

Land Use & Transportation Plan

Johnson City, TN

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area:	Citywide
Client:	City of Johnson City
Year Completed:	2001
Website:	johnsoncitytn.org/index.php?page=long-range-planning-2

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



Above: North Roan Street, 2000. *Top Right:* North Roan Street transformed into a memorable, walkable boulevard.



The Armory site is located near a medical center and the Veterans Administration. This rendering shows how concepts of mixed-use and walkable streets can be applied to a brownfield site.



Many residents lack small neighborhood parks within walking distance. New parks, located downtown and as part of the converted South Roan Shopping Center (illustrated above), are key.

The Project

After receiving a grant from the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP), Johnson City began a process to reintegrate land use and transportation throughout the city. The city of about 55,000 residents, which sits at the edge of eastern Tennessee, has long been a regional center for commerce and medical services. The disconnect between transportation and land use, apparent in the post-war era of rapid growth, has been increasing steadily in Johnson City. Assisting Dover-Kohl in this project were Glatting-Jackson, ZHA, A+S Architecture, and UrbanAdvantage.

The Process

During an intensive ten day charrette, the design team acquired needed local knowledge from Hands-On Design Sessions, workshops, and meetings with community members, developers, and city staff. Initial ideas were presented at the end of the week to the community. For the next year, the team refined ideas and concepts, creating "Connecting Johnson City: the Land Use and Transportation Plan."

Plan Principles

The Master Plan re-integrates land use and transportation and explains how the two disciplines can work together. The Plan also places priority on complete neighborhoods as the increment for growth. The emphasis is on solid urban form and building community by encouraging a more compact mix of uses in the neighborhoods. Streets and roads are examined as pathways for people, not just cars. This approach abandons the road-widening, reactive planning cycle for a more deliberate, proactive one.

Status

The Master Plan Report, Connecting Johnson City, and a preliminary framework for the Traditional Neighborhood Code were completed in Winter of 2001. The principles and findings were later incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, which guides the future development of the city as well as its Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The Holistic Approach of Planning

Successful long-range planning requires a broad understanding of the region at large. Regardless of the study area, neighborhoods, streets, and city centers are integrated into, and more typically affect, the greater system of transportation, services, and commerce. The Johnson City Land Use and Transportation Plan, which targeted the city proper, was created through a comprehensive analysis of the regional network of neighborhoods and streets; the technical application of the Transect, which identified the area's habitats from the most natural to the most urban; and the critical contributions of residents from all over Johnson City who directly contributed to growth plans for the city as a whole and for their specific areas of town.

Interested citizens, local business owners, members of the Planning Commission, students, neighborhood activists, architects, artists and developers from all areas of the city gathered in schools, recreation and town centers to discuss ways to guide urban growth, address traffic issues and preserve Johnson City's character. The regional map (at right) reinforced development patterns, overall street connections and topographical constraints, while the Transect (below) established guidelines for appropriate development according to the characteristics of the city's varied neighborhoods.

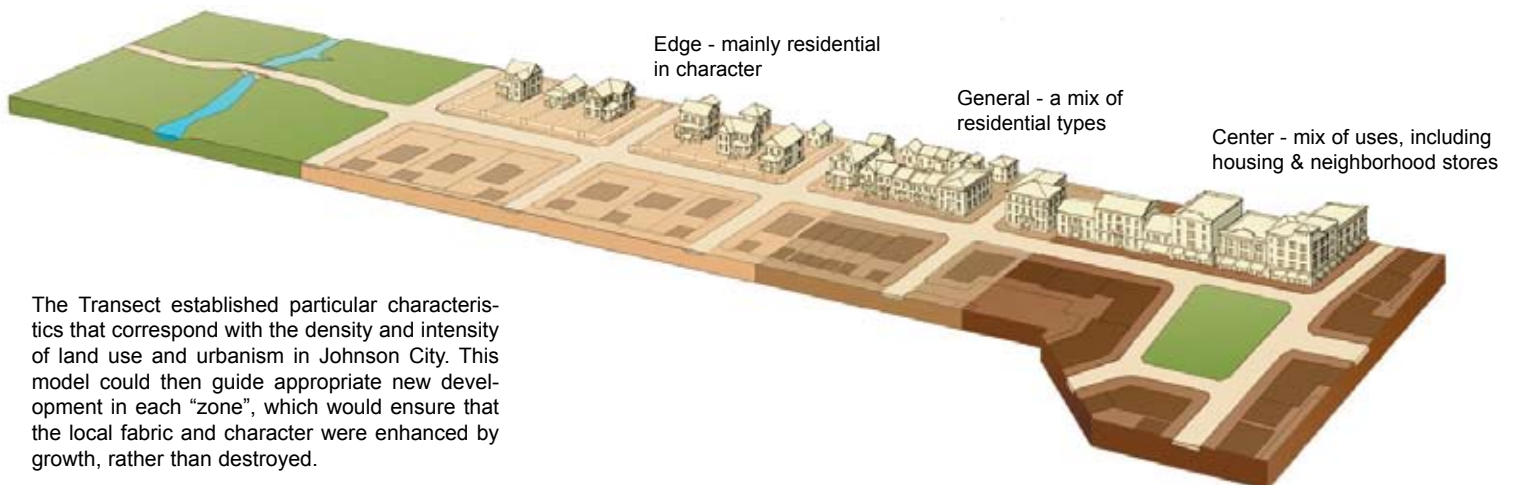
The process culminated with a Community Results Presentation, where hundreds of community members signed a 6' long "Connecting Johnson City: the Land Use and Transportation Plan" banner in overwhelming support of the project.



Technical meetings, along with six Hands-On Design Workshops involving hundreds of local citizens, were held throughout the charrette to inform the plan. At right, a Johnson City resident gives her support during the final presentation.



A city map was created to show the existing settlement pattern. Neighborhoods are shown in pale yellow, with neighborhood centers in red. Ridges and other natural areas are shown in dark green and green.



The Transect established particular characteristics that correspond with the density and intensity of land use and urbanism in Johnson City. This model could then guide appropriate new development in each "zone", which would ensure that the local fabric and character were enhanced by growth, rather than destroyed.