

## **Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Planning Commission Mission Statement<sup>1</sup>**

The Planning Commission guides growth and development as Nashville and Davidson County evolve into a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable community, with a commitment to preservation of important assets, efficient use of public infrastructure, distinctive and diverse neighborhood character, free and open civic life, and choices in housing and transportation.

### **Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Planning Department**

The mission of the Planning Department is to help Nashville and Davidson County evolve into a more sustainable community, guided by efficient use of infrastructure, distinctive and diverse community character, open and vibrant civic life, and choices in housing and transportation focused on improving the quality of life.

#### ***Issues:***

- a. *The lack of regional cooperation due to the state and local taxing structure, fragmented and ineffective planning, and overuse of natural resources has contributed significantly to a fundamentally unsustainable development pattern characterized by sprawl, pollution and unnecessary resource depletion that will undermine the economic viability of the region and Davidson County and destroy the quality of life that is unique to the area. (Community Planning)*
- b. *The inability to effectively coordinate land use policy and transportation plans, particularly across jurisdictional boundaries, will hamper mobility and prevent Davidson County and the rest of the Nashville region from realizing its maximum economic growth potential. (Land Use and Mobility)*
- c. *A lack of accurate geographic information necessary to make responsible and informed decisions will increase Metro's costs and preclude informed decisions. (Geographic Information Services)*
- d. *The lack of proactive and constructive land development implementation tools and techniques within Davidson County results in increasingly inefficient development patterns and severely inhibits the ability to build sustainable communities. (Community Design and Implementation)*
- e. *The growing inability, and in some cases unwillingness, to understand the actual alternatives available to address the issues of sustainable growth and development will increasingly prevent the community from making responsible and appropriate choices. (Community Leadership)*

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: The achievement of a truly sustainable community requires the integral cooperation of the citizenry, all Metro departments, and state and federal government. It requires a commitment to the vision, goals and objectives contained herein. The active support and engagement of the Parks, Water Services, Public Works, Codes Administration, and Fire Departments, the Metropolitan Transit Authority and MDHA are essential to achievement of the goals outlined.

## Community Planning Goal

*Over the next five years implement a planning program that increases Metro Council's, developers', and citizens' understanding of growth-related issues and results in comprehensively sustainable community and neighborhood plans by placing a basic premium on the critical importance of:*

- *meaningful citizen participation that identifies and preserves distinctive community character and contributes to a shared civic life;*
- *livable and walkable mixed-use neighborhoods with actual and functional transportation choices and housing opportunities that meet the needs of all citizens, regardless of age, income, or family status;*
- *applying sustainable building and development practices as the first principle of choice as opposed to choice of last resort;*
- *appropriate opportunities for context-responsive development<sup>2</sup> in the Downtown and other neighborhoods well-served by urban infrastructure;*
- *broadened awareness of the need to establish economic competitiveness in the 21st century economy to build the highest possible quality of life.*

### Line of Business

#### 1 Planning Policy and Implementation

The purpose of the Planning Policy and Implementation Line of Business is to develop sustainable community and neighborhood plans and implementation strategies necessary to achieve comprehensive sustainable development.

Program 1.1: Planning Policy and Implementation Program. The purpose of the Planning Policy and Implementation Program is to develop sustainable community and neighborhood plans and implementation strategies necessary to achieve comprehensive sustainable development.

Result Measure: % increase in land designated by policy as appropriate for “smart growth” projects.

Output Measure: Number of “smart growth project” opportunity areas identified and planned

Demand Measure: Amount of land available for “smart growth projects”

Efficiency: \$ cost per “smart growth project” designed through detailed plan or form-based code

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<sup>2</sup> Context-responsive development recognizes that communities evolve over time and new development responds to existing design to add value to the built environment that preceded it. Context-responsive development creates desirable blocks and communities where people engage in places to work, to live, to learn, to relax and to shop for daily needs. Streets are an important component of the *public realm* (public spaces where people interact), which help defines a community's aesthetic quality, identity, economic activity, health, social cohesion and opportunity, not just its mobility. Context-responsive development generates buildings that shape and define memorable streets, squares, and plazas, while allowing uses to change easily over time.

## **Land Use and Mobility Goal**

*By December 2010, develop a plan that fully integrates community and transportation planning in order to increase transit use, maximize the utilitarian functionality of pedestrian and bicycle networks through mixed use community development patterns that reduce trip lengths, and provides sustainable community and neighborhood development patterns.*

### Line of Business

#### **2 Regional Transportation Planning**

The purpose of the Regional Transportation Planning Line of Business is to provide short and long-term recommendations, budget, coordination, and educational advice to state, regional and local governments, so they can provide diverse and effective transportation options for their citizens.

Program 2.1: Regional Transportation Planning Program: The purpose of the Regional Transportation Planning Program is to provide short and long-term recommendation, budget, coordination, and educational advice to state, regional and local governments, so they can provide diverse and effective transportation options for their citizens.

Result Measure: Increase in the comprehensive mobility index. (Index developed with equal input from

1. reduction in VMT per person;
2. increase in bicycle commuting or use;
3. increase in transit usage;
4. increase in pedestrian activity.

Output Measure: The \$\$ amount of projects in the MPO's TIP located in congested corridors that offer alternatives to roadway widening.

Demand Measure: The \$\$ amount of candidate projects requested for inclusion in the MPO's TIP located in congested corridors that offer alternatives to roadway widening.

Efficiency: Percentage of households in the urbanized area with access to transit or non-motorized modes.

## **Community Design and Implementation Goal**

*By December 2012, revise land development policies and regulations for a minimum of 50% of the developable (non-maintenance or conservation) land within Davidson County to ensure new development and redevelopment results in sustainable, compact, mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods, designed to provide a unifying sense of place, actual housing and transportation choices, usable public space, and sound environmental stewardship through form-based coding<sup>3</sup> and other techniques<sup>4</sup>.*

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<sup>3</sup> A method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm primarily by controlling physical form, with a lesser focus on land use, through city or county regulations.

## Line of Business

### 3 Development Guidance

The purpose of the Development Guidance Line of Business is to provide design expertise, professional planning advice, and policy and regulatory tools and techniques to decision-makers, developers and the general public so they can have the information and regulatory framework to implement and apply the principles of sustainable development consistent with the community's vision established in the General Plan.

Program 3.1: Development Guidance Program. The purpose of the Development Guidance Program is to provide design expertise, professional planning advice, and policy and regulatory tools and techniques to decision-makers, developers and the general public so they can have the information and regulatory framework to implement and apply the principles of sustainable development consistent with the community's vision established in the General Plan.

Result Measure: % increase in the assessed value of identified "smart growth projects" compared to the county as a whole.

Output Measure: Number of identified "smart growth projects" approved.

Demand Measure: Number of identified "smart growth projects" for which approval is requested.

Efficiency: \$ cost average for processing projects that meet criteria for "smart growth projects"

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Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in Form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a *regulating plan* that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development rather than only distinctions in land-use types. This is in contrast to conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS) to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, Form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory.

Form-based codes are drafted to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a Form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes is dependent on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements. Source Form-Based Code Institute

<sup>4</sup> The very first developments completed based on form-based codes are (in 2008) just beginning to be occupied and subject to property tax on the building improvements. In FY2008 such development demonstrated an increase in property value of 75.4% as compared to value increases of 27.8% in the remainder of the county.

## **Geographic Information Services Goal**

*Over the next five years, increase the value of Metro's enterprise GIS by integrating GIS applications into a minimum of 10% more of the Metro Government lines of business.*

### Line of Business

#### 4 GIS Information Services

The Purpose of GIS Information Services Line of Business is to efficiently provide spatial data and information, applications and geographic analysis to Metro Departments/Agencies, Elected Officials and the general public so they can have the critical information available to make decisions based on accurate data.

Program 4.1: GIS Services and Application Program. The Purpose of GIS Services and Application Development Program is to efficiently provide spatial data and information, applications and geographic analysis to Metro Departments/Agencies, Elected Officials and the general public so they can have the critical information available to make decisions based on accurate data.

Result Measure: Change in the percentage of lines of business that are utilizing Metro's enterprise GIS in their workflow.

Output Measure: Percentage of lines of businesses in metro government served by Metro's enterprise GIS.

Demand Measure: Expected number of lines of businesses requesting access to GIS information or services.

Efficiency: Cost to add new lines of business to the enterprise GIS

Program 4.2: Geographic Data Maintenance Program. The purpose of the Geographic Data Maintenance Program is to provide accurate geographic and land information products to Planning Department staff, other Metro departments and agencies, and the public, so they can have timely and accurate property and zoning datasets that meet national standards (NSDI) to achieve their objectives and avoid duplication of effort.

Result Measure: Percentage of property and zoning dataset entries made accurately on initial entry

Output Measure: Number of property datasets entries

Demand Measure: Number of property dataset entries expected to be required

Efficiency: Cost to add new parcel information

## **Community Leadership Goal**

*By December 2010 establish a comprehensive leadership culture, including advanced staff and community education, necessary to empower staff and community members with the information to make the informed decisions required to achieve a sustainable community development pattern and maintain and enhance the quality of life.*

### Line of Business

#### 5 Executive Leadership

The purpose of the Executive Leadership Line of Business is to provide management and leadership services to the department and community by providing tools, information, education and guidance as to critical planning alternatives and options necessary to attain a sustainable community.

Program 5.1: Executive Leadership Program. The purpose of the Executive Leadership Line of Business is to provide management and leadership services to the department and community by providing tools, information, education and guidance as to critical planning alternatives and options necessary to attain a sustainable community.

Result Measure: Reduction in Nashville's carbon footprint

Output Measure: Actual annual carbon footprint calculation

Demand Measure: Attainment of a carbon neutral footprint

Efficiency: Increase in % of vegetative ground cover