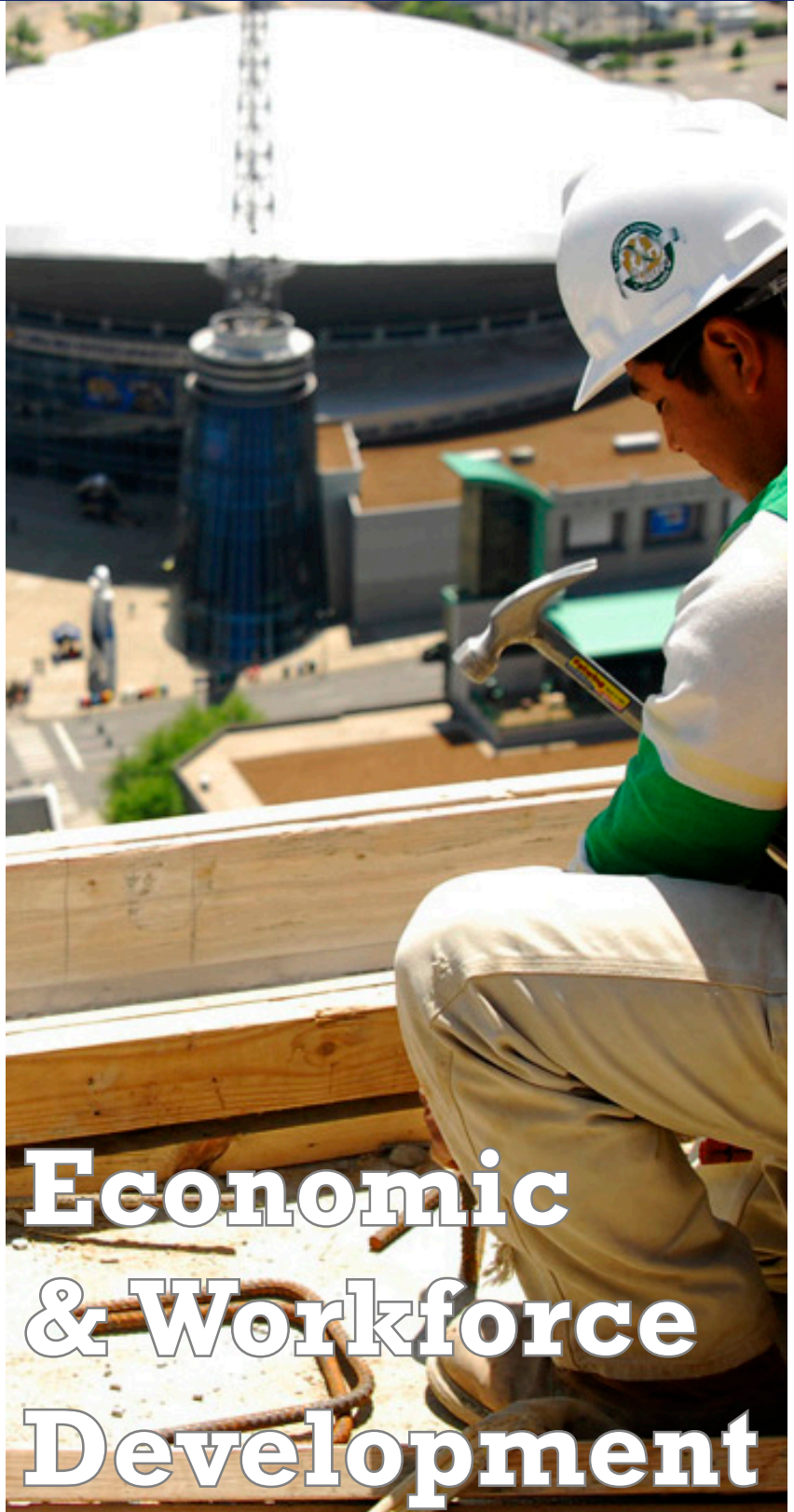





**A General Plan for Nashville & Davidson County**


Adopted June 22, 2015


**Volume II:  
Elements**



**Economic  
& Workforce  
Development**

 Certified per TCA 13-4-202 as a part of the Nashville-Davidson County General Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Planning Commission and including all amendments to this part as of June 22, 2015.

  
Executive Secretary

 NASHVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
A GREAT CITY DEPARTMENT

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

**Resolution No. RS2015-256**

**"BE IT RESOLVED by The Metropolitan Planning Commission that NashvilleNext is approved in accordance with the staff report and recommendations in the staff report with the following amendments: 2; 3; 4; 5; 14; 15; 16; 18; 20; 22a; 22c; 23; 24; 25; 31; 32; and the deferral of 11 areas identified in the Whites Creek area until the August 13, 2015 Planning Commission meeting with the Public Hearing closed. (9-0)"**

Resolution No. RS2015-256

WHEREAS, Section 13-4-203 of the Tennessee Code, Annotated, authorizes a General Plan "with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, and identify areas where there are inadequate or nonexistent publicly or privately owned and maintained services and facilities when the planning commission has determined the services are necessary in order for development to occur;" and

WHEREAS, Chapter 5, section 11.504 (c) of the Metro Nashville Charter gives the Metro Planning Commission the power to "Make, amend and add to the master or general plan for the physical development of the entire metropolitan government area;" and

WHEREAS, Section 18.02 of the Charter of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requires that zoning regulations be enacted by the Council "only on the basis of a comprehensive plan prepared by the Metropolitan Planning Commission;" and

WHEREAS, the last General Plan, *Concept 2010, A General Plan for Nashville/Davidson County* was adopted in 1992; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Karl Dean, seeing fit to update the General Plan, announced on May 22, 2012 that the General Plan would be updated, assigning the task to the Metro Planning Department; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of the *NashvilleNext* Steering Committee and the Community Engagement Committee, the staff of the Metropolitan Planning Commission worked with stakeholders in Nashville/Davidson County, holding over 420 public meetings and events and soliciting input through online forums, engaging over 18,500 participants in providing public input to update the General Plan;

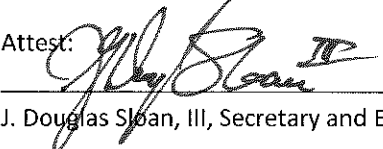
WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, empowered under state statute and the Charter of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County to adopt master or general plans for smaller areas of the county, finds that the process followed to develop the *NashvilleNext* General Plan included diverse, widespread, and meaningful community participation and substantial research and analysis and therefore finds that replacing the *Concept 2010* General Plan with *the NashvilleNext* General Plan is warranted; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Metropolitan Planning Commission hereby ADOPTS *NashvilleNext, A General Plan for Nashville/Davidson County* in accordance with sections 11.504 (e), (j), and 18.02 of the charter of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville, and Davidson County as the basis for the Commission's development decisions in the county.

  
James McLean, Chairman

Adoption Date: June 22, 2015

Attest:

  
J. Douglas Sloan, III, Secretary and Executive Director

# PARTS OF THE PLAN

Each part of the plan has a role to play. Some parts are broad and visionary, while others are specific and detailed. This section helps users of the plan understand how the parts fit together and support one another. No part of the plan is intended to stand alone; each can be understood only as working together with the rest of the plan.

## I Vision, Trends & Strategy

Volume I presents the role and powers of the plan, key trends and issues that the plan addresses, a summary of the plan’s strategy and approach to the future, and implementation goals and policies.

## II Elements

- » Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure
- » Arts, Culture & Creativity
- » Economic & Workforce Development
- » Education & Youth
- » Health, Livability & the Built Environment
- » Housing
- » Natural Resources & Hazard Adaptation

## III Communities

Nashville’s Community Plans provide history and context for Nashville’s 14 Community Planning Areas, along with community-specific issues, strategies, and sketches of how different places in the community could change over time. Detailed Community Character Maps link the broad, countywide Growth Concept Map to character policies that guide zoning and development decisions.

### *Community Character Manual*

The Community Character Manual provides detailed explanations of the character policies used in the Community Character Maps.

## IV Actions

Specific tasks for Metro departments and partners to undertake, within a recommended timeframe.

## V Access Nashville 2040

Volume V is the overarching vision of how transportation works under NashvilleNext.

## Volume II

### Economic & Workforce Development

#### Contents

About economic development.....	92
<i>Economic base</i> .....	92
<i>Secondary sector &amp; local businesses</i> .....	94
<i>Talent &amp; workforce development</i> .....	95
<i>Innovation</i> .....	101
<i>Regionalism</i> .....	102
Key ideas shaping this chapter.....	104
<i>Investment ready places</i> .....	104
<i>Quality of life &amp; attracting talent</i> .....	106
<i>Underserved areas</i> .....	107
<i>Workforce development</i> .....	109
<i>Paths out of poverty</i> .....	109
Goals and policies.....	113
<i>Related plans</i> .....	113

# ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A city's economy includes all of the activities for pay that pass money from customers to businesses and from employers to employees, recognizing that everyone plays every role at some point. In 2014, the economy of Nashville and Middle Tennessee reached the \$100 billion mark, making it the 34<sup>th</sup> largest metro economy in the country. Cities, states, and other organizations conduct economic development to expand the size, scope, and quality of the economy. Generally, economic development has three goals:

- » **To create and retain quality jobs:** meaningful, well-paid jobs allow workers and their families to thrive.
- » **To enhance tax base:** businesses support Nashville property and sales tax base directly and through the salaries and wages they pay employees.
- » **To enhance the quality of place:** more businesses and workers are looking for high quality places to locate in.

Economic development considers four main parts to understand how to intentionally grow Nashville's economy: the region's economic base, our secondary sector and local businesses, talent and workforce development, and innovation. Business pays a double dividend for Nashville—supporting our tax base directly and employing our residents and workers.

## About economic development

### Economic base

A city's economic base is what it does to bring in money from outside of the community. For example, country music sells to national and international audiences. Some of that money is diverted to retail, distribution, or online outlets; but some comes back to Nashville to pay musicians, writers, producers, support staff, the people who clean and maintain studio spaces, owners of studio spaces, and so on. Similarly, headquarters and back offices for national firms bring some of the money these companies earn across the country back into Davidson County through rent, property taxes, and salaries and wages.

Outside money is important because it passes through to Nashvillians to pay for all of the things people in Nashville buy. Known as the non-basic economic sectors, these things include all of our daily needs, dining out, entertainment, consumer goods, legal services, business support, government—everything that's bought locally or imported.

### A Diverse Economy

One of the strengths of Middle Tennessee's economy is its diversity. Initially rooted in trade (as a major port along the Cumberland River) and state government, the region's economy now boasts substantial jobs across all major sectors. This diversity allows it to perform well and continue to offer opportunities for growth during economic downturns.

Four sectors make up more than half of the Nashville region's economy:

- » Health care: \$30B
- » Music/entertainment: \$13B
- » Advanced manufacturing: \$10B
- » Tourism/hospitality: \$6B

### Nashville As The Product Is More Important Than Ever

The businesses that Nashville attracts are looking for five major things:

- » A talented workforce
- » Room to locate and expand
- » Transit
- » High-performing K-12 school system
- » Quality of place

While earlier approaches to economic development focused only on business attraction, assuming that the workforce would follow, attracting the workforce directly is now a key strategy as well.

Nashville is the center of a broader regional economy, connecting as many as 15 different counties. Though we have a smaller share of the region's economy than in the past, Nashville still has the largest share of the region's jobs (generally higher-skill and higher-paying jobs) and plays several unique roles in the economy. We are home to the state government, multiple dense employment locations (including downtown, Midtown, and Music Row), the most extensive transit system, and the largest collection of colleges and universities. Public policy decisions and public and private investment should recognize Nashville's unique position and enhance Nashville's role as the vibrant, urban center of commerce, government, entertainment, and culture for the region.

Being the center of the region also poses challenges. Nashville's central location and premier locations (downtown, as well as other anchors, such as colleges, universities, and large hospitals) make it attractive for certain kinds of work. However, these drive land prices higher, making Davidson County less attractive for other kinds of businesses, especially industrial and new manufacturing, which often need low land prices.

### **Other sources of outside money**

State government, retirement, income support (particularly in light of the recent recession), local education spending (State and Federal support), health insurance, and college/universities (tuition).

### **Who's involved in economic development in Middle Tennessee?**

- » Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce/ Partnership 2020
- » Metro Nashville-Davidson County
- » State of Tennessee
- » Tennessee Valley Authority
- » Nashville Electric Service
- » Workforce development nonprofits
- » Other chambers

### **Foreign investment**

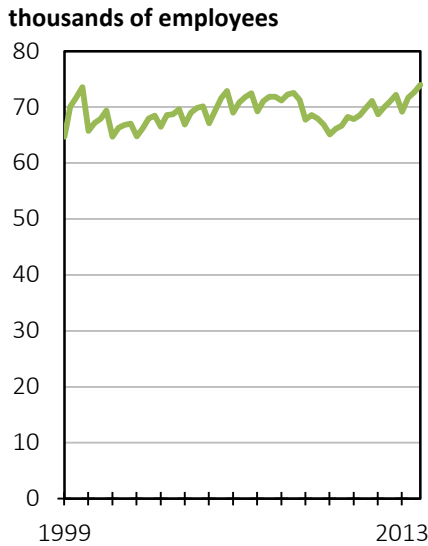
Five percent of Nashvillians work for foreign-owned companies. Though a small share of workers, foreign investment represents a larger share of compensation, productivity growth, and corporate research and development.

Foreign investment also links Nashville with the global spread of new knowledge, technology, and ideas, all critical to Nashville's growth as a creative, entrepreneurial economy.

*Source: Brookings Institute, FDI in U.S. Metro Areas, online report.*

### Figure EWD-1: Small businesses

Employees at small firms (less than 50 employees) and all firms in Davidson County.



Source: U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

### Secondary sector & local businesses

Money from Nashville’s economic base circulates through our non-basic sector (such as services and local businesses) before leaving to pay for things we import from other regions and countries. Within the non-basic sector, local businesses keep money in Nashville for a longer time. This is because local businesses rely more on other local business for their support services, such as accounting, banking, and other back office work. National firms typically centralize these functions outside of Nashville at their own company headquarters.

However, local businesses do more than just increase economic activity. Local business owners often have a stronger commitment to Nashville’s success, supporting local charities, neighborhood events, and community efforts. They also provide distinctiveness to Nashville’s neighborhoods and activity centers. (At the same time, distinctiveness is not always the most important thing for Nashville’s residents—price and convenience are major factors as well.)

Local and small businesses face a number of challenges, however. Increasing land prices make it difficult for businesses with less access to capital to find affordable workspace. In addition to their trade, small businesses must also develop their business skills. Relatedly, small businesses must navigate a variety of complex regulations and licensing requirements. Finally, small business owners must stay aware of how the marketplace is changing. In each of these cases, large companies are able to centralize these activities, hiring specialists who can focus on regulatory compliance, up-to-date research, and accounting.

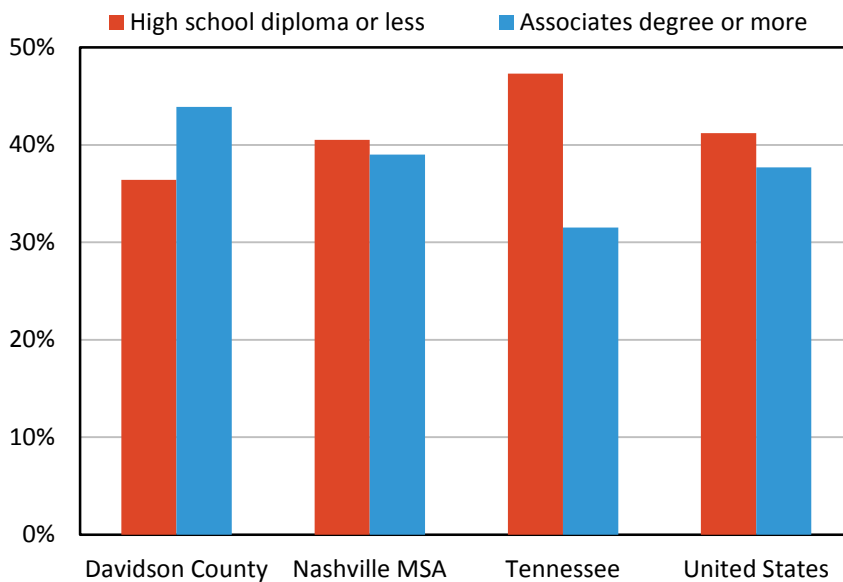
## Talent & workforce development

Demographic and other trends indicate that the country, and Nashville and the surrounding region, will face workforce shortages in the future, driven by adding new jobs, declining workforce due to retirements occurring as baby boomers become seniors, and tightening unemployment. Relatedly, well-paying jobs increasingly require advanced skills. This includes formal, credentialed education, such as a bachelor's degree or certificates in trades or information technology, as well as experience and on the job training. Aging baby boomers are also at the peak of their skills and careers; leaving the workforce will result in a shortage of talent.

Nashville is well-positioned to address these shortages, by capitalizing on its numerous colleges and universities, openness to new residents from across the country and around the world, and a citywide commitment to improving Nashville public schools. In this, Nashville is not working alone: access to postsecondary education is a major focus of Federal and State policymakers. In particular, Governor Haslam's Drive to 55 effort and Tennessee Promise scholarship should help with Nashville's workforce development.

**Figure EWD-4: Educational attainment in Nashville**

Davidson County has a lower percentage of people with only a high school diploma, equivalent, or less, and a higher percentage of people with an associate, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degrees. *Not shown: people with some college.*



Source: American Community Survey (2013, 1-year estimate)

**One source of future talent is the students that are drawn to Middle Tennessee's colleges and universities. Currently, the region retains 60 percent of its college graduates.**

*Higher Education Institutions in Middle Tennessee: An In-Depth Analysis of Their Impact on the Region from a Comparative Perspective (2007)*

### Figure EWD-5: 2009 to 2019 workforce shortage

Growth in jobs is likely to outpace available workers in Nashville, leading to a shortage of workers.

From 2009 to 2019, the Nashville region will require **117,548** workers.



From 2009 to 2019, the Nashville region labor force will grow by **48,137** workers (people age 16 and over).

Moving from 2009 levels of unemployment to full employment (4% unemployment) would add another **34,508** workers.



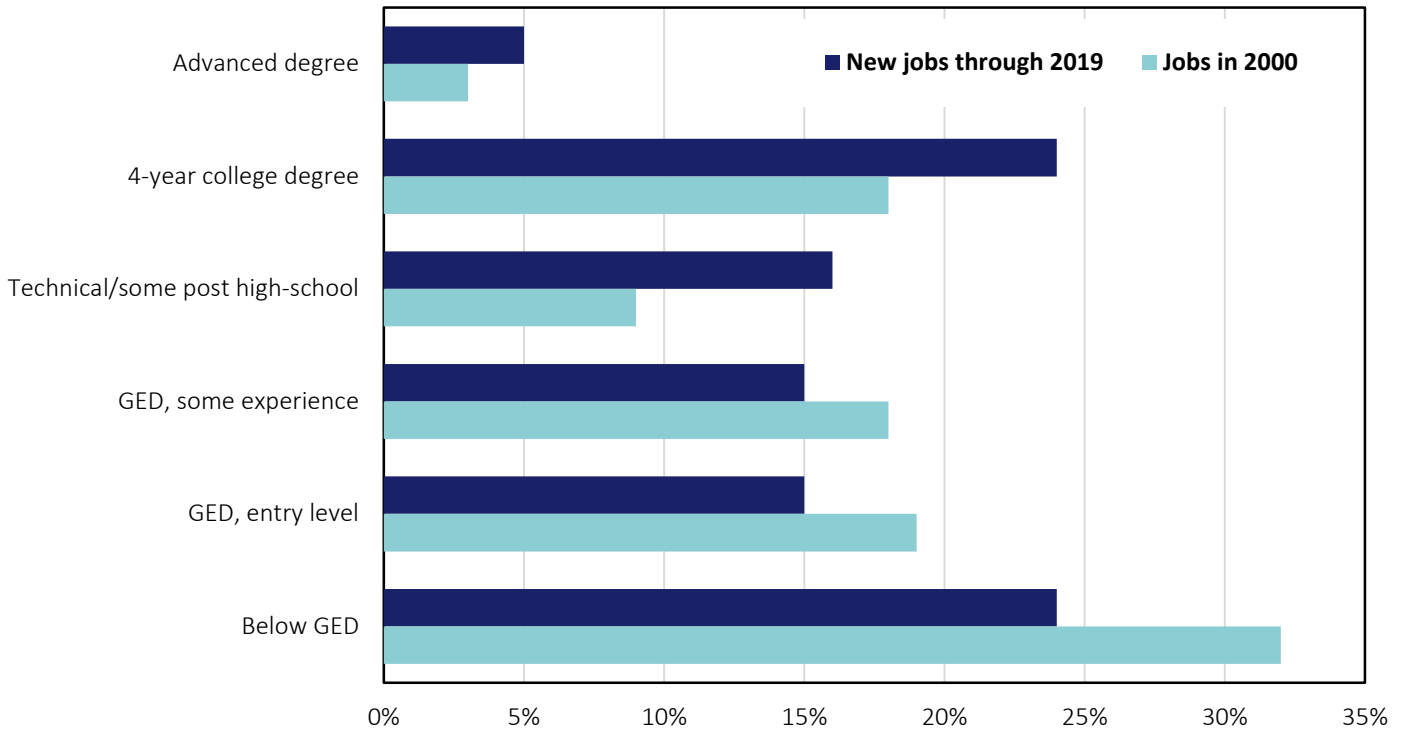
“The region’s economic development program goals include efforts to modestly increase the local labor force participation rate by 2015. This effort recognizes the need for businesses to explore ways to retain older workers and employ those with disabilities, low-income women with children, former military, and immigrants. This initiative could be vital for the Nashville area to sustain its growth as it encounters likely future worker shortages.”

*Leveraging the Labor Force for Economic Growth Assessing the Nashville Economic Market Area’s Readiness for Work after the Recession (2010), Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness.*



**Figure EWD-6: Changing job requirements**

Skill/education requirements for jobs in 2000 compared with new jobs added through 2019. There will still be a large number of jobs needing less experience or education, but they will continue to decline as a portion of the workforce.



Source: Leveraging the Labor Force for Economic Growth Assessing the Nashville Economic Market Area’s Readiness for Work after the Recession (2010), Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness.

**Key talent and skills generators**

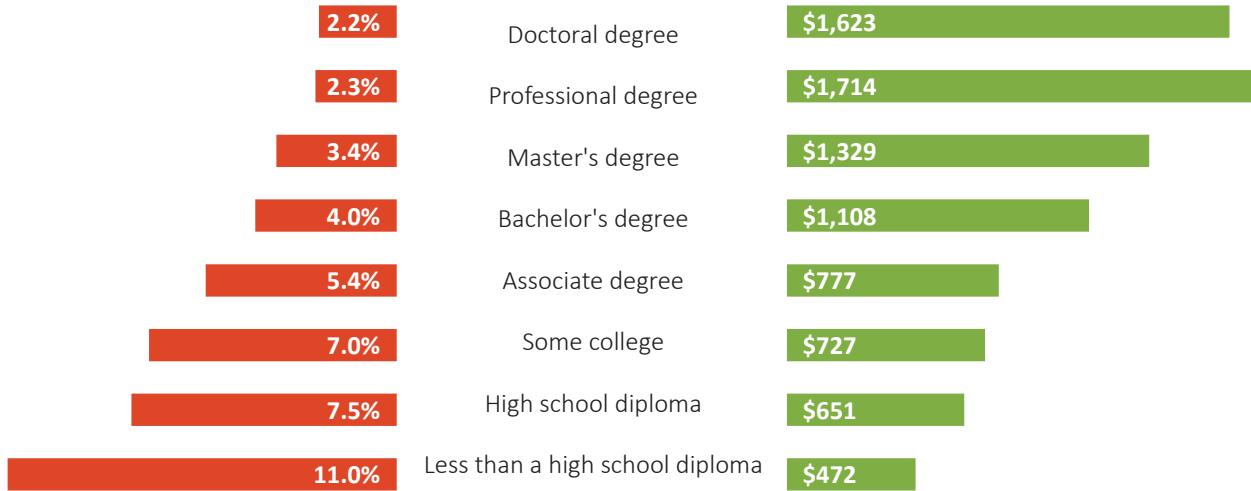
- » 42 High school career academies aligned with wide range of area industries and occupations
- » 18 Colleges & Universities in the Nashville Region
- » 118,379 College Students with 17,000 Graduates Annually
- » 10,000 College Graduates Remain in the Nashville Region (60%)
- » 70,000+ with Graduate or Professional Degree

**Workforce development special populations**

- » Individuals with substantial language or cultural barriers
- » Offenders
- » Homeless individuals
- » Deficient in basic literacy skills
- » A school dropout
- » Homeless, a runaway, or a foster child
- » Pregnant or a parenting teen
- » Individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities
- » Veterans
- » Low income individuals, including individuals currently receiving cash public assistance (Families First, Food Stamps, etc.)

**Figure EWD-7: Unemployment rate and earnings by educational attainment in the U.S.**

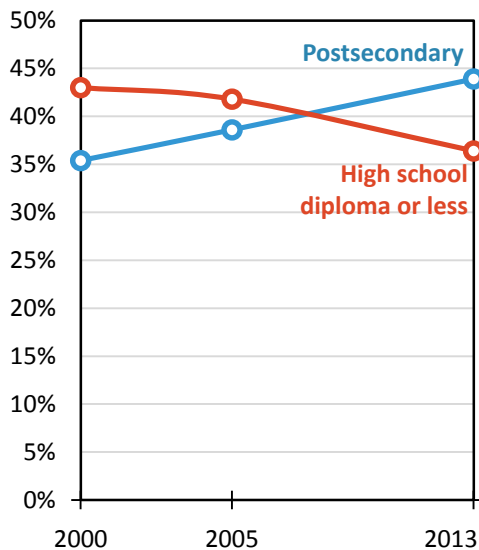
Greater educational attainment corresponds to higher earnings and lower unemployment.



Source: Nashville Davidson County Community Needs Assessment (2014); Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013)

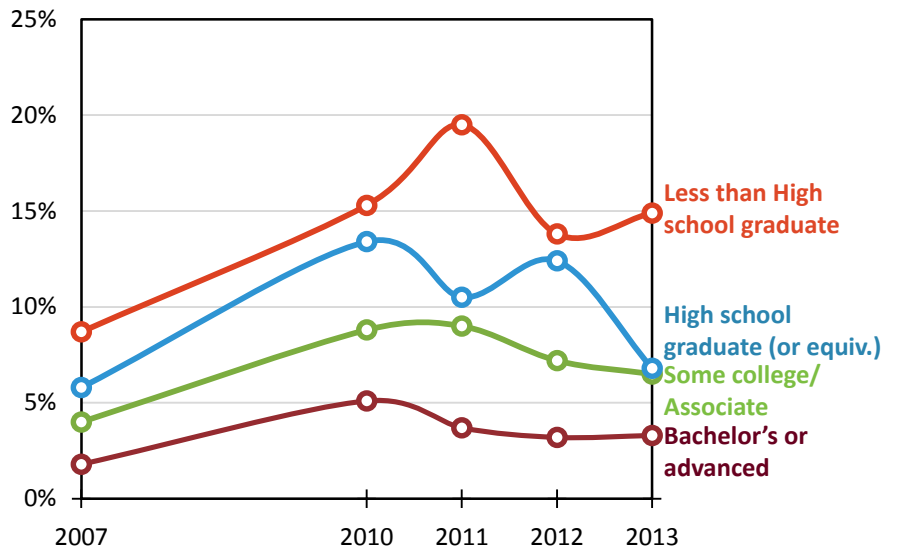
**Figure EWD-8: Postsecondary education since 2000**

More people in Nashville have a some college, an associates degree, bachelor's degree, or other advanced degree since 2000.



Source: U.S. Census (2000); American Community Survey (2005, 2013, 1-year estimates)

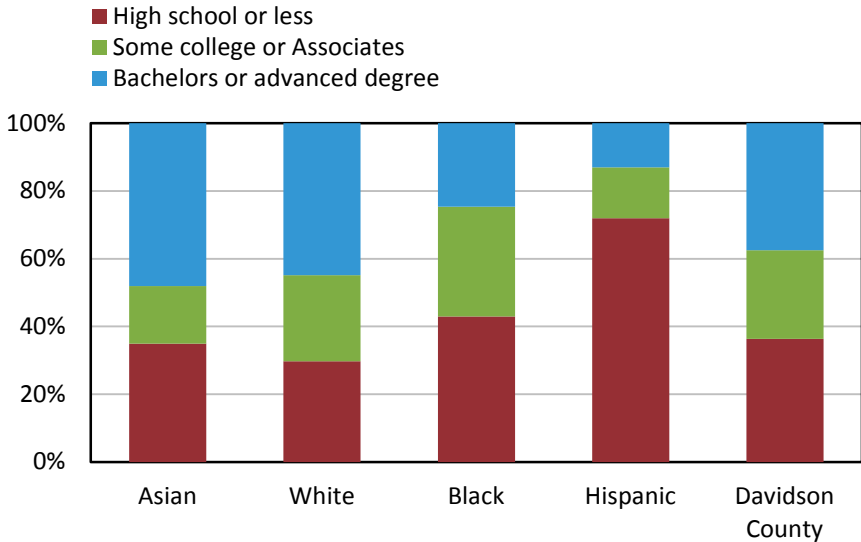
**Figure EWD-9: Unemployment rate since 2007 by educational attainment**



Source: American Community Survey (2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 1-year estimates)

In the long term, the skills gap can be closed by improving the skills of Nashville’s current workers. Improving the skills of current workers can help to reduce poverty and include workers historically left out of economic opportunities. This gap can also be closed by attracting new high skill workers (including retaining graduates from Nashville’s universities and colleges). New workers primarily move to places with a vibrant economy and job opportunities. However, quality of life also plays a role, particularly once workers have decided on a place. Some, particularly college educated workers, often choose a place to live first, and then look for work. By improving places for current residents, we can also attract newcomers.

**Figure EWD-2: Educational attainment by race & ethnicity**

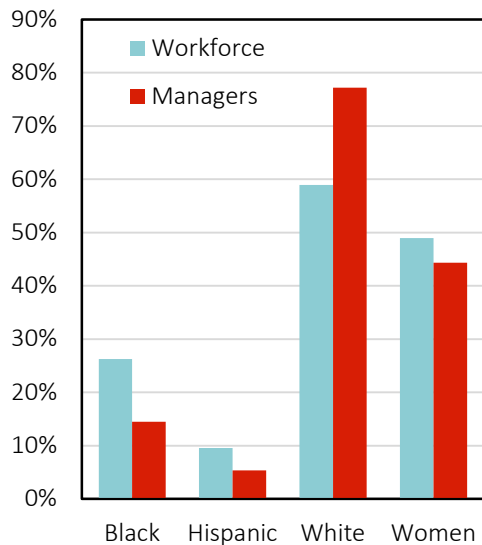


Source: American Community Survey, 2011 - 2013 (3-year estimate)

International immigrants are another crucial source of talent. Many immigrants attained a high level of education before moving to the U.S. In some cases, they are able to transition into their field successfully. Others, however, face language and other barriers that force them into lower skill jobs. International immigrants are also a key source of entrepreneurialism. While 9% of Nashvillians were born in a foreign country, immigrants represent 29% of Main Street business owners (defined as retail, food services and accommodation, and neighborhood services such as nail salons, beauty shops, and gas stations).

**Figure EWD-10: Workers and managers**

The chart below shows how minorities and women are under-represented in management positions compared with the rest of the workforce. As Nashville and the rest of the country become more diverse, and international connections matter more to our economy, having a diverse management will also be increasingly important. Initiatives like the Mayor’s Diversity Advisory Committee can identify specific steps necessary to overcome these gaps.



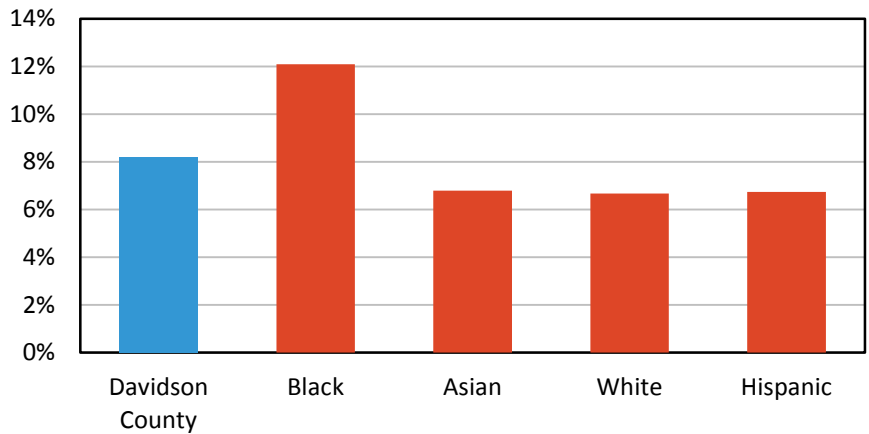
Source: American Community Survey (2011–2013, 3-year estimate. B24010 series.

Individuals with more education, skills, and experience have more opportunities for better-paying jobs. Connecting our residents to educational and employment opportunities improves their quality of life. It also bolsters Nashville’s economy. Sometimes, lack of job openings, college offerings, or skills limits what a worker can achieve. Other barriers, such as lack of physical access and transportation, language, citizenship, disability, affordable childcare, or soft skills can also limit a worker’s access to jobs or education.

Another way to overcome this shortage is by better integrating workers often left out of the current labor market. African-Americans, immigrants, low-income mothers with children, people with disabilities, and veterans are often not included in the economy at their full potential.

From 2011 to 2013, Davidson County’s unemployment rate was just over eight percent. For black Nashvillians, however, it was nearly 12 percent. Similarly, black and Hispanic Nashvillians have lower educational attainment than white and Asian Nashvillians. Increasing their educational attainment is needed for Nashville’s economy; it is also important for including them in the county’s prosperity.

**Figure EWD-3: Unemployment by race and ethnicity (2011–2013)**



Source: American Community Survey (2011–2013, 3-year estimate)

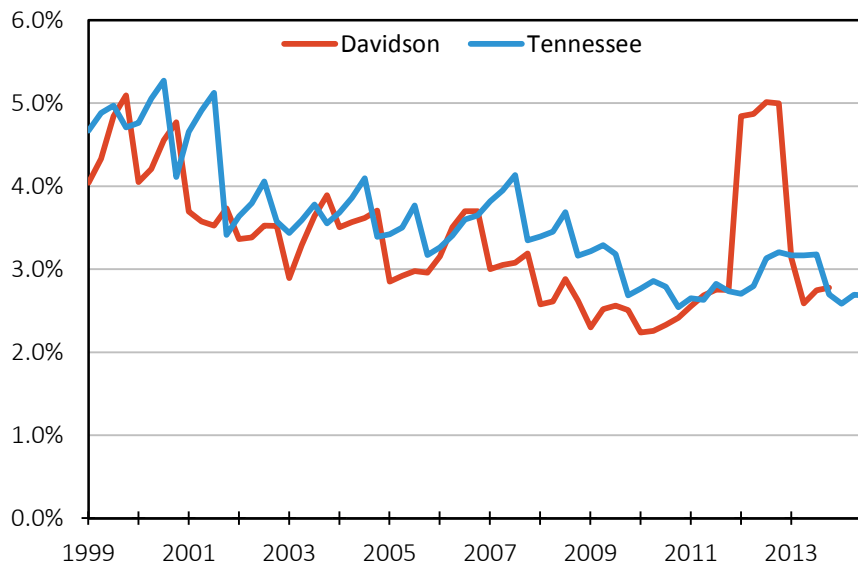
## Innovation

The way that business is conducted continues to change as never before. Supply chain management, business analytics, and shared management services are just a few examples of business operations that are being transformed through technology and more efficient business models. Whole industries, from music and publishing to health care, education, and manufacturing, are undergoing reinvention and reconfiguration due to consumer behaviors, public policy, delivery of products and services, and technological innovation. Nashville is at the very center of many of these changes and serves a leadership role for many national industries. In many ways, the region is a microcosm for global industry change. The future will see more, not less, of these transformations, and given Nashville's unique leadership role in several of these industries, there will be special opportunities for economic development in Nashville.

One of Nashville's most important competitive advantages is its knowledge-based, creative economy. This strength is seen in the many sectors and businesses in Nashville that are leaders in their fields. This strength is also seen in the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of Nashville, which creates a space for ingenuity and innovation. In the last 10 years, a number of outlets, incubators, and spaces have started that support the diversity of small business startups and innovators. The Entrepreneur Center, for example, connects new entrepreneurs with mentors, resources, and education to help establish their businesses. Similarly, Tennessee State University's Business Incubation Center helps smaller, lower-tech businesses grow, while the Center for Nonprofit Management assists nonprofits. Nashville has also seen a proliferation in co-working spaces that can be rented for short periods of time. Some of these workspaces are art or design focused, with recording space or sound-proof booths, while others provide platforms for technology development or meeting rooms for collaboration. This expanding support system allows entrepreneurs to develop their businesses while developing business skills and maintaining low overhead.

### Figure EWD-11: Startup businesses

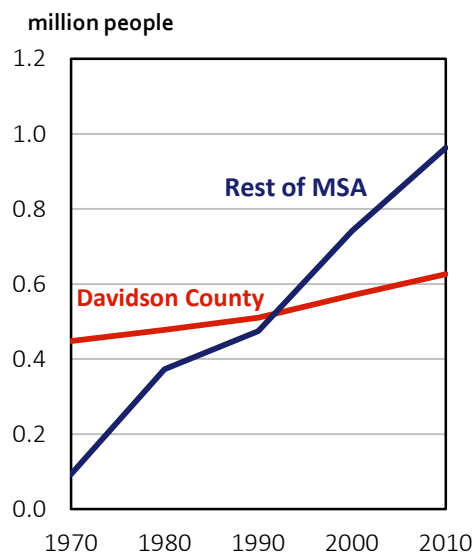
Percentage of employees working for new firms (less than two years old), Davidson County and the state of Tennessee.



Source: U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

### Figure EWD-12: Population growth in Davidson County and the Middle Tennessee region

Davidson County is growing fast, but the region is growing faster. In particular, Rutherford and Williamson counties are both growing fast and becoming much more urban.



Source: U.S. Census (1970–2010)

## Regionalism

The 15 counties of Middle Tennessee have closely linked economics. This clearly stands out when looking at commuting patterns—62% of workers in the region cross county lines to get to work. Davidson County is at the core of substantial transportation infrastructure that connects the region together, including the convergence of I-24, I-65, and I-40, multiple freight train lines, an international airport, and transit service.

Nashville benefits from the more diversified tax base that accompanies being the center of the regional economy, but suffers from increased congestion and air pollution. Other regional features include the electricity system (part of the Tennessee Valley Authority), natural features like the Cumberland and Harpeth Rivers, linked housing markets, and 18 colleges and universities.

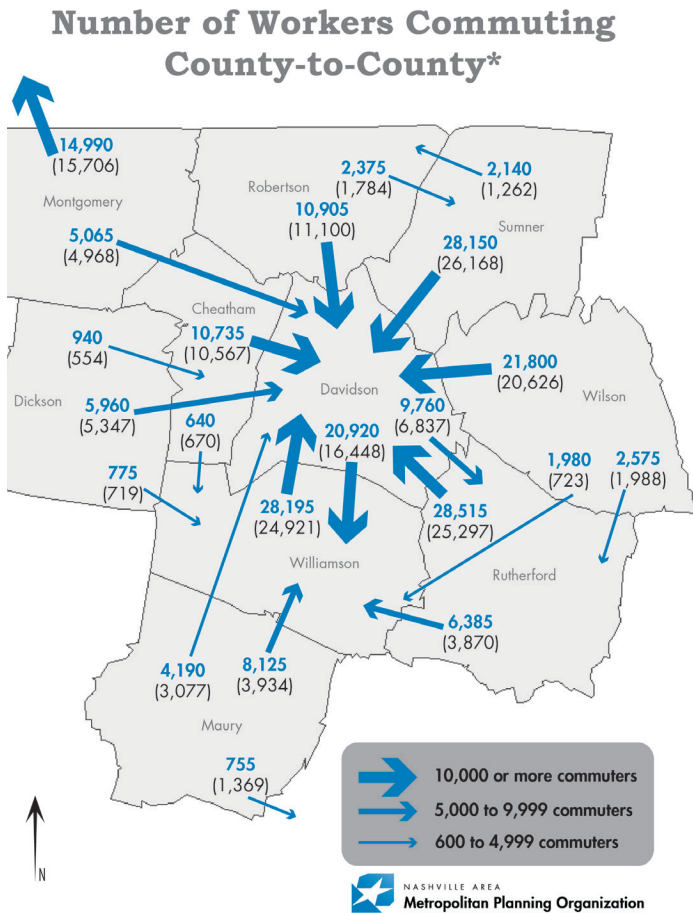
A number of issues require regional cooperation. Key parts of Middle Tennessee’s infrastructure—including our roads and bridges, transit lines, and electrical grid, as well as the natural resources that keep us safe during severe weather—must be regionally coordinated. Addressing these concerns means continuing to sustain and strengthen collaboration and cooperation across city and county borders.

As the region grows and housing and employment patterns change, the region must adapt. Market trends that mean one thing for Nashville (such as increasing interest in urban living, walkability, and transit) mean something very different for surrounding counties. As suburban counties grow and age, they will increasingly face development pressures similar to those Nashville is dealing with now, such as aging infrastructure, fewer greenfield areas for new growth, and maintaining services across low density, dispersed development patterns that are costly to maintain. Key issues include the spread of poverty into suburban areas, following the suburbanization of low- and mid-skill employers. Providing better transit access and more jobs close to housing throughout the region is important for all counties in Middle Tennessee.

**62% of workers in the region cross county lines to get to work.**

**Figure EWD-14: Journey to work between counties in Middle Tennessee**

The arrows below show the volume of commuters between the 10 counties in Middle Tennessee in 2010 (number of commuters in 2010 are shown in blue; number of commuters in 2000 are shown in gray).



Source: Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, using Census 2010 data.

**Figure EWD-13: Poverty rate by county**

Poverty has increased throughout Middle Tennessee. Some of the largest changes have been in suburban counties, as well as in Davidson County's former suburbs, such as Madison and Antioch.

	2000	2011-2013	Change
Cheatham	7.4	16.8	9.4
Montgomery	10.0	16.4	6.4
Davidson	13.0	18.6	5.6
Wilson	6.7	11.6	4.9
Robertson	9.0	12.9	3.9
Rutherford	9.0	12.2	3.2
Williamson	4.7	5.7	1.0
Sumner	8.1	8.9	0.8

Source: U.S. Census (2000), American Community Survey (2011-2013)

## Key ideas shaping this chapter

### Investment ready places

Nashville’s current economic success owes partly to its diversity of economic base (businesses that bring money into Nashville), which makes it more robust as individual parts of the economy grow at different rates. Nashville’s current primary industry sectors include:

- » Music, arts, and entertainment
- » Hospitality, transportation, and logistics
- » Manufacturing
- » Information technology
- » Health care and health care operations
- » Corporate/office operations.

Nashville’s “places” are critical to supporting its economy. Places situate businesses and residents in relation to transportation, customers and sellers, workplaces and employees, infrastructure, and one another. Identifying and preparing land for economic development lowers the cost for businesses that are forming, relocating, or expanding. It also ensures that all businesses—whether they are national or international firms, local entrepreneurs, artists, or small businesses—have the opportunity to grow and prosper in Davidson County.

All businesses need a place to locate. However, different kinds of businesses need different kinds of places. A home-based business may need so little space that it can fit within a residential neighborhood. New retail needs low real estate prices, as well as high customer traffic. Intense industrial businesses need to be apart from residences and close to substantial infrastructure support. Art studios typically need very low rental rates, as do many artistic venues; some also have nearly industrial needs for ventilation and noise, while others can be located within neighborhoods. Offices need access to transportation for large numbers of office workers arriving and leaving over a short time. At the same time, the technology that businesses use means that location needs and opportunities change as well. Small, clean industrial (such as 3-D printing) or home-scaled recording equipment means that these uses can be re-incorporated close to residential areas.

A lack of suitable land at the right price can often make it difficult for new businesses to start or locate in Nashville or for existing businesses to expand. Business locations should also, however, strengthen the city’s



other goals, such as contributing to vibrant neighborhoods and improving access for workers. Increasingly, high quality places are important for resident quality of life and for employee retention, attraction, and happiness.

A place is ready for investment when it has all of the factors needed to attract private sector investment. Barriers to investment are widespread. Formal barriers, such as zoning entitlements, set legal limitations on what can be done with a piece of property. They could also be engineering barriers, such as nonexistent, inadequate, or aging infrastructure. There may be no current market potential, due to lack of customers in the market area. A small supply of commercial spaces in desirable locations can drive up the cost of land, making it too costly for businesses to start or expand. Finally, there may not be community support or political will necessary to overcome other barriers (such as zoning or extension of infrastructure). Investment-ready places can come in many scales, from small commercial corridors for retail and services to large-scale sites that are available when large employment locations are needed. Investment-ready places should be chosen and prepared in line with other plan goals.

## Quality of life & attracting talent

Nashville supports a high quality of life for its residents, workers, and visitors when its places are safe, orderly, and affordable with access to work, services, education and green space. A high quality of life also helps to attract new workers and talent to Nashville and retain these workers once they are here. Having a talented workforce helps to attract and grow businesses. This is particularly so for college-educated millennials who are important to filling Nashville’s projected skills gap in key industries. According to national surveys and the experience of local job recruiters, many of these highly mobile workers look for a city to live in and then search for work, rather than finding a job and moving to the job. Investing in Nashville’s quality of life benefits our current residents while also helping to attract new talent.

Just as different kinds of businesses need different kinds of places to thrive, different parts of Nashville offer different lifestyles. Downtown and other vibrant urban areas offer many amenities and services, while rural areas offer the peace of being away from the bustle. However, some parts of the county do not have the level of retail, businesses, and services that their residents need. Improving quality of life for all Nashville residents means closing those gaps. As we do this, we must also maintain affordability and accessibility in housing options for workers and residents. Land use policies and market forces impact where people live and work. Maintaining a balance between the jobs available in a community and the scale and affordability of nearby homes supports economic development in the region’s core.

### Figure EWD-15: Cost of living

Cost of living and purchasing power are also important to maintaining quality of life for existing residents and attracting new talent and employers. With rising income levels and low cost of living, Nashville provides higher level of disposable income for workers. However, as housing and other goods become more expensive, it threatens quality of life for Nashvillians, as well as our competitive advantage.

	Composite Index	Grocery Items	Housing	Utilities	Transportation	Health Care	Misc. Goods and Services
Nashville	88.9	91.9	74.1	93.6	92.1	81.5	97.7
Austin	95.4	88.5	86.5	101.8	98.0	100.3	101.5
Atlanta	97.6	103.6	92.5	93.0	100.3	96.3	99.7
Raleigh	94.6	103.0	80.1	103.9	101.7	104.7	95.5
LA	131.4	103.3	200.8	114.2	108.0	111.2	105.2
NY	220.3	145.9	443.8	140.7	127.5	110.0	150.2
San Francisco	163.9	126.0	300.1	102.3	109.5	117.2	118.2
Chicago	117.5	106.9	134.9	96.7	129.8	99.4	112.4

Source: ACCRA Cost of Living Index (2014)

## Underserved areas

The level of retail and services necessary to daily life, such as groceries, banking, dining out, and entertainment (called the secondary sector above) varies throughout Nashville. Sometimes, these differences are normal and expected. For example, sparsely populated areas like Joelton will inevitably have fewer retail stores than dense, urban neighborhoods. Traveling farther to access to these kinds of services is intrinsic to rural character.

On the other hand, some communities in Nashville are underserved, with fewer nearby retail and services than expected. When the lack of services relates to healthy food and supermarkets, we call the community a food desert. However, the same principle applies to other services—banking, household goods, services like barber shops and hair salons, daycare, and the like. People in communities lacking those services go without, find alternative ways of making do, or must travel farther distances.

This is most common in neighborhoods high in poverty or home to nonwhite residents. In the table below, for example, Bordeaux residents have far fewer retail and restaurant offerings compared with the rest of the county, despite higher household incomes, higher educational attainment, and a higher homeownership rate.

Lack of access to retail and services can cause a variety of problems. Longer distances to services or limited choices close to home can increase traffic and time spent traveling, reducing quality of life. Limited choices can also nudge residents to inferior options. For example, a dearth of banks and easy access to payday loans and other predatory lenders can trap workers in cycles of high interest payments and high fees, reducing money available for necessities. In 2013, more than a quarter of Nashvillians used or relied on these kinds of alternative financial services. Similarly, lack of nearby parks and healthy food options can have health consequences if more meals are eaten from fast food outlets or are readymade.

**Figure EWD-16: Retail density in select Nashville ZIP codes**

	Davidson County	Bordeaux	South Nashville	Madison
	28 ZIP codes	37218 ZIP code	37210 ZIP code	37115 ZIP code
Population	660,537	14,441	14,876	36,839
Household size	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.3
Minority population	28%	79%	65%	48%
Median household income	\$43,616	\$46,829	\$25,622	\$36,826
Income per person	\$28,309	\$21,775	\$15,248	\$19,921
Homeowners	51%	74%	37%	47%
Higher education attainment	24%	30%	15%	16%
Retail establishments	2,598	28	99	195
Outlets per 1,000 residents				
All retail	3.9	1.9	6.7	5.3
Supermarkets	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Restaurants	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.7

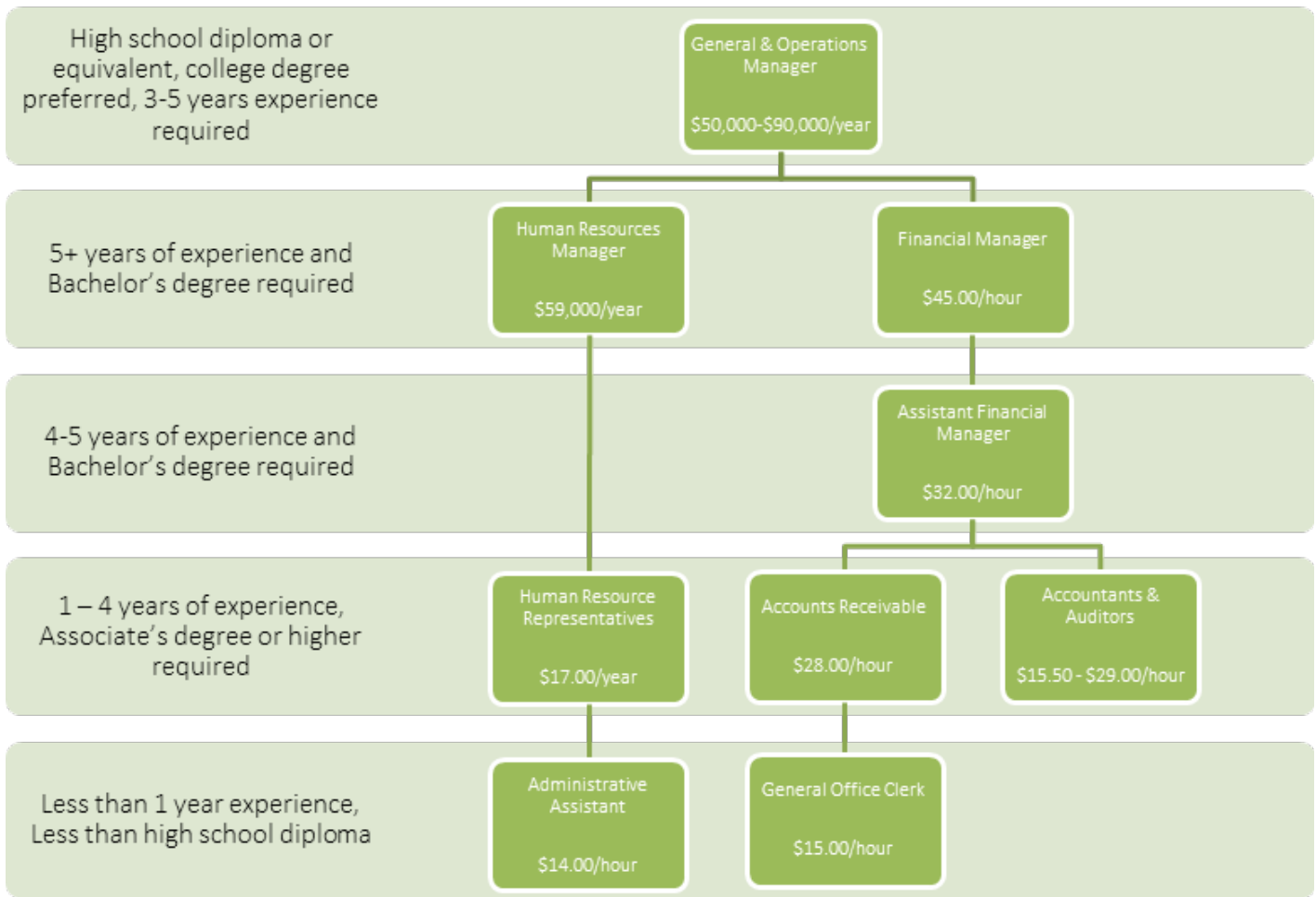
Source: Economic study of minority and immigrant communities, 2013. Ben Fuller-Googins for the Metro Nashville Planning Department.



Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

**Figure EWD-17: Example career ladder and kinds of skills required**

Hospitality: Support and administration services career ladder



Source: Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

## Workforce development

Workforce development is a critical part of sustaining our economy into the future and ensuring that everyone in Nashville benefits from the county's prosperity. Workforce development seeks to help low-skill workers, unemployed workers, underemployed workers, or workers with other barriers to work find appropriate career tracks and attain the skills needed to succeed in them. Often, these are industry-specific skills (such as food preparation); but workforce development also includes soft skills, such as timeliness and communication (particularly for youth first joining the workforce).

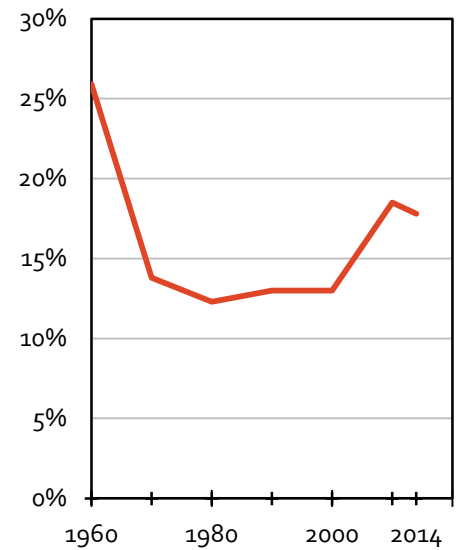
Many industries have a defined career path and expect that entry-level workers will move up that career path as they gain new skills and knowledge. The major workforce development career centers help candidates learn what is expected along each industry's career path. Additionally, those career centers also provide access to the job training and education needed by the businesses with the jobs.

Matching our postsecondary education programs to Nashville's growing and emerging job sectors will also be critical. High tech jobs, artistic careers, and old and new forms of manufacturing can all be supported through Middle Tennessee's network of higher educational institutions. Nashville is already participating in regional and state Skills Panels to identify ways to close gaps.

## Paths out of poverty

Between 2000 and 2010, poverty in Nashville increased among all people, families, and age groups. The poverty rate for the county increased from 13.0 percent in 2000 to 20.2 percent in 2010. Since the end of the recession, the rate has declined to 17.8 percent in 2013 (still more than 117,000 people living in poverty). Poverty does not strike all people equally. The poverty rate for married couples was only 9.7 percent, but the poverty rate for single mothers was 34.4 percent. Nearly one-third of children in Nashville live in poverty, as do more than one in five people with disabilities.

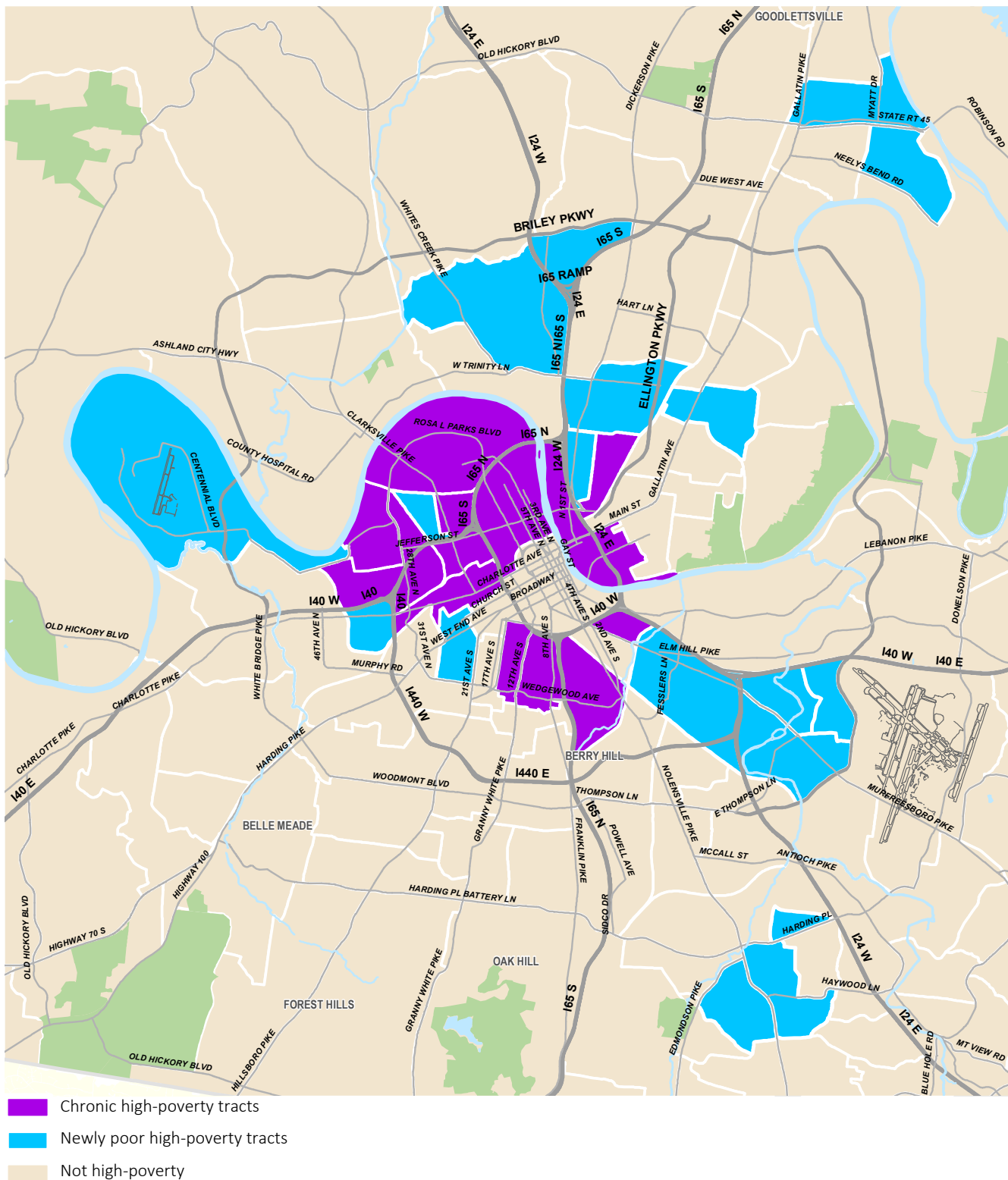
**Figure EWD-18: Poverty in Davidson County since 1960**



Source: U.S. Census, Poverty Rates by County: 1960–2010; American Community Survey (2014; 1-year estimate)

**Figure EWD-19: High poverty Census tracts (2010)**

Chronic high poverty tracts have high poverty since the 1970 Census. Newly poor tracts were high poverty in 2010, but not in 1970.



Poverty is not synonymous with unemployment. People living in poverty include those working at minimum wage, those holding down several low-wage or part-time jobs, seniors living on fixed incomes, wage earners suddenly out of work, and people living downtown, in suburban communities, or in rural areas.

People who are in poverty or unemployed face a number of challenges. These challenges include access to food, housing, transportation, childcare, jobs, and job training. There are a host of not-for-profit organizations that provide access to these services, but many organizations have waiting lists. Other challenges are more severe versions of challenges shared by people not in poverty. Improving factors like the availability and access to jobs or services would benefit all workers in Nashville, not just those in poverty.

The problems associated with poverty, including access to jobs and services, health, and quality of life, are especially acute for Nashvillians living in areas with concentrated poverty. Unfortunately, the geography of concentrated poverty (Census tracts with more than 30% of residents living below the poverty line) is spreading. The difficulties imposed by living in poverty are magnified when many of your neighbors are also in poverty. Consider the job search: many people find jobs through casual acquaintances, online postings, through career centers, and, to a lesser extent, through formal job postings. When fewer people live near businesses with jobs, residents have fewer opportunities to learn of new openings.

For many, employment, education, and workforce development, with access to supporting services, are the pathways out of poverty.

### Figure EWD-20: Aligning economic & workforce development

The chart below shows key primary sectors and secondary sectors, with how they relate to current economic and workforce development programs. Generally speaking, primary sectors are industries that bring money in from outside of Nashville, while secondary sectors primarily provide local services.

Economic development generally focuses on primary sectors, to expand the amount of money feeding into Nashville’s economy. Workforce development works to match job-seekers with skills needed, regardless of whether the job is in a primary or secondary sector.

	Nashville Chamber Target Industries	Small Business / Entrepreneur	Workforce Development	MNPS Academies of Nashville	NSCC / TCAT
<b>Primary sectors</b>					
Music/Arts/Entertainment	*	EC		*	NSCC
Hospitality			Goodwill	*	
Transportation/Logistics	*		NCAC		NSCC, TCAT
Manufacturing	*		NCAC; MTWFA	*	NSCC, TCAT
Information Technology		EC	NCAC; MTWFA	*	NSCC, TCAT
Health care	*	EC	Goodwill; NCAC; MTWFA	*	NSCC, TCAT
Corporate/Office Operations	*		Goodwill		NSCC, TCAT
<b>Secondary sectors</b>					
General Business Skills		BAO, SCORE			NSCC, TCAT
Construction			Goodwill; NCAC		NSCC, TCAT
Education			Goodwill; NCAC		NSCC
Retail			Goodwill		
Landscaping			Goodwill		
Food Service			Goodwill		NSCC

- » EC = Entrepreneur Center
- » SCORE Nashville
- » BAO = Minority and Women Business Assistance Office
- » NCAC = Nashville Career Advancement Center
- » MTWFA = Middle Tennessee Workforce Alliance
- » NSCC = Nashville State Community College
- » TCAT = Tennessee College of Applied Technology



## Goals and policies

**Goals** set broad direction for the plan by applying the Guiding Principles to NashvilleNext's seven plan elements. They identify, for each element, what NashvilleNext is trying to achieve.

**Policies** extend goals by providing more detail. They give more direct guidance on community decision making, without specifying which tools to use. (Identifying and adopting which tool is a job for actions and implementation.) As implementation occurs, if one particular tool is rejected by the public, the policy guidance remains.

**Actions** (Volume IV) are short-term steps to carry out these Policies and achieve these Goals. The plan is structured so that the Action plan is updated the most frequently. During the annual update process, actions can be removed if accomplished or if they were deemed infeasible. Removing an action because it's infeasible leaves the overarching Policy in place. During the update, the Planning Department would seek to identify alternate ways of accomplishing the policy.

## Related plans

With a strong commitment to annual updates and review, the General Plan is able to play a key role in providing coordination between other agencies and plans. It helps other departments understand long term goals and how their work shapes that, even if they must focus on short term needs that are out of step with the long term plan. For example, the long term vision for transit is to build a high capacity transit network operating along major corridors, with few deviations from those corridors. In the short term, MTA needs to conduct its operations to connect to riders, who may not live along those major corridors. Eventually, MTA operations should merge with the long range vision; but it will take time to build the infrastructure and housing to support the high capacity network.

Thus, Element chapters highlight related plans when discussing NashvilleNext Goals & Policies.

Much of what Nashvillians want for the future goes beyond what Metro can achieve on its own. Partnerships with community groups, nonprofits, and the private sector are critical.

- » Partnership 2020
- » NCAC master plan
- » Poverty Reduction Initiative Plan
- » Arts Commission Strategic Plan

## **EWD 1**

Nashville will have a thriving economy, built on a diversity of economic sectors that are nationally and internationally competitive, mid- to large-size businesses that provide a large and diverse number of employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial and small businesses that support our quality of life.

### **EWD 1.1**

Support entrepreneurs and small businesses by providing locations to develop and grow new businesses, business development training, support for small-business and startup districts, and clear laws and regulations.

### **EWD 1.2**

Create an adequate inventory of investment-ready places to match the diverse needs of different kinds of businesses. Investment-ready means places whose entitlements are in line with market demand, infrastructure, political, and community support.

### **EWD 1.3**

Keep existing and recruit new businesses that complement Nashville workers and industries, that help to provide career opportunities across skill levels, and that attract new and retain existing workers to Nashville.

### **EWD 1.4**

Search for opportunities for new and emerging industries and economic sectors with the potential to grow and support rising incomes to locate in Nashville.

## **EWD 2**

Nashville will increase the quality of life and business opportunities throughout Davidson County to make life better for existing residents and attract new residents.

### **EWD 2.1**

Expand business opportunities, retail, and services that fit within the character and context of underserved areas.

## **EWD 2.2**

Support public and private investments in Nashville that improve the quality of life, maintain a competitive cost of living, and provide critical services and facilities to retain current residents and attract a high-skill workforce.

## **EWD 3**

Nashville's workforce will match skills needed by today's employers as well as be prepared for the shift to increasingly higher skilled jobs that will account for most of our expected employment growth.

### **EWD 3.1**

Ensure secondary, postsecondary, and vocational opportunities in the Nashville region are matched to current employer needs and future job trends.

### **EWD 3.2**

Ensure that the region retains college-educated talent from our regional postsecondary institutions to meet workforce needs.

### **EWD 3.3**

Create direct and available pathways to connect Nashville workers to long-term employment opportunities with identified potential for prosperity with particular emphasis on workers living in poverty.

### **EWD 3.4**

Integrate immigrants, migrants, and refugees into the workforce, with resources to allow them to reach their full potential and bring skills from their home countries to good use in Nashville.