

Tullahoma Comprehensive Plan

An aerial photograph of Tullahoma, Tennessee, showing a mix of residential, commercial, and natural areas. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "EXECUTIVE SUMMARY" is prominently displayed in the center of the image.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING PROJECT OVERVIEW

Located in Coffee and Franklin counties in southern Middle Tennessee, Tullahoma has over 20,000 residents. It is strategically located between Nashville, which is 71 miles to the northwest, and Chattanooga, located 77 miles to the southeast.

Project Intent

The City's Request for Proposals (RFP) document to solicit proposals from consultants summarized this plan's intent as follows:

"The comprehensive development plan will serve as the guiding document for growth and development regarding land use, zoning, utility capacity and construction, economic development, traffic management, recreation, capital budgeting, provision of municipal services and facilities, housing, and community engagement."

Project Approach

The following five key steps were taken to create this Comprehensive Plan:

Task 1.0: Project Kick-Off & Research

Task 2.0: Visioning & Economic Assessment/Analysis

Task 3.0: Charrette & Concept Plan

Task 4.0: Draft Plan Preparation

Task 5.0: Plan Presentation & Revisions

"We are a growing city, but still have a small town feel."

Surveyed citizen

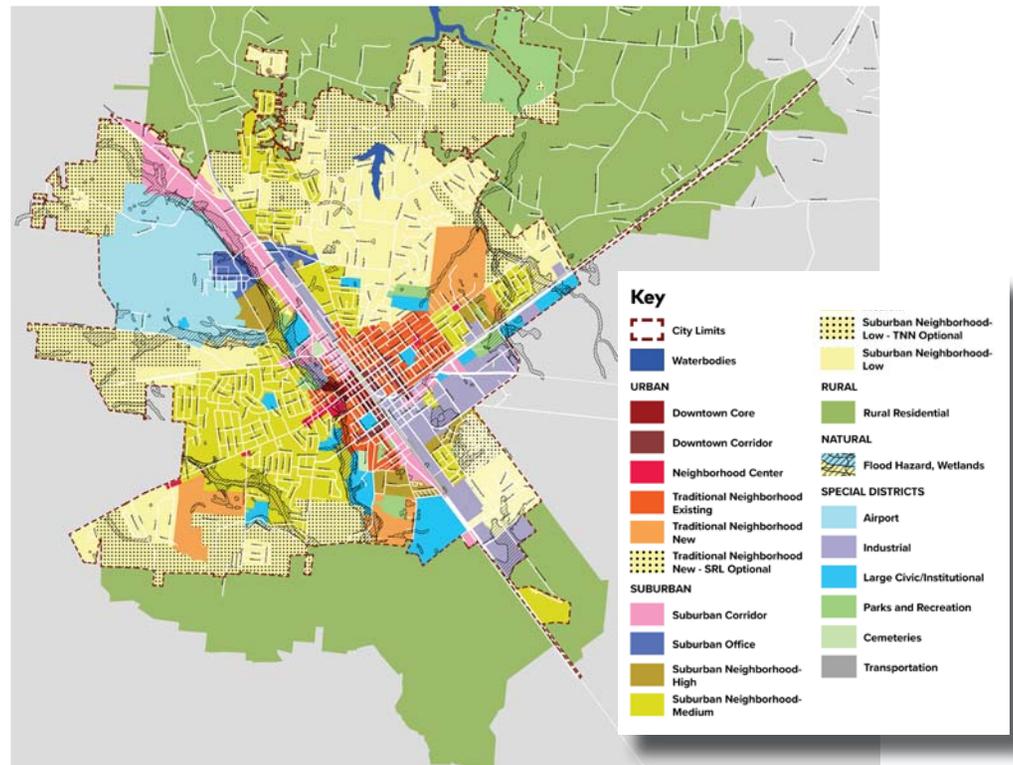
There were many opportunities for public engagement, including numerous public and stakeholder meetings, an online public opinion survey taken by over 1,000 citizens, and a five-day charrette, which included an intensive brainstorming workshop engaging the public to develop key planning ideas.



PLACE TYPES

"Place Types" are determined by land uses, density, form and character. The 20 different Place Types for Tullahoma are mapped below (bottom) and the transect illustrating the five primary Place Types is immediately below. Place Types are implemented through zoning and development standards.

TULLAHOMA PLACE TYPES TRANSECT

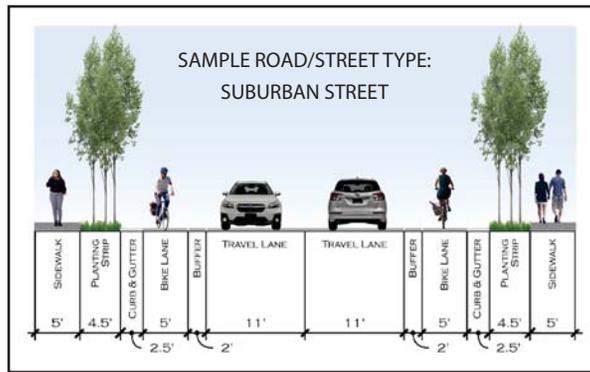


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MOBILITY

This plan section includes a list of planning principles, a summary of the “complete streets” concepts, a description and graphics for Tullahoma’s various Road/Street Types, proposed road/street improvements and connections, and plans for non-motorized travel, including bike lanes and greenways. As with Place Types, Road and Street Types are categorized into Rural, Suburban and Urban Types (Natural and Special are not applicable). The seven types include the following:

- Rural Parkway
- Rural Suburban Road
- Suburban Avenue
- Suburban Street
- Local Suburban Street
 - New Development
- Urban Avenue
- Urban Street
- Local Urban Street
 - New Development



INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES

This plan section addresses utilities such as public sewer and water, electricity, gas and telecommunications. There are also recommendations for “green infrastructure,” which entails alternatives to conventional piping of stormwater by allowing natural absorption into the ground. Examples include:

- Bioswales
- Rain gardens
- Wetlands restoration
- Impervious surfaces



Among the various recommendations for facilities are expanded and new schools, expanded and new emergency service facilities, new cultural venues (library, museum, and Downtown amphitheater) and renovating City Hall.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources

Key recommendations include:

- Discourage the disturbance of floodplains
- Continue to pursue clean-up efforts for streams
- Require street trees in the City’s subdivision regs
- Consider adopting a tree preservation ordinance

Cultural Resources

Key recommendations include:

- Explore the designation of local historic districts
- Prepare design guidelines (even if local historic districts are not designated)
- Promote federal investment tax credits for historic building rehabilitations
- Consider a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program as a preservation incentive
- Pursue certified local government (CLG) status by establishing a preservation program

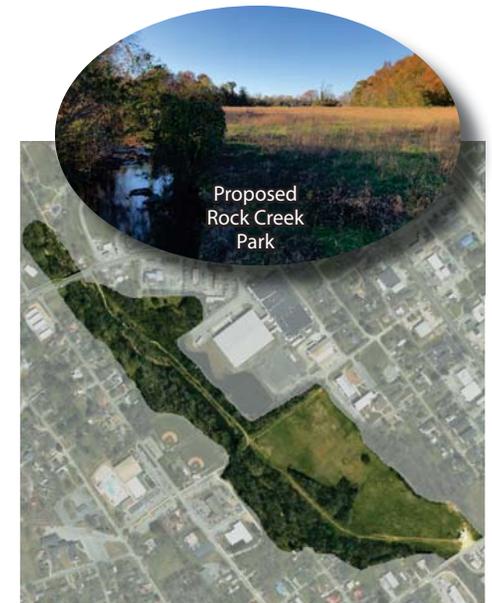


PUBLIC SPACE & RECREATION

In addition to projects already occurring at Waggoner Park, Johnson Lane Park and Silver Street Park, the following facilities should be pursued:

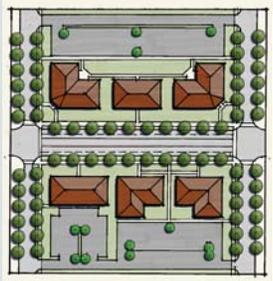
- Basketball courts
- Pickle ball courts
- Skate park
- Dog park
- Short Springs parking & rest rooms

Also, a group of citizens have advocated for the creation of a new Rock Creek Park between roughly Grundy Street and Wilson Avenue (see at right).

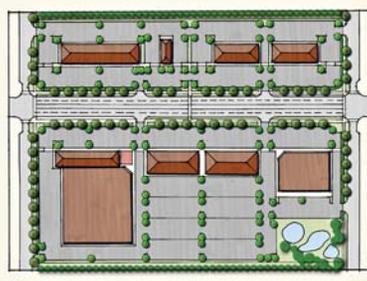


COMMUNITY DESIGN

This section is grounded in the design principles of walkability, mixed uses, calming of motor vehicles, and generous landscaping. Specific concepts were developed, as follows:



North Jackson Street Corridor
The proposed redesign for this corridor features an urban segment (left) and a suburban segment (right) for both within and beyond the ROW.



Scenarios for Grundy Street Site

These two scenarios are for a vacant site on Grundy Street across from the Police Department and overlooking the proposed Rock Creek Park.



The concept on the left features a three-story multi-family building and nine self-parked townhouses. The concept on the right features a two-story multi-family building and five self-parked townhouses, as well as a small restaurant with spectacular views of the new park (see the illustration at right).



DOWNTOWN

Downtown Tullahoma is strongly linked to the image and economic health of the entire community. Consequently, a key recommendation is to establish a downtown revitalization entity. Whether it is affiliated with the national and state level Main Street programs or not, the entity should still follow the Main Street “Four Point” approach:

- Organization
- Design
- Economic Vitality
- Promotion

While a range of recommendations have been made, including some of the community design proposals previously illustrated, recommendations include: explore historic zoning and design guidelines for Downtown; regulate on-street parking for turnover and create more off-street parking; use the proposed new public space for, among other uses, a farmers market (rendering above); and market analysis to create an optimal tenant mix for business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts.



HOUSING

Based on the housing market analysis and other research conducted as part of this project, primary development concepts include the following:

- Downtown Mixed-Use
- Apartment Communities
- Neighborhood Infill
- Traditional Neighborhoods

It is recommended that regional and national residential developers be recruited through a range of approaches and incentives, as well as direct City participation through tools such as land banking and master planning for sites.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While specific strategies of this plan section are too numerous and detailed to address here, key focus areas of this plan section include the following:

- *Health Services & Biomedical Industries Hub* - building on the hospital and other existing resources
- *Aviation & Aerospace Industries and Associated Technology Development* - leveraging AEDC, UTSI, the municipal airport and other facilities
- *Tourism Destination* - building upon existing themes such as whisky heritage and aviation
- *Buildings & Sites* - supporting this economic development strategy
- *Economic Development Structure* - utilizing the City's existing relevant economic development entities

Economic Development Objectives

1. Become a medical services hub and a center for technology innovation, with a focus on testing and product and process development.
2. Identify and prioritize sites and buildings for rehabilitation, redevelopment and new development (e.g., older warehouses, airport business park).
3. Enable development of diverse housing to accommodate the needs of the workforce, professional recruitment, and lifestyle changes.
4. Become a tourism destination, building existing assets and through traffic.
5. Develop a unified voice in marketing our strengths.
6. Enhance our aesthetic qualities through streetscape improvements, especially in our commercial corridors and gateways.
7. Diversify our fiscal base in order to enable more opportunities for funding and staffing projects and programs that are needed in the city.

RESILIENCY

As stated in the American Planning Association's 2020 publication "Climate Change Policy Guide": "Climate change is the most consequential worldwide environmental event that human civilization has had to confront." A few examples of recommendations in this plan section include: discouraging the disturbance of floodplains; encouraging or mandating green infrastructure for stormwater; requiring street trees in the subdivision regulations; and adopting a tree preservation ordinance.

Public Opinion Survey Sample Comments

"It is sad to see the destruction of natural areas, bulldozed for ill-conceived "development," and with all the problems that follow."

"Environmental concerns (eliminate plastic bags and bottles, styrofoam). Identify chemical free-mow free zones for butterfly habitat restoration, enforcement of littering fines when observed, etc."

"Quit destroying woodland areas to build housing."

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

An effective plan implementation strategy helps the community move from vision to reality. Below is an overview of the key components of this critical plan section.

How to Apply the Plan

Primary aspects of applying the plan include the following:

Plan Implementation Committee - This group should meet periodically to review and pursue ongoing implementation, it should be supported by City staff, and it should report to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen at least annually regarding progress

Flexibility - The Comprehensive Plan should be viewed as a living document so that implementation can be adjusted for changing circumstances, although the plan's Planning Principles should always be adhered to.

Plan Updates - As new circumstances, opportunities and challenges for Tullahoma arise, the City should periodically update the plan. It should be updated at least every five years based on new circumstances and the City's implementation achievements for this plan.

Policy Revisions

Among the various recommended policy revisions are those related to zoning, development standards, and the city's Urban Growth Boundaries. This section also highlights, as a side bar, the economic costs of sprawl.

Primary Capital Projects

Examples of capital projects to implement the plan include improvements for roads, bicycling and pedestrian facilities, infrastructure (utilities, stormwater drainage, etc.), parks and recreation, and development of a new public space and additional parking Downtown.

Implementation Matrix

This matrix lists specific recommendations expressed in the plan. It provides a concise statement of each key recommendation, cites the plan pages for more detail, indicates who will be responsible, and when the recommendation should be implemented.

