

nashvillenext

VISION, TRENDS & STRATEGY

APRIL REVIEW DRAFT

This is the review draft of Volume I of NashvilleNext. It provides a vision for Nashville's future based on the participation of thousands of Nashvillians. It also includes key trends shaping Nashville's future, tools to implement the plan, and key strategies for achieving the community's vision.

We appreciate that you are giving time to reviewing this work. These actions are the result of three years of effort on NashvilleNext, combining public visioning and community engagement with topical experts to create a plan for Nashville and Davidson County over the next 25 years.

Comments

The public review period is during April 2015. We are eager to hear your thoughts on the plan. Here's how to provide input:

- » Online: www.NashvilleNext.net
- » Email: info@nashvillenext.net
- » At public meetings
 - » April 18: Tennessee State University (Downtown Campus), 10am - 1:30 pm
 - » April 20: 5 - 7pm at both the North Nashville Police Precinct and the Edmondson Pike Branch Library
 - » April 27: 5 - 7pm at both the Madison Police Precinct and the Bellevue Branch Library
- » Phone: 615-862-NEXT (615-862-6398)
- » Mail: Metro Nashville Planning Department, P.O. Box 196300, Nashville TN 37219-6300

We ask that you include contact information with your comments. We also request that you be as specific as possible in your requests. Referring to a specific page or section is greatly appreciated.

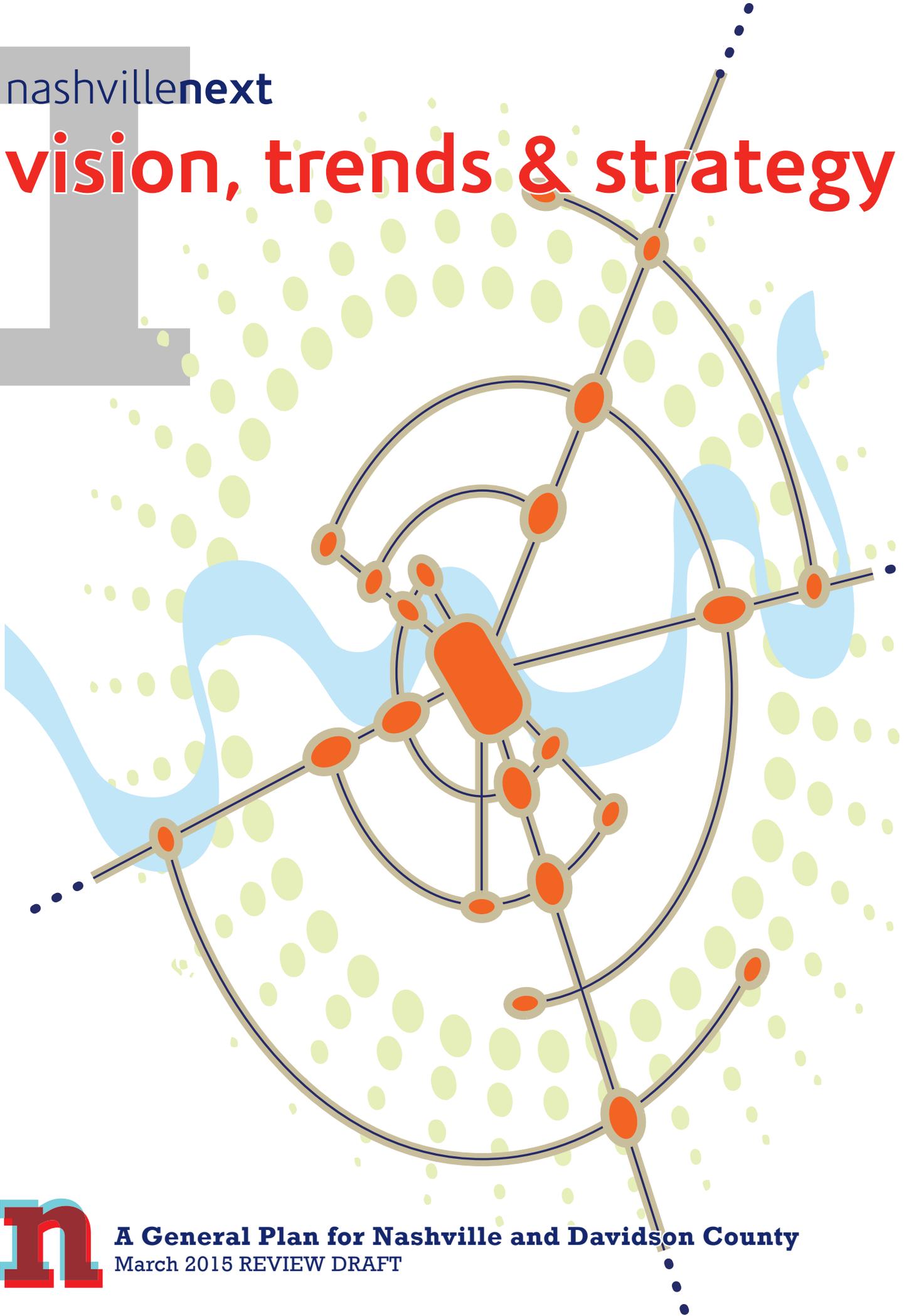
Next steps

The most up to date information is always available at www.NashvilleNext.net. Here is our tentative adoption schedule:

- » Mid-May: Post static draft of plan in advance of public hearing
- » June 10: First public hearing at Planning Commission (tentative; special date)
- » June 15: Second public hearing at Planning Commission (tentative; special date)

nashvillenext

vision, trends & strategy



A General Plan for Nashville and Davidson County
March 2015 REVIEW DRAFT

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 only be understood 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.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles present the long-term view of what Nashvillians want for their future. Throughout the process, they guided more detailed work, helping to ensure all key topics were addressed by the plan. Once adopted, they provide long-range context for why individual goals and policies are included in the plan. As the plan gets minor amendments and major updates over time, the Principles should be changed the least, barring a substantial change in situation or public sentiment.

II Elements

Volume II presents the seven plan elements. Their policy direction takes two forms: goals and policies.

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

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.

III Communities

Nashville's Community Plans – originally attached as amendments to Concept 2010 – are here incorporated into NashvilleNext as Volume III, replacing all previously adopted versions. They 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. Finally, detailed Community Character Maps link the broad, county-wide 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. An initial action plan is included as Volume IV, but will be maintained online to provide up-to-date reports on progress.

V Access Nashville 2040

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

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, Nashville/Davidson County enjoys success and prosperity with a healthy economy, vibrant neighborhoods, an ever-expanding and beloved park and greenway network, strengthening schools, low cost of living compared to its peers, and a spirit of community, opportunity and hope. Today's Nashville has reaped the benefits of strategic, and often difficult, decisions in growth, development, preservation and governance.

It is in this spirit of pride for who we are, hope for the future, and commitment to making decisions that benefit our city today and in the future, that as a community, we have created NashvilleNext – a plan created by Nashvillians for Nashville's prosperity and well-being for the coming 25 years.

NashvilleNext began with the premise that the plan should have four foundational pillars – opportunity and inclusion, economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and responsive, effective government – and the understanding that all of these pillars act within the diverse and inter-connected regional framework of Middle Tennessee. Representatives of these four pillars and others comprise the NashvilleNext Steering Committee.

Through the NashvilleNext process, the community has discussed the opportunities and challenges the future brings, with increased population; a population that is more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age and country of origin; an evolving educational system and economy; and an increasing awareness of the beauty, protection and economic advantages that our open space and natural features provide to our community. We have learned how the entire Middle Tennessee region has benefitted from intentional regional cooperation.

NashvilleNext presents a community derived vision of the future we want. The plan provides the framework to harness the tools at Metro Nashville/Davidson County's disposal – regulations and policies, the Capital Improvements Budget, programming, partnerships and the bully pulpit – to achieve that vision.

The vision proposed in NashvilleNext was created with over 17,000 participants offering input in a variety of forums created by the NashvilleNext Community Engagement Committee. The community input was supplemented by the insight of local, topical experts forming Resource Teams on issues ranging from Natural Resources and the Built Environment, to Housing, to Arts, Culture and Creativity, to Economic and Workforce Development and others. Finally, the overall creation of NashvilleNext was guided by the work of the Steering Committee, comprised of Nashvillians committed to Nashville's future success and well being.

The NashvilleNext process has provided the community the opportunity to establish a vision and outline the decisions needed to make that vision a reality. The plan outlines the policies and decisions needed to engage the many skills and talents of our growing and diverse population to address our needs and in particular, our most critical needs in remaining an open and welcoming community, expanding the supply and availability of housing affordable across incomes and creating an efficient and meaningful transit system for all.

Together, we have identified our path and can now move forward to secure our bright future.

Rick Bernhardt
Executive Director
Metro Nashville/Davidson County Planning Department

Efficient Government



Friends:

Nashville continues to be one of the most thriving and vibrant cities in Tennessee and, for that matter, the United States. It offers a diverse culture, a strong economy and safe streets. Our challenge as leaders is to ensure that our progress continues, and that is why the NashvilleNext process has been so important to our city's future.

The NashvilleNext process has given all Nashvillians a chance to participate in the planning of our great city. This inclusive approach has unearthed opportunities and challenges for the city's future:

- » Increasing population.
- » Changes in housing demand.
- » Evolving economic growth.
- » Increasing ethnic diversity.

We have explored the importance of compact and walkable communities and of public investment in strategic locations such as downtown. We also know from our research and from past development patterns that some public resources are being used to support less efficient living choices for all. And we know that continued unsustainable development patterns will undermine our future by making public infrastructure and services unnecessarily—and in some cases, unmanageable—expensive.

In order to capitalize on the real economic opportunity for Nashville, the NashvilleNext process identified several critical issues that must be addressed:

- » A complete and realistic transit system is the most critical public infrastructure issue we face.
- » We must ensure that our education system addresses diversity issues, early childhood education, workforce education and adult education.
- » The increasing battle over our individual health and related issues demands that our development decisions consider this cost in the design of communities where there are opportunities for exercise, open space and a public realm that is inviting and welcoming.
- » Public safety remains the most important factor in the attractiveness of a city. This is one area where we cannot let down our focus.

Regional collaboration is critical to ensure our success. It is imperative that we engage our regional partners, our business community and our citizens to efficiently and effectively share this vision.

NashvilleNext outlines the policies and decisions needed to address our future needs—and, in particular, the most critical issues of ensuring appropriate education for all, expanding the supply and availability of affordable housing, and implementing an efficient and meaningful transit system.

Together, we have identified our path. Now, we can move forward to ensure that tomorrow’s public infrastructure, services and facilities will support our community’s economic foundation and neighborhood environment- and provide the framework for our actions as we continue to become an even more diverse, more economically sound, and an even stronger, friendlier and more progressive Nashville and Davidson County.



Karl F. Dean
Mayor

Opportunity & inclusion



Nashville has a rich history as the home of a civil rights movement that brought a new vision of equality and inclusion to our nation. Today, Nashville is home to a host of groundbreaking initiatives that promote these values in innovative ways, encompassing issues of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age, and wealth. Nashville is poised to enter the next twenty-five years as a city worthy of emulation in many ways. Indeed, our city's steadfast commitment to being a welcoming community has fueled much of its recent success.

However, Nashville's work to achieve equity and inclusion for all its residents must always remain on the forefront. Disparities persist in access to opportunity, infrastructure, and services. As Nashville thrives, the mandate to ensure that all Nashvillians share in and have meaningful access to the benefits of its growth is even more compelling. Nashville's strength as a city depends upon shared opportunity and the participation of all community members in decisionmaking for its future.

As Nashville looks to its development over the next twenty-five years, we must affirm that the values of shared opportunity and inclusion are central tenets of its prosperity. The Nashville Next process has shown the strength and creativity that voices often not at the table can bring to community decisionmaking. It has also shown the necessity of evaluating measurable benchmarks to ensure that inequities are not created or perpetuated by policymaking. Continuing processes like these will ensure

that Nashville makes its commitment to equity and inclusion a reality for all Nashvillians, today and tomorrow.

The responsibility to ensure that opportunity and inclusion are hallmarks of Nashville's future does not fall only to its government—although government can and should set the example. We will live up to our ideals only if we engage in deliberate collaborations across Nashville's many communities to achieve this goal. All sectors of our city—government, business, nonprofits, educational institutions, faith communities, and more—must take on this challenge together. In 2040, we will know we have stayed true to our welcoming values if all Nashville's residents have access to affordable, safe housing; efficient transportation to get to work, school, and all the city has to offer; high-quality public education; and the opportunity and encouragement to participate fully in civic life.

Nashville Next is just the beginning. Together, we can create a just and welcoming Nashville for all of us.

Renata Soto
Executive Director
Conexión Américas
Nashville For All Of Us

Prosperous economy



Hello!

Nashville and Middle Tennessee are hot – we are a driver of Tennessee’s economy and, as a strong region, a driver of the national and global economies. We are a city and region in which people consciously choose to live, work and invest because the opportunity for individual and business prosperity exists.

The *NashvilleNext* process is providing all of us a unique chance to better understand our position as a city and region and participate in guiding our future – one that keeps Nashville/Davidson County strong as the core county and city within the region, and one that understands the symbiotic relationship between us and the other counties in our area.

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to be part of the *NashvilleNext* process. We are represented on the steering committee and, in that role, are glad to provide insight into the importance of economic development as a process and cornerstone theme of a plan that will guide our physical growth over the next several decades.

For the *NashvilleNext* process, it is important to agree on the definition of economic development. The International Economic Development Council’s definition is clear and concise: “Economic development is improving the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life.”

For the Chamber, it’s all about how we “mind the ‘spread’” that results in higher levels of disposable income for those who live and work here –a key contributor to our growth (*left*).

Increasing relative income levels

(currently 115 percent of the national average)

+

Favorable relative cost-of-living levels

(currently 88.9 percent of the national average)

+

Favorable relative tax burden levels

=

Higher levels of disposable income

We know this from the *NashvilleNext* process:

The community strengths businesses look for when they choose to relocate, expand or start their companies in Nashville:

- » Our accessible and strategic location
- » Our diverse and thriving economy
- » Our talent
- » Our reputation as a creative magnet
- » Our quality of place

The trends in economic development that will affect us in the future:

- » The emergence of information technology
- » The next focus of the health care industry
- » The growth of the music and entertainment industry
- » The growth of the creative industries
- » The growth of the younger workforce
- » The importance of multi-modal transportation accessibility

The types of companies that are attracted to Nashville in our downtown and suburban areas:

- » Corporate headquarters
- » Shared services, financial services, call centers
- » Home-based or remote access
- » Light manufacturing, food manufacturing, automotive suppliers and distribution/wholesale

The challenges that result in barriers to our growth and often business investment:

- » Workforce/talent shortages and skills gaps
- » Lack of real estate options (land and existing)
- » Lack of multi-modal transportation options
- » Lack of adequate housing at various price points
- » The quality of K-12 public education
- » Post-secondary attainment
- » Ensuring the continuation of our quality-of-place investments

We know this as well: people and businesses will stay or relocate where they can be prosperous. Successful cities and regions strategically and purposely frame and implement economic development plans that focus on job creation and community livability. They will continually build on their strengths and provide solutions that address barriers to growth.

We've learned much from the *NashvilleNext* process. If we plan well and understand that prosperity guides everything we do, our city and region will thrive. Neglected, unsupported or unguided, the city and region will suffer.

Ralph Schulz
President/CEO
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce

Healthy environment



Nashville is magnetic! Over the next 25 years, Nashville will include 100,000 new homes, 300,000 more jobs and 200,000 more residents. As millennials, families, and retirees choose to make our city their home, the demand for land grows. But we cannot grow anymore land.

We welcome the benefits and opportunities that growth provides to our residents. Our innovative businesses and creative industries are attracting hard workers and problem solvers. Our local economy is growing rapidly and providing new job opportunities. Nashville's urban center is thriving.

But we must responsibly accommodate this growth. Without our plentiful natural resources, it is simply impossible to support this success and our continued growth, while keeping the beloved character and culture of Nashville.

A vibrant economy, the health and safety of our families, and the very spirit of our communities rely on the preservation of our precious environmental assets.

As demand for our open spaces and natural resources grows, it is more important than ever that we have plans in place to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, the farmlands that sustain us and the outdoor spaces our families enjoy.

Growth is a product of having clean and abundant water sources, a healthy and safe environment, a growing parks and greenways system that weaves through the county, walkable neighborhoods, fertile soils for local farms and rolling countrysides a short drive from downtown Nashville. These irreplaceable characteristics of our city must be valued and protected as we plan for the future.

As we work toward building a sustainable Nashville with green spaces, scenic landscapes and growing public parks, we must strike a balance that cultivates progress without compromising the needs of generations to come.

The Land Trust for Tennessee represents the Environmental Pillar on the Nashville Next Steering Committee. We represent a united group of organizations and individuals who are taking the responsibility and

opportunity to ensure that Nashville's environment is valued and prioritized in our growth plan. We have heard the call from our citizens to plan and support conservation at the same level we invest in plans for development. We are all recognizing this voice and bringing it to the forefront of our city's plans for the future.

Through this process, we are responding to this resounding call. You asked to keep our city from going the way of others where unbalanced development has decimated the character of neighborhoods, congested roads, air and waterways, and blocked the growth of parks and greenspaces. We are listening and taking this mission to the heart of Nashville's leaders.

We must be bold in acknowledging that some places should remain in their natural state forever, or minimally developed. We can all agree that growth should be supported with better methods of transportation and connections to adjacent neighborhoods. We believe that the best future for Nashville is one where everyone can walk or take public transit to their grocery store, a park or to work. We believe in working to protect clean water sources, places to grow and buy local food, and greenspaces where children and adults alike can play outside to support their emotional and physical health.

This future will be unattainable if we don't make substantial investments in our environment, chart the course and commit to balancing development by following through with the proposed actions to support our vision.

The consequence of growth — without planning for the perseveration of our vital natural resources — has dangerous repercussions for our city. Families, business owners and local developers alike have a stake in getting this balance correct: We all share this home, and we all want to protect the qualities we know and love.

Our community wants to maintain our identity while

welcoming newcomers and embracing welcomed economic prosperity. Our charge is to:

- » Conserve land, especially our floodplain and forests to protect our character, ensure agriculture remains a growing part of our economy, and make us more resilient to weather extremes
- » Invest in our park and greenway system, adding acres to existing parks, creating urban and neighborhood parks, and build trails, to keep pace with our population growth
- » Understand that our physical and mental health is tied to our natural environment and enact policies to conserve water, promote local food production, establish parks in underserved areas, and increase our urban tree canopy.
- » Use sustainable development practices including efficient transportation, walkable neighborhoods, and natural treatment of rainwater water, and connect our streets.
- » Permanently conserve lands for private and public recreation, flood mitigation, and preservation of our cultural identity

As the Environmental Pillar, we stand united with a strong community of economic and environmental organizations and citizens that believe in this plan. It plants the seed for a future we can be proud of. It is our hope that you will join us in helping ensure this vision grows and prospers.

Jeanie Nelson
President and CEO
The Land Trust for Tennessee

Our Town portraits

In 2013, Bryce McCloud (behind) and a team of artists went to every corner of Nashville, inviting Nashvillians to create self-portraits using only a collection of stamps. Taken together, they form a community self-portrait of all Nashvillians.



THE NASHVILLENEXT APPROACH

Efficient government, economic prosperity, equity and inclusion, and a healthy environment. These pillars set forth a challenge to planners and the community. Built through extensive community engagement and detailed through collaboration with a diverse set of local stakeholders and experts, NashvilleNext is the response to that challenge.

NashvilleNext reports on trends shaping Nashville’s present and future. It provides a countywide vision for growth and preservation. Goals and policies expand on that vision to guide decision-making in the future. It updates Nashville’s 14 community plans, which shape private development. It concludes with an action plan to begin the work of achieving the public’s vision for the future.

Thousands of participants told planners their vision for Nashville’s future. Through online surveys, public meetings, open houses and community meetings and events, they shaped and refined NashvilleNext. Their vision for the future has been consistent throughout the NashvilleNext process. It has also been consistent throughout Nashville’s community planning program.

Nashvillians cherish the diversity of places in Davidson County. They want their neighborhoods to support well-being and community. They want a prosperous community that allows everyone to share in the city’s success.

NashvilleNext recommends strongly coordinating regulations and resources to achieve this vision. In particular, NashvilleNext seeks to

- » protect Davidson County’s remaining natural and rural areas
- » restore degraded natural features to health
- » ensure that everyone in the county has access to green places.
- » encourage new development in walkable centers and corridors
- » deconcentrate poverty by minimizing displacement in redeveloping areas and building new homes in high opportunity areas
- » create a high capacity transit network that is competitive with car travel to sustain high ridership

Today’s children will inherit the county we leave and that we prepare them to lead. The city we hand over to them should grow as we grow and change as we change, without losing sight of what makes it Nashville.

A general plan guides the physical development of the entire county. It is enabled by State law and required by the Metro charter.

Four Pillars of Nashville Next



Guiding Principles

- » Ensure opportunity for all
- » Expand accessibility
- » Create economic prosperity
- » Foster strong neighborhoods
- » Advance education
- » Champion the environment
- » Be Nashville

How do we know what the community’s vision is?

Throughout NashvilleNext, the vision was created with input from the community, supplemented by insight from topical experts, and guided by the Steering Committee.

See “Community engagement” on page 23 for more information.

About planning

Cities and communities make decisions about the future every day, in response to new opportunities or unexpected problems. A General Plan like NashvilleNext is one tool for helping to make these decisions, with three distinctive features:

- » It is long-range, looking ahead 10, 20, or 25 years
- » It is comprehensive, looking across many different facets of what a city does
- » It is deliberative, looking within to understand the needs and desires of all of the communities that care about the city.

The physical structure of the city — our roads and parks, pipes and sewers, buildings and sidewalks — is the primary focus of NashvilleNext. However, the physical city does not exist isolated from the rest of daily life. It shapes our health, work, and well-being and how we relate to one another in and across communities. NashvilleNext must consider all of these contexts as it plans the future of the city.

Implementation

Most of the work of shaping Nashville's future will be done by our residents, businesses, and nonprofits. Metro Government has a key role to play through these implementation tools:

- » Regulations (particularly the land development code)
- » Capital spending
- » Programs and staffing
- » Partnerships

Partnerships may be the most important tool NashvilleNext has. Nashville happens because of much more than what Metro does. A shared vision that unites government with the private sector, non-profits, and communities across the county is our most powerful tool.

NashvilleNext also proposes an annual report to Planning Commission, Metro Council, and the Mayor. The report will track progress in implementing the plan and allow for minor updates to ensure the plan remains relevant.

The demographic changes we anticipate will mean a larger, more diverse population. Those changes give us an opportunity to rebuild and reinvent the county in critical places. Doing so will give people more choice in where to live, where to work, and how to get around. Improving access to safe, healthy neighborhoods the quality of life for Nashvillians. Including new homes, businesses, and services carefully can sustain and enhance the character of the neighborhoods that Nashvillians cherish.

Creating a high-capacity transit network is critical to managing this change. Re-imagining and rebuilding our key corridors and centers supports a balanced approach to transportation that improves streets for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers. The transit network becomes the framework for where and how places in Nashville become more dense and vibrant.

Giving priority to infill development allows us to preserve more of Nashville's remaining natural and rural areas. Reducing development on sensitive features like steep slopes and floodplains minimizes hazards to life and property.

We also seek to grow our economy by ensuring a ready supply of places for all kinds and sizes of businesses to locate and expand. We prepare for Nashville's future economy by investing in our workforce through lifelong learning and access to educational opportunities.

Our vibrant economy and talented workforce plays the biggest role in growing Davidson County's tax base. But NashvilleNext also recognizes that growing in a compact way maximizes the value of existing infrastructure, reduces extending infrastructure to unserved areas, and provides services more efficiently.

Last, NashvilleNext recognizes that Nashville is not an island, cut off from the rest of the world. We are embedded in a broader region, whose fortunes rise and fall with our own. We are also tied to global changes, from a worldwide economy to a changing climate.

The foundation of this approach is to ensure that the plan remains relevant to Nashvillians. The plan's implementation policies provide a platform for ongoing reporting on the plan's progress. They also recommend regularly updating the plan to ensure it stays relevant to decision-makers.

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

NashvilleNext is the General Plan for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. The process to create the plan engaged the community to develop and establish community aspirations for the future, and goals for public policy and community development. It updates previous planning documents including General Plan for Nashville, 1980-2000 and Concept 2010. NashvilleNext is a coordinated plan which guides future development across the county. It provides direction and policy guidance on the physical structure of the county – the things we build, how and where we build them, as well as the places we preserve. It includes:

- » Homes, shops, and workplaces
- » Roads, greenways, sidewalks, and transit
- » Power lines, water and sewer connections, and solid waste facilities
- » Schools, parks, gardens, and farmland
- » Historic sites, forests, lakes, rivers, and creeks

These have a few things in common. They are inter-related – they influence each other. Where homes are affects where shops go, and vice versa. Similarly, a new subdivision may add a sewer line connecting the new homes to sewer service. Once that line is built, however, it encourages other new subdivisions to locate nearby.

These things are also jointly decided. No one group – a single government, a set of developers, or private homebuyers – is entirely responsible for making decisions. This is especially so when considering the entire county. Many different people play a role.

These things also affect more than just the city’s physical structure. Where jobs are in relation to homes and what kinds of transportation connect them shapes what opportunities residents have for employment. The kinds of jobs that are available are also influenced by the price of land. This can result in a mismatch between the skills workers have and the skills employers need.

Some of these jobs are also incompatible with where people live, because of noise, pollution, or something else. However, too often over the past century, community leaders concentrated unwanted uses in poor and minority communities.

long term



nashvillenext

mid-term

Functional Plans

short term

Community Plans

zoning code

subdivision regulations

capital improvement budget

mandatory referrals

Last, how we build the city can affect how we get along. Public spaces like parks and safe streets are a kind of infrastructure for neighborliness. They create places to come together across communities and provide meaningful access to community resources.

The community's vision for its future should guide how these things work together. NashvilleNext lays out how Metro should harness the tools at its disposal to achieve this vision. Regulations that promote development, redevelopment, or preservation; investments in parks, buildings, and infrastructure; and programs and partnerships in Nashville and throughout the region can all play a role.

NashvilleNext guides decisions on these interrelated things to achieve a future that is:

- » Responsive to what the public wants while balancing the needs and desires of different groups
- » Reasonable and possible to achieve, with specific action steps
- » Realistic in grappling with trends that are underway or likely to occur
- » Far-sighted with a view toward long-term trends
- » Broad in terms of thinking about the needs of the entire county and region
- » Comprehensive, drawing the insight of different fields, departments, or organizations

NashvilleNext begins by considering a changing population impacts the county's physical structure. (See below for a look at demographic trends.) It goes beyond that to understand the implications those changes have for other areas, such as education, workforce development, and culture.

General plans have two primary tools for turning their visions into reality. Land development regulations (like zoning and subdivisions) guide private development decisions. The city builds and maintains physical infrastructure like sewers, roads, and parks. As the scope of general plans have expanded, other tools are increasingly important. For example, art in public spaces can create places and neighborhoods that Nashvillians treasure. Often, Metro Arts commissions the art. It may also be contributed by individual artists, neighborhoods, or developers. The Planning Department is usually not involved at all. Coordination with other Metro departments

and partnerships with outside groups help the general plan guide community development. (See below for a discussion of implementation tools.)

Davidson County's last general plan (Concept 2010) was written in the early 1990s and was in effect until replaced by this plan. NashvilleNext will be Nashville's third general plan since city-county consolidation. Each general plan has been a product of its time. The General Plan for Nashville, 1980-2000 was focused on how to handle a population that was expanding outward. Concept 2010 was a broader, strategic plan that relied on the newly created community planning program to provide land use guidance. Concept 2010 also provided more balance between outward expansion, environmental preservation, and urban and downtown revitalization. NashvilleNext will differ from these prior plans because circumstances have changed. (See *Why Make a Plan?*)

Legal authority

In Nashville, a general plan has two sources of authority. First, State law enables municipalities to create a general plan to guide development. Second, the Metro Charter requires that Nashville a General Plan for use by the Planning Commission in its work. Traditionally in Nashville, General and Community Plans are adopted by the Planning Commission and accepted by the Metro Council. Councilmembers have been engaged routinely throughout NashvilleNext, both as representatives and in order to reach their constituents across the county.

**a General Plan
for the physical
development of the
entire metropolitan
government area**



The Metro Charter requires that Nashville have a General Plan “for the physical development of the entire metropolitan government area.”

(Metro Nashville Charter, chapter 5, sec. 11.504 (c))

The Metro Planning Commission is charged to:

Make, amend and add to the master or general plan for the physical development of the entire metropolitan government area.

Make and adopt a zoning plan and recommend or disapprove proposed changes in such plan.

Make and adopt plans for the replanning, conservation, improvements and renewal of neighborhoods, planning units and communities within the metropolitan government area.

Submit annually to the mayor, not less than sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the budget year, a list of recommended capital improvements.

Approve the use and construction of public rights of way, streets, buildings, utilities, or parks.

(Metro Nashville Charter, chapter 5, sec. 11.504 (c))

**in accordance with
existing and future
needs to best promote
public health, safety,
morals, order,
convenience, prosperity
and the general welfare**



Tennessee State Law requires that a general plan “shall be made 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” (Tenn. Code Ann. § 13-4-203).

Why make a plan?

Governments, communities, and businesses create plans for many different reasons. At their core, all plans are about managing change to create a better future.



To set priorities and use public money wisely

Nashville is a \$66 billion asset.¹ This is the value of the places and buildings in Nashville – downtown offices, urban and suburban neighborhoods, places to shop, farmland, and all other properties in the county.

Through its regulations and investments, Metro is closely involved in managing the value of that asset. Our regulations can allow the value of that asset to increase in some areas, while limiting how it grows in others. Our investments – such as roads, sewers, transit, or parks – can make places more or less attractive to the private market.

Because property taxes are Metro’s primary source of revenue, this asset – our tax base – is also the core source of funding for Metro’s programs. These tie together in three ways:

- » The overall value of the asset – primarily the value of property, plus retail spending within the county.
- » The tax rate – how much value Metro extracts to run its operations
- » The level of services Metro provides – the amount of operations Metro can conduct.

When preparing each year’s budget, the Mayor, Councilmembers, and the public discuss how much we tax and how much we spend, given current needs and the value of the tax base. To balance its finances, Metro can levy higher or lower tax rates, or provide more or fewer services.

The General Plan aids this discussion by identifying long-range, county-wide priorities. It shows how different Metro programs and parts of the county play different roles, now and in the future. This context helps Planning Commission, Metro Council, and the Mayor weigh competing objectives.

With a long-term perspective, Metro can also work to increase, stabilize, or reduce the value of its tax base. How Metro invests and regulates land uses

¹ Minicozzi, J. & Barnes, J. (2013). *Nashville-Davidson: Local Solutions for a Regional Vision*.

See more about Metro finances on page 96.

can allow or encourage the private market to add value to the tax base in appropriate locations. It can also develop and redevelop the way the county is built to make it more efficient to provide city and county services. In a compact city, heavy utilities like roads, sidewalks, and storm sewers are cheaper to build and maintain. The Fire Department has lower operating costs in a compact city, although narrow streets and congestion can push in the other direction.

To adapt to anticipated future growth

Nashville adopted its last plan, Concept 2010, in 1992. Since then, Nashville has undergone significant changes. Concept 2010's goal of revitalizing downtown while invigorating neighborhood planning has largely succeeded. Nashville has been fortunate in the intervening twenty years: a growing population, lower crime rate, increasing educational attainment, greenways built, new investments throughout the county, and an expanding transit system.

But these successes bring challenges. Our physical infrastructure — what the city builds — has to keep pace. This infrastructure reflects and reacts to where and how people choose to live. It can also influence those decisions. Similar, the private market, and our regulations that guide it, also reacts to and shapes where and how people choose to live. A general plan is our opportunity to ask if the city we are building is what Nashvillians want for the future.

To maintain our quality of life by deciding where and how we grow

Nashvillians want different things for their homes and neighborhoods, workplaces and shops, natural places and downtown. These differences can be intense when confronted with particular project. In recent years, Nashvillians have debated the Fairgrounds, the Convention Center, and new mixed use buildings in many neighborhoods.

Nashville has been changing for decades, but the past ten years have been especially fast-paced. Rising interest in older, urban neighborhoods has challenged Nashville's approach to building the city. The ensuing development and redevelopment is changing neighborhoods and commercial centers across the county. Some neighbors welcome these changes, but others are wary.

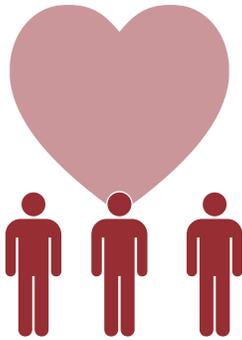
By 2040, Nashville is expected to add 185,000 more people and 326,000 more jobs.

See more about demographic changes facing Nashville on page 49.



Intense debates over the location and nature of growth are not unusual. Decisions on roads, parking, zoning, and the like matter because they impact our quality of life. They shape our health and welfare, the ability to look after children or parents, the character of our neighborhoods, and how we live our lives each day.

A general plan is our opportunity to step back and determine what we agree on, and make some big decisions. It cannot end disagreement, but it can highlight where we agree and what our overall goals are. Creating the plan can provide opportunities for all to be heard when we do disagree.



To create communities that we love

Nashvillians love communities across the county for their neighborliness, grit, and hospitality. People move here, fall in love, and stay because of our vibrant economy and quality of life. The built environment shapes daily life in Nashville: where our public spaces are, how we get around, how much time we spend in the car, and how much we see our neighbors. These things support a high quality of life for Nashvillians. Our neighborhoods – whether they are peaceful and secluded or vibrant and active – shape our enjoyment of our homes. They are also places we cherish of their special qualities that let us know we are in this place and not another place.

More and more research over the past twenty years shows the importance of community, neighborliness, and casual acquaintances. Over that time, Nashvillians, like the rest of America, have less time for our local communities. Longer work hours, tougher schedules, more television, more time spent in cars, and the internet all nudge us away from our neighbors.²

This sort of neighborliness isn't for everyone at all times. Some people value the solitude of Joelton or Whites Creek, or the space to stretch out that a larger lot allows. But more and more people are looking to reconnect to their local communities. The places in Nashville that support that lifestyle are increasingly in demand and rapidly becoming unaffordable.

² Sources: Putnam RD. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster; 2000.