

historic architecture TRANSPORTATION ECONOMIC VITALITY efficient movement RURAL CHARACTER DESTINATIONS PLANNING GOALS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT conservation JOBS STRATEGIES

MPO

The Nashville Area MPO provides leadership to the region in the planning, funding, and development of a multi-modal transportation system to promote economic prosperity, while encouraging sustainable growth and development practices to protect and preserve valuable community assets and natural resources. The MPO is a partnership among federal and state agencies and local governments and is governed by a Board comprised of city and county mayors representing more than 1.5 million people throughout Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, Wilson and parts of Maury and Robertson counties. The MPO manages the region's transportation plan and work program, and contributes to ongoing conversations about land use, economic development, health, and environment.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

With more than 1.7 million residents, the area has emerged as one of the most land-extensive metropolitan regions in the country. Over the last decade, the region has experienced a significant expansion of a sprawling development pattern which has threatened the region's rural countryside and has placed increased pressure on the area's fiscal capacity to keep up with growing demands for new infrastructure and community services.

STUDY AREA

Robertson, Sumner, and Wilson counties comprise the Tri-County area.

The study area lies within the Cumberland Region that, for more than a decade, has generally been defined by ten counties that share strong economic and political ties: Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson. These ten counties are the focus of several regional organizations dedicated to planning for the future livability and economic vitality of the region. The three counties in our study area are a subarea of the planning area served by the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Covering almost 1,600 square miles, it includes 19 municipalities as well as several important natural and man-made features. The Old Hickory Reservoir lies along the Sumner/Wilson County line. The Cedars of Lebanon State Park and Nashville Superspeedway are located in southern Wilson County. Interstate highways 24, 40, and 65 provide direct access from the three counties into the heart of Nashville and its central business district.



GOALS

The goals provide a basis for a quantitative and qualitative evaluation that identifies gaps and informs decisions about a direction forward.

- > Promote historical + cultural resource conservation
- > Support agriculture
- > Preserve rural character
- > Enhance economic growth and opportunities
- > Strengthen and enhance existing urban centers
- > Protect the most critical natural resources
- > Provide for efficient & diverse movement of persons, goods and services
- > Ensure future growth occurs with community infrastructure and services needed to support growth and development
- > Provide a wide range of housing types and communities
- > Allow new types of development while retaining the established character of existing development



PLANNING PROCESS

The Tri-County Transportation & Land Use Study

is a first of its kind in the Nashville region to bring local governments, citizens, and businesses together across jurisdictional boundaries to discuss issues pertaining to future population growth and development. Through this process, local leaders in the three counties came together to talk about the impacts of future growth, particularly on regional mobility, economic prosperity and the environment as the communities grow closer together.

This study came about after the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) put the proposed northern segment of the State Route 840 "beltway" on hold indefinitely in 2004. The primary purpose of the effort was to generate ideas for the regional transportation plan, the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, to be prepared by the MPO in a subsequent process. The ideas were predominantly focused on future land use, as an efficient transportation network is one that effectively supports the established and desired development patterns.

The products of the process, including the multi-jurisdictional land use concept, will help the MPO identify needs and prioritize related transportation projects, particularly those that are regionally beneficial, to obtain necessary state and federal funding.

SPOTLIGHT ON IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to informing several other planning initiatives (i.e., 2035 Comprehensive Plan: Sumner County's Blueprint to the Future), the Tri-County Transportation & Land Use Study sets forth implementation strategies that have led to actions that support the MPO's three major transportation policy initiatives:

Create a Bold, New Vision for Mass Transit

Plan Recommendation: Support the Regional Transit Vision.

Implementation Strategies: Transit System Plans; Small Area Plans; Transit Station Area Plans; Transit-Oriented Development Districts; Transit Station Area Design Guidelines; Form- or Context-based Codes.

Early Action Step: The Northeast Corridor Mobility Study. This study is examining potential transportation solutions—passenger rail, bus rapid transit, roadway improvements, etc.—for the 30-mile corridor between downtown Nashville and Gallatin, TN.

Support Active Transportation and the Development of Walkable Communities

Plan Recommendation: Maintain and Build Regional Bike/Pedestrian Framework.

Implementation Strategies: Community Transportation, Collector Street, Bicycle/Pedestrian, and Greenway Plans; Complete Streets; Street Classification System; TN Enhancement Grants.

Early Action Step: Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Study. In 2009, the MPO conducted a study to establish a strategic vision for improving walking/bicycling opportunities in the region. In January 2012, the MPO announced \$2.5M in funding for active transportation projects identified.

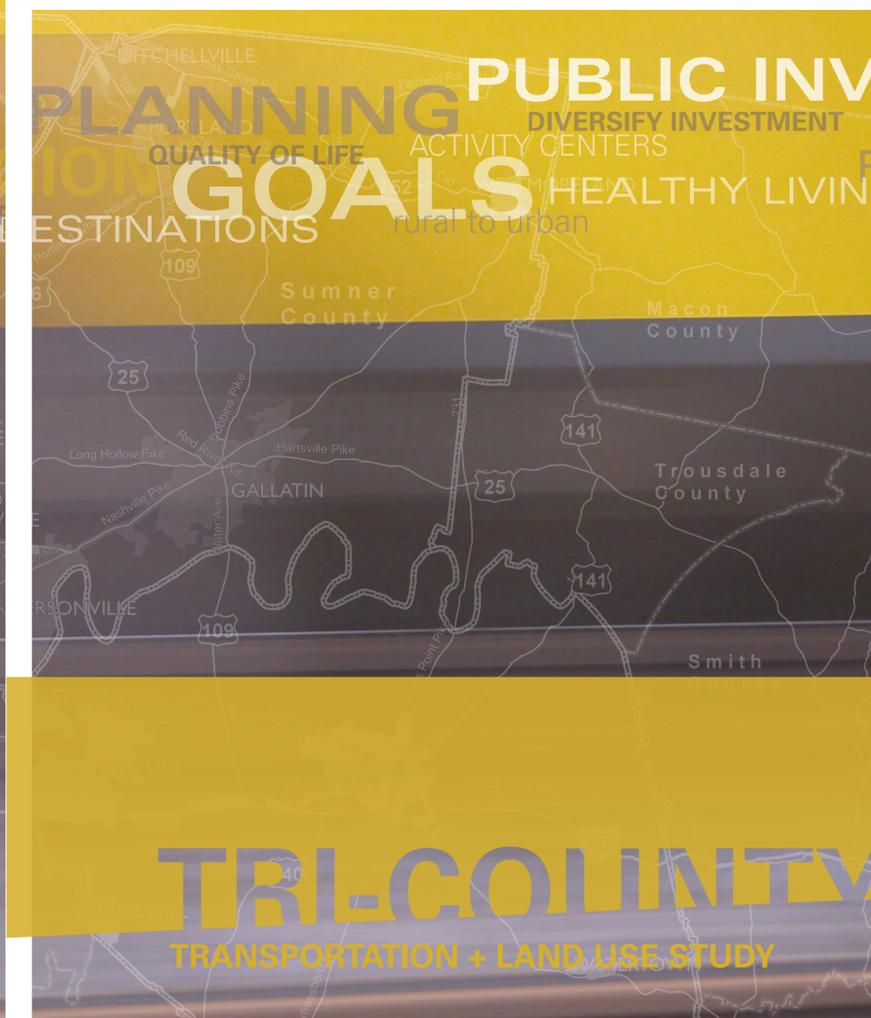
Preserve and Enhance Strategic Roadway Corridors

Plan Recommendation: Employ access management techniques [to preserve regional mobility].

Implementation Strategies: Corridor Studies; Roadway Design Standards; Driveway Policies; Site Design Standards; Corridor Overlay Districts; Traffic Impact Analyses; Conservation Development; Conservation Easements; Transfer of Development Rights.

Early Action Step: State Route 109 Access Management Study. TDOT initiated a study of the SR 109 corridor to preserve the capacity of this important north-south route as development along the segment between I-40 and I-65 continues. It also serves as an early step in the implementation of a proposed corridor management agreement among affected stakeholders.

For a link to the complete plan please visit [www.nashvillempo.org](http://www.nashvillempo.org).



# CHARACTER AREAS

Each Character Area is applied to a geographic area with similar regulations for land development intensity, pattern, and form.

Due to the size and diversity of the Tri-County area, local land use policies are aggregated into Character Areas. As each regional growth scenario was developed, this common development pattern "language" facilitated the comparison of similar land use categories across multiple jurisdictions.



## 1 Conservation

Areas recognized for preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Includes state parks & large dedicated open spaces.

## 2 Rural

Areas recognized as those having significant value for continued agricultural purposes and rural way of life in the future.

## 3 Suburban

Areas where a variety of land uses occur at low densities, generally separated across the landscape by specific use type. Areas that extend beyond current city limits to Urban Growth Boundary. Automobile-oriented, includes highway commercial areas found along major roadway corridors and residential subdivisions.

## 4 General Urban

Areas where a variety of land uses occur at medium to high densities, having a well-connected pattern within the landscape. Areas generally within current city limits of county seats. Generally comprised of established residential neighborhoods found near historic core areas.

## 5 Traditional Town Centers

Areas with a variety of land uses, typically at the highest densities in region. Generally found in historic established core areas such as the county seats. Pedestrian oriented, due to these areas being planned prior to euclidean zoning (separates land uses) and automobile dominance in the landscape (typically pre-1940s).

## 6 Village Centers

Smaller town, hamlet, or village centers in rural or suburban setting. Grid street system (not necessary). Possible mixed-use neighborhoods, commercial concentration.

## 7 Employment Centers

High concentration of light industrial, back-office, or industrial employment.

## 8 Activity Centers

Large-scale developments that are regional destinations with a mix of office, retail and residential land uses.

## 9 Transit Oriented Development Center

District supporting a mix of land uses, at higher densities, located in close proximity to an existing or planned mass transit station.



Character Area: Transit Oriented Development Center



Character Area: Suburban



Character Area: Traditional Town Center



Character Area: Village Center

# DEVELOPMENT FORM FOCUS AREAS

These Development Form Focus Areas depict how proposed land use policies manifested in the built environment in accordance with the parameters of a given character area and with successfully integrated transportation facilities. Each represents one character area flanking a "strategic corridor" defined during the planning process. The hypothetical results are four multi-modal, mixed-use communities with transportation and land use functioning symbiotically through sound urban design.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## General Transportation

To facilitate regional mobility and support the development pattern depicted in the Preferred Growth Scenario, adopt a common set of transportation policies and pursue specific improvements to the network, particularly those that cross jurisdictional boundaries and serve multiple regional objectives.

## Regional Transportation Planning

- Refine MPO Project Scoring System (ongoing)
- Establish "Fix It First" Policy (current)
- Implement Context-Sensitive Solutions (current)
- Develop Thoroughfare Design Guidelines (proposed)
- Initiate Complete Streets (current)
- Maintain and Build Regional Bike/Ped Framework (ongoing)
- Prepare Tri-County Collector Street Plan (proposed)
- Update the Official Functional Classification of Tri-County Streets (proposed)
- Support the Regional Transit Vision (ongoing)
- Evaluate Transit Alternatives to Connect TOD Centers (ongoing)
- Create a Template for Local Transportation Plans (proposed)

## Local Transportation Planning

- Make Corridor Planning Standard Operating Procedure (proposed)
- Manage Parking Supply (proposed)
- Employ Access Management Techniques (ongoing)

## General Land Use

Direct growth in a manner that will achieve the regional goals pertaining to development and conservation. Adopt a common set of land use policies aimed at efficient use of resources, especially with respect to infrastructure and the protection of valuable natural resources, as reflected in the Preferred Growth Strategy. In it, eighty percent of growth projected for Robertson, Sumner, and Wilson counties by 2035 will occur in radial and linear preferred growth areas, and the remainder would occur outside these designated areas. Compared with the "Business-as-Usual" Scenario, this alternative would reduce demand for urban public services in areas currently unserved and facilitate conservation of agricultural lands and open spaces.

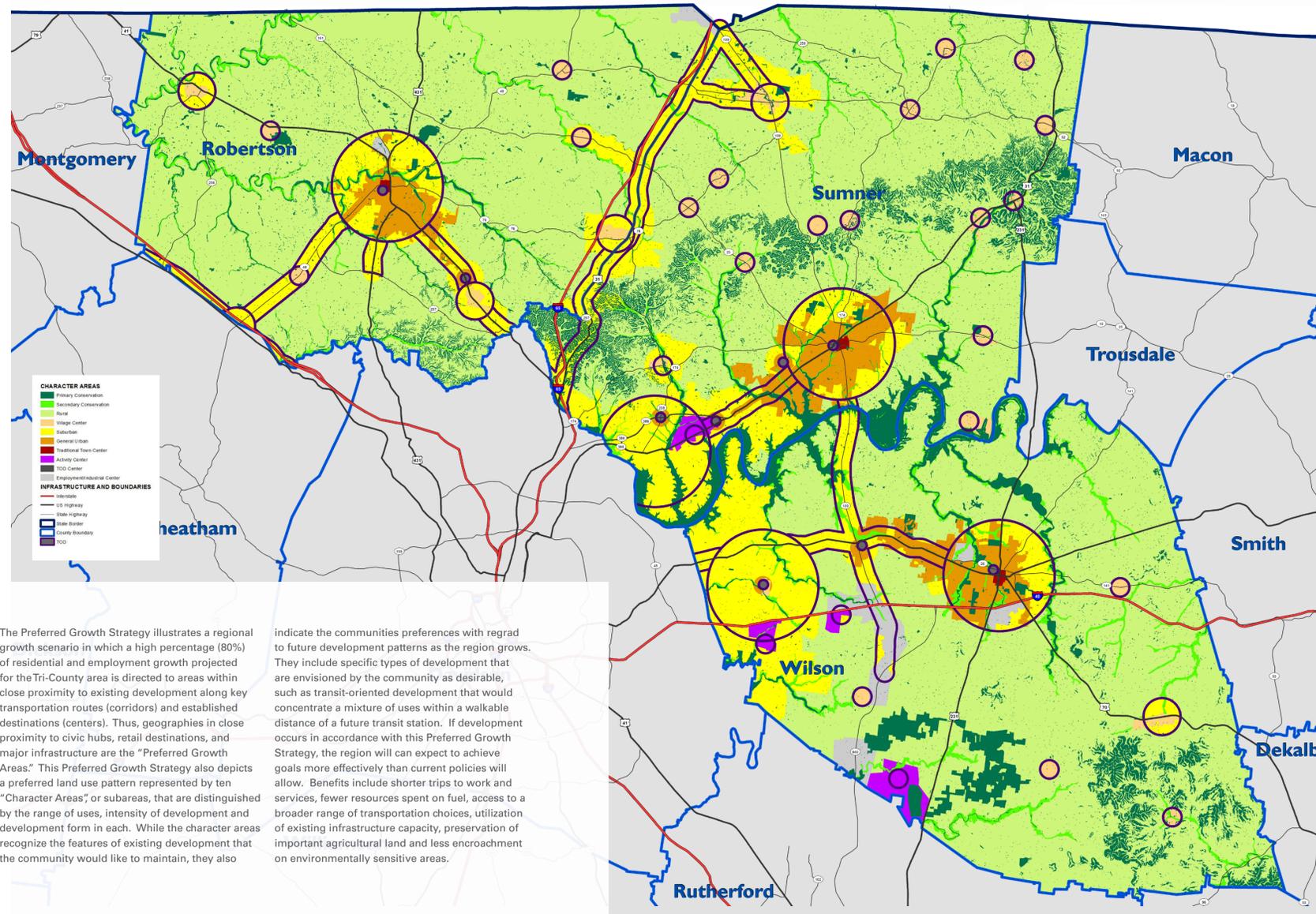
## Regional Land Use Planning

- Form Regional Land Use Coordination Committees (proposed)
- Create a Tri-County Rural Resource Guide (proposed)

## Local Land Use Planning

- Utilize the Preferred Growth Strategy as a Resource for Countywide and Municipal Plans (proposed)
- Establish Redevelopment Districts in "Centers" and Declining "General Urban" Neighborhoods (proposed)
- Maintain Rural Character (ongoing)
- Streamline Development Review (proposed)
- Establish Concurrence Requirements (proposed)
- Scale Development Assessment Fees by Location (proposed)
- Employ Asset Management for Water and Sewer Systems (proposed)
- Guide Development of Corridors to Achieve Mobility Goals (proposed)

# PREFERRED GROWTH STRATEGY



The Preferred Growth Strategy illustrates a regional growth scenario in which a high percentage (80%) of residential and employment growth projected for the Tri-County area is directed to areas within close proximity to existing development along key transportation routes (corridors) and established destinations (centers). Thus, geographies in close proximity to civic hubs, retail destinations, and major infrastructure are the "Preferred Growth Areas." This Preferred Growth Strategy also depicts a preferred land use pattern represented by ten "Character Areas," or subareas, that are distinguished by the range of uses, intensity of development and development form in each. While the character areas recognize the features of existing development that the community would like to maintain, they also

indicate the communities preferences with regard to future development patterns as the region grows. They include specific types of development that are envisioned by the community as desirable, such as transit-oriented development that would concentrate a mixture of uses within a walkable distance of a future transit station. If development occurs in accordance with this Preferred Growth Strategy, the region will be able to achieve goals more effectively than current policies will allow. Benefits include shorter trips to work and services, fewer resources spent on fuel, access to a broader range of transportation choices, utilization of existing infrastructure capacity, preservation of important agricultural land and less encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas.