What's Keeping your Downtown Street Project from Moving Forward?

Take this Street Project Readiness Assessment and Find Out



Download this diagnostic tool to evaluate if your municipality is ready to get shovels in the ground.

A practical readiness assessment for municipalities looking to turn a downtown street vision into a project that can be funded, designed and built.

You may already have a vision for your downtown. **But while you are talking about your vision, other downtowns are getting things built. The question is: Are the pieces in place to move your vision forward?**

This quick assessment will help you identify where your project is well positioned, and where a few important gaps may still need to be addressed before you're ready to budget, pursue funding, begin design and ultimately get shovels in the ground.

HOW TO USE THIS ASSESSMENT:

For each statement, rate your municipality's current readiness from 0 to 4:

0 — No / Not Started
1 — Just Beginning
2 — Partially
3 — Mostly
4 — Yes / In Place

Don't worry about getting a perfect score. The goal is simply to understand where your project stands today and identify the steps that can help move it forward.



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1 Define the Need

Do you have a clear understanding of what needs to change—and why?

Successful street projects start with a clearly defined need. Understanding the safety, infrastructure, economic and community issues along your street helps establish priorities, build support and make a stronger case for investing public dollars in the project.

Rate each statement from 0–4.

SCORE

☐ We can clearly explain the primary problems or opportunities this project is intended to address.

☐ We have identified specific pedestrian, bicycle, traffic, accessibility or safety concerns along the street.

☐ We understand the general condition of existing sidewalks, curbs, pavement, drainage, lighting and other important street infrastructure - incluiding below grade utilities.

☐ We understand the economic and community issues the project should address, such as foot traffic, business activity, public space or the overall downtown experience.

☐ We have identified which issues are priorities and which improvements would simply be nice to have.

SECTION 1 SCORE: ___ / 20

2 Establish the Vision

Do you know what you want the street to accomplish?

You don’t need to have every design detail figured out. But before moving into detailed design, it’s important to have a shared understanding of the project’s goals, the types of improvements being considered and the real-world conditions that could shape the project.

Rate each statement from 0–4.

SCORE

☐ Our municipality has established clear goals for what this street project should accomplish.

☐ Existing plans, such as a master plan, redevelopment plan, or Complete Streets policy, have been reviewed and align with the goals of this project.

☐ We have identified the types of improvements we may want to consider, such as sidewalks, crossings, lighting, landscaping, parking, bicycle facilities, stormwater improvements or street furnishings.

☐ We have determined the priority users for this street and understard the major trade-offs or competing needs that may need to be resolved to achieve this balance (ie parking, cars traffic, bicycle facilities, etc.)

☐ We know who controls the roadway and which municipal, county or state agencies will need to be involved as the project advances.

SECTION 2 SCORE: ___ / 20

3 Build Support

Are the right people involved and moving in the same direction?

Great street projects affect many people, so early communication and alignment matter. Bringing municipal leaders, staff, businesses, property owners and the public into the process helps identify concerns early, establish shared priorities and build the momentum needed to move a project forward.

Rate each statement from 0–4.

SCORE

☐ Elected officials and key municipal staff generally agree on the project's goals and priorities.

☐ The municipal engineer and other appropriate professionals have been brought into the conversation.

☐ Downtown businesses, property owners and other key stakeholders have had—or will have—a meaningful opportunity to provide input.

☐ We have a clear approach for engaging residents and the broader community as the project moves forward.

☐ We are prepared to work through competing priorities and concerns while keeping the project's larger goals moving forward.

SECTION 3 SCORE: ___ / 20

4 Test Feasibility + Cost

Do you know whether the vision can realistically become a project?

A strong vision is an important start—but eventually it has to work within the physical and financial realities of the street. Testing key ideas, understanding major constraints and developing a realistic planning-level budget can help prevent surprises later and give municipal leaders confidence about what they're being asked to support.

Rate each statement from 0–4.

SCORE	
☐	We have a good understanding of the available street space and whether the improvements we're considering can realistically fit.
☐	Major existing conditions—such as utilities, drainage, grading, driveways or other physical constraints—have been considered at a planning level.
☐	We understand how potential changes could affect important street functions such as parking, loading, traffic circulation and pedestrian movement.
☐	We have a realistic planning-level estimate of what the overall project —or its major components—may cost.
☐	If the full vision exceeds our likely budget, we have considered priorities, alternatives or ways the project could be phased.

SECTION 4 SCORE: ___ / 20

5 Prepare to Fund + Implement

Do you have a realistic path from today's vision to tomorrow's project?

Funding opportunities are much easier to pursue when a municipality already understands what it wants to build, why it's needed and approximately what it will cost. Connecting the project to your capital budget, potential grants and a clear implementation strategy helps turn good ideas into actionable next steps.

Rate each statement from 0–4.

SCORE

- ☐ The project has been discussed as part of the municipality's upcoming capital planning or budgeting process.
- ☐ We have a general understanding of the local funding that may be available or required to advance the project.
- ☐ We have identified potential county, state or federal funding programs that may align with the project's needs and goals.
- ☐ We understand the type of project information and documentation we'll need to competitively pursue outside funding.
- ☐ We know the next actionable step for advancing the project—and who will be responsible for moving it forward.

SECTION 5 SCORE: ___ / 20

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How ready is your project?

Add your five section scores together.

YOUR TOTAL READINESS SCORE: _____ / 100

80–100 | READY TO ADVANCE - You've built a strong foundation.

Many of the important pieces are already in place. Your next opportunity is to bring them together into a coordinated, realistic plan that establishes priorities, costs and a clear path toward funding, design and implementation.

55–79 | GOOD MOMENTUM—WITH SOME GAPS - Your project is moving in the right direction.

You've already done some important work, but there are still a few gaps that could create delays, budget surprises or challenges when pursuing funding. Addressing them now can put your municipality in a much stronger position to advance the project.

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30–54 | BUILD THE FOUNDATION - The vision is there. Now it's time to make it actionable.

Several of the building blocks needed to move toward design, budgeting and funding are still developing. This is a valuable time to establish priorities, engage stakeholders, test feasibility and understand costs before committing significant resources to detailed design.

0–29 | START WITH THE ROADMAP - You're at the beginning—and that's a good time to get organized.

Before jumping into detailed design, focus on defining the need, establishing goals, understanding community priorities and developing a realistic picture of what the project could cost and how it could move forward.

YOUR SCORE IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY

Take another look at your five section scores.

Which section scored the lowest?

That may be more useful than your overall number.

You may have strong community support but no realistic cost estimate. Or, maybe you have a well-established vision but no clear funding strategy. Or, there could be funding opportunities on the horizon but you haven't yet developed the project enough to pursue them effectively.

The goal isn't a perfect score. It's knowing what's missing—and what to do next.



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FROM VISION TO A BUILDABLE PLAN



You probably don't need another visioning exercise. **You already know you want a safer, more attractive and more successful downtown street.**

The challenge is turning that vision into something that can actually move forward.

Arterial's Step 1: Capital Improvement Plan is designed to bridge that gap.

It brings together community and stakeholder input, project goals, existing conditions, needed improvements, planning-level costs and an implementation strategy into a practical roadmap municipalities can use to prepare for capital budgeting, pursue grant opportunities and advance toward design and construction.

It's not just another plan. It's a strategy for moving beyond a vision and getting shovels in the ground.

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