success story showcase a model for modern public-private partnerships.

The expedited development process centered on Fort Worth's X team. This team transformed traditionally lengthy permitting processes into same-day approvals through direct, face-to-face consultations during the design phase. Additionally, the city's pragmatic approach to life safety and fire requirements, implemented through strategic Limited Certificate of Occupancy (LCO) approvals, demonstrated how municipalities can maintain safety standards while facilitating rapid project progression.

To ensure long-term project viability, the city structured an attractive economic incentive package. This incentive structure provided the financial certainty needed for long-term planning while ensuring mutual benefits for both the city and Siemens.

Within this efficiently developed facility, Siemens launched a transformative workforce development program that reimagines manufacturing training. By recruiting former educators as technical trainers, Siemens applied proven instructional methods to teach complex technological concepts through a blend of classroom learning and hands-on experience. This innovative approach effectively bridges the gap between education and industry, equipping workers with the skills needed for today's advanced manufacturing environments.

Tags: Innovation, Jobs created



Siemens Fort Worth

Contact:

D.J. Harrell
Director of Development Services for the City of Fort Worth
d.j.harrell@fortworthtexas.gov

Brie Sachse
SVP & Head of U.S. Government Affairs
brie.sachse@siemens.com

Sourcwell: Streamlining City Waste Management Solutions

Project Description: To meet growing waste management demands, Graham, North Carolina public works partnered with Sourcwell, Carolina Environmental Systems (CES), and Heil to streamline its equipment procurement process. Sourcwell's cooperative purchasing program enabled the city to access a ready-to-use, competitively solicited Heil contract, allowing the city to quickly and compliantly purchase high-quality refuse vehicles from CES, a trusted distributor. This solution eliminated procurement delays, reduced administrative workload, and delivered cost-effective, fleet-ready trucks. The project ensured uninterrupted service for a growing population while maximizing staff time and budget efficiency.

Challenge: The city faced rising pressure on its waste management system due to rapid urban growth, with up to 20 new homes built weekly and a projected 26% population increase. Public Works Director Burke Robertson and his team needed to expand the infrastructure quickly, without exceeding tight budget limits or compromising service quality. The traditional procurement process was slow and complex, requiring staff to navigate purchasing requirements, develop and advertise RFPs, and evaluate bids before initiating equipment purchases. Partnering with Sourcwell improved the city's ability to deliver timely, cost-effective waste collection services by streamlining how it purchased critical equipment.

Impact: This project significantly streamlined the city's procurement process, allowing the public works team to fast-track the compliant purchase of high-quality, cost-efficient Heil refuse trucks. By using Sourcwell's cooperative contract, the city reduced administrative effort, ensured compliance, and cut both initial expenses and long-term operating costs. The new trucks integrated seamlessly with Graham's existing fleet, minimizing training needs and service interruptions. Their fuel-efficient design and built-in maintenance tracking further improved operational efficiency. With support from Sourcwell, CES, and Heil, the city expanded its waste management capacity while maintaining high-quality service for residents now and into the future. This partnership demonstrates how cities can leverage cooperative contracts to improve infrastructure, maximize budgets, and respond efficiently to community growth.

How-to: Sourcwell conducts solicitations on behalf of all eligible government agencies, resulting in highly competitive contracts and pricing discounts. This allows cities and other units of government to maximize taxpayer money by saving time, reducing costs, and gaining access to best-value products and services.

Once Sourcwell establishes a contract, any public agency in the United States can use that contract to purchase from a supplier. Contracts are pre-approved either by direct authority, where existing laws already support cooperative purchasing, or by joint exercise of powers statutes, which allow government entities to use their collective buying power. Government agencies have access to the full solicitation process and all contract documents to document they met procurement requirements through the purchasing process.

When a city or other government agency decides to purchase using a Sourcwell-awarded contract, it's an easy three-step process:

1. Register as a participating agency at sourcwell-mn.gov/register.
2. Use the search to find a contract for the required products or services.
3. Contact the selected supplier and provide their Sourcwell account number.

General Tips: Cooperative purchasing streamlines government procurement by increasing efficiency and transparency. Endorsed by both The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) and the American Bar Association, it is recognized as an established method for government entities to purchase technology, equipment, and other products and services at the best value.

Budget: All cities — and any public agency — can use Sourcwell's cooperative purchasing contracts. There is no cost, no obligation, and no liability.

Funding Sources: General purpose city funds

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Cost savings, Business benefits



Scan or visit
sourcwell.co/story
to read the full story.



A Heil refuse truck collects waste in Graham, North Carolina

Contact:

Burke Robertson
Public Works Director City of Graham
b.robertson@cityofgraham.com

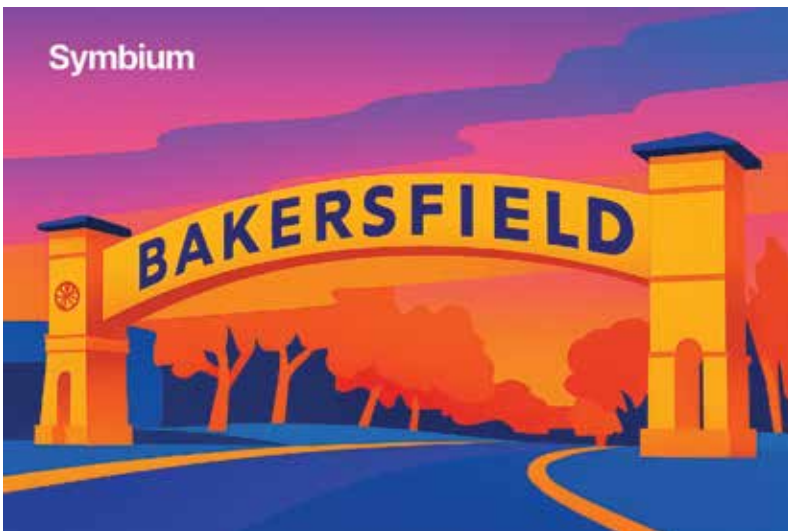
Bill Otto
bill.otto@sourcwell-mn.gov, (651) 295-0365

Symbium: Phased implementation of instant permitting

Project Description: Bakersfield successfully executed a phased rollout of Symbium's instant permitting platform by supercharging the city's existing permitting systems. This strategy prioritized minimal disruption internally, as city staff didn't need to learn or adopt new processes - the implementation was entirely public-facing. By initially targeting high-volume permits such as solar and battery storage, and then smoothly expanding to EV charging, reroofing, and electrical panel upgrades, the city enhanced service delivery without operational friction, quickly demonstrating the value of instant permitting to the community.

Challenge: The project dramatically improved Bakersfield's permitting services, specifically addressing the challenge of lengthy delays and administrative bottlenecks in reviewing and issuing permits for energy-saving projects, including reroofing, solar, and main panel upgrades. By implementing Symbium's instant permitting platform, Bakersfield overcame slow turnaround times, streamlined compliance checks, and transformed a previously cumbersome experience into a rapid, fully automated, and user-friendly service available directly to residents and contractors.

Impact: The successful rollout of Symbium's instant permitting platform in Bakersfield dramatically reduced delays and red tape for housing and energy-saving home upgrades, streamlining the permit process from weeks to minutes. Residents and contractors gained immediate approvals for critical improvements such as reroofs, electrical panel upgrades, and home energy efficiency projects. This efficiency reduced costs, boosted local economic activity, and freed city staff from paperwork, allowing them to enhance customer service and support broader community development goals.



City of Bakersfield

How-to: Development and Implementation Breakdown: The City of Bakersfield and Symbium collaboratively developed a phased, public-facing rollout approach for instant permitting, focused on simplicity, minimal disruption, and leveraging existing city processes.

Initial Assessment and Scope Identification: Bakersfield staff and Symbium identified key permit types (reroofs, electrical panel upgrades, energy efficiency upgrades) most suitable for automation, prioritizing high-volume applications to achieve immediate, visible impact.

System Integration Without Internal Disruption: Symbium's permitting platform was designed to enhance, not replace, existing city permitting infrastructure. By placing the entire interface and compliance-check process directly in public-facing applications, city staff maintained their existing workflows without requiring additional training or process changes.

Phased Rollout: Implementation began with simpler, high-frequency permit types, allowing rapid community adoption and immediate positive feedback. Successes were monitored closely to quickly address any challenges or optimize processes.

Launch Event and Community Celebration: A major City Hall launch event is scheduled in July 2025, where the Mayor and installers who do business in the City will celebrate this innovation and the accelerated deployment of projects in the City.

Expansion and Continuous Improvement: After initial successes, Bakersfield seamlessly expanded instant permitting to additional project types, continually incorporating community and staff feedback to ensure ongoing improvement.

This structured, phased strategy allowed Bakersfield to implement instant permitting with minimal disruption, maximum public benefit, and scalability - making it highly replicable for other municipalities nationwide.

General Tips: A key insight from Bakersfield's successful rollout is that cities don't need extensive internal system overhauls or staff retraining to achieve significant service improvements. The entirely public-facing implementation ensured rapid adoption and minimized disruption. Additionally, because Symbium's platform is offered to jurisdictions at no cost, Bakersfield avoided the lengthy public RFP process, enabling swift deployment. Engaging installers early also proved essential in gaining strong community buy-in and accelerating permit adoption.

Budget: \$0 to the local AHJ. Contractors pay a nominal service fee to get an instant permit through Symbium.

Funding Sources: Symbium assumed the cost

Tags: Innovation, Cost savings, Impact on city economy, Eliminated friction at the permitting counter, leading to a happier public.

Contact:

Pete Jackson, Electrical Specialist
pjackson@bakersfieldcity.us, (661) 326-3091

Leila Banijamali, CEO
leila@symbium.com, (415) 999-6382

U.S. Green Building Council: Building Resilience through LEED in Coral Gables

Project Description: The City of Coral Gables, FL inaugurated its state-of-the-art Public Safety Building in January 2021. The 189,000 square foot facility houses the Police and Fire Headquarters, 911 Call Center and First Responders Dispatch Center, Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Fire Station 1, and Innovation & Technology (IT) Department as well as its Communications and Public Affairs Office. In October 2021, the Public Safety Building received Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) v4 BD+C Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), verifying the achievement of sustainability and resilience in building design and construction. By leveraging LEED, Coral Gables was able to use a proven framework to achieve its sustainability and resilience goals for the project and deliver a cutting-edge public safety facility for its constituents.

Challenge: The former public safety facility had become obsolete over time, impacting occupant comfort and maintenance needs. Because the facility remains a key part of the city's critical infrastructure, upgrades were necessary. Through this project, the city invested not only in building modernization but also in sustainability and resilience, ensuring the facility is built to last in a region vulnerable to hurricanes.

Impact: The new Coral Gables Public Safety Building is designed to be resilient to natural hazards such as hurricanes, an important feature for a facility that houses critical infrastructure including the 911 Call Center and divisional EOC for the cities of South Miami, West Miami, Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay and Sweetwater as well as the University of Miami. The city invested in facility resilience measures such as reinforced masonry, thick glass, and housing mechanical equipment on the top floor of the five-story building, in addition to backup generators that ensure the building can remain operational for two weeks in case of an emergency. According to Police Chief Ed Hudak, "This building is for the next few generations. The technology alone is what we've always needed and wanted, and now we have it... and it's the strongest building, structurally, that the city has ever built." Overall, a small upfront investment in disaster preparedness avoids disruptions to essential operations and mitigates costly disaster recovery efforts, delivering significant economic and community resilience benefits for the long term.



Coral Gables Public Safety Building

How-to: The Public Safety Building project used Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) as the project delivery method, bringing a Construction Manager into contract early in the design phase to work with consultants to provide periodic cost estimates, value engineering and constructability reviews. Early collaboration between various project stakeholders contributed to the project achieving the LEED Integrative Process credit.

Strategies that helped the building achieve LEED certification include incorporating tree canopy, coral stone pavers, Mallorca clay cool roof tiles, and PVC Sheet Roofing to help reduce impacts of heat island effect, as well as water efficiency measures that reduced potable water use by more than 36%. Additionally, the facility invested in resilience measures such as two backup generators, reinforced masonry, and thick glass that harden the building to natural disasters.

Finally, certifying the project to LEED Silver builds on the city's existing relationship with USGBC and market familiarity with LEED. Coral Gables requires all new buildings over 20,000 sq. ft., whether public or private, to meet LEED Silver or equivalent standards. Compliance with the LEED policy is verified through a Green Building Bond totaling 3% of construction costs; if a project owner cannot provide proof of green building certification within two years of receiving a Certificate of Occupancy or Completion, the amount of the bond is forfeited to the city to help pay for citywide sustainability initiatives.

The city also achieved LEED for Cities Gold certification in 2022, demonstrating Coral Gables' jurisdiction-wide leadership on sustainability. They received full credit for resilience planning, having completed a vulnerability assessment and resilience plan for the entire jurisdiction. Coral Gables also achieved points for credits such as green building policy and incentives, green spaces, and grid harmonization, consistent with their work on the Public Safety Building.

General Tips: In April 2025, USGBC launched the newest version of LEED, LEED v5, which strengthens the standards for decarbonization and resilience. All LEED v5 projects must undergo a climate resilience assessment, identifying priority natural hazards that could affect the project. LEED v5 also provides an optional Resilience Pathway for projects to document clear measures toward addressing natural hazards, making it easier than ever to verify that a building is resilient.

Budget: \$68 million

Funding Sources: Coral Gables Sunshine State Governmental Financing Commission (SSGFC) Bonds: \$49.5 million; Coral Gables General Capital Improvement Funds: \$8.9 million; Coral Gables Impact Fees: \$4 million; Developer Fees: \$2.7 million; Interest on Coral Gables SSGFC Bonds: \$1.7 million; Building Better Communities Miami-Dade County Bonds: \$1.5 million; Coral Gables Roadway Funds: \$100,000

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Cost savings, Environment impact

Contact:

Matthew Anderson
Assistant Director, Mobility & Sustainability, City of Coral Gables, FL
Manderson@coralgables.com

Hilari Varnadore,
Vice President, Sustainable Cities, U.S. Green Building Council
Hvarnadore@usgbc.org

UL Standards & Engagement: Safer Batteries, Safer Cities: A Public-Private Approach to E-Mobility Risks

Project Description: UL Standards & Engagement, a nonprofit safety advocacy organization, serves as a trusted resource for cities working to reduce e-mobility fire risks while advancing clean, sustainable transportation. ULSE develops consensus-based safety standards for e-mobility devices and lithium-ion batteries and provides data-driven insights to help cities understand and address emerging safety challenges. In New York City, for example, ULSE's first-of-its-kind research, in partnership with Oxford Economics, quantified the economic, human, and community toll of battery fires — an estimated \$518.6 million in damages, fatalities, and injuries between 2019 and 2023 — and identified unsafe charging behaviors and a critical need for public awareness. These findings helped define the issue and underscore the importance of clear safety requirements. NYC's Local Law 39, signed in 2023, includes a requirement that e-mobility products sold, rented, or leased in the city comply with UL safety standards. This model illustrates how data, standards, and collaboration can drive meaningful, replicable policy solutions for communities nationwide.

Challenge: New York City faced a growing public safety challenge as fires caused by uncertified e-bikes, e-scooters, and lithium-ion batteries placed increasing strain on emergency services and put residents at risk. In response, the city enacted new laws to help ensure that products sold, leased, or rented meet three established UL safety standards — reducing the likelihood of dangerous incidents. Research provided by ULSE and Oxford Economics helped define the scope of the issue, identifying nearly \$519 million in damages, fatalities, and injuries between 2019 and 2023, and revealing an awareness gap around safe charging practices. These insights support a data-driven approach to policymaking and public education — helping strengthen consumer protection, ease pressure on first responders, and promote safer use of e-mobility devices. This model offers a replicable framework for other cities working to reduce fire risks while supporting sustainable urban transportation.

Impact: The passage of New York City's Local Law 39 marked a major step in improving e-mobility safety by requiring that e-bikes, e-scooters, and lithium-ion batteries sold, rented, or leased in the city comply with three UL safety standards. Since the law took effect, the city has seen a 67% drop in lithium-ion battery-related fatalities — from 18 in 2023 to 6 in 2024 — demonstrating how clear product requirements can help reduce risk. UL Standards & Engagement has served as a resource by providing data and analysis that helped define the scope of the issue and support ongoing implementation. Our research quantified the financial toll of e-mobility fires and highlighted unsafe consumer behaviors contributing to these incidents. This outcome underscores the value of data-informed policy and cross-sector collaboration. Together, these tools can help communities more effectively respond to fast-evolving safety challenges.

How-to: New York City identified a growing public safety threat as fires caused by uncertified e-bikes, e-scooters, and lithium-ion batteries continued to rise. In response, the city enacted Local Law 39, requiring that all e-mobility devices sold, leased, or rented meet three UL safety standards. This decisive action illustrates how local leadership can proactively reduce risk and protect residents through clear, enforceable safety requirements.

UL Standards & Engagement, a nonprofit safety advocacy organization, serves as a non-regulatory resource for cities addressing these challenges. ULSE develops consensus-based safety standards through a transparent process involving manufacturers, first responders, regulators, and public interest groups. These standards are designed to keep pace with rapidly evolving technologies and help ensure consumer safety.

To support informed policymaking, ULSE also conducts first-of-its-kind research that examines consumer behavior, awareness gaps, and charging practices related to e-mobility devices. In NYC, ULSE quantified the economic, human, and community toll of lithium-ion battery fires, estimating nearly \$519 million in damages between 2019 and 2023. These insights help other cities assess the scale of the issue and build the case for early intervention.

To support replication, ULSE has developed model legislation that can be adapted by local governments seeking to strengthen e-mobility safety. By combining data, standards, and actionable tools, this approach provides a clear path for mayors to mitigate fire risk, protect their communities, and support safe adoption of clean transportation.

General Tips: Based on insights from ULSE's report, *The Impact of E-Mobility Battery Fires in NYC: The Economic, Human, and Community Toll*, to bridge the gap between current efforts and a comprehensive safety framework, ULSE proposes the following recommendations:

- Stronger enforcement of safety standards
 - Public education on proper charging and certified products
 - Targeted initiatives for delivery workers, including trade-in and battery swap programs
 - Improved data collection through standardized incident reporting
- These steps can help cities reduce risk, protect lives, and ensure safer e-mobility growth.

Funding Sources: Private funding

Tags: Innovation, Environment impact, Impact on city economy

Contact:

NYC Council and Mayor's Office
David McKnight
David.McKnight@ul.org

Veolia North America: 30M Solar Energy Savings: City of Arvin, CA

Project Description: The City of Arvin, California faced high energy costs at its wastewater treatment plant, consuming 30% of operating expenses. To address this, Arvin partnered with Veolia to implement a solar energy project aimed at cutting costs, lowering emissions, and enhancing plant reliability. The project was funded through municipal financing, the Inflation Reduction Act, and additional resources tied to the city's disadvantaged community status. Once operational, the solar installation will produce one megawatt of electricity—enough to power approximately 750 homes. Over 30 years, the project is projected to save the city up to \$30 million in energy costs.

Challenge: The project improved the operation of Arvin's wastewater treatment plant by significantly reducing its energy costs, which made up 30% of its operating budget. It also addressed the city's challenge of high emissions and unreliable energy by introducing a sustainable, solar-powered solution—enhancing both financial stability and service reliability.

Impact: The project cut energy costs and boosted reliability at Arvin's wastewater treatment plant. By generating clean, on-site power, it reduced emissions and protected the city from rising energy prices. Over 30 years, it's expected to save up to \$30 million—freeing funds for other city services and improving long-term sustainability.



City of Arvin Solar Ground Breaking Ceremony



City of Arvin Solar Installation 23

How-to: Arvin's best practice began with an energy audit to identify high-cost operations at the wastewater plant. The city partnered with Veolia to design a solar solution tailored to site needs. Funding was secured through municipal financing, the Inflation Reduction Act, and resources for disadvantaged communities. The system was sized for maximum impact—1 MW—and integrated without disrupting operations. This model—audit, partner, fund, install—can be replicated by other municipalities.

General Tips: A key lesson learned was the value of leveraging a community's disadvantaged status to unlock additional funding and incentives. Early collaboration between city leadership, operations staff, and financing experts was also critical to aligning technical goals with budget realities. Another takeaway: designing the system for long-term energy inflation—not just current rates—maximized future savings and strengthened the project's business case.

Budget: 3.6M

Funding Sources: Federal tax credits, Federal grants, State grants

Additional Investment: Yes, the City of Arvin utilized multiple funding sources to implement its solar project at the wastewater treatment plant. In addition to low-interest municipal financing and the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the city applied for a \$3 million loan through the California Energy Commission's Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA), which offers financing at a 1% interest rate. Veolia also assisted the city in applying for a \$1.29 million direct payment from the U.S. Treasury under the IRA's Investment Tax Credit program. Furthermore, the city pursued an additional 10% bonus credit available to disadvantaged communities, potentially increasing the federal contribution to 40% of the project cost.

Tags: Service delivery improvement, Innovation, Cost savings, Environment impact, Impact on city economy

Contact:

Jeff Jones
City Finance Manager
jeffjones@arvin.org

John Burdette
Business Developer
john.burdette@veolia.com
james.hague@veolia.com

WM: Recycling Pilot Helps Capture New Material and Evaluates Recycling Education on Participation

Project Description: To address the issue of film plastic contamination which is a challenge for many recyclers that often contaminates the curbside recycling stream, WM has implemented advanced film processing equipment at its recycling facility in Salt Lake City, Utah to enhance recycling capacity and improve residential recycling by including flexible plastics in the curbside recycling program.

From August 2023 to September 2024, approximately 16,000 residents were encouraged to include various plastics in their recycling carts, including grocery, newspaper, food storage, and dry-cleaning bags, plastic wrap, and mailing packaging.

This pilot project had two main objectives: to effectively collect flexible plastics for recycling and assess the processing technology.

Challenge: Flexible plastics are versatile materials used in a variety of applications. As their popularity has grown, we face an increasing plastic waste problem. It is also crucial to recognize that tossing these items into curbside recycling bins where facilities lack the proper processing equipment can endanger workers.

Plastic bags, shrink wrap, and bubble wrap can easily become tangled in machinery that sorts recyclables into different categories. This tangling decreases the facility's efficiency, as workers must stop the machines to untangle and remove these items, which can also pose a safety hazard.

Impact: Flexible Plastics

During and after the pilot program, there was a notable increase in the recycling of film plastics, rising by over 60%. Additionally, contamination in the recycling stream decreased, which led to higher quality recyclables and fewer recyclables in the disposal stream. At the start of the pilot in August 2023, the contamination rate was 37%. By the end in August 2024, it decreased to 33%. Changes in material composition:

- Target film in recycling rose from 1% to 1.6% (64% change).
- Target film in trash fell from 2.2% to 0.75% (65% change).
- Target film capture rate increased from 10% to 10.9% (9.2% change).

Recycling Education: WM and the City implemented a comprehensive outreach strategy to encourage residents to recycle new materials. During the first two months of the pilot program, the educational efforts reached residents through multiple channels, with additional outreach occurring five months later to maintain momentum.



How-to: Pilot Introduction

- WM presented at the Orem City Council meetings and met with the Orem City Manager and other city staff members to discuss the pilot program, establish a timeline and outreach strategy, and identify households that would receive invitations to participate.
- Pilot Launch: Engaging Residents
- WM and the City of Orem sent invitation postcards to selected households to announce the launch of the pilot recycling program and to specify the materials residents could include in their curbside recycling carts.
- To ensure that all residents were informed about the changes to their recycling during the pilot program, WM created additional mailers, a bill insert for the City to distribute, and social media posts for the City to share on its platforms.
- Furthermore, the City established a dedicated webpage for the pilot, along with a list of frequently asked questions. They also emailed residents, published articles in their monthly newsletter, Orem Outlook, and issued a press release that garnered attention from Fox13 News.
- Material Audits
- The Salt Lake Recycling Facility conducted material composition audits before the pilot launched and after the pilot period concluded. They performed volume audits of film in recycling and trash and assessed the quality of the inbound film.
- Pilot Data
- The City of Orem and WM collaborated with a leading management consulting firm renowned for its waste and recycling industry expertise. Together, they diligently audited the capture rates of targeted film plastics during this transformative pilot program, ensuring a thorough understanding of its impact.

Funding Sources: Private funding

Tags: Innovation, Environment impact, Recycling



Contact:

Brenn Bybee
Orem City Manager
(801) 229-7000

Susan Moulton
Senior Director, Public Sector Solutions
smoulton@wm.com
(562) 305-0042



THE UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Tom Cochran

Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director

1620 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: 202.293.7330

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