



Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities

Chattanooga, TN

Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health / Fiscal Impact Analysis

Report and Suggested Next Steps

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program

To: Jenny Park, City of Chattanooga, Strategic Capital Planner
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Commission

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to our technical assistance award with the City of Chattanooga, this Memorandum constitutes Smart Growth America's report summarizing the recent *Economic and Fiscal Health* workshop, and suggesting possible [Next Steps](#) the city could take to craft a vision for the City of Chattanooga future development.

Alex Hutchinson and Chris Zimmerman, representing Smart Growth America (SGA), met with regional leaders and residents on October 11 and 12, 2016 to provide assistance via the *Economic and Fiscal Health* tool, supported by a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency. Under this funding, SGA also conducted and delivered a *Fiscal Impact Analysis* to Chattanooga. Please refer to the separate report describing the fiscal impact analysis for more information on the methodology and results.

Following a productive discussion with various stakeholders — including residents, advocates, business owners and elected officials — and the completion of the fiscal impact analysis, the following [Next Steps](#) are recommended:

- 1. Prioritize dense infill redevelopment to meet the city's expected population increase.**
- 2. Creative and expand incentive programs that encourage development of affordable housing.**

- a. Establish an affordable housing trust fund.
 - b. Continue to expand the PILOT program to fund affordable housing.
3. Leverage the new Chattanooga Land Bank Authority to maintain affordability of housing.
4. In the portions of the city where Chattanooga's new form-based code is applicable, seek to leverage it to revitalize a model corridor.
5. Work with local resources to provide new resources and infrastructure in the Glass Street neighborhood in East Chattanooga.
 - a. Participate in an existing regional business accelerator or establish one within the neighborhood.
 - b. Provide bike/pedestrian improvements on Wilcox Boulevard and Wilder Street to connect the neighborhood to the Tennessee RiverPark.
6. Update zoning code to allow more types of residential housing to be developed.
7. Work with the Highland Park neighborhood to create events and establish a place entity.

Need for assistance

Chattanooga's downtown is vibrant and prosperous, the result of remarkable and nationally recognized revitalization efforts. And the city's growth is showing no signs of losing momentum. According to the River City Company, a downtown development promotion organization, Chattanooga has \$529 million in projects under construction or in planning phases. Much of that capital will go to a host of new housing developments in a variety of formats, including 1800 apartment units, 1400 student beds, 526 hotel rooms and 71 single family homes.

These new projects will provide much-needed downtown housing for downtown's workforce, provided that workforce can afford the new housing. Only 3 percent of those who work downtown also live downtown, a proportion that lags behind Chattanooga's peer cities.

Higher price points have already emerged in the downtown housing market, generating some cost anxiety among consumers and residents in downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. There is growing concern that new development will effectively price out existing residents in nearby neighborhoods as downtown's economic growth expands. Aside from the financial impacts on lower-income households, there is concern that the growth will affect the character of downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, create more traffic congestion, and overload parking infrastructure.

Smart Growth America's (SGA) *Economic and Fiscal Health* technical assistance workshop was requested as a means to guide the city's ongoing planning toward a sustainable model. If the city can properly plan to accommodate its current and future growth, the downtown's success can be enjoyed by a more diverse number of Chattanoogaans.

SGA also performed a *Fiscal Impact Analysis* that will assist Chattanooga in taking inventory of the infrastructure cost of potential development patterns. For more information on the fiscal impact analysis, including methodology and results, please refer to the separate report prepared by SGA.

Workshop Review

The two-day workshop began with a guided tour led by Jenny Park, the City of Chattanooga's Capital Investment Planner. The tour explored Chattanooga's wealth of civic and natural resources, including Downtown; the Riverwalk Trail; the Walnut Street pedestrian bridge; the Bluff View, St. Elmo, and Highland Park neighborhoods; and the South Broad Street Corridor.

The new expansion of the Riverwalk trail, the first phase of which was among the City's first downtown revitalization initiatives, has promoted townhome development along the riverfront and trail. The trail travels along the Alstom power facility, which has reduced its workforce in recent years, and provides commute access for the remaining employees. The trail serves as a convenient and direct travel route between downtown and the neighborhoods that surround it.

Many of the neighborhoods that ring Chattanooga's urban core have footprints that are suitable for the adaptive reuse and infill redevelopment patterns that made Downtown Chattanooga a case study in successful urban revitalization. Over the last several decades, Chattanooga annexed surrounding geographies as it expanded beyond its historic city boundaries. Currently, the city is unable to provide some key community services, such as parks, requested by these neighborhoods.

Chattanooga's building-scape harkens to the city's days as a major manufacturing and industrial hub for Southeast Tennessee. The city's industrial legacy has left many brownfield sites that require remediation; our tour visited several sites that could be potential redevelopment areas. The city has already successfully redeveloped several historic industrial buildings including the Warehouse Row, a mixed-use historic rehabilitation project.

Smart Growth America met with Mayor Andy Berke to discuss the challenges facing the city and how smart growth development patterns could be a piece of the solutions to address economic growth and affordable housing.

After the city tour, the Smart Growth America team concluded day one with a public presentation to community leaders, business owners, and other citizens. The evening presentation walked the audience through the evolution of 20th century urban development, current economic and demographic trends, and a discussion of implications for mid-sized cities like Chattanooga. The audience asked a variety of questions regarding public private partnerships, affordability, changing retail trends, and other topics.

Over day two, SGA delved further into an examination of current development patterns and their economic impact. We discussed the emergence of the millennial generation as the predominant driver of economic demand, emphasizing that generation's interest in walkable, bikeable, vibrantly social cities, and presented quantitative evidence for that trend.

The workshop examined how increased demand for the presently limited housing supply of residences in walkable urban places has combined with stagnant income growth to create a national housing affordability crisis. That crisis is at hand in Chattanooga.

The workshop also featured presentations and discussions led by city officials.

Donna Williams, Administrator, Office of Economic & Community Development at City of Chattanooga, spoke about the city's growing need for policy and production solutions for adding more affordable housing in the city. Chattanooga is currently developing a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) funding mechanism that will incentivize inclusion of affordable housing units in new market rate buildings. The PILOT incentive is one of Chattanooga's few direct options for spurring affordable housing development. State law limits the city's power to require affordable housing provisions in new developments through inclusionary zoning mechanisms.

John Bridger, Executive Director of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, spoke regarding the city's Growing Forward program, a planning effort focused on creating high quality places in the built environment. That initiative is entering its second of three phases, which will produce 12 area plans, revise zoning codes, and create new plans and policies, all intended to create more opportunities for infill housing.

SGA's presentation also compared the infrastructure costs associated with suburban-style development patterns with conventional, single-use zones to the cost of compact, mixed growth and infill patterns, which take advantage of existing roads, pipes, and power lines, etc. Using these data, Chattanooga found the revenue per acre of infill, mixed-use development, to be drastically higher than single use development with substantial surface parking.

Much of what Chattanooga needs to thrive is already on hand: A willingness to take

critical self-reflection of the city's current obstacles, an openness toward exploring new ideas, and an energized core of leaders committed to progress, change and data-driven fiscal judgment.

Attending leaders from local agencies, civic organizations, businesses included:

- Jenny Park, City of Chattanooga
- John Bridger, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency
- Andrew Ray, City of Chattanooga
- Andrew Sevigny, City of Chattanooga
- Bill Connor, City of Chattanooga
- Donna Williams, City of Chattanooga
- Erik Schmidt, City of Chattanooga
- Edward LeCompte, City of Chattanooga
- Yusuf Hakeem, City of Chattanooga
- Joran Dunnavant, State of Tennessee
- Summer Kohlhorst, Center Centre
- Amy Donahue, River City Company
- Christa Mannarino, Mannarino Consulting

Representatives from EPA included:

- Rick Durbrow

The built environment and fiscal and economic health

Communities around the nation are always concerned about their fiscal and economic health. This is especially true of small towns and rural regions.

By *fiscal* health, we mean a local government's bottom line: Does the life cycle cost of a project's investment—upfront infrastructure, ongoing service provision and eventual repair and maintenance—cost more than what it produces in tax revenue?

By *economic* health, we mean the general economic well-being of the community and its region: How does new investment and development add to or detract from the creation of economic competitiveness, fiscal efficiency and sustainability, jobs, jobs access, retention of local youth, cultural identity and wealth?

In approaching these questions in Chattanooga, as in any part of the country today, it is important to bear three trends in mind:

Our nation’s demographics are changing in a way that profoundly affects the housing market in large cities and rural areas alike.

Demographic trends are moving the housing market strongly away from conventional suburban housing.¹ That presents a significant opportunity for rural communities to compete for new growth. The two biggest demographic groups in the nation—retiring baby boomers and Millennials (18-39 year-olds) — both express strong preferences for a more walkable, urban/village lifestyle.

Data tells us that ten percent of all city-dwelling Americans would prefer to live in rural locales if those places are walkable, connected to the larger region and possess a strong sense of character and place. That represents a pool of 26 million potential transplants that Chattanooga could compete to attract. Indeed, forty percent of Millennials prefer to live in rural places, provided those places have a vibrant rural fabric. The vast majority of net new households formed have no children at home, and most of them are one- and two-person households, which are much more likely to prefer a walking lifestyle.² These trends depart from those experienced in the latter half of the 20th century.

The formula for economic growth is changing.

Business growth used to be driven by large corporations that operated in a fashion that was both private in ownership structure and linear in manufacturing and production. In the past, new research breakthroughs occurred in sealed research laboratories

¹ See; “The Changing Shape of American Cities,” Luke J. Juday, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia, March 2015.

“Demographic Reversal: Cities Thrive, Suburbs Sputter,” William H. Frey, Brookings Institution, State of Metropolitan America Series, June 29, 2012.

²ⁱ “Suburbs Try to Prevent an Exodus as Young Adults Move to Cities and Stay,” Joseph Berger, New York Times, April 16, 2014 (on-line at, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/nyregion/suburbs-try-to-hold-onto-young-adults-as-exodus-to-cities-appears-to-grow.html?_r=0.)

“See ya, suburbs: More want to live in the big city,” Greg Toppo and Paul Overberg, USA TODAY, March 27, 2014.

“Why urban demographers are right about the trend toward downtowns and walkable suburbs,” Kaid Benfield, bettercities.net, February 28, 2014.

“NAR 2013 Community Preference Survey: Americans Prefer to Live in Mixed-Use, Walkable Communities,” National Association of Realtors, November 1, 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ For more information, see: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/research/the-fiscal-implications-of-development-patterns/>

^{iv} A description of the methodology and summary of the results of each case studied can be found in Government Finance Review

controlled by the companies that owned them. Manufacturing and other business processes occurred in assembly-line situations, with little interaction across or inside industries. These conditions led to communities that featured large, sealed-off campuses and tended to be linear in their arrangements.

Today, business growth is driven by collaboration among many types of entities — private companies, research institutions, universities, and others — that must interact frequently and work together creatively. This trend requires cities and communities that encourage interaction and collaboration — the opposite of the older model described above. How communities are designed directly impacts their ability to create interactive and collaborative environments.

Most significantly, the innovation economy, as it is sometimes called, depends heavily on skilled workers. The companies that are driving innovation are pursuing highly educated talent, especially among Millennials. Increasingly, companies find it necessary to locate in places that their target workforce wants to live in. Increasingly, that means walkable communities. **People on the move are looking to relocate to places with a high quality of life. In fact, they are willing to sacrifice salary for location. High quality of life is defined more and more by the character of the town center than by the size of a front yard or square footage of a home.**

Similarly, the market for retail is changing. Suburban shopping malls and retail centers that thrived for decades are struggling as a result of oversupply and a shift in shopping preferences. With online buying playing a bigger role for consumers (especially for bargain hunters), many are looking for a more authentic experience when they shop in person. Consumers are demonstrating strong preferences for shopping locally at unique establishments that offer handcrafted, regional products. They prefer this experience to be a short distance from their homes and offices and within a comfortably walkable town center. This is bringing new value to traditional walkable main streets. Chattanooga is well suited to take advantage of this shift in consumer choice.

Sprawling development patterns are making it more difficult for local governments to balance their budgets.

Development patterns that sprawl outward from town center require extensive investments in capital infrastructure and ongoing service delivery. Sprawling development requires more infrastructure to serve relatively few people and requires service providers such as firefighters and school buses to travel farther. More compact development patterns reduce both life-cycle infrastructure costs and operating costs.

A 2013 study by Smart Growth America, *Building Better Budgets: A National*

*Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development*³, concluded that, compared to conventional suburban development, smart growth patterns can achieve savings of one-third or more in upfront infrastructure cost, and 10% annually in ongoing operating expenses. Smart growth development patterns can generate up to ten times more revenue on a per-acre basis.

More recently, SGA's *Core Values: Why American Companies are Moving Downtown*⁴ examines the characteristics, motives, and preferences of companies that have either relocated, opened new offices, or expanded into walkable downtowns between 2010 and 2015. Smart Growth America partnered with global real estate advisors Cushman & Wakefield to identify nearly 500 companies that have made such a move in the past five years. Of those, we interviewed representatives from more than 40 companies to gain a better understanding of this emerging trend. These companies' new locations are in areas that are dramatically more walkable than previous sites. The average Walk Score of companies' previous locations was 52; the average Walk Score of the new locations is 88. Similarly, Transit Scores grew from an average of 52 to 79 and Bike Scores bumped from an average of 66 to 78.

This trend is visible across the country, in big cities and small ones alike and should be a factor in the economic development strategy of all communities, including Chattanooga.

Participant viewpoints

Breakout sessions gave attending participants, including elected officials, business owners, and civic leaders, the chance to develop a vision for Chattanooga's identity.

Participants focused on areas of concern in three Downtown-adjacent neighborhoods: East Chattanooga (The Glass District), South Broad Street, and Highland Park. SGA staff guided the groups through exercises that narrowed brainstormed ideas into an organized set of actionable goals. Organizing the community's aspirational vision this way created a structured, prioritized approach to tackling issues that ranged in scope and degree of achievability.

Participants expressed deep concern about the growing number of families facing displacement from subsidized affordable housing developments. While the growth of downtown is largely seen as a positive for the community, they are nevertheless concerned that most of the new development is marketed and priced for higher income households.

³vi The full report can be downloaded at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/building-better-budgets>

⁴ The full report is available at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/core-values.pdf>

Feedback from these sessions primarily reflects that challenge.

Actions for Success

- **East Chattanooga**
 - Leverage local art scene for neighborhood branding
 - Establish Business Association to improve coordination
 - Strengthen connections across neighborhood boundaries
 - Institute job training program for locally accessible jobs
- **Highland Park**
 - Special event programming tied to parks
 - A wider variety of housing options
 - More local restaurants and markets
 - Better bike and pedestrian connectivity
- **South Broad Street**
 - Strengthen transit connectivity
 - A better range of housing
 - Preserved green space
 - Attracting new development to remedy blight (adaptive reuse)

Obstacles

- **East Chattanooga, Highland Park, and South Broad Street**
 - Many vacant properties
 - Housing gap in middle-income housing -- i.e. 'the missing middle'
 - Fractured neighborhoods
 - Lack of start-up capital
 - Outdated or restrictive zoning

Opportunities

- **East Chattanooga**
 - Nearby expansion of STEM school
 - Launch Chattanooga (local incubator)
- **South Broad Street**
 - Vacant properties
- **Highland Park**
 - New development by Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) can serve as a redevelopment catalyst

Assets

- **East Chattanooga**
 - Glass Street building stock
 - Buster Brown & Harriet Tubman sites
 - Local arts community

- Access to Riverwalk
- **South Broad Street**
 - Area greenways
 - Access to Riverwalk
 - U.S. Pipe
- **Highland Park**
 - Access to Riverwalk

Recommendations

Following a discussion with various stakeholders — including residents, advocates, business owners and elected officials — the following Next Steps are recommended:

1. **Prioritize dense infill redevelopment to meet the city’s expected population increase.**

Refer to the separate report provided by Smart Growth America that details the methodology and results of the fiscal impact analysis. The analysis considered how Chattanooga will accommodate an anticipated 29,396 new residents by 2036 by examining the cost of several levels of density. It compared development at the city’s existing average density of 1.7 persons per acre with dense development at a rate of 13 people per acre (the densest development currently observed in the city) -- regardless of the location of that development.

The study found significant cost savings to the city in terms of infrastructure such as roadways, sidewalks, waterlines, and sewer lines. These savings are greatly increased if a proportion of that development occurs as infill in portions of the city that have existing infrastructure already in place.

Smart Growth America recommends that Chattanooga prioritize dense infill redevelopment to meet the city’s expected population increase to the extent practical. Context-sensitive higher density levels are not only beneficial from economic, social equity, and environmental standpoints, they also make financial sense.

The levels of density studied by Smart Growth America are easily congruent with the character of the community. Continuing to build at low-density levels would yield heavy capital costs for major infrastructure items, and these costs can be mitigated with a “smart growth” approach to new development.

2. **Creative and expand incentive programs that encourage development of affordable housing.**

a. **Establish an affordable housing trust fund.**

Affordable housing trust funds have been created in at least 47 states plus the District of Columbia. These entities create a dedicated source of

primarily public funding to preserve and expand affordable housing.

Two examples in other Tennessee cities are worth examining. The East Tennessee Foundation's Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) began in 1993 when the City of Knoxville and Knoxville's Community Development Corporation funded it.

Today, it supports efforts to increase both owner- and renter-occupied housing for low income housing by providing financial assistance (such as loans, lines of credits, and grants) to nonprofits, government agencies, and certain for-profit entities. The AHTF funds new construction as well as major rehabs. It also supports stabilization, educational, and assistance programs such as down payment assistance and homebuyer education. Projects are reviewed biannually against specific evaluation criteria prior to making funding decisions.⁵

In Nashville, the city council created the Barnes Fund for Affordable Housing that provided initial funding for projects in 2014. Administered by a private nonprofit organization, the Barnes Fund offers grants to nonprofit housing developers to fund the construction and renovation of both owner- and renter-occupied units. The program is intended to be accessed by these developers alongside other existing tax credit and funding programs for which they may be eligible.

The first round of \$2 million leveraged an additional \$2.5 million in federal and private funds to enable the construction of 40 affordable rental units. A subsequent round of funding provided \$10 million for 381 units in six rental and homebuyer projects. Additional funding remains available from the Barnes fund on an annual basis.⁶

Smart Growth America recommends that Chattanooga look to replicate the success of Knoxville and Nashville by creating its own Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Funding sources should include the city's general fund, loan repayments, and development fees.

b. Continue to expand the PILOT program to fund affordable housing.

In September 2016, Chattanooga created a new PILOT program that offers tax payment reductions to housing developers providing affordable housing. Under the program, property developers will offer 50% of their units to low income renters with a maximum of 80% area median income.

⁵ For more information, see

http://www.easttennesseefoundation.org/receive/grants/affordable_housing_trust_fund.aspx

⁶ <http://www.nashville.gov/Mayors-Office/Economic-Opportunity-and-Empowerment/Affordable-Housing/Barnes-Fund.aspx>

Smart Growth America recommends that this program continue to be expanded and to ensure that it provides quality affordable housing for low-income families.

The PILOT program offers a work around to inclusionary zoning that is currently not allowed under Tennessee law.

3. Leverage the new Chattanooga Land Bank Authority to maintain affordability of housing.

The newly formed Chattanooga Land Bank Authority offers a tool to revitalize tax foreclosed, vacant, and abandoned properties. A Tennessee Housing Development Agency Issue Brief⁷ offers several suggestions to improve the likelihood of the land bank's success:

- a. View properties owned by the land bank as assets to neighborhood revitalization rather than liabilities. This requires a consistent funding source to ensure acquired properties play a positive role in the community. A variety of public and private funding sources are available to a land bank.
- b. If possible, work with Hamilton County or other local government entities to scale the land bank at a larger geographic level, such as the county or metropolitan area in order to diversify the real estate market. The inclusion of an appointee of the mayor of Hamilton County on the land bank's board ensures the participation of other governmental bodies, even though the geographic scope will be limited to the City of Chattanooga.
- c. The Chattanooga Land Bank Authority will not have powers of eminent domain or taxation. Ensuring the land bank is connected to Chattanooga's tax collection and foreclosure system by capturing the revenue and using it to manage properties under control of the land bank would help keep the money generated locally within the community.
- d. Ensure the land bank's policies and priorities are clear regarding who may purchase properties from the land bank, when these transactions may happen, as well as the terms and pricing of the sale.
- e. Ensure the community, and particularly neighbors of land bank-owned properties, are engaged in the process.

⁷ <https://s3.amazonaws.com/thda.org/Documents/Research-Planning/Land-Bank-Issue-Brief.pdf>

Chattanooga's land bank provides an opportunity for the community to guide the redevelopment of tax foreclosed, vacant, and abandoned properties. By putting liens on properties sold by the land bank to determine who can purchase them, Chattanooga can allow these parcels to remain affordable. The anticipated use of the property sold through the land bank is as important as its sale price in helping the community redevelop in a sustainable way.

Finally, Smart Growth America recommends creating a website for the Chattanooga Land Bank Authority to provide more information to the public regarding this program.⁸

4. In the portions of the city where Chattanooga's new form-based code is applicable, seek to leverage it to revitalize a model corridor.

Whereas conventional zoning focuses on segregation of land uses and controlling development intensity through various parameters, form-based codes focus on physical form. In both words and visuals, form-based codes address the relationship between buildings and public spaces as well as buildings to one another. A community plan regulates the form and scape of form-based code development, including streets and blocks.⁹

Chattanooga's city council unanimously adopted a form-based code for the North Shore, Riverfront, City Center, ML King, and Southside neighborhoods in 2016. The recent passage of this new development mechanism offers a perfect opportunity to create a model corridor in the city.

Arlington County, Virginia utilized form-based codes for the successful revitalization of its Columbia Pike corridor. The residents and business owners in this area decided on primarily mid-rise, mixed-use buildings on the corridor and lower buildings on surrounding roadways. The county board adopted two form-based codes for commercial centers and for multi-family residential areas. In the Columbia Pike corridor, the form-based codes define and illustrate the following requirements:

- Building heights
- Building and parking placement
- Historic facades
- Windows, balconies, and other architectural features
- Standards for sidewalks, streetscape, parking, and other public features

⁸ As an example, see the Shelby County land bank website in Memphis:
<https://landbank.shelbycountyttn.gov/>

⁹ For more information about form-based codes, refer to <http://formbasedcodes.org/>

Although optional in Arlington, the form-based codes generally allow developers to pursue more density as well as an opportunity to avoid existing regulations as well as the site plan review process, which may be expensive. There are financial incentives for the developers and an approval process that is faster and more efficient.

Since 2004, Columbia Pike's form-based code has resulted in 3,000 new residential units (including 700 units affordable to those making up to 60% of AMI), over 300,000 square feet of commercial space, as well as a new community center, grocery stores, and other public spaces.¹⁰

5. Work with local resources to provide new resources and infrastructure in the Glass Street neighborhood in East Chattanooga.

a. Participate in an existing regional business accelerator or establish one within the neighborhood.

Glass Street is beginning to undergo a transformation. Local residents are working to bring new businesses into the neighborhood and reduce crime. Organizations such as the Glass Street Collective,¹¹ founded in 2012, are gathering people together to help revitalize the neighborhood by creating events, public art, partnerships, and finding other new uses for public space.

A local accelerator offers another tool for the neighborhood by focusing on incubating new businesses. Company Lab (CO.LAB)¹² is an example of a regional accelerator already in place in southeast Tennessee. CO.LAB, based in Chattanooga's Innovation District, works with companies and entrepreneurs of all sizes. The residents of the Glass Street neighborhood might partner with this existing organization to provide new business opportunities. Or they may wish to establish their own local accelerator within the neighborhood.

Business owners in the Glass District should also consider participating in LAUNCH Chattanooga's 10-week Business Entrepreneurship Academy.¹³ This program helps individuals explore and develop their business idea to help ensure its success.

¹⁰ <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/neighborhoods/columbia-pike-form-based-codes/>

¹¹ <http://www.glasshousecollective.org/>

¹² <http://launchtn.org/impact/co-lab/>

¹³ <http://www.launchchattanooga.org/business>

b. Provide bike/pedestrian improvements on Wilcox Boulevard and Wilder Street to connect the neighborhood to the Tennessee RiverPark.

The Tennessee RiverPark presently runs 13 miles from the Chickamauga Dam to downtown Chattanooga and beyond. The Riverwalk trail located in the park offers recreational and commuting options for bicyclists and pedestrians, including those in Glass Street and other Chattanooga neighborhoods. The Riverwalk trail could also play an idea role in bringing new people into the neighborhood -- both as patrons of local businesses and restaurants as well as new residents.

The RiverPark is a neighborhood asset. Constructing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure linking Glass Street and its redeveloping commercial area to downtown will promote new traffic into the neighborhood. Other Chattanooga neighborhoods located along the RiverPark, including South Broad Street and Highland Park, would benefit from similar infrastructure connecting them to the trail and downtown Chattanooga.

6. Update zoning code to allow more types of residential housing to be developed.

In East Chattanooga and other parts of the city, outdated or restrictive zoning limits the type of housing developments that can be built, resulting in a mismatch between the housing stock and potential residents. Updating Chattanooga's residential zoning code would provide opportunities to promote affordable housing and infill developments. Participants in the workshop noted that additional housing types for the "missing middle" -- middle income households -- need to be developed. This includes allowing increased density options for new housing and offering the ability to create accessory dwelling units, as well as the ability to pursue other affordable housing options.

7. Work with the Highland Park neighborhood to create events and establish a place entity.

Chattanooga's Highland Park neighborhood, with 900 homes and 3 parks, has been recognized nationally for its social revitalization efforts and it has been featured in several national publications. The neighborhood has several key assets:

- Its location just a few miles east of downtown
- A strong neighborhood association
- A grid street layout

- Diverse population
- Historic homes

Workshop participants noted a need for Highland Park to continue to develop its sense of place. Specifically, the neighborhood needs to identify key locations for commercial and mixed use developments.

There is also a need for an entity to assume responsibility for everyday long-term maintenance and to implement the community's vision for the neighborhood. This entity might be housed within the city government or through the existing Highland Park Neighborhood Association.

This entity should also help establish and market a neighborhood brand, perhaps centered on the McCallie Walls Murals Project or the public art project in Tatum Park. The neighborhood brand could also include a series of events centered on the three parks.

Other East Chattanooga neighborhoods could also benefit from their own "brand" celebrating and promoting their unique cultural, natural, and other amenities.

