

CONCLUSIONS

Knoxville's future is bright. The city and the region are predicted to grow and gain cultural and economic influence in the coming decades. Knoxville has shown the way to create new centers of employment and population while conserving farming and the rural countryside.

Downtown and the surrounding first ring neighborhoods are burgeoning with new residents and businesses, making the heart of the city vital in a way it has not been in decades. Partnerships forged between the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory promise to make the region a national leader in innovative design and energy technologies. The city continues to become an ever more significant entertainment center with a variety of live venues and festivals hosting diverse acts of national and international prominence. Of course, we continually enjoy a setting of tremendous natural beauty that is blessed with numerous park lands and protected areas. These are crowned by a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, that is just minutes away. Amidst these numerous benefits, Knoxville continues to enjoy a very affordable cost of living.

These are just a few of the positive indicators. Yet, we cannot be complacent as we move toward the future. As noted in the PlanET *Livability Report Card*, we also face some stiff challenges in areas such as education, transportation, affordable housing, health, and environmental quality. Improvement in these areas will only come through concerted efforts. Failure to realize such improvements will undoubtedly hold Knoxville back from achieving its fullest potential and

dampen the impact of the many positive developments now underway. Meanwhile, our regional neighbors are not standing still. One only need look to some of our closest neighboring cities - Nashville, Chattanooga, Asheville, and Lexington - to find high levels of civic innovation that are leading to real economic, environmental, and cultural benefits for their residents. If Knoxville is to compete for the best and brightest, we must be concerted in our efforts to improve quality of life.

While it is not a panacea, *Centers and Corridors* shows that progressive urban design strategies thoughtfully tied to improved transit systems can play an important role in such continued improvement. If balanced correctly, innovative design strategies can serve as a framework supporting improvement in mobility, health, and environment while strengthening community and reinforcing the uniqueness of each place

To realize such possibilities will require insightful developers, talented designers, and forward-thinking public officials working in concert to overcome a variety of economic and regulatory barriers that currently prohibit the creation of the types of places shown in *Centers and Corridors*. While challenging, such public and private efforts offer the best mechanism for generating positive outcomes that cut across the interests of multiple parties and therefore stand to benefit current residents and future generations on multiple fronts. The term for that is "win-win".

