



KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY PLANNING

# ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2020-2021



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Amy Brooks, AICP • Executive Director | 865-215-4001 • amy.brooks@knoxplanning.org

This year was unparalleled, full of upheaval, forced adaptation, and lasting impacts.



The arrival of COVID-19 hurtled all of us into stay-at-home orders, social distancing, virtual work, and new routines. Many of our staff members were sent home to work, board and commission meetings became virtual, face-to-face interactions were sparse, and outreach events moved online. Like the rest of the world, we had to adapt quickly, changing our processes overnight. Despite these challenges, our agency was able to prioritize the health of staff and the public while ensuring our work was uninterrupted. We began processing applications online and found ways to interact with members of the public and partner agencies from a distance.

We worked quickly and creatively to continue providing services despite unprecedented challenges, and it is a testament to our staff's commitment to the community that our work never skipped a beat. Applications continued to flood our inboxes as local development continued unfazed. Despite being physically separated for much of the year, we continued collaborating with partners on projects. Working with Knox County, we are embarking on a Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan, as well as a transit study with the City of Knoxville. We had higher than expected attendance at virtual events



for the latest update to the regional Mobility Plan, and views of the recorded meetings were well received. Staff made our work more accessible to the public with the release of two new interactive development and demographic research tools, Panorama and Density Explorer.

As the pandemic unfolded, we quickly learned that our community is resilient and able to adapt. We also learned that our staff can serve and engage the public in new ways that will have long-term benefits, like virtual access to our services and meetings. It's likely that these lessons will impact the development landscape and field of planning for years to come.

The communities and people we serve are at the center of all we do. No matter the circumstances, we are committed to involving residents in an open planning process, providing objective advice to public officials, and serving as an information resource for all. I am proud of the accomplishments our staff have made to serve all of you over the past year amid significant challenges, and we look forward to rising to the challenges that emerge from this latest period of change and growth.



# PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

The Planning Commission is an advisory board made up of 15 citizens—seven appointed by the City Mayor and eight appointed by the County Mayor.

These volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, representing diverse community interests and concerns. They serve staggered four-year terms and may be re-appointed. The Commission meets the second Thursday of every month.

Planning thanks outgoing Commissioners Gayle Bustin (2016-2021), Mike Crowder (2015-2021), Elizabeth Eason (2013-2021), and Sandra Korbek (2020-2021) for their service to our community. Their contributions are appreciated by all.

**Executive Committee:** On an annual basis, the Planning Commission Chair appoints an Executive Committee consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and three other members of the Planning Commission. Terms are one-year in length.

The Executive Committee reviews and recommends the annual budget and work program, provides consultation and advice on any matters the Executive Director brings to the Committee, and resolves staff issues as needed.

**Executive Committee Membership:** Tamara Boyer, Tim Hill, Chris Ooten, Patrick Phillips (Chair), Scott Smith (Vice Chair)

The Planning  
Commission heard  
**437 cases**

**124**  
rezonings

**87**  
use on reviews

**69**  
plan  
amendments

**65**  
subdivisions  
(preliminary  
and final plats)

**38**  
special uses



**KARYN ADAMS**  
City | 2020-2024

**TAMARA BOYER**  
County | 2018-2022

**LOUIS BROWNING**  
County | 2018-2024

**AMY MIDIS**  
City | 2021-2023

**JIM NICHOLS**  
County | 2021-2022

**JACQUELENE DENT**  
City | 2020-2024

**LOGAN HIGGINS**  
City | 2021-2025

**RICHARD GRAF**  
County | 2018-2022

**TIM HILL**  
City | 2019-2023

**MARITÉ PÉREZ**  
City | 2021-2025

**CHRIS OOTEN**  
County | 2016-2024

**PATRICK PHILLIPS**  
Chair  
City | 2016-2023

**JEFFREY ROTH**  
County | 2011-2023

**EDDIE SMITH**  
County | 2020-2024

**SCOTT SMITH**  
Vice Chair  
County | 2014-2022



**19**  
other business

**17**  
street closures

**8**  
ordinance  
amendments

**3**  
planned  
developments

**3**  
street name  
changes

**2**  
development  
plans

**2**  
wireless  
communication  
facilities

# KNOX COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

Population **475,609**

Population growth since 2010 **9.9%**

Area **526 sq. miles**

Housing units **211,738**

Median home selling price **\$249,000**

Median household income **\$60,283**

Population with bachelor's degree or higher **37.7%**

Labor force **242,643**

Unemployment rate **5.9%**

Cost of living index (100 U.S. average) **83.7**

Public parks **6,418 acres**

Greenways and walking trails **198 miles**







## DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Residential units permitted	3,637
Value of residential construction	\$676.5 million
Non-residential units permitted	141
Value of non-residential construction	\$259.3 million
Residential subdivision lots created	899
Non-residential lots created	7



# PLANNING SERVICES

Planning Services staff guide residents, developers, and others through local review processes. Planners evaluate requests for rezonings, subdivisions, and development plans, and they prepare a recommendation for each case that will be considered by the Planning Commission.

The group updates sector plans and the general plan and conducts special studies, like park inventories, small area plans, and guidelines for neighborhood overlays. Staff also maintain the county's property addressing system. Planning Services works closely with several city and county departments, as well as our own Transportation Planning division, promoting the interconnectivity of land use and transportation infrastructure.

## ADDRESSING

Planning's Addressing Department makes sure that each residence and place of business in Knox County is systematically assigned a valid, unique address, complete with structure number and road name, essential for the community's safety and for proper service delivery.

### ADDRESSING ACTIVITY

Addresses in use in Knox County	276,239
New addresses created	5,214
Features in the addressing database modified	10,373
New street segments added to the county base map	190
Existing street segments updated	404

#### Amy Brooks, AICP

Planning Services Manager

#### Liz Albertson, AICP

Senior Planner  
Zoning, sector plans, environmental resources

#### Tarren Barrett, PE

Transportation Engineer  
Development review, traffic impact studies

#### Dori Caron

Senior Administrative Assistant  
Planning Commission administration, transportation grants

#### Lindsay Crockett, AICP

Planner  
Historic zoning, Design Review Board, design standards

#### Emily Dills

Planning Technician  
Plat review

#### Laura Edmonds

Administrative Assistant II  
Planning Commission and board meeting administration





# SUBDIVISION PLAT REVIEW

Planning is responsible for regulating the subdivision of all land in Knox County other than the Town of Farragut. Final plats are reviewed and certified by staff. Plats requiring a variance from the subdivision regulations are also reviewed by the Planning Commission.

**498 plats  
reviewed**

Residential: 381  
Non-residential: 109  
Not specified: 8

**2,382**

acres of land  
subdivided/  
replatted

**2,367**

lots created/  
replatted

## Donna Hill

GIS Specialist  
Addressing, street naming

## Erin Kelbly

Planning Technician  
Plat review, addressing, street  
naming

## Levan King Cranston

Planner  
Zoning, plan amendments, hillside  
protection overlay

## Andrea Kupfer, AICP

Interim Customer Service Coordinator  
Addressing, street naming, customer  
service

## Sherry Michienzi

Planning Technician  
Customer service, meeting  
administration

## Marc Payne

Planning Technician  
Customer service, staff support,  
plat review

## Michelle Portier, AICP

Senior Planner  
Zoning, sector plans, development  
plans, TTCDA

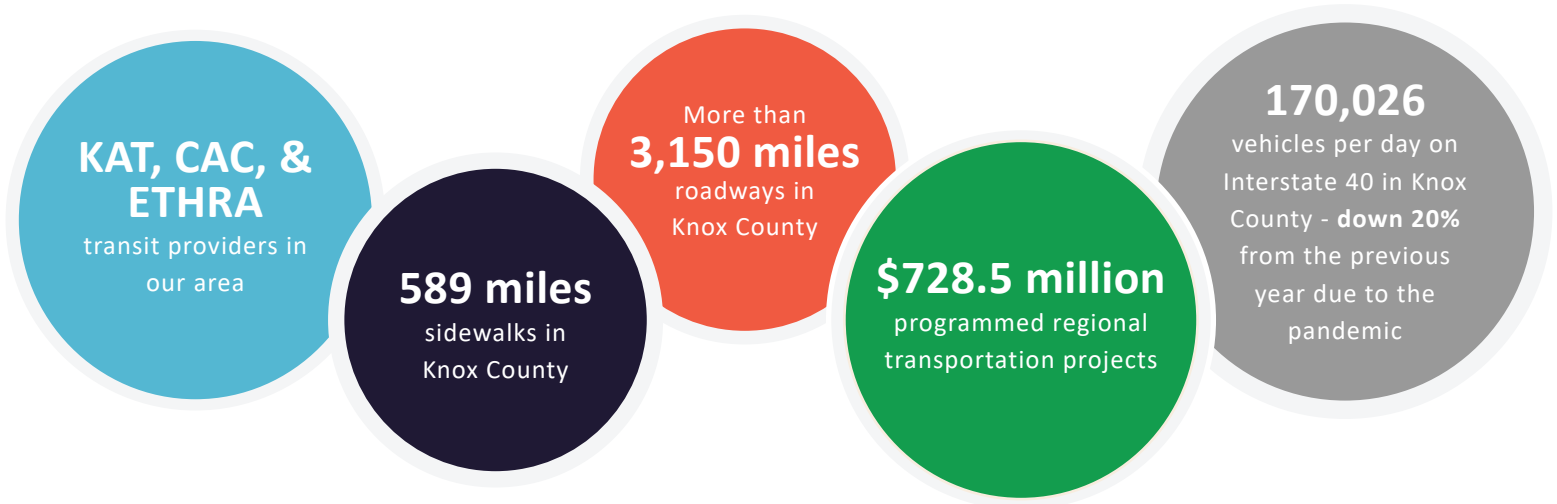
## Mike Reynolds, AICP

Senior Planner  
Development plans, zoning, design  
standards

# TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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, transit, and freight movement.

Staff members collaborate with the Planning Services division on corridor studies, sector plans, and other land use planning activities. They also work closely with the engineering departments and transportation service providers of Knoxville, Knox County, and several surrounding communities.



## Jeff Welch, AICP

Transportation Planning Manager/TPO Director

## Doug Burton

Principal Planner  
Public transit, downtown transportation,  
Title VI coordinator

## Mike Conger, PE

Senior Transportation Engineer  
Transportation system modeling, traffic  
counts, traffic studies, air quality, ITS

## Craig Luebke, AICP

Senior Planner  
Transportation Improvement Program,  
Mobility Plan, performance metrics





To ease traffic congestion and improve our region's air and quality of life, Smart Trips promotes alternatives to driving alone.

**465**

registered participants

**22,059 gallons**

gas saved

**197,065 pounds**

greenhouse gases kept out of the environment

**5,116,795 calories**

burned by biking, walking, or other active transportation

**10,689**

work from home "trips" logged

**Tina Piatt**

Finance Officer  
Grants management, financial reporting,  
human resources

**Savannah Robertson**

Smart Trips Coordinator  
Employer outreach, membership  
recruitment, promotion

**Ellen Zavisca, PTP**

Principal Planner  
Pedestrian and greenway planning,  
Safe Routes to School



**tpo**  
KNOXVILLE REGIONAL

# INFORMATION SERVICES

This division comprises two main functions, research/support and GIS/web/design. Staff assist agency-wide planning activities by conducting background research for plans and presentations, delivering online content, leading community outreach efforts, and maintaining the print and digital library.

Planning's geographic information systems (GIS) group maintains land and infrastructure data systems and produces maps. Web and design staff are responsible for content management and presentation of the many websites housed at Planning, and they prepare artwork and layouts for the agency's plans, reports, and brochures.



## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT PROJECTION MODEL

Planning partners with external agencies to complete projects that help those groups fulfill their roles in the community. One example is the annual enrollment projections for Knox County Schools. Looking at subdivisions that have been proposed over the past year, Information Services staff is able to estimate the number of additional students that will be added to each school within the system in the coming years. These projections sometimes lead to changes in school zone boundaries and identification of facility needs.

**Terry Gilhula, PhD**

Information Services Manager

**Josh Anderson**

Senior Graphic Designer/Webmaster  
Website development and content  
management, graphic design

**Kelli Byard**

Graphic Designer  
Publication design and production,  
website content, photography

**Ally Ketron**

Communications and Outreach Coordinator  
Communications, community engagement,  
public relations





## Chase Marcum

GIS Specialist  
GIS data collection, quality  
control, map production

## Debbie Mitchell

Administrative Assistant I  
Library, office administration

## Nick Schoenborn

GIS Analyst II  
GIS analysis and map  
production, database  
management, information  
technology

## Aubrey Weiland

Research Associate  
Technical reports, demographics,  
research in planning topics

## Alex Zendel

GIS Analyst II  
GIS analysis and map production,  
database management, web  
application development

# PLANNING ACTIVITY TIMELINE

2020 — 2021





## JANUARY

- Panorama launches
- Density Explorer goes live

## FEBRUARY

- TPO solicits project applications for 5310 funding
- Planner Levan King Cranston joins staff
- Staff hosts One Year Plan update community meeting

## MARCH

- TPO staff gives pedestrian safety presentation
- Public meetings are held for Mobility Plan 2045
- Amy Brooks is appointed Executive Director

## APRIL

- Living with Disabilities in Knox County report and story map are available
- Mobility Plan is adopted

## MAY

- In-person meetings resume
- City of Knoxville transit studies begin
- 2020 Development Activity Report is published
- Knox County Land Use and Transportation Plan RFQ is released

# HIGHLIGHTS

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## BROOKS APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Amy Brooks was named Planning's Executive Director in April by Knoxville City Mayor Indya Kincannon and Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. She accepted her first position with the agency in the Transportation division in 2007, and most recently was the Planning Services Manager. She also served as Interim Executive Director following Gerald Green's retirement, leading up to her appointment in March of this year.

## NEW TOOLS IN USE

Planning staff recently developed two new tools to help people interact with our extensive collection of data and maps. Panorama allows users to dig into existing conditions of Knox County, looking at population, demographics, economic conditions, quality of life, housing, and development. Density Explorer helps users visualize the housing density of proposed subdivisions and developments throughout the county.

## TECHNICAL REPORTS AVAILABLE

Two updates to our Technical Report Series: *Living with Disabilities in Knox County* and *Senior Population in Knox County*, have been added to our research library and made available in interactive story map format on our website. These reports dig into detailed demographic, economic, and quality of life characteristics and issues faced by each group.





## MOBILITY PLAN ADOPTED

Mobility Plan 2045 is our region's long-range transportation plan. It allows federal money to be received for local projects and ensures that the best long-term decisions are made for residents, employers, and visitors. The plan is updated every four years to account for changes in community and regional priorities, technology, project costs, and available funding. The result is a slate of 134 roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects, totaling \$4.5 billion of investment, over the next 25 years.

## COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN UNDERWAY

A comprehensive planning process that will guide land use and transportation decisions for the next 20 years began in May when an RFQ to hire a consultant was released. The consultant will work with Knox County and Planning staff to analyze population growth projections, land availability, and infrastructure conditions to identify areas of Knox County that should be preserved and those that are appropriate for new growth and investment.

## active knox SPEAKER SERIES

Active Knox is a collaboration of organizations that work under the premise that healthy design leads to healthy communities. Their ongoing speaker series brings experts to discuss health and built environment topics and how they can benefit Knoxville and Knox County. Last year, four virtual events were held.

### Design Matters: Increasing Physical Activity and Understanding Equity in Parks

Dr. Cristina Barroso and Dr. Gene Fitzhugh

### Equity Matters: Creating a Safe, Healthy, and Inclusive Transportation System for All

Charles T. Brown (with Councilmember Seema Singh and Dr. Caroline Cooley)

### Right of Way: A Conversation About the Epidemic of Pedestrian Deaths

Angie Schmitt

### Connecting People and Places by Bike

Anthony Taylor (with Jalonda Thompson and De'Ossie Dingus)

## PLANNING OUTREACH

News articles published by local media	46
Articles shared on Planning website	31
Meeting video views	5,089
Newsletters (opened)	11,607
Facebook likes	791
Twitter followers	648

## TPO OUTREACH

News articles published by local media	10
Articles shared on TPO website	20
Meeting video views	559
Mobility Plan video views	1,114
Newsletters (opened)	3,087
Facebook likes	431
Twitter followers	419
Active Knox Facebook likes	384
Active Knox Instagram followers	1,099

## SMART TRIPS OUTREACH

Newsletters (opened)	4,548
Facebook likes	770
Twitter followers	275
Instagram followers	954





# BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

## Downtown Design Review Board

The Downtown Design Review Board examines proposals for private and public development in Knoxville's center city. As of August of 2020, the group also reviews applications for infill housing in Edgewood Park, Lonsdale, and Oakwood/Lincoln Park neighborhoods for conformance with the Heart of Knoxville Infill Housing Guidelines. The goal of the review board is to foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation of the downtown area and to ensure infill development is architecturally compatible with the neighborhood, fosters neighborhood stability, creates pedestrian-oriented streets, and meets a wide range of housing needs.

### Board Members

John Thurman – Chair, Josh Wright – Vice Chair, Jarrod Arellano, Rick Blackburn, Matthew DeBardelaben, Richard Foster, Joey Natour, Lisa Hood Skinner, Sandi Swilley, Robin Thomas, East Tennessee Community Design Center

## Historic Zoning Commission

The Historic Zoning Commissions for Knoxville and Knox County evaluate projects proposed in local Historic Overlay districts. Work of the commissions is intended to stabilize or improve property values by encouraging rehabilitation and new construction that is harmonious with the area. The commissions review applications to repair, alter, rehabilitate, relocate, or demolish properties; review proposed new construction; and identify properties for local or National Register of Historic Places designation.

### Board Members

#### *Knoxville HZC*

Dationa Carter Mitchell – Chair, Rick Blackburn – Vice Chair, Elizabeth Eason, Faris Eid, Casey Fox, Hallie Hearnese, Lynne Randazzo, Travis Tillman, Stanton Webster

#### *Knox County HZC*

George Ewart – Chair, Kim Isenberg – Vice Chair, Bill Belser, Mike Crowder, Scott Smith

## TTCCA

The Tennessee Technology Corridor Development Authority and its design guidelines ensure aesthetic quality and environmental conservation for developments within the Technology Overlay zones of the city and county.

### Board Members

David Collins – Chair, Justin Biggs – Vice Chair, Nancy Elizabeth McBee, Ben Pethel, Janice Terpenney

# STAFF ACCOLADES

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

**Liz Albertson** is the President of the Pilot Light.

**Amy Brooks** serves as Treasurer for the Tennessee Chapter of the American Planning Association, is a member of the School Steering Committee for South Knoxville Elementary, and is on the United Way of Greater Knoxville's Outcome Based Investment Committee.

**Kelli Byard** serves on the advisory board for the University of Alabama-Birmingham Sigma Kappa Chapter as well as the Sigma Kappa Foundation District 3 as Collegiate Philanthropy Supervisor.

**Michelle Portier** serves as Secretary-Treasurer for the Knoxville Chapter of the American Planning Association.

**Savannah Robertson** serves on the Bike Walk Knoxville Advisory Board and was a 2021 Host Committee Member for the Association for Commuter Transportation 2021 International Conference.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**Lindsay Crockett** and **Craig Luebke** passed the American Institute of Certified Planners exam.

**Liz Albertson, Dori Caron, Lindsay Crockett, Ally Ketron, and Andrea Kupfer** completed a Municipal Management Academy certification.

**Ellen Zavisca** co-authored "Impacts of Small Changes in Thoroughfare Connectivity on the Potential for Student Walking," which was published in the *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*.

## STAFF PROMOTIONS

**Amy Brooks** – Executive Director

**Ally Ketron** – Communications and Outreach Coordinator

**Craig Luebke** – Senior Planner

**Chase Marcum** – GIS Specialist

## YEARS OF SERVICE

### 10+ Years

Emily Dills	17
Marc Payne	17
Alex Zendel	16
Ellen Zavisca	15

Liz Albertson	13
Amy Brooks	13
Mike Reynolds	13

### 20+ Years

Donna Hill	29
Debbie Mitchell	29
Mike Conger	23

### 30+ Years

Jeff Welch	35
Sherry Michienzi	33
Terry Gilhula	32
Doug Burton	31





# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

*Statement of Revenues/Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance  
Budget and Actual - General Fund for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2021  
(Pending audit)*

REVENUES	FINAL BUDGET	2021 ACTUAL UNAUDITED	VARIANCE FAVORABLE (UNFAVORABLE)
Fees and Charges	\$459,500	\$736,290	\$276,790
Federal Government Grants <sup>1</sup>	2,755,300	1,753,211	(1,002,089)
State of Tennessee Grants <sup>1</sup>	38,500	172,074	133,574
Local Grant Match (Other than Planning) <sup>2</sup>	0	25,681	25,681
City of Knoxville	1,266,900	1,266,900	0
Knox County	787,500	812,500	25,000
Government & Other Groups <sup>3</sup>	24,360	15,222	(9,138)
Misc. Revenue and Misc. Contracts Revenue <sup>4</sup>	0	35,075	35,075
From Fund Balance	0	0	0
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$5,332,060</b>	<b>\$4,816,953</b>	<b>\$(515,107)</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$2,928,648	\$2,560,272	\$368,376
Contracted Services	1,870,590	795,055	1,075,535
Supplies and Materials	683,590	620,486	63,104
Other Charges	164,404	142,224	22,180
Capital Outlay	25,985	7,724	18,261
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$5,673,217</b>	<b>\$4,125,761</b>	<b>\$1,547,456</b>
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	\$(341,157)	\$691,192	\$1,032,349
Fund Balance, July 1, 2020	\$1,843,495	\$1,843,495	\$0
Fund Balance, June 30, 2021	\$1,502,338	\$2,534,687	\$1,032,349

1 – Seven Active Grant Programs: Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG); Regional Transportation and Air Quality; Knoxville Smart Trips Program; Regional Pavement Study; TPO Bike Parking Enhancement; FTA Section 5310 Senior Transit; and Tennessee Historical Commission.

Balance includes grant funds that nonprofit organizations were not able to utilize for operations and vehicle purchases due to COVID-19 restrictions. These funds will be available in the next fiscal year.

2 – CPG-10: Knoxville Area Transit (Remix) \$2,350; TPO Bike Grant: 20% matching contributions from participants \$1,150; and Section 5310 capital van purchases: Sunshine Industries \$7,781 and Emory Valley \$14,400.

3 – Government & Other Groups: Knox County Schools PEFA VI \$8,500; The Development Corp \$3,898; and Active Knox Speaker Series \$2,824.

\$9,500 budgeted in anticipation of the City of Knoxville Census Redistricting project being completed. This project was not completed until after the fiscal year end.

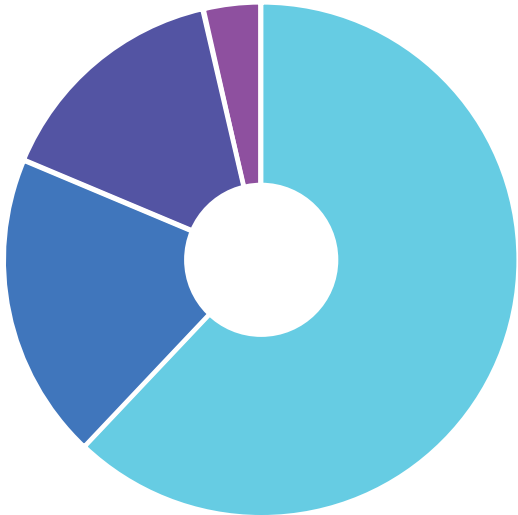
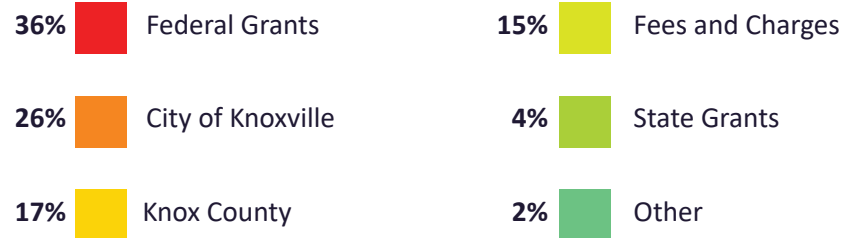
4 – Miscellaneous Revenue & Contracts: City of Knoxville payment for administration on Recode \$28,380 and Policy Map \$1,100; Sale of Chevrolet Impala \$5,050; and other miscellaneous fees \$545.





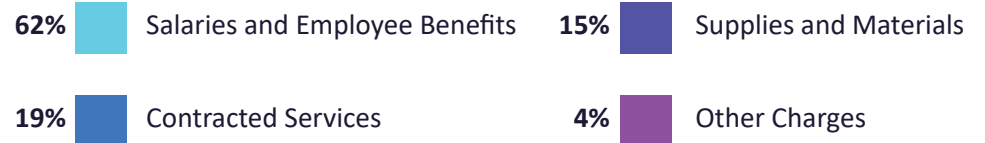
## REVENUES

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## EXPENDITURES

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## INSPIRING COMMUNITY

Established in 1956, Knoxville-Knox County Planning is responsible for comprehensive planning and administration of zoning and land subdivision regulations for the City of Knoxville and Knox County.

## OUR CORE DUTIES

### **Prepare and Adopt**

a general plan

### **Review**

subdivision regulations and site plans

### **Prepare and Recommend**

zoning ordinances and maps

### **Review**

proposed zoning amendments

### **Prepare and Advise**

on a capital improvements plan

### **Perform**

special purpose studies

## OUR MISSION

Promote healthy, vibrant communities through comprehensive planning and land use management; involve residents in an open planning process; provide objective advice to public officials; and serve as an information resource for all.



# Planning

KNOXVILLE | KNOX COUNTY

City County Building  
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Knoxville, TN 37902  
[contact@knoxplanning.org](mailto:contact@knoxplanning.org)

