

# NASHVILLE'S AGENDA<sup>2007</sup>

CONVERSATION ACROSS THE CITY

## NEW IDEAS FROM NASHVILLIANS

### INTRODUCTION

The “ideas for action” on the following pages are proposed by the citizens of Nashville.

During the spring of 2007, more than 3,000 Nashvillians participated in the ***Nashville's Agenda 2007*** process – sharing ideas in survey questionnaires and community meetings – with the goal of finding new ways to “make Nashville the best it can be.”

In 1993, the original ***Nashville's Agenda*** project involved a similar process and produced 21 ambitious goals for the city's future. Following up, in March 1994, a Steering Committee of diverse community leaders was formed and initiated an array of volunteer action teams. These groups helped the city address a list of “ideas for action” that had also been identified in the goal-setting process. The work of these Nashvillians produced the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, the Nashville Housing Fund, the Davidson Group, and other important accomplishments that today help define the new Nashville.

In January 2007, the current Steering Committee (see roster in the *Appendix*) determined it was time to undertake such a process once again to identify fresh ideas for moving the city forward – but this time utilizing the technology of the Internet, as well as the time-tested method of bringing Nashvillians together in a number of community discussions. The Committee observed that much progress had been made by Nashvillians in addressing the 21 goals in the intervening years and also that new subjects had emerged as important for the city and its future.

First, a “Survey of Nashvillians” was undertaken utilizing a questionnaire circulated by telephone interview and also via the Internet. A total of 306 telephone

interviews were completed by Perdue Research Group with broad distribution of respondents across the city, and nearly nine times that number participated online. This multitude of responses helped frame the top discussion topics for community meetings and also established a “database of ideas” as an ongoing community resource for action teams to use later.

Next, using the survey information as an organizing tool, five well-publicized community meetings were held to facilitate a “conversation across the city” over a two-week period in April. These occurred in Woodbine, Bordeaux, West Meade, East Nashville, and downtown, with hundreds participating via small “discussion circles” assisted by trained facilitators. The meetings generated hundreds of possible action ideas, which were ranked in the same sessions by the same participants.

No idea was lost, but Nashvillians talking together ranked some ideas higher than others – identifying those that were most in need of attention by the community at large. All the ideas will be part of the permanent project archive. This record, organized by topic and meeting date, will be available as a resource to Nashvillians working subsequently on implementation activities.

This report also does not represent the spectrum of all issues of importance to the city. Instead, this is a timely update on what subjects are top-of-mind for Nashvillians today and are therefore deserving of attention now.

It is good to remember that all the 21 goals in the original **Nashville’s Agenda** report continue to be important. This document does not replace the original list of goals for our city but is meant to add to our understanding of that challenging agenda in the present day. The goals established by Nashvillians in 1993 – from education to tourism, from health care to sports and the arts – are all still highly relevant to our city’s future and are still being pursued by Steering Committee members and other volunteers. This 2007 initiative began by asking Nashvillians what subjects they consider most in need of attention *now*, and they responded enthusiastically. Responses to the “Survey of Nashvillians” indicated that citizens perceive that our city has made great progress on those fronts since 1994. We clearly have.

This new report is intended to build on that progress and sustain our ongoing attention to all these worthy goals. Both documents, therefore, add to our understanding of the full range of topics that are vital to making Nashville the best it can be.

From the community's new input this spring – from our “conversation across the city” of 2007 – the 75 top-ranked actionable ideas are now presented in ten categories on the following pages. We respectfully present this report to our fellow Nashvillians for the community's attention – in the hope that this document can serve as a foundation for action, building on the progress of the past decade.

To be successful, this will require continuing participation and leadership. In Nashville, the most important leadership has always come from multiple sources – individuals and organizations, business and labor, clergy and laity, private sector and government. In this way, we have seen such progress occur before – with impressive and historic results for our city.

As Nashvillians begin to grapple with implementation of these ideas, it will also be important to understand the availability of this larger body of work – the total “database of ideas.” Just as a mountain has a broad base structure as well as a more visible summit, we believe that authentic community action requires a broad base of participation and source of ideas, as well as leadership for organization and direction – and a shared spirit of community to bind the whole together. We know this can work. From the implementation activities that began in 1994, we know from experience that all the parts of the mountain are important.

This ambitious project was brought about by organizers, facilitators, and other volunteers who are identified at the end of this document. We especially thank The Frist Foundation for its generous funding of this effort. Above all, we appreciate the many Nashvillians who contributed time and enthusiasm to this initiative.

*Here's how you can help ...* Take a look at the following pages, and find the topic that interests you the most. If you would like to volunteer, please visit the website at [www.nashvillesagenda.org](http://www.nashvillesagenda.org) or call 321-3110. The Steering Committee will identify leaders to organize teams of interested citizens to move the action forward.

As before, it is likely that these action teams will agree it does not matter who gets the credit; that many existing institutions in our city have an important role to play in implementing new ideas, and that some ideas herein may reveal a need for new institutions or programs.

Finally, our thanks to all the Nashvillians who brought to this process their energy and spirit to make Nashville the best it can be. We recognize that making progress on this ambitious list of ideas will take time. We suggest the time to begin is now.

# NASHVILLE'S AGENDA<sup>2007</sup>

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

### EDUCATION

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Ensure that it is a safe and nurturing place for all children, where kids learn the skills they need for life in an effective school system that encourages parental involvement and respect for diversity.***

- Provide skilled job training after high school and jobs for young people, with a mentoring component.
- Reduce the drop out rate in our public high schools.
- The Mayor, Metro Council and Board of Education should develop a five-year funding plan for schools with no reductions. Provide resources to close achievement gaps in education.
- Require community service work for youth as part of the school curriculum.
- Increase mentoring programs for all kids – not just those who are troubled. Senior citizens could be mentors for at-risk students, helping them avoid being placed in alternative schools.
- Re-establish vocational schools, possibly through agreements with community colleges and trade schools. Adult literacy and education should also be supported.
- Establish learning curves for preschools and daycares to match pre-kindergarten expectations
- Establish a “Blue Chair Program” in schools for parents to participate regularly by coming to classrooms, sitting/watching, holding students, with teachers and administrators accountable.
- Prepare for the transition of “baby boomers” with public service programs, community awareness workshops. Establish a senior citizen community that would include resources, financial security and education.
- Provide guidance counselors at every grade level.

- Create a Student Bill of Rights to clarify the rights and responsibilities of students.
- Provide diversity education for students and teachers.
- Start building small schools with better site planning to encourage community support, energy saving, and walking.
- Help non-profits design, market, and deliver curriculum based programs to schools more effectively. For example, offer art classes as a means of anger management.

## YOUTH

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Establish more places and programs that enable children to play safely, enjoy life, respect each other, and become discerning citizens.***

- Place more emphasis on prevention programs that help parents help children at risk.
- Offer safe places for kids to play.
- Create a village for after-school arts and sports with instruction.
- Establish programs to involve youth in civic political processes.
- Provide additional summer programs for young students aged 13-17 to allow better choices for summer care for youth.

## IMMIGRATION

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Identify ways to encourage understanding of immigration issues – including the problems associated with illegal immigrants – in a broader context of valuing cultural diversity and encouraging appreciation for new Nashvillians.***

- Create more positive image of immigration in the city. Encourage corporate and political leaders to educate city on value of diversity and immigrants. Find ways to increase cultural awareness in Nashville through more city-wide celebrations like the Celebration of Cultures festival. Educate public about differences between immigrants and illegal immigrants with a focus on the total immigrant population.

- Expand diversity training to identify cultural differences provided in the workplace, school, religious institution and govt.
- Encourage local corporations to “adopt” at-risk or immigrant neighborhoods for civic training and job placement.
- Provide a database and services that are multi-lingual to address specific newcomer needs.
- Convene a group of policy-makers to develop a special driver’s license for undocumented immigrants that, at a minimum, allows them to drive to and from work.
- Create an Office of Immigrant Integration that provides education, information services and forums that encourage civil conversation
- Hold “civics” classes at schools and libraries for new Nashvillians on local laws, government processes and services available.
- Create a leadership academy which partners immigrant leaders with native Nashvillians to expand partnerships and create stronger leaders.

## **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Identify targeted streets and areas for special development, encourage employment opportunities, promote tourism, and establish regional partnerships that strengthen the city.***

- Develop a downtown park for people who live and work downtown. Possible locations include the former baseball park site, Shelby Park or the Gulch.
- Develop a thoroughfare connecting North Nashville to West End.
- Revitalize the Jefferson Street business district.
- Revitalize Charlotte Avenue.
- Build out the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan to take advantage of the river banks as the heart of downtown.
- Conduct a strategic plan to retain college students as permanent residents of Nashville, with employment opportunities.
- Develop higher-density commercial and mixed use areas, particularly at significant neighborhood corners
- Provide more support for diverse businesses.

- Recognize competition with Williamson County, and collaborate on economic development with a regional perspective.
- Build the planned convention center and connect it with other area facilities like the arena and the current convention center.
- Find ways to support basic services downtown to provide amenities that are needed by residents and workers, including retail and medical care.
- Support the design and construction of the new Tennessee State Museum on the Bicentennial Mall with accommodations for the Metro Archives and Metro Historical Commission under a suitable governance structure.
- Develop small communities for seniors offering services needed in their daily lives.

## **HOUSING**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD...

***Accelerate development of affordable housing, encourage more home ownership, and provide prospective homeowners with the information and tools they need.***

- Increase the housing trust fund with a sustainable source of public revenue in order to expand affordable housing opportunities and access to mortgages for low-income housing. Consider dedicating a portion of the developer fees that are already being collected.
- Provide affordable housing *citywide*. Stop concentration of poverty and homeless in urban areas.
- Set up an early intervention system for people in Section 8 Housing with a mediation program between tenants and landlords to keep them out of court, so that they don't lose their housing vouchers.
- Circulate a master list of seminars and workshops for first-time home buyers.
- Create a listing of abandoned homes in order to encourage development of those properties.

## **HEALTH**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Have in every neighborhood access to healthy food, community health clinics, and life-saving equipment for use in emergencies. Nashvillians should not be***

***hungry or have to endure food insecurity.***

- Establish a farmer's market in every part of Nashville (possibly coordinated city-wide by the Nashville's Farmer's Market). Create community gardens & compost sites for youth involvement on public property.
- Convert existing school nurse offices for use as children's clinics in the evening and on weekends.
- Install defibrillators so that they are convenient to residents of Section 8 Housing and in assisted living areas (like Radnor Towers).
- Teach skills for reducing teen pregnancy. Provide parenting classes for all age groups
- Implement spay/neuter program citywide for cats and dogs roaming city streets.
- Establish a "Senior Watch" program (similar to a Neighborhood Watch) providing a network for volunteers to check in on seniors to ensure their well-being.
- Teach basic nutrition and food preparation to preschoolers.
- Provide free medical services for the uninsured (including dental and mental health services).
- Establish an incentive plan to allow for 30-60 minutes of exercise per day for employees in order to improve health.

**SAFETY**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Have an effective engagement of police with the community to make Nashvillians safe in their homes and neighborhoods, be tolerant and respectful of others, but intolerant of crime and criminals.***

- Establish mentoring programs to teach tolerance, self-respect and empowerment. Create better anger management programs for students.
- Provide security and surveillance (for protection) for teachers.
- Address the problem of "gang villages." Police officers should get out of their cars, and city workers should report what they see to the police.

## **POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Develop more effective ways to help individuals and families in need break the cycle of poverty, reduce homelessness, and provide mentoring for those who are economically disadvantaged.***

- Establish temporary housing for mothers and children who are homeless.
- Develop city-wide plans for adequate transitional living.
- Establish mentoring programs for economically disadvantaged by those economically advantaged.
- Encourage the business community to provide more job opportunities for the homeless and poor.
- Create an accessible adult public education facility that people could use to break out of the cycle of poverty. It should be available at specific times and places (with babysitting facilities, etc.), that make it easy to attend.
- Help students break the cycle of poverty by understanding the link between lack of education and poor economic success.
- Establish a city-wide strategic plan to create and develop long-term solutions for our residents who are in poverty.
- Provide life skills and behavior training in public housing and low income communities. This should include financial and decision management.
- Coordinate the governmental and community resources that address the root causes of homelessness and poverty.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***Be a “green city” which emphasizes respect for the environment, reduction of waste, and more efficient energy consumption.***

- Set a goal of 50% waste diversion through more effective recycling and

composting programs. Convert the city's waste removal to a pay-as-you-throw garbage plan. Local government should use hybrid/electric cars, and convert city buses to electric power.

- Stop sewer sludge land application.
- Relocate the metals scrap yard from the downtown area.
- Develop a program to clean up litter, broken windows, and abandoned buildings. Advocate for enforcement of Metro codes and ordinances to reduce graffiti and litter.
- City government should conduct an energy audit to become more energy efficient and reduce carbon dioxide. Require LEED certification for all Metro government buildings.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

TO MAKE NASHVILLE THE BEST IT CAN BE, WE SHOULD ...

***The city should be safe, walkable and bikeable, and have a workable public transportation system that is accessible and affordable and connects neighborhoods in the city, and cities in the region.***

- Develop more efficient, available, and environmentally-sound public transportation with better promotion and greater incentives (lower fares, better routes) for people to take public transportation. The "spokes" of Nashville's main avenues and pikes should be served and cross-town connections provided. Develop better public transportation for seniors
- Create a river taxi from northwest Nashville to downtown.
- Make Nashville more walkable and bikeable. Remove barriers, and add sidewalks and bike paths.
- Conduct a public transportation strategic plan for regional high speed lines from commuter areas, with incentives to discourage cars from driving into Nashville.

*APPENDIX*

**NASHVILLE'S AGENDA 2007 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Tom Sherrard *Chairman*

Lewis Lavine

Kent Adams

Ellen Lehman

Nelson Andrews

Randy Lowry

Sue Atkinson

Art Rebrovick

Pete Bird

Kenneth L. Roberts

Rosalyn Carpenter

Phillip Ryan

Deb Palmer George

Mike Schoenfeld

Allyson Young

Ronal Serpas

DeWitt Ezell, Jr.

Alan Valentine

Jose Gonzalez

Hershell A. Warren

Nicholas Holland

Jerry Williams

Dr. Roy Hutton

Brenda Wynn

Melvin N. Johnson

**PROJECT COORDINATOR**

KEEL HUNT

## **NASHVILLE'S AGENDA 2007 FACILITATION TEAM**

Dr. Roy Hutton <i>Team Coordinator</i>	Briana Himelrick
Dr. Larry Bridgesmith	Genma Holmes
Rosalyn Carpenter	Marnie Huff
Dr. Tilden Curry	Becky Kantz
Sam Davidson	David Koellein
T.K. Davis	Christine Kreyling
Jose Gonzalez	Omar'an D. Lee
Brenda M. Hunter	Eduardo Lelli
Sharon Hurt	Dr. Millicent Lownes-Jackson
Sylvia Hutton	Stephanie McCullough
Dr. Charla Long	Linda McFadyen-Ketchum
Kate Monaghan	Rachel Moxley
Dr. Jim Thomas	Wesley Paine
Hershell A. Warren	Nikki Parram-Thibaud
Brenda Wynn	William Pugh
Deborah Alexander-Fisher	Janet Rachel
Clara Mesa Arteaga	Jerrika Rivera
Robert L. Baker	Julie Roberts
Megan Barry	Paula Roberts
Katina Beard	Ron Rossman
Natalie Bradley	Remizer Seals
Mickee Carter	Joyce Searcy
Dr. Clyde Chesney	Marietta Shipley
Brian Christens	Susanna Shumate
Dr. Sande Churchill	Lisa Smith
Matthew Davis	Patra Thomas
Rhonda Dunn	Lani Wilkeson
Deb Palmer George	

**NASHVILLE'S AGENDA 2007 LOGISTICS TEAM**

Hershell Warren <i>Team Coordinator</i>	Kenneth Phillips
Virginia Brennan	Art Rebrovick
Dena Cheatham	Linda Rebrovick
Margaret Dyer	Pam Robinson
Elizabeth Fielding	Victor Wynn
Tony Hurt	Allyson Young
Vanita Lytle-Sherrill	

**LOCATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

April 10 – **Glenclyff High School** 160 Antioch Pike

April 12 – **Temple Church** 3810 Kings Lane

April 17 – **St. Henry School** 6401 Harding Pike

April 19 – **Litton Middle School** 4601 Hedgewood Drive

April 21 – **First Baptist Church** 108 Seventh Avenue South

## **ACTION ON NASHVILLE'S AGENDA**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Kent M. Adams	E. Gordon Gee	Ben R. Rechter
Nelson C. Andrews	Tammy Genovese	Colin Reed
Sue Atkinson	The Hon. Howard Gentry, Jr.	Raul Regalado
The Rev. Bill Barnes	José González	Dr. Wayne J. Riley
Rick Bernhardt	Randy Goodman	Kenneth L. Roberts
Pete Bird	Aubrey B. Harwell	Phillip Ryan
Dennis C. Bottorff	Jim Houser	Ron Samuels
Jack Bovender	Samuel H. Howard	Mike Schoenfeld
Dr. T.B. Boyd III	Keel Hunt	Ralph Schulz
The Hon. Philip Bredesen	John R. Ingram	Chief Ronal W. Serpas
Monroe Carell, Jr.	Martha R. Ingram	Tom Sherrard
Agenia Clark	Orrin Ingram	John Stein
The Hon. Jim Cooper	Dr. Harry R. Jacobson	Rusty Stephenson
Mac Crawford	Dr. Melvin Johnson	John Stern
Mike Curb	Lewis Lavine	Dominique Thormann
Marty Dickens	Ellen Lehman	Cal Turner, Jr.
Emanuel Eads	Jerry Lee	Steve Turner
Mike A. Edwards	Randy Lowry	Alan Valentine
J.D. Elliott	Robert C.H. Mathews, Jr.	Hershell A. Warren
Kitty Moon Emery	Robert McNeilly	E.W. Wendell
Mark A. Emkes	Clayton McWhorter	David Williams II
DeWitt Ezell, Jr.	Frank Miller	Jerry Williams
Irwin Fisher	Donna Nicely	William M. Wilson
Dr. Robert C. Fisher	Gerald F. Nicely	Jim Wright
Dr. Thomas F. Frist, Jr.	Kathleen O'Brien	Brenda P. Wynn
The Hon. Richard H. Fulton	David Perdue	Kyle Young
Darrell S. Freeman	The Hon. Bill Purcell	Shirley Zeitlin
Dr. Pedro Garcia	Mario Ramos	