

Metropolitan Planning Commission



Staff Report

October 6, 2022



Metro Planning Commission Meeting of 10/6/22

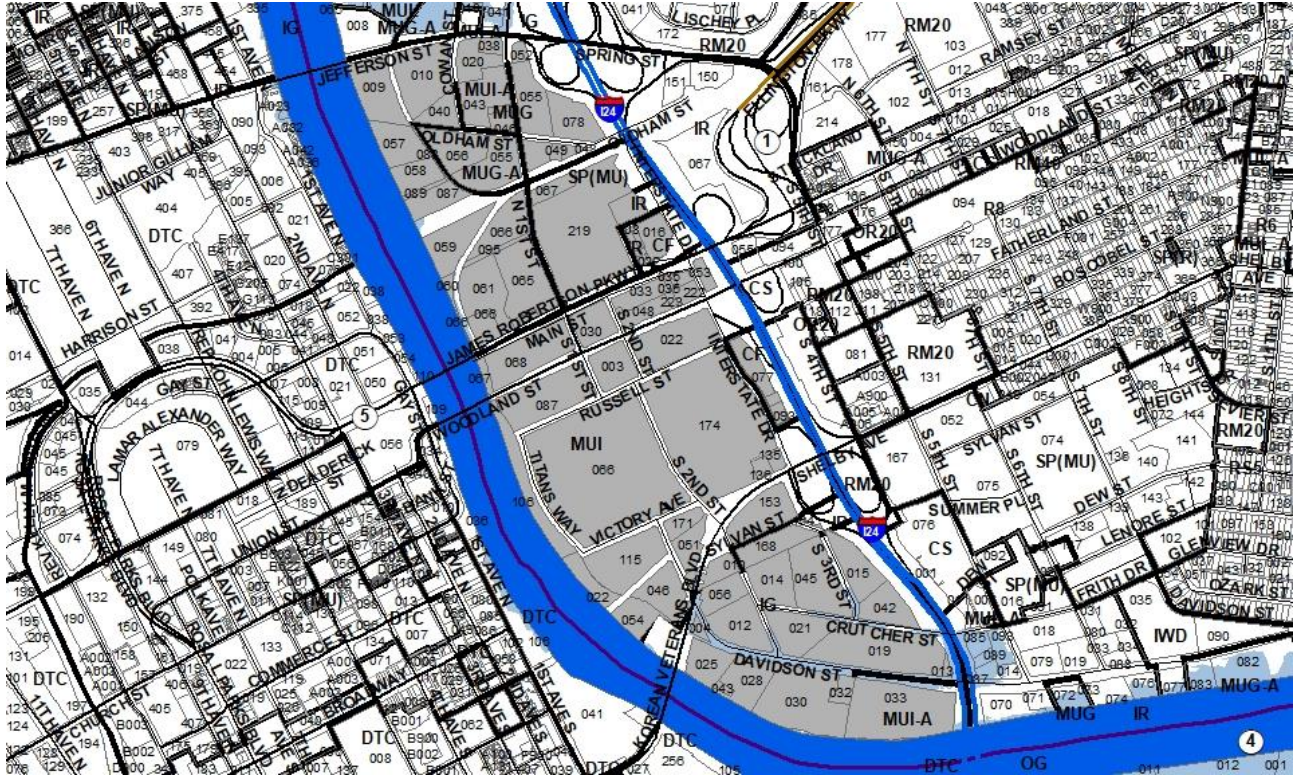
Mission Statement: The Planning Commission is to guide the future growth and development for Nashville and Davidson County to evolve into a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable community with a commitment to preservation of important assets, efficient use of public infrastructure,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



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2022CP-009-001

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT

Various Properties

09, Downtown

5 (S. Parker), 6 (B. Withers)



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Item # 1	Major Plan Amendment 2022CP-009-001
Project Name	Downtown Community Plan Amendment
Council Districts	5 – Parker, 6 – Withers
School District	1 – Gentry
Requested by	Metro Nashville Planning Department, applicant; various owners.
Staff Reviewer	Grider
Staff Recommendation	<i>Approve.</i>

APPLICANT REQUEST

Amend Downtown Community Plan to replace the current supplemental policy, update the Major and Collector Street Plan (MCSP), and update the WalknBike Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways.

Major Plan Amendment, Major and Collector Street Plan Amendment, and WalknBike Amendment

A request to amend the Downtown Community Plan to adopt the Imagine East Bank Vision Plan on various parcels in an area bounded by I-24 to the east and south, the Cumberland River to the west, and Jefferson Street to the north, this will replace the Supplemental Policy (09-T6-DN-EB-01), update the Major and Collector Street Plan to include the new East Bank Boulevard, and amend the WalknBike Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways. Requested by the Metro Planning Department, applicant; various owners.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN

Background

The *Imagine East Bank* Vision Plan covers 338 acres of the East Bank of the Cumberland River in an area bounded by I-24 to the east and south, the Cumberland River to the west, and Jefferson Street to the north. The existing policy for the study area was adopted in *NashvilleNext* in 2015 and in the update to *NashvilleNext* in 2017.

In early 2021, the Planning Department kicked-off a study to re-envision 338 acres of underutilized land in the heart of Nashville along the banks of the Cumberland River. In partnership with consultants, Perkins Eastman, the Mayor’s Office, Nashville Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, and others, the *Imagine East Bank* visioning process has provided Nashville with the opportunity to dream of new neighborhoods that could emerge in this area, that are accessible to all, and reposition this area of the city for generations to come.

Historically, the East Bank supported industrial uses for a budding new city and the area has remained largely industrial to this day. Urban renewal projects in the mid-twentieth century severed the East Bank from its neighbors effectively making it an island characterized by disjointed streets, industrial development, surface parking lots, and other large-scale infrastructure. More recently, a renewed interest in the waterfront and urban core brought new uses to the East Bank. Over time, the construction of a new NFL Stadium, the John Seigenthaler Pedestrian Bridge, and Cumberland Park created important destinations.



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Several major projects currently under development, in and around the East Bank, will add significant new development. These include the rapid development of River North and the arrival of Oracle, the redevelopment of the truck stop site, and explorations around Titans Stadium. If each project develops in a piecemeal fashion, without a coordinated strategy, it will strain already lacking infrastructure. The *Imagine East Bank* vision was initiated to outline strategies for coordinated development and to better understand how Nashvillians want the area to evolve with these changes. This approach proactively directs and manages growth, as opposed to defensively and retroactively planning for it at its margins.

ANALYSIS

The Planning Department, in collaboration with expert consultants and multiple Metro Departments has undertaken extensive technical analysis, urban design inquiry, and robust community outreach to shape this Vision Plan.

The planning process was divided into the following phases:

- Imagine
- Research & Analyze
- Test Ideas
- Draft & Refine Vision Concepts
- Draft Vision Plan
- Feedback & Adoption

The following issues were analyzed in depth:

- Equity and affordability
- Infrastructure, in particular for mobility
- Climate change and living with water
- Creating new complete neighborhoods

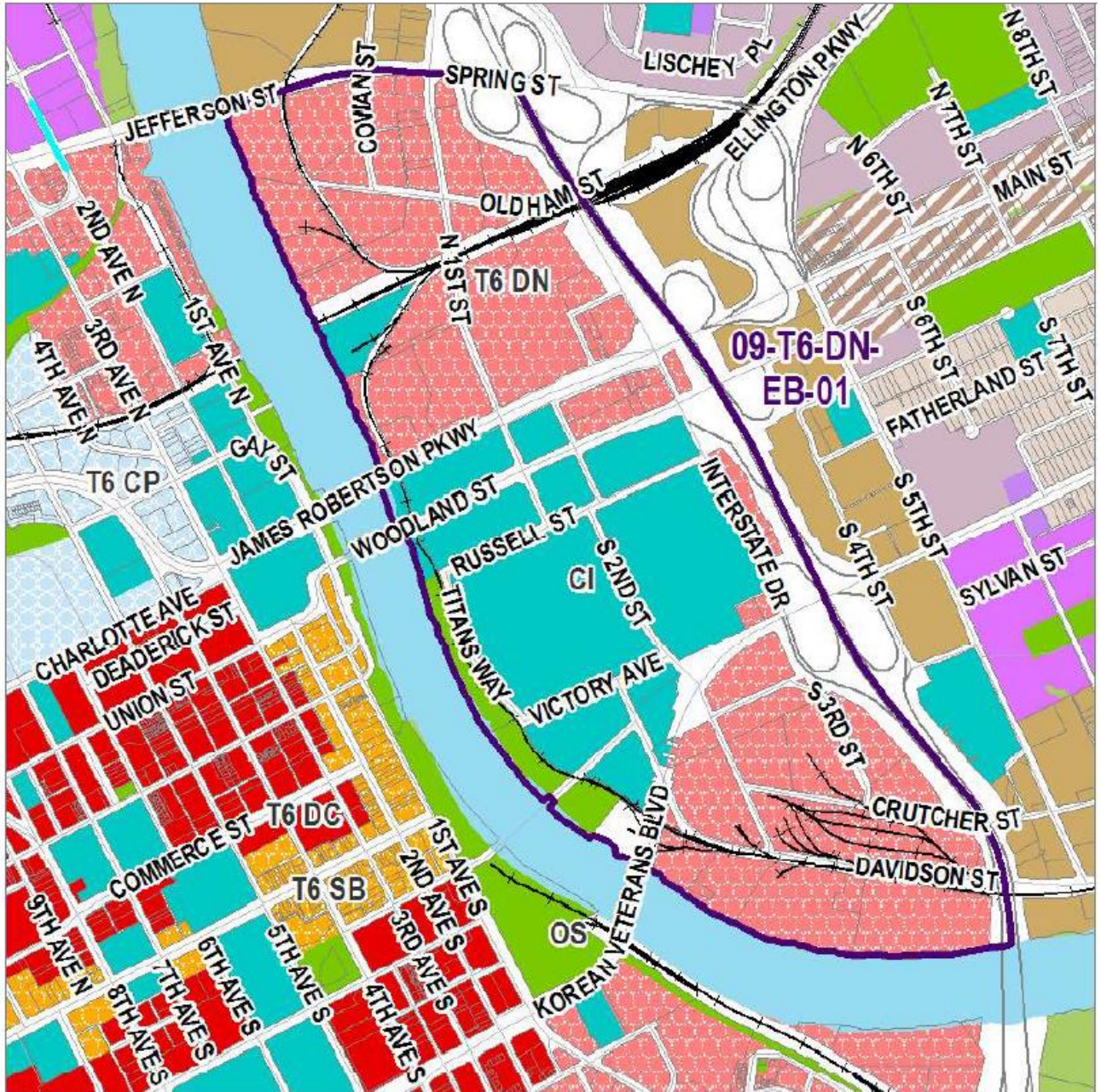
During the study process, the Tennessee Titans organization began exploring the option of building a relocated stadium on the East Bank. While the stadium is an important component of the study area, it is one part of a much broader area with the potential for positive change. Our primary focus is the livability of the entire area, including but not limited to the publicly owned parcels around the stadium. From a planning and design perspective, there are important downsides and advantages around the stadium placement decision, however, we believe that basic plan elements that support the broader planning effort can be achieved under either scenario.

NashvilleNext Growth and Preservation Concept Map

The Growth and Preservation Concept Map adopted with NashvilleNext reflects Nashvillians' expectations for growth in the future. It identifies tiered centers expected to accommodate a range of future growth, improved public spaces, transit, and sustainable economic activity, and it encourages infill development along transit and multimodal corridors. Within the study area, the Concept Map designates the entire Downtown Community Plan area as a Tier One Center. These centers are the focus of coordinated investments to shape growth and support transit.



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CCM Policy. Green is Open Space (OS), teal is Civic (CI), pink is T6 Downtown Neighborhood (T6 DN).



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Existing Policy

At this time, the Community Character policy of Downtown Neighborhood (T6-DN) is applied to foster mixed use development on private property. Open Space (OS) policy is applied to properties along the river bank already held in public ownership, and Civic (CI) policy is applied to the Nissan Stadium properties and parking areas.

Existing Supplemental Policies

Currently, supplemental policy 09-T6-DN-EB-01 is applied to the East Bank. With the adoption of the *Imagine East Bank* Vision Plan this policy will be replaced by the guidance within *Imagine East Bank*.

Zoning and Existing Land Use

Much of the study area is zoned for more intense mixed use - Mixed Use Intensive (MUI), Mixed Use General (MUG-A). There is also a prominent amount of industrial zoning districts Industrial Restrictive (IR) and Industrial General (IG). The truck stop parcel was rezoned from IR to SP in 2021.

Historic Properties

There are no National Register Historic Districts or local historic districts within the study area. The railroad swing bridge is National Register Eligible.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Imagine East Bank represents a 20-month effort to meaningfully engage as many residents and stakeholders as possible, to understand their experiences and craft a collaborative vision for the future of the East Bank. These conversations directly shaped the infrastructure and design recommendations presented in the plan.

Planning staff undertook an extensive public outreach and participation program, including a Technical Advisory Committee and Neighborhood Advisory Committee, and multiple means of promoting the project and participation opportunities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several engagement activities were adapted to an online format to safely gather public opinion.

The following is a timeline of key events and dates:

- February 4, 2021 – Virtual Informational Meeting
- April 13, 2021 – Consultant Team Announced
- May 11, 2021 – Virtual Kickoff Meeting
- June 2021 – Boating and Waterfront Survey
- July and August 2021 – Summer Design Principles Workshops (4 total)
- September - October 2021 – Multimodal Survey
- November 2021 – Study Update Public Meeting and accompanying survey
- December 2021 to July 2022 – 9 public meetings and 57 technical engagements
- August 2022 Draft Plan Review – engagements totaling 33 meetings and events, plus an online survey

In total over the past 20-months the planning department undertook:

- Approximately 50 public meetings with over 1,000 attendees



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- Over 200 technical meetings
- Four surveys with a total of over 2,000 survey responses
- Established an email listserv with approximately 1,100 subscribers

Technical and Neighborhood Advisory Committees

During the spring of 2021, the Planning Department formed two Steering Committees to assist with outreach and function as a sounding board for ideas and strategies. The Technical Advisory Committee was made up of multiple federal, state, and local entities, and development and design professionals. The Neighborhood Advisory Committee was made up of residents, property owners, business owners, and faith-based organizations. Both groups each met five times throughout the planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the *Imagine East Bank* Vision Plan as the Supplemental Policy.

The Plan, if adopted, will be the policy guide for zone change requests. It may also guide requests for the Capital Improvements Budget. The vision and goals are intended to guide policy interpretation and zone change requests. Adoption of the proposed Vision Plan would replace the current Supplemental Policy 09-T6-DN-EB-01. Supplemental policies are intended to provide an additional level of guidance beyond that provided by the Community Character Manual (CCM). They address unique features of the area and expand upon standard guidance of CCM in order to tailor policy to the needs of the study area. No changes to the CCM land use policy are proposed.

This Supplemental Policy includes guidance for the following (please refer to the *Imagine East Bank* Vision Plan for the full guidance:

1. Equitable and Affordable East Bank. Advancing equity, resiliency, and high quality of life for all Nashvillians through the creation of accessible and affordable places to live, work, and play. Equity and affordability are promoted through a multi-pronged approach that includes housing, multimodal connectivity, economic development, resiliency, and land use. Several strategies and tools for advancing housing diversity on the East Bank are addressed.

The vision for equity represents the first of the vision concepts and is woven throughout the entire plan.

2. Safe and Simple Multimodal Connections. Providing a robust, multimodal transportation system enabling easy and equal access to and through the East Bank. The proposed mobility plan prioritizes the experience of transit riders, cyclists, and pedestrians, while improving street connectivity. It identifies placement and sections for these networks.
3. Respect for the River. Re-centering the river as a vital community amenity and bolstering resiliency through enhanced floodplain and stormwater management. The environmental strategy links flood resiliency and stormwater management with the creation of vibrant park spaces that provide a variety of river-oriented activities.



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4. Neighborhoods for Nashvillians. Creating vibrant, livable, and authentic neighborhoods that prioritize the everyday needs of Nashvillians. The East Bank is divided into for neighborhoods with unique contexts and characteristics. Objectives and guidelines are proposed for the development of buildings, streetscapes, and outdoor spaces.
5. Metro-owned Land in Focus. Outlining key ideas and opportunities for Metro-owned land on the East Bank including the creation of an East Bank Park, mobility hub, and opportunities for cultural resources. Given Metro's responsibility as stewards of public property, the vision for the Metro-owned land on the East Bank was developed further than that of the other neighborhoods.

Amend the Major & Collector Street Plan and WalknBike.

The Major & Collector Street Plan (MCSP) is a comprehensive plan and implementation tool for guiding public and private investment on major streets (Arterial-Boulevards, Arterial-Parkways, and Collector-Avenues) that make up the backbone of the city's transportation system. It is a part of, and implements, *Access Nashville 2040*, which is the functional plan component of *NashvilleNext*, the General Plan for Nashville and Davidson County.

As an element of the General Plan, the MCSP is amended as updates occur to each Community Plan and further engineering studies are completed to reflect the changes that have occurred in the community since the MCSP was adopted and/or to respond to future planned growth, development, and preservation.

The *Imagine East Bank* Plan proposes adding the East Bank Boulevard as an Arterial-Boulevard to the MCSP from I-24 to Jefferson Street with the T5-M-AB designation. The proposed East Bank Boulevard will include dedicated transit only lanes in each direction. Two conceptual alignments of the boulevard are shown, one with Nissan Stadium remaining in place and another with it moving to the East. Since a decision on the location of the Stadium has not been made, the MCSP amendment includes concepts for both futures. As a tool that is conceptual in nature this will ensure that the intent of a continuous north-south boulevard through the East Bank is conveyed.

110' is the typical right-of-way for the boulevard with additional ROW where needed at intersections or at stop locations.

Additionally, the section of Cowan Street within the River North UDO, from Jefferson Street to Cleveland Street, should be updated to include 110' right-of-way consistent with recent discussions on River North.

The following maps depict the changes:

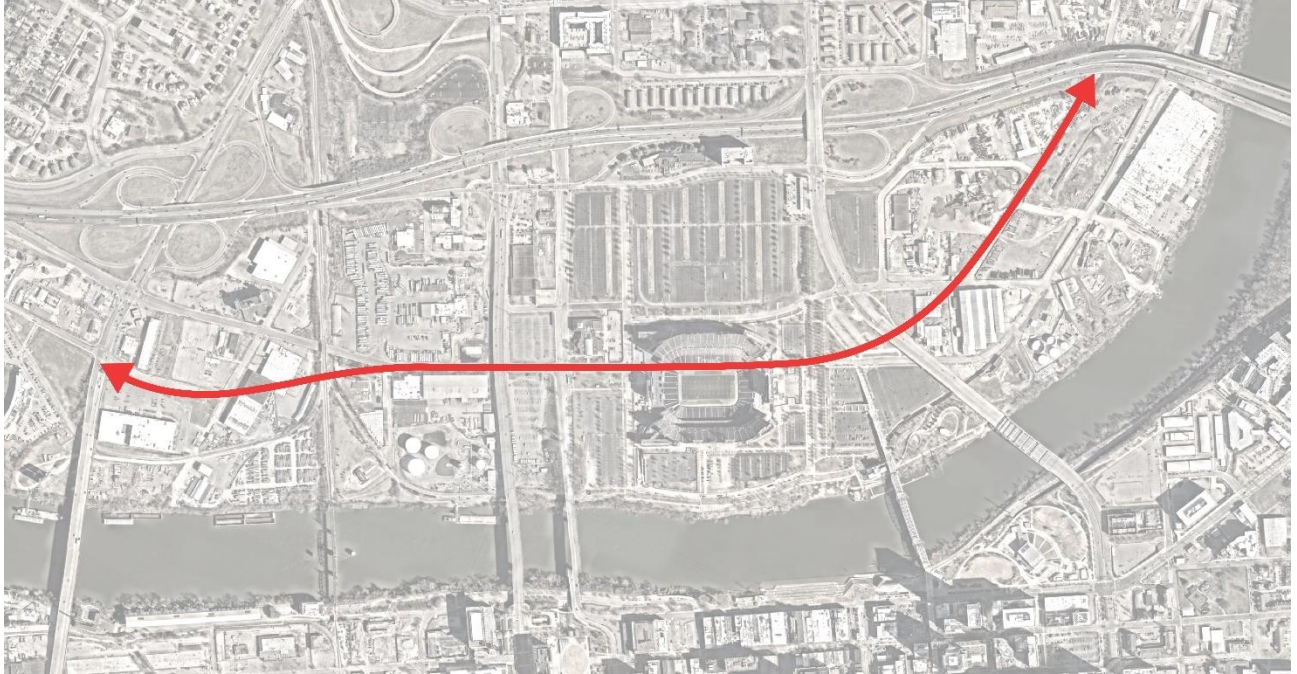


East Bank Boulevard: Option A

(accommodates relocated stadium)

typical ROW: 110'

below line represents approximate alignment

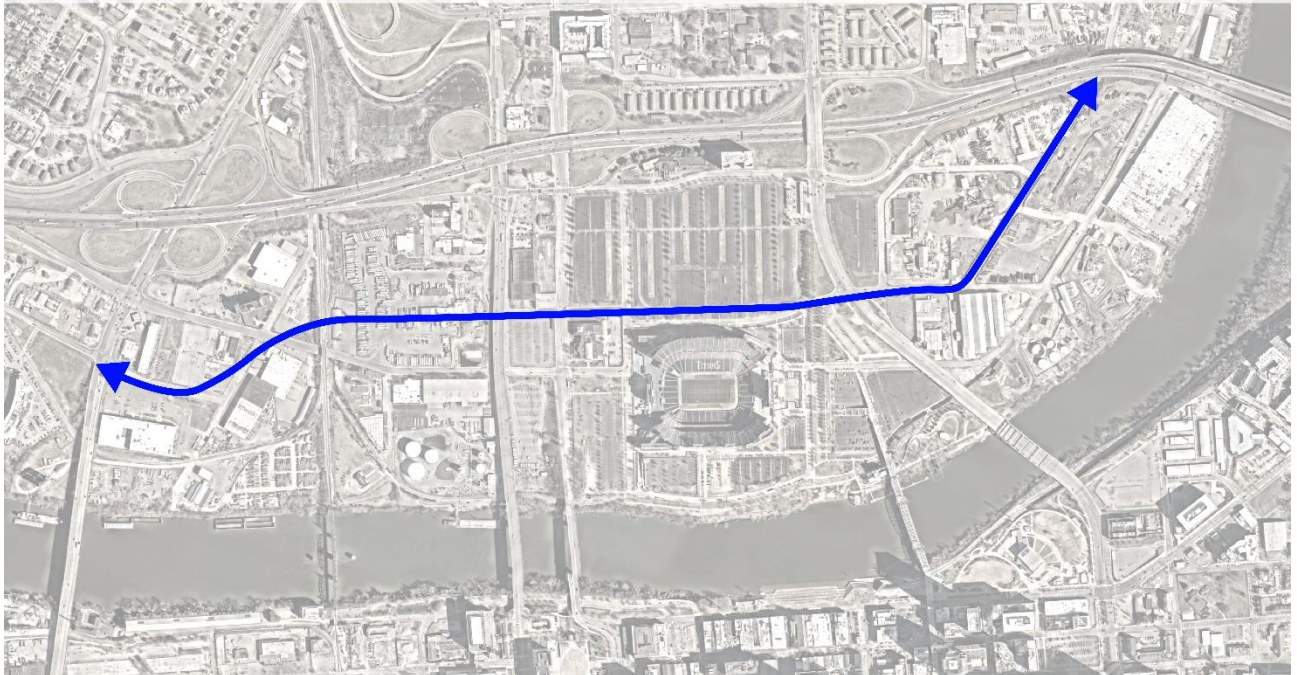


East Bank Boulevard: Option B

(accommodates renovation of existing stadium)

typical ROW: 110'

below line represents approximate alignment





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Additionally, *WalknBike* should be updated to identify new bike facilities within the study area. Planning staff will make note of those changes and work with NDOT to incorporate the bikeway elements as part of a comprehensive update to *WalknBike*.

Summary

- Adopt the *Imagine East Bank* Vision Plan to replace the current Supplemental Policy in the *Downtown Community Plan*.
- Amend the Major and Collector Street Plan.
- Amend the WalknBike Strategic Plan for Sidewalks and Bikeways.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval.