



Knoxville • Knox County
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2014-15



PLANNING COMMISSIONERS



REBECCA LONGMIRE, Chair
County
2006-2018



BART CAREY, Vice Chair
City
2007-2015



HERB ANDERS
County
2012-2016



ART CLANCY, III
County
2012-2016



LAURA COLE
County
2007-2018



ELIZABETH EASON
City
2013-2017



CONRAD "MAC" GOODWIN
City
2013-2017



LEN JOHNSON
County
2012-2016



MICHAEL KANE
City
2007-2015



CHARLES LOMAX
City
2012-2016



JEFFREY ROTH
County
2011-2015



JACK SHARP
City
2003-2015



SCOTT SMITH
County
2014-2018



JANICE TOCHER
City
2012-2016



JIM WAKEFIELD
County
2014-2018
(resigned 2015)

The Planning Commission is an advisory board comprised of 15 citizens—seven appointed by the City Mayor and eight appointed by the County Mayor. These volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and represent a broad spectrum of community interests and concerns. They serve staggered four-year terms without compensation and may be re-appointed. The Commission meets the second Thursday of every month.

Planning Commission Staff

Liz Albertson	Senior Planner
Jeff Archer, AICP	Principal Planner
Tarren Barrett	Transportation Engineer
Bryan Berry	Research Associate II
Tom Brechko, AICP	Principal Planner
Amy Brooks, AICP	Principal Planner
Michael Brusseau, AICP	Senior Planner
Doug Burton	Principal Planner
Dori Caron	Administrative Assistant II
Michael Conger, PE	Senior Transportation Engineer
Emily Dills	Planning Technician II
Terry Gilhula, PhD	Information and Research Manager
Kaye Graybeal, AICP	Historic Preservation Planner
Gerald Green, AICP	Executive Director
Donna Hill	GIS Specialist
Dan Kelly	Development Services Manager
Tim Kuhn	GIS Manager
Betty Jo Mahan	Administrative Assistant II
Sara Martin, AIA	Smart Trips Outreach Coordinator
Sherry Michienzi	Receptionist
Debbie Mitchell	Administrative Assistant I
Marc Payne	Planning Technician I
James Reed	GIS Operator
Mike Reynolds, AICP	Senior Planner
Nick Schoenborn	GIS Analyst I
Kelley Segars	Principal Planner
Susan Taylor	Administrative Assistant II - Finance
Christi Wampler	Smart Trips Program Coordinator
Jo Ella Washburn	Graphic Designer
Jeff Welch, AICP	Transportation Planning Manager/ TPO Director
Ellen Zavisca, PTP	Senior Planner
Alex Zendel	GIS Analyst II

Farewell to MPC Staff Who Left During the Year

Mark Donaldson	Executive Director
Dave Hill	Deputy Director/ Comprehensive Planning Manager
Ewing (Buz) Johnson, AICP	Deputy Director
Sarah Powell	Webmaster/Senior Graphic Designer

Keynotes from the Executive Director



It's often said that history repeats itself – in my case, an encore involves a return to the city I last called home in 1982.

The community has a decidedly quieter atmosphere, only because the thousands of visitors from near and far moved on with the wrap of the World's Fair. But excitement and

vibrancy are still here, with a downtown core that supports 24-7 living – an incredible feat that many cities across the country still struggle to achieve; much larger, more diverse populations share the area; and, an incredible fabric of preserved historic homes, buildings, and landmarks lends cultural identity.

Call it “growth,” or “progress,” or, simply, “change;” Knoxville is a different place than it was 33 years ago. It was a great place to live then, and it's even better now – but the community faces challenges. Our ever-growing population has put unmet demands on the public school system, road capacities, and park facilities. Expansive suburbs reach out to the corners of the county with few connections. And, commercial development thrives in some corridors, while others struggle to remain viable.

We've identified a few priorities for MPC as an agency for the next year or so, and even longer. Short-term, we need to take a fresh look at our development regulations, bringing our guiding principles into the 21st century to encourage the types of development that we hear about during sector plan meetings, community forums, and sessions with developers. We can enhance communications as well, working to integrate more with citizen groups, builders, elected officials, and city and county departments, and demonstrate what MPC does to add value to the community.

Longer term, MPC needs to promote and provide tools for neighborhood connectivity and services in recently developed areas. Also, the agency can expand associations with outside groups, like Legacy Parks, Tennessee Department of Transportation, University of Tennessee, and others – we will hear new ideas about community-building, and we can tackle joint projects with these partners.

Moving MPC forward begins with the efforts of the very talented agency staff. Since joining MPC this summer, I've met with each member to get to know them and to hear what they've been working on. Everyone has provided a wonderful first impression, and it is my honor to share their accomplishments of this past year on the pages that follow.

Looking forward to a second chapter of living and working in this great community,

Gerald Green, AICP
Executive Director

MPC Staff Accolades

Liz Albertson, Senior Planner in MPC's Comprehensive Planning unit, submitted a grant request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and was awarded \$25,000 to study the feasibility of a food hub for the Knoxville region. USDA's Local Foods Promotion Program invests millions of dollars annually in marketing and promotion activities for local food enterprises. MPC's study will assess our region's readiness for a centrally located facility for collection, distribution, and marketing of locally produced food.

Mike Conger, MPC's Senior Transportation Engineer, was elected president of the Tennessee Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (TSITE) for 2015. TSITE is an organization of 300 transportation professionals, including engineers, planners, and educators. Mike previously served as TSITE secretary/treasurer in 2013 and vice president in 2014.



Left to right: Major David Barrett, Jeff Welch, Captain Tarren Barrett, Mike Conger, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Mul Wyman

Mike Conger also received special honor from the National Guard this year. During a joint Metropolitan Planning Commission and Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization meeting in April, Mike was presented the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriot Award, submitted by Captain Tarren Barrett. Captain Barrett is a part-time Tennessee Air National Guard military member for the 134th Air Refueling Wing out of Knoxville and full-time Transportation Engineer with the TPO.

Kaye Graybeal, Historic Preservation Planner, helped MPC secure a grant from the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) to compile an inventory of local historic properties, a project that will survey and evaluate our history of growth and the architecture that resulted from it. THC funding, totaling \$21,000, will help MPC complete a thorough survey of Knoxville's historic resources, including descriptions, maps, and photos, evaluating their significance based on local and federal criteria. The City of Knoxville is supporting the effort with \$14,000 in matching funds.

Betty Jo Mahan, Administrative Assistant II in the Development Services division, graduated from the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) Community Leadership Class of 2015. CAC brings together people who live, work, or volunteer in low to moderate income neighborhoods and offers training to encourage and inspire new community leaders to address neighborhood needs and affect positive change.

The Tennessee Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects bestowed an Award of Excellence on a team of local professionals, including MPC Senior Planner **Ellen Zavisca**, and University of Tennessee students for their work on greenway design. Their efforts were part of a Plan East Tennessee and City of Knoxville initiative to create new ways to provide and promote greenways and pedestrian linkages in the region.

The Planning Commission is supported by a staff of 32 who work in four groups: Development Services, Comprehensive Planning, Transportation Planning, and Information Services. Each has unique abilities and responsibilities, and teams are built from all groups to collaborate on projects.

The Executive Director manages the agency and is responsible for developing and administering the work program and budget. A seven-person management team is led by the Executive Director.

MPC's **Development Services** staff guides citizens, developers, and others through local development processes. Planners review requests for rezonings, subdivisions, and development plans, and they prepare a recommendation for each case that will be considered by the Planning Commission. Staff also maintains the county's property addressing system.

Comprehensive Planning focuses on long-range planning. Updating sector plans and the general plan are among the group's responsibilities, as well as special projects like park inventories, small area plans, corridor studies, and guidelines for neighborhood overlays.

The **Transportation Planning** group supports the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization, or TPO, a federally-required board that coordinates road improvements, bicycle and pedestrian plans, freight movement, and transit.

Information Services includes the geographic information systems group, a graphic design team, and two researchers. The group supports all planning efforts and manages MPC's library, websites, computer network, and various community outreach activities, including publications, social media, and market studies.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Building Activity

Development activity in Knox County reported healthy gains this year. Investment in residential construction was up \$32.4 million over last year's total, reaching \$327.0 million this year. Among notable residential developments, two large apartment projects were permitted: Marble Alley Lofts (248 units) in the Central City Sector and The Cottages at Tazewell Pike (231 units) in the North City Sector. This year's non-residential construction investment also saw improvement, hitting \$123.4 million in total value, a 46 percent increase over last year. Staybridge Suites (\$16.7 million) in the Southwest County Sector and FedEx Distribution Center (\$14.7 million) in the Northwest County Sector were two of the larger projects.

More than 2,500 residential and non-residential units were permitted in 2014. Single-dwelling residences and apartments led the charge, each contributing 1,100 units. Non-residential additions were fewer than last year – the 59 completed units represented a 21 percent drop.



Construction of Marble Alley Lofts at S. Central Street and Commerce Avenue

Subdivisions

Residential subdivision activity marked gains in 2014. The 904 new lots were 81 percent more than last year's total. Similarly, subdivided land (496 acres) increased from 2013 figures. The average residential subdivision this year was 6.9 acres in size and comprised 12 lots. Non-residential subdivision activity was slower for the year, with 18 approved projects, 12 short of last year's total.

Changes to the Zoning Map

A total of 84 residential and non-residential rezonings were approved in 2014, affecting 633 acres of property. Thirty-seven residential applications accounted for three quarters of the total acreage rezoned, while non-residential requests garnered 47 approvals and the remaining 25 percent of land rezoned. Agriculturally-zoned property converted by rezoning dropped from 794 acres last year to 292 acres in 2014. Agricultural-zone conversions accounted for a 46 percent share of all rezoned acreage this year.



Addressing

MPC's Addressing Department makes sure that each residence and place of business in Knox County is systematically assigned a valid, unique address, complete with a structure number and road name, essential for the community's safety and for proper service delivery. New addresses must be approved as part of the MPC subdivision and development plan review process. Also, all activities requiring building permits (construction, demolition, and improvements) need address verification. Addressing work involves close communication with citizens, businesses, developers, utility providers, emergency services officials, and the post office. There are more than 258,000 addresses currently in use in Knox County.

During FY2014-15, MPC's Addressing staff created 3,200 addresses for new development. Staff also modified 45,750 features in the addressing database, added 147 new street segments to the county base map, and updated 285 existing street segments.

Code Amendments

The Planning Commission considered 10 amendments to the City and County Zoning Ordinances in FY 2014-15. No amendments were heard for the Minimum Subdivision Regulations for Knoxville and Knox County.

Zoning Ordinance for Knoxville, Tennessee:

- Amendments to the City Sign Code regarding sign regulations
- Amendments related to floor area ratio and other area requirements for certain commercial zoning districts
- Amendments to the City Building Code related to delay and issuance of permits for historically significant structures
- Amendments regarding demolition of residential structures built before 1865 and a demolition delay
- Amendments to the General Provisions of the Form Based Code to add definitions related to existing structures and to better accommodate reuse and redevelopment of existing structures
- Amendments to define Urban Agriculture uses and supplementary regulations
- Amendments regarding definitions, appropriate zone districts, and development standards for various group living facilities (Tabled at MPC)
- Amendments regarding definitions, appropriate zone districts, and development standards for day care facilities (Tabled at City Council)
- Amendments regarding pet services (Withdrawn at MPC - new pet services ordinance in development)

Zoning Ordinance for Knox County, Tennessee:

- Amendments regarding off-street parking lot layout, construction, and maintenance

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Northwest City Sector Plan Completed

The Northwest City Sector is a 16.5 square mile area that is both urban and suburban in character, well-served by city infrastructure systems and home to several established, healthy neighborhoods and thriving businesses. The sector plan included recommendations for land use, community facilities, green infrastructure, historic resources, and transportation systems, organized into five-year and 15-year implementation stages. Plan recommendations reflected observation of data trends, projects implemented since 2004 (the last update), and public input.

Northwest City Sector population has grown steadily over the past 25 years. Vacant land was used for new development, and much of the remaining supply offers limited growth potential due to slope and stream constraints. Future investment in the sector will focus more on redevelopment and renovation of existing properties and less on greenfield development.

Although residents were concerned that new development will pose land use conflicts for existing neighborhoods, most comments expressed a desire to improve quality of life through amenity improvements, such as sidewalks and greenways, and to enhance design quality and connectivity for commercial strips and centers.

As a result, the Northwest City Sector Plan recommended redevelopment of different types of centers with varying scales and functions, including neighborhood, community, and employment centers. Rather than creating new centers and corridors, the plan recommended strengthening existing ones, improving connectivity to the neighborhoods they serve, and accommodating appropriate infill opportunities.



Victor Ashe Park in the Northwest City Sector

Northwest and Northeast County Sector Plan Updates Underway

Background reports, community surveys, and first rounds of public meetings were completed during FY 2014-15 for the Northwest County and Northeast County Sector Plans.



The Northwest County Sector is the fastest growing sector in the area, the second largest in size, 77 square miles, and has the largest population. Themes that emerged from community input sessions centered on connectivity and walkability of neighborhoods (particularly around school facilities), road/ intersection improvements to alleviate congestion, variety of housing types, new middle school in the Hardin Valley area, and conservation of agricultural lands. The second round of public meetings will be held in the fall of 2015, and the plan will be presented for adoption in December, 2015.

Greystone Vista apartment homes are under construction in the Hardin Valley area of the Northwest County Sector.

The Northeast County Sector faces the challenge of balancing growing demand for residential development with preservation of agriculture and rural character. Residents also noted a need for a new middle school in the Gibbs community. The second round of public meetings for the Northeast County Sector Plan is scheduled for September, 2015, and the plan should be presented for adoption in November, 2015.

The Sawyers-McBee house on Washington Pike is a historic resource in the Northeast County Sector, as well as Knox County's only Tennessee Pioneer Century Farm, established in 1785.



Alternative Financial Services Report

At the request of Knoxville City Council, MPC staff evaluated the geographic distribution of alternative financial services (AFS) operations in the city to determine if such businesses were clustered in certain communities and to see if possible zoning regulation changes were needed. The report offered an overview of national, state, and local regulations for the AFS industry, which includes check cashers, deferred presentment services, pawnbrokers, and title pledge lenders.



MPC research identified 81 AFS establishments in Knoxville, 16 outside the city in Knox County, and two in Farragut. Clusters were noted on Clinton Highway, Broadway, Chapman Highway, Magnolia

Avenue, and Kingston Pike. The highest concentration was found at Clinton Highway and Merchant Drive, with seven establishments within 1,000 feet of each other.

Two options for local consideration were offered in the report: a) develop a geographic spacing standard in the zoning ordinance; and, b) take no action. If city officials choose to address clustering of AFS establishments through the zoning ordinance, a spacing standard of 1,000 feet of separation from like businesses and 1,000 feet from residentially-zoned properties was recommended. Other proposed zoning changes included the addition of a definition and listing of AFS uses under the “uses permitted on review” section of zones C-3, C-4, and C-6. AFS uses could be preserved in the planned districts where they occur today, including SC-1, SC-2, SC-3, and PC-1. The report is currently under review by Knoxville City Council.



Knoxville Urban Agriculture Ordinance

In 2011, MPC staff and the Knox County Health Department collaborated on the report, *Toward Healthier Living: Strategies to Make Active Living and Healthy Eating Part of Everyday Life in Knoxville and Knox County*. One action item identified in the report was the need to “create definitions for urban agriculture practices and make them a use by right in all City and County zone districts.” In 2014, the City of Knoxville’s Office of Sustainability spearheaded an effort to bring about ordinance changes by convening an Urban Agriculture

Committee, consisting of representatives from City of Knoxville departments, the Knox County Health Department, and UT Extension Knox County. Also serving were MPC’s Liz Albertson and Mark Donaldson.

In May, 2015, MPC heard and recommended the UA Committee’s proposed zoning ordinance changes, and in July, Council adopted additional use definitions into the City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance.



Knoxville Regional Food Hub Feasibility Project

One of the regional goals identified in the Plan East Tennessee initiative included strategies to expand local food production. Establishment of a regional food hub was proposed to improve connections between small- and medium-sized farms with larger-scale purchasers, such as restaurants, grocery stores, schools, and hospitals. In late 2014, MPC was awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture Local Food Promotion Planning Grant to conduct a feasibility study for a regional food hub. MPC has partnered with agricultural economists from UT’s Institute of Agriculture to conduct the study, which includes focus groups, interviews, and surveys with producers and purchasers of local and regional food. Study findings are expected in fall of 2016.

Assistance to City of Knoxville and Knox County

Officials from the City of Knoxville and Knox County request expert assistance from MPC staff to update, change, or supplement local zoning ordinances. This year, Comprehensive Planning staff worked on three major efforts:

- Revisions to city and county parking ordinances
- Revisions to demolition permit process for potentially historic structures
- Developing an Urban Agriculture Ordinance for the city

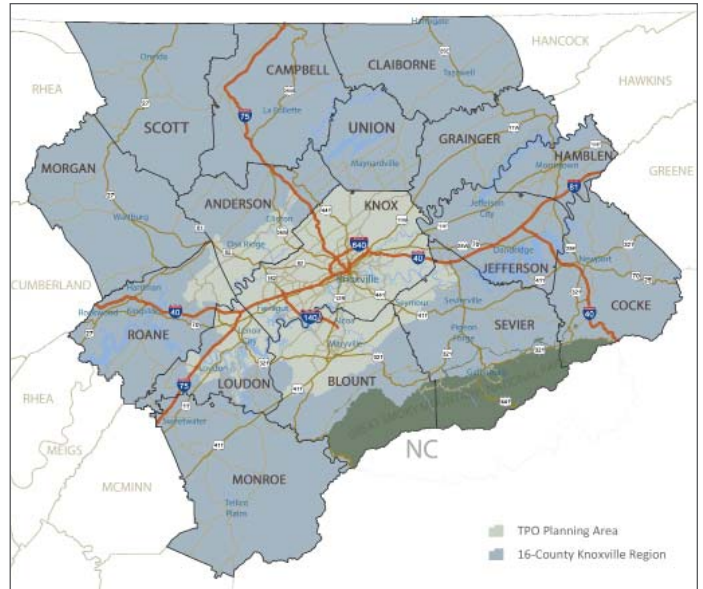
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING



The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), staffed by MPC planners, serves as the transportation planning agency for Knox County, most of Blount County, and parts of Anderson, Loudon, and Sevier counties, including the cities of Knoxville, Farragut, Maryville, Alcoa, Oak Ridge, Clinton, Loudon, and Lenoir City. The State of Tennessee and East Tennessee Development District also participate in the process. Under contract with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), TPO staff is also responsible for conducting regional transportation planning in the air quality non-attainment/maintenance areas for ozone and PM2.5. Those areas comprise Anderson, Blount, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, and Sevier counties, as well as parts of Cocke and Roane counties.

TPO Executive Board and Technical Committee

The TPO Executive Board and Technical Committee work with TPO staff to make decisions on regional transportation plans and projects. The Executive Board, which sets policy and adopts plans, comprises 18 elected or appointed officials from the TPO planning area and representatives from the East Tennessee Development District and the Governor of Tennessee. The 25-member Technical Committee consists of local planners and engineers. The Technical Committee works closely with staff and makes recommendations to the Executive Board.



Left to right: TPO Director Jeff Welch, Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx, Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett

increase transit funding by 76 percent. More investment in transit is needed, Foxx said, because it meets the needs of many millennials and baby boomers, the two biggest demographics in the U.S.

The last multi-year transportation bill passed by Congress was MAP-21, a two-year deal approved in 2012. Since then, funding has been authorized by short-term extensions of MAP-21.

Transportation Options Funded for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

TPO administers a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant that funds projects to enhance transportation options for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The \$500,000 program previously was administered statewide by TDOT, but FTA now allocates resources directly to planning regions to allow more localized project selection. All awards require some level of local match, and the amount varies by type of project. Awarded projects must complement the goals of TPO's Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan, which identifies gaps in services, proposes projects to help close those gaps, and examines ways services can be coordinated.

Projects funded this year include programs in Knox and Blount counties that recruit volunteers to drive and assist elderly and

Transportation Secretary Visits Knoxville

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx visited Knoxville on May 12 to highlight the need for transportation funding that is sufficient to maintain our infrastructure and allow for good planning. The Secretary cited the example of Alcoa Highway among projects to increase capacity and improve safety that have been delayed because of uncertain federal funding. He made his remarks at a reception and special meeting prior to the TPO's Technical Committee meeting.

Secretary Foxx touted the Obama Administration's Grow America plan, which proposes a six-year transportation bill that would boost overall spending by 45 percent and would



Blount County's Senior Miles program: Volunteers provide door-through-door transportation for residents who are age 60-plus, do not drive, are ambulatory, and are in need of reliable, safe rides for essential trips.

disabled passengers on important errands; public transit services for elderly and disabled persons in portions of Anderson, Blount, Loudon, and Sevier counties; and, vans for non-profits, such as Cerebral Palsy Center, Emory Valley Center, Loudon County Office on Aging and Senior Center, Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services, and Sertoma Center.

Planning for Pedestrians

TPO partners with other local agencies to plan for places and programs that encourage people to have healthier and more active lifestyles. One of its closest partnerships is with the Knox County Health Department



(KCHD), which coordinates the Knox County Safe Routes to School Partnership. TPO works with KCHD in writing grants and organizing events for the local Safe Routes program. TPO, Safe Routes Partnership, and Knoxville Police Department collaborated this year on a grant to fund education and enforcement around crosswalk and school bus safety.

Greenways

TPO works with greenway advocates from across the Knoxville region as part of the Knoxville Greenways Commission and the Great Smoky Mountains Regional Greenway Council. The Council brings together planners from a dozen local governments to coordinate planning and marketing of greenways. In recent years, the Council, in partnership with TPO, has funded two greenway studies looking at regional linkages. These studies complement the planning work done by local governments, and they make the health and economic case for regional greenway connections.



Photo credit: Mary Grace McCaffery

Smart Trips

Smart Trips is a program that encourages people to take alternative commutes, such as riding transit, walking, bicycling, or carpooling, instead of driving alone to work. In 2014, 223 new users signed up for the free, web-based program, raising the total number of participants to nearly 650. By using alternative forms of travel, members kept 1,514,774 pounds of greenhouse emissions out of the environment this year.

Two full-time employees, an Outreach Coordinator and a Project Coordinator, manage the Smart Trips program. The Outreach Coordinator's responsibilities include marketing to companies and institutions, visiting health and benefits fairs, hosting seminars, and developing a network of business advocates for the program. The Project Coordinator markets the program to the general public, provides user support, and manages the day-to-day operations.



L to r: Smart Trips Program Coordinator Christi Wampler, 2014 Commuter Challenge grand prize winner Dana Bryson, AAA of East Tennessee Public Affairs Director Don Lindsey, and Smart Trips Outreach Coordinator Sara Martin

In 2014, Smart Trips conducted a year-long Commuter Challenge, with monthly rankings published in the program's e-newsletter. In November, the Commuter Challenge Ceremony was held, and prizes were given out to the companies that enrolled the most new members, had the highest rate of participation among its workforce, and logged the most commutes. Rush's Music took first prize, followed by 21st Mortgage, Elavon, Elizabeth Eason Architecture, and Y-12. Individual members also were eligible for prizes based on their amount of logging. A grand prize vacation package from AAA worth \$1,500 was awarded to Dana Bryson of UT.

Bicycle Program

I Bike KNX, the Knoxville Regional Bicycle Program, raises awareness about the importance and value of bicycling. Its volunteer Bicycling Ambassadors spoke at community events and festivals, encouraging people to ride more often and more safely, and helping motorists better understand how to share the road safely with people on bicycles. Ambassadors and other volunteers presented "Sharing the Road with Bicyclists and Pedestrians"—a program that exposes the dangers of distracted driving, speeding, and road rage—to every high school driver's education class in Knox and Blount counties.



Bicycle riders fill Gay Street for the 8th annual Tour de Lights in December.

Additional Bicycle Program highlights this year:

- TPO provided funding for a *Bicycle Facilities Plan*, which was completed in spring 2015.
- The Bicycle Program's Facebook page grew from 1,200 followers to more than 1,550.
- The bike rack grant program has been responsible for placement of more than 650 racks throughout the air quality non-attainment area since the program began in 2004.
- I Bike KNX hosted Bike to Work Day and Ride Smart bike safety classes and promoted other training, rides, and events during National Bike Month (May).
- More than 1,000 people turned out for the 8th annual Tour de Lights bicycle ride in December, touring the holiday decorations of Fourth and Gill and Old North Knoxville. The event was sponsored by the City of Knoxville, Three Rivers Market, and Mast General Store.



ETcompetes

ETcompetes is an outgrowth of the Plan East Tennessee regional planning effort. It is a partnership of citizens, businesses, and government agencies from across the region collaborating to achieve

our goals for a strong economy and good quality of life. It is important that we continue the Plan East Tennessee mission to work together so that we grow in ways that provide future generations a more livable, beautiful, and prosperous region.

This year, ETcompetes supported three major efforts:

- **ETindex.org:** Under guidance of key community partners—University of Tennessee Center for Business and Economic Research, Cornerstone Foundation, United Way of Greater Knoxville, and Knoxville–Oak Ridge Innovation Valley—TPO and MPC staff and consultants developed a web-based platform to track 87 social and economic indicators that measure quality of life in East Tennessee. Staff continues to manage this website with on-going updates to key metrics.
- **ETindex Livability Report Card:** The Livability Report Card provides a common foundation for quality information on key indicators maintained at ETindex.org. The Report Card urges us to go beyond anecdote and engage in dialog about important opportunities that will lead us to a more prosperous future for our region. This report is updated annually by MPC staff in partnership with other local organizations.
- **Mayors Caucus:** The East Tennessee Mayors Caucus is comprised of mayors from 16 area counties. An outgrowth of the Plan East Tennessee Board of Mayors, the Caucus formed in 2015 and meets quarterly to discuss cross-jurisdictional issues. The intent is to provide an opportunity for elected leaders from across our region to collaborate on common problems and work toward the shared goals of growing our regional prosperity and improving our quality of life. TPO staff manages the Caucus.

INFORMATION SERVICES



Regional Indicators Website and Report Card

MPC's Information Services division took the lead on updating content for ETindex, an online clearinghouse for regional data, including demographics, economy/workforce, education, environment/agriculture, financial well-being, healthy living, housing/neighborhoods, quality of life, and transportation. In addition to online content, staff completed the 2015 Livability Report Card, a data-rich publication that conveys detailed information about the quality of life in East Tennessee in an easy-to-read, sharable format for use by citizens, businesses, and local agencies throughout the region.

Census Data

MPC serves as an affiliate of the Tennessee State Data Center, and in that role, the MPC Library and website are repositories of federal Census data. Print and digital materials from the annual American Community Survey and decennial Census of Population and Housing are available—MPC's collection includes releases from 1960 through 2015.

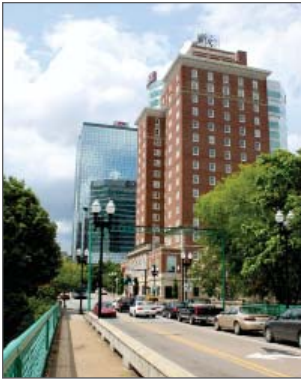
To assist people conducting demographic, social, economic, and housing research, MPC staff has summarized locally-relevant Census data and provided the information in a one-stop web shop, making retrieval of data much easier than navigating the more complex Census Bureau web catalogs. This year's update included data from several Census sources, including the American Community Survey, Population Estimates Program, and Historic Population.

MPC Library

The MPC Library houses thousands of reports, journals, and books on a wide range of urban, rural, and regional planning topics. The library also includes print and digital U.S. Census material and other government data sets.

MPC-produced holdings include Planning Commission meeting materials, such as applications, staff reports, and supporting documents for subdivision, rezoning, use on review, and all other case types. Digital records date back to 1939 and are available as PDF files for reading or printing. The MPC Library also is the repository of all ordinances, regulations, plans, and studies published by the agency.

The library is open to the public each weekday during regular business hours.



Property Market Studies

Information Services staff researches and writes three property market reports—*Office Market Analysis*, *Shopping Center Market Analysis*, and *Industrial Space Inventory*. The office market is analyzed yearly while the others are researched on a less frequent, rotating basis. This year's efforts included an updated *Office Market Analysis*.

MPC GIS

MPC's Information Services division includes a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) group. In addition to daily support that the group provides staff planners, MPC GIS analysts completed several major projects for external clients this year:

- **Knox County Schools** enrollment projections: Produced seven-year enrollment projections for the 58,000-student public school district under a renewed five-year engagement.
- **Knoxville Area Transit** maps: Revised numerous maps for public transit schedules, including the trolley system.
- **Knox County Health Department** food access study: Supported food access analysis of the Five Points neighborhood.
- **Urban Land Institute (ULI)** assessment: Aided the City of Knoxville's Office of Redevelopment in preparing a briefing book for a ULI analysis of five potential reinvestment sites downtown.
- **The Development Corporation of Knox County (TDC)** marketing support: Completed mapping and promotional materials for Knoxville's largest industrial park, Forks of the River. The materials were added to TDC's website, also an MPC GIS product.
- **Knoxville Urban Wilderness** maps: Created maps of new trails added to the wilderness system and incorporated updated maps into various websites.
- **Knoxville/Knox County/Knoxville Utilities Board GIS (KGIS)** National Register District mapping: Compiled data for a new theme, "Historic Districts and Pre-1865 Structures," in the KGIS Maps website.

Knox Area Landmark Imagery Captured by Google Trekker

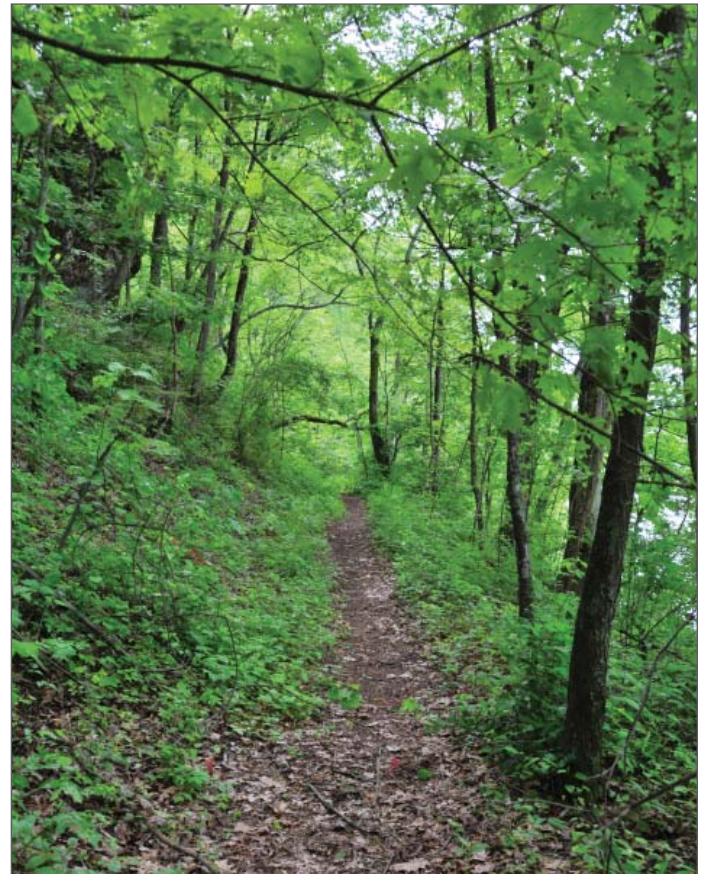
Internet-related services and products giant, Google, has been photographing street-level views of communities across the country for several years with car-mounted cameras, but many of the nation's most scenic places are not accessible by car. To capture that imagery, Google has been testing its human-powered Trekker equipment. In this pilot effort, Trekker cameras are lent to qualified tourism boards, government agencies, nonprofits, and other groups with knowledge of interesting places with 360 degree, panoramic views. Last summer, MPC applied to participate in the program to capture Knoxville area resources and was selected.

A team from MPC, City of Knoxville Parks and Recreation, Knox County Parks and Recreation, the Town of Farragut, Visit Knoxville, Legacy Parks, and Appalachian Mountain Bike Club used Google equipment to photograph local trails, parks, and scenic destinations to feed Google Maps Street View.

With growing recognition that greenways and trail systems are an important contributor to the quality of life enjoyed in this region, the Google Trekker program is a great opportunity to share local successes with people across the country and the world.



Becky Gronewold wears a backpack outfitted with a camera system to photograph the trails of the Knoxville Urban Wilderness.



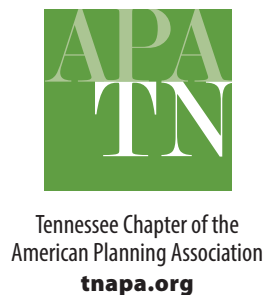
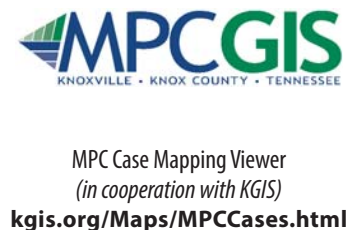
MPC Online

Staff continued to improve public communication and outreach efforts by adding to the content available on official websites for MPC, TPO, and several related organizations. In FY 2014-15, the long-term growth of the agency's website continued as the number of users reached 41,000, a 12 percent increase, and page views grew six percent to 172,000. The most visited pages on the MPC website were the home page and those providing information related to zoning ordinances for Knoxville and Knox County.

During the same period, the TPO website attracted 21,000 visitors and served more than 40,000 page views. Usage of the site dipped as some of its most popular content, related to the Knoxville Regional Bicycle Program, was moved to a new website, ibikeknx.com. Together, the two TPO sites saw usage grow by an impressive 25 percent. TPO's roadway alert page, home page, and regional greenway information attracted the most traffic.

In addition to its websites, MPC keeps citizens informed through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Constant Contact, and YouTube), publicizing meetings, new products, and special events.

A REFERENCE GUIDE TO WEBSITES MANAGED BY KNOXVILLE KNOX COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION



BOARDS AND COMMITTEES SUPPORTED BY MPC STAFF

As an extension of their work with the Planning Commission, agency staff participated on a variety of boards, committees, and task forces.

TTCDA

The Tennessee Technology Corridor Development Authority concept is based on the goal to achieve aesthetic quality and environmental conservation for developments within the Technology Overlay zones of the city and county. Design guidelines are followed to achieve functional, aesthetic, and visual unity while maintaining individual user expression.

Technology Overlay development continues to experience a rebound from the low level of activity of a couple of years ago. Nearly 145,000 square feet of new floor space was approved this year, an increase of 55,000 square feet, or 60 percent, over last year's total. The 28 applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) were a slight increase from last year's 27. Twelve building permits were approved this year, matching the previous year's total. Ten requests for sign permits were approved.



Construction of Local Motors Microfactory, August 2015

One of the most notable project approvals in the Corridor in FY 2014-15 was Local Motors Microfactory, a 41,215-square foot research and development facility in the Vista Dei Monte complex on the west side of Pellissippi Parkway, south of Hardin Valley Road. The facility has been in the news lately for its development of 3D-printed full-size cars. Other area projects included Greystone at Snyder Road, a 328-unit apartment complex at Lovell and Snyder Roads; a 25,875-square foot addition to the office building for Mesa Associates on the south side of Murdock Drive; Sanders Medical Products, a new 21,000-square foot assembly facility on the north side of Dutchtown Road; and, an expansion of the PetSafe campus near Cogdill Road.

Historic Zoning Commissions

The Historic Zoning Commissions (HZC) for Knoxville and Knox County have several responsibilities: review applications to repair, alter, rehabilitate, relocate, or demolish properties protected by local historic overlay districts (zoned H-1 or HZ); review proposed new construction within overlay districts; and, identify properties for local or National Register of Historic Places designation.



One of three Victorian-style houses was saved from demolition to make way for a new University of Tennessee science building. The house at 1302 White Avenue was moved to 1201 Clinch Avenue in the Fort Sanders neighborhood.

After design review and approval of proposed work within historic overlays, a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued by the appropriate HZC for major works or by MPC staff for minor works. Design review is intended to stabilize or improve property values by encouraging rehabilitation and new construction that is harmonious with the area. Out of 75 COA applications this fiscal year, 67 were approved and eight denied. The Old North Knoxville Historic District led submittals with 22.

Infill Housing Design Review Committee

MPC's Infill Housing Design Review Committee examines applications for new housing in Edgewood Park, Lonsdale, and Oakwood/Lincoln Park neighborhoods for conformance with the Heart of Knoxville Infill Housing Design Guidelines. The Committee ensures that development within the Infill Housing Overlay District (IH-1) is architecturally compatible with the neighborhood, fosters neighborhood stability, creates pedestrian-oriented streets, and meets a wide range of housing needs. The nine-member Review Committee includes MPC staff and representatives from the East Tennessee Community Design Center and City of Knoxville Plans Review and Inspections, Engineering, and Community Development departments.



In FY 2014-15, the Review Committee issued 16 COAs that resulted in five new houses, four new lots, one porch renovation, one addition,

and five changes to parking in the overlay district. In addition, MPC staff participated on the Community Development Department's Infill Committee and assisted in the review of seven houses that were funded through various city programs.



A vacant service station at the Jackson Avenue/Broadway intersection will become a microbrewery with a beer garden and a restaurant.

Downtown Design Review Board

The Downtown Design Review Board examines proposals for private and public development in Knoxville's center city. The goal of the Review Board is to foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation of the downtown area.

The Review Board heard 38 proposals in the past year. The majority were signs and minor exterior alterations (such as new storefronts and windows). Notable projects included exterior renovations of the Kress, Century, and Regas buildings. There were also several City of Knoxville public improvement projects: streetscape improvements to the Clinch Avenue Viaduct, 700 block of Gay Street, 400-500 blocks of West Jackson Avenue, and streets around the Marble Alley Lofts development; and, improvements to the Henley Pedestrian Bridge and the Promenade.

City of Knoxville Parking Policy Committee

The Parking Policy Committee has a citywide scope, however, its focus is on-street parking in the downtown core and other areas with parking meters. The Committee studies policy issues related to signage, parking rates and duration, allocation of space for commercial and passenger loading zones, parking meter hardware, and on-street parking code amendments. Special uses, such as taxi stands, valet parking, car-share parking, and food trucks, also are evaluated.

Other Committees, Boards, and Task Forces with MPC Staff Participants

- CAC Board of Directors, Transportation Advisory Committee, Volunteer Assisted Transportation Committee
- Central Business Improvement District (CBID) Development Committee
- Community Development Facade Review Committee
- Downtown North/I-275 Corridor Advisory Board
- East Tennessee Community Design Center
- East Tennessee Council on Aging and Disability
- East Tennessee Mayors Caucus
- East Tennessee Quality Growth Board of Directors
- East Tennessee Regional Leadership
- East Tennessee U.S. Green Building Council
- Geography Network of East Tennessee
- Great Smoky Mountains Regional Greenway Council
- Incident Management Task Force
- KGIS Coordinating Committee
- Knox County Air Pollution Control Board
- Knox County Board of Zoning Appeals

- Knox County Community Health Council
- Knox County Parks Board
- Knox County Safe Routes to School Partnership
- Knox Heritage Ex-Officio Board Member
- Knox Heritage Summer Supper Committee
- Knoxville Board of Zoning Appeals
- Knoxville Chapter of the American Planning Association
- Knoxville City Council's Public Property Naming Committee
- Knoxville Energy and Sustainability Advisory Board
- Knoxville Form Code Administrative Review Committee
- Knoxville Greenways Commission
- Knoxville Homeless Management Information System Advisory Committee
- Knoxville Regional Freight Advisory Committee
- Knoxville Transportation Authority
- Knoxville Tree Board and Planning and Policy Committee
- Knoxville Urban Agriculture Committee
- Knoxville-Knox County Food Policy Council, Food Access Committee, Outreach Committee
- Magnolia Avenue Warehouse District Advisory Committee
- National Cooperative Highway Research Program
- Nourish Knoxville Board
- Safe Routes to School State Network
- South Knoxville Elementary Community School
- Tennessee Bike Summit
- Tennessee Model Users Group
- Tennessee Regions' Roundtable Steering Committee
- Tennessee Section Institute of Transportation Engineers
- Transportation Research Board Strategic Highway Research Program

Professional Development

MPC staff attended several meetings to make presentations and keep current on issues and best practices:

- Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Annual Meeting
- Drivers' Education Program for Knox County, Blount County, Alcoa, and Maryville Schools
- ETindex.org Promoted at Local Events
- Greater Knoxville Research Network
- Institute of Transportation Engineers Webinars
- National, State, and Local Chapter Meetings of the American Planning Association
- State and Regional GIS Conferences
- Tennessee Bike Summit
- Tennessee Section Institute of Transportation Engineers Conferences
- Travel Model Improvement Program Webinars
- U.S. Green Building Council

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of Revenues/Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance
 Budget and Actual - General Fund
 For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015
 (Pending Audit)

	Final Budget	2015 Actual UNAUDITED	Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)
REVENUES			
Fees and Charges	\$504,000	\$541,431	\$37,431
Federal Government Grants ¹	1,494,000	1,501,778	7,778
State of Tennessee Grants ¹	626,000	152,549	(473,451)
Local Grant Match (Other than MPC)	0	14,540	14,540
City of Knoxville	905,000	900,000	(5,000)
Knox County	646,000	646,000	0
Miscellaneous Revenue and Miscellaneous Contracts Revenue ²	41,000	23,148	(17,852)
From Fund Balance	236,851	0	(236,851)
Total Revenues	\$4,452,851	\$3,779,446	(\$673,405)
EXPENDITURES			
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$2,771,211	\$2,662,682	\$108,529
Contracted Services	1,391,317	915,240	476,077
Supplies and Materials	89,000	73,483	15,517
Other Charges	217,240	221,357	(4,117)
Capital Outlay	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$4,468,768	\$3,872,762	\$596,006
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(\$15,917)	(\$93,316)	(\$77,399)
Fund Balance, July 1, 2014	\$1,089,670	\$1,089,670	\$0
Fund Balance, June 30, 2015	\$1,073,753	\$996,354	(\$77,399)

Footnotes:

¹ Eleven grant programs include: FHWA Highway Planning and Construction; FTA Technical Studies; Regional Transportation and Air Quality; Knoxville Smart Trips Program; Knoxville Car Share Program; TPO Bike Parking Enhancement; Regional Transit Corridors Study; FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute; FTA New Freedom; USDA Food HUB; and, FTA Section 5310 Senior Transit.

² Miscellaneous contracts - actuals: Miscellaneous Fee Revenue totaled \$9,648 while Miscellaneous Contractual Revenue included Knox County Schools PEFA V, \$7,500, and Telecom Tower Escrow, \$6,000.

KNOXVILLE • KNOX COUNTY

M P C

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P L A N N I N G
C O M M I S S I O N

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