

TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations

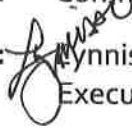


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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM:  Lynnisse Roehrich-Patrick
Executive Director

DATE: 11 June 2015

SUBJECT: Sustainable Competitiveness for Tennessee's Counties: A Collaboration between TACIR and TSU

Tennessee State University faculty, Dr. Soumen Ghosh, professor in the Department of Economics and Finance, and Dr. Meg Streams, associate professor in the Department of Public Administration, will discuss findings from their study of sustainable competitiveness in Tennessee, partially funded by the Commission. The study was motivated by a desire to better understand local officials' beliefs and judgments about competing and cooperating, what their cities and counties need to stay viable and strong, and how their beliefs and judgments compare to conventional academic theoretical models and prescriptions. Key study elements included focus groups with elected officials and development district staff and a survey of the local elected officials and city managers throughout the state who are guiding our communities through a period of rapid economic and demographic change, as well as examination of data on county-level performance on key measures indicated by the survey results.

Study findings address the following questions, all with an emphasis on understanding local policymakers' own judgments and attitudes:

- *What is sustainable competitiveness? Why study sustainable competitiveness? How can community assets that can drive competitiveness be defined in a useful way?*
- *What do Tennessee local officials consider "signs of success" for local jurisdictions? How do their judgments align with traditional versus new visions of jurisdiction competitiveness?*
- *How does local officials' assessment of the strength of their own jurisdictions' community assets relate to reported performance on those measures of success?*
- *How are local officials' attitudes towards cooperation with other jurisdictions influenced by assessment of the strength of their community asset base?*