

Nashville's Livability Project—Workforce Group
Meeting of January 12, 2011

Attending: Nancy Eisenbrandt, Kate Monaghan, Toks Omishakin, Ellen Zinkiewicz,
Maribeth Farringer

Absent: Brenda Head, Susan Heard, Rebecca Leslie

Maribeth began by noting that the workforce and the civic engagement groups will now meet separately.

Nancy gave a summary of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce's recent event called "Leveraging the Labor Force for Economic Growth." The fall event was attended by 300 higher education, business and agency leaders. Some of the points which Nancy noted were:

- The 10-county area now has 70,000 unemployed (8.7%)
- Full employment (4%) is not expected until 2014
- By 2019, taking into account the number of persons entering and exiting the workforce as well as the number of new jobs, our area will have a 20,000 person labor shortage.
- There will be a shortage of skilled workers (healthcare, IT, marketing) and there will be fewer jobs for those with less education
- If boomers leave the workforce in greater numbers than anticipated, there will be an even greater shortage of workers.
- Immigration is an important consideration in our area.
- Past studies have shown that 60% of college graduates stay in our area
- In the future companies will need to have good "family policies" to attract workers.

Nancy suggested that we look at a recent Knight Foundation study done with the Gallup group called "Soul of the Community." The top reasons that individuals stay in a community are all related to livability: 1) opportunity for engaging in the community 2) a welcoming place for all and 3) beautiful environment.

Kate mentioned that there is talk of some Nashville groups doing a similar local study. The Nashville Studies Center at Vanderbilt and AARP are interested. However, none of this is ready for public mention.

The committee then discussed what policy changes the Livability Project might want to foster. We should look at this as a "family" issue not an "elder" issue; seniors are part of the family issues that employees (and employers) now face.

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce will be looking at a boomer strategy. The plan is to begin work in 2013 (when employment levels are getting back to normal) and to launch the plan in 2014. This information could also help colleges know what training they need to focus on and help employers know where there will be gaps. Ellen saw value in an

event highlighting where jobs are going to be for older adults. This could fit into the Chamber's initiative.

The group agreed that the immediate recommendation from the Livability Project to hold a conference on the changing workforce should be put on hold. Instead the group would like to look at companies who early on adapt to the changing workforce. We would like to concentrate on the largest employers (Metro Government, Vanderbilt and the State of Tennessee). Tokes will talk to Metro's HR Department about the feasibility of this. Our hope is that someone from the department could come to our next meeting. Among the issues are which departments have the largest number of older workers and how does seniority rules affect this. Our hope would be that the workforce group can learn from the largest employers and share this information and possible actions at an event in 2013-2014.

The meeting concluded with these long-term action steps:

- Study the changing workforce at Davidson County's largest employers (Metro Government, Vanderbilt and the State of Tennessee)
- Tie in to a local survey on livability factors
- Study how we can support the Chamber's boomer strategy