

# 2024 Annual Report

Metro Nashville Planning Department



NASHVILLE  
PLANNING



The Planning Department provides design guidance, reviews zoning and subdivision applications, and shapes public policy related to growth, preservation, and development. The Planning Department also provides recommendations to the Planning Commission.

We are committed to proactive, community-based planning founded on public participation, and to the building of livable, sustainable communities.

### EXECUTIVE STAFF

Lucy Kempf  
*Executive Director*

George Rooker  
*Deputy Director - Operations*

Richel Albright  
*Chief of Staff*

Burgin Dossett, III  
*Development Director -  
Real Property/Special Projects*

Lisa Milligan, AICP  
*Assistant Director -  
Land Development*

Joni Williams  
*Assistant Director -  
Design Studio*

John Houghton, AICP  
*Assistant Director -  
Long-Range Planning*

Angela Hubbard  
*Assistant Director -  
Housing*

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# From the Executive Director

**LUCY KEMPF**  
Executive Director,  
Metro Nashville Planning  
Department

Dear Commissioners,

As we reflect on the progress made by the Planning Department in 2024, I am pleased to share with you some of the key highlights and look ahead to the exciting work still to come. Our efforts have been defined by a commitment to sustainable growth, high-quality urban design, and community-driven planning.

The **Design Studio** has played a pivotal role in this success, leading significant updates to the Downtown Code and expanding our urban design vision to the East Bank. The creation of comprehensive Downtown Design Guidelines has ensured that our downtown's growth aligns with our collective aspirations for a vibrant and well-designed Nashville. In 2025, the Design Studio will focus on key initiatives such as the Downtown Attainable Housing Bonus, Ecological Conservation Strategy, and revitalization and safety projects on 1st Avenue and along the Riverfront.

The **Housing Division**, though still in its early stages, has already made remarkable strides, managing critical funding like the \$150 million Barnes Housing Trust Fund and securing \$5 million from the HUD PRO Housing grant. These resources will support the construction and preservation of thousands of affordable homes and new programs like the Faith-Based Development Initiative and Affordable Housing Accelerator Program, making real progress in addressing Nashville's affordable housing needs.

The **Land Development Division** has also grown significantly, improving operational efficiency and collaborating across departments to better manage Nashville's rapid development. In 2025, their focus will include implementing the Housing and Infrastructure Study findings.

Our **Long Range Planning Division** continues to build on its foundational work, leading impactful projects such as the Multimodal Mobility Master Plan and the North Nashville/Jefferson Street Corridor Study. These efforts, together with continued work on community planning ensure that Nashville's growth is not only equitable but also well-coordinated and sustainable.

The **Operations and Mapping Divisions** have made great strides in improving staffing, professional development, and technology, enhancing our ability to provide accurate, timely information in support of the department's work.

Finally, our brand new **Real Property Planning Division** is playing a vital role in analyzing Metro-owned property for public sector needs and determining where sites can be used for public-private partnerships, including affordable housing opportunities.

Looking ahead, we are committed to continuing the momentum we've built in 2024. While challenges remain, we are confident that with your support and continued collaboration, we will meet these challenges head-on and ensure Nashville remains a city of opportunity, innovation, and inclusion.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and partnership. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead to shape the future of our great city.

Sincerely,



Lucy A. Kempf  
Executive Director, Nashville  
Planning Department

# 2024-2025 Projects Timeline



Ongoing Study → Study Begin and End Dates —|

# Design Studio

This year, our Design Studio has navigated significant growth, tackling both the opportunities and challenges that come with expanding our capacity and influence. We have maintained a strong focus on design integrity, continuously pushing for high-quality outcomes and positioning ourselves to exert influence across various projects. This team has actively engaged with both internal and external stakeholders to provoke critical thinking and reshape how projects are approached, particularly in the context of urban development and planning. In 2024, some of their key accomplishments include:

## REVIEWING, EXPANDING, & UPDATING THE DOWNTOWN CODE

The Downtown Code (DTC) was first adopted in 2010 and as this area of our city has experienced change, so has our form-based zoning code. Last year, the team successfully expanded the DTC to include the Initial Development Area of the East Bank. Additionally, the team worked with a consultant to conduct a Downtown Market Study to aide in the update and amendment to the Bonus Height Program, which is in its final stages of public review before Planning Commission adoption.

## DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES & DRC PROFESSIONALIZATION

Developed comprehensive design guidelines that have bolstered the confidence and effectiveness of the Downtown Design Review Committee

(DRC) in decision-making. This marks a key step in our commitment to professionalizing the design review process.

## BELLE MEADE HIGHLANDS DESIGN & MOBILITY STUDY

The team is nearing completion of a comprehensive mobility and placemaking study for the area that includes important recommendations regarding access to Metro Parks land and surrounding cultural sites via Highway 100 and finding traffic demand solutions for the area neighborhoods. This project has proved to be far more complex than the original scope and the team has handled its challenges with best practices and professionalism.

## METRO PROPERTY PLANNING

As Planning is standing up its first Real Property Planning Division, the Design Studio team played a crucial role in ensuring design quality is at the forefront of Metro-owned projects – providing a continuum of excellence in design across the public and private sector, including involvement in the design of the new Nashville Fire Department Headquarters and Fire Station 2.

## TREE STANDARDS

The Ecological Team continued refining regulations around plant standards and tree protections during construction, aligning our codes with industry best practices.



Downtown Nashville skyline at sunset, the week before the NFL draft. Photo by Tanner Boriack on Unsplash.

In 2025, Design Studio will look ahead to:

- **Downtown Attainable Housing Bonus:** The team is working with consultants to understand feasibility for adopting the State-enabled legislation around the Attainable Housing Bonus within the DTC. This would likely result in an amendment to the voluntary Bonus Height Program (BHP).
- **1st Ave & Riverfront Development:** As the reconstruction of 2nd Avenue moves forward, the Design Studio team is turning its focus to 1st Avenue and Riverfront Park. This work includes important collaboration with other Metro partners on riverfront safety initiatives and will work with key stakeholders to form a broader Riverfront Master Plan vision
- **East Bank Streetscape Design & Downtown Code Public Realm Framework:** A major focus will be merging the East Bank Streetscape Design with the broader Public Realm Framework to ensure cohesive development across downtown and East Bank corridors.
- **Ecological Conservation Strategy:** As we continue to experience growth, we want to ensure there is a strategy in place for also protecting our natural resources. As we identify growth needs through Housing & Infrastructure it is crucial develop a strategy that prioritizes our hills, wetlands, and forests as well.

As we look ahead to the next year, our Design Studio team is committed to maintaining a high standard of design integrity while addressing the evolving needs of the city's development landscape. The challenges ahead require ongoing collaboration, strategic planning, and a sharp focus on resource management to ensure our success. We are poised to continue our momentum and make meaningful contributions to the city's future.



# Housing

The Housing Division has made significant strides in addressing the growing housing challenges in Nashville, which remains one of the city's most pressing issues, and is integral to our growth and development. The Housing Division is working toward a more comprehensive approach by integrating housing policy, programs, and other strategic elements. This approach aims to support sustainable housing solutions that respond to the evolving needs of Nashville's residents. In 2024, the Housing Divisions Accomplishments Include:

## TEAM GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

The Housing Division was created in January 2022 with three staff members. In just two years time it has grown to ten members and is managing the Barnes Housing Trust Fund that has grown from \$81 million in 2022 to more than \$150 million today. In the past year alone, over \$50 million in Barnes Fund grants have been awarded nonprofits through three funding rounds. These grants will advance the creation and preservation of 1,308 new homes, including the city's first publicly-funded housing co-operative and permanent supportive housing. With the upcoming release of the city's first Unified Housing Strategy, we anticipate recommendations for even further staffing investments.

## PRO HOUSING GRANT

In November 2023, the Housing Division submitted an application for the Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In June, it was announced that Nashville was one of 21 communities – out of 175 applications nationwide – to receive funding. With this \$5 million the Housing Division plans to launch new initiatives in 2025 including the Faith Based Development Initiative, the Affordable Housing Accelerator Program, and the Affordable Housing Finance Program.

## COLLABORATIONS & KEY PROJECTS

**Unified Housing Strategy:** For much of 2024, the Housing Division has undertaken work to develop a Unified Housing Strategy (UHS) that will set goals, outline strategies, and provide policy and program recommendation to advance access to affordable, safe, and stable housing for all Nashvillians. The UHS builds upon other existing and on-going studies, including the 2021 Affordable Housing Task Force report, to provide detailed policy and program recommendations on how to increase housing security. The team is in the final phase of wrapping up this work and will share findings in early 2025.

**ULI Technical Assistance Panel:** The Housing Division partnered with Urban Land Institute (ULI) Nashville to gain insights from housing, sustainability and government experts from around the country on insights into sustainable housing practices and solutions for our city.

**Catalyst Fund:** In June, the Housing Division launched the Catalyst Fund with \$50 million through a partnership with the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, First Horizon, Vanderbilt University, and others. The fund provides fast, flexible capital to nonprofit developers to help build and preserve affordable housing in Nashville. In December, the Catalyst Fund met its \$75 million initial fundraising goal and began the process of approving investment funding for its first project, which will be an all-affordable housing building on the East Bank.

**CHIP:** The Housing Division is in the process of finalizing its second Connecting Housing to Infrastructure (CHIP) project. The project at Sojourn Nolensville Apartments will bring much needed enhanced pedestrian crossing and signaling, which connects nearby residents to additional commercial options and southbound bus stations. This project is a partnership between the Housing Division and NDOT and is a \$178,000 investment along one of the all-access corridors outlined in the Choose How You Move (CHYM) transportation improvement program.

Our Housing Division continues to make great strides in addressing Nashville's housing issues through a combination of policy development and program execution. Moving into the new year, the team is excited to continue its work on implementing the UHS and other housing initiatives, with an eye on partnering with our new Real Property Planning division to find solutions for housing on Metro sites.

# Land Development

The Land Development Division, the oldest section within the Planning Department, plays a critical role in managing Nashville's growth and development. As the public face of the department, the team is often tasked with representing the department's values, interacting directly with property owners and developers, and ensuring that regulatory processes are followed effectively. Despite the challenges inherent in this role, the division has evolved significantly over recent years, doubling in size and expanding its capacity to plan at all scales across the city. In 2024, Land Development's accomplishments include:

## TEAM GROWTH & ADAPTATION

Land Development has successfully adapted to rapid growth of our city by growing its team, developing new roles and strengthening internal processes. This evolution reflects the department's commitment to becoming a great regulatory team. As a way to on board new staff, the team introduced staff-led training sessions where plan reviewers provide feedback on completed cases. This practice has helped the team improve knowledge sharing and fostered a deeper understanding of the projects they work on.

## FOCUS ON INSPECTION & IMPLEMENTATION

The inspections team has made strides in training and cross-training, ensuring better consistency and quality control throughout the lifecycle of projects.

## CROSS-DIVISIONAL COLLABORATION

The division has worked collaboratively with other departments and divisions to achieve better outcomes, such as during the review of multi-family projects with large garages. Through proactive engagement and collaboration, the team helped push for better designs.

A look at the Land Development's Applications and Inspections in 2024:

• Plan Amendments	8
• Mandatory Referrals	295
• Rezoning	126
• Preliminary SPs and Amendments	75
• Subdivision	205
• Text Amendments	20
• Zoning Letters	122
• Building permits	700
• Inspections	2,091

The customer service team also answered 3,563 phone calls and helped more than 2,873 in-person customers.

In 2025, Land Development will look ahead to:

### Housing & Infrastructure Study:

The division will focus on the Housing and Infrastructure (H&I) Study, which is due to the Council in March and has the potential to generate a set of recommendations for changes to the development code, project review processes, and housing policies. Land Development will play a key role in providing constructive feedback to ensure the city can accommodate diverse housing options.

**Choose How You Move:** There will be a continued focus on implementing infrastructure improvements and coordinating development with transit initiatives. This includes addressing the gray areas between projects led by the Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT) and those requiring significant land use changes. The team will need to be proactive in ensuring zoning and design guidelines support transit-oriented development along major corridors.

The Land Development Division has had a productive year and is well-positioned to continue supporting Nashville's growth in the coming year. As the city evolves, this team remains committed to maintaining high standards of customer service, problem solving, and collaboration across departments to ensure that Nashville's development aligns with its values and future needs.

Stones River

# Long Range Planning

Long-Range Planning: The Long Range Planning Division works with elected officials, residents, businesses, and property owners to address development challenges at a variety of scales – from countywide issues to neighborhood and corridor plans. Underlying the Division’s work is a commitment to building trust through data driven analysis, extensive public engagement, and creative planning strategies. And, because its work touches every corner of the county, the Long Range Planning Division proactively partners with other Metro departments to coordinate improvements and ensure policies, plans, and projects meet local needs. In 2024, Long Range Planning’s accomplishments include:

## ADVANCED PLANNING & RESEARCH

Last year, the **Advanced Planning and Research** team continued to tackle a diverse set of complex projects with long-term implications for the county, including work related to Choose How You Move, the Unified Housing Study, and early steps for the Housing and Infrastructure Study. The team also worked on:

- Completing the Nashville Independent Venues Study (NIVS) which evaluated how Nashville’s small music venues are impacted by growth. Venue

owners, community stakeholders, and artists provided input about the issues that make it difficult for these places to thrive. NIVS included recommendations for tracking independent venues and assessing obstacles to music venues in Metro’s Code of Ordinances, which the team has begun working on.

- Developing a plan for Metro’s surplus property on Brick Church Pike, including interdepartmental conversations across Metro and community meetings to discuss neighborhood goals and objectives.
- Leading Planning’s efforts to support Mayor O’Connell’s Executive Order supporting **Green and Complete Streets**, by identifying metrics for assessing progress on the Order (approved by Planning Commission in September) and by reviewing internal policies and plans to identify where these can more fully support Green and Complete Streets.
- Providing support for the Capital Improvement Budget and Capital Spending Plan process for the Mayor’s Office and Council.

## COMMUNITY PLANS

The Community Plans team hosted or participated in 105 community meetings this past year involving community plan amendments,

small area studies, and stakeholder events. As part of regular updates to the county’s 14 community plans, the Planning Commission approved 11 community plan amendments in 2024. The team is currently working on a number of technical studies that will help provide a foundation for any needed changes to NashvilleNext in the coming year. Ongoing studies include:

- With NDOT and WeGo, the Community Plans team is developing a countywide Multimodal Mobility Master Plan that will result in a new Major and Collector Street Plan tying land use, transportation, and growth more closely together.
- Partnering with NDOT, staff is already collaborating with community members on a wide variety of projects in North Nashville, including the North Nashville/Jefferson Street Corridor Study. The study will hold planning meetings in neighborhoods throughout North Nashville before taking a deeper dive into the Jefferson Street corridor.
- Finally, the team recently kicked off a small area plan in Cane Ridge and Antioch that will evaluate tradeoffs among community character policies, zoning, conservation, and infrastructure.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In just its second year, the **Project Management** team provided leadership on 27 plans and studies allowing the department to undertake a much broader and more diverse range of work and meet some of Nashville’s most pressing needs. Project managers partner with staff across the department and Metro to take projects from concept to completion – emphasizing national best planning and design practices and careful stewardship of public resources. Recently completed projects include the Global Mall Area Master Plan and the Edgehill Neighborhood Plan as well as technical studies addressing the redevelopment of older Metro properties, stormwater impacts associated with growth, and new zoning tools. In 2025, the team will

continue to provide indispensable leadership especially on some of the more challenging and time sensitive department projects, including:

- With department’s Design Studio team, Project Management will help guide an inventory of natural resources in Davidson County and strategies to conserve them.
- Project Management is partnering with the Advanced Planning & Research team on the Metro Council requested Housing & Infrastructure Study.
- Working with NDOT and staff from Community Plans, Project Management will help deliver both the countywide Multimodal Mobility Master Plan and the North Nashville/Jefferson Street Corridor Study.

The division’s accomplishments reflect a strong commitment to data-driven planning, public engagement, and interdepartmental coordination, positioning Nashville for sustainable growth and continued success in the years to come.

Additionally, as we look ahead, the division aims to deepen its equity-focused approaches, and these efforts will ensure the city continues to evolve in a way that reflects the values and needs of its diverse communities. This team’s resilience and dedication are paving the way for a more sustainable and inclusive urban future.



# Operations

The Operations and Mapping Divisions have demonstrated considerable growth, adaptability, and commitment to continuous improvement throughout the year. Despite facing challenges, the divisions have successfully implemented key processes, managed significant changes, and focused on professional development, all while maintaining a strong organizational foundation. In 2024, Operations and Mapping accomplishments include:

## **GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

**Hiring and Internal Promotions:** The department has expanded significantly, with 20 new hires and 16 internal promotions. This growth reflects the department's ability to build a strong, dynamic team.

**Professional Development:** 51 conferences and seminars attended, across 14 states, showcasing the team's investment in ongoing learning. Major conferences included American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, US Housing Conference, NACTO Designing Cities, and Congress for New Urbanism, demonstrating a commitment to staying current with industry trends.

**Executive Coaching & Training:** Introduction of executive coaching and the creation of training videos have been pivotal in enhancing leadership capabilities from executive staff to middle management.

**Technology Upgrades:** The Mapping Division successfully transitioned to a completely new software platform. Additionally, a major effort in file digitization was completed, improving document management and access.

**Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Collaborative work with HR and Finance has led to significant improvements in departmental processes, including evaluations, new hire announcements, and budget preparation.

**Mapping Data:** Mapping updated or edited nearly 4,211 new parcels were added to the county's tax roll totaling nearly 281,000 parcels. Additionally, the Mapping Division is responsible for making changes to maps after zoning bills have been adopted, in 2024 they worked on 139 Council zoning bills.

Both the Operations and Mapping Divisions have shown remarkable adaptability and growth in the face of significant changes and challenges. With a clear focus in 2025 on strategic planning, staff development, and technological advancements, the divisions are well-positioned to continue their trajectory of success into the next year.

**Despite facing challenges, the divisions have successfully implemented key processes, managed significant changes, and focused on professional development, all while maintaining a strong organizational foundation.**

Ft. Negley



Radnor Lake

## Real Property Planning

In July, we established a new division within the department focused on the development of Metro-owned properties and understanding the best uses for these sites. The Real Property Planning Division was the recommendation of a study done by EY that includes the establishment of the Special Projects Committee, following Mayor Freddie O'Connell's Executive Order No. 50.

The Special Projects Committee is chaired by the Mayor's Office but works in close alignment with the Real Property Development Director, Burgin Dossett. Since joining the Planning Department, Burgin has worked on projects spanning the new Nashville Fire Department Headquarters and Fire Station 2, Hadley Park Library, and other Metro-owned sites.

Real Property Planning partners with the Mayor's Office on other initiatives including implementation of the Global Mall master plan, collaborating with WeGo for programming and planning of a proposed mixed use transit center to support the district's significant ridership demand, combined with housing and commercial uses.

In 2025, Real Property will focus on leveraging Metro owned land and facilities as a basis for public/private partnerships to realize new mixed-use projects that include affordable and mixed income housing, services, and retail. Further study of existing facilities such as fire stations or libraries slated for replacement or upgrades present opportunities to partner with the private sector. We we plan to bring on more staff in the coming year to support the division's work.



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**Metro Nashville Planning Department**  
800 President Ronald Reagan Way | Nashville, TN 37210  
615-862-7190 | [nashville.gov/mpc](http://nashville.gov/mpc)