



**A Report to the  
Audit Committee**

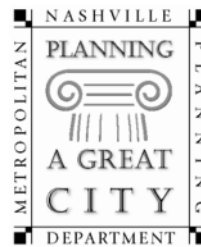
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**Deputy Mayor**  
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# Audit of the Metropolitan Planning Department



February 14, 2014

Metropolitan  
Nashville  
Office of  
Internal Audit

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

February 14, 2014



### Why We Did This Audit

The audit was initiated based on the number of years that have elapsed since the last audit and the strategic importance of this process to the citizenry.

### What We Recommend

The Planning Department may mitigate risks by increasing reviews performed on front counter receipts and by segregating the duties within the Metropolitan Planning Organization's dues collection and recording process.

Additionally, the Planning Department could better operational goals by opening dialog internally and externally, assessing staffing needs, establishing performance measures, and evaluating system usage, capital improvements, and Council interaction.

For more information on this or any of our reports, email [Mark.Swann@nashville.gov](mailto:Mark.Swann@nashville.gov)

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT AUDIT

### BACKGROUND

The Planning Department provides design guidance, reviews zoning and subdivision applications, and shapes public policy related to growth and development. The Office of Internal Audit contracted with Rangwala Associates, who performed a consultation engagement service.

### OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the audit were to:

- Determine if the operational goals and expectations of the Planning Department were met.
- Determine if fiscal resources were used in a manner consistent with Metro Nashville's financial policy and the Planning Department's mission.

The audit scope included July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2013.

### Actual Expense

Fiscal Year	2013	2012
Payroll	\$ 3,853,989	\$ 3,609,139
Internal Service Fees	640,332	942,921
Miscellaneous	1,564,469	1,551,882
Total	\$ 6,058,790	\$ 6,103,942

Source: EnterpriseOne Financial System

### WHAT WE FOUND

#### Office of Internal Audit

In general, the Planning Department had controls in place to effectively manage fiscal resources and protect assets. Service requirements were being effectively delivered. However, some controls regarding receipt of revenue and recording of dues obligations could be strengthened.

#### Rangwala Associates

Rangwala Associates noted observations and opportunities for more effective communication, planning, and usability of graphic resources. (See Appendix B)

## GOVERNANCE

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The Planning Department is governed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission. The Metropolitan Planning Commission consists of two charter members, the Mayor, the Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Committee, along with eight appointed members. The Metropolitan Planning Commission primarily meets twice a month with the exception of winter holiday months.

The Planning Department is led by Executive Leadership who oversees three areas of planning: Land Development, Graphical Information System and Mapping, and Community Plans and Design Studio. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is housed within the Planning Department, has its own board, leadership, staff, work plan, and budget. The Metropolitan Planning Organization, who conducts transportation planning across seven counties surrounding the Nashville area, is primarily funded by federal and state pass-thru funds, the majority through Tennessee Department of Transportation contracts. The remaining funds are through dues from county users. None of the funds are accepted on behalf of or belong to Metro Nashville.

## FISCAL RESOURCE USE

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### Top Ten Planning Department Vendors for Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013

Vendor	Total Payment	Description
WESTAT	\$1,134,000	MPO Study
AECOM TECHNICAL SERVICES	283,305	MPO Mobility Study
PARSONS BRINKERHOFF INC.	186,502	MPO Public Relations Contract
THE TMA GROUP	166,551	MPO Transportation Planning
NASHVILLE CIVIC DESIGN CTR	71,683	MPO Study
RPM TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS LLC	59,175	MPO Study
INRIX INC.	53,500	MPO Study
G SQUARED LLC	53,490	Graphical Information System Review
RICOH USA PROGRAM	49,348	Printing, Binding, Rentals
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY	37,732	MPO Planning, Information Materials

Source: EnterpriseOne Financial System

## OBJECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

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1. Were the operational goals and expectations of the Planning Department met<sup>1</sup>?

**Yes.** Operational goals of the Planning Department were being met. However, areas of improvement were identified. See supporting objectives for discussion of improvement areas.

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### Supporting Objectives and Conclusions

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<sup>1</sup> The remainder of the operation items were addressed separately by the contractor Rangwala Associates, see Appendix B.

(a) *Were applicants satisfied with the services provided by the Planning Department?*

**Yes.** Based on a survey of applicants who worked with the Planning Department during the audit period, applicants were satisfied with services provided.

(b) *Were the application processes defined by the Planning Department applied uniformly across all applications?*

**Yes.** Defined application procedures were applied equally across a representative sample of case files.

2. *Were fiscal resources used in a manner consistent with Metro Nashville's financial policy and the Planning Department's mission?*

**Yes.** The Planning Department's fiscal resources were managed in a responsible manner. However, improvements to some processes will enhance the overall controls. Supporting objectives below provided enough detail for this conclusion.

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### Supporting Objectives and Conclusions

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(a) *Were application fees, mapping fees, and dues accurately and completely charged, receipted, reviewed, and recorded?*

**Yes.** During the audit period, application fees, mapping fees and dues appeared accurate and completely charged, receipted, reviewed, and recorded. Two areas of improvement were noted within the controls around application fees and MPO dues (see Observations A and B).

(b) *Were bond amounts accurately recorded, monitored, and called?*

**Yes.** During the audit period, sufficient controls were in place and operating to ensure accurate recording, monitoring, and calling of performance bonds.

(c) *Were petty cash funds maintained in accordance with Metropolitan policy?*

**Yes.** Petty cash was maintained, replenished, and reviewed in accordance with Metropolitan policy.

(d) *Was leave time calculated and recorded in accordance with Planning Department contracts?*

**Yes.** The Planning Department calculated and recorded leave time in accordance with employee contracts or Civil Service Rules, whichever was applicable.

(e) *Was credit card usage in accordance with the Metropolitan Nashville Credit Card policy?*

**Yes.** Credit card usage by Planning Department employees was in compliance with the Metropolitan Nashville Credit Card policy.

(f) *Were the Planning Department's fixed assets properly accounted for and adequately safeguarded?*

**Generally yes.** Based on a review of asset record keeping, fixed and tracked assets were adequately safeguarded by the Planning Department.

## AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

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The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control – Integrated Framework*, Control Environment component recommends management and the board of directors establish mechanisms to communicate and hold individuals accountable for performance of internal control responsibilities across the organization and implement corrective action as necessary. The audit observations listed are offered to help management fulfill their internal control responsibilities.

### ***Observation A: Strengthen front counter receipt review***

Prudent business practices and The COSO *Internal Control – Integrated Framework* recommend implementing controls to ensure that all receipts are recorded. These controls include running daily reports and performing routine reconciliations.

On several occasions, the Daily Deposits Report was run at the front counter prior to the close of business. On each occasion, the following day's Daily Deposit Report did not compensate for the previous time that was not included. Thus, any receipts processed after the Daily Deposits Report was run would not be included in the list of items to be deposited. No instances of receipts not being recorded and/or deposited after the fact were noted.

Additionally, no revenue reconciliation was performed between the receipts logged in the Kiva system and the deposits recorded in the EBS Financial System (EBS). Data is available within Kiva to perform a reconciliation of receipts.

#### *Recommendation for management of the Planning Department to:*

1. Require Daily Deposit Reports be run by the front counter every morning to ensure all receipts are included.
2. Perform a quarterly reconciliation between Kiva receipts data and EBS revenues recorded. Reconciliation should be reviewed and signed off by management.

### ***Observation B: Segregate duties within Metropolitan Planning Organization dues collection process***

The COSO *Internal Control – Integrated Framework* recommends proper segregation of duties to “reduce the risk of error or inappropriate or fraudulent actions.” Proper segregation of duties involves dividing the responsibilities of asset recording and handling of the related asset.

Checks for Metropolitan Planning Organization dues were received by the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Administrative Assistant. Checks were then given to the Finance Officer 3 for account coding. The Finance Officer 3 then handed off the checks to either the front counter or receptionist for deposit. The two duties within this process for the Finance Officer 3 (custody and accounting entry) are incompatible functions. Further, no sign off was performed to indicate the handoff from the Finance Officer 3 to the other party. The process lacks proper segregation of duties and accountability controls.

*Recommendation for management of the Planning Department and Metropolitan Planning Organization to:*

Require the Metropolitan Planning Organization Administrative Assistant to assign account coding to checks received then handoff checks directly to the front counter or receptionist for deposit. Document the handoff with a sign off from the receiving party.

## **GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS COMPLIANCE**

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We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Rangwala Associates was contracted for consultation engagement services. Therefore did not follow Government Auditing Standards.

Yearly reviews of Metropolitan Planning Organization expenditures are conducted and documented by Tennessee Department of Transportation; thus, they were not audited as part of this engagement.

## **METHODOLOGY**

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To accomplish our audit objectives, we performed the following steps:

- Interviewed key personnel within Metropolitan Planning Department.
- Consulted with planning function subject matter expert.
- Evaluated internal controls currently in place.
- Reviewed sample selections to determine the effectiveness of internal controls.
- Reviewed financial transactions.
- Considered risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Considered information technology risks.

## **Audit Team**

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Carlos Holt, CPA, CFF, CIA, CGAP, CFE, Audit Manager

Lauren Riley, CPA, ACDA, Auditor-in-Charge

Kimberly Smith, Staff Auditor

**APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN BEGINS ON  
NEXT PAGE**





**METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT  
OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY**

Planning Department  
Metro Office Building  
800 Second Avenue South  
Nashville, Tennessee 37201

February 11, 2014

Office of Internal Audit

222 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, Suite 401  
PO Box 196300  
Nashville, TN 37219

Dear Mr. Holt,

This is to acknowledge receipt of the Metropolitan Nashville Planning Department Audit Final Report. We found your auditors, Lauren Riley and Kimberly Smith, to be extremely courteous and we sincerely appreciate their time and effort.

Our responses to the audit findings are attached to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard C. Bernhardt".

Richard C. Bernhardt, FAICP, CNU-A  
Executive Director

## APPENDIX A – MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

We believe that operational management is in a unique position to best understand their operations and may be able to identify more innovative and effective approaches and we encourage them to do so when providing their response to our recommendations.

Recommendations	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
<b>AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT</b>		
Executive Management of the Planning Department should:		
<b>A.1</b> Require Daily Deposit Reports be run by the front counter every morning to ensure all receipts are included.	<b>Agree.</b> The Planning Department agrees with this recommendation and has implemented it.	1/6/2014
<b>A.2</b> Perform a quarterly reconciliation between Kiva receipts data and EBS revenues recorded. Reconciliation should be reviewed and signed off by management.	<b>Accept Risk.</b>	
<b>B.</b> Require the Metropolitan Planning Organization Administrative Assistant to assign account coding to checks received then handoff checks directly to the front counter or receptionist for deposit. Document the handoff with a sign off from the receiving party.	<b>Agree.</b> The Planning Department agrees with this recommendation and implemented it in late 2013 when the recommendation was first proposed by the auditors.	10/16/2013

**APPENDIX B: RANGWALA ASSOCIATES REPORT BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE**

December 5, 2013

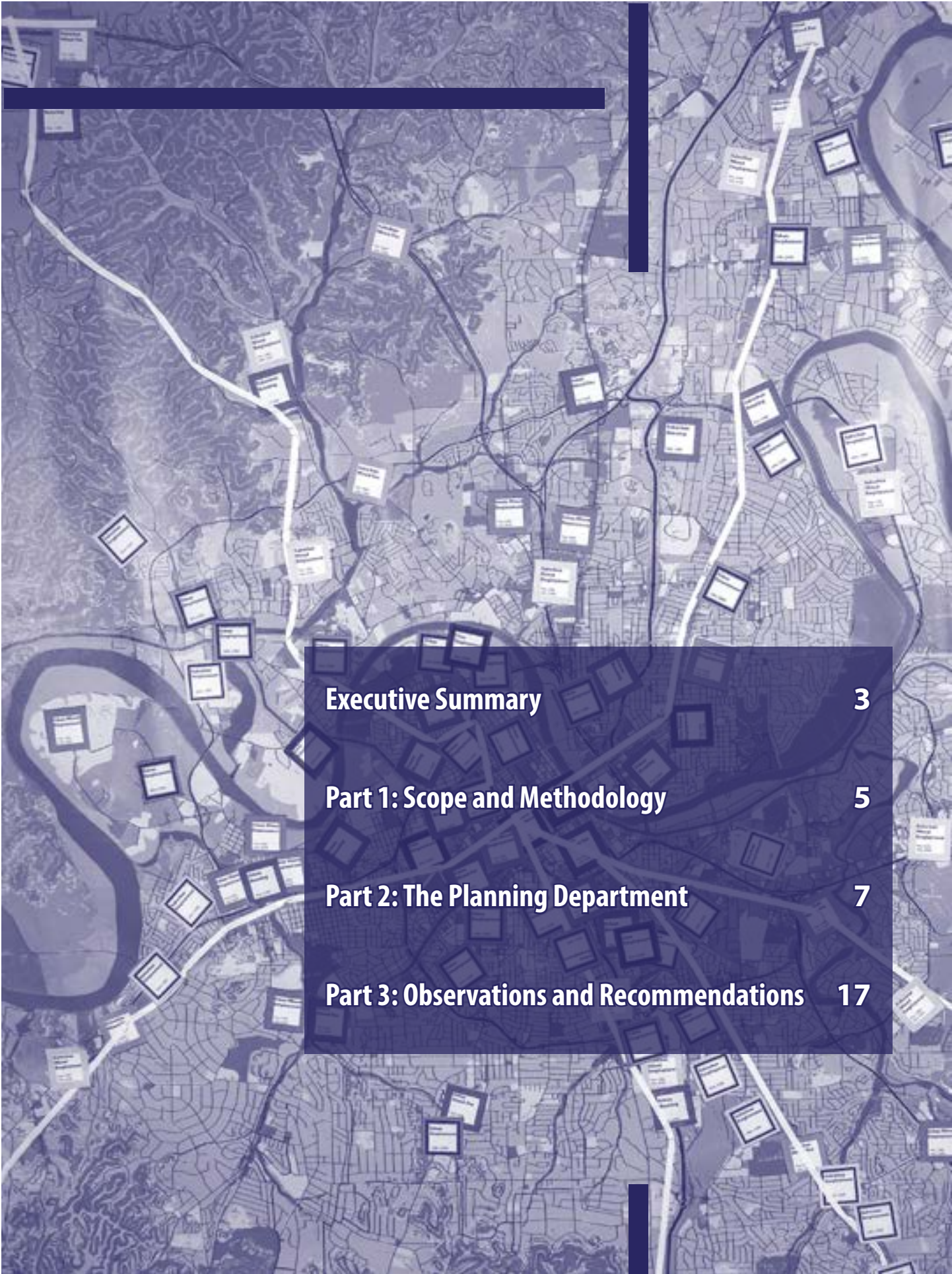


# Audit of Planning Processes



**Rangwala Associates**  
Planning, Urban Design, & Economic Development

Metro Nashville, TN



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The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County's Planning Department is well known for its form-based planning work. NashvilleNext is a significant in house effort by Metro Nashville planners.

NashvilleNext is more than a growth and land use plan. The effort provides an opportunity for all Metro Nashville departments to align their policies and initiatives. This action would help maximize long-term prosperity, preserve and enhance the environment and neighborhoods, and enhance mobility options. Additional benefits would be to provide adequate infrastructure for future needs, provide recreational opportunities for leisure requirements, and to assist in forming a long-term strategy for public safety.

The Metro Nashville Planning Department places a heavy emphasis on developing plans. Plans should be matched with an equal emphasis on implementation. Such factors as weak interdepartmental collaboration, limited code reform, weak linkages between individual plans and the Capital Improvement Budget decrease effectiveness. Further, a lack of economic focus in community plans has impacted orderly implementation.

Metro Nashville cannot carry out implementation by itself. It needs to partner with the private sector as much as possible. To attract private sector investment, the public sector can develop a market based vision, help build capital infrastructure improvements, and develop clear and precise development codes with predictable processes. NashvilleNext and the existing 14 community plan areas provide the vision. A stronger and transparent link is needed between the vision and the Capital Improvement Budget. Form-based codes should be developed for all 14 community plan areas in order to reduce subjective review and provide predictable processes and outcomes.

Great plans and codes will attract and retain a high caliber staff. As the economy recovers, the Planning Department should hire planners with more experience particularly in the Land Development division, where plans are implemented.

The Metro Nashville planning process time frames are lean and

competitive when benchmarked with other cities. The perception that the process takes too long could be addressed by publicly sharing the competitive benchmarks. Waiting seems longer when the applicant is not informed. Planners should ensure the applicants are well informed up front of the various steps in the process and associated timeframes. Pre-application meetings should be encouraged for early direction and live status updates of the application as it moves through the process should be common.

Enhanced understanding of the expectations and alignment of professional differences between Metro departments will allow effective use of limited resources, a superior business climate, and a pleasant working environment.



# Part 1: Scope and Methodology

## Scope

This report is an audit of planning processes carried out by the Metro Nashville Planning Department. The focus is to capture a snapshot of all the important and relevant processes that the department is involved in on a day to day basis.

Part Two of the report includes an assessment of existing planning processes and provides a snapshot of the planner's work load. Part Three includes observations and recommendations with resources and benchmarks where applicable.

The audit does not evaluate the Metropolitan Planning Organization functions. Development application fees were not evaluated in this audit.

## Methodology

The Metro Nashville Office of Internal Audit provided background information on the organization. This research included staff interview notes, individual job descriptions, cost study reports, analysis of fees and services, previous audit reports, and lists of applicants, architects, developers, and neighborhood and business associations. Metro Nashville's website allowed a cursory review of planning documents such as the departmental budget, zoning ordinances, community plans, and urban design overlays. The Metro Council budget hearings provided a sense of department needs and priorities.

Focus group meetings were conducted with Land Development staff, Community Planning and Design Studio staff, Geographic Information Systems and Mapping staff, business and development community members, neighborhood associations, council members, and Public Works staff. The Executive Director and Director of Development Services from the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development were also interviewed.



Information on the planning process was also gathered from the:

- **Nashville Chamber’s Planning and Zoning Policy Task Force meeting:** the task force committee includes 20+ members addressing how planning and zoning policy and processes can encourage development. The Task Force provided written comments which have been considered for and incorporated into this audit report where appropriate.
- **NashvilleNext mapping meeting:** the exercise engaged the participants to discuss the various options and map locations where 200,000 additional people and 300,000 new jobs can be accommodated over the next 25 years.

Metro Nashville’s governance and its leadership in the areas of smart growth and form-based planning/codes are unique. However, benchmarks are points of reference for decision makers to gauge how well or how poorly the organization is doing. Benchmarks were gathered for planning processes from Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Knoxville.



# Part 2: The Planning Department

## Mission

The Metro Planning Department's responsibilities include working with local communities to create appropriate land use policies and community plans, making recommendations to the Planning Commission on zoning decisions, and providing design services while supporting more sustainable development.

## Organization Structure

**Executive Office:** The Executive Office provides leadership and daily management. The Executive Director is presently leading the NashvilleNext planning effort. This effort requires approximately 85% of his time. The day to day operations are managed by the Deputy Director and Assistant Director.

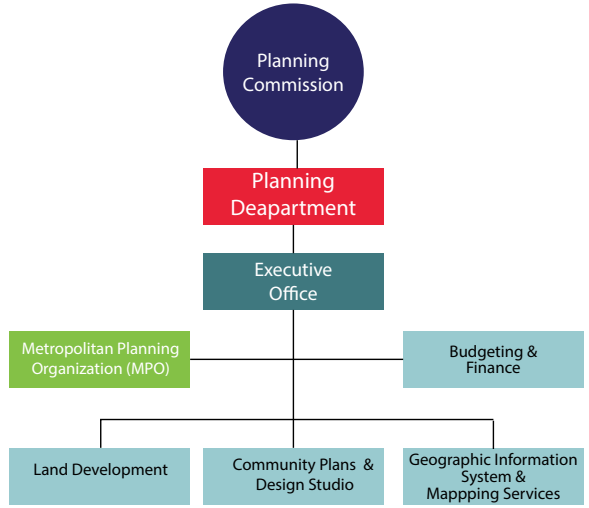
**Land Development:** Land Development planners review subdivisions, rezonings, and other applications related to the zoning code, guide applicants through the development process, and write staff reports advising the Metropolitan Planning Commission. The Development Finance Officer processes performance bonds and letters of credit. The front counter accepts applications and answers zoning and subdivision questions.

**Community Plans and Design Studio:** Community Plans and Design Studio planners work with residents, property owners, developers and other stakeholders to develop and update community plans based on each community's needs and goals.

**Geographic Information System (GIS) and Mapping Services:** The GIS division generates, organizes, and analyzes spatial data, creates maps, and provides information about the county's physical structure for other Metro departments and the general public. GIS is a system of hardware and software used for storage, retrieval, mapping, and analysis of geographic data. In Metro Nashville, GIS provides a better understanding of the county's physical attributes and supports more informed decisions about land use and development.

*“The Planning Department provides design guidance, reviews zoning and subdivision applications, and shapes public policy related to growth and development. We are committed to proactive, community-based planning founded on public participation, and to the building of livable, sustainable communities.”*

Source: Metro Nashville Planning Department website



Metro Planning Department Organization Structure

**Budgeting and Finance:** This area of the Metro Planning Department maintains the department's budget, coordinates purchases, processes invoices, and maintains financial records for performance bonds.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Planning:** The Nashville Area MPO is the federally designated transportation planning agency for over 2,800 square miles and more than 1.5 million people throughout Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, Wilson and parts of Maury and Robertson counties.

## Professional Certification and Affiliations

The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification is awarded to planners who pass a rigorous examination covering the history and theory of planning, urban design, law, ethics, and quantitative methods. Twelve planners at Metro Nashville have earned an AICP designation. The Nashville Planning Director is a charter member and a charter fellow of AICP.

The Nashville Planning Director is also an Emeritus Board Member of the Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI). The Form-Based Codes Institute is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the understanding and use of form-based codes.

## Planning Processes

Metro Nashville has invested heavily in long term planning. The NashvilleNext, community plans, and urban design overlays are all being developed in-house by the Planning Department. The Executive Director is leading the effort and investing his time to NashvilleNext. The Community Plans and Design Studio division is staffed with more planners in senior position as compared to the Land Development division.

**Capital Improvement Budget:** The Capital Improvement Budget identifies eligible capital projects. The Capital Improvement Budget is not an appropriation of funds but a schedule for funding considerations for the next five years. The Capital Improvement Budget is a potent tool for implementing Metro Nashville's plans, policies, and programs.

Year: 2013	II. Refining the vision												2014												2015																							
	Phase: I. Visioning						III. Mapping						IV. Alternate scenarios						V. Draft review and adoption																													
	Month: J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J																		
Major Deliverables (* to Planning Commission)				(D)			(I)			(K)	*							(M)	*			(O)									(S)	*					(U)	*					(V)	*				
Metro Council				(C)														(N)	Councils Worksession												(S)	Council Worksession																
Public				(A) Visioning (round 1: blue sky)			(E) Visioning (round 2)			(L) Growth mapping								(N)	Review and score scenarios												(S)	Draft plan review																
Community Plans							(F) Review CCM											(N)	Review and score scenarios			(R) Detail work on key areas, as needed																										
Steering Cmte							(I) Guiding principles					*												*					*																			
Resource Teams				(G) Driving forces						(M) Develop policy scenarios											(Q) Develop preferred policy scenario																											
Land Use Group				(G) Driving forces & CommunityViz prep						(M) Develop land use scenarios											(Q) Develop preferred scenario																											
Staff							(I) Guiding principles											(P) Developing the plan													(T) Adoption draft																	
Departments				(H) Define the public service														(N) Review scenarios																														

Note: This schedule does not include Phase 0 (Preparing to Plan), which occurs in 2012

(D) Release visioning round 1 results  
(I) Release visioning round 2 results  
(K) Nashville Futures Working Paper  
(M) Release alternate scenarios

(S) Release draft plan  
(U) Release adoption draft  
(V) Plan is adopted

NashvilleNext is a multi-year planning process that will draw on the needs, ideas, and input of the public to guide growth for the next 25 years.  
Source: Metro Planning Department

The executive team of the Metro Planning Department reviews the Capital Improvement Budget and moves projects up and down the list depending on need and direction from the Mayor and Metro Council. Project requests are submitted annually by Metro departments and the Mayor and are compiled and approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission each spring.

### NashvilleNext

The State of Tennessee requires each municipality to prepare a general plan to facilitate preservation of stable areas and accommodate new growth. A new general plan is currently being developed. NashvilleNext, the process for generating that plan, is based on the community's vision and involvement. The work so far has centered on assessing existing conditions and listening to experts and community members' desires for Metro Nashville's potential future. The next step is to develop and assess alternate scenarios and identify areas for growth, preservation, and renewal. The plan will be ready for review and adoption in 2015.

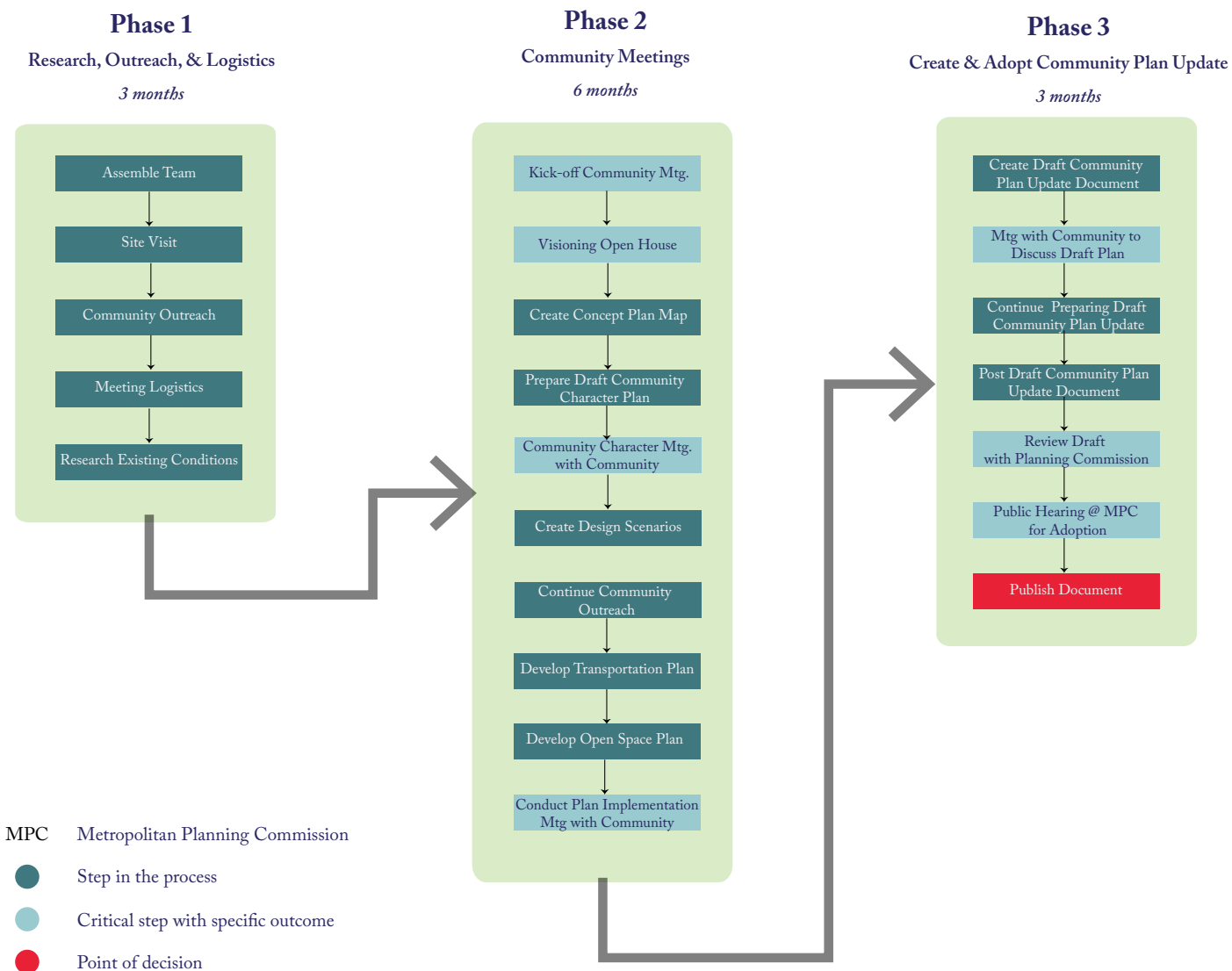
In most cities, the comprehensive skill sets and time needed to carry out the general plan is simply not available. Cities retain a team of outside consultants to prepare the general plan. Metro Nashville planners are preparing the general plan.



NashvilleNext Public Process  
Source: Metro Planning Department



NashvilleNext growth mapping exercise. Working in small groups, participants examine guiding principles for preservation and development and identify areas for accommodating new growth.

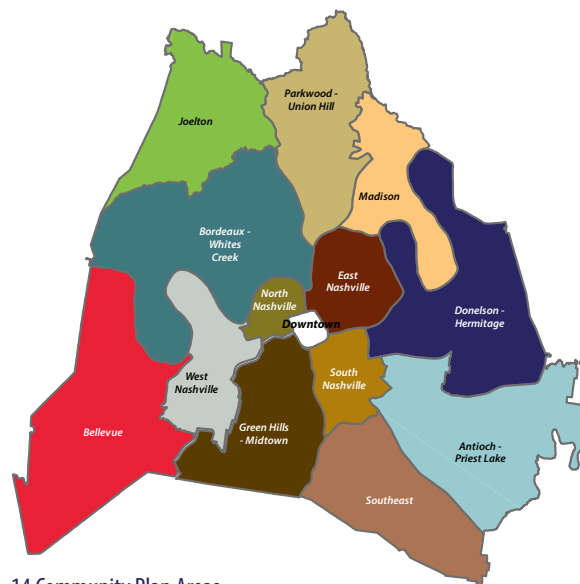


Community Plan Update Process

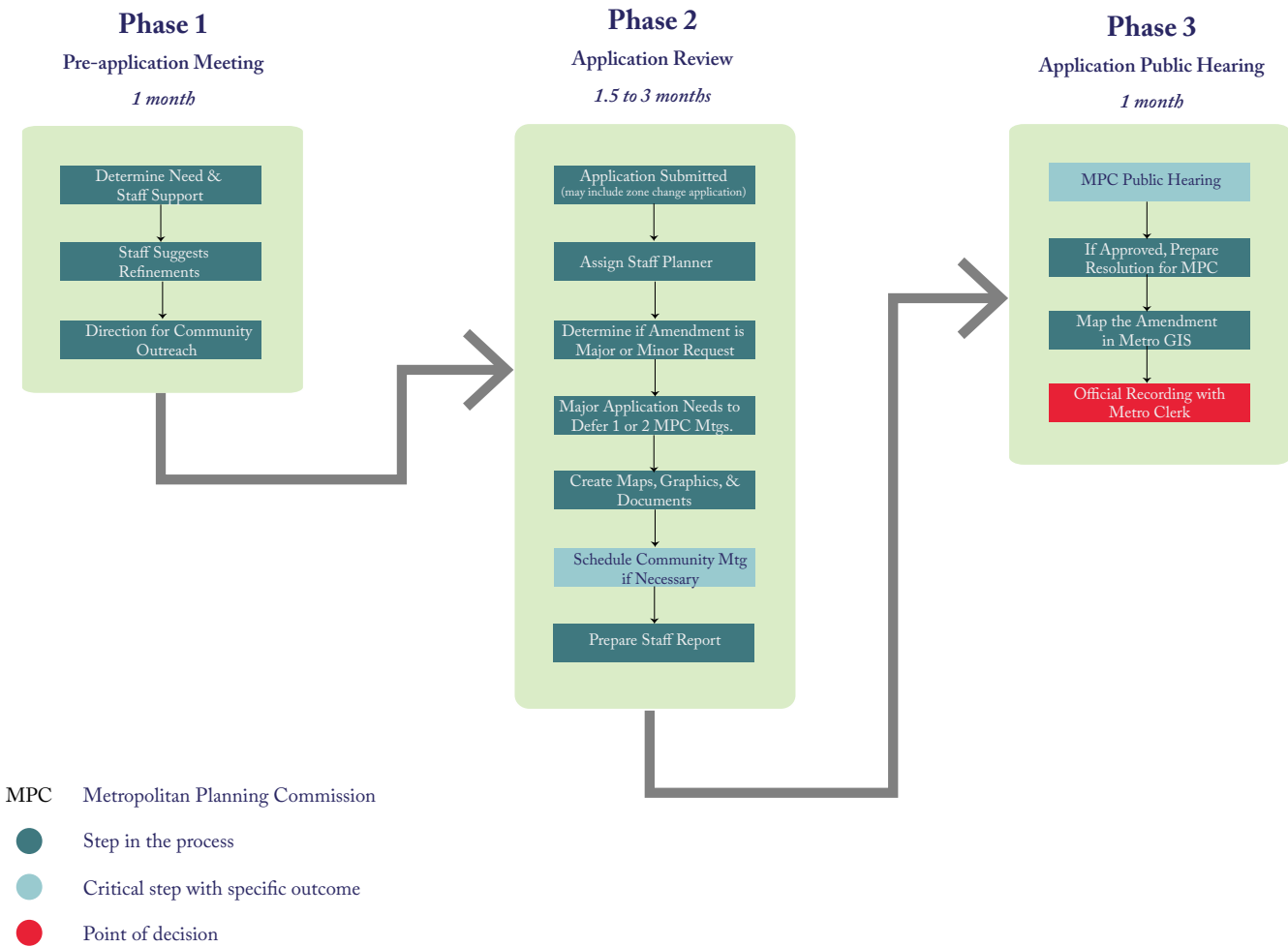
**Community Plan Update**

Davidson County is divided into 14 communities. Each community has a community plan that is updated every 7 to 10 years. The plan creates a vision for the community’s future preservation, growth, and development by guiding land uses, urban design, streets, parks, and civic uses. These policies are then used to judge future preservation and development decisions from zone changes to capital improvement projects like new roads, parks, and public facilities.

The community plan updates have been put on hold until the NashvilleNext plan is adopted.



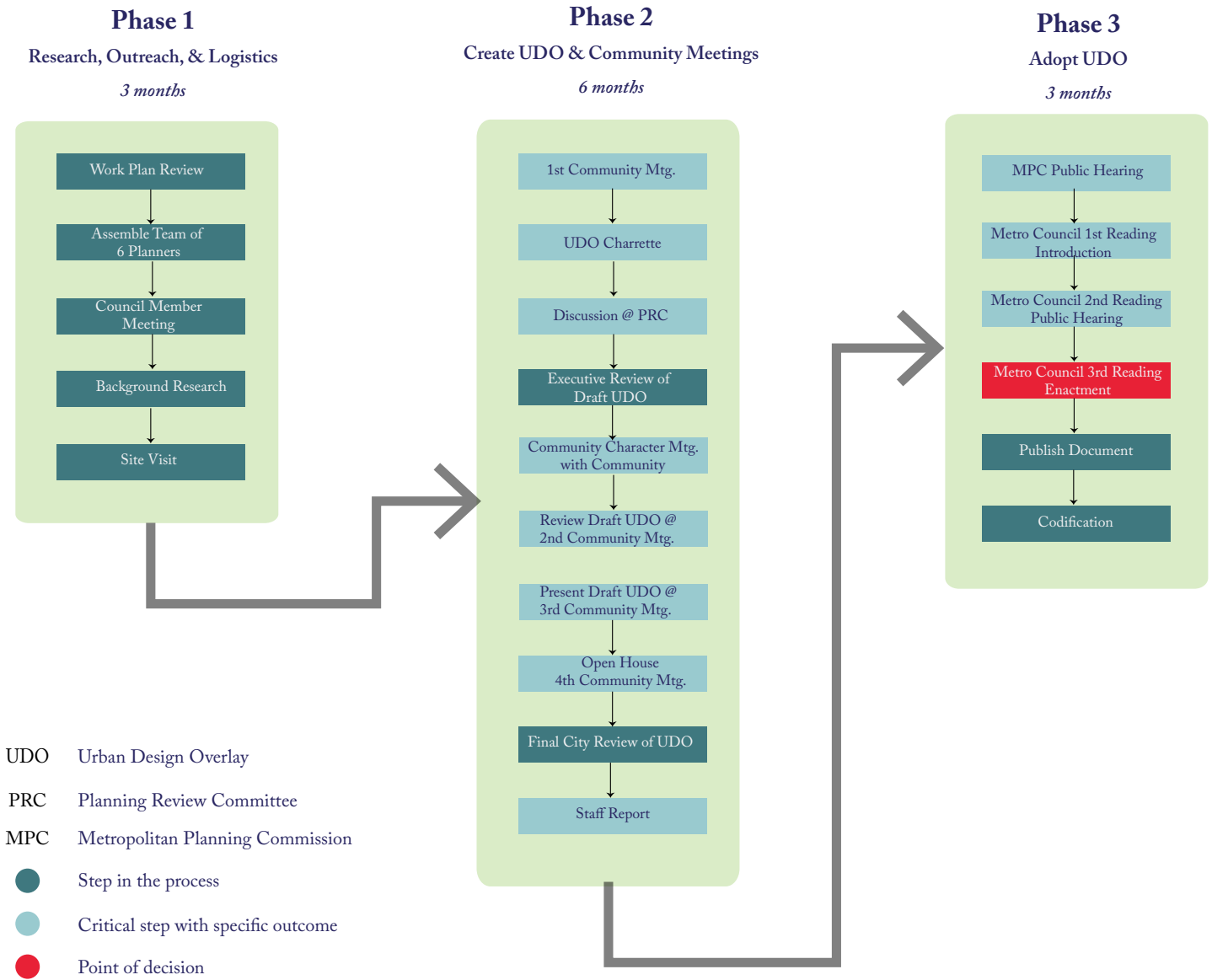
14 Community Plan Areas  
Source: Metro Planning Department



Community Plan Amendment Process

**Community Plan Amendment**

If a rezoning application is found to be inconsistent with the recommendation of the community plan, then an applicant may request amendment to the community plan. Typically, the rezoning and community plan amendments are processed concurrently.



Urban Design Overlay Process

**Urban Design Overlay (UDO)**

Urban design overlays provide clear and precise design standards to protect the pre-existing character of an area or to create a desired physical character. Urban design overlays overlay the current base zoning and allow for development standards above and beyond those in the base zoning.

Any Metro Council member can request that Metro Planning create an urban design overlay for a neighborhood. An urban design overlay is used to translate the policies of a community or neighborhood plan into enforceable zoning regulations. Developers can also apply for an urban design overlay as a zone change and must follow all the required steps for rezoning.

Table 1 shows the work load of the Community Plans and Urban Design Studio from January to November 2013.

Table 1: Community Plans and Urban Design Studio Division Work Load

Planners	Division Work Load	
3 planners	19 Community Plan Amendments - 8 minor, 11 major	All 7 planners are involved in NashvilleNext
4 planners	2 Major and Collector Street Plan Amendments	
	10 UDOs - 1 new, 9 final	
	50 Permit sign-offs - 31 for signs	
	65 Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency Project Reviews - (35 Downtown Code zoning projects)	

The Land Development division staffs the front counter for walk-in customers, application submittal, and reviews and processes site plans, subdivisions, rezonings, mandatory referrals and bonds. Eligible site plans and subdivisions can be processed administratively. Land Development staff members meet with potential applicants in pre-application meetings and coordinate the development review process among the various Metro agencies. Land Development staff also reviews special exception cases and writes a written report with a recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Land Development staff creates a Metropolitan Planning Commission meeting agenda and staff report packet for each meeting, as well as a staff report packet for Metro Council public hearings and the Planning and Zoning Committee at the Metro Council. The typical time frame for development review and process is:

- Administrative Approval for Site Plan and Subdivisions: 25 days
- Site Plan and Subdivisions going to the Metropolitan Planning Commission: 41 days
- Rezoning: 113 days minimum (including three readings at the Metro Council).

In 2013, the number of cases filed has increased compared to the past four years. Planners get between 5 and 12 new cases per filing deadline, in addition to the active and inactive cases that they are already carrying. The number of total active cases varies depending on



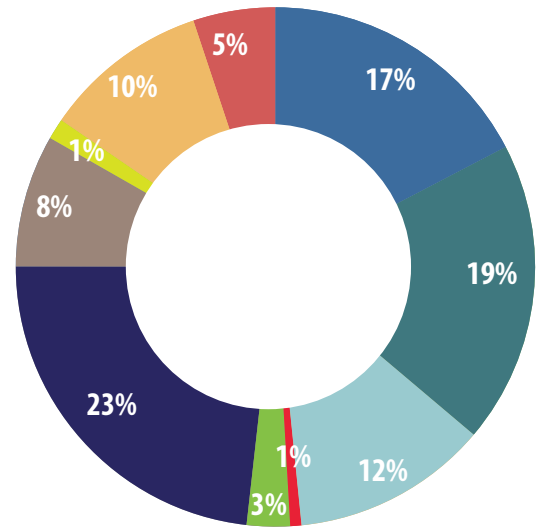
how long the planner has been with the department. Listed below is the case load of each planner in the Land Development division:

Table 2: Land Development Division Work Load

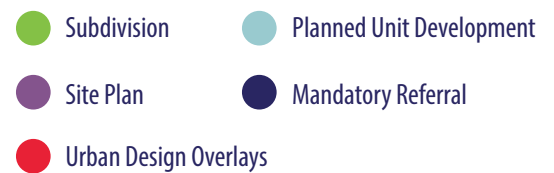
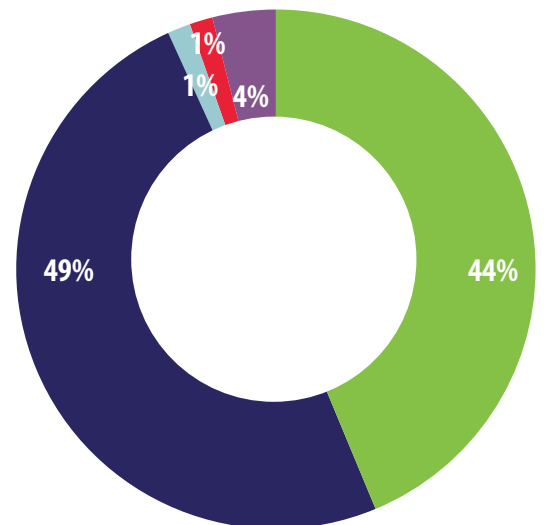
Title	Active cases	Inactive cases	Total cases	Notes
Planner 1	12	19	31	With the Planning Department for two months.
Planner 1	19	25	44	With the Planning Department for one year.
Planning Tech 2	1	-	1	Does the initial preparation work for all cases.
Planner 2	25	11	36	With the Planning Department for 18 months.
Planner 2	24	47	71	With the Planning Department for nine years.
Planner 2	0	1	1	A front counter position whose main responsibility is answering questions from walk-in customers, answering phone calls, and taking in new applications.
Senior Planner	2	5	7	This position shares supervisory duties with the manager. This planner is responsible for keeping many of the Land Development processes on track and to ensure proper completion.
Development Finance Officer	31 pending bond applications; 11 new applications. Out of these 11 new bond applications, 6 are active cases where the developer is working on getting the bonds posted.			

Besides the zoning, site plan, subdivision, and bond applications, Land Development division planners process the following requests:

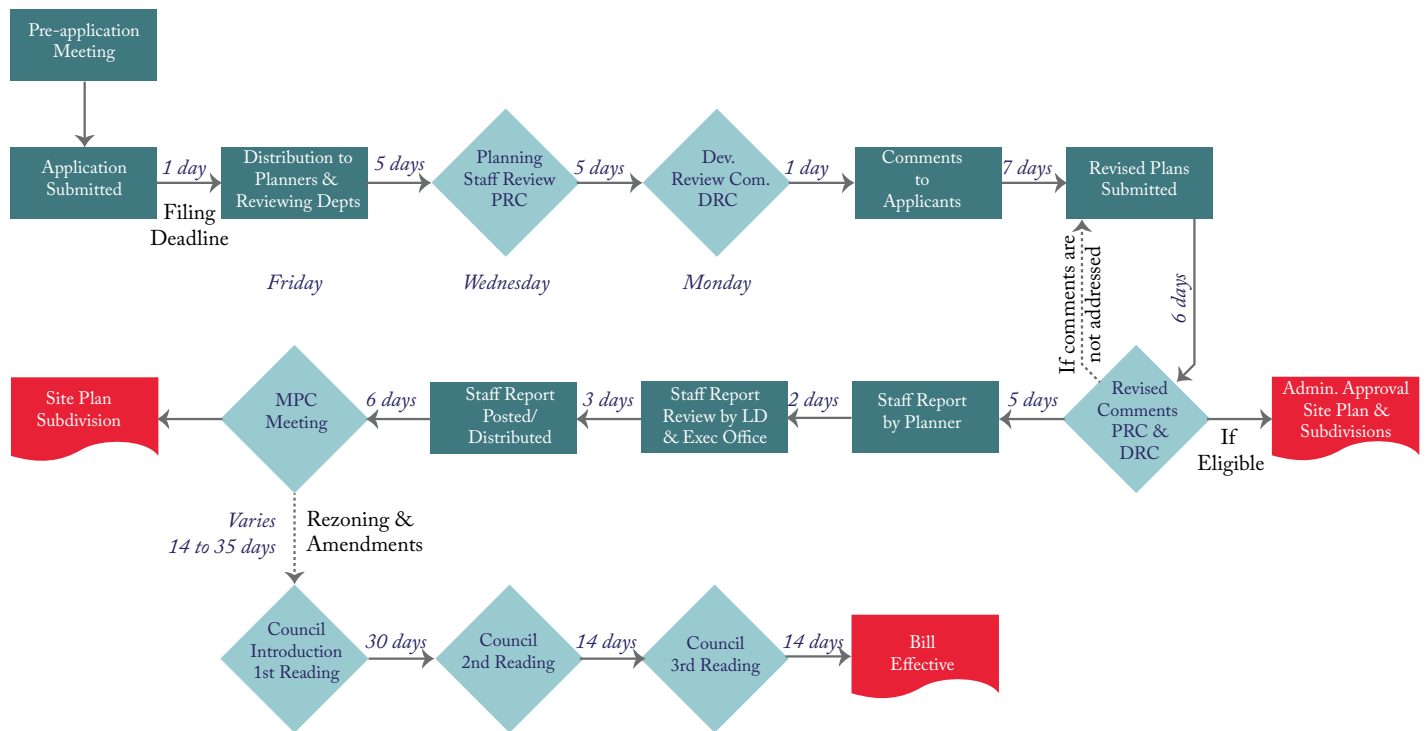
- Zoning Letters: Typically 3-5 requests per week.
- Critical lots: Typically 1 per week.
- Permits: Typically sign off on 10-15 over the counter permits per week.



A total of 1,153 cases were processed from November 2012 to 2013. The cases were approved by the Metropolitan Planning Commission and in some cases also required approval from Metro Council. Source: Metro Planning Department



A total of 1,432 cases received administrative approval from November 2012 to 2013. Source: Metro Planning Department



- PRC Planning Review Committee
- DRC Development Review Committee
- LD Land Development
- MPC Metropolitan Planning Commission
- Step in the process
- Critical step with specific outcome
- Point of decision

## Land Development Process

### Critical Path for Development Cases

Planning applications are filed at the front desk. There are two filing deadlines per month, with fast track subdivision cases submitted in between. Mandatory referral applications are also submitted by various agencies at any time. Mandatory referrals do not follow the normal review process.

The application file proceeds to the planning technician who scans the plans and application and reviews the file to prepare a map of the property to be included in a packet of cases that is distributed to all planners in the department and other agencies. The Planning Technician also prepares slides of each case in a PowerPoint presentation so that the planners and other agencies have a slide showing an aerial photo, land use policy, and the site plan during the review meetings. The docket goes to the Senior Planner that assigns the case to a planner within one day of the filing deadline. The manager reviews the docket and may reassign the cases. The plans are distributed to reviewing agencies.

The planner in charge of the case reviews the case and prepares for the internal Planning Review Committee (PRC) meeting and

the external Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting. The comments are forwarded to the applicant after the DRC meeting. The applicant submits revised plans. If the plans address all comments the case moves forward. Eligible site plans and subdivisions exit the system with final administrative approval. Other applications move forward to the Metropolitan Planning Commission. The planner prepares a staff report for the manager's review and comment. Six days prior to the Metropolitan Planning Commission hearing the staff report is made public. Site plans and subdivisions exit the system with a final decision from the Metropolitan Planning Commission. Rezoning applications move to the Metro Council for first, second, and third readings. The process before the Metro Council requires a minimum of 72 days before the bill is effective.

# Part 3: Observations and Recommendations

## NashvilleNext

### Observation A

Not all Metro Nashville departments are fully engaged in the NashvilleNext project.

### Discussion

NashvilleNext is not just a growth and land use strategy produced by and for the Planning Department. NashvilleNext is also Metro Nashville's strategy for economic prosperity, to preserve and enhance environment and neighborhoods, to enhance mobility options, to provide adequate infrastructure, to provide recreational opportunities, and to strategize for public safety. It provides a platform to maximize the synergy between the different initiatives. If other Metro Nashville departments are not involved in shaping these policies and strategies, they are not likely to adopt NashvilleNext as a blueprint for their budgeting and program activities. The involvement referred to here is not limited to extending the invitation to other departments and the departments sending representatives to attend NashvilleNext meetings. These departments need to be actively engaged in a meaningful manner. They should collaborate and lead the process with the Planning Department.

NashvilleNext will be implemented by Metro Nashville agencies and various other civic, business, and neighborhood organizations. Metro Nashville must set a positive example of collaboration by pulling all of its resources, talent, and expertise to help shape what is next for Metro Nashville.

The speaker's series format has brought outside expertise to weigh in on key issues but has not allowed a robust dialogue on the topic. The desired outcome was to win over people, particularly those on the fence or representing a different perspective, with compelling arguments. The inability for the other side to present their story on equal footing may have further alienated some of the intended audience.



NashvilleNext Logo  
Source: Nashville Planning Department

## **Recommendations**

1. If NashvilleNext is to become more than a growth and land use strategy, then the departments should use the NashvilleNext process to establish and align their individual long term goals, objectives, and strategies.
2. The Metro Nashville department heads should collaborate with the Planning Department and take ownership and lead the production of their specific portion of the NashvilleNext Plan.

## Community Plans and Codes

### Observation B

Implementation of community plans is limited. Code reform has not kept pace with community plan updates.

### Observation C

Planners are spreading themselves thin by moving from one community plan to the next without pausing to put in place codes to implement the community plans.

### Observation D

Community plans should be based on an understanding of market economics.

### Discussion

“More clarity with more codes and less subjective planning.” This message was consistently communicated by the business and development community, neighborhoods, Codes department, the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development, and even the planners in the Land Development division.

The development community desires predictable processes. Neighborhoods desire predictable outcomes. Staff desires less subjective policies, clear standards, and a streamlined development review process that maintains a balance between cases coming into and going out of the system so as to not create a burdening case load.

Codes, particularly form-based codes like the downtown code, have turned former vague and subjective policies into direct and clear indications about how, where, and why the community wants to grow. The developers and designers noted that the process has gotten much better in the downtown area. The new code provides precise and clear direction and offers a streamlined “by right” approval process to projects that comply with the standards. Minor deviations are approved at the staff level.

The planning and coding process ideally should be developed at the same time to increase efficiency and effectiveness of community

*“Zoning along corridors should be more flexible when dictated by market conditions, and a greater understanding of local market dynamics should be used to create a more strategic approach to land use regulation.”*

- Nashville Tennessee: Place Making Through Infill and Corridor Redevelopment, a 2010 ULI Rose Center Advisory Services Program Report

*“Planning staff needs more business experience and an economic check on policy. Perhaps there should be a former real estate professional on staff to evaluate the economic impact of proposed policies (i.e. take the site/area, apply the policy, run pro formas and make a conclusion/recommendation).”*

- Comments from the Chamber Task Force Group

engagement. Like planning, the coding also begins with an open, transparent, and broad-based public involvement to develop a vision and strategy for how the community should grow. Metro Nashville form-based planning and coding allows different components of community plans and codes to be developed on an integrated platform that supports implementation.

Planners and the community plans will be more effective and gain more community support if they develop codes and identify the community plan projects on the Capital Improvements Budget.

### **Recommendations**

1. Develop form-based codes to reduce the subjective policy and drive implementation of community plans before moving to the next community plan update.
2. An economic development professional should participate in the preparation of the community plans and provide the market economic perspective.

## Application Review

### Observation E

The Planning Department processes a heavy case load with few and mostly junior planning staff.

### Observation F

An overwhelming amount of information, crunched review timeframe, huge case load, and inconsistent mentoring and coaching can lead to burn out of new and unseasoned planners.

### Observation G

For optimum results, planners desire a more reasonable review time frame. However, the development and business community perceives the development review process as lengthy and unpredictable.

### Discussion

While the planners want a reasonable timeframe, developers feel the development process takes too long.

It is a planner's responsibility to offer a development review process that includes:

- Predictability. A developer should be able to know early on whether they have a bankable project and not have to wait months to be able to move forward. The earlier there is certainty, the better. Then developers are willing to take some risks – a key part of getting quality development.
- Timely processing. Common approaches that communities use to streamline their development approval processes include one-stop centers, pre-application meetings, reduced application requirements, use of the internet and web technology, free or low cost “how to” manuals, guaranteed review turnaround times, consistent review and inspections on projects, and centralized permitting.
- Fair treatment. The planner should offer trust and be trustworthy.
- Accurate and accessible information.

*“The longer the development review process takes, the more expensive the development becomes, which ultimately results in less design flexibility and fewer funds for “amenities” the community expects.”*

- Chamber Process Improvement Task Force



- Reasonable and fair costs. Fees should be clearly linked to the services provided.
- Facilitating innovative development. What is important in development review is finding a higher level of value, not necessarily saving time or efficiency. Quality development is aided by elegant regulations – those that both reflect what the community wants and are simple and easy to use. A trained and well-informed decision and advisory making body, staff, and a community that is aware of smart growth is vital.

The Land Development division is the frontline staff. Budget cuts in recent years have resulted in hiring at lower positions, such as Planner 1 and Planner 2 positions.

The NashvilleNext, development codes for community planning and the associated streamlined development review processes provide a renewed opportunity to examine the development process. The one-stop centralized permitting center under construction may require adjustments to current systems and processes. Discussion of process improvement must recognize that it requires a change of culture, and change involves moving from a process oriented mindset to one focused on customer service and continuous improvement.

## **Recommendations**

1. Planning management should constantly review strategy, systems, resources, hiring, and training programs. As the economy recovers, the Planning Department needs to hire planners with more experience, particularly in the Land Development division.
2. Planning management should actively monitor the process for efficiency and effectiveness.
  - a. If applications are routinely turned in incomplete, the application forms need to be clearer about the requirements.
  - b. A pre-application meeting with the development review team provides early direction and information on all the process and substantive requirements, which saves time, effort, and production costs. The Planning Department should prominently advertise and encourage pre-application meetings. If necessary, a fee can be charged for the

pre-application meeting to recover costs.

- c. A brief one or two question customer survey conducted at the end of the application process would provide immediate feedback that can facilitate process improvement and serve as a metric for staff’s performance.
3. Adopt clear and precise form-based codes for the 14 community plan areas. This would reduce subjective interpretations and provide streamlined and predictable development review process.

**Benchmarking**

The table below compares Metro Nashville processing time to other comparable cities. These benchmarks are minimum number of days required to process a development application. These benchmarks do not reflect the extent or quality of development review.

The Metro Nashville processing timeframe is competitive with other cities. Staff should monitor and report this benchmark publicly.

Table 3: Benchmarks for Planning Processes

Process	Nashville	Charlotte	Minneapolis	Knoxville
<b>Administrative Approval</b>				
Site Plan	25 days	60 days	Few weeks	60 days
Subdivisions	25 days		N/A	60 days
<b>Planning Commission Approval</b>				
Site Plan	41 days	120 days	60 days	120 days
Subdivisions	41 days		N/A	120 days
<b>Council Approval</b>				
Subdivisions	N/A	N/A	150 days	180 days
Rezoning	113 days	90 days	90 days	180 days

Source: Planning process timeframes gathered from phone calls to Nashville, Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Knoxville Planning Departments.

## Observation H

The business community is often at odds with the Metro Council and neighborhoods on location and intensity of growth and change.

### Discussion

NashvilleNext is the appropriate forum to strike the right balance between growth and preservation in appropriate locations. Broad based public involvement is difficult to achieve but extremely critical. NashvilleNext will inform the public of the nature of intended change in different areas of Metro Nashville. Generally, stable areas are preserved and maintained, struggling areas are programmed for regeneration, and new neighborhoods are designated for expansion on vacant parcels. This approach focuses policy, regulation, and the techniques used to implement the community vision for areas of change.

This rigorous and principled approach to planning establishes the regulatory geography and sets the stage for coding with predictable processes for the development community and predictable and contextual outcomes. The regulatory framework seamlessly carries the logic of good design and sound planning from the scale of a building, lot, and block to the scale of a neighborhood, community, city, and region.

The organizing framework gives Metro Nashville and its 14 communities an operating system to plug in individual development opportunities in a coherent manner to create an appealing and fiscally sustainable place. The lack of such a framework tends to leave communities without clear enough direction for sensitively weaving new development with existing development. The physical and spatial organizing framework should recognize that Metro Nashville needs to provide a range of options to suit diverse needs. The framework therefore supports a range of contexts from the natural, rural, suburban to the urban core. The transect conceives the city as a sequence of complete human habitats of distinctive character and intensity. The form and character of the different human habitats is conceived as a geography of diverse place types such as neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. The form element of the NashvilleNext coordinates the community's priorities into a physical framework to achieve the vision.

*Since 2006, neighborhoods were supportive of planning. Now, neighbors are suspicious. In the past nine months, staff has been unresponsive, dogmatic, ideological, and bending the rules. Staff is encouraging high density regardless of appropriateness. Planning principles should be applied with judgment. Phone calls are not returned. Notices are not coming in. The Planning Commission has four members who depend on development for their livelihood.*

- These are collective opinions expressed by four Metro Council Members that participated in the Metro Council Member's Focus Group. These opinions have not been corroborated to represent a majority opinion of Metro Council.

*The planning process is one in which staff members meet with neighborhood advocates and show them pretty photos and convince them that they should desire the unrealistic results that they have been shown and which staff also desires. They get an easy buy-in and then develop community plans which demand sweeping changes, contain general rather than specific requirements, and are based upon unrealistic expectations which they then seek to impose upon existing buildings and businesses already established in the area. Planning process seldom actually listens to the affected property owners and business owners – or considers their input. There should be a better balance of interests.*

- Various commingled comments from the Chamber Task Force Group

## Recommendations

1. Planning staff should continue its concerted effort to attract broad based participation in the NashvilleNext process. Staff should doggedly monitor participation from different groups and make necessary adjustments to public participation strategies. The meeting formats should actively pursue and facilitate dialogue between disparate factions.
2. NashvilleNext should develop an organizing framework that gives the 14 communities an operating system to plug in individual development opportunities in a coherent manner to create an appealing, contextual, and fiscally sustainable place.
3. The existing conditions and community vision should shape the sectors for conservation and growth. These community sectors should be mapped and deployed through the form-based regulatory tools. The growth areas should be fine-tuned for intensity and character. Stable areas should be preserved from runaway growth, and growth should be redirected to areas in need of reinvestment where viable infrastructure is already in place. Growth sectors are the areas where development is allowed, prioritizing it on a scale ranging from the maintenance of stable areas to areas for infill development and areas for ultimate expansion of the built environment.

## Interdepartmental Collaboration

### Observation I

Interdepartmental collaboration is often lacking.

### Discussion

Conflicts between planners and engineers are not unique to Metro Nashville. While misaligned professional differences are commonplace, it drains limited resources, smears the business climate, becomes a burden, and creates an unpleasant working environment.

Planners complain that comments on development applications from the Public Works Department are often late, which causes delays, and lack accountability. Public Works says they “never miss deadlines,” and “when the drawings are vague, we can only issue vague comments.”

Public Works is admittedly risk averse and less open to untested planning principles. Public Works values lower risk tolerances for safety and are comfortable with standards that are middle of the road compared to other cities. Planners and economic developers value distinctive places and cite empirical safety evidence in traditional communities.

Who has the final word on street design? The Metro Nashville Charter says:

- MPW Role – Section 8.402. Functions. The department of public works shall be responsible for: (a) The design, construction, maintenance, repair and cleaning of roads, highways, streets, alleys, other public places, bridges, viaducts, and other related structures.
- MPC Role – Sec. 11.505. Mandatory referrals to planning commission. Whenever the commission shall have adopted the master or general plan of the metropolitan government area or any part thereof, then and thenceforth no street, park or other public way, ground, place or space, no public building or structure, or no public utility whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed or authorized in the area under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan government until and unless the location and

*“Public Works also is completely rigid in their approach to development. Nothing can be different than their “standards,” which are outdated and too basic. Public Works approach is unbending, inflexible and ‘their way or the highway.’”*

- Various comments from the Chamber Process Improvement Task Force

*“Stormwater is more progressive ... but they are very slow in reviewing and approving anything, and they seem to have a culture of how to make things more difficult for development and builders.”*

- Various comments from the Chamber Process Improvement Task Force

extent thereof shall have been submitted to and approved by the planning commission.

Per the Metro Nashville Charter, the Metropolitan Planning Commission sets the width of the street, and Public Works designs within that width. As advocates of complete streets, the planners can set a narrow width in the community plan and constrain Public Works design. This is not an optimum solution - particularly as it frequently plays out on a case-by-case basis. Streets should be designed collaboratively. Quality of life, context, and multi modal use should matter no less than safety, speed, and capacity.

Increasingly federal, state, and regional agencies are using linkages to land use policies as a key criteria for project selection and implementation. Without aligned land use and transportation policies and a mutual understanding between the Planning Department and Public Works Department, Metro Nashville is at risk of losing funding for transportation and planning projects.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development should get a third party credible mediator to analyze the conflict at the Development Review Committee, identify the parties' interests, facilitate negotiations, draft agreements, and develop implementation plans.
2. The Charter Revision Commission should review and provide clarity on the collaborative role of street design, specifically in light of the Mayor's 2010 Complete Streets policy.

## Capital Improvements Budget

### Observation J

The Capital Improvements Budget has become a routine bureaucratic exercise.

### Discussion

Metro Nashville's Capital Improvements Budget is a potent tool for implementation. The Capital Improvements Budget is a five year plan that identifies capital projects, provides a planning schedule, and identifies options for financing the plan. Essentially, the Capital Improvements Budget should provide a link between the various departments, their collective plans, policies, and programs, and Metro Nashville's annual budget. It fosters cooperation amongst departments and allows for systematic evaluation of all city projects at the same time. The Capital Improvements Budget can also serve as an economic development tool.

For the Planning Department and the Metropolitan Planning Commission, Capital Improvements Budget is important because of the impact these expenditures have on economic and community development, the environment, and the urban form. The Capital Improvements Budget can be a more powerful tool than zoning to implement NashvilleNext. Individual projects also may need to insure that offsite capital facilities needed by the project will be available.

### Recommendations

1. All departments should articulate NashvilleNext as a source for Capital Improvements Budget and participate in shaping and carrying out NashvilleNext.
2. Right now is a great time, while the NashvilleNext process is underway, for the Planning Department and Metropolitan Planning Commission to draw a stronger and more transparent link between NashvilleNext and Capital Improvements Budget.
3. The Public Works Department and Finance Department should actively participate and collaborate on the implementation dialogue for NashvilleNext Plan.

## **Performance Measures**

### **Observation K**

The Planning Department and its staff have very few quantifiable performance measures.

### **Discussion**

Noted leadership trainer John Jones said: “What gets measured gets done. What gets measured and fed back gets done well. What gets rewarded gets repeated.” The object is not a bureaucratic focus on metrics and measuring everything but measuring what really matters. Measuring performance is not about the numbers but about guiding and monitoring improvement towards a measurable, observable NashvilleNext goal. Performance measures allow us to understand causes and effects of problematic performance as well as successes, and then lead human performance improvement in the Planning Department.

### **Recommendation**

1. Adopt performance measures that tie individual performance to the Planning Department and NashvilleNext goals and objectives and supporting budget initiatives.



## Geographic Information Systems

### Observation L

Currently about 10 Metro Departments have individual accounts with Esri, a vendor for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping software. Over \$240,000 a year is spent on maintenance and purchases. Each department budgets for their anticipated use of GIS. Government systems are dynamic and tend to change rapidly. The current licensing does not allow for quick changes.

### Discussion

Enterprise License Agreement reduces complexity by combining software licensing into a single Metro Nashville agreement, lowering the costs of software compliance and asset management, increasing flexibility to build a tailored and scalable GIS, and maximizing value by strategically providing mapping and GIS services where and when needed.

This agreement would be for three years at a time. Its cost is based on Metro Nashville's current usage and any large anticipated projects. During the three years, Metro Nashville has the option to add users, license new software, or increase licensing on existing software. Additionally, the agreement provides access to Esri's new software, allowing all departments access to current technology.

This would allow Metro Nashville the ability to spin up new apps for departments or respond quickly to high demand or emergency situations. Pricing is based on usage at the end of each three year period. If there is a unique situation in the middle of the contract term that requires more licensing temporarily, this can be done without affecting the next contract term.

During the 2010 flood, an Enterprise License Agreement would have been extremely useful. The other benefit of the license agreement is to simplify and centralize all of the different existing agreements. It would allow the GIS section to help users get connected quickly without getting quotes. If a need arises, the software can be made available immediately and the costs would be budgeted in the future contract.

Metro Nashville is expanding their use of technology. Metro

Nashville's GIS use is growing and is expected to continue. The \$240,000 average annual spending is likely to go up. At least \$60,000-\$120,000 of new software is planned through the end of this fiscal year.

Enterprise License Agreement is not cheap, but it offers flexibility and convenience. An estimate for an Esri Enterprise License Agreement for Metro Nashville is in the range of \$295,000 to \$400,000 per year.

### **Recommendation**

1. Metro Nashville should consider an Enterprise License Agreement.

### **Resource**

For more information on Enterprise License Agreement, see <http://www.esri.com/industries/ela>.

## Summary Observation & Recommendation

Observations		Recommendations	
<b>NashvilleNext</b>			
A	Not all Metro Nashville departments are fully engaged in the NashvilleNext project.	1	If NashvilleNext is to become more than a growth and land use strategy, then the departments should use the NashvilleNext process to establish and align their individual long term goals, objectives, and strategies.
		2	The Metro Nashville department heads should collaborate with the Planning Department and take ownership and lead the production of their specific portion of NashvilleNext Plan.
<b>Community Plans and Codes</b>			
B	Implementation of community plans is limited. Code reform has not kept pace with community plan updates.	1	Develop form-based codes to reduce the subjective policy and drive implementation of community plans, before moving to the next community plan update.
C	Planners are spreading themselves thin, by moving from one community plan to the next without pausing to put in place codes to implement the community plans.		
D	Community plans should be based on an understanding of market economics.	2	An economic development professional should participate in the preparation of the community plans and provide the market economic perspective.
<b>Application Review</b>			
E	The Planning Department processes a heavy case load with few and mostly junior planning staff.		Planning management should constantly review strategy, systems, resources, hiring, and training programs. As the economy recovers, the Planning Department needs to hire planners with more experience, particularly in the Land Development division.
F	An overwhelming amount of information, crunched review timeframe, huge case load, and inconsistent mentoring and coaching opportunities can lead to burn out of new and unseasoned planners.		<p>Planning management should actively monitor the process for efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If applications are routinely turned in incomplete then the application forms may need to be clearer about the requirements.</li> <li>b. A pre-application meeting with the development review team provides early direction and information on all the process and substantive requirements, which saves time, effort, and production costs. The Planning Department should prominently advertise and encourage pre-application meetings. If necessary, a fee can be charged for the pre-application meeting to recover costs.</li> <li>c. A brief one or two question customer survey conducted at the end of the application process would provide immediate feedback that can facilitate process improvement and serve as a metric for staff's performance.</li> </ul>

Observations		Recommendations	
G	For optimum results, planners desire a more reasonable review time frame. However, the development and business community perceives the development review process as lengthy and unpredictable.	1	Adopt clear and precise form-based codes for the 14 community plan areas. This would reduce subjective interpretations, and provide streamlined and predictable development review process.
H	The business community is often at odds with the Metro Council and neighborhoods on location and intensity of growth and change.	1	Planning staff should continue its concerted effort to attract broad-based participation in the NashvilleNext process. Staff should doggedly monitor participation from different groups and make necessary adjustments to public participation strategies. The meeting formats should actively pursue and facilitate dialogue between disparate factions.
		2	NashvilleNext should develop an organizing framework that gives the 14 communities an operating system to plug in individual development opportunities in a coherent manner to create an appealing, contextual, and fiscally sustainable place.
		3	The existing conditions and community vision should shape the sectors for conservation and growth. These community sectors should be mapped and deployed through the form-based regulatory tools. The growth areas should be fine-tuned for intensity and character. Stable areas should be preserved from runaway growth and growth should be redirected to areas in need of reinvestment where viable infrastructure is already in place. "Growth" sectors are the areas where development is allowed, prioritizing it on a scale ranging from the maintenance of stable areas, to areas for infill development, and areas for ultimate expansion of the built environment.
<b>Interdepartmental Collaboration</b>			
I	The interdepartmental collaboration is often lacking.	1	The Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development should get a third party credible mediator to analyze the conflict at the Development Review Committee, identify the parties' interests, facilitate negotiations, draft agreements, and develop implementation plans.
		2	The Charter Revision Commission should review and provide clarity on the collaborative role of street design, specifically in light of the Mayor's 2010 Complete Streets policy.

Observations		Recommendations	
<b>Capital Improvements Budget</b>			
J	The Capital Improvements Budget has become a routine bureaucratic exercise.	1	All departments should articulate the NashvilleNext Plan as a source for all Capital Improvements Budget and participate in shaping and carrying out the NashvilleNext Plan.
		2	Right now is a great time, while the NashvilleNext process is underway, for the Planning Department and Metropolitan Planning Commission to draw a stronger and more transparent link between NashvilleNext plan and the Capital Improvements Budget.
		3	The Public Works Department and Finance Department should actively participate and collaborate on the implementation dialogue for NashvilleNext plan.
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
K	Planning Department and staff have very few quantifiable performance measures.	1	Adopt performance measures that tie individual performance to the Planning Department and NashvilleNext goals and objectives and supporting budget initiatives.
<b>Geographic Information Systems</b>			
L	Currently about 10 Metro Departments have individual accounts with Esri, a vendor for GIS mapping software. Over \$240,000 a year is spent on maintenance and purchases. Each department budgets for their anticipated use of GIS. Government systems are dynamic and tend to change rapidly. The current licensing does not allow for quick changes.	1	Metro Nashville should consider an Enterprise License Agreement.

**APPENDIX C: PLANNING DEPARTMENT RESPONSE MATRIX TO RANGWALA ASSOCIATES**

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**APPENDIX C: RANGWALA ASSOCIATES RESPONSE MATRIX BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE**

## APPENDIX C: PLANNING DEPARTMENT RESPONSE MATRIX TO RANGWALA ASSOCIATES

We believe that operational management is in a unique position to best understand their operations and may be able to identify more innovative and effective approaches and we encourage them to do so when providing their response to our recommendations.

<i>Recommendation</i>	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
<b>AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RANGWALA ASSOCIATES</b>		
<p><b>A-1.</b> If NashvilleNext is to become more than a growth and land use strategy, then the departments should use the NashvilleNext process to establish and align their individual long term goals, objectives, and strategies.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Planning staff agrees with this assessment and is doing all that it can to encourage other departments to collaborate on NashvilleNext.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>A-2.</b> The Metro Nashville department heads should collaborate with the Planning Department and take ownership and lead the production of their specific portion of NashvilleNext Plan.</p>	<p><b>Requires action by other departments.</b> Planning staff agrees with this assessment and is doing all that I can to encourage other departments to collaborate on NashvilleNext.</p>	
<p><b>B-D-1.</b> Develop form-based codes to reduce the subjective policy and drive implementation of community plans, before moving to the next community plan update.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree.</b> Planning staff agrees that utilizing form-based codes in <i>strategic</i> locations can drive the implementation of the community plan. However, given current staffing resources and the priorities set by the Metro Planning Commission, this recommendation as worded is unrealistic.</p>	Ongoing – Planning staff develops form based codes for strategic areas as staffing levels and work plan permit.
<p><b>B-D-2.</b> An economic development professional should participate in the preparation of the community plans and provide the market economic perspective.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Planning staff agrees and while the Planning Department cannot compel the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development to participate, the Planning Department will certainly encourage their participation.</p>	2016 or later. No community plan updates are underway during the NashvilleNext effort.
<p><b>E-G-1.</b> Planning management should constantly review strategy, systems, resources, hiring, and training programs. As the economy recovers, the Planning Department needs to hire planners with more experience, particularly in the Land Development division.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Metro Planning has requested to be allowed to hire more senior staff (Planner 2s versus Planner 1s) for the two positions currently open in Land Development.</p>	Hiring underway.

**APPENDIX C: PLANNING DEPARTMENT RESPONSE MATRIX TO RANGWALA ASSOCIATES**

<i>Recommendation</i>	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
<p><b>E-G-2a.</b> If applications are routinely turned in incomplete then the application forms may need to be clearer about the requirements.</p>	<p><b>Accept Risk.</b></p>	
<p><b>E-G-2b.</b> A pre-application meeting with the development review team provides early direction and information on all the process and substantive requirements, which saves time, effort, and production costs. The Planning Department should prominently advertise and encourage pre-application meetings. If necessary, a fee can be charged for the pre-application meeting to recover costs.</p>	<p><b>Accept Risk.</b> Planning staff believes that the overwhelming majority of applicants that want a pre-application meeting have one. In addition to the pre-application meeting option offered by Metro Planning, the Development Review Committee also has a pre-submittal meeting option, which some applicants use.</p>	
<p><b>E-G-2c.</b> A brief one or two question customer survey conducted at the end of the application process would provide immediate feedback that can facilitate process improvement and serve as a metric for staff's performance.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Planning staff intends to send out a customer service survey with the correspondence sent after a zone change or subdivision request are completed.</p>	<p>2/1/2014</p>
<p><b>E-G-3.</b> Adopt clear and precise form-based codes for the 14 community plan areas. This would reduce subjective interpretations, and provide streamlined and predictable development review process.</p>	<p><b>Partially Agree.</b> Planning staff is committed to the use of form-based codes, however, we believe it is more appropriate to create and adopt form-based codes in strategic locations to encourage redevelopment; not all areas need a form-based code. A strategic approach is more realistic given the Planning Department's budget and staffing levels.</p>	<p>Ongoing – Planning staff develops form-based codes for strategic areas as staffing levels and work plan permit.</p>



**APPENDIX C: PLANNING DEPARTMENT RESPONSE MATRIX TO RANGWALA ASSOCIATES**

<i>Recommendation</i>	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
<p><b>H-1.</b> Planning staff should continue its concerted effort to attract broad-based participation in the NashvilleNext process. Staff should doggedly monitor participation from different groups and make necessary adjustments to public participation strategies. The meeting formats should actively pursue and facilitate dialogue between disparate factions.</p>	<p><b>Disagree.</b> The Planning Department disagrees with this assessment. The consultant focused on one community input opportunity – the speaker series – where he felt that there were not enough opportunities for debate. Given time constraints (and the habit of speakers to always exceed their allotted time), those meetings had less time for Q&amp;A. Every community input opportunity since then, however, has had ample opportunity for divergent perspectives to be shared and debated. Planning staff is currently monitoring participation from different groups and diligently works to involve groups that are under-represented.</p>	
<p><b>H-2.</b> NashvilleNext should develop an organizing framework that gives the 14 communities an operating system to plug in individual development opportunities in a coherent manner to create an appealing, contextual, and fiscally sustainable place.</p>	<p><b>Disagree.</b> This recommendation is unclear, however, we think the consultant is recommending that Metro Planning use a framework for considering growth and development. Metro Planning has been using the framework of the Transect for over a decade.</p>	
<p><b>H-3.</b> The existing conditions and community vision should shape the sectors for conservation and growth. These community sectors should be mapped and deployed through the form-based regulatory tools. The growth areas should be fine-tuned for intensity and character. Stable areas should be preserved from runaway growth and growth should be redirected to areas in need of reinvestment where viable infrastructure is already in place. “Growth” sectors are the areas where development is allowed, prioritizing it on a scale ranging from the maintenance of stable areas, to areas for infill development, and areas for ultimate expansion of the built environment.</p>	<p><b>Accept Risk.</b> It’s worth noting that this “recommendation” seems to be less of a best practice to “Determine if the operational goals and expectations of the Planning Department were met,” and more about promoting a specific philosophy for growth development and preservation.</p> <p>That said, while Metro Planning generally agrees that the philosophy espoused here is sound planning policy. However, we have to work within political realities, the market, the fact that zoning already exists. This recommendation does not acknowledge these realities.</p>	

**APPENDIX C: PLANNING DEPARTMENT RESPONSE MATRIX TO RANGWALA ASSOCIATES**

<i>Recommendation</i>	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
<p><b>I-1.</b> The Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development should get a third party credible mediator to analyze the conflict at the Development Review Commission, identify the parties’ interests, facilitate negotiations, draft agreements and develop implementation plans.</p>	<p><b>Reject.</b> The Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development believes this recommendation is overreaching and tangential.</p>	
<p><b>I-2</b> The Charter Revision Commission should review and provide clarity on the collaborative role of street design, specifically in light of the Mayor’s 2010 Complete Streets policy.</p>	<p><b>Requires action by other departments.</b> While the Planning Department agrees that this Committee could take action to provide clarity on this issue, it remains the prerogative of that Committee to act or not act.</p>	
<p><b>J-1.</b> All departments should articulate the NashvilleNext Plan as a source for all Capital Improvements Budget and participate in shaping and carrying out the NashvilleNext Plan.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Planning Department agrees with this recommendation, but cannot compel the other Departments to use NashvilleNext as a source for CIB projects or for participation in NashvilleNext. Planning staff continue to work with other Departments to facilitate their meaningful participation in NashvilleNext.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>J-2.</b> Right now is a great time, while the NashvilleNext process is underway, for the Planning Department and Metropolitan Planning Commission to draw a stronger and more transparent link between NashvilleNext plan and the Capital Improvements Budget.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Planning staff has discussed the idea that the CIB can be used to help implement portions of NashvilleNext.</p>	Underway
<p><b>J-3.</b> The Public Works Department and Finance Department should actively participate and collaborate on the implementation dialogue for NashvilleNext plan.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> The Finance Department concurs with the recommendation and will continue to collaborate with the Planning Department on implementation of the NashvilleNext Plan.</p> <p>The Public Works Department agrees with the recommendation and will continue to collaborate with the Planning Department on implementation of the NashvilleNext Plan.</p>	Completed

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<i>Recommendation</i>	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
<p><b>K.</b> Adopt performance measures that tie individual performance to the Planning Department and NashvilleNext goals and objectives and supporting budget initiatives.</p>	<p><b>Accept Risk.</b> Planning staff feels confident that we are working toward the goals/objectives outlined by Metro Planning Commission, one of which is to complete NashvilleNext.</p>	
<p><b>L.</b> Metro Nashville should consider an Enterprise License Agreement.</p>	<p><b>Agree.</b> Metro Planning has proposed the use of an Enterprise License Agreement.</p>	Completed