CASE STUDY

The Challenge

The USTA invests millions in community tennis facility renovations through its Tennis Venue Services grant program but lacked a standardized, data-driven way to measure whether those investments actually increased utilization.

The Outcome

Foot traffic data revealed that renovation projects drove measurable year-over-year visit growth. The USTA now has a repeatable framework to assess grant effectiveness and direct future funding for maximum impact.

USTA

United States Tennis Association (USTA)

The USTA is the national governing body for tennis in the United States, overseeing everything from grassroots community programs to the US Open. Through the Tennis Venue Services grant program, the USTA funds facility construction, reconstruction, and upgrades to expand access to tennis nationwide.

STEP 1

Analyze grant-funded facilities

STEP 2

Measure pre/ post renovation performance and quantify ROI

STEP 3

Build a repeatable grant evaluation framework

Millions Invested, But No Way to Measure Impact

The **USTA Tennis Venus Services grant program** leverages technical expertise and funding to transform facilities nationwide—from court reconstruction and lighting upgrades to building new tennis venues. The grants reach all 17 USTA sections and serve communities of every size.

But proving that those investments actually grow tennis participation has been a persistent challenge. In the past, the USTA relied on self-reported usage data and anecdotal feedback from facility operators. There was no standardized way to compare disparate projects to determine which types of investments.

A Dedicated Measurement Framework

The USTA's investment in location intelligence technology gave the organization something it never had before: a consistent, objective way to measure facility performance before and after renovation, across every grant type and geography.

Attributes Analyzed

UTILIZATION (YOY, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED)

TRUE TRADE AREA

VISITOR LOYALTY & FREQUENCY

DEMOGRAPHICS

DWELL TIME

TIME OF DAY / DAY OF WEEK

CROSS-VISITATION (NEARBY BUSINESSES)

COMPETITIVE RANKING

For renovation projects, the methodology compared six-month pre-renovation and six-month post-renovation windows, each benchmarked year-over-year to isolate the true impact of improvements from normal seasonal variation. New construction projects present a different measurement challenge: because these are brand-new facilities with no prior baseline, the analysis focused on absolute visit volume, trade area size, and visitor demographics to assess early-stage community impact.

Visit counts were just the starting point. The analytics also revealed who was visiting, how often they returned, how long they stayed, when they played, where they came from, and where they went before and after.

Renovation Impact: Year-Over-Year Growth

Across the portfolio, the analytics made one thing clear: the USTA's renovation investments are working. Renovated facilities, both reconstructed courts and lighting upgrades, consistently outperformed their prior-year benchmarks in the six months following completion. Top reconstruction sites showed year-over-year utilization growth rates of 400% to 1,600%. Those numbers signal genuine community transformation, not just a return to pre-decline levels.

But perhaps more valuable than the visit counts is what the data revealed beneath them. For the first time, the USTA could see not just whether a renovation worked, but how it transformed a community: which visitor segments it attracted, how far people traveled, how trade areas shifted, and whether surrounding businesses benefited.

RENOVATION DEEP DIVE:

Morgan Tennis Courts | From Crumbling Courts to Community Anchor

Morgan Tennis Courts in South Minneapolis tells the most dramatic story in the program. Before renovation, the courts were in such poor condition that they recorded just 2,546 total visits over seven months.

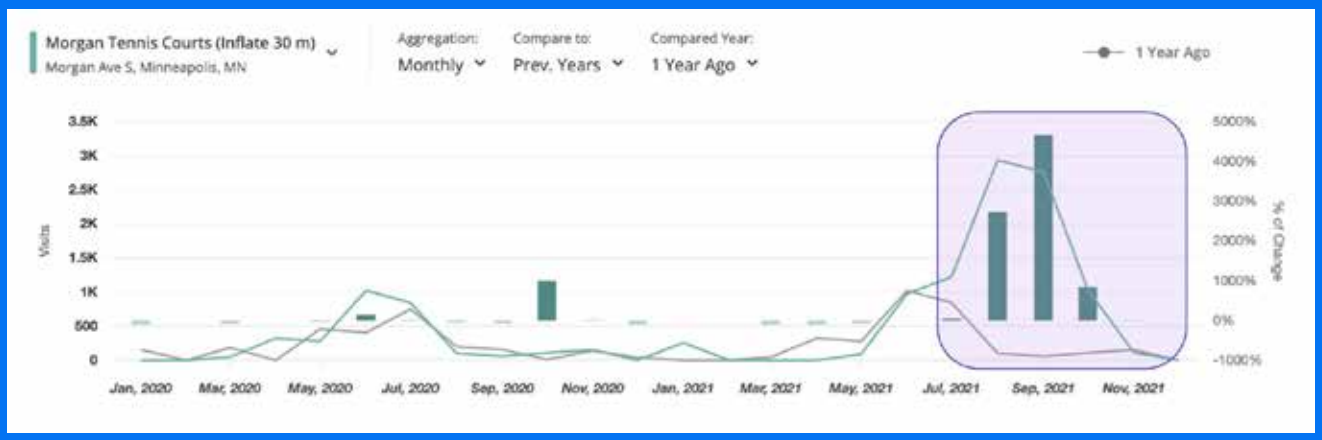
Location intelligence helped quantify the impressive turnaround seen post-renovation:

1,417%
Total Growth

36K
Additional Visits

4.5 yrs
Sustained Success

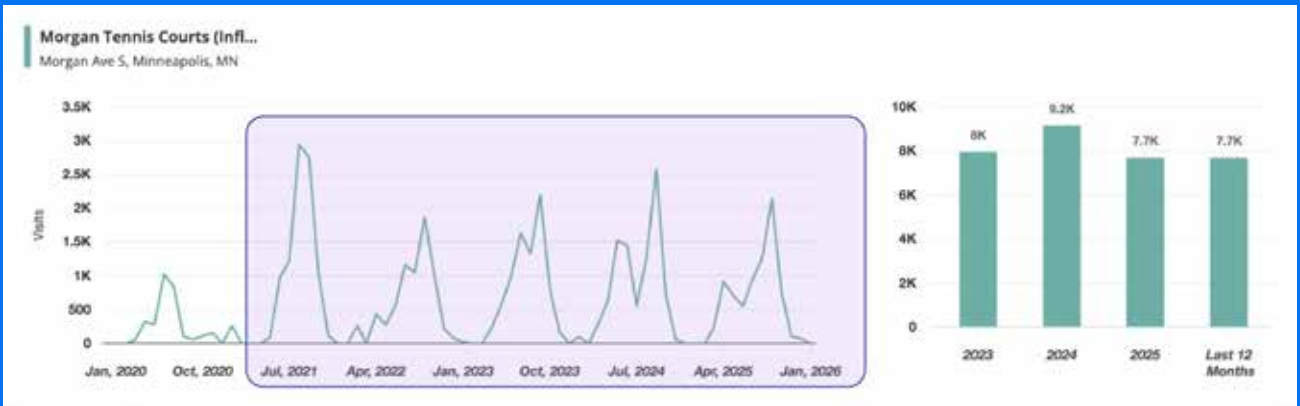
15/15
Nearby Businesses See More Visitors



Location intelligence data confirmed that the renovation didn't just restore a facility; it created a community anchor that attracted new visitors, higher-income demographics, and measurable economic activity for surrounding businesses.

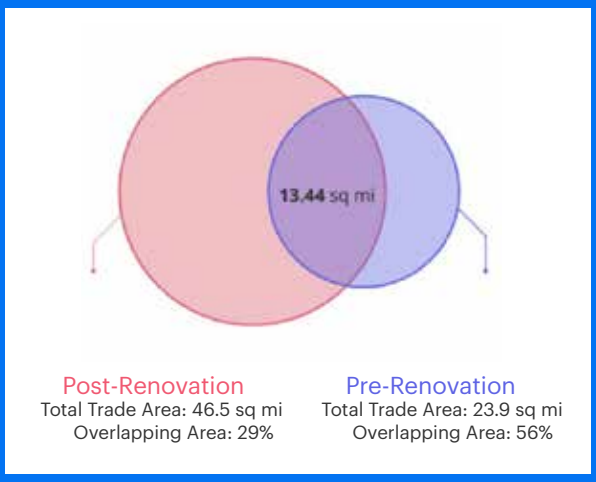
Community response was immediate: the first full month post-renovation drew 2,939 visits, and rather than tapering off as novelty faded, annual totals climbed to between 8K and 9K visits and held steady for four and a half years.

The data showed almost 3K visits in the first full month, growing to 8K+ annually and holding for 4.5 years



One of the most telling findings was where the new visitors came from. The facility's trade area doubled post-renovation, with minimal trade area overlap. That means the vast majority of post-renovation visitors were coming from neighborhoods that had never generated meaningful traffic to Morgan before. The renovation didn't just convince existing players to come back more often; it put the facility on the map for an entirely new set of communities.

The trade area doubled, with only 29% overlap, proving the renovation reached a new audience.



The visitor profile shifted meaningfully as well. Demographic analysis showed median household income among visitors rose 24%, suggesting the upgraded facility drew a more diverse and affluent audience than the original courts had been able to attract.

Median household income jumped to $172K from $139K after the renovation.

Properties	Median Household Income	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Most Common Ethnicity	Persons per Household
Pre-Renovation Morgan Tennis Courts	$139.3K	75.3%	White (84.5%)	2.32
Post-Renovation Morgan Tennis Courts	$172.5K	76.9%	White (81.9%)	2.56

LIGHTING DEEP DIVE:

Wake Forest University Tennis Courts | More Playable Hours, More Total Traffic

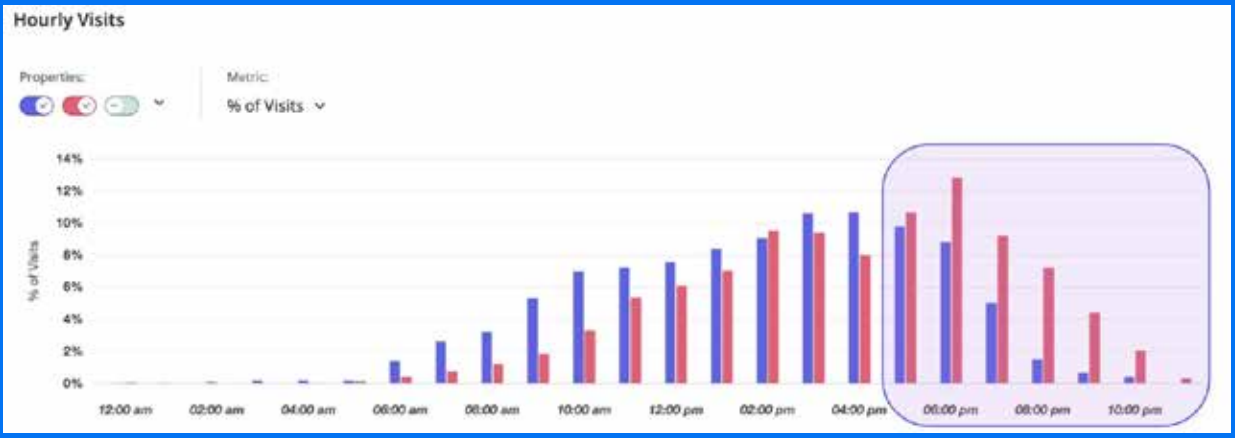
Not every high-impact investment requires breaking ground. Wake Forest's tennis courts were well-located on a university campus with strong demand, but playable hours were limited by outdated lighting. The USTA funded a targeted LED upgrade, completed in summer 2023 and strategically timed to launch with fall semester.

At 38% more evening traffic for a fraction of new construction costs, ighting additions delivered one of the strongest ROIs for grant funding.

38%	+2-4 hrs	6-10x	$5-15k
More Evening Traffic	Daily Capacity Added	Estimated ROI	Annual Energy Savings

Hourly data showed exactly where the growth came from: visitation during evening hours (6-10 PM) spiked dramatically post-upgrade, confirming that the facility's biggest constraint had never been demand. It was available hours.

The data showed a substantial increase in visitation during evening hours



A Repeatable Framework for Future Grants

Before committing to a data-driven measurement strategy, the USTA could say it funded tennis facility improvements. Now it can prove exactly how those investments work. Renovations generate year-over-year visit growth, expand trade areas, shift visitor demographics, and boost nearby businesses.

The analysis also gave the USTA team a data-driven framework for evaluating future grants: where to invest, what type of investment to prioritize, and how to measure success after the fact.