PARTNERING FOR AN EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE NASHVILLE

Synopsis

Partnering for an Equitable and Inclusive Nashville includes content provided by some 15 community contributors, including representatives of the civil liberties, civil rights, disabled, immigrant and refugee rights, LGBT, and Muslim communities, as well as the Metro Human Relations Commission and the Metro Department of Public Health. The background report:

a) describes some of Nashville's nationally recognized "socially integrative" achievements in promoting awareness, advocacy, and human services;

b) identifies persistent and emerging trends in social exclusion in Nashville; and

c) proposes a public-private partnership for augmenting and sustaining Nashville's capacity for addressing social exclusion and realizing itself as an inclusive community over the generations.

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ROLE AND PURPOSE OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

This background paper was developed to provide input to the NashvilleNext planning process. It was researched and authored by community members interested, involved, and knowledgeable on the topic. The authors present best practices, an evaluation of the state of the topic in the Nashville community today, and recommendations for consideration during the planning process.

This paper provides a *starting point* for broader community discussion and reflection based on the research and recommendations of the authors. Throughout the planning process, NashvilleNext will use this and other background papers, ongoing research, departmental involvement, community input and engagement to discuss, refine and formulate the policies and recommendations for the general plan.

The information and recommendations provided in this background paper are solely those of the authors and contributors and are being provided at the beginning of the NashvilleNext process to start community discussion.

The NashvilleNext Steering Committee thanks and extends its sincere appreciation to the authors of and contributors to this background paper for the time and effort to provide this report for community consideration and discussion. The Steering Committee looks forward to the ongoing dialogue on the issues and recommendations that the authors provide.

Any final policies and recommendations endorsed by the NashvilleNext Steering Committee for the consideration of the Metropolitan Planning Commission will be the result of the entire planning process and upcoming community engagement and discussion.

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INTRODUCTION

Fisk University student Diane Nash, facing Mayor of Nashville Ben West on the courthouse steps before 1,000 non-violent protestors on April 19, 1960, "had not prepared a speech. What she said next . . . came to her like a divine inspiration. Or if not divine inspiration, at least a remembrance of what Jim Lawson had taught them . . . to see one another as human beings instead of enemies. So she asked Ben West to use the prestige of his office to end racial segregation. West immediately did. 'I appeal to all citizens to end discrimination, to have no bigotry, no bias, no hatred,' he said." [1]

Since a group of students at its historically black colleges and universities charted the course for a civil rights movement that would change the nation, issues of equity and inclusion have been central to Nashville's city identity. Over the last half-century, as Nashville has grown and changed in its population, the challenges of achieving equity and inclusion for all Nashvillians have similarly expanded to encompass issues of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age, and wealth. As in the past, these new challenges have been met by the force of enterprising Nashvillians who have launched nationally recognized initiatives of advocacy, awareness, and inclusion. In our constantly diversifying community, these socially integrative initiatives present models for Nashville's future resolve to address both long-term and recent trends that slow Nashville's progress toward greater social inclusion and equity.

Nashville is poised to enter its planning process as a city worthy of emulation in many ways. However,

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition New Americans on the Hill Day 2012.

Nashville's work to achieve equity and inclusion for all its residents is not complete. Disparities persist in access to opportunity, infrastructure, and services. We reach this conclusion from multiple sources indicating the need for continued efforts to achieve social inclusion in Nashville. Sources include Metro Social Services' annual Community Needs Evaluation reports, U.S. Census Bureau statistics about Nashville, local organizations and archives, our own recorded conversations with community leaders, reports written for this paper by diverse experts and advocates, reports written for this paper by staff of two Metro Nashville government agencies, and media coverage.

As Nashville thrives as a city, the mandate to ensure that all Nashvillians share equally in and have access to the benefits of its growth is even more compelling. Nashville's strength as a city depends upon shared prosperity and the participation of all community members in policymaking decisions for its future. Planning for the next twenty-five years gives Nashville the opportunity to ensure that equity and inclusion are solidified core values of the community.

Our purpose in this white paper is twofold: first, to recognize and learn from models in the public and private sectors of Nashvillians working to create an equitable Nashville; and second, to ensure that commitment is carried into Nashville's future.

As Nashville authors its general plan for the next twenty-five years, we must confirm that the values of equity and inclusion are central tenets of development. To achieve this goal, we propose the annual evaluation of measurable benchmarks, an Inclusivity Index that can be used as a perennial guide for planning decisions and to evaluate equity in our city. We also propose the formation of a public-private partnership dedicated to equity and inclusion considerations. The Partnership will develop and execute the Inclusivity Index, ensure inclusion of marginalized voices in community decision making, and encourage socially integrative initiatives in Nashville that manifest these goals. Establishing the Partnership will serve as the first step in making our commitment to equity and inclusion real for all Nashvillians, today and tomorrow, and in creating a strong, prosperous, equitable, and inclusive community to support Nashville's growth over the next twenty-five years and beyond.

ON NASHVILLE'S HISTORY OF INCLUSION

We embrace the history of Nashville's and Nashvillians' many exemplary and pioneering efforts to achieve the ideal of an equitable and inclusive community. Over a half-century ago, a group of Nashville college students countered the tide of segregationist hostility by creating the campaign of Gandhian nonviolence. Their principles became the template for the civil rights movement, and Nashville became its training ground.[2] Ultimately, Nashville desegregated its downtown in 1962, two years before national passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[3]

These young people charted Nashville's course as a city striving for equity and inclusion. In our more recent history, we have seen the ongoing civil rights struggle carried by expanded communities of color and other oppressed groups. Nashville's commitment to becoming an ever more welcoming and inclusive city is increasingly pressing as the population of immigrants and refugees in our community grows at one of the fastest rates in the United States. Nashville's robust economy, affordability, and cultural amenities make Nashville a globally attractive site for businesses and people to relocate and settle. Davidson County's population is projected to increase by 7% between 2010 and 2020; its white population is projected to grow by 2% and its black and Hispanic populations by 13% and 51%, respectively, in the same period. By 2020, blacks are projected to comprise 30% and Hispanics 12%, of Davidson County's population.[4]

Current efforts to ensure equity and inclusion for all Nashvillians have not been without challenge. But those challenges have been met with the strength of advocates dedicated to overcoming them. Referring to the role of the press during the initial civil rights struggle, John Seigenthaler, now chairman emeritus of *The Tennessean*, explained:

> I think the ordeal of racism has been something that we had to live with and worry about and write about . . . And the "southern way" gave us something to rub up against, you know, something to react to. There has always been a challenge in the South . . . The ordeal of reporting on events in the South was more of a challenge, I think, for the southern journalist than for reporters in other parts of the country.[5]

The late Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Halberstam, a young reporter who covered the civil rights movement for *The Tennessean*, wrote that, at the time he joined *The Tennessean* staff in 1956, *The Tennessean* was "arguably the best and most aggressive paper in the South . . . I was then, and I remain to this day, proud of its role in breaking the old Crump machine in Memphis and helping to bring the franchise to blacks and poor whites across the state."[6]

Our proposal for a public-private partnership is inspired by Nashville's continuing mission of becoming an inclusive democratic community and arises out of this history of noteworthy action by both committed community leaders and public officials. Several recent campaigns illustrate Nashville's progress toward these goals.

Defeat of English Only. One significant hurdle came when an "English-Only" referendum was presented to Nashville voters in 2009. The English-Only ordinance would have forbidden Metro Nashville government to conduct its business in languages other than English. When the English-Only ordinance was introduced, Nashvillians quickly organized in opposition. A citywide coalition of opponents maintained that English-only would lower the accessibility of public services to international migrants, making Nashville appear to be an unwelcoming city in the global community. Its mission was depicted in the New York Times at as follows: "A broad coalition of business, labor, religious, civil liberties, civil rights, and social services groups have joined together to oppose this divisive initiative. The coalition opposes English-only proposals not only on economic grounds, but also for moral, religious, social and legal reasons."[7] Nashville had become increasingly aware of the issues facing its immigrant population in the early 2000s. Mayor Bill Purcell commissioned the 2002-2003 Nashville Immigrant Community Assessment which served to set the city on its welcoming course.[8] English-Only was defeated in 2009 with 57% of the vote.[9]

Nashville's Non-Discrimination Ordinance. On September 25, 2009, Metro Nashville became the first Tennessee city to enact a Non-Discrimination Ordinance (Ordinance No. BL2009-502, hereinafter the NDO) "to prohibit the Metropolitan Government from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity through its employment practices."[10] On April 8, 2011, the Metro Council expanded the NDO "to prohibit Metropolitan Government contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity through their employment practices."[11] Just one month later, however, the Tennessee General Assembly overturned the NDO's expansion by enacting a prohibition on municipalities extending the non-discrimination requirement to contractors.[12]

English-only fails

As the nation watches, Nashville voters spurn a measure to restrict government business to English.

pponents of the English-only proposal celebrate Thursday at the Nashville for All of Us gathering at Loews Vanderbilt Hotel in Nashville. JAE S. LEE / THE TENNESSEAN

Nashville's Procurement Non-Discrimination Program. In 2008, the Metropolitan Procurement Code was amended to include a Procurement Nondiscrimination Program. The ordinance was prepared by Griffin & Strong, the same law firm that conducted a Disparity Study in 2004, which revealed that Metro Government has significantly underutilized minority- and women-owned firms in its procurement of construction, professional services and goods and services compared with the availability of these same kinds of firms in the marketplace.

Metro Government reaffirmed its commitment to assisting minority- and women-owned businesses by creating the Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance in the Department of Finance. The office is committed to assisting the development of small and minority businesses in Nashville, recognizing that these businesses are a fundamental component of Nashville's economy. The Office has worked to significantly increase the number of companies approved for Metro's small business program and the number of minority-owned businesses registered with Metro.

Standing Up to Hate. In February 2010, the Al-Farooq mosque on Nashville's Nolensville Road was vandalized and defiled with messages of "Muslims

not welcome" and "Muslims go home." In response to the vandalism, Mayor Karl Dean and law enforcement officials met with Muslim leaders to confirm that the vandalism did not represent Nashville's values and to pledge that such acts of hate would not be tolerated in the city. The words of the Mayor, broadcast on local news stations, echoed throughout the Muslim community: "This act does not represent Nashville. We are a friendly and diverse city, and we celebrate that diversity."[13]

Nashville has a proud history to stand on as it looks towards 2040. We must continue our commitment to the moral imperative of becoming an inclusive and equitable city so that all residents may benefit from our growth and development. The need for inclusion and equity must also be understood as an economic imperative for our city's future. The demographics of our city are changing rapidly and Nashville will not realize its vision for 2040 if current inequities persist. We must invest in equity today to ensure that our city can continue to thrive in the decades to come.

IN THE NATIONAL GAZE
NASHVILLE'S CREATIVE STRIDES TOWARD EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Our central objective is to encourage Nashville's continuing progress on its historic trajectory to becoming an inclusive democratic community. Space constraints prevent us from detailing all of the many exceptional initiatives undertaken by Nashvillians toward this goal. The cited initiatives provide representative examples of Nashville's creative capacity for developing and implementing innovative, socially integrative initiatives that draw national recognition. The examples illustrate the types of initiatives that should be encouraged by the proposed public-private partnership.

Promoting Awareness

Nashville Civil Rights Room of the Nashville Public Library

Located in the heart of downtown Nashville, near the former sites of the desegregation sit-in movement, the Civil Rights Room of the Nashville Public Library was established in 2004 with a donation by Robin and Bill King of Nashville, during the administration of Mayor Bill Purcell and the Library Directorship of Donna Nicely.[14] The Civil Rights Room "capture[s] some of the drama of a time when thousands of African-American citizens in Nashville sparked a nonviolent challenge to racial segregation in the city and across the South . . . [T]he students organized marches, held sit-ins at establishments where they had been denied service, and carried out an effective boycott of downtown stores. The circular table in the center of the room is symbolic of lunch counters that were popular gathering places in downtown Nashville in the days before fast-food chains became commonplace. On the counter surface is a list of 'ten rules of conduct' carried by the protesters during the sit-in demonstrations. A timeline displays significant events both locally and nationally during the civil rights era."[15]

The Civil Rights Room also houses original national network TV news footage, photographs of the Nashville movement, and the Civil Rights Oral History Project[16] which conducts and archives interviews with original participants in the Nashville movement.

Designed by the Nashville-based architectural firm of Tuck Hinton Architects, the Civil Rights Room has received numerous national awards from professional associations, including the American Library Association (2006), International Interior Design Association (2006), and the American Institute of Architects (2006).[17]

WNPT's "Next Door Neighbors" TV Documentary Series

"Next Door Neighbors," the Emmy Award-winning documentary series produced by WNPT, covers the achievements and challenges facing six immigrant groups recently settled in Nashville. The multi-part series reports on immigrants and refugees from Kurdistan, Somalia, Latin America, Bhutan, Sudan, and Egypt.[18] An educational resource for engaging the broader community on immigrant settlement issues, "the 'Next Door Neighbors' project aims to increase understanding of unfamiliar cultures, highlight the experiences and successes of Nashville's immigrants, and mediate a community-wide conversation about who we are as Nashvillians."[19]

"Next Door Neighbors" is a helpful resource for immigrant and refugee resettlement professionals, as well as urban planning professionals. Mark Eatherly and Damber Kharel, refugee resettlement professionals working with Nashville Bhutanese refugees, provide a report on Bhutanese refugees in Nashville that is appended to this white paper. In their report, the authors refer to the illuminating depiction in "Next Door Neighbors" of the transportation challenges Bhutanese refugees face in Nashville:

> The program showed viewers the struggles the Bhutanese have faced since coming to Nashville. One interviewee, Shekhar Kanal, talked about transportation. He said, 'In America, not having a car is like not having feet.'[20] He talked about how it took four hours on the bus to get to and from his job; whereas, if he had a car, it would only take 30 minutes. Public transportation is just one example of how difficult it can be to access services. First, one has to learn how to ride the bus. Understanding what route one needs to take, knowing where the bus stops are, and figuring out to pull the cord when one wants to get off are things that most Nashvillians aren't even familiar with. Think about trying to learn all those details with limited English and little knowledge about the city."

WNPT has gained national recognition—and resources—for its production of "Next Door Neighbors." The Corporation for Public Broadcasting awarded NPT a prestigious Local Service Initiative

Matching Grant for their Next Door Neighbors proposal. NPT partnered with Vanderbilt University, Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Charities, Metro Nashville Public Schools, the Welcoming Tennessee Initiative, the HCA Foundation, and the Nissan Foundation in the production of the documentary.[21] Two years later, at the completion of the first three segments of the series, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting awarded WNPT a My Source Community Impact Award for Engagement. On the occasion of the award ceremony, Pat Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, stated that "[n]ow more than ever, communities are relying on local public broadcasting stations for information they can trust, for connection to community that matters and for a safe place where children can learn."[22] NPT President and CEO Beth Curley[23] stated, "We are extremely proud of what we've accomplished and believe this project will have a lasting impact on Middle Tennessee."[24]

Advocacy and Community Engagement

American Center for Outreach

Remziya Suleyman was described by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Andrea Elliott in *The New York Times* as one of a new generation of Muslim activists who are confronting anti-Muslim political opposition in the United States:

> Remziya Suleyman hardly noticed the rain as she stood in April under the shelter of a black umbrella in Nashville, waiting for the rally to begin. She had imagined this moment for months, yet her mouth fell open as a bus from Knoxville pulled up, and then one from Memphis, delivering the first of hundreds of Muslims to her charge.
>
> Many had never voted, much less marched. In their native land—countries like Syria, Somalia and Iran—protests brought dangerous repercussions. But here in Tennessee, a place long considered safe harbor for Muslim immigrants, they were confronting a new tempest: public opposition to mosques, rising hate crimes and proposed legislation aimed, they felt, at marginalizing people of their faith.
>
> Then came Ms. Suleyman. Born of Kurdish immigrants and raised in Nashville, the chatty 26-year-old activist had gone from mosque to mosque, telling doctors, imams and homemakers twice her age that they could no longer stay silent. "The older generation was like, 'No, this will pass,'" she said in her Southern cadence. "But if we do not speak for ourselves, who will speak for us?"
>
> "I grew up hearing this is the land of the free."[25]

A graduate of Tennessee State University with a Masters in Public Administration and a member of the Leadership Nashville class of 2013, Ms. Suleyman participated in the founding of the Nashville-based advocacy organization American Center for Outreach (ACO) in 2011.[26] The ACO was established as an advocacy organization for Tennessee Muslims following a wave of Islamophobia that manifested in the Tennessee General Assembly as proposed legislation designed to limit the practice of Islam in Tennessee. In her capacity as policy coordinator for the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Ms. Suleyman helped mobilize, for the first time in Tennessee's history, hundreds of Tennessee Muslims who converged on the state legislature in Nashville to protest the pending anti-Islam bills.[27] This legislative attack on Muslims was a striking new development in a decade-long legislative affront to immigrants and refugees. But targeting individuals based on religious beliefs presented new challenges and opportunities. Ms. Suleyman explained why she helped establish the American Center for Outreach in the Huffington Post:

> I helped found the American Center for Outreach (ACO) in order to ensure that political leaders hear Muslim voices and, more broadly, to challenge misconceptions about Muslim commu-

nities in Tennessee. ACO is a Tennessee-based, non-partisan organization that was established to inform, educate, and empower Muslims to become engaged in society by providing the assistance and guidance the community needs. Our goal at ACO is to show that the average Tennessean can take part in the democratic process regardless of religion, race, gender, or economic status. To do this, ACO aims to better connect the Muslim community and Tennessee government, while also supporting individuals in becoming catalysts for positive change in their own communities.

We also hope to change the Muslim community's perception of the political system. Many believe that the system is inaccessible and their voice does not count . . . However, I am in awe at how motivated and determined Muslim communities are to make an informed decision during this political season . . . We understand that political and civic engagement involves more than voter registration and voter participation. We at ACO are working to implement a sustained and active effort to help guide our community through the civic process, while simultaneously providing them with the voter education and empowerment that they need, regardless of their political affiliation.[28]

Welcoming Tennessee Initiative

Between 2000 and 2012, the rate of increase in Tennessee's foreign-born population was the third fastest in the country. The pace of this growth has created some understandable anxieties in places where residents have very little context in which to interpret demographic change, and negative perceptions of immigrants frequently dominate the public discourse. Deeply rooted fears are exploited by everyone from opportunistic politicians, to white supremacist groups, to ratings-hungry radio talk show hosts. The wave of anti-immigrant legislation that swept through Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina in 2011 has further polarized public opinion and highlighted the unique challenges of immigration in the South.

The Welcoming Tennessee Initiative (WTI) is a proactive communications campaign launched in 2006 by the Nashville-headquartered Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), directed by Stephen Fotopulos.[29] TIRRC is a collaboration of immigrants, refugees, and allies working to lift up fundamental American freedoms and human rights and foster an atmosphere in which all Tennesseans are recognized for their positive contributions. WTI is based on the idea that Tennessee is fundamentally a welcoming and hospitable place where many people remember and value their own immigrant roots, and can be moved to value the contributions that newcomers make to the social and economic fabric of the state. The project addresses the need for constructive dialogue on immigration through a multi-pronged approach that includes direct public education, use of traditional and new media, and community organizing, all with the purpose of encouraging conversation, dispelling common myths, and highlighting positive aspects of immigration. Project staff helps convene local "welcoming committees" throughout the state and train individual "ambassadors" to deliver presentations to community-based, religious, civic, academic, business, and other related groups.

WTI played a coordinating role in the documentary film Welcome to Shelbyville, which addresses WTI's positive impact on this rural Tennessee community. The documentary was produced and directed by award-winning filmmaker Kim Snyder and premiered in May 2011 on the PBS series Independent Lens. The film "explores immigrant integration and the interplay between race, religion, and identity in a changing America, creating an intimate portrayal of a community's struggle to understand what it means to be American . . . [and] is a recipient of a 2010 Gucci-Tribeca Documentary Fund grant and an official selection of the U.S. State Department's 2010 American Documentary Showcase."[30]

WTI earned national recognition in 2009 when it received the Migration Policy Institute's inaugural E Pluribus Unum award for exceptional work in immigrant integration, a prestigious prize granted to "exceptional efforts that uphold and update the ideal of 'out of many, one' and inspire others to take on this important work." WTI was one of just four awardees selected from a pool of over 500 applicants and accepted the award at a ceremony held in the Library of Congress and keynoted by U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis.[31] WTI has achieved further national impact by serving as the model for similar initiatives in more than twenty other states, and by playing a leadership role within Welcoming America, a national network inspired by WTI and incubated by TIRRC until it obtained independent status in 2011.

In a context of demographic shift, economic uncertainty, and political opportunism, where newcomers are particularly vulnerable to scapegoating and marginalization, WTI reaches out to communities grappling with change and creates spaces for people of all backgrounds to come together around basic values of respect and inclusion. By putting demographic change in a broader historical framework and lifting up and humanizing the personal stories of new immigrants, WTI helps members of receiving communities expand the collective sense of what it means to be an American, a Tennessean, and a Nashvillian, creating more political space for public policies that encourage diversity and facilitate full integration of immigrant communities.

New Americans Advisory Council

In 2009, Mayor Dean created the New Americans Advisory Council to provide a forum for direct communication and collaboration between the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Nashville's growing ethnic, refugee and immigrant communities. The Council includes numerous immigrant groups as well as leaders from academia and business. The Council's ultimate goal is to institutionalize itself, thereby ensuring that these communities and government are always connected.

One of the New Americans Advisory Council's initiatives is MyCity Academy, which seeks to provide education and increased awareness among New Americans and Nashville's broader international community as to how Metro Government works. MyCity Academy hosts a class of New Americans who meet and interact with elected and appointed members of Metro's government as well as Metro employees from various departments. In the future, the New Americans Advisory Council will work with Metro to create a website that will serve as a portal for New Americans to find information and ensure that government documents are available in a variety of languages.

Visionary Human Services

Casa Azafrán

Casa Azafrán, Nashville's new cultural center, celebrated its Grand Opening on December 1, 2012. Located near the intersection of Nolensville Rd. and I-440, the one-stop-shop community-based center is in close proximity to the racially and ethnically diverse, "culturally interlaced" immigrant and native families who reside in the low-to-moderate-income South Nashville catchment area.[32] For Renata Soto, Executive Director of Nashville-based Conexión Américas,[33] which founded Casa Azafrán, the new center "is both a project and a process emblematic of the welcoming spirit that Nashville has demonstrated to those who have come from all over the world to call Middle Tennessee home . . . Conveniently located near downtown . . . Casa Azafrán is the gateway to Nashville's most international and socially diverse district."[34] Symbolizing the mosaic of humanity served by Casa Azafrán, a colorful mosaic entitled "Migration," a community art project led by Nashville artist Jairo Prado, is installed above the main entrance as visitors enter the 28,800 sq. foot, $5 million center.[35]

A nationally recognized advocate of human rights and human services,[36] Ms. Soto envisions Casa Azafrán as a center that will "serve all area residents. It will be a place for education, health services, entrepreneurship training, culinary and artistic expression, volunteerism, community building, and events. It also is a smart way for nonprofits to share resources, meeting and training spaces and opportunities."[37] It will house several partner agencies, including United Neighborhood Health Services, Family and Children's Services, YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors, and the Global Education Center.[38] The center's tri-lingual interior signage (in Arabic, Spanish, and English) encourages the delivery of culturally sensitive services to a diverse clientele.

The theme of economic development and integration is an important rationale for the sizable federal grants that have been awarded to Casa Azafrán. A public-private partnership, Casa Azafrán is funded with grants from the federal government, corporate foundations, and other sources. As of Casa Azafrán's Grand Opening, federal government grants comprised 49% of the $3+ million raised for Casa Azafrán. In December 2011, the U.S. Economic Development Administration announced a $1.3 million grant "to help build the Casa Azafrán Community Center, which will provide expanded business startup or expansion assistance" following the 2010 flood.[39]

Metro Pubic Health Department in North Nashville

The Metro Public Health Department has served as a leader in creating several initiatives designed to address health equity disparities across minority communities in Nashville. Primary among these initiatives is the MPHD's work in North Nashville, through which the Department has "learned that in order to better address long standing health disparities," it must focus on "a community's history, key events that have shaped neighborhoods, and people's understanding and interpretation of these events" as well as making sure all residents have a stake in community decision making. The MPHD's North Nashville initiative is detailed in full in the attached appendix. It presents an exemplary method of service provision that considers both current and historical barriers to equity and inclusion faced by a community in proposing means of overcoming those barriers.

ADVANCING NASHVILLE ON ITS HISTORIC MISSION

A PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Nashville looks to 2040 while continuing its historic trajectory of striving to be an open, just, and inclusive community. Nashvillians' nationally recognized initiatives in awareness, advocacy, and human services demonstrate the tremendous human, organizational, and financial resources our government and civil society can creatively muster to advance Nashville toward this goal.

We propose the formation of a public-private partnership (the Partnership) that will continue and formalize Nashville's work to ensure inclusion of marginalized voices in community decision making; monitor and evaluate Nashville's development progress toward equity and inclusion; and encourage socially integrative initiatives in Nashville that support these goals. The Partnership accomplishes its mission by fully availing itself of Nashville's comparative advantages in envisioning, designing, and sustaining

itself over the generations as an exemplary community: its visionary and compassionate residents; its involved and active government; its creativity in the arts, humanities, and science; its robust economy; its generosity in philanthropy; and its area college and university students who continue to drive Nashville toward realizing its vision of inclusivity.

A Public-Private Partnership

The Partnership's mission is to sustain and elevate Nashville as an exemplary open, just, and inclusive community over the generations. It conducts its mission by pursuing three objectives:

1. The first objective is to conduct an annual Inclusivity Index that documents Nashville's progress toward its goals of equity and inclusion. Based on data analysis and broad community engagement, the Partnership should create measurable benchmarks and goals for reducing disparities and advancing equity in Nashville. We propose that the metrics be evaluated and discussed annually. The Partnership will sponsor an annual event to present the Index as a report on the achievements and challenges in human relations in Nashville, developed through a rigorous compilation of statistical and qualitative data throughout the previous twelve months. A proposed indexing process is set out more fully below.

In order to move Nashville forward, the annual event will convene a series of public workshops that will assess the state of human relations as presented in the annual report—achievements and challenges—in each of a range of policy domains. The event would also devise socially integrative initiatives for advancing Nashville in these policy domains. Examples given in this white paper represent the types of socially integrative initiatives that should be considered for advancing Nashville as an exemplary community. The Partnership may serve as an incubator for future socially integrative initiatives through the development of taskforces directed at particular issues.

2. The Partnership's second objective is to create a forum to convene representatives of Nashville's many diverse communities and stakeholders to address issues of equity and inclusion in the city. The Partnership will be made up of representatives from the following community sectors, among others: academia, the arts, charity and philanthropy, clergy, grassroots leaders, health care, hospitality, human rights advocates, human services professionals, the Mayor's office, Metro Nashville government agencies, and social entrepreneurs. By bringing these diverse groups together on a regular basis with the express mission of focusing on issues of equity and inclusion, Nashville will formally demonstrate its dedication to continuing its legacy of working toward the equity of all Nashvillians. It will allow the city to draw from the creative wealth of its residents, allow residents direct channels of communication with government on these critical issues, and provide government an opportunity to work across agencies and departments in collaboration toward this shared goal.

3. The Partnership's third objective is to mentor the next generation of visionary Nashvillians, drawing on Nashville's historic comparative advantage as a city with a diverse wealth of college students. The Partnership will develop an internship program and match college students with participating field sites linked explicitly to the functions and tasks of the Partnership's first and second objectives. Interns may assist in research, policy analysis, report-writing, event management, assembling task forces, conducting workshops, and designing socially integrative initiatives. They will play a primary role in the research and compilation functions central to creating the Inclusivity Index.

We propose that the work of the Partnership will be performed by a private, full-time paid staff, participating Metro Nashville Government agencies, volunteer taskforces, and student interns. Meanwhile, for-profit and non-profit enterprises dedicated to ensuring similar progress toward inclusion will represent Nashville's private sector's investment in this process. Participating Metro Nashville Government agencies with expertise in human relations and social policy research and planning include the Metro Human Relations Commission, Metro Planning Department, Metro Public Health Department, and the Metro Social Services Department. The Metro Human Relations Commission would be tasked with the inter-agency coordination of the annual research process and preparing the annual report on the state of human relations in Nashville.

INDEXING INCLUSIVITY IN NASHVILLE

Central to the goal of achieving a more equitable and inclusive Nashville is understanding and quantifying the challenges and disparities facing Nashvillians. The Partnership's hallmark task, therefore, is to strengthen Nashville's capacity to track and promote public awareness of trends that slow Nashville's progress toward greater social inclusion. By tracking such trends, Nashville becomes empowered and enabled as an advocate for the marginalized to initiate policies and programs for combating disparities and promoting equity. Similarly, if Nashville is to envision and plan for a more equitable city in 2040, we must identify

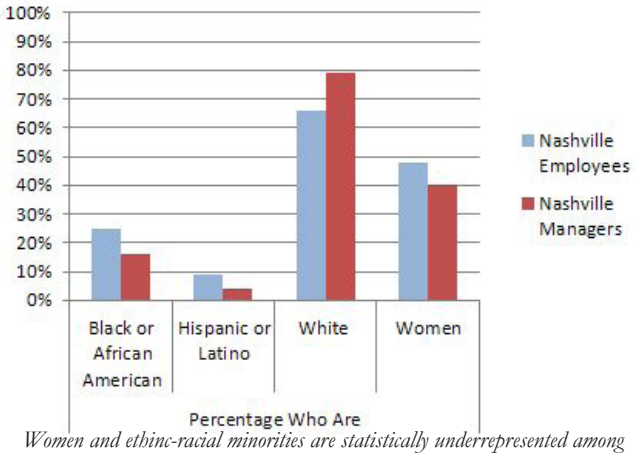
where inequity exists and persists in our government, neighborhood development, infrastructure, and public services. By developing a framework and analysis of equity and inclusion, we may then better record successes, identify action areas, guide our future development decisions, and evaluate our progress.

At this time there is no exhaustive analysis or store of data that provides a picture of equity and inequities in Nashville. We can, however, identify examples of the types of indicators that should be assessed and tracked to account for persistent and emerging inequities in our city. What follows is by no means an exhaustive analysis, but is instead a snapshot of a few key indicators that illustrate the urgency of why we must more fully analyze equity and inclusion and set measurable goals to reduce disparities. These include the following illustrative indicators:

Statistical and Economic Indicators

- The accessibility of good jobs and opportunities for career advancement is an important indicator. Managers strategize, direct, guide, administer, and supervise the workforces of the more than 18,000 workplaces that drive the Nashville economy. Compared to their percentages of employed Nashvillians in all occupations, women and ethnic-racial minorities are statistically underrepresented among Nashville managers: women comprise 48% of all employed Nashvillians, but only 40% of all Nashville managers; African Americans comprise 25% of all employed Nashvillians, but only 16% of all Nashville managers; and, Hispanics or Latinos comprise 9% of all employed Nashvillians, but only 4% of all Nashville managers.[40]

- Unemployment and poverty are classic indicators of inequity. The 2002-2003 Immigrant Community Assessment of Nashville found that Nashville's non-citizen foreign-born residents were twice as likely as Nashville's U.S.-native population to be poor.[41] The Assessment also found that Nashville's foreign-born residents were concentrated in the southeast quadrant of the city and geographically isolated from employment and social services: "80% of 813 public and private social service providers in Nashville are located outside of the southeast quadrant of Nashville."[42] The inaugural 2009 Community Needs Evaluation performed by Metro Social Services found that between 2005 and 2007, African Americans and Hispanics were more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to be poor.[43] As of 2010, 25.2% of the foreign-born population in Tennessee was living below the poverty line, compared to 17.3% of the native-born population.[44] Additionally, nearly 40% of foreign-born workers in Tennessee were earning below $25,000 per year.[45]



Women and ethinc-racial minorities are statistically underrepresented among Nashville managers.

- Education outcomes are also indicative of wealth and resource disparities. 40% of Nashville's African-American children live in poverty, compared to 21% of white children. To the degree that poverty is a predictor of diminished school performance, 36% of black and Hispanic students in Metro Nashville Public Schools scored "proficient" or "advanced" in reading and language, compared to 60% of white students. In math skills, 49% of white students scored proficient or advanced, while 22% of black students and 28% of Hispanic students scored in those categories. Comparable gaps were recorded among black and white high school students on similarly required exams.[46]

- Access to infrastructure and services and the tracking of public service delivery can identify gaps that may perpetuate disparities. For example, the 2009 Community Needs Evaluation's focus groups with diverse families in need cited transportation barriers to securing employment: "In all the focus groups, transportation was seen as major barrier both when seeking employment and while trying to keep a job after being hired. They discussed the need for more convenient and affordable public transportation as a way to use services and to remain employed."[47]

With each of these data points and others proposed during the NashvilleNext planning process, the Inclusivity Index can track indicators of social equity and inequity and provide insight on what disparities exist and how they might be addressed.

Other Indicators of Marginalization

Some forms of inequity are more difficult to track than employment and poverty. Interviews and documentary assessments not only provide important insight into the disparities faced by particular groups, but also identify community-based, effective solutions. Documentary methods include journalistic, academic, and private reports of acts of exclusion and harm, such as mosque vandalizing or other hate crimes; interviews with representatives of minority communities; oral histories of minority community members; surveys of inclusive corporate accommodations; and tracking the expansion of rights through enactment of new legislation, such as Nashville's pioneering non-discrimination ordinance.

In the fall of 2012, Nashville For All Of Us convened Nashville African-American leaders, Nashville disability rights advocates, and representatives of Nashville's Muslim and LGBT communities for open-ended conversations about social issues in Nashville. The full reports are included as appendices to this white paper. Each of the conversations or reports yields important insights into particular issues

faced by these groups in Nashville today.

African-American Nashvillians

The group of eight Nashville African-American leaders represented the business, government, education, and civil society sectors and clergy. The leaders expressed deep concern with "[j]oblessness, health and education disparities, substandard housing, unequal pay, differential treatment under the law, and other inequities that disproportionately affect the African-American community." They asserted that these inequities "produce consequences with ripple effects including crime, increased health care costs, high unemployment, overreliance on social services, and other public encumbrances." Racial disparities in livelihoods and well-being persist as the unfinished business of Nashville's desegregation movement, as suggested by the report: "It is a problem reminiscent of Nashville's civil rights era, but with the clear and present fumes from a highway that tore through a community's hopes and vision. It is a problem that continues to shape the city's landscape and the community's consciousness, despite individual successes of many members of the African-American community."[48]

Nashvillians with Disabilities

The conversation with disability rights advocates yielded similarly important insights into the issues faced by persons with disabilities in Nashville. Advo-

cates asserted that, for Nashville "to be considered a 21st Century community of distinction, all planning and development decisions must consider the needs of the disabled, assuring that these needs and their legal and natural rights are met." The full report presents 13 recommendations for addressing the needs of Nashville's disabled population. Among these recommendations are increasing the mobility of the disabled through improvements in public transportation network and service, communications and other technology; removing physical barriers in the built environment, especially in private-sector buildings and businesses; empowering the disabled by appointing representatives to organization boards and creating governmental oversight positions; and increasing the availability and accessibility of affordable housing and social and health services.[49]

This conversation's recommendations are supported by the 2011 Community Needs Evaluation, which also highlighted an emerging trend in the growing number of at-risk disabled people in Nashville.[50] The 2011 Evaluation predicts that demand for home and community-based services for seniors and adults in Nashville will increase for a few reasons: "The number of frail elderly and disabled adults will increase during the coming decades (due to the aging population . . .). The need for services will also increase because of the increased likelihood of older people having one or more disabilities, increasing their need for services."[51] Presently, Nashvillians with disabilities are at great risk of being poor—especially those who are age 35-64, and homemaker services for the elderly and disabled ranked among the highest priorities in the 2011 Evaluation's Nashville Grassroots Community Survey.[52]

Religious Diversity in Nashville

Since the 1990s, and escalating after 9/11, Islamophobia has been a significant expression of religious intolerance in Nashville and the surrounding region. Avi Poster, Tom Negri, Remziya Suleyman, and Kasar Abdulla have written a report on "The Marginalization of the Muslim (and other) Communities" that is appended to this background report.[53] The report provides a chronology of anti-Muslim and anti-Islam marginalizing events that have occurred since 2005 in Middle Tennessee, both interpersonal and legislative. As the authors put it: "Marginalization takes different forms … none more devastating than social exclusion … when individuals and entire communities of people are purposively and systematically blocked from enjoying the legal and natural rights, key to their integration, that are easily accessible to other members of society. Such is the case with the Muslim community in America and in Tennessee today." The authors conclude their report by presenting an annotated list of helpful resources and a 7-point program of "best practices in integration and acceptance." These best practices include encouraging inter-cultural and interfaith dialogue; strengthening neighborhoods as integrated, culturally diverse communities with common gathering spaces; and encouraging elected officials, planners, and business leaders to consider the objective of realizing Nashville as a "dynamic, multicultural, pluralistic urban center" in policymaking decisions.

Nashville's LGBT Community

Conversations held with seven leaders of Nashville's LGBT community noted significant strides made in the last twenty years to ensure that Nashvillians who identify as LGBT "have a safe and affirming city to call home." Among the cited indicators of inclusion are the creation of the LGBT Chamber of Com-

merce, the presence of LGBT community members in positions throughout Metro government, and the creation of a gay business district in the Church Street corridor.

However, significant challenges to the social integration of Nashville's LGBT community remain. These challenges exist in central institutions of our community—the workplace, family, school, and healthcare. For example, according to the Human Rights Campaign's 2012 Municipal Equality Index, Nashville scores 50 out of 100 points on LGBT inclusivity.[54] Hedy Weinberg,[55] Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee, and David Taylor's[56] appended report documents multiple advances in the areas of employment, public schools, and law enforcement, and concludes with eight policy recommendations for strengthening the integration of the LGBT community in Nashville. These recommendations include augmenting Nashville's capability for tracking incidents of employment discrimination and bullying in schools, increasing cultural competency training for educators, expanding services especially for transgendered youth, establishing an LGBT liaison in the Mayor's Office, increasing the representation of the LGBT community on organization boards and in government, and providing domestic partnership benefits to Metro employees.

Nashville's Immigrants and Refugees

Stephanie Teatro, Policy and Civic Engagement Coordinator of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, describes the growth of Nashville's immigrant population and the need for community involvement in four types of immigrant integration: political, economic, civic, and social integration.[57] In her report, found in the appendices of this report, she asserts that "[a]n important area of immigrant integration, and one that is crucial to Nashville's long-term viability, is economic opportunity and integration. As immigrants continue to make up a growing share of our community, their economic success will have a greater impact on the broader Nashville community. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of immigrants in the Tennessee workforce increased by 90.5%,[58] making the foreign-born workforce 6.1% of the state's total workforce.[59] However, as of 2010, 25.2% of the foreign-born population in Tennessee was living below the poverty line, compared to 17.3% of the native-born population.[60] Additionally, nearly 40% of foreign-born workers in Tennessee were earning below $25,000 per year.[61]

Local governments and non-profits in Nashville and across the country have been developing programs to match immigrant workers with good jobs as well as providing continued training to facilitate upward economic mobility. Immigrants are more able to participate and prosper in the local economy when they are given the tools, including English language classes, vocational training, access to higher education, and assistance in transferring their professional degrees and credentials from other countries to the US. Similarly, addressing the barriers for immigrant children to succeed in school will also be critical for Nashville's economic growth in the future.[62]

Broader Indicators of Inclusivity

In addition to the preceding indicators, the Inclusivity Index will encompass a broad variety of factors developed from more thorough data analysis and community engagement.[63] The annual report with results from the Inclusivity Index can demonstrate in which areas Nashville is succeeding in inclusionary policies and practices, where there are existing programs and projects to emulate, and where more work is needed. The areas of concerns and metrics below may also be incorporated into measurable goals of other areas of NashvilleNext.

Employers in Nashville

- Do employers in Nashville have non-discrimination policies?
- Do employers have non-discrimination and equal benefits ordinances for their contractors?
- Do employers offer employees domestic partner benefits, legal dependent benefits, and equivalent family leave?
- Do employers offer health benefits that are inclusive for all employees and their families?
- Do employers have an office or liaison for equity issues?
- Does Metro Nashville-Davidson County Metro Government have an office or liaison for equity issues?
- Do employers have program directors and staff received diversity and cultural competency trainings? How many trainings are provided each year?
- Do employers have a conflict resolution program to address acts of discrimination? How many claims are filed each year?

Public Education

- Do public schools have anti-bullying policies? Is diversity part of the curriculum?
- How does the on-time graduation rate differ based on race/ethnicity? Family income?
- How are resources, technology, and funding for public schools distributed among neighborhoods? Do patterns emerge between resource allocation and neighborhood diversity?
- Have teachers and administrators received diversity and cultural competency trainings?
- Are schools expanding and improving educational and social opportunities for students with disabilities?

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

- Is there an office or liaison for marginalized communities within the Police Department or Sheriff's Office?
- Does the Police Department track and report hate crimes statistics?
- Do all city residents feel safe calling emergency services? How does this vary by race/ethnicity?

Selection from the Human Rights Campaign Inclusivity Index.

Part III. Municipality as Employer
This section is the most heavily weighted because it is an area in which almost every municipality will have extensive control and the power to do much good. It measures how cities treat their LGBT employees and the extent to which they require their contractors tod o the same.

	Available		State	County	City	
Non-Discrimination in City Employment	5	5			5	5
City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance	2	2			0	0
City Contractor Equal Benefits Ordinance	4				0	
Domestic Partner Health Benefits	4				0	
Legal Dependant Benefits	2				0	
Equivalent Family Leave	2				0	
						Total Part III: 10 out of 26 Points

- How is the city working with convicted felons to increase opportunity and decrease recidivism?
- Do high fines and court fees create barriers to resolution of legal problems for marginalized communities?
- Are law enforcement agencies collaborating with federal immigration agencies? How is the city working to ensure trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement?
- How frequently are persons of color involved in traffic stops, searches, and arrests as compared to white persons? How is the city monitoring and eliminating racial profiling?

Leadership and Elected Officials

- Are planning process and decisions made with broad and full participation of the community? How are persons with limited English proficiency able to participate in decision making?
- Does city leadership reflect the diversity of the population?
- When the city makes capital and other improvements, how are the community's goals considered? How are the outcomes of these improvements measured? Are directly affected communities represented on city boards and commissions?

Housing and Neighborhood Development

- How has the number of homeless people in Davidson County changed?
- How many low-income housing units have been built? How are these housing units distributed throughout the city?
- What percent of renters are paying 35% or more of their household income on rent?
- How has diversity in city neighborhoods changed? Are neighborhoods becoming more or less diverse?
- How do more diverse neighborhoods access to transportation, jobs, and services differ from less diverse areas? Does public investment and neighborhood improvement differ in more and less diverse neighborhoods?
- What percentage of neighborhoods have access to a variety of housing options, grocery stores and other commercial services, transportation, and public services? How does this access vary by neighborhood median income and racial diversity?
- Are tax incentives for neighborhood development and revitalization distributed across neighborhoods of varying means?
- How are low-income and communities of color represented in decision making regarding neighborhood development?
- Is neighborhood development displacing low-income and communities of color?
- Are neighborhood community members participating in decisions regarding tax expenditures?
- How many affordable, companion-based housing units have been created?

Poverty, Wealth, and Work

- How has the median income for the population over the age of 25 changed? How does the median income vary among race/ethnicity?
- What percent of families have incomes at or below the federal poverty level or a locally determined standard of poverty?
- How has income distribution changed?
- How many jobs have been created? What is the unemployment rate?
- How does the unemployment rate differ by race/ethnicity?
- How is the city working to employ the underemployed communities of Nashville? What vocational trainings and employment opportunities are available to disabled persons, persons of color, formerly incarcerated persons, and other marginalized communities?

Services and Infrastructure

- What is the total investment (in annual city dollars) spent supporting health, housing, and human services?
- How has the number of low-income persons assisted with services (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) changed?
- How does access and frequency to public transportation correlate with neighborhood median income and race/ethnicity diversity?
- What are the community impact goals of service delivery? How are we measuring outcomes and opportunity?
- Are all city buildings, public projects, and voting sites located where all people with disabilities freely, openly, and easily negotiate their environment without any restrictions or limitations?
- Does the granting of building permits require full accessibility for persons with disabilities?
- Is adequate support in place for non-profit organizations and other employers to support the developmentally disabled in obtaining employment?
- Is transportation being developed in a way that increases accessibility for persons with disabilities?
- Are community members able to access information about government and services? Are these access points accessible to communities with disabilities and communities with limited English proficiency?

Religious Diversity

- Does the city collect data on hate crimes, including vandalism to places of worship? How has the frequency of these crimes changed?
- How has the city promoted inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue?

The Partnership's Broader Mission

We conclude this white paper by recommending an agenda of socially integrative initiatives for the Partnership to take on in pursuit of Nashville's historic mission. We derive these initiatives from the analysis of indicators assessed in this white paper and present them as examples of the types of initiatives that may emerge from the Partnership's collaboration. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the recommendations made in each of the appended reports from Nashville community leaders. These recommendations should also be considered along with recommendations proposed by the community during the NashvilleNext planning process.

Participating in the Management of Nashville's Economy

1. Research and develop a citywide program for further diversifying the management of existing Nashville enterprises and/or capitalize on existing programs.

2. Create an economic development policy for attracting new businesses which have a proven track-record in corporate social responsibility and corporate philanthropy.

Reducing Disparities in the Risk of Poverty

3. Research and develop a citywide workforce development program that prepares socioeconomically disadvantaged Nashvillians of all backgrounds and disability statuses for work and careers in Nashville's robust "knowledge" and "creative" sectors and/or capitalize on existing programs.

4. Develop a citywide employment referral program for placing qualified, socioeconomically disadvantaged Nashvillians of all backgrounds and disability statuses in good jobs with participating Nashville-area employers and/or capitalize on existing programs.

5. In order to increase the accessibility of jobs in the greater Nashville metropolitan area, extend public transportation job-commuting routes and hours of operation throughout Nashville and the surrounding metropolitan area for all residents of greater Nashville.

6. Develop a plan for strengthening the social safety net and for creating career pathways to achieve the American Dream, for all Nashvillians.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding

7. Develop community-based public forums for on-going inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue.

8. Develop a citywide program for on-going collaboration in research and analysis between law enforcement agencies, diverse local clergy and religious leaders, human rights experts, and academia for understanding and preventing hateful acts of religious intolerance.

9. Develop a citywide program for tracking discriminatory acts against the LGBT community and expand training in "cultural competency" among educators.

APPENDIX A

IMPROVING HEALTH THROUGH THE LENS OF RACE, PLACE, AND POLICIES

Kimberlee Wyche Etheridge, MD, MPH
Director, Bureau of Family, Youth and Infant Health, Metro Public Health Department

The Metro Public Health Department (MPHD) has led several initiatives that have aimed to promote health equity within disparate communities in Nashville. MPHD has aimed to change the norms in some communities that seem to accept and expect poor health and the inevitability of disease. One important lesson we have learned is that in order to better address long standing health disparities, it is important to listen and to be familiar with a community's history, key events that have shaped neighborhoods, and people's understanding and interpretation of these events. It is also important to make sure residents who have a stake in the community participate in decision making. An example of this is the work that has been done in the North Nashville area.

North Nashville statistically is an area where over two-thirds of the children live below the federal poverty rate.[64] Many families struggle to keep a roof over their heads, while sustaining a family on a meager income. Residents of North Nashville carry a disproportionate burden of chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cancer, heart disease and stroke.[65] One of the most critical of the disparities in the community, which represents a convergence of the environment, the experiences, and the health of the population, is the excessively high infant mortality rate at which babies are dying. One of the worst tragedies a family can face is to be planning a funeral instead of a first birthday party. In North Nashville, these funerals are twice as common as they are in the rest of Nashville.[66]

In order to put forth more effective public health responses to the health issues concentrated in North Nashville, a team of public health experts partnered with academic institutions, community leaders and historians to study North Nashville's history, and to identify critical periods over the last 100 years that could help to explain factors contributing to the persistent health disparities.

The group focused its attention on the 1950's when North Nashville was considered to be an opportunity rich community with a stable population of working class African-American families, profitable local businesses, and a strong sense of community. Over the course of the next fifty years, however, these things changed and the community went from opportunity rich to opportunity depleted.

The team identified several key events that in the minds of residents had a negative impact on community. The most significant was the 1967 Sixth Circuit Court of Appeal ruling in the case, *Nashville I-40 Steering Committee vs. Ellington*.[67] The case focused on the construction of a 3.6 mile section of the planned Interstate I-40 along its planned route through the predominantly African-American community of North Nashville. The steering committee, composed of teachers, ministers, civic and professional leaders, as well as racially diverse business owners, was heavily involved in organizing opposition to the planned construction, but did not have a voice early in the planning process. The committee lost their appeal to the Supreme Court, and the injunction that had halted construction of Interstate 40 was lifted. Construction of the Interstate, in the minds of many residents, dissected the community and contributed significantly to its decline. The steering committee had argued the point that building the Interstate as proposed, would be detrimental to the community.[68] For the state of Tennessee, and the city of Nashville, the interstate was seen as a lifeline with national and economic implications. The Tennessee State's Attorney testified against the steering committee, arguing that the claims of damage to the community were exaggerated and the resulting roadway would have

minimal effect on the surrounding area, but would benefit the region greatly. The courts concluded that, "[m]ost of the evidence presented by the plaintiffs goes to the wisdom and not to the legality of the highway department's decision . . ."[69] Work resumed on the project in 1968. When the interstate was done, it transected Jefferson Street, which had been identified as the heart of the North Nashville community. Many cross streets were rendered dead ends, making it much more difficult to get around the community. Residents were cut off from businesses and from their neighbors.

In order to better understand community views on the impact of the Interstate, the team completed a series of informant interviews and focus groups with elders who were long-time residents in North Nashville. The Interstate was seen by many who participated as an example of how the community has not been listened to by decision makers. As a result, the impact of the Interstate on the neighborhood was compounded by experiences of discrimination and a legacy of mistrust.

The Racial Healing Project's conversations about I-40's negative impact on North Nashville and its residents were very timely. In 2011, plans were finalized to construct the 28th Avenue/31st Avenue Connector. The bridge creates a needed street connection from 31st Avenue North in Midtown to 28th Avenue North leading into North Nashville. The connector was opened on October 1, 2012, linking the Tennessee State University to Vanderbilt University and Belmont University and linking the Midtown employment center with residents and potential employees in North Nashville. The 28th Avenue/31st Avenue Connector not only accommodates vehicles, but also provides safe passage for bicyclists and pedestrians. In his comments at the opening of the connector, Mayor Dean noted, "This bridge, connecting 28th Avenue in north Nashville and 31st Avenue in west Nashville, is more than just infrastructure, it is a sym-

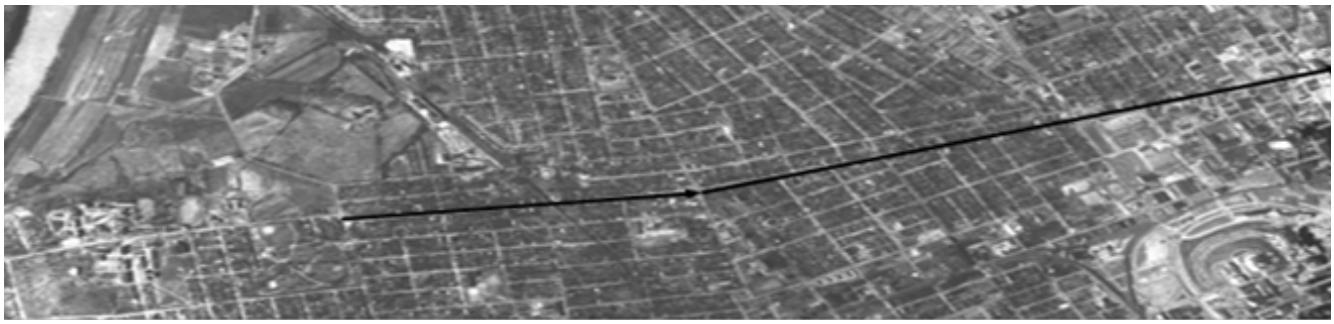


Figure 1: Jefferson Street, North Nashville 1950, Racial Healing Project 2011 MPHD

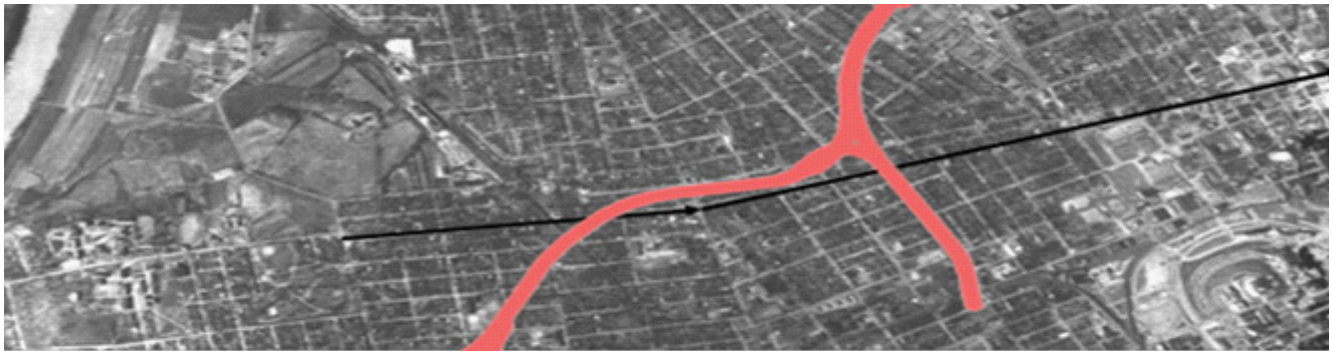


Figure 2: Jefferson Street with I-40 Overlays, 2010 Racial Healing Project 2011 MPHD

bol of bringing our community together. With today's opening, we are literally reconnecting two parts of our city that were divided over 40 years ago when the interstate was built."

In addition to the interstate system, over the course of Nashville's history, several key policies and grants have been used to shape the growing urban area. Several of these had negative impacts on North Nashville. In response to the Great Depression, The Home Owners Loan Act of 1933 provided relief for nearly 20% of families across the county, who were upside down with their mortgages. Out of the thousands of families that received aid, only 1% of the funds were granted to African-American homeowners. As a result, many African Americans in North Nashville lost ownership of their homes during this time period. A decade later, The Federal Housing Act of 1949[70] set the stage for the leveling of an impoverished North Nashville African-American community that sat at the base of the Capitol, and cleared the land, replacing the neighborhood with the construction of James Robertson Parkway. Families that were displaced were often relocated to low standard housing stock farther north, and farther away from the growing downtown area. According to historical accounts provided by the Nashville Civic Design Center in their Urban Design/Policy Brief,[71] Pyramidal Zoning also negatively affected the community during this same time period. This zoning ordinance was instituted to protect suburban land owners from commercial growth and mixed land use, but North Nashville properties were excluded, sanctioning the building of many types of businesses next door to established residences, which ultimately brought down property values.

Another major factor that has shaped North Nashville is the historical events of the Civil Rights era. North Nashville students and church members and other activists were instrumental in the success of the marches and sit-ins that lead to Nashville becoming one of the earliest cities to integrate. Desegregation offered middle class residents more choices, and as many of the businesses that had flourished in the 1950's were gone, years of neglect of abandoned store fronts and vacant buildings brought down property values and contributed to the flight of middle class residents.

In 2012 this once vibrant and nationally known community is struggling. The social cohesion that was once the strength of the community has eroded, leaving concentrated poverty, waning opportunities, crime, a sense of disenfranchisement, all of which have contributed to high rates of illness and disparate health conditions.

Given the long and complex history of North Nashville and the burden of disease in the community, the role that policy decisions have played cannot be ignored. The community has seen many partnerships and community improvement programs come and go, often tied to short term funding. The interventions have typically targeted individuals, and have not impacted the community as a whole, nor achieved long term sustainability. To truly achieve equitable health in the North Nashville community, change must be multifaceted, community driven, and must aim to address contributing factors at the policy, systems, and environmental levels, as well as at the individual level. This philosophy has led the MPHD to apply for new federal monies to work differently in the community.

In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control's federally funded initiative, Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative, (CPPW) awarded Nashville $7.5 million in 2010 to develop and implement policy, systems and environmental changes to decrease obesity jurisdiction wide. The CPPW campaign provides examples of how health equity can be achieved by policy, systems and environmental change interventions. The initiative sought to understand the history and disparities in the county, build diversity and capacity, and engage the community for strategy development and implementation.

Some of the CPPW funding was used to provide mini grants in the community to address healthy eating and active living (HEAL) projects. These grants included the support of community and school based gardens to increase access to healthy foods, a teaching kitchen for the community to use for nutrition education and partnerships with faith based organizations to encourage adoption of healthier life styles. CPPW supported on-going training around dialogue and diversity as well as cultural competency and the increase of ground level capacity building with local leadership. Listening sessions were held with community leaders and residents to identify priorities to guide the community action plan and its implementation. These strategy sessions resulted in the establishment of Healthy Corner Markets in recognized food deserts, as well as inclusion of the Nashville Green Bikes program which has provided bicycles for residents to use without cost in key community locations. In addition, over 80 community gardens were established in schools and neighborhood locations. Under the branding of NashVitality, this initiative has refocused health improvement efforts on the creation of healthier places, making healthy choices more of a default than an exception, and increasing the opportunities the community has to engage in physical activity.

Earlier in 2008, MPHD became one of two new communities across the country to be awarded a Federal Healthy Start grant. These grants are for place-based projects to address disparities in infant mortality. The initiative, Music City Healthy Start (MCHS), has brought $3.5 million over five years to Davidson County. It is a data driven, comprehensive community based initiative, focused on the North Nashville area in response to the high infant mortality rates. The initiative was constructed using the collaborative work that has been done around infant mortality over the last 10 years. During this time MPHD spearheaded targeted community work focusing on changing the approach to reducing infant mortality to include not just the role of prenatal care, but also the role of social determinants of health. Stakeholders, providers, and community members have worked together under the umbrella of Project Blossom. Project Blossom is a data informed consortium, founded to bring a community driven, multidisciplinary team together to improve birth outcomes and eliminate disparities. This working group has identified limitations and inequities in the perinatal system, and has worked together to develop solutions. The group has held annual conferences bringing in national experts to introduce concepts and best practices from across the country in order to better address equity and social determinants of health locally. They have also included the role of race, racism and poverty, as well as issues around the built environment, including the longitudinal implications of the construction of I-40 as a risk factor for adverse birth outcomes.

MCHS has developed a network of providers in both the medical and social services fields within the targeted area. They have established a venue in the community to identify local expertise, and train community members to provide families with information ranging from addressing family nutrition and health, to improving financial literacy, home buying and future planning around education and employment. The ultimate goal of the MCHS program is to help build a healthy community by providing the skills, services and system level changes needed to support healthy pregnancies; families with young infants and again, to support the idea that good health should be the community default instead of the individual exception.

The Project Blossom participants also recognized that in order to help build North Nashville into a community of opportunity, programs were needed that specifically addressed the needs of men, especially those who were fathers and were dedicated to obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to give their children the opportunities and expectations of success that they often did not have growing up.

In 2011 MPHD successfully competed nationally for, and was awarded one of eight new federal grants to focus resources on supporting fathers. This project brought an additional $7.5 million to Davidson County over five years. Based on Davidson County data of children living in poverty, often without fathers in the home, one of two primary focus areas identified was North Nashville. The New Life Project (NLP), named by the men who contributed to the components of the project, aims to identify and respond to policies and systems that discourage men from caring for their families. The NLP also provides case management to fathers, as well as skill building, job readiness training, parenting support, and life skills management. The program has been embraced by so much enthusiasm that over 500 men voluntarily enrolled for the services provided within the first six months. Strengthening the family unit and the well-being of the children, not only improves the health of the children, but also the health of the community.

The work that the team has done in the community emphasizes the community's desire to achieve health and acknowledge the past while improving the present and future. MPHD has worked to establish strong relationships with community leaders, and stakeholders, which has made these kinds of initiatives possible. Preexisting partnerships have served as the foundation for program planning and sustainability.

Any work put forth that will affect a community must be done in concert with that community, and not in isolation based simply on the impressions and decisions of leaders on the outside. Partnerships must be symbiotic and must be willing to alter course based on the short term as well as the longitudinal needs that are being addressed. An example of this is that in order to focus on infant mortality, the community wanted to focus on maternal self-efficacy and issues around strengthening fathers. If this step of engaging in community dialogue is missed, skipped or avoided, the role of government is rightfully challenged, and the walls that are constructed may take generations to dismantle. The I-40 experience exemplifies this clearly.

The negative impact of the planning and construction of the interstate has left a cloud of distrust that has been a raw nerve for the interviewed community members for over forty years. In situations where community members have been brought to the table as equal partners, great advances have been made. There are places with similar histories where roadways have been buried, or even rerouted as a result of listening to community concerns.

Having a better understanding of history has strengthened the funding opportunities discussed above that MPHD has spearheaded. Neither would have been possible in application or execution without the purposeful inclusion of the targeted communities early in the process. These relationships should be established and nurtured long before funding opportunities arise. As a result of this, CPPW, Federal Healthy Start and the New Life Program have been able to help thousands of residents increased their health efficacy and benefit from policies that have helped set the foundation for equity of information, resources and health, but to ultimately achieve it from the inside out.

APPENDIX B

FOCUS 2040: TOWARD A MASTER PLAN FOR NASHVILLE'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY THAT TURNS THE TIDE OF THE LAST 40 YEARS

Caroline G. Blackwell, Executive Director, Metro Human Relations Commission

Global economic analysts and cultural critics agree: not only is Nashville on the rise, but it is a recognized destination. The city is recording substantive gains on national and international measures of economic expansion and prosperity[72] despite a deeper recession than experienced by hundreds of metropolitan areas worldwide. Nashville has earned chart-topping status on popular livability rankings[73] and was dubbed one of America's "Next Big Boom Towns" by Forbes Magazine. In 2011, "NBC Dateline" rated Nashville one of the country's "Friendliest Cities", adding to a variety of "bests" the Music City continues to collect for the amenities it offers residents and visitors alike.

Even the sidebars in Nashville's glossy cover story—notably in education, job growth, and health metrics—are recording measureable improvements and/or high-profile attention. In October 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a 6.7% unemployment rate for Nashville, lower than both the state and national averages (8.2% and 7.9%, respectively) for the same period. While the city has fewer jobs than it did before the recession, the 33,000 new private-sector jobs created over the last 10 years placed the city 12th in the nation in job growth in 2011,[74] a number that is likely to climb as policy makers champion Nashville's business-friendly environment.

Metro Nashville Public Schools received a vote of confidence from the U.S. Department of Education in November when it became a finalist in the $400 million "Race to the Top" competition for innovative school reform plans.[75] After years of pummeling for failing grades on national achievement and accountability standards, MNPS became one of 61 finalists nationwide—and Tennessee's only contender—in a group that is "setting the curve"[76] on ways districts can apply localized strategies to prepare students for college and the workforce by improving educator effectiveness, closing achievement gaps, and boosting overall outcomes.

Nashville's recognition as a worldwide healthcare industry capital stands in stark contrast to the health status of its human capital. While a detailed look at health outcomes in North Nashville's African-American community will be treated elsewhere in this paper, it is noteworthy that in Tennessee, the obesity rate among African American adults was 40.2% as compared to 29.2% among all adults.[77] A similar variance exists in rates of overweight and obesity among children in this state, with African American children and youth at 43.9% compared to 21.1% for white children.[78] Heart disease, diabetes, infant mortality, and other health problems that threaten individual and community wellbeing among African Americans and the citizenry in general have prompted civic, political, education, and healthcare leaders to mount numerous campaigns to reverse these trends and help make Nashville the "Healthiest city in the South."

One such initiative, endorsed by former U.S. Senator Bill Frist, MD, and a host of local dignitaries, is Shaping Healthy Cities: Nashville, a two-year study expected to yield concrete recommendations for environmental, and urban land use changes designed to positively impact these and other health concerns.[79]

These data and other progressive messages about Nashville's renaissance support the widely held belief that "rising tides lift all boats." If the adage is true, several implicit questions arising from a conversation among community leaders on the status of African Americans in the Music City might be, "When will the tide reach our shores?" "What's holding the water back?" "Are our boats visible?" "Who's controlling the flow?"[80]

Moreover, these questions are particularly salient as Nashville celebrates 50 years of a consolidated government, an anniversary that also reveals fissures in perceptions about Nashville as a prosperous, safe, and bountiful city where socioeconomic opportunity is available irrespective of race.

According to U.S. Bureau of Census figures, blacks comprise 27% of the Nashville-Davidson County population compared to 66% for whites. Latinos and other ethnic minorities account for the remaining 7%. 39% of Nashville's residents are black. Analysis of 2010 Census data further shows that on average, blacks in Nashville earn 42% less than whites.[81] 40% of Nashville's African-American children live in poverty, compared to 21% of white children. To the degree that poverty is a predictor of diminished school performance, in 2011, black students in grades 3-8 scored between 25 and 27 points below white students on standard measures of proficiency or advanced placement in reading and language. Comparable gaps were recorded among black and white high school students on similarly required exams.[82]

During the conversation among community leaders held in the fall of 2012, participants put a human face on these and other statistics with stories about Nashville's African-American community that bear little resemblance to the hip vibrancy of the Gulch, trendy Historic Edgefield, or the city's perennially alluring West Side. "In 40 years, little has changed, people are trapped," one member said, adding that there have been no significant construction projects in the community that signal hope or prosperity for children and youth to see. Another leader added, "The African-American community lacks connectedness. We have been caught up in affliction. There is heart-wrenching violence, and hopelessness." Continuing to list issues facing Nashville's African-American community today, the following themes emerged:

Limited financial resources:

Group members argue that resources within Metro and private sector investment have been unequally distributed, resulting in a significant economic divide between Nashville's white and black communities. Whether measured by homeownership and equity, urban development, or political power, participants said, the African American community is lagging behind the growth taking place in other areas of Nashville.

Diminished political and social power:

Citing Metro's shifting demographics, participants expressed concern that the political voice and clout African Americans once held has dwindled and that this trend is likely to continue. As a result, participants called for increased coalition building and macro-level action to address systemic challenges in African American community.

Personal efficacy and self-determination:

By creating more leadership development and mentoring opportunities, African American business, political, education, and civic leaders can leverage their influence and help counter some of the disparities faced by children and adults alike, group members said. Parent education, promotion of high expectations and accountability, increased focus on reading and critical thinking skills, and use of technology and web-based resources were also cited as valuable tools for increasing individual and community empowerment.

Collaboration and Advocacy:

The African American community lacks a shared vision of economic, social, and political opportunity and development that can galvanize individuals and groups, participants said. Consequently, leaders at all levels would benefit from joining forces in deliberate commitment to ensure equal access and opportunity in public education and other resources and services for Nashville's African American residents, particularly in neighborhoods where the tax bases alone cannot sustain needed improvements.

Thus, as Nashville continues its quest to be a world-class city in every respect, it meets a world-class problem—how to bridge the divide that creates economic, political, and social prosperity and wellbeing among a largely white majority, and dislocation, disadvantage, disconnection, and despair experienced by some members of the black minority living within miles of one another. It is a problem reminiscent of Nashville's civil rights era, but with the clear and present fumes from a highway that tore through a community's hopes and vision. It is a problem that continues to shape the city's landscape and the community's consciousness, despite individual successes of many members of the African-American community.

What steps could Nashville take over the next 25 years, to become more inclusive and equitable with regard to the African-American community? The community leaders who participated in the conversation offered the following recommendations:

1. Employ the kind of tax incentives used to develop and revitalize other parts of city to attract economic and cultural development to "challenged" (black and poor) neighborhoods.

2. Apply the highly collaborative, cross-sector "Collective Impact" Model[83] to improve and enhance the livability and economic vitality of North Nashville, particularly when public (tax) money is awarded to contractors engaged in economic development initiatives elsewhere in the city.

3. Provide neighborhoods with voice; consider tax programs that allow residents to influence how improvement funds are used in their neighborhoods, thereby creating hope and opportunity for children who live in poverty.

4. Use community development block grants to enhance neighborhood safety by installing lights, signs, and other measures; improve public transportation access and service in North Nashville, and other low-come areas.

5. Build affordable housing; scatter low-income housing throughout the city. Destroy "hoods".

6. Bring African-American parents back into the Metro Nashville Public School system public education system. Provide diversity training for MNPS teachers and administrators to make schools safer and more welcoming for members of the African-American community.

7. Expand mentorship programs to develop leadership in the African-American community as Nashville's racial and ethnic demographics shift.

8. Work with felons; change policies to advance successful re-entry after incarceration. Place a moratorium on fines and other court costs that become a barrier to resolution of legal problems.

9. Collaborate with members of the African-American community to build, maintain and nurture political clout.

10. Recognize and acknowledge the value of major cultural entities such as Meharry Medical College, Fisk, Tennessee State University, historic Jefferson Street, and tell "the other side of the story" when these other markers are threatened, removed, or fall into decline.

Finally, the community members conversation called for recognition that an equitable and inclusive Nashville requires acknowledgment of human and community interdependence. Divestment in one neighborhood compromises the vested interests of others, members said. Joblessness, health and education disparities, substandard housing, unequal pay, differential treatment under the law, and other inequities, disproportionately affect the African-American community.[84] The consequences of these factors produce a ripple effect, group members said, including disproportionately high crime rates, increased health problems, high unemployment, overreliance on social services, and other public encumbrances.

From a Birmingham jail in 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Demonstrable commitments in an equitable and inclusive master plan will help ensure the next 40 years will not be the same for Nashville's African-American community.

Editor's Note. The contents of this document reflect the personal opinions and observations of a group of community thought leaders organized by Nashville For All of Us. The conversation among opinion leaders was held on October 23, 2012. Nashville For All of Us is grateful to Community Facilitator Kim Johnson for ably hosting the conversation. Wherever possible, the editor has included direct quotations, and provided statistical data consistent with the content, tenor, and context of the discussion.

Participants in the conversation included

Ronald Corbin

Rev. Vernon (Sonnye) Dixon

Beverly Goetzman

Erica Gilmore

Gracie Porter

Oscar Miller, PhD.

Rev. Neely Williams

Kim Roberts Johnson

APPENDIX C

PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: SERVING BETTER THE MOST VULNERABLE AMONG US

Avi Poster, Founding Chair, Coalition for Education About Immigration; Board Chair, Rochelle Center

Prelude

People with disabilities living in our cities inherently and regularly face challenging and potentially insurmountable situations beyond those that others among us face. An enlightened government and society must consider and help people address these challenges. This can best be done through services and supports that will enable people with disabilities to live a more independent and normal life, one that is both rewarding and fulfilling. While many would consider this a moral obligation, it is, in fact, grounded in federal law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), that guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, housing, transportation, governmental services, and telecommunications.

Introduction

As Nashville continues to position itself as an attractive world-class city of excellence, one that intentionally serves its business community and residents with distinction, respect, and concern, we must be mindful of, and consider in all planning and decision making, the most vulnerable among us – the developmentally and intellectually disabled. While Nashville leaders, especially in recent years, have boasted about ours being a welcoming and inclusive community, historically this has not been the rule with regard to providing opportunities for people with disabilities to lead full and inclusive lives alongside of their neighbors.

Past

For far too long, America's culture did not promote or encourage people with disabilities to fully integrate into the social, economic, and educational environment, denying people the opportunity to help support and sustain themselves or develop the natural friendships and interpersonal relationships that all people strive for and benefit from. This pervasive societal condition existed largely due to an inherent lack of acceptance and communal understanding of the plight of people with disabilities. This is an attitude and condition that begot isolation for both those with disabilities and their families/caretakers and inhibited their ability to overcome the natural and imposed obstacles and barriers society placed in front of them. The years leading into the 21st Century were notable for minimal employment opportunities, a dearth of dedicated public services, the unavailability of affordable and suitable housing, and minimal opportunities for quality social and recreational experiences.

Present

While deinstitutionalization as a practice began decades ago, Nashville has not kept pace with providing alternative living arrangements or services for people with disabilities, too often confining them to their own homes and limiting them to their own devices. Fortunately, the negative stigma has been lifted today. Attitudes and conditions have improved in the last decade largely due to the loud voice of advocates, changes in public law, the beginning stages of best inclusionary practices in our public schools, more enlightened city leadership, and a better educated public.

No longer do the majority of Nashvillians believe people with disabilities are best served in the most restrictive environments or have less value, are less capable, or less deserving than others. No longer is there resistance to supportive living arrangements in our neighborhoods for people with disabilities. Community planners now place a higher priority on accessibility. However, largely because of a lack of public will and dollars, the needs of the disabled remain low on the totem pole of community priorities. The reality is that while societal attitudes and communal conditions have improved we still have a long road

to travel towards making our community truly accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to those who are severely challenged.

While employment opportunities, structural conditions, and accessible transportation have improved there is much more that needs to be done. Areas of primary concern include, but are not limited to, a significant lack of affordable meaningful-day services after children age out of the public school system, limited housing and transportation options, woefully limited opportunities for social and recreational activities, and a continuing need for training and employment. Until these concerns are adequately addressed, people with disabilities and their families will continue to face growing insurmountable challenges.

Future

For ours to be considered a 21st Century community of distinction, all planning and development decisions must consider the needs of the disabled, assuring that these needs and their legal and natural rights are met. In addition, all city planning should be committed to the principles of full inclusion: the paradigm within which all people with disabilities freely, openly, and easily negotiate their environment and our city without any restrictions or limitations. For this to occur, we recommend that city leaders and planners, in the years ahead, consider the following when making decisions centered on the progress and future of our city:

1. To ensure that the needs of the disabilities community are met, create an ample array of opportunities for people with disabilities, and their families, to have a voice in city decision making. Opportunities that would include, but are not limited to: appointments on city boards and commissions, especially those directly impacting their lives.

2. Additional public and private support is needed to help non-profits do the community's work in supporting the developmentally disabled. Non-profits could serve far more people if governmental rates for reimbursement and other forms of financial support were in place. Unfortunately, too many individuals are restricted to their homes due to a lack of funding for enrollment in day service or the lack of capacity and resources for non-profits to do more.

3. The development of neighborhoods and new buildings must keep the physical needs of the disabled at the forefront. Strong governmental rules and policies for physical space in the business the city licenses are needed to guarantee greater accessibility for individuals with disabilities to goods and services often taken for granted by the general population. City planning should ensure physical accessibility as our city grows. While this is required by ADA, there is much more we can do to intentionally make our community truly accessible.

4. Additional affordable, companion-based housing is desperately needed in all neighborhoods. Assistance in purchasing homes could come in a variety of forms including tax relief, support with utilities, and housing subsidies or loans. Builders can be encouraged to provide opportunities for housing through dedicated mechanisms such as requiring assigned space and creating tenant-lease programs.

5. Access to and use of telecommunications by people with disabilities should be considered essential. Infrastructures should be designed with this in mind. Training programs for people with disabilities would assist in their inclusion, as would public financial assistance for the purchase of assistive technology.

6. There is a tremendous need for social and recreational services for both those who live in residential placements and those who live at home. Other communities excel at doing this, so should Nashville.

7. There is a need for additional community-based workforce development and employment opportunities for the disabled. Quotas in large companies can be established and financial incentives to businesses can be provided to new and existing business to ensure that quotas are met. Public-private partnerships are needed that will lend to collaborative efforts that provide job training, placement, and oversight.

8. While accessible transportation has improved and is now a core value of MTA, much more can be done to accommodate people with disabilities by making transportation better available, more convenient, affordable, and accessible.

9. Support is needed to help cover the cost of special and assistive equipment, as well as the care needed, to assure cultural, educational, and work force inclusion.

10. Expand summer camps, social/recreational options, and employment opportunities for school-age children with disabilities when school is not in session.

11. Our public schools must continue, at full speed ahead, to move towards full inclusion as well as provide a full array of continuing educational and social experience until age 22, as required by law.

12. Create a dedicated city hotline for people with disabilities to access when information or service is needed.

13. Create a city governmental post to oversee that these and other strategies aimed at inclusion and opportunity are being implemented.

Conclusion

While advancements for the disability community have been made, and while Nashville continues to be seen as an emerging world-class city, given the current environment for people with disabilities, we will not step out of the pack as a desired location of choice for businesses or families considering locating here. Other cities have fared better at this than have we. We have miles to travel before ours is considered a community that truly serves and treats its most vulnerable with the intentionality and care they deserve.

Editor's Note. The content of this paper reflects the opinions and observations shared during conversations and email exchanges between the following members of the disabilities advocate community and the author.

Debbie Chadwick, Executive Director of the Rochelle Center

Donna Goodaker, Executive Director of Progress, Inc.

Elise McMillan, Co-Director, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Cecilia Melo-Romie, Statewide Spanish Outreach Coordinator, Tennessee Disability Pathfinder, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education

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APPENDIX D

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE: THE MARGINALIZATION OF THE MUSLIM (AND OTHER) COMMUNITIES

Kasar Abdulla, Avi Poster, Tom Negri, and Remziya Suleyman

Introduction

For a variety of reasons, far too many segments of American society, at one time or another, have found themselves marginalized. Black Americans, the poor, the LGBT community, Hispanics, the developmentally disabled, and many others have, at one time or another, felt that they have been relegated to the fringes of their community because of who they were assumed to be, a refusal to acknowledge their rights or needs, or a rejection of their beliefs or values. Marginalization takes different forms—none more devastating than social exclusion—when individuals and entire communities of people are purposively and systematically blocked from enjoying the legal and natural rights, key to their integration, that are easily accessible to other members of society. Such is the case with the Muslim community in America and in Tennessee today.

The purpose of this report is two-fold: a) to serve as a reminder of Muslim social marginalization such that we can work to eradicate it and b) to serve as a reminder that there are other marginalized groups within our midst, or on the horizon of being marginalized, for whom we must to be prepared to intervene and support.

Why focus on the Muslim community? Marginalizing an entire population, or an entire religion, is simply not good for America or our community. While the focus of this white paper centers on Nashville's Muslim community, the commentary included can be extrapolated and used in reference to issues and problems other marginalized communities experience.

Unfortunately, across the country we are witnessing hostility, which gives rise to fear towards Muslims, challenges the positive values of religious freedom, tolerance, neighborliness, and respect for minority groups and individuals regardless of race, religion, or social rank. Within our own community, the building of mosques and Muslim community centers is met with a small but fiercely swelling resistance from an increasingly vocal minority of local citizens who believe that any place Muslims gather poses a major threat to America's way of life and core values, when indeed the opposite is true. Many mosque founders and Muslim leaders today share a common commitment to promoting an authentic and mainstream vision of Islam that complements other faiths in America and supports American values.

Past

Obstacles and challenges in recent years have prevented our city from being an inclusive and welcoming community for Muslims, a growing population attracted to Nashville because of economic and other reasons. For more than a decade, Islamophobia has been on the rise in Tennessee. In recent years, the flames of tragic, racially motivated events, often fanned by vocal, opportunistic politicians and entrepreneurs of hate and fear-mongering, have led to the creation of barriers that have made integration and participation in society very difficult.

The following are a handful of such notable events:

- The Holy Quran was set on fire and, with human feces, placed on the doorsteps of a Somali resident living in Nashville. (June 23, 2005)
- A mosque in Columbia was set ablaze and defiled with swastika and hateful messages including "White Power". Three males were arrested and sentenced to prison. (February 2008)
- Channel 5 News ran sensational, misleading episode entitled "Inside Islamville: Is a Local TN Community used as a Terrorist Compound?" To

encourage viewership, the public was asked to "tune in and see if a local TN community is a terrorist compound." This caused a furor, even though viewers later learned the assertion was false. Because these lead-ins were aired during the Super Bowl, much damage was done to the image of Muslims in the community. Three days after the airing the Al-Farooq Mosque on Nolensville Road was vandalized and defiled with messages such as "Muslims Not Welcome" and "Muslims Go Home." (February 3, 2010)

- nti-Sharia Law legislation was proposed in the General Assembly, a clear and intentional attempt to dehumanize the Muslim community and limit the 1st Amendment rights of Tennessean Muslims. (February 2011)
- The proposed building of a Mosque in Murfreesboro created a community-wide controversy accompanied by continual vandalism and bomb threats and courtroom intervention aimed at preventing Muslims from exercising their constitutional right to building a place of worship. (June 2010-present)
- Local and state elected officials have fanned the flames of Islamophobia through legislative proposals and anti-Muslim rhetoric. (2011-present)
- A national anti-Muslim conference and countless anti-Muslim public forums were organized for the purpose of spreading fear in Tennesseans' minds about Muslims. After two major Nashville hotels rejected the organizers' request for space for this convening, the conference was moved to a local church. (October 2011)

Present

Like so many other ethnic groups, because of the increased feeling of being marginalized from society and rejected by fellow citizens, Muslims are reluctant to fully engage in the community. Instead, community members isolate themselves and are reticent to collaborate with law enforcement agencies and public officials for fear of mistreatment and retribution. Some Muslim parents have opted to home-school or place their children in private schools believing they will be better cared for. Fortunately, there are signs of improvement, giving the Muslim community more confidence that better times lie ahead. Some anecdotal examples that support this are worthy of notation:

- Because of Mayor Karl Dean's positive response to the Al-Farooq vandalism, Muslims feel that they have a Mayor who cares about them. In response to the vandalism, the Mayor, along with law enforcement officials, met with Muslim leaders to assure that what happened did not present the values of Nashvillians, to pledge that acts of hate will not be tolerated in our city. The words of the Mayor, broadcast on local news stations, echoed throughout the Muslim community: "I'm here to serve, what can we do as a city to make you feel welcome?" This landmark response helped give rise to increased confidence that through enlightened leadership Muslims can grow to feel respected and appreciated. The more people in leadership that recognize the value of diversity and lend support to people who are different, the more likely ethnic groups such as Muslims will feel free to emerge as positive contributors to society.
- The Education Resource Committee, founded in September 2009 as an arm of the Islamic Center of Nashville,[85] is working closely with Nashville Public Schools to implement concrete strategies designed to enhance parent engagement, develop curricula centered on cultural and religious diversity, host conversations and training sessions with teachers about best practices in dealing with and educating ethnic minorities, and facilitating free and open dialogues among students. Action steps like these led the Director of Family Liaisons & Social Studies curriculum instructor to provide concrete strategies for parent outreach, facilitate dialogues with students and faculties about how to recognize and understand issues related to cultural and religious diversity, provide multicultural

learning opportunities, etc. The more successful this effort is the more likely our community will experience cultural and religious inclusiveness in the years to come.

- New organizations aimed at helping Muslims integrate as a constructive part of society have emerged. The American Muslim Advisory Council,[86] founded on August 15, 2011, is successfully building bridges between law enforcement agencies and the Muslim community while working diligently to organize interfaith dialogues to advance understanding within the religious community in Tennessee. The American Center for Outreach,[87] has emerged as a progressive and proactive political voice of Tennessee Muslims. Muslim Youth Navigating TN (MYNT), founded on March 17, 2012, is a new Muslim youth group that provides volunteer and leadership opportunities for Muslim youth aimed at steering them to give back to the broader community while, at the same time, helping them to be proud of their Muslim-American identity.
- Several notable community organizations are devoted to interfaith and inter-cultural understanding and collaboration, and promoting social and religious pluralism. Human rights organizations including, but not limited to, Nashville for All of Us, The Family of Abraham, the Metro Nashville Human Rights Commission, and many others are devoting themselves to community integration of all minority and ethnic groups as well as working to combat anti-Muslim rhetoric.

Resources

The following resources will help readers better understand the challenges facing the Muslim community today.

- Center for American Progress, "Fear Inc." http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia.pdf
- New York Times, "The Man Behind the Anti-Shariah Movement, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/31/us/31shariah.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- First Amendment Center's report "What is the Truth about American Muslims?" http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/madison/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/FAC_American_Muslims_Q_A.pdf
- New York Times, "Generation 9/11" http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/08/us/sept-11reckoning/muslims.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Future

The future, indeed, looks brighter. Moving forward, we envision Nashville as a world-class city of distinction - a vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive city that respects and accepts the differences within and whose diverse citizenry contributes significantly to its economic and social growth and stability. Nashville is indeed on a path to flourish both economically and socially, but in order for this to happen it needs to adopt and sustain the best practices in integration and acceptance.

- City officials should consider how the decisions they make would lend to ours becoming a more inclusive city in which all ethnic and religious minorities (as well as those who are economically disenfranchised) are helped to feel welcome.
- Planning decisions aimed at strengthening existing neighborhoods and building new ones should intentionally include strategies and mechanisms for economic, social, and recreational integration. The placement and development of open space, the expectation for affordable housing, and the improvement of transportation between neighborhoods and to our economic and social hubs must be considered. In addition, convenient gathering places should be purposefully designed. Schools can become neighborhood gathering places when not in session, local hubs in which programs can be delivered to help local citizenry acquire language, technology, citizenship, and employment training and serve as a center for social and recreational activities.
- For us to become a dynamic, multicultural, pluralistic urban center the language of inclusion and integration must be modeled by our city's political and business leadership and adopted by policymakers and implementers such that the actualization of both becomes part of the core fabric of future progress. The more this is intentionally done the more likely negative and regressive attitudes about ethnicity and those different among us will be marginalized, rather than people being marginalized. It should be our goal that whenever those who hear about or consider moving to Nashville think of our community as a model of inclusivity and multiculturalism.
- Future planning and decision making regarding the policy-making and economic development should include a mechanism for hearing from ethnic minorities such that their needs and opinions are considered. This can be accomplished through focus groups and/or appointments to decision-making bodies.
- Given that the acceptance of religious and cultural plurality is central to the future development of Nashville, public policies should be adopted that ensures that all Nashvillians, regardless of their religion or race, are guaranteed the opportunity to worship and gather in centers of their choice. For this to occur, it is essential that all government employees (policy-makers, administrators, law enforcers, workers, etc.) be provided on-going trainings in cultural competence. The more effective the trainings the more appropriate decisions will be made regarding a host of needs of our ethnic populations, including transportation, law enforcement, food services in our public schools, language assistance, design and location of parks and community centers, and other public services.
- Frequent opportunities for inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue can be hosted by our city. These forums would provide governmental leadership with critical insight but will go a long way to ensure that the core values of our city are celebrated and protected.
- For many reasons, our city should continue making investment in public school education the highest of priorities and should add the creation of leisure time activities for our youth to its agenda. Given that our youth represent the pool from which future leaders and citizenry will emerge, it is essential that we provide them with the best opportunities to advance their skills and learn from each other. As anti-Muslim sentiments have increased, Muslim youth, in particular, have grown to feel isolated and rejected. Programs designed to educate all youth on the virtues of multiculturalism and aimed at engaging all youth in productive activities when not in school can positioning our youth to better become leaders of tomorrow and productive, contributive, embracing citizens of our community. To this end, creating centers for social and recreational engagement in every neighborhood is essential.

Closing

Our choice is clear. In order to avoid succumbing to the voices of intolerance and ignorance and instead create a world-class community that embraces integration, and inclusion, a community in which Muslims and other ethnic minorities flourish and contribute to our betterment, we have to adopt intentional practices that will lend to ours being a true multicultural center.

APPENDIX E

LGBT INCLUSION IN NASHVILLE: MOVING FORWARD

Hedy Weinberg, Executive Director of American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee
David Taylor, Co-owner of Tribe, Play, and Suzy Wong's House of Yum

Nashville has taken great strides in creating a welcoming and inclusive city for members of the LGBT community. The progressive leadership of Mayor Dean and Metro Council members and the excellent advocacy by human rights groups and business leaders are strong signs that Nashville is a city dedicated to extending equal protection and equal treatment to LGBT persons.

Our report on the status of the LGBT community of Nashville is based on our interviews with seven leaders of Nashville's LGBT community. Our report presents a consensus of interviewees' email responses to our open-ended questions.

The Nashville of twenty years ago is vastly different than today. As a city, we mostly embrace the LGBT community and recognize their many contributions. Today the LGBT community enjoys far greater visibility than it did 20 years ago. As one interviewee responded, "Nashville has proven itself a leader by ensuring that its citizens who identify as LGBT have a safe and affirming city to call home."

Nashville has an abundance of services, programs, and organizations that serve as outlets for a rich nurturing and cultural experience. The emergence of the LGBT Chamber of Commerce, media outlets such as Out & About and the Newschannel 5+ program, and "the creation of safe spaces and venues for intra-group dialogue" (e.g., the Oasis Center, OutCentral, gay business district/Church Street corridor, Nashville in Harmony, and Nashville Grizzlies) ensure a healthy and responsive community culture.

In addition, there are now a number of members of the LGBT community who serve on Metro Commissions. Furthermore, the recent political campaigns of several LGBT metro council candidates are evidence of the greater incorporation of LGBT voices in the Nashville political arena. While an openly LGBT person has been elected to Metro Council in a district race, no city-wide race has been won by an openly LGBT person to date. Mayor Dean has appointed openly LGBT persons to senior levels of city government.

According to one interviewee, "None of this progress would have been possible without an ever-growing and increasingly diverse network of activists, aided by a rank-and-file, that advocate for a welcoming and inclusive Nashville. Organizations such as the TEP, the TTPC, the ACLU, HRC, and GLSEN have been vital to changing the conversation in Nashville and Middle Tennessee and paving the way for a sea-change in attitudes."

Nashville has taken great strides forward, especially in the policy domains of employment, public schools, and law enforcement. Advances in anti-discrimination employment policy occurred first in Nashville's private sector. Among these model employers are Bridgestone Americas, Hospital Corporation of America, and Vanderbilt University which protect their LGBT employees from discrimination in the workplace. In addition, HCA, Healthstream, Willis North America, and Tri-County Extradition, Louisiana-Pacific Corp., among others, provide domestic partnership benefits to their LGBT employees. Unfortunately, most Nashville workplaces lack these comprehensive non-discrimination policies, but it is noted that the private sector has often led the public sector in the adoption of non-discrimination policies and recognition of the contributions of LGBT individuals to their organizations.

A crucial community defining moment for public sector employees occurred in 2009 when the Metro

Nashville Council passed a non-discrimination ordinance, protecting current and prospective Metro employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Sponsored by at-large council members Megan Barry, Ronnie Steine, Jerry Maynard, and Tim Garrett and endorsed by Mayor Dean, Nashville became the first city in the state to adopt a non-discrimination ordinance.

In 2011, the Metro Nashville Council went a step further and passed an ordinance requiring all contractors doing business with the county government to have a non-discrimination policy prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Unfortunately, in response to this new ordinance, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a state law prohibiting municipalities and counties from passing laws that expanded protection for LGBT employees. A constitutional challenge to the state law failed and the Metro ordinance became void.

According to interviewees, there is broad consensus that Metro Nashville public school system is committed to creating safe environments for its LGBT students and enforcing comprehensive anti-bullying and anti-harassment measures. In 2008, the Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) Board of Education unanimously adopted changes to the Code of Student Conduct to protect LGBT students from bullying and harassment. Sexual orientation and gender identity/expression were added as enumerated categories of protected classes to the comprehensive anti-bullying and harassment policy.

This outcome was the result of a year-long campaign by the Support Student Safety Coalition (SSS). First organized in 2007 and assisted by the ACLU-TN, current and former high school students mobilized to ensure that all MNPS students had access to public education that was safe and free from discrimination. The city-wide campaign increased awareness about the negative impact of bullying in schools and the need for a comprehensive policy that protected LGBT youth.

Furthermore, based on Metro Nashville Education Association's recommendation, the MNPS Board also adopted a comprehensive non-discrimination employment policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity. The MNPS system became the first in the State to prohibit discrimination against its LGBT employees.

Despite these strides forward, our interviewees argued for expansions in youth services for LGBT youth and cultural competency training for educators. As one interviewee put it, "with 22 MNPS high schools, there are only three Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs….and according to GLSEN, the presence of these clubs GSA clubs drastically increase a sense of safety and improve the climate within the schools for all students."

In August 2011, MNPS began to train its high school counselors on how to become allies for LGBT students and strategies to create a safer learning environment. Since then, over 350 MNPS professionals - counselors, social workers, and school psychologists - have received extensive training on how to effectively and respectfully work with LGBT students. Teachers, however, have not yet received the cultural competency training.

The Metro Nashville Police Department has made great strides in strengthening its relationship with the LGBT community. Their rapid responses to concerns of and crimes against members of the LGBT community indicate the effectiveness of Metro's cultural competency training program. However, there is still the need for greater respect by the MNPD toward transgendered individuals who report crimes and are considered suspects.

The Challenges Ahead

While great strides have been made in Nashville and are embraced by most Nashvillians, the Tennessee

General Assembly remains hostile to LGBT issues as they relate to employment discrimination, bullying in schools, and family well-being. The ability of the State Legislature to void a local ordinance providing expanded protection is troubling and requires statewide mobilization to challenge these types of assaults.

What is more, a culture of homophobia is pervasive in many schools, workplaces, and communities. Homophobia is expressed in the myriad of often undetected acts of intolerance, such as bullying, exclusionary and abusive co-worker relations, unequal treatment of LGBT families under the law, and inaccessibility of family-friendly social welfare benefits for LGBT families.

Even greater strides need to be made in integrating the transgendered community, especially youth, into Nashville. As one interviewee explained, "Transgender youth are the most misunderstood population… and present more often in a state of crisis than their LGB counterparts." In addition, the lack of gender neutral bathrooms and locker rooms and shelters create additional safety and security issues.

At this time, transgendered Nashvillians have yet to be appointed or elected to positions in government, although a transgendered Nashvillian has been elected a Delegate to the Democratic National Convention as well as a District Representative of the Davidson County Democratic Party.

We must continue to seek anti-discrimination protections for LGBT people in the private employment sector, in housing, in schools, as well as equal rights for same-sex couples and LGBT families. Religious intolerance remains a serious obstacle to fully realizing the social integration of the LGBT community in Nashville. Most importantly, as an interviewee described, we need to create "enduring attitudinal change" (i.e. change the hearts and minds of the public) in order to ensure the continued integration of the LGBT community in Nashville.

Conclusion

Nashville has the opportunity to implement policies that will distinguish itself as a welcoming and inclusive city for LGBT individuals. Realizing this vision depends on the leadership of elected officials and the collective and compassionate voices of business, human rights, and faith leaders as well as the active participation of Nashville residents. A city committed to LGBT equality will ensure a thriving city and Nashville's growth as an attractive site for new investment in the knowledge and creative sectors.

Recommendations

Incorporating the following recommendations into the Nashville 2040 General Plan are critical for sustained success to ensure a diverse, welcoming and inclusive city for LGBT Individuals:

1. Secure domestic partnership benefits for Metro employees;

2. Continue to appoint openly LGBT people to Metro boards; include LGBT people in the Mayor's senior staff and other leadership positions within city government;

3. Create a LGBT liaison position within Mayor's Office and the Police Department;

4. Provide annual training for Metro Nashville Public School System educators on how to effectively and respectfully work with LGBT students, including resources about anti-bullying initiatives to protect all students, including LGBT students;

5. Create a mechanism to track incidents of employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in both the public and private sectors;

6. Create and implement a mechanism to track incidents of bullying in public school settings and respond effectively;

7. Require that Metro Human Relations Commission track incidents of employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in the public and private workplace and pursue investigations;

8. Provide continued "cultural competency" training and resources for MNPS and MNPD on LGBT Issues, especially as it relates to the transgendered community;

9. Expand services for transgendered youth, including shelter beds, access to health care, and public schools unisex / gender neutral bathrooms or locker rooms;

10. Adopt the criteria for the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index as community goals for achieving LGBT equality in Nashville. Website: http://hrc.org/municipal-equality-index

Acknowledgments

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Maria Salas, attorney and former member of Human Rights Campaign boards of governors and directors;

Marisa Richmond, President, Tennessee Transgender Political Coalition;

Chris Sanders, President, Tennessee Equality Project;

Pam Sheffer, Program Coordinator, Just Us, Oasis Center.

APPENDIX F

INNOVATING INCLUSION FOR REFUGEES IN NASHVILLE: THE STRUGGLES BHUTANESE REFUGEES FACE AND NPT'S GROUNDBREAKING PROJECT TO DOCUMENT THEIR PLIGHT

Mark Eatherly, Refugee Integration Coordinator, Nashville International Center for Empowerment
Damber Kharel, Refugee Integration Liaison, Nashville International Center for Empowerment

Based on data from the Tennessee Office for Refugees[88] and the Tennessee Department of Human Services[89], approximately 6,680 refugees were resettled to Davidson County between 2000 and 2010. According to 2010 census data,[90] the population of Davidson County increased by 56,790 new residents in the same time period. Therefore, about 12% of Nashville's population increase can be attributed to refugee resettlement. These statistics reveal that refugees will play a significant role in Nashville's future. Thus, as the city looks forward, it should ensure that refugees are part of the conversation.

Refugees face myriad challenges when resettled to the United States. After living in a refugee camp for many years where bureaucracy is almost non-existent, coming to a city where bureaucracy is king can be daunting. Imagine trying to find the services you need and accessing them without speaking English, having a car, understanding the forms, knowing what is essential, or the knowledge that those services even exist. Ask yourself if you had just moved into your home with absolutely no knowledge about the city you were in, no car, and no English proficiency, how would you figure out where to go to find food, a doctor, the bus, a job, or a school? And, even if you did find them, how would you access them? Refugee resettlement agencies assist refugees with these issues, but it's not as if they are going to learn English, have the money to buy a car, or figure out where everything is within the few months they are being served by these agencies. With refugees, navigating the system is the biggest challenge.

Nashville Public Television's Emmy winning series called Next Door Neighbors puts this situation into perspective. One of these specials focused on the Bhutanese refugees in Nashville. The Bhutanese began arriving in the summer of 2008 and are quickly becoming one of the largest refugee populations in Nashville. Their current number is estimated to be 1,250. The program showed viewers the struggles the Bhutanese have faced since coming to Nashville. One interviewee, Shekhar Kanal, talked about transportation. He said, "In America, not having a car is like not having feet."[91] He talked about how it took four hours on the bus to get to and from his job; whereas, if he had a car, it would only take 30 minutes. Public transportation is just one example of how difficult it can be to access services. First, one has to learn how to ride the bus. Understanding what route one needs to take, knowing where the bus stops are, and figuring out to pull the cord when one wants to get off are things that most Nashvillians aren't even familiar with. Think about trying to learn all those details with limited English and little knowledge about the city.

A recent study done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center on the alarming suicide rate among the Bhutanese in the US reiterates the hardships faced by this community. Between 2009 and 2012, sixteen Bhutanese refugees committed suicide. Two of the sixteen suicides happened in Nashville. The percentage of these suicides compared to the size of the community is almost double that of the national and global suicide rates. Families of the deceased and other community members were interviewed about what they believed the central causes of the suicides were. These are the top four: "language barriers (77%), worries about family back home (57%), separation from family (43%), and difficulty maintaining cultural and religious traditions (43%)."One of the key recommendations the report makes for stemming the tide is "strengthen[ing] community structures and expand[ing] programs for newly arrived persons

that address post-resettlement isolation, non-clinical interventions in the context of Bhutanese culture, vocational training and community engagement."[92] Clearly, Nashville must take steps to better integrate and engage the Bhutanese and other refugee populations.

To put it simply, Nashville has to figure out a way to make itself more accessible to those that are new here. Essential services should not be so arduous to navigate. Language barriers must be resolved. Cultural competency on both sides should be promoted. And, the infrastructure in areas where the majority of refugees live needs to be taken into account when planning for the city's future. If refugees could all understand the forms they have to fill out, were able to easily travel to appointments and jobs, could read their mail, could talk on the phone with English speakers, could figure out where to go when they need to do or find certain things, and could ensure that their children are prepared for life here, then they would be able to integrate much faster and, thus, make great strides in allowing everyone in Nashville to move forward together.

APPENDIX G

PROMOTING IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN METRO NASHVILLE

Stephanie Teatro, Policy and Civic Engagement Coordinator, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

Nashville's New Americans

Over the last decade, Tennessee has had the third fastest-growing foreign-born population of all the states in the U.S. Between 2000 and 2010, the foreign-born population of Tennessee increased by 81.8%, bringing the total immigrant population to nearly 300,000 persons.[93] In Nashville, nearly 12% of our population is foreign-born. In addition to population size, the economic, social, and cultural benefits of an increasingly diverse population are also growing. In 2010, the overall purchasing power of Tennessee's growing Latino population was $6.1 billion. As of 2007, our state had nearly 20,000 Asian- and Latino-owned businesses that employed more than 38,000 Tennesseans and sold more than $5.4 billion.[94]

To ensure our city's success in the future, we must invest in New Americans today. Our city has the opportunity to create bold and innovative programs and policies that welcome and support immigrant integration to the benefit of the entire community. This paper aims to provide an overview of opportunities and models for immigrant integration.

Local Governments and Immigrant Integration

Immigrant integration is the responsibility of the entire community, but local governments have a special role to play in ensuring that New Americans can fully participate and contribute. Cities and counties across the country have taken the lead by creating and investing in programs that facilitate economic and social integration of immigrants, and ensuring that immigrants have equal access to government programs and services.[95] Similarly, local governments have been passing ordinances that limit the collaboration between local law enforcement and federal immigration agencies, recognizing that such collaboration undermines trust between immigrant communities and local police and emergency services.[96] By learning about the unique barriers that immigrants face to full participation and integration, cities are better equipped to adapt and respond.

Davidson County has been responding to the growing immigrant population by creating programs and modifying existing infrastructure to ensure that New Americans are welcomed into our county. For example, Nashville facilitated its first My City Academy in 2012, whereby immigrant community leaders learned more about how the county government is organized and the services provided by each office. My City Academy was organized by the Mayor's New Americans Advisory Council, which was formed in 2009 to advise the city on issues of immigrant integration.

Economic Integration: Immigrant Workers and Entrepreneurs

An important area of immigrant integration, and one that is crucial to Nashville's long-term viability, is economic opportunity and integration. As immigrants continue to make up a growing share of our community, their economic success will have a greater impact on the broader Nashville community. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of immigrants in the Tennessee workforce increased by 90.5%,[97] making the foreign-born workforce 6.1% of the state's total workforce.[98] However, as of 2010, 25.2% of the foreign-born population in Tennessee was living below the poverty line, compared to 17.3% of the native-born population.[99] Additionally, nearly 40% of foreign-born workers in Tennessee were earning below $25,000 per year.[100]

Local governments and non-profits in Nashville and across the country have been developing programs to match immigrant workers with good jobs as well as providing continued training to facilitate upward economic mobility. Immigrants are more able to

participate and prosper in the local economy when they are given the tools, including English language classes, vocational training, access to higher education, and assistance in transferring their professional degrees and credentials from other countries to the U.S.[101] Similarly, addressing the barriers for immigrant children to succeed in school will also be critical for Nashville's economic growth in the future.[102]

Nationally, immigration and immigrant entrepreneurism have proven to be a great economic driver that can benefit the whole community. In 2011, immigrant entrepreneurs established 18% of all Fortune 500 companies in the United States and founded or co-founded 25.3% of science and technology firms in the United States.[103] In 2010, research showed that immigrants were more than twice as likely as US-born persons to start their own businesses.[104]

Successful and proactive economic integration at its base facilitates the participation of immigrant communities into existing financial structures—tax systems, home ownerships, banking services,[105] etc. At its best, economic integration helps immigrant families to not only survive and participate in a new economic system, but also to prosper.

Civic Integration: Promoting Naturalization

The rate of naturalization of immigrants can serve as a key indicator of immigrant integration. Citizenship removes the final barriers to many jobs and government services and gives immigrants the right to vote. As of 2010, only 33.5% of immigrants in Tennessee were naturalized U.S. citizens.[106] According to Rob Paral and Associates, there are more than 20,000 Legal Permanent Residents that may eligible for citizenship in Davidson County alone. Foreign-born people in Tennessee that were naturalized citizens were more likely than noncitizens to have a bachelor's or higher degree (34.8% compared to 20.6 percent).[107] The rate of poverty between citizens and noncitizens is also quite wide: 31.6% of noncitizens in Tennessee were living in poverty, compared to 12.7% of naturalized citizens.[108] Non-profits and local governments across the country are working to reduce barriers to citizenship and encourage eligible immigrants to naturalize.[109]

Social Integration: Engaging Receiving Communities

While New Americans and local governments have a large role to play, successful immigrant integration also engages receiving communities in the process. Nashville has already developed some successful programs to facilitate cultural sharing and understanding in our community—most notably the annual Celebrate Nashville cultural celebration. By educating the entire Nashville community about immigration and immigrant integration, we can build a more welcoming Tennessee that thrives on the participation and contribution of all our residents.[110]

Conclusion

As we look into the future of our city and our region, it is imperative that we be thoughtful and innovative about how we realize the full potential of the immigrant community in Tennessee. Our whole city will be stronger when everyone can fully participate and contribute.

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