

STRENGTHS

“We have seen an enormous amount of growth and prosperity in the southeast portion of the metropolitan area. Explain what has caused this area to be successful. What are its strengths?”

 <p>LAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good availability of flat, buildable and cheap land • Quality land use planning and few physical barriers to development have allowed for rapid residential growth and urban development 	 <p>COMMERCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large companies such as Nissan North America, Amazon, Bridgestone and others in the Cool Springs area • Diversified economy with job growth • Strong economic development 	 <p>LIFESTYLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower cost of living than some U.S. cities, in part due to low taxes (no state income tax) • Higher than average per capita income • Area boasts of a strong historic heritage and appealing traditional communities and has good proximity to Nashville
 <p>EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good K-12 schools and good post-secondary education • Quality of programs at MTSU, Bridgestone’s “Robotics in Schools” program and flight schools at local airports 	 <p>RECREATION/NATURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many water/natural assets including Percy Priest Lake • Good cycling and running opportunities in area • Many green spaces and good parks/trail systems (some National Parks and caves) 	 <p>WORKFORCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse workforce that is easily trainable, proactive and willing to work hard • No unions – cheap labor • Many MTSU alumni stay in the community
 <p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access to utilities, as well as a CSX Railroad and two airports (Nashville and Smyrna) • Good access to the interstate system, including new SR 840 • Less traffic congestion than other areas • Smart Growth approaches – EV charging stations and LEED buildings) 	 <p>COMMUNITY AMENITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located between Nashville and Chattanooga • Good access to shopping, health care facilities, tourist venues and the new Nashville Convention Center • Variety of home types with range of prices 	 <p>GOVERNMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, well-managed TDOT • Good regional cooperation among transit groups, Chambers of Commerce, municipalities and other groups • Strong cooperation between local and state leaders and between mayors
 <p>GENERAL FINDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seemed to be agreement with the statements made about the important strengths with the exception of the workforce in the Southeast area. There seems to be differences of opinion on the extent to which there are sufficiently trained and motivated workers for jobs located in the study area. 		

FUTURE CHALLENGES

“What challenges will present themselves that might threaten this continued prosperity?”

 <p>LAND</p>	 <p>COMMERCE</p>	 <p>LIFESTYLES</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of land available for low density development but not enough dollars to invest in growth • Rapid growth in the area has been very difficult to prepare for and the densities are not high enough to reduce the burden on existing infrastructure and the transportation system • Future growth should be planned better, especially the transition from rural to urban in order to retain community character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid economic growth • Limited water supply for residential and industrial expansion will make it difficult to attract new business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be difficult to sustain region's high quality lifestyle with the immense population growth • Culture is very auto-dependent; congestion is becoming a problem and commuting will be more expensive • Citizens are not getting involved in planning and the region is becoming more diverse
 <p>EDUCATION</p>	 <p>RECREATION/NATURE</p>	 <p>WORKFORCE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region's schools are poorly sited • K-12 education in Davidson County still needs to be improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality regulations and geology (bedrock) of area may present a challenge to growth • Streams - lack of protective practices have led to poor water quality in LaVergne and Smyrna; silt issues; endangered species in Stones River and Mill Creek • Will be hard to meet needs of a growing population with no waste management plan in place and without natural resources being compromised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce is not diversified or educated enough— need more advanced manufacturing schools and technical centers • There are few “creative employment” opportunities
 <p>ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	 <p>COMMUNITY AMENITIES</p>	 <p>GOVERNMENT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth can outpace road capacity and other infrastructure; lack of east/west and regional connections • Lack of funding for road infrastructure; available funding is being spent only on operations and maintenance • Traffic congestion will increase along I-24, I-65 and Murfreesboro Road; HOV lanes are not enforced • Freight traffic will double by 2040; lack of truck parking; heavy truck traffic in neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rates of foreclosures have affected the housing stock • Lack of diversity in housing to meet needs of young and elderly across all income groups; housing is not located with convenient access to transit • No mixed-use development or employment centers in Antioch – people have to commute long distances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide variation in quality of local land use planning and policies and there is a wide range of plan update cycles • Lack of federal funds forces local governments to raise taxes; still not enough tax revenue • Strong views on property rights and anti-tax mentality makes implementation of bus rapid transit difficult • Difficult to balance adequate maintenance of infrastructure and services and keep service rates reasonable
 <p>BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	 <p>TRANSIT</p>	 <p>OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete bicycle and pedestrian network, especially in rural areas and between existing and new neighborhoods • Lack of a regional Complete Streets program; lack of bike lanes • Connecting greenways in the area will be difficult due to state parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transit options, including the lack of bus rapid transit service between Nashville and Murfreesboro • Lack of enough funding for transit; must overcome the cultural resistance to fund transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rutherford and Williamson Counties have limited utility and water service • Lack of stormwater regulations for development and money for strategic utility infrastructure • Lack of passenger rail service • Need better access to broadband



GENERAL FINDING

- While the need for new infrastructure was recognized (transit, bike paths, sidewalks, freight rail service), the concern about the ability of the Southeast area to raise sufficient funding for these systems was very evident.
- Most concerns relate to the competing needs between environmental protection and land development and infrastructure needs.

EMERGING ISSUES

“What are some emerging issues in the southeast area that might be unique from the rest of the state or metropolitan area?”

 <p>LAND</p>	 <p>COMMERCE</p>	 <p>LIFESTYLES</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More commercial and industrial space is needed for new companies to relocate to the area • Land use conflicts: industrial land has been located next to residential areas • Need to utilize urban growth boundaries and discourage sprawl • Need to maintaining community character while accommodating new growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some interchange areas are suffering due to diverted traffic using the new SR 840 • Need more white collar and light industrial jobs near Murfreesboro • Region should try to attract higher wage jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges due to growth – more crime, homelessness, and children in need of education • People need to be more accepting of a diverse population; cultural friction related to growth between younger, progressive residents and older citizens that like the status quo
 <p>EDUCATION</p>	 <p>RECREATION/NATURE</p>	 <p>WORKFORCE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSU is seeing rapid growth and is drawing enrollment from areas well outside Murfreesboro; need to expand campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge in preserving rural areas and green space • Costs are rising for environmental mitigation, clean water and air quality issues • Large amount of farmland and development pressures are placing strains on the water system (especially Percy Priest Lake) • Climate change and increase in frequent of severe weather is negatively impacting our natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce challenges include finding qualified workers and those with hard work ethics
 <p>ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	 <p>COMMUNITY AMENITIES</p>	 <p>GOVERNMENT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion is increasing • Gas tax revenue will drop due to fuel efficient cars • How to provide new infrastructure while maintaining the existing systems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to provide access to goods, services and amenities for each community • People want amenities and services of a nice city, but they do not want to pay for them through taxes • A competition between local economies and community amenities persists across jurisdictional and political boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property rights vs. annexation and taking land for public infrastructure • Cultural clashes between existing residents vs. newcomers • Political climate of lower taxes and smaller government will pose challenges • Challenge of having peer-to-peer conversations among leaders and officials
 <p>BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	 <p>TRANSIT</p>	 <p>OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure is not in place to encourage healthy lifestyle – need more sidewalks, bikeways and greenways • Need better planning for multimodal transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for livability has increased the demand for transit – new residents have higher expectations for transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of water and sewer infrastructure, and the provision of natural gas, electricity, broadband utilities will be a challenge • Increased demand for water resources, especially in Rutherford County • Better waste management will be a need and a challenge • Airports and rail assets should be better leveraged



GENERAL FINDING

- The majority of the unique features identified by the participants related to infrastructure systems and government.
- The need to expand access to critical infrastructure systems (i.e. transportation, water and sewer, broadband, electricity, natural gas, etc.) was clear.
- In the arena of government, unique challenges related to the need for increased intergovernmental cooperation, the current anti-tax sentiment working in opposition to pay for needed infrastructure investments, and the need for better coordinated planning decisions.

PLACES TO PROTECT AND GROW



PLACES TO PROTECT

Top 10 places that were identified in the study area that should be “saved” or “preserved” from new development or redevelopment.

1. Downtown Murfreesboro, for its character and cultural significance.
2. Remaining agricultural and rural land—“bank land for tomorrow.”
3. Historic places, such as Stones River Battlefield and adjacent areas.
4. The village-type atmosphere of Eagleville and its surrounding rural area.
5. Old Town Smyrna and historic Nolensville.
6. Water resources, including headwaters. These include Percy Priest Lake, Hamilton Creek, Stones River and nearby creeks, Harpeth River, and the Duck River Divide.
7. The scenic, rolling hill topography of Rutherford County, particularly in eastern Rutherford County.
8. The SR 840 intersections (SR 840/SR 109, SR 840/I-40, and SR 840/I-65) from residential growth pressure, and protect the rural character.
9. Unique identities of “communities of interest” such as Christiana, Blackman, and Rockvale.
10. Greenways, as well as areas near water (for recreational opportunities).



PLACES TO GROW

Top 10 places that were identified in the study area where new growth and development should occur, including places that should be redeveloped, expanded or improved.

1. Opportunity for industrial and commercial growth along SR 840, Joe B. Jackson Parkway, Highway 96 between Franklin and Murfreesboro, Veterans Parkway, Highway 99 and Murfreesboro Road
2. Expansion of the MTSU campus - add more housing and higher density development in the area.
3. In Nashville, LaVergne, Smyrna, Franklin, and Murfreesboro, look for areas to build vertically and increase density of development.
4. More industrial employment centers around the interchanges, especially at the I-40/SR 840 interchange and Almadale Road exit off of SR 840.
5. Opportunity for new growth in Antioch, Eagleville, LaVergne and Smyrna.
6. Antioch needs to be redeveloped/revitalized, and the around Hickory Hollow Mall could support a mix of commercial uses and housing.
7. Develop an employment center east of the Nashville airport.
8. Expand the Smyrna Airport and the grow the area around it.
9. Build new intermodal yards or expand the intermodal yards at I-24 and SR 840; Radnor Yard is approaching capacity.
10. Percy Priest Lake is underutilized for recreation; add other recreational activities in the area.



NEW TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Top 15 new transportation corridors or transportation improvements that were identified as needed to access and serve either existing or new development.

1. Build an alternate direct route between Rutherford and Williamson Counties (as an alternative to Highway 96).
2. Add rapid transit along I-24 between Murfreesboro and Nashville, and include service to the Nashville airport.
3. Build an east-west connector between Nolensville and Franklin and Brentwood.
4. Add rapid transit service along US 70 between Murfreesboro and Nashville
5. Develop a better roadway network in Eagleville.
6. Widen Highway 96 between Franklin and Murfreesboro.
7. Alleviate congestion on I-24 in Nashville, especially around the Bell Road/Hickory Hollow area – additional lanes may be needed.
8. Add a bypass around Murfreesboro, and integrate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.
9. Build more greenways and trails between Rutherford County and Davidson County – make connections.
10. Extend the Music City Bikeway into other counties.
11. Add greenway connections and trailheads around downtown Murfreesboro, from MTSU to Stones River.
12. Build more bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities in the Antioch area.
13. Establish greenway connections between neighboring communities, such as Murfreesboro, Smyrna, and LaVergne.
14. Establish more transit between Smyrna, LaVergne and Murfreesboro to provide better access to jobs and add transit circulators in LaVergne and Smyrna.
15. Construct a greenway around Percy Priest Lake.