

# Nashville Tennessee



**Urban Land  
Institute**

**Daniel Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use**

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# Nashville Tennessee

Place Making through Infill and Corridor Redevelopment

February 8–11, 2010  
A Rose Center Advisory Services Program Report

Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW  
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Washington, DC 20007-5201

# About the Urban Land Institute

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**T**he mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and

- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 28,500 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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# About the ULI Rose Center

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The mission of the ULI Daniel Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use is to encourage and support excellence in land use decision making. By providing public officials with access to information, best practices, peer networks, and other resources, the Rose Center seeks to foster creative, efficient, practical, and sustainable land use policies.

The Rose Center appointed the mayors of Phoenix, Minneapolis, Nashville, and Philadelphia as fellows to serve in the center through 2010. Each of the four mayors is leading a team of three additional fellows from their respective cities, working with leading experts in the real estate development, finance, and land use fields to tackle complex land use issues facing their communities. The Rose Center also holds forums on topical land use issues for public leaders. In 2010 these included how cities can achieve their sustainability goals in the challenging fiscal climate, and how they can maximize opportunities from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

In 2008, Daniel Rose, chairman of New York City-based Rose Associates, Inc., committed \$5 million to create the center. Rose Associates operates throughout the East Coast as developer and manager of more than 30 million square feet of major office towers, commercial retail centers, mixed-use complexes, and high-rise residential buildings. Rose has pursued a career involving a broad range of professional, civic, and nonprofit activities.

The Rose Center's Advisory Board is chaired by Joe Rose of the New York-based Georgetown Company and includes Seth Brown of Brooklyn-based Aspen Equities, LLC; Alex Garvin of New York-based Alex Garvin and Associates; Stephen Goldsmith, former mayor of Indianapolis and professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government; Glenda E. Hood, former mayor of Orlando and former Florida secretary of state; William H. Hudnut III, former Indianapolis mayor and ULI/Joseph C. Canizaro Chair for Public Policy Emeritus; Greg Johnson of Seattle-based Wright Runstad & Company; Tom Murphy, former Pittsburgh mayor and senior resident fellow, ULI/Klingbeil Family Chair for Urban Development; Peter Rummell of the Jacksonville, Florida-based Rummell Company; Julia Stasch of the MacArthur Foundation in Chicago; and Anthony A. Williams, former mayor of Washington, D.C., of Arlington, Virginia-based Arent Fox.

# About ULI Advisory Services

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The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; hour-long interviews of key community representatives; and a day of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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# Acknowledgments

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The ULI Rose Center wishes to thank Karl Dean, Metropolitan Nashville–Davidson County mayor; Planning Department Executive Director Rick Bernhardt; Mathews Company President Bert Mathews; and Alexia Poe, director of the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Community Development, for accepting the invitation to be Rose Center Fellows and for hosting this advisory services panel.

Special thanks go to Deputy Mayor Greg Hinote; Ann Hammond, Jennifer Carlat, Craig Owensby, Cynthia Wood, and Hilary Kahnle of the Planning Department; and ULI Nashville District Council Coordinator Rose Faeges-Easton for their time and assistance during the panel’s visit.

Interviews conducted with numerous stakeholders including elected officials, Metro staff, residents, business and property owners, community and business organizations, and other public agencies and regional institutions provided information and diverse perspectives that aided the panel in its analysis. The panel thanks all those who gave their time to be part of the process. Finally, the Rose Center wishes to thank the Nashville Public Library and Nashville Children’s Theatre for providing meeting spaces for the panel.

# Rose Center Nashville Fellows

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## ULI Panel

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# Contents

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Panel Assignment and Executive Summary	8
Context and Observations	14
Market Trends and Opportunities	16
Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Challenges	19
Guiding Principles and Redevelopment Steps	22
Conclusion	32
About the Fellows and the Panel	33



# Panel Assignment and Executive Summary

Topography, history, and commerce resulted in Nashville's unique spoke-and-wheel alignment of arterial turnpikes, or pikes.

Capital of Tennessee, Nashville is the second-most-populous city in the state after Memphis. Located on the Cumberland River in north-central Tennessee, it is a major hub for the health care, music, publishing, banking, and transportation industries. Nashville has a consolidated city-county government called Metropolitan Nashville–Davidson County (Metro) that includes seven smaller municipalities in a two-tiered system. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the population of Nashville–Davidson County was 626,144 as

of 2008. The 2008 population of the entire 13-county Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area was 1,550,733, making it the largest metropolitan area in the state.

Nashville's unusual wheel-and-spoke street pattern reflects the city's early history as a regional center with connections to surrounding towns. Beginning in the mid-20th century, however, development along the spokes transitioned into auto-driven sprawl, and corridors became throughways rather than destinations, resulting in a development pattern oriented to the car. Commercial uses with expansive parking and intense signage designed to attract drivers took precedence over pedestrian facilities; this pattern is not an asset to the neighborhoods that flank the corridor. Nashville Metro has been using planning and zoning strategies to reinvigorate its corridors and is interested in evaluating these tools and considering additional tools such as capital investments and economic development strategies.

All of these efforts have occurred under the dynamic leadership of Nashville mayor Karl Dean. In May 2010, heavy rains caused the Cumberland River and its tributaries, which run through Nashville, to experience historic flood levels that killed five in Metro Nashville and caused about \$2 billion in damages. Mayor Dean's administration will undoubtedly be focused on flood recovery efforts in the near term, which may affect the timing of implementing the recommendations in this report.

## The Panel's Assignment

As part of the fellowship program for the Rose Center, ULI organized an advisory services panel to look at two corridors: Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South. The panel was asked to look at land use and planning strategies that can serve as transferable models for other corridors in Metro Nashville. In addition, the panel examined the neighborhoods between these corridors to determine tools and techniques to encourage appropriate infill development.



The Nashville Rose Fellows requested tools and strategies that would

- Provide complete transportation options with choices for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and individual autos;
- Support surrounding neighborhoods with housing and services in a pedestrian-friendly environment;
- Encourage infill to use existing infrastructure and maximize transit opportunities; and
- Be feasible and doable given the existing and evolving economic realities.

### The Challenge

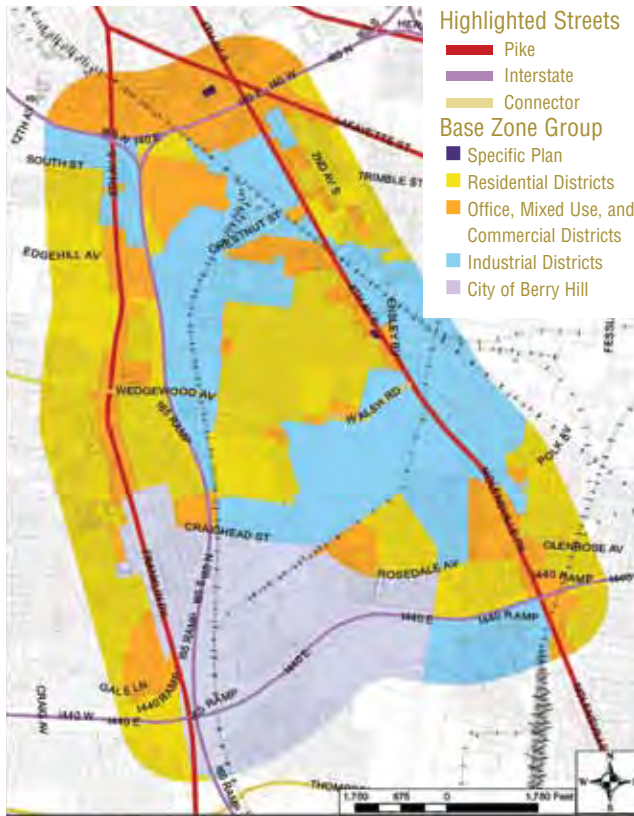
The goal of the Nashville Fellows is to determine the best regulatory tools, economic development tools, procedural improvements, and conceptual and visualization tools for transforming traditional highway corridors and infill locations from their current underused, auto-centric condition to a new, more sustainable urban condition featuring compact, walkable, transit-supportive, mixed-use communities.

Three major sets of questions were raised in consideration of this challenge:

- *Do market, financing, and cultural trends point toward compact, mixed-use development?* Although Nashville is deeply committed as a city to becoming more sustainable, are current and projected economic and business conditions favorable to large-scale change in Nashville as examined through the study area?
- *What are the specific obstacles to appropriate development in the study area?* What potential market and financing options are both available for redevelopment and consistent with demographic and economic trends? Are Nashville's regulatory rules and approval systems for development efficient, and will they make achieving the desired development goals simple? Are multimodal transportation options a real possibility along these corridors? What alternatives exist to address redevelopment challenges such as lot patterns and lot sizes as well as fragmented land ownership and to ensure that these challenges do not preclude achievement of the redevelopment objectives?
- *Which stakeholders should be tasked with what specific actions to improve the investment environment along these corridors and infill areas?* What can be done—and by whom—to encourage appropriate corridor and infill development?



Historic homes in the neighborhoods flanking the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors have attracted new residents.



The land uses and zoning along the corridors are varied, but not mixed with one another in an integrated way.



## Existing Character

The study area includes solid, established neighborhoods ranging from late-19th- and early-20th-century historic neighborhoods to a recently redeveloped HOPE VI community. The neighborhoods are edged with commercial uses along prominent corridors and significant industrial uses along the rail lines crossing the study area. Neighborhood character becomes less walkable as distance from the city center increases; many of the older neighborhoods are former first-ring “streetcar suburbs” dating to times of greater transit use and feature appropriate sidewalks and short distances to possible transit routes.

The prominent corridors that flank the study area (Eighth Avenue South/Franklin Pike to the west and Fourth Avenue South/Nolensville Road to the east) and the area between the corridors have a variety of land uses, although they cannot be called mixed use because the land uses do not relate to, or interact with, one another; the area as a whole lacks recognizable community centers and transit-appropriate density. Again, much of the land is underused, in some cases vacant, and pedestrian-unfriendly, particularly along the Fourth Avenue/Nolensville Road route.

The study area’s assets include considerable civic and public uses and open space. Several schools and parks are located there, along with a minor-league baseball stadium, a historical park centered on a reconstructed Civil War fort, a historic city cemetery, the recently decommissioned Tennessee State Fairgrounds of approximately 130 acres, and significant green space in several residential areas.

New development around the edges of the study area provides opportunities to jump-start redevelopment. A dying shopping mall just south of the study area has been converted recently into a vibrant mixed-use retail and medical center with supportive retail growth in the surrounding area; a HOPE VI community between the fairgrounds and the medical center was recently redeveloped; and new, compact residential development is already underway on the western edge of the study area on Eighth Avenue South and off the corridor at Bradford Avenue.

Portions of the corridors are significantly underdeveloped, offering potential redevelopment op-

portunities. Challenges to redevelopment include economic, land use, and ownership issues; a wide spectrum of potential development interests; and a culture of wariness about government involvement. Previous planning efforts along these corridors have been challenging. Widely fragmented ownership, with many small and varied parcels, makes land assembly for major initiatives difficult. The depth of residential properties along the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors follows a jagged, sawtooth pattern, and that pattern's effect on site layout and site capacity is uncertain.

The fairgrounds and baseball stadium provide particularly interesting circumstances for distinctive redevelopment. The decommissioned 130-acre fairgrounds site removes the Nashville Speedway, an automobile racetrack that has significantly affected development in the area. Offering considerable open land for new development, this site connects residential neighborhoods with the Fourth Avenue corridor. The stadium, soon to reach the end of its useful life, adjoins the historic park and a major regional children's museum and science center, providing additional opportunities for connected recreational and cultural growth.

## Summary of Recommendations

From a regional perspective, Nashville has many economic drivers, including state government, health care, higher education, and entertainment. Even with the current slowdown, Nashville will likely lead the state in new population and employment growth. The central business district will see increased entertainment employment, state government offices, and regionally serving health care services. As the nation moves out of the recession, the need for housing in or near downtown will increase. The study area is well situated to attract some of this growth.

However, Metro must understand that in the current and near terms, the economic situation does not provide a market solution to the problems facing the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors. These corridors and infill areas cannot simply hope for an economic rebound and a return to "normal." Concentrated action will be necessary to help the historic corridors and urban infill locations overcome decades of abandonment and underuse in deference to expanded low-density, dispersed new development on the urban fringe.



The panel suggests that more zoning flexibility is needed to accommodate local market dynamics and that Metro should provide incentives through public infrastructure investment and economic assistance. A true interdisciplinary approach by Metro is needed to implement the vision for these corridors.

To forge a new identity on the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors, Metro should undertake a study to assess uses and utility of industrial building stock, define alternative uses that meet its goals and are economically feasible, and create specific places to house those uses along the industrial sections of the corridors. Metro should support other strong economic sectors in the region by forming partnerships with the music and health care industries and by encouraging and providing financial incentives for light industry to relocate into existing building stock along the corridors.

The perceived value and economic upside of the corridors and their adjacent neighborhoods have attracted new infill development.



Lot size, building orientation, and ownership patterns are highly fragmented along the corridors.

Metro should support emerging corridor sectors by identifying and providing financial incentives to retail and commercial businesses that are appropriate for the corridor and by evaluating the market potential for relocating the Tennessee State Fairgrounds Flea Market to other sites along the corridor.

Key objectives for the fairgrounds redevelopment initiative should include the following:

- Job and tax base expansion;
- Open space and civic investment;
- Preparation of site and development plans compatible with surrounding land uses; and
- Inclusion of sustainable and green practices that reduce impact on the natural environment.

The initial steps in this process are to

- Organize a redevelopment process with key stakeholders, existing users, and the neighborhoods;
- Identify key development objectives;
- Create a redevelopment plan for the fairgrounds area;
- Identify the public sector role and initial redevelopment resources;
- Prepare a request for proposals (RFP) document;
- Create a review committee; and
- Solicit and review proposals.

The panel also recommends that Metro declare its intent to encourage reinvestment in the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South areas by targeting improvement opportunities in the public realm. Ideas for consideration include the following:

- Create an access management plan for the corridors to deal with curb cuts and other access issues from adjacent properties.
- Implement “complete street design” with infrastructure that supports multimodal streets with green stormwater management. The initial focus of this redesign should be on Eighth Avenue South near Douglas-Wedgewood.

- Undertake a streetscape beautification program for Fourth Avenue South/Nolensville Pike.
- Make transit service and infrastructure improvements along both corridors, including more frequent service, enhanced bus facilities and travel information in a fashion similar to bus rapid transit, creation of service along Wedgewood, and direct service from the study area to 100 Oaks.
- Investigate improvements to the Interstate 65 interchange that could create a parallel road network to Hamilton/Chestnut to alleviate through traffic along Fourth Avenue South.
- Create a “Southwest Parkway” by redesigning Wedgewood/Walsh as a parkway that connects to the cluster of universities west of the study area.
- Conduct a freight-rail access study to analyze available and obsolete lines that could potentially be reused for transit, pedestrian paths, or new roads.
- Make a significant public investment in a Fairgrounds Gateway Park to create a sense of arrival, using about five acres at the intersection of Walsh and Fourth Avenue South.
- Design and complete the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restoration of the Browns Creek Greenway (estimated to be a 40- to 60-acre project) in conjunction with redevelopment of the fairgrounds.

The panel envisions the need to use or create new tools to implement this vision. These may include

- Using the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Metro’s capital improvement program for proposed improvements to both corridors;
- Creating special corridor tax increment financing (TIF) legislation in Tennessee;
- Using investment tax credits; and
- Creating a neighborhood commercial area business improvement district (BID) or other special districts.



The Tennessee State Fairgrounds has most recently been the home of a flea market and regional expos.

# Context and Observations

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**M**etropolitan Nashville–Davidson County has enjoyed a healthy economy, with population and job growth in both the city and the region. However, the city of Nashville is losing market share rapidly to outlying areas. Recent projections show the Metro population increasing by 20 percent between 2008 and 2025, with the population of the outlying portions of the metropolitan statistical area increasing by 67 percent. Metro’s share of regional population is projected to decrease from 35 percent to 30 percent.

This projected decrease in population of the region’s principal city is inconsistent with the principles of sustainability and smart growth supported by Metro policies and ULI best practices and research. Metro leadership, rather than accepting a 5 percent market share decline as a *fait accompli*, should rise to the challenge of at least maintaining its current regional population market share.

## Nashville’s Opportunity

The Nashville region has a young population and is attracting more so-called millennials (the tech-savvy generation born between 1982 and 2001). *Forbes.com* ranked Nashville 16th of the nation’s 40 largest metropolitan areas in attracting the next generation of top business talent. “Creatives” (e.g., students from Vanderbilt, Belmont, Tennessee State, and other colleges and universities) are more inclined to live in urban areas. Given the interests of educated millennials in an urban lifestyle, developing a more walkable urban environment will be an asset for Metro as it continues to compete for young talent.

Perhaps because Metro has been growing in population (more than 1 percent per year), in businesses (e.g., Vanderbilt Medical Center, Dell Computers), and in development (e.g., LP Field, Schermerhorn Symphony Center), the Metro government and local private sector have not had to act forcefully in the realm of economic development. Business and de-

velopment deals often have come to Nashville, rather than Metro having to seek them out.

But the 2008 global financial crisis has changed the economic world, especially the world of real estate development. Metro may now have to “sniff out” deals and help make them happen—through good sleuthing as well as through providing incentives such as TIF, payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT), new market tax credits, and public infrastructure investment—if new growth is to continue to occur here.

This kind of proactive approach may challenge existing norms in Metro planning, economic development, and public works departments and perhaps the way these departments are structured. But if Nashville is to adopt a new growth paradigm, it will require a renewed commitment by Metro government and its residents to the following:

- Walkable, mixed-use development;
- Increased use of mass transit;
- Infrastructure investment;
- Cultural and recreational amenities;
- Business retention and attraction;
- Innovative financing tools and techniques; and
- Corridor redevelopment (given Nashville’s historic radial “pikes”).

## Corridor Focus

The Planning Department has been using planning and zoning strategies to rethink the role of its radial corridors (historic pikes). Why is this important? As a built-out city, Nashville has few significant opportunities for new development. An infill strategy is integral. With largely stable neighborhoods, corridors represent the best candidates for new growth because they have much underused land adjacent to neighborhoods that have appreciated in value.

The corridors have evolved from their origins as buffalo trails to a salt lick along a river, to trade routes to the central marketplace early in Nashville's history, to infrastructure for moving large-volume automobile traffic to and from downtown and the rest of region in the late 20th century. The panel believes that today the corridors should evolve once more to both serve the needs of adjacent neighborhoods and move people by many modes of travel—not just by automobile.

To date, Nashville's approach has seen significant leadership from the Mayor's office and Metro Council members, a public visioning process along corridors led by the Planning Department, and the use of new urbanist principles (pedestrian orientation, mix of uses, relationship between street and development) in public engagement. This engagement has been a big success. It has stimulated the imagination of urban design professionals and the desire of community and neighborhood residents for walkable commercial corridors connecting to adjacent residential areas, neighborhood-serving retail and services, and transportation options other than a car.

It has also led to the creation of some specific plans by the Planning Department for corridors that articulate this vision. Metro has taken the first implementa-

tion steps (from a regulatory perspective) by creating form-based overlay zoning districts along corridors with specific plans. In corridors with strong markets, the new regulations may be sufficient to steer investment into desired forms. In corridors with weaker real estate markets, however, new zoning has not been embraced by landowners and developers, who see it as another hurdle in a challenging market.

A disconnect seems to exist between the vision of urban form and uses in the plans and the economic realities in weaker market corridors. Demand to build forms and uses required by the corridor overlay zoning may be insufficient in weak market corridors. As a result, landowners and developers feel penalized by the new zoning. They also have concerns about the phasing in of the new regulations for grandfathered buildings and uses.

Likewise, a disconnect seems to exist between the land use regulations and public investment in streetscapes and transportation infrastructure. The current design of streets, intersections, and sidewalks; the provision of transit; and the design of its facilities do not support today's vision for Metro.



# Market Trends and Opportunities

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Some trends in the urban marketplace, including demographic changes and the climate for development capital, reveal market opportunities and challenges.

## Influences

A number of trends are influencing present development in the study area and will shape future demand. These are described in the following sections.

### Quest for Urban Lifestyles

A growing force for investment and growth within the urban core and inner-ring (or first-tier) suburbs is the desire of young people and households (millennials) as well as many empty nesters (over 55 years of age) to live where they can enjoy an urban lifestyle. They want no or smaller yards to maintain within walk-to environments for shopping, dining, friends, and culture. Many of those choosing an urban lifestyle are likewise target employees for businesses and institutions operating in high-technology and highly creative sectors. In Nashville, these employers include music, medicine, higher education, and information technology

### Urban Corporate Campus

With an expanding pool of highly educated and creative people located in the urban core, more businesses and institutions are choosing to relocate or expand there to capitalize on this asset. Often this influx results in tenancy for downtown offices. Other businesses and institutions seek the benefits of a somewhat lower-intensity office campus complex on the edge of downtown or other urban neighborhoods and business districts, provided the requisite sites can be made available.

### Key Business Sectors

Health services, information technology, music industry, state government, and higher education are the economic sectors likely to drive demand for

residential, retail and entertainment, light industrial, and office real estate products in the study area.

### Vanderbilt and Other Nashville Universities

Vanderbilt University's main campus is located about a mile and a half to the west of the study area, on the south side of West End Avenue. This presence is increasingly being felt in the study area's marketplace for housing and shopping as well as in filling jobs within the area. Other educational institutions whose presence will be felt in the study area include Trevecca Nazarene University to the east; Belmont University to the west; and Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, and Tennessee State University to the northwest.

### Adjacency to Downtown

Nashville's growing and increasingly vital downtown district is steadily exerting a positive influence on the study area's real estate market. This influence has manifested itself in a variety of housing options and improvements as well as in increased patronage for retail shopping, dining, and entertainment.

### Role of Development Capital

Investment capital for urban real estate development is in severely short supply at present. Debt capital from conventional sources is particularly scarce because banks and bond investors remain fearful of losses from defaulting borrowers. Equity capital is available but only at rates of return that are challenging to achieve under current conditions of risk aversion.

As a result, public capital becomes essential and critical to move forward on most urban real estate investments. Metro will need to carefully consider if and how its resources can be brought to bear to facilitate developments in the study area, ranging from improving and replacing essential public infrastructure throughout the area to facilitating redevelopment of the fairgrounds and portions of its surroundings.

## Major Real Estate Sector Opportunities

A healthy mix of urban uses coexists within the study area today. The city has the opportunity to fine-tune this mix and foster phased redevelopment that will ensure the area’s long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

### Residential Ownership

Almost 42 percent (some 2,175) of the 5,210 occupied housing units located within the study area are owner-occupied. Most are older, detached, single-family bungalows, and a few are recently minted

detached and multifamily condominium units. In the short term and coming out of the current recession, demand is likely to be tilted in favor of detached infill units. Within a relatively short time, however, demand is likely to shift back toward multifamily condominium occupancy, given rising property values and a scarcity of sites deemed attractive for detached units. A reasonable projection of growth in the supply of ownership housing would be 10 percent, or some 220 units over the 2011–2020 decade.

### Residential Rental

Rental multifamily housing constitutes over 58 percent (3,035 units) of housing supply in the study area. Although successive waves of strong versus

## Market Opportunities Matrix

Uses	Market Potential			Desirability		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
<b>Residential</b>						
Detached Single-Family		●				
Rowhouse/Townhouse	●			●	●	●
Multifamily Condominium		●		●		
Multifamily Rental	●				●	
<b>Retail</b>						
General Merchandise		●			●	
Home Improvement			●	●		
Grocery Store		●		●		
Restaurants	●			●		
Entertainment			●		●	
<b>Office</b>						
Medical Office	●			●		
Corporate Headquarters	●			●		
Back Office/Call Center	●				●	
<b>Industrial</b>						
Self-Storage		●				●
Office/Warehouse		●			●	
Light Manufacturing			●	●		

A quick assessment of real estate market opportunities in the corridor by land use.

weak demand are likely to occur, this relative proportion may well persist indefinitely. As the current weak economy improves, infill of multifamily rental units should grow. A fair target would be an increase of 15 percent over the decade, or 450 units between 2011 and 2020.

### Office

Currently, no significant supply of office space exists within the study area, and no significant increase of rental office supply is anticipated in the future. Nevertheless, one or more office campuses can be developed for major corporate office operations—headquarters or support—provided that appropriate land can be made available for sites within the study area. On average, the Nashville region has annually built and absorbed some 750,000 to 1 million square feet of office space, and the downtown has captured about 100,000 square feet per year. Given this broad market context, anticipating absorption of between 500,000 and 1 million square feet of office by the study area over the coming decade would be fair. This estimate assumes, of course, that large enough sites with access can be made available, with the redeveloped fairgrounds site being the most promising opportunity.

### Retail: Shopping and Entertainment

Smaller units of modest quality located along the frontage of Nolensville and Franklin pikes dominate the inventory of retail facilities. The only significant concentration of larger national-brand stores is located on the ground level of the 100 Oaks complex

recently created by Vanderbilt Health from an obsolete and failing strip retail center on the southwest edge of the study area. Vanderbilt uses the full upper level for a series of outpatient clinics and leases the ground level to retail tenants that include Michaels craft store, hhgregg appliances and electronics, T.J.Maxx, PetSmart, Guitar Center, Burlington Coat Factory, and Reebok, plus several out-lot tenants, including Logan's Roadhouse and Pinnacle Bank.

### Institutions: Medical and Educational

Significant opportunities could exist for the region's major institutions, especially higher education and medical, to occupy sites within the study area for supporting or ancillary facilities and uses: back-office, clinical, storage, and the like. These would most likely replace obsolete industrial uses or be part of the redeployment of the fairgrounds site.

### Light Industrial

At present, the study area includes a wide array of industrial and warehouse uses, many of which remain viable businesses, whereas others are in decline because of loss of competitiveness or obsolescence. The result is a challenge to the city to replace those uses that fail while, in the interest of job preservation, supporting and conserving those whose businesses and facilities are economically sustainable. Likewise, opportunities exist to facilitate the entry and expansion of new businesses engaged in manufacturing processes, warehousing, and distribution that are compatible with the community.

# Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Challenges

The panel considered existing conditions within three frameworks: natural systems, connectivity, and land development. A corridor redevelopment template for sustainable growth would provide opportunities for economic, environmental, and connectivity benefits at the intersection of these three frameworks. Each framework and opportunities the panel identified that suggest a potential approach to the area are described below.

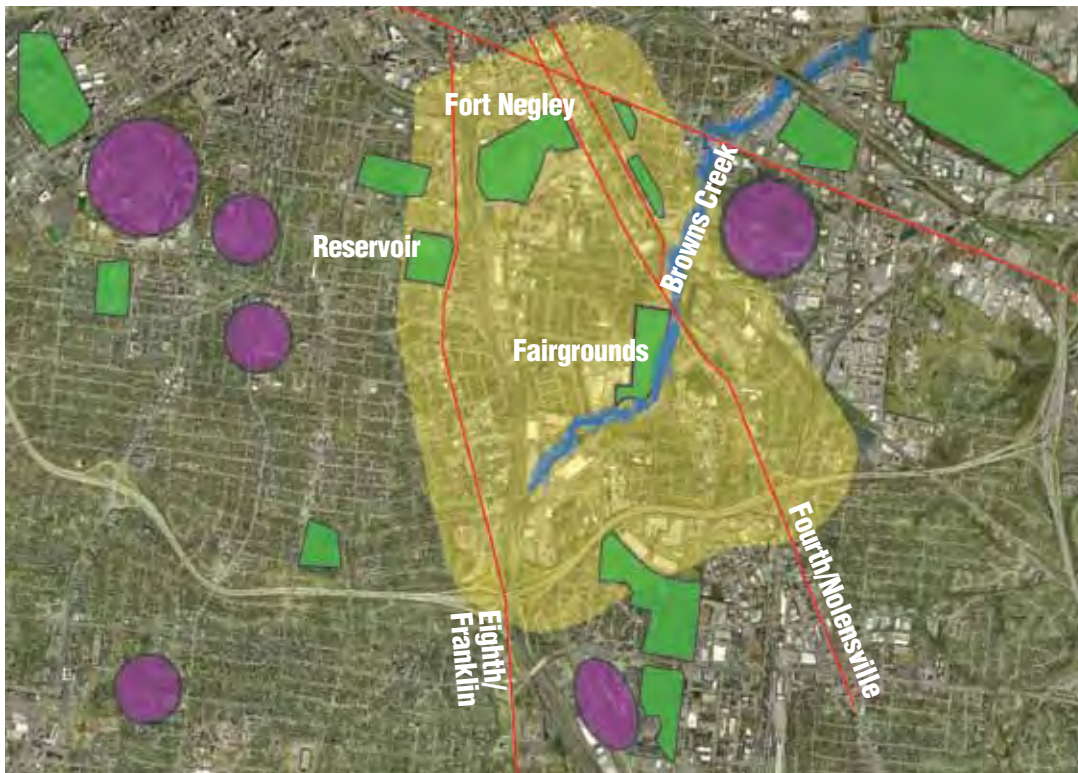
## Natural Systems

The key natural systems are those public open-space amenities that provide air- and water-quality benefits as well as programmatic amenities for passive and active recreation. Other natural systems include the promontories to the northwest and southeast.

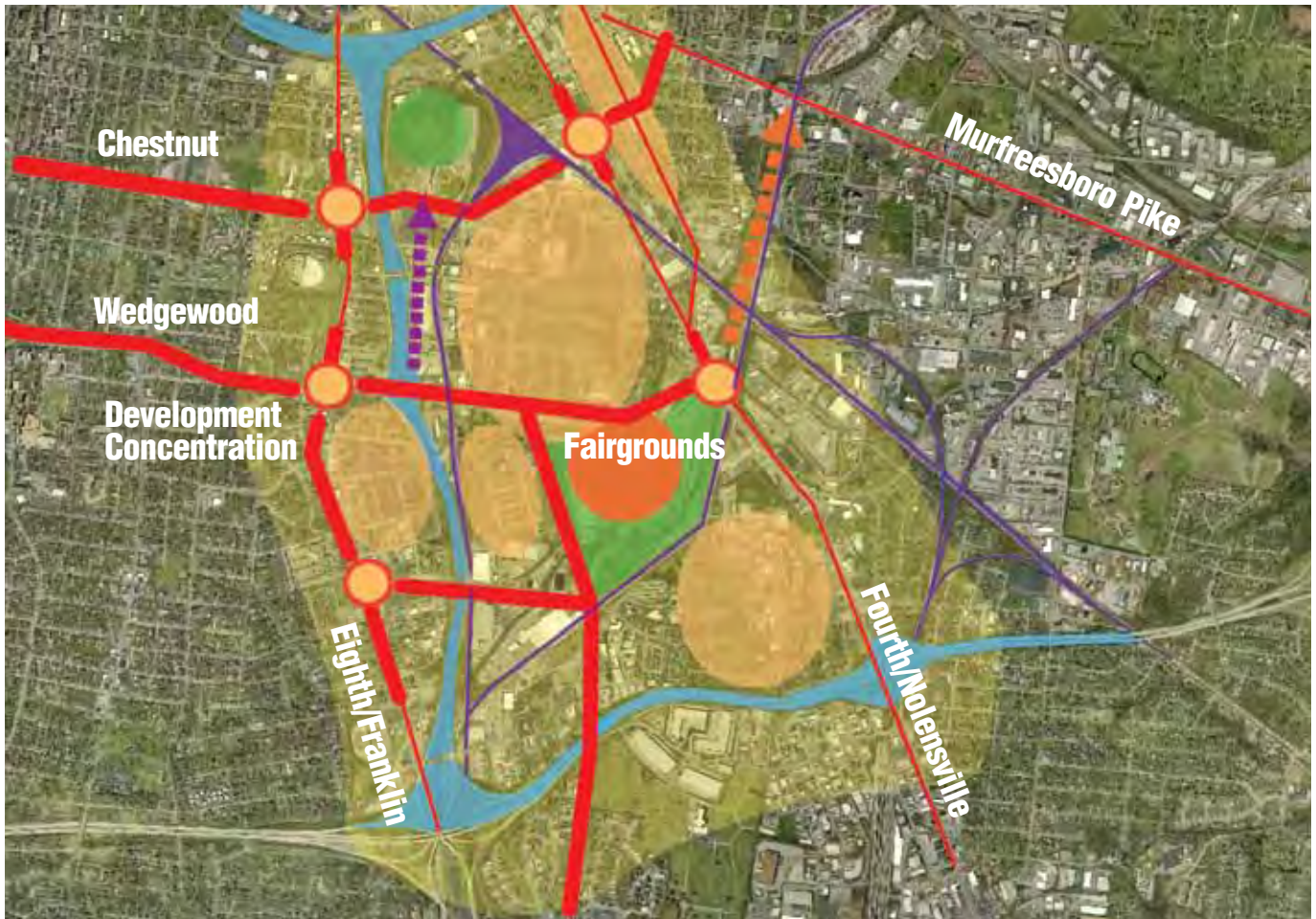
Although the rolling hills of Nashville's topography make development along the corridors difficult in some locations, the higher ground does afford views and potentially higher-value development. The opportunity for the natural systems is to integrate the elements to create a system beneficial to both the people and the ecology of the area.

The elements of the natural systems framework are as follows:

- *Parks:* The park system includes public parks, school grounds, Fort Negley Park, and the park areas of the fairgrounds.
- *Cemeteries:* The historic city cemetery on Fourth Avenue is a significant cultural asset that could be integrated into a larger system of open space.



Natural systems elements in the study area.



Redevelopment-opportunity sites are surrounded by stable and resurgent neighborhoods that are somewhat isolated from one another.

- *Browns Creek:* The existing creek is proposed as a greenway creating a trail that connects with the fairgrounds site to the northeast and provides recreational connectivity and increased value to adjacent property.

## Connectivity

The key elements of connectivity are the grid of streets that connect to adjacent neighborhoods, transit service, and highway access. The challenges in this area include the conflict between the primacy of auto access along the corridors and the character of the adjacent neighborhoods; the effect of highway access at Wedgewood, Interstate 40, and Interstate 440 on the surrounding local street system; and the freight-rail crossings that act as barriers throughout the local street system. The opportunities include integrating the parks and circulation systems to create a pedestrian-friendly network of

connectivity for the residential neighborhoods, commercial development, and citywide recreation.

Following are the three elements of the connectivity framework:

- *Street grid:* The existing street grid is fragmented in the east-west direction, does not distribute highway traffic through the area, and lacks pedestrian and bicycle amenities, thus limiting transportation choice.
- *Transit services:* Bus service exists along Fourth Avenue South (Route 12), Eighth Avenue South (Route 8), and Chestnut (Route 25) but with no direct service from the study area to the 100 Oaks center.
- *Highway access:* I-65 provides neighborhood access from the southern suburbs while Fourth Avenue South from I-40 and I-440 provides access

to the beltway system. However, this access affects both corridors and Wedgewood west of Eighth Avenue South with highway-related traffic.

## Land Development

The existing development along the corridors is part of a larger economic corridor that follows I-65 from the affluent southern neighborhoods and suburban job and retail centers, but the physical and historical characteristics of the area have limited the economic potential in contrast to other corridors. Short-term challenges for development lie in large vacant and underused properties, which include the 130-acre fairgrounds site and potential assemblage of land along Chestnut between Eighth Avenue South and the freight rail line east of I-65. Medium- and longer-term challenges include repositioning the industrial lands, creating a development model along the corridors that balances all modes of transportation, seeking appropriate density models for infill residential, and capturing residential market from the nearby

higher-education institutions for denser residential development along the corridors.

Key opportunities that address the challenges include the following three actions:

- *Fairgrounds*: The upland area contiguous with the Wedgewood-Houston neighborhood is well located with highway access via Wedgewood to the west and Fourth Avenue South to the east, while the low-lying land along Browns Creek provides opportunities for a park that would add value to the upland area.
- *Chestnut Street*: The vacant and underused land coupled with connectivity north to downtown and east-west to Belmont, Vanderbilt, and other higher-education institutions provides an opportunity to assemble land for catalytic development.
- *Infill and densification*: New development must address the specific conditions of property dimensions, land economics, and contextual design issues related to building placement and character.

# Guiding Principles and Redevelopment Steps

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The redevelopment process for the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors will have many steps and take different directions as it evolves over the long term. To assist Metro, the panel has developed a series of guiding principles for redevelopment. Further discussion of these concepts can be found in the ULI publication *Ten Principles for Successful Public/Private Partnerships*.

## Guiding Principles

**1. Be proactive, not reactive.** Metro and its partners must seek opportunities to achieve the vision for the study area rather than merely wait for the private market to invest in the desired forms and outcomes. Even with the credit markets and the economy in recovery, access to capital is unlikely to be as easy as it once was, and the public sector will need to show its political willingness and financial capacity to prepare opportunities for private investment.

**2. Anticipate evolution of the corridors.** A long-term vision should exist for how these places will evolve over time. Metro and its partners should be clear about the big picture and make sure each implementation project is consistent with that vision and helps it come to fruition. Changes may be small at first and facilitated by the public sector initially, but at some point they will reach a critical mass and the private sector will carry the momentum.

**3. Ignite leadership in both the public and the private sectors.** This vision will never be achieved without consistent leadership from government, from the development community, and from community stakeholders. The public sector must demonstrate its dependability as a partner for private developers and community advocates that understand a predictable process. The development community must understand that its projects need to fit within the public vision to leverage public benefits. And the community stakeholders need to continue to advocate for the vision through successive waves of public adminis-

trations and market cycles. All must buy in, perform their roles, and collaborate to achieve desired results.

**4. Establish and concentrate on nodes.** The intersections of key streets (some are identified in this report; others may evolve over time) will be critical places to focus transformative public infrastructure and private redevelopment because of their high visibility and spillover potential to define an identity for the corridors. Redevelopment of these intersections can help create new identities for the broader area.

**5. Focus on place making.** Focusing on creating a place, not just building a project is important. Promoting a high-quality public realm through siting decisions, design, materials, and the like will be critical. This means making a special effort to work with property owners and developers through the design and review process to achieve these standards is imperative.

**6. Engage with relevant agencies.** Clearly, many public agencies will have roles and responsibilities within the study area. These agencies include the Tennessee Department of Transportation, Metro Nashville Planning, Metro Nashville Public Works, and other public agencies such as the Metropolitan Development and Housing Authority, the regional transit agencies, and the MPO. Metro needs to coordinate with all relevant agencies and strategically deploy them in specific roles that align with their authority and capacities.

**7. Improve connectivity and balance access.** The current context within the study area corridor is auto-oriented and dependent. A few legacy examples of older development from the streetcar era were built to serve walk-up customers from adjacent neighborhoods. The highways, freight-rail tracks, and traffic and lack of pedestrian design impose significant barriers on the corridors within the area. Retrofitting streets and creating new connections will be key to creating value that will attract investment and improve the quality of life for residents. In addition to street design and transit, Metro should look at access issues such as curb cuts and sidewalk amenities.

**8. Explore and improve private/public financing opportunities.** Metro needs to create a more robust toolbox of public financing tools that can be used to leverage private investment. Creating such tools may require action at the state level for the proper authority, as well as coordination with different public agencies, for example, to create corridor-based TIFs that capture existing tax base.

**9. Build intimate relationships with developers and property owners.** Developers and landowners will be key implementation partners for Metro as it seeks to implement its vision. Metro needs to establish strong working relationships and help build trust with the community to enable the desired investment and changes.

**10. Provide incentives for long-term stakeholders and provide opportunities for new stakeholders.** Metro will need to focus on the potential issues of undesired displacement of residents and businesses as an unintended consequence of new incentives and regulations. Current property owners and residents should be given the first opportunity to take advantage of the possibilities offered by a new set of development tools and rules. At the same time, these tools should provide the basis for broader market interest in the study area by making the development process and partnership terms more predictable.

**11. Encourage higher density.** Overall density will be important to turn the corridors into more pedestrian-oriented places. Incentives need to be included in land use regulations to make denser, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development allowable by right rather than by exception in appropriate places. Context should be the driver in determining where density is most appropriate and how it should be designed. Areas of stability like historic neighborhoods and buildings of value should be preserved and enhanced, whereas areas of change with vacant, underused, or dilapidated properties should be targeted for new development based on their location and value. From a development perspective, regulations will need not just to encourage the good but also to prevent the bad from happening.

**12. Identify, program, and complete several catalytic projects in the corridors.** Nothing breeds success like success. The completion of a few high-quality transformative projects will spur investor interest and create spillover. Metro needs to carefully choose

where to invest its limited resources to ensure these short-term achievements have a catalytic effect on the entire study area.

## Redevelopment Steps

The panel was asked to offer suggestions on how to create a corridor redevelopment process that can be replicated. Although the guiding principles in the previous section provide an initial framework for moving forward, developing a well-defined process for establishing and following through on a corridor redevelopment program will be important. In light of the preceding context, the panel had the following overarching recommendations:

- Zoning along corridors should be more flexible when dictated by market conditions, and a greater understanding of local market dynamics should be used to create a more strategic approach to land use regulation.
- Metro should offer “carrots” (incentives such as loans or grants) as well as regulations to achieve desired outcomes.
- Public resources should be marshaled for significant investment in street design and streetscape, sidewalks, traffic management, and transit service.

Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach is needed to corridor planning and implementation. Such work requires clear definition and orchestration of roles and responsibilities among Metro agencies:

- The Planning Department has responsibility for land use regulation.
- Right-of-way design and maintenance on these corridors appears to be split among the Tennessee Department of Transportation, Metro Public Works, and the Planning Department.
- Transit is the responsibility of the Metropolitan Transit Authority while the Regional Transportation Authority operates the region’s single commuter-rail line.
- Land assembly and public finance tools reside with the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency. What additional economic development tools Metro currently has at its disposal is not clear.

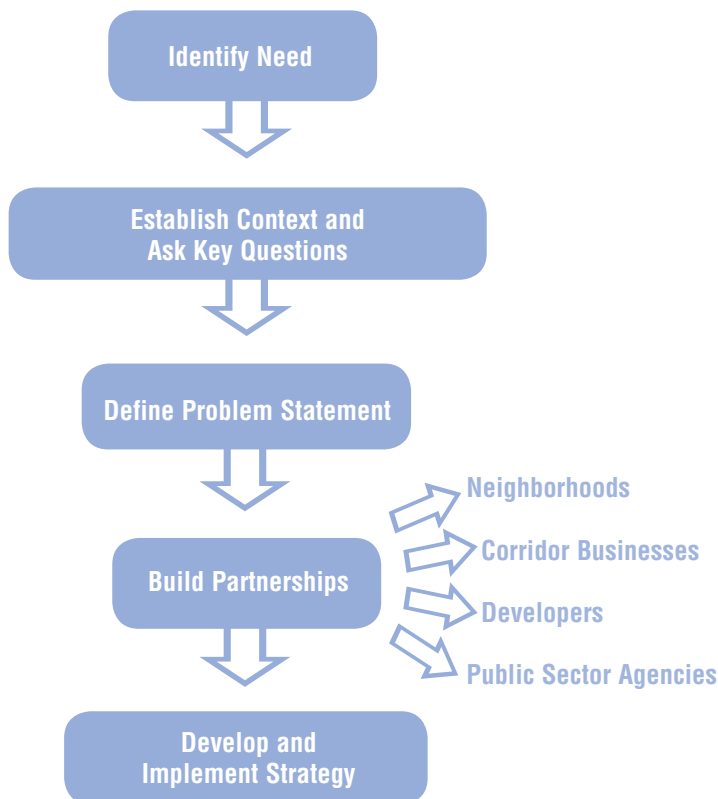


- Federal transportation funding is disbursed through Metro, the Nashville Area MPO, and the transit agencies.

The panel believes Metro should approach the corridors by building on existing successes in the area, such as the 100 Oaks redevelopment, and private reinvestment in neighborhoods near corridors, such as the Douglas Corner historic area with its antique shops and entertainment uses on Eighth Avenue South. Creating connections to nearby jobs and destinations such as 100 Oaks and university centers like Vanderbilt and Belmont will be critical in achieving the goals for the study area.

Successful demonstration projects in the study area will stimulate spillover in the private market. Such projects can be large scale, such as the redevelopment of the fairgrounds or the ballpark, or public infrastructure to transform one or both corridors into a “complete street.” They can also be small projects, such as new development of vacant sites (e.g., bowling alley, Mercury dealership), key corner lots, and other public realm improvements at key nodes.

Corridor redevelopment process.



## Getting Started

Following are a few of the questions that should be asked early in the process:

- What are the reasons that a corridor redevelopment initiative is being considered? Create a problem statement.
- Who are the key stakeholders that will be affected and benefit if the redevelopment initiative is undertaken?
- What are the initial outcomes that are proposed? Define the finish line.
- What are the initial thoughts on how to accomplish these outcomes and over what period of time?

**Definition of the problem statement:** Most often, the advocate for pursuing a corridor redevelopment initiative will be a public sector entity or a neighborhood stakeholder. But a broader group of affected parties should be involved early in the process. A good time to broaden the group would be after a well-defined problem statement has been drafted: the problem statement should be refined with key stakeholders.

**Partnerships:** In almost every corridor redevelopment initiative, likely actors include the planning department, the public works agency, the redevelopment authority, stakeholder neighborhood organizations, corridor businesses, and developers. Early discussions with these groups will accomplish a couple of important objectives. First, if approached correctly, each of these groups will feel that it has been able to influence the initial discussions regarding the final understanding of the problem and potential responses to it. Second, with their early involvement and hoped-for buy-in, they will help expand support for the effort from their respective stakeholder groups.

Moving forward, each of the key stakeholder groups must define its roles in the corridor redevelopment process and commit to fulfilling them. Neighborhood groups will be instrumental in documenting social and physical issues relating to the corridor, as will the local business community. Developers can assist with providing critical business and market analysis information as well as direct experience regarding

development opportunities and obstacles. Finally, each of the public entities will bring both staff and economic resources to both analysis and documentation of the corridor issues that need to be addressed as well as potential public responses.

**Analysis and response:** A corridor redevelopment initiative will require significant research and analysis. Typically, significant land use concerns include obsolete zoning and properties, low-functioning public infrastructure, conflicting new emerging uses, and identified market needs related to property issues. A deliberate and comprehensive approach to the analysis is of critical importance. The research will include but not be limited to a complete property inventory by use, land use economics, updated market demand assessment, and transportation and infrastructure analysis. This analysis must be completed before strategies and tools can be defined to address both the problems and opportunities.

Once the analysis is nearly completed, the partnership group can begin to identify a strategy for improving and reprogramming the corridor. In most cases, a variety of approaches and tools will evolve that will effectively address the identified needs and opportunities. A timetable will be developed that helps establish a realistic work program for each of the partners that will be involved in the implementation process. The panel assumes that public investment will be used not only to make improvements to the corridor but also to leverage new private investment.

### Short-Term Development Opportunities

After a strategy and implementation program have been defined, identifying several short-term development opportunities (to take place during the next 12-18 months) is important. Often both the time commitment and the hard work required to create a viable corridor redevelopment strategy need to be reinforced by the likelihood of visible short-term successes. The panel identified a number of development-related activities for Nashville leadership to consider. The fairgrounds redevelopment initiative is discussed further here.

The 130-acre Tennessee State Fairgrounds site is underused and incompatible with surrounding land uses. If Metro decides to redeploy the property, it will need to determine the most promising and desirable use or uses to pursue. The ULI panel has undertaken a cursory

review and evaluation of options for consideration by the community, including one or more of the following primary or secondary uses. Each use or combination of uses would achieve different objectives:

- Public ownership and occupancy
  - Public park and open space
  - Public institution or entertainment venue
- Nonprofit cultural, educational, or higher education institution
- Private commercial economic development
  - Corporate offices (headquarters or support operations)
  - Retail shopping center
  - Mixed-use “town center” complex
  - Affordable residential neighborhood

Potential development objectives of these alternative uses include

- Establishing a vibrant focus for the community;
- Creating high-quality jobs and community wealth;
- Providing a unique community amenity;
- Achieving attractive, well-designed facilities, site, and landscaping; and
- Creating significant net public revenue and expanding the tax base.

The panel recommends that an RFP be developed for the entire fairgrounds property. The RFP should solicit private and civic entities to propose reuse options for the property that will enhance the surrounding neighborhoods and corridors. Possibly a decision will be made to subdivide the property and to issue multiple RFPs. This decision can be made after the redevelopment plan is completed. The initial steps include the following:

- Organize the redevelopment process with key stakeholders, including existing users, the surrounding neighborhoods, and economic development and development entities.

- Identify key development objectives, including relocation of viable existing uses with stakeholders and economic development and civic leadership.
- Create a redevelopment plan for the fairgrounds area.
- Identify the public sector role and initial redevelopment resources available to assist with redevelopment.
- Prepare the RFP, review it with key stakeholders, and refine.
- Create a review committee to provide analysis and recommendations to Metro regarding submitted proposals.
- Solicit and review proposals.
- Structure an action plan based on the selected development partner.

the floodplain area in a manner that benefits community and environmental concerns, addressing adjacent properties that are poorly maintained and incompatible with new investment objectives, and reconfiguring adjacent property to organize a gateway that provides adequate ingress to and egress from site. Others challenges may emerge, but Metro and its partners should keep those listed here foremost in mind.

The panel recommends the following timetable:

- Engage and build working relationship with key stakeholders (months 1-6).
- Prepare for the redevelopment process concurrently with public engagement (months 1-9).
- Prepare and issue the RFP (months 12-16).
- Interview and select a development partner (months 16-18).

### Public Realm Improvements

Often a precursor to attracting significant private investment to an area or corridor is the decision by the public sector to make lead investments designed to enhance and draw positive attention. Such invest-

A complete streets treatment (below).

Green gateway for the fairgrounds (right).

Some of the challenges foreseen by the panel are identifying adequate talent and skill sets to maximize opportunity and ensure a development partner with depth, engaging and informing the public about the fairgrounds redevelopment opportunity, addressing



ment can occur in the form of upgraded infrastructure, extensive landscaping, signage, pedestrian improvements, and lighting. The panel recommends Metro declare its intent to encourage reinvestment in the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors by targeting public realm improvement opportunities.

Relying on the concept that an integrated circulation and parks system will support recreation opportunities and transportation choices as well as add value to adjacent properties, the panel has several specific public realm recommendations:

- *Complete streets*: Metro agencies should work together to design complete streets infrastructure that supports multimodal transportation and includes best practices in stormwater management, focusing on Eighth Avenue South, Fourth Avenue South, Second Avenue South, Chestnut, Craighead, Rosedale, and Bransford. This work would include an access management plan for the corridors to deal with curb cuts and other access issues from adjacent properties. A demonstration project on Eighth Avenue with connections to the west along Douglas and Wedgewood and to the east along Benton would build off the commercial successes of this traditional commercial block.
- *Fourth Avenue South/Nolensville Pike beautification*: Early public investment should focus on the image of Fourth Avenue South and Nolensville Pike with banners, lighting, signage, and landscape features.
- *Fairgrounds gateway park*: A five-acre gateway park at the intersection of Walsh Road and Fourth Avenue South should be an early public investment to position the fairgrounds for redevelopment.
- *Browns Creek greenway*: The restoration of Browns Creek as part of the Cumberland River Greenway and in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should be the main feature of a future 40- to 60-acre public/private park the same quality as Centennial Park.
- *Southwest parkway*: Redesign Wedgewood Avenue and its continuation to Fourth Avenue South as Walsh Road as a parkway street, building off the connectivity to parks and institutions to the west and connecting the corridors to Belmont University, Vanderbilt University's Peabody College, and

Vanderbilt University through Centennial Park to Hadley Park and Tennessee State University, via a new bridge that connects 31st Avenue to 28th.

- *Freight-rail study*: Freight-rail service and routes through the city should be studied to understand which lines and spurs are not well used so they can be converted for possible use for transit, pedestrian or bike paths, or complete streets, such as the corridor that runs along Browns Creek. This use could provide a connection from the fairgrounds to Trevecca Nazarene College and the Lafayette Street/Murfreesboro Pike and the Hermitage Avenue/Lebanon Pike corridors.
- *Transit improvements*: As development occurs, transit services should be incorporated in the Southwest Parkway (Wedgewood/Walsh) providing frequent service among all the college and universities, commercial corridors, parks, and in-town neighborhoods to the south and west. In the short term, the bus routes should provide direct connections from the study area to 100 Oaks to the south.
- *I-65 interchange*: Metro and the Tennessee Department of Transportation should study how to improve this interchange to implement a local street-access plan that would include a parallel road system distributing auto access away from Wedgewood to Hamilton and Chestnut.

The initial steps for public realm improvements include the following:

- Assessing whether the preceding strategic areas or others best serve the short- and long-term objectives for development along the corridor;
- Engaging business and neighborhood stakeholders by them informing of the opportunity and seeking input;
- Assembling recommended improvements for the targeted areas and identifying intended outcomes they will encourage; and
- Identifying funding sources and desired sequencing of improvements.

Some of the challenges foreseen by the panel include determining specific areas to target with the goal of generating positive impact and leveraging private investment, garnering support from key stakeholder

groups, and identifying funding sources that are able to contribute within the next year.

The panel recommends the following timetable:

- Select targeted areas (months 1–2).
- Inform and seek input from key stakeholders (months 2–4).
- Prepare a preliminary budget and identify funding sources (months 3–6).
- Design improvements (months 7–12).
- Implement improvements (months 10–18).

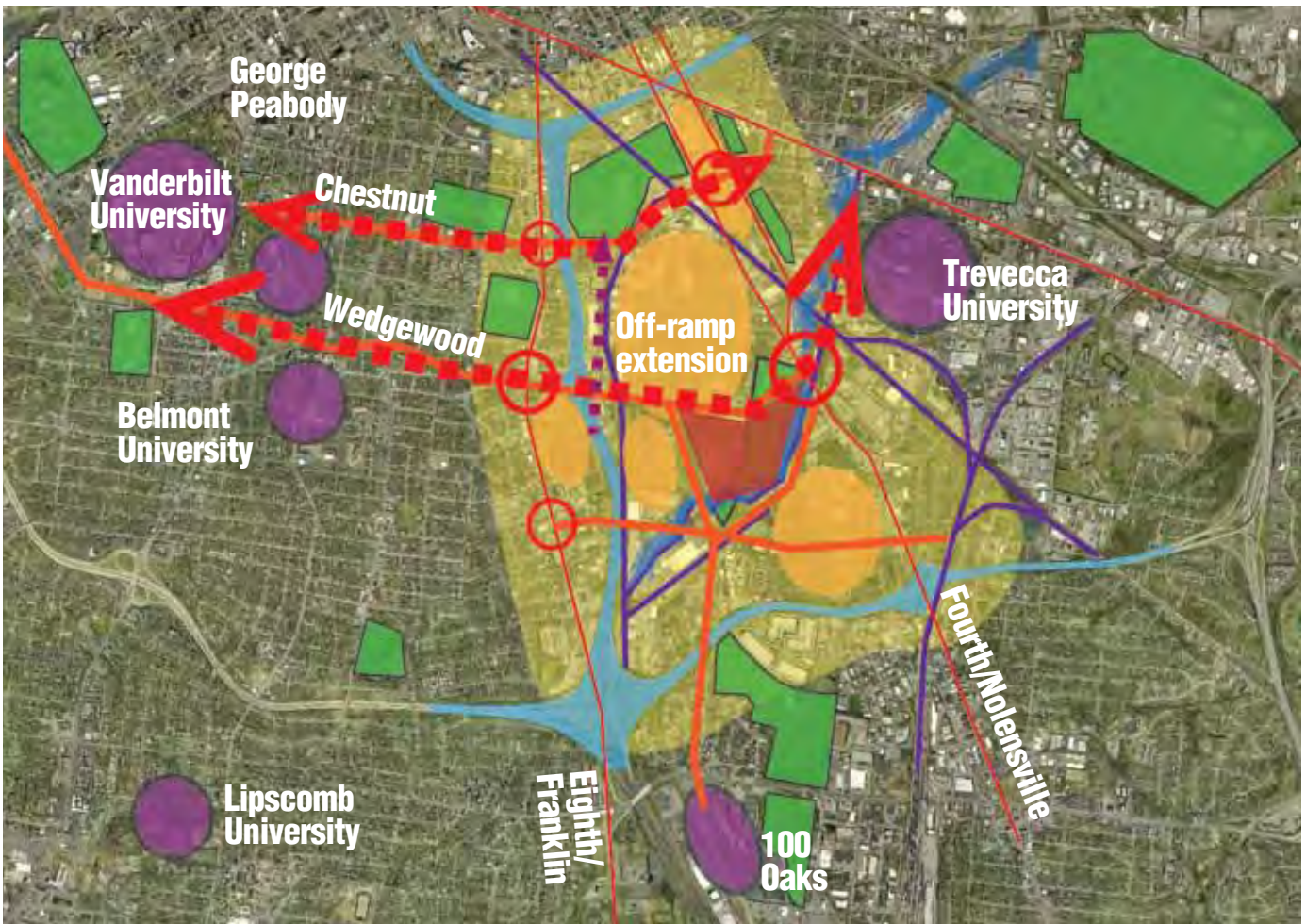
### Consolidating Industrial Properties

Some 23 percent of the study area is currently zoned as industrial. Much of this land is vacant or underused.

However, the panel could find no indications that new industrial uses will be returning to the corridor in any significant quantity. As a segment of the regional economy, the industrial sector is shrinking rapidly compared to the music, medical, and service industries.

Metro should undertake a study to assess the use and utility of existing industrial properties along the corridors. An inventory by parcel is critical in understanding current and future utility of the land. Metro and the development agency should create strategies to make former industrial sites available that will support strong local sectors like health care and the music industry. The aggregation of sites may create critical mass that can contribute to development of new identities for segments of the corridor through adaptive use or new development. Retail, commercial, and mixed-use development opportunities may

The study area has numerous public and private opportunities with the potential to be catalytic projects.



emerge at former or underused industrial sites and further contribute to new corridor identity.

Metro and the development agency should do a market assessment to evaluate the feasibility of relocating functions like the flea market—which attracts more than 500,000 vendors and customers a year—currently using the fairgrounds to underused industrial facilities along the corridor. This critical mass of customers may seed activity and economic development along the corridors. Making customers park and walk from location to location may inculcate habits of pedestrian supremacy along defined sections of the corridors, creating new corridor identities.

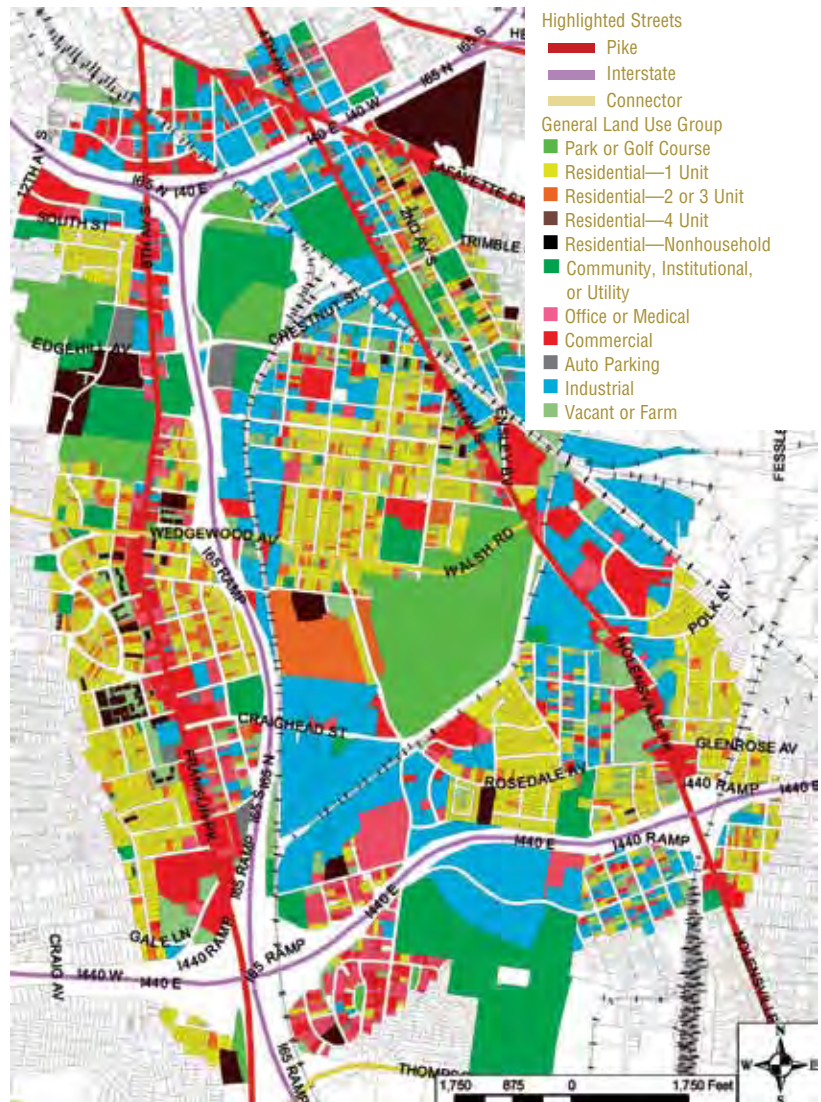
The initial steps for consolidating and reprogramming industrial property include the following:

- Take an inventory of all industrial property in the study area to identify light industrial businesses that demonstrate potential for growth or long-term presence and marginal and vacant industrial properties. Determine likely future land use direction, areas that will support future light industrial investment and expansion, and any brownfield issues.
- Use a public agency to organize industrial land to support development objectives.
- Work with transitional industrial property owners to ensure existing industrial use is discontinued in a manner that works for the community and the property owners.

Some of the challenges foreseen by the panel include communicating with industrial businesses in manner that allows accurate land use assessment, understanding potential brownfield issues, and identifying alternative industrial site for relocated businesses.

The panel recommends the following timetable:

- Perform industrial inventory (months 1–6).
- Identify viable industrial, marginal industrial, and property to be transition to new land uses (months 5–8).
- Create a strategy for working with industrial and new land use opportunities (months 9–12).



Industrial uses make up between 20 and 25 percent of the land in the study area.

## Land Assembly

Many objectives can be achieved by publicly aided land assembly. They include acquiring underperforming assets for repositioning, assisting in configuring developable parcels, stemming blight and disinvestment, and supporting density and multi-modal transportation goals.

A public agency (such as the Metropolitan Development and Housing Authority) with the appropriate authority and capacity has a strategic opportunity to assemble private land to stimulate development of critical parcels within the study area and along the corridor. This agency should have command of public/private partnership economic and financial tools that have been used widely throughout the country to stimulate development in underserved markets.

It should identify and purchase parcels with the potential to jump-start development and the transformation of the corridor or contribute to the stabilization of the neighborhoods between the corridors. When the local and national real estate and financial markets were robust, this type of intervention may not have been required in many of Nashville's submarkets. Today, however, more public engagement is required to enable development to happen. With private capital focused on acquiring and repositioning nonperforming recently constructed assets nationally, local developers' will and capacity to assemble and land bank inner-ring properties for development are limited.

The agency must make strategic investments to prepare selected sites to attract developers and publicly leveraged capital to the market. This means developing a process to assemble selected land parcels, entitle them with the proper zoning, and provide a package of financial incentives to enable the developments to move forward. Partnerships with local banks, national banks, the Federal Home Loan Bank, and community development financial institutions must be established to stimulate capital investment. Without this type of market stimulation, local developers may elect to develop greenfield sites on the region's periphery simply because they are easier to execute at lower price points.

Many assets along the corridors are vacant or appear to be underperforming. Targeting these properties to put them quickly into service can demonstrate to the

neighborhoods between the corridors the benefits of Metro's community development policy objectives. The public sector can explore several strategies for underperforming assets:

- **Purchase property from private owners and provide incentives for private development.** After land and incentives and land are assembled, issue an RFP to private and nonprofit developers to develop the property. As an alternative, the development agency may purchase options on private land and close only when the financing is in place to close on the entire development deal.
- **Apply for federal economic development grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce.** Economic Development Administration grants focus on creating economic opportunity and jobs in areas in need of public investment to stimulate private investment.
- **Package new markets tax credits.** The U.S. Treasury Department has identified the census tracts that comprise the study area as qualifying census tracts for eligibility for New Markets Tax Credits Program and other federally assisted investment. Partnering with new markets tax credits allocatees who have received allocations for investment in Tennessee or the southeastern United States could create up to 30 percent equity that requires no repayment.
- **Allocate federal Community Development Block Grants or Section 108 loans** to stimulate local retail business as part of the site acquisition and preparation process.
- **Prepare TIF or PILOT applications** with terms prearranged and prepackaged for successful RFP respondents.
- **Float tax-exempt public bonds to provide low-interest loans to acquire land or to be blended with developer financing** to reduce the cost of capital to successful RFP respondents. Subordinate all public debt to senior lenders on the project.
- **Facilitate private land assembly and public/private partnerships.** Where private owners or developers own property on critical corridors and lack the expertise, ability, or incentive to redevelop underperforming assets, form partnerships with them. The development agency will be responsible for assembling tax credits, state and federal grants,

and loans to support the developer's project and all other incentives similar to those provided for parcels the public sector has acquired.

Areas should be targeted based on their significance to the public psyche, catalytic potential to transform the corridors or communities, and potential to support higher-density, multimodal transportation access and to stabilize corridors and communities. Possible sites to investigate include Eighth Avenue South and Chestnut and Eighth Avenue South and Wedgewood.

The initial steps for land assembly include the following:

- Conduct an inventory of underused and vacant land in the study area (may perform concurrently with industrial inventory).
- Determine which properties to target for acquisition given their ability to promote corridor development objectives.
- Contact property owners to determine property disposition opportunity.
- Create short- and intermediate-term strategies for targeted acquisition.
- Create institutional capacity to implement the acquisition strategy.
- Evaluate acquisition opportunities on an ongoing basis.

The panel recommends the following timetable:

- Perform inventory (months 1-6).
- Identify short- and intermediate-term property acquisition opportunities (months 5-8).
- Create a strategy and implement a program for targeted property acquisition (months 9-12).

## Tools

Several tools should be considered to help advance the vision for corridor redevelopment, including adapting existing tools to meet the redevelopment needs and considering the creation of new tools that may require state legislative approval.

A critical existing tool is the regional Transportation Improvement Program of federally funded projects administered by the MPO. Metro should propose that

Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South be included in the TIP and Metro's capital improvement program for road improvements that implement complete street principles. They currently are not on the TIP, which means they are not likely to be considered for prioritized future funding opportunities.

In addition, Metro may want to use the existing BID tool for a neighborhood commercial district. This tool would entail working with corridor businesses to evaluate potential for "self-assessing" in an effort to create a revenue stream that will match or supplement public investment for public realm improvements. Justification for special assessment of businesses will depend on the ability to demonstrate appreciation in property values and improved business climate.

Metro may want to consider creating the following new tools, or similar ones, to help implement the vision for these corridors:

- **Corridor special TIF legislation:** This concept is modeled after Indiana's HOTIF [housing tax increment financing district] Program, which identifies key thresholds in distressed neighborhoods—aging housing stock, high vacancy rates, and high poverty rates—for designation. HOTIF not only allows the capture of a new property tax increment from new investment but also permits the capture of the existing tax base to be used for property acquisition and infrastructure investment. The capturing of the existing tax base provides an instant funding source for improvements to an area in need.
- **Investment tax credits:** Metro may want to create business tax credits for business investors in commercial corridors designated for redevelopment. These credits could help reduce the risk of expanding or creating a new business through a state and possibly a local tax credit program.



# Conclusion

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The foundation for success is set in the Fourth Avenue South and Eighth Avenue South corridors. The community has identified significant opportunity that is worth the time and effort to achieve. The Planning Department has successfully established a vision and engaged the community in the transformational benefits of commercial corridors in the city. The mayor and community leaders are providing necessary leadership to ensure continued focus and commitment from key public and private entities

The need now is to organize for success. This work includes defining the process going forward, identifying short-term opportunities, engaging and

securing commitments from key public and private players, agreeing on the work program and timing, and establishing an active, ongoing program to identify and secure needed resources.

This particular study area really represents a regional opportunity. Great potential exists for a major place-making project at the fairgrounds site and along the corridors. Because of the regional economy and demographic trends, Metro has a strong opportunity to capture market attention and offer a unique live, work, and play environment. Moreover, it has a strong opportunity to create true multimodal environment along these corridors that will be unique in Nashville.

Advisory services panel and Rose Center Nashville fellows.



# About the Fellows and the Panel

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## Daniel Rose Center Nashville Fellows

### Karl Dean

Elected on September 11, 2007, Dean is the sixth mayor of the metropolitan government of Nashville and Davidson County. His priorities as mayor are education, public safety, and economic development.

Since taking office, Dean has strongly supported the development of Music City Center, a new downtown convention center in Nashville, which will attract hundreds of thousands of new visitors and generate millions of dollars in local and state tax revenue. Music City Center is scheduled to open in early 2013.

In spring 2008, Dean formed the Green Ribbon Committee on Environmental Sustainability and set a goal to make Nashville “the greenest city in the Southeast.” The committee completed its work in April 2009 and presented a summary report with 16 goals and 71 recommendations. Dean is now working to prioritize and implement the initiatives. Those already underway include planning for mass transit in the Middle Tennessee region and developing an open-space plan for Davidson County. Dean formed the Bicycle Pedestrian and Advisory Committee, which works to make Nashville a more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly city.

Dean first held public office when he was elected as Nashville’s public defender in 1990, a post to which he was reelected in 1994 and 1998. He served as Metro law director from 1999 to 2007, when he resigned to run for the office of mayor. Dean completed the program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard in 1999. He has also served as an adjunct professor of law at Vanderbilt.

### Rick Bernhardt

A town planner for over 35 years, Bernhardt is executive director of the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Planning Department. His practice has focused on creating sustainable communities, neighborhoods, and places through the use of traditional design principles. These techniques have been used to develop community-wide and project-specific master plans.

Before joining Metro, Bernhardt was director of EDAA’s Town Planning Studio and also served as Orlando’s director of planning and development for 17 years. His work with the Southeast Orlando Sector Plan and Baldwin Park resulted in receipt of the initial Catherine Brown award from the Congress for the New Urbanism. He is on the board of directors of the Form-Based Code Institute and previous chair of the Planners Task Force of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

Bernhardt was educated at Auburn University (BS in economics) and Ohio State University (master’s of city planning with a concentration in housing and urban structure) and received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Ohio State University in 1997.

### Bert Mathews

Mathews is one of Nashville’s most astute real estate investors. Behind his disarming smile is an encyclopedic knowledge of the deals that have shaped Nashville’s growth over the past 70 years. Real estate is in his DNA. His grandfather started the Mathews Company, and his father ran it for 30-plus years. In 1992, Mathews took the reins and is leading the Mathews Company into a new era of growth and success. As president, he oversees development, acquisitions, financing, institutional and investor relations, and supervision of all real estate marketing activities for both portfolio and third-party properties, which total more than 2.5 million square feet.

Mathews combines consummate people skills with a keen and decisive business mind. A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Harvard Business School, his 20-plus years of experience in commercial real estate services have seen him represent clients as a developer, a broker, and a property manager.

Not only is Mathews a leader in commercial real estate services, but he is also a community leader in both civic and professional organizations and serves in several leadership roles. He is chairman of the ULI Nashville District Council and vice chairman of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. He is also active in Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Nashville's Central Business Improvement District, and Nashville Downtown Partnership, and is former vice chairman of the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority and chairman of the Metro Transit Authority.

## Alexia Poe

Poe currently serves as director of economic and community development for Mayor Karl Dean in Nashville, Tennessee. She joined the mayor's office after serving as managing director of the Tennessee office for Peritus, a public affairs firm based in Louisville, Kentucky.

Before joining Peritus, Poe was director of public affairs for Gaylord Entertainment, owner and operator of large hotel and convention center properties in four states and the historic Grand Ole Opry. There she oversaw the company's government relations, community relations, and charitable foundation.

Prior to joining Gaylord, Poe served nearly a decade in public service. She worked in the nation's capital as communications director for U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) where she built his Senate press office from the ground up. Poe also worked in the White House as deputy press secretary to First Lady Laura Bush. She began her career in public service in Tennessee governor Don Sundquist's press office where she became the second female and youngest person in the state's history to serve as press secretary.

Poe spent several years as a television reporter and morning anchor out of college. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Tennessee with a BS in communication and minor in political science.

## Rose Center Advisory Services Panel

### M.D. (Mike) Higbee, Jr.

*Panel Chair  
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Higbee joined Strategic Capital Partners, LLC, in July 2009 as the managing director of the Urban Development Group, which takes urban projects from concept to completion. His primary expertise is in urban redevelopment, including land use, real estate development opportunities, project phasing, leveraging public/private investment, cost estimates, organizational roles and responsibilities, fiscal impact analysis, and creating developer interest.

In 1991, Higbee founded Development Concepts, Inc. His role as principal-in-charge was to work directly with both private and public sector entities to encourage planning and development efforts that were consistent with a community's goals and objectives. He worked with groups at various points in the development process from defining a potential development concept through actual project implementation.

Before forming Development Concepts, Inc., Higbee served as the director of metropolitan development, one of six departments within the Indianapolis-Marion County consolidated government under Mayor William H. Hudnut III. During his tenure, Higbee was responsible for the city's economic development and affordable housing initiatives. In addition, he was the city's point person for several premier redevelopment projects including Circle Centre Mall, the United Airlines MOC II facility, and the Canal Walk Redevelopment Project.

Higbee received his BS in political science from Purdue University and completed graduate study in community development and public administration at Southern Illinois University. He is the chairman of the ULI Indianapolis District Council and serves on ULI's Public Private Participation Council. He also serves on the Economic Growth Council for the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Advisory Council for Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and the Project Committee for Indiana Historic Landmarks and is on the board of directors for the Project School.

## Carlton Brown

*New York, New York*

A founding partner and chief operating officer of Full Spectrum of New York, Brown is a 1973 graduate of Princeton University's School of Architecture and Urban Planning and has studied real estate finance at New York University. He worked for architecture and planning firms until he joined AT&T as a manager in the real estate division. During his ten-year tenure at AT&T, Brown directed the development and construction of over \$2.0 billion of real estate for the company.

Brown has used his educational and corporate experience to shape Full Spectrum's real estate development activities. He has been responsible for the development, deployment, and implementation of high-performance and sustainable building technologies and strategies. He is a long-term proponent of sustainability. In 1990, he led a multidisciplinary consultancy to the Cape Verde Islands, West Africa, that developed an approach for sustainable development projects.

Brown's vision for Full Spectrum has led to the firm's recognition as a national leader in the development of affordable, green, smart buildings in emerging urban markets. The firm's central theme is that all communities—regardless of race, ethnicity, or income—are entitled to a sustainable future, and Brown's role is to see that all Full Spectrum development projects meet these high performance standards.

Brown has served on several boards, including the New York Chapter, American Institute of Architects; the Business Resource and Investment Service Center of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone; and BEN Asset Group. He is the current board chair of 651 Arts. Brown has received numerous commendations from various organizations for his leadership and civic engagement, including the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce. He has served on the NYC High Performance Building Task Force and the NYC Brownfield Task Force. In September 2006, Brown was the only developer appointed to New York City Mayor Bloomberg's Sustainability Advisory Board. This board's mission is to address the important environmental issues that face the entire city and to a large extent will determine its viability as a community by 2030.

## Nando Micale

*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Micale is an architect and urban designer and serves as a group leader in managing Wallace Roberts & Todd's Philadelphia office. His strengths lie in his commitment to both urbanism and environmentalism, and a consideration of all scales of design in strategies for urban regeneration. His work includes citywide urban design plans, waterfront planning, suburban smart growth strategies, transit-oriented development, and urban infill projects.

His award-winning urban design work led to his investiture in the American Institute of Architects College of Fellows. Recent master-planning efforts include the downtown waterfront plan in Trenton, New Jersey; transit-oriented development plans for Philadelphia's Port Authority; and Philadelphia's Civic Vision for the Central Delaware Riverfront, which has received four national awards since its release in 2008.

Micale has degrees from Temple University and Harvard University. He serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design and is a guest critic and lecturer at Drexel and Temple universities.

## Richard T. Reinhard

*Washington, D.C.*

Reinhard is deputy executive director, planning and development, for the Downtown DC Business Improvement District, a nonprofit organization that works to create a remarkable urban experience in the heart of our nation's capital. The Downtown BID is funded through a special district, within which property owners tax themselves and govern how the money is spent to improve the BID area.

Reinhard has spent more than two decades on the improvement of cities. Most recently, he directed the Infrastructure Initiative at the Urban Land Institute. He has managed urban revitalization organizations in Richmond, Buffalo, Atlanta, and Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He served as chief of staff to the mayor of Buffalo and as chief operating officer of a Toronto-based real estate development corporation. He began his career as a newspaper reporter in his hometown of Syracuse, New York.

As an adjunct faculty member, Reinhard has taught planning and policy at the University at Buffalo, Emory University, Georgia State University, the University of Ulster, and, most recently, Virginia Tech's National Capital Campus.

He has a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and a master's degree from Rice University. He was a Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

## Christopher Stienon

*Brooklyn, New York*

Stienon is an architect, an urban designer, and the managing principal of Urban Matrix, a company dedicated to the design of cities and urban areas with an emphasis on urban regeneration and sustainable development patterns. As both a licensed architect and a licensed professional planner, and having worked with municipalities, planning agencies, private developers, and institutions, Stienon has gained a broad familiarity with both the public and private sector forces shaping the modern city during more than two decades since graduating with a master's of urban design and architecture from Columbia University. His insights into the needs and aspirations of these various groups help him facilitate a dialogue between multiple stakeholders typically involved with large-scale urban development projects.

Before founding Urban Matrix, Stienon served as the director of urban design at the New York office of EDAW|AECOM where he oversaw the master planning of New York City's Governors Island, a redevelopment plan for Midtown Rochester, and the conceptual design of a cultural district in Baku, Azerbaijan.

He is a member of the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Certified Planners, the Urban Land Institute, and the Institute for Urban Design. He is also a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited professional.

## Richard Ward

*St. Louis, Missouri*

Ward joined Zimmer Real Estate Services in 2007 to manage Zimmer's St. Louis office and be part of its Development Management Group. His principal areas of focus include shaping and advising public/private ventures and partnerships, development partner procurement, site selection and acquisition strategies, structuring incentive agreements between local governments and private investors, and acting as master developer for complex multideveloper projects.

A seasoned development counselor, before joining Zimmer, Ward was the founder and chief executive officer of Development Strategies, a highly respected provider of professional services in support of economic, community, and real estate development nationwide. Between 1973 and 1986, he was managing partner of two real estate investment partnerships active in inner-city neighborhoods of St. Louis.

Ward is frequently retained as an adviser and expert witness in legal proceedings typically related to questions of highest and best use of real estate and issues associated with land use controls or use of the eminent domain power. In addition, he led the creation of strategic economic development plans for many communities and public private partnerships nationwide.

He has served on ten ULI advisory panels throughout the United States and Europe, including, most recently, Saarbrücken, Germany, and South Bend, Indiana. He is a frequent speaker and panelist at diverse professional and civic organization meetings and conferences. Ward is a regular contributor to a variety of professional publications, including those of the International Economic Development Council, the Urban Land Institute, the Real Estate Counselors, and the American Planning Association. He received his MBA from the Olin School of Business at Washington University in St. Louis as well as a master's of urban design from Washington University and a master's of urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech.



**Urban Land Institute**

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