

1. INTRODUCTION

Land Use. We use land all the time. We use it to shelter ourselves, raise a family, and enjoy the many activities that make a house a home. We use it to grow the food we eat. We use it for economic benefit, to sell things, provide services, and manufacture things. We use it as a place to worship and celebrate community. We use it for recreation and enjoyment of the great outdoors. We use it to provide community support functions such as schools, police, fire protection and utilities. Using land is an activity that ranges in scale from the individual to the whole community. The cumulative effects are identifiable patterns on the landscape, defining urban and rural areas, residential and commercial areas, and the character of our community.

Transportation. We use land to get from one place to another, and link our uses of land across our community. This linkage is transportation, and includes roads, airports, railroads, sidewalks, trails and other physical linkages for getting from one place to another. Transportation also includes consideration of the types of conveyance, such as cars, trucks, buses, trains, airplanes, bicycles, and our feet. Transportation is another activity that ranges in scale from the individual to the whole community. The cumulative effects are identifiable patterns of traffic and physical infrastructure that relate very closely to the patterns of land use.

Planning. We also plan. In planning, we seek understanding of our situation and how the different components of our community relate to each other. We seek understanding from the past and the present as basis for imagining possible futures, and we make choices about the future based on values and expected outcomes or benefits. Individuals plan. Households plan. Churches and civic organizations plan. Businesses and industries plan. We also plan for a broad range of community interests and functions within the context of local government. Planning is also an activity that ranges in scale from the individual to the whole community.

Statutory Basis for Planning. Tennessee State Statutes provide for local government planning, including planning for land use and transportation. This is

specified most clearly in Tennessee Code Annotated 13-3-301 for a local government such as Blount County as follows:

(a) It is the function and duty of a regional planning commission to make and adopt a general regional plan for the physical development of the territory of the region. ...

(b) The regional plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the regional planning commission's recommendations for the development of the territory covered by the plan, and may include, among other things, the general location, character and extent of public ways, ground and other public property; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for power, light, heat, sanitation, transportation, communication, water and other purposes; the removal, relocation, extension, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment or change of use of existing public ways, grounds, open spaces, buildings, properties, utilities or terminals; the general character, location and extent of community centers, town sites or housing developments; the location and extent of forests, agricultural areas and open development areas for purposes of conservation, food and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities or the protection of urban development, and the identification of areas where there are inadequate or nonexistent publicly or privately owned and maintained services and facilities when the planning commission has determined the services are necessary in order for development to occur; a land classification and utilization program; and a zoning plan for the regulation of the height, area, bulk, location and uses of buildings, the distribution of population, and the uses of land for trade, industry, habitation, recreation, agriculture, forestry, soil and water conservation and other purposes.

State statutes go further and provide the overall purpose of a plan, as follows in TCA 13-3-302:

The regional plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, efficient and economic development of the region which will, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order,

convenience, prosperity and welfare of the inhabitants, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development, including, among other things, such distribution of population and of the uses of the land for urbanization, trade, industry, habitation, recreation, agriculture, forestry and other uses as will tend to create conditions favorable to transportation, health, safety, civic activities and educational and cultural opportunities, reduce the wastes of financial and human resources which result from either excessive congestion or excessive scattering of population, and tend toward an efficient and economic utilization, conservation and production of the supply of food, water, minerals, drainage, sanitary and other facilities and resources, and identify areas where there are inadequate or nonexistent publicly or privately owned and maintained services and facilities when the planning commission has determined that the services are necessary in order for development to occur.

Blount County Plans. Planning in Blount County has a long history, and this plan builds on that base. Prior to 1990, the last general plan for the County was the Blount County: 1990 Land Use Plan & Policy dated June of 1976 and with a plan horizon to 1990. Since 1990, the Blount County Planning Commission adopted the following plans or received the following planning studies by year:

Major Roads Plan (adopted 1993);

A Long Range Facilities Plan for the Blount County School District (1997);

Blount County Land Use Plan – A Plan for Mountain Areas (adopted 1998);

Blount County Policies Plan (adopted 1999 after a three year planning process begun in 1996);

“Growth Plan” map mandated by Public Chapter 1101 (1999 with final resolution and adoption by the County Commission in 2001);

Conceptual Land Use Plan (adopted 2000);

Blount County Roadway Needs Study (2000 and updated in 2004);

Blount County School Board Five Year Plan (2003);

Water Quality Plan, Blount County, Tennessee (adopted 2003);

Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2005);

Little River, Big Future - Promoting Water Quality in the Little River Watershed Through Participatory Planning (2005);

Blount County Growth Strategy (2005);

Action Plan and Issue Profiles of the Environmental Health Action Team (2007);

Report of the Growth Management Advisory Committee on Purchase of Development Rights (2008);

Blount County Policies Plan (revised and adopted 2008); and

Blount County Green Infrastructure Plan (adopted 2009).

Most of these plans and studies can be found at www.blounttn.org/planning under the Plans button, and parts of the documents have been incorporated into this Plan.

Outline of This Plan. This Plan will focus on land use and transportation. The following is the outline for this Plan:

1. Introduction – this chapter, what we are planning for, statutory basis, and basis in past plans.
2. Population and Economy – the drivers of growth and the foundation for dynamics of land use and transportation.
3. Geography – the lay of the land on which land use and transportation occurs.
4. Environment – aspects of water quality and air quality in relation to land use and transportation.

5. Land Use - Pattern of land use over time (residential) and present structure. Residential areas. Commercial areas. Industrial areas. Agriculture areas. Open and green space. Special use areas (Airport, GSMNP). Community infrastructure serving land use (electric, water and sewer). Community service uses of land (schools, parks and recreation, law enforcement and justice, emergency preparedness, solid waste, library, health care, general government).

6. Transportation and Roads - The road network and classification of major roads. Traffic and condition of road system. Rail transportation. Public transportation. Bicycle and pedestrian considerations. Linkages between transportation and land use.

7. Strategic Policy Synthesis

Land Use Plan

Transportation and Roads Plan

8. Maintenance of the Plan