

# NAVIGATING OUR FUTURE

**Best Practices Case Studies  
from the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network**



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## Sponsors

Special thanks to the Surdna Foundation for their support of Cumberland Region Tomorrow for the creation and facilitation of the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network. Special thanks also to NADO member organizations the Southwest Tennessee Development District and the Southeast Tennessee Development District for their instrumental contributions to the creation of this publication.

This publication was supported in part by funding under awards to the NADO Research Foundation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (under Agreement No. DCSGP0003-11) and the Federal Highway Administration (under Agreement No. DTFH61-10-C-00047). The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The authors and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) is a membership organization for the national network of over 520 regional development organizations (RDOs) focused on strengthening local governments, communities, and economies through regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions. Founded in 1988, the NADO Research Foundation is the nonprofit research affiliate of NADO. The NADO Research Foundation identifies, studies, and promotes regional solutions and approaches to improving local prosperity and services through the nationwide network of RDOs. The Research Foundation shares best practices and offers professional development training, analyzes the impact of federal policies and programs on RDOs and their local communities, and examines the latest developments and trends in small metropolitan and rural America.



*Tennessee State Capitol  
(Source: Nashville Civic Design Center)*



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# Introduction

## Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Best Practices Case Study Publication

This NADO Research Foundation–sponsored Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Best Practices Case Studies publication strives to advance current implementation efforts by sharing successful examples of local, regional, and state-level projects across Tennessee. Stories presented from Tennessee's diverse regions and communities highlight collaborative leadership, strategic partnerships, innovative projects, and implementation funding techniques readers can put to use in their own communities. These are the best practices advancing our Quality Communities objectives and actions across Tennessee.

The outstanding achievements showcased in this publication come from across the three regions of our state: West, Middle, and East Tennessee. Diverse in both geography and culture, these three grand divisions boast their own cultural, historic, natural, and economic assets, and each faces its own opportunities and challenges. Accordingly, these case studies are grouped into three corresponding sections while themes running through the whole publication showcase the unifying character and resolve of the Tennessean landscape and spirit.

This Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Best Practices Case Studies publication features successful examples of Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC)–funded projects as well as community-led initiatives supported by a variety of local, state, and national partners and funders. PSC-funded projects are marked on maps and pages with blue stars, while case studies feature red stars. These stories illustrate successful Quality Communities implementation across Tennessee. Each case study is designed to provide useful, applicable insight into the process of leading community and economic development efforts, including information on project leaders, technical assistance providers, and funding sources. A comprehensive contact and resources section at the end of the publication offers further sources of information and expertise for every story told.

From regional initiatives along the Mississippi River to community-driven projects in far northeastern Sullivan County, Tennessee is a state full of inspiring individuals and communities working together toward Quality Communities growth and development. These twenty-two outstanding profiles of leadership, collaboration, and implementation are just a few of the countless stories waiting to be told across Tennessee, and we hope that the innovation and resolve they embody will resonate with leaders in any community.



*Regional Connectivity and Economic Development*



*Neighborhood Revitalization & Business District Expansion*



*Regional Visioning Workshop*



*Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network Leaders (Source: Anne Goetze)*

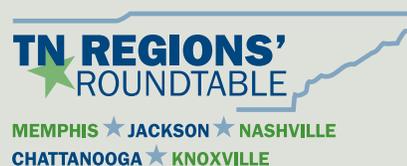
## The Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network

Tennessee is a southern state that is currently showing great promise and results in implementation of regional economic and community development actions that align with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities' Principles and Programs through a diverse group of public and private sector partner organizations located and working within key regions of the state. We have adopted Tennessee-specific Quality Communities Principles that guide this work. Our long-term objectives and actions include working to:

- ★ Facilitate the creation and operation of an integrated leadership network that is building out the learning, capacity, and collaborative systems of lead regional organizations and aligned agencies and organizations
- ★ Create leadership and expertise among practitioners in the public and private sectors, government agencies, design and planning communities and aligned affiliates and funders for successful implementation
- ★ Create new regional capacity and synergy through shared knowledge and expertise, technical assistance and resources, outreach and communication efforts, and diverse organizational affiliations among Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network partners
- ★ Identify joint outcomes and actions that will leverage funding, policies, and expertise through national, state, and regional resource organizations and funders

- ★ Position Tennessee to adopt our Quality Communities principles and programming framework as the new approach for growth and development decision making, actions, and implementation across the unique and diverse regions of the state
- ★ Support and expand statewide goals of economic competitiveness and job opportunities, quality community development, and ensuring the wise use of fiscal resources
- ★ Position Tennessee as the leading southern state in successful implementation within our specific Quality Communities framework, principles, and practices

Tennessee's geography and political realities across West, Middle, and East Tennessee provide unique opportunities for collaboration among key groups and the leveraging of strong regional models and expertise that support successful implementation of each region's efforts. Through joint work actions and successful collaboration, our lead regional organizations, affiliate organizations, state and federal agency partners, and funders are working together to create an integrated network to catalyze current and future regional efforts through our Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network.



# Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network Partners

Tennessee's geography and political realities across West, Middle, and East Tennessee provide unique opportunities for collaboration among key groups and the leveraging of strong regional models and expertise that support successful implementation of each region's efforts. Through joint work actions and successful collaboration, our lead regional organizations, affiliate organizations, state and federal agency partners, and funders are working together to create an integrated network to catalyze current and future regional efforts through our Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network.

For more information on the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network, contact Dr. Bridget Jones, Cumberland Region Tomorrow Executive Director, at [bridget@cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](mailto:bridget@cumberlandregiontomorrow.org).

## Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Regional Partner Organizations

### West Tennessee/Mid-South/Memphis Region

Urban Land Institute-Memphis\*  
[www.memphis.uli.org](http://www.memphis.uli.org)

Memphis/Shelby County Office of Sustainability\*  
[www.sustainableselby.com](http://www.sustainableselby.com)

Community Development Council of Greater Memphis  
[www.memphiscommunitydevelopment.com](http://www.memphiscommunitydevelopment.com)

USDA Rural Development—Jackson Office  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html)

### Southwest Tennessee/Jackson Region

Southwest Tennessee Development District\*  
[www.swtdd.org](http://www.swtdd.org)

Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)  
[www.reditn.com](http://www.reditn.com)

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development—Southwest Tennessee Region  
[www.tn.gov/ecd/RegionalDirectors.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/ecd/RegionalDirectors.shtml)

USDA Rural Development—Jackson Office  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html)

### Middle Tennessee/Nashville Region

Cumberland Region Tomorrow\*  
[www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org)

Nashville Area MPO  
[www.nashvillempo.org](http://www.nashvillempo.org)

Greater Nashville Regional Council  
[www.gnrc.org](http://www.gnrc.org)

American Institute of Architects Middle Tennessee Chapter  
[www.aiamidtn.org](http://www.aiamidtn.org)

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development—Northern Middle Tennessee Region  
[www.tn.gov/ecd/RegionalDirectors.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/ecd/RegionalDirectors.shtml)

USDA Rural Development—Nashville Office  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html)

### Southeast Tennessee/Chattanooga Region

Southeast Tennessee Development District\*  
[www.sedev.org](http://www.sedev.org)

Thrive 2055  
[www.thrive2055.com](http://www.thrive2055.com)

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency  
[www.chcrpa.org](http://www.chcrpa.org)

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission  
[www.nwgrc.org](http://www.nwgrc.org)

Top of Alabama Council of Governments  
[www.tarcog.us](http://www.tarcog.us)

Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce  
[www.chattanoogachamber.com](http://www.chattanoogachamber.com)

USDA Rural Development—Chattanooga Office  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html)

### East Tennessee/Knoxville Region

PlanET\*  
[www.planeasttn.org](http://www.planeasttn.org)

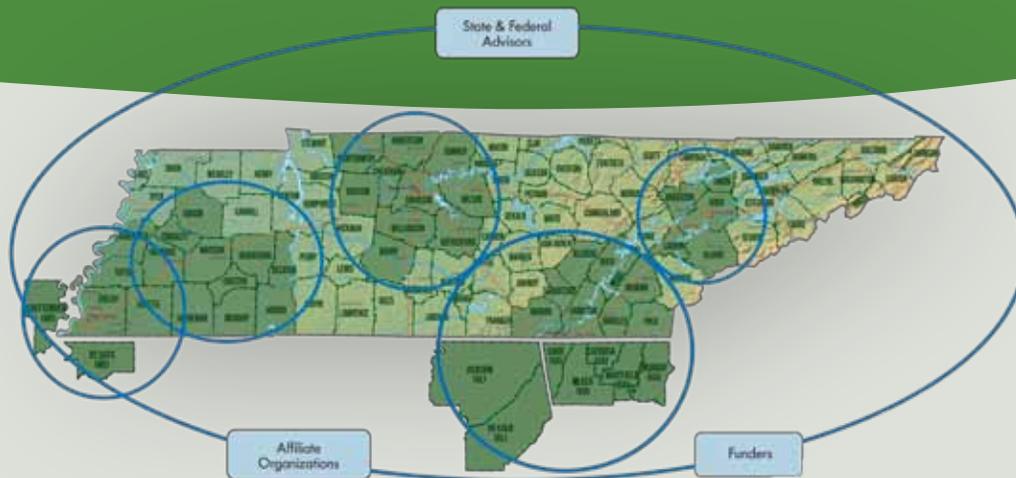
Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization  
[www.knoxtrans.org](http://www.knoxtrans.org)

City of Knoxville  
[www.cityofknoxville.org](http://www.cityofknoxville.org)

Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission  
[www.knoxmpc.org](http://www.knoxmpc.org)

USDA Rural Development—Knoxville Office  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html)

\* Lead Regional Contact Organization



## Tennessee State and Federal Advisors

Tennessee Department of Transportation  
[www.tdot.state.tn.us](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us)

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation  
[www.state.tn.us/environment](http://www.state.tn.us/environment)

Tennessee Department of Agriculture  
[www.state.tn.us/agriculture](http://www.state.tn.us/agriculture)

Tennessee Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations  
[www.tn.gov/tacir](http://www.tn.gov/tacir)

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development  
[www.tn.gov/ecd](http://www.tn.gov/ecd)

Tennessee Department of Tourism Development  
[www.tn.gov/tourdev](http://www.tn.gov/tourdev)

Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency  
[www.state.tn.us/twra](http://www.state.tn.us/twra)

Tennessee Office of General Services  
[www.tn.gov/generalserv](http://www.tn.gov/generalserv)

Tennessee Department of Health  
[www.health.state.tn.us](http://www.health.state.tn.us)

Tennessee Housing Development Agency  
[www.thda.org](http://www.thda.org)

Tennessee Historic Commission  
[www.tennesseehistory.com/RESOURCE/THC.htm](http://www.tennesseehistory.com/RESOURCE/THC.htm)

University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service  
[www.ips.tennessee.edu](http://www.ips.tennessee.edu)

USDA Rural Development—Tennessee State Office  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Home.html)

## Funders

Cumberland Region Tomorrow  
[www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org)

The Surdna Foundation  
[www.surdna.org](http://www.surdna.org)

Rockefeller Foundation  
[www.rockefellerfoundation.org](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org)

Stephen Turner Family Foundation

Hyde Family Foundation  
[www.hydefoundation.org](http://www.hydefoundation.org)

Lyndhurst Foundation  
[www.lyndhurstfoundation.org](http://www.lyndhurstfoundation.org)

The Christie Foundation  
[www.christie-foundation.org](http://www.christie-foundation.org)

Benwood Foundation  
[www.benwood.org](http://www.benwood.org)

Urban Land Institute—Memphis  
[www.memphis.uli.org](http://www.memphis.uli.org)

Tennessee Department of Workforce Development  
[www.tn.gov/labor-wfd](http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd)

Tennessee Department of Transportation  
[www.tdot.state.tn.us](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us)

## Affiliate Organizations

Smart Growth America  
[www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

Southern Environmental Law Center  
[www.southernenvironment.org](http://www.southernenvironment.org)

Center for Rural Strategies  
[www.ruralstrategies.org](http://www.ruralstrategies.org)

Transportation for America  
[www.t4america.org](http://www.t4america.org)

National Association of Development Organizations  
[www.nado.org](http://www.nado.org)

National Association of Counties  
[www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)

Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
[www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)

The Nature Conservancy—Tennessee Office  
[www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

Mississippi River Corridor—Tennessee  
[www.msrivertn.org](http://www.msrivertn.org)



*Jackson, Tennessee (Source: Anthony Coley)*



*Memphis, Tennessee (Source: Jack Kenner)*



# West Tennessee Region



*West Tennessee Scenic Photo (Source: Pawpaw Partners)*

## FEATURED PROJECT

### MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE'S White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities

The Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) supports President Obama's agenda to make historic investments to build ladders of opportunity for those working hard to make it to the middle class and partner with communities that were hardest-hit by the recent recession. Memphis was chosen as one of seven locations to receive intensive technical assistance from federal inter-agency teams, known as Community Solutions Teams, which work alongside the mayor in City Hall to support the community's vision for economic revitalization.

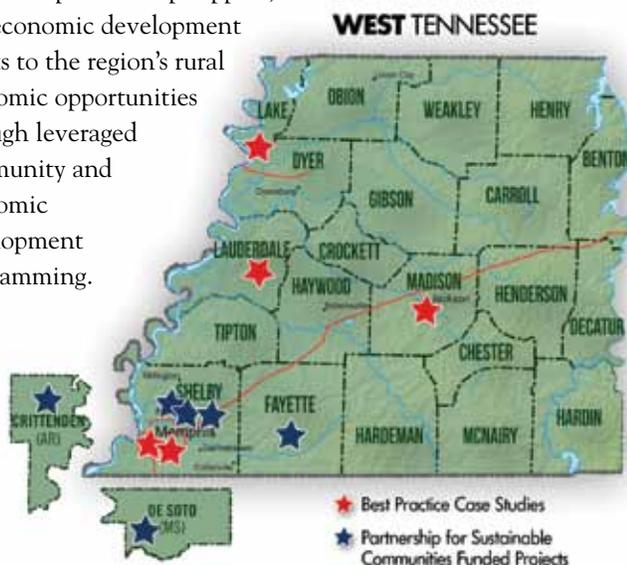
The SC2 team in Memphis is working with Mayor Wharton and other partners to support four priorities: creating safe and vibrant neighborhoods, investing in people, growing prosperity and opportunity for all, and advancing a culture of excellence in government. Key SC2 accomplishments include:

- > Addressing small-business funding needs in the community through the establishment of the Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE). Developed by the City and Shelby County with technical assistance from the Small Business Administration (SBA), EDGE and its associated entities are capitalized at \$16m and include an "Imprest Fund" for smaller loans and a "Growth Fund" for needs exceeding \$100,000.
- > Worked with the Government Services Administration to revise and reissue a bid to procure space for a new court building downtown that supports the Mayor's focus on downtown revitalization. Initially, language for the bid prevented downtown buildings from being eligible.
- > Worked with a local non-profit, Community LIFT, to support the incubation and launch of a new Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI), River City Capital Investment Corp. The Department of Treasury Community Development Fund awarded Community LIFT nearly \$100,000 to launch the fund in three target neighborhoods.
- > Supported the development of the Mayor's 25-block neighborhood revitalization strategy to reduce blight and improve public safety. This made the City more competitive to receive and align additional federal resources, including an interagency grant from the White House-led Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.
- > Worked with the City and Shelby County to reduce juvenile victimization and crime in Memphis by aligning the efforts of the Attorney General's Defending Childhood Initiative, the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, and local law enforcement initiatives.
- > Enabled the city to revitalize its riverfront as a key anchor and catalyst for economic development through the purchase of the American Queen Riverboat. U.S. Department of Transportation members of the SC2 team worked with other public officials and key stakeholders to solve a complicated financing challenge that threatened the completion of the deal.

Stretching from the state's western boundary at the Mississippi River to its great dividing line along the Tennessee River, the West Tennessee Region is a land of fertile soils, wide floodplains, and exceptional musical and artistic traditions. Long a major center of cotton and tobacco production, this region also played an invaluable role in the development of the American musical tradition, giving rise to the blues as well as the roots of jazz, country, and rock and roll. West Tennessee comprises productive rural landscapes and a wealth of historic towns, growing communities, and outstanding natural resources.

In the Memphis/West Tennessee/Mid-South Region, the ULI Mid-South Chapter has been a major catalyst in creating public and private sector leadership, support, and investments in downtown revitalization, Complete Streets Policies adoption, and dialogue on the region's opportunities around greenway connections that led to the HUD Regional Planning Grant-funded Mid-South Greenprint and Sustainability Plan. Other Sustainable Communities Partnership funded-projects include the Aerotropolis HUD Challenge Grant and Harahan Bridge TIGER Grant-funded projects that support regional goals and implementation.

The Jackson/Southwest Tennessee Region's successful eleven-county Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI), created in 2010, is generating demonstrated success through high school mentoring programs, leveraged financial aid partnerships, and aligned higher education and workforce development programs that support rural economic development clusters that can be replicated by other rural regions. REDI also actively works to connect regional workforce development, human capital investment, rural technology jobs, entrepreneurship support, and economic development efforts to the region's rural economic opportunities through leveraged community and economic development programming.





Mid-South Regional Greenprint Community Workshop  
(Source: midsouthgreenprint.org)

## West Tennessee Regional Initiative

★ Partnership for Sustainable Communities-Funded Region

### Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan Memphis, Tennessee/Mid-South Region HUD Regional Planning Grant

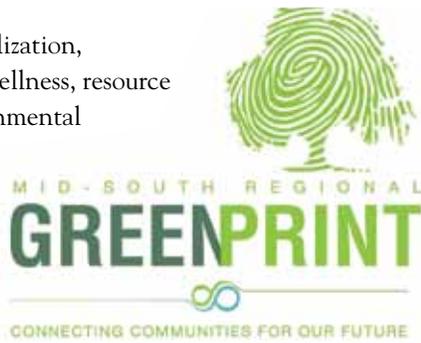
**N**ot limited to a single state, the Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan seeks to unify parts of Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi in developing a regional vision for a network of green spaces connecting four counties in the three states. The plan aims to create a multi-jurisdictional approach to integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in Shelby County, Tennessee; Fayette County, Tennessee; Crittenden County, Arkansas; and DeSoto County, Mississippi.

Due to this tri-state territory, the Greater Memphis Region faces unique challenges, among them balancing the needs and desires of different state and local governments and urban, suburban, and rural areas. In addition, there is a serious issue of obesity in Memphis and parts of the surrounding area. According to the 2012 Gallup-Well Being Poll, the City of Memphis had the highest rate of obesity in the United States. These factors, along with high poverty and access issues, create a dynamic and complex environment for growth and development in the region.

The Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan is funded by a \$2.6 million HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant awarded to Shelby County, Tennessee. The plan process is coordinated by the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Sustainability. The plan also received a \$515,000 grant from the Hyde Family Foundation. This plan is a good example of leveraged public-private and philanthropic investments toward a shared community vision.

The goal of the Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan is to create a unified regional vision for a network of regional green spaces that improves the regional quality of life; promotes community health; creates stronger connectivity to parks, open spaces, and communities; builds on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure; establishes better access from homes to jobs, schools, services, and fresh food; improves environmental quality and natural habitat; and achieves equitable project impact across the four-county area. This network includes green space areas such as parks, greenways, bike trails and walking paths, byways, waterways, conservation lands, natural areas, wildlife management areas, open space areas, community gardens, stormwater management areas, and other similar places. The plan will address housing

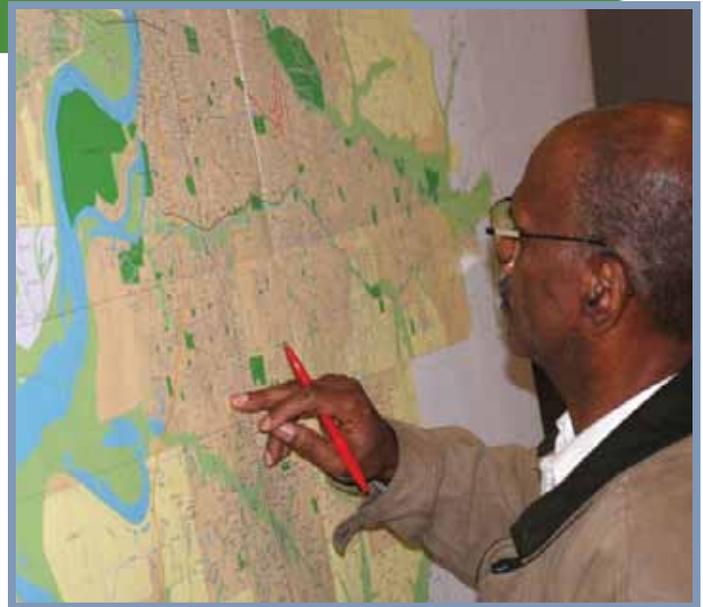
and neighborhood revitalization, community health and wellness, resource conservation and environmental protection, accessibility, neighborhood engagement, and social equity in the four-county region.



The primary components of the Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan will create:

- > the Regional Vision Plan, led by a consortium of eight topic-focused working groups;
- > interactive data mapping and analysis to support the regional planning effort;
- > community engagement and capacity building to gain public input and buy-in to the regional planning process and build long-term capacity for engaging in the public planning process;
- > a bus transit to workplace study that surveys how transit access to major employment centers can be improved and connected to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure;
- > a health impact assessment of green infrastructure;
- > a Fair Housing and Equity Assessment, providing analysis of how the link between housing, infrastructure, and opportunity can be more equitable in lower-income areas of the region;
- > a minority recreational use public education campaign;
- > and subplanning awards for localized or topic-focused projects throughout the region that advance the Regional Vision Plan

This plan illustrates how a citizen-based regional planning process driven by organizations and community groups working in partnership with government bodies and the private sector can establish a regional vision and structure for ongoing collaborative cross-jurisdictional planning. The plan is a collaborative effort, utilizing the skills and resources of the Memphis MPO and West Memphis MPO, Mid-South Regional Greenways Steering Committee, ULI Memphis, Hyde Family Foundation, Community Development Council of Greater Memphis, Memphis Area Association of Governments, Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, and 80 other regional



*Engaged resident at a Mid-South Regional Greenprint Community Workshop  
(Source: midsouthgreenprint.org)*

organizations and municipalities that comprise the Mid-South Regional Greenprint Consortium. A 25-member Consortium Executive Committee is responsible for the guidance and decision making during the planning process.

In addition to the success of bringing together over 80 different organizations and 200 individuals throughout the four-county region, the project has set ambitious targets for community participation, including over 50 community meetings of various types to obtain citizen input and feedback in the planning process. The Mid-South Regional Greenprint project completed its first major milestone: the development of the Regional Vision Plan in October 2013. After the development of the Regional Vision Plan, the Bus Transit to Workplace Study, Health Impact Assessment, and Fair Housing and Equity Assessment will begin and continue for several months.

The second phase of the project is dedicated to providing grants to organizations involved with the Consortium to conduct localized or topic-focused planning that advances the goals and objectives of the Regional Vision Plan. There will be a total of \$800,000 available for small grants not to exceed \$50,000 per organization. The grant activities and additional studies and assessments will be combined with the Regional Vision Plan to produce the Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan by the end of 2014.





REDI College Access Scholarship Recipients/Students working on REDI College Access activity (Source: REDI)

## Southwest Tennessee Regional Initiative

★ Best Practices Case Study

### REDI—Regional Economic Development Initiative Southwest Tennessee Region

The Regional Economic Development Initiative, or REDI, was established by the Southwest Tennessee Development District (SWTDD) in 2010 to create a public/private partnership in 11 counties in the Southwest Tennessee Region. In their collaborative to create REDI, regional leaders are looking beyond county lines to create a unique vision for Southwest Tennessee that is distinctive and progressive. Member counties include Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Lauderdale, McNairy, and Tipton. REDI has received funds from their 11 member counties, as well as the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, USDA/Rural Development, and the Tennessee Regions’ Roundtable.

The REDI program has four areas of concentration: Education/Workforce Development, Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Capacity Building. Since its inception, SWTDD leaders have created and successfully launched its first two REDI program initiatives that improve human capital and address workforce development and education:

#### REDI College Access Program

The nature of today’s globalized economy has impacted job opportunities and prospects for today’s workers. In the past, one could rely on a low-skill manufacturing job to earn a living and support a family. However, in today’s workforce, jobs often

require at least some post-secondary education or technical training, and many require additional certification. The future of successful economic development for this region of West Tennessee is linked to transforming the educational culture and improving access to higher education for both youth and adults. “To stay competitive in a 21st century economy, it is imperative that we create a more seamless path between high school, postsecondary, and the workforce. Today’s students must be prepared to be tomorrow’s workers,” said Governor Haslam. “The states that provide the strongest pool of talented workers with the most relevant skill sets are the states that will grow jobs and attract businesses.”

REDI’s College Access program was created to meet the needs of youth and adults wanting to pursue post-secondary education. Many students in rural communities are first-generation college students and are unfamiliar with how to navigate the process of attending some type of post-secondary education. REDI helps students with the entire college exploration, application, and enrollment process.

The REDI College Access Program, designed after the Ayers Foundation program, was created to change the educational culture of the region, and foster the link between education, workforce, and economic development. It was created to fill the gap in services for the post-secondary education process. The College Access Program is the cornerstone of REDI, and focuses on increasing educational attainment levels and improving workforce skill levels in rural West Tennessee. REDI has a College Mentor Corps, which is housed in the 19 area high

schools. These mentors provide one-on-one and group assistance to seniors on all things related to post-



secondary educational attainment. For some students, mentors may simply help in filling out the FAFSA, and for others it may start with exploring potential careers and moving forward from that point. Mentors work with students to explore career paths, the best school or fit for them, and assist students and their family with the financial aid process. REDI also employs Transition Coaches, who work at the two area Community Colleges. These coaches work with students as they graduate from high school and transition to college. They help with scheduling, provide academic assistance when needed, listen, help problem solve, and provide support for the students. Phase II for the College Access Program is a local, “Last Dollar” scholarship that communities raise funds for that provides any qualified student financial assistance to attend a community college, technical program, or other qualified university for two years. REDI focuses on first-generation, economically disadvantaged students, but resources are available to any student interested in post-secondary educational pursuits.

Working closely with 19 high schools in the 11-county area, REDI’s College Access Program helped over 3,000 seniors in the last two years acquire financial aid totaling \$15 million dollars for post-secondary education. The retention rate of REDI college students at the local community colleges has been between 75 and 80 percent (compared with a non-REDI rate of 50 percent).

The future of economic development for this region is directly linked to transforming the educational culture and improving access to higher education for both youth and adults. This creative approach to community and economic development earned REDI the 2012 Innovator Award from the Southern Growth Policy Board and a NADO Innovation Award for four consecutive years.

### **REDI Digital Factory**

Job creation is difficult in many communities, but when it is a rural community seeking to create more jobs, the odds seem stacked against them. Rural communities face a variety of unique challenges which can include no Internet access, infrastructure issues, poor educational attainment levels, and not having an adequately skilled or trained workforce. Overcoming these obstacles is extremely important for recruiting business and industry to a community, with a strong emphasis on having an educated and skilled workforce. Unfortunately,

**KEY FACTS:** Southwest Tennessee Region

**Population:** 307,963 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** rural economic development, human capital development, workforce development

**Partners:** Tennessee Dept. of Workforce Development, Tennessee Dept. of Economic and Community Development, DRA, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/Rural Dev., Chester Co., Crockett Co., Decatur Co., Gibson Co., Hardeman Co., Hardin Co., Haywood Co., Henderson Co., Lauderdale Co., McNairy Co., Tipton Co.

for many communities these are not challenges that can be overcome quickly and hinder job creation for the area. The new knowledge-based economy emphasizes that knowledge and education, often referred to as “human capital,” can be treated as a business product or as a productive asset. This knowledge-based economy provides the opportunity to train and educate workers in rural communities and provides technology-based employment opportunities that are normally not available. REDI is working to impact the regional economy and local job creation through training and technology through its Digital Factory program.

A Digital Factory is a co-working center that provides office space, shared broadband connection, and training/work rooms to connect candidates and remote employers. In the Digital Factories, candidates receive online training that results in a job placement upon successful completion of the program. The concept focuses on the online economy and features a social business model. The three-week training program is free to participants. After successful completion of the three-week Customer Service-focused training classes, testing, and certifications, participants are put to work. The online employer offers participants the flexibility to work shifts best suited to their schedules. The Digital Factory is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and successful candidates can work as little or as often as they choose. Many use this as a supplemental income, while others work full time. The employers have various lines of work available and provide a workable solution for anyone looking for a job.

REDI’s first Digital Factory was opened in June 2011 in Parsons, Tennessee, and has created 95 jobs in this rural area. REDI successfully launched its second Digital Factory this year in Ripley, Tennessee. Three training classes have been completed at this new location providing 17 new jobs for the city thus far. Plans are in place to create a Digital Factory in the nine remaining REDI counties over the coming years.





Harahan Bridge Project Schematic (Source: Greg Maxted)

## Regional Connectivity and Economic Development

### Memphis, Tennessee/Mid-South Region

★ Best Practices Case Study ★ Partnership for Sustainable Communities Funded Projects

#### Harahan Bridge Project—TIGER IV Grant

The Harahan Bridge, completed in 1916, is the second of four bridges to cross the Mississippi River from Memphis to Arkansas. It opened to train traffic in 1916 and the narrow, one-lane roadways were opened in 1917. The Harahan Bridge was the only automobile bridge that crossed the lower Mississippi until 1935. After the Memphis and Arkansas Bridge (currently I-55) was completed in 1949, the Harahan's wooden surface was removed, but the structural steel remains in place to this day. In researching the bridge, the deeds of sale were discovered for the roadways from 1917. Although the Union Pacific Railroad owns the bridge, the City of Memphis and Crittenden County, Arkansas own the roadways.

The City of Memphis collaborated with the Downtown Memphis Commission; the City of West Memphis, Arkansas; Shelby County Tennessee; Crittenden County, Arkansas; the Tennessee Department of Transportation; and the Harahan Bridge Project (representing private donors) to make a TIGER grant application in 2012. TIGER grants are aimed at improving corridors and thoroughfares dedicated to multiple forms of travel such as pedestrian and bicycle traffic. With the help of local and federally-elected officials, particularly Congressman Cohen and Mayor Wharton of Memphis, the project was awarded a \$14.9 million (TIGER) IV Discretionary grant. With these

federal funds in hand, combined with \$20 million from the local partners, a new 10-foot-wide, 1-mile-long bike/pedestrian crossing will be built along the existing roadways of the Harahan Bridge. This bike/pedestrian connection between the cities of Memphis, Tennessee and West Memphis, Arkansas will create a safe and legal way to walk or bike between these sister cities.

The Harahan Bridge Project is a component of the Main Street to Main Street Connector project, which is a 10-mile regional, multi-modal corridor that will increase and improve transportation between the Memphis metro area and Arkansas. The project includes upgrades to downtown Memphis' Main

**KEY FACTS:** Shelby County, Tennessee and Crittendon County, Arkansas

**Population:** 978,546 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** multi-modal corridor, downtown revitalization, adaptive infrastructure reuse

**Partners:** City of Memphis, Tennessee; City of West Memphis, Arkansas; Shelby County, Tennessee; Crittenden County, Arkansas; Downtown Memphis Commission; Community Redevelopment Agency; Harahan Bridge Project; Tennessee Dept. of Transportation; Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department; Hyde Foundation; Memphis Area Transit Authority; Memphis MPO; West Memphis MPO; Union Pacific

TIGER grants are aimed at improving corridors and thoroughfares dedicated to multiple forms of travel such as pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

**KEY FACTS:** Shelby County, Tennessee

**Population:** 927,644 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** multi-modal distribution network, transportation improvements, job creation

**Partners:** Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce; City of Memphis; Shelby County; Shelby County Office of Planning and Development; University of Memphis's Center for Community Building & Network Action; University of Memphis Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice; Memphis Economic Development Growth Engine (E.D.G.E); City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development; the City of Memphis Division of Community Enhancement; Shelby County Code Enforcement; Memphis Area Transit Authority; Memphis Light, Gas, & Water; and the Metropolitan Planning Organization

Street and a connection from the bridge to Broadway Avenue in West Memphis, Arkansas.

By the end of 2014, along a two and a half mile section of the Mississippi River, there will be a convergence of public/private projects in Memphis. The Harahan Bridge walkway will be open, the Beale Street Landing will be complete, and the Bass Pro Pyramid will be renovated and open for business. These three large-scale projects will transform the riverfront and bring thousands of visitors to the river and downtown Memphis.

### Memphis Aerotropolis—HUD Community Challenge Grant

Memphis is home to the country's busiest cargo airport and is crisscrossed by highways and interstates stretching from coast to coast and North to South. There are six intermodal train yards within the Memphis MPO serving hundreds of miles of track. The fourth largest inland port in the country links Memphis to the Mississippi River, ferrying goods, people, and raw products through the nation's heartland. All of this, along with the people who have had the foresight to recognize such advantage in location and logistics, has helped to make Memphis "America's Distribution Center." A moniker created in the 1980's, it has helped Memphis lure distributors and manufacturers from all around the world. In our continually globalized world, which creates a demand for goods to move faster and more efficiently, Memphis has an opportunity to continue to be a logistics powerhouse as "America's Aerotropolis."

An aerotropolis is a city or an economic hub extending out from a large airport into a surrounding area that consists mostly of distribution centers, office buildings, light manufacturing firms, convention centers, and hotels. In this case, Memphis International Airport is at the heart and extends out like a web to encompass Shelby County, DeSoto, and Tunica counties in Mississippi to the south, and Crittenden County in Arkansas, to the west. This web consists of a network of current and proposed roads, highways, interstates, and rail lines. Memphis is a global hub of distribution and warehousing, and Aerotropolis Memphis has strengthened that position by partnering with Aerotropolis Europe in Paris, France, and Aerotropolis Asia in Guangzhou, China.

The Memphis Aerotropolis initiative is funded by a \$1.26 million HUD Community Challenge Grant, and will focus on economic development efforts that will retain and expand the number of commercial and industrial jobs in existing employment centers, redevelopment efforts that will reduce the percentage of housing units with serious building code

violations, and transit improvements that will increase ridership while reducing vehicle miles travelled and shorten commutes.

Conceived and developed by the Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce, the Memphis Aerotropolis will spur business attraction and retention and boost job creation. The City of Memphis applied for the funding for the project and is managing the project, with assistance from the Chamber of Commerce. It will improve the connecting roadways from the airport to business parks, residential areas and the commercial and entertainment district of downtown Memphis while mitigating congestion through improvements in overall infrastructure. It will increase cargo and passenger service coming through the airport and help the region to build on its already known and respected reputation as America's Distribution Center.



Memphis distribution network (Source: Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce)





## Complete Streets Policy Development

Memphis, Tennessee/Shelby County

★ Best Practices Case Study

**M**illions of public dollars are invested in infrastructure to build roadways that will be used solely by automobiles, discouraging other transportation uses on many streets and roadways. In Memphis, where obesity rates are among the highest in the country, the need to emphasize walking and biking is paramount as a public health strategy. Efforts are under way in Memphis, Tennessee to design streets to be accessible and safe for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders regardless of age or ability. Known as “complete streets,” these streets create a more pedestrian-cyclist-and transit-friendly environment that encourages people to take alternate modes of transportation (see sidebar).

The Memphis/Shelby County Complete Streets Policy Development Project was designed to provide safe, attractive, and comfortable access to roadways for all users, regardless of the choice of mode. The final scope of the policy includes all of Memphis. The project aims to engage a two-step process: crafting a policy that can be implementable, and fostering community advocacy and education programming about complete streets and their many benefits.

A broad-based coalition was formed with the Urban Land Institute and Livable Memphis, a program of the Community Development Council of Greater Memphis, along with additional partners that include the Memphis Regional Design Center, Department of Civil Engineering, Memphis Area Transit Authority, University of Memphis Department of Civil Engineering, Memphis City Engineers, Shelby County Engineers, University of Memphis Partnership for Active Community Environments, the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department, and Healthy Memphis Common Table.

This coalition is working together to increase the access for all users of Memphis and Shelby County’s streets.

An Executive Committee including key players and financial supporters led the effort, and a policy development team was created. The team recognized that it would not be feasible or prudent to simply implement another city’s complete streets policy and expect it to work in Memphis. The Memphis/Shelby County Complete Street Policy had to be customized to the wants and needs of its own residents. From the beginning, involvement with the Memphis and Shelby County Engineering Department was vital, as it would be tasked with the implementation of the desired changes and improvements should the policy be passed. From the start, the policy development was meant to be a proactive and positive effort, and to be locally informed and relevant.

The project received \$10,000 through an Urban Innovation Grant from the national Urban Land Institute. Another \$5,000 came from coalition partners, as well as a National Association of Realtors Smart Growth grant for \$15,000. The money was used for coalition education and advocacy, and to fund policy development.

The policy development team crafted two policies: the Memphis Complete Streets Policy and the Shelby County Complete Streets Policy, which were similar but uniquely focused on the needs and wants of the two constituencies. In February 2013, Memphis Mayor A. C. Wharton signed an executive order for the Memphis Complete Streets Policy. The next step is the creation and adoption of the Complete Streets Technical Design Manual to aid in implementation across Memphis. In October 2013, the Coalition received \$48,000 in funding from the Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan to develop a design and implementation manual.

## What are Complete Streets?

As a member of the Smart Growth America Coalition, the National Complete Streets Coalition works to change the way most roads are planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to enable safe access for all users. The National Complete Streets Coalition brings together public interest groups such as AARP, the National Association of Realtors, and the American Public Transportation Association, as well as practitioner organizations such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Association of City Transportation Officials, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Planning Association, and the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals. It works for the adoption and effective implementation of Complete Streets policies at the local, state, and federal levels.

## What are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.

Creating Complete Streets means transportation agencies must change their approach to community roads. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

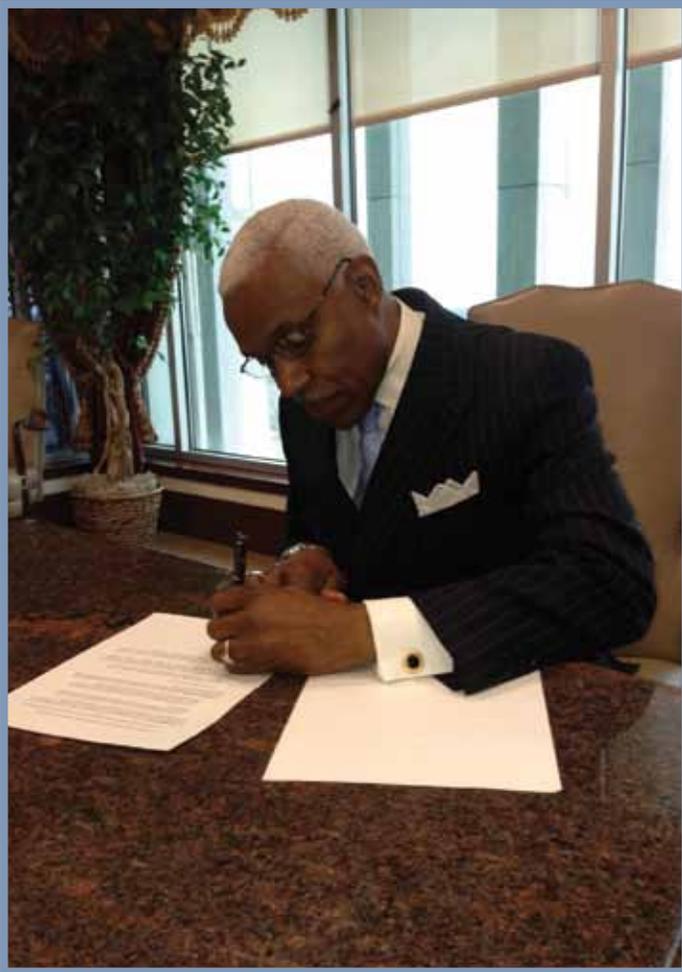
## What does a “Complete Street” look like?

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more.

A Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a Complete Street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.



Source: National Complete Streets Coalition—Smart Growth America



Mayor A.C. Wharton signing the Memphis Complete Streets Policy  
(Source: [midsouthcompletestreets.blogspot.com](http://midsouthcompletestreets.blogspot.com))

**KEY FACTS:** Shelby County, Tennessee

**Population:** 927,644 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** complete streets policy implementation, public-private partnership, multi-modal infrastructure investment

**Partners:** ULI Memphis, Community Development Council of Greater Memphis, Memphis Regional Design Center, University of Memphis Dept. of Civil Engineering, University of Memphis Partnership for Active Community Environments, Memphis/Shelby County Health Department, Healthy Memphis Common Table, National Association of Realtors, Memphis Area Transit Authority, Memphis City Engineers, Shelby County Engineers





Mississippi River (Source: John Guider)

## National Scenic Byways Development and Implementation

### Memphis, Tennessee/Mississippi River Corridor

#### ★ Best Practices Case Study

The Mississippi River Corridor – Tennessee, Inc. (MRCT) has received three FHWA National Scenic Byways program grants that are successfully advancing economic and natural resource conservation along the Great River Road region of Tennessee. The Mississippi River Corridor - TN is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and its mission is to identify, conserve, and interpret the region's natural, cultural, and scenic resources to improve the quality-of-life and prosperity in West Tennessee.

The Mississippi River Corridor's diverse initiatives are dedicated to the economic development, land conservation, and environment and wildlife preservation of the six counties that border the Mississippi River along the entire western border of Tennessee. The six counties that comprise the Corridor are Shelby, Tipton, Lauderdale, Dyer, Lake, and Obion.

The organization is led by a robust Board of Directors and serves as a model for regional engagement and a facilitator for important and strategic partnerships from government, private, and philanthropic sectors that are supporting successful implementation projects in each county.

The potential economic impact of their innovative projects is a windfall for the region. The Corridor regularly attracts thousands of tourists and regional travelers as a designated FHWA National Scenic Byway along the ten-state Great River Road. Recreational and outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs, biology and botany researchers, families, and students of all ages benefit from the Corridor's magnificent trails and scenic vistas, interpretive centers, and recreational facilities.

The Mississippi River Corridor works to celebrate and conserve the unique natural beauty and rich history of the wilderness,

recreation lands, working farms and forests, parks, and wildlife habitat in the 650,000-acre alluvial valley basin from the River to the famous Chickasaw Bluffs.

The Corridor is a complex and ever-evolving project that involves uniting hundreds of key stakeholders and property owners within the region to preserve the area's important and significant resources like vegetation, wildlife, soils, water, and trails; sites of historical, geological, and archaeological interests; and scenic views, vistas, and areas of high aesthetic value. The MRCT provides managed access to this unique region for recreational and educational experiences along the Mississippi River.

Not only is this a critical initiative for the preservation of the region, its wildlife, and natural amenities, it is equally important in the economic development of the distressed counties in western Tennessee that are experiencing a major loss of employment opportunities and contain high concentrations of employment in declining industries. Development of amenities within each county is underway to support the influx of visitors and new development ventures that will positively impact job creation, capital investments, income levels, and local and state tax revenues. Examples of these and the communities in which they are located follow.

#### Discovery Park of America – Union City, TN – Obion County

This world-class educational and entertainment complex is composed of a 100,000 square-foot Discovery Center and features a multi-storied oval-shaped structure with 10 exhibit galleries for science, nature, technology, art, and history. The immense building sits on a 50-acre site that also contains a



*Discovery Center (Source: Mary Nita Bondurant)*

19th century gristmill, extensive landscaping with Japanese, European, and American gardens, historical log cabins, and a 100-year old church. Work began on this extraordinary regional resource in 2007, and has a price tag of almost \$80 million. The funding is supplied primarily by The Robert E. and Jenny D. Kirkland Foundation. Over 250 local and regional citizens serve on a multitude of committees and provide the heart and soul for the project.

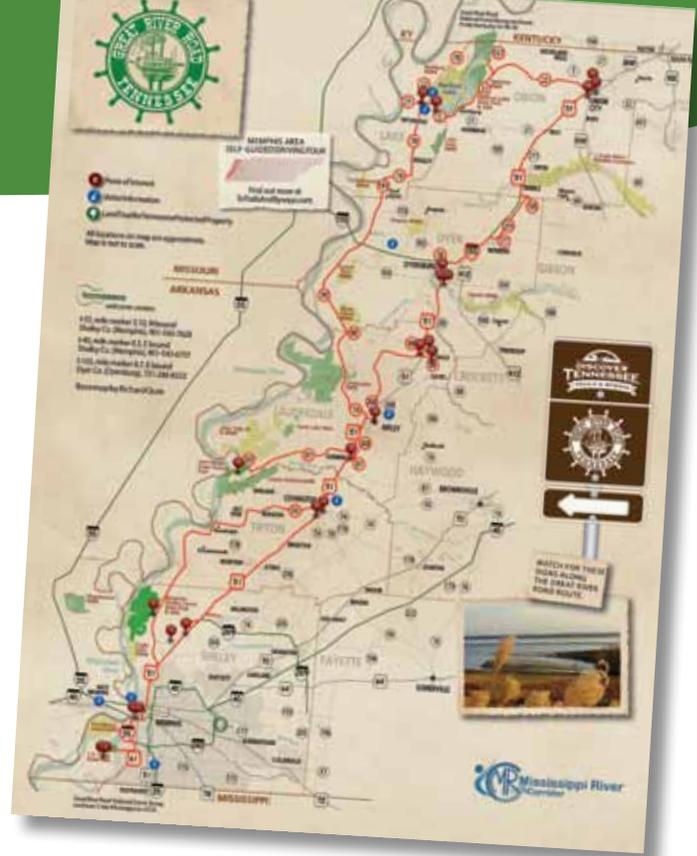
### **New Interpretive Visitors Center for Reelfoot Lake State Park – Tiptonville, TN – Lake County**

MRCT will begin construction on a new state-of-the-art Interpretive Visitors Center at Reelfoot Lake State Park in early 2014 after receiving a \$1,890,000 grant award from the FHWA National Scenic Byways program, TDOT, and TDEC. Located near the Great River Road – National Scenic Byway in Tennessee, Reelfoot Lake is the largest natural lake in Tennessee and was created by the New Madrid Earthquake in 1811–12. The Interpretive Visitors Center will tell the history of this unique region with highly interactive interior and exterior exhibits as well as provide an “outdoor classroom” for this amazing wildlife habitat and scenic paradise. It will also serve as a visitor orientation gateway in the NW region of Tennessee and create a way station for hikers, bicyclists, birders, campers, historians, and educators traveling along the 10-state Great River Road NSB.

Lake County, the home of Reelfoot Lake State Park, is located in the most economically challenged area within the State of Tennessee. The new Visitors Center is expected to bring thousands of additional visitors to the State Park and will provide a significant revenue increase for the citizens that live along the Mississippi River in Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

### **Dyersburg River Center, Park, and Water Trail Projects – Dyer County, TN**

The MRCT Dyersburg River Center, Park, and Blueway (water trail) initiatives were created three years ago to establish new community awareness, economic development revenues, health and wellness benefits, additional tourism dollars, educational venues, and to provide needed conservation and restoration efforts for the Forked Deer and Mississippi Rivers. With the



construction of the Dyersburg River Center, floating boat dock, restroom/shower facility, walking trail, and Blueway, the MRCT, Dyer County Government, and a multitude of community partners will be able to engage and train students, serve individuals of every capability, provide new outdoor activities, and teach river advocates best practices for canoeing and kayaking.

Funding for the project has been provided to the MRCT by: The Walton Family Foundation, the TDEC Recreational Trails Program, and USDA. Enhancement of amenities to support the influx of visitors and regional citizens to the MRCT Dyersburg River Park, and new economic development ventures associated with the complex, will also positively impact job creation, capital investments, talent retention, healthier lifestyles, outdoor recreational activities, and local and state tax revenues.



**KEY FACTS:** Mississippi River Corridor Region

**Population:** 1,094,514 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** natural resource conservation, tourism, rural economic development

**Partners:** Mississippi River Corridor–Tennessee, Federal Highway Administration, Robert E. and Jenny D. Kirkland Foundation, Tennessee Dept. of Transportation, Tennessee Dept. of Environment and Conservation, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Dyer County, the Walton Family Foundation



Ripley, Tennessee Courthouse Square  
(Source: Brent Moore)

## Courthouse Square Revitalization

Ripley, Tennessee

★ Best Practices Case Study

**A**n hour north of Memphis, near the Arkansas state line, sits the small town of Ripley, Tennessee. The county seat of Lauderdale County, Ripley is home to the Lauderdale County Tomato Festival, a 30 year tradition that highlights the role the crop has had on the community.

In recent years the recession and depressed economy severely impacted Ripley and Lauderdale County. Many of Ripley's industries and local businesses closed their doors, leaving many residents without a job. Ripley has had an unemployment rate that is significantly higher than the national average.

Downtowns can play an important role in a community's efforts to boost the local economy and improve a town's quality-of-life. These commercial cores usually account for as much as 30 percent of a community's jobs and 40 percent of its tax base. Downtown is also a community's crossroads – a place in the hearts and minds of residents that evoke strong emotions and help define a community's identity. In 2011 Ripley became a member city of the Tennessee Main Street Program, a coordinating partner of the National Main Street Center, to gain resources and technical assistance for downtown redevelopment. By aligning its downtown redevelopment with the strategies and beliefs of the National Main Street Center's "Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization," Ripley developed a comprehensive downtown revitalization plan that includes a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional business districts based on unique assets (see sidebar). Ripley

has emphasized its distinctive architecture, pedestrian-friendly environments, and local ownership as assets in the redevelopment process.

With a high unemployment rate and stagnate economy, the city and the Ripley Downtown Development Corporation also needed a catalyst to spur development and job growth in the area, which came in the form of a new state program, the Courthouse Square Revitalization Pilot Project Act. Chosen as one of six county seats with a population of 120,000 people or less, Ripley created a designated downtown and tourism zone around the county courthouse that was to be redeveloped. Through this program the state returns around five percent of the sales tax generated in this specified zone to Ripley to fund the redevelopment process. Each new business in the zone increases available funding so the program also helps to encourage new businesses to locate in the downtown area. The zone includes the court square area, the property around the courthouse, and Washington Street from court square to Kellar Street. Ripley also received \$2.95 million from the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) for repairing and improving streets and sidewalks and a \$35,000 USDA Rural Development Grant for general funding of the project.

The redevelopment process was divided into three phases, with the completion of the entire project scheduled to end in 2023. Phase I, completed in 2010, emphasized sustainable design strategies, and the impact it's made on the health of the community is evident. Ripley's court square is now more pedestrian-friendly due to recently implemented traffic calming

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Ripley developed a comprehensive downtown revitalization plan that includes a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional business districts based on unique assets

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Lauderdale County Courthouse (Source: Brent Moore)

techniques. Traffic signals that once allowed vehicles to enter the square without stopping were changed to stop signs. Traffic lanes were narrowed and trees and other landscape improvements were added. Some walkways were widened into plazas with plenty of seating to encourage people to congregate and socialize. These plazas and all areas of the square are now connected with extra-wide crosswalks to make it easy and inviting for pedestrians to stroll and shop without feeling the need to get in a car and drive. The new streetlights in the revitalization area complement the 1930s era courthouse and direct light down for pedestrian safety while reducing night sky light pollution. The lighting in the courthouse is 75 percent more efficient than the previous lighting. Increasing the landscaped areas and reducing impervious paving has reduced the amount of stormwater entering the drainage system and helps to recharge the local aquifer.

Phase I also included the renovation of the Lauderdale County Courthouse. The Art Deco style building, which was erected during the 1930's by WPA, is a cultural icon for the area and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The renovation included replacing old windows with energy-efficient ones and updating the HVAC system. These changes have made the building more energy efficient, ultimately reducing the courthouse's energy consumption by 35%.

Phase II will focus on the other areas of the downtown zone, improving the streetscape along Washington Street from the court square to Kellar Street. Phase III of the downtown revitalization plan will include adding a rail museum, children's park, and a skate park to the downtown district. A six-mile walking trail loop will also be created to link the downtown area with the park.

**KEY FACTS:** Ripley, Tennessee

**Population:** 8,445 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** historic preservation, rural economic development, leveraged implementation funding

**Partners:** Tennessee Main Street Program, Ripley Downtown Development Corporation, Tennessee Dept. of Transportation, United States Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development, City of Ripley and Lauderdale County

## National Main Street Program

Established in 1980 as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Program works with a nationwide network of communities to encourage preservation-based economic revitalization, and has participated in the renewal of more than 2,000 older commercial districts during its 30-year history. Main Street offers a revitalization framework appropriate for communities of all types, including commercial districts in urban neighborhoods, rural towns, and smaller and mid-sized cities. Working in conjunction with a state-city-, or county-wide Main Street Coordinating Program, or directly with the National Main Street Center, local Main Street programs plan and implement projects that create more vibrant and healthy commercial districts.

### The Four Points of the National Main Street Program:

**Organization:** Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district.

**Promotion:** Promotion takes many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in the commercial district.

**Design:** Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors. It takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in a commercial district by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials.

**Economic Restructuring:** Economic restructuring strengthens a community's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support.



National Main Street Center

a subsidiary of the  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Source: National Main Street Program—National Trust for Historic Preservation

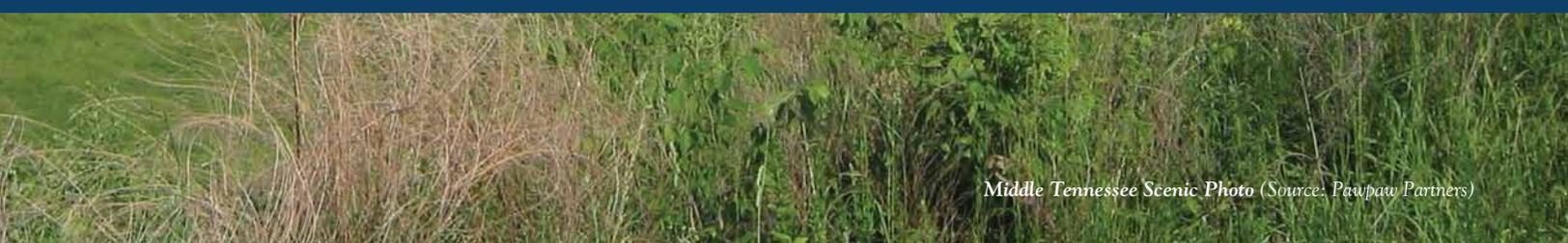




*Nashville, Tennessee (Source: Pawpaw Partners)*



# Middle Tennessee Region



*Middle Tennessee Scenic Photo (Source: Pawpaw Partners)*

## ★ Featured Partnership for Sustainable Communities - Funded Project

### COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE'S

### James Campbell Boulevard Strategic Corridor Plan—HUD Community Challenge Grant

James Campbell Boulevard is Columbia's loop road around its historic downtown neighborhoods that was a critical area identified in the Columbia Comprehensive Plan. This commercial strip is anchored by a regional medical center, an urban mall from the 1970's, and most of Columbia's national chain and big box retailers. Attention to this important business corridor was needed to ensure its future economic vitality and a continuing sales tax base for the city. In 2010, HUD awarded the City of Columbia a \$250,000 HUD Community Challenge Grant, to which the City allocated an additional \$100,000 to develop the James Campbell Boulevard Strategic Corridor Plan. The James Campbell Corridor Project created new zoning plans for the commercial corridor and the decayed shopping mall.



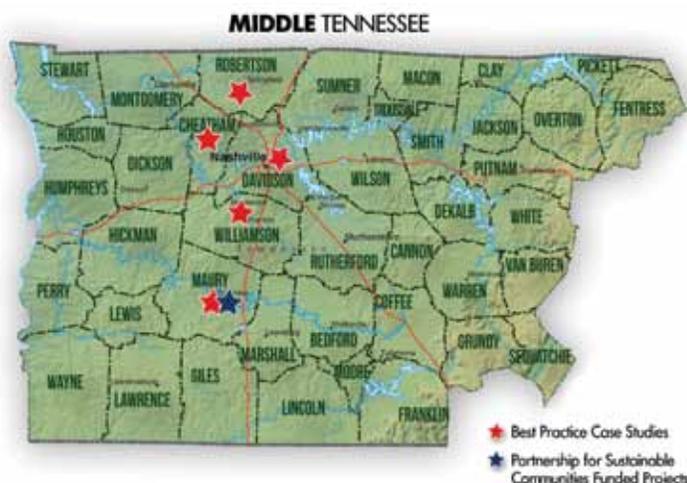
During its heyday, James Campbell Boulevard carried abundant car traffic leading to the local mall and nearby retailers and restaurants. Now a dilapidated relic, the mall no longer serves residents and the boulevard is unsafe and unsuitable for Columbia's growing bike and pedestrian traffic. To revive James Campbell's role as a center for commerce, the city has envisioned the mall redevelopment as an economically vital "lifestyle center" where one can live, work, shop, and play. It is projected that the new center will support 2,200 new jobs and 400,000 square feet of new housing in a walkable, pedestrian-and bicyclist-friendly urban environment. The regional medical center has already located overflow medical services into a large portion of the mall's available space. "As a city in decline, we were really looking for a catalyst for new investment," Columbia Planning Director Norman Wright said. "For us, livability is synonymous with economic development."

As Columbia shifts from planning to implementation, it will apply a collaborative approach to the newly redesigned Columbia Mall. Developing the anticipated lifestyle center, efforts are underway to transform one of the mall's large, vacant storefronts into a civic space that will enhance the city's image and encourage future development. The Maury Regional Medical Center has also invested \$2 million in the mall project. In total, James Campbell Boulevard has attracted \$7.5 million of private investment since the Sustainable Communities grant was announced. Reinvigorated by its grant work, the James Campbell Corridor is proof that livability and economic growth go hand in hand. The work of the residents and city officials in Columbia has been the driving force in the transformation of the James Campbell Corridor from an antiquated through-road to a bustling, community space.

The James Campbell Strategic Corridor Plan was approved in December 2011 and the Implementation Strategy was approved in February 2012. Recently, the City of Columbia has funded \$800,000 in intersection improvements at the main crossing and has approved designs for another intersection improvement that will be funded through the Surface Transportation Program funds.

Spanning from the east banks of the Tennessee River to the rise of the Cumberland Plateau, Middle Tennessee plays host to landscapes that are among the most diverse and scenic to be found in the South. The region's low rolling hills and vast Tennessee and Cumberland River Watersheds boast a wealth of natural beauty and resources, as well as a rich cultural and historic heritage, from some of the most crucial battles of the Civil War to the rise of country music in Nashville, the state's capital. Today, Middle Tennessee's historic agricultural landscapes, main streets, and rural communities are thriving alongside the high-tech creative economic clusters than have made its larger cities home.

Nashville and the Middle Tennessee Region's early success in regional implementation began with regional economic development partnerships and regional leadership development in the 1990s, leveraged by a successful 2001 Cumberland Region Tomorrow Regional Visioning Project scenario planning effort, which has supported successful community and regional planning, design, and implementation and created region-wide acceptance of new comprehensive plans that support Sustainable Communities and Quality Growth Principles. Currently, the Middle Tennessee Region is focusing on multi-modal transportation and transit implementation, building upon the 2010 Nashville Area MPO 2035 Transportation Plan's Bold New Vision for Mass Transit that is being implemented among a strong partnership led by the Middle Tennessee Mayors Caucus, the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee, the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, and other key stakeholder groups. Middle Tennessee is experiencing great success through aligned regional organizational capacity and collaboration demonstrated by the 50+ regional organizations working together through the Middle Tennessee POWER OF TEN Network.





## Middle Tennessee Regional Initiative

★ HUD Preferred Region Status

### Collaborative Leadership Model Middle Tennessee Region HUD Preferred Region Status



Successful regional visioning, planning, and implementation requires collaborative efforts and actions among key public and private sector organizations and leaders. This collaborative leadership approach is essential for regional planning efforts to move through the necessary stages to bring focus and action to implementation efforts that support shared regional goals and outcomes. Current HUD Regional Planning Grant-funded regional projects across the country are moving through this process. The Cumberland Region Tomorrow (CRT) Middle Tennessee Region began a collaborative leadership, regional visioning, comprehensive planning, and regional implementation process in the early 2000s. Today these efforts are producing positive growth and development implementation results.

CRT's role in the 10-county region of Middle Tennessee consisting of Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Sumner, Robertson, Rutherford, Williamson, and Wilson counties is to encourage growth planning and implementation with a focus on livability, sustainability, and economic vitality by bringing people and organizations together to communicate, collaborate, and take action on six key issues of regional importance of Middle Tennessee's future growth and development:

- > Economic Competitiveness
- > Transportation/Transit
- > Land Use/Quality Growth
- > Infrastructure



- > Open Space Conservation
- > Air/Water Quantity/Quality

Since 2000, CRT has worked to advance regional and local planning and implementation efforts by improving the framework from which growth and development decisions and actions occur. This work has included the creation of a successful collaborative leadership model that undergirds and guides all of CRT's work efforts, including completion of a nationally recognized regional visioning project that produced the 2003 *Report to the Region*, development of Tennessee's first *Quality Growth Toolbox* education, implementation, and outreach resources tailored to regional consensus and needs and facilitation of annual POWER OF TEN Regional Summits that identify and drive action toward regional issues and opportunities. CRT is currently working on the creation and coordination of the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network that is bringing together the West, Southwest, Middle, Southeast, and East Tennessee Regions, a new State and Federal Advisory Committee, and aligned Affiliate Organizations and Funders to expand CRT's Quality Growth resources and collaborative leadership model across Tennessee.

CRT's successful collaborative leadership model and approach has involved thousands of regional leaders and citizens and strategically engaged and aligned organizations, experts, and resources in each stage of the organization's work, which has now matured to function at the local, regional, state, and national levels. The effective use of CRT's collaborative leadership approach and the relationships this model creates through its regional board structure and network of government, private sector, and non-governmental partner organizations is the basis of all CRT's efforts and is critical to their implementation successes. A robust and recognized regional communications platform and outreach program have also been

carefully developed and implemented by CRT including Web sites, e-newsletters, and publications for three brands managed in-house: Cumberland Region Tomorrow, the POWER OF TEN Regional Summit, and the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network. This outreach and communications work has greatly helped to advance the acceptance of visioning, planning, design, and implementation in the CRT Region.

CRT serves as a trusted resource and facilitator for regional collaborative action, quality growth implementation, and outreach and communications at the local, regional, state,

and national levels. CRT has a successful track record of working with local, regional, state, and national leaders and organizations in implementing impactful programming, such as: The Regional Visioning Project *Report to the Region*, the *Quality Growth Toolbox*, *GIS Greenprint for Quality Growth*, annual POWER OF TEN Regional Summits, and the new Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Network. These initiatives have been key in accomplishing Middle Tennessee's and the state's shared goals of economic competitiveness and job opportunities, quality community development with choices, and wise use of fiscal resources.

## Cumberland Region Tomorrow's Quality Growth Toolbox

Cumberland Region Tomorrow (CRT) created the Quality Growth Toolbox in 2006 to promote the adoption of innovative professional practices in community development, comprehensive planning, community reinvestment and design, strategic open space conservation, integrated land use and transportation planning, and targeted infrastructure investing. Funded by CRT, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the development of Tennessee's first Quality Growth Toolbox has created the platform for education, technical assistance, implementation, and outreach that builds on Middle Tennessee's regional consensus and needs. The CRT Quality Growth Toolbox has been a key element in the overall regional strategy and the major component of each of these actions.

In developing the Quality Growth Toolbox, CRT created a coalition of 150 leaders and organizations, researched best practices for growth management from all over the United States, and compiled them into a comprehensive set of guiding principles, strategies, tools, and resources for local governments to learn and apply. These are presented in the Quality Growth Toolbox in seven chapters:

- > Prologue: Creating Quality Growth in the Cumberland Region
- > Reinvesting in Towns, City Centers, and Communities
- > Creating a Variety of Housing Choices
- > Conserving Our Region's Land, Water, Cultural, and Natural Resources
- > Transportation and Land Use Planning for Quality Growth

- > Guiding Infrastructure for Sustainable Development
- > Conclusion: Ensuring Our Region's Economic Vitality through Quality Growth

In each of these interrelated chapters, the CRT Quality Growth Toolbox stresses that choosing to promote Quality Growth through comprehensive planning, community design, and implementation is the region's best pathway to economic competitiveness. The Quality Growth Toolbox also illustrates how these actions will result in increased community and regional livability, sustainability, and ensures the wise use of fiscal and land resources.

The CRT Quality Growth Toolbox is establishing a new standard of practice that exceeds state requirements and leverages resources and expertise through collaborative leadership approaches. CRT's efforts have achieved positive results in updated growth and development plans and strategies in eight of 10 counties in the region that are supporting local and regional implementation.

In 2013, the CRT Quality Growth Toolbox was recognized by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation with the Governor's Award for Environmental Stewardship in the category of Education and Outreach. TDEC officials described the project as "an exemplary model of innovation, leadership, cooperation, and commitment with proven and far-reaching results that have and will continue to positively impact Tennessee's environment and economy for generations to come."

*Funders: Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Tennessee Department of Transportation, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency*





Bluffs along the Cumberland River (Source: Paupau Partners)

## Sustainable Tourism Strategy Implementation

### Cheatham County

#### ★ Best Practices Case Study

**T**hough quiet, hilly Cheatham County sits just down the road from Nashville, its towns and residents might as well be a world away. Rich in scenic beauty and blessed with numerous natural and cultural resources, the county has maintained its essentially rural character to this day, and boasts a relatively small population of about 40,000 people.

Due to its geographic isolation, rural setting, small population, and lack of large employers, Cheatham County faces unique economic challenges. The county has the highest external commuting rate in the state of Tennessee, at 82.5%, with only 3,300 of the approximately 21,000 skilled workers in Cheatham County employed within the county. The county's low daytime population puts economic stress on businesses and restaurants: Cheatham County has the highest retail leakage rate of any county in Tennessee, with a current rate of 68%.

With so many workers and so much consumer spending headed elsewhere, community leaders recognized the need for ways to bring revenue into the county. Seeking to generate more economic development opportunities, local business leaders funded and launched Cheatham Vision in 2010 with the intent to improve Cheatham County's economy and overall quality-of-life. Later that year, Cheatham Vision released Open for Business, a three-year economic, business, and workforce development strategy.

One of the specific strategies outlined in the plan was to

identify, develop, and market Cheatham County's outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational assets. By developing the county's tourism industry and targeting specific new businesses, the community hoped to create local jobs and new business development opportunities. In addition, new tourist spending would boost revenues at local businesses such as restaurants, service stations, shops, and lodging. Increased sales taxes would help schools and public services while reducing the need for property tax increases.

In early 2012, the Cheatham County Chamber of Commerce formed a partnership with Cumberland Region Tomorrow (CRT) and with their assistance secured a Rural Business Enterprise Grant through the Tennessee Rural Development Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The RBEG grant provided funding to inventory, access, and document all existing and potential tourism and recreation resources in Cheatham County and to develop a Sustainable Tourism Plan.

The development of the Cheatham County Sustainable Tourism Plan was broken down into five main tasks:

- > **Task One:** Inventory, document, and assess the natural, cultural, and recreational resources in Cheatham County to develop a sustainable tourism plan.
- > **Task Two:** Determine realistic economic enhancement strategies based on existing and potential attractions.

**KEY FACTS:** Cheatham County, Tennessee

**Population:** 39,105 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** sustainable tourism, rural economic development, natural resource enhancement

**Partners:** Cheatham County Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Pawpaw Partners, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, University of Tennessee – Knoxville

- > **Task Three:** Identify specific businesses to be targeted to provide for additional tourist and recreational use of the county's resources, and develop detailed demographic and usage data to enable local business leaders to recruit such businesses and generate new jobs.
- > **Task Four:** Identify economic development incentives from local, regional, state, and federal sources that can help existing and new businesses that will be targeted through Task Three.
- > **Task Five:** Generate a written sustainable tourism plan for economic and community development implementation. Provide businesses and other organizations with marketing and outreach materials, photography, graphic icons, and links for tourism cluster promotion.

CRT was contracted to provide consulting services to complete needed resource assessment, technical analysis, perform gap business and incentive analysis, coordinate community engagement, and generate the final deliverable: the Sustainable Tourism Strategy. In addition, CRT agreed to coordinate with state-level Rural Economic Development partner agencies including the Tennessee Departments of Agriculture, Tourist Development, Wildlife Resources, and Economic and Community Development to ensure that Cheatham County objectives aligned with state objectives and incentives to ensure successful implementation.

Led by the Chamber of Commerce, CRT worked with Pawpaw Partners, a Nashville-based natural and cultural resource planning firm, and other business leaders to look at each of the county's four incorporated communities and determine recommendations for place-specific marketing strategies. Ashland City would be promoted as a recreational center, Kingston Springs for its historic character, and Pleasant View for its agricultural heritage.



*Tourism along a Civil War Trail in Kingston Springs  
(Source: Pawpaw Partners)*

Pegram, just west of the Bellvue section of Nashville, would be marketed as a center for local crafts and music.

The Cheatham County Sustainable Tourism Plan will be completed in the winter of 2013. In addition to business recruitment, the plan will provide the Chamber and Economic Development leaders with new marketing tools for the Vision Cheatham Tourism Cluster, along with new watchable wildlife and motorcycle tours, enhanced ecotourism, and a new arts initiative. Possibilities also include the county's first high-end hotel, incubator spaces for artists, outdoor outfitters, and agritourism resources. Thousands of new visitors will soon discover this quiet county on Nashville's urban edge and support local economic and community development objectives thanks to innovative planning and marketing strategies completed through this first-ever Tennessee project.



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**“This is a true rural economic development project aimed at improving the Cheatham County economy by developing and enhancing a tourism and recreation industry based on its unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources.”**

*Gary Scott, Cheatham Business Leader*

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Columbia's Courthouse Square at night (Source: Columbia Main Street)

## Downtown and Neighborhood Revitalization

*Columbia, Tennessee*

★ Best Practices Case Study

**S**ituated just 30 miles south of Nashville and less than an hour's drive from the Alabama state line, Columbia serves as an economic and cultural hub for the South Central Tennessee Region. The county seat of Maury County, Columbia is home to close to 35,000 people living along the Duck River. Columbia serves as the regional hub for health care, higher education, banking, retail, and entertainment.

Between 2000 and 2010 Columbia had one of the slowest growth rates in Tennessee and the highest unemployment rate of any city of its size in the state. That decade's economic downturn was hard on Columbia, with a loss in manufacturing jobs that created hardships for the city. In recent years, Columbia has also had trouble attracting new residents and has seen a rapid loss of the vital millennial generation, generally recognized as anyone born between 1980 and 2000, which many recognize to be key assets in attracting local investments and maintaining a vibrant economy.

But that is now turning around due to coordinated, successful public and private partnership efforts. In response to these economic development and livability issues, Columbia leaders took action and built upon successful downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts begun in the early 1980s through comprehensive planning and implementation actions. The Columbia Main Street Program, established in 1982,

has played a large role in focusing downtown reinvestment, emphasizing organization, design, and economic restructuring that has created the Downtown Commercial Historic Central Business District that Columbia enjoys today. Columbia Main Street, the City of Columbia, and other community partners have parlayed visioning, planning, and implementation funding through the City of Columbia, Tennessee Department of Transportation, and local funding to build out streetscape connections that undergird historic and tourism resources and downtown businesses.

In 2007 Columbia, along with Maury County, Spring Hill, and Mount Pleasant, received technical assistance as one of Cumberland Region Tomorrow's (CRT) first Quality Growth Toolbox Pilot Communities and began a joint comprehensive planning effort through local government contributions and Rural Development RBEG grant funding. In 2008, with the help of CRT, city officials created and adopted the new Columbia Comprehensive Plan that has been a major catalyst in moving Columbia's downtown reinvestment, housing and neighborhood revitalization, and corridor redevelopment goals forward.

Midway through the development of the comprehensive plan, Columbia leaders saw an opportunity to contribute additional funds to piggyback a housing and neighborhood revitalization plan for Columbia's contiguous historic neighborhoods onto the comprehensive plan, which identified housing and



*Economic Development Professionals in front of the Maury County Courthouse (Source: Validity Magazine)*

neighborhood areas in critical need of revitalization. That forethought by Columbia officials allowed the city to apply for and receive a \$519,000 HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Grant for their first priority neighborhood of East Columbia next to the Downtown Commercial Business District. As part of this grant, the City of Columbia reorganized its housing authority as the Columbia Housing and Redevelopment Corporation (CHRC) that has been an effective implementing partner. This restructuring has allowed the city and the expanded housing and redevelopment agency to purchase abandoned properties in distressed neighborhoods and rebuild new, affordable homes in their place. The reorganization of the housing authority also allows the city to utilize a broader array of redevelopment tools, including Tax Increment Financing, and capture several HUD Community Block Grants. Columbia has also synergized these efforts with citizen-led organizations like People Helping People and local Habitat for Humanity efforts. CHRC has received national awards for its approach to housing and neighborhood revitalization, and it actively pursues revitalization city-wide. The City of Columbia and CHRC have created a successful

## Benefits of Downtown Revitalization

**Revitalization protects the existing tax base**—Private investment in banks, businesses, and commercial property and public investment in streets, sidewalks, and water and sewer lines are protected and enhanced.

**Revitalization provides an incubator for new business**—A viable downtown offers opportunities and incentives for the new entrepreneurs such as lower rent and technical assistance.

**Revitalization helps attract industrial development**—Downtown reflects the overall image a community projects to potential investors. An invigorated downtown makes a very positive statement about the whole community.

**Revitalization provides a point of focus and stability**—A vibrant downtown gives the whole community and region a sense of pride and positive self-image. It also serves as an anchor that holds the community together and provides the stability necessary for economic growth.



**National Main Street Center**

a subsidiary of the  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

Source: National Main Street Program—National Trust for Historic Preservation

**KEY FACTS:** Columbia, Tennessee

**Population:** 34,681 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** comprehensive plan, main street reinvestment, neighborhood revitalization

**Partners:** Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Columbia Housing and Redevelopment Corporation, Tennessee Main Street Program, City of Columbia

collaborative model for addressing neighborhood revitalization, infill development, and creating housing choices and opportunity through effective Columbia Comprehensive Plan implementation.





Downtown Franklin  
(Source: Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County)

## Sustainability through Downtown & Corridor Revitalization

*Franklin, Tennessee*

★ Best Practices Case Study

“Fourteen miles and 100 years from downtown Nashville” as its proponents tell it, the city of Franklin is one of Tennessee’s truly outstanding downtowns. Nestled in historically agricultural Williamson County, the town boasts over 62,000 residents, many of whom commute north to jobs in Nashville but make their home in or near historic downtown Franklin or one of the surrounding rural hamlets. Celebrated for its public square, its Civil War history, its walkability, and its many Main Street festivals, the historically rich and mindfully developed city that is today’s Franklin is the result of decades of work on the cutting edge of preservation, design, planning, reinvestment, and community and economic development.

For almost thirty years, Franklin has been a pioneer of downtown, community, and economic development both within Tennessee and on a national stage. The Downtown Franklin Association, founded in 1984, was one of the state’s first Main Street organizations pairing historic preservation, revitalization, and community and economic development with impressive results. Working in partnership with property owners, local businesses, preservationists, and city and county government, the association has had an unparalleled influence on the emergence of Franklin as a brand and destination. In May 1995, Franklin was honored as one of the best downtown areas in the nation when it received one of the first five “Great American Main Street” awards ever given by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Since then, accolades have included the “Best Small Town in Tennessee,” “America’s Most Romantic Main Street,” and “One of America’s Greatest Antique Destinations.” Franklin was also the launch location of the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Tennessee Civil

War Trails program in 2008, due to its significant battlefield and campaign locations.

Part of what makes Franklin so outstanding is its continued commitment to excellence after almost thirty years of planning, design, and community development initiatives. Rather than rest on its laurels as one of Middle Tennessee’s most famous historic towns, Franklin has continued to explore new models for reinvestment and emerging best practices to keep the community on the cutting edge. In 2008, Ken Moore, then an alderman for the City of Franklin, began to call for more sustainability initiatives from the city and from the Downtown Association, hoping to make Franklin and Williamson County a model for green development and sustainable living. The result was the creation of the City of Franklin Sustainability Community Action Plan, adopted in 2009.

When Moore became mayor in 2011, he brought those initiatives to the forefront with the help of many partners and staff. The Downtown Franklin Association and the Heritage Foundation was the first group with whom the City of Franklin partnered when the local sustainability movement began. Under Directors Nancy Williams and Mary Pearce, the Downtown Franklin Association and the Heritage Foundation helped the City of Franklin to establish curbside recycling as a citywide institution, and supported a downtown movie theater’s reopening as a LEED-certified historic building. Franklin’s green momentum inspired other downtown businesses, including a Starbucks that installed rooftop solar panels to generate electricity.

Franklin has built upon successful downtown and neighborhood redevelopment and connected these efforts to its sustainability implementation. “Use of current buildings and infrastructure



*Designing Columbia Avenue (Source: Nancy Williamson)*

**KEY FACTS:** Franklin, Tennessee

**Population:** 62,487 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** historic preservation, community revitalization, main street revitalization

**Partners:** Downtown Franklin Association/Heritage Foundation, City of Franklin, Franklin Tomorrow, Tennessee Main Street Program

meeting to discuss the project and make plans to complete the design by the end of summer 2013.

### **Columbia Avenue Complete Streets Corridor**

In the next phase of Franklin’s central business district development and implementation, an adjacent key area targeted for retrofitting and business development is the Columbia Avenue corridor adjoining the downtown district, where the city is using Complete Streets design principles. Historic Columbia Avenue runs along State Route 31-South and connects Franklin’s central business district to Columbia, Tennessee, another state Main Street Community, in neighboring Maury County. Columbia Avenue or Highway 31 South is also one of the region’s most important historic preservation corridors connecting Civil War sites including Franklin’s Carter House Museum and the entrance to Carnton Plantation to nationally recognized Civil War battlefield sites located in Franklin, Thompsons Station, Rippavilla Plantation in Spring Hill, Columbia, and southward along historic Highway 31 corridor.

To ready Columbia Avenue for a new role in connecting downtown Franklin to an emerging business district, Franklin has designed and built a cutting-edge Complete Streets corridor and designated the strip as a major reinvestment corridor. The Columbia Avenue project has already proven a catalyst for new public and private sector investment and returns, as several new businesses, banks, and agencies along with the Franklin Police Department have been established along Columbia Avenue to take advantage of the walking, biking, and transit traffic and connections to contiguous historic neighborhoods that Complete Streets development generates.

Projects like the Columbia Avenue corridor show Franklin’s outstanding capacity for integrating its long-standing downtown redevelopment efforts with new technologies and practices like the principles of Complete Streets design. The town continues to be a model for Tennessee Main Street communities, connecting placemaking, heritage tourism and economic development, and strategic infrastructure investment to maintain a small-town character that provides a timeless experience while incorporating cutting-edge green building technology/methods and sustainable community design principles.

is one of the most sustainable practices within the built environment,” says Mayor Ken Moore as he reflects on the Franklin’s success in implementation.

The guiding document for the city’s related efforts has been the Franklin Land Use Plan, which features sustainability themes throughout. The adopted Land Use Plan sets the vision for the community and gives detailed guidelines for each section of the city. The zoning ordinance and design guidelines implement the Land Use Plan by providing a legal framework for development and the practical application of the plan’s principles, including open space, tree conservation, storm water mitigation, historic preservation, and connectivity targets for all new development. Historic District Design Guidelines in turn protect the existing fabric and heritage of Downtown Franklin. The aligned Franklin Greenways and Open Space Master Plan is designed to create a well-connected network of bike lanes, sidewalks, and trails that safely link people to parks, schools, and other destinations. The city uses this plan to ensure that developers integrate their properties within the proposed trailway system when appropriate.

Another early partner with the City of Franklin and others in sustainability efforts was Franklin Tomorrow, a community-visioning nonprofit. In 2006, the organization produced a Green Building Report which led to the inclusion of sustainable building practices in the city’s new police headquarters. The group also held a lecture series on how to ‘live green in Franklin’ and now holds a permanent seat on the city’s Sustainability Commission. Other goals and projects underway read like a green wish list. Franklin has just received a grant from the Tennessee Main Street Program to build bike racks throughout the downtown. The city’s Department of Planning and Sustainability is working to re-design underutilized space in front of the historic post office as well as the adjacent archives buildings as a new outdoor event space. The city hopes to make this a key gathering spot and has already held one public





Tomato Art Festival at Five Points (Source: Tomato Art Festival)

## Neighborhood Revitalization & Business District Expansion

*Nashville, Tennessee*

★ **Best Practices Case Study**

Located along the banks of the Cumberland River, Nashville is the capital of Tennessee and Middle Tennessee's regional center. Commonly referred to as Music City, USA, Nashville is the hub for Middle Tennessee's music, health care, publishing, banking, and transportation industries, which play a large role in the regional economy. On the eastern side of the Cumberland River lies the East Nashville community, comprising of unique neighborhoods that have been in place since before WWII. For many years considered to be a dangerous and blighted part of Nashville, these neighborhoods are in the midst of a renaissance due to its historic fabric and walkable atmosphere with an abundance of locally owned restaurants, churches, schools, and parks. East Nashville is the leading haven for Nashville's creative class.

In April 1998 an F3 tornado touched down in East Nashville and made a chaotic and destructive path through the historic neighborhoods. Houses were destroyed and century-old trees were uprooted, leaving residents in various states of grief and bewilderment.

In the aftermath of the tornado, then-Mayor Phil Bredesen established the Tornado Recovery Board (TRB) to coordinate the city agencies, neighborhood residents, and business leaders contributing to the recovery efforts. The TRB worked with the American Institute of Architects Middle Tennessee to enlist

the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT), a group of the nation's best urban designers, planners, architects, and engineers, to help East Nashville recover from the tornado. The team developed a long-range plan that built on the community's strengths, identified strategies to address physical damage and destruction, and looked at ways to revive East Nashville's economy. The final plan, titled *Rediscovery: A Plan for East Nashville*, encouraged business district development, neighborhood connectivity, and improved mobility. Following the plan's completion, the nonprofit organization, Rediscover East!, was established to continue the work of R/UDAT and represent the collective voice of the East Nashville community.

Due to the destruction caused by the tornado, East Nashville property owners received a significant amount of insurance money—the largest infusion of new money into the neighborhood in many years. As a result, the recovery process spurred one of the largest urban revitalization processes in Nashville's history, utilizing the insurance money to reconstruct and renovate homes and businesses in the community. People from elsewhere in Nashville, who had never travelled across the river because of East Nashville's poor reputation, saw how charming the area was and that it had historic homes that were significantly less expensive than in other parts of the city. Unexpectedly, the tornado breathed new life into

**KEY FACTS:** Nashville, Tennessee

**Population:** 626,681 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** natural disaster recovery, neighborhood revitalization, business district revitalization/expansion

**Partners:** AIA Middle Tennessee, Metro Nashville-Davidson County, AIA Middle Tennessee R/UDAT Team

East Nashville, sparking the creation of new neighborhood organizations and strengthening its sense of community.

The Five Points area of East Nashville, where Woodland Street, Clearview Avenue, and North 11th Street converge, was identified by R/UDAT as a focal point of a business development district. Eventually, it received a great deal of private investment, and by the early 2000s, an abandoned TV repair shop was converted to a coffee shop, a 1930s era gas station became a nationally recognized restaurant, and an old clapboard house was transformed into a neighborhood bar. Other restaurants moved into vacant storefronts and office spaces to give the Five Points area a diverse and eclectic array of shops and eateries, supported by the neighborhood's growing residential consumers.

The initial revitalization of Five Points provided the foundation for more retail and economic development in the area. In 2011, local activists Bret and Meg McFadyen launched The Five Points Collaborative, a cooperative of small buildings on Woodland Street intended to foster the growth of additional retail outlets in the Five Points area. These business incubators encourage entrepreneurial small businesses by providing small rental spaces at fair prices. There are eight individual buildings for different start-ups, ranging in size from 168 square feet to 320 square feet. This small business incubator was one of the first in Nashville and has been successful in part because of the prior revitalization of the area, catering to the tastes of the East Nashville residents.

Today, Five Points is considered the business and activity center of the East Nashville community, home to an array of businesses including boutiques and shops, restaurants and bars, and a veterinary clinic. It is also the venue for the community's signature event: The Tomato Art Festival. Five Points fosters an atmosphere that is friendly to pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and mass transit. This Complete Streets and multi-modal environment encourages a wide array of users who come to Five Points to eat, drink, and shop, and has helped to create a strong business district for East Nashville. Five Points will be the terminus for The AMP, a proposed bus-rapid transit route running east-west through Nashville, better connecting East Nashville to the rest of the city. This improved city-wide connectivity will increase the customer base for East Nashville's growing local businesses and entrepreneurs. Spurred by the need

## Community Benefits of Complete Streets

Complete Streets create a safe, comfortable, integrated transportation network for all users, regardless of age, ability, income, ethnicity, or mode of transportation. Complete Streets offer benefits to all communities, regardless of size or location. Complete Streets benefit all ages, from children to aging adults. They encourage livable communities and a healthy lifestyle.

### Community Benefits of Complete Streets

- > **Increased Transportation Choices:** Streets that provide travel choices can give people the option to avoid traffic congestion, and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network.
- > **Economic Revitalization:** Complete streets can reduce transportation costs and travel time while increasing property values and job growth in communities.
- > **Improved Return on Infrastructure Investments:** Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later.
- > **Quality of Place:** Increased bicycling and walking are indicative of vibrant and livable communities.
- > **Improved Safety:** Design and accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians reduces the incidence of crashes.
- > **More Walking and Bicycling:** Public health experts are encouraging walking and bicycling as a response to the obesity epidemic. Streets that provide room for bicycling and walking help children get physical activity and gain independence.



National Complete  
Streets Coalition



Smart Growth America  
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

Source: National Complete Streets Coalition—Smart Growth America

to recover from a devastating tornado, East Nashville residents came together and made their community a thriving and dynamic place with a prosperous future.



The American Institute of Architects

AIA Middle Tennessee





Tobacco drying barn in Robertson County (Source: Margot Fosnes)

## Rural Economic Development and Comprehensive Planning

### Robertson County

#### ★ Best Practices Case Study

Long known as the home of “The World’s Finest Dark-Fired Tobacco,” Robertson County, which sits just north of Nashville between Interstate Highways 24 and 65, is a county with dual identities. Though its famous agricultural economy is alive and well, bringing in more than \$115 million annually from 1,400 farms across 230,000 acres, Robertson also boasts one of Middle Tennessee’s most thriving industrial and manufacturing sectors. Its eleven incorporated municipalities range from densely populated urban areas to rural hamlets and bedroom communities. The county seat of Springfield anchors a diversified manufacturing presence, including appliance companies, automotive suppliers, other diversified manufacturers, and major logistics and distribution centers.

With this steady base of employment and a median household income ranking seventh in the state of Tennessee, Robertson County’s 70,000 residents would seem fortunate and well-positioned to succeed, but a closer look at the statistics reveals some worrying facts. More than 70% of employed Robertson County citizens leave the county each day to go to work—one of the highest rates of out-commuting in the state. Providing infrastructure and services to a growing county has stretched county and municipal budgets thin, as a 20% increase in population since 2003 has caused the demands of commuters to outpace road and transit maintenance and construction. An even greater projected future population growth—40% over the next decade—threatens the open spaces, rich farmland, and rural

character that defines Robertson County’s identity and heritage and is the basis for its important agricultural economic sector.

In July 2012, Robertson County embarked on a journey with two desired endpoints: a new comprehensive growth and development plan and a comprehensive economic development strategy. Business leaders, government partners, and community members alike all voiced the desire to accelerate economic development and create high-wage jobs while protecting the county’s rural culture and important agricultural resources that would be supported by both efforts.

#### Realizing Robertson Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan

Building upon this momentum and support, in August of 2012, the Robertson County Commission approved funding for this project to create and implement a comprehensive growth and development plan that would guide future economic and community development actions. It would build off of a series of workshops held in 2007 where Robertson County citizens shared their hopes and concerns about the future of their communities. AIA Middle Tennessee and Cumberland Region Tomorrow partnered in this first CRT Quality Growth Pilot Project in the Middle Tennessee Region, offering visioning, design, education, technical support, and guidance. Funding from a USDA Rural Development RBEG grant and contributions from three partner rural municipalities allowed Robertson County leaders to secure professional consultation and begin work in 2012 with Quality Growth Advisory Committee members serving as Steering

**KEY FACTS:** Robertson County, Tennessee

**Population:** 66,283 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** rural economic development, comprehensive planning, comprehensive economic development strategy

**Partners:** Robertson County, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Robertson County Chamber of Commerce, AIA Middle Tennessee, City of Adams, Town of Coopertown, City of Cross Plains

Committee members for the comprehensive plan effort. The Robertson County comp plan will support economic and community development goals and outcomes that are intended to guide future growth in such a way as to preserve the county's agricultural resources, protect open space, and allow county and city governments to responsibly steward their financial resources while providing necessary services and infrastructure for the growing population.

Slated for completion and implementation in late 2013, the Robertson County Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan will provide an integrated framework for decisions related to growth, development, infrastructure, community services, and conservation of cultural and natural resources by:

- > Describing a collective vision for the future of the county and the communities located within its boundaries.
- > Recognizing that Robertson County and its communities are keenly aware of their cultural and natural resource-based heritage, which is integral to established agriculture and related land-based economies, the vibrant sense of place, and the unique identity of the area.
- > Providing direction for land developers and homeowners on future land use, transportation, and utility networks; and laying out policies guiding the future development of the county, enabling landowners to protect their investments and manage their property.
- > Guiding the financial decisions of the county and cities to most effectively direct limited public resources to serve the greatest good.
- > Developing infrastructure to ensure effective transportation, information, and water supply and delivery systems critical to maintaining and enhancing the communities' efficient functioning and quality of life in conjunction with local priorities and regional MPO and TDOT planned transportation and transit investments.
- > Enabling the Planning Commissions, County Commission, City Councils, and other boards and councils to make fair and consistent decisions on projects and policies, and ensure wise use of fiscal and land resources in support of future economic and community development efforts.

## Realizing Robertson's Future Economic Development Strategy

As the comp plan project moved forward, the Robertson County Chamber and local economic development leaders began work on a parallel economic development plan focused on creating quality jobs, retaining and expanding existing businesses, improving education and workforce training, addressing transportation and infrastructure projects, and growing the local economy. The Realizing Robertson Economic Development Strategy was developed based on a series of visioning sessions involving over 125 community and business leaders.

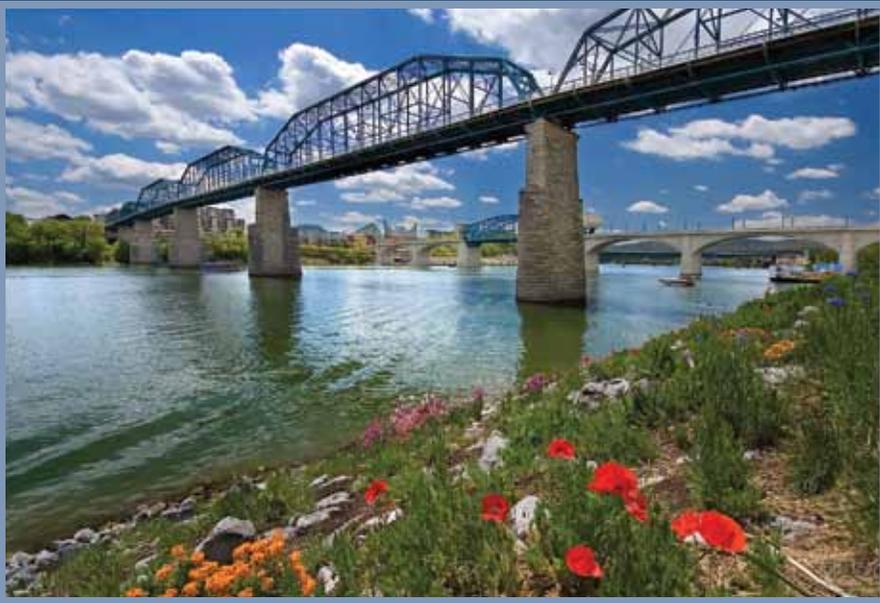
In July 2012, the Realizing Robertson's Future launched, with fifty-two investors committed to providing more than \$1.2 million in funding. A four-year economic, business and workforce development plan, Realizing Robertson's Future featured measurable goals and recommendations. Recognizing the interdependence of the county's agricultural character and manufacturing clusters, the Realizing Robertson's Future plan calls for mutual support with the Robertson County Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan. Both plans commit to transportation and land use planning to maintain and enhance the county's quality of life. Because economic development leadership recognizes the importance of support for the growth plan, the Robertson County Chamber and its investors have proposed a matching grant of \$50,000 for the implementation of the recommendations developed in the comp plan.

In 2013, Robertson County is poised to experience the most prosperous and successful period in its long and storied history. With a proactive approach focused on economic sectors that will take advantage of its competitive assets and complement its vision for the future, Robertson County leaders hope to provide support and opportunities for all of its citizens, communities, and economic clusters. With the commitment and involvement of public and private sector leadership, Robertson County has put plans in place to participate in the growth and development coming to the Middle Tennessee Region on its own terms in the coming years.

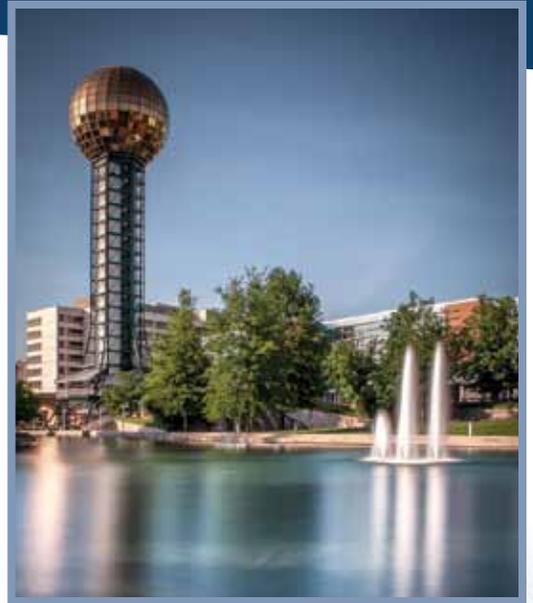


AIA Middle Tennessee





*Chattanooga, Tennessee (Source: Donnie Lee)*



*Knoxville, Tennessee (Source: Alex Banakas)*



# East Tennessee Region



*East Tennessee Scenic Photo (Source: Pawpaw Partners)*

## ★ Featured Partnership for Sustainable Communities - Funded Project

### CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE'S Chattanooga Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Project—EPA Office of Sustainable Communities

In February 2013, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that Chattanooga, Tennessee was one of 43 communities in 27 states to receive technical assistance through the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program, a project of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This program provides chosen communities with technical assistance to pursue sustainable growth and development that encourages local economic development while safeguarding communities and people's health and the environment. With a large baby boomer population, Chattanooga will use this technical assistance to focus on supportive neighborhood design creating great places for its residents who want to age in place. As the population ages, community leaders in Chattanooga think that it is necessary to plan for the changing needs and abilities of older people. Supportive neighborhood design can help residents age in place and maintain their health, activities, and overall quality of life.

The Department of Neighborhood Services and Community Development (DNSCD), Choose Chattanooga, and Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability were co-applicants and applied for technical assistance from EPA. These organizations saw the program as an opportunity for Chattanooga to evaluate its current neighborhoods and take an assessment of what is needed that will allow residents to age in place in a safe and enjoyable environment.

"The project also coincides with past efforts to add Chattanooga as a destination point for persons looking to retire," DNSCD administrator Beverley Johnson told Tennessee Town & City. "The thought is, if we look at our demographics and partner with Choose Chattanooga and their efforts as a whole destination location for retirees, we need to see whether or not we are in step with providing amenities for a different-aged population."

Staff from EPA, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and other national experts will conduct workshops that focus on the Neighborhood Planning for Healthy Aging Tool and offer expertise and resources for successful implementation. This Building Blocks Program helps communities understand the inter-related nature of the built environment, creating neighborhoods, and community design and investments that allow residents to comfortably age in place. Leaders will consider housing options, transportation, proximity to grocery stores, handicap accessibility, safety, and security during two-day workshop sessions. City leaders will explore these concepts through a GIS analysis of location conditions and will create a community assessment. From this collected data and input, the EPA team will develop a series of strategies and next steps that Chattanooga leaders can consider to improve local conditions to support aging in place priorities.



Cut into the dramatic rise of the Appalachian Mountains, East Tennessee is home to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park — the nation's most visited — and hundreds of smaller park areas and communities that support a vibrant tourism economy based on outdoor recreation, Appalachian culture, and the bluegrass tradition. A strong history of scientific leadership, from the economic development efforts of the Tennessee Valley Authority to the twentieth-century atomic experiments at Oak Ridge, also underlines the region's outstanding innovation and technology sectors. Today, its major cities of Chattanooga and Knoxville are leading the way in regional initiatives to manage their workforces, economies, and rich natural resources.

The Chattanooga/Southeast Tennessee region, along with northern Georgia and northern Alabama, are leading the joint Thrive 2055 effort to expand Chattanooga's success to a 17-county multi-state region. These efforts are intended to build upon the city's regional impact and opportunities. Chattanooga's successful community-based goal setting and implementation process, supported by the Vision 2000 community involvement project, has transformed a community with serious environmental and economic problems into a national leader in sustainability, diversified regional economic development, and community redevelopment. As a result, the Southeast Tennessee Region is on the forefront of economic development and prosperity.

The Knoxville/East Tennessee Region's successful award of the 2010 HUD Regional Planning Grant for Plan East Tennessee (PlanET) is creating new cutting edge models for regional visioning, regional comprehensive planning and community design, implementation, and capacity building that is advancing this region's priorities. PlanET is a regional partnership of communities and organizations building a shared direction for the future. PlanET seeks ideas to protect the valuable resources and address the region's challenges regarding jobs, education, housing, transportation, a clean environment, and community health. The goal is to create long-term solutions or investments in the region and to define the next chapter of the rich history, leaving a legacy of optimism and opportunity for future generations.





PlanET Community Workshop (Source: Amy Brooks)

## East Tennessee Regional Initiatives

★ Partnership for Sustainable Communities—Funded and Preferred Regions

### ★ THRIVE 2055

Southeast Tennessee Region  
HUD Preferred Region Status



**S**outheast Tennessee Development District is partnering with local governments, businesses, non-profits, and citizens from across the region in THRIVE 2055, a public-private initiative focused on proactively engaging people from across Southeast Tennessee, Northeast Alabama, and Northwest Georgia in creating an action plan for making the most of the region’s economic opportunities while preserving what is most loved about these communities. The Tri-State Region comprises 16 counties and 79 municipalities in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama, connected by landscape, watersheds, and local issues and opportunities.

Known for breathtaking natural beauty, bountiful opportunities for outdoor fun and distinct business advantages make the region one of the most desirable in the nation. Through a remarkable sense of community spirit and a process of public-private partnerships, the region’s citizens have made their home a hub for successful business enterprise, a regional tourism center, and a gracious place to live. Over the past few years, the THRIVE region has experienced tremendous economic development with the investments of over \$4 billion in new business investment, and the creation of thousands of jobs. Based upon these economic development successes, the region is experiencing a great deal of optimism and is very well positioned for accelerated growth.

These growth pressures not only exacerbate existing environmental, infrastructure, and fiscal challenges and in some instances create new ones. The region’s rural areas are struggling with double-digit unemployment and gaps between current workforce skills and the demands of emerging and retooling industries. Local governments are fiscally restrained and challenged to meet the existing infrastructure needs at a time when impending growth is likely to demand new infrastructure and public facilities. While the creation of more jobs is exciting, there is a strong desire within the region to preserve the community identity, quality of life, and other elements of local flavor that have made the area so attractive.

THRIVE 2055 was established and funded by a wide array of businesses, foundations, local governments, and non-profit organizations. The initiative is citizen-led through working groups and a volunteer coordinating committee, assisted by a local project manager, a team of professional staff from partner agencies, and a consulting team. Many of the elected officials are engaged in an advisory role as well as participating in the working groups.

The first year, the “Listen and Learn Phase,” encompassed three major steps:

1. Identifying what contributes to the regional vitality based upon multiple input opportunities from residents and workers in the region
2. Analyzing forces and trends shaping the region

3. Gaining an understanding of the region's existing performance in areas such as education, workforce development, economic competitiveness, natural environment, health and wellness, transportation, and infrastructure

As the initiative enters its second year, efforts will focus on visioning and creating possibilities around local values and key issues that will help guide the region into the next 40 years. Developing partnerships and collaborating across county and state lines will help create a competitive region where all citizens have the opportunity to THRIVE.

★ **PlanET**  
**East Tennessee Region**  
**HUD Regional Planning Grant**



Plan East Tennessee (PlanET) is a regional partnership of communities and organizations building a shared direction for the future. PlanET seeks ideas to protect the valuable resources and address the region's challenges regarding jobs, education, housing, transportation, a clean environment, and community health. The goal is to create long-term solutions or investments in the region and to define the next chapter of the rich history, leaving a legacy of optimism and opportunity for future generations.

Funded by a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, PlanET is a three-year process that focused on Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon, and Union counties in the Knoxville metropolitan area. PlanET was designed to foster ongoing citizen involvement in planning for the region's future, develop a regional "blueprint" to guide decisionmaking over the next decades, and increase local capacity for dialogue, collaboration, and action.

Using a three-phase engagement process, PlanET leaders hope to produce targeted, meaningful outcomes. Phase I (August 2011-July 2012) brought community members together to establish a shared identity and vision. Phase II (April 2012-March 2013) took that vision and developed a shared direction through a variety of community-engagement activities. The work being accomplished in Phase III (January 2013-December 2013) is producing and reporting the final product and focusing on implementation activities. By the end of 2013, over 10,000 individuals will have contributed to the development of an action plan that lays out strategies and tools for implementation. It is intended to serve as a resource for individual communities and organizations to solve tough issues

together so that they grow and innovate in ways that benefit the entire regional community.

Stretching across five East Tennessee counties, the PlanET region includes a range of communities and terrain. The people and places are rooted in the Appalachian Mountains, and a strong sense of history and an independent nature define the region. The region is small town friendly with big-city amenities. There are productive farms and places where residents can live away from it all, but there are also suburban and urban neighborhoods and one of the nation's strongest research and technology corridors. Home to Tennessee's flagship state university and a number of smaller educational institutions, there are many opportunities for jobs, education, and workforce development in the region's center. There is a wealth of natural and recreational assets, including Norris Lake, the Tennessee River, and part of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park that support the region's stellar tourism economy. The low cost of living makes the region more affordable than many other metropolitan areas.

Despite all of the assets, there are challenges to the region's livability. There are economic and social disparities and physical issues relating to growth and development. Many of the residents live in poverty and have limited employment prospects. Many of the streams and lakes are becoming polluted, and poor air quality is affecting the region's health and its environmental assets. And the majority of the region's households are spending large portions of monthly income on transportation—not just because of rising gas prices, but because so many of the homes are located far away from the region's employment and commercial centers.

The region's challenges today will be compounded by the population growth forecast over the next three decades. PlanET was undertaken to address these challenges before they become insurmountable, ensuring that the region remains beautiful, becomes healthier, and offers pathways to success for all. PlanET is designed to develop strategic solutions to region-wide problems by bringing local officials, community and business leaders, and residents together to plan for the region's future. The goal is to improve livability for all who live in the region now and for the next generation of residents and workers.





Chattanooga Skyline (Source: Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce)

## Strategic Broadband Infrastructure Investment

*Chattanooga, Tennessee*

★ Best Practices Case Study

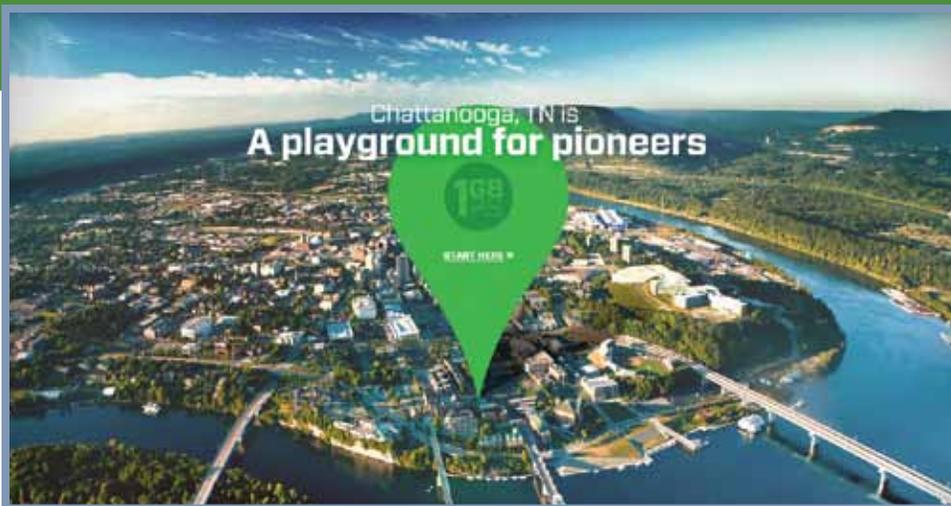
**W**ith a population of over 170,000 residents spread along the Georgia border, Chattanooga is Tennessee's fourth-largest city. As the seat of Hamilton County and the center of the Southeast Tennessee region, Chattanooga lies at the convergence of the Cumberland Plateau and the Appalachian mountain range, which together create the dynamic and scenic natural landscapes that have made the city famous. In the last few decades, Chattanooga has also made a name for itself through its economic development initiatives: by combining smart incentives, collaborative leadership, and the enhancement and marketing of its famous quality-of-life. The greater Chattanooga region has attracted over \$4 billion in investments from major companies like Volkswagen Group of America, Amazon.com, Alstom, Wacker Polysilicon USA, and IVS. These companies have located large manufacturing and distribution facilities in the region, bringing thousands of jobs to Southeast Tennessee and cementing Chattanooga's role as a major economic player in the New South.

However, Chattanooga's history was not always so bright. In 1969, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency report called it the "dirtiest city in America" thanks to air and water pollution from its burgeoning industrial sector. In the following years, changing markets and overseas competition caused many of those industries to vacate the city, undermining its economy and employment base. Only in the past four decades, thanks

to far-sighted regional leadership and major investments in infrastructure and business development, has Chattanooga begun to re-establish itself as a leading Southern economic region.

In the early 2000s, public and private sector leaders set their sights on a new infrastructure element of Chattanooga's development as a modern business hub: a complete redesign of the city's power grid and Internet services that would position it as a national leader in connectivity and green technology. Combining a \$100 million investment from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act with a \$200 million local bond issue, the city set its municipal Electric Power Board to work implementing cutting-edge live fiber connection technology across its entire grid. Dubbed "Gig City"—the initiative was one of the state's largest and most ambitious infrastructure overhaul projects to date.

Thanks to the contributions of countless local and regional partners, the full Gig City grid went live in 2010. Today, Chattanooga boasts the fastest municipal Internet grid in the entire Western hemisphere, offering up to 1 gigabit (1,000 megabits) per second data speeds—200 times faster than the national average of 5.3 megabit per second. Those blazing fast speeds place Chattanooga among the best connected cities in the world, a major attractor for growing businesses, large corporations, and Internet entrepreneurs alike. The city's investment in broadband infrastructure has positioned



Imagery from Chattanooga's technology campaign (Source: Gig City)

Chattanooga as an emerging technology hub and helped create hundreds of new jobs. The city's rapidly growing entrepreneurial scene now includes dozens of local start-ups along with many new arrivals and entrepreneurs, including a former NASA scientist who invented the NODE, a palm-sized sensor array that reads out to a smart phone, which has garnered national attention.

Since the Gig City project's implementation, Chattanooga and its partners throughout the region have been busy building on its successes. The business accelerator project Gigtank is the only one of its kind plugged into a living fiber network, which the project claims "enables next generation businesses to go to market today." Gigtank participants are granted access to a toolkit of integrated technologies that can be combined, enhanced, and commercialized to support business ideas and initiatives. A complementary program, Geekmove, provides incentives, assistance, and resources to computer developers and entrepreneurs interested in relocating to Chattanooga.

In addition to the city's major strides in Internet connectivity, the Gig City project outfitted Chattanooga's entire power grid with top-of-the-line Smart Grid meter connections. A major innovation in green infrastructure technology, the Smart Grid system allows the Electric Power Board to dynamically assess the power needs of the city down to the block and house scale, reducing wasted energy and helping to match production levels to peak usage. Smart metering has also proved invaluable in crisis management. For example, in July 2012, when a storm knocked out power to 80,000 homes, more than half had their energy restored within three seconds via digitally rerouted connections—compared with seventeen hours on a standard system.

Chattanooga's fiber optic network also serves as the backbone for a superfast wireless infrastructure system, which city officials are using to link and manage traffic signals, water quality monitors, and much more. The system also gives police officers

and firefighters high-speed Internet access while in route. The system has inspired a local company called Global Green Lighting to develop radio-controlled outdoor lighting that delivers tremendous cost savings while giving public officials the ability to adjust the light in real-time. At the same time, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's SimCenter Enterprises is developing a

system to detect disaster events, project their likely impact, and coordinate public safety deployments and citizen notification in real time.

"The Gig City project has been a major engine driving economic, educational, and sustainable development within Chattanooga," said Beth Jones, Executive Director of the Southeast Tennessee Development District. The unprecedented Internet speeds now available to homes and businesses alike have raised the city's profile on the world scale, and have drawn coverage from CBS, CNN, *The New York Times*, and several international outlets. By transitioning its economy into the 20<sup>th</sup> century while preserving and enhancing the natural beauty and quality-of-life that made it famous, Chattanooga and the Southeast Tennessee Region have set an outstanding example for all cities and regions poised to invest in similar communications infrastructure.



**KEY FACTS:** Chattanooga, Tennessee

**Population:** 167,674 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** Broadband infrastructure, business incubation, strategic infrastructure investment, small business support

**Partners:** Access America Transport, Chambliss, Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Chattanooga Renaissance Fund, Chattanooga State Community College, Chattanooga Technology Council, The Chattanooga Land Company, The Company Lab (CO.LAB), Delegator, The Enterprise Center, EPB, Geni, City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Lamp Post Group, Lyndhurst Foundation, Miller and Martin, National Science Foundation, Pale Dot Voyage, Re tickr, River City Company, Solidus Company, Start Up Tennessee, University of Tennessee Chattanooga



Main Street, Pikeville, Tennessee  
(Source: J. Stephen Conn)

## Rural Community and Corridor Revitalization

### Pikeville, Tennessee

#### ★ Best Practices Case Study

Located just a few miles from Fall Creek Falls State Park, Pikeville, Tennessee is a historic community of 2,800 residents in East Tennessee's Sequatchie River Valley. Downtown Pikeville has long been a crossroads within the region, lying at the intersection of state highways 28, 30, 209, and 127, and enjoys a strong tourism business thanks to the state park.

Approximately seven years ago a new bypass for Highway 127 was constructed around the City of Pikeville, redirecting travelers away from the city's central business district. This asphalt ring, which cut through farmland a half-mile west of town, allowed motorists to speed through the area with no incentive to stop and visit Pikeville proper. Tourism revenues soon began to decline, and businesses were forced to move or shut down, saddling the old downtown with vacant storefronts.

In an effort to revitalize the downtown and recoup tourism revenues, city leaders began an aggressive project to re-shape the central business district. The project was divided into three phases:

In Phase I, a Main Street streetscape redesign plan was created and implemented with a \$99,550 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission and a \$50,000 grant from USDA Rural Development. Improvements included the installation of 48 ornamental streetlights along Main Street from Methodist Street to Gill Street, and textured brick crosswalks directing tourists into the heart of the central business district. Pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown was also enhanced, increasing foot traffic that promotes shopping and encourages businesses to stay or return to the central district.

For Phase II, following successful implementation of the Main Street streetscape redesign plan, the City of Pikeville was awarded \$596,000 in Transportation Enhancement funds from the Tennessee Department of Transportation for a pedestrian enhancement project on Spring Street between Grove Street and Wheeler Avenue. The project improvements provide pedestrians with a safe, welcoming passage between the historic Main Street central business district and the town's other key business district, along Spring Street and East Railroad Avenue nearer to the U.S. Highway 127 bypass. The city constructed approximately 1,600 linear feet of sidewalk between Grove Street and Wheeler Avenue. In accordance with the City of Pikeville's downtown redevelopment strategy, Spring Street now serves as the city's primary corridor from the bypass to the Main Street commercial business district. The Spring Street Pedestrian Enhancement Project connects the Main Street pedestrian enhancement project, provides pedestrian access to key services, and enhances tourism, economic activity, community attractiveness, and function, and enhances quality-of-life for Pikeville residents.

In Phase III of the project, which is currently underway, Pikeville plans to construct approximately 2,100 linear feet of sidewalk on Spring Street between Wheeler Avenue and East Railroad Avenue. Tennessee Department of Transportation Enhancement grants funds will be re-allocated for walkability improvements along adjacent sections of the Spring Street corridor. Street lighting with underground electrical wiring, stamped brick crosswalks, and trees, shrubs, and flowers have also been installed in the downtown. All intersections will be equipped for safe pedestrian crossing, and several are also slated for stormwater runoff alterations.

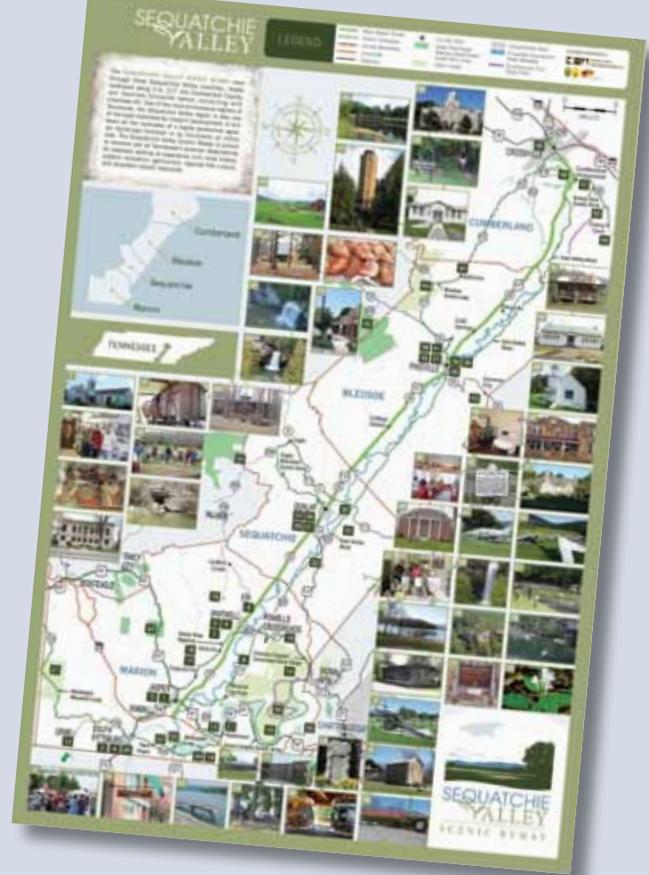
## Sequatchie Valley Scenic Byway

As Tennessee's smallest physiographic region, the Sequatchie Valley is unique. Approximately 60 miles in length and unusually straight and flat, the valley is of singular geological and ecological interest—no other landform in North America can compare. The valley was formed by erosion forces in much the same way as the Grand Canyon, but is clothed in trees with a gentle river flowing through the entire length. Many of the physical features of this 'Old Southwest Frontier,' a term describing the region in the pioneer and settler days, can still be viewed. Today, the valley offers breathtaking scenery, outstanding natural areas, compelling historic sites, cultural attractions such as music and folk arts, varied agricultural resources, and intriguing stories shared by local residents.

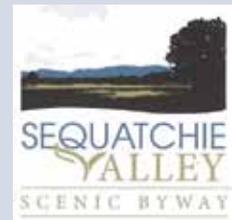
In 2012, the Southeast Tennessee Development District (SETDD), in cooperation with local governments, chambers of commerce, tourism-related industries, and other partners, developed the Sequatchie Valley Scenic Byway, a driving tour and economic development project for the valley counties of Bledsoe, Sequatchie, and Marion, and the U.S. 127 corridor in Cumberland County. Funded in part by a U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration grant, the project was carried out as a part of the National Scenic Byways Program, a grassroots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the U.S.

The Byway route begins at I-40 in Cumberland County and runs south on U.S. 127/Tennessee Highway 28 through Crossville and Pikeville to Dunlap. It continues on Tennessee 28 to I-24 at Jasper, in Marion County. Scenic sideways (roads off the main Byway route) allow visitors to explore additional attractions including historic towns, natural areas, parks, and other points of interest.

SETDD, which encompasses most of the Byway corridor, managed the initial phase, the development of a Byway Corridor Management Plan. It awarded the contract to the planning firm Kimley-Horn and Associates, which has expansive scenic-byway experience in Tennessee and across the nation. Pawpaw Partners, a natural and cultural resource conservation planning company, conducted extensive field inventories and



other byway planning work. Other partners have included the Southeast Tennessee Development District; TDOT; FHWA; Marion County Partnership; Bledsoe County Chamber of Commerce; Sequatchie County Chamber of Commerce; The Alliance for the Cumberlands; and Bledsoe, Marion, and Sequatchie Counties. The Corridor Management Plan was released in January 2013, and implementation work is now underway.



Thanks to progressive community leadership, the above mentioned implementation grants, and the efforts of its partners, Pikeville, Tennessee is drawing people back into its historic downtown. By reinvesting in Main Street, supporting anchor businesses, and making downtown an attractive place to

stroll and shop, the town is reversing past development setbacks that threatened the community's character and creating new tourism revenues. Today, the city of Pikeville is creating a high quality-of-life and historic Tennessee downtown experience for local residents, travelling motorists, and visitors to Fall Creek Falls State Park alike.

**KEY FACTS:** Pikeville, Tennessee

**Population:** 1,608 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** rural tourism, community revitalization, corridor revitalization

**Partners:** City of Pikeville, Tennessee Dept. of Transportation, Tennessee Downtowns Program, Appalachian Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development



Committed to the future of rural communities.





Outdoor concert in the wetlands (Source: E. G. Fisher Public Library)

## Natural Infrastructure Design & Implementation

*Athens, Tennessee*

★ **Best Practices Case Study**

**N**estled amidst a series of narrow, elongated ridges and low hills that are characteristic of the Appalachian Ridge-and-Valley Province, Athens, Tennessee began as a small agricultural center. About an hour north of Chattanooga and an hour south of Knoxville, Athens is the county seat of McMinn County and home to the Mayfield Dairy Farm and Tennessee Wesleyan College. Over the years, Athens has grown industrially but has maintained the attitude that earned it the nickname “The Friendly City.” There are a number of historic homes scattered about the city, constant reminders of bygone days. The downtown business district, with its quaint buildings and shops, also offers a glimpse of yesteryear when things were simpler and life was less hectic.

Oostanaula Creek, located in downtown Athens, is listed on the state’s impaired waterway list due to pathogens, phosphates, and siltation. The Oostanaula also has a tendency to overflow its banks, causing significant flooding in the downtown area. The City of Athens decided to approach these significant issues with three natural infrastructure guiding principles in mind:

> **Put on the Brakes**—Decrease flooding and erosion with detention ponds, vegetation, and other energy-dissipating projects.

> **Soak like a Sponge**—Clean water and reduce flooding with natural infrastructure design and retention techniques like rain gardens and wetlands.

> **Make like a Sieve**—Reduce runoff and flooding with pervious materials and products.

In 2008, the City of Athens partnered with Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), and the local YMCA to put these principles into action through a parking lot project. A municipal parking lot adjacent to City Hall and the YMCA was reconstructed to reduce impervious cover— asphalt and other hard surfaces that don’t absorb water—and better filter rainwater. The old asphalt parking surface was removed and replaced with pervious concrete parking spots and driving lanes made from GeoBlock, a hollow-cell grid of recycled plastic through which grass grows. The conventional landscaped parking lot island was replaced with a rain garden and a kiosk with a green roof and educational materials explaining the benefits of each component of the project. This new parking facility incorporates many Low Impact Development practices and serves as a living classroom for contractors, developers, and students who seek better ways of developing infrastructure that works with natural systems.

**KEY FACTS:** Athens, Tennessee

**Population:** 13,458 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** natural infrastructure, stormwater mitigation, community revitalization

**Partners:** City of Athens, Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee Dept. of Environment and Conservation, YMCA, Southeast Tennessee Development District, Athens Public Works Department

## Southeast Tennessee Development District's Southeast Tennessee Green Infrastructure Handbook for Local Governments: Using Water to Revitalize Tennessee's Towns and Cities

The Southeast Tennessee Green Infrastructure Handbook for Local Governments: Using Water to Revitalize Tennessee's Towns and Cities was written by the Southeast Tennessee Development District with a grant from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. The Green Infrastructure Handbook for Local Governments is a guide for decision makers to learn more about green stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) that provide ecological, economic, and social benefits.

Some of the design strategies found in the guide were used in the Athens, Tennessee natural infrastructure projects.

### Pervious Pavement

- > Reduce the rate and quantity of stormwater runoff
- > Reduce stress on stormwater infrastructure
- > Recharge groundwater
- > Filter pollutants, silt, and debris
- > Reduce the urban heat island effect
- > Can be used for parking lots, roadways, sidewalks, etc

### Rain Gardens

- > Recharge ground-water
- > Filter pollutants, silt, and debris
- > Reduce the need for irrigation
- > Reduce local flooding
- > Provide habitats for birds and wildlife
- > Reduce the rate and quantity of stormwater entering the stormdrain
- > Provide attractive garden areas to receive discharge from downspouts

### Native Landscaping

- > Require little or no irrigation or maintenance once established
- > Require no herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers
- > Provide habitats for birds and wildlife

In 2009 Athens received a Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for the purpose of restoring the Oostanula Creek. The EG Fisher Public Library agreed to partner with the city to construct a wetland on its property to retain polluted stormwater and prevent it from entering the creek. This six-acre site includes an amphitheatre, limestone glade, walking trails, and educational kiosks for the library's summer reading program. Native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers were planted to complete the project. Later, the amphitheatre, along with the downspouts at the McMinn Living Heritage Museum, were retrofitted to intercept stormwater through a pervious patio connected to a rain garden.

Seeing the benefits of these pilot projects, the city of Athens has begun an aggressive campaign to construct 250 rain gardens at homes and businesses throughout the city to create expanded natural infrastructure projects and improved environmental outcomes. The Public Works Department provides technical assistance and labor to property owners willing to participate in the program.

In July 2013 McMinn County and the city of Athens received a \$200,000 Clean Tennessee Energy Grant from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. Clean Tennessee Energy Grants are awarded to projects that are designed to reduce air emissions, improve energy efficiency, and create cost savings. In Athens, the money will be used to for a new addition at the McMinn County Justice Center and to purchase and install a new geothermal HVAC system for the Justice Center. Compared with traditional electric and gas HVAC systems, the geothermal system will reduce energy consumption by 750,000 kWh, which is a net savings of \$45,000 per year.



Source: Green Infrastructure Handbook for Local Governments, Southeast Tennessee Development District



## Healthy Communities and Aging in Place

### Kingsport, Tennessee

#### ★ Best Practices Case Study

**S**traddling rural Sullivan and Hawkins counties in far Northeast Tennessee, the city of Kingsport, with 51,519 residents, is part of the Tri-Cities region of the state. With 20% of its population over the age of 65—compared with an average of 13% for the state as a whole—Kingsport continues to see its population age due to outmigration of young people and the arrival of retirees. This trend has placed new demands on the city’s infrastructure and services and brought changes to its economy and culture. In terms of the built environment, however, the needs of older populations largely mirror those of the young workers and residents that many towns seek to attract: transportation choices, walkable communities, safe streets, neighborhood vitality, and green space.

In 1992, inspired by the health benefits her patients experienced from just 20 extra minutes of walking per evening, family physician, medical educator, and community researcher Dr. Kathleen Beine began rallying support to outfit Kingsport with more walking paths and safer sidewalks. Recognizing that a community’s physical design impacts the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and economic well-being of its citizens, Dr. Beine and other volunteers conducted a “Visual Image Study” asking community members to envision what their ideal city would look like. With 1,100 participants, using photographs and survey tools, the study showed that residents valued five community characteristics: clean, green, with more sidewalks, parks and playgrounds, and neighborhoods with these amenities.

In 2009, Kingsport was selected by AARP to serve as a pilot for a Livable Community Survey, building upon the fruits of the Visual Image Study. AARP invited Beine to help design and conduct a survey for residents, primarily focusing on the senior population but also interviewing others about what would make the city a better place for them to live, work, and play. The 16-page survey covered aspects of community design and services, neighborhood issues, and personal concerns related to public health, aging, and livability. Over 3,000 surveys were sent out, with 1,439 surveys returned for a response rate of 43.6 percent. This was achieved as a result of a multimedia marketing campaign. “AARP is very pleased to be part of this effort. The collaboration between the city of Kingsport, AARP, local residents, and volunteer focus groups was instrumental to the success of the project,” said Margot Seay, a Kingsport resident and instrumental player in the project’s success who now serves as the AARP National Volunteer Director.

In March 2010, a final report was released, revealing that the majority of participants were very pleased with the city in which they live. There were, however, suggestions for improvements that could be made to increase satisfaction in each of the three categories comprising the survey. The first category was community concerns, and some items identified included a lack of job opportunities, urban gardens, and public transit. The second category, neighborhood concerns, included a lack of sidewalks, grocery stores within walking distance of homes,

**KEY FACTS:** Kingsport, Tennessee

**Population:** 51,519 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** healthy communities, community engagement, aging in place

**Partners:** Margot Seay, Dr. Kathleen Beine, AARP, City of Kingsport, local volunteers, businesses, and organizations, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Office of Sustainable Practices

recreation centers, and parks. The final category, personal concerns, included health care affordability, maintaining independence, and safety.

To capitalize on the report's findings, Kingsport Mayor Dennis Phillips did not want the project to end with the survey. He appointed a Blue Ribbon Task Force on livability that included Kingsport leaders such as former mayors and aldermen, along with the leaders of four community organizations. The task force examined the survey results and conditions on the ground to identify key implementation areas that were feasible and shovel-ready. They discovered that the city was providing a number of services of value to residents, but community members were not aware of them due to limited communication. Actions initiated as a result of the task force's work included improving public outreach efforts, enhancing local transit services, developing a Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, building more sidewalks, and expanding community centers and recreational opportunities.

AARP survey findings have been used to advocate for healthy community design, to develop successful grant applications, and to make real changes to the city. For example, Kingsport's first community garden grew out of the survey. The Harvest of Hope Community Garden is a collaboration between AARP, the United Way of Greater Kingsport, the City of Kingsport, First Presbyterian Church, the University of Tennessee Extension Office, and the Master Gardeners of East Tennessee.

AARP and the City of Kingsport also held an Active Living Workshop with national expert Dan Burden to help the city government identify planning and transportation strategies to promote safe travel for bicyclists and pedestrians. Chris Campbell, the Transportation Planning Coordinator, said, "We realize that our economic vitality, public health, and transportation systems are intrinsically connected and that having more transportation options will improve the city's livability, well-being, and retail vibrancy."

Kingsport's successful AARP survey project has served as a model for other Tennessee communities. In 2012, Murfreesboro, Crossville, and Blount County implemented modified versions to better understand the needs and desires of their own residents. Similar to Kingsport, their survey results showed that the majority of residents consider their community a good place to live and want to remain there in the future. The gaps in neighborhood features and services were similar for all cities participating and included issues like sidewalks, dependable transportation, services to help older residents maintain their independence, and walking and biking trails within a half-mile of homes.

Lori Munkeboe, Director of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Office of Sustainable Practices, said, "We are so pleased to see Kingsport represented among national recipients for this prestigious award. It's advantageous to have a pilot city in a program designed with replication potential, as we continue to learn and improve upon the health, prosperity, and livelihood of the citizens of Tennessee."



*Designing a Walkable Kingsport Intersection (Source: Walkable and Livable Communities Institute)*



Fairmount Elementary students walking to school (Source: Christy Smith)

## School Siting, Safe Routes to School Implementation, and Neighborhood Revitalization

*Bristol, Tennessee*

★ **Best Practices Case Study**

Located in the northeast corner of Tennessee, on the Tennessee/Virginia state line, the city of Bristol is nationally recognized as the official birthplace of country music. Bristol's central location and excellent transportation connections make it the center of a five-state area. State Street in downtown Bristol joins Tennessee and Virginia, and West Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina are within easy driving distance along US Highway 421 and Interstate 81. Seventy percent of the U.S. population is located within a day's drive of Bristol.

In 2008 the Bristol School Board decided to demolish and reconstruct Fairmount Elementary School to better suit the needs of the growing community. The decision to keep the elementary school in its current location demonstrates a commitment to neighborhood and community revitalization efforts occurring in the city. During this process, parents and neighborhood residents raised concerns about what would happen to the neighborhood when the larger population

of students and faculty began attending the new school. Specifically, they were worried about the increase in traffic the school would cause, as the Fairmount Neighborhood District is a traditional neighborhood not designed to accommodate large amounts of vehicles. City officials agreed that encouraging parents to walk with their children to school would alleviate some of these traffic concerns. Approximately 85% of the children who would be attending Fairmount live within walking distance, which is defined as a two-mile-or-less radius. However, the neighborhood lacked continuous sidewalks that could provide safe routes to school for these children.

The Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization partnered with the YMCA's Pioneering Healthy Communities and Coordinated School Health Program as well as Fairmount Elementary, the Bristol Police Department, and the City to apply for, and ultimately receive, a \$250,000 Safe Routes to School grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation. With the grant funding, Bristol undertook a sidewalk survey to determine where

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Bristol's reinvestment in an existing school location has also triggered a significant increase in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

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## Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Launched in 2005, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a fast-growing network of hundreds of organizations, and government agencies working to set goals, share best practices, leverage funding, and advance policy change to implement Safe Routes to School programs. The Partnership seeks to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, to improve the overall health and well-being of America's children, and to foster livable and sustainable communities. Tennessee is one of seven states participating in the Safe Routes to School State Network Project, which is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and operates in tandem with the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

According to the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, successful Safe Routes to School projects make remarkable changes in the way students and parents choose to travel to and from school. These projects succeed by including each of the "Five E's" of Safe Routes to School to ensure that their project is a well-rounded, multi-prong, and time-tested approach to getting more students walking and bicycling.

The Five E's of Safe Routes to School include:

**Evaluation**—Monitoring and documenting outcomes, attitudes, and trends through the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

**Engineering**—Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails, and bikeways.

**Education**—Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

**Encouragement**—Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling and to generate enthusiasm for the program with students, parents, staff, and surrounding community.

**Enforcement**—Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure that traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors) and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs and student safety patrols.

Source: Safe Routes to School National Partnership



repairs and connections were needed. The sidewalk sections in disrepair were replaced and new sidewalks were built in places where none had previously existed to create a continuous and safe pedestrian network in the Fairmount Neighborhood District. The grant also provided funding for educational programs to teach students about pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Residents of all ages are using and benefiting from the sidewalks, which are higher quality, better connected, and safer. Bristol's reinvestment in an existing school location has also triggered significant increase in neighborhood revitalization efforts. The excitement about walking has spread to the rest of the community and there are plans to hold year-round walking events for the residents of Bristol.



Neighborhood next to Fairmount Elementary (Source: Christy Smith)

**KEY FACTS:** Bristol, Tennessee

**Population:** 26,702 (2010 Census)

**Project Description:** safe routes to school, connectivity, neighborhood revitalization

**Partners:** Safe Routes to School National Partnership, City of Bristol, Bristol Metropolitan Planning Organization, YMCA, Bristol Police Department

# Contacts and Resources

## West Tennessee Region

### ★ White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities— Memphis, Tennessee

Sara Sieloff, Memphis Team Lead, White House Council on  
Strong Cities, Strong Communities

### ★ Mid-South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan

John Zeanah, Program Manager, Mid-South Regional  
Greenprint & Sustainability Plan

[www.midsouthgreenprint.org](http://www.midsouthgreenprint.org)  
[www.sustainablesheby.com](http://www.sustainablesheby.com)

### ★ REDI-Regional Economic Development Initiative— Southwest Tennessee Region

Lisa Hankins, Director, REDI

[www.reditn.com](http://www.reditn.com)  
[swtdd.org](http://swtdd.org)

### ★ ★ Regional Connectivity and Economic Development— Memphis, Tennessee/Mid-South Region

Greg Maxted, Executive Director, Harahan Bridge Project  
Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce, Memphis  
Aerotropolis Project

<http://harahanbridgeproject.com>  
[www.memphischamber.com/The-Chamber/Councils/  
Aerotropolis.aspx](http://www.memphischamber.com/The-Chamber/Councils/Aerotropolis.aspx)

### ★ Complete Streets Policy Development—Memphis, Tennessee/Shelby County

Anna Holtzclaw, District Coordinator, Urban Land Institute—  
Memphis

<http://memphis.uli.org/local-initiatives/complete-streets/>  
[www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets)

### ★ National Scenic Byways Development and Implementation—Mississippi River Corridor

Diana Threadgill, President and Executive Director, Mississippi  
River Corridor-TN

[www.msrivertn.org](http://www.msrivertn.org)  
[www.tdot.state.tn.us/byways/tennessee-scenic-highways.aspx](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/byways/tennessee-scenic-highways.aspx)

### ★ Courthouse Square Revitalization—Ripley, Tennessee

Frankie McCord, Executive Director, Ripley Downtown  
Development Corporation

[www.ripleytenn.com](http://www.ripleytenn.com)  
[www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)  
[www.tennesseemainstreet.org](http://www.tennesseemainstreet.org)

## Middle Tennessee Region

### ★ James Campbell Boulevard—Columbia, Tennessee

Norman Wright, Director of Development Services, City of  
Columbia

[www.columbiatn.com](http://www.columbiatn.com)

### ★ Middle Tennessee Region Collaborative Leadership and Implementation

Bridget Jones, Executive Director, Cumberland Region  
Tomorrow

[www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org)

### ★ Sustainable Tourism Strategy Implementation—Cheatham County

Ann Thompson, Executive Director, Cheatham County  
Chamber of Commerce

Richard Quin, Principal, Pawpaw Partners

[www.cheathamchamber.org](http://www.cheathamchamber.org)  
[www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org)

### ★ Downtown and Neighborhood Revitalization—Columbia, Tennessee

Trent Ogilvie, Executive Director, Columbia Housing and  
Redevelopment Corporation

Norman Wright, Director of Development Services, City of  
Columbia

Tony Massey, City Manager, City of Columbia

[www.chrc-tn.org](http://www.chrc-tn.org)  
[www.columbiatn.com/CityMgr/PDFs/2010DemographicReport.  
pdf](http://www.columbiatn.com/CityMgr/PDFs/2010DemographicReport.pdf)  
[www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org)

### ★ Sustainability through Downtown and Corridor Revitalization—Franklin, TN

Mary Pearce, Executive Director, The Heritage Foundation/  
Franklin Main Street

Nancy Williams, Downtown Franklin Association Director, The  
Heritage Foundation/Franklin Main Street

Ken Moore, Mayor, City of Franklin

Mindy Tate, Executive Director, Franklin Tomorrow

[www.historicfranklin.com](http://www.historicfranklin.com)  
[www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-now/2011/  
may-june/green-revolution-in-franklin.html](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-now/2011/may-june/green-revolution-in-franklin.html)  
[www.franklin-gov.com](http://www.franklin-gov.com)  
[www.tennesseemainstreet.org](http://www.tennesseemainstreet.org)  
[www.franklintomorrow.org](http://www.franklintomorrow.org)

★ **Neighborhood Revitalization and Business District Expansion—Nashville, Tennessee**

Rick Bernhardt, Executive Director, Metro Nashville Planning Department

Carol Pedigo, Executive Director, AIA Middle Tennessee

[www.nashville.gov/Planning-Department.aspx](http://www.nashville.gov/Planning-Department.aspx)

<http://ideahatcherynashville.com>

[www.aiamidtn.org](http://www.aiamidtn.org)

★ **Rural Economic Development and Comprehensive Planning—Robertson County**

Margot Fosnes, President, Robertson County Chamber of Commerce

Howard Bradley, County Mayor, Robertson County

Jonathan Garner, County Commissioner, Robertson County

[www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org](http://www.cumberlandregiontomorrow.org)

[www.robertsoncountyttn.org](http://www.robertsoncountyttn.org)

[www.robertsonchamber.org](http://www.robertsonchamber.org)

**East Tennessee Region**

★ **Chattanooga Aging in Place—Chattanooga, Tennessee**

Beth Jones, Executive Director, Southeast Tennessee Development District

[www.chattanooga.gov/economic-community-development/neighborhood-services](http://www.chattanooga.gov/economic-community-development/neighborhood-services)

[www.sedev.org](http://www.sedev.org)

[www.choosechattanooga.com](http://www.choosechattanooga.com)

★ **PlanET**

Amy Brooks, Project Manager, PlanET

<http://planeasttn.org>

★ **THRIVE 2055**

Bridgett Massengill, Project Director, THRIVE 2055

Beth Jones, Executive Director, Southeast Tennessee Development District

[www.thrive2055.com](http://www.thrive2055.com)

[www.sedev.org](http://www.sedev.org)

★ **Strategic Broadband Infrastructure Investment—Chattanooga, Tennessee**

Leigh McClure, Special Projects, Southeast Tennessee Development District

<http://chattanooga.gig.com>

[www.thegigcity.com/about/](http://www.thegigcity.com/about/)

[www.sedev.org](http://www.sedev.org)

★ **Rural Community and Corridor Revitalization—Pikeville, Tennessee**

Chuck Hammonds, Director of Community Development, Southeast Tennessee Development District

[www.sedev.org](http://www.sedev.org)

★ **Natural Infrastructure Design and Implementation—Athens, Tennessee**

Chuck Hammonds, Director of Community Development, Southeast Tennessee Development District

[www.sedev.org](http://www.sedev.org)

[www.sedev.org/downloads/GreenInfrastructureHandbook.pdf](http://www.sedev.org/downloads/GreenInfrastructureHandbook.pdf)

[www.cityofathenstn.com/publicworks/YMCAParkingLot-New.html](http://www.cityofathenstn.com/publicworks/YMCAParkingLot-New.html)

★ **Healthy Communities and Aging in Place—Kingsport, Tennessee**

Jan Compton, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Office of Sustainable Practices

[www.tn.gov/environment/osp/](http://www.tn.gov/environment/osp/)

★ **Safe Routes to School Implementation and Neighborhood Revitalization—Bristol, Tennessee**

Christy Smith, TN Advocacy Organizer, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

[www.tdot.state.tn.us/bikeped/saferoutes.htm](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/bikeped/saferoutes.htm)

[www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/srts-in-your-state/tennessee](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/srts-in-your-state/tennessee)



## About This Publication

This NADO Research Foundation–sponsored Tennessee Regions’ Roundtable Best Practices Case Studies publication strives to advance current implementation efforts by sharing successful examples of local, regional, and state-level projects across Tennessee. Stories presented from Tennessee’s diverse regions and communities highlight collaborative leadership, strategic partnerships, innovative projects, and implementation-funding techniques readers can put to use in their own communities. These are the best practices advancing our Quality Communities objectives and actions across Tennessee.

Tennessee is a southern state that is currently showing great promise and results in implementation of regional economic and community development actions that align with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities’ Principles and Programs through a diverse group of public- and private-sector partner organizations located and working within key regions of the state. Through joint work actions and successful collaboration, our lead regional organizations, affiliate organizations, state and federal agency partners, and funders are working together to create an integrated network to catalyze current and future regional implementation efforts through our Tennessee Regions’ Roundtable Network.

## Tennessee Regions’ Roundtable Network

