

# 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. This plan is 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:

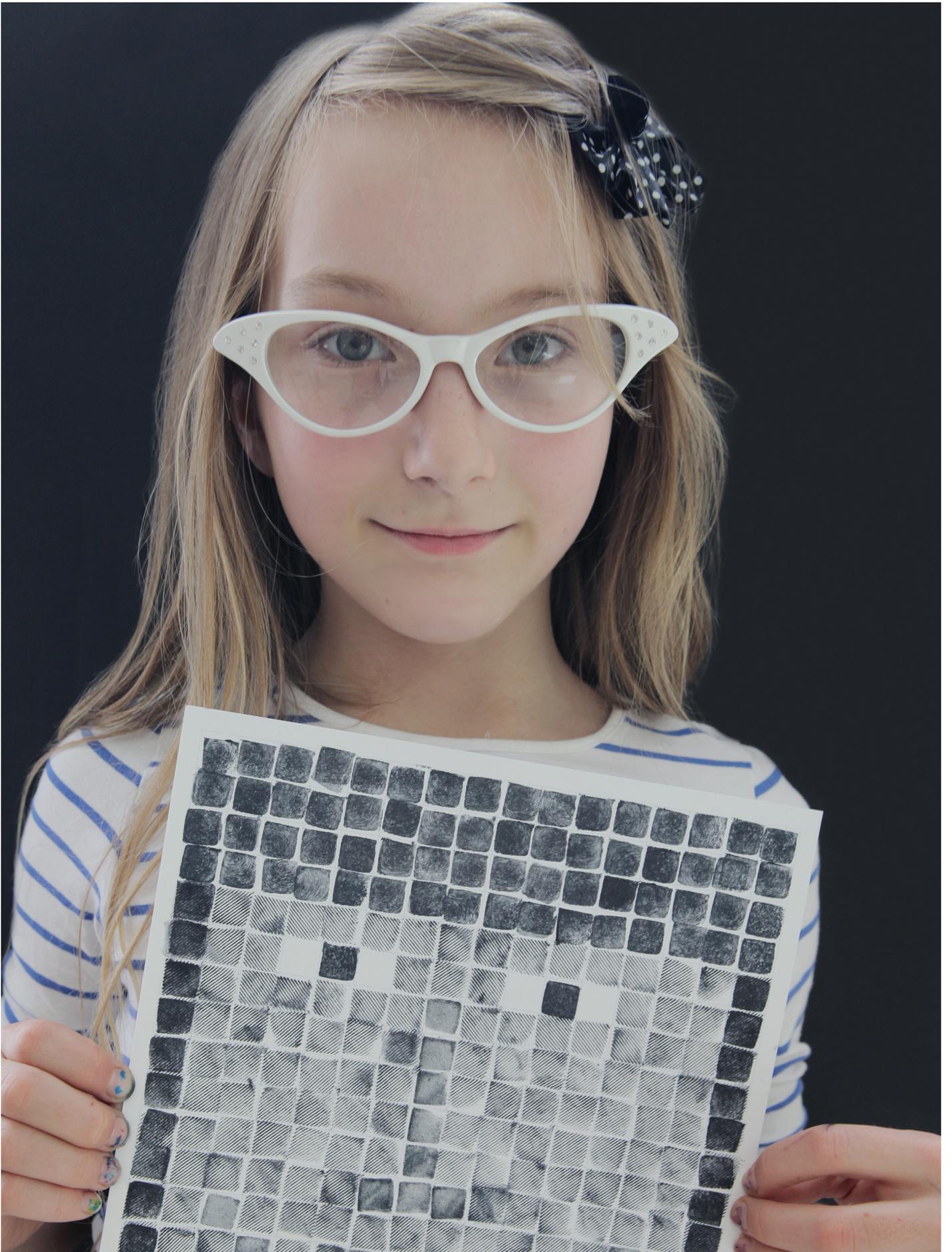
- » Online: [www.NashvilleNext.net](http://www.NashvilleNext.net)
- » Email: [info@nashvillenext.net](mailto:info@nashvillenext.net)
- » At public meetings
  - » April 18: Tennessee State University (Downtown Campus), 10am - 1:30 pm
  - » April 20: 5 - 7pm at both the North Nashville Police Precinct 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](http://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)



# IMPLEMENTATION

How a plan moves from vision to reality is critical. Community leaders and members have clear expectations that their work on NashvilleNext will be carried forward and be made real. This section explains the tools that NashvilleNext has to make this vision a reality.

## 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.

## *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 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.

## NashvilleNext Resource Teams



Arts, Culture & Creativity



Economic & Workforce Development



Education & Youth



Housing



Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure



Natural Resources & Hazard Adaptation



Health, Livability & the Built Environment

## Elements

The seven plan elements (Name the seven elements here) are the major topics for the plan to address. Their policy direction takes two forms (goals and policies). Taken together, the seven elements form Volume II of the plan.

- » **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.
- » **Policy Maps** give geographic guidance for decision-making. If Policies say what should happen, Policy Maps say where it should or should not happen. They help to coordinate investments (such as priorities for transit or new greenways) and reflect community expectations for the future of an area.  
The Growth Concept Map is the central Policy Map, providing the highest level view of how NashvilleNext's different elements come together. Other maps provide further detail. In particular, Community Character Maps give more detailed land use guidance for zoning and subdivision decisions.
- » **Actions**, included in Volume IV, provide specific tasks to carry out the Policies. Actions are intended to be updated regularly, as they are completed. If an action is found to be the wrong tool to accomplish a policy, the policy guidance still holds; a new approach should be identified.

## 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.

The Community Character Manual, volume III, provides detailed

explanations of the character policies used in the Community Character Maps.

### *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.

### *Access Nashville 2040*

Volume V is the overarching vision of how transportation works under NashvilleNext. It contains three more detailed plans that address key components of Nashville's transportation system. First, the Major & Collector Street Plan guides how Metro manages its transportation rights-of-way – the land it has the right to use for the transportation system. The Major & Collector Street Plan identifies how much land is needed for different kinds of roadways in the county, as well as how different travel modes (auto traffic, transit, bikes, and pedestrians) are accommodated in each roadway.

The Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways enables Metro to effectively plan and implement facilities that improve safety, enhance mobility, and promote a higher quality of life. The plan provides Metro with a blueprint for making walking and bicycling attractive, safe, and practical transportation options for citizens throughout Nashville and Davidson County.

The MTA Transit Master Plan guides transit operations and improvements in the near term (5 years), as well as with an eye toward the long-term system Nashvillians need.

## How plans become reality

By the nature, plans are implemented slowly. The built environment changes even more slowly, especially across an entire county. Changes rarely happen immediately when a plan is adopted. Instead, plans typically identify a workplan that must then be carried out over the course of several years. Regulations must be studied, formulated, debated, and adopted. Proposals for staffing must be incorporated into budgets, where they compete with other priorities. New proposals for capital improvements must be incorporated into capital planning processes, budgeted for, designed, and then built.

These decisions are always made in the context of the day. Any number of things affect how quickly plans are implemented, such as:

- » changes in the economy
- » concerns over the business environment and tax rates
- » outside funding sources
- » the complexity of complying with new regulations

Community members may be wary of changes to regulations or new approaches to infrastructure. They look to pilot projects or introducing regulatory changes on a small scale first. These slow implementation, but they also allow everyone to understand the effect of new policies or construction techniques.

At right, two timelines show the long arc of implementing plans or changing how we build infrastructure. For example, in the case of downtown, the prior General Plan called for a 24-hour downtown, with homes, shopping, and tourism complementing downtown's offices. At the time, downtown zoning prohibited homes. Concept 2010's vision was gradually achieved over the next twenty years.

## A 24-hour downtown

Nashville's current General Plan, Concept 2010, called for revitalizing downtown as a place for 24-hour living, expanding beyond businesses to include residences, shopping, and tourist destinations. Getting there has been a long road, one that is not yet complete. Here are some key events in revitalizing downtown:

- 1992** Concept 2010 adopted
- 1994** Zoning in the central core changed to allow residential construction  
Ryman Auditorium re-opens  
BellSouth building opens (now AT&T Building)
- 1996** Bicentennial Mall and Farmers Market open  
Nashville Arena opens
- 1997** Plan for SoBro published by the Nashville Scene
- 1998** The Cumberland apartments open (first new residential since the zoning code revised)
- 1999** Titans move to Nashville; stadium opens on East Bank
- 2001** Frist Center for Visual Arts, Country Music Hall of Fame, and the downtown Public Library open
- 2002** The Gulch Master Plan completed
- 2003** Seigenthaler Pedestrian Bridge Reopens
- 2005** The Plan of Nashville is published
- 2006** Viridian condominiums open (first high-rise condos in Nashville)  
Schermerhorn Symphony Center opens  
Music City Star Commuter Rail Service Begins  
Gulch Business Improvement District is created.
- 2007** Downtown Community Plan updated
- 2008** Music City Central Downtown Transit Station Opens
- 2010** Downtown Code revised; prior to the revision, every new project required multiple variances. After revision, none do.  
Census finds 6,219 residents downtown
- 2012** Nashville B-Cycle Bikeshare Network Launched

## **Bicycling and sidewalk amenities**

Sidewalks used to be a standard feature of new neighborhoods. As cars became more widespread and the demand for homes with large yards grew, they were abandoned as too costly. Decades of neighborhoods were left with sidewalks. The slow process of restoring sidewalks as a standard part of neighborhoods has involved federal legislation, constant refinements to subdivision regulations, the need for a long-term view as to how major corridors evolve and redevelopment.

- 1975** Conceptual bikeway map for urbanized sections of County produced by Planning Department
- 1990** Federal Americans with Disabilities Act adopted
- 1991** Metro Greenways Commission established  
Subdivision Regulations required sidewalks on one side of new streets
- 1992** Mobility 2010: A Transportation Plan for Nashville and Davidson County was adopted by the Planning Commission – acknowledged the importance of walking and bicycling – “high occupancy vehicles including carpools, vanpools, and public transit, and other alternatives such as bicycling and walking will provide a significantly greater amount of mobility needed in the future.”
- 1996** Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan developed by the Planning Department included the Greenways Commission’s Greenways Framework and identified major street corridors on which the installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities were recommended  
Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Task Force (TAPS) established by the Metro Council
- 2000** Nashville’s Downtown Transportation Plan for 2000-2020 included a policy to improve pedestrian circulation
- 2001** Countywide pedestrian and bicycle plan started
- 2002** Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner hired at Metro Planning  
Subdivision Regulations requirements for sidewalks amended and in-lieu fee option added
- 2003** Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways completed which assessed existing sidewalks, compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and implementation
- 2006** Subdivision Regulations amended to require sidewalks on both sides of new streets
- 2007** Mobility 2030: Nashville-Davidson County’s Transportation Plan incorporates Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solutions to the planning of the transportation system
- 2008** Mayor Karl Dean establishes a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways updated
- 2009** Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner moved into Mayor’s Office as Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
- 2010** Mayor Karl Dean establishes a Metro Complete Streets Policy
- 2011** Planning Commission adopts updated Major and Collector Street Plan entitled Implementing Complete Streets: Major and Collector Street Plan of Metro Nashville which emphasizes a street’s context and surrounding land use to design adequate sidewalks with redevelopment and an envisioned regional mass transit system
- 2013** Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator hired at Metro Public Works

## **Implementation goals and policies**

### **IM 1**

Nashvillians rightfully expect their participation in this plan to change Metro Nashville's policies, regulations, actions, and investments toward achieving their vision for the future.

NashvilleNext is first and foremost a community developed statement providing a vision for the desired future of the community together with the principles, goals, objectives and actions required to attain that vision.

Through its adoption, NashvilleNext becomes a guiding tool for the Planning Commission. Its three primary powers draw from the Commission's power: to shape the physical form of the County through plans and land development regulations, by recommending projects to be included in each year's capital improvements budget, and by managing public buildings, facilities, roads, and rights-of-way with an eye toward the community's long-term needs.

Because these three powers touch on so many different aspects of life in Nashville, it is critical that this plan also serve as a place to coordinate related activities and efforts. This coordination happens in two ways. First, other Metro Departments should consult NashvilleNext as they develop their own long-range plans and programs. Second, Metro should partner with other groups – non-profits, as well as community, business, and neighborhood groups – pursuing goals related to the plan.

NashvilleNext includes many recommendations beyond these three powers. NashvilleNext do this for three reasons.

First, these powers are closely intertwined with other things that Metro does. Taking a broader approach allows for better coordination.

Second, this plan represents considerable public input, on a scale far larger than any other single project, other than voting in elections. Moreover, NashvilleNext builds on Nashville's ongoing community planning program, a 25-year effort to involve people across the county in shaping the future of their communities.

Third, this plan should be monitored and updated annually. Regularly updating the plan keeps it relevant in the face of unforeseen changes, trends and actions. This gives real teeth to its role in coordination. As partners succeed or struggle, NashvilleNext can recognize this. As other departments encounter problems or identify new opportunities to implement the plan, NashvilleNext should be updated to maintain its relevance.

### **IM 2**

Nashvillians are regularly informed about progress in implementing the plan and in achieving the plan's goals.

A general plan is not a blueprint. It is a guide to decisions and actions. As a plan ages and is implemented, new opportunities arise and different compromises are reached than was originally envisioned by the plan. As this happens, a static plan becomes less and less relevant over time, until it properly stops being meaningful and used completely.

Therefore, NashvilleNext should be reviewed annually. This review should include:

- » What's been done to implement the plan?
- » Where is new development happening?
- » Updated metrics to assess progress in achieving the vision

This review should be submitted to the Planning

Commission for acceptance at a public hearing. The hearing allows an opportunity for the community to validate or propose amendments to NashvilleNext.

Once accepted by the Commission, it should be submitted to the Mayor and Metro Council prior the start of the annual budget process.

### **IM 2.1**

Report on progress, including successes, and obstacles, in implementing the plan.

### **IM 2.2**

Assess progress towards achieving the vision Nashvillians identified in the plan.

### **IM 2.3**

Monitor the location, character and effects of new private development.

## **IM 3**

NashvilleNext is regularly updated to remain relevant to future decisions.

Each year, decisions that adjust the course charted by NashvilleNext should be incorporated to keep the plan from becoming out of date. In most cases, these will be minor adjustments that only need be recorded. In some cases, these may entail major changes of direction that trigger the need to update some or all of the plan.

Additionally, the public should be consulted every five years to see if the plan's vision and policies are still representative and appropriate. The intent of major updates is a considered approach to changing policies, rather than keeping the plan in line as decisions are made. Why might an update be needed? Changing vision from Nashvillians

(including insight from changing market demand, implementation, or community plans), changing circumstances (state/federal law, national/international trends)). Major amendments may update the entire plan, or focus only one or more elements or sections.

### **IM 3.1**

Make amendments to Volumes 1, 2, 4, and 5 annually to reflect minor changes.

### **IM 3.2**

Consider amendments to Volume 3 (Community Plans) by direction of Planning Commission to support NashvilleNext or with requests for re-zoning.

### **IM 3.3**

Review the plan for major updates at least once every 5 years, or as needed, based on annual reports and updates, as determined by the Planning Commission.

## **IM 4**

NashvilleNext supports public-, private-, and non-profit-sector coordination.

Incorporating policies from NashvilleNext into other departments' plans, programs, and policies to extend the community's vision beyond the powers of the Planning Commission.

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.

This is why Element chapters (Volume 2) 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, non-profits, and the private sector are critical.

Middle Tennessee's economy and places are closely linked together, with residents crossing county lines in all directions to work, shop, live, and play. Coordinating regionally is critical to improving quality of life and remaining economically competitive in Nashville and the region.

#### **IM 4.1**

Provide usable, relevant information to public, private, and non-profits engaged in short- and long-term planning or program development.

#### **IM 4.2**

Incorporate appropriate recommended changes from public, private, or non-profit partners into NashvilleNext through the annual update process, as determined by the Planning Commission.

#### **IM 5**

Nashville creates and uses appropriate, available tools to achieve the plan's goals and implement its policies.

As Nashville's general plan, NashvilleNext sets out a

vision for what Nashville wants to be in the future. Land development regulations are an important tool used to achieve that vision. Where we lack the tools that we need to achieve the vision, NashvilleNext will recommend creating them and show how the tool should relate to other elements in the plan. For example, two major themes of NashvilleNext are improving affordability and expanding transit. While these can be pursued independently, they are most effective when done together. NashvilleNext provides recommendations for the use of existing and new tools to achieve goals in these areas

If regulations are an important tool within our toolbox for shaping the future of the city, the zoning and rezoning process are how we select and apply tools to particular pieces of land. This, too, should be guided by Volume III of NashvilleNext. An outcome that is appropriate for one part of the county—requiring rural character, for example—may not be appropriate in another part of the county (downtown, for instance) and our regulatory tools must be designed and applied to achieve the desired community.

Rezoning may occur as individual property owners decide to change how they use their property. They may also be initiated by Metro, as a way to implement this plan.

In some cases, more detailed planning is needed for particular areas before rezonings occur or new investments are made. These small-area plans (which in the past, have included transportation studies and detailed neighborhood design plans) provide a much more fine grained look at small parts of the county and provide detailed guidance on investments to make (road improvements, sidewalks and bikelanes, streetscapes, and the like) and zoning guidance. Small-area plans provide a link between the broad direction of NashvilleNext, concerns from nearby residents and businesses, and the final tools for

implementation.

The Metro charter requires that the Planning Commission recommend to the Mayor a list of projects each year for a capital improvements budget. NashvilleNext's annual reports should inform each year's capital improvements budget. Each year, departments submit a list of recommended projects to the Planning Commission. Each project is rated on a checklist of NashvilleNext priorities. This information is provided to Planning Commission as part of its discussion and decision on which projects to recommend that year. Updated information will be provided to the Mayor and Council, as well. See the sidebar for a recommended checklist for capital improvements.

#### **IM 5.1**

Adopt regulations and incentives to guide private development to achieve community goals identified in NashvilleNext.

#### **IM 5.2**

Apply regulations to rezonings, subdivision, site plans, and other development decisions in line with NashvilleNext.

#### **IM 5.3**

Use small-area plans, design studies, design overlays, and other detailed plans when more fine-grained regulations or community discussions are required.

#### **IM 5.4**

Ensure changes to public facilities, buildings, and rights-of-way are aligned with NashvilleNext.

#### **IM 5.4**

Give priority to projects in each year's capital improvements plan that address immediate life, safety, or legal needs; reflect Council and Mayor priorities; or are aligned with NashvilleNext.

#### **IM 5.5**

Align Metro's organizational structure, programs, and operations to improve quality of life, achieve the community's vision for Nashville's future, and maintain efficient governmental operations.