NEW ON OUR WEBSITE

Community Survey, Round 2
The University of Tennessee conducted a second Community Survey on behalf of PlanET and the results are now available. This round asked residents how to improve the quality of life in each of our five focus areas. Both reports are available on our website.

PlanET
Regional Outreach Series 3
How We Grow Matters!
March 4 - March 29, 2013
It’s not too late to participate online or schedule a Meeting in a Box. Details on our website.

Only a Few More Days to Share Your Ideas on Growth Concepts
Did you know that by the year 2040 the five-county region we live in—Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon, and Union counties—is expected to grow by almost 300,000 people and 240,000 jobs? How do we grow that much and keep what we love about our communities? The decisions we make now matter!

Log on now and let us know which of our growth concepts you prefer and to compare your input with other online users. Online participation closes on March 29, so don’t delay!

New Census Figures Confirm Regional Connections
A recent data release from the U.S. Census Bureau has confirmed what residents of Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon, and Union Counties already know: the people who live and work in our region share daily connections. With one in six local workers driving to a neighboring county in the region to go to work each day, it’s clear that our economic, environmental, and cultural ties don’t stop at county lines.

Almost 60,000 of the PlanET region’s 350,000 workers commute to another county within the region every day. In Anderson County alone, nearly 10,000 residents—one-third of its workers—go to a different county elsewhere in the five-county region for work. Similar rates of daily commuting are reported for Blount and Loudon counties. And more than half of Union County’s residents travel to a neighboring county to work. (See map.)

According to the American Community Survey—a product of the U.S. Census Bureau—the flow of commuters traveling to work from their home counties to some other county in the PlanET region is on the rise, continuing a decade-long trend.
A look at commuting figures leads to questions about how our region works, and how some changes might be desired for its future. For example, can more jobs be brought to Union County so 55 percent of its workers don't have to drive to another county for work? Do Union County residents face transportation cost burdens that affect their quality of life? With more than 20,000 people traveling between Knox and Anderson counties each workday, should we take a look at regional transit? Can we do a better job providing housing opportunities in areas closer to employment centers? What are the impacts on our region's air quality in light of the growing need to drive farther for work?

Our region's population is expected to reach over 1,000,000 in the next 30 years. The trend in commuter flows reafirms a need to think regionally, not just about our transportation system, but also about the economy, environment, and overall health and well-being of our communities.

Because we are living regionally, we need to plan regionally. The decisions that residents, developers, and elected officials make now will have a huge impact on the future of our communities. We need to ask the right questions and develop a vision for that future now because how we grow matters!