



A General Plan for Nashville & Davidson County

Adopted June 22, 2015

Volume II: Elements



Health, Livability & the Built Environment



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.



Richard Beuchler

Executive Secretary

**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;

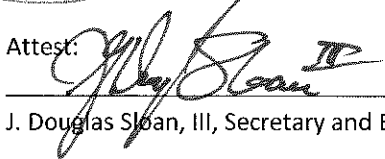
WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, empowered under state statute and the Charter of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County to adopt master or general plans for smaller areas of the county, finds that the process followed to develop the *NashvilleNext* General Plan included 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

Health, Livability & the Built Environment

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HEALTH, LIVABILITY & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Physical design affects human behavior at all scales—buildings, neighborhoods, communities, and regions. The places in which we live, work, and play affect both our mental and physical well-being. Today, communities across the United States are facing obesity and chronic disease rates of epic proportions. Our built environment offers both opportunities for and barriers to improving public health and increasing active living.

A healthy and complete community is a place where every resident can readily make healthy lifestyle choices. Critical components include easy access to healthy and affordable foods, availability of safe parks and walking trails, recreational programs for both children and adults, safe and affordable places to live, and lifelong learning programs and educational opportunities for all ages. Healthy places create economic value by attracting both younger and older workers and appealing to a skilled workforce and innovative companies.¹

Creating a healthy community requires several fundamental design values. Those values shape this Element and the Community Character Manual and Community Plans in Volume III.

Healthy and complete communities:

- » **Drive economic development by creating a unique identity.**
Nashville's built environment includes many different places, with very different character. Context refers to the overall pattern of land uses and intensities, ranging from natural, undisturbed areas to rural areas, to suburban neighborhoods, to urban neighborhoods, to downtown. Nashville and Davidson County residents recognize and appreciate the different kinds of places found throughout the county. Accommodating new housing, services, and jobs and improving health and livability require either matching changes to fit the context while respecting existing neighborhood character or carefully and intentionally changing the character of key locations. Creating a unique identity can increase the neighborhood's property values and the county's tax base.

¹ Eitler, Thomas W., Edward T. McMahon, and Theodore C. Thoeig. *Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 2013. p6

- » **Improved access to job opportunities.** Access to employment is critical to economic stability and well-being. Meaningful travel choices reduce travel times and the cost of getting to employment. Communities with viable access to transportation options have a lower unemployment rate and reduced levels of poverty.
- » **Promote social and environmental justice.** A reduction in the rate of violent and property crime reflects pride in a neighborhood. These communities typically exhibit fewer juvenile arrests and fewer chronically homeless individuals and families. Another component of this value is a lower consumption of energy. Both are components of a safe and sustainable neighborhood.
- » **Increase housing opportunities by providing a diversity of housing choice.** Housing options reflect the diversity in households. Diversity allows people to choose to locate in areas that meet their social, economic, and physical needs. Increasing the supply of housing types through new and rehabbed units is important to satisfy the evolving housing demand.
- » **Make education the cornerstone of revitalization.** Civic identity built around a community school uplifts, inspires, and provides a social bond within a community. A school should provide the foundation for a community center where key services and facilities can be located. The physical design provides an indication of the openness to community interaction through the availability of a playground or community garden, for example. The presence of a welcoming school is critical to the fabric of the neighborhood. Successful community schools reflect a positive relationship with the surrounding neighborhood. A positive relationship results in an increasing number of school age children. Pre-kindergarten programs and an active and engaged community improve high school graduation rates and college attendance, increasing the likelihood of successful workforce preparation.
- » **Empower champions for a healthy community.** Through active use and availability of social networks, community members build pride in their neighborhood. Because of the community's experiences with recent natural disasters, Nashvillians are particularly welcoming and engaged with one another. Neighborhood organizations, list serves, events, and activities are just a few ways the communities reach out to provide support and assistance to both new and longtime residents.

- » **Invest in people, not cars.** Building quality neighborhoods requires that we design our roadways as a public space for all and not just the automobile. Enhancing access and mobility choices opens a neighborhood up to all people. Children have access to parks and exploration, walks can be fun and interesting, and the diversity of a neighborhood can be enjoyed. The successful design of public rights of way into a supportive public realm for all results in a safer and more pleasant community through lower traffic and pedestrian related injuries, increased walkability, higher use of bicycles, and better access to transit.

- » **Maximize opportunity for all residents to get physical activity.** The design of so many communities without the values discussed here has significantly increased health issues for large parts of our nation. Deteriorating health indicators such as heart disease, strokes, diabetes, obesity, asthma, infant mortality, and substance abuse have all been tied to some degree to the physical design of our built environment. Balanced communities incorporate access to open space and recreation as part of the normal daily activity. Opportunities to age in place are a normal result of housing diversity. Access to social and medical facilities are increasingly important for mental and physical health.

- » **Encourage mixed use development.** The best and easiest way to incorporate these values is through the design and development of walkable mixed-use communities that offer a diversity of housing options with easy access to transportation choices. Opportunities to improve the healthiness of existing single use communities can be found through the introduction of strategically placed infill housing and retrofitting obsolete development to introduce choice and increase connectivity.

- » **Promote access to healthy food.** The availability of healthy food choices is one of the most important elements a neighborhood design can provide. Building on the other values previously discussed, diverse, welcoming, walkable, and mixed-use neighborhoods have grocery stores nearby to serve the needs of the community. Often there are community gardens to supplement retail stores, and access to a farmers' market can provide local food access for those who do not grow fresh food for themselves.

Growth and Changing Demographics

Nashville’s projected growth and increasing diversity, discussed in Volume I, are strengths of the community. The combined effect of population growth and demographic shifts to younger households, childless households, and households of aging seniors are changing the type of housing that Nashvillians will be looking for over the next 25 years. For example, the number of Nashville residents age 65 or older is projected to more than double in the next 30 years, rising from 65,403 seniors in 2010 to 133,012 in 2040. By then, boomers will make up 17 percent of the total population. In 2040, a third of the population will be age 60 or older. However, neighborhoods often experience friction as neighborhoods face change and new and old Nashvillians have different needs and different visions for the future. Meanwhile, public response to any changes in the character of existing neighborhoods is often negative. Striking the right balance between these two sometimes competing objectives—providing more housing and new housing types while preserving neighborhood character—is a critical challenge for Nashville.

**Figure HLBE-1:
Community Health Assessment**

In 2014, the Metro Health Department updated Nashville’s *Community Health Assessment* and *Community Health Improvement Plan* (CHIP). Today in the U.S., more people die from chronic diseases, many of which are related to the places and ways we live, than from contagious diseases. In Nashville, improving the community’s health is the role of the Healthy Nashville Leadership Council, an 18-member council appointed by the Mayor and charged with assessing the health status and quality of life for Davidson County residents, the health delivery systems available; support mental and emotional health; and maximize the built environment to improve health. Each of the three priorities has goals and strategies that complement the goals, policies, and actions of NashvilleNext. More about CHIP can be found at www.healthynashville.org.

Roadmap: Three Priority Issues

1. Advance Health Equity
2. Support Mental and Emotional Health
3. Maximize Built Environment to Improve Health



Community Character Placemaking
for a Healthy Community

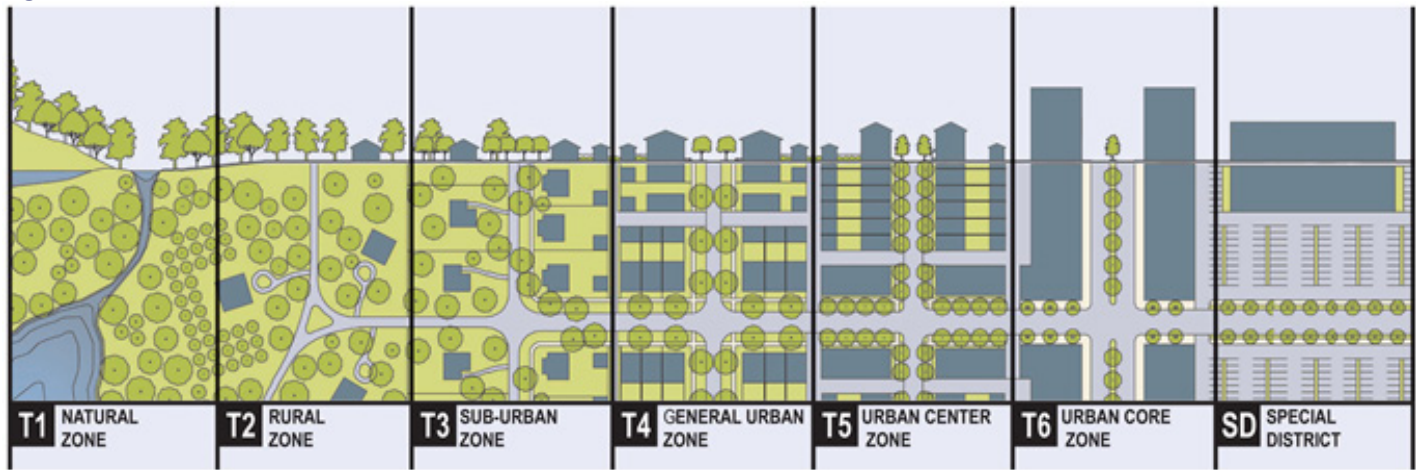
The values of a healthy community are reflected through the built environment. It affects every aspect of our daily life. Complete community types use placemaking as the policy framework for building and enhancing a sustainable and healthy community. This section is founded on the application of the rural-to-urban transect and uses the work of the Nashville Civic Design Center. This research examines the specifics of placemaking through application of the transect in Nashville. The research into Shaping Healthy Communities was commissioned by the Metro Public Health Department.

Complete communities provide an environment for healthy and productive living. Healthy and complete communities operate at the regional, city, neighborhood, and street scale through the principles outlined in the Charter for the New Urbanism and discussed in the Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Element. Nashville celebrates the diversity in our population by working to provide choices in community type within the county.

The long-term success of a neighborhood depends on how well it incorporates the full range of complementary elements to support the desired character. For example, a rural neighborhood or environment should be supported by rural development patterns, building types, street design, lighting, commercial structures, and natural or built environmental features. A suburban or urban neighborhood will have many of the same components as a rural neighborhood but in a specific form and character that builds and complements the desired suburban or urban community type. The Community Character Policies (detailed in the Community Character Manual, Volume III) detail how to create internal consistency within a neighborhood or part of a neighborhood.

However, as a framework for healthy living, the basic placemaking elements of a complete neighborhood are discussed below.

Figure HLBE-2: The Transect



Source: Center for Applied Transect Studies

Figure HLBE-3: The shape we give our city, in turn, shapes us

SHAPING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: NASHVILLE



The shape we give our city, in turn, shapes us. Public health and urban planning emerged from the recognition of the impact built environments have on health. Last century we altered the built environment to reduce ill health; by redesigning cities we successfully eradicated infectious diseases and exposure to industrial toxins. We did not, however, foresee the unintended consequences of the resulting zoning requirements, such as the emergence of a sedentary and increasingly obese population. The challenge for 21st century public health and urban planning has, therefore, shifted from shielding people from harm from the built environment, to also shaping our cities so that their design fosters good health. The Shaping Healthy Communities: Nashville project takes on this challenge.

The Nashville Civic Design Center began a partnership with the Metro Public Health Department in the spring of 2011 to address the impact of ‘built environments’ on health with an emphasis

on research and education. Shaping Healthy Communities: Nashville has expanded to include partnerships and projects representative of the issue’s complexity. The project brings the lens of health to the various planning transects and current built environments, and addresses how we can adapt our city to foster good health through design. This data, research, and consultation process will inform a variety of projects and products. The project will conclude with a publication, Shaping the Healthy Community: The Nashville Plan, and features hundreds of photos, maps, and illustrations that demonstrate best practices for improving the health of Nashville’s neighborhoods. Ten detailed case studies are utilized to accomplish this, including: Bells Bend, Neely’s Bend, Madison, Bellevue, Chestnut Hill, Germantown, Lafayette, Rolling Mill Hill, Green Hills, and Antioch.

Partnerships established with faculty members at Vanderbilt University allowed further investigation through analyzing existing Nashville city plans, visiting sites and providing qualitative analysis of the built environment of identified neighborhoods, and conducting interviews with individuals residing and/or working within selected study areas, which have helped shape personal narratives to relate individual experiences of living and working in the various types of neighborhoods.

Shaping the Healthy Community: The Nashville Plan will be used to educate private citizens, business and policy leaders, planners, and designers of the critical role that the built environment plays in public health, inform these groups of the important infrastructure investments needed to begin shifting priorities for new projects toward considering health in every project advanced in the city, and provide a blueprint/action plan that guides Nashville toward its goal of becoming the “healthiest city in the Southeast,” as identified by Nashville Mayor Karl Dean.

Rural Character

Much of Davidson County is composed of environmentally sensitive land and areas without urban services. Other areas have a historical rural development pattern desired by residents. These areas serve those who desire to live within a rural environment in relative proximity to urban amenities. Examples of areas classified as rural include Joelton, Scottsboro, Bells Bend, and Neely's Bend.

In accentuating the health positives and mitigating the negatives of rural areas, planners, developers, and residents should consider strategies that preserve the rural, open character in appropriate areas. Development options to meet the needs of residents—such as food resources, senior housing, and economic opportunities within the community—should be appropriately scaled and sited to not provoke future overdevelopment. Strategies should be consistent with the fiscal limitations of government's public service provision to low population-densities. Frequent MTA bus service, pocket parks, community recreation centers, and paved sidewalks, for example, are financially unrealistic. Infrastructure appropriate for higher population density communities, such as curb-and-gutter roads, street lighting, and sewers, should be avoided.

Areas identified as Rural through the Community Character Maps (within each Community Plan in Volume III) should be retained and preserved as a long-term rural resource. These areas should not be considered as holding areas for future urbanization.

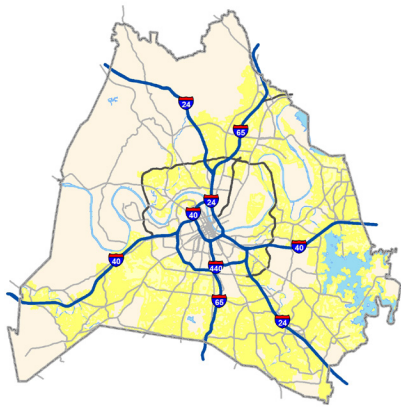


To Create Complete and Healthy Rural Areas

- » Protect sensitive environmental resources.
- » Provide opportunities for local agricultural production.
- » Reduce the need for inefficient extension of urban services.
- » Provide opportunities for rural living choices.
- » Provide private open space and visual access to the natural environment.
- » Avoid introducing urban services that will encourage transition to a suburban or urban neighborhood.

Ideal Characteristics of Rural Areas

- » Sparsely developed with inconsistent building placement.
- » Primary land uses are agriculture, open space, and low-density residential.
- » Limited commercial within hamlets.
- » Wide spaces between buildings, except for conservation subdivisions.
- » Agricultural, forest and naturalistic landscaping, and limited exterior and street lighting.
- » Roads typically two-lane with few intersections.
- » Low pedestrian and bike connectivity: few curbs, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, or bicycle paths.
- » Minimal city services; many homes rely on wells and septic systems.



To Create Complete and Healthy Suburban Areas

- » Strategically connect housing to schools, goods, services, and transportation.
- » Introduce housing choices by providing additional housing in closest access to transit and introducing missing housing types into neighborhoods in a context sensitive manner .
- » Provide bicycle and pedestrian opportunities and increase access to transit.
- » Increase connectivity for emergency access and access to food and social resources.
- » Retrofit declining commercial corridors for mixed use and green space.

Ideal Characteristics of Suburban Areas

- » A mixture of housing types, prices, and sizes is available in a modest scale and massing.
- » Historic main streets and centers are available as mixed-use walkable centers for the neighborhood(s).
- » Condominium and apartment complexes address the street, are adjacent to major roadways, and are integrated with surrounding development patterns.
- » Transit linkages between centers and employment concentrations are available.
- » Sidewalks and greenways are present to provide safe and convenient alternatives.
- » Healthy food options and other daily needs, including retail, entertainment, and commercial facilities, are easy to access other than by car.
- » Increased interconnectivity to neighborhood scaled greenspace and other neighborhoods is present.
- » Sensitive environmental features, such as steep slopes and floodplain, are protected and avoided as development sites.

Suburban Character

Nashville's earliest suburban neighborhoods developed close to the urban core on large lots due to the lack of a comprehensive sewage collection system. Many of these mid-century subdivisions tried to follow the principles of the suburban garden city movement of the early 20th century.

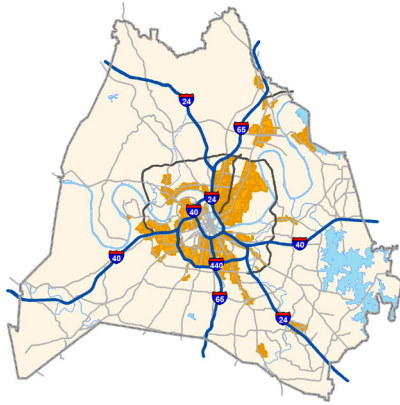
At the same time, "in reports and studies of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, Nashville's planners warned that continuing to expand low-density development patterns of the suburbs would make the provision of services to these areas prohibitively expensive, dilute the level of services in the traditional neighborhoods, and make it all but impossible to establish an efficient and economically feasible mass transit system for Metro Nashville."

Although a public sewage system has been built, the presence of large lot single-family neighborhoods close to urban amenities makes Nashville unique and highly desirable. Because much of that development pattern was built with high street connectivity and some housing choice, it presents an easier opportunity to evolve into a complete suburban neighborhood. Introducing missing housing types to meet the changing household demand and strategically locating appropriately scaled neighborhood centers in walkable locations allows these areas to evolve into sustainable and healthy communities. Examples of mid-20th century areas classified as suburban include West Meade, Donelson, and Madison.

Since the mid-20th century, the problems of suburban subdivisions have been made even more pronounced as suburban development patterns evolved into disjointed and isolated individual subdivisions with numerous cul-de-sacs, few sidewalks, uniform housing choice, and little access to daily needs except through the increased use of the automobile. In areas where commerce is segregated from residences and residences segregated by type and cost, lots are large and lack sidewalks, cul-de-sacs feed into wide arterials, schools and churches sit on large campuses surrounded by acres of parking, and each business has its own parking lot, driving is a way of life with increasingly clear health consequences. All the cars create congested streets, which pollutes the air and creates stressful commutes. The people in those cars are sitting, not walking. Basic exercise thus is not an incidental part of daily life but a discrete event—trips to the gym or park—that suburbanites must program into schedules already tight because of all the time spent sitting in cars.

This late 20th century suburban development pattern has proved to be a development pattern with tremendous difficulty in evolving over time into healthy neighborhoods that address changing social and demographic patterns. Reducing the need to drive and providing opportunities for changes in household demand will require greater strategic intervention into the structure of these neighborhoods. Denser residential development in selected locations, primarily along the arterials and collector streets, enables a larger ridership pool for mass transit, increasing transit's financial viability and frequency of service. Installing a more complete system of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is also necessary. Integrating a mix of land uses can reduce the distance between destinations and encourage residents and workers to walk and cycle to meet the needs of daily life rather than drive to large-scale pods of commerce. Examples of late 20th century areas classified as suburban include Hermitage, Bellevue, Bordeaux, and Antioch.

Areas identified as Suburban on the Community Character Maps (Volume III) are often designed to be almost completely dependent on the use of the automobile and are often unsustainable as currently designed. Focus should be on retrofitting suburban areas as appropriate toward the objective of providing a sustainable and healthy suburban opportunity as a lifestyle choice through the evolution into a complete community.



To Create Complete and Healthy Urban Areas

- » Provide for a diverse housing stock through a variety of housing densities, types, and unit sizes.
- » Increase presence and access to transit opportunities.
- » Have complete streets ensuring equal accessibility for pedestrians and bicycles as well as automobiles.
- » Provide easy access to healthy foods and services.
- » Maintain an accessible parks and open space network.

Ideal Characteristics of Urban Areas

- » Development patterns and population of greater density than those in suburban and rural zones.
- » Intermingled land uses.
- » Multiple housing types, sizes, and prices that enable socioeconomic and age diversity (residents can “age in place”).
- » Convenient access to public transportation.
- » Walking distance to neighborhood commerce.
- » Good pedestrian and bike connectivity.
- » Active and passive open space and recreational facilities.

Urban Character

The neighborhoods surrounding Nashville’s central core comprise the largest share of the urban zone. These neighborhoods, once considered places to be avoided as new suburban development occurred and white flight left once desirable neighborhoods, have in the last decade become the hot places to live, experiencing some of the steepest escalation of property values in Davidson County.

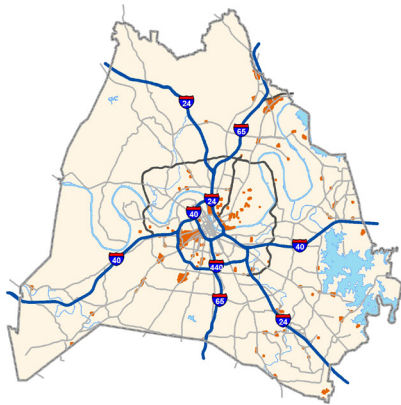
The form of these early suburbs was determined by the primary kinds of transportation available in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the streetcar and the human foot. (The horse as a means of personal mobility—as opposed to commercial delivery—was too expensive for the average citizen.) The trolley lines ran on the main streets connecting these new neighborhoods to downtown. People walked to the stops as well as to local shops, schools, and churches integrated into the neighborhood fabric. Lots were relatively small, typically 50 to 60 feet wide and 150 feet deep, and connected by a network of streets with sidewalks.

Single-family homes of various sizes predominated, frequently with front porches that encouraged socializing among neighbors. Backyards were functional spaces dedicated to growing fruits and vegetables, raising chickens, and washing and drying clothes. Alleys provided access for garbage haulers and coal delivery. The strength of these areas is being rediscovered. The characteristics of urban neighborhoods reflect the traditional building patterns that create both healthy and sustainable communities.

The form of the urban neighborhood offers many opportunities for integrating physical activity with daily life. Residents can walk or cycle to a grocery, branch library, coffee shop, restaurant, transit stop, or park. The possibility of “aging in place” is greater due to the diversity of housing types. Urban development patterns are more economically efficient than suburban ones. Services, such as trash and recycling pickup and mail delivery as well as infrastructure for water, sewer, and utilities, are cheaper and easier to provide and maintain if they serve five houses per acre rather than one. Per acre, denser development has a positive impact on city tax rolls.

Examples of areas classified as urban include East Nashville, Germantown, North Nashville, Belmont-Hillsboro, Edgehill, Sylvan Park, the Nations, Chestnut Hill, and Wedgewood-Houston.

Areas identified as Urban through the Community Character Maps (Volume III) are often areas that developed based on historically proven neighborhood building practices. They often have high walkability and were historically located and developed to take advantage of transit through streetcars provided in the pre-World War II period. Focus should be on re-establishing high transit access, reintroducing appropriately scaled and located commercial opportunities, and providing missing housing options toward the objective of providing sustainable and healthy urban neighborhoods as a lifestyle choice.



To Create Complete and Healthy Centers

- » Are areas for considerable population growth through availability of diverse housing options.
- » Provide a community focal point with access to needed goods, services, public facilities, and transportation.
- » Include a mixture of uses connected to the adjacent neighborhoods within a safe bicycle and pedestrian environment.
- » Utilize presence of and access to recreational and open space opportunities as a fundamental design element.

Characteristics of Ideal Centers

- » Multiple uses and functions—including commercial, office, and retail.
- » Developed as complete communities at an appropriate scale with the service area, with an integrated mixture of land uses, including residential.
- » Buildings oriented toward transportation corridors and other prominent streets.
- » Active, pedestrian-friendly streets connected to the adjacent neighborhoods.
- » Multimodal transportation access.
- » Big-box groceries and restaurants well oriented to pedestrian customers, with smaller markets and locally owned restaurants integrated into the mix.
- » Open spaces in the form of pocket parks, plazas, and roof gardens.

Center Character

The shift away from downtown as the central marketplace to suburban strips and shopping centers scattered throughout an entire region began with the rise of the automobile as the vehicle for personal transportation. The growth in automobile access enabled Americans to live farther from an urbanized core. Individualized transportation brought numerous amenities to locations within closer driving distances to suburban homes, but these amenities were laid out for access by private automobile.

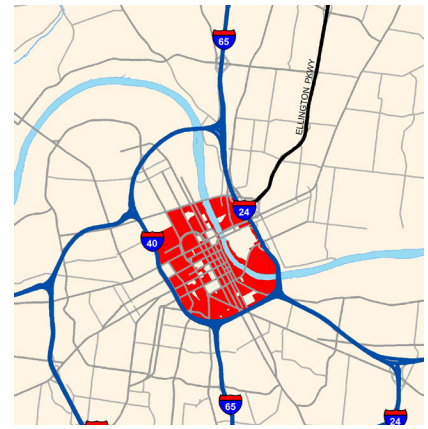
Walkable mixed use Centers are key locations for population growth and development. Expansion of residential opportunities, promotion of a pedestrian friendly streetscape, and frequent public transit service are key requirements for Centers to become complete communities. Without mass transit that is easy to use and provides high frequency of service, a continuous urban fabric, with an integrated mixture of land uses, presented in a walkable format, is not possible.

Areas identified as Centers through the Community Character Maps (Volume III) and the Growth and Preservation Concept Map are areas that have the potential to develop into true mixed-use centers. They range in scale depending on the intended market area, including suburban, urban, and regional centers. The focus of a center is to be truly mixed-use. Together with the high capacity transit corridors, the Center Zone is intended to absorb much of the projected growth. As they develop out they are expected to provide healthy and sustainable community, accessible to all, with facilities and services and within suburban and urban areas provide extensive transit access. Focus should be on ensuring a mixed-use walkable environment, introducing appropriately scaled and located commercial opportunities, providing missing housing options, and establishing high transit access toward the objective of providing sustainable and healthy mixed-use neighborhoods as a lifestyle choice. Examples of Center areas at this scale include Midtown, Green Hills, Rivergate, and the Cowan Street/East Bank area. In addition to these more intense centers, there are smaller-scale rural, suburban, and urban community centers and neighborhood centers across the county, including Five Points, Hillsboro Village, Downtown Donelson, The Crossings, Bellevue (Highway 70/Interstate 40), and Scottsboro.

Downtown

Downtown Nashville is the binding agent of the region, an area encompassing 10 counties and over 1.8 million people. Since the 18th century turned into the 19th, all of Middle Tennessee's major roadways—in traffic engineering lingo, “arterials”—have led to the central city. That is where people who lived and worked in the region wanted to go and needed to go to sell and buy, to meet and greet. But arteries are dependent on a healthy beating heart. Despite the loss of commerce and residents to suburbia, Nashville's core is still home to the highest concentration of government and private business offices, cultural, and tourist amenities, all located in a relatively compact area of just under 1,600 acres.

The early years of the 21st century saw the construction of a new downtown library on the site of a dead mall, Church Street Center, constructed to revitalize the city in the 1980s. The largely vacant downtown post office became the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. A new Country Music Hall of Fame and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center arrived in SoBro, followed most spectacularly by the Music City Center for conventions. Less architecturally noteworthy—but equally, if not more, important for the ultimate viability of downtown—has been the growth in residential construction and rehabs. For it is only by returning the central city to a fine-grained mixture of land uses, with enough residents to support the provision of goods and services for daily life, that downtown will become the first among Nashville's neighborhoods.



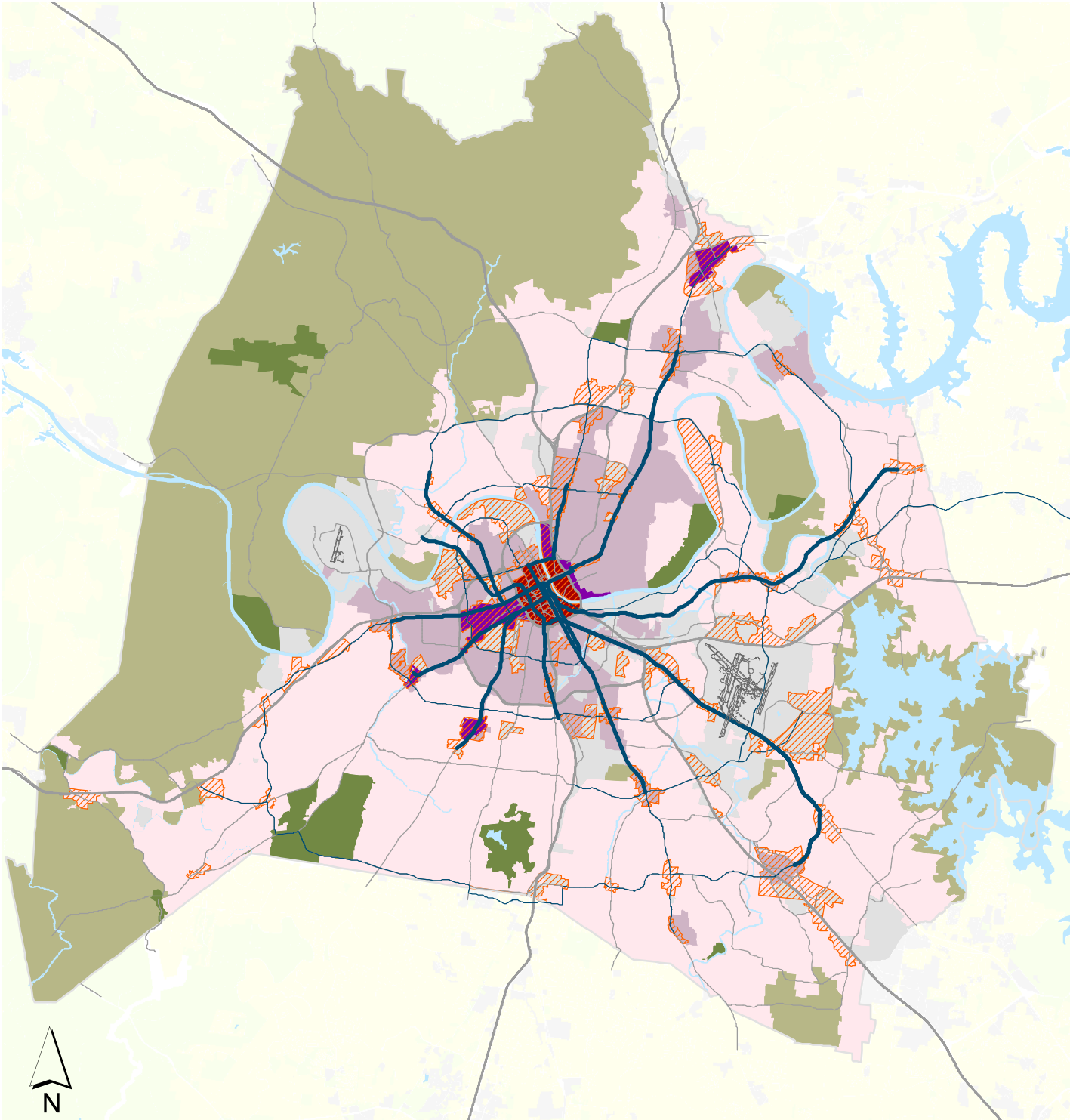
To Create a Complete and Healthy Downtown

- » Is a complete neighborhood.
- » Includes regionally significant cultural, entertainment, and governmental venues.
- » Is designed and perceived as the regional gathering place for significant and public events.
- » Has a prioritized pedestrian and transit friendly environment.
- » Provides a community uniqueness and identity.
- » Includes access to healthy food choices.
- » Takes advantage of the Cumberland River as a community resource with riverfront access for all.

Characteristics of an Ideal Downtown

- » The most intensely developed of any zone in terms of square footage per acre.
- » A mix of land uses: commercial, office, residential, arts and entertainment venues, local and state government. Individual buildings also often accommodate a mixture of uses, such as residential or office over retail/restaurant.
- » Typically high- to mid-rise buildings located close to one another and often abutting.
- » Mix of modern and historic buildings.
- » The central hub of public transportation within the county.
- » A tight network of gridded streets, including sidewalks and crosswalks, to accommodate automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle travel.
- » On-street parking.
- » Formal landscaping, urban street trees, public plazas and small parks, and pedestrian-scaled street lighting.
- » High pedestrian connectivity.

Figure HLBE-4: Community Character Areas in Davidson County
 The Transect



Transects Legend


Centers

Priority Corridors


Immediate need


Long-term need

	T1 Natural		T5 Center
	T2 Rural		T6 Core
	T3 Suburban		D District
	T4 Urban		W Water

Components of a Healthy Community

NashvilleNext focuses on creating a healthy, sustainable, and complete community that prepares for the future while preserving, enhancing, and celebrating the culture and heritage of Nashville's diverse neighborhoods and character. A healthy community addresses not only the physical environment, but also education, employment, housing, infrastructure, social and environmental stewardship, and community engagement components.

A healthy community is a place where every resident can readily make healthy lifestyle choices. Key components include easy access to safe parks and walking trails, recreational programs for both children and adults, healthy and affordable foods, safe and affordable places to live, and life-long learning programs and educational opportunities for all ages. This section will focus on the components of the built environment that are the foundation and often determinant of a healthy lifestyle. These components are generally universal across the community character types discussed in the previous section.

The commitment to creating healthy, sustainable communities is woven throughout the Community Character Policies, the 14 Community Plans, and individual development decisions throughout Nashville/Davidson County. Other Metro departments also play a part in determining community character. Metro Nashville Public Schools builds and maintains elementary, middle, and high schools to serve students. Metro Public Works builds and maintains sidewalks, streets, bikeways, and alleys. Public Works also works with neighborhoods on neighborhood landscaping projects, cleanup of neglected lots, and neighborhood cleanup projects. Metro Water Services encourages low impact development (retaining and treating stormwater on site with rain gardens, swales, green roofs, etc.) with its innovative Low Impact Development Manual and decides on where to permit sewer expansion. The Metro Transit Authority provides transit along with bus shelters and bus stops. Metro Public Library builds community branch libraries that serve as community gathering places. Metro Parks and Recreation builds parks of various sizes, community centers, nature centers, and greenways. Metro Arts Commission provides public art. The Metro Historical Commission works to preserve the city's historic structures and places, and the Metro Historic Zoning Commission works to preserve community character through design review.

The following components form the framework for the character zones discussed in the previous section. At the appropriate scale for the desired place, they are the basis for healthy living and refine and apply the NashvilleNext Guiding Principles.

- » Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- » Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
- » Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
- » Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- » Mix land uses.
- » Create walkable neighborhoods.
- » Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- » Take advantage of compact building design.
- » Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
- » Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place

As we create interesting, unique communities that reflect the cultures and values of the people who reside there, these places also foster physical environments that support a more cohesive community fabric and character. In addition, this component promotes the construction and preservation of buildings that are assets to a community for years, not only because of the services they provide, but because of their contributions to the look and feel of the neighborhood. The character districts discussed earlier are designed to ensure there are distinctive, attractive places that reinforce a healthy and sustainable pattern over time.

History helps ground us in a sense of place. Historic preservationists around the country recognize the importance of good urban design to maintain the livability of neighborhoods through changes in household preferences. They see the connections between historic patterns of development and opportunities for more livable cities. Nashville's early preservation efforts centered on saving the estate homes of prominent historical figures, including The Hermitage, Travellers Rest, and the Belle Meade Mansion, along with local landmarks and churches. However, there have also been significant losses to our city's historical resources. Nashville has the distinction of having had the first federally funded urban renewal project in the nation, the Capitol Hill Redevelopment

Project, which was authorized in 1949. Although intended to level slums and promote new development, it also erased the historic street grid and viable commercial buildings around Capitol Hill. Four additional urban renewal projects followed from 1959 to the 1970s, which destroyed the urban landscape in downtown, east and south Nashville. The projects cleared thousands of residential and commercial properties in the city. The Downtown Urban Renewal Project cleared another 40 acres, including the cast iron storefronts east, west and south sides of the public square and the city's historic black business district. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 authorized construction of the Interstate Highway System. In local and state governments' rush to spend federal dollars and make the city more attractive to businesses, routes were cut thorough the city that cleared paths through neighborhoods, often bisecting and isolating parts from each other. Parts of north, west, east, and south Nashville have been negatively affected. The construction destroyed historic fabric, and the poor and minorities were often displaced and separated by these actions.

Historic preservation in Nashville has changed dramatically in recent decades. In the mid-20th century, preservationists were often seen by civic, business, and government leaders as obstructionists to growth. Today, historic preservationists are recognized as critical partners in planning for a distinctive, viable, and quality city. Efforts have expanded from saving single buildings to preserving and restoring sites, neighborhoods, and landscapes that are significant for their inhabitants, events, architecture, surroundings, contributions to neighborhoods, and relationship to cultural identity. The Metro Historical Commission and the Metro Historic Zoning Commission work and partner with many public and private institutions, agencies and nonprofits to further shared goals and a vision of a progressive city with a sense of place, uniqueness, and history. In addition to documenting history and historical resources, the two commissions oversee commemorative events, preservation awards, the historical markers program, conferences, and building reviews. Preserving and reusing our existing historic structures assist us in being more responsible stewards of our land and resources. This approach not only preserves historic architecture, but also maintains diversity within our communities through a variety of sized homes and buildings from various time periods.

Nashville has some tools in place that assist with creating well designed communities. The Urban Zoning Overlay was established over 10 years ago and applied to Nashville's circa-1950 boundaries to allow new development to be built consistent with traditional building practices. The

broad application of form-based codes² is another tool utilizing traditional development parameters to ensure walkability and encourage the re-establishment of traditional development patterns. Urban Design Overlays are used to preserve and create areas with unique character, mixed use, and walkability, such as Hillsboro Village, Bedford Avenue, 31st Avenue/Long Boulevard, Green Hills, Downtown Donelson, and Lenox Village. Historic Zoning Districts are used to preserve the historic character of Nashville's distinctive historic neighborhoods. There remain places where traditional design approaches should be applied, especially in commercial areas and along the city's commercial corridors.

Another tool in addressing building quality is through constructing high-performance buildings. High-performance buildings seek to improve economic, environmental, and social performance by building for the long term. This applies to new construction, as well as preserving, maintaining, and updating our existing building stock, including historic structures and landmarks.

A high-performance built environment reduces costs by efficiently using materials and resources, with an emphasis on renewable and local resources. These buildings improve social and economic outcomes by reducing costs and improving affordability and by reducing or eliminating exposure to pollution, especially indoor air pollution. Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) is an example of third-party certification to assess how well buildings are performing and celebrating those that do particularly well. Nashville is projected to build or rebuild 113,000 new homes and 485 million square feet of nonresidential space. Metro's requirement, since 2007, to design to LEED standard in Metro buildings or as incentives for private buildings can help shift the entire industry to improving the performance of the built environment.

² *A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation. For more information, see <http://formbasedcodes.org/>*

*Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty,
and critical environmental areas*

Forests, agricultural areas, greenways, large natural and landscaped areas, city parks, and ballfields are all considered green space, and all afford people living near them with both calm respite and a place to recreate, provide gathering places, offer shade and protection from the sun on a hot sunny day, and provide a filter for pollutants in our air and water. Greenery increases the quality of life and can add years to the quantity of life. In addition to its aesthetic benefits, green settings have been shown to decrease fear and anger and increase mental alertness and cognitive performance. Living close to green space and having access to a garden is correlated with lower levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and obesity, and, especially among the elderly, more positive perceived general health.

In 2011, the city created the Nashville Open Space Plan which outlines the need to preserve various types of green spaces and sets goals for attainment. The Open Space Plan contains four main themes: connect wildlife and water networks; support urban and rural farming; connect people to the green infrastructure network; and preserve historic and iconic resources. The plan provides a roadmap for the strategic conservation and creation of green spaces, by both the public and private sectors, and includes opportunities in urban areas such as the creation of neighborhood parks and gardens as well as opportunities outside of the urban core such as conserving farms and forests and protecting river corridors.

Within NashvilleNext are the city's 14 community plans that guide development policy. The community plans also encourage preservation of sensitive environmental features and remediation of the features if they have previously been disturbed, through the application of Conservation policy. While Nashville has over 1,300 acres of land in private conservation easements, many more could be added. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a land owner and an organization where land is protected, but certain property rights are reserved. Nashville has some areas where additional planning is needed about how to preserve these areas while still ensuring that they are economically viable, such as Bells Bend, Scottsboro, Whites Creek, and Whites Bend. Ideas include heritage tourism, ecotourism, and agri-tourism, but the key is to balance development, including what infrastructure is required, with the preservation of rural, open space or natural areas.

Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities

Directing development toward existing communities already served by infrastructure utilizes existing resources while conserving undeveloped, green spaces. Developing or redeveloping property in existing neighborhoods has benefits including increased efficiency of existing infrastructure, an increased population base, and closer proximity to jobs and services.

Infrastructure includes all of the different equipment, structures, and facilities that Metro Nashville and major utility companies provide that link together services and support daily life. These are generally large-scale physical investments. Transportation infrastructure includes our roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways, and bus routes and facilities. Energy infrastructure includes power lines and transformers (provided and maintained by Nashville Electric Service), as well as gas lines (provided and maintained privately) and communication lines provided by several private providers. Water pipes, water plants, sewers, swales and ditches, detention ponds, and even roadways are part of our water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure.

A review of Nashville's infrastructure found many areas where infrastructure needed to be improved, expanded, or maintained.³ From another source, the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations projects that Davidson County needs \$4.4 billion in infrastructure spending over the next five years. To put this in context, Nashville has spent \$1.2 billion on capital projects over the past five years.

Nashvillians are most familiar with those parts of the city's infrastructure they use or that are near to them. Regularly reporting on infrastructure condition is important to helping Nashvillians understand how the quality of infrastructure near them fits into the broader county context. This, in turn, is important to supporting smart infrastructure investments. Infrastructure decisions can be controversial, in part because there is a long list of needed infrastructure improvements and because there may be a sense that investments are not made equitably throughout the county. As Nashvillians have a better sense of where investments are needed, it is also important to link decisions on new investments to community goals.

³ For an overview, see the NashvilleNext Public Infrastructure background report: <http://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Planning/docs/NashvilleNext/next-report-Infrastructure.pdf>

Nashville's infrastructure shapes what opportunities are available in daily life, as well as the support and safety services that residents, workers, and visitors rely on. Nashvillians have expressed a clear desire to add reliable and genuine transportation options like transit, walking, and biking to our current auto-oriented environment. Infrastructure also shapes safety services because of the way transportation routes affect response times.

Equitable access means that Nashville residents in similar situations have similar access to goods and services. Genuine access means that cost is not a barrier to access. For example, transit ridership is related to density. Places with high density tend to have higher ridership; low density places tend to have low ridership. Because of this, transit agencies typically provide higher service to denser areas. So providing more transit service to higher density areas than lower density areas would not necessarily be inequitable. On the other hand, providing very different service between two equally dense areas could be.

In the 21st century, infrastructure also includes convenient access to Internet service, which is an increasingly important part of daily life. It is especially important for accessing educational services for young and old, information about government and private services and assistance, and finding and applying for jobs. While more Nashvillians have Internet access, many Nashvillians' primary mode of accessing the internet is through mobile devices or text services.

Re-using existing buildings is another important component. According to a study conducted by economist Donovan Rypkema in comparing \$1 million spent on building rehab to \$1 million in new construction, spending the money on building rehab creates five to nine additional construction jobs and \$120,000 more dollars will initially remain in the community.⁴

The Adaptive Reuse zoning option provides a tool to reuse and redevelop commercial properties along prominent corridors with mixed uses including residential. Warehouses, like Werthan Lofts, have been adapted into housing, while the warehouses that comprise Marathon Village are being reused for commercial, entertainment, and residential uses. Metro has also invested in reusing the old Hickory Hollow Mall, purchasing space and constructing a new library, community center, park, and

⁴ Robert A. Young, *Stewardship of the Built Environment: Sustainability, Preservation and Reuse*. July 18, 2012.

hockey facilities for the Antioch/Crossings community. Nashville State Community College has purchased another portion of the mall for its satellite campus. Conversations during the NashvilleNext process have helped to determine where additional development can occur to take advantage of existing infrastructure, services, and transit; provide housing choice and “aging in place” opportunities for current neighborhoods; and preserve important open space and natural features.

Provide a variety of transportation choices

Traffic congestion is worsening around the country, including Davidson County and the Middle Tennessee region. Communities desire a wider range of transportation options—walking, cycling, taking transit—in an effort to improve traffic congestion and encourage healthier lifestyles. The average American spends an hour in the car every single day, according to a 2009 U.S. Department of Transportation study.⁵ The study also shows we take the overwhelming majority of our trips by car—91 percent. Traffic data in Nashville show that the average Nashville commuter spends 45 minutes in traffic each day during peak travel periods. In recent decades, the increase in suburban neighborhoods, which requires more auto-dependence, has dictated the construction of ever-increasing numbers and capacities of roadways. The distance suburbanites must travel from home to accomplish daily routines has expanded. Transportation alternatives are often limited, especially as road construction projects historically catered solely to motor vehicles. Recent policy changes to build complete streets can improve the character of our streets over time. Walking or biking can feel, and be, unsafe. Transit options may not be available, or the population base may not be enough to make transit a viable alternative. Making a city more walkable is good for the health of its citizens and their quality of life, and the built environment plays a key role in the decisions people make on whether to walk, bike, ride public transit, or drive their own cars.

A 2009 regional inventory revealed that there are currently over 354 miles of bike lanes, bike routes, and greenways in the greater Nashville area and, for arterial and collector roadways within the region, approximately 460 miles of sidewalks. After a long period of decline during the 1980s and 1990s, transit in Nashville has significantly expanded during the 2000s. Metro opened the 28th Avenue/31st Avenue Connector Bridge that connects North Nashville to the West End area. The bridge includes a protected shared use area for bicyclists and pedestrians along with six new

⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. *Summary of Travel Trends: 2009 National Household Travel Survey*. 2009.

bus shelters. MTA also began fixed route bus service called the University Connector, linking universities in North Nashville with universities in South Nashville. Since that route opened, ridership numbers saw a jump, and as additional routes are added, ridership is expected to increase further. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lite—an improved bus service with fewer stops, greater frequency, and faster route time—is provided along Gallatin Road and more recently along Murfreesboro Road. Currently (2015), BRT Lite service is planned for the Nolensville Pike and Charlotte Pike corridors.

Nashville's two guiding transportation plans which are also part of NashvilleNext, Access Nashville 2040 and the Major and Collector Street Plan, guide public and private investment for Nashville's street system and focus on creating complete streets that provide balanced and appropriate design for all modes of transportation. Metro Public Works has implemented complete street principles on roadways throughout the city, including rural, suburban, and urban areas. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, the Mayor's Executive Order on Complete Streets in 2010 calls for complete streets to vary based on the physical context and character of an area. Complete streets do not always look the same, but they strive to include bike, pedestrian, vehicle, and transit facilities as needed in a manner that complements the character and setting of the area. In Nashville, the Deaderick Street improvement project, Shelby Avenue in East Nashville, Belmont Boulevard, Otter Creek, and Korean Veterans Boulevard are often cited as exemplary complete streets projects.

Mix land uses

Mixing land uses helps create better places to live. Placing residential, commercial, and recreational uses close to one another helps alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, become viable. A mixture of land uses also provides a larger population for supporting commercial businesses and public transit. A mix of land uses can create vitality and increase the number and activity of people on the street. In recent years, Metro has made great strides in allowing a mix of land uses (offices, residential, commercial, etc.) across a property and within a single building, in strategic locations. Just 15 years ago, it was illegal to have residential development in downtown. Now residential developments in the Gulch,

North Gulch, Rolling Mill Hill, Sulphur Dell, and SoBro are bringing hundreds of residents into downtown—enlivening downtown and making it a “24/7” community.

Likewise, many of Nashville’s prominent corridors are flanked with commercial zoning that, until just a few years ago, did not allow residential development. Metro amended the zoning code in 2005 to allow the redevelopment of buildings and sites for residential development in commercial zoning on the city’s prominent corridors. Several developments in the 12South area and in North Nashville have been developed under Adaptive Reuse. Adaptive Reuse has the power to draw residential development to these corridors, putting “rooftops” near existing commercial development, riders near existing transit lines, and allowing for more housing choice in neighborhoods while preserving the character of the neighborhood’s interior and making better use of the city’s underutilized corridors. While many developers are exploring the Adaptive Reuse option, the tool could be expanded to corridors in other portions of the county, providing more housing choices that reinforce existing commercial and transit and make better use of existing infrastructure.

Create walkable neighborhoods

Making a city more walkable is good for the health of its citizens and their quality of life. The built environment plays a key role in the decisions people make on whether to walk, to bike, to ride public transit, or to drive their own cars. A city can become more walkable through a combination of direct routes (which may be achieved through an interconnected street pattern with an abundance of intersections), higher population density, and greater mixed land use. Street design impacts the safety and ease of walking and biking, which impacts the amount of walking and biking that residents will do. A grid pattern enables the most direct route to destinations as well as travel options, and designated bike lanes for bikers and sidewalks with convenient crosswalks for pedestrians appeal to walkers and bikers. The width of the street and the time given by a traffic light to cross the street determines whether children, the elderly, or the infirm can safely cross the street. Streets with multiple lanes and not much to keep drivers’ attention are less safe. People choose to walk when they can walk safely, using a direct route, to destinations nearby. The National Association of Realtors recently stated that two-thirds of homebuyers view being within an easy walk of destinations as an important factor in deciding where to live.⁶

Many of the oldest neighborhoods in Nashville were built with sidewalks, including neighborhoods closest to downtown. Unfortunately, city leaders

⁶ National Association of Realtors. *National Community Preference Survey*. October 2013.

and residents did not place a high priority on sidewalks during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and the majority of residential development built during that period did not include sidewalks. Today, Metro is committed to funding and building additional sidewalks, repairing existing sidewalks, filling in sidewalk gaps, and making important sidewalk connections, such as near schools and parks, near transit, and along corridors. Nashville's goal is to create and sustain active, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use streets that address the needs of walkers, cyclists, and transit riders in addition to drivers. Steps toward accomplishing this goal have been made with required sidewalk regulations (2002); the Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways (2003); creating the Nashville Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) (2008); the Mayor's Executive Order for Complete Streets (2010); and dedicated funding for sidewalks, bikeways, and transit infrastructure in each year's Capital Spending Plan. NashVitality, a local partnership to create healthy change in Nashville, has developed signs and maps that highlight healthy places in Nashville and ways to walk and bike to destinations safely.

As the city's population grows older, lives longer, and continues to diversify, Nashville must plan and create more walkable centers where people do not have to depend exclusively on automobiles. From a land use perspective, creating walkable neighborhoods can be aided by having size-appropriate, mixed use centers close to residences that allow for some walking trips to meet residents' daily needs.



Missing Middle Housing

“Well-designed ‘Missing Middle’ buildings unify the walkable streetscape as they greatly diversify the choices available for households of different ages, sizes, and incomes. Smaller households tend to eat out more, helping our neighborhood attract wonderful restaurants. Diverse households keep diverse hours meaning we have more people out walking our streets at more varied hours—keeping them safer.” — Ellen Dunham-Jones, professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology and co-author of *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*

Create a range of housing opportunities and choices

Housing is an important component of the way communities grow as it constitutes a significant share of new development. Housing is also a key factor in access to transportation, services, employment, recreation, and education. No single type of housing can meet the various needs of today’s diverse households. Creating a wider range of housing choices allows neighborhoods to have alternatives to travel besides the automobile, ensures a better balance of housing and jobs, uses infrastructure resources more efficiently, and generates additional support for commercial centers and services. Nashville has numerous neighborhoods with mixtures of housing types.

One of the most critical needs is the expanded use of missing middle housing. Missing middle is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living⁷. Missing middle housing options are most appropriate for Suburban and Urban Character Zones where they are strategically inserted as housing options or infill opportunities between mid-rise mixed-use and residential buildings along the corridor and detached single-family neighborhoods. Missing middle housing types such as detached accessory dwellings, alley houses, duplex, triplex, courtyard apartments, and townhouses can often fit comfortably within neighborhoods if done sensitive to the scale and massing of the building. Other missing middle housing types such as bungalow or cottage courts, stacked flats, and live/work units can fit at strategic locations with similar concern for the scale and massing of the buildings.

⁷ See <http://missingmiddlehousing.com/>

Cottage developments are compact and attractive to some buyers. Other popular housing options in Nashville include detached duplexes and accessory dwellings, although use of these housing types needs to be made easier. Detached accessory dwellings could be a particularly useful tool in established single family neighborhoods to increase housing choices and affordability.

Another housing type is co-housing, a type of collaborative housing where residents actively participate in the design and operation of their neighborhoods. Often, co-housing developments include community gardens, communal kitchens and dining spaces, courtyards, and common houses where people gather and where meals are served. Nashville's first co-housing development is located in Germantown. Another tool is conservation subdivisions, where houses are grouped in order to provide more open space and preserve sensitive environmental features. Nashville already has some examples of live/work housing, often work space on the first floor with living space above, but this tool could be made available to more areas in Nashville.

Healthy and sustainable communities require the availability of a variety of housing types and price points, so that housing in the community is accessible to all. Nashville continues to expand on the breadth and depth of housing, including apartments, condominiums, townhomes, artists' housing, workforce housing, single-family, cottage-style developments, urban infill, public housing, and co-housing. Opportunities for vertically integrated mixed-use, mixed income housing is an important element largely missing from our housing supply. Recent residential development projects that take advantage of their walkable location are along the West End corridor, in the 12th South Neighborhood, along Main Street in east Nashville, in Sylvan Park in west Nashville, in Cleveland Park in northeast Nashville, and in Germantown and Salemtown in north Nashville.

Take advantage of compact building design

Compact building and site design has positive benefits for community health and livability. Not only does it promote walkability, but it also uses less developable land, preserving open space and natural features (floodplains, steep slopes, tree cover) that make Nashville's landscape unique and provide cleaner air and water. Compact development also includes older buildings. Many older areas of the city were built more compactly than newer areas. These older areas have a mix of smaller

buildings of various ages and sizes that offer choices for businesses and institutions that help contribute to a diverse, local economy. Nashville currently offers multiple tools to developers and neighborhoods that seek to promote compact building and site design, but there are more options and tools that could be made available to the community.

One of the tools that has garnished recent attention is cottage developments. Cottage developments create smaller footprint homes on smaller lots, which are generally grouped around a small, shared open space. Cottage developments have been built in Germantown, Sylvan Park, Chestnut Hill, and Hillsboro-West End. Cottage developments promote a compact site design that is attractive to some home buyers, can fit unobtrusively into a neighborhood, promote walkability and outdoor play, and use less developable land.

Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective

The value of property and the desirability of a place are affected by government regulations and investment in infrastructure. The private market supplies large amounts of the money for development and redevelopment to occur. Governments that make the right infrastructure and regulatory decisions can support fair, predictable, and cost-effective smart growth and development outcomes. This can include establishing standards that provide certainty to developers while reducing unnecessary costs.

Zoning codes, using a context-based or form-based approach to development regulation, are critical to create mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods beginning with our corridors, including community and neighborhood centers and finally in strategic neighborhoods throughout the county. Tools such as Adaptive Reuse, the Downtown Code, Contextual Overlay, and the Alternative Zoning Districts add basic but effective urban design elements to existing zoning districts, ensuring a more urban, walkable, sustainable form. Other form-based codes such as the Urban Zoning Overlay, Urban Design Overlay, and the Alternative (A) Zoning Districts add predictability about design and development decisions. These tools allow smart growth by right, and make the basic urban parameters clear and easily understood and implemented. The most important regulatory issue is how to introduce the broader use of additional form-based codes as a matter of right. It is important to make it as easy as possible for development to occur in a manner that creates sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

*Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
in development decisions*

The planning process strives to make planning for future growth both inclusive and transparent. The public conversation about smart growth, however, is ongoing. As described above, Metro has taken several actions to make quality growth easier in Nashville. Meanwhile, several neighborhoods and communities have embraced these changes, and many developers are leading the way in smart growth development and redevelopment. These efforts are aided by the Nashville Civic Design Center, a nonprofit that works to elevate the quality and health of Nashville's built environment by educating the public about design through lectures with prominent speakers, by consulting on community design projects, and by researching and publishing reports on various civic design issues. The Nashville Civic Design Center recently published *Shaping Healthy Communities*. The book builds on the long-term vision for the city set forth in the Plan of Nashville (2005), but focuses more specifically on designing the city's built environment to foster better health among its citizens.⁸

⁸ Nashville Civic Design Center, *Shaping the Healthy Community: The Nashville Plan*. 2015 (forthcoming).

Conclusion

Metro Government, area universities, and other community nonprofits have been studying livability and health issues from a variety of perspectives over the past 10 years. When it comes to health, livability, and the built environment, Nashville has areas of both strengths and opportunities. Individuals address personal health through daily choices, such as daily physical activity and healthy eating. Addressing health and livability through the design of the built environment is complex and multifaceted. Through the thoughtful study and analysis that went into the creation of a variety of reports and plans, including the Together Making Nashville Green Report, the Nashville Open Space Plan, the Parks and Greenways Master Plan, the Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways, the Major and Collector Street Plan, and the Community Health Improvement Plan, the city has considered best practices from around the country and created a variety of programs tailored for Nashville. There are numerous recommendations from those plans that are carried forward in the NashvilleNext process.

Using the built environment as a means for improving livability and health is a long-term strategy. Nashville's land use and transportation patterns created through development will impact how people live, work, and play for many years. The negative health effects of sprawling development patterns have taken decades to become evident, and instituting healthy community design is not a quick solution. It can, however, along with concepts tied to sustainability and other principles laid out in the Community Character Manual, shift development patterns toward built environments that are more supportive of health and livability and provide a foundation for current and future generations to live healthy and productive lives.

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.

BE Goal 1

All Nashville residents have a choice of vibrant, safe, and healthy neighborhoods across many different communities and contexts.

BE Policy 1.1

Preserve residential character in established neighborhoods, while accommodating housing options that meet Nashville's changing needs.

BE Policy 1.2

Create safe, walkable community, retail, and employment centers across the county that fit within each community's context and character and meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

BE Policy 1.3

Encourage the development, redevelopment, or improvement of property, buildings, and landscapes to promote safety and reduce opportunities for crime.

BE Policy 1.4

Expand the use of context sensitive and scale appropriate missing middle housing types as a matter of right.

BE Goal 2

Nashville promotes the safety and wellness of its residents, workers, and visitors.

BE Policy 2.1

Encourage physical activity and promote social and mental well-being by improving public spaces (such as public streets, sidewalks, and parks), reducing barriers to all pedestrians, and providing green space.

BE Policy 2.2

Improve the health quality of Nashville's air, water, light, and land, both outside and indoors.

BE Policy 2.3

Improve mental health and wellbeing of Nashville residents through advocacy, education, research, and service.

BE Policy 2.4

Ensure all neighborhoods have healthy food options—including locally grown food—particularly neighborhoods with low levels of car ownership.

BE Policy 2.5

Increase connections to the network of accessible greenways, creeks, and rivers that connects Nashville residents to nature throughout Davidson County.

BE Policy 2.6

Host active and passive activities and amenities at community parks and open spaces for people of all ages.

BE Goal 3

Nashvillians have equitable access to goods, services, multiple modes of transportation, and public safety.

BE Policy 3.1

Support access throughout the county for all users (including walkers, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers) of roadways and greenways.

BE Policy 3.2

Match transportation infrastructure to the needs of police, fire, and emergency medical personnel to maintain response times and keep residents, workers, and visitors safe.

BE Policy 3.3

Ensure equitable access to high speed Internet service throughout the county and adapt online services to mobile Internet users.

BE Policy 3.4

Support communities by diversifying the use of public buildings and facilities in the services they offer (such as libraries, schools, community centers, and police and fire stations).

BE Policy 3.5

Facilitate the access of health and wellness services to meet changing health care needs.

BE Policy 3.6

Maintain infrastructure and programs to keep the public safe during emergencies.

BE Goal 4

Nashville is welcoming, and our residents care for and support one another.

BE Policy 4.1

Recognize and bridge cultural differences and language barriers when providing services and engaging the public in community decisions.

BE Policy 4.2

Ensure that special impact uses are located in a manner that acknowledges the need for, and benefit from, special impact areas, while seeking to protect the safety and quality of life for all nearby residents. Avoid concentrating too many special impact areas in any one community.

BE Policy 4.3

Use the design of public space to enhance the unique identities of Nashville neighborhoods and communities.

BE Policy 4.4

Celebrate Nashville's diverse faith communities and their role in shaping Nashville's history.

BE Policy 4.5

Create opportunities to increase fellowship and build relationships throughout the county and in individual neighborhoods.

BE Goal 5

Nashville's buildings will be healthy, attractive, affordable, and easily accessible, supporting social, environmental, and economic performance.

BE Policy 5.1

Encourage new construction and major renovations, retrofitting, and upgrading of existing buildings to improve environmental performance of the building and site.

BE Policy 5.2

Encourage the creation of high-performance, quality architecture throughout Davidson County, especially in key centers of activity.

BE Policy 5.3

Preserve historic structures and landmarks that represent our county's identity.

BE Policy 5.4

Encourage flexibility in re-use and expansion of historic buildings to preserve character and maintain affordability. Standards should follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as noted in State law and the Metro ordinance.

BE Policy 5.5

Require that new Metro buildings are third-party certified for energy and efficiency and enhance the communities in which they are located.