PlanET Perspectives
Guest Blog Series
A variety of East Tennessee leaders are sharing ideas and strategies to help make East Tennessee a stronger, more resilient and competitive region.

Doing What Comes Naturally

Carol Evans
Executive Director
Legacy Parks Foundation

The Nuclear Option: Big Opportunities Ahead for Workers with the Right Skills

Doug Lawyer
Knoxville Chamber

A Framework for Action: Public Input Round 4 Begins May 28

PlanET’s fourth round of public input shifts from discussing how community members would like the region to be in the future to evaluating ways to make those ideas a reality.

Over the last 18 months, PlanET has asked residents to share their visions for East Tennessee. The strength of the volunteer spirit is evident in the number of people who have answered that call; nearly 6,000 people have helped shape a vision for the future of the region.

Four central themes emerged at the heart of this vision:

- Build strong towns
- Grow quality places
- Improve health of people and places
- Expand choices for all

Over the next month, PlanET will ask for help again; seeking thoughts on the best approaches to help the region turn this vision into reality.

What is the best way to grow more local food and support agriculture in the region? What are the best ways to expand transportation and housing options for all of our community members? How does the region grow dynamic, walkable destinations in suburban centers? Round four participants will be asked to answer these questions and more.

From May 28 through June 28, community members will be asked to evaluate a set of goals and objectives that will serve as the framework for the development of an action strategy, which will serve as a guide for communities and the region as a whole as they seek to reach their vision for 2040.

To encourage as much participation as possible, PlanET will offer two ways to provide input. Individuals may visit the PlanET website and work through the materials online anytime they want, anywhere they want. Neighborhood associations, civic organization, or other groups can hold a Meeting in a Box at a time and location of their choice and with or without a PlanET facilitator.

Details of each method are available on the PlanET website.

Contact Sherith Colverson, sherith.colverson@planeasttn.org or (865) 215-4396, to schedule a Meeting in a Box or for questions about how to use the online community input tool.
PlanET held its inaugural speakers series event last month. If you missed Chuck Marohn and his Curbsite Chat, or even if you just want to see it again, it’s now available on PlanET’s YouTube channel.

More than 900 people participated in round three of PlanET’s Regional Outreach Series and the results could not be clearer: issues relating to protecting the environment, redeveloping land and increasing transportation options dominated the discussion.

Participants were asked to consider the expected growth rate of 300,000 people in 30 years as they provided input in two areas: growth priorities and regional growth concepts. The majority showed a strong preference for growth patterns that strengthen cities and small towns, create quality suburban centers and preserve farmland.

In the growth priorities exercise, a list of 13 issues that would be affected by future growth was provided and participants were asked to select the five most important from that list. The top three issues identified were water quality, air quality and local agriculture.

Among the nearly 300 area high school students who took the survey, these three issues rose clearly above all others. For respondents over the age of 18, three additional issues also emerged: opportunities for walking and bicycling, convenient transit and land redevelopment.

With the priorities identified, participants were next asked to review four growth concepts, compare them to a 30-year projection of the current growth trend, and identify which one they preferred. Across the region, the most strongly favored concepts were ones that focused growth within the region’s cities and small towns, and in dynamic suburban centers where both housing and jobs could be congregated.

This more balanced approach to growth, with development in urban areas, small towns and suburban communities, was strongly favored over continued growth exclusively in lower density suburban styles.

In the next round of public input, scheduled to begin in June, PlanET will build on the outcomes of these exercises and ask residents to identify the best ways to make their goals a reality.

To review findings from round 3 or to learn how to participate in round 4, see the PlanET website at http://www.planeasttn.org/Participate.