

Promoting Equity In Middle Tennessee

**Diversifying Partnerships
in Transit & Transportation**

A Report Submitted to the Surdna Foundation
by Sustainable Community Development Group
August 2014

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ABOUT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP



Sustainable Community Development Group (SCDG) is a Washington, DC based nonprofit leader specializing in collaborative problem solving that supports civic engagement, healthy community building and inclusive engagement of diverse stakeholders. We believe in Sustainability for All by delivering support to community leaders, elected officials, business and industry, government, foundations and grantees. Research, technical assistance and project management actively promotes equitable development, environmental justice and smart growth.

We are capacity builders working in multi-stakeholder settings internationally, at the federal level, in the neighborhood, in municipalities, states and regions. Cities, towns and neighborhoods are complex systems which require many elements to work well, from clean air and water, to decent housing and safe streets to good schools, and access to shopping, health care and other services. Our goals are education and strategies that help develop leaders who understand their assets, how public and private redevelopment works and how it can be used to create jobs, green the infrastructure and tackle health, environmental and socioeconomic concerns. We have global experience and a network of strategic relationships. We value aligning our skills as part of the team, facilitating effective engagement and efforts for change.

Sustainable Community Development Group associates are knowledgeable about the challenges of integrated decisions involving environmental and health factors like pollution, climate and land use; socioeconomic factors such as race, job readiness, employment and wealth; and historic factors such as heritage preservation and sprawl. We are sensitive to cultural distinctions. Our professionals have worked with indigenous peoples and hundreds of community activists, delivering technical assistance, coordinating working relationships with stakeholder groups and overcoming obstacles to public involvement. Our win-win is sustainable economic development that delivers opportunities, benefits and prosperity for all communities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deohn Ferris, Sustainable Community Development Group's President and Founder, is the principal author of *Promoting Equity In Middle Tennessee: Diversifying Partnerships In Transit and Transportation*. Ferris has extraordinary experience advocating on behalf of and working with communities in countries on 5 continents. She is the environmental lawyer and environmental justice pioneer who led the groundbreaking campaign resulting in the federal call-to-action Presidential Executive Order 12898, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and the Federal Inter-Agency Workgroup. She is a nationally recognized provider of public policy expertise and technical assistance that tackles sustainability in low wealth neighborhoods. Ferris was ably assisted in researching this report *Promoting Equity In Middle Tennessee: Diversifying Partnerships In Transit and Transportation* by Sustainable Community Development Group's Urban Planning Fellow, Lenz Bayas, the firm's Legal Intern Niyah Walters, and Research Intern Paul Epps.

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A full list of interview subjects and their affiliations is in the Appendix.

INTRODUCTION

Promoting Equity In Middle Tennessee: Diversifying Partnerships In Transit and Transportation is a report developed to facilitate Cumberland Region Tomorrow and partner organizations in Tennessee working to improve equity measures and inclusive leadership. The report's objective is to advance the equity conversation in Middle Tennessee by helping Cumberland Region Tomorrow to strengthen connections to grassroots civic infrastructure and leaders representing underserved communities and communities of color. Cumberland Region Tomorrow is a key voice on next generation infrastructure solutions for Tennessee, especially with respect to transportation networks and, more recently, stormwater.

The Cumberland Region Tomorrow partnership is a regional collaborative network of organizations and agencies whose equity focus is on creating and enhancing access to opportunities for all people. The network's messaging framework is grounded in a set of principles which incorporate ensuring economic competitiveness and wise use of fiscal resources and community development that provides opportunities, jobs and housing choices. Working with public and private partners, Cumberland Region Tomorrow is dedicated to planning for the future livability and economic vitality of the 10 counties of Middle Tennessee, encouraging growth planning, with emphasis on transit and transportation, land use, preservation of rural space and community character. Equity means smart growth and increased transportation options, housing choices, quality education, good jobs, access to parks, open space, healthy food and other services for all communities in Tennessee.

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research for this report combines background literature reviews, research and stakeholder outreach, 25 interviews and strategic development of 13 organization profiles of groups in the State and Middle Tennessee that could become effective partners with Cumberland Region Tomorrow in exploring solutions and strategies to address equity. There is a cross-section of 25 interdisciplinary leaders who contributed to the report. Discussions with Dr. Bridget Jones, Executive Director of Cumberland Region Tomorrow and the network's national partner Transportation for America (the policy alliance of Smart Growth America) led by Director, James Corless set the stage for developing this report. The interview list of 23 more Tennesseans was developed through a process of research and information gathering about stakeholder groups and institutions in the region and the State. Culturally diverse leadership, collaboration and a successful track record addressing racial, social, economic and environmental concerns is the starting point.

Individuals interviewed for this report comprise community and business leaders, transportation officials, academicians, advocacy groups, governmental and elected officials in the Middle Tennessee region and the State. They are experts and leaders representing constituencies, African Americans, Hispanics, multicultural immigrants and refugees; they are minority business leaders and professors; they are elected representatives; and they are governmental decision makers in land use planning, transit and transportation.

Interviews and Profiles

For the purpose of this report, interview subjects span many disciplines and cultures and since current organizational priorities of the 13 profiled entities are varied, when conducting this inquiry, a common understanding of what is meant by the terms equity or equitable development was important. For the purpose

of this report, the shared definition of equity and equitable development is: ensuring that everyone regardless of race, economic status, ability or the neighborhood in which they live has access to ingredients for health and environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being including good jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, housing choices, public transportation options, good schools, safe and walkable streets, parks and access to healthy food.

Because smart growth is anti-sprawl, reducing automobile miles traveled, promoting availability of convenient public transit and enhancing community walkability are core community and economic development objectives. Advancing stakeholder engagement and influence in transit and transportation decisions and investments are smart growth priorities. As a result, the inquiry for this report hones in on incorporating equity in the public transit and transportation planning and development decision process by, in particular, identifying and strengthening inclusion and involvement of groups working on community building. The 13 entities profiled and their executive leadership are in Section C of this report. The list of all profiled organizations and institutions is in the Appendix.

Promoting Equity In Middle Tennessee: Diversifying Partnerships In Transit and Transportation shares perspectives and provides insight into working with organizations and institutions there to achieve equity and equitable development. The report identifies and profiles a multidisciplinary group of 13 established entities working statewide and in the Middle Tennessee region on surmounting racial, social and economic barriers. Leaders and experts who were interviewed and these 13 groups are entities that could become effective partners with Cumberland Region Tomorrow, exploring strategies and solutions which highlight the connections between providing opportunities and achieving sustainable growth, land use and transit in Tennessee.

B. REGIONAL MIDDLE TENNESSEE OVERVIEW

This overview of Middle Tennessee is a snapshot of regional demographics and regional composition. The ten county Middle Tennessee region is a rapidly growing, increasingly ethnically diverse geography. Comprised of the counties of Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson, Middle Tennessee is one of the foremost growth epicenters in the South. This overview is in 4 parts: Population Growth, Public Health, Economic Resiliency and Transportation and Transit.

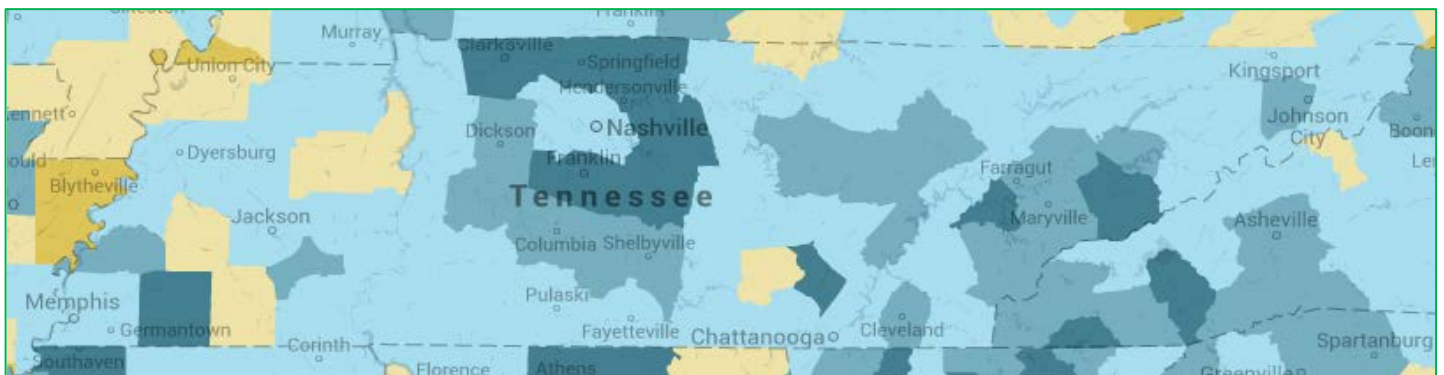


Figure 1: Tennessee Counties Population Growth – Growth is Highest in Darker Areas

I. POPULATION GROWTH

According to 2010 US Census data, Tennessee has a total population of 6,346,105 people; an 11.5% increase since the 2000 US Census. Growth across Tennessee is described by scholars as steady. Middle Tennessee

experienced greater population growth than the State as a whole, with the average population growth among the counties at 23.5%. This region boasts a population of 1.67 million, comprising 27% of the State's population. By 2035, the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) predicts that the population within the Nashville Metropolitan Area will swell to over 2 million people, representing a 64% increase from 2006 figures. The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority's Strategic Master Plan projects that the Middle Tennessee region has been growing both in employment and population for the past several decades, and that growth is projected to increase through 2035.

Nashville, the State capital, is Tennessee's second largest metropolitan area. It is the fifth largest city in the Southeastern United States and one of the State's prime urban growth centers. Murfreesboro and Clarksville are smaller though also sizeable cities nearby. Word of the Nashville's attributes is spreading. *Conde Naste Traveler* Magazine named Nashville one of the best places to visit. In 2013, the *New York Times* brightened the spotlight calling Nashville the "It City." Nashville's Mayor Karl Dean adds that the City has "...a very diverse economy, great universities, we have the healthcare industry, the music industry, the hospitality and people all over the world are recognizing that Nashville is a very appealing city because of the culture, how friendly we are, [and] the great restaurant scene." Regional population growth coupled with increasing public and private investment in projects throughout Nashville foretell an expanding growing job market, lots of service industries and a booming economy.

According to the University of Tennessee, "The suburban counties that are like a donut around the big cities...especially Nashville, are the ones that show the most growth." Census estimates point to substantial growth in Montgomery, Williamson, Wilson and Rutherford counties. Rutherford County, a south Nashville suburb, is one of Tennessee's fastest growing counties, with a population that jumped 44% in the latest Census. Eight of the top 10 cities in raw population growth in Tennessee are in Middle Tennessee: Nashville, Murfreesboro, Clarksville, Spring Hill, Franklin, Smyrna, Laverne and Brentwood. Williamson County was named the 17th wealthiest county in the nation by *Forbes* Magazine in 2010.

Immigration

Expansion is driven largely by immigrants. Tennessee's Hispanic population grew faster than any other group — 134% to 290,059 — more than doubling to almost 5% of the population. Nashville is an important center of international refugee resettlement, estimating that about 60% of the City's foreign-born population is Hispanic, and 35%-40% are resettled refugees. Eighty languages are spoken in Nashville public schools. The City has the nation's largest Kurdish population and was an international polling site for the Iraqi election after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Immigrants also come from Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia, among other places. There is a growing Muslim population as well.

Racial Groups

Racially, Tennessee is relatively similar to the United States, with the most noticeable differences between State and national statistics occurring among the Hispanic and Asian populations. In part as a result of the rapid population growth taking place, Middle Tennessee's racial diversity is expanding. Between 2000 and 2010, there was an 18% increase in the White population, compared with 7% growth statewide; a 23.6% increase in the African American population, compared with 13% growth statewide; and a 161.2% increase in the Hispanic population, compared with 134% growth statewide. However, it is important to note that in absolute numbers, growth among the White demographic is still the largest, as more than 80% of Middle Tennessee is White, and the percentage growth (as a percentage) is still not significantly less than that of African Americans, the next largest racial group.

**NASHVILLE-DAVIDSON COUNTY-MUFREESBORO
POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS AND DIVERSITY**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2012</u>
American Indian or Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic)	3,583	4,032	4,096
Asian or Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic)	21,087	37,148	40,798
Black (Non-Hispanic)	194,609	240,779	251,568
Hispanic	41,173	105,367	112,335
Two or More Races (Non-Hispanic)	11,699	24,652	27,212
White (Non-Hispanic)	1,039,719	1,177,956	1,208,694

Definition: Resident Population By Race and Ethnicity. Statistics Compiled By Brandeis University.

II. PUBLIC HEALTH

Social determinants of health such as race, income, education, housing, food supply and dietary habits are predictors of the health status of the overall population. Diseases that are significant in the population nationally are also challenges in the State of Tennessee. Diseases statistically prevalent in the general population are often bellwether diseases in communities of color and low income among them diabetes and obesity, cardiovascular disease and asthma.

Diabetes and Obesity

Robert Wood Johnson and Trust for America rank Tennessee 10th most obese State in the nation with a 2010-2012 adult obesity rate of 31.9% and diabetes rate of 11.9%. Tennessee ranks 5th highest in the percentage of diabetic adults compared to other states. More than 30% of the population self-identify as obese, according to a recent Centers for Disease Control report. Statistics are even more significant in communities of color, with 38% and 36.7% of African Americans and Hispanics, respectively, classified as obese. Conversely, Nashville, like many other metropolitan areas, is comparably healthy to its rural counterparts, with 24.7% self-reporting as obese, compared to 28.1% nationwide. According to a 2007 Tennessee Department of Health report, obesity and sedentary lifestyle are more common among African Americans than whites; and high cholesterol is more common among whites than African Americans.

Diabetes, another national health challenge in Tennessee, disproportionately impacts African Americans and Hispanics. Between 1996 and 2005, the percentage of Tennessee adults with diabetes almost doubled from 5.0 percent to 9.1 percent. As of 2010, the Centers for Disease Control reports a 10.2% rate. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Trust for America rank the State's diabetes rates 3rd highest nationally.

Cardiovascular Disease

Hypertension is one of the leading risk factors for cardiovascular disease. The national median for hypertensive adult Americans is almost 31%. Similarly, Tennessee has a high blood pressure burden. United Health Foundation's Tennessee statistics peg the 2011 hypertension rate in the State at 32.6% (2011 BRFSS Methodology); Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has it at 38.6%, ranking it 3rd highest nationally. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the nation, in Tennessee and in women in the State.

Men are much more likely to die from coronary heart disease, and Black and Hispanic men and women are much more likely to die of heart disease and stroke than their white counterparts.

In 2004 the age-adjusted heart disease death rate for Black Tennesseans was 32% greater than for Whites; the age-adjusted stroke death rate for Black Tennesseans was 43% higher than for Whites. Heart disease was the 3rd leading cause of death among Hispanics.

Asthma

Nationally asthma prevalence increased from 7.3% in 2001 to 8.4% in 2010, when 25.7 million persons had asthma (reported in 2012 by Centers for Disease Control as the highest levels ever). As for Tennessee, in 2012, the reported asthma rate for adults was 6.0% and 9.5% for children.

Between 2001 and 2010 there was a statistically significant decrease in the inpatient hospitalization rate for primary asthma among males. Black females had the highest asthma inpatient hospitalization rate, followed by Black males, White females and White males. Hispanics had a higher inpatient hospitalization rate than non-Hispanics.

III. ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Statewide economically, Tennessee fares comparably with the United States as a whole, when evaluated by the metric of unemployment. The United States rate is 6.1% and the rate in the first quarter of 2014 in Tennessee is 6.9%. Middle Tennessee does not deviate significantly from the State, showing an average unemployment rate in the range of 6.7% among the ten counties.

Middle Tennessee State University Business and Economic Research Center's first quarter 2014 report shows the services-providing sectors adding jobs. Tennessee's poverty rates for Whites, Blacks and Hispanics is respectively 18%, 37% and 35% for 2011-2012 according to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

Employment

Creating music and entertainment is what makes Nashville most famous. Nashville is #5 on *Forbes Magazine* 2014 list of Best Places for Business and Careers based upon cities with strong business climates, low costs of doing business and the workforce. To determine the ranking, researchers rated the 200 largest metro areas on these factors and jobs, costs of living, income growth, quality of life and workforce education.

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce reports that Middle Tennessee has strong employers. Vanderbilt University, Nissan North America in Rutherford County, Health Care Holdings and St. Thomas Health are all major employers. Nissan North America's corporate headquarters are in Cool Springs in Williamson County. Maury County hosts a General Motors facility. Montgomery County hosts an Air Force military base, and the City of Clarksville is the 5th largest in Tennessee. Health care is one of Nashville's top industries. According to the Nashville Health Council, the City is known as "the nation's health care center."

Figure 2: State of Tennessee



Housing

In Tennessee, median home value and median rent closely track each other. Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) statistics show that Middle Tennessee counties – Davidson, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson – have among the highest home prices in the State. Williamson County is the State’s most expensive. In 2013, appreciation in the Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was the second highest in the State. The 5.7% home prices growth rate in the Nashville-Davidson County MSA is higher than the overall 4.8% US average.

Nashville prices are accelerating including rental rates which rank statewide in the top 3. There is a shortfall of affordable rental housing units especially at the lower end of income levels. Forty percent of Tennessee’s rental households are defined by the State as cost-burdened, spending more than 35% of income for shelter. One THDA Housing Needs Assessment: Rental Challenges and Opportunities states “...almost 50 percent of minority households face some sort of housing problem.”

The Agency’s 2005-2010 data sets analysis shows “One-quarter of Tennessee’s white population is facing at least one form of housing problem (either cost-burdened, overcrowded, or lacking kitchen/plumbing facilities). This rate is almost double for Black and Latino households. While minority households are disproportionately impacted by housing problems, approximately 70 percent of the households in the State with housing problems are White.”

Nashville Next

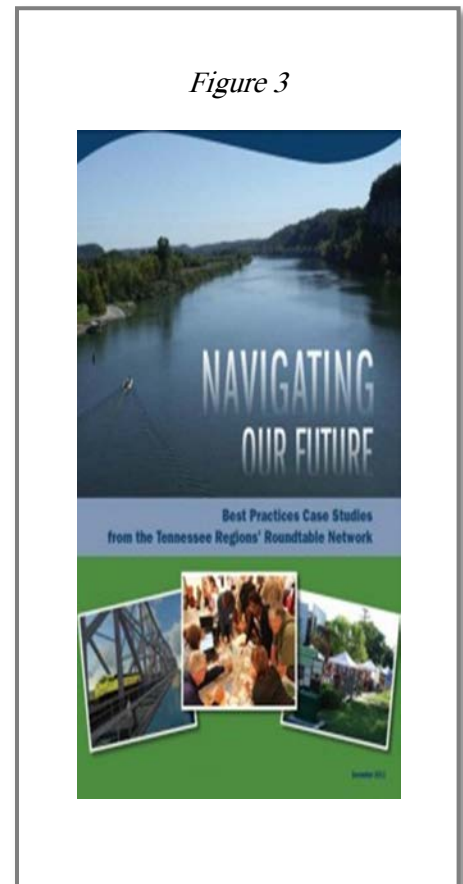
Nashville Next is the process to create a plan for the future of metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County. This mayoral initiative, under the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Department, is the regional Middle Tennessee planning model committed to equity and diverse community engagement on major issues affecting growth and progress. The central query is “How will we get around in Nashville and Middle Tennessee over the next 25 years?” Nashville Next aims to increase community involvement, reaching out to new constituencies.

The steering committee of community and metro partners guides the process covering four goal areas: Efficient Government, Economic Development, Environment, and Equity. Resource teams comprised of multi-stakeholder volunteers provide input to City planners. “Driving Forces” reports explain the societal and economic factors affecting each topic in the plan which is scheduled to take effect in 2015 and guide Nashville and Davidson County through 2040. Nine of the 13 organizations working on racial, social, economic or environmental justice, which were researched and are profiled in this report, are engaged in Nashville Next.

IV. TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Middle Tennessee is a highly mobile and connected area; 62% percent of the region’s workforce is commuters from outside the 10-county designation. Cumberland Region Tomorrow identifies Nashville as ranking consistently low, however, in comparison to other metropolitan areas when judged by the metric of hours spent

Figure 3



commuting during peak hours. In Middle Tennessee, working families pay a quarter of their income in transportation costs, according to the nonprofit Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee. More people and agencies are looking to mass transit to cut those costs. Suburbanites often have no commuting alternatives other than the automobile.

In the public processes carried out by the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) Strategic Transit Master Plan, increasing frequency of service emerged as most important. People asked for more buses to eliminate overcrowding, and for more service throughout the day, in the evenings and on weekends. Another need raised in the Strategic Transit Master Plan process is for transit to be more competitive to the automobile. This can be couched in terms of speed of travel or overall trip time for transit versus the automobile and also in terms of availability of space on the buses.

The public is requesting faster service, which is needed to incentivize fewer automobile trips thus reducing congestion, pollution and greenhouse gas. MTA's service area is Nashville and specifically designated Davidson County areas. The Agency's long term plan (2026-2035) seeks opportunities to provide high capacity service to commuter-growth zones of Rutherford, Sumner and Williamson Counties. Current options include commuter bus services in Robertson, Rutherford and Sumner counties and a soon-to-start service in Dickson County.

Emerging Trends

In Middle Tennessee and across the country, younger constituencies are the new workforce. They are insistent about transit options and frequently make decisions based upon the availability of it. A recent study of millennials (ages 18-34) by the Rockefeller Foundation and Transportation for America reveals that this age group has a different idea of mobility. Most prefer relying less on an automobile, considering the cost to purchase and maintain a car, and they favor communities that offer reliable, high quality transit.

Nashville is one of 10 municipalities in the study which reports that only 32% of the City's millennials rated the public transit system as excellent or good, while 16% rated it as poor, compared to the 10-city average where 50% rated public transit systems as excellent and 11% as poor. Locally, 54% stated they never used public transportation, while 27% was the average across the 10 cities. As a result, 85% of Nashvillians thought it was very important to have regular access to a car or truck. Four percent used a bus to travel versus 89% by car. According to the survey, young people make decisions on where to work and live based on transit options and transit options are one of three major factors considered when determining where to live.

C. REVIEW OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five interdisciplinary experts and leaders contributed to this report. Setting the stage for developing the report, two of those leaders are Dr. Bridget Jones, Executive Director of Cumberland Region Tomorrow and the network's national partner, Transportation for America, led by Director, James Corless. In addition to background literature reviews, stakeholder, historical and demographic research and outreach conducted for this report, relationships are forged with 23 more Tennessee leaders who were identified, researched and selected for interviews comprising community and business leaders, transportation officials, academicians, advocacy organizations and governmental officials in the Middle Tennessee region and the State.

Interviewed individuals are experts on social, racial, environmental and economic justice; they are leaders representing underserved communities and communities of color such as African Americans, Hispanics, immigrants and refugees; they are minority business leaders and academicians; and they are land use planning, transit and transportation decision makers. Interview subjects represent nonprofits, colleges and universities (institutions), businesses and agencies. The full list of interview subjects and their affiliations is in the Appendix.

Interviews conducted demonstrate a high level of interest in the topic of equitable development and inclusion of leaders, organizations and institutions working on racial, social, economic and environmental justice in the transit and transportation planning process and in decision making on regional and State investments.

Interview findings are grouped below as follows:

1. Multiple barriers inhibit inclusion in the transit and transportation planning and development process although engagement is crucial.
2. Capacity building, expertise and resources are critical to supporting effective, inclusive engagement in the transit and transportation planning and development process.
3. Leveraging existing resources is important to support inclusion in the transit and transportation planning and development process.

1. MULTIPLE BARRIERS INHIBIT INCLUSION IN THE TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS ALTHOUGH ENGAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL.

Experts and leaders interviewed focus on a variety of issues; however, they share a common understanding of the significance of transit and transportation. Everyone referenced the primacy of connecting neighborhoods with the broader metropolitan region and Middle Tennessee. In almost every discussion, transit and transportation and meeting community needs were addressed in the context of six factors: Community Health; Neighborhood Vitality; Workforce Readiness; Employment and Income; Local Business Success; and Opportunity Access.

Agenda Priorities

Stakeholders offered that organizations working in the Middle Tennessee region on racial, social, economic and environmental justice have crowded agendas. Prioritizing existing organizational “bread-and-butter” issues is paramount. Further, although most groups would recognize it as essential for their constituencies, most if not all would have limited or no existing capacity to address transit and transportation planning. In this case, a learning curve and effective community engagement are linked. There is consensus that unfamiliarity of many organizations and the constituencies which they serve inhibits quality involvement.

Complexity and duration of the planning and development process compound the barriers. Distrust grounded in experiences of urban renewal throwing history and culture overboard or gentrification or perceptions of the development process, government and the private sector can also impede motivation to engage. There is sensitivity to community skepticism about soliciting input into the process, in particular, concerning at what stage, when and how stakeholder engagement does or does not happen.

The multi-year planning and development process and sequence of activities can take years, which is not generally understood and can be discouraging. Engagement over the long-term requires investment over the long-term, for which staffing and resources are commonly currently unavailable.

Needs Assessment

Interviews associated inclusive community planning and engagement with ability to leverage existing resources and attract investment that is necessary to stabilize neighborhoods, to build and sustain local businesses and to create opportunities and choices. They also associated inclusion with identifying and meeting transit needs, availability of transit, convenient travel times especially in the early and late hours and to places in the counties and metro areas where the jobs are.

Transportation is an issue that connects many others. It's part of the bigger picture; embedded in issues that organizations are already working on. Diverse groups can contribute to the conversation. Diversity is viewed as the on-ramp to more robust engagement creating dialogue which would bring about better transit and transportation outcomes in the Nashville metro, the Middle Tennessee region and statewide.

Case Study: Gentrification

Gentrification and community revitalization in the Nashville metro were emphasized in many of the interviews as the prime reason that inclusion of diverse groups is crucial. Community rebirth of old neighborhoods in the "It City" is on the rise. Scholars cited the desire for in-town and closer living as the *raison d'être* for snapping up older, cheaper housing in East, South and West Nashville, increasingly in North Nashville as well as the City's surrounding inner ring suburbs. Community revitalization is bringing newcomers and new amenities like parks, shopping, restaurants and markets, entertainment, restoration of old buildings, cleaning up blight and vacant properties.

Interviews highlighted public housing and lower cost rental housing giving way to new development. Affordability of housing and rapid gentrification were highlighted as cautionary indicators in the region. Home price escalation is noted among the biggest challenges facing a City with a historically low cost of living and good quality of life.

Public investment in certain areas is associated with gentrification. Long-term residents, workers and business owners pinched by rising rents and property values are feeling excluded from the benefits enjoyed by neighborhood newcomers.

The suburbs confront affordability too; for example, rapidly growing, affluent Franklin County and Williamson County, the State's most expensive. Scholars say that poorer and more moderate income people are moving to the suburbs, commuting from farther away which could indicate trending towards suburbanization of poverty.

Metro Nashville-Davidson County's 2013-2018 Consolidated Plan recognizes housing affordability and fair housing as important concerns finding that "historically, minority households had limited access to quality housing and quality neighborhoods." While segregation levels have decreased and housing opportunities for minorities have expanded to some extent, many Tennessee counties are still racially segregated. "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Choice" is also recognized as a priority need within the jurisdiction.

The Plan outlines strategies to address impediments such as scarcity of units, enforcement and evaluating new projects factoring in proximity to public transportation, healthy food options and schools and parks.

Figure 4: Regional Transit Benefits

- **Community Health**
- **Neighborhood Vitality**
- **Workforce Readiness**
- **Employment and Income**
- **Local Business Success**
- **Opportunity Access**

Approximately 20% of the population in the Nashville Metropolitan Area lives below the poverty line (14.9% is the national average).

2. CAPACITY BUILDING EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES ARE CRITICAL TO SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE, INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

Capacity building and need for new community engagement and technical assistance resources are the #1 and #2 most mentioned factors impeding engagement of organizations working on racial, social, economic or environmental justice in the Middle Tennessee Region. Capacity building as a means to promote trust and collaboration is a collective theme.

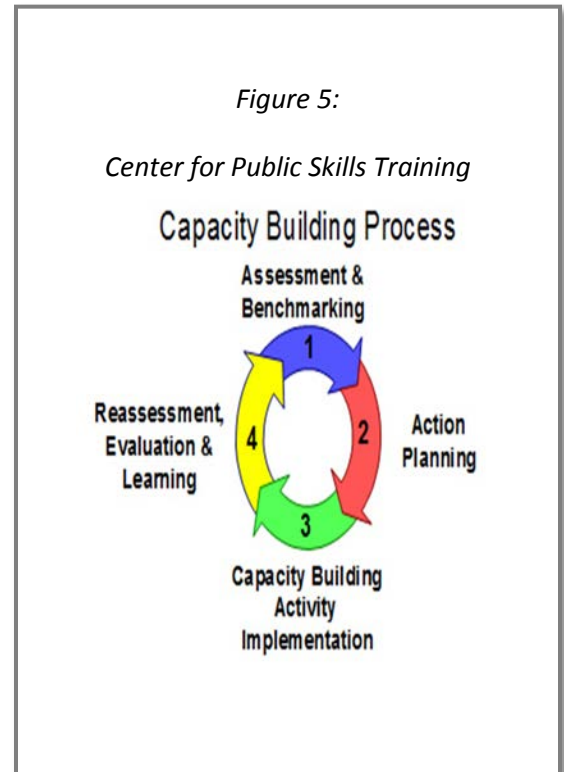
Organizations in the region have variable staff levels and budgets. Consequently, new funding that supports capacity building is central to achieving inclusive engagement. There is general agreement that organizations and institutions which could support them by providing expertise need additional funding for staffing and technical assistance. Paired with culturally competent staff, resources would strengthen knowledge about the planning process, knowledge about the relationship of transportation to existing priorities, and it would enable organizations to work with their constituencies on transit and transportation issues engaging them over the long-term. Resources to reach out to communities, provide training, stay up-to-date on issues and the planning process are all noted as capacity needs.

Resource Needs

Meeting resource needs would enable organizations to staff neighborhood engagement, conduct focus groups, gather and synthesize input. Expertise to review surveys, data and information and to collaborate with other stakeholders would facilitate ideas potentially opening up more opportunities for constituencies. Assistance identifying and applying for funding opportunities is another highlighted area. Some interviews mention need to build the capacity and cultural competency of governmental entities. Addressing affordable housing is pinpointed as a space wherein additional governmental staffing would be beneficial.

Some interviews express the need for development of innovative communication strategies especially with respect to immigrant populations and multiple languages. One interview notes that a full time community organizer and a full time researcher familiar with mixed methods of investigation would be vital. The organizer would promote networking and coalition building. Both positions would facilitate breaking down silos and working with government and other stakeholders.

In summary, capacity is defined in the interviews as the ability of organizations and institutions to collaborate and to fulfill their missions in an effective manner. Since many of the nonprofits working in the region on racial, social, economic and environmental justice are smaller and possess limited resources, particularly when measured against the challenges and critical issues that they address, capacity building to integrate transit and transportation is a major need and it would boost collaboration on equity and equitable development in the

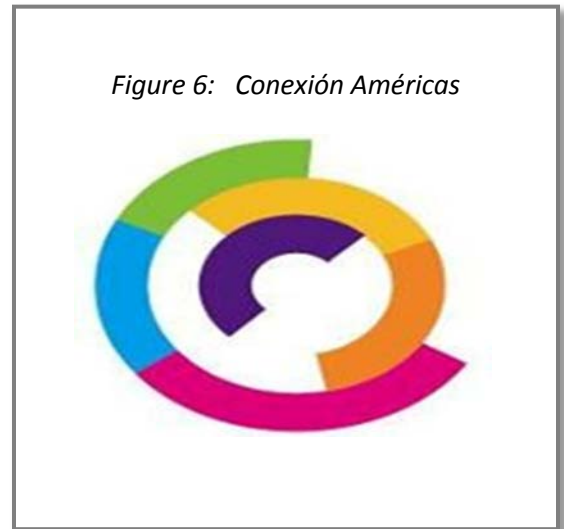


Nashville metro and Middle Tennessee. Resources would complement and leverage current funding sources and investments.

Case Study: Conexión Américas

Conexión Américas is a regional model of more inclusive engagement. Conexión Américas was established 12 years ago to focus on Middle Tennessee Latino families in culturally competent, comprehensive ways through integrated services, advocacy, public awareness, culture and the arts. The organization helps “Hispanic families realize their aspirations for social and economic advancement by promoting their social, economic, and civic integration into the Middle Tennessee community.” Conexión Américas and the Middle Tennessee Hispanic community are recent immigrants as well as native born Tennessee residents.

Executive Director, Renata Soto is involved in the transit conversation with the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and Tennessee Department of Transportation. Conexión also serves on the Nashville Next future planning initiative. This engagement, facilitated by a small Kresge Foundation grant, is a partnership with Cumberland Region Tomorrow and Transportation for America. Conexión is also a member of Cumberland Region Tomorrow’s Tennessee Regional Roundtable Network.



The partnership is timely. Conexión Américas and Casa Azafran, the groundbreaking facility that the organization developed, are the twin seeds of place-making, stimulating revitalization of the deteriorated Nolensville Pike Corridor where they are located. Casa Azafran’s public-private partnership was recognized with the 2014 Excellence in Development Award by the Urban Land Institute Nashville for “exemplary design, creativity and vision in land use, and financially successful real estate development.”

The Casa is a neighborhood anchor; an attractive new building housing nonprofits that deliver a wide range of community services there. Conexión is tackling transportation issues especially transit, traffic and pedestrian safety and transit availability for constituencies served by the organization and other nonprofits whose offices are in Casa Azafran. The Conexión Américas Profile is later in this report.

Transit and transportation are exigent concerns. Students, recipients of social services, people participating in Casa Azafran’s arts and cultural activities are locked out without them. Aesthetic amenities and improvements such as covered bus stops and benches for transit riders are on the agenda. There are parking issues for people who commute from the counties and around the metro to services and events from, for example, Rutherford County where immigrant population growth is increasing. Traffic, parking and pedestrian safety are on the top of the list for Conexión Américas and Casa Azafran.

A new pre-kindergarten, is about to open in the Casa; 1 of 3 new ones and the only one in a community center rather than a Nashville metro school. Eighty children are expected to attend which means more parents and more cars accordingly. Again, traffic calming and pedestrian safety are urgencies. Kresge Foundation’s grant and the collaboration with Transportation for America and Cumberland Region Tomorrow pave the way for engagement by Conexión Américas and leveraging more new resources.

3. LEVERAGING EXISTING RESOURCES IS IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT INCLUSION IN THE TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

Organizations and institutions interviewed for this report agree that capacity building and resources would boost their ability to: (a) effectively identify, plan and address constituency needs; and (b) collaborate with government, the private sector and other stakeholders. Interview subjects and the entities profiled in this report bring multilayered perspectives, talents and expertise. Uppermost among them are Identity, Language, Cultural Competence, Working History, Relationships, Content and Know-How with their constituencies. Additional capacity and resources, will capitalize on these proficiencies facilitating segue of transit and transportation planning into current priorities.

Profiled organizations are working on constituency priorities with businesses, government and other stakeholders. They are focused on collective action aimed at relationship building and problem solving, strengthening the community and the region. Similarly, Nashville's HBCUs are multidisciplinary community-serving institutions. All of the profiled entities can enhance public education, mobilize target groups and marshal input into planning and development.

Historic Schools

A brief history of African Americans in Nashville provides context for the recommendation that HBCUs could assume roles in capacity building and inclusion of diverse voices in transit and transportation planning and development. Blacks settled in Middle Tennessee alongside White explorers founding the City of Nashville in the 1700s. During the Civil War, thousands joined the combat. During Reconstruction and afterwards, freedmen made Nashville the urban culture center of the South for Black people.

Next, Nashville became the center of Tennessee's civil rights movement; in the 1860s fighting for citizenship for former slaves and the male right to vote. Civil rights struggles in the 1950s and 60s and Black college student sit-ins are world renowned. Nashville was the first City in the South to desegregate as a result. Protest and activism around transportation and the right to ride dates back as well; in more recent history most well known as the Freedom Rides from Nashville. Involved students were from North Nashville's HBCUs.

HBCU roots date to the 1800s. Nashville developed a reputation as the Black Athens of the South because of the number of educational institutions established for Black people there. In the 1860s, Northern funds for educational institutions flowed into the City – Williams University, Fisk University, Meharry Medical College; and in 1912, Tennessee State University (TSU). They are anchor institutions in the City and in North Nashville; culture and history run deep.

The schools' research capabilities cross a range of disciplines including urban planning, engineering, transportation and public health among others. TSU, for example is the recipient of research grants from TDOT, US DOT and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Interviews reveal respect for the intellectual firepower and multidisciplinary proficiency of HBCUs. A consortium of HBCUs could assist.

*Figure 7: North Nashville
HBCUs*

- **Fisk University**
- **Meharry Medical College**
- **Tennessee State University**

Interviews suggest that HBCUs are uniquely positioned to: (i) provide research and information about the planning and development process; (ii) deliver relevant interdisciplinary expertise; and (iii) assist the efforts of North Nashvillians and other organizations representing communities of color and low income to knowledgeably collaborate with other stakeholders on meeting community transit and transportation needs. Profiles for TSU, Meharry and Fisk are later in this report.

Case Study: North Nashville

Transportation is a vexing issue for the Black community in North Nashville. North Nashville is centrally located and near downtown (which makes it an increasingly desirable in-town place to live). The Jefferson Street Corridor there (near the HBCUs) has been the principal Black commercial area since 1920s. In the 1950s, the Tennessee State Highway Department planned Interstate 40 segments through this central city community. By the mid-60s, community activists battled Nashville government and downtown business allies, the State's road engineers, and federal agency decision makers.

Opposition was led by a committee of Black professionals many from Fisk University. Their argument that the I-40 expressway through the North Nashville Black community represented racial discrimination was compelling but failed in the Supreme Court. The highway destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses, gouging a divide through what remained of the neighborhood.

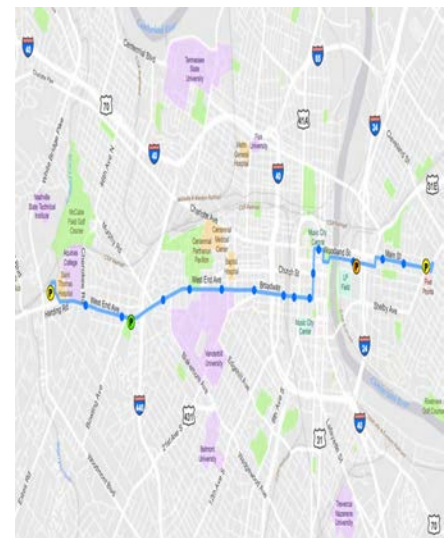
The legacy of that devastation lingers and the community still struggles with challenges. To help address them, for example, the most recent Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Development and Housing Agency Consolidated Plan, designates North Nashville the first ever Tier II Priority Area for redevelopment. The Plan targets resources for infrastructure, rehab, acquisition, clearance, demolition, relocation, cleanup, capacity building and technical assistance.

The freshest transportation controversy is about the proposed Amp Bus Rapid Transit, the \$174 million project proposed to link the western stretches of the city to East Nashville over a 7.1 mile span. Journalists dub it the first earnest attempt at reliable mass transit in Tennessee. Naysayers from the North Nashville community, many lower income African Americans, feel left out of the process and would prefer to see increased regular bus service provided throughout the day, extended into the evenings and available through the weekends. Lawsuits were threatened. Conversely, businesses on the Jefferson Street Corridor would like the BRT to deliver employees, more customers and new businesses.

It must be noted that opposing North Nashvillians are not alone in dissent over the Amp. Federal and Metro funds were committed. The Tennessee Senate tried but failed to pass legislation banning bus rapid transit altogether thereby stopping the Amp. Detractors range from fiscal conservatives, to wealthy residents of the West End, to residents of gentrifying neighborhoods along the route and places where the route doesn't reach, to critics charging that the route was chosen to benefit tourists and/or landowners, who are banking on increased

Figure 8: The Amp Route

Courtesy of Nashville MTA



land values and more development, to arguments over traffic congestion, bus stops and design. A tinge of race and class adds to Amp fireworks.

While views about the Amp are varied throughout the City, interviews recommend an alternative approach. In summary, early consultation, upfront coordination by agencies with the community, shared expertise to support decision making and inclusion of community views and needs in the planning and development process. Instead of broad rejection, effective engagement could possibly have led to improved transit options in North Nashville. In April 2014, Mayor Karl Dean announced formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee and he has directed the Amp project team to examine redesigning the BRT.

C. ORGANIZATION PROFILES

The objective of this report's inquiry is advancing the equity conversation in Middle Tennessee by helping Cumberland Region Tomorrow and partners strengthen connections to grassroots civic infrastructure and leaders representing underserved communities and communities of color.

Profiles of organizations and institutions selected and profiled in this report were developed through a process of research, outreach and information gathering about Middle Tennessee and statewide stakeholders and groups. They demonstrate culturally diverse leadership, collaboration and a successful track record addressing racial, social, economic or environmental concerns. There are 13 Profiles in this report. These entities represent a variety of constituencies, African Americans, Hispanics, multicultural immigrants and refugees; minority businesses and academia.

There are many disciplines, cultures and current organizational agendas among Profiled groups. Their priorities are teaching or research, or affordable housing or workforce development, entrepreneurship or economic opportunity. The common themes are community building, education and civic engagement.

Profilees are working on constituency concerns with businesses, government and other stakeholders. They are focused on collective action aimed at relationship building and problem solving, strengthening the community and the region. Profiled institutions, Nashville HBCUs, are multidisciplinary community serving institutions. All of the profiled entities can enhance public education, mobilize target groups and marshal input into planning and development.

Figure 9

PROFILES

- **AMERICAN CENTER FOR OUTREACH**
- **CONEXIÓN AMÉRICAS**
- **FISK UNIVERSITY**
- **JEFFERSON UNITED MERCHANTS PARTNERSHIP**
- **MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE**
- **MIDDLE TENNESSEE URBAN LEAGUE**
- **NASHVILLE BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
- **NASHVILLE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR EMPOWERMENT**
- **NEIGHBORHOODS RESOURCE CENTER**
- **TENNESSEE NAACP**
- **TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**
- **TENNESSEE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS COALITION**
- **TENNESSEE LATIN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

They bring multilayered perspectives, talents and expertise. Uppermost among them are Identity, Language, Cultural Competence, Working History, Relationships, Content and Know-How with their constituencies. Cumberland Region Tomorrow can capitalize on these proficiencies facilitating leadership diversity and inclusive transit and transportation planning and development.

Profiles convey insight into key organizational areas: Mission; Group History; Current Activities; Top Priorities; Nexus to Transit and Transportation; and Constituency Benefits. Figure 9 lists Profiles in this report.

GivingMatters.com

Profiled entities were screened for this report through GivingMatters.com, an online resource of The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee “created to inform, empower and enrich charitable giving in Middle Tennessee – benefiting donors, nonprofits and the community at large.” GivingMatters.com furthers the cause of philanthropy in the region.

Nonprofit information is reviewed by Community Foundation staff to ensure that financials are consistent with official documents, e.g., IRS Form 990 or audit.

GivingMatters.com Criterion:

- GivingMatters.com does not endorse or recommend nonprofit organizations.
- GivingMatters.com is a voluntary program for area nonprofits.
- The Community Foundation verifies information including financial data obtained from Forms 990 and audits, IRS compliance, and Tennessee Charitable Solicitations registrations.
- Profiles are updated at least once annually.
- GivingMatters.com seeks to include the most accurate data available through document verification and a due diligence process. Further documentation of compliance by grantors is recommended.

“Giving Matters.com promotes nonprofit transparency and putting nonprofit information at the fingertips of donors, volunteers, and community members in an easy-to-use, searchable online database.”

Organizations not appearing on GivingMatters.com were researched by Sustainable Community Development Group to ascertain IRS and/or other nonprofit status.

Figure 10: Profile Thumbnail

- **Mission**
- **History**
- **Top Priorities**
- **Current Events**
- **Transportation Nexus**
- **Constituency Benefits**

American Center for Outreach

Remziya Suleyman, Director of Policy & Administration; Telephone: (615) 669-2261

Website: <http://acotn.org/>

Mission: The American Center for Outreach (ACO) is a Tennessee based non-partisan organization that was established to inform, educate and empower Muslims to become engaged in society by providing the assistance they need to become productive citizens. ACO aims to connect the Muslim community and government while supporting individuals in becoming catalysts for positive change in their own neighborhoods and communities.

In terms of religious diversity, several counties in Middle Tennessee are home to a steadily growing Muslim population. The highest ratio of Muslim individuals to the general population in Tennessee is in Davidson County, where Nashville is located. According to data compiled by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research, the majority of mosques are clustered around the Nashville metropolitan area, with nine mosques operating within Nashville itself, and an additional mosque located in Murfreesboro.

Group History:

In early 2011, state lawmakers in the Tennessee General Assembly attempted to outlaw Islam through legislation. The bill threatened to jail Muslims who wanted to attend the mosque. It was considered by many to be the most severe legislation of its type in the country. However, the Tennessee Muslim community responded and fought back, successfully defeating the proposed law.

The American Center for Outreach (ACO), a Tennessee statewide organization, was established in late 2011. It was established to bring the Muslim voice to the political stage with a primary objective of changing the local political debate. As a political advocacy organization, it is their aim to maintain a visible presence throughout Tennessee.

The positive outcome in 2011 marked a historic community mobilization which debunked stereotypes about the lack of participation of minority groups in the civic process, especially Muslims. A diverse faith community united in support of this powerful cause.

Since 2011, ACO has been monitoring policies, providing analysis, meeting with lawmakers, building community allies, and pushing back on counterproductive legislation. As Muslims in Tennessee, ACO board members fulfill important roles in mobilizing the statewide and Middle Tennessee Muslim communities.

ACO Director, Remziya Suleyman was selected by the Nelson and Sue Andrews Institute for Civic Leadership to participate in the 2014-15 class for Leadership Tennessee, a leadership education program designed to cultivate a network of business, nonprofit, education and government leaders who are committed to addressing the State's challenges and opportunities. The class consists of 31 members from across Tennessee.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Civic engagement
- Connect the Muslim community and governmental policy makers
- Educate and inform the Muslim community to improve societal engagement

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

Muslim communities share needs of the general population inclusive of public benefits such as quality education, affordable housing, health care, business development, jobs, transit and transportation. Adjustments to new places, customs, language, social mores and securing income compound these challenges.

Since the US Census Bureau does not aggregate data regarding individual religious affiliation, statistics regarding the size and location of various religious groups are difficult to ascertain. However, the Islamic Center of Nashville estimates that as of 2010, there were approximately 20,000 Muslims living in the Nashville Area. Muslims in the Nashville metro area are primarily from Kurdistan and Somalia, but also are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia, among other places.

Nashville was designated a "gateway city" by the federal government in the years following the Gulf War, so that refugees fleeing from the war-torn country could be provided sanctuary. In the 20-plus years since this designation, the number of Muslims in Nashville has tripled. Education, involvement and engagement of this sizable group of the population will facilitate collaboration and identifying and meeting inter-connected needs of immigrant communities.

How the organization's constituencies could benefit from transit investment:

The Muslim population is challenged in the State by disenfranchisement efforts and false negative public perceptions hindering their voices and engagement and participation in the in the public policy arena.

Engagement in transit and transportation decision making and investments provides opportunities and a lens through which to address interconnected goals of environmental, social and economic advancement.

American Center for Outreach is a member of Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County's vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

IRS 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization

Conexión Américas

Renata Soto, Co-Founder and Executive Director; Telephone: (615) 835-2500

Website: <http://www.conexionamericas.org/>

Mission: Conexión Américas helps “Hispanic families realize their aspirations for social and economic advancement by promoting their social, economic, and civic integration into the Middle Tennessee community.” Conexión Américas and the Middle Tennessee Hispanic community are recent immigrants as well as native born Tennessee residents.

Group History:

Conexión Américas was established 12 years ago to focus on Middle Tennessee Latino families in culturally competent, comprehensive ways through integrated services, advocacy, public awareness, culture and the arts. The strategy is threefold:

- (1) To help low and moderate income Latino families realize their aspirations for a better quality of life skills and leadership development;
- (2) To help long-time residents, nonprofits, government and business understand Latinos’ presence, contributions and challenges in the region; and
- (3) to realize Casa Azafran as a vibrant Tennessee center for promoting and supporting Latino cultural engagement and visual, film, literary, culinary and performing arts.

Among other honors, Conexión Américas is the recipient of the Best Innovative Partnership Award from NeighborWorks America; the national Family Strengthening Award presented by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Council of La Raza; and Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builder Award.

To provide a community home and holistic gathering place linked to services delivery, Conexión Américas developed Casa Azafrán, the 28,000 sq. ft. facility which opened in 2012. Ten culturally diverse nonprofit resident partners are now all under one roof in the Casa and under the large and symbolic mural that adorns it. The Casa is a hub and a prime catalyst in changing the community fabric along Nashville’s Nolensville Pike, which the *Nashville Scene* calls the “unofficial gateway to Nashville’s most diverse corridor.”

Casa Azafrán’s public-private partnership was recognized with the 2014 Excellence in Development Award by the Urban Land Institute Nashville for “exemplary design, creativity and vision in land use, and financially successful real estate development.” The *Nashville Scene* awarded Conexión Américas Executive Director and co-founder, Renata Soto, the 2013 Person of the Year Award for her leadership. Conexión Américas partners with Cumberland Region Tomorrow and Smart Growth America to help ensure that diverse voices are engaged in transit and transportation decision making in the State and in the region.

Organization’s top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Social integration
- Economic integration
- Civic integration.

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

According to the University of Tennessee’s Center for Business and Economics, Hispanic immigrants are dramatically changing the State’s landscape, demographically and economically. Hispanic peoples are significant to statewide growth. While the Hispanic population is still small in overall terms, the growth rate is the 3rd fastest nationally. Nashville is home to some of the largest numbers of resident Hispanic peoples. One in eight new immigrants to Tennessee is Hispanic; one in ten births is a Hispanic child. Approximately half of the Hispanic population is foreign born; half were born in the United States. Most native born are children who will be the workforce in the next couple of decades.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program which is updated annually, in 2013, 9.9% of Davidson County and 4.9% of Tennessee as a whole are of Hispanic descent. Transportation is crucial. For example, nationally, 13.7% of all Hispanic individuals live in households that do not own a personal automobile. Hispanic constituencies are involved and important to achieving Tennessee’s economic, environmental, social and civic goals.

Conexión Américas and Casa Azafran provide the intellectual and physical space for Hispanic community education, engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, government and business because they are strategically situated to gather input and address a cross section of growth and development, transit and transportation concerns.

How the organization’s constituencies benefit from transit investment:

The stage is set for Conexión Américas constituencies to provide input, engage in and benefit from local and regional transit and investment dialogues. For example, the group works with the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization and the City Planning Department on a neighborhood Master Plan and to identify and address a range of issues such as walkability, pedestrian safety and public transit amenities on the Nolensville Pike Corridor.

Conexión Américas serves on Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County’s vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area. Executive Director, Renata Soto serves on Cumberland Region Tomorrow’s Tennessee Regional Roundtable Network and the Tennessee Department of Transportation’s Multi-Modal Advisory Committee.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

Fisk University

H. James Williams, PhD, President; Telephone: (615) 327-8555

Website: www.fisk.edu

Mission: Fisk University's goal is to produce graduates from diverse backgrounds with the integrity and intellect required for substantive contributions to society. Their curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts with faculty and administrators emphasizing the discovery and advancement of knowledge through research in the natural and social sciences, business and the humanities.

Group History:

Founded in 1865 just months after the conclusion of the Civil War to educate freedmen, Fisk University was founded as a historically black university (HBCU), and is now the oldest institution of higher learning in Nashville, Tennessee. Following the 1867 Tennessee legislation aimed at supporting public education, Fisk incorporated as a normal school with the goal of educating teachers.

Fisk University has played a crucial role in the education of African American individuals, with its faculty and alumni occupying positions among America's elite intellectual, artistic, and civic leaders since the school's founding.

In view of Fisk's extensive history in the area, the University serves as an anchor institution in the City and in North Nashville, providing invaluable community services over the years. Distinguished alumni include the social critic W.E.B. Du Bois and the journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett, along with the students that have been members of the world renowned Fisk Jubilee Singers.

Fisk is partnering on a joint effort headed by Meharry Medical College in affiliation with other HBCUs, "The HBCU Wellness Program" which is designed to combat chronic health conditions in, for example, the African American community and health impacts such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and hypertension.

Families lacking stable financial resources have a higher probability of being either overweight or obese, due in large part to their lack of access to health foods and/or effective, affordable health care. In terms of wellness, investment in transportation infrastructure could fulfill a crucial role in the expansion of access to health professionals and services, which could in turn foster a decrease in health related costs.

Student Demographics (2012-2013 academic years)

- 533 students enrolled
- 36% male, 64% female
- 77.5% Black, 7.7% non-resident/alien, 2% mixed race, 0.8% White, 11.5% ethnicity unknown

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Education of students for diverse workforce
- Build leadership qualities in students to extend benefits beyond the classroom
- Create a service-first mentality in students; students that possess this mentality are more likely to engage in volunteer efforts that benefit the surrounding areas

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

Access to transit and transportation is indispensable to access by the Nashville metro as well as the North Nashville population to the University's programs, faculty and expertise. A 2007 study entitled "Leveraging Anchor Institutions for Urban Success," for example, highlights the role which anchor institutions with a long history in a single region can have on affecting economic indicators such as employment, purchasing, and real estate value, among others. This same study noted the effect that another anchor institution, the Los Angeles Music Center, has had on the development of downtown Los Angeles.

Although Los Angeles is a different city in a different region, the positive effects associated with anchor institutions are analogous. Longstanding, richly historical and cultural institutions such as Fisk University can engage with their respective communities in ways that provide a range of mutual opportunities, benefits and learning.

How the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

According to the most recent US Census, 5 of Nashville's 40 Council Districts share unemployment rates above 13%. Three of these 5 districts are in the areas north of the proposed AMP route. Transit investments that foster access by people in low wealth neighborhoods to employment and economic development could catalyze growth and resiliency in Nashville, the metropolitan area and Middle Tennessee.

North Nashville exemplifies transit and transportation challenges posed in a predominantly low income community of color located in Middle Tennessee. For example, since the initial proposal of Nashville's AMP Bus Rapid Transit project, North Nashville activists have fought to amend the route so that the three HBCUs in the neighborhood, students, local residents, workers and businesses can stimulate and realize community and economic development benefits as well as access transit to jobs in other Nashville metropolitan areas.

Fisk University is an anchor institution that can assist the community. Fisk has educational, professional, technological and technical capabilities and resources that can assist communities, agencies and other stakeholders in North Nashville, Nashville and Middle Tennessee connect the issues, engage and collaborate on transit and transportation decision making and investments.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee in GivingMatters.com

Jefferson Street United Merchants Partnership (JUMP)
Sharon Hurt, Executive Director; Telephone: (615) 726-5867
Website: <http://www.jumptonjefferson.com/#>

Mission: The Jefferson Street United Merchants Partnership is an organization that serves Jefferson Street and the surrounding community through advocacy, commerce, and development in a way that pays homage to its culture and heritage. Their stated mission is to “develop, foster, and promote cooperative economic development through revitalization, acquisition, education, and public safety programs in North Nashville.”

Group History:

The Jefferson Street community treasures an exceptional shared history. Historically, Jefferson Street was one of the most vibrant areas in Nashville. From the 1940s through the early 1960s, Jefferson Street was one of America’s best-known districts of jazz, blues, and rhythm and blues. Famous African American musicians played in the many nightclubs. Little Richard, Jimi Hendrix, Ray Charles, Fats Domino and Memphis Slim were among the entertainers who often performed there.

The Golden Era ended in the 60s when the Jefferson Street Corridor community was bisected by construction of Interstate 40 cutting off traffic to businesses, residents and workers in the neighborhood. Compounding that blow, desegregation reduced shopping in North Nashville as Black customers shifted their purchasing to White-owned stores stifling the prosperity of Black businesses. This once culturally and economically vibrant model Black neighborhood transitioned into a collection of businesses fighting to hold on, boarded-up buildings, deteriorating infrastructure, and 3 HBCUs.

In 1994, concerned homeowners, business owners, longtime residents and developers with new construction in mind met to create a framework for advancing Jefferson Street. They talked about the past, the future, things gone right and wrong. They shared ideas about the future that would transform the Jefferson Street Corridor into a bustling business-university-hospital center; the kind of neighborhood where you know your neighbors, you eat in their restaurants and you buy in their stores.

JUMP is the result of these citizens’ vision of progress. Today, the nonprofit organization is comprised of over 111 individuals and organizations – doctors, lawyers, dentists, master barbers, musicians, ministers, writers, hair stylists, retailers and restaurateurs – with a one goal in common: keeping Jefferson Street alive and flourishing.

Current Work/Events/Publications:

- 14th Annual Jefferson Street and Blues Festival
 - showcases jazz and blues as a celebration of the musical heritage of Jefferson Street
- 11th Annual Bridging the Gap Mixer

Organization’s top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Commerce and economic development
- Workforce readiness
- Advocacy and governance

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

JUMP understands that transit, transportation and infrastructure are indispensable to workforce readiness, business development, a thriving business district and residents and workers in the neighborhood. As a board member of the Middle Tennessee Workforce Investment Board (MTWIB), JUMP works to determine when and whether additional training opportunities for local business owners and operators are needed. The MTWIB was established by federal law to provide leadership, direction, vision and oversight of the Local Workforce System. Publicly funded, the Board assists in addressing the employment needs of employers and the career development needs of workers. The MTWIB promotes workforce and economic development and youth education throughout a four county region, Local Workforce Investment Area-9.

Executive Director, Sharon Hurt, counsels Nashville’s Mayor on workforce development, transit, transportation and other relevant community issues. She has served on Nashville Next, Mayor Karl Dean’s Davidson County visioning effort for the future of the Nashville metropolitan area over the next 25 years. JUMP favors the AMP Bus Rapid Transit and other transit as catalysts for Jefferson Street Corridor development

How the organization’s constituencies benefit from transit investment:

JUMP advocates in favor of creating a vital, aesthetically pleasing, and livable place by encouraging and promoting appropriate development that respects the Jefferson Street Corridor and the community’s culture and heritage. JUMP collaborates with partners to identify and attract high value commercial enterprises while retaining existing businesses and helping them to expand and thrive. Transit access is a key neighborhood issue. JUMP’s advocacy and input addresses North Nashville’s transit issues and additional community priorities in ongoing dialogues in the Middle Tennessee region.

JUMP can assist in the Nashville metro’s and the Middle Tennessee region’s transportation and transit decision making, development efforts and investments through advocacy that addresses the unique needs of North Nashville and businesses in the area and attracts resources which support workforce preparedness of low income African Americans from the neighborhood who need both upwardly mobile jobs, transportation and transit access.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

Meharry Medical College

A. Cherrie Epps, PhD, President; Telephone: (615) 327-6904

Website: <http://www.mmc.edu/>

Mission: Meharry Medical College is an “academic health sciences center that exists to improve the health and health care of minority and underserved communities by offering excellent education and training programs in the health sciences. True to its heritage, Meharry places special emphasis on providing opportunities for people of color, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, and others regardless of race and ethnicity; delivering high quality health services; and conducting research that fosters the elimination of health disparities.” Meharry seeks to diversify the nation’s health professions workforce, enlighten health policy development, implement culturally-sensitive, evidence-based health services, and conduct research that will lead to the elimination of health disparities.

Group History:

Meharry Medical College was founded in 1876 by Samuel Meharry who sought to repay an act of kindness of which he was the beneficiary some forty years earlier. Meharry Medical College is one of the nation's oldest and largest historically black academic health science centers dedicated to educating physicians, dentists, researchers, and health policy experts. 1886 was the first year in which Meharry began operating its dental program. Today, the College offers multiple degrees including MD, DDS, MSPH, and PhD programs, providing opportunities and education in the health sciences to conduct research and foster elimination of health disparities. Meharry is a community anchor institution which has provided high value services since its founding.

Meharry Medical College, located in North Nashville, is an actively engaged health advocate in the Nashville metro community, keying in on serving those who are uninsured, underinsured, or with limited access to health care. Meharry is a leader in the national “HBCU Wellness Project,” an initiative designed to utilize the human and social capital at historically black colleges and universities to promote health and modify risks for chronic diseases among individuals living in the surrounding communities. The program combats chronic health conditions in the African American community and health impacts such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and hypertension.

Beginning in 1985, Meharry has been the recipient of funding from the Research Centers in Minority Institutions program which is funded through the National Institutes of Health, which is a division of the US Department of Health and Human Services. The goal of the program is to help expand the research capacities of primarily minority research universities.

Student Demographics:

- 722 students enrolled
- 43% male, 57% female
- 87% Black, 5% Asian, 4% Hispanic, 3% White

Organization’s top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Serving the health care needs of underserved communities
- Maintaining a service-oriented environment
- Fostering health policy development to create highly effective educational and training programs

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organizational priorities:

The connection between transportation, public and environmental health and the built environment is garnering more and more attention across sectors. Ensuring that all populations gain and retain access to transportation nodes ensures that they can efficiently get to and receive necessary care and other critical services. Meharry’s faculty and students, its health educational and training programs and its services can inform, complement and strengthen transit and transportation decision making.

How the organization’s constituencies benefit from transit investment:

Meharry’s North Nashville location sets the stage for research and delivery of expertise to and about the community including low income populations and people of color in the area, in the wider metro, Middle Tennessee and the State. Seating medical students and professionals at the table and involving them in dialogue about transportation planning and investments along with the people from the community could be a critical asset in terms of connecting investments with services for those who often are often left out of formal planning processes.

Collaboration with community partners also facilitates service-learning and service-oriented work by students and faculty as well as research opportunities focused on underserved communities and communities of color.

Meharry Medical College’s constituencies could benefit from transit investment by being connected to key medical institutions which can conduct research and provide direct service care. In addition, ready, willing, and capable medical and health professionals and students could help with outreach, educating, targeting and accessing the relevant constituencies.

Meharry is an anchor institution that can assist the community. The College has educational, professional, technological and technical capabilities and resources that can assist communities, agencies and other stakeholders in North Nashville, Nashville and Middle Tennessee connect health and health outcomes to the issues, engage and collaborate on transit and transportation decision making and investments.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Gloria Sweet-Love, President of Tennessee Conference; Telephone: (731) 660-5580

Website: www.tnnaacp.org

Mission: The NAACP's mission to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights and to eliminate race-based discrimination is encompassed in six main objectives: to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens; achieve equality of rights and eliminate race prejudice in the United States; remove racial discrimination barriers through democratic processes; seek enactment and enforcement of federal, state, and local civil rights laws; inform the public and to seek elimination of discrimination; educate people about their constitutional rights and all lawful action to secure the exercise thereof.

Group History:

Founded February 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group citizens of United States and eliminate race prejudice. The NAACP seeks to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic process. Historically, the NAACP performed an essential role in litigating civil rights protections for African Americans. Policy is another NAACP linchpin.

The Washington, D.C., bureau, led by lobbyist Clarence M. Mitchell Jr., helped advance not only integration of the armed forces in 1948 but also passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964, and 1968, as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In 1954, Thurgood Marshall and a team of NAACP attorneys won Brown v Board of Education landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court holding that segregation in public education violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

These and many more civil rights landmarks endure, paving the way to twenty-first century NAACP priorities which include disparities in economics, health care, education, voter empowerment and the criminal justice system while continuing its legal advocacy on civil rights issues. NAACP has a climate justice program and is a member of the National Transportation Equity Caucus.

The Tennessee State Conference NAACP is a statewide nonprofit organization chartered in 1946 after members from Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville organized to aid the Black citizens of Columbia-Maury County following a race riot, which resulted in several deaths and injuries mainly affecting the African American community. Tennessee NAACP chapters were instrumental in the State's desegregation efforts including public spaces, restaurants, stores and schools. Executive Director, Ms. Gloria Sweet-Love, serves on the NAACP National Board of Directors and she chairs the Southeast Region V NAACP Leadership Caucus. The Tennessee State Conference oversees 11 branches, 11 college chapters, and 9 youth councils in Middle Tennessee. The NAACP Tennessee Conference has a staff of 1-2. Largely, the Middle Tennessee chapters are staffed by volunteers. The chapters regularly convene events, activities, fundraisers and conduct voter education.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Racial inclusion
- Health
- Economic opportunity

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

Transportation is the crucial link which connects people to opportunities tantamount to quality of life – jobs, schools, affordable housing, health care, retail, food and more. These are goals synchronous with NAACP's mission and objectives which advance racial, social and economic justice and promote education and the readiness of the electorate to engage in the democratic processes especially the African American community, other communities of color and low income communities.

How the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

Mobility can make the difference between meeting basic human needs, full participation in community life and the benefits of the national economy. Collaboration with the Tennessee Conference could address community education, engagement and advancement of transit and transportation policies, strategies and investments in ways that tackle needs of communities of color and low income.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE TENNESSEE STATE CONFERENCE NAACP CHAPTERS

Clarksville-Montgomery County

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Columbia-Maury County

Barbara Dobbins, President
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Mary Wright, President
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Murfreesboro

Rev. Kenny Williams, President
PO Box 371, Murfreesboro, TN

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization – NAACP national organization

Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce

Carolyn Waller, President; Telephone: (615) 777-8587

Website: <http://www.nashvilleblackchamber.org/>

Mission: The Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce mission is “To economically empower the Black community through the promotion, education, and advancement of its businesses and their partners, while focusing on the development of business opportunities, alliances, and legislative advocacy in the greater Nashville community.”

Group History:

The Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce was established in 1998, founded by Rosetta Miller Perry of the *Tennessee Tribune* and *Contemporaria Magazine*. Originally established as a 501(c)(3), the Chamber was re-chartered as 501(c)(4) organization, enabling the Chamber to refocus as a civic association.

The Chamber retains a vision to empower the Black community, educate and mentor future entrepreneurs, and embrace industry and technology, all while continuing to globally market Nashville to world markets.

Current Work/Events/Publications:

The Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) seeks to economically empower the African American community through three major pillars: (1) promotion; (2) education; and (3) advancement. Their most recent work, housed under the theme of “EMPOWER 2014: Reshaping Music City” emphasizing supporting the Black business community through a diverse programming menu.

NBCC programs include these interest areas: (1) active participation in public education; (2) providing school teachers opportunities to shadow employers to garner a sense of workforce demand; (3) hosting quarterly membership meetings to discuss issues pertinent to the community; and (4) hosting “Lunch And Learn” seminars to educate business owners and employees on the new ideas and trends in business formation and sustainability.

The Chamber provides a wide range of member events such as quarterly membership meetings that address community issues and how those issues could affect local business owners. The School Partnership Initiative created by the Chamber works with local public schools to connect students with local business owners who share the same cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Annually, NBCC hosts a luncheon and honors Black business through Awards. The Chamber also hosts periodic networking events to market business, to recruit new members and to inform members, business and community leaders and governmental officials.

Organization’s top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Education
- Workforce development
- Business innovation

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

Transportation and transit are intrinsically linked with the success, or failure, of businesses large, medium and small. The opportunities provided by the Chamber help promote growth for its member organizations and growth in the Middle Tennessee region. However growth and revenues can be stifled by inadequate transit and transportation options. The Chamber provides linkages between the business community and education community, which could be instrumental in enhancing stakeholder collaboration. Collaboration with the Chamber could also facilitate building and strengthening of social capital amongst the Black community, other communities and stakeholders in the City of Nashville, the metropolitan area and the Middle Tennessee region.

NBCC’s Schools Partnership Initiative is a major effort. The initiative provides:

1. Greater exposure of the NBCC to the Nashville community;
2. An opportunity to engage NBCC members in a purposeful experience while providing public speaking training in a non-threatening environment;
3. A forum for NBCC members to build business relationships with one another;
4. An opportunity to participate in the improvement of public education;
5. An opportunity to promote NBCC businesses to future consumers; and
6. A channel for educating and training Nashville’s and NBCC’s future workforce.

How the organization’s constituencies benefit from transit investment:

Transit and transportation infrastructure provide access the businesses in the Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce constituencies and foster investment in the Black business community’s priorities including small businesses and emerging companies. The Black business community can also assist in the empowerment of socially and historically disadvantaged businesses and minority businesses in Nashville and the metropolitan area. NBCC is a member of Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County’s vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

501(c)(4) nonprofit organization

Nashville International Center for Empowerment
Gatluak Thach, President and CEO; Telephone: (615) 315-9681
Website: <http://www.empowernashville.org/>

Mission: The Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE), formerly the Sudanese Community and Women's Services Center, is a nonprofit, community based organization dedicated to empowering refugees and immigrants of Middle Tennessee through direct social services and educational programs. Fundamental to NICE's mission is the elimination of the root causes of poverty within Greater Nashville's refugee and immigrant community, the creation of opportunities for upward socioeconomic mobility, and the social integration of those it serves. NICE's constituencies are challenged to think beyond their current circumstances and discuss long-term goals. NICE helps to establish the foundation necessary to achieve these goals through educational and employment environments that are conducive to success.

Group History:

Originally established as the Sudanese Community & Women's Services Center, the Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE) was renamed in spring of 2010, a name which more fully represents the services provided and communities served.

Since its founding, NICE has expanded to serve people with origins from more than 50 different nations across the Nashville area, most of African and Middle Eastern descent. Programs are offered to legal permanent residents with refugee, asylum seekers or other immigrant status.

Demographically, Tennessee has a rapidly growing immigrant population. According to Migration Policy Institute data, the percentage of the State's population comprised of immigrants has grown from 2.8% in 2000 to 4.5% in 2010, representing an 83.4% increase. It is likely that this growth will continue barring any major shift in immigration policy. Groups like NICE fulfill the pivotal role of assisting these growing populations, helping them become productive members of society.

Community initiatives of organization include the Nashville Refugee Health Initiative (NRHI) & Preventative Health (PH) programs. The NRHI program incorporates health classes, medical screenings and Wellness Partners. Through this program, individuals learn healthy living habits to better maintain their physical well-being. The Preventative Health program amplifies these messages further, with refugees given health orientation classes on general health, mental health, and nutrition. NICE also offers a Job Readiness class which targets specific workplace preparedness issues and English for those who are planning to enter the workforce or need to strengthen their English proficiency in order to sustain employment.

NICE services include English Language Learning Classes; Job Readiness & Employment Classes; GED Preparation; Health Awareness; Immigration and Social Adjustment; Citizenship Preparation; and the School Impact Program which seeks to bridge the communications gap.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Education
- Employment
- Health

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

The connection between transportation and immigrant populations is simultaneously significant, and which could be better defined. It is NICE's mission to eliminate root causes of poverty and create an upward trajectory for immigrant populations. NICE's job readiness classes provide the workplace and language skills for the dynamic Nashville job market. However, without proper transportation and transit infrastructure in place, it becomes significantly more difficult for refugee and immigrant groups to get to these jobs. NICE could serve as a liaison between immigrant population and relevant actors to collaboratively create a transit system that effectively addresses the collective needs of this frequently neglected group.

How the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

The Nashville International Center for Empowerment works closely with immigrants and their families immediately upon arrival into the United States. NICE makes it their mission to ensure a smooth transition in the communities in which these immigrants and refugees live. The Center provides help in accessing essential goods and services such as finding a home, scheduling medical screenings, and providing help in social service related issues.

Affordable, reliable modes of transportation enable residents to access services, to be active members in their respective communities, enabling them to more easily visit local shops, cultural events, and other venues through which they can establish roots and friendships in the community. Enhancing the Center's capacity to engage new citizens in the dialogue of transit and transportation would facilitate sharing more perspectives when addressing the needs of currently underserved populations.

NICE serves on Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County's vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

Neighborhoods Resource Center

Yolanda Vaughn, Executive Director; Telephone: (615) 782-8212

Website: <http://www.tnrc.net/>

Mission: The Neighborhoods Resource Center was established by local residents to ensure that Nashville neighborhoods have a place at the local decision making table to advance and address community concerns. "Transportation, schools, crime and public safety, affordable places to live, green spaces, and places to play are all important issues that neighborhood organizations address every day." Neighborhoods Resource Center is committed to facilitating community driven change. Their interventions on goal setting and public policy derive directly from residents and local groups represented by the organization.

Group History:

Founded in 1997, the Neighborhoods Resource Center was established to strengthen neighborhoods by addressing public health, crime, public safety, affordable housing, education, economic development of transit corridors and transportation areas, parks and green space, vacant and blighted properties and environmental awareness in metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County. The Neighborhoods Resource Center works with local groups and residents to encourage collaborative community solutions. The Center's work focuses on the ground and on those directly affected by local issues; people working and living in the community, with emphasis upon inclusion of the voices of the most challenged constituencies.

Neighborhoods Resource Center programs incorporate three overarching services: (1) Neighborhood and Community Organizing; (2) Training and Leadership Development; and (3) Information Services. These programs facilitate promoting relevant community quality of life strategies. For example, NRC and the residents of Glencliff and Woodbine neighborhoods are working with the City of Nashville to tackle economic development of the Nolensville Road corridor and land uses that thwart community renewal such as myriad used car lots, payday lenders, secondhand tire shops, blight and vacant, deteriorating properties.

To advance strategic community building, the Center creates and maintains a data inventory that communities and agencies need to shape the future of Nashville metropolitan neighborhoods ranging from maps depicting neighborhood-level data ranging, to local assets, political and school districts, to types of available retail, health and child care facilities and health statistics, to nonprofit service providers, to crime incidents and arrests, to property ownership, zoning patterns, to locations of schools, mosques, synagogues, churches, parks, libraries, community centers and more.

From its office in North Nashville and other locations, the Center hosts activities and convenes workshops, training, educational classes, public forums and meetings and networking opportunities.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Working to create more affordable housing options
- Encouraging community oriented solutions to issues such as transportation and education
- Helping to establish and strengthen effective neighborhood advocacy groups

Relationship between transportation and transit to the top 3 organization priorities:

Informed community decision making is a Neighborhoods Resource Center priority. The Center builds local capacity and strengthens collective community action by developing and providing data, information and access to decision makers. This approach promotes knowledge and collaborative problem solving. In 2006, the US Census Bureau designated the organization a Census Information Center. Neighborhoods Resource Center's data inventory consists of, e.g., 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 breakdowns of age, race, and gender, income, educational attainment, employment, housing and poverty levels. In addition, in 2004, the Neighborhoods Resource Center joined the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NIPP).

NRC's capacity to create, maintain and deliver critical information as well as strengths in education, training and collaboration on local community and economic development issues could be leveraged to facilitate informed engagement of people directly affected by transit and transportation including low income communities and communities of color.

How the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

Neighborhoods Resource Center's works one-on-one and in groups to help residents and neighborhood groups develop skills necessary to effectively lead. The organization's philosophy is "A leader is an ordinary person who takes initiative to solve problems and bring people together for a common purpose. We can all be leaders in our neighborhoods."

The Center hosts training and leadership development events through the Leadership Training Academy. Activities gather residents from the Metropolitan Nashville area and Davidson County. Enhancing the Center's capacity to educate, solicit input and engage the community on transit and transportation decision making and investments would assist policy makers and decision makers in addressing the needs of local constituencies including communities of color and low income.

Neighborhood Resource Center is a member of Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County's vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
Daud Abudiab, President; Telephone: (615)833-0384
Website: <http://www.tnimmigrant.org/>

Mission: The Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) is a statewide, immigrant and refugee-led collaboration whose mission is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout Tennessee to develop a unified voice, defend their rights, and create an atmosphere in which they are recognized as positive contributors to the State. TIRRC envisions a society in which: immigrants are powerfully engaged as leaders in the civic, political, and cultural life of the community; the human rights and dignity of all people are respected, and diversity is welcomed and valued; people are free from discrimination and oppression, and immigrants are joined with others in a broader movement for religious freedom and social, racial and economic justice.

Group History:

Since its founding in 2001, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition has worked to develop immigrant leadership, build the capacity of its immigrant-led member organizations, help immigrant community members understand and engage in the civic process, and educate the public about policies that would better promote integration of new immigrants and facilitate their full participation in society.

In just over a decade, TIRRC has grown from a grassroots network of community leaders into one of the most diverse and effective regional coalitions, a model for emerging immigrant rights organizations in the Southeast and throughout the United States. Programs include: Civic Engagement, Policy and Advocacy, Immigrant Integration, Youth Organizing, Democracy Fellowship, Know Your Rights and Welcoming Tennessee Initiative. Trainings include: (1) Effectively moving people to action; (2) Organizing 101; (3) The Spectrum of Social Change; (4) Training Effective Spokespeople and Storytellers; (5) Understanding and Navigating the Limits of Nonprofit Advocacy; (6) Budgeting for Nonprofits and (7) Fundraising.

TIRRC has joined in the national #Not1More campaign and the Fair Immigration Reform Movement's Keeping Families Together campaign to urge President Obama's Administration to cease deportations, grant administrative relief by expanding deferred action, and to end the Secure Communities program that uses local law enforcement to unjustly deport immigrants and separate families.

Current Work/Events/Publications:

- Welcoming Tennessee Initiative – Designed to shift public opinion on the subject of immigration. WTI holds public forums, educational presentations, and other community events to foster an open dialogue about immigration and New Tennesseans.
- Become a Citizen Now! - A free resource for people to access information about the naturalization process.
- Established Better Access to Drivers Licenses for Immigrants including language translations available for Tennessee's written driver's license test.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Education
- Inclusion
- Civic engagement

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

There are over 20,000 Legal Permanent Residents in Davidson County eligible for citizenship, but barriers such as lack on information, an intimidating and complicated application process, and cost deter many from applying. TIRRC successfully urged Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and the City of Nashville to join Chicago and Los Angeles in making its libraries and community centers hubs for citizenship assistance.

Transit and transportation are inextricably connected with the adjustments immigrants generally face when new to the United States, as new members of a society in a new culture. Adjustments to new places, customs, language, social mores and securing income compound challenges faced by immigrants.

In addition, because of differences in language and culture, immigration and refugee populations can be comparably more susceptible to economic hardship and transportation limitations than their more established neighbors and friends, making access to transit imperative to improving their economic circumstances and accessing services and other quality of life opportunities.

Ways the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

When immigrants and refugees come to the United States, often their funds are limited. Some cannot afford housing or an automobile. Access to public transportation enables them to participate in their new society by providing access to jobs, education and public services.

A diverse workforce helps to ensure a strong local economy; while a diversified skillset can improve capacity to tap opportunities in the educational, economic, and social realms. Involving TIRRC, educating and engaging its constituencies in the transit and transportation decision making and investment process could help to ensure that specific needs in immigrant and refugee communities are taken into consideration in ways that promote dialogue and results keying in on equity and access.

TIRRC is a member of Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County's vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

Tennessee Latin American Chamber of Commerce
Mayra Zimmer, Board President; Telephone: (615) 450-0487
Website: <http://www.tlacc.org/>

Mission: The Tennessee Latin American Chamber of Commerce has multi-pronged organizational objectives. These objectives are to: procure and manage the resources needed for normal operation of the Chamber; create value in the organization to attract new members while preserving the existing members; recruit companies, organizations, and individuals to become members of the Chamber; and assume a leadership role regarding issues involving the Latin American business community

Group History:

Founded in 2000, the Tennessee Latin American Chamber of Commerce (TLACC) is a 501 (c)(6) nonprofit organization headquartered in Middle Tennessee, welcoming all interested members of our community. Their primary vision is to be the leading voice on business issues relating to the Latin American community across Tennessee.

TLACC is statewide, providing it members with the leadership and support required to create opportunities for Latin owned companies and individuals, while also opening new markets for non-Latin American organizations looking to become engaged with a diverse and growing Latin American community.

The Chamber promotes an open relationship between its members for whom it advocates, seeking to encourage dialogue between businesses and the neighborhoods they serve. Membership benefits include networking opportunities, industry-specific training events, information regarding the Tennessee legislative agenda, and improved business credibility.

TLACC establishes programs that advance achievement in education, healthcare, and business development in the Latin community. The Chamber's objectives are to:

Procure and manage the resources needed for normal TLACC operations;

Create value in the organization to attract new members while preserving existing TLLAC membership;

Recruit companies, organizations, and individuals to become TLACC members; and

Assume a leadership role regarding issues involving the Latin American business community.

Current Work/Events/Publications:

- Networking Lunches
 - members meet to connect with outside organizations and individuals for improved business prospects
- Tour of Latin America
 - local Latin American restaurants showcase their menu offerings as a backdrop for business and community interaction
- Futuro College Program
 - professional membership organization that provides students with structured, career-specific career mentoring, and career readiness

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Encourage a business-friendly environment for Tennessee Latin businesses and organizations
- Provide knowledge and resources for Latin entrepreneurs to take advantage of already existing business networks to maximize probability for success
- Provide expertise regarding the commercial and legal climates surrounding economic development for businesses, resulting in an improved labor market and corresponding employment opportunities for the surrounding communities

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

The ten counties comprising Middle Tennessee are currently some of the hottest emerging markets for economic growth. With an influx of private and public funding at its disposal, the City of Nashville added more than 14,000 new jobs in fiscal year 2011. Job creation is one piece of the puzzle; for a region to sustain economic vitality, employers require educational and technical competency that organizations like the TLACC are helping to foster. Improved transportation and transit options facilitate connecting the community and the expertise possessed by TLACC. Strengthening these connective ties promotes improved stakeholder engagement on key business policy issues and encourages continued economic excellence.

How the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

According to a 2011 study titled "Transit and Regional Economic Development," transit systems fulfill a powerful role in facilitating economic activity. Due to increased foot traffic and access to a greater number of potential purchasers, vendors and employees, firms are attracted to and prefer to locate around transit hubs, spurring improved economic efficiencies.

The Tennessee Latin American Chamber of Commerce's strong membership could benefit significantly from the opportunity to focus on transit and transportation decision making and investments. TLACC's regional knowledge of Latin American businesses and the organization's understanding of the business climate, entrepreneurship and business development are assets that can be deployed to benefit Nashvillians, the metropolitan area, Middle Tennessee and the State.

501 (c)(6) nonprofit organization

Tennessee State University

Brenda Baskin Glover, PhD, President; Telephone: (615) 963-7401

Website: <http://www.tnstate.edu>

Mission: Tennessee State University fosters scholarly inquiry and research, lifelong learning, and a commitment to service. Building from a strong heritage of instruction and research, Tennessee State University prepares students for leadership, professional success, personal achievement, and service to local, national, and international communities in the global community. Tennessee State offers academic courses through schools and degree programs in Agriculture, Human, and Natural Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies and Research, Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, Public Service and Urban Affairs.

Group History:

Founded in 1912, Tennessee State University (TSU) is a comprehensive, urban, coeducational, land grant institution and a historically black university (HBCU) located in North Nashville. TSU was originally organized as the Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School, for African Americans. This institution was the birth of a new era of higher education for African Americans in the State of Tennessee and nationally. The first class of 247 students began their academic careers in June 1912. The first master's degrees were awarded in June 1944.

TSU is as an anchor institution in the City and in North Nashville. The University is committed to the education of its student body and promotes diversity and access without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. Nashville has two TSU locations - the 500-acre main campus nestles in a beautiful residential neighborhood along the Cumberland River, and the downtown Avon Williams campus is near the center of Nashville's business and government district.

Student Demographics:

- 8,973 students enrolled
- 36% male, 64% female
- 72% Black, 22% White, 6% Other

Current Work/Events/Publications:

Tennessee State University is the recipient of a federal Department of Transportation grant on transportation for livable communities, which covers progressive, pedestrian, and bicycle transit. The grant engages a consortium of universities around the nation. Additionally, TSU is the recipient of Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) grants aimed at researching topics related to the safety of cable rail systems in Tennessee, the effect of abandoned vehicles on highway safety, and bicycle and pedestrian safety as it relates to safety-related investments.

TSU leads the "Go Green North Nashville" program, aimed at improving environmental sustainability in the surrounding area. TSU also leads the "Triple Impact Youth Empowerment Program," which invests in youth in the neighborhood.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Education
- Energy and environment
- Community outreach/volunteerism

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

Encouraging individuals across socioeconomic categories to choose more environmentally conscious modes of transportation promotes community sustainability. With emphases in the Black community and low income communities, TSU resources and professionals provide knowledge that assists the region, all Nashvillians and people in the North Nashville neighborhood via expertise, community education and engagement on transportation, transit, energy and environmental issues, among others, as well as youth learning and engagement.

Tennessee State University faculty serves on Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County's vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

How the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

North Nashville exemplifies transit and transportation challenges posed in a predominantly low income community of color located in Middle Tennessee. For example, since the initial proposal of Nashville's AMP Bus Rapid Transit project, North Nashville activists have fought to amend the route so that the three HBCUs in the neighborhood, students, local residents, workers and businesses can stimulate and realize community and economic development benefits as well as access transit to jobs in other Nashville metropolitan areas.

The educational initiatives of Tennessee State University's Go Green North Nashville are a template with regard to informing local citizens. Collaboration with community partners also facilitates service-learning and service-oriented work by students and faculty as well as research opportunities focused on underserved communities and communities of color.

The University is an anchor institution that can assist the community. TSU can facilitate community learning, about transit and transportation. TSU has educational, professional, technological and technical capabilities and resources that can assist communities, agencies and other stakeholders in North Nashville, Nashville and Middle Tennessee connect the issues, engage and collaborate on transit and transportation decision making and investments.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

Urban League of Middle Tennessee

Patricia Parrish Stokes, President and CEO; Telephone: (615) 254-0525

Website: <http://ul-mdtn.iamempowered.com/>

Mission: The mission of the Urban League of Middle Tennessee is to enable African Americans, other minorities, and disenfranchised groups to secure economic self-reliance, power, parity, and civil rights. The Urban League movement empowers communities and changes lives. Efforts are focused in the following areas: Economic empowerment - which includes workforce development, jobs, housing, and entrepreneurship; Youth & Education - services focused on ensuring academic competence while preparing young people for life, leadership, and success within a global economy; Health & Quality of Life for all and particularly for those who need it most; Civic Engagement and empowering communities through participation in the political process; Civil Rights and Racial Justice.

Group History:

In 1910, The National Urban League was founded with the goal of fighting for racial progress by providing college scholarships and job training and striving to increase homeownership and entrepreneurship in minority communities. The organization was formed through a merger between the Committee for the Improvement of Industrial Conditions among Negroes in New York and the National League for the Protection of Colored Women. The Urban League resulted from migration of high numbers of African Americans who left the rural South to pursue employment opportunities in Northern cities. The League expanded job opportunities for African Americans through its Industrial Relations Laboratory, which had major success in eroding the color bar at many defense plants. The League fulfilled a major role in the Civil Rights Movement.

The Urban League of Middle Tennessee (ULMT) was chartered on April 15, 1968 by a diverse group of business and community leaders to "Carry on programs of social service improving the economic welfare of Negroes." In 2008, the Middle Tennessee League celebrated 40 years of "Empowering Nashville and Middle Tennessee Communities."

ULMT has a strong reputation for connecting thousands of job seekers and employers. The League has also saved many families from homelessness. Since 2004, ULMT has contributed up to \$6 million into the Nashville economy connecting clients with employers.

Current Work/Events/Publications:

- Urban League Young Professionals Leadership Conference seeks to empower young professionals by providing engaging sessions, workshops, and seminars facilitated by business, health, and civic leaders and professionals.
- Project Ready provides academic and social support to high school students preparing for post-secondary schooling.

Organization's top 3 priorities for community and economic development:

- Youth and adult education
- Workforce development
- Economic empowerment

Relationship between transportation and transit and the top 3 organization priorities:

Transit and transportation correlate with access to workforce development training and retraining and access to job opportunities. Ameliorating the lack of resources in disadvantaged African American communities and other disadvantaged and/or low income communities by diversifying employment opportunities and providing access via transit and transportation options strengthens the community and the workforce and enhances self-sufficiency.

Two strategic ULMT programs exemplify the significance of transit and transportation to access the activities. They are the Youth and Adult GED Education Programs delivered through a partnership between ULMT, Nashville State and Community College and the Tennessee Technology Center; and Project Ready which ensures education of children by providing access to early childhood literacy, after-care programs and college preparation and scholarships. Project Ready is a signature program of the National Urban League (NUL) designed to provide enhanced academic and social support to 9-12th grade high school students as they prepare for post-secondary success.

Ways the organization's constituencies benefit from transit investment:

Urban League of Middle Tennessee constituencies are benefitted by transit investment as a means of providing transportation to the area universities and other educational opportunities that enhance youth and adult education and workforce readiness. The ability to access local and regional colleges, universities and other educational institutions is a critical asset that promotes a dynamic, capable, and therefore more resilient workforce. Collaboration with the Middle Tennessee Urban League can assist in identifying and addressing their constituency's needs. ULMT is a member of Nashville Next, the initiative established by Mayor Karl Dean, which is shaping Davidson County's vision for future of the Nashville metropolitan area.

501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization verified by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee on GivingMatters.com

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