Avison Young Uses SafeGraph Data to Offer Ground-Level Insights for Commercial Real Estate Site Selection

**THE COMPANY**

AVISON YOUNG

**THE PROBLEM**

How to help businesses make better, more informed real estate decisions

**THE SOLUTION**

SafeGraph Places

**THE RESULT**

Delivering deep local market insights at a remarkable speed
THE PROBLEM

How to help businesses make better, more informed real estate decisions

The question that Avison Young’s clients ask regularly is, “What’s the best location for my office, (industrial) business, or retail location?” But in asking this question, they really want to know more. Is a location easily accessible by highways or public transportation? Are there plenty of lunch options in the area? For retail locations, will the store or restaurant be well-positioned to reach the largest number of target consumers?

In other words, these businesses come to Avison Young not only to make better and more informed commercial real estate site selection decisions but also to get deeper real-time insights into what’s actually happening at ground level around those locations. And with local market dynamics—including property availability—changing faster than ever before, having access to the right location data at the right time is critical for faster decision-making.

THE PROBLEM-SOLVER

Avison Young

Avison Young is a data-driven commercial real estate company fueled by a common purpose: To create real economic, social, and environmental value—powered by people. They rally around the idea that anyone engaged in real estate today needs data, technology, and consultative solutions to achieve their unique and rapidly transforming goals. They believe that commercial real estate plays a vital role in creating healthy and productive workplaces, prosperous cities, and other built spaces that can benefit the economy, environment, and local community.

“SafeGraph makes it possible for us to provide the most updated, real-time insights to our clients with the greatest amount of accuracy and precision.”

Julian Adams, Director of Data Science at Avison Young

THE SOLUTION

SafeGraph Places

The primary focus for the Avison Young team is being able to provide value to their clients with speed—and SafeGraph has made it possible for them to do this. Prior to working with SafeGraph, Avison Young had access to only limited datasets including location data related to big brands. Although understanding which brands are present in any given market is important, it doesn’t paint a complete picture.
“If a fast-casual (QSR) restaurant chain comes to us to help them pinpoint the best location for their next restaurant in a given market, they need to know not only what other QSRs are in the area but also if there are ‘mom and pop’ restaurants nearby as well,” explained Julian Adams, Director of Data Science at Avison Young. “This information is critical for understanding what the real competitive landscape looks like.”

Additionally, when doing void analysis for retail landlords, the most common question is: How can we optimize the tenant mix to be competitive with adjacent retailers (or retail spaces) in the local market? While those landlords may already have access to property data (sales and leases) and retail comps, they don’t have deep insight into the bigger picture. “Now, we’re able to help retail landlords identify what voids exist in the market, so they can place the right tenants,” emphasized Adams. “We’re able to help them make better decisions that lead to better outcomes, thanks to SafeGraph.”

**THE RESULT**

**Delivering deep local market insights at a remarkable speed**

At the end of the day, the Avison Young team needed to be able to track *everything*. This includes being able to identify up-and-coming neighborhoods based on the evolving businesses, retailers, and infrastructure developments happening in those areas. Continuing with the QSR example, Adams added, “We need to understand what kind of restaurants are clustering in a specific location, so we can help QSRs land in a place where they can fill a food diversity gap.”
On top of that, many businesses come to Avison Young with specific criteria (i.e. Can't be near a school, library, church, etc.). “We can’t be on the ground in every local market we operate in—we need access to data that can be our ‘eyes’ on the ground and give us a more accurate idea of what the local market looks like,” reiterated Adams. “But it wasn’t a good use of the team’s time to append partially complete POI data with open-source data to fill in the gaps.”

In the past, Avison Young’s team of analysts would often spend up to 40% of their time (per project) cleaning data to make it usable. “The time spent munging the information is time lost to providing real value to our clients, the kind that helps them act fast,” explained Adams. “With SafeGraph, however, we’ve not only improved the efficiency and effectiveness of our analysis but also have been able to increase our speed to value—now our analysts can answer our clients’ questions and deliver actionable insights faster than ever before.”
Knowing that real estate markets move quickly—with major fluctuations often happening on a daily basis—the Avison Young team can rest assured that, with SafeGraph data on their side, they can stay ahead of the curve and get answers to their clients as quickly as possible.