



**City Thread**

**Connected Streets = Connected Communities**

How Bentonville, Arkansas Is Reimagining What's Possible with Local  
Government + Partnerships

# **Building Communities That Work For Everyone**

# Building Communities That Work For Everyone

## Who We Are

- National, non-profit 501(c)(3) funder and consulting team
- Developed the **Playbook** and **Accelerated Mobility Playbook (AMP)** to advance place-based projects
- Playbook communities are delivering projects 5X faster than traditional approaches, turning decades-long projects into 24- to 36-month completions.
- Launched the grant-funded AMP Technical Assistance program in 2023



# If Not Washington, Then Where?

How local governments, funders, and local Coalitions are leading  
in an era of uncertainty.

## Our Approach

- Facilitate conversations and strengthen bonds by reaching people where they are.
- Understand community interests, needs, and priorities to implement solutions and achieve equitable results.
- Mobilize diverse coalitions to work toward a safer, more accessible, and connected community.



NATIONAL REACH



# Are You Stuck? BINGO

"I ride a bike, but..."	Business owner with the mayor's cell number	Don't touch my parking!	What we really need is better education	Old school roadway engineers
This design isn't in the MUTCD	Our elected leaders are not on the same page	Our plan is too old, we need a new one.	Community engagement isn't helping	It's going to be amazing, but it will take 10 years
This is a sign of gentrification	We'll do that after the election	-FREE- Not enough money -SPACE-	Media has declared a "War on Cars"	"I never see anyone walking..."
Not enough staff	We don't have a plan	Not enough community engagement	"I never heard about this project"	(name your group) don't ride bikes
This isn't Amsterdam	No one wants to go on a (road) diet	"Why can't you fix this other thing first?"	State DOT doesn't get it	This is going to make traffic less safe

## The Challenge:

1. Projects take too long to implement.
2. Completed projects are small in scale, disconnected, and don't deliver on the promise of connection.
3. Poor messaging creates fear and distrust, empowering a vocal minority of opposition.
4. Leaders lack a proven and accessible strategy and the implementation expertise needed to sustain momentum.

## The Good News:

We can overcome these challenges and accelerate the completion of place-based projects if we:

- Change how we talk infrastructure and its benefits
- Diversify our base of support and spokespeople
- Resource partners to participate meaningfully
- Use a data-informed strategy to act with consistency and predictability

# The Playbook

## Program Overview

**The Playbook** provides a roadmap for authentic community engagement, project selection, and accelerated implementation.

### Four areas of focus:

- Resident perceptions and attitudes
- Public messaging and communications
- State of project planning and implementation
- Relationships between stakeholder groups

### Four stakeholder groups:

- Elected Leaders
- County / City Staff
- Community Partners
- Philanthropy + Anchor Institutions

### Deliverables:

- Audience research reports
- Readiness Assessment report
- Action Plan with budget and timeline



# City Thread's Playbook

## 1 Establish a shared goal

Acceleration relies upon a shared vision among community stakeholders.

This goal must be **bold, yet achievable.**

## 2 Align Partnerships

Success requires coordination, partnership, and communication.

**Elected officials, city staff, & community organizations** must unite behind a shared strategy.

## 3 Resource Partners

A multi-year cooperative effort requires customized resources.

**Philanthropy** provides each partner resources to address their specific needs.

## 4 Build Projects, Fast

Project delivery occurs alongside community outreach and engagement.

Residents participate positively because the process is **consistent and predictable.**



# Establishing A Shared Goal



**Complete 30 miles of prioritized  
Connecting Bentonville Plan by  
December 2025.**

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Traffic Congestion  
Civic Engagement  
Economic Development

Active Living  
Transportation Options  
Roadway Infrastructure

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Runway  
Walton Family Foundation  
Trailblazers  
Visit Bentonville  
City of Bentonville

NWACC  
Bentonville Public Schools  
Chamber of Commerce  
Walmart  
Church Congregations

## The Goal:

Complete 30 miles of new bike projects by the end of 2025.



# The Playbook Strategy

## ACCELERATION FLYWHEEL

- 1 Aligning Partnerships
- 2 Resourcing Local Champions
- 3 Building At Scale, Quickly





# Aligning Partnerships



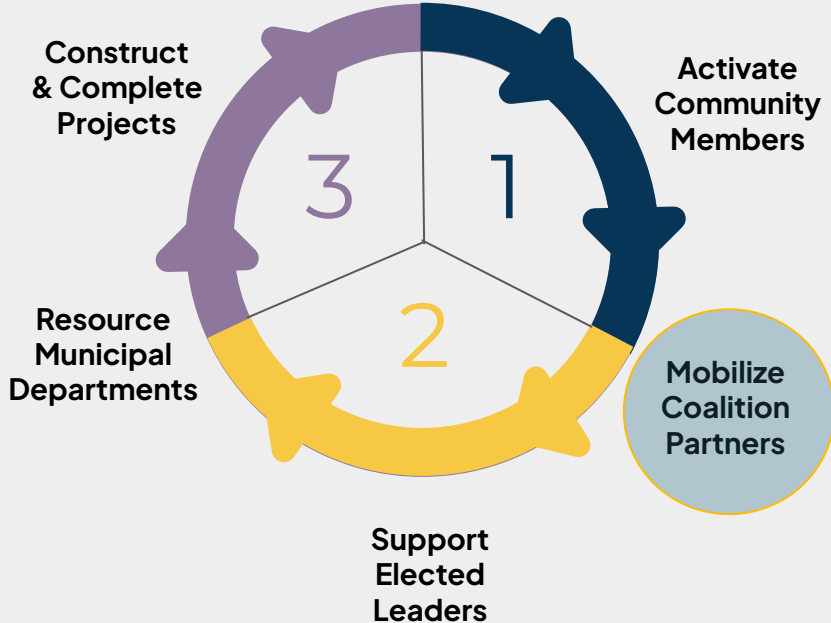
The Bentonville Moves Coalition's paid media campaign generated 500,000 impressions per month.





# Aligning Partnerships

Highlight  
Popular  
Support



In 2025, the total membership in the Bentonville Moves Coalition grew by 50%, exceeding 875 members.



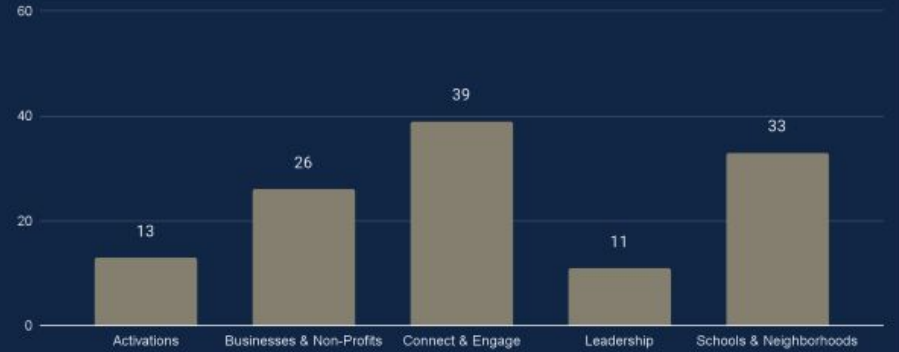


# Coalition Building + Activation

### BMC Total Membership

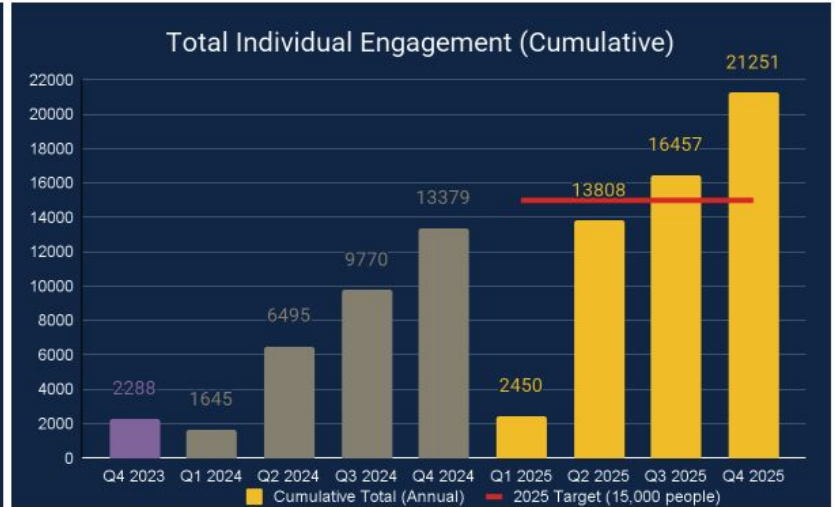
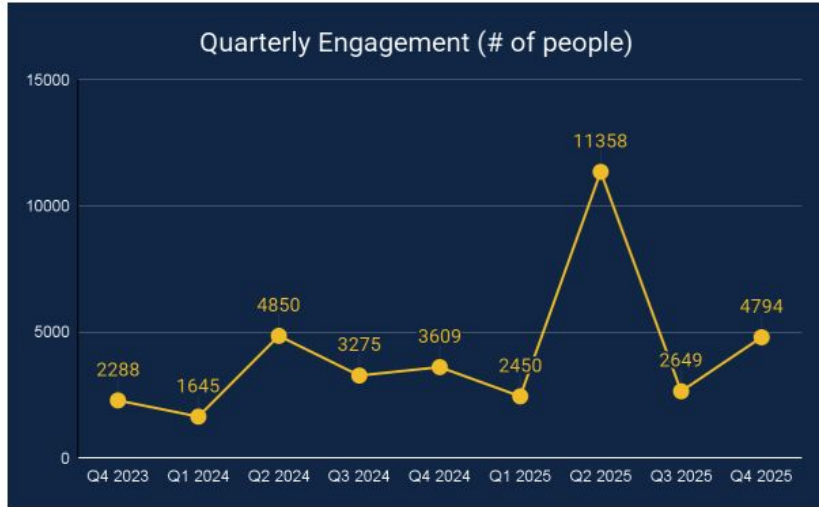


### BMC Subcommittee Membership (# of people)





# Coalition Building + Activation





# Resourcing Local Champions

Highlight  
Popular  
Support

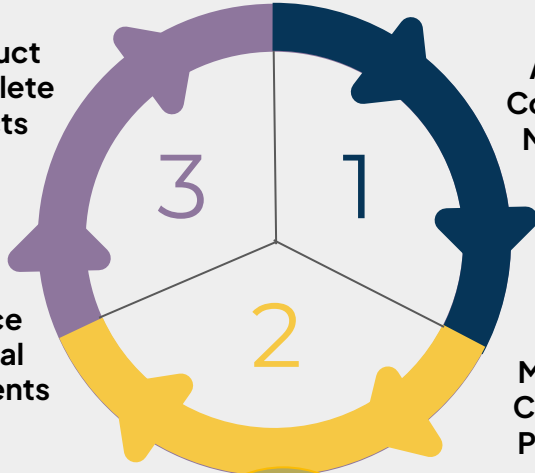
Activate  
Community  
Members

Mobilize  
Coalition  
Partners

Support  
Elected  
Leaders

Construct  
& Complete  
Projects

Resource  
Municipal  
Departments



The Coalition partnered with 80 local organizations and engaged 15,000 in project activations, mini-grants, community gatherings, and local business/event sponsorship in 2025

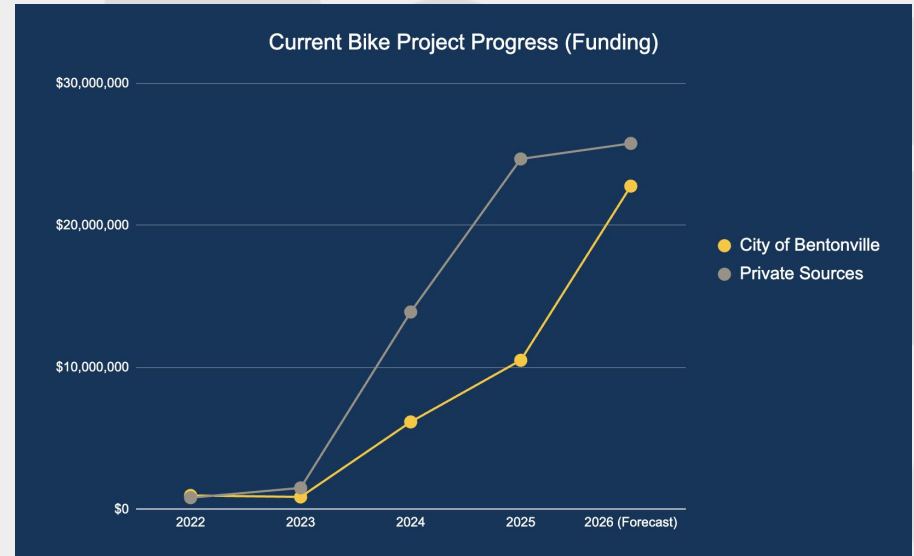




# Resourcing Local Champions



The City of Bentonville has allocated **\$28M** of funding towards the completion of this work.

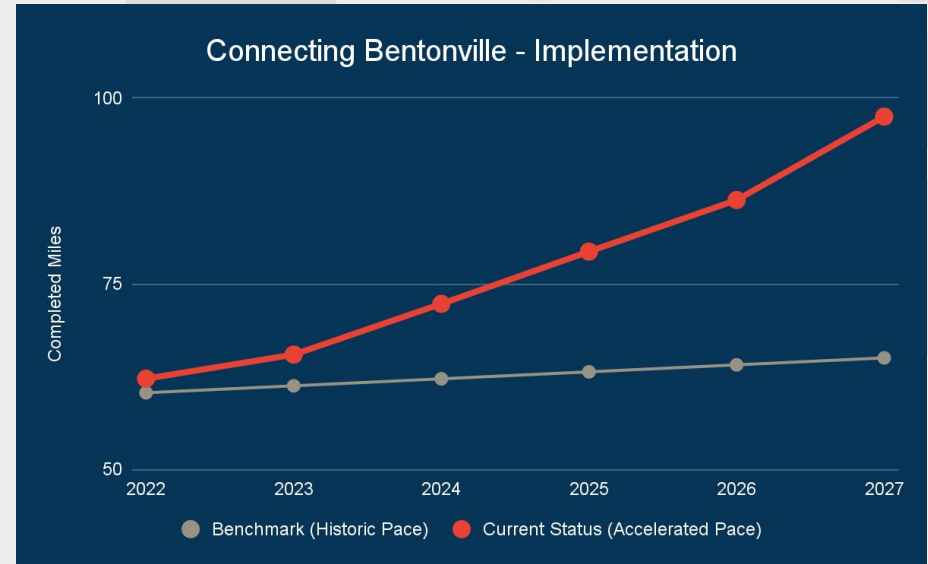




# Build At Scale, Quickly



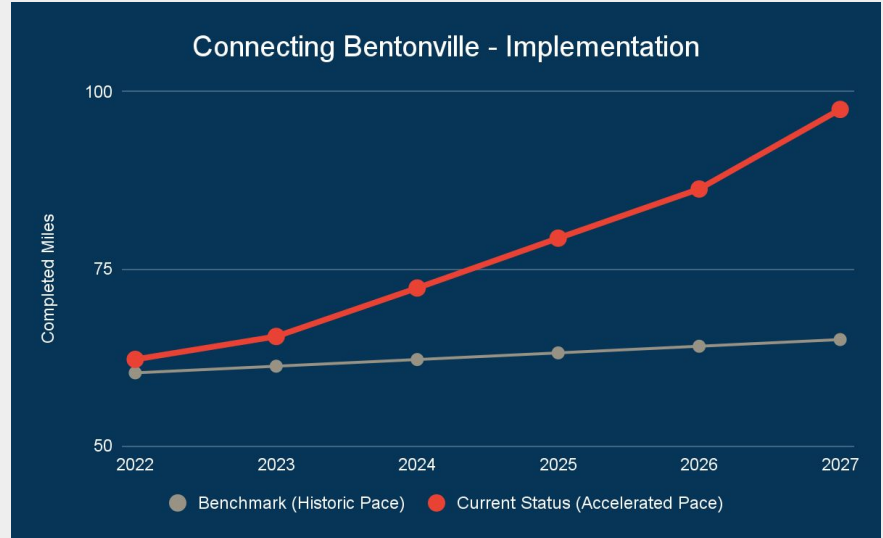
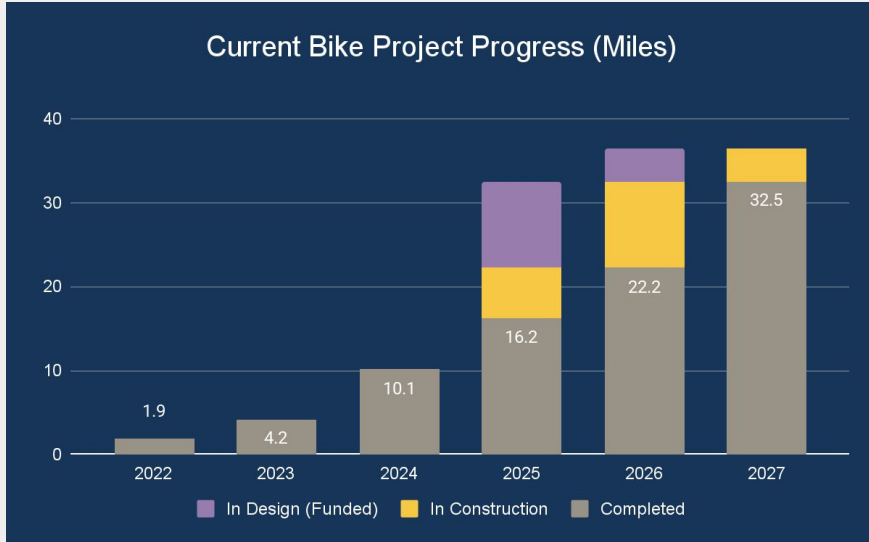
Since 2022, the City of Bentonville accelerated project delivery 295% over its historical pace.





# Replicable, Relatable, and Ready

## Network Implementation



**From 2022–2025, the City of Bentonville accelerated project delivery 9X over its historical pace**

**The net result is 9.9 miles of projects completed 10 years earlier than expected.**



# A Broad, Diverse Coalition



**Bentonville Moves Coalition celebrated 20 grand opening events from 2023 – 2025.**





# Playbook Outcomes: Civic Sustainability

## Enabling Risk

- BMC created a channel of support and encouragement directed at the Mayor and City Council, encouraging process innovation.
- City Thread will encouraged City staff to lean in further on good design practices, budget requests, and community engagement activities



Surveys completed in 2023, 2024 and 2025 found that 80% of voters supported the *Connecting Bentonville* plan, with 90% of participants agreeing that a connected mobility network would improve safety for all road users, drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike.



**City Thread**

**The Playbook: Our Stone County**



# City Thread's Playbook

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# The Playbook

## Preliminary Observations

Stone County benefits from **strong social cohesion**, deep civic pride, and a web of partnerships across churches, schools, nonprofits, and health organizations.

- **Community Strength and Collaboration Are Core Assets**
- **Housing and Transportation Are Persistent Weaknesses**
- **Opportunities Lie in Public-Private and Faith-Based Partnerships**
- **Emerging Leadership and Philanthropic Trust Can Drive Change**
- **Civic Participation Is Low but Interest in Engagement Is Growing**

# The Playbook

## Noteworthy Considerations

Among Stone County's residents, there are differences in need based on **age** (young people vs. seniors) and **geographic location** (north vs. south)

- **Natural Amenities Leveraged for Resident Benefit**  
Stone County could develop recreation infrastructure and outdoor programming that supports both tourism and year-round resident well-being
- **Poverty and Stigma Must Be Considered**  
Residents may resist services seen as “handouts” making program design and communication strategies critically important
- **Supporting Seniors Is Popular**  
When prompted, residents overwhelmingly supported investment in infrastructure and services for seniors.
- **Low Participation with Local Government**  
While many residents aligned politically with local leadership, the intensity of participation in government was low

# The Playbook

## Relationship Mapping

Collaboration, coordination, and communication between three primary partner groups is critical for success.

Philanthropy provides resources and support to ensure that the other three groups can effectively and productively participate.





# Establishing A Shared Goal



1. Support Access to Affordable Housing
2. Improve Water Quality & Conservation
3. Create Community Gathering Spaces

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Educational Attainment  
Workforce Development  
Economic Development

Public Health / Healthcare  
Transportation Options  
Roadway Infrastructure

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The Neighbor Company  
SC Health Department  
SC County Commission  
Kimberling City, MO  
Branson West, MO

Table Rock Chamber  
Unite Table Rock Lake  
Elevate Branson  
Taney County Partnership  
Pathways Project

Reeds Spring Schools  
Comm Fdn Ozarks  
MO Fdn for Health  
Silver Dollar City Fdn  
Hatch Foundation

# The Playbook

## Our Stone County

**Preserving the past, shaping what's next.**

*Bringing together neighbors, business owners, and local leaders to ensure Stone County remains a place people are proud to call home for generations.*



# Inspiration from Other Places

Support Access  
to Affordable  
Housing



Telluride, CO

Improve Water  
Quality &  
Conservation



Colman, SD

Create  
Community  
Gathering  
Spaces



Skowhegan, ME



- 1,000+ member community coalition
- 10x increase in project implementation
- Double-digit increase in public support
- \$27M in public funding



**QUESTIONS?**  
**We have answers.**

# Get in Touch



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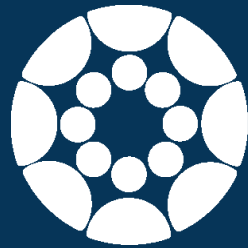
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**City Thread**

Stone County, MO Playbook