nashvillenext

EDUCATION & YOUTH

MAY STATIC DRAFT

This is the static review draft of the Education & Youth element of NashvilleNext. It is part of Volume II (Elements) of the draft General Plan.

We appreciate that you are giving time to reviewing this work. This chapter 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 open until the Planning Commission's public hearing on the plan on Monday, June 15, 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
- 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 the Planning Commission's tentative adoption schedule:

- 3:00 pm, Monday, June 15: The Metropolitan Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the NashvilleNext plan at the Sonny West Conference Center in Metro's Howard Office Building, 700 Second Avenue South.
- 1:00 pm, Monday, June 22. The Metropolitan Planning Commission will resume their consideration on the NashvilleNext plan at the Sonny West Conference Center in Metro's Howard Office Building, 700 Second Avenue South.

Changes from the March 27, 2015, Review Draft are summarized on the next page.

Static Draft changes from the March 27, 2015 Draft

Education & Youth

- Edits have been made to the element text to reflect public comment.
- A sidebar was added on recent successes within Metro Nashville Public Schools.
- Numerous action items have been edited, refined, and—in some cases—combined, in response to comments provided by stakeholders and members of the public throughout April.
- An action item was added, at the request of the Metro Planning Commission, to provide a regular report on residential growth and its impact on schools to aid in planning for future school sites. This is in addition to the analysis provided by Metro Planning staff with each residential zone change.

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.

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, 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.

V Access Nashville 2040

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

Volume II

Education & Youth

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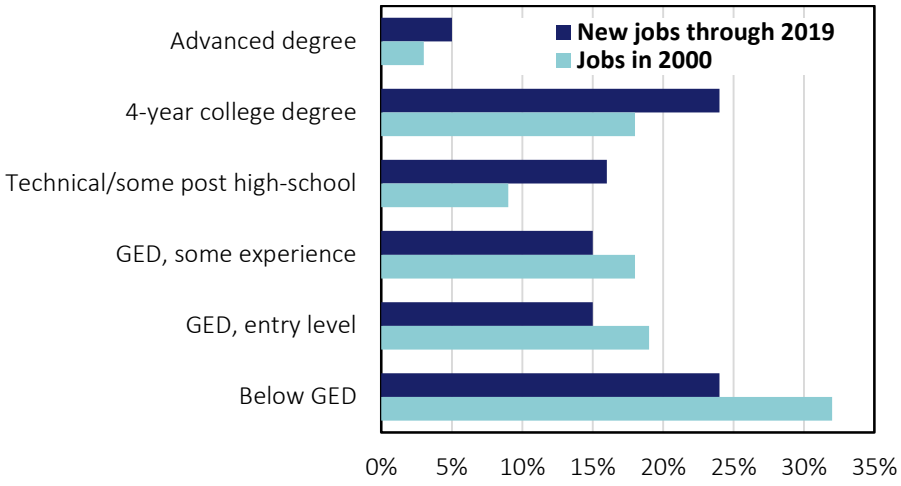
EDUCATION & YOUTH

Nashvillians are concerned about the health, education and well-being of our city's children and youth. Whether they are our children, neighbors, students, or simply in our community, Nashvillians want to provide a bright future Nashville's children.

Beyond the fact that children and youth add vitality to Nashville, beyond basic moral or ethical concerns for children, there are real and immediate reasons to care about Nashville's children and youth. When children are healthy and engaged in learning and productive out-of-school activities, the city reaps the benefits of reduced health care and delinquency costs. Nashville's youth are also its future employees, civic participants and leaders. While some Nashvillians are un- or under-employed, in the long term, Nashville expects worker shortages in key industries. This is the result of Baby Boomers retiring and declining birth rates. Meanwhile, we also expect there will be fewer jobs for low-skill workers and more jobs requiring some post-high school training or education. A child born at the beginning of the NashvilleNext process, in 2012, will be 28 at the end of the NashvilleNext horizon in 2040. The education and preparation of Nashville's children and youth will be key to Nashville's economic success and civic leadership in the future.

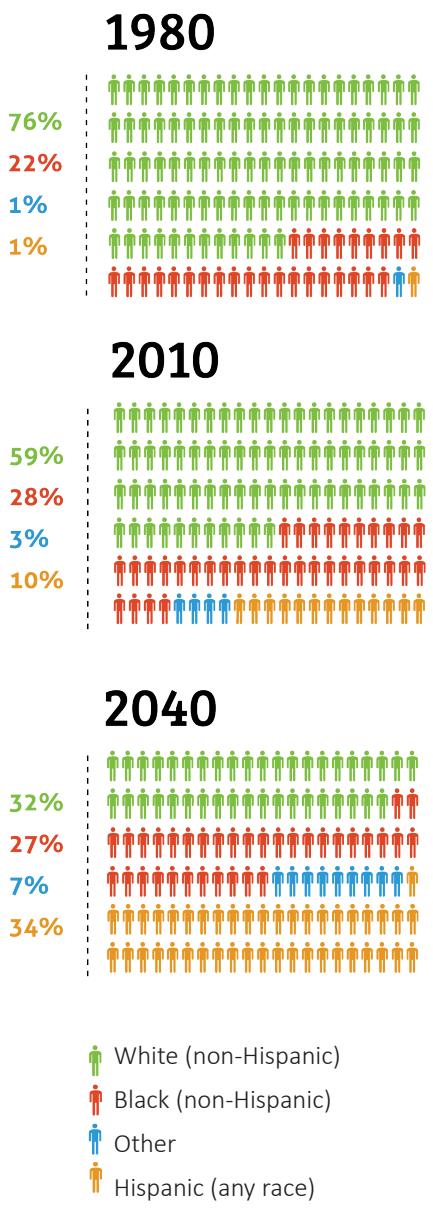
Figure EY-1: Changing job requirements

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



Source: Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, 2011

Figure EY-2: Nashville's changing racial and ethnic diversity (1980–2040)



Source: U.S. Census (1980, 2010); Woods & Poole (2040)

Nashville's youth can, perhaps, best be described as increasingly diverse. Davidson County boasts a diversity of places to live and, as a result, Nashville's children live in rural settings, in suburban communities, in urban neighborhoods and increasingly in downtown. In these settings Nashville's children garner different life experiences, are exposed to different opportunities, and have access to different levels of social capital. Nashville/Davidson County is diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, with a growing, vibrant immigrant and refugee community. Nashville also has significant socio-economic diversity with very wealthy families residing near families living in poverty.

This diversity impacts the lives of Nashville's children and youth. Exposure to diversity provides Nashville's children and youth with the opportunity to be aware of differences and work with others of diverse backgrounds– an important skill in an increasingly diverse country and an increasingly global economy.

The diversity of Nashville/Davidson County's children and youth poses opportunities and challenges to the Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) system. On a day-to-day basis, MNPS welcomes children from various socio-economic backgrounds including numerous children living in poverty who may come to school hungry, tired or experiencing extreme stress in their personal lives. MNPS serves children from 120 countries speaking over 135 languages. MNPS students represent an increasingly diverse variety of faith communities. MNPS also welcomes families and children moving to Nashville from across the country as well, bringing new ideas and perspectives. This diversity exposes MNPS students to the diversity of experience and thought that they will encounter in an increasingly inter-connected world, preparing them for the diversity that will be the norm in the future.

Nashville/Davidson County's diversity has also created unique challenges for MNPS. Many Nashvillians have been able to disengage from the conversation about, and support for, public schools because their households do not have children; because their children attend one of the County's private school options; or the family chooses to leave Davidson County for education options in outlying counties.

Nashville has responded with an intense focus on improving the county's school system and outcomes for Nashville's children and with public conversations and actions to re-engage individuals and families who have

How the Education & Youth Element is related to other NashvilleNext Plan Elements

Some of the issues that impact children and youth – the availability of safe, affordable housing; the availability of safe transportation (walking, biking or transit) to education and work; efforts to create safe, welcoming neighborhoods and parks; etc. – are addressed in other elements within NashvilleNext and will only receive cross-references in this element. The Education & Youth Element will focus primarily on providing quality care, education and opportunity to Nashville's children and youth.

Housing – Safe and affordable housing that is in good condition and is accessible to jobs, educational opportunities, and services is important to the success and well-being of children and their families throughout the county.

Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure – These three items are closely interrelated and children and youth are disproportionately harmed when land use, transportation and infrastructure are not designed in a way that gives them safe, convenient access to educational, recreational and employment opportunities. Children and youth are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of inadequate infrastructure such as sidewalks and transit facilities. The lack of this kind of infrastructure hurts their ability to enjoy relative independence.

Health, Livability, and the Built Environment – The current and future lives of children and youth are affected by health and livability issues such as access to health care and information about healthy living, their ability to safely walk, bike, and play outside in their neighborhoods, and other factors such as whether they live in food deserts or enjoy access to affordable, healthy food choices, and safe, welcoming parks.

Economic and Workforce Development – Preparation of our children to participate in tomorrow's workforce is critical for their success and that of the city and region.

Natural Resources and Hazard Adaptation – Providing access to natural resources through public parks, greenways, and school open spaces is of obvious importance to children and youth. Broader exposure to the natural world serves an important role in their education and upbringing. Their lives can be severely impacted by natural disasters such as floods, and Nashville's commitment to sustainability is based, in large part, on the knowledge that our children will inherit the environment that we protect.

Arts, Culture and Creativity – Providing children with equitable opportunities to participate in the arts, express their own cultures and learn from others, and express their creativity is important to their educations and development as successful adults. The Arts, Culture and Creativity Element includes action items to incorporate and fund arts and creativity as a key component in Metro School's core curriculum, programs and activities.

The relationship of the Education & Youth Element and the Child and Youth Master Plan

THERE CAN BE NO KEENER REVELATION OF A SOCIETY'S SOUL THAN THE WAY IN WHICH IT TREATS ITS CHILDREN. –NELSON MANDELA
CHILD & YOUTH MASTER PLAN
IT IS EASIER TO BUILD STRONG CHILDREN THAN TO REPAIR BROKEN MEN. –FREDERICK DOUGLASS
FOR METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE & DAVIDSON COUNTY THE SOLUTION TO ADULT PROBLEMS TOMORROW DEPENDS ON LARGE MEASURE UPON HOW OUR CHILDREN GROW UP TODAY. –MARGARET MEAD
CHILDREN ARE REMARKABLE FOR THEIR INTELLIGENCE AND ARDOR, FOR THEIR CURIOSITY, THEIR INTOLERANCE OF SHAMS, THE CLARITY AND RUTHLESSNESS OF THEIR VISION. –ALDOUS HUXLEY
CHILDREN ARE LIKELY TO LIVE UP TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE OF THEM. –LADY BIRD JOHNSON
TASKFORCE REPORT TO MAYOR KARL DEAN JULY 2010

The well-being and success of Nashville's children and youth has been the subject of much study and discussion. In 2010, Mayor Karl Dean convened a task force of over 50 community leaders and youth to develop the Child and Youth Master Plan (CYMP – available at http://www.nashville.gov/Mayors-Office/Priorities/Education/Reports-and-Committees.aspx). The CYMP reflects broad community consensus for actions that will improve the current and future lives of Nashville's young people. The CYMP was reviewed as part of the Education & Youth conversation during NashvilleNext. Its framework and content served as a resource for the NashvilleNext Education & Youth Resource Team. Many of the CYMP action items are included in this element, but the reader should look to the CYMP for a complete listing of its action items.

Figure EY-3: MNPS' foreign-born students' countries of origin
The larger the name of the country, the more MNPS students that are from that country

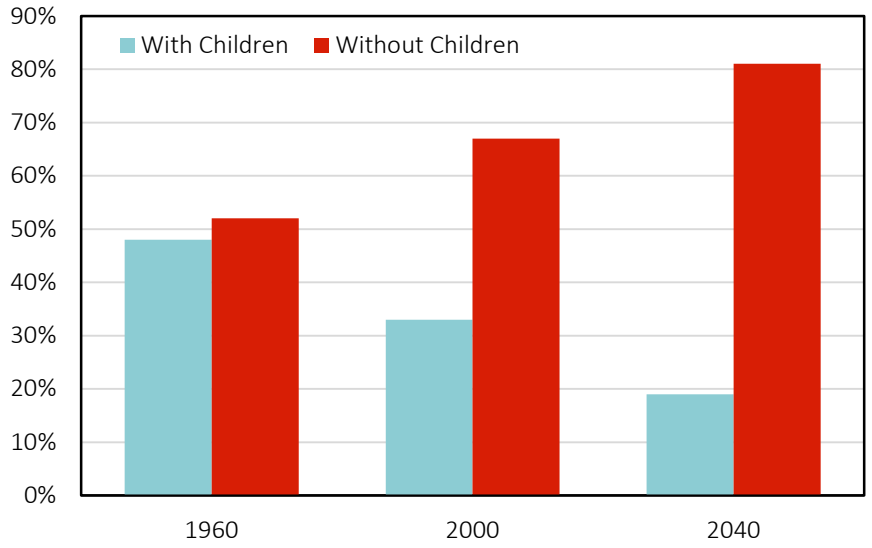
Figure EY-4: MNPS' foreign-born students' language at home
The larger the name of the language, the more MNPS students whose families speak that language at home

not been involved with public schools. These efforts include the *Child and Youth Master Plan* completed in 2010 (see sidebar); two decades of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce *Education Report Cards*; the work of numerous non-profit and for-profit groups using innovative models and programming to aid Nashville's children, youth and schools; and efforts by MNPS to offer quality educational opportunities to all children. However, the possibility that Nashvillians might disengage from public schools will grow even stronger in the future. While the total number of children who are 19 and under in Davidson County will increase from 155,207 in 2010 to a projected 184,296 in 2040, the number of children as a percentage of total population of the County will decline from 24.8 percent in 2010 to a projected 23.7 percent in 2040. Meanwhile, the percentage of households with children in Nashville/Davidson County is projected to decline as well.

Individual educational choices for the well-being of children will continue to be made. Nashville, like many other cities across the country, is firmly rooted in a model of providing educational choices to families. The goals and policies of the Education & Youth element lay the foundation for all Nashvillians—regardless of whether they have children or whether their children are in Metro Nashville Public Schools—to be engaged in caring for, educating and preparing our city's children and youth for future

Figure EY-5: Changes in households with children (1960–2040)

Since 1960, the percentage of households in Davidson County has declined. That trend is expected to continue through 2040.



Source:

NashvilleNext and Metro Nashville Public Schools

While there are many influences in a child's life, school is surely among the largest. The Metro Nashville Public Schools system (MNPS) is part of Metro government, but MNPS has a separate charter and an independent Board of Education composed of members who are directly elected by the constituents they represent. The Board of Education is the body that hires the Superintendent of Schools for MNPS.

NashvilleNext is intended to situate MNPS's work in the vision for the growth, development and preservation of the broader city, but NashvilleNext does not address matters directly related to the classroom, such as direct curriculum decisions or staffing decisions. These are the purview of the Board of Education.

success. Meanwhile, when choices are available, every option should be strong, and every family should have the resources—through clear, understandable information, meaningful transportation, reduction of costs that serve as barriers, etc.—to make their choice a reality.

The call for all Nashvillians to be engaged in supporting MNPS is paired with the expectation that all children and youth can succeed and that children, families, caregivers and schools should be supported to help children succeed. The NashvilleNext Education & Youth Element sets college preparedness as the standard for success for our children. While not all youth will choose to attend college, by setting college preparedness as our goal, we ensure that no child is precluded from post-high school education or training because they were ill-prepared to succeed at these tasks and all children are prepared to be able to make their own choice for college and/or career.

MNPS Recent Successes

Pre-K

MNPS has worked aggressively to expand pre-K programming to more Nashville/Davidson County children. In 2014, the efforts of MNPS, Mayor Karl Dean, Senator Lamar Alexandar, Congressman Jim Cooper and many local private sector partners came to fruition as MNPS received an $8.3 million grant to develop and expand high quality pre-K. The grant will create 400 new pre-K seats within MNPS and in outside, private sector partners; children who are economically disadvantaged or English Learners will have first priority for these seats.

The grant also provides opportunities to strengthen the network of pre-K providers and encourage innovation and accountability. MNPS and other providers will form the Early Childhood Education Commission, with the mission of aligning and planning for early childhood services across Nashville.

Academies of Nashville

With the creation of the Academies of Nashville system, MNPS has transformed its high schools to prepare students with relevant, advanced skills to pursue college or career. In 2010, MNPS went "wall-to-wall," implementing Academies in all of its neighborhood high schools. Each Academy offers a thematic course of study ranging from health care, engineering, business, finance, hospitality, architecture and construction, and more. MNPS high school students decide their area of interest and can attend the Academy of their choice. The Academies offer applied learning opportunities, partnering with businesses to address real-world problems, shadow industry leaders, and secure internships and other valuable learning opportunities. Students learn in settings that promote teamwork, critical thinking, communications and creativity.

StrIDe

In 2014, the Nashville Metro Transit Authority (MTA), the Mayor's Office and MNPS launched StrIDe,a program where 9th–12th grade students in MNPS schools and MNPS Charter schools can ride MTA buses at no cost. MNPS is offering more choices for high school students (see Academies above) and StrIDe assists youth and families who want to exercise that choice.

Key ideas shaping this chapter

Nashville's children & youth today

As noted above, Nashville's children and youth are diverse and, because of that diversity, it is difficult to describe them comprehensively. While many Nashville children have home lives that are safe and nurturing, live in neighborhoods that are safe and welcoming for children to play and explore, and attend schools that meet their needs and challenge them academically, there are other Nashville children who do not have these foundations for success. Some hallmarks of Nashville children's lives today include:

Poverty: 17.8 percent of all Nashville/Davidson County residents live in poverty. Among residents under the age of 18, the poverty rate is 30.5 percent or roughly 43,000 youth. Note that children under age 18 represent 21.6 percent of Nashville/Davidson County's population, so they are disproportionately impoverished[1].

Food Insecurity: In 2013, an estimated 22.4 percent of households with children under 18 in Davidson County faced food insecurity, meaning that over 13,000 households with children were uncertain that they would have enough money to buy food for the month and/or uncertain about where their next meal would come from. This compares to 17.1 percent of families with children under 18 in the State of Tennessee and a 21.6 percent of families with children under 18 across the U.S. [2]

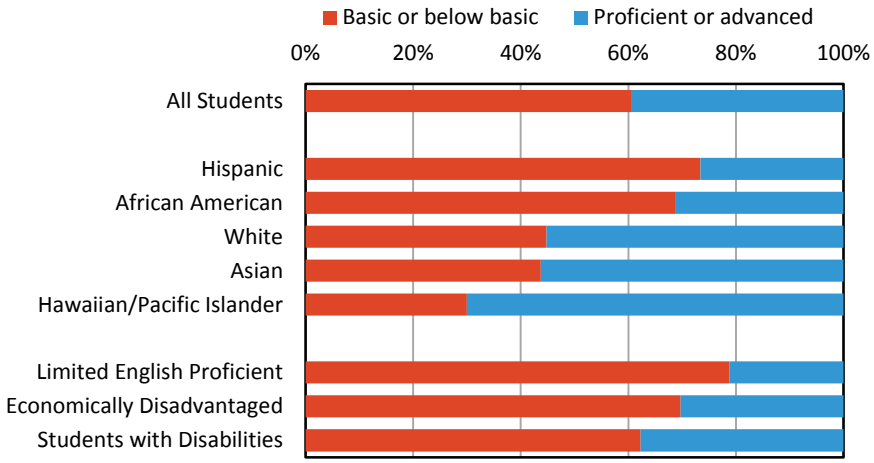
Educational Achievement: Two measures of academic achievement are included below; both represent achievement of Metro Nashville Public School students. Figure EY-6 on Grade 3 Achievement for Reading/Language Arts highlights a well-accepted measure of a child's educational success—whether they are reading at grade level during grade 3. The table, with 2012 data shows which cohorts of MNPS third graders were reading at a "proficient or advanced" level in grade 3—a predictor for future academic success.

Graduation rates
MNPS' graduation rate has risen by 20 percentage points in the past 10 years, from 58.2 percent graduating in 2004 to 78.7 percent graduating in 2014. A student graduating in 2014 was in second grade in 2004, and they have witnessed significant changes in MNPS' elementary, middle and high schools in the past ten years. With improvements at every stage of the student's academic career, graduation rates have been steadily rising.

English Learners
MNPS' student body is increasingly diverse, including student from over 120 countries speaking over 135 languages. MNPS' Office of English Learners recognizes that these students are not skill deficient, they are language deficient. As a result, the structures and supports around English Learners focus on language acquisition, making sure content accessible. The result is that former English Learners (those students who received and completed English Learner assistance) outperform general education students. On the 2014 TCAP, 50 percent of former English Learners scored "proficient or advanced" on reading/language arts tests compared to 43 percent of students with no English Learner background. The results on math tests were even more striking with 56 percent of former English Learners scoring "proficient or advanced" versus 42 percent of students with no English Learner background. The Office of English Learners relies on a cadre of English Learner teachers who teach not only general education subjects, but the English language as well and consistently produce improvements in English Learners.

1 *American Community Survey, 2013*
2 *Department of Education Report Card*

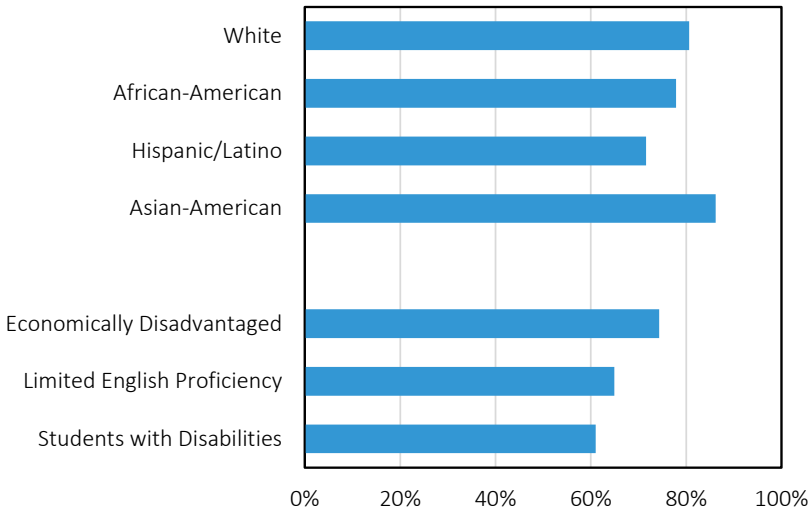
Figure EY-6: Grade 3 Achievement for Reading/Language Arts
After third grade, students should stop learning to read and begin reading to learn.



Source: Tennessee Department of Education; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012 (http://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-why-reading-by-the-end-of-third-grade-matters/)

Figure EY-7 illustrates MNPS' graduation rates from 2012, showing what percentage of each demographic cohort graduated from MNPS. In 2014, MNPS reported that between 2004 and 2014, its overall graduation rate improved from 58.2 percent in the 2003/2004 school year to 78.7 percent in 2013/2014.

Figure EY-7: Graduation rates from Metro Nashville Public Schools, (2013-2014



Source: State of Tennessee Education Report Card

Empowering youth

Children and youth are whole individuals with rights to lives with hopes and opportunities. Children and youth are in the formative stages of their lives. This is the time when they experience most of the education that will carry them through the rest of their lives as adults, employees and active participants in civic life. Their education is not just academic and formal. It also includes developing life skills inside and outside of the classroom. The goals, policies and actions of the Education & Youth Element include several opportunities to empower children and youth to visualize and attain a future full of possibility.

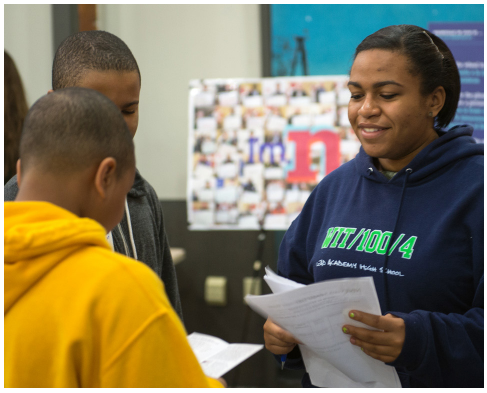


Figure EY-8: Children & youth were also participants in NashvilleNext.
Above, the 2013 Mayor's Youth Summit
Below, at the 2013 Eid Festival at Centennial Park.

Providing access, resources and support to Nashville's increasingly diverse families

In Nashville, families are also becoming more diverse. Nashville's families take many forms, including multigenerational, single parent, foster, blended, multi-ethnic, and same-sex households. The economic and cultural backgrounds of families vary. So do the challenges they face and the resources that are available to them. Barriers arise from issues including, but not limited to, poverty, lack of education and training, available time for child rearing, access to work, childcare and schools, and language differences. These barriers can affect the future opportunities available to the children in their care. Families need support systems that respond to their diversity to help their children succeed.

Areas where this support is needed include:

» Employment and workforce development
» Continuing their own education
» Affordable housing
» Transit
» Affordable health care
» Access to quality child care and before and after school programming
» Training/education for families on finances, parenting, language, and other life skills
» Assisting families with children with disabilities

Some of these issues are addressed in the Education & Youth goals, policies and actions and others are addressed in other elements of NashvilleNext. See sidebar above.

Creating networks of support for Nashville's at-risk youth

There are many points where a child's life and potential success in the future can be thrown off track, for example, by drug or alcohol use, an unplanned pregnancy, gang involvement, exposure to violence, etc. While the costs to the child and their future success and happiness can be severe, this is not a cost born solely by the child. In the U.S., it costs an average of $407.58 per child per day to incarcerate youth in a "residential placement," which varies from prison like settings to more open settings like group homes. The cost in Tennessee is lower, ranging from $280 to $300 per child per day.[3] Meanwhile, research conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation showed a decline in the number of juveniles in committed custody (a court-ordered action) from 1,716 youth in 1997 to 927 youth in 2007.[4]

It takes many layers of support to help a child return to a stable and healthy home and school life and to work with the child to understand that they deserve and can achieve more. Nashville needs to take decisive action to create positive pathways for at-risk children and youth. We need to support them and their families and guide them back into safe and healthy homes and educational settings.

Providing safe, welcoming and accessible neighborhoods where children, youth and their families can thrive

Children are greatly influenced by their environment—their families, peers, schools and neighborhoods. The manner in which we design and build neighborhoods can impact—in positive and negative ways—a child's health, well-being and the availability of opportunities for play, exploration and learning. Children and youth need neighborhoods where they will be safe when they walk, bike, and play outside for their health and well-being. Children and youth face unique challenges related to the built environment. The built environment has a much more powerful effect on children than it does on most adults. It either limits or allows them relative independence in their neighborhoods. Another way to think of this issue is that if a child can safely navigate a neighborhood, so can everyone else. If a neighborhood is structured to be safe for children in terms of walkable blocks, crosswalks and sidewalks, etc., then adults and seniors will be comfortable there as well.

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3 *Justice Policy Institute. (2014). Sticker Shock: Calculating the Full Price Tag for Youth Incarceration. Washington DC.*

4 *The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2011). No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration. Baltimore, MD: Richard A. Mendel.*

Safe, welcoming environments will also help children to develop healthy habits that they will carry with them throughout their lives such as including activity in their daily lives. Access to neighborhood opportunities helps young people enjoy the benefits of "social capital"—the connections among different kinds of people in a neighborhood. These connections provide residents with exposure to knowledge, ideas, tools, and resources such as networks and relationships that can lead to opportunities like internships and jobs.

Figure EY-9: Springdale Park Elementary School, Atlanta, GA
Perkins + Will
©2009 Jonathan Hillyer Photography, Inc.

Many Nashville neighborhoods face challenges that threaten children's health and well-being. These challenges are often related to poverty. They can affect rural, suburban, or urban neighborhoods. One of the most effective ways of addressing poverty-related challenges facing children and youth is developing or maintaining mixed income neighborhoods. This strategy has been proven to not only support housing choice for a broad range of incomes, but also to help improve the learning outcomes of the children who live in mixed income neighborhoods and/or including lower-income children in higher socio-economic environments, where social capital can be shared.

Figure EY-10: William Jones College Prepatory High School, Chicago, IL
Perkins + Will
© 2013 James Steinkamp Photography

Educational choices, providing *genuine access* to these choices, and providing quality education for all students

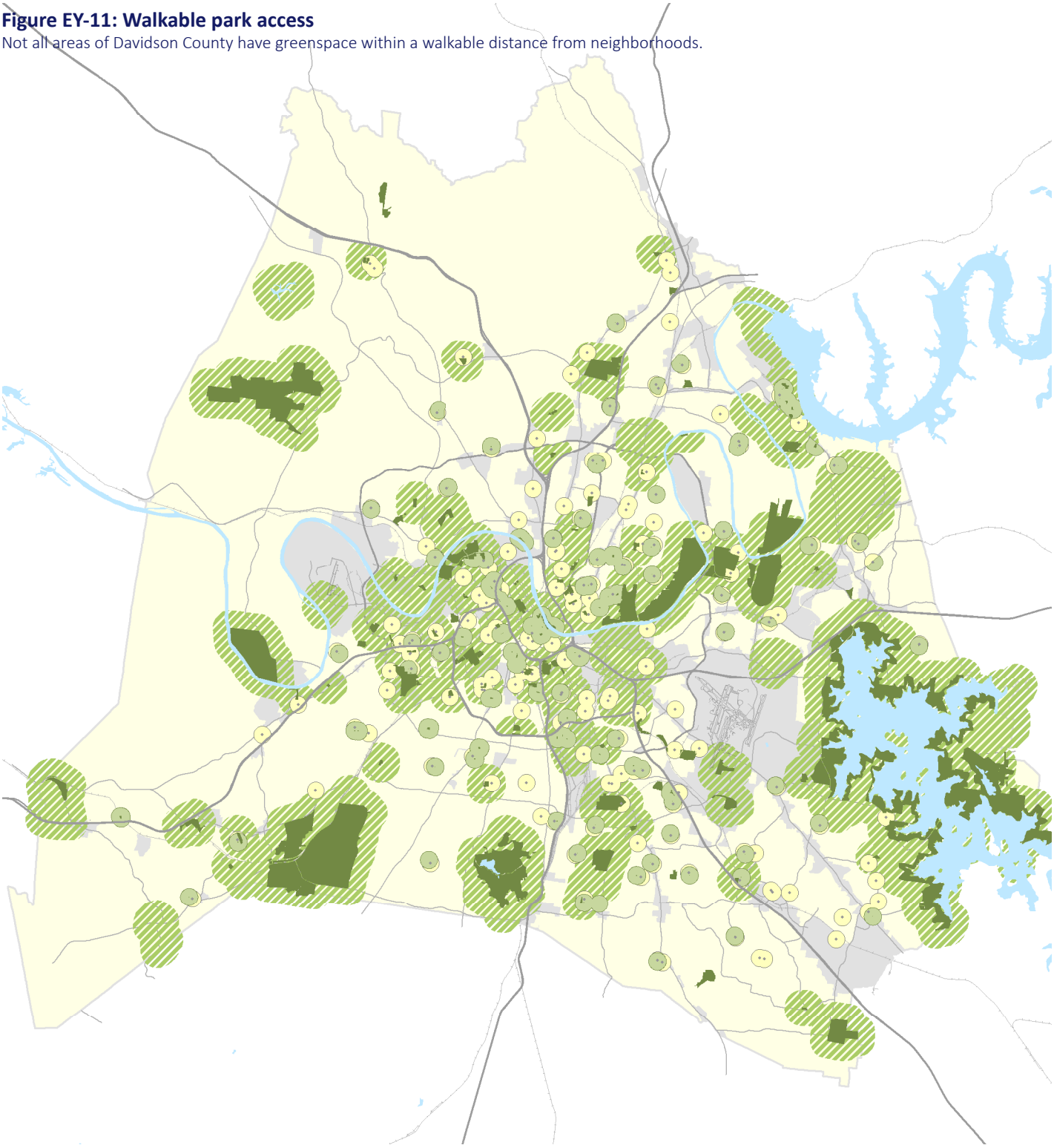
Nashville has a tradition of providing "choice" in terms of home-schooling, public and private school options; in 2014, MNPS' enrollment was nearly 86,000 students and it is estimated that over 14,000 students were enrolled in private schools or were home-schooled.

In recent years, more choices have been offered within MNPS with the addition of magnet schools, charter schools and opportunities for high school students to attend the Academy of their choice. Due to state and federal policies as well as ongoing support in Davidson County, children and their families will likely have even greater educational choices in the future. Every child should be able to access a quality learning environment that meets the child's hopes and needs.

These choices become more meaningful, and the results become more equitable, however, when there is a commitment to genuine access to these choices. Genuine access means not only offering choices, but working to reduce barriers to a child and their family taking advantage of a choice. Genuine access includes providing information for children and their

Figure EY-11: Walkable park access

Not all areas of Davidson County have greenspace within a walkable distance from neighborhoods.



Park Service Area

- All Parks
- Area served by being within 1/4 mile of a Mini Park
- Area served by being within 1/4 mile of Open Space at a school
- Area served by being within 1/2 mile of a Neighborhood, Community, or Regional Park

families to make the best decision to meet their needs. Genuine access also means providing meaningful transportation options, to make it feasible for a child to attend the school or program of their choice. Genuine access means the reduction of costs or other barriers that could keep a child or family from pursuing the choice they deem best for their education. And in some cases, genuine access may mean providing additional assistance for children and youth in making educational decisions when the child's parents are unable to help the child understand all their options. The need to provide genuine access for all children and families is not confined to educational choice. It is also critical to provide genuine access to transportation options—transit, walking and bicycling routes so that children and youth can safely and comfortably play, explore and learn. This access is important to the overall health of children and youth and their families.

MNPS' interest in providing choices to students does not diminish MNPS' and the community's commitment to ensure that all choices offered to students are high quality. Nor does the interest in choice deter from the commitment to equitably providing resources and support to schools to meet the needs of their students.

Figure EY-12: Druid Hills High School, Atlanta, GA, Perkins + Will
©2010 Jonathan Hillyer Photography, Inc.

In addition to providing choices for all students, MNPS has taken concrete steps to bolster neighborhood schools, making them attractive to nearby families and allowing the school to serve as an anchor and resource for the entire neighborhood. The goals, policies and actions in the Education & Youth element explore ways that neighborhood schools can serve nearby families and the neighborhood as a whole including options such as co-location of services that are relevant or useful to the neighborhood on the school site and/or opening the school to serve as a community gathering spot.

Figure EY-13: Grady High School, Atlanta, GA Perkins + Will

Evolving educational environments

The physical layout of schools has evolved over time—whether it is offering more spaces for group learning or cordoning areas to serve specific age ranges of students in a smaller "school within a school" setting. Meanwhile, changing technology and evolving thoughts on education mean that school environments will continue to change over the coming years. Campuses should be adaptable to serve youth, their families, and the community.

In addition to the site and building design, Nashville must be resourceful and innovative in where we locate schools and how we secure land for schools. Public lands and buildings are scarce and are becoming more difficult to locate and expensive to acquire. Nashville must make creative decisions about school siting and design to make school sites more efficient. Nashville must also, however, think creatively about where schools are located, whether it is in office settings or in unconventional sites such as underutilized commercial sites served by transit. Finally, Nashville should look at all the available options including purchase of land, but also agreements with private sector developers to acquire sites for schools in the fastest growing areas of town.

Goals and policies

In any of the topics discussed in NashvilleNext, there is a tension between addressing current challenges and meeting current needs, while also setting a twenty-five year vision and the framework of goals, policies and actions to achieve that vision. This is especially apparent in the goals, policies and actions for the Education & Youth Element. The Nashvillians who shared their insight on how to support children and youth were interested in immediate actions to address immediate challenges, and were also interested in establishing a vision for what we want for our children, which is made especially difficult in an evolving field like education. The goals, policies and action items reflect that dual goal—to address immediate concerns while establishing a long-term vision.

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 the Policies and achieve the 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 implements the long-term goals, 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, non-profits, and the private sector are critical.

EY Goal 1

Pursue a shared, community-wide vision and agenda to provide quality care, education and opportunity to Nashville's children and youth, considering each child's learning style, language, culture, special learning needs and economic status, meeting each child where they are in life with the expectation that the child will succeed.

EY 1.1

Commit to using information, research, best practices and measurement in designing and implementing the care and education of Nashville's children, setting the standard for high quality care and innovation in all our work with Nashville's children and holding ourselves accountable to that standard.

EY 1.2

Provide strong community support and resources for Nashville's students through evolving and diverse PK-12 school learning environments.

EY 1.3

Provide mentors and role models from throughout the community to work with children and youth.

EY 1.4

Empower Nashville's children and youth to participate in setting the course of their education, activities, employment and other aspects of their life and act upon their decisions by giving them what they need to make informed decisions for their future, a voice in decisions impacting them, and genuine access to resources and opportunities, regardless of their means.

EY 1.5

Create positive pathways for children and youth who are facing homelessness, delinquency/gangs, dropping out of school, and other threats to their well-being such as drugs/alcohol.

EY 1.6

Support children with disabilities and their families so that they are fully accepted and included in opportunities for learning and success.

EY 1.7

Address challenges faced by children and youth in foster homes and their transition into adulthood.

EY 1.8

Provide support to children, youth, and families facing challenges associated with barriers such as citizenship status or lack of English language skills, including access to PK-16 educational opportunities.

EY Goal 2

Provide all children, youth, families, and caregivers quality educational opportunities and opportunities in and outside of school, information needed to make informed decisions on school choices, and genuine access to follow through on the choice.

EY 2.1

Provide all families with the information they need to access educational choices and opportunities in and outside of school in a format and language that is relevant and understandable to them.

EY 2.2

Provide early educational programs such as quality, accessible early childhood care and pre-kindergarten for all to ensure that all children come into the K-12 school environment on an equal footing in terms of their ability to learn academic subjects.

EY 2.3

Provide resources and programming to achieve the goal of all third graders reading at third grade level, to increase their likelihood of future academic and career success.

EY 2.4

Provide systems, support, and resources to support graduation from high school, addressing the needs and challenges of individual students. Provide youth nearing the point of graduation and their families with information, support, and opportunity to pursue higher education, training, and/or work experience to fit their goals.

EY 2.5

Provide equitable access to, and distribution of, affordable out-of-school activities, technology, and healthy physical activities.

EY 2.6

Develop educational facilities, campuses and systems that can flexibly respond to evolving ways that educational opportunities may be provided and support innovative use of land and buildings for this purpose. Site schools in a manner that provides convenient countywide access, anchors communities, invites parental involvement, and promotes the health of students.

EY Goal 3

Provide Nashville's families and caregivers with access to the resources, support systems and opportunities they need for their children to be safe and healthy and achieve academic and life success.

EY 3.1

Provide parents and caregivers the opportunities, resources and support they need to succeed, reduce their stress, and allow them to dedicate more time and energy to their children.

EY 3.2

Ensure that all children and youth are living in safe and supportive home environments.

EY Goal 4

Make Nashville's neighborhoods safe, accessible, and welcoming for families so that they provide opportunities for play, learning and social engagement that help children and youth thrive.

EY 4.1

Ensure that Nashville's neighborhoods and public places are safe and welcoming.

EY 4.2

Provide genuine access to the elements necessary for healthy and successful lives–ample parks and open spaces with structured activities for families to promote active lifestyles; transit; healthy food options; access to health care services, libraries, schools, community centers, jobs, entertainment, and other neighborhood-based services.

EY 4.3

Provide educational facilities/campuses and other civic institutions such as libraries within neighborhoods that serve as neighborhood hubs and meet the unique needs of the neighborhood.

EY 4.4

Ensure that Nashville's neighborhoods are welcoming and accessible to all by ensuring affordability and transportation choices.

EY 4.5

Increase civic engagement to provide youth a voice in the growth of the city and in decisions that will impact their lives, such as the education system, libraries, transit, activities, and parks and recreation.