

Global Mall Area Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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PREPARED FOR: METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The 78-acre Global Mall site in Antioch represents one of Metropolitan Nashville's most significant redevelopment opportunities for the next decade and beyond. Building on prior investments at the site, including the Southeast Branch Library, Southeast Regional Community Center, and Ford Ice Center, Metro purchased most of the former mall in 2022 allowing the city to structure the redevelopment process in a way that can maximize long-term benefits for Antioch, Nashville, and the broader region.

In October 2022 and in conjunction with community meetings led by District 32 Councilwoman Joy Styles, Metro Nashville launched a robust, year-long community planning process to prepare a master plan for the mall site and a planning framework for the surrounding study area. The community meetings and planning process developed a vision and goals for the site and larger study area and emphasized the important role that a new mixed-use neighborhood, with a strong educational, cultural, and community services platform, will play in the future redevelopment of the mall site. Placemaking strategies that meaningfully incorporate open space, programming, and the arts is an integral part of that vision.

The mall site is already a major center for community services and an emerging, lively arts scene provides another reason for people to come to the area. Immediately south of the mall site, Mill Ridge Park, a new 622-acre regional park, officially opened in 2023 and additional private and public investment is taking place throughout the Antioch community in response to the area's rapid growth. The purpose of the master plan is to help answer the question, "How should the Global Mall area – the heart of Antioch – develop going forward?"

Community Engagement

The community-based planning process generated a wealth of ideas about how the Global Mall area can best serve the community. Across three public workshops, more than 30 stakeholder meetings and community events, and an interactive project website, over 1,200 people participated in the Global Mall area master planning process. Community engagement highlighted two core messages:

- ▶ **First**, easier short-term strategies may not yield the long-term outcomes that the community seeks and that will best serve citywide and regional interests. Simply reusing the existing Mall structure would limit potential redevelopment outcomes and diminish the opportunity to leverage current assets with new strategies at the mall site. Additionally, tapping market support for a range of uses, including housing, will create more demand for retail and related uses that better serve the community and region's long-term interests.
- ▶ **Second**, since Antioch, Nashville, and the region have many common interests, the mall site should be redeveloped to:
 - Provide robust workforce readiness and skills training services on the site together with support for unique, locally owned and operated small businesses. This will expand economic opportunities for, first, Antioch and, second, for the entire region;
 - Nurture a rich mix of uses, which in turn will support a lively, diverse live, work, play, learn neighborhood across the site;
 - Support an arts presence that underpins a new center for Antioch and the region's diverse business community, and in the process helps attract the talent and companies that fuel a growing regional innovation economy;

"Over the next two decades ... a convergence of transformative trends will trigger unprecedented opportunity."

- Establish a common ground that invites all of Antioch and their neighbors from across the region to come together to celebrate their individual diversity and shared community;
- Provide day care, senior housing, and other wellness and social services to create a complete community on the site; and
- Create new connections for pedestrians and bicyclists across the study area, as well as to regional destinations.

Transformative Trends

Over the next two decades, in virtually every region across North America, a convergence of transformative trends will trigger an unprecedented opportunity for redevelopment of sites like Global Mall — and create a platform for expanding economic opportunity and equity.

Nationally, household composition is changing. The large majority of households from about 2040 onward will be singles and couples without children. These new, smaller households are already voicing a strong preference for living and working in mixed-use, walkable places, including reinvented malls and shopping centers.

A growing number of households without children, in turn, will slow workforce growth and increase labor shortages across more and more industries. Even today, knowledge and innovation industries face a workforce shortage of educated talent and are bringing jobs and investment to the places that offer the mixed-use, walkable environments that their employees desire. Creating these vibrant places is essential to expanding economic opportunity for people across all backgrounds and skill levels. By attracting and growing tomorrow's companies today, cities will generate new opportunities for locally owned and operated small businesses.

Regionally, Nashville is Tennessee's economic engine. The Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) accounts for 40% of the state's gross domestic product. It also enjoys one of the most prosperous metropolitan economies in the nation. In terms of population, between 2010 and 2020 Nashville was one of the top 10 fastest-growing large Metropolitan Areas in the country.

Locally, Antioch continues to be valued for its relative affordability, diversity, and access to destinations throughout the region. These qualities have helped make Antioch one of the fastest-growing areas in Metro Nashville. Between 2000 and 2020, Antioch's population doubled to approximately 99,000 people and accounted for one-third of countywide growth. During that 20-year period, the population also shifted substantially from White to African-American and other races. Antioch's racial diversity is an enormous asset. Significantly, the share of the population that is foreign-born has helped fuel Antioch's growth, increasing from 10% to 25% over the past 20 years.

The Antioch community and local elected officials have voiced significant pride in Antioch's diverse, multicultural character. More than 80 languages are reportedly spoken in local elementary schools. Across the board, Antioch stakeholders expressed a desire to work with Metro and future developers to ensure that through the involvement of local artists and local businesses, and in many other ways, this unique multiculturalism influences the character and spirit of redevelopment moving forward.

Fig. 1-1. Antioch residents support the arts and innovation community, which will help to cultivate and lift up the many talents and cultural perspectives in the community.



Market Study

Market demand for potential new uses on the mall site is consistent with the demographic trends and growing importance of mixed-use, walkable places that attract economic investment. The market data also reflect the dramatic impact the long-term trend toward hybrid work (accelerated but not initiated by the pandemic) has on the reduction of demand for traditional office space. Demand for multifamily, market-rate housing in a mixed-use, walkable setting is very strong and could absorb the mall site's full redevelopment capacity in less than a decade. Significant new housing on the site will support a new generation of diverse retail options — unique shopping, eateries, and similar businesses. While some demand for medical office space is anticipated, demand for other types of traditional office space will be minimal.

Housing and related retail are likely to come to the site early in the development process. The walkable, amenity-rich environment these uses help create will in turn attract jobs and investment. All of these uses will be highly compatible with the Library, Community Center, Community College, and KIPP School already located on the site. These existing community service-type uses will also play an instrumental role in training local talent to expand the district's appeal to employers.

Vision and Goals

The community articulated a mission, vision, and set of goals that spoke to local, countywide, and regional perspectives on the mall area's future.

- ▶ **Mission.** Reinvent the mall site and surrounding study area to meet the economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs and aspirations of 21st century Antioch, Nashville, and the region.
- ▶ **Vision.** Transform the mall site and study area into a lively mixed-use, walkable center and regional destination that enriches quality of life, expands economic and life-path opportunities, and celebrates diversity and shared community for Antioch, Nashville, and the greater region.
- ▶ **Goals.** Integrate goals for education, workforce development, land use, environment, mobility, culture, and urban design so all of these qualities work together to translate the mission and vision into planning, programming, and placemaking that shapes a lively district.



Fig. 1-2. Antioch residents created a collective vision at the first community workshop that will guide the transformation of the Global Mall site into a mixed-use, walkable center of community activity.

The Vision

Transform the mall site and study area into a lively mixed-use, walkable center and regional destination that enriches quality of life, expands economic and life-path opportunities, and celebrates diversity and shared community for Antioch, Nashville, and the greater region.



Master Plan

The community engagement process helped ensure that the mall site will emerge as a dynamic district, organized ideally into two villages. The District's redevelopment will be shaped around a vibrant public realm of streets, squares, and parks. The public realm will be designed and programmed to invite the full spectrum of the Antioch and larger communities to claim the new district as their own, embody and convey the District's distinctive creative spirit, and mark the site as a significant new destination for Antioch, Nashville, and the region.

The district will be anchored by two signature, tree-lined streets (referred to in this plan as Arts Way and Innovation Boulevard), which in turn will be complemented by three prominent public spaces: the Central Green where the district and surrounding communities can come together for formal and informal gatherings; the existing community park that supports the Library and Community Center and can serve as a neighborhood park for the district and Antioch; and Arts Square that presents an opportunity for the Antioch community to celebrate Nashville's living culture with the larger community. In all instances, these public spaces – and the mobility networks that connect them – should include placemaking strategies that incorporate local art programs and other amenities that support a safe and comfortable environment. A Business Improvement District (BID) or other entity should be considered to support programming and maintenance.

This public realm will form an “armature” around which more than two million square feet of additional new development can take root in conjunction with the existing Library, Community Center, Ford Ice Center, Community College, and KIPP School, which already call the new district home. This new investment will roughly double the amount of development on the site. Metro should partner with the private and nonprofit sectors to invest in a mixed-use development program that complements the vision for the site and takes advantage of the current investments, such as wellness/sports uses, retail, live/work spaces, cultural uses, and a diversity of housing types attractive to Nashvillians of all ages.

Movement to and through the site is critical to its long-term success. A new WeGo transit center will enhance connections to Downtown and the region. The size and nature of the site and study area, together with rapidly evolving mobility technologies, suggest further study to determine the feasibility of creating an automated shuttle that could connect the mall site and nearby future districts directly to each other and to the transit center. The shuttle would make the entire study area accessible, without a car and within a five- to ten-minute trip, to residents, workers, students, and visitors alike.

Planning for the area has not stopped at the edges of the mall. The mall site can include a compact mix of redevelopment with strong market support. The new district, in turn, has the opportunity to spur incremental redevelopment of the adjacent, multiple ownership, autocentric mix of retail, office, industrial, and similar uses. The same forces that suggest an era of opportunity for the mall site — opportunity that will benefit individual property owners and the Antioch and larger communities alike — are present in the surrounding area. Three compact, walkable new character areas beyond the District are envisioned and guided by the goals identified for the mall site and governed by collective design and development guidelines. Additional investments in mobility infrastructure and transit options will support growth of the broader area. These include:

- ▶ **Antioch Mixed-Use Character Area:** A mixed-use live, work, play, learn walkable neighborhood to the east of the mall site anchored by a walkable main street and trails.
- ▶ **Bell Road Character Area:** A retail-lined walkable avenue and gateway characterized by mid-rise and taller commercial and residential buildings. Bell Road also offers an excellent opportunity to use extensive digital public art to tell the evolving, multicultural story of the area.
- ▶ **Industrial/Flex Use Character Area:** An area adjacent to I-24 characterized by a mix of traditional and smart industrial uses intermixed with flex spaces housing a growing innovation and maker economy.

Implementation

Projected market demand, access, and similar traditional development measures underpin the master plan. At the same time, more detailed study of market dynamics and financing will be necessary for the development of individual projects that will make up the reinvented mall site in the future.

In addition, strong collaboration between Metro and private and public sector partners will be necessary to create notable parks and public spaces, and provide the “infrastructure” of walkability in order to capture the District's full potential.

Additionally, the District will require robust management to ensure that its public realm is fully programmed and managed and its promise as a significant new regional destination endures across future decades.



Fig. 1-3. Community uses and great public spaces will attract visitors from throughout the region.



Fig. 1-4. The vision for the future Global Mall site arises from engagement with the Antioch community.



Fig. 1-5. Community workshops provided an opportunity to explore ideas in greater detail, including shared commercial space, housing options, arts amenities, and community services.

Key Objectives

- ▶ **Transit Center** – At the earliest phase of development, Metro and WeGo should coordinate on developing a new regional transit center on the mall site, following the master plan’s vision and design guidelines.
- ▶ **Plan Framework** – Metro should use the master plan vision to evaluate and prioritize blocks where public uses and interests are required to be preserved, such as the transit center, and ensure such uses are protected throughout the phases of development. Other parcels may be evaluated for individual or multiple private development agreements.
- ▶ **Public-Private Partnerships** – Metro Nashville should actively pursue partnerships with private and non-profit entities to leverage their strengths and resources and ensure community services, such as a day care center, senior center, business incubator, and coworking space, are included in the mall site’s redevelopment. Metro should further devise a development strategy that includes three key factors: (1) how can the city take advantage of demand generated from current uses on the mall site; (2) how can the city tap into strategic drivers that shape the local economy, including local universities, health care, and the like? and, is there an opportunity for the mall site to meet some of those needs? (3) in all instances a residential development component should be devised to drive investment in the site and meet the goals for a walkable, livable community.
- ▶ **Perimeter Loop and Regional Trail System** – Metro Nashville should ensure future development includes a shared-use path on the site’s perimeter street that can serve as an important connection or hub in the emerging regional trail system, linking Mill Ridge Park to Antioch Park as well as local schools, greenways, and other neighborhood parks.
- ▶ **Bell Road Improvements** – In partnership with TDOT and CSX, NDOT should continue their efforts to improve the multimodal infrastructure and overall safety of Bell Road, including the interchange area.
- ▶ **Cultural Use** – Metro Nashville should identify a potential site where a cultural use, such as a performing arts center, could be incorporated into a development plan and pursue private and non-profit partnerships for such an opportunity.
- ▶ **Infrastructure and Resiliency** – Metro should develop an open space and streetscape plan that includes public art as a key component and explore the creation of a BID or other entity to manage and program public spaces. Additionally, consider whether a district management entity should coordinate shared parking across the site and identify strategies to improve overall environmental performance with an emphasis on long-term resiliency.



Fig. 1-6. The district will once again become a local and regional draw. Instead of a shopping mall, residents and visitors will be able to live in or visit a walkable mixed-use neighborhood that prioritizes a range of amenities - including parks and schools, as well as a public library, community center, ice rink, and transit center.

Illustrative Plan

- 1. Arts Way
- 2. Arts Square
- 3. Innovation Boulevard
- 4. Central Green
- 5. Antioch Transit Center
- 6. Perimeter Loop Trail
- 7. Ford Ice Center
- 8. Southeast Community Center & Library (SCCL)
- 9. Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)
- 10. Nashville State Community College (NSCC)
- 11. Mixed-Use District with Parking Garages
- 12. Community Park
- 13. KIPP Soccer Field
- 14. Mixed-Use District with Parking Garages

Fig. 1-7. The vision for the District is a walkable neighborhood where future commercial and residential development opportunities support and enable community priorities including cultural uses, like a performing arts center, and community services, such as a senior center and day care.

- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Mixed-Use Developments

11. Mixed-use district including cultural uses (such as a performing arts center), mixed-income housing (such as artist housing), retail and live/work.

5. & 14. Transit hub with ground level mixed-used development, opportunities for community services (such as day care and senior center), mixed-income housing and live/work.

6. Great loop trail around the entire site for walking and bicycling — and connecting the different districts and destinations.

