Destination: MADISONVILLE

A Community Driven Downtown Revitalization Plan
Destination Madisonville

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By

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Madisonville, Tennessee is a town at the crossroads, both literally and figuratively. Located at the junction of Highways 411 and 68, the community has served as the Monroe County seat for nearly two centuries. Established in the early nineteenth century, Madisonville has long functioned as the governmental, economic, and social hub for the county.

At the heart of Madisonville is the city’s historic downtown. Long-time residents recall the area as a vibrant district where county residents traded, mingled, and worshiped. Downtown was dominated by the historic county courthouse, where citizens convened for elections, trials, and county business. Today the courthouse retains that function, but the rest of downtown is dramatically different.

Changing trends in transportation, retailing, and recreation have transformed the once vital community hub into a shadow of its former existence. Foremost among these impacts are changes in the region’s transportation network. Over the past half-century, the local highway system has been transformed by road construction and expansion. The opening of Interstate 75 and modernization of Highway 411 have drawn residents and resources away from the downtown district. Residents and business owners lament the loss of traffic and visitors to the neighboring town of Sweetwater, which boasts an interstate exit.

The widening of Highway 411 and the construction of a downtown bypass is now dominated by national chains, shopping centers, and big-box retailers that have drained much of the economic and social life out of downtown.

Central to this new retail district is a colossal Wal-Mart Supercenter. Madisonville, like many other rural towns across America, has experienced both the positive and negative consequences of the so-called “Wal-Mart effect.” While local residents no doubt welcome the selection and low prices associated with Wal-Mart, the chain’s impact on Madisonville has been profound as the world’s largest retailer, with its unassailable economies of scale, contributed to the decline of local
businesses. Few establishments survived the transition as vacant storefronts and second-hand shops now occupy much of the downtown landscape.

Paired with the loss of retail activity, the historic fabric of downtown has also experienced decline. Neglect, absentee ownership, and lack of intervention have taken their toll on historic structures; many are now vacant or underutilized. Two historic Works Progress Administration-era structures are threatened with demolition to make way for a new and controversial library.

Most distressing to local residents is the state of the community’s Kefauver legacy. A January 2006 fire damaged the Senator’s downtown home, transforming the landmark into a lamentable symbol of decay and indifference.

Yet, in spite of these issues, there is much reason for hope in downtown Madisonville. The city’s architectural resources, while neglected, do remain largely intact. Downtown restaurants and a new art gallery are showing signs of success. Community stakeholders, including Hiwassee College, the local arts council, the local government, and community leaders have participated in efforts to help improve and revitalize the district. This report, along with the associated process that preceded it, is an outcome of that effort.

This report is the product of a partnership between the people of Madisonville and the University of Tennessee Community Partnership Center (CPC). The ideas and the vision established by this plan, however, belong to the residents of Madisonville. This document, while generated by a process facilitated by the CPC, is an expression of the community’s values, goals, and creativity.

Madisonville, a town at the crossroads, has determined its own path to the future.
The process used to develop this plan was predicated upon two fundamental and guiding principles: public participation and sustainability. These concepts represent the values of the Community Partnership Center and the University of Tennessee and are incumbent through our institutional mission as the state’s land grant institution.

These principles, however, are also vital in that they represent proven best practices in the fields of land use planning and community and economic development. Their use and application offer the best chance for project implementation and long-term success.

Public Participation

Public participation is an easy concept to grasp, but often difficult to achieve. Genuine participation involves giving concerned individuals - citizens, residents, community leaders, and all community stakeholders - a meaningful if not dominant role in the decision making process. More often than not, however, participation falls far short of this goal. Instead it takes the form of bureaucratic “inform and ignore” public meetings, mandatory hearings conducted deliberately during resident’s work hours, or a design “charrette” to unveil a consultant’s personal vision.

Sherry Arnstein first addressed this phenomenon in 1969 in a groundbreaking article titled “A Ladder of Citizen Participation.” In this work, often cited as a foundation of modern participatory principles, Arnstein proposed a hierarchy of public engagement in the decision making process. This “ladder” ran from non-participation and tokenism, defined by Arnstein as “manipulation” and “informing,” all the way to more meaningful levels of activity, such as “partnership” and “delegated power.” The ultimate goal, according to Arnstein, is “citizen control,” a level where residents and stakeholders democratically drive and control the decision making processes that impact their lives, their environment, and their community.

Other studies have confirmed the importance of participatory planning. Benjamin Barber, author of Strong Democracy, summarized the significance of the practice, stating that participation “enhances the power of communities and endows them with a moral force that non-participatory rulership rarely achieves.” Moreover, he added, participation enhances “the power of communities...enlarges their scope of action...and envisions politics not as a way of life but as a way of living.”
Still others have demonstrated the effectiveness of including citizens in the decision making process. Recently, for example, a study published in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* found a strong correlation between the likelihood of plan implementation and the level of public participation. The study concluded that planning processes with a high level of public involvement were 2.4 times more likely to achieve implementation than traditional processes with limited public involvement.

**Targeted Public Planning Processes**

Since the 1960s, public participation has been viewed as a necessary element in comprehensive planning processes. Most states, municipalities, and public agencies now require participatory elements in planning and development projects. Despite the persistence of *ad hoc* and *pro forma* participation, most planners today view meaningful public engagement as an important and necessary step in the planning process.

The successful use of public participation has led to its increasing application in specialized and targeted planning processes. Today, for example, participation is a key element in cutting-edge environmental planning studies. By 1992, in fact, the practice was so widely accepted that more than 100 heads of State worldwide agreed to the following statement in the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*:

"Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided."

Likewise, preservationists have adopted civic engagement as an important planning tool. The Secretary of the Interior now includes participation in the agency’s “*Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning*” stating:

“Preservation planning includes public participation. The planning process should provide a forum for open discussion of preservation issues. Public involvement is most meaningful when it is used to assist in defining values of properties and preservation planning issues,
rather than when it is limited to review of decisions already made. Early and continuing public participation is essential to the broad acceptance of preservation planning decisions. The success of the preservation planning process depends on how well it solicits and integrates the views of various groups.”

Given these trends, it is both necessary and appropriate to include a significant level of public involvement in a downtown revitalization plan. Meaningful participation also assists in funding proposed projects and improvements as foundations and public agencies – aware of the strong correlation between participation and project success – now tend to favor proposals with significant public input.

Sustainability

More and more, the modern world is a place of scarce resources. Population growth, economic expansion, and changes in the global marketplace have all increased demands on the planet’s finite resources. Environmental issues, most visibly climate change, have served to compound these problems. As a result, resources such as arable land, raw materials, traditional energy sources, and potable water are increasingly in short supply.

In an effort to cope with diminishing resources, many communities are encouraged to incorporate the concept of sustainability into their planning processes. The most popular definition of sustainability is defined by the United Nations’ Brundtland Commission as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹ Simply put, sustainability is about resource management, and sustainable plans define strategies to help communities identify and conserve resources and valuable local assets.

Sustainability is usually associated with environmental concerns and is an important component of plans that promote clean water, improve air quality, or conserve energy. However, sustainable resources extend far beyond the natural environment. Cultural and historical resources, local architecture, existing infrastructure, and educational institutions are also important assets that continue to contribute to healthy and functional communities.

Given these considerations, it is clear that downtown revitalization efforts fit well within the context of sustainable development. In fact, many characteristics of historic downtowns reflect sustainable principles. Among these are the following:

- Downtowns have existing infrastructures, negating the need for new construction, thereby reducing demand for undeveloped land, new construction materials, and landfill space for demolition debris.

- Historic downtowns have culturally significant sites and architectural resources, which contribute to community distinctiveness, provide a sense of place, and add to local quality of life.

- Downtowns are usually walkable and pedestrian friendly, enhancing public health and reducing traffic and the need for road expansion.

- Downtown structures often have mixed-use potential, allowing residential and commercial activities in close proximity.

As competition for resources increases in the future, traditional downtown districts will be poised to attract residents and businesses. As a result, a vital and viable downtown is a key element to a local community and economic development strategy.

**The Community Partnership Center's Approach to Public Participation**

The goal of the Community Partnership Center (CPC) is to promote public participation and help Tennessee communities reach the upper rungs of Arnstein’s hypothetical ladder. The CPC’s approach to planning is rooted in a commitment to sustainable economic and community development through broad-based community participation. The CPC’s approach attempts to answer the challenge of the sustainability movement, to find ways to effectively manage growth, and to plan for the future of the community in ways that will not compromise the quality of life of future generations.

This approach assumes that decisions about growth management and future development are highly complex and embedded in the dynamics of the social, economic, political, and environmental systems. It also assumes that within communities there are complexities of values, perceptions, and the relative power of various stakeholder groups affected by these decisions, and uncertainties and urgency surrounding growth issues. Therefore, in order to make choices about how to use their limited resources, communities need a choice of viable processes that are based on an understanding of the important linkages and trade-offs that exist among their community's quality of life, their social, economic,
environmental assets, and the potential for various stakeholders to benefit differently from the choices made.

The CPC’s approach includes processes, data gathering, and decision tools that can be used by communities to sustainably plan for their future. The approach takes into consideration stakeholder and other contextual differences, the collaborative development of information, and the collaborative development of appropriate decision tools and processes. In essence, the approach is focused on process and specific decision products. An important goal is to greatly enhance the potential for sustainable community-based growth management, conservation, and development choices in the community.

The Planning Team process used by the CPC was developed through the center’s experience in public participation and civic engagement. In this process, participants representing all segments of the community go through nine phases of research, evaluation, and decision-making. These phases, presented as informal questions, lead team members through a complete, circular, and ongoing research process that can continue to address community issues long after the initial question has been resolved.

The questions and phases of the process are:

- How will we work together and what are our goals?
- What do we need to learn and why?
- How do we find out about what we need to learn?
- Who will do what and when?
- What are we learning and what does it mean?
- How do we make changes with what we have learned?
- What differences have we made?
- How do we celebrate our efforts?
- What next?

Over the past decade, CPC has successfully employed this process to promote community and economic development throughout East Tennessee. The CPC has assisted residents in rural Appalachia, for example, prioritize local development projects, attract sustainable industries, and promote local tourism. This process has also been used in the Knoxville Empowerment Zone to help residents develop and implement community-driven plans.
In Madisonville, the CPC used a modified version of the planning team approach with tools and methods designed to focus discussion specifically on the downtown community and its resources. The CPC conducted a series of three community workshops over the course of three months in the spring of 2007. Successive workshops were designed to craft a vision, identify resources, generate ideas, and define priorities.

Workshops were held in the community room of the First United Methodist Church. The workshops were marketed to the public through multiple channels, including newspaper announcements, postcards, and html email. Attendance for all three workshops was good and residents remained interested and engaged throughout the process.

While CPC staff designed and led the workshops, smaller group discussions each night were facilitated by trained graduate students from the University of Tennessee Planning Program. The students led groups through various exercises and decision-making processes and recorded their discussion points. Facilitators focused group discussions on the downtown community through the following group exercises, which will be detailed during each individual workshop summary that follows:

- Community Mapping Exercise
- Community Values and Visioning
- Community Likes and Dislikes
- Scenario Exercises
- Community Snapshot Exercise
- Brainstorming Exercise
- Resource Inventory and Assessment

Trained student facilitators led smaller discussion groups for a number of reasons. Primarily, graduate students gain invaluable experience in a community, plus it has been demonstrated that students often lead more dynamic and responsive discussions, providing performance advantages that contribute to the quality of the final plan.
The primary goals of the first workshop were to introduce the planning process, determine downtown boundaries, and establish a community vision for the district’s future. The meeting began with an introduction to the planning process which stressed the importance of local participation. For participants, “key concepts” to consider included sustainability, creativity, and the importance of “the long view.”

In an effort to orient residents, participants were introduced to a pair of case study communities: Jonesborough, Tennessee and Damascus, Virginia. These communities, both regional success stories, were highlighted to show the potential of careful planning, creative thinking, and asset-based development. They also provided compelling examples of the economic benefits associated with sustainable development practices.

Following this introductory session, participants separated into discussion groups of about eight people each. Groups were seated around a work table and were assisted by a pair of UT student facilitators. These groups then took part in exercises designed to determine valued downtown features, set local boundaries, and establish a local vision. Other valuable data was uncovered here as local issues were voiced and a framework for establishing common ground in the group and the larger project began to take shape.

Community Mapping Exercise

During the first exercise, groups were given ink markers and a poster-sized aerial photo of downtown Madisonville. Participants were asked to define downtown by drawing boundary lines on the poster. Working together as a group, each table created a definition for downtown that helped establish the plan’s study area.

Participants were encouraged to note sites and structures on photos during subsequent discussions. Subsequent analysis of these notes indicate consensus on a number of local significant buildings and landmarks. These sites were labeled “hot spots” and helped identify local priorities and areas of concern.
Based on the four maps and the subsequent discussion, the downtown plan’s study area is defined by Hwy 411 to the south, the railroad tracks to the north, and the outside of Houston Park, Pine Street, and Mill Street to the west and east.

Values and Visioning Exercise

Participants also took part in a values and visioning exercise. First, residents were questioned about the characteristics and elements of downtown that they valued. This activity helped determine what residents liked about downtown and did not want to see
changed. Similarly, participants also identified things they disliked. Among the responses and points of discussion were the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Dislikes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown restaurants</td>
<td>State of Kefauver House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courthouse</td>
<td>Neglect of buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic buildings</td>
<td>Parking problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halloween festival</td>
<td>Absentee ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail stores</td>
<td>Inadequate codes enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>Narrow sidewalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkability</td>
<td>Deliveries block access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creek</td>
<td>Lack of unified vision</td>
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</table>

Participants then took part in visioning exercises. Residents were asked “What is your vision for downtown in 2025?” Visions included the following:

- College Street as a vibrant business district with unique locally-owned shops
- A pedestrian friendly environment with wide sidewalks
- A growing community with a diverse mix of people and ages
- A downtown with entertainment, events, and festivals
- Increased cooperation between the city and county
- Tourists and visitors from across the region
- A restored Kefauver House and a strong historic district

**Scenario Exercise**

Following the mapping and visioning activities, resident took part in a scenario writing exercise. Each discussion group was asked to create and title two narrative scenarios for downtown in the year 2025. One scenario, labeled as “light,” would describe the best possible outcomes for downtown. The other, called the “dark” scenario, would describe the worst possible outcome. The resulting scenario titles, cited below, revealed much about the aspirations and misgivings of the local community.

**Light Scenarios**
- Boomtown
- Sunshine Center
- Back to the Future
- Madisonville

**Dark Scenarios**
- Doomtown
- Black Hole
- Who is Estes Kefauver?
- Results of No Action
By working through various scenarios, clear and common themes emerged. The “light” scenarios resembled the vision statements crafted earlier in the evening. Residents described a vital and prosperous downtown that would be a hub of community activity. The district would remain distinctive and would retain historical structures and elements. Residents would have a stronger sense of community and a greater appreciation for local heritage. Amenities, including recreation space and a restored creek, would be connected by a local greenway system.

The “dark” scenarios also shared many common elements. Residents described a community in decline characterized by empty streets, vacant storefronts, and crime. The town’s heritage is largely lost and the community is largely homogenized. Sweetwater has completely supplanted Madisonville as the county’s commercial and governmental hub. Parks are overgrown and litter-strewn, while the creek has become polluted and toxic.

**Post-Workshop Analysis**

The workshop indicated a high level of community interest in the revitalization of Madisonville’s downtown. There was explicit consensus on the desirability and need for a viable downtown commercial district. Likewise there was also strong agreement that the community’s historic resources are at risk. Among the sites and specific issues raised at the first workshop were the following:

**The Kefauver House**

The declining state of the Kefauver House was a major sore spot for local residents. For many participants, the historic structure’s deterioration symbolized a recent history of apathy and inaction. Residents also agreed that, in addition to being a demoralizing force, the increasingly blighted structure is becoming a threat to public health and public safety.
Absentee Property Ownership
Residents cited absentee property ownership as a major factor in the neglect of many key downtown structures. Some residents expressed frustration at the inability of local government to effectively deal with codes enforcement and building maintenance issues.

Traffic and Parking
Downtown traffic and parking emerged as important issues. Many residents found the current traffic pattern unsafe and discussed ideas to slow vehicles, especially on College Street. Participants disagreed, however, on the issue of on-street parking. Some residents found the practice dangerous and disruptive while others lauded it as a time-saving convenience. Townspeople bemoaned the issue of courthouse parking, stating that county workers often monopolized downtown spaces at the expense of visitors and customers.

Houston Park and Town Creek
Participants identified Houston Park as an underutilized asset with redevelopment potential. Residents also expressed concerns about Town Creek, a historic waterway that runs through the park. Citizens stated the creek was overgrown, polluted, and in need of remediation.

New Public Library
Considerable disagreement exists over the site of a new downtown library. While most residents welcomed the idea of a downtown library, the preferred site, which would require demolition of two historic WPA structures, was the subject of considerable debate. Many citizens voiced preferences for alternative sites, including Houston Park.
Workshop Two

March 8, 2007

The second workshop was designed to help residents focus their discussion by identifying local assets and opportunities, and developing preliminary project and policy ideas. Participants were also asked to identify potential barriers to downtown redevelopment. Student facilitators, using participatory tools and methods, again facilitated and documented small group discussions.

Community Snapshot Exercise

Citizen photography is an important and useful tool for participatory planning. We have found that photos, when taken anonymously by participants, help identify resources, assets, and obstacles that might otherwise go without discussion during workshops. When integrated into the workshop process, the community snapshots generate talking points among workshop participants better than open discussion allows. Photos help uncover community issues and can even provide a powerful voice for unheard stakeholders.

Near the end of the first workshop, single-use cameras were distributed to six participants who volunteered to take the cameras. These participants were then asked to record opportunities for downtown redevelopment and important local assets. They were also encouraged to photograph barriers to successful change and any image that would represent issues of community concern.

After two weeks, the cameras were anonymously collected, processed, and digitized. The resulting images proved useful in further defining local issues.

At the beginning of the second workshop, photos from the community snapshot exercise were displayed on a table for viewing. Each participant was asked to take two photos that they could identify with and speak to for use in discussion groups.

Resulting images from the Community Snapshot Exercise overwhelmingly fell into four general categories: traffic and parking, historic downtown, litter and eyesores, and parks and sidewalks.
Community Snapshots
Community Snapshots
Inventory and Assessment Exercise

Following an introductory presentation, residents divided into discussion groups to discuss their selected community snapshot photos. Participants were also asked to list opportunities for redevelopment and improvements, as well as potential barriers to change. Discussions were lively and contributed to a better understanding of local concerns.

Workshop participants identified Houston Park as an underutilized asset and decried its poor condition. Participants also noted other neglected or underutilized public facilities, such as the town’s sidewalks. The library issue continued to be a point of discussion, with many residents suggesting alternative sites including the former Heilig-Myers location and Houston Park.

Traffic also emerged as a major issue. Residents complained about the volume and speed of traffic through downtown, particularly along College Street. On-street parking remained a divisive issue, and participants agreed that courthouse parking should be addressed. Several residents noted that nearby church parking lots sat empty during the week and suggested a shared parking arrangement as a possible solution.

Commercial traffic, delivery vehicles, and courthouse parking were all viewed as impediments to downtown business development. Some participants also discussed physical barriers and accessibility issues, citing a lack of handicapped parking and aging sidewalks as concerns.

The town’s historic resources were also identified as an important and underutilized resource. As expected, townspeople expressed considerable concern about the Kefauver House and more generally, the Kefauver legacy. Most residents found that while the town’s heritage was valuable, its current state was lamentable.
Absentee ownership of several key downtown buildings, including the Kefauver House, was also discussed. Residents felt that the owners of these structures “held back” progress in the town and could prevent future redevelopment efforts.

New development also raised concerns. While residents welcomed downtown business growth, they worried about the impact of new growth on historic structures and their ability to preserve the local visual continuity. Participants also expressed a strong desire for locally-owned businesses over national chains.

The issue of litter, previously not discussed, emerged as an important area of concern for the community once the number of snapshots showing pictures of litter and eyesores were realized. Community members cited a number of concerns related to trash and eyesores. These included inadequate or inconsistent codes enforcement, public apathy, lack of awareness, and a perceived shortage of convenient litter receptacles around town.

Participants identified a number of barriers to successful redevelopment. Local and county governments were among the perceived problems discussed. Many participants cited a lack of cooperation and coordination between the two governments as a problem in developing long term solutions. Residents also named inadequate or unenforced codes as a barrier to downtown redevelopment.

A lack of roadside signage and an adequate marketing program were also discussed as potential barriers. Citizens noted the lack of signs promoting the downtown district and downtown businesses. Many participants pointed to Sweetwater as a model for effective marketing, noting the recent growth of the neighboring community’s historic downtown. Still others debated the timeliness of marketing efforts stating, “We can’t promote ourselves until we have something to promote.”

Hiwassee College was identified as an important and underutilized resource. Residents noted the long association
between the town and the historic college and expressed a desire for a stronger relationship. As one participant noted, “A strong downtown is good for Hiwassee College, and vice versa.”

**Group Brainstorming Exercise**

Following the inventory and assessment exercise, participants took part in a brainstorming session. Groups were asked to develop at least five ideas for projects and strategies to improve downtown. In an effort to encourage creative thinking, groups were asked to develop at least one “outside the box” idea. During the exercise, ideas and strategies addressed a range of issues from underground utilities to expanded local festivals.

- Ideas for improved parks and public facilities were offered. Multiple groups called for a greenway system to connect downtown sites. Some carried the concept even further, seeking a connection between downtown and Hiwassee College.

- Participants called for an improved Houston Park and expressed ideas to restore Town Creek. Many participants favored the idea of the park as a new library site.

- Parking and traffic changes were proposed, including the elimination of on-street parking, changing College Street to a one-way thoroughfare, and developing shared parking agreements with local churches.

- Preservation and land-use issues were widely discussed, with multiple residents calling for improved regulations and better codes enforcement.

- Participants explored ways to encourage Hiwassee college students to frequent downtown, and a locally owned coffee house garnered wide support.

- Residents discussed ideas to increase the vitality of downtown while promoting the town’s heritage, including new festivals, a revamped courthouse square, and a local Kefauver museum.
Post-Workshop Analysis

The second workshop resulted in a focused vision for the downtown district, including a significant number of feasible project ideas and strategies. Residents appeared open to change and sought the development of new tools, such as improved local codes, to help implement their vision. The courthouse square concept emerged as a central theme during much of the discussion and it was realized that such an effort could become the core of a revitalized downtown.

Overall, there was considerable agreement between discussion groups on possible projects and strategies. Disagreements, however, continued over the new library site as did the issue of on-street parking.

Following the second meeting, CPC staff and planning students analyzed the workshop findings. More than two dozen alternative ideas based on the projects and strategies were developed during the workshop sessions. These ideas were grouped into five general areas:

**Traffic and Parking**
- Redesign College Street Parking
- Mixed Use Street Space
- Courthouse Employee Parking
- Shared Parking Lots
- Traffic Calming

**Design and Image**
- Design Guidelines
- Downtown Enhancements
- Codes Enforcement
- Litter Prevention

**Parks and Greenways**
- Revitalized Houston Park
- Restored Town Creek
- Reconsider Library Location
- Local Greenways

**Downtown Vitality**
- Public Art
- Public Festivals
- Wireless Internet
- Business Improvement District
- Improved College Connections

**Historic Preservation**
- National Register Historic District
- H1 Zoning Overlay
- Demolition by Neglect ordinance
- Facade easements
- Revolving Fund
- Residential Development Incentive
The third workshop began with an overview of each project area and a description of the alternative ideas and strategies. Participants then separated into discussion groups to evaluate the alternatives. Residents were asked to evaluate the alternatives using a number of criteria, including feasibility, local acceptance, and cost. Participants were also encouraged to contribute new ideas not listed.

Planning students facilitated discussions, answered questions about alternatives, and helped prioritize ideas. Results of these group discussions were later presented to all participants in a plenary session. Alternatives with a high degree of public support became the basis of the final plan recommendations.

Participants also proposed two new alternatives for consideration: a skate park and the conversion of College Street to a one-way thoroughfare. Both ideas enjoyed moderate support and merit further consideration for possible implementation.

Post-Workshop Analysis

Participants showed strong interest in the alternatives presented and engaged in serious and meaningful discussions. Residents demonstrated support for the majority of the proposed ideas. As a result, discussions were geared towards a prioritization of many alternative recommendations rather than selections between them.

The library site, parking, and traffic remained somewhat contentious issues. Most participants, however, remained open to alternative suggestions and discussed the merits of alternative strategies.
The recommendations summarized below and detailed in the remaining portion of this report are based on ideas and strategies developed during the three public workshops and strategic evaluations by local residents. The recommendations have been organized into four areas of concentration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courthouse Square and Business Development</th>
<th>Parks, Greenways, and the Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This section includes recommendations to improve the courthouse area and enhance business development downtown. Strategies related to downtown vitality, residential development, and downtown partnerships are also addressed.</td>
<td>This section includes recommendations to improve downtown public amenities, including Houston Park and Town Creek. It also includes strategies to reduce litter, link sites via a proposed greenway network, and offers recommendations related to the proposed library site.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Preservation</th>
<th>Downtown Parking and Traffic Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This section includes recommendations to preserve and promote the town’s significant cultural, historical, and architectural resources along with strategies to help the community assess and manage these important assets.</td>
<td>This section includes recommendations and strategies to improve downtown parking in order to provide for a safer downtown thoroughfare and allow for a more efficient traffic flow through downtown streets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within each recommendation section, subsections are prioritized to reflect workshop outcomes. Ideas and strategies that received high support or attempt to respond to immediate needs are classified as short-term goals. Ideas and strategies that are seen as less urgent or those that may require additional development are listed as long-term goals. Where applicable, implementation strategies and possible funding sources are included in the goal descriptions.
Courthouse Square and Business Development

During the workshop sessions, many residents spoke fondly of downtown’s heyday, when the area was an active commercial district and the center of local activity. Most participants recognized that, with changes in retailing and transportation, Madisonville’s downtown would never be quite like that again. Still, townspeople enthusiastically supported ideas and policies that would give downtown a role as a viable shopping or entertainment district.

The Monroe County Courthouse has traditionally been at the center of the town’s activity, and that legacy continues today. Yet, while the courthouse attracts visitors and generates traffic, it has not encouraged the growth of downtown retail establishments. Participants expressed interest in restoring a “courthouse square” type of environment, where the area around the structure would become a hub for local events and activities.

Just as residents consider the courthouse as an underutilized asset, they also believed that Hiwassee College has untapped potential. Workshop participants expressed strong support for the institution and discussed ideas to establish a stronger relationship.

The recommendations listed and detailed on the pages that follow reflect the community’s desire for a thriving commercial district and a downtown public space.
The City of Madisonville should begin development of a mixed-use public space along the courthouse block of College Street.

While Madisonville boasts a historic and attractive courthouse area, the community lacks a true courthouse square. As opposed to towns with an authentic square – a park-like downtown public space – Madisonville has a busy commercial street and often congested parking area. Yet, while this space may not be a true square, it sometimes serves the same function. On special occasions, such as Halloween, local authorities block College Street and the area facing the courthouse becomes a public venue.

The city should take steps to formally define this space and establish it as a part-time venue for public events and festivals. Design elements should be incorporated into future improvements to allow the street to become a safe, functional, and attractive space for public events. These improvements should include the following:

**Removable bollards**
Installed across either side of College Street fronting the courthouse, these barriers will help define the public space and help create a safe and controlled environment.

**Alternative street surfacing**
Materials such as brick or simulated brick should be considered for its aesthetic and traffic calming properties. This surfacing would also help visually define the space.

**Downtown amenities**
Trash bins, benches, and bike racks should be installed near the public space.

**Signage**
Helps route traffic safely and efficiently around events and to assist patrons with parking.

**Decorative landscaping**
Vegetation such as trees and flowers help define the space and increase visual appeal. Trees should be placed so that they do not block or impede the line of sight within the space.

**Infrastructure**
Power outlets, water access, and lighting should be considered. Officials should also consider installing Internet access for vendors and visitors.

Funding for these improvements is available from a number of sources including federal and state transportation grants and community development block grants. Technical assistance is available through TDOT the East Tennessee Development District, and the East Tennessee Community Design Center.
Short-Term Goal #2

The City of Madisonville and community groups should partner to develop downtown family-friendly events and activities.

While Madisonville currently hosts a limited number of public events each year, efforts should be made to expand the number of events and make a downtown recreational venue. These efforts could be ameliorated by the creation of dedicated public space. Possible events include the following:

**Outdoor Movies**

Many communities now sponsor seasonal film series, usually with family-friendly fare. Outdoor screens and projectors are readily available for both rental and purchase. An inflatable 16’x9’ screen is less than $5,000 and can be viewed comfortably by 250 people. Many even offer a choice of films, along with the screen and projector. In many cases, the same equipment used for film screenings can also be used to show televised events, including sports, political events, or election results.

**Farmers Market**

The community could revive the tradition of “market day” by having a local farmer’s market on the square area during the summer months. The events could be held on a regular basis, such as every other Saturday and could also feature local craftsmen or other vendors. The event would allow residents to purchase locally grown produce while supporting local farmers and artisans.

**Music and the Arts**

The courthouse square area would be an ideal performance venue. Performers could include musical groups, theater groups, and storytellers. It would also be an excellent performance space for artists from Hiwassee College, local schools, and local churches. Performances could take place in conjunction with the farmers market, movies, or other events.

Coordinating and organizing these events will require the efforts of a local committee and, if possible, a part-time staff person. Funding for these events could come from a number of sources, including state arts and humanities commissions, local businesses, corporate sponsors, local and regional foundations, and user fees.
Public art can play an important role in improving downtown aesthetics, improving community image, and attracting residents. Featuring art created by local artists and community members serves to engage residents in the revitalization process and helps give them a sense of ownership of the downtown area.

The city should form a partnership with the Monroe Area Council for the Arts, teachers, and other local organizations to create a public art program for the city. A committee should be formed to create and assess program ideas, make recommendations, and help develop proposals. Possible project ideas could include the following:

**Downtown Tiger Trail**
Local artists, businesses, and schools decorate and display outdoor tiger sculptures. The tigers, representing the Hiwassee College mascot, could be placed in prominent locations downtown. Unpainted fiberglass forms are readily available from a number of vendors and cost less than $1400 each. Each tiger could be sponsored by a local business, with sponsorship noted on a plaque. At the close of the exhibition, tigers could be auctioned, with proceeds benefiting future arts programs.

**Kefauver Memorial**
A public memorial could be erected to honor Estes Kefauver. The memorial could range from a simple stone marker to a statue of the senator, depending on funding. The memorial could be placed in the small triangular park across from the Kefauver House. A development committee would be required to organize and implement a fund-raising campaign.

**Bicentennial Arts Project**
The city could commemorate its upcoming bicentennial with a downtown arts project. Project ideas might include a heritage trail, with bas-relief sculpture panels depicting events from the community’s past. It could also include an updated war memorial. The current memorial, while historically significant, segregates by race and does not reflect current community values.

Funding for arts projects is available from a number of sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Tennessee Endowment for the arts, and private foundations.
The Business Improvement District (BID) is often an important element in a community’s downtown revitalization efforts. A BID is an area defined by state and local legislation in which, “the private sector delivers services for revitalization beyond what the local government can reasonably be expected to provide.” The properties and/or businesses within this legally constituted district pay a fee or assessment to cover the costs of downtown services or improvements. The benefits are that while the city provides some oversight authority the BID designates how and where funds are spent.

A BID is an entrepreneurial entity that allows downtown stakeholders to solve their own problems. They allow businesses to bypass local bureaucracies and give resident flexibility to address downtown issues and experiment with alternative strategies.

A BID can be structured in two ways. Some are independent of local government and have considerable freedom in developing and managing projects. Others are dependent on local government and created only to raise revenue for specific projects, which are administered and implemented by local government.

In Madisonville, a local BID could undertake a number of possible projects, including the installation of downtown amenities, creation of banners and signage, sponsorship of public art projects, or sponsorship of downtown events.

The creation of a BID usually requires some form of prior approval by a majority of district property owners. They can be overseen by a board composed of local stakeholders and local government.²

²http://www.planning.unc.edu/courses/261/actman/bidweb1.html
The current city jail, while convenient to downtown, serves as a constraint to downtown redevelopment. While the current facility is convenient to the courthouse, it creates a barrier to downtown investment and deters improvements to Houston Park. Families do not want to play in the shadow of the jail yard and would be unlikely to utilize a greenway traveling past the facility.

Relocation of the jail facility should be a priority for local government. The new facility should be placed in a more suitable location, such as a rural agricultural land or near industrial sites.

The East Tennessee Development District should be consulted in developing funding strategies for a new facility.
Workshop participants recognized the value of Hiwassee College and listed it as an underutilized local asset. Residents understood that downtown Madisonville and the college maintain a symbiotic relationship. Local stakeholders should commit to including Hiwassee College in future redevelopment efforts and projects and should include college goals, such as increased enrollment or faculty retention, as outcomes or performance indicators for project proposals.

This mutually beneficial relationship can be seen in a number of ways. An improved downtown, for example, helps attract students and recruit faculty. Likewise, a strong and thriving college creates business opportunities for downtown merchants.

Downtown stakeholders should participate in projects directly related to project goals. One such project, widely discussed in local workshops, was the creation of college coffeehouse and inn at the site of the former Kefauver Hotel. The facility would draw students to downtown, attract alumni and campus visitors, and provide real-world experience for students in the college’s hospitality program. The program might also partner with the hotel and restaurant management program at the University of Tennessee and serve as a feeder for their four-year and graduate programs.

Another project supported by participants is the creation of a walking and bike path connecting the college campus to downtown. This ambitious project would require a number of easements, but would help promote downtown and enhance pedestrian safety. Residents expressed interest in other transportation services for students, including the creation of a weekend shuttle service.

Support for college related projects could come from a number of sources, including transportation enhancement grants, alumni groups, and Business Improvement District funds.
The City of Madisonville should encourage the development of downtown housing by creating incentives for local developers.

Workshop participants also identified unutilized downtown space as an unused local asset. Currently, few downtown structures occupy or utilize their upper floors. This vacant space contributes little to downtown and provides no tax revenue to local governments.

Increasingly, vacant commercial space is being adapted for residential use. Residential downtown lofts are one of the fastest growing segments of the real-estate market and appeal to a variety of buyers including young professionals and retirees. Downtown residential developments are currently underway in both nearby Knoxville and Maryville and are commanding high prices. Some recent Maryville units, for example, sell in excess of $350,000.

Downtown housing offers a number of benefits to local communities. Loft residents generate new tax revenues, stimulate local businesses, and add vitality to the downtown scene. They also promote downtown improvements, help reduce crime and vandalism, and can bring expertise or professional services to the community.

Local governments should form a partnership with the development and real-estate community to create and implement incentives for downtown redevelopment. Incentives could include limited tax abatements for buyers or tax increment financing for local developers. Tax increment financing, often referred to as a TIF, allows developers to use new tax revenue created by a project to offset their financing costs.

Technical assistance in developing incentives is available from the Tennessee Historical Commission or the Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
The community should develop and stage an annual public festival in downtown Madisonville.

Currently, Madisonville hosts a number of local or community-wide events throughout the course of the year. Holiday celebrations, such as events at Easter and Christmas, have become an important part of the local cultural landscape. Yet, while these events draw a large number of local residents, they attract few visitors from outside the immediate area.

In an effort to increase the number of visitors, Madisonville should create and host an annual festival. Residents showed particular interest in holding a musical or bluegrass festival. Other festival themes could include a fifties-themed “Kefauver Days,” a folk life festival, or an arts or theater series.

The city should help form a committee representing a variety of stakeholder interests to help create and implement a festival. Committee members should also review or visit festivals in peer communities, including the National Cornbread Festival (South Pittsburg, Tennessee), Trail Days (Damascus, Virginia), the Alabama Shakespeare festival (Anniston and Montgomery, Alabama), and the National Storytelling Festival (Jonesborough, Tennessee).

Sources for festival planning might include local governments, the local tourism council, and the East Tennessee Foundation.
From the beginning of the process, local residents identified historic preservation as a priority for downtown revitalization. Citizens recognized the value and wasted potential of local structures and frequently cited preservation success stories, such as Jonesborough, Tennessee, in group discussions. They expressed frustration at the current state of historic resources and feared that both important structures and historical awareness might soon reach an irretrievable state of decay.

Townspeople voiced concern over the Kefauver House and the Kefauver legacy. Estes Kefauver, once a political giant, was becoming a remote and irrelevant figure to many local residents - particularly young people and new residents. Likewise, the senator’s downtown home cast a heavy shadow over the town and emerged as a symbol of downtown’s seeming decline.

In response, residents expressed interest in learning more about preservation codes and regulations, particularly those in place in peer communities. This interest is reflected in the recommendations.

However, these ideas and strategies go beyond a desire to save or restore old buildings. They reflect the community’s need to retain its distinctiveness and sustain its regional and national historical significance.
Downtown Madisonville, with its historic resources, appears to be well suited for a local historic district. Two structures - the Monroe County Courthouse and the Stickley Mansion are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Additional properties, such as the Kefauver House and the Kefauver Hotel would also be strong candidates. The city should work with a qualified consultant to develop an inventory and evaluation of historic properties in the downtown area to determine National Register eligibility and help define a historic district. Qualified consultants would include the Historic preservation Planner for the East Tennessee Development District and the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University.

The inventory and assessment should be conducted in consultation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Officials and consultants should also work with local property owners to point out the benefits of a National Register district to allay fears and misconceptions. Once a historic district is defined, local officials should work with the SHPO to have the area listed as a National Register Historic District. A guide to documenting and creating a National Register District can be found in Appendix A.

Once designated, the district should be visually defined through special signage and street banners. Contributing properties should be identified with plaques commemorating the structure’s listing on the National Register.

Possible funding sources to support these activities include the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Southern Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Local officials should also seek in-kind technical assistance from the Tennessee Preservation Trust, Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation, and other nonprofit providers.
Historic district zoning is an important tool for protecting and managing local historical and architectural resources. Historic zoning is often used to ensure the visual continuity of older neighborhoods, maintain property values, and control unnecessary demolition. Contrary to popular misconceptions, it is not a draconian measure imposed on homeowners.

Communities determine regulations based on their own needs and situations. In most cases, controls only apply to the external appearance of major renovations. Demolitions can still take place, but are generally subject to a review process that prevents cursory destruction and evaluates other and potentially better options. In most cases, historic zoning is applied as an overlay, on top of or in addition to existing land use regulations.

Historic zoning is overseen by a local historic zoning commission. These commissions generally consist of 6-10 community members appointed by the Mayor and City Council. They are often required to include a local architect, a local or county historian, neighborhood representatives, and a member of the local planning commission.

One of the main duties of a historic zoning commission is the issuance of certificates of appropriateness, which are a requirement for obtaining a building permit in a historic district. Commissioners review construction or renovation plans to ensure changes will not negatively impact the historical or architectural integrity of the neighborhood or harm nearby structures.

Technical assistance for developing an H-1 historic zoning ordinance is available from a number of sources, including the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development’s Local Planning Assistance Program and the University of Tennessee’s Urban and Regional Planning Program. A sample ordinance is included as Appendix B.
Vacant, abandoned, and neglected structures can create serious issues for communities. They can, in the case of historic structures, lead to the gradual and visible decay of irreplaceable local assets. Yet the problems associated with demolition by neglect go far beyond the need for historic preservation. Vacant and neglected buildings create a fire hazard, attract vermin, breed crime, and decrease the value of surrounding property. As such, they create a serious threat to public health and safety and are subject to intervention by local authorities.

A demolition by neglect ordinance is an important tool used by towns to address the issues raised by neglected and abandoned structures. These ordinances define conditions that constitute demolition by neglect and establish remedies for addressing and correcting these issues. Most often, property owners are given opportunities to make repairs. If repairs are not made, municipalities can levy fines or, in some cases, make necessary repairs and assess the property owners for associated costs. Most ordinances contain provisions for economic hardship and exceptional circumstances.

Technical assistance for developing and implementing a demolition by neglect ordinance is available from a number of sources, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Tennessee Preservation Trust, and Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's Local Planning Assistance Program. Information on developing a demolition by neglect ordinance and a sample ordinance are available as Appendices C and D.
Many communities now support revolving funds to help preserve, renovate, and reuse historic structures. These funds usually begin with a community’s investment in the restoration and sale of a local historic property. Profits resulting from the sale are reinvested in other structures which are then sold, generating additional revenue for other preservation efforts.

These funds are generally administered by a local nonprofit, such as a heritage trust. These organizations work closely with local government, developers, and banks to coordinate redevelopment efforts. Many times these nonprofits enjoy a line of credit with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, greatly enhancing their ability to undertake renovation projects.

Technical assistance in establishing a local heritage trust is available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Local stakeholders should also consult with successful organizations in the region, such as Knox Heritage and the Jonesborough/Washington County Heritage Alliance.
A façade easement is an increasingly popular tool to help protect and preserve local streetscapes. Under an easement arrangement, the owner of an historic building transfers certain rights and privileges to another party. The façade easement is in the form of a deed, and is usually granted in perpetuity to a local preservation trust. The trust dictates terms for the transfer and establishes regulations for maintaining the integrity of the facade.

In return for the easement, the property owner enjoys significant tax incentives. In many cases, owners can deduct the full value of the easement from their income and property taxes. Some communities also develop restoration incentives for easement properties. Property owners may also be eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits.

Technical assistance in establishing a facade easement program is available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Tennessee Preservation Trust, and the Tennessee Historical Commission. Information on easement programs is also included as Appendix E.
The City of Madisonville should promote the community’s heritage through educational programs, a walking tour, and a dedicated exhibit space.

The preservation of local history and awareness of that legacy emerged as important themes during the community workshops. Numerous ideas for promoting local history were discussed and evaluated. One such idea was the creation of a local walking tour. Downtown Madisonville seems especially well suited for such a tour, as the district is both walkable and accessible.

A simple yet informative tour would be relatively easy to create. Most tours consist of a simple map or brochure. The town could also use the same content to create a virtual walking tour for distribution via the city’s web site. The tour could also be offered as a podcast, a distribution channel that might prove popular among youth and college students.

Many residents also supported the creation of a local museum. Sustained funding for this type of institution, however, can be exceedingly difficult to maintain. As a result, many communities prefer to incorporate museum or exhibition space into new or existing facilities. Madisonville’s new library would be an ideal location for such a space and library designs should include a dedicated museum area.

Likewise, local stakeholders should also encourage the development of local educational programs. These could include workshops for local teachers and genealogists, forums with regional historians, or traveling exhibits for local schools and community centers. The City of Madisonville should also explore possible partnerships in developing heritage-based displays and programs. Potential partners include the University of Tennessee, home to the Estes Kefauver collection, and the East Tennessee Historical Society.

Funding sources include the East Tennessee Foundation, the Tennessee Historical Commission, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Tennessee Humanities Council, and the Tennessee Civil War National Historic Area.
Throughout the planning process, residents acknowledged the importance of viable and attractive downtown facilities and amenities. They also advocated the creation or preservation of green spaces, recreational opportunities, and natural features.

High among the existing resources cited by participants were Houston Park and Town Creek. Both the park and the creek were noted as neglected and underutilized assets with tremendous potential for helping to improve downtown.

Many residents also expressed interest in developing a local greenway system. Citing examples of nearby Maryville, local citizens wanted to see walking paths connecting Houston Park, the courthouse, downtown, and other sites.

Participants also voiced environmental concerns. In addition to pollution in the creek, they also complained about litter and public eyesores. Stewardship of the local landscape and of community resources thus emerged as a theme in group discussions.

Participants also expressed interest in new public facilities. As mentioned, the possibility of a new library was a major point of discussion. While townspeople disagreed on the best location for the improved facility, most appeared willing to consider alternative sites.

The recommendations on the following pages reflect the public's desire for better use and better care of local physical and environmental assets.

Houston Park, which is adjacent to downtown, is viewed by citizens as a neglected and thereby underutilized asset.
Madisonville has been blessed with a large downtown park. Unfortunately, this space has not been well maintained. This lack of investment discourages park use and encourages litter and vandalism. The current playground consists of dated equipment that does not meet current safety standards, athletic fields are overgrown and unused, and there is little signage to denote the park and park policies.

Madisonville should make a strong commitment to improve Houston Park. The community should invest in a renovated and safe playground and should erect signage identifying the park and its policies. The city should also increase the number of litter receptacles, improve lighting, and investigate improved restroom facilities.

The city should also explore additional uses for the existing athletic field area. Possible new uses include the creation of a community food garden, as found in Maryville, or the development of a skate park for local youth.

Park improvements should be done in consultation with the entire community and especially with the surrounding neighborhood. The community could also consider creating a Houston Park Foundation to assist with fundraising and grant development.

Funding sources include the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation, Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute, and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture’s Urban Forestry Program. The city should solicit corporate and foundation funding for playground improvements.
The City of Madisonville should assess codes related to litter and eyesores and should equitably enforce existing regulations.

During the workshop process, residents expressed frustration at the persistence of litter and local eyesores. Junk cars, debris, and litter piles can be found on many streets surrounding downtown. These sites harm downtown aesthetics, bring down property values, and create a nuisance for other residents. They also constitute potential environmental and health risks.

The city should adopt a proactive approach to litter control and enforce existing codes. Citations for the removal of derelict cars, discarded appliances, and other nuisances should be issued to responsible homeowners and businesses. Enforcement should be applied fairly, though assistance might be considered for low income, disabled, or elderly residents.

Litter laws should also be enforced, with fines or other penalties issued to offenders. Illegally dumped trash should be examined for correspondence, bills, or receipts to help identify offenders.

The city should also review existing codes and, if necessary, strengthen them. Codes enforcement should also be reviewed, with consideration given to hiring additional codes enforcement personnel.
During the workshop process, the site of a new downtown library was the topic of much discussion. Central to the discussion was the site location currently favored by local officials, which offers some advantages. It is in close proximity to the courthouse and would help draw people downtown. Yet this site also carries serious drawbacks. Construction of the new facility would require the demolition of two structures - the former city hall building and the old American Legion hall.

Both these structures are New Deal relics, constructed by the Works Progress Administration. As such, they are important reminders of the town’s depression-era past. The American Legion hall serves to remind residents of the county’s contributions and sacrifices to America’s victory in World War I. The site also features a handful of mature trees which would also be lost to new construction, further impacting downtown aesthetics.

During the workshop process, many residents proposed two alternative library sites: Houston Park and the former Heilig-Meyers store lot. Both locations are currently vacant and within easy walking distance of downtown. The Houston Park site is particularly advantageous, since it could combine the library with a playground, walking path, and other park amenities.

As the community moves forward with considerations, the city must remain in compliance with federal laws in the development of a new facility. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act states:

"The head of any Federal agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed Federal or federally assisted undertaking in any State and the head of any Federal department or independent agency having authority to license any undertaking shall, prior to the approval of the expenditure of any Federal funds on the undertaking or prior to the issuance of any license, as the case may be, take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The head of any such Federal agency shall afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation established under Title II of this Act a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking."

In short, the act states that projects that involve federal funds and that impact historic
properties must undergo a mandated review process. Since the old city hall and the American Legion hall are both National Register eligible, demolition, relocation, or alteration of the structures will require a section 106 review in consultation with the Tennessee Historical Commission. The section 106 statute and a guide to the review process are included as appendices F and G.

The Fountain City Branch of the Knox County library system gives an excellent example of a facility combined with a public park. Local officials should also examine Knox County’s Halls and Powell library locations, which exhibit best practice in design and environmental stewardship. The Blount County Public Library, in Maryville, is an excellent example of a library as a multi-use community facility and meeting space.
Communities enjoy many benefits related to the creation of a greenway system. Greenways improve local aesthetics, provide recreation, improve public health, create public spaces, and reduce traffic. Greenways can also help promote local businesses and community facilities. Madisonville is well suited for greenway development. In many cases existing sidewalks and pedestrian traffic areas could be improved to provide greenway space.

Ideally, greenways should connect public spaces and business districts. As such, priority should be given to the creation of a greenway between Houston Park and the downtown business district. The greenway would consist of a tree-lined pedestrian and bike path alongside Main Street with crosswalks allowing access to local shops and businesses.

A secondary greenway could connect local historic sites, such as the Kefauver House and the Stickley Mansion, along the route of downtown shops and restaurants. Existing downtown sidewalks could be “greened” by upgrading walking paths with plantings, flower boxes, and trees.

The city could also create a pair of small “vest pocket” parks in open public spaces downtown. Such parks would not require extensive furnishing or maintenance, as benches and simple landscaping would suffice. Suitable locations for these parks can be found along College Street near the courthouse (Locust and College). Similarly, a memorial garden at Warren and Main Street could easily serve as a vest pocket park.

Funding for greenways is available from a number of sources. Modest funding is available from the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation and the National Tree Trust. More extensive funding is available from the federal Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA). A guide and application for TEA funding in Tennessee is provided as Appendix H.
Town Creek is an important link to Madisonville’s past and a significant environmental resource. Currently, the creek appears to be in poor condition. Erosion is also visible along the stream bank. The stream is blocked in many areas with litter and debris. Stream blockages increase the risk of flooding during significant rain events. More importantly, the presence of significant levels of algae indicates a nutrient rich environment, a sign of pollution from significant amounts of organic wastes.

As such, the stream currently poses a risk to public health and safety, and water from the creek may not be safe for human contact. This is especially alarming, since the creek runs through Houston Park and near a children’s playground.

Funding to repair and restore the stream is available through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Securing these grants, which include the 319 grant program and the 604(b) program, usually requires a strong partnership with state and federal agencies.

The Tennessee Valley Authority could be a key partner in establishing these ties, and the agency has expressed interest in working with the city. The City of Madisonville should take steps to build on this interest by meeting with representatives from TVA. The city and county should also consult with the local UT Agricultural Extension Office and the local Soil Conservation Service for advice. The University of Tennessee Water Resources Center could also be of assistance. Lastly, city and county officials should work with these agencies to establish contacts with the Water Pollution Control Division at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

Funding is available to install interpretive signage along waterways. Such signs frequently explain natural features or management practices. This material would enhance the park setting and work well with the proposed greenway system.
Downtown Traffic and Parking

Traffic and parking issues were among the concerns most cited by local residents during the workshop process. Many participants voiced dissatisfaction with the angled parking downtown, stating that it was becoming increasingly dangerous for both drivers and pedestrians. Some citizens, however, expressed strong support for the current parking scheme, citing its convenience.

- The speed and level of traffic were seen as contributing factors to parking and circulation woes. Cars and trucks traveled too fast, making it difficult and frightening for some people to back out of angled spaces.

- Participants complained about accessibility issues. The district lacks handicapped parking spaces and most sidewalks throughout downtown do not meet current accessibility standards.

- The issue of delivery trucks, which often block parking spaces and traffic throughout the day, also sparked comments.

- There was strong consensus among residents regarding the need for dedicated courthouse parking. County employees sometimes monopolize downtown spaces throughout the day, taking parking from shoppers and visitors.

In general, residents understood the importance of traffic and parking issues for successful revitalization, and these issues also figured highly among the community snapshot exercise photos. They also acknowledge that public safety should remain a priority.

The recommendations that follow reflect these desires for a safe, active, and accessible downtown district.

Citizens offered several recommendations to creating an efficient traffic flow and provide accessible parking for downtown visitors and employees as the effort to revitalize downtown moves forward.
According to Tennessee Department of Transportation traffic counts, College Street currently accommodates an average of more than 6,000 vehicles per day. Workshop participants said that this volume of traffic, combined with pedestrian and parking issues, creates serious safety issues throughout the downtown corridor. Residents also raised concerns with the speed of traffic, which served to compound existing traffic hazards.

In order to improve the safety of College Street, the city should adopt and implement traffic calming strategies. These steps would be implemented in the course of road improvements during the reconfiguration of the street’s parking and sidewalks. Among the strategies that should be considered are:

**Alternative surfacing**
Studies have demonstrated that the use of alternative surfacing, such as brick or simulated brick pavement, will help slow traffic. This surfacing also helps improve local aesthetics.

**Trees and plants**
Ornamental vegetation, especially trees, has proven effective in slowing traffic. Trees, incorporated into sidewalk improvements or traffic islands, would also enhance beautification efforts.

**Traffic islands**
Ornamental islands, constructed between the traffic lanes, also help slow traffic. They also improve aesthetics and provide a safe haven for pedestrians crossing the street.

Funding for these improvements is available from a number of sources including federal and state transportation grants and community development block grants. Technical assistance is available through TDOT and the East Tennessee Development District.
Downtown parking should be reserved for visitors and residents who shop, dine, or conduct business downtown. Currently, however, many spaces are utilized for long-term parking by downtown workers. This practice discourages downtown patrons and impedes business development.

In an effort to discourage this practice, the city should impose time limits on downtown parking. Time limits of one or two hours should be imposed on downtown spaces, particularly along College Street. Thirty minute spaces could also be created for courthouse spaces. Time limits would only be applicable during the daytime, to encourage evening dining and shopping.

Time limits would be indicated through signage and could be enforced by the local police, through a local contractor, or by implementing a parking meter program. Local business owners would be apprised of the new limits and encouraged to report offenders.
During the workshop process, residents complained about the monopolization of downtown parking by courthouse employees. This practice was especially onerous to local business owners, who felt it discouraged potential customers. In an effort to correct this problem, the Monroe County and the City of Madisonville should work together to create a dedicated employee parking lot.

Possible locations include creating a parking lot at the old Heilig-Myers site, which is currently vacant. All county workers, with the exception of handicapped employees, should be required to use such a dedicated parking lot.

The county and city should also explore shared parking arrangements with downtown churches. Church lots currently sit largely empty during the day, while workers and visitors sometimes search for available spaces. Many of these lots are largely unused except on Sundays and Wednesday nights.

In exchange for parking concessions, local governments should help maintain lots, provide landscaping, or install visual improvements. Shared lots should be identified with signage and should be reserve priority for church use on Sundays, Wednesdays, and other designated times.
College Street has traditionally been the main thoroughfare through downtown, and remains so today. Currently, parking consists of angled spaces running the length of College Street on one side. While this arrangement is convenient, it is becoming unmanageable during peak hours, given current traffic loads. Deliveries also continue to be an issue, and since there are no dedicated delivery areas, trucks block traffic lanes, which leads to additional congestion and creates dangerous passing situations.

Perhaps most importantly, the current configuration also fails to meet current accessibility standards. There are few handicapped parking spaces downtown and the sidewalks are not wheelchair friendly.

The city should take action to correct these shortcomings by reconfiguring parking and sidewalks along College Street. The angled parking should be replaced with a parallel configuration, with at least one space per block reserved for handicapped drivers. Daytime delivery zones should be established and signage posted where needed, possibly along side streets throughout downtown.

Space freed by the new configuration should be devoted to landscaping and sidewalk improvements. The city should undertake a long term strategy to improve, expand, and modernize sidewalk spaces. Sidewalks should be bricked and made wheelchair accessible. Trees and ornamental paintings should be incorporated into the new configuration. Brick or high quality trash receptacles and bike racks should also be incorporated.

This new sidewalk configuration offers many benefits over the current design, allowing greater accessibility so that more visitors can comfortably enjoy downtown. By offering improved aesthetics, the design will offer a more attractive place to work and shop, thereby creating new business opportunities through greater visibility and access.

Project funding is available from a number of sources including federal and state transportation grants and community development block grants. Technical assistance is available through TDOT and the East Tennessee Development District. These improvements would represent a major project for the city, and while initiating these improvements is a short term goal, completing them will probably be a long term project.
Several individuals and organization have contributed to this planning process and have helped make this plan possible. We would like to thank the City of Madisonville, Monroe County, the Madisonville Downtown Revitalization Task Force, and the John D. Grubb-Louise G. Sumner Fund of the East Tennessee Foundation for their financial support for this effort and their commitment to improving the community.

We would first like to recognize the special contributions made by Mary Hendershot, who helped arrange local meetings, introduced us to the town’s rich history, and served as a vital liaison to the community throughout the process.

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We are grateful to Dr. James Noseworthy, president of Hiwassee College, for taking time to participate in each of the community workshops and to represent his institution during the planning process.

Madisonville First United Methodist Church graciously hosted our community workshops. We thank them for the use of their wonderful facility and for their kind generosity.

Lastly, we want to thank the people of Madisonville for their hospitality, candor, good humor, and commitment to community. The vision and ideas contained in this plan are a testament to their imagination, pride, and sense of stewardship. We are confident that downtown Madisonville, blessed with this energy and enthusiasm, will enjoy a bright and promising future.