# Overcoming Obstacles To Trail Network Implementation

Lessons and Case Studies for Suburban Communities



**SMITHGROUP** 



#### **OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO TRAIL NETWORK IMPLEMENTATION**

MASTER CLASS AGENDA

**INTRO** (15 MIN)



**CASE STUDY** (45 MIN)



**ACTION PLANNING** (30 MIN)



#### **TODAY'S EXPERT FACILITATORS**

MEET THE SMITHGROUP TEAM



**CASSIE GOODWIN CIVIL ENGINEER, PE** MADISON, WI



**ELLEN SCHMIDT** LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PLA CHICAGO, IL



**SmithGroup Mobility** 



**OLIVER KILEY** LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PLA ANN ARBOR, MI

#### NATIONAL STORY, MIDWEST ROOTS

1,500

Multi-Disciplinary **Professionals**  #8

Architecture & Engineering Firms, *BD+C*, 2024

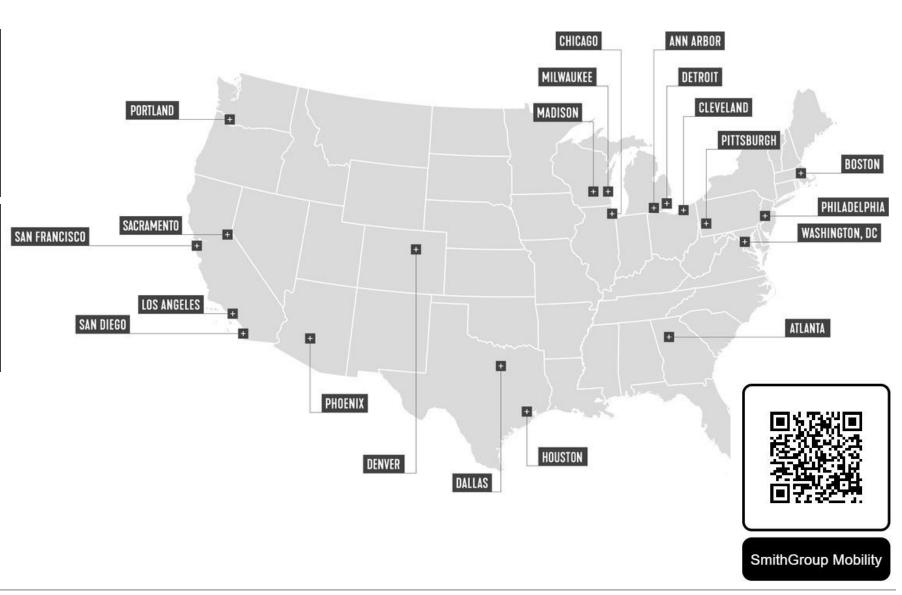
Fast Company Innovation by Design Awards in 5 Years

\$84B

in construction costs for LEED projects

ENR Midwest Names SmithGroup Design Firm of the Year





#### **OUR TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY PRACTICE**

COMPLETE **STREETS** 84 **CORRIDOR DESIGN** 

> Kercheval St Detroit



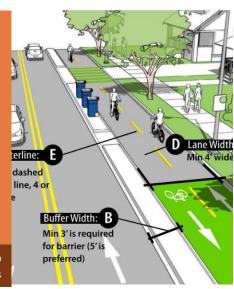
TRAILS & **GREENWAYS** 

> Dequindre Cut Greenway Detroit



**MOBILITY POLICY GUIDELINES** 

Kalamazoo Design Guidelines



**PLACEMAKING TACTICAL URBANISM** 

> Ann Arbor State St Curbless Street



**MOBILITY &** TRANSPORTATIO **PLANS** 

> St. Louis **Mobility Plan**



TRANSIT & **TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMEN** 

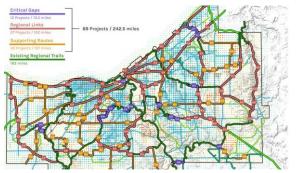
> Fresno Station & TOD Plan



#### TRAIL PROJECTS THAT ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



**DEQUINDRE CUT**Detroit, Michigan



CUYAHOGA GREENWAYS PLAN Cleveland, Ohio



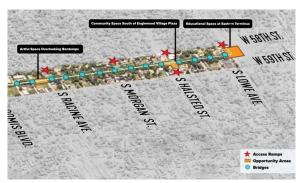
HANK AARON STATE TRAIL, LAKESHORE PATH Milwaukee, Wisconsin



GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY, BRICKLINE St. Louis, Missouri



HARBOR DISTRICT RIVERWALK Milwaukee, Wisconsin



CDOT ENGLEWOOD TRAIL DESIGN Chicago, Illinois



MARQUETTE GREENWAY/SOUTH SHORE RAIL AND TRAIL HEAD Porter, Indiana



GLASS CITY METROPARK
Toledo, Ohio



BRONZEVILLE TRAIL MASTER PLAN
7 Chicago, Shripthagroup.com



GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY, GATEWAY MALL
St. Louis, Missouri
Overcoming Obstacles to Trail Network Implementation



CLEAR LAKE GREENWAY
La Porte, Indiana



**ROUGE RIVER GREENWAY**Wayne County, Michigan



#### MISSION DRIVEN WORK

#### IMPORTANT DRIVERS OF OUR WORK



#### **EQUITY**

We recognize the impact that transportation has on how people access needs and opportunity in their community.



#### HEALTH

We recognize that the safety and comfort of transportation systems is a matter of public health and basic welfare.



#### **PLACE**

We recognize that transportation systems continue to negatively impact the cohesion and identity of communities.



#### **OVERCOMING OBSTACLES**

LET'S START WITH SOME TERMINOLOGY

**OBSTACLE** 

a thing that prevents or hinders progress

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a thing that prevents or hinders progress

**ISSUE** 

context-based fact contributing to the obstacle

DYNAMIC

emotion at play in the situation creating the obstacle

#### WHAT IS AN OBSTACLE YOU HAVE FACED?





### WHAT IS A DYNAMIC AT PLAY WITH THAT OBSTACLE?



#### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO TRAIL NETWORK IMPLEMENTATION

**CASE STUDY PRESENTERS** 

# RURAL CASE STUDY: COWBOY RECREATION AND NATURE TRAIL



**HANNAH JONES** 

Planning & Development Administrator Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

#### SUBURBAN CASE STUDY: CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL



**BRET BARONAK** 

**Executive Director,**Carolina Thread Trail

#### URBAN CASE STUDY: JOE LOUIS GREENWAY



**DANIEL STEFANSKI** 

Real Estate
Development Manager,
Joe Louis Greenway
City of Detroit Planning
and Development

## **Carolina Thread Trail**

Suburban Case Study



#### **SMITHGROUP**





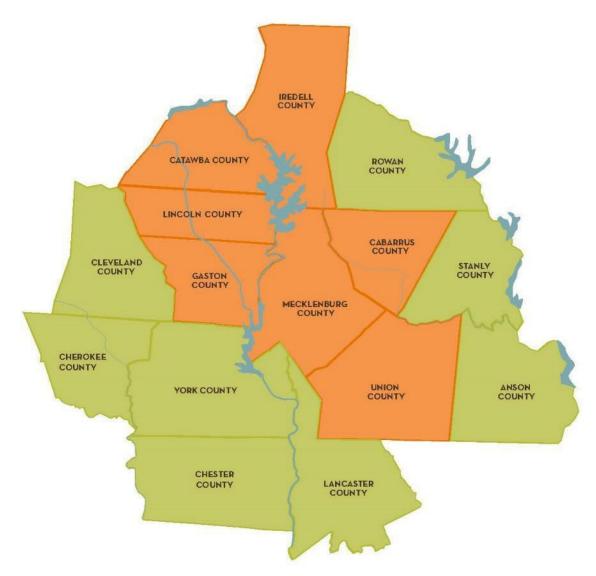


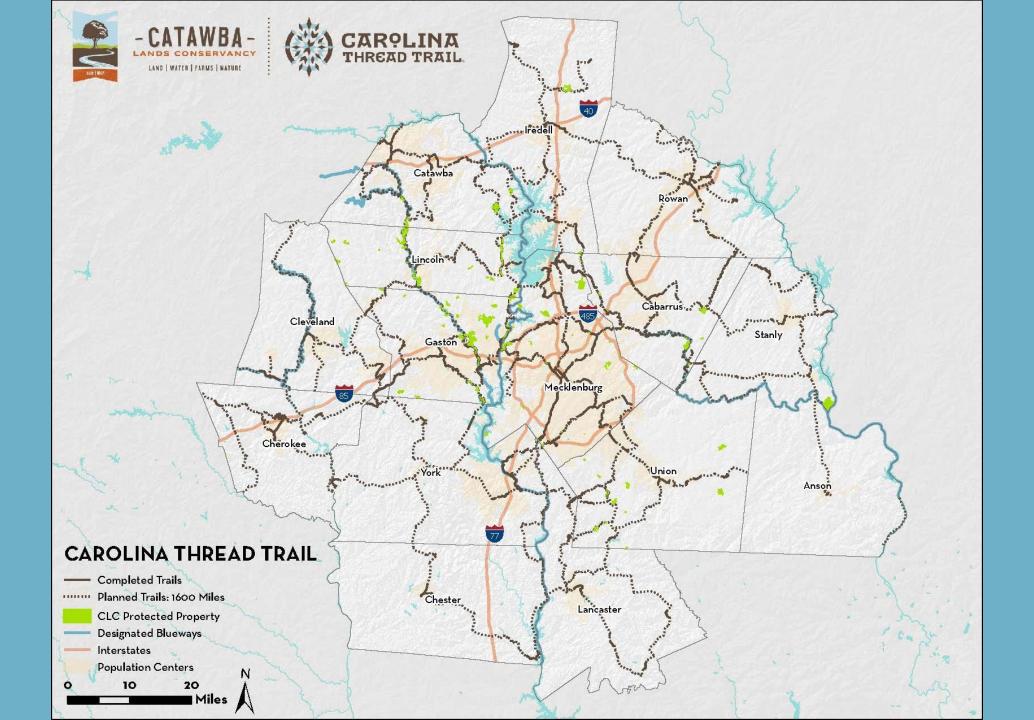


#### CARPLINA Saving Land and Connecting THREAD TRAIL. Lives to Nature

#### **OUR ROOTS**

- Catawba Lands Conservancy began in 1991
- Areas of focus
  - Local farms
  - Wildlife habitat
  - Clean water
  - Connection to nature
- Accomplishments
  - 17,800 acres protected
  - 161 miles of water frontage protected
  - 3,350 acres of farmland preserved
- CTT began in 2007





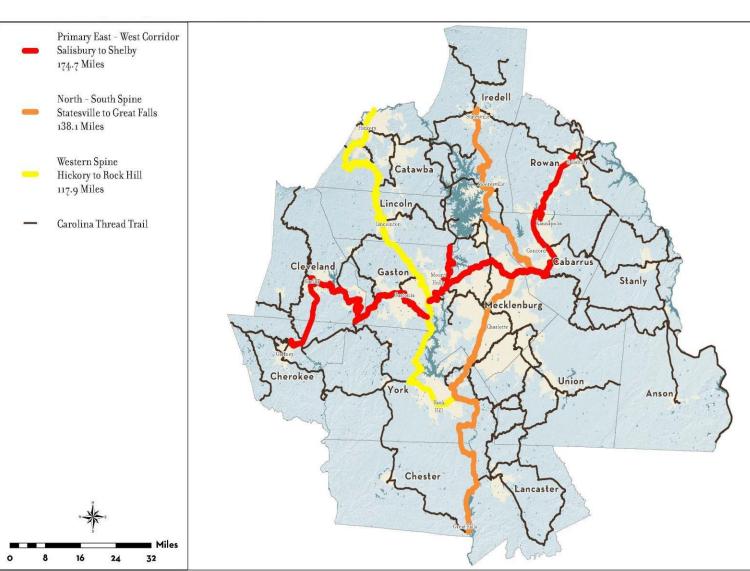




#### **CTT FOOTPRINT**

- 1630 miles overall
- 450miles existing
- 88 municipalities
- 200+ miles of paddling trails

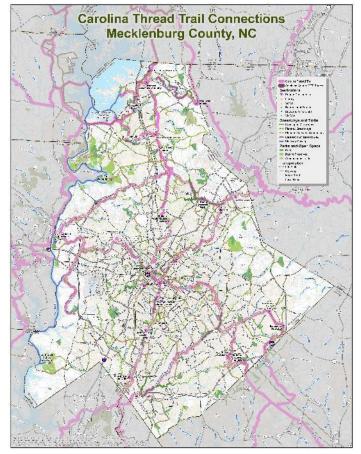
Various types of trail!

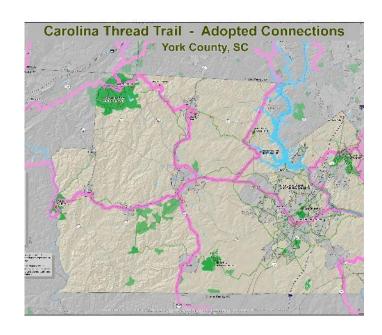


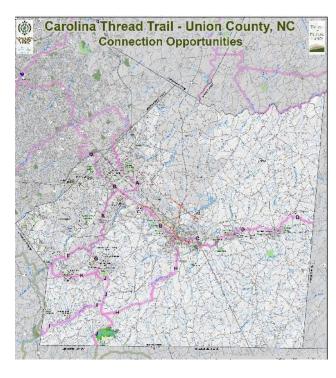












#### **COUNTY MASTER PLANS**

- 15 counties
- Adopted into transportation and land development plans
- Locally led CTT Facilitated





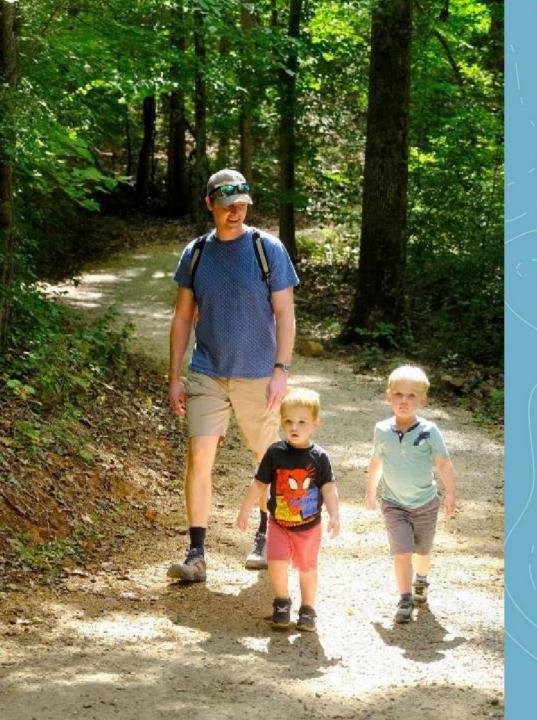












- Leveraging coordination (local government, developers, other partners)
- Planning assistance
- Grant writing assistance
- Special Studies Feasibility, Crime, Economic Impact, etc.
- Education (Regional Round Tables & Trail Forum)
- Private Fundraising
- Landowner outreach
- Advocacy & leadership
- Programming and marketing
- CTT Implementation Grant Program







#### **IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM**

Awarded over \$8.7 million to partners since 2009

- Acquisition
- Feasibility/Corridor Studies
- Design
- Construction
- Intention to Leverage other Funding







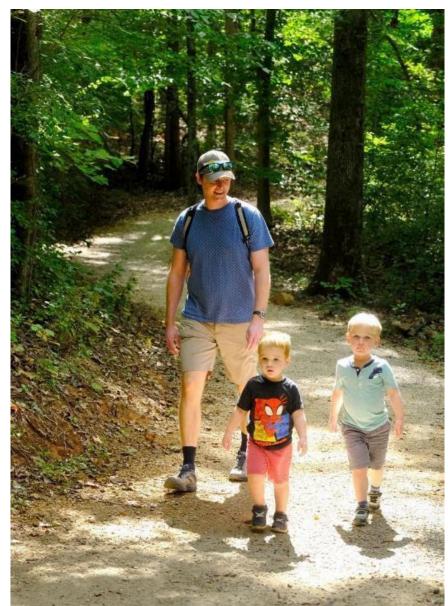






#### Catalytic role - How we help

- Leveraging coordination (local government, developers, other partners)
- Planning assistance
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#### **MAJOR FUNDERS**

**Belk Family** 

**David Belk Cannon Foundation** 











**Duke Kimbrell** 







Honeywell **Bank of America** 



**CHARLOTTE** PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY

C.D. Spangler Foundation

**George Foundation** 

**TURNER FAMILY FOUNDATION** 

a supporting foundation for the Foundation For The Carolinas

1400 INDIVIDUAL DONORS













# TRAIL USE DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM

- 23 sites
  - Geographic balance
  - Some paved, some unpaved
- Uses of data
  - Make the case for trails and their benefits
  - Helpful in grant applications
  - Trends over time
- Observations
  - In 2023, some trails saw daily averages of 309 and 382 trips



# Cultivating Partnership and Managing Expectation

Carolina Thread Trail Case Study



#### **SMITHGROUP**





# Partnership Cultivation— "The Lifeblood of the Organization"

- Local Governments
- Funders/Philanthropy
  - Operations and Project Implementation
  - Capital Campaign
  - Foundations
  - CTT Grant Program
  - County Fund Raising Leads Campaign Chairs
- Governing Board and Committees
- Local "Trail Champions"
- Volunteers
- Landowners
- Business and Industry Succession (Leaving a Legacy)





#### **Challenges**

#### **Local Government Coordination**

- Multi-Jurisdictional cooperation (Working Together)
  - Master Plan approvals local and county level adoption
  - Connectivity realizing the benefit depends upon looking beyond the political boundaries
  - Funding priority placed upon cooperation.
  - Fortunate that most jurisdictions recognize the benefit
- Local task forces/working groups
  - Targeted Focus
- CTT Creation of Local Government Affairs Committee
  - Conduit to elected body communication
- Landowner Outreach "friend of a friend" approach
- Trail champions/Advocacy
  - Laying the groundwork locally individual passion



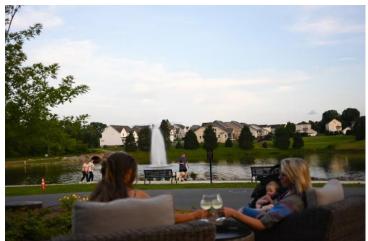




#### MATTHEWS-BELK SOUTH FORK RIVER CORRIDOR

#### **GASTON COUNTY, NC**









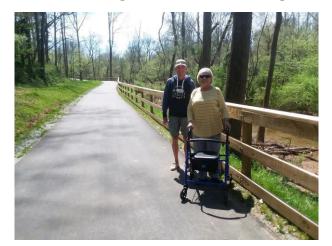




# Model for Trail for Regional Trail Development - Strategic Regional Trail Planning

- 23 Miles Complete Gaps
- 5 Local Governments
- Mix of Trail Types
- 2000 Acres of Conservation Property
- Multiple Implementation Partners

Lots of Moving Parts to Manage......













# Matthews-Belk South Fork River Corridor Gaston County, NC

- Governing Board- new member waving the banner for the project
- Government Affairs Committee carry weight with elected officials
- CTT Trail Implementation Grant leveraging funds
- Public Art brings in new supporters
- Targeted Fundraising/Philanthropy consists of foundations, local governments, private/public grants, specific capital campaign
- Outreach local elected officials, staff, business leaders, public, community events
- Formulation of Task Force locally "connected" individuals
- Developers education, planning process and rezoning as a tool
- Context sensitive different trail types to match the environment.
- Priority on near-term implementation not waiting around for the "gold standard"
- Donor Cultivation "boots on the ground" with potential donors, not settling for the request in a conference room = has resulted in 2.5 million raised (two gifts worth \$1 million each)
- Construction management and maintenance training









#### LANDOWNER OUTREACH

- "Friend of a Friend" approach trust
- Testimonials from other landowners
- Recreational Use Statute Liability
- Education Trail Easements (what they are and what they are not)
- Be cautious as it relates to exuding "government"
- Know "when to say when"
- Take the time to get to know them not all talk is trails







#### ROLES TO CREATE LOCAL BUY-IN

- Small towns without dedicated trail staff
- Grant writing and technical assistance
- Construction management
- Admin some funding to cover staff time
- Always be engaging the elected officials
- Use government affairs and business leader to advantage
- Award CTT grants forces a local government "skin in the game"
- Economic Impact data
- Attend/table local events show a dedication to the local community builds credibility and "friendship"













#### **VOLUNTEERS**

- Come in many forms labor, outreach, fund-raising
- A smaller percentage do the majority of the work
- Adopt-a-trail
- Always looking to add more
- No task is off limits









#### TAKEAWAYS

- Build Trust
- Well-Connected Governing Board or Committee Members (communication and fund-raising)
- Don't dismiss any partners lots of unique collaborations
- Know limits do not push too hard on landowners
- Leverage the development community
- Education is key
- "Apples to Apples" use local knowledge to build case and support (don't compare your area to somewhere else in the country)
- Embrace trail types variety of experiences and more expeditious implementation
- Respect private property rights and family history. Don't be critical of those who are not interested in accommodating trails.
- A bottoms up approach. CTT does not tell partners "what to do". Advise YES! Be authoritarian – NO!
- Engage your local community programs and events



## **Moving Forward**

**Carolina Thread Trail Case Study** 





## **SMITHGROUP**



#### WHERE WE ARE TODAY

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Talented and dedicated staff (more than a job)
- Growing recognition of organization in region
- Trusted by partners
- Galvanizing partnerships
- Political will local and state
- Balance between strategic and opportunistic
- Financial support (Donors)
- Strong board and committees
- Economic Impact Study
- Dedicated volunteers
- Technical studies (feasibility, economic impact, crime)

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Trail recognition all-time high
- CTT Master Plan Update
- NC Great Trails State
- Building a corridor model
- More technical studies (feasibility, economic impact, crime)
- Pace of development in Charlotte MSA – Development community.
- New board members
- CLC Stewardship favorable on extending existing trails
- CTT and Govt Affairs
   Committees
- Potential for admin funding/fee for services

#### CAUTION

- Unpredictable economy decreased giving, local and state budgets
- Local government staff and elected body turnover
- Next generation of local trail "champions"
- Situational CLC/CTT
  mission conflict potential
  or perception





#### **CONNECT WITH US**

www.catawbalands.org www.carolinathreadtrail.org



CatawbaLands
CarolinaThreadTrail

#catawbalands #carolinathreadtrail



@CatawbaLands

@ThreadTrail

# Discussion

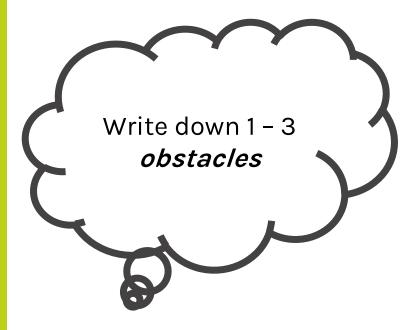


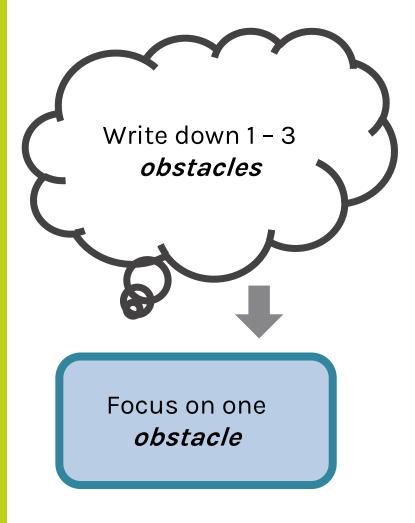
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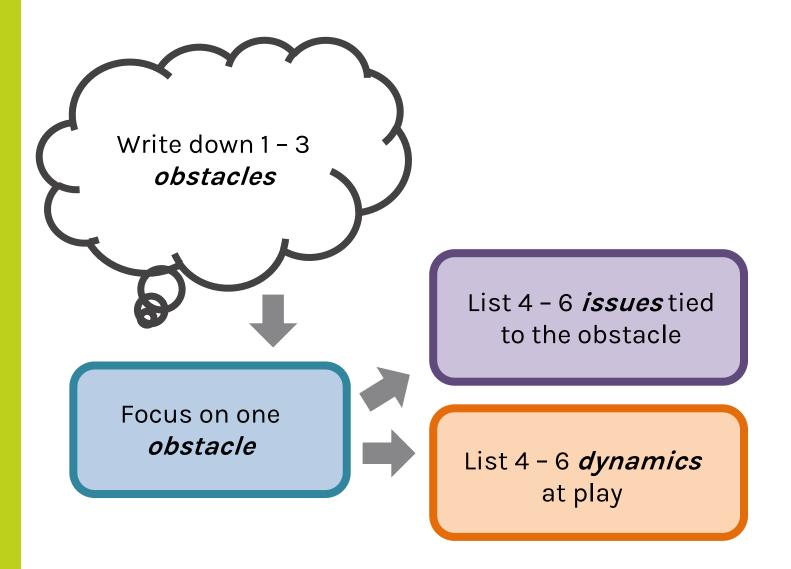


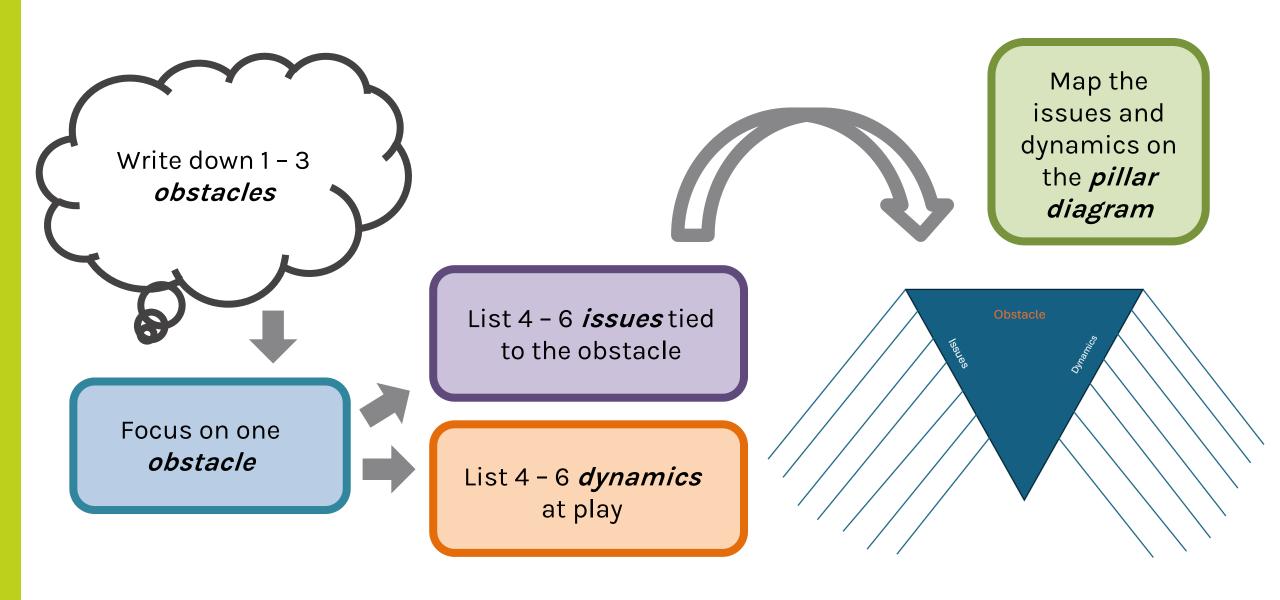
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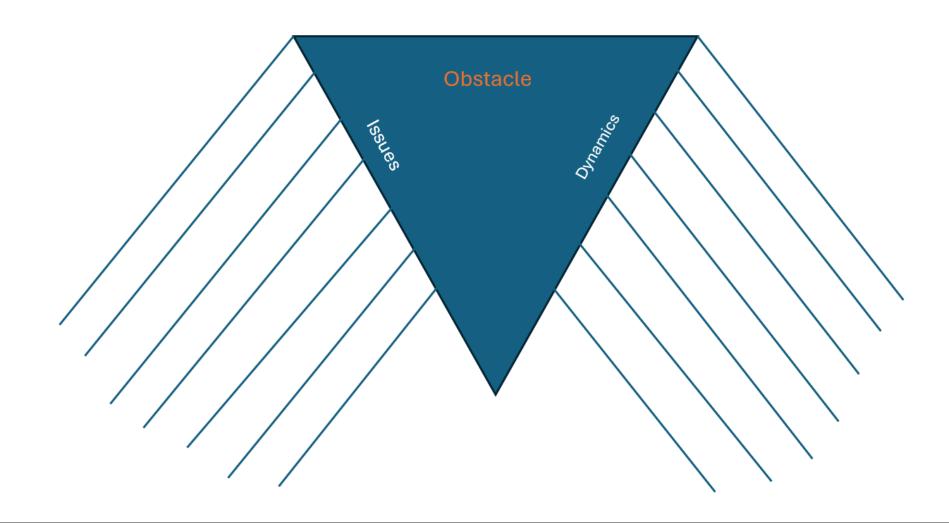


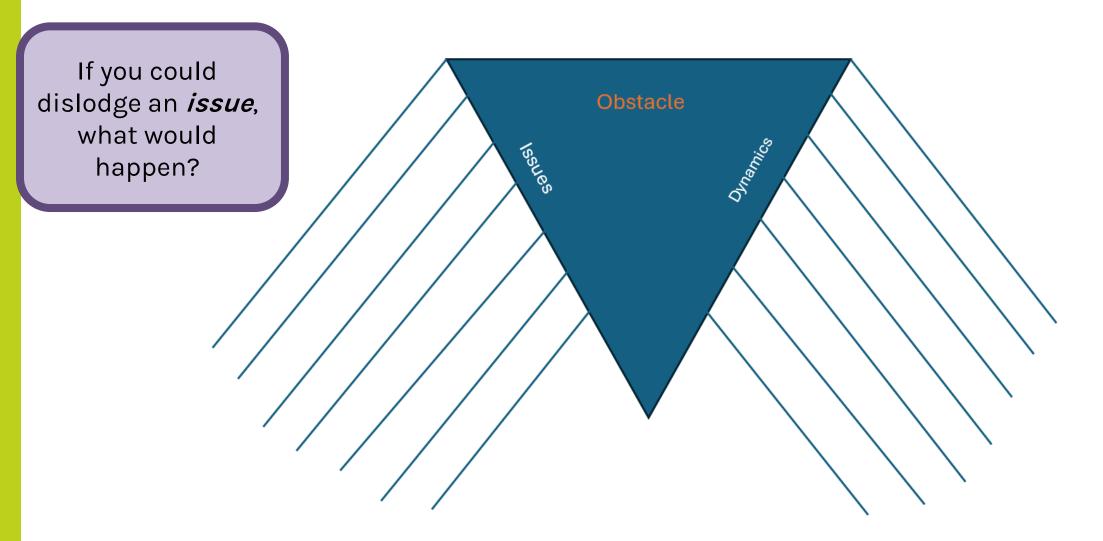


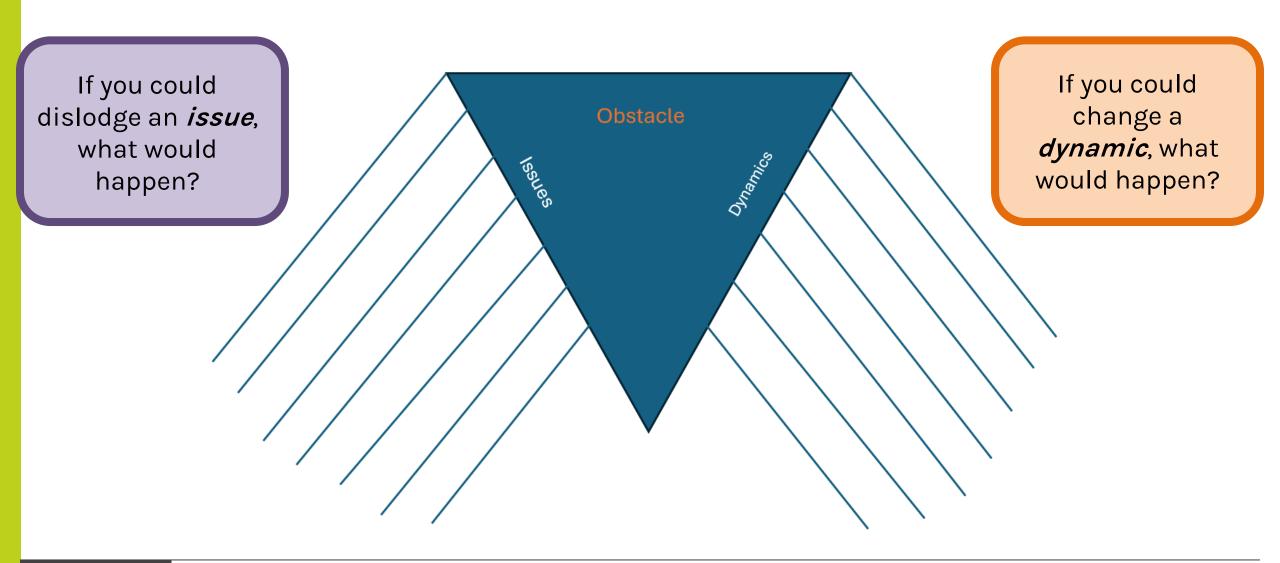


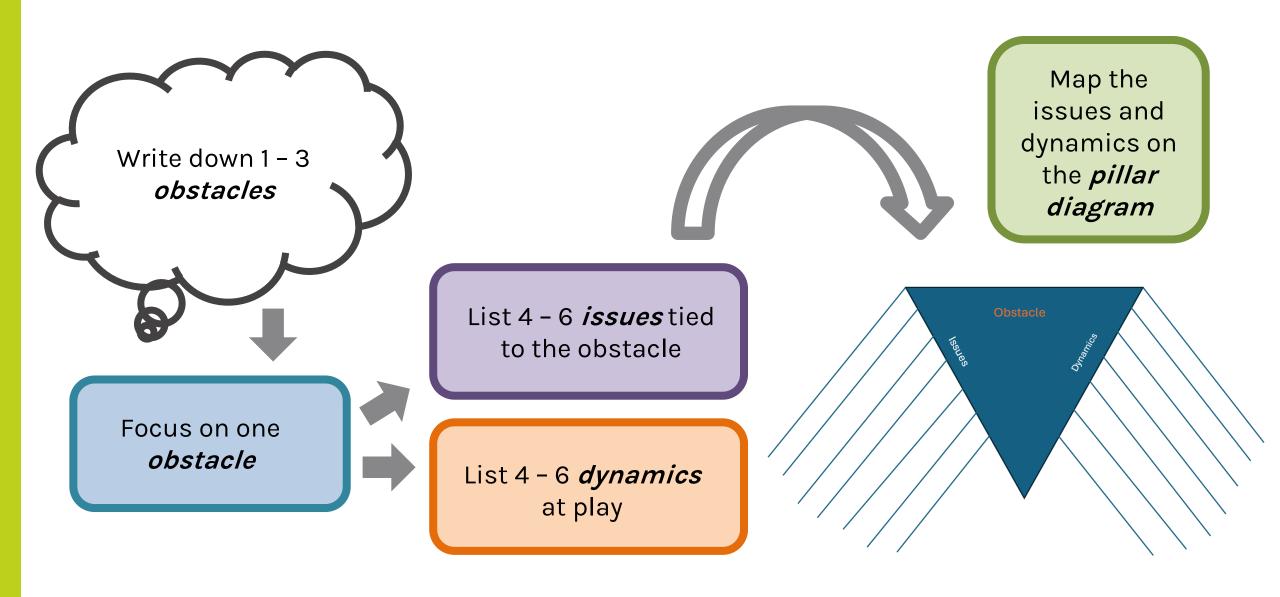


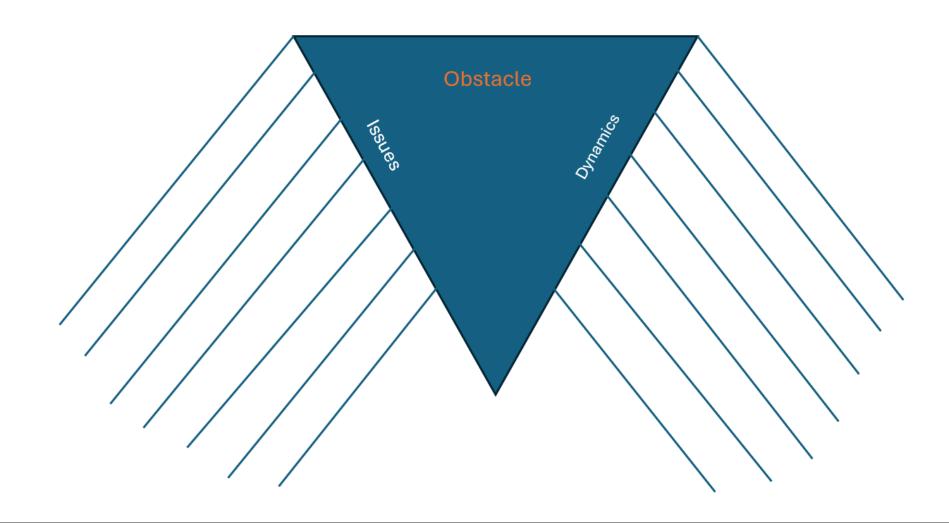


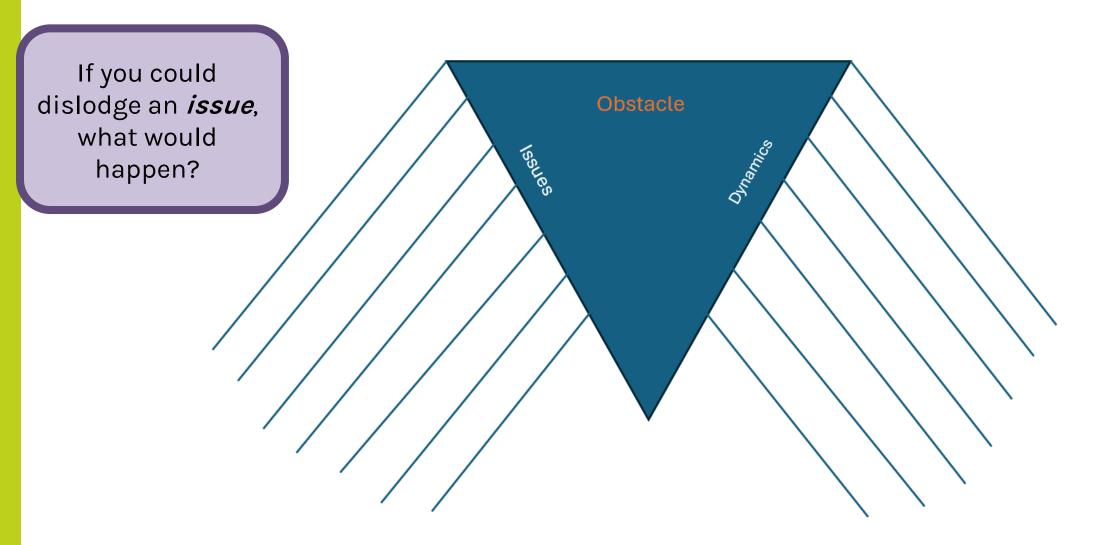


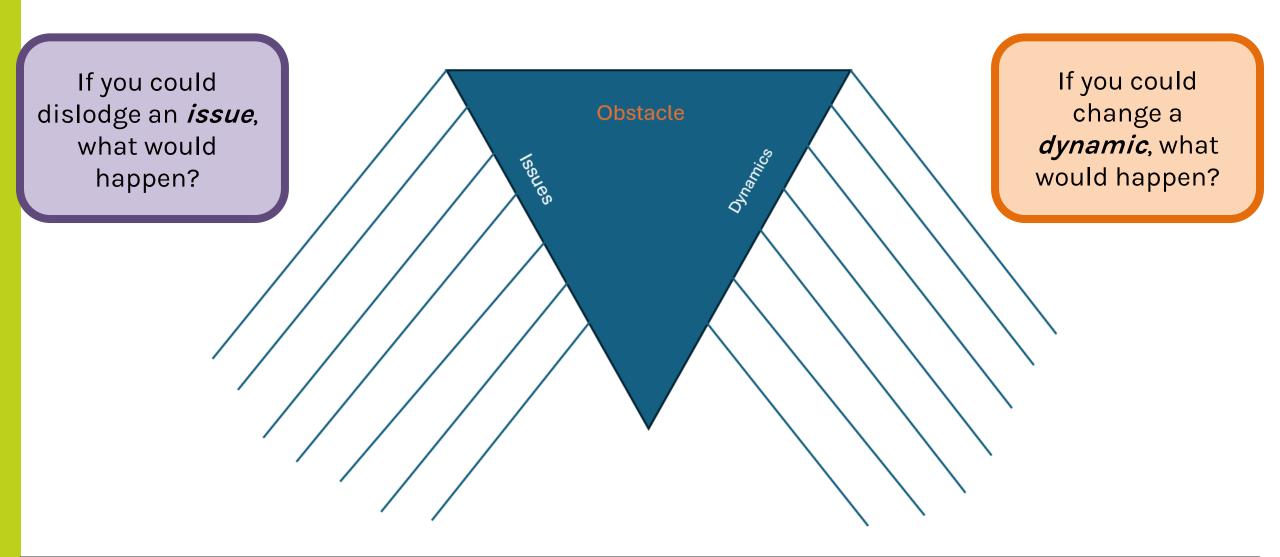












# Make a Plan

Working in Pairs

## Reach Out!

Carolina Thread Trail

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Smith Group:

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Oliver Kiley - oliver.kiley@smithgroup.com

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