

Where Everyone Belongs



A VISION FOR NASHVILLE'S FUTURE

The goal was simple: Create a unified vision for the next decade, driven by the shared values of Nashville's residents and providing a single roadmap for policymakers, nonprofits, philanthropists, the business community, and neighborhood groups alike.

Over the past 14 months, **Imagine Nashville** engaged thousands of Nashvillians in a conversation about their hopes and dreams for the city's future. In total, **10,000+ people participated**, providing **100s of ideas** from community and subject matter experts on ways to turn those dreams into action.

But this wasn't the typical kind of community engagement. Instead, they led a deeply intentional effort to talk to people from every zip code, every income, different ages and ethnicities, including a purposeful effort to engage young people and often-underrepresented populations.

Imagine Nashville was an unprecedented undertaking for our city. It led to a deeper understanding of the successes and pain points our residents are currently feeling, and where we most need to focus our efforts moving forward if we are to tackle Nashville's biggest challenges.

At such a critical time in our city's history, **Imagine Nashville** will serve as the guiding framework by which we can create a Nashville of the future that is truly built around equitable prosperity.

14-MONTH
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

10,000+
VOICES HEARD

100S OF EXPERTS
ENGAGED

4 BIG AREAS
OF FOCUS

30+ IDEAS
FOR ACTION

ONE SHARED VISION
AND CITYWIDE EFFORT

The final recommendations emerging from the months-long process are anchored around four overarching priorities:

1
All Nashvillians have meaningful and accessible pathways for a higher **standard of living** – an essential ingredient for a **good life**.

2
Our transit system allows us to move about the city **safely and efficiently**.

3
We have ample **attainable and affordable** housing options that match demand and meet our needs.

4
Each neighborhood has a **distinct character** and fosters a high **quality of life** for residents.

A Starting Point:

SHARED VALUES

Imagine Nashville's work began with in-depth research and months of discussion with Nashvillians across the city. Some of the key research findings included:

When asked about the **things they value most**, many Nashvillians cited things like family, security, independence, happiness, and peace of mind.

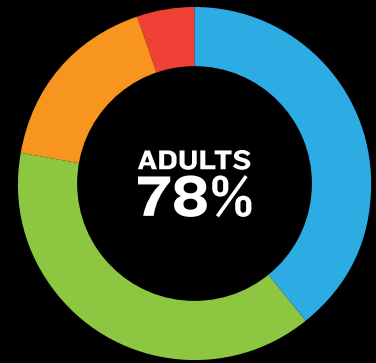
But one thing emerged as particularly unique – Nashville's "secret sauce" so to speak – a deep **sense of belonging and connection** people feel here.

People feel they belong here because of:

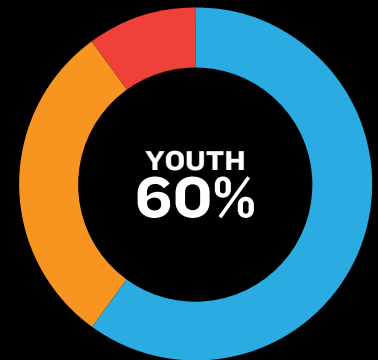
- **Nashville's rich diversity**
- **How genuinely welcoming and accepting Nashvillians are**
- **Our supportive and collaborative spirit**
- **Our strong sense of community**

For many, Nashville is a good place to raise families, build relationships, and find opportunities. A clear majority of Nashvillians say **things are positive in Nashville**; more than half see their **quality of life getting better** in the future.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU BELONG IN NASHVILLE?



Strongly Belong	39%
Somewhat Belong	38%
Somewhat Don't Belong	17%
Strongly Don't Belong	5%



Agree or Strongly Agree	60%
Neutral	30%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	17%

TOP 5 Positives in Nashville

ADULTS

GOOD RESTAURANTS,
SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT

OUTDOOR RECREATION,
PARKS, GREEN SPACES

CREATIVE, GATHERING PLACE
FOR MUSICIANS, ARTISTS, ETC.

DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE
AND CULTURES

HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE
AND HOSPITALS

YOUTH

GOOD RESTAURANTS,
SHOPPING, ENTERTAINMENT

GOOD EDUCATION

CREATIVE, LOTS OF MUSIC
AND ART

ACCESS TO FUN ACTIVITIES

DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE AND
CULTURES

Yet, the research raises red flags about whether residents enjoy equitable access to the city's amenities and whether priorities and focus is on the right things. A growing number of **Nashvillians fear they may not belong** here much longer.

More than any other factor, income determines who feels they belong, a particular challenge given that **47% of Nashvillians qualify as low-income**, earning less than \$50,000 annually.

72%
Nashvillians

see "a growing divide between rich and poor."

57%
Low-income families

feel increasingly excluded from the opportunities and benefits of living here.

Who else reported feeling left behind? Respondents who are:

LGBTQ+
48%

AGES 65+
45%

YOUTH
40%

**AFRICAN AMERICAN/
BLACK** **31%**

As we consider the diminishing sense of belonging, it's important to note that what Nashvillians say are the key drivers of their quality of life are the very things they say Nashville is not doing well. Ultimately, Nashvillians expressed frustration and anxiety about the impact of the city's growth.

29%
Adults

35%
Youth

"Growth in Nashville is making things better."

**TOP
5
Negatives
in Nashville**

ADULTS

**TRAFFIC/CONGESTION
LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING
TOO MUCH GROWTH
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
HIGH COST OF LIVING**

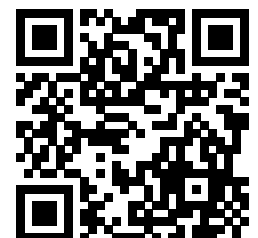
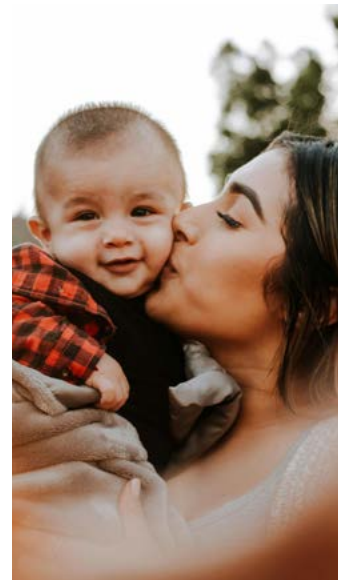
YOUTH

**TRAFFIC/CONGESTION
EXPENSIVE TO LIVE IN NASHVILLE
HOMELESSNESS
EXPENSIVE HOUSING
MORE CRIME**

What's Next

Having a clear picture of where we are trying to go as a community is a critical part of the equation, but accountability for action is equally important. Thus, Imagine Nashville also announced an implementation framework which includes:

- First and foremost, nothing can move forward without **strong leadership** and **dedicated resources**. **Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee** has agreed to spearhead next steps, working in partnership with the Mayor's Office and other partners.
- To ensure government, the business community, nonprofits, philanthropy, and neighborhoods work together on an ongoing basis, **Community Implementation Teams** will be formed for each of the four priority areas. Each team will be jointly led by a public and private sector leader with significant experience and a deep understanding of the issues. They will be charged with developing a multi-year scope of work that aligns to clear, measurable success metrics. The goal is to create **world-class public/private partnerships** to advance each priority and make sure those active in the space are working together.
- A **Community Indicators Platform** will be created to track progress. It will be an open-access, user-friendly platform. Work is already underway on this in partnership with the Belmont Innovation Lab for Social Impact.
- Stakeholders are committed to **coming together annually** to honestly discuss progress and next steps.



Read the full plan, access the data, and join the movement:

Turning Dreams into Action



The Imagine Nashville recommendations are designed to provide a way forward for the next decade. The ideas build on the best existing work, but also bring fresh thinking to some of the city's stubborn challenges. Below is a sampling of what is outlined as next steps in the report:

All Nashvillians have meaningful and accessible pathways for a higher standard of living – an essential ingredient for a good life.

- Position Nashville as an “innovation hub” and center for R&D and entrepreneurialism in the South.
- Expand Nashville’s small business footprint and better protect home-grown small businesses from displacement.
- Deepen implementation of 2020 Workforce Study by concentrating economic development efforts on high growth industries with greater likelihood of better paying jobs.
- Support and scale economic mobility efforts aimed at moving families out of poverty and removing systemic barriers to high-wage employment.
- Guarantee all students in the city have equitable access to high-wage, high-demand career pathways, including meaningful career-based learning opportunities.
- Ensure unemployed and underemployed adults get the training they need to access high-wage, high-demand jobs.
- Elevate and align workforce development efforts by establishing a workforce development intermediary.
- Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare in high-demand neighborhoods.
- Address pay scale of childcare teachers and direct care workers needed to attract and retain employees, meet childcare and eldercare demand.

Our transit system allows us to move about the city safely and efficiently.

- Build high-capacity transit corridors that prioritize transit today and prepare Nashville for the future.
- Ensure public transit is accessible to all Nashvillians, including “youth ways” networks and expanded/enhanced “last mile” sidewalk and infrastructure needs for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Increase safety for those using public and active transportation.
- Promote and incentivize the use of public transit and active transportation.
- Recommit to implementing Plan to Play (Metro Parks & Greenways master plan).
- Revisit role of community centers in better meeting the needs of both older Nashvillians and youth.

We have ample attainable and affordable housing options that match demand and meet our needs.

- Identify under-represented housing types and set clear housing targets, including housing options for older adults, those with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness.
- Better educate the public on the importance of housing diversity throughout the city.
- Increase the city’s housing stock, including identifying public and private property that could be leveraged.
- Substantially accelerate funding for public and private affordability efforts, including better maximizing existing sources of revenue/funding.
- Streamline zoning, land use, and permitting process to incentivize and expedite development of attainable housing.
- Expand homebuyer and rental assistance as well as repair/modification and property tax relief that could help people stay in their homes longer.

Each neighborhood has a distinct character and fosters a high quality of life for residents.

- Ensure every neighborhood has a robust neighborhood development plan that is based on the results of a quality of life/ neighborhood livability index, including addressing amenity gaps.
- Pilot 4-5 “complete neighborhood” concepts across the city to help develop neighborhood commercial corridors.
- Create and promote clean, safe “third places” (fun places outside of school and home) for young people ages 12-18 that are accessible on evenings and weekends.
- Encourage community-building efforts by streamlining and simplifying the permitting process.
- Better equip neighborhood groups with knowledge and resources to advocate for their needs.
- Better leverage state and federal neighborhood revitalization funds.
- Update development code to ensure developers contribute to high-quality built environment and needed infrastructure.
- Strengthen coordination of gov’t services involved in large-scale development and/or capital projects to minimize impacts on residents.
- Foster “belonging” of often excluded groups by expanding neighborhood and citywide amenities that strengthen Nashville’s social fabric.