



ANNUAL REPORT



KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY PLANNING | FY 2022-2023

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jeff Welch, AICP • Executive Director | 865-215-4001 • jeff.welch@knoxplanning.org

Our work of the past year was driven by collaboration. We made it a priority to provide information and staff support to local partners and the community, seizing all opportunities to join the City of Knoxville, Knox County, and others to produce meaningful resources that tackle area challenges.

We continued to contribute to the county's first ever integrated land use and transportation plan. Called Advance Knox, the project should be completed later this year. We also provided resources to the City of Knoxville to finalize a Missing Middle Housing Scan, a look at the connections between zoning and innovative infill housing options. These projects are great examples of how local agencies have joined forces to make more informed, deliberate, and responsible decisions as growth continues.

Our transportation group had a similar focus on large-scale collaboration over the past year. They participated in a series of areawide transit studies with local service providers and oversaw a regional pavement management plan that will allow more cost-effective maintenance for member jurisdictions. They also began work on a Regional Roadway Safety Action Plan, a joint effort to save lives and prevent injuries.

Behind the scenes, we continued to produce technical reports and data-access tools that help our staff and partners. We expanded the functionality of our case map viewer, updated maps showing priority populations, and continued providing web-related assistance for external agencies.

I am pleased to present this snapshot of our major accomplishments over the past year and hope you will read on to learn more. None of these accomplishments would be possible without the hard work and unwavering dedication of our staff. I am eager to see what the next 12 months hold as we continue to support our partners and lend expertise to find meaningful solutions to community challenges.



PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

The planning commission is an advisory board made up of 15 citizens—seven appointed by the City Mayor and eight 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 to make recommendations and take action on local development requests.

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 Commission. Terms are one year in length.

The Executive Committee reviews and recommends the annual budget and work program, consults and advises on matters brought by the Executive Director, and resolves staff issues as needed.

Executive Committee Membership: Karyn Adams, Tim Hill (Chair), Chris Ooten (Vice-Chair), Patrick Phillips, Jeffrey Roth

KARYN ADAMS City 2020-2024	TIM HILL (CHAIR) City 2019-2023	MARITÉ PÉREZ City 2021-2025
NANCY BARGER County 2022-2026	JOHN HUBER County 2022-2026	PATRICK PHILLIPS City 2016-2023
TAMARA BOYER County 2018-2026	RICHARD LEVENSON County 2022-2026	JEFFREY ROTH County 2011-2023
LOUIS BROWNING County 2018-2024	AMY MIDIS City 2021-2023	NATHANIEL SHELSON City 2021-2024
LOGAN HIGGINS City 2021-2025	CHRIS OOTEN (VICE CHAIR) County 2016-2024	EDDIE SMITH County 2020-2024

Planning thanks outgoing Commissioners Jim Nichols (2021- 2022), Richard Graf (2018-2022), and Scott Smith (2014-2022) for their service to the community.

The Planning Commission heard **507 total cases**

- 160 Rezonings
- 93 Plan amendments
- 74 Subdivisions (preliminary and final plats)
- 61 Development plans
- 39 Special uses
- 33 Use on reviews
- 18 Other business
- 15 Street closures
- 9 Ordinance amendments
- 4 Planned developments
- 1 Street name changes



DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

\$863.2
MILLION

Value of residential
construction

4,191

Residential units
permitted

1,316

Residential subdivision
lots created

\$246.3
MILLION

Value of non-residential
construction

180

Non-residential units
permitted

8

Non-residential
lots created



KNOX COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

Population	494,574
Population growth over past 10 years	12.2%
Area	526 sq. miles
Housing units	217,226
Median home selling price	\$325,000
Median household income	\$64,894
Population with bachelor's degree or higher	40.5%
Labor force	253,198
Unemployment rate	2.6%
Cost of living index (100 U.S. average)	84.9
Public parks	6,443 acres
Greenways and walking trails	212 miles

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.

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



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 regulate the subdivision of all land in Knox County other than the Town of Farragut and 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.

DIVISION EXPANSION

The agency is excited to welcome several new staff members to the Planning Services division.

Amy Brooks, AICP – Executive Director
Dallas DeArmond – Administrative Assistant
Shelley Gray – Planning Services Technician
Naomi Hansen – Planner
Samiul Haque – Planner
Oscar Iniguez – Planning Services Technician
Madison Louis – Planning Services Technician
Frankie Ramos – Planning Services Technician
Spencer Schmudde – Planning Services Technician



JEFF WELCH, AICP
Executive Director

LIZ ALBERTSON, AICP
Principal Planner

DORI CARON
Senior Administrative Assistant

LINDSAY CROCKETT, AICP
Senior Planner

DONNA HILL
GIS Specialist

JESSIE HILLMAN
Senior Planner

ERIN KELBLY
Senior Planning Services Technician

ANDREA KUPFER, AICP
GIS Specialist

TINA PIATT
Finance Officer

MICHELLE PORTIER, AICP
Principal Planner/Planning Services Supervisor

MIKE REYNOLDS, AICP
Principal Planner

WHITNEY WARNER
Planner

Missing Middle

Planning collaborated with consultant Opticos, City of Knoxville, and Knoxville Area Association of Realtors on a Missing Middle Housing Scan. The report identifies barriers to innovative types of infill housing development in the city, as well as next steps to better accommodate them in the future. Since the report was released, city staff have engaged agency leadership, local partners, and City Council to find opportunities to bring these housing types to our community.

Advance Knox

Work on this comprehensive land use and transportation plan continued over the past year with public outreach focused on a preferred growth scenario, future land use map, and list of prioritized transportation projects. The final document is expected later this year.

Alcoa Highway

The Alcoa Highway Corridor Study was adopted by the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission, Knoxville City Council, and Knox County Commission last summer. The study looks at land uses and zoning along the corridor to determine changes needed to spur redevelopment and encourage retail, commercial, and housing investment.



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, freight movement, and transit.

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

SMART TRIPS

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

372

registered participants

18,646
gallons

of gas saved by participants

36,926

fewer automobile trips as participants made alternative choices

1,434,278
calories

burned by biking, walking, or other active transportation



JEFF WELCH, AICP
Transportation Planning
Manager/TPO Director

DOUG BURTON
Principal Planner

MIKE CONGER, PE
Senior Transportation Engineer

CRAIG LUEBKE, AICP
Senior Planner

ELLEN ZAVISCA, PTP
Principal Planner

KATE JONES
AmeriCorps Member

Transportation Improvement Program

The FY 2023-2026 TIP was adopted by the TPO Executive Board in October to program funding for roadway, bridge, transit system, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. The TIP is a four-year work program of federally funded, regionally significant, and financially constrained transportation projects within the Knoxville Urban Area.

Pavement Management

The TPO worked with Applied Pavement Technology, Inc. to assess pavement conditions for the cities of Knoxville, Oak Ridge, Maryville, and Clinton, as well as Blount County. The jurisdictions are now using that information to identify the streets most in need of repair and to develop multi-year maintenance and rehabilitation plans for cost-effective management of the region's road network.

Regional Roadway Safety Action Plan

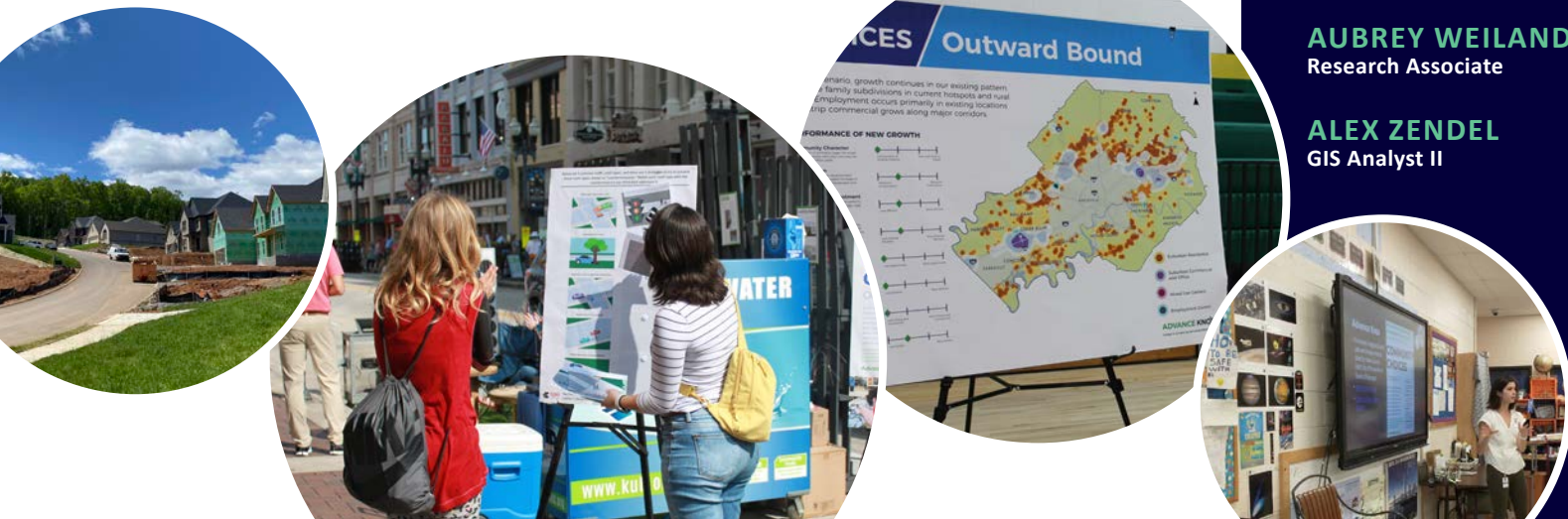
The TPO has formed a task force with local government, TDOT, and Bike Walk Knoxville to identify changes that can be made in the Knoxville Region to save lives and prevent serious injuries on our roadways. The plan is expected to be finished in the summer and, once completed, will position the TPO and local governments to apply for federal funding.



INFORMATION SERVICES

This division comprises several support functions, including research, GIS, web development, graphic design, and communications. Staff assist agency-wide planning activities by conducting background research for plans and presentations, maintaining the print and digital library, and leading community outreach efforts.

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.



TERRY GILHULA, PHD
Information Services Manager

JOSH ANDERSON
Senior Web Developer

KELLI BYARD
Graphic Designer

ALLY KETRON
Communications and
Outreach Supervisor

NICK SCHOENBORN
GIS Analyst/IT Coordinator

JACE SWAIN-CROWLEY
GIS Specialist

AUBREY WEILAND
Research Associate

ALEX ZENDEL
GIS Analyst II

Case Viewer Enhancements

In response to user requests, a Transportation Impact Study layer was added to Planning's Case Viewer Map in November. This function allows users to filter their search to show active and archived cases with an associated traffic study.

Technical Report Series

Staff recently added two new studies to our technical report series. We completed our look at the local center of population and its underlying social and economic drivers, as well as an examination of priority populations, those neighborhoods most challenged by daily stressors and inequities.

Website Support

Staff from our Information Services division continue to lend expertise to local partners by providing content, design, and programming support for their websites. The team plays an important role in website support for Knoxville Chamber, Industrial Development Board, Advance Knox, Tennessee Chapter of the American Planning Association, and Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization.



PLANNING ACTIVITY TIMELINE

2022

JULY

- GIS Specialist Jace Swain-Crowley joins staff
- Alcoa Highway Corridor Study is adopted
- Advance Knox hosts Scenario Planning Lunch and Learn

AUGUST

- 2022 Facts and Figures Report is available
- GIS staff assist City of Knoxville with electric vehicle charging station analysis and maps
- Planner Whitney Warner joins staff

SEPTEMBER

- Jeff Welch is appointed Executive Director
- Missing Middle Housing Scan is released
- Planning and TPO participate in Parking Day

OCTOBER

- Choices Week public workshops are held for Advance Knox
- Knox County 2020 Center of Population technical report is released
- Staff participate in annual TAPA/TSITE conference
- TPO adopts FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program

NOVEMBER

- 2021-2022 Planning Annual Report is released
- Traffic Impact Study layer is added to KGIS Planning Case Viewer

DECEMBER

- AmeriCorps member Kate Jones joins TPO

2023

JANUARY

- Online research tools Panorama and ACS Explorer are updated with 2021 data

FEBRUARY

- Work on Regional Roadway Safety Action Plan begins
- One Year Plan update meetings are held

MARCH

- Priority Populations technical report is released
- Priorities Week workshops are held for Advance Knox
- Regional Pavement Management System data collection is completed

APRIL

- 2023 Bike Month Guide is released
- Planning Technicians Frankie Ramos, Spencer Schmudde and Madison Louis join staff
- Priority Populations data dashboard is added to Panorama
- One Year Plan is adopted

MAY

- Administrative Assistant Dallas DeArmond, Planning Technicians Oscar Iniguez and Shelley Gray, and Planner Naomi Hansen join staff

JUNE

- Amy Brooks is appointed Executive Director
- Planner Samiul Haque joins staff

PLANNING OUTREACH

News articles published by local media	72
Articles shared on Planning website	16
Newsletters (opened)	19,974
Facebook followers	1,097
Twitter followers	690



ACTIVE KNOX OUTREACH

Facebook followers	456
Instagram followers	1,239

TPO OUTREACH

News articles published by local media	26
Articles shared on TPO website	18
Newsletters (opened)	1,881
Facebook followers	525
Twitter followers	415



SMART TRIPS OUTREACH

Newsletters (opened)	7,106
Facebook followers	872
Twitter followers	267
Instagram followers	1,003

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Design Review Board

The Design Review Board examines proposals for private and public development in Knoxville's center city. This 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 established neighborhoods, fosters community stability, creates pedestrian-oriented streets, and meets a wide range of housing needs.

Historic Zoning Commissions

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.



Tennessee Technology Corridor Development Authority (TTCDA)

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.

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, is made up of elected officials from the TPO planning area, representatives from the East Tennessee Development District, and the Governor of Tennessee. The Technical Committee consists of local planners and engineers who work closely with staff and make recommendations to the Executive Board.



PLANNING STAFF ACCOLADES

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Mike Conger** serves as Chair of the Knox County Air Pollution Control Board.
- Ally Ketron** serves on the Island Home Park Neighborhood Association Board of Governors.
- Andrea Kupfer** volunteers at the Clarence Brown Theater.
- Michelle Portier** volunteers for East Tennessee Children’s Hospital.
- Aubrey Weiland** volunteers at Centro Hispano.

- Jeff Welch** is on the Board of Directors for the East Tennessee Community Design Center.
- Ellen Zavisca** is a member of the Technical Committee for the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

STAFF PROMOTIONS

- Jeff Welch** – Executive Director
- Erin Kelbly** – Senior Planning Services Technician
- Michelle Portier** – Principal Planner/Planning Services Supervisor
- Nick Schoenborn** – GIS Analyst/IT Coordinator

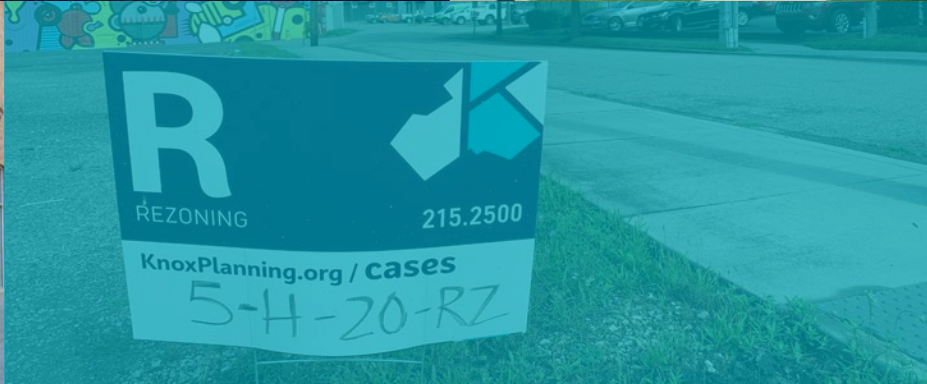
YEARS OF SERVICE

10+ Years	
Alex Zendel	18
Ellen Zavisca	17
Liz Albertson	15
Mike Reynolds	15
Dori Caron	11

20+ Years	
Mike Conger	25

30+ Years	
Jeff Welch	37
Terry Gilhula	34
Doug Burton	33
Donna Hill	31





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