

PURPOSE & INTENT

Clarksville, Tennessee, the county seat of Montgomery County and its only incorporated area was founded in 1785 and served the region for over 150 years as a transportation hub for the profitable tobacco trade which has created a rich cultural legacy. Clarksville continues to thrive and grow in economic strength and population that consistently outpaces national averages. Ft. Campbell and Austin Peay State University are two of its most important assets in addition to many viable industries.

This growth, however, has not followed in the Downtown and the River District. Suburban shopping centers and the relocation of many governmental agencies, both city and county, have weakened the District's health. Growth and renewal in the District has not kept pace with the balance of the community. The tornado of 1999 and the Flood of 2010, while creating opportunities have, on balance, also weakened the fabric and viability.

Responding to this, the existing Downtown District Partnership and the River District Commission proposed a merger in 2008 to combine the strengths of the organizations hoping to achieve a synergy that is greater than the sum of the parts, resulting in the formation of the Two Rivers Company. The organization moved to identify and address key issues facing the District as follows:

- While various plans and studies have been prepared for the downtown over the past decade, many of the ideas have not been implemented. The riverfront planning is an exception, as much implementation has occurred there.
- Past efforts for on-going revitalization of the downtown have received insufficient funding to achieve success.
- Both the general public and public officials need to be convinced of the importance of the downtown/riverfront and educated on related issues.
- Because of the proximity and continued growth of APSU, it has tremendous potential for benefiting the downtown if physical linkages and destinations can be provided to attract the APSU community. Lack of connectivity to assets is an impediment to growth.
- Despite apparent demand for downtown housing, there is still substantial vacant upper floor space in existing buildings. Financial incentives for housing may be required as well as regulatory revisions.
- Riverside Drive serves as a physical and psychological barrier between the river and downtown and the volume and speed of traffic discourages many types of desirable activities.
- The Two Rivers Company needs a detailed mission, a strategic plan, office space and staffing to address these challenges.
- Stable long-term funding sources will be critical to Two Rivers' future success.

The creation of a Strategic Plan is intended to establish a framework and direction to provide for the District's growth and increased prosperity. The Plan is specific in its direction, but not in details or timetables. Developing project details, timetables and programs will be left to the Two Rivers Company (TRC) Board. The TRC Board of Directors is responsible for the implementation of this Plan, and is composed of individuals with a demonstrated interest in the District who are appointed by the City Council.

Downtown Clarksville and the River District are cherished public assets. Clarksville's citizens will be placing a great deal of trust in the TRC to be faithful stewards of these assets. It is the intent of this Plan to provide a fair, thoughtful and constructive vision of the District's future development, forged with positive input and realized through its careful implementation.

VISION STATEMENT & MISSION

Vision Statement

Clarksville, Tennessee is one of the state's oldest cities with historic, natural and economic resources which rival any city of its size. Clarksville continues to grow at a high rate and is consistently ranked nationally as a desirable community to live in.

The Downtown and River District provides Clarksville with an extremely important sense of community, history and identity. The heart and soul of the community is manifest in its historic Downtown fabric. The citizens of Clarksville recognize that the identity and vitality of the city would be irreparably harmed by any significant degradation of the Downtown and River District.

To prevent further degradation and foster revitalization the District must be continually improved and strengthened as the city's suburban commercial centers continue to develop. Given appropriate attention to its infrastructure, appearance and promotion, the Plan envisions the continuation of the District as a prosperous and attractive commercial and cultural center – one which is a desirable place to work, live, shop, visit and recreate.

The Plan envisions a District that is user-friendly, safe, secure and healthy. The Downtown must also maintain a diversity of businesses, and institutions, housing and attractions. It is important to the success of the District area to improve the ease of access for all people, whether walking, biking or driving. These elements must be accomplished while maintaining the ambience and historic character of the District area. Especially important is preserving and enhancing the community's heritage, reflected in the physical beauty and cultural vigor of the Downtown and its River District.

A significant investment of time and money is essential for this vision to become a reality. Since resources are finite, the Plan acknowledges that decisions and priorities must take into account costs and benefits with regard to accomplishing the primary desired result. The Plan recognizes that resources must be drawn from numerous sources, public and private, and that projects must be funded by the most appropriate means.

Our primary goal is an economically thriving District that attracts investment, stabilizes and strengthens the tax base and supports the vitality and diversity of Clarksville and Montgomery County as its social and cultural center. This Plan hopes to ensure the vitality of the District for the foreseeable future and to reestablish the District as the center of the community in which all citizens can participate and take exceptional pride.

Mission

The Two Rivers Company is a non-profit organization focused on enhancing Clarksville, Tennessee's, downtown and riverfront areas. Two Rivers employs a holistic approach to address all facets of the downtown and riverfront, including organization, design, economic restructuring and promotion. It serves as a catalyst by partnering with other entities and the private sector to attract investment to this area. Two Rivers' long-term goal is to make downtown and the riverfront premier locations in Clarksville to live, work and play, which will require sufficient and permanent financial resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Strengthen the District's economic vitality.

Action A: Commission a real estate economist to conduct a study to determine the viability of and a strategy for implementing a business improvement district (BID) and a tax increment financing (TIF) district.

Action B: Commission a real estate economist to conduct a market analysis to serve as the basis for future business and housing development efforts.

Action C: Capitalize on easily targeted market segments already coming to the downtown area, such as the APSU community and church congregations.

Action D: Make housing a high priority for the Two Rivers Company.

Action E: Promote more conveniently located and better managed parking.

Action F: Facilitate continued commercial development.

Action G: Initially target efforts to a relatively small geographic area within the broader District.

Action H: Pursue one or more anchors to attract more people to the District.

2. Create awareness of the activities, benefits and importance of a viable District to the community and government.

Action A: Initiate a campaign to promote the District.

Action B: Brand the District with a strong and clear identity.

Action C: Make engaging public input a foundation of all activities and plans.

Action D: Improve communications among district stakeholders.

3. Provide leadership and support for District stakeholders.

Action A: Represent and advocate on behalf of District stakeholders regarding local and community-wide issues that impact the District, and establish a process for interacting with the media.

Action B: Provide leadership and spearhead initiatives that benefit the District.

Action C: Provide a clearinghouse and forum for discussing and assessing governmental impacts on the District.

4. Manage all circulation issues (traffic, parking, pedestrian, bicycling) to improve the District as a safe and convenient destination to live, work and play.

Action A: Create stronger connections among the riverfront, downtown and APSU.

Action B: Improve overall accessibility, including pedestrian safety, particularly at intersections.

Action C: Evaluate the effectiveness of public transportation within the District.

Action D: Accommodate bicycles as a means of reducing parking and automotive circulation requirements.

Action E: Work with the Parking Authority to improve the management of parking.

Action F: Develop consistent and effective delivery and loading zone policies.

Action G: Maintain and enhance the appearance and safety of sidewalks, alleys and parking lots.

5. Insure that the District remains the center of government, finance and culture with a historic sense of place.

Action A: Avoid the loss of desirable institutional uses from the District, and attract new ones.

Action B: Make historic preservation a high priority by reviewing the City's existing preservation program, ordinance and design standards to identify any needed improvements.

Action C: Encourage the growth of cultural activities.

Action D: Encourage public art within the District.

6. Maintain an attractive, secure, safe and healthy environment which will promote living, working and playing in the District.

Action A: Improve the appearance and adequacy of lighting, while remaining compatible with the desired character of the District.

Action B: Increase public safety in the District through alternatives to automobile patrols (foot patrols, bicycle patrols or electronic personal transporters).

Action C: Provide public restrooms within the core of Downtown.

Action D: Update and modernize District wayfinding signage, kiosks and historic plaques.

Action E: Pursue centralized services, such as trash removal, recycling, wi-fi, and other consolidated services.

7. Coordinate all public and private policy and planning efforts to insure maximum beneficial effect and conservative allocation of resources.

Action A: Review local public policies to identify opportunities to improve them for the benefit of the District.

Action B: Implement the best recommendations from past downtown/riverfront plans based upon a market analysis and community priorities.

8. Pursue environmental sustainability for the District.

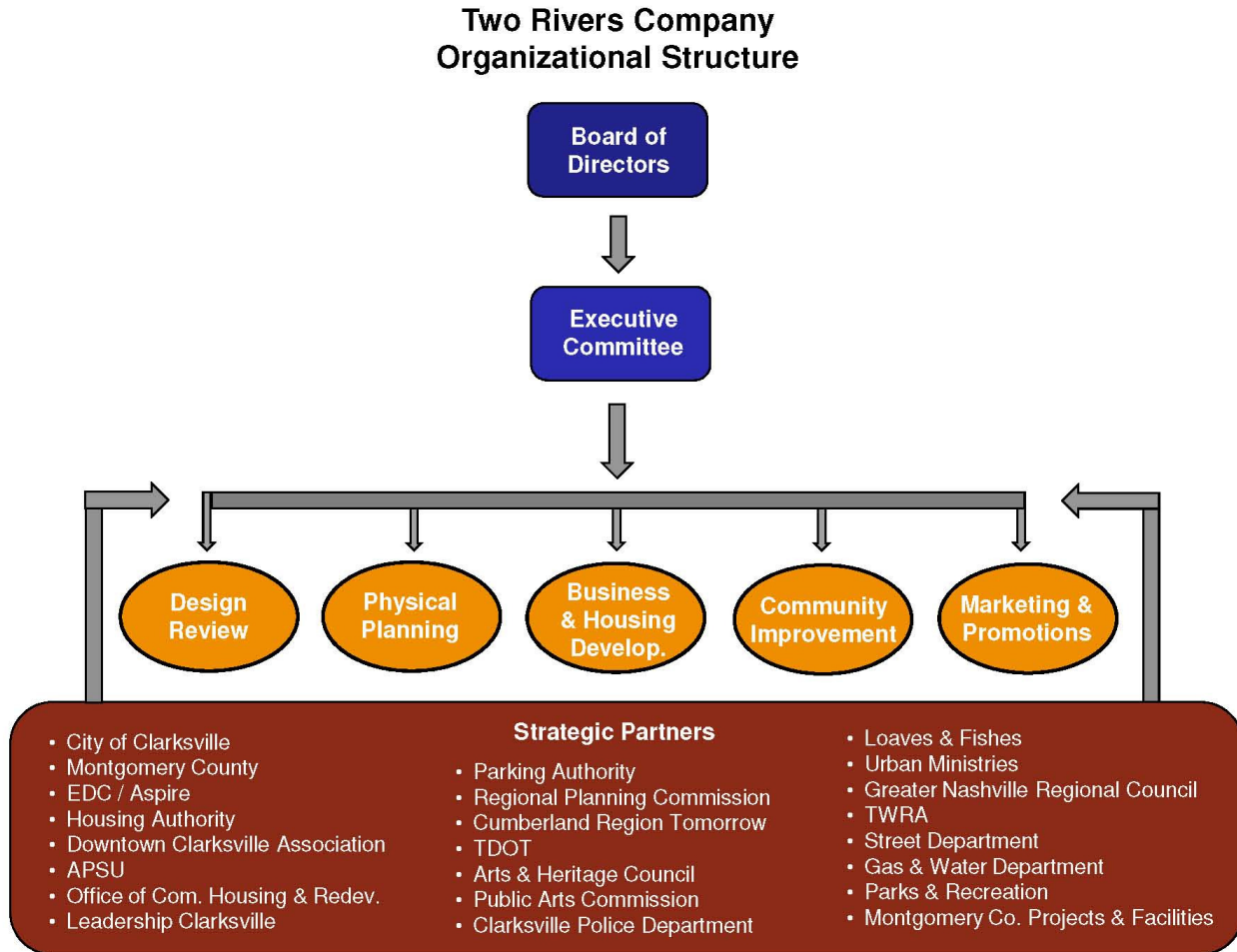
Action A: Encourage the City to adopt development standards that further sustainability goals.

Action B: Introduce sustainable design solutions into public works projects, such as the use of bio-swales to accommodate stormwater drainage.

Action C: Pursue a recycling program for solid waste disposal within the District.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & FUNCTIONS

Immediately below is a graphic depicting the organizational structure for the Two Rivers Company, and below it is a narrative description.



GOVERNING BODY

Two Rivers Company Board of Directors

Functions: general guidance for the organization, establishing policies, employee oversight, sponsorships and memberships, as well as administration of any potential special districts, including a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and a Business Improvement District (BID)

COMMITTEES

Executive Committee - *Functions:* financial, legal and staffing issues in direct support of the Board of Directors

Design Review - *Functions:* design review for any reviewable proposed physical improvements per the adopted design guidelines

Physical Planning - Functions:

- Greenspace and public spaces
- Pedestrian and cycling trails
- Traffic and parking
- Streetscapes
- Façade improvements
- Utilities
- Signage
- Public art
- Historic preservation
- Sustainability
- Design standards and zoning

Business & Housing Development – Functions:

- Business retention, expansion and recruitment
- Financial incentives
- Real estate revolving loans

Community Improvement - Functions:

- Public safety
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Residents' issues
- University relations
- Social issues
- Cleanliness and physical maintenance

Marketing & Promotions - Functions:

- Special events
- Marketing and promotion
- Wayfinding signage and banners
- Communications (stakeholders and allied groups)
- News media

In addition to these six committees, sub-committees might be created as needed. For example, a potential sub-committee of the Marketing & Promotions Committee might be the Special Events Sub-Committee.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Affiliated Two Rivers committees are indicated in parenthesis.

Strategic Partners

City of Clarksville (all six committees)
 Montgomery County (all six committees)
 Economic Development Council / Aspire (all six committees)
 Leadership Clarksville (all six committees)
 Housing Authority (Business & Housing Development / Physical Planning)
 Downtown Clarksville Association (Business & Housing Development / Marketing & Promotions)
 Austin Peay State University (Community Improvement / Physical Planning / Marketing & Promotions)
 Office of Community Housing & Redevelopment (Physical Planning / Community Improvement)
 Parking Authority (Physical Planning)
 Regional Planning Commission (Physical Planning)
 Cumberland Region Tomorrow (Physical Planning)
 TDOT (Physical Planning)
 Arts & Heritage Council (Physical Planning)
 Public Arts Commission (Physical Planning)
 Clarksville Police Dept. (Community Improvement)
 Loaves and Fishes (Community Improvement)
 Urban Ministries (Community Improvement)
 Greater Nashville Regional Council (Physical Planning)
 TWRA (Physical Planning)
 Street Department (Physical Planning)
 Gas & Water Department (Physical Planning)
 Parks & Recreation (Physical Planning)
 Montgomery County Projects & Facilities (Physical Planning)

PROPOSED PROJECTS & FUNDING

This will come out of the Physical Planning Committee's review of past plans

RESOURCES: EXISTING PLANS & STUDIES

Key planning efforts for the downtown and/or riverfront in recent years include the following:

Smart Growth Plan 2030 (2010)

Subtitled “a Blueprint for Progress & Quality ... as we grow to 250,000 residents,” this document combines the work of a multi-disciplinary planning team with the input of 200 citizen volunteers. The plan presents a vision for Clarksville, including artistic renderings, potential projects, economic considerations and implementation steps to achieve major priorities. The project included 11 committees of local residents who volunteered their time over a seven week period to research, prepare and deliver plans and recommendations in the form of more than 150 pages of manuscripts and visuals. A resource section lists 65 existing plans developed over the past 20 years that were compiled and reviewed in the development of this plan. A key component is the plan's ten “Opportunity Zones” – potential projects spread throughout Clarksville, as well as the Implementation Plan with key steps and timelines for priority projects.

In general, the ideas advocated in the plan specifically for Downtown Clarksville and the riverfront follow recognized “best practices” for downtown and waterfront planning and appear to be reasonable. Key recommendations include substantial residential development, streetscape improvements, the development of public spaces, stronger linkages with APSU, the redesign of Riverside Drive into a landscaped urban boulevard, structured parking in strategic locations, business recruitment, and financial incentives for investment within the downtown and riverfront. Furthermore, the plan was based upon market analysis, so it would appear to be economically feasible. It is likely that the proposed development of a new hotel and event center would require a detailed feasibility study, which would have been beyond the scope of this plan.

City of Clarksville, Tennessee, Downtown Parking & Street Network Study (2010)

Prepared by Tunnell Spangler Walsh and RPM, the contents of this study include a review of existing public policies and past studies, an analysis of existing conditions, a public input process that featured an Image Preference Survey, and a set of parking recommendations. The study area was relatively broad, including not only the downtown and riverfront, but also APSU and surrounding older neighborhoods. Key recommendations included:

- Maximize on-street parking
- Use back-in or reverse-in diagonal parking to maximize parking and for safety
- Provide pedestrian crosswalks, striping and signage
- Provide pedestrian signal heads and mid block crossings
- Add sidewalks at Kraft Street and Red River Street
- Provide bike lanes and shared lane markings per the recommended bike route map and street standards

- Use street trees in future streetscapes
- Provide medians for certain street sections
- Road diets should be implemented per the street standards
- A wayfinding master plan should be created
- Bioswales should be incorporated with new parking and retrofitted per the sustainability standards
- Shared parking should be promoted and coordinated
- Carpooling spaces should be incorporated at locations that have high parking demands
- Adopt bicycle parking requirements and retrofit existing streets

This study was thorough and included numerous good ideas that can benefit the district. Particularly noteworthy is the idea of redesigning Riverside Drive to be more functional, pedestrian-friendly and attractive. While the idea of introducing back-in parking was ambitious given the risk that some people may not be comfortable with the concept, it has already been implemented and appears to be working fine.

Downtown Parking Study (2009)

Prepared by Desman Associates for the Clarksville Parking Authority, this 66-page document (plus appendices) includes an analysis of current and future parking conditions and a detailed set of recommendations. It determined that, of the 805 total off-street spaces, only 18% are available to the public for more than a two-hour time limit. Likewise, 85% of the 247 on-street spaces have a two-hour limit. It concluded that more two-hour spaces existed than are necessary, yet there is a lack of sufficient mid-term parking spaces. It also determined that, if full revitalization were to occur in the downtown core, a deficit of roughly 390 spaces could exist. In addition to examining four sites for their potential for structured parking, which would only be required if demand expands in the future, the plan also made some management recommendations to make operations more effective and efficient.

River District Plans (1988/2010)

A series of plans have been prepared in recent years for the River District Commission. The initial plan in 1988 by the Mozley Company, Inc. focused on the central portion of the riverfront most adjacent to the downtown, while the Phase II “South Extension” and “North Extension” plans were done in 2010 by Lyle Cook Martin Architects and teaming consultants. These are excellent physical plans that propose a series of improvements such as green space, trails, overlooks, mixed use development, marinas, pavilions, and enhancements to Riverside Drive to make it more attractive and pedestrian friendly. Many of the Phase II plan concepts grew out of a 2004 visioning process undertaken by Lyle Cook Martin, and key individual projects include:

- The Landings – wharf, fishing piers, multi-purpose pavilion, pedestrian bridge over Red River, trail hub
- The Overlook – mixed density housing, vest pocket park, Marion/McClure corridor enhancements
- The River Center – community center, 600-car garage, mixed use development (including housing)
- The Works - mixed use development (including housing), conversion of historic waterworks to dining/retail, courtesy docking
- Civic Marina – harbor for sports boats, redevelopment of shopping center and retail areas into New Urbanist mixed use center
- The West Bank – access via the railroad bridge (non-automotive), recreational fields, natural areas

Some of the ideas in these plans have been implemented, are in the development process, or are currently under consideration, such as the new marina.

Clarksville Center Redevelopment and Urban Renewal Plan (2008)

This plan was approved by the City, but because the County indicated that it would not do the same, the plan was abandoned. As stated in its introduction section, this plan was to be undertaken by the Clarksville Housing Authority per state codes, and it would encompass over 1,000 acres to include the CBID, several adjoining historic neighborhoods, APSU, and the industrial area along the Red River. It would have created a Redevelopment District Board (RDB) having broad powers to condemn and acquire

land, demolish buildings, institute tax increment financing (TIF), and similar redevelopment activities. It was these powers that apparently led to the concerns from the public that ultimately precluded its adoption. Given the complete failure of “urban renewal” that occurred nationwide during the 1960s and 1970s, using the term in the plan’s title likely only added to the public’s concerns.

Clarksville Strategic Plan (2007)

Prepared by Liberty Advocates for the City of Clarksville, this extremely general plan begins with a set of “Top 21 Goals,” and the balance of the plan expands on those goals with a set of supplemental objectives for each goal. None of the 21 goals addressed downtown or the riverfront. However, there were some loose connections with some of the goals. For example, the plan’s last section on “Standards and Beautification” suggests beginning the “old fashion Christmas in the downtown again” (page 46), as well as establishing redevelopment districts and standards (page 47).

Clarksville Land Use Master Plan (2002)

This plan was prepared for the Downtown District Partnership by a multi-disciplinary consultant team. The document’s title is misleading because rather than being a land use plan for the entire city it is actually a physical improvement plan specifically for the downtown. It does a good job of analyzing existing physical and economic conditions, including a map illustrating that roughly 30% of the downtown core’s land area is occupied by tax-exempt entities. The plan was created through a charrette process, and key ideas included: increase density, centralize and manage parking, take advantage of the river, implement more of the streetscape plan, encourage residential development, and infuse more retail/entertainment into the downtown. The plan goes into great detail for many of its recommendations, including estimating the potential tax revenues to be generated by several recommended redevelopment projects. It also recommends consideration of property tax abatements, a business improvement district, and tax increment financing.

Central Improvement District Streetscape Plan (2000)

This plan was prepared by Hodgson and Douglas based in Nashville. It has numerous worthy recommendations, including following the City’s adopted design guidelines, and maintaining an urban form for downtown – particularly with regard to infill development opportunities. It also goes beyond just physical improvement recommendations, such as recommendation regarding marketing, fund raising and a financial plan for implementation. The plan also includes a great deal of detail, including design specifications for all key streetscapes and detailed cost estimates. Even street tree species are recommended, including their spacing dimensions and planting specifications. The only recommendation that is clearly inconsistent with best practices in downtown planning is the axonometric artist rendering depicting 90 degree head-in parking on the public square, which would be better served to be angled parking. Also, the merits of the proposed traffic circle in front of the historic City Hall are questionable. Nevertheless, this overall plan is a solid piece of work that contributes greatly to the body of ideas for enhancing Downtown Clarksville.

Development Strategies for Clarksville (1999)

This plan was prepared by Odell Associates, Inc. for the Clarksville Downtown Redevelopment Task Force shortly after the tornado that devastated the downtown area. This 59-page document was organized into the following chapters: purpose and objectives, strategic planning, traffic and parking, land use, conceptual master plan, implementation, conclusion, and appendix. While it is relatively general in nature, there are many solid ideas and some appear to have been expanded upon in the 2002 Clarksville Land Use Master Plan.

Upland Trail Master Plan (1991)

This plan featured several proposed trail segments and related improvements, most of which have since been completed, including:

- Main Street to railroad bridge
- Gatehouse Pavilion to Main Street
- Railroad bridge to trestle at Valleybrook Park
- Landscape improvements along the Spring Street Corridor
- Improvements to the bridge overlook at Valleybrook Park
- Commerce Street bridge improvements