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# III. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

## A. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION EVENTS

From the onset of this planning process, the County and cities were intent on engaging the public through a comprehensive community participation campaign to achieve a truly citizen-driven Plan. This campaign was implemented by several methods of gathering community input. Public input was solicited through meetings with the Steering Committee appointed by the County Mayor, multiple location- specific community workshops, individual stakeholder interviews, an online survey and extensive use of social media, culminating in a joint public hearing with the County and participating cities to jointly adopt the Plan. This information provided the basis of the vision for Robertson County and the jurisdictions of Adams, Coopertown and Cross Plains. Detailed information on each of these community participation efforts is located in the Appendix.



### 1. STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee was appointed by the County Mayor for the Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan for the purpose of guiding the planning process during its development and to provide a wide cross-section of opinions and desires of the community. The Steering Committee includes representatives from a broad base of community interests including agriculture, health, business, local government, historic and cultural groups, faith-based institutions, developers, education, and neighborhood organizations. The consultants held meetings at key points during the planning process with the Steering Committee to gain information, receive direction and understand local needs. The Steering Committee served as the "first stop" to review drafts of the plan, the vision maps, and other key work products. They also created the Vision Statement and Cornerstone principles for the plan. A total of 3 Steering Committee meetings were held during the planning process at key milestones and the members were invited to attend the final public hearing in September, 2013. A list of the Steering Committee is included in the Acknowledgements section of this plan.



### 2. PROJECT KICKOFF AND TOUR

September 18, 2012, marked the official kickoff of the 2040 Robertson County, Adams, Coopertown and Cross Plains Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan planning process. The Project Team hosted kick-off meetings including a tour of Robertson County's key sites and the jurisdictions of Adams, Coopertown and Cross Plains. The kick-off meetings involved key individual stakeholders in the community, some of whom are members of the Technical Review Committee (agency staff) and

the Steering Committee, which represents a broad spectrum of the County's diverse interests. Initial input was received during these meetings addressing key issues, opportunities and needs for the communities' future. Summaries and notes from each of these events were then posted to the project website for review and can also be found in the Appendix.



### *KEY HIGHLIGHTS*

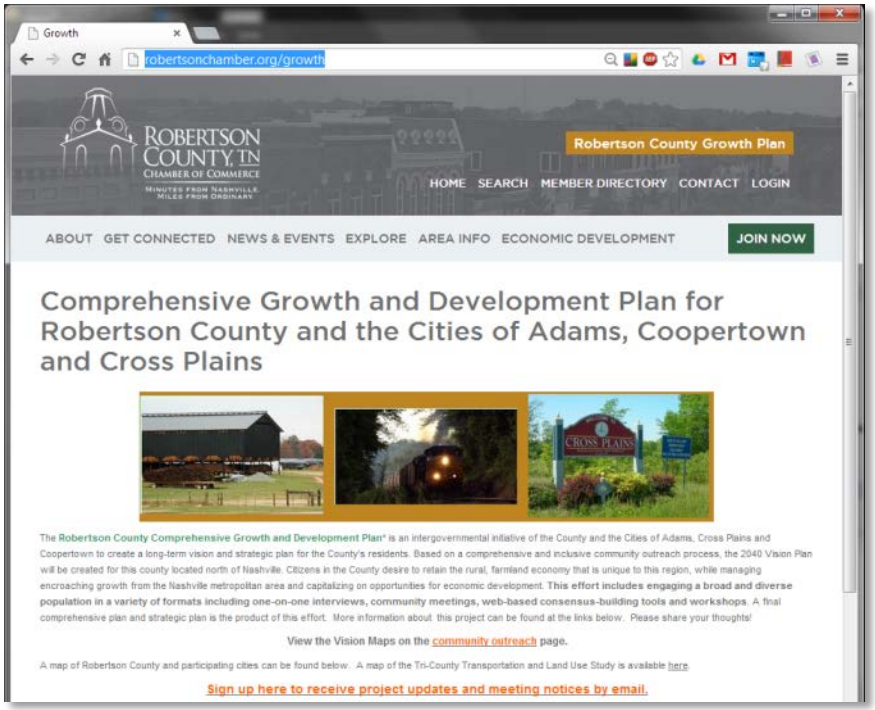
During the project kickoff, the project team discussed with each participating community their desired outcome of the plan and future needs for their communities. The following desired outcomes of the plan were discussed:

- Develop consensus on the future needs of communities (i.e. highway projects, development pattern, be inclusive)
- Develop a plan that sets Robertson County apart and provides visibility and marketability
- Provide economic development strategies
- Water resources are scarce and need to be planned for in a coordinated fashion
- Involve and engage the community
- Create an actionable plan including tools to implement the vision
- Maintain and enhance the County's rural/agrarian culture and history
- Provide for an east-west road connection through the County

## 3. PROJECT WEBSITE

A project website was developed as another method to engage the community regarding development of the plan and opportunities for public input. The project website, www.robertsonchamber.org/growth, was hosted by the Robertson County Chamber of Commerce. Available information on the website included team member contact information, community outreach opportunities, plan updates, maps, summaries of workshops and meetings, event updates and the online survey. The site also provided a voluntary sign up for citizens interested in receiving project updates via email and comment forms were posted for additional community input.

Social media was another method utilized to engage the public. Media feeds used included Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The social media outlets allowed the project team to connect with the citizens through technology that was vital in engaging the younger cohort of Robertson County.



## 4. ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was conducted from October 26, 2012 to January 21, 2013. Created and administered through Survey Monkey, the survey was emailed to the stakeholders and meeting participants and made available through a live link on the project website. In total, thirteen open ended questions were posed to elicit candid answers from the survey respondents. A total of 108 responses were received. Specific details regarding the results of the survey can be found in the Appendix.

## 5. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

As part of the comprehensive community input process, 27 key stakeholders were interviewed over a two-day period in October 2012. The cross-section of individuals selected for the stakeholder interviews represented a diverse group of interests, including realtors, educational institutions, business people, farmers, elected officials, homeowners, builders, non-profits and government staff. Each interviewee was provided a description of the project and a list of potential questions prior to their interview. Details regarding the results of the interviews are located in the Appendix.

## 6. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

A total of six community workshops were conducted over the course of one week. Four of the six workshops, were located in each participating jurisdiction. The other two workshops were held at a joint meeting of the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs and the Realizing Robertson's Future Chamber committee in Springfield.

In general, the input received from the community regarding the future growth of the County was used in creating the Vision Maps found in Chapter IV. Specific detailed summaries of the workshops are included in the Appendix.




Base maps were provided to small groups during each workshop. The groups were asked to prepare their maps with areas they felt were most appropriate for future growth and what type of growth was appropriate. Additional improvements necessary to carry out their growth scenarios were encouraged to be shown on the maps, which could include utilities, roadways, parks or other related infrastructure elements.

Input was mixed among the varying participants. However, there were several common themes that were discussed at each of the workshops. Those common themes included the following:

### *General Robertson County Themes*

- Preserve the prime agricultural lands
- Enhance existing corridors - widen SR 49, SR 431 and SR 76

- Develop a southern bypass following the same alignment as Batson Parkway
- Adams, Cross Plains and Coopertown should develop as Village Centers
- Preserve the historical and cultural resources
- Future parks and trails are needed throughout the County
- Water supply and resources need to be conserved and allocated appropriately
- Create and retain higher-paying jobs in the County

### *General Adams Themes*

- Generate an eco-tourism industry leveraging off of existing festivals and cultural activities in town – create a 24 hour destination
- Infrastructure needed along SR 41
- Trail needed between Fort Redmond and Port Royal
- Sewer needed in the downtown area
- Water shortage needs to be addressed to allow for future job growth

### *General Cross Plains Themes*

- Protect and preserve the historic structures in the core
- SR 25 should not be widened in the future
- Bike path need along SR 25
- Tennessee Conservation Land Trust easements could be used to preserve rural character
- Caves and karst features could be used as tourist attractions
- A farmers market is desired in town
- Safety improvements should be made to SR 25 and Cross Plains Road

### *General Coopertown Themes*

- Sustainable water supply is needed for future generations
- Preserve prime agriculture
- Widen SR 49 to 4 lanes from SR 76 to Springfield
- Develop multiuse trail along Trail of Tears
- Interstate 24 Interchange is a prime location for employment center and/or mixed use activities
- A park should be developed around the waterfall to allow for greater accessibility and to preserve it for future generations
- Village Center location should be at SR 49 and SR 257 east of SR 49

By utilizing the themes elicited from the stakeholders, community workshops, interviews and survey respondents, a comprehensive Vision Plan for the cities and County was realized. Generally, the input suggests that growth should be concentrated within existing city centers in the southern portions of the County with rural preservation occurring along the western and north portions of the County. The vision also identified jurisdictions of Adams, Cedar Hill, Coopertown, Cross Plains and Orlinda as small village centers with a small amount of growth occurring at and around existing village centers. The cities of Springfield, Greenbrier, Ridgetop, Millersville, White House and Portland were identified for more intense growth. The remaining cities (Greenbrier, Ridgetop, Millerville and Portland) were envisioned as suburban areas with supporting urban development within their urban growth boundaries.



## B. CORNERSTONES OF THE ROBERTSON GROWTH PLAN

From the onset of this project, seven Cornerstone Principles were established to guide development of the Robertson County Comprehensive Plan. A cornerstone is not unlike a goal, which provides direction and a future aspirational level of attainment. The plan objectives were based on the cornerstones that were developed by the Steering Committee and prepared in the consultant solicitation prior to the commencement of the project. The cornerstones are represented as the overarching areas that the plan addresses.

**Cornerstone Principles**

The Plan will:

1. Be built on the public participation process and represent the Citizens' vision.
2. Provide a framework for future development.
3. Guide effective use of financial resources through controlled growth and development, and the phasing of infrastructure and community services.
4. Provide economic development implementation strategies to retain grow and create jobs.
5. Provide strategies to preserve cultural and natural resources.
6. Provide strategies to preserve the rural character and agrarian heritage.
7. Include strategies to develop an efficient transportation network and a sustainable potable water supply system.





## C. VISION STATEMENT

Developing a vision statement during a community-driven planning process is an integral part of the overall plan development. The vision statement should embody the overarching cornerstones principles and the future aspirations of Robertson County and cities. An effective vision statement should be brief, to the point, articulate the values of the County and cities and essentially become the ultimate goal to aspire to.

Using the input received from the local residents, business leaders and the Steering Committee, the following vision statement was established for Robertson County and the jurisdictions of Adams, Coopertown and Cross Plains by the Steering Committee in a workshop held in May, 2013. This vision statement and the goals lay the foundation of the 2040 plan.

**Robertson County 2040 Vision Statement**

Robertson County is committed to preserving and promoting our agrarian heritage and economy by encouraging sustainable growth and agri-toursim while improving the quality of life for our citizens. The historic village character and rural landscapes will be preserved and strengthened, and open spaces and sensitive environmental resources will be conserved as part of connected passive systems.

A strong economy will be created by attracting more diverse employment to the County, and locating it in developed areas and at nodes along the Interstate corridors. Public investment in civic spaces and in infrastructure, including transportation improvements, will be made to promote private investment in key growth centers. Educational resources and diversity of housing will be equitably improved across the County with a renewed emphasis on promoting good urban form while taking advantage of existing infrastructure in core areas.



