



## **PORTLAND MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Portland City Hall - Council Chambers**

**100 South Russell St. Room 111**

**AGENDA for July 8, 2025**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. New Business**
  - A. Presentation from GNRC for the City's draft Comprehensive Plan.
- 5. Planning Commission Members Comments**

**Adjournment**

**PRESERVING**   
**PORTLAND**

# Comprehensive Growth Plan

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FIRST DRAFT  
March 2025

**City of Portland Planning Department**  
100 S Russell Street | Portland, Tennessee 37148 | (615) 325-6776  
[CityofPortlandTN.gov](http://CityofPortlandTN.gov)

# Public Review and Comment

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*Preserving Portland* is a vision document that is intended to depict community preferences for future growth and a strategy for achieving those preferences. The plan provides a general policy framework that will be used to guide the city's decisions related to the land development review process. The plan does not have the authority of regulation. The city's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations establish requirements and govern the development review process.

Learn more at [PreservingPortland.org](https://www.PreservingPortland.org).

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To review the draft plan, visit  
<https://www.PreservingPortland.org/DraftPlan>

or scan the QR code with your computer  
or mobile device.

Prior to formal presentation to the Planning Commission, GNRC will incorporate feedback from the public and planning partners as it produces a final publication with enhanced visualizations to be considered for public adoption.

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# Acknowledgements

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This document was prepared for the City of Portland Planning Department with assistance from the Greater Nashville Regional Council under the direction of the City of Portland Mayor and Board of Alderman, Municipal Planning Commission, and *Preserving Portland* Steering Committee.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

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## About the Plan

*Preserving Portland* is a plan to guide the City of Portland and its partners in their decisions related to shaping future growth and land development. Portland, like many cities and towns across Middle Tennessee, is poised for significant growth over the next 25 years. The current population of roughly 13,000 is expected to increase by 30 percent by 2045. With that growth will come more jobs and economic opportunities but also will the need for more housing. In addition, growth will necessitate improvement to and the expansion of the city's public infrastructure for transportation and utilities. With an understanding of those circumstances, the city and its leadership determined that now was the time for Portland to create a comprehensive plan that guides future development.

The plan provides advisory recommendations to help guide municipal decisions related to development or redevelopment across the city's planning area. The intent is to ensure that a high quality of life can be sustained into the future as the city grows. The plan is organized into two key sections:

- **Chapter 1. Introduction** – Information about the purpose of the plan and an overview of the planning process.
- **Chapter 2. Community Trends** – Assessment of trends and forecasts related to population and job growth and related municipal issues.
- **Chapter 3. Community Aspirations** – The key issues to address and a shared vision statement and set of goals, objectives, actions to help the city forward.
- **Chapter 4. Growth Policy** – Recommended land use and design policy to help inform regulatory decisions related to development.
- **Chapter 5. Transportation Priorities** – Identification of key challenges and recommended projects and strategies to improve transportation across the city.
- **Chapter 6. Implementation Guidance** – Recommended strategies and resources to assist with the implementation of the plan.
- **Additional Documentation** – Additional information including data, maps, and technical details is available at [PreservingPortland.org](http://PreservingPortland.org).

## Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for a community's growth and development. For the City of Portland, *Preserving Portland* offers an opportunity to articulate a vision for the future that represents its residents' and stakeholders' needs, values, and aspirations. The plan will guide decisions regarding land use, infrastructure, economic development, and community resources, ensuring that Portland is positioned to manage growth to balance progress with preservation over the next 20 years.

This plan identifies areas for development and ensures a balance between maintaining the city's resources and a high standard of public services, preserving its rural character and history, and aligning infrastructure investments with the community's priorities.

## Community Driven Planning Process

The City of Portland is uniquely positioned within the Middle Tennessee region as its boundaries span Sumner and Roberston County. The city is experiencing significant growth; since 2000, its population has increased by 56%, making it the third-fastest growing municipality in Sumner County. This growth underscores the need for a comprehensive plan that addresses critical issues such as housing, transportation, school capacity, preservation, and infrastructure. The plan's goals align with the broader initiatives of neighboring jurisdictions and the region through collaboration with the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC), a key partner in this planning effort. *Preserving Portland* was initiated in 2023 with a commitment to engage residents and stakeholders in shaping the city's future.

### Planning Process

*Preserving Portland's* success is rooted in a proactive and wide-ranging community engagement process. Outreach efforts prioritized meaningful interaction, active listening, and incorporating community input into the process and elements of the comprehensive plan. The engagement process emphasized educating residents, gathering diverse perspectives, and fostering participation through in-person events and virtual platforms. Creating a phased approach to engagement was essential and charted in the *Preserving Portland* Engagement Plan.

Community engagement and plan development followed a three-phase process over 24 months between May 2023 and April 2025. The process was guided by a Steering Committee, the public, and a group of technical staff to ensure that the plan reflects the vision and preferred direction of the community.

- **Phase 1: Visions and Expectations** - The first phase laid the groundwork by establishing the city's long-term vision, values, and goals. This phase prioritized awareness and input collection to shape the vision and key priorities.
- **Phase 2: What If Scenarios** - During this phase, scenario planning allowed the community to explore trade-offs and alternatives for future growth. This phase resulted in a preferred growth pattern and framework for Portland.
- **Phase 3: Plan Drafting and Review** – The last phase focused on prioritizing recommendations for short-term and long-term action that support the community's vision and preferred growth framework.

### Outreach and Engagement

The first public meeting in May 2023 marked the first of many opportunities for community participation. Residents and stakeholders were invited to share their ideas, learn about current planning efforts, and provide input on topics ranging from land use and transportation to parks and utilities. Additional outreach efforts include an online survey, public meetings and workshops, and informational presentations through civic organizations and booths at community events such as the Strawberry Festival to ensure broad participation.

By engaging a wide and diverse audience, *Preserving Portland* represents thoughtful participation and a sense of ownership from the community, which are critical to the plan's successful implementation and stewardship.

**Government Leadership** comprises the Planning Commission, Mayor Mike Callis, and the City Council. Its purpose is to inform and collect input from governing councils and commissions so that the Plan can be adopted and followed.

The **Steering Committee** comprises members of the city council and county commission, a religious community leader, infrastructure representatives, the Chamber of Commerce, a business owner, and a historic preservationist. It will guide the overall production of a draft plan for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council. The committee ensures participation and buy-in from leadership across the various aspects of municipal government.

The **Intergovernmental Coordination Task Force** comprises members of state, regional, and county agencies covering parks and recreation, utilities, planning, engineering, and public works. It is tasked with helping facilitate cooperative policymaking for *Preserving Portland* and focuses on coordination in planning, public infrastructure, and service delivery.

The project team held various **public events**, including pop-up booths at Portland’s major festivals and public meetings, and provided presentations to local organizations. To capture audiences who may not have attended an event, the project team provided **online surveys** to collect community input on key components driving this Plan. We captured audiences through various methods, such as stakeholder outreach, press releases, email blasts, and social media. A ***Preserving Portland* website** was created to help broaden outreach and keep interested parties informed on the process.

### **Outreach by the Numbers**

- 10 Steering Committee Members and 5 Meetings
- 12 Intergovernmental Coordination Task Force Members and 2 Meetings
- 4 Meetings with Government Leadership (Planning Commission and City Council)
- 4 Press Releases
- 8 Email Blasts and Approximately 300 Email Recipients
- 38 Social Media Posts
- 4 Public Meetings and 125 Public Meeting Attendees
- 2 Pop-Up Events
- 2 Go-to Meetings and Approximately 70 Attendees
- 3-4 Online Surveys and 600 Online Survey Responses

The Community Engagement Report provides a detailed report on the actions and feedback from each outreach phase (available in Technical Appendix).

### **Connected Planning Efforts**

Making connections to planning efforts already in place helps implementation by ensuring cohesion among regional, local, and neighboring plans. Planning for the future is challenging, and implementation is even more so. Implementation requires ongoing commitment of resources and coordination by the city and its partners and should be continuously monitored and adjusted.

A review of plans by the City of Portland, Sumner County, Robertson County, and regional agencies was conducted to better understand each plan's purpose and recommendations and their relevancy to *Preserving Portland*. Recommendations from these existing plans fit into this plan, and to the extent possible, this plan can help refocus and align efforts into updated actions and best

practices. By connecting previous plans with *Preserving Portland*, we can ensure that recommendations are supportive and aligned.

Below is a summary of key planning initiatives from existing plans that were consulted during the development of the plan.

- **City of Portland Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2022):** A comprehensive parks master plan that defines a unified vision for its park system and plans for future growth. This plan helped identify park improvement priorities (Richland Park, Meadowbrook Park, and Dogwood Hills Municipal Golf Course) and future considerations for parks, wayfinding, community centers, and trail systems.
- **North Gateway Corridor Study (2017):** A plan focused on the I-65 interchange and Northern portion of the Portland Bypass to identify ways to enhance safety, mobility, and regional connectivity along SR-109, reducing congestion and supporting local growth. The importance of these improvements is the effective change they will bring to the physical, economic, and environmental landscapes in and around Portland. Therefore, this plan helped create a foundation for future place types by providing the framework of character areas in the north corridor study area.
- **The City of Portland Main Street Master Plan (2008):** A master plan that outlines a vision to revitalize Downtown Portland, restore its historic charm, and reestablish Main Street as a vibrant community hub and source of civic pride. This Master Plan identified improvements to Main Street (landscaping, lighting, facades, and signage), connections from Main Street to Russel Street, pedestrian infrastructure and amenities, public parking, and stormwater and utility systems. This
- **Portland Greenways and Trails Plan (2007):** A comprehensive greenways and trails plan to enhance connectivity between key community locations such as Meadow Brook Park, Richland Park, and local schools over a ten-year horizon.
- **Sumner County Parks Master Plan (2020):** A countywide master plan to address current and future needs for parks, open spaces, and connectivity. This plan helps to see where regional connectivity should occur when planning for Portland’s greenways and trails.
- **Robertson County 2040 Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan (2013):** A countywide comprehensive plan that provides a strategic framework guiding future growth, development, and infrastructure. Robertson County is adjacent to Sumner County, and ensuring regional connectivity between the plans is important.
- **2035 Comprehensive Plan: Sumner County’s Blueprint to the Future (2010):** A countywide comprehensive plan that outlines a vision, goals, and strategies for managing growth, transportation, and natural resources, primarily focusing on unincorporated areas under county jurisdiction.
- **Regional Transportation Plan for FYs 2021-2045 (2021):** A long-range regional transportation plan that identifies projects and programs across the seven-county Middle Tennessee region to invest federal and state funds toward a safe, efficient transportation system that drives regional and statewide economic success.
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2021):** The region’s long-term strategy outlines goals, strategies, and actions to support Middle Tennessee’s shared economic and workforce development vision.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Land use planning is a complex process, but one that can be understood by anyone who is provided access to the relevant information. The following is a list of frequently asked questions about the plan.

### What is the purpose of the Plan?

The purpose of the plan is to provide advisory recommendations on the development or redevelopment of the municipal and urban growth areas with the intent to ensure that a high quality of life can be sustained into the future. Through the planning process, residents, businesses, and local organizations were provided an opportunity to help shape how the city will manage growth to ensure new development is consistent with the community's expectations.

### What is the legal basis for the plan?

Title 13, Chapter 4 of the Tennessee Code Annotated (§13-4-201) assigns to the Planning Commission the function and duty of preparing and adopting an official General Plan for the physical development of the municipality. The statute further stipulates the broad range of what can be included in the plan and provides for the manner in which a general plan is adopted. The law states that, once the general plan is adopted by the local legislative body, all land use decisions in the City shall thereafter be consistent with the plan. For the purposes of defining "consistency," only those elements of the plan related to land use decisions become effective. All other sections of the plan are intended as a guide and only for planning purposes.

### Does this Plan determine how much growth will happen?

No public policy or community plan has the power to control how much growth will happen within a community. Growth rates are a function of a combination of variables that are largely defined by the private market and individual property rights. The role of *Preserving Portland* and similar documents is to ensure that the local government and its partners are prepared for growth and to establish tools that allow the municipality to guide development in a way that results in a mutual benefit for long-time residents and businesses and for those who are new to the area.

### Does this Plan determine where growth will happen?

*Preserving Portland* offers an analysis of where growth is likely to occur and a set of recommendations to guide growth towards the areas that are more suitable based on public input received during the process. The plan also offers recommendations for how to ensure infrastructure is made ready for anticipated growth and development. The plan provides a framework for decisions that will be made by the city regarding proposed developments, but it is not regulatory in nature. The city regulates land development through its zoning and subdivision regulations.

## **Can we do something to slow the rapid pace of development?**

The greater Nashville area is experiencing significant population growth and development. The plan does not have the authority to stop new developments from occurring, but it can help ensure that new growth is accommodated in a manner that prioritizes the needs of current residents as it welcomes newcomers.

## **How does the plan affect how I can use my property?**

*Preserving Portland* identifies the desired form, intensity, and character of future development and does not strictly limit what can be done with property. The plan is an advisory document that guides land use decisions. The zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and building codes are the devices that regulate property and structures.

## **What is the difference between the plan and zoning regulations?**

The comprehensive plan and the zoning regulations both have an influence on how land can be used or developed. The plan generally guides land use decisions and is an advisory document. Zoning is part of the municipal codes and regulations and governs the type, scale and intensity of development which may occur at the parcel level.

## **Have additional questions?**

Additional FAQs may be found online at [PreservingPortland.org](http://PreservingPortland.org).

# Chapter 2. Community Trends

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## History of Growth

Maya Angelou said that “you can’t really know where you’re going until you know where you’ve been.” Understanding Portland’s history, how it has and will continue to evolve is important when planning for its future. The city has a different physical presence from when it was incorporated, and the community of Portland is more diverse than ever. Change is a certainty and what will change is not entirely unknown. This chapter presents some of the more significant changes to the city and the challenges and opportunities the community has identified as important to address now and in the future.

Portland has a rich history rooted in agriculture, transportation, and community resilience. Located in northern Sumner County near the Kentucky state line, Portland’s origins date back to the early 19th century when settlers were drawn to the area’s fertile land and natural resources. Originally named Richland, the town grew around farming and trade, with the construction of roads and rail lines fueling its early development.

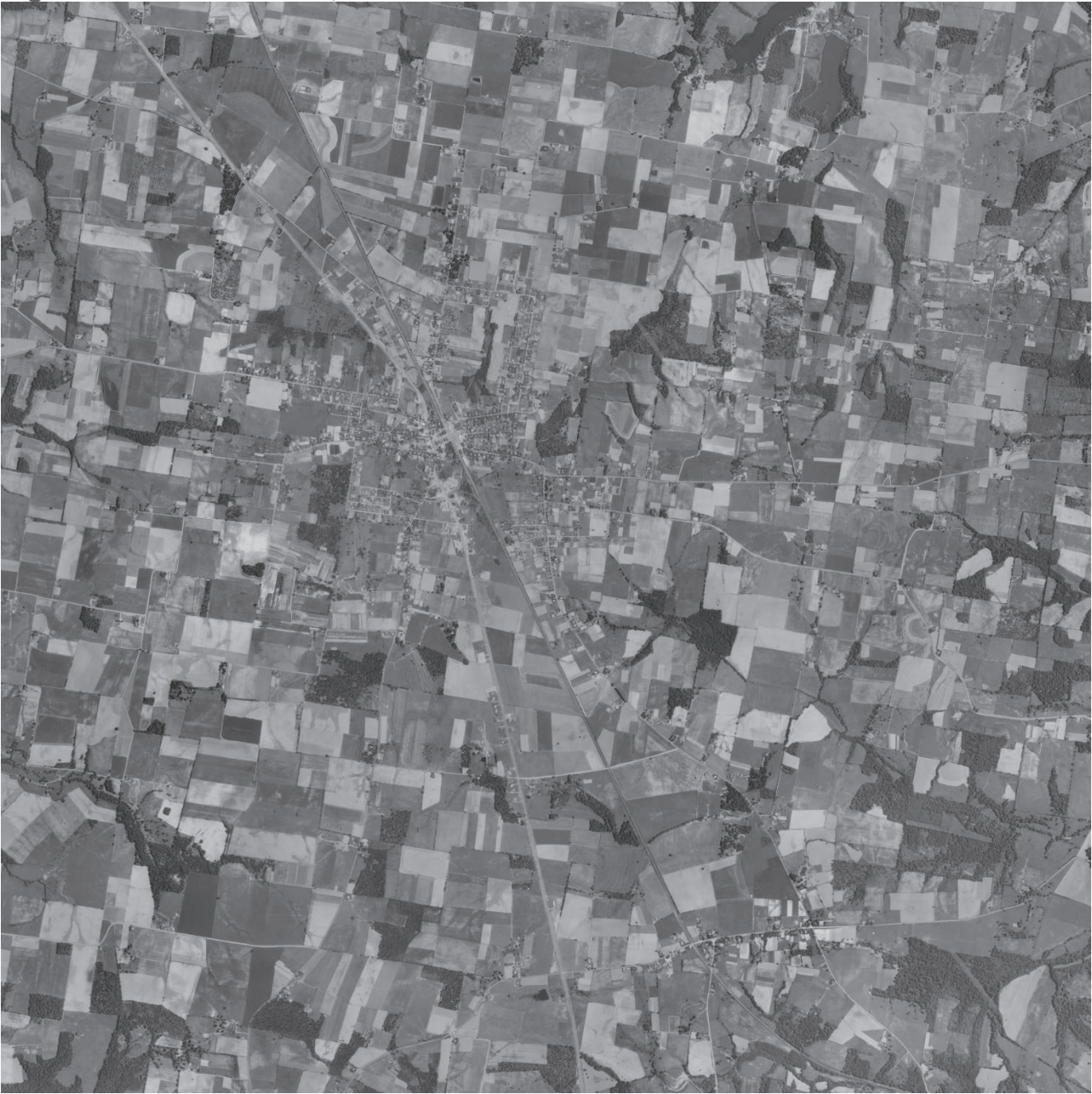
A significant moment in Portland’s history came in the late 19th century with the arrival of the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad. The railroad connected the small agricultural community to larger markets, boosting economic activity and population growth. In 1888, the city was renamed Portland to avoid confusion with another Tennessee town along the L&N railroad named Richland. By the early 20th century, Portland had become one of the country’s leading strawberry producers, earning the title “Strawberry Capital of Tennessee.” This agricultural heritage continues to be celebrated today through the annual Middle Tennessee Strawberry Festival, a tradition that honors the city’s farming legacy and community spirit.

Portland was officially incorporated as a city in 1905, and throughout the 20th century, it expanded beyond its agricultural roots. The construction of State Routes (SR) 52 and 109 provided critical transportation links, further integrating Portland into the regional economy. While farming remained a significant industry, the city also saw growth in manufacturing, retail, and service sectors. The city proved its resilience as its downtown rebounded from three major fires in its early years and a train wreck in the 1920s. By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Portland’s strategic location along Interstate 65 made it an attractive destination for businesses and new residents seeking a balance between small-town living and access to urban job centers like Nashville.

Today, Portland continues to experience steady growth, with a population that has expanded significantly over the past few decades. This growth presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in managing infrastructure, housing, economic development, and public services. As the city evolves, it remains committed to preserving its identity while embracing the demands of the future.

The following aerial images depict the city from above in 1960, 1980, and 2020.

**Figure 1. Portland Aerial, 1960**



**1960 U.S. Census, Citywide Population of 2,424 people**

**Figure 2. Portland Aerial, 1980**



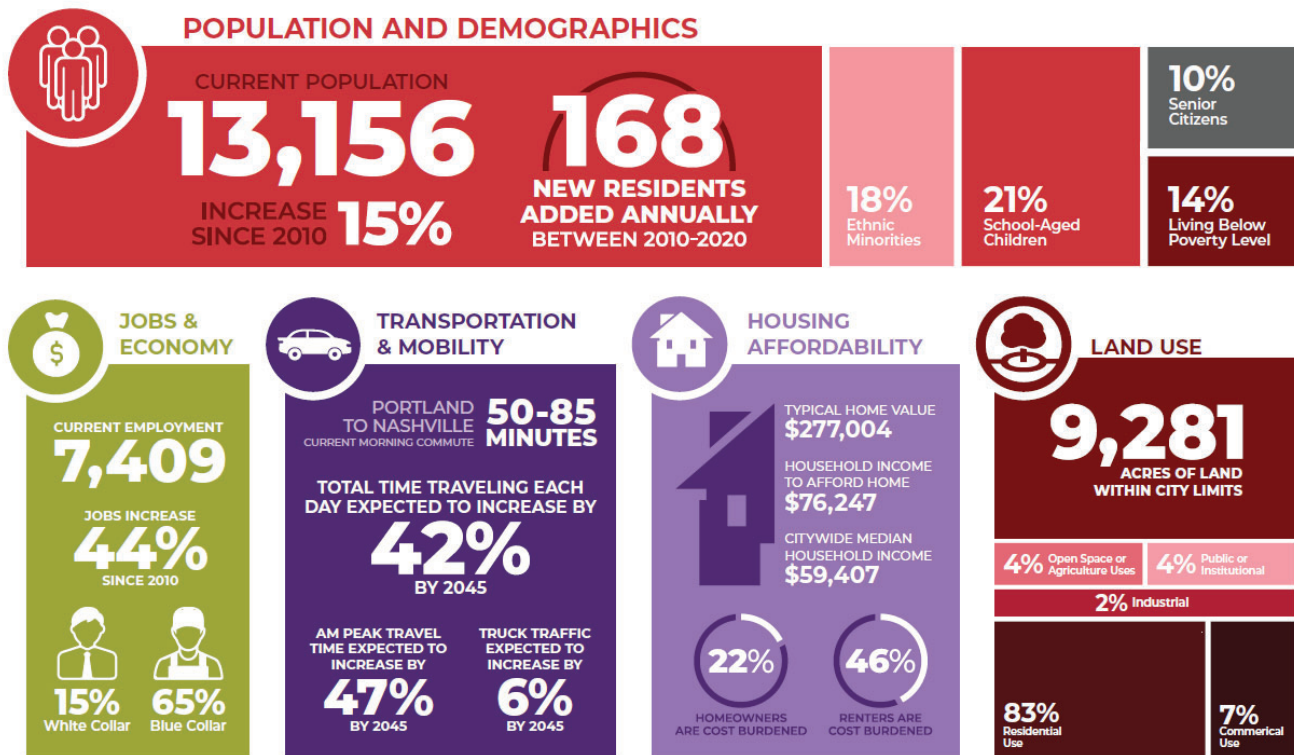
**1980 U.S. Census - Citywide Population of 4,030 people**

**Figure 3. Portland Aerial, 2020**



**2020 U.S. Census - Citywide Population of 13,156 people**

# Community Profile



## Population and Demographics

Portland’s population has grown steadily over the past two decades, mirroring broader demographic trends in Middle Tennessee. Since 2010, the city’s population has increased by 15%, with an average of 168 new residents added each year between 2010 and 2020.

Between 2000 and 2020, the city’s minority population tripled, increasing from 6% to 18%, with the Hispanic population rising nearly 400% during the same period. This shift has been accompanied by a steady increase in foreign-born residents, now representing 4.7% of the population. Approximately 8% of Portland residents speak a language other than English, further highlighting the city’s growing cultural diversity. Alongside these changes, the city’s population is aging, with the 60+ population expected to rise by nearly 30% in the coming years. These evolving demographic patterns underscore the need for inclusive policies and strategic investments to ensure that Portland’s future growth is equitable and sustainable.

## Economy and Workforce

Portland’s economy is heavily influenced by the trade, transportation and utilities, and manufacturing sectors, with half of the city’s workforce employed in goods-producing industries. Unipres U.S.A. Inc., a prominent metal stamping operation in Portland, is one of Sumner County’s top employers, with approximately 500 employees. Despite strength in manufacturing, most of Portland’s workforce, over 75%, commute outside the city for employment. That workforce is split, with roughly 40% of residents working elsewhere in Sumner County and nearly 30% commuting to Davidson County. These residents are primarily employed in service industries such as retail, healthcare, and administrative services. Only 11% of Portland’s workforce is employed in local

service industries, highlighting the city’s reliance on neighboring communities for white-collar employment opportunities.

Many community participants in Portland noted that job availability in the region significantly contributes to their high quality of life. However, some expressed a need for higher-paying job opportunities in technology and more job diversity with an interest in expanding hospitality, retail, and healthcare opportunities.

Educational attainment in Portland has improved significantly over the past two decades. As of 2021, more than 85% of residents have earned at least a high school diploma, up from 68% in 2000. Post-secondary education plays a critical role in improving economic outcomes, with higher levels of attainment linked to increased wages and lower unemployment rates. Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) contributes to the city’s workforce pipeline, mainly through its highly regarded Welding Technology program, which supports the local manufacturing industry. Nearby institutions like Volunteer State Community College and colleges in Davidson County offer broader educational opportunities, helping residents pursue careers in a wider range of industries.

Between 2018 and 2021, Portland’s workforce saw median annual earnings of \$32,000, rising to \$40,000 for full-time workers. While wages in Portland have increased by 25% during this period to be on par with Sumner County earnings, service-providing industries in the county lag behind those in the rest of the county. However, Portland’s economic outlook is promising, with employment projected to grow by 47% between 2020 and 2045, adding more than 5,600 new jobs. This statistic supports the community’s top priority (95%): economic sustainability.

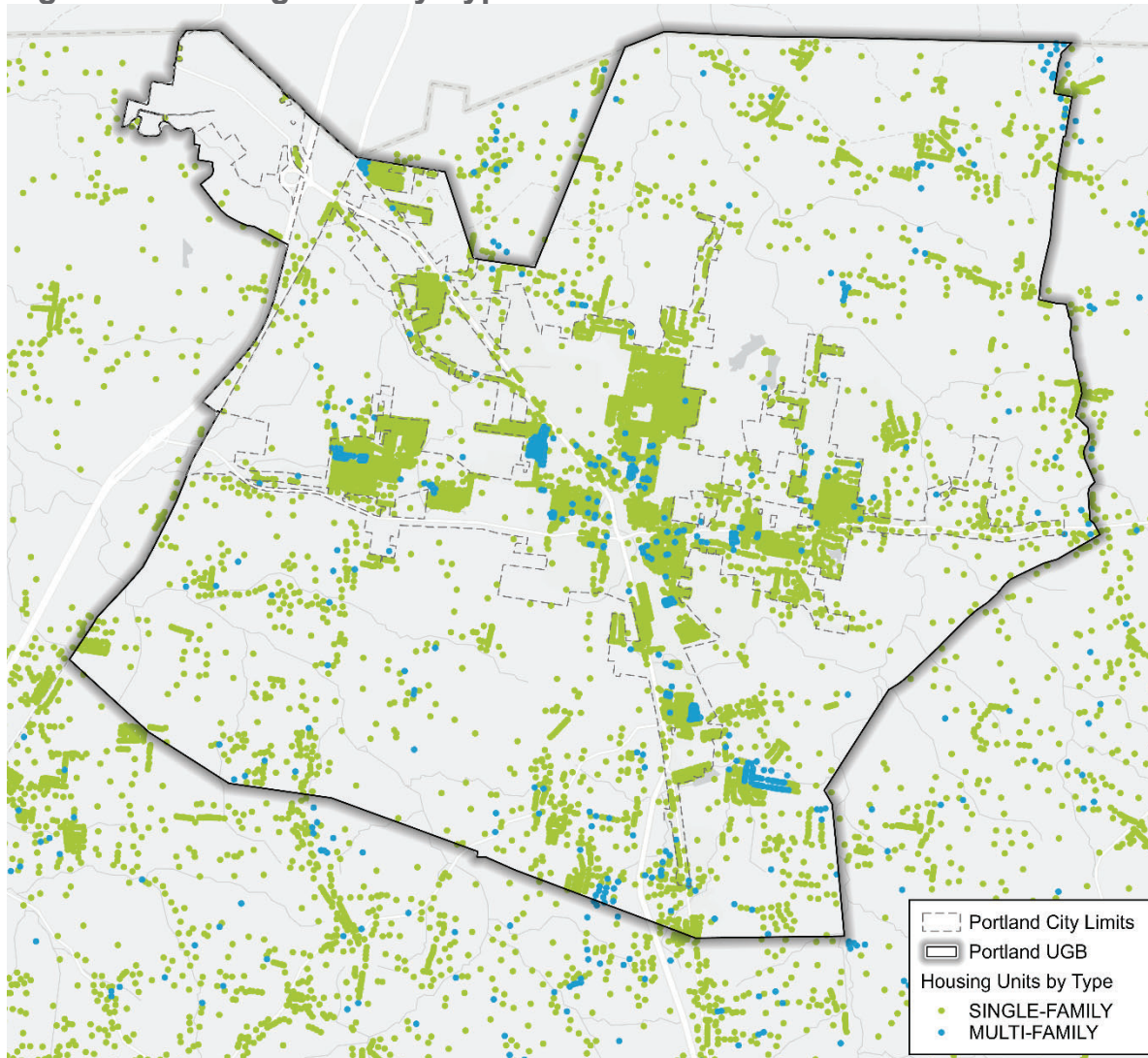
## Housing

Understanding housing needs and trends is important for guiding city growth and ensuring stability for residents. In Portland, the majority of homes are single-family, but in 2021, half of the issued permits were for multifamily units. About 30% of the city’s housing stock was built after 2000, with the median construction year being 1993. Homeownership in Portland dropped from 67% in 2010 to 61% in 2021, and the city has one of the highest renter rates in Sumner County, with roughly 39% of residents being renters. The decline in homeownership presents an opportunity for the rental market, especially for younger individuals and older generations seeking low-maintenance living. This decline is backed up by community participants who feel various housing types would improve the City of Portland; however, key stakeholders note that the increase in housing development could further strain the current infrastructure backlog.

Although Portland’s housing costs are the lowest in Sumner County, at 21% of income, many residents are cost-burdened. Twenty-two percent of homeowners and 46% of renters are cost-burdened, meaning they spend 30% or more of their income on housing. Over 43% of community survey participants are concerned about housing affordability, or accessibility.

Over the past 20 years, Portland’s median household income (MHI) has risen by over \$23,000. In 2000, the MHI was \$36,105, and by 2021 it had increased to \$59,407. Today, 44% of households earn under \$50,000 per year, 36% earn between \$50k-\$100k, and 20% earn over \$100k. In 2021, 14% of Portland’s population lived below the poverty level, a significant increase from 2000, when this figure was much lower. This marks a doubling of the impoverished population over the past two decades. In Portland, 32% of those below the poverty line are under 18, despite children making up only 27% of the total population. Notably, poverty disproportionately affects minority populations in Portland.

**Figure 4. Housing Units by Type**



## Transportation

Portland’s transportation and utility infrastructure faces growing demands as development outpaces capacity. About 20,000 vehicles, including 2,000 freight trucks, travel daily on SR-109 and Main Street. To ease traffic, construction of the SR-109 bypass will begin in 2025 for the northern segment and 2031 for the southern segment. This bypass will divert traffic from downtown, improve safety, and create an opportunity to transform downtown into a more pedestrian-friendly destination, similar to Gallatin’s successful downtown revitalization.

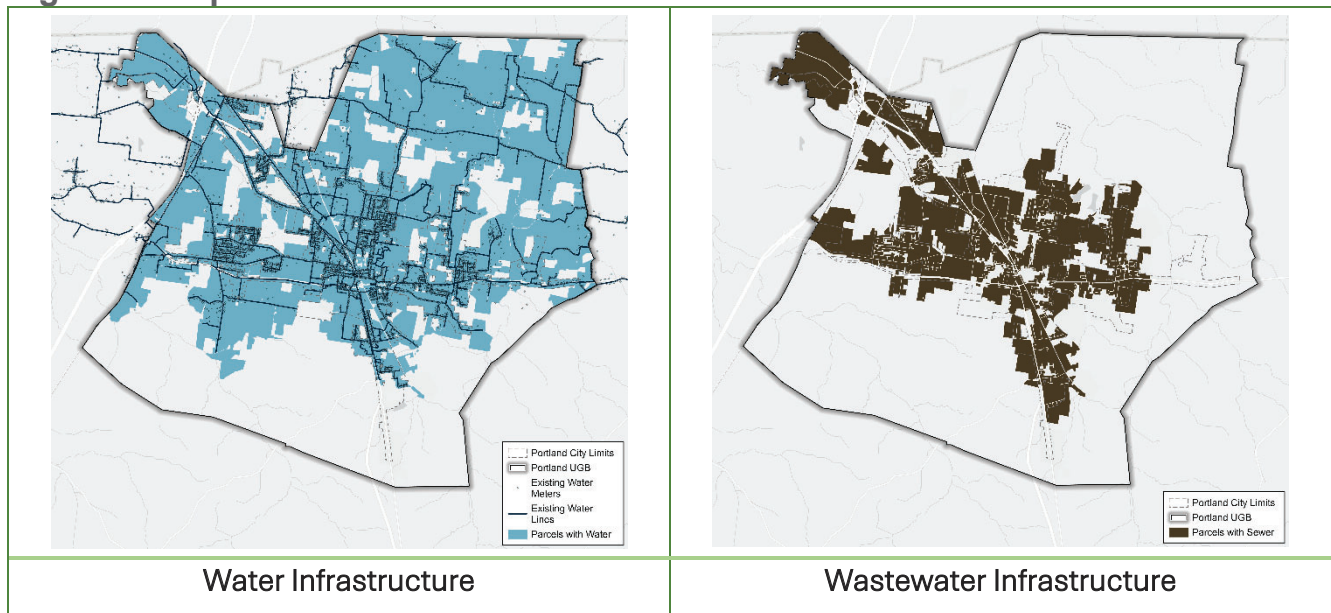
Mobility challenges in Portland also include limited sidewalks, misaligned street connections, and the lack of public transit. With no local public transit service, the nearest fixed-route public transportation option is the Regional Transportation Authority Express Bus 87, with park-and-ride stops in Gallatin and Hendersonville. On-demand public transportation service, provided by Mid Cumberland Human Resource Agency, is available in the city. Community sentiment is that alternative modes of transportation would make Portland better since they identified the lack of transit and sidewalk connections as contributing factors to a poor quality of life. Overall, they want infrastructure to catch up with development.

## Water and Wastewater Utilities

The city’s water supply, sourced from West Forks Drake Creek, with Portland City Lake serving as a backup during drought conditions, is the only municipal water utility in Sumner County not connected to the Cumberland River. The city maintains over 265 miles of underground water lines, eight storage tanks, and approximately 6,725 customers on its public water system. During recent droughts, the city has considered implementing water restrictions due to limited supply. The city’s Grade 4 Water Treatment facility can process up to 3 million gallons of water per day, and efforts are underway to explore connections with other municipal and utility providers to expand supply. Several governmental leaders, the Steering Committee, and community participants identified water capacity as a key issue or challenge to Portland’s ability to grow responsibly.

Portland’s sewer infrastructure also faces capacity challenges, particularly in areas experiencing high demand. The city maintains over 100 miles of sewer lines and provides service to approximately 3,750 customers. Adequate sewer infrastructure enables higher-density development and mitigates potential health and environmental risks. Middle Tennessee’s karst topography and clay-heavy soils often limit the viability of private septic systems, making public sewer access essential for supporting urban growth. Additionally, stakeholders and community participants supported expanding and improving sewer services to help support sustainable growth.

**Figure 5. Map of Water and Wastewater Utilities**



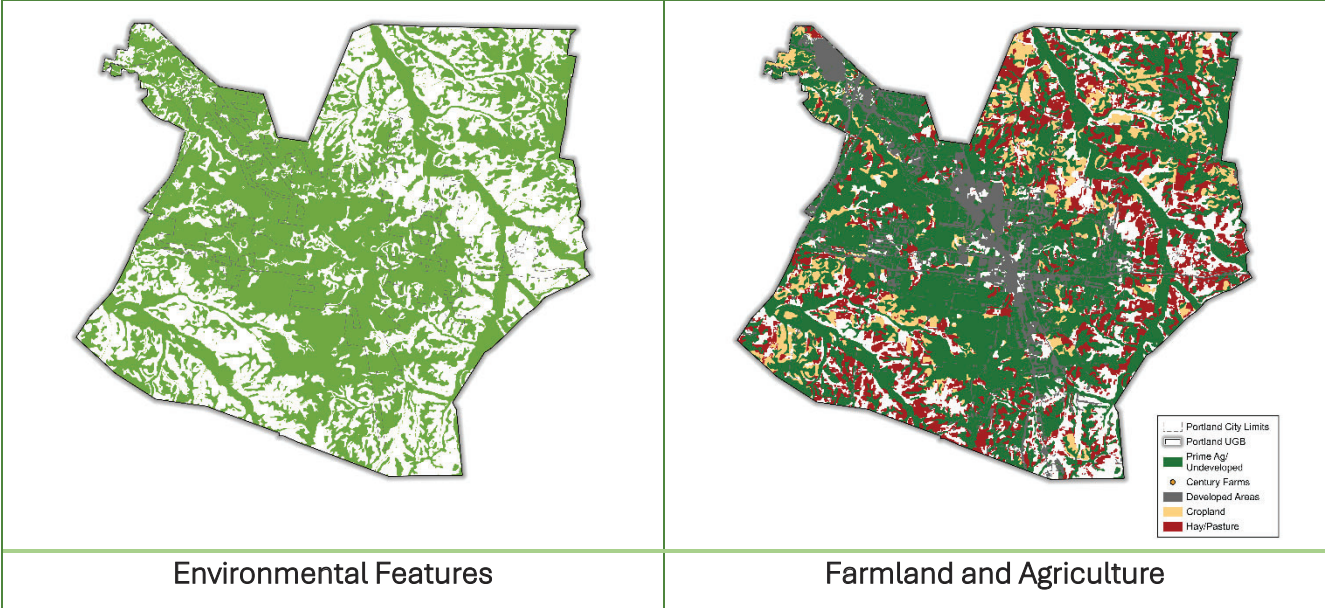
## Land and Natural Resources

Currently, about 40% of Sumner County’s land is devoted to agriculture, based on National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD). Since 1971, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has utilized Landsat imagery to create the Cropland Data Layer (CDL) which provides crop-specific land cover information at a 30-meter resolution. The CDL is aligned with year of harvest but is more representative of what was planted, as a percentage of fields in a given year may not be harvested. The latest CDL from 2021 shows that the most prevalent “crop” in Sumner County is pasture/grassland for livestock, totaling 99,330 acres or about 29% of the County’s total area. This is true in Portland as well, where pasture/grassland makes up 26% of the city’s total area.

In Portland, there are 0.5 square miles of 100-year floodplain intersecting 358 properties. Community members noted the importance of preserving open space to prevent the environmental flooding issue. As a result, government leaders and community participants identified preservation as a high priority and goal to maintain the small town feel and to protect the natural resources and agricultural practices.

The following maps present a visual of the Portland areas environmental assets, farmland, and agricultural area.

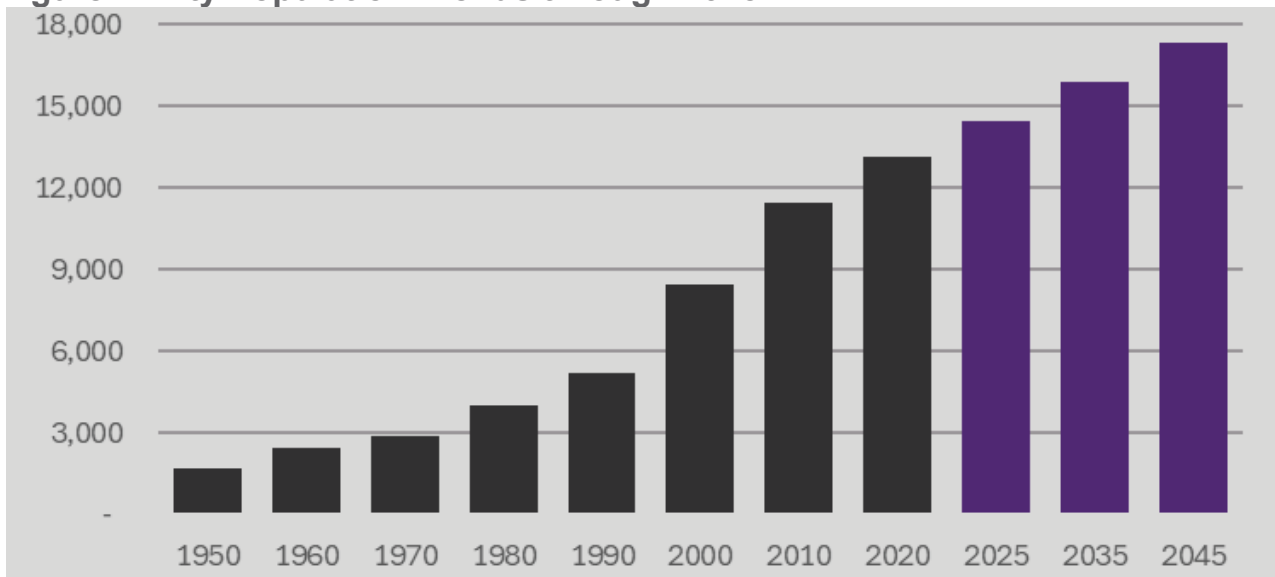
**Figure 6. Map of Environmental Features and Farmland**



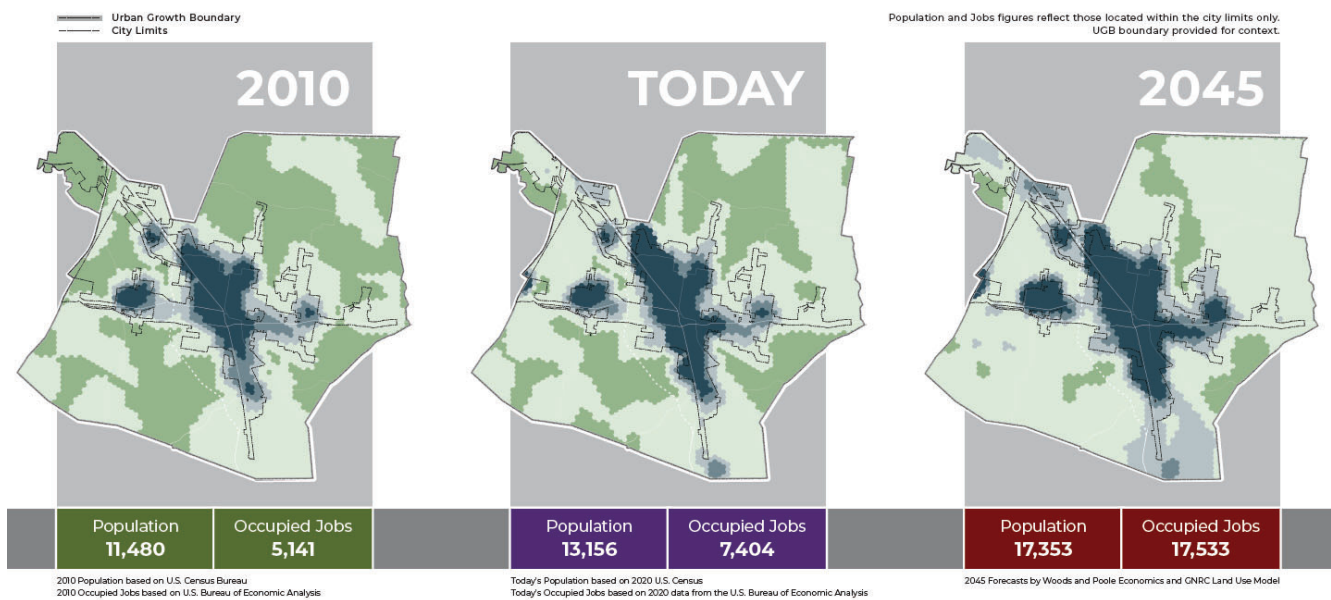
# Growth Outlook

Portland is growing. Its population is projected to reach 16,000 by 2035, an increase of nearly 22% from 2020, and to more than 17,000 by 2045. The rapid pace experienced in recent years is projected to continue as the city grows. Area employment is on the rise too and is anticipated to double by 2045. In addition, a considerable number of people are expected to locate within the existing UGB, potentially becoming residents of Portland as the city expands its municipal boundary and infrastructure over the next several years.

**Figure 7. City Population Trends through 2045**



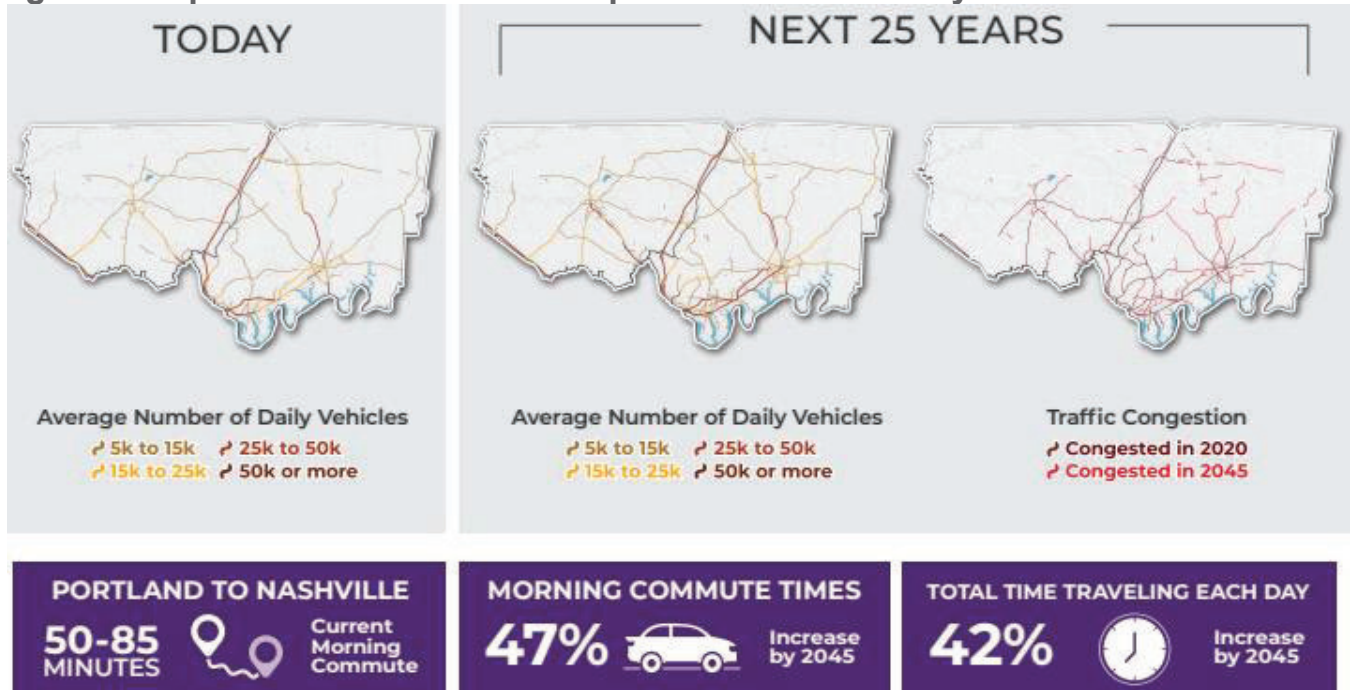
**Figure 8. City Development Pattern, 2010 to 2045**



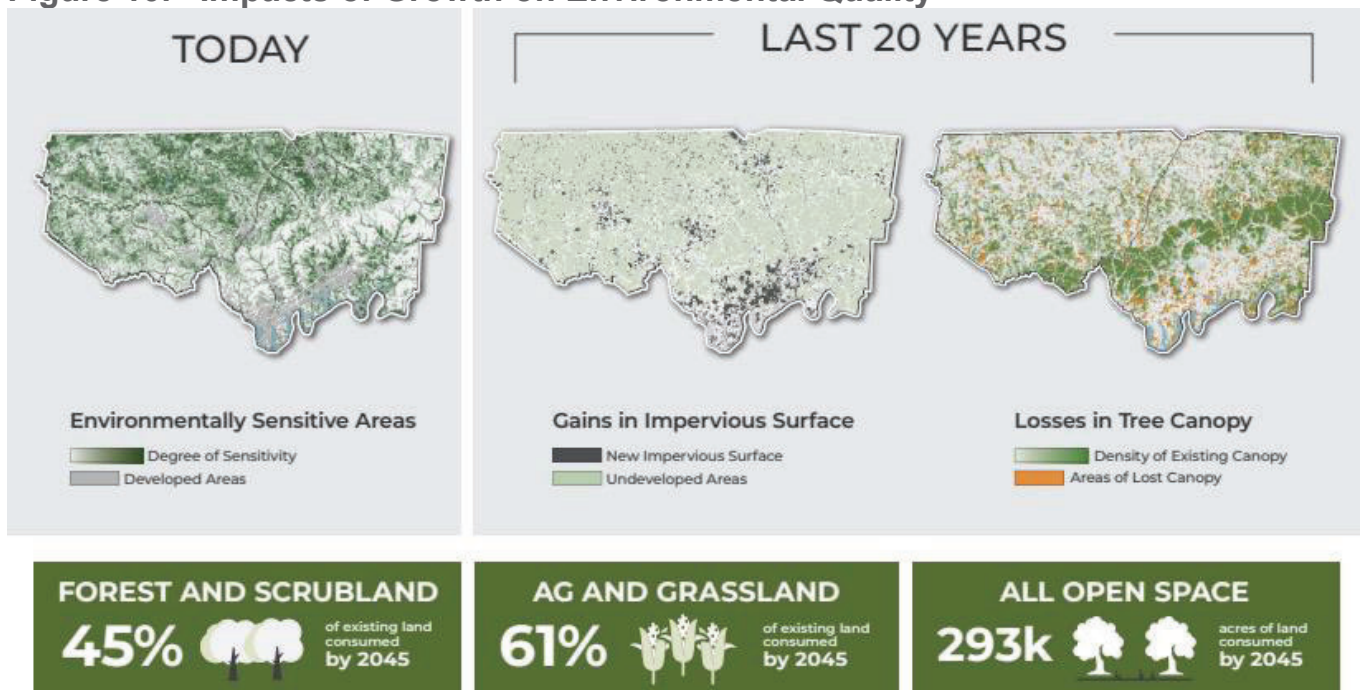
## Implications of Change

The projected growth over the coming decades will have a significant impact on the city and its neighboring communities and require strategies and policies that will help community leadership guide its decision-making. The following figure illustrates significant impacts to the area’s transportation system and natural environment as a result of the recent and projected trends.

**Figure 9. Impacts of Growth on Transportation and Mobility**



**Figure 10. Impacts of Growth on Environmental Quality**



## Considering the Trade-Offs of How the City Grows

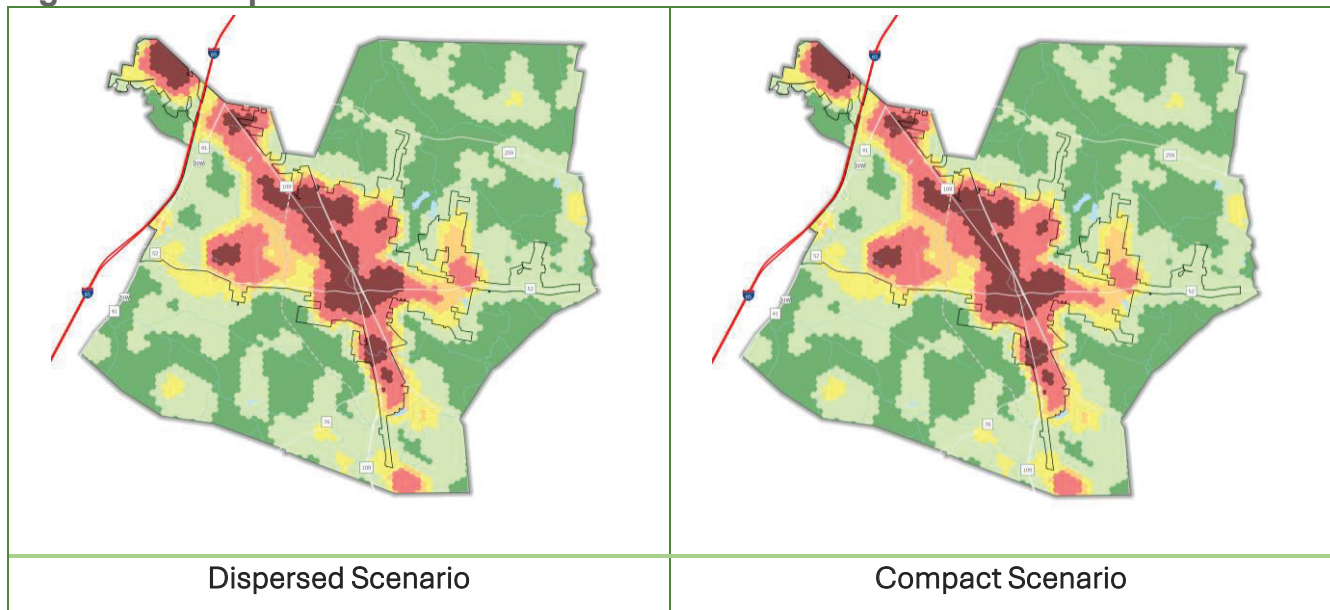
How and where will we grow? Those are important questions to answer. If population trends and development patterns continue, Portland will likely see over 4,000 new residents in the city limits and over 5,000 new residents in the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). This could equate to more than 4,500 new households by 2045.

Through the *Preserving Portland* process, community members and stakeholders had the opportunity to evaluate the impacts of future growth and development ahead of time by participating in scenario planning- a tool to facilitate discussions about the trade-offs associated with different growth strategies.

Three scenarios were developed based on population and employment projections to help the Portland community understand and identify an alternative growth pattern. All three scenarios assumed the same population and employment growth. The difference was in how and where to grow.

During the workshops, participants were invited to provide feedback on two scenarios – a sprawling growth pattern or “dispersed scenario” and a “compact scenario” that anticipates development in a denser growth pattern. Although no single strategy is perfect, policy decisions can significantly influence the impacts of growth by incorporating lessons learned from modeling various future development scenarios. This approach allows for more informed decision-making and helps to mitigate the potential negative effects of rapid growth.









**Figure 11. Map of Environmental Features and Farmland**



Although it is possible for either of the two alternatives to become reality given the right set of circumstances, they are intended to represent hypothetical outcomes for comparative purposes only. Residents and community leadership were invited to study the scenarios to become familiar with the relationship that exists between development patterns and several performance measures that are often used to assess quality of life.

When compared, the more compact development pattern improves the expected impacts of growth and development as compared to the trend, and a notable amount of agricultural land would be saved.

**Figure 12. Scenario Planning Scorecard**

Measure of Success	Trending Scenario	More Dispersed	More Compact
Roadway Demand 	51% higher	3% worse	12% better
Flooding Risks 	87% higher	13% worse	7% better
Agricultural Land 	68% lost	About the same	33% better
Other Open Space 	84% lost	1% worse	40% better
Fiscal Impacts – Infrastructure Costs vs. Tax Revenue 		-	+
Opportunities for Transit and Walkability 		-	+
Opportunities for Larger Yards 		+	-
Access to Parks and Amenities 		-	+

# Chapter 3. Community Aspirations

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## Priority Issues

*Preserving Portland* is a plan that voices the community’s hope for the city’s future. Throughout the planning process, community members recognized that the city would continue to grow but expressed a desire to manage that growth to minimize any unintended consequences of rapid growth and development. The plan’s vision and goals define this hope, and a growth framework was created to guide new and future development. The vision, goals, and growth framework inform the proposed objectives and actions for mid- and short-term decisions and investments by the city and partners. The growth framework is the guide for developing differently in the future and as proposals are submitted to the city.

### Key Issues from Community Outreach

The infographic consists of six vertical panels, each with a circular image at the top and text below. The panels are: 1. **Appreciate Uniqueness** (purple background, image of a woman with a red strawberry mascot): Portland should create plans that guide future development to both enhance and preserve existing community character. 2. **Coordinated Planning** (purple background, image of a building): Portland should ensure future developments align with and complement the planning efforts of adjacent municipalities and the region. 3. **Economic Sustainability** (red background, image of a street scene): Portland should strengthen its economic stability by creating plans that make the most of its local resources and assets. 4. **Improve Accessibility** (red background, image of a house): Portland should explore housing and transportation options to be accessible for all residents and visitors. 5. **Proactive Investments** (dark grey background, image of a road construction machine): Portland should invest in improving infrastructure and services, such as transportation, public safety, social services, and cultural preservation, to accommodate the community's growing needs. 6. **Environmental Impact** (green background, image of people in a forest): Portland should use resources responsibly to meet current needs without harming the natural environment and ecosystems, ensuring the well-being of future generations.

### Key Issues from Planning Analysis

**Development is exceeding the city’s water supply capacity.** The city’s water supply is sourced from West Forks Drake Creek and Portland City Lake as a backup in drought conditions. It is the only municipal water utility in Sumner County that is not connected to the Cumberland River. The city has over 265 miles of underground water lines, 8 water storage tanks, and approximately 6,725 customers connected to the city’s public water system. In recent droughts, the city has considered enacting water restrictions because of limited water supply. The Water Treatment facility is a Grade 4 facility equipped to process 3 million gallons of water per day. The city is investigating options for increasing its water supply through connections to other municipal and utility providers.

**In some areas of the city, sewer infrastructure is undersized for the demand.** The city maintains wastewater treatment infrastructure to provide sewer utilities to customers and residents in the city limits. The Sewer Collection department maintains over 100 miles of sewer lines and has approximately 3,750 customers connected to the public sewer system. Public sewers are

important for urban density development because the utility removes the need for on-site treatment thus allowing for small lot size and higher density development. Public sewer also reduces the potential for health hazards and ground and surface water contamination. Especially in Middle Tennessee, the karst topography and clay, and other non-percolation type soils, can significantly restrict the viability of private septic systems.

**New developments are locating on roads that were not designed for high volume of traffic, some of these are essentially old farm roads.** Portland’s street department maintains all the city-owned streets and roads within the city limits. The interstates and state routes are primarily the responsibility of the Tennessee Department of Transportation. A major thoroughfare plan with a planned street typology will help prioritize investments by street function and assist in the planning for future road connections and needed right-of-way. And with a connected, efficient transportation network the city can continue to attract new businesses and create jobs and tax revenue.

**Less than a quarter of Portland’s workforce lives and works in the city.** Over 75% of Portland’s working residents (the workforce) commute outside of Portland for their job. 40% of the workforce is employed in Sumner County, while almost 30% commute to Davidson County.

Half of the workforce that both live and work in Portland are employed in goods-producing industries, primarily manufacturing. In fact, Portland boasts one of Sumner County’s top employers, Unipres U.S.A. Inc., a metal stamping operation, with approximately 500 employees. 25% of the workforce that live and work in Portland work in trade, transportation and utilities, and only 11% work in service industries, which includes most white-collar jobs. These service-providing workers are typically commuting elsewhere in Sumner County or to Davidson County. So, while Portland is strong in the manufacturing industry with in-commuters and a location quotient of 5.03, there are many residents that are traveling to find economic opportunity through other types of employment.

The annual transportation cost for a typical family in Portland is 29%. Transportation costs are considered a burden if they account for more than 15% of a household’s income. This adds additional costs to their household budget reducing their flexible spending on other goods and services. More diversity in local employment could result in a lower out-commute rate that helps to ease transportation burden on the workforce and increase economic activity in Portland.

**Educational attainment has risen in Portland with more than 85% of the city’s population having at least a high school diploma or equivalent in 2021.** The share of population with less than high school level attainment has decreased from 32% in 2000 to 15% at present. Higher levels of attainment are associated with higher wages. Studies have shown that education beyond a high school diploma is critical to advancing beyond low-wage jobs and that those with only a high school diploma have a higher rate of unemployment and lower earnings than their counterparts with more education.

Education prepares the population with knowledge, experience, and critical thinking skills that not only enrich their lives but also craft the workforce pipeline and economic ecosystem. Locally, TCAT Portland had 14% of total TCAT Nashville enrollment for 2022-2023 with 200 students enrolled. This impressive Welding Technology program directly feeds into Portland’s strongest industry, manufacturing. While this is the primary institution in Portland itself, nearby Volunteer State Community College and the various institutions in Davidson County offer more diverse educational opportunities for Portland residents.

**Higher-paying jobs were an important community issue identified during the planning process.**

According to the Census Bureau, the Portland workforce saw median earnings of \$32,000 during the period between 2018 and 2021. Those that were working full-time appreciated higher median earnings at \$40,000. More frequently produced annual data from the Bureau of Labor statistics shows that over this same period, the wages for jobs in Portland increased by 25%, mirroring the increase of Sumner County. While average wages per worker in 2021 were relatively consistent with the rest of the county, wages for service-providing industry workers were lower than those in the rest of the county. This includes both service industry and most white-collar employment.

**Portland is projected to have a robust outlook of 47% employment growth between 2020 and 2045.**

By 2045, employment is projected to be over 17,500, a net increase of more than 5,600 jobs from 2025.

**The average daily trips on SR-109 and Main Street for all vehicles in both directions are about 20,000. The average daily number of trips by freight vehicles at that intersection is approximately 2,000 trips.** SR-109 was upgraded to address the cancelled I-840 Northeast connection. This routed more traffic on SR-109 which has significant negative impacts on downtown. A bypass for SR-109 around downtown is expected to be completed in two phases, the north segment (phase 1) is scheduled for construction in TDOT's fiscal year 2025, with the south segment (phase 2) scheduled for construction in fiscal year 2031. The bypass is designed as a partial access-controlled facility intended to divert many through trips to reduce traffic volumes going through the heart of downtown and improve safety in downtown. Now is the time to reimagine downtown, and plan to reclaim space from vehicles. Similar to the City of Gallatin when their bypass was completed. While this is good for reducing traffic downtown and taking back space from vehicles, care should be taken to ensure that downtown is invested in and is not competing against similar activity centers.

**Investing in a Main Street Programs can help preserve the city's historic character and small-town charm.** With the SR-109 bypass expected to reduce heavy freight traffic, downtown has a prime opportunity to reimagine itself as a pedestrian-friendly, business-friendly destination. Strategic investments in infrastructure, public spaces, and local businesses will create a more inviting and inclusive environment and generate long-term economic growth for the city by increasing foot traffic, supporting local entrepreneurs, and strengthening connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

**Over 80% of residential construction has been single-family homes since 2000 with an average home value of \$313,581 according to Zillow in 2024.** Diversity of housing stock is important for providing housing options for different incomes, needs, and lifestyles. Limited housing choices may cause struggles for existing residents and those wanting to move to Portland to find suitable housing that fits their needs and budget. Stable, affordable housing is vital for individuals and communities. Housing is considered affordable when a household spends no more than 30% of its income on housing, those who spend more are considered cost burdened. About 22% of homeowners and 46% of renters were considered cost-burdened in 2021. Safe, affordable housing helps build wealth, improves individual health, and can enhance economic growth.

**Cropland is threatened by growth and development.** Rural character and agriculture were important aspects identified by the community. Portland's history and association with strawberries is a major component of the city and community's identity. In addition to its agricultural heritage, Portland has cultural and social components of its identity. There are three

historic structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Moye Boarding House, Parkers Chapel Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery, and Scattersville Public School.

**Portland is becoming a more diverse community with approximately 18% of its community identified as a minority in 2020, up from 6% of the population in 2000.** With this increased diversity more people in Portland speak a language other than English and more may have been born in a different county. An important characteristic voiced during the process is the community’s welcoming and friendly atmosphere. A culturally diverse city can be incredibly valuable with a diverse workforce, different perspectives and ideas to innovate, and foster a better understanding of different cultures and cuisines. The city can support diversity with services and programs offered in multiple languages, and through inclusive and adaptive design and facilities and paying attention to where public investments are prioritized and through land use approvals to be fair and share the burden.

**Portland has three City Parks with over 240 acres of recreational options and 1.86 miles of trails.** The 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified park improvement priorities (Richland Park, Meadowbrook Park, and Dogwood Hills Municipal Golf Course) and future considerations for parks, wayfinding, community centers, and trail systems. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a typical ratio is one park for every 2,386 residents, or about 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. There are different types of parks – neighborhood parks, city parks, specialized recreational facilities, greenways and blueways, and state and federal parks or preserves. This plan presents potential opportunities for future parks and greenways or blueways for the community to consider.

**Public safety and protection of environmentally sensitive areas are important to reduce the risk of harm to people and the environment while potentially lowering the cost of government and reducing property damage from natural hazards.** The Congressional Budget Office estimated that damage from flooding in the U.S. has averaged \$46 billion per year (in 2023 dollars). Reducing property damage and risk to critical infrastructure due to flooding and other natural hazards can be achieved through regulations and building codes while protecting community assets that are valuable from both an aesthetic perspective as well as financially.

## Vision and Goals

A community’s vision statement should be future-oriented and aspirational. It should be based on community voices and highlight what matters most now and in the future. It should inspire the city and challenge it to be innovative and responsive. The planning process illuminated the characteristics and values of the community that led to the plan’s vision statement.

The Community’s vision is supported by Goals, Objectives, and Actions that form the decision-making framework. The framework also includes a growth framework for a new development pattern comprised of activity centers/hubs and key corridors, further defined by place types.

It is often difficult to predict the future, and it is challenging to plan for it. City staff, elected officials, appointed boards, and other community organizations and leaders will need to make decisions in the future about things we haven’t anticipated today. Portland leaders and staff will likely make hundreds of unanticipated decisions in the future. Together, the vision, goals, and growth framework provide direction and guidance for the city’s future and help it achieve consistency through everyday decisions.

<p><b>Vision Statement</b></p>	<p><i>“Portland will be a vibrant rural community that honors its small-town charm and heritage, fosters economic opportunity, and ensures a safe, livable, and enjoyable city for all.”</i></p>
<p><b>Goal 1. Align Infrastructure Improvements with Planned Development</b></p>	<p>Expand transportation options and improve public utilities to meet the needs of today’s residents and businesses and manage growth by prioritizing future extensions to areas planned for new housing and economic development.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2. Foster a Resilient and Thriving Local Economy</b></p>	<p>Create a business-friendly environment by improving access to local retail, identifying areas for the expansion of job centers across a range of industries, and supporting programs that connect local talent to training and high paying jobs.</p>
<p><b>Goal 3. Strengthen the Character and Vitality of Downtown</b></p>	<p>Reinvigorate downtown as a center of commerce and community gatherings by leveraging its historic charm to develop a safe and walkable destination with aesthetic appeal.</p>
<p><b>Goal 4. Support and Enhance Quality of Life</b></p>	<p>Create a welcoming and affordable community for all residents by expanding housing choice, offering high quality public spaces and amenities, and protecting the surrounding area’s cultural, agricultural, and natural resources.</p>

## Objectives and Actions

### Goal 1. Align Infrastructure Improvements with Planned Development

Providing modern infrastructure-transportation networks, water and sewer, internet, electricity, and gas – utilities, and services to Portland residents and businesses helps ensure a high quality of life and retains and attracts new businesses. Strategies for maintaining the existing infrastructure and improving them will rely on the city and other organizations that provide these services.

Managing growth and practicing best management practices will help ensure adequate access to resources. Specific challenges for the city include water supply and system capacity, sewer system capacity, and farming roads that now serve a greater demand and volume of traffic than intended.

Developing a transportation system that prioritizes safety, reliability, and resilience for all modes of transportation is important to residents, businesses, and others who travel to or through the city. A well-designed and reliable transportation system improves daily commutes, reduces the risk of crashes, and ensures access to essential services and employment for residents. For businesses,

an efficient and reliable transportation system supports economic growth through the movement of goods, services, and employees and customers. By investing in a transportation system that prioritizes these elements, the city can foster a safer, more accessible, and more thriving community and economy.

### **Objective 1.1. Connect the City with a safe, reliable, and resilient multi-modal transportation system.**

- **Action 1.1.1.** Establish a transportation network that connects areas of the city to one another, emphasizing east-west routes, and an eastern north-south route, promoting safe and efficient, redundant travel.
- **Action 1.1.2.** Promote walkability and bikability where feasible and make connections with greenways and trails.
- **Action 1.1.3.** Promote denser, mixed-use development that is supportive of alternative modes of transportation.
- **Action 1.1.4.** Develop a maintainable funding mechanism for transportation infrastructure and maintenance.

### **Objective 1.2. Coordinate growth management policies with utility and infrastructure improvement and expansion plans.**

- **Action 1.2.1:** Ensure adequate provision of utilities to manage growth and development.
- **Action 1.2.3:** Prioritize public investment in utilities and infrastructure in areas that are identified for growth in this plan.
- **Action 1.2.4:** Invest in capacity building infrastructure and partnerships.
- **Action 1.2.4:** Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.

### **Objective 1.3. To reduce demand for utilities and extend capacity limitations, promote resiliency and efficiency for public infrastructure and buildings as well as private new buildings and redevelopment, such as LEED Certification or other green-building programs.**

- **Action 1.3.1.** Build and maintain new public infrastructure and buildings to high energy efficiency standards.
- **Action 1.3.2.** Offer incentives for developments that promote energy efficiency and water savings within structures as well as in the landscape.

## **Goal 2. Foster a Resilient and Thriving Local Economy**

The city has an interest in increasing employment and expanding business opportunities. With this goal in mind, it is necessary to break this down into creating a supportive business climate, aligning workforce development with employer needs, focusing on high-wage jobs with upward mobility, and cultivating a quality of life that draws new people and companies in and retains homegrown talent.

## **Objective 2.1. Cultivate a Business-Friendly Environment**

- **Action 2.1.1.** Support programming from the local Chamber of Commerce and Forward Sumner to encourage an active, cohesive, and supportive business community
- **Action 2.1.2.** Streamline regulatory processes for business expansion
- **Action 2.1.3.** Incentivize companies that are creating good jobs (growth potential and pay more than the median area wage of \$56,307 - 2024Q2 4Q Moving Average)
- **Action 2.1.4.** Create a small business/entrepreneur's incubator where business owners can meet to share resources and solutions.

## **Objective 2.2. Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce.**

- **Action 2.2.1.** Work with TCAT Nashville Portland, Northern Middle Workforce Board, Forward Sumner, and the Portland Chamber of Commerce to align program offerings with industry needs.

## **Objective 2.3. Comprehensive Strategy to Retain Talent**

- **Action 2.3.1.** A comprehensive approach to retaining Portland's talent after graduation means TCAT offerings that are aligned with good jobs, an attractive quality of life and cost of living (see Quality of Life section), and a variety of economic opportunities for the workforce.

## **Objective 2.4. Support existing business districts and corridors and encourage new development of non-residential districts along mixed-use corridors and in centers that build on existing assets and serve the needs of residents.**

- **Action 2.4.1.** Promote clusters of non-residential uses and businesses by focusing public resources and regulatory policies toward built environment needs and supporting infrastructure.
- **Action 2.4.2.** Support institutions and partners that contribute to the vitality of commercial and mixed-use corridors and centers, such as local business associations, arts venues, and cultural organizations.

## **Goal 3. Strengthen the Character and Vitality of Downtown**

Downtown has endured heavy traffic, especially freight traffic, that travels on SR-109 through the heart of Portland. SR-109 serves as a connection between I65 and I40 bypassing Nashville which makes the route favorable to freight to avoid Nashville congestion and delays. The proposed SR-109 bypass should alleviate most of the pass-through traffic, especially the freight traffic, and provide the opportunity to reclaim downtown Portland to be more pedestrian friendly and business-friendly. This is a great opportunity to reimagine downtown and there's work to be done to realize the full potential. It will take the efforts of the city and local stakeholders and partners working together to leverage this opportunity and with a continuing commitment to making downtown a vibrant center that residents and businesses want it to be.

With the SR-109 bypass, downtown has an opportunity to reimagine and redesign itself. It's important to start planning and designing for that now and identifying public investments to leverage and maximize private investment. Focusing investment to Main Street (between 109 and N. Russell) and along SR-109/Ronnie McDowell Pkwy will help lay the foundation for reimagining

downtown. These major connections should be the priority with sufficient pedestrian infrastructure which will be an important factor for a viable downtown.

The feel and character of downtown can make a difference in whether a business invests and locates there. This plan is based on the Place Type approach and creating a sense of place that will generate investment and interest in downtown. Streets and sidewalks play a pivotal role in creating this sense of place for downtown while connecting adjacent neighborhoods and the public parks. The city's commitment to improve vehicular and pedestrian movements will help determine downtown's future.

Main Street should showcase Portland's commitment to creating great streets and places. It will require the best elements. These elements may be street trees, permanent or temporary furnishings, wayfinding, pedestrian lighting, and branding.

Rightsizing SR-109 to a downtown street may require reallocating space from vehicles to pedestrians. Through the master streetscape plan, Portland should consider what is necessary for the number and width of lanes and reallocate space to pedestrian and bike facilities, and space for public amenities.

Everyone has a stake in downtown, with varying interests and degrees. Most successful downtowns have an organization committed to the efforts and interest in downtown. Reimagining and investing in downtown Portland will take resources and combinations of public and private time and money. The city should investigate financial tools and incentives to support downtown development/improvement activities. Streetscape, wayfinding, and other public amenities.

The practice of Placemaking by actively shaping the physical space to cultivate a distinct identity and location is important to downtown. Place branding is far more than a city's physical characteristics; it's an approach to managing the place and shaping both the reality and perception. Combining placemaking and place branding will help reinforce the city's identity, and shape people's perception and experience of the city.

Strong brands translate a city's identity, values, and narrative into a tangible experience. Well-designed public spaces can become tangible expressions of Portland's brand. The strawberry is identifiable for the city.

### **Objective 3.1. Focus public and private investment along Main Street and Ronnie McDowell Pkwy (SR-109).**

- **Action 3.1.1.** Develop a master streetscape plan for downtown streets and sidewalks and strengthen connections to adjacent neighborhoods and public parks.
- **Action 3.1.2.** Develop Main Street (SR-109 to N Russell) as Portland's signature street.
- **Action 3.1.3.** Create great streetscapes along SR-109 – pay careful attention to the relationship between public streets and the built environment – right-size streets and reallocate space.

### **Objective 3.2. Collaborate with the Portland Chamber of Commerce and other key downtown stakeholders.**

- **Action 3.2.1.** Utilize incentives or a taxing district to encourage and fund improvements.
- **Action 3.2.2.** Evaluate participation in the TN Main Streets Program.

### **Objective 3.3. Placemaking and place branding the Portland identity in collaboration with other partners.**

- **Action 3.3.1.** Update the Portland Main Street Master Plan (2008)
- **Action 3.3.2.** Develop a framework for public realm improvements that guide landscaping, street furnishing, streetlights, trees, street design, and other improvements to the public space and pedestrian environment.
- **Action 3.3.3.** Consider adopting architectural standards for downtown buildings.
- **Action 3.3.4.** Pilot main street closure or other reactivation of downtown pedestrian environments.
- **Action 3.3.5.** Use design principles that ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all people and abilities.

### **Goal 4: Support and Enhance Quality of Life**

Updating the zoning ordinance and map is the most important initiative that must be undertaken to realize the *Preserving Portland* vision. However, it is not the only action to take and should be aligned with qualitative aspects of the community.

Housing is and will likely continue to be an important focus for residents and many looking to make Portland home. The city should not let developers and homebuilders drive city housing policy and instead should focus on providing flexibility to build more types of housing in more areas of the city. This approach will help to preserve farms and the rural character of the UGB and Counties that residents value.

Following the adoption of *Preserving Portland*, the city should update its zoning ordinance, zoning map, and subdivision regulations to ensure that it is consistent with the plan. The zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are the primary tools to help implement this plan and the community's vision for the future. The Growth Framework section provides the legal basis for the zoning ordinance.

With changing household compositions, a diversified approach to housing will provide options for people with different incomes and preferences. Higher density developments offer a better return on investment for the development community that also increases the city's tax base.

Preserving the character of Portland within the city boundary and beyond is an important focus that the community expressed. There are various methods and steps that can be taken within the city as well as in the UGB. As a means to preserve farmland and the rural character of the UGB, it is important that the city collaborate with the counties and other local stakeholders. Sumner and Robertson County have jurisdiction over development in the UGB.

### **Objective 4.1. Update the Zoning Ordinance and Map, Subdivision Regulations, and other regulations to reflect *Preserving Portland* to provide flexibility in land uses and to ensure safety, compatible design, and high-quality products.**

- **Action 4.1.1.** Update the zoning ordinance and map to reflect the Place Types presented.
- **Action 4.1.2.** Develop a citywide street typology with standards for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation as well as streetscape components.

- **Action 4.1.3.** Determine standards or minimums for frontage or building typologies that coordinate with the street type and Place Type.
- **Action 4.1.4.** Review and determine updates to the subdivision regulations, stormwater ordinance, zoning ordinance, and other regulations to ensure they are consistent with each other and in consideration of development standards that have an impact on safety and quality of life. (i.e. tree retention and preservation requirements, steep slope limitations, open space requirements, wetland and riparian buffer requirements)

### **Objective 4.2. Take a multifaceted approach to diversifying housing.**

- **Action 4.2.1.** Allow the highest-density housing near downtown and in mixed-use centers.
- **Action 4.2.2.** Encourage higher-density infill housing in neighborhoods that may be predominantly single-family residential.
- **Action 4.2.3.** Allow for accessory dwelling units (also may be known as carriage houses, in-law suites, granny flats, backyard cottages, laneway houses, etc.) in all residential and mixed-use place types.
- **Action 4.2.4.** encourage infill development by expanding its definition/applicability; not just residential infill, but opportunities for infill in commercial/industrial spaces too (and redeveloping with non-residential uses -green spaces perhaps)

### **Objective 4.3. Provide a connected network of parks and corridors.**

- **Action 4.3.1.** Develop open space, and greenway and trail system plan to protect the natural environment while providing safe locations for recreation through a connected network of parks and corridors.
- **Action 4.3.2.** Inclusion of dedicated public parks and intentional open or activity spaces within developments and PUDs.
- **Action 4.3.3.** Consider incentives, such as density bonuses, for the dedication of usable and functional open space and areas in flood prone areas in all new developments over a minimum size.

### **Objective 4.4. Promote the city's heritage and preserve farmland and rural character of Sumner and Robertson County.**

- **Action 4.4.1.** To ensure a high-quality and distinctive physical environment in all areas of the city develop design guidance and design review with building and site design requirements or incentives for both large and small projects.
- **Action 4.4.2.** Establish technical review meetings for county and city staff to review and make recommendations for proposed development in the UGB.
- **Action 4.4.3.** Continue to identify cultural and heritage resources and encourage compatible uses around those.
- **Action 4.4.4.** Coordinate with adjacent local jurisdictions to cooperatively preserve and protect natural resources and cultural heritage.

- **Action 4.4.5.** Increase awareness and appreciation of the economic and intrinsic value of older properties which are important to the city’s character and heritage by encouraging the retention and rehabilitation of historic buildings and landscapes that are important to the city.
- **Action 4.4.6.** Develop and explore tools and strategies to recognize and promote properties that are important to the city’s character and heritage.

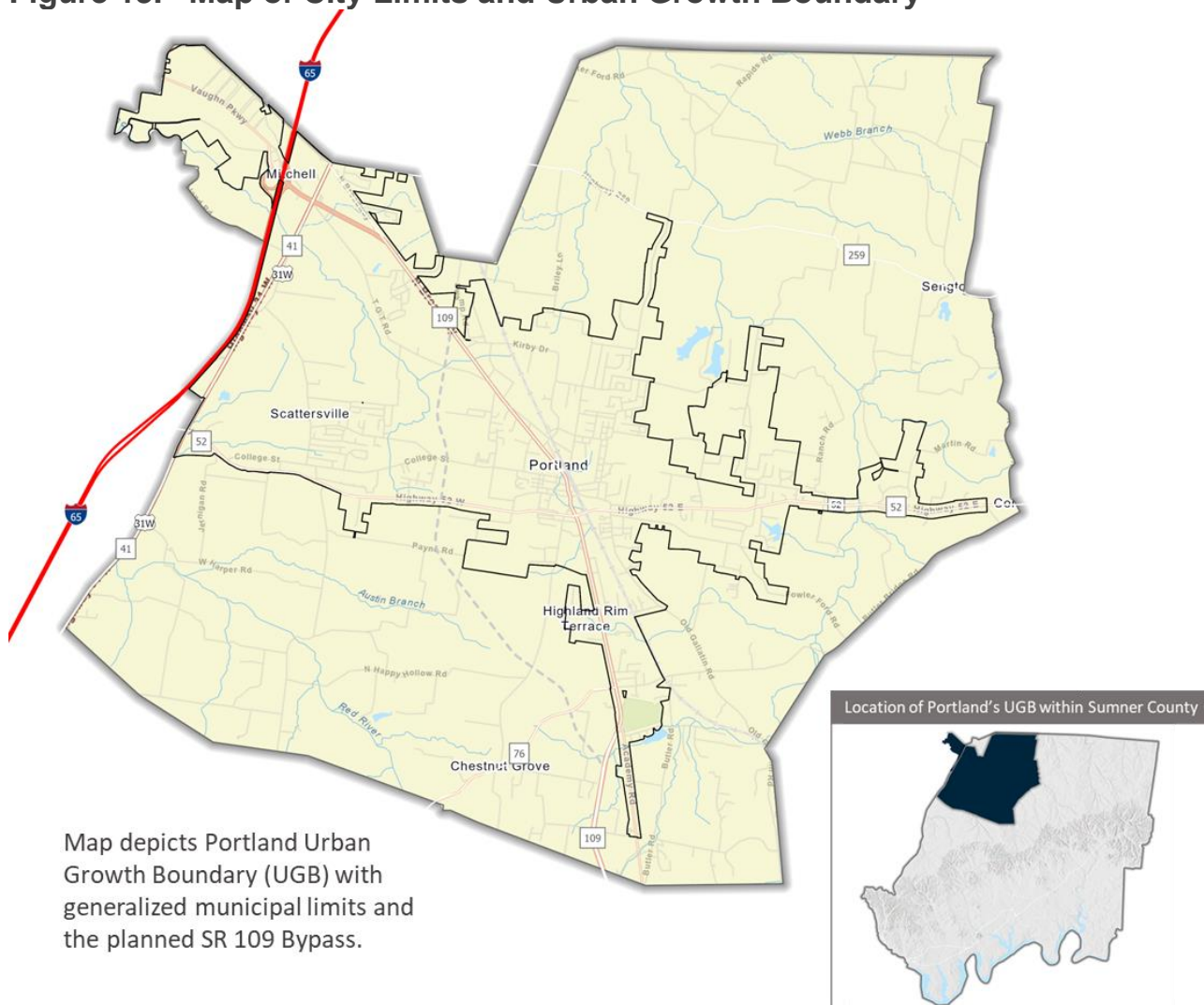
# Chapter 4. Growth Policy

## Planning Jurisdiction

The municipal limits of Portland encompass approximately 15 square miles, or just less than 10,000 acres. Under Tennessee state law, local governments within each county are required to work together to develop a shared, countywide plan for identifying future growth areas between jurisdictions. This planning requirement is distinct and different from *Preserving Portland* in that its primary focus is to define designated Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) that represent future annexation opportunities for municipal governments and the rural areas that represent places that are likely to remain for agriculture, recreation, and other low-density uses.

The city's UGB is nearly 33,000 acres. *Preserving Portland* makes recommendations for both the city and the UGB, or about 43,000 acres of land.

**Figure 13. Map of City Limits and Urban Growth Boundary**



Map depicts Portland Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) with generalized municipal limits and the planned SR 109 Bypass.

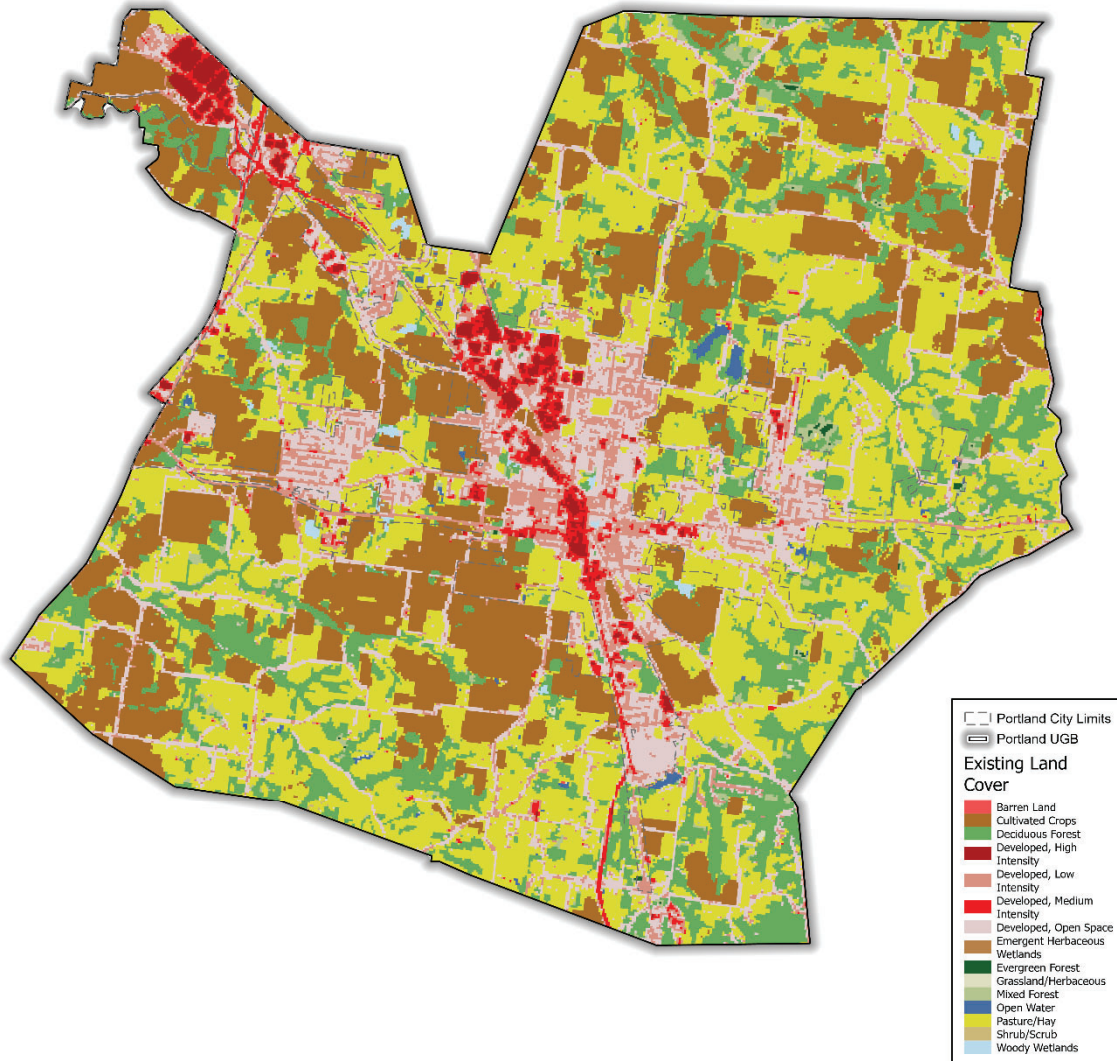
# Current Land Use

Until a few short decades ago, the predominant land use across the Sumner and Robertson counties was rural or agricultural in nature. Rapid growth since the late 1970s has introduced large residential subdivisions of relatively low density.

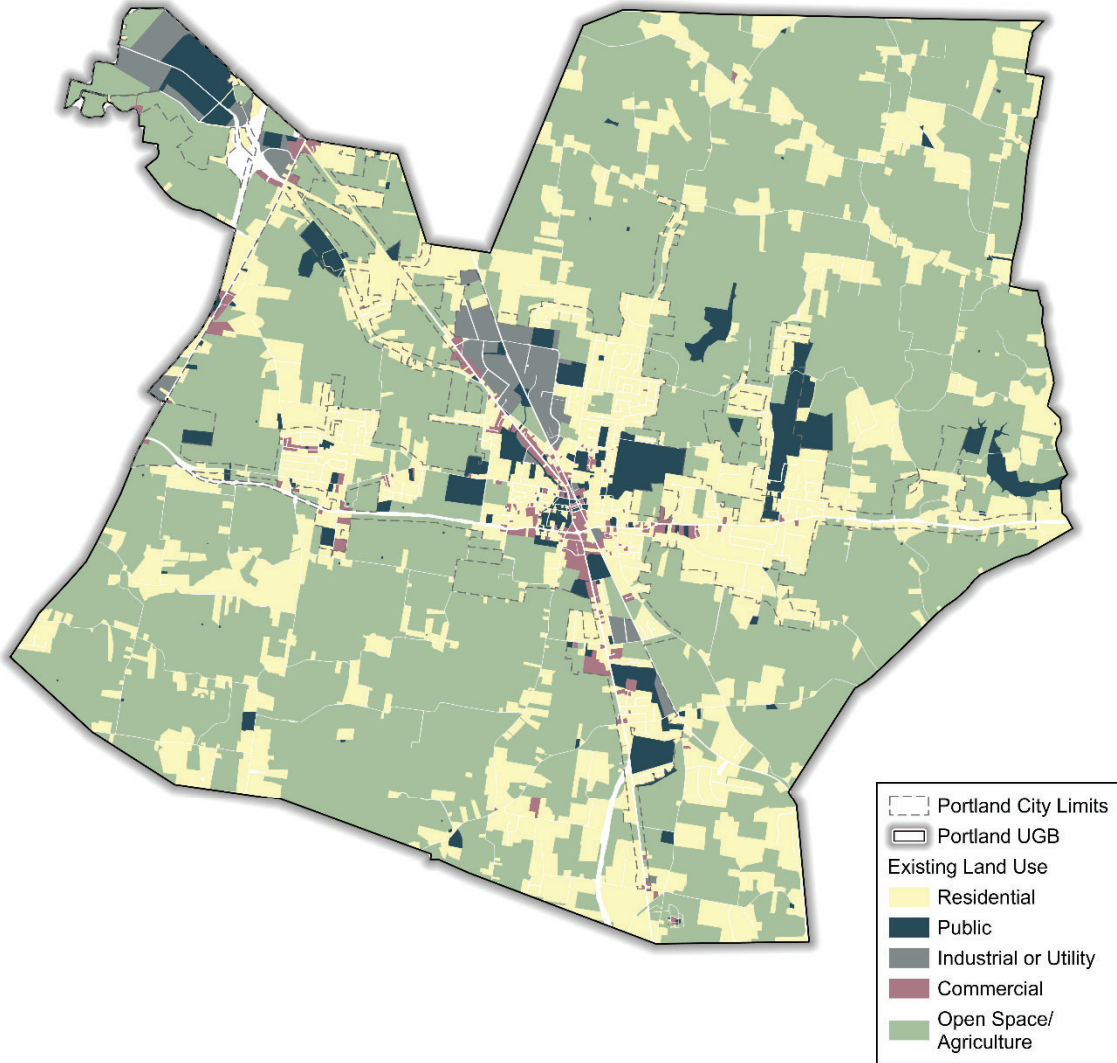
Within the city today, 83% of the land is used for residential purposes, 9% for commercial and industrial purposes, and 4% for open space and agricultural uses. This supports the community’s desire for more parks, green space, greenway connections, and recreational land.

In 2020, the city’s population density was 1.32 people per acre or 843.33 people per square mile. The densest populations are located along the primary transportation corridors, western SR-52 and northern SR-109, and downtown. Primarily, commercial, office and industrial land uses are located along SR-109. On the city’s northwest boundary is the industrial and office park off Vaughn Parkway and I-65. And northwest of downtown is a large cluster of commercial and industrial land in a wedge between SR-109 and the railroad tracks. Residential is dispersed in low-density developments along the SR-52 and SR-109.

**Figure 14. Map of Current Land Cover**



**Figure 15. Map of Current Land Uses**



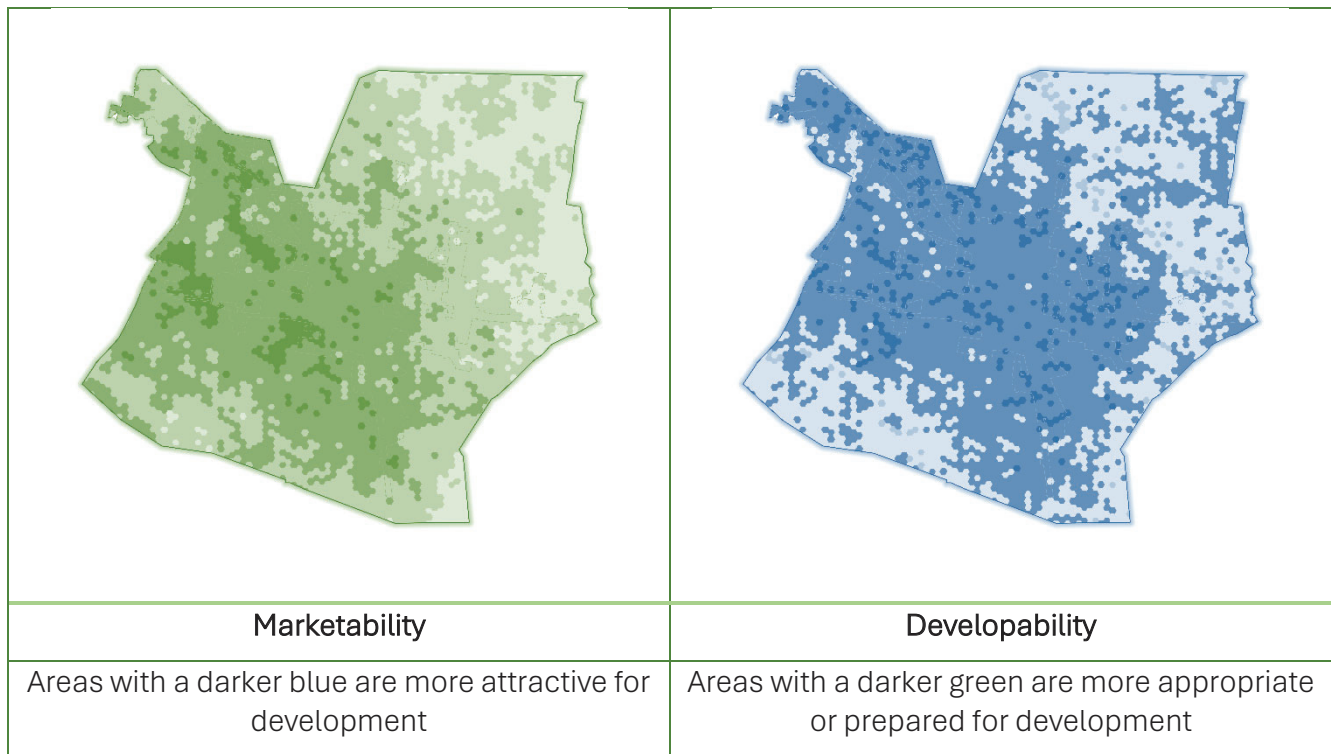
## Suitability for Development

While *Preserving Portland* is focused on the future growth of the city, it is important to note that the plan itself is not the cause of the development happening in and around the community. The plan is a tool to help manage growth to ensure that it is consistent with the community’s vision and expectations. It does this by communicating clear goals and objectives and offering recommendations to guide private development towards outcomes that are mutually beneficial to residents, property owners, employers, developers, and the community at large.

Understanding the key drivers of local growth is important so that the plan can effectively influence the location, form, function, and aesthetic of development – be it new construction on a vacant lot, or the redevelopment or rehabilitation of an existing structure. Through its zoning ordinance and building codes, the city regulates different aspects of development, but in the end, most new development is the result of decisions by private landowners or developers who choose to build based on a variety of factors.

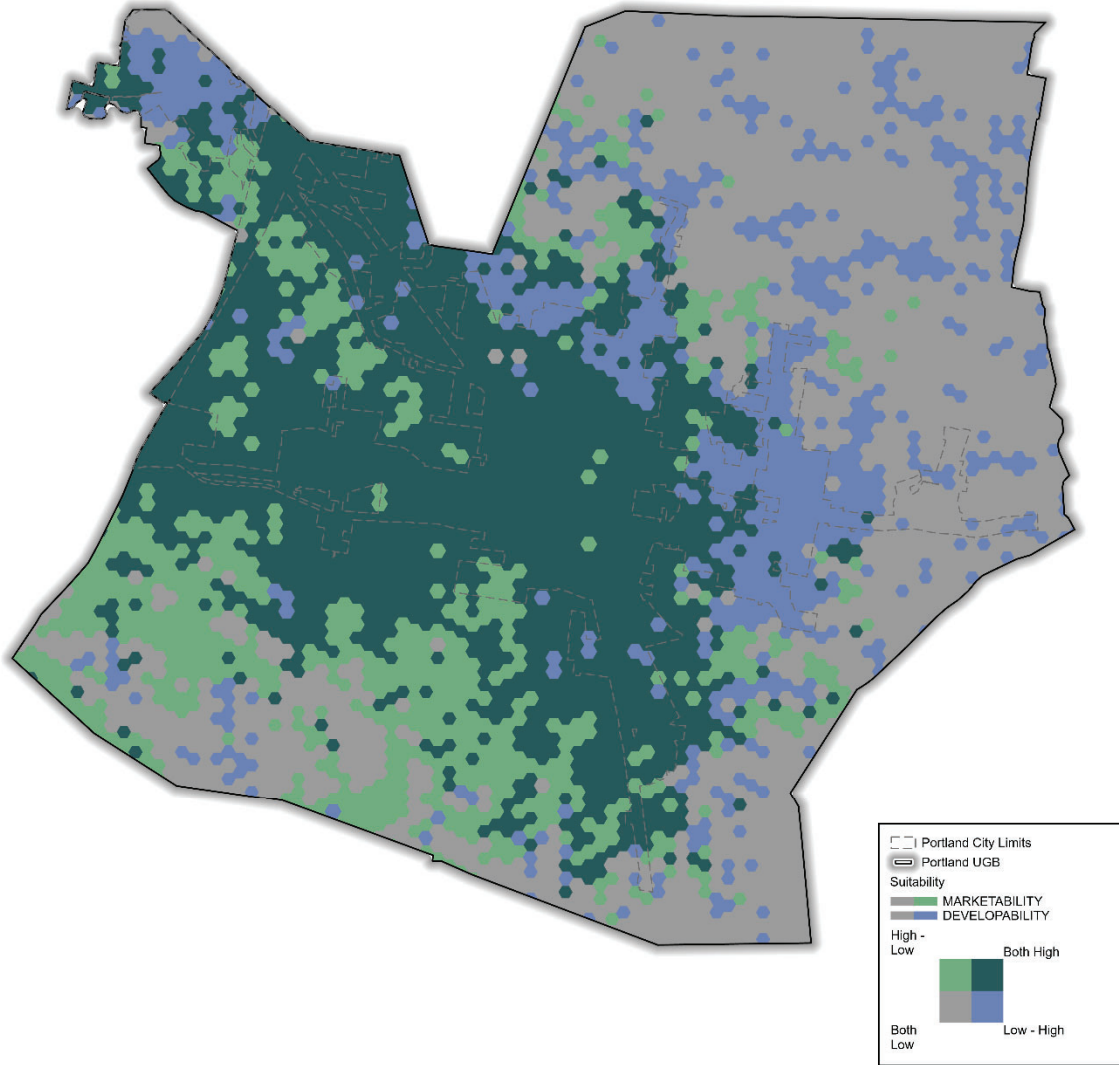
## Land Suitability Analysis

As part of the planning process, GNRC conducted a land suitability analysis of Portland to determine the areas that were most appropriate for growth. In this context, “appropriate” was defined as a combination of factors that include assets that make land attractive to developers, the presence of environmental constraints, and the capacity of infrastructure. In the maps below, “Marketability” depicts areas with larger lots, cleared land, lower land values, and are located closer to major roads, interchanges, & county schools. “Developability” depicts areas with water and sewer utilities, transportation capacity, relatively flat land, soils that perc, fewer sink holes, and bedrock at a higher depth.



Areas colored **bright green** represent land with good characteristics for marketability and above average conditions to support new development. Areas colored in light **blue-green** represent land that is least likely to develop.

**Figure 16. Map of Development Suitability**



## Future Land Use Designations

Throughout the *Preserving Portland* planning process, community members acknowledged that the city would continue to grow and they expressed a desire to do it differently than before. The framework for guiding Portland’s growth will require a different way of developing. This new growth framework is presented in the following section through different lenses that provide a unique understanding of the future.

Historically, cities and towns across the nation have relied on land use driven policies and ordinances to establish a pattern of development across the jurisdiction. Often this was done to purposefully separate uses from each other, often to one area from negatively affecting another. For example, industrial activities like manufacturing were separated from residential areas to protect residents from harm. This zonal approach to land use planning was successful in eliminating the nuisances and public health concerns of time, but over the years, this pattern of separated uses led to further distances between homes and work, shopping, and other daily activities.

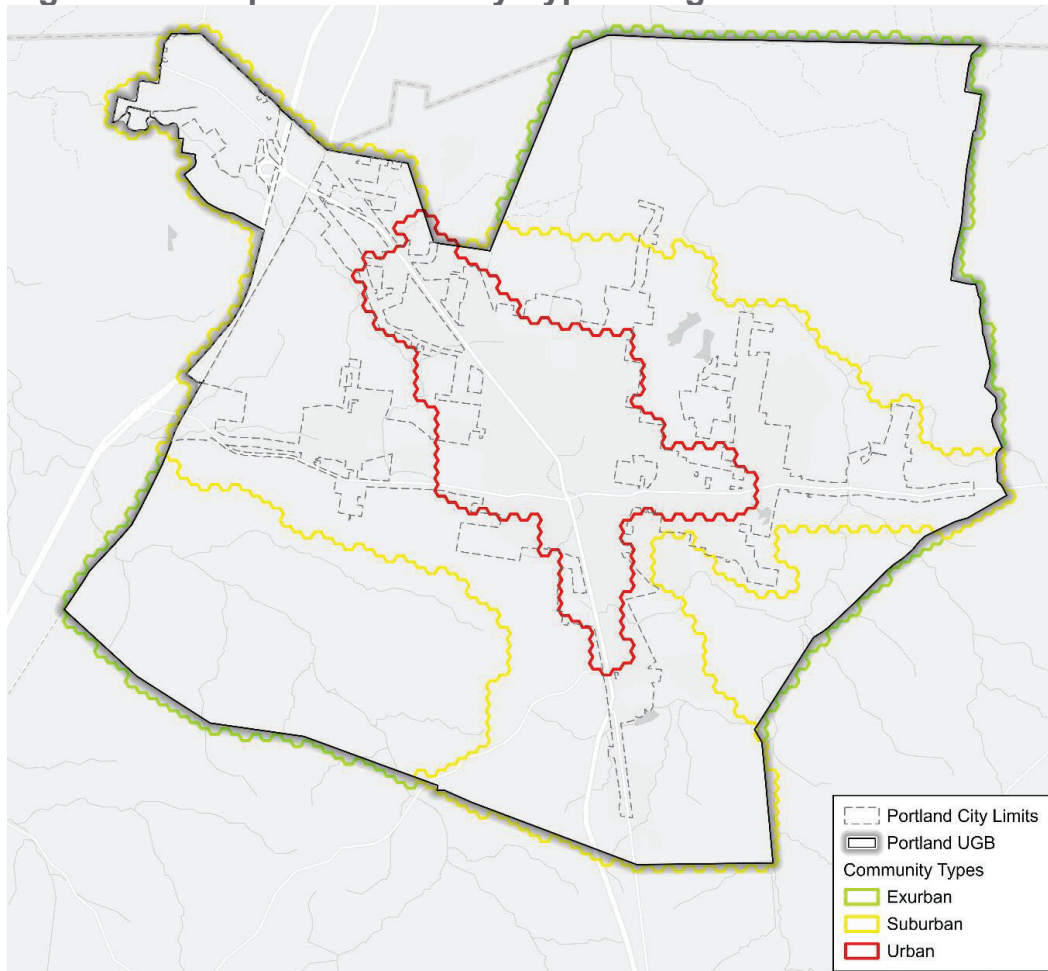
*Preserving Portland's* future land use policy emphasizes the character, form, and function over specific land use classifications. To depict community preferences for growth, the plan incorporates “community type” and “place type” designations.

## Community Types

Community types are adapted from the planning industry’s “transect” scale which provides a conceptual framework for understanding how the scale of the built environment varies from place to place. *Preserving Portland* identifies four community types – urban, suburban, exurban, and rural.

- **Urban:** Densely populated areas with a high mix of residential, commercial, and other land uses.
- **Suburban:** Semi-urban, with medium housing density and a mix of suburban and urban land uses. These land uses include residences, commercial centers, and employment centers. Suburban areas occur near and within a city or town beyond the urban core.
- **Exurban:** Semi-rural, with low housing density and a mix of rural and suburban land uses. These land uses include residences, agriculture, and forest lands. These exurban areas are urban-dependent and occur near a city or town but are beyond the suburbs.
- **Rural:** Large acreages of land for agricultural use or passive recreation, or fallow countryside.

**Figure 17. Map of Community Type Designations**



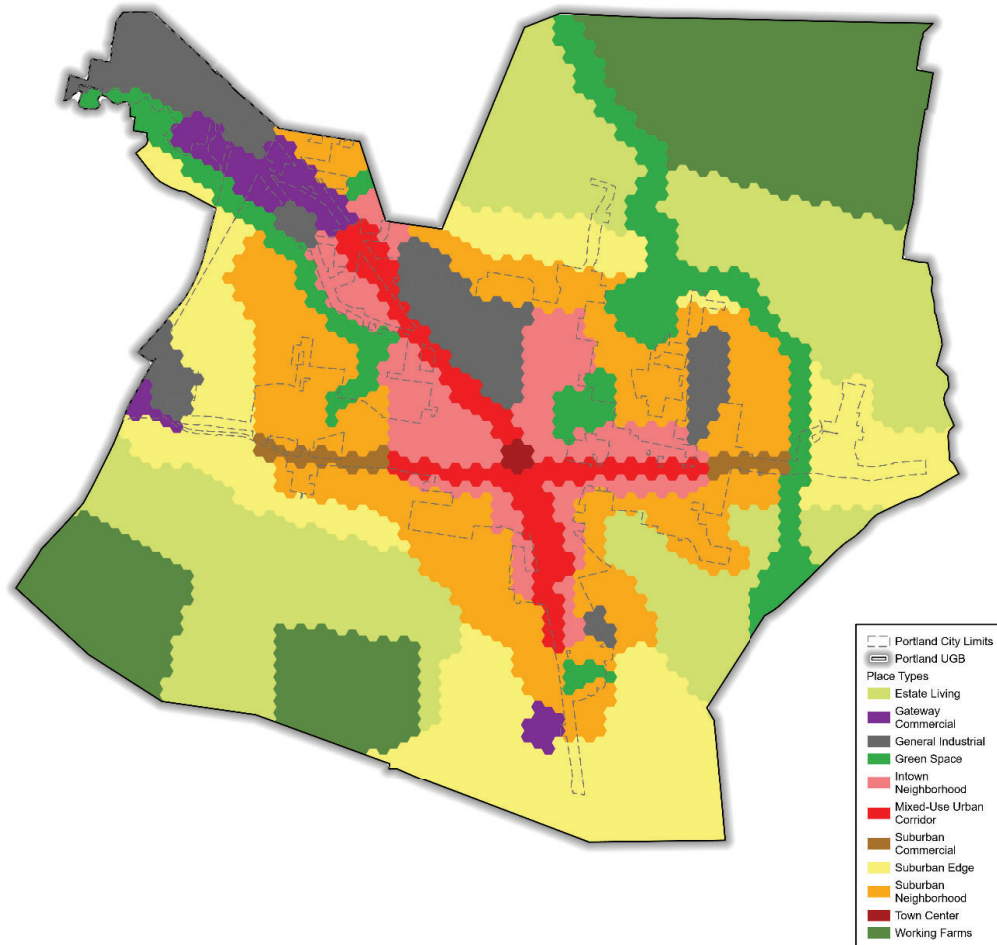
## Place Types

Place Types help share the future of Portland by focusing on the look and feel of places – their form and character – and not solely focused on the use of land. Place Types combine land use, intensity and density, building form, and transportation elements. This makes Place Types especially useful tools to guide future decisions regarding growth and development in each community, considering variable priorities such as economic development, land and farming preservation, protection of natural resources, efficient transportation options, and the provision of community facilities and services. Place types are not meant to be synonymous with traditional use-based zoning districts. Zoning districts and Place Types are not a one-for-one translation. It is expected that more than one zoning district may fit into a Place Type.

Each place type is described with important elements that work together to achieve the desired mix and intensity of land uses, community design, and infrastructure. The descriptions of each character area include parameters for the following elements:

- Mix of land uses
- Lot size and density
- Building forms, placement, and massing
- Transportation options, and
- Open space considerations

**Figure 18. Map of Place Type Designations**



SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLACE TYPE DESIGNATIONS

# PLACE TYPES

Every community has a unique identity shaped by the way its spaces, buildings, and activities come together. This distinct character, often called a “sense of place,” is influenced by building size, the layout of streets and open spaces, and how people interact within them. Place Types provide a way to describe these elements, helping to shape the future of Portland by focusing on the look and feel of areas rather than just their land use.

Place Types combine land use, building design, density, and transportation to guide decisions about growth and development. They help balance priorities like economic development, farmland preservation, natural resource protection, transportation efficiency, and community services. Unlike traditional zoning, which regulates land use, Place Types provide a broader vision, with multiple zoning districts potentially fitting within a single Place Type.

This handout outlines the Place Types for Preserving Portland which includes key characteristics, common land uses, infrastructure, and development patterns.

## Recommended Density Key

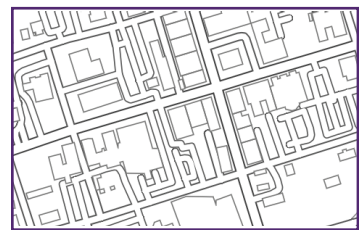
A density key is a way to categorize communities based on the number of housing units or commercial structures and their proximity to each other, and the land area they occupy. The bar above each place type relates to the density scale below.



**Low End**

**High End**

Detailed descriptions of residential units per acre recommendations based on low, mid, and high end density is available in the draft plan.



## TOWN CENTER

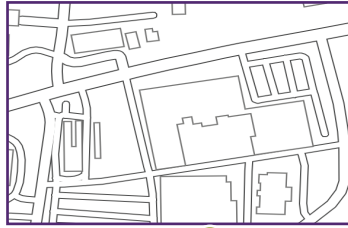
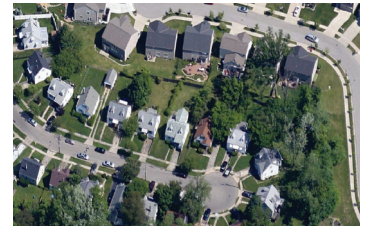
A Town Center (Portland's downtown) serves local communities with more urban living spaces, commercial, and office activity. Designed for walkability, it may feature small blocks with pedestrian-friendly streets. Buildings are typically two or more stories, often with residential units above storefronts. The mix of land uses and transportation infrastructure makes town centers vibrant and accessible.

### Potential Land Uses

- Professional office
- Community-serving commercial and retail
- Entertainment and sit down restaurants
- Community, public, and institutional facilities
- Multi-tenant commercial
- Townhomes and Apartments

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- High road network connectivity with sidewalks and bike lanes
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Grid/rectangular street pattern



## MIXED USE URBAN

Mixed Use Urban Center and Corridors combine urban living spaces, retail and shops, offices, and entertainment in a walkable area or neighborhood. Offering various housing options with higher densities, they are designed so residents can access daily needs within a 15-minute walk or a ¼-mile radius. Businesses and public spaces blend with nearby homes, ensuring a smooth transition between different building sizes and uses.

### Potential Land Uses

- Single-family and multi-family residential
- Sit down restaurants
- Neighborhood-serving commercial and retail
- Professional and personal services
- Offices
- Entertainment
- Small-scale flex industrial

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Medium road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Grid/rectangular street pattern

## INTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Intown Neighborhoods have a mix of moderate to high-density housing options. They are typically located near the edge of downtown and have grid street pattern. These may be small-lot single-family homes, attached single-family homes, and multi-family homes. These are typically connected by a network of sidewalks.

### Potential Land Uses

- Single-family detached residential
- Duplexes and townhomes
- Triplexes, fourplexes and small-scale apartments
- Accessory dwelling units
- Community, public, and institutional facilities
- Parks and natural areas

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- High road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Grid street pattern

## SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL

Suburban Commercial is typically auto-oriented commercial areas that are near busy roads and major intersections designed mainly for car access. Businesses are set back from the street with large parking lots in front and little connection between neighboring properties.

### Potential Land Uses

- General commercial and retail services
- Sit down or fast food restaurant
- Big box commercial
- Professional and personal services
- Light industrial
- Multi-family residential
- Entertainment

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Medium road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Grid/rectangular street pattern

## SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

Suburban Neighborhoods have a predominantly low-intensity residential development pattern with a mix of single-family homes and small to mid-sized apartment buildings connected by a well-planned street network. Lots are usually smaller, and new developments should blend with the surrounding homes in size and style. Apartments and offices may serve as a transition between quieter residential areas and busier commercial zones.

### Potential Land Uses

- Single-family detached residential
- Townhomes, duplexes
- Community, public, and institutional facilities
- Multi-family or offices along major corridors

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Medium road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Curvilinear street pattern

## Recommended Density Key

A density key is a way to categorize communities based on the number of housing units or commercial structures and their proximity to each other, and the land area they occupy.

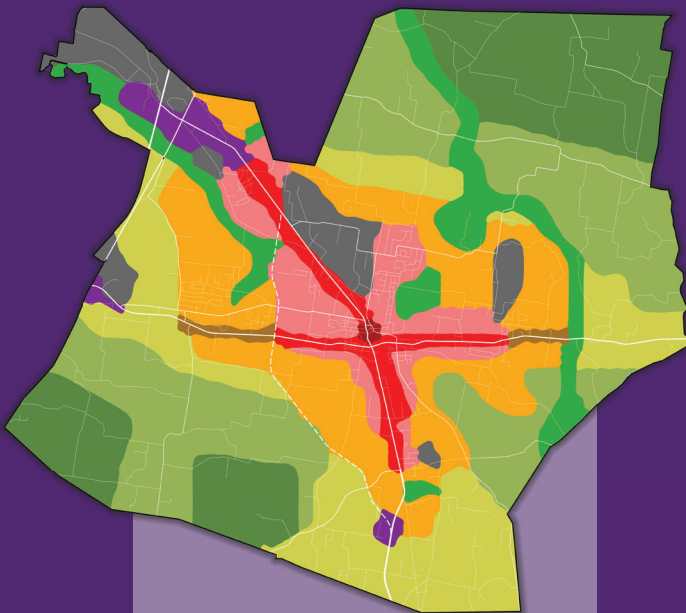


Low End

High End

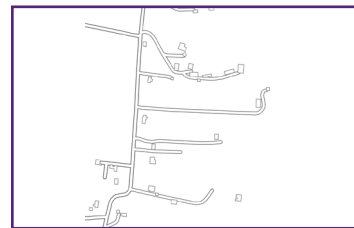
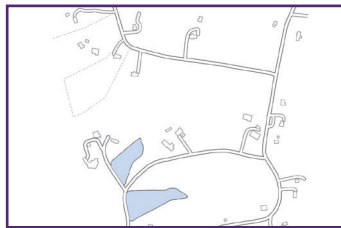
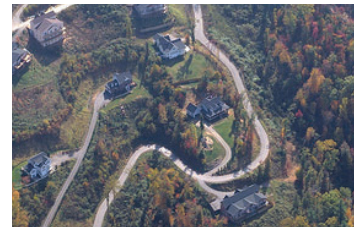
Detailed descriptions of residential units per acre recommendations based on low, mid, and high end density is available in the draft plan.

## Place Type Locations



### LEGEND

- TOWN CENTER
- MIXED USE URBAN
- INTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD
- SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL
- SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS
- SUBURBAN EDGE
- ESTATE LIVING
- WORKING FARMS
- GATEWAY COMMERCIAL
- GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
- GREEN SPACE



## SUBURBAN EDGE

Suburban Edge consists of lower-density areas of the city that receive urban services like water, sewer, police, parks, and fire protection. Development should blend land uses, connect within and between developments, and begin to incorporate infrastructure supporting walking and biking connections.

### Potential Land Uses

- Single-family detached residential
- Townhomes, duplexes
- Community, public, and institutional facilities

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Low road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Curvilinear street pattern

## ESTATE LIVING

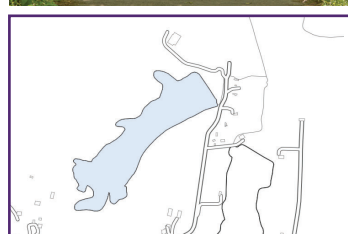
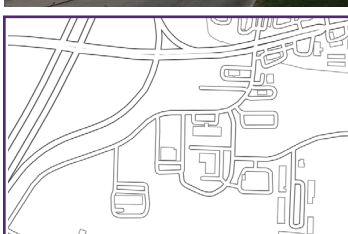
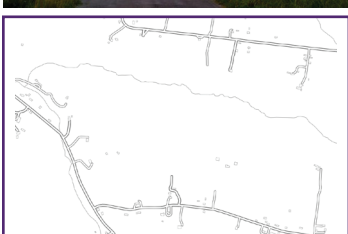
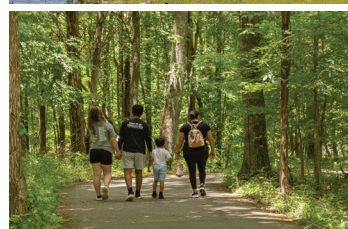
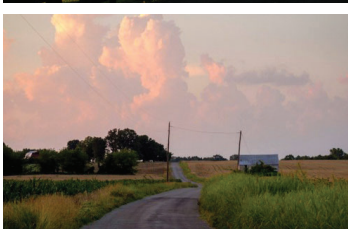
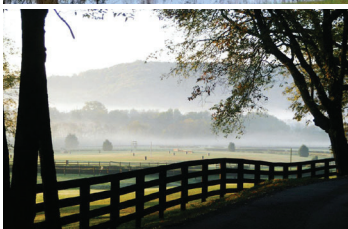
Estate Living generally consists of larger lots, open spaces, and widely spaced structures or homes, often blending into the natural landscape. Some properties include small farms or agricultural uses. Homes are typically located along highways with private driveways. In areas with more development, homes may be clustered together to preserve open spaces, scenic views, and natural environments.

### Potential Land Uses

- Single-family detached residential
- Farms
- Hobby farms

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Sparse road network
- Limited public water
- Limited sewer utilities
- Curvilinear street pattern



## WORKING FARMS

Working Farms are typically characterized by agriculture and forestry activities, with low-density single-family residential and accessory buildings such as barns. Farms vary in size and become less common closer to the city, and are located within the Urban Growth Boundary and beyond.

### Potential Land Uses

- Cultivated farmland
- Livestock
- Timber
- Woodlands and forest
- Single-family detached residential
- Light industrial
- Warehouse/storage

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Sparse road network
- Limited public water
- Limited sewer utilities
- Curvilinear street pattern

## GATEWAY COMMERCIAL

Gateway Commercial areas are located at key entry points to the city, featuring restaurants, hotels, and retail spaces that serve both visitors and residents. Development should be attractive and well-designed and create a welcoming sense of place that reflects the city's identity. These areas are not meant to complement downtown areas with visitor-focused businesses, ideally in a mixed-use setting.

### Potential Land Uses

- Hotels and motels
- General merchandise
- Big box retail
- Office space
- Restaurants
- Medical

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Medium road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Grid/rectangular street pattern

## GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

General Industrial supports a variety of industrial activities such as processing, production, and manufacturing activities. They may include warehouses, industrial parks, and light and heavy manufacturing. Heavy industries should be kept away from residential areas to minimize disruption.

### Potential Land Uses

- Light and heavy industrial
- Research and development
- Commercial and retail

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Medium road network connectivity
- Public water and sewer utilities
- Grid/rectangular street pattern

## GREEN SPACE

Green spaces are undeveloped areas, parks, trails, and protected lands. They may be preserved for their beauty, environmental benefits, or wildlife protection. Typically, undisturbed or undeveloped land is ideal for legally protecting it from future construction by government agencies or private organizations.

### Potential Land Uses

- Federal, State, and local parks
- Wildlife refuge
- Natural area
- Greenway
- Cemetery

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Medium road network connectivity

## Special Districts and Focus Areas

*Preserving Portland* identifies special districts and focus areas that attract people for shopping, work, entertainment, and social activities. Directing future growth into these centers reduces the pressure to develop in the UGB and sprawl along transportation corridors.

The locations of these districts were identified through a combination of factors, such as the availability of underutilized land, the likely continuation of development trends, notable market demands, and proximity to infrastructure. Through urban design and place-making approaches, there are opportunities to make each of these centers unique and individual.

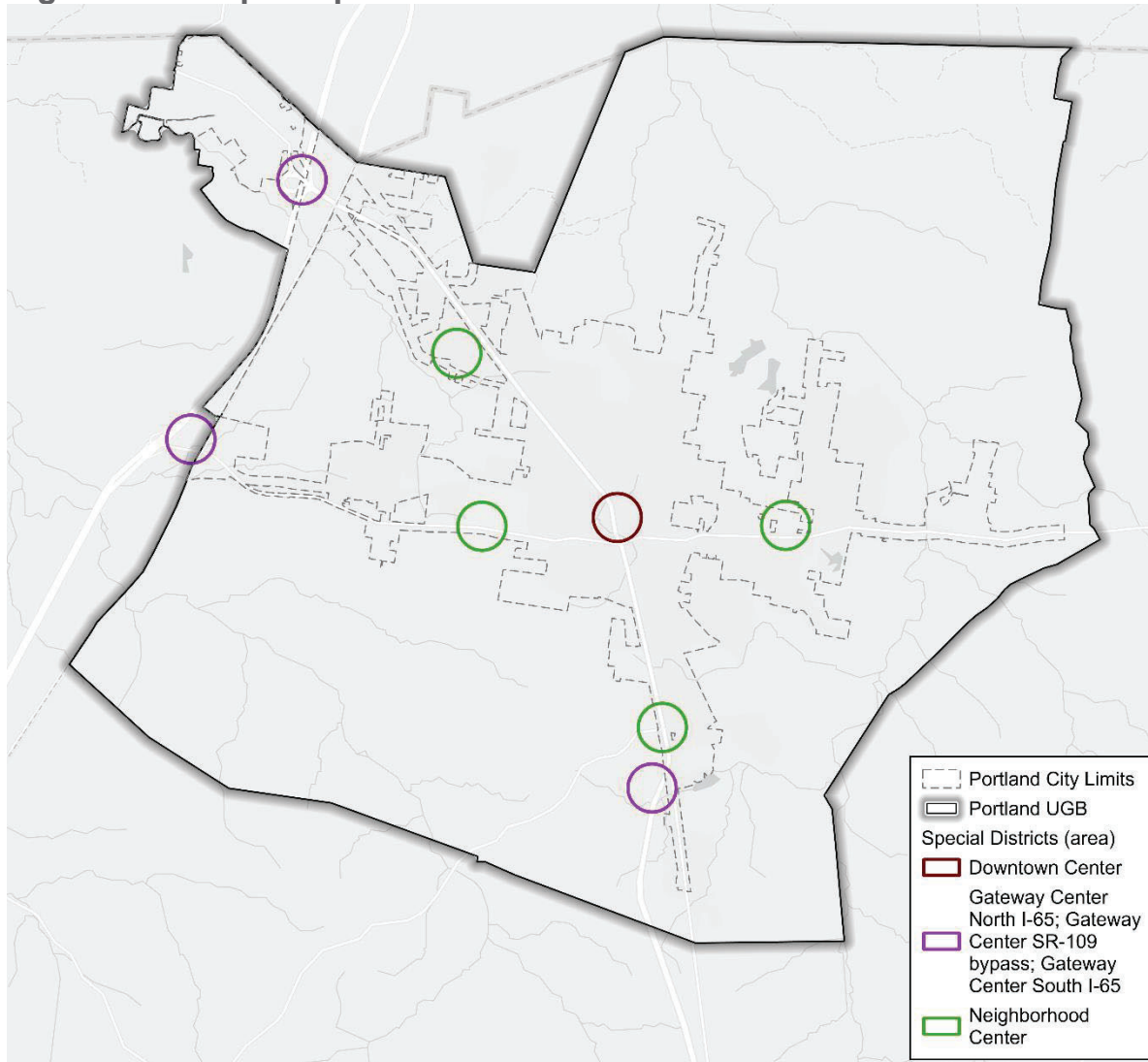
- **Downtown:** The downtown area is an opportunity for the community to reimagine it with the construction of the SR-109 bypass. On average over 20,000 vehicle trips per day across four lanes cut through downtown on SR-109. Some of this space for vehicles could be repurposed for pedestrians and the community. Streets, sidewalks, and parks are considered the public realm and the private realm is primarily buildings and private lands. The public and private realms meet most noticeably in downtown, and the design and function of the public and private realms are important elements to a vibrant downtown.

The 2008 Main Street Plan focused on the block of Main Street between N. Broadway (SR-109) and the railroad tracks. With a reduction of vehicular traffic on SR-109 this is the time to plan for the downtown district, not just one block, and to define a development design and form that represents Portland.

Urban design is an important element of downtown and the 2008 Main Street Plan recommended design standards and materials. It might be time to update the 2008 Main Street Plan to reimagine the space, design, and function of downtown.

- **Gateway Centers:** Major commercial districts serving much of the city and travelers. It is at entry/exit points of major city corridors. Buildings can range from two to four stories and include a range of land uses. (I-65 and Ronnie McDowell Pkwy/SR-109, I-65, SR-31W and SR-52E, and SR-109 and SR-109 Bypass / Dorris Road)
- **Neighborhood Centers:** Local districts that primarily serve surrounding neighborhoods. The area typically includes one to three-story buildings with a mix of commercial/retail, small office, and residential uses. (SR-109 and SR-76, SR-52W and Airport Road, SR-52E and SR-109 Bypass, SR-109 and TGT Road/Kenwood DR)

**Figure 19. Map of Special Districts and Focus Areas**



## Degrees of Change

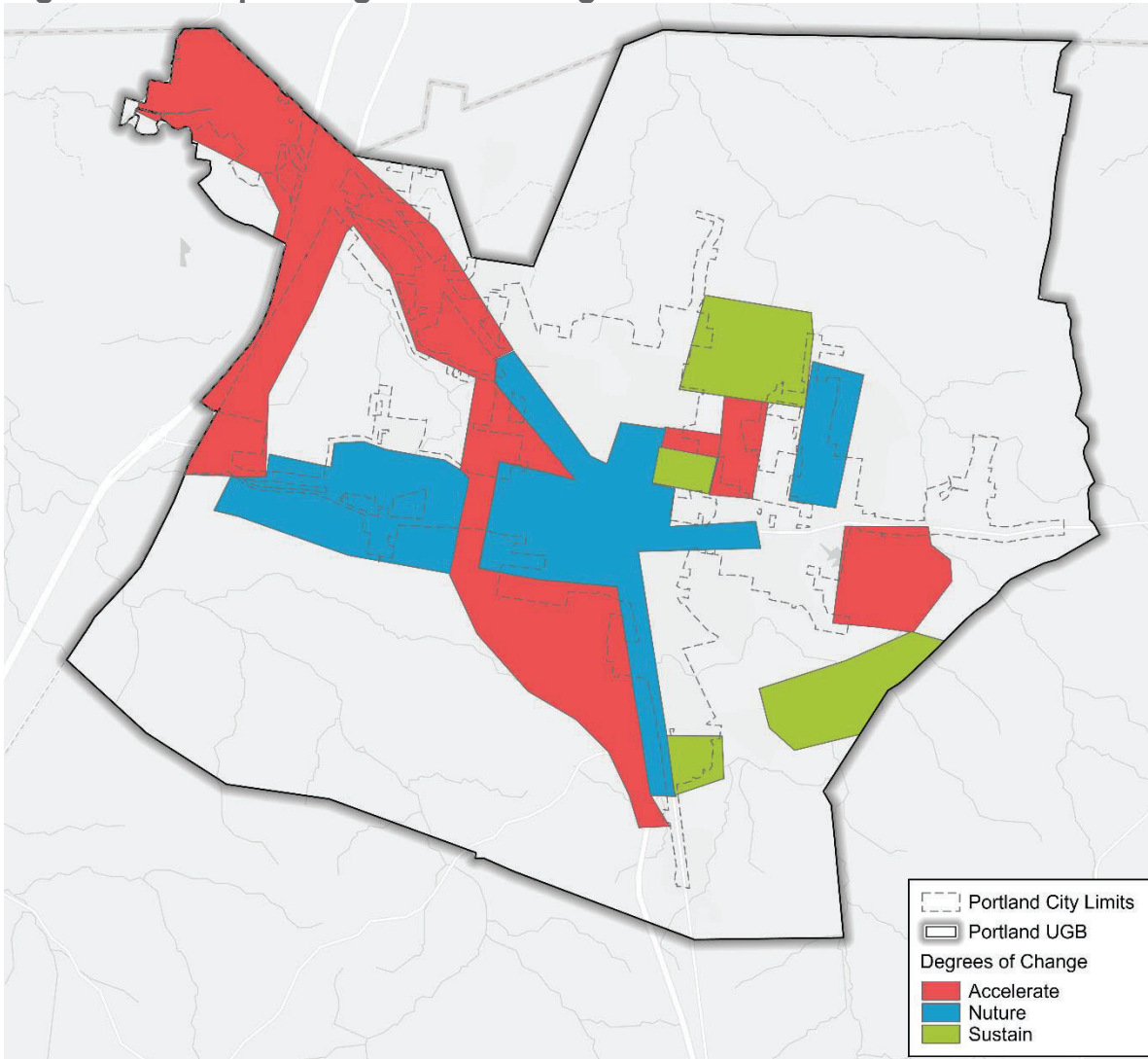
Planning for change over the coming decades in Portland, it is anticipated that growth and development will occur across the city at different times and degrees. Some areas will continue as they are today, and some areas may see infill development, while others will be completely transformed as new developments occur.

Identifying where change is likely to occur, and the preferred degree of change, helps prioritize public investment and timing of those investments.

- **Sustain:** Areas that are not expected (or do not desire) to experience significant change in character. These may be undeveloped areas that will remain so, or they may be developed areas with an established character and are largely built out with a few new or infill development opportunities. New or Infill development within these areas should help enhance the quality of the place and improve connectivity and transportation options. Private investment should be encouraged to support steady growth for continued community stability.

- **Nurture:** Established neighborhoods or commercial areas that have or could experience decline without continued investments to maintain or improve the quality of the place. These areas would benefit from enhanced projects to improve walkability and create a sense of connectivity.
- **Accelerate:** Areas that are expected to experience significant change. These may be areas that are fully developed, which may completely or significantly change in character, or they may be areas of land currently undeveloped or agricultural areas that will be significantly transformed, fully developed areas that completely or significantly change in character, areas of land currently undeveloped, with new development.

**Figure 20. Map of Degrees of Change**



# Chapter 5. Transportation Priorities

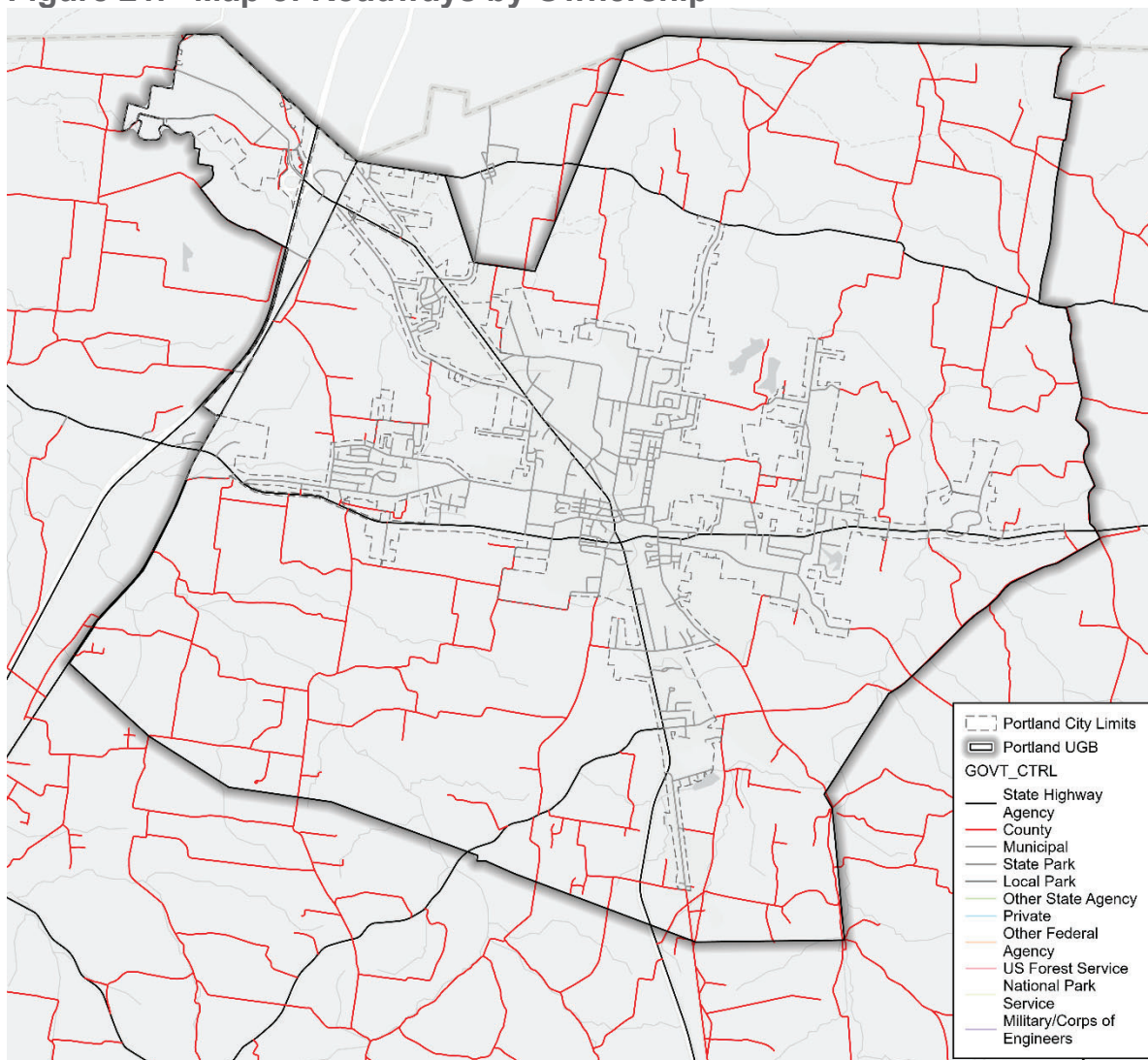
## System Performance

The plan’s first goal is “Align Infrastructure Improvements with Planned Development” by expanding transportation options [and utilities] to meet the needs of today’s residents and businesses while also prioritizing future extensions to areas planned for new housing and economic development.

### Roadway Network

Portland's street department maintains the local streets depicted in the map below, while the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) manages state routes and interstates.

Figure 21. Map of Roadways by Ownership

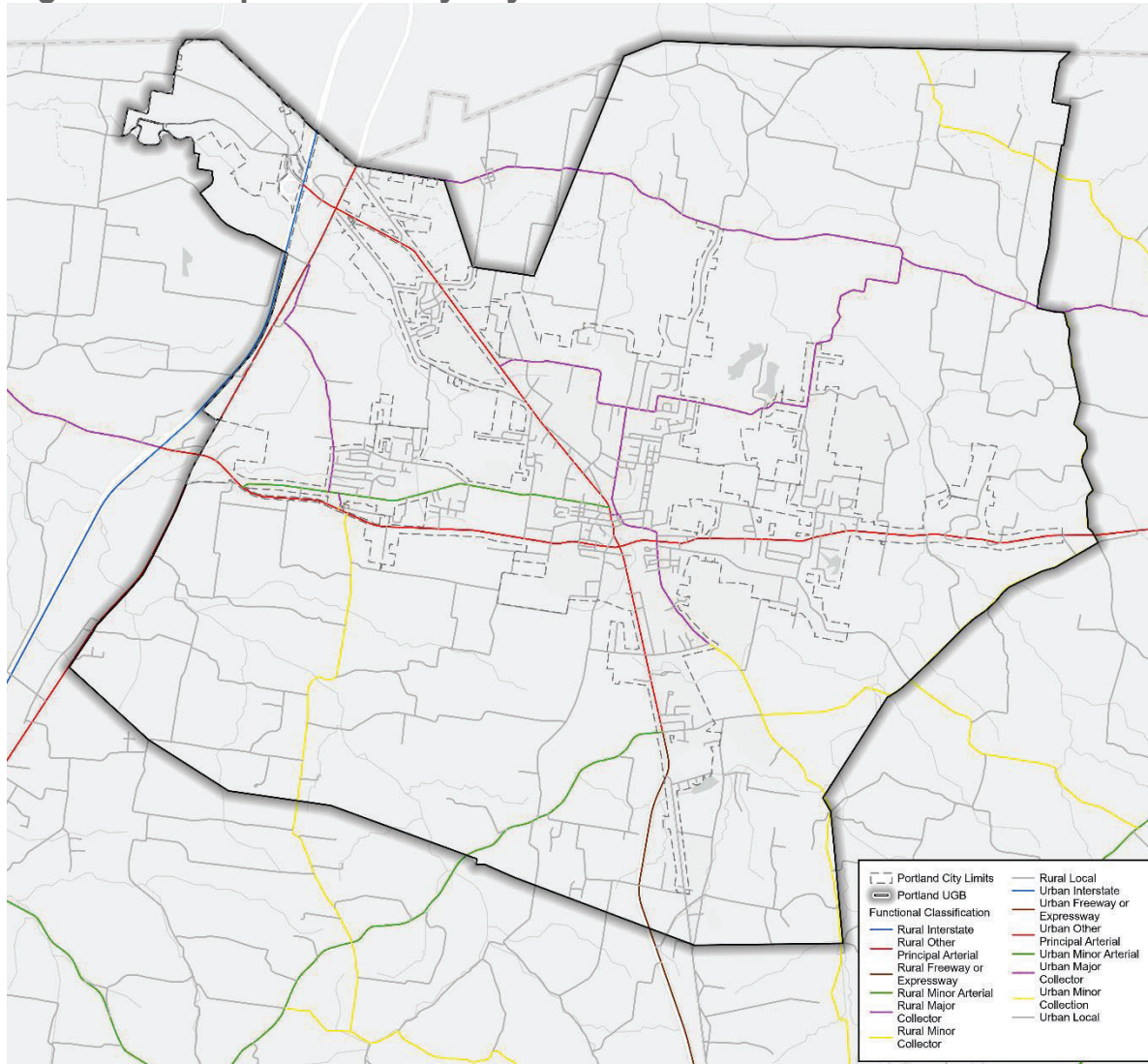


About 20,000 vehicles, including 2,000 freight trucks, travel daily on SR-109 and Main Street. To ease traffic, construction of the SR-109 bypass will begin in 2025 for the northern segment and

2031 for the southern segment. This bypass will divert traffic from downtown, improve safety, and create an opportunity to transform downtown into a more pedestrian-friendly destination, similar to Gallatin’s successful downtown revitalization.

Many new developments are being built on roads not designed for heavy traffic, adding to congestion. To mitigate that impact, identifying where the city will direct development in the future and understanding the capacity of current roadways and anticipating investments that will need to be made to support that growth is an important part of *Preserving Portland*.

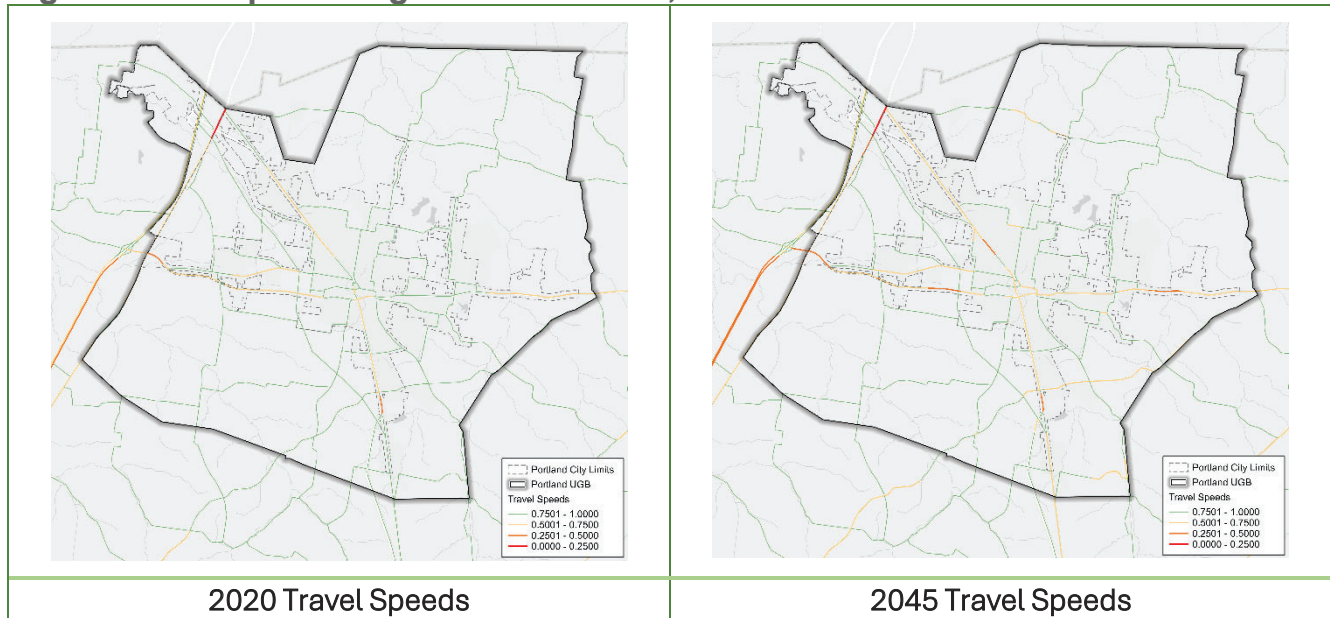
**Figure 22. Map of Roadways by Functional Classification**



## Traffic Congestion

Middle Tennessee's rapid growth is impacting the reliability of the transportation system regionwide and locally in Portland. Today, the morning commute time from Portland to Nashville is roughly 50 minutes. However, that is projected to increase by 45% by the year 2045. During community outreach, over 60% of community participants identified traffic congestion as their top concern. Portland will not escape the fate of the region as travel times are forecast to decrease because of increased levels of traffic congestion.

**Figure 23. Map of Congested Corridors, 2020 and 2045**



## Freight and Heavy Trucks

The Nashville area occupies a strategic location within North America at the convergence of three major U.S. Interstates and within 650 miles of half the U.S. population and sits at the nexus of major highways and rail routes. As such the region has an excellent distribution network at hand with highway, rail, air, and barge facilities all readily available. The area is served by numerous freight carriers with terminal locations throughout the metropolitan area and beyond. The Cumberland River provides full river barge access to the Gulf of Mexico. CSX Transportation serves Nashville with a major classification yard as well as container, automotive, and bulk terminals. *Preserving Portland* recognizes the significant impact made by the heavy volume of commercial vehicles and trucks traveling through downtown on SR 109.

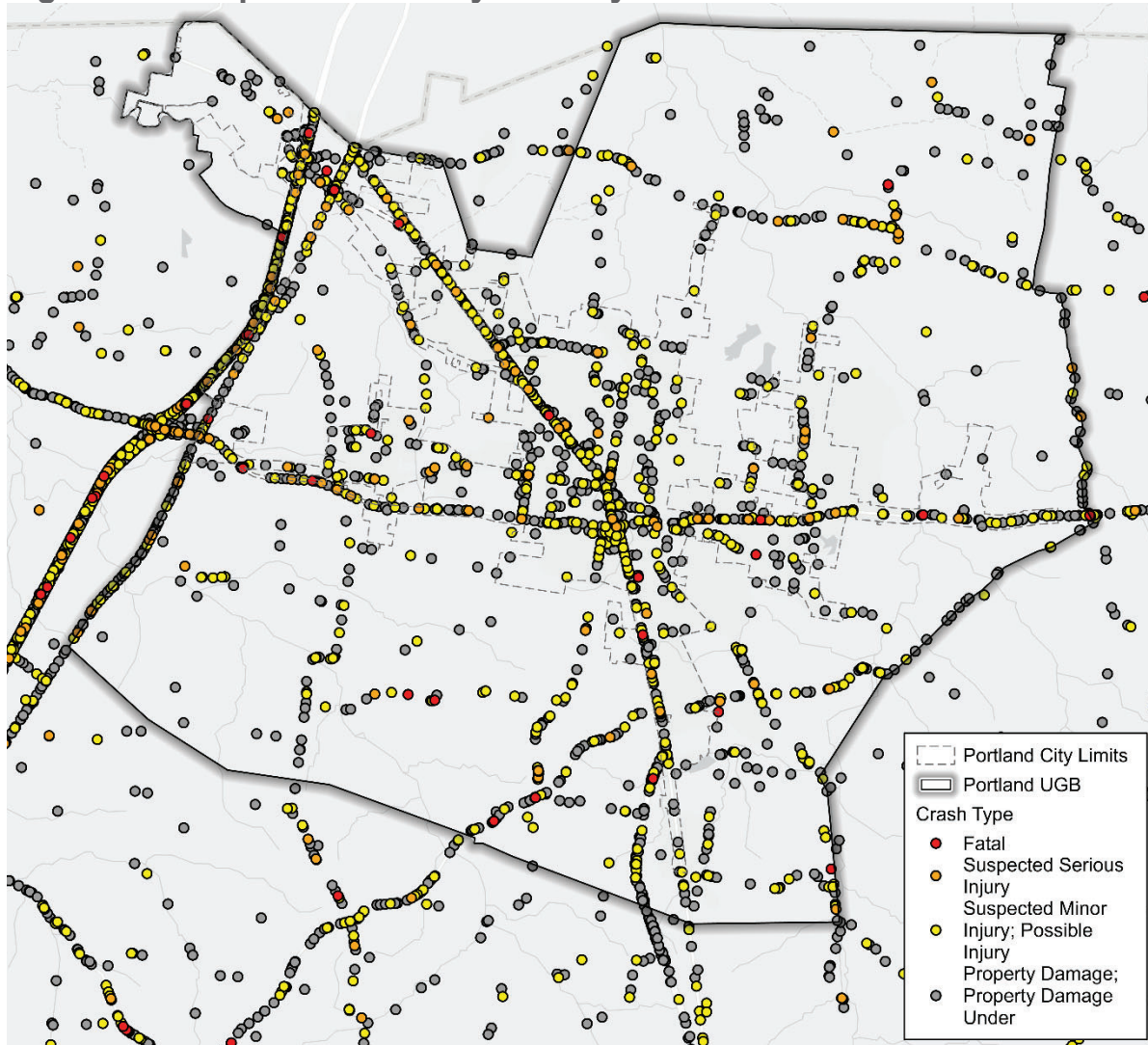
## Roadway Safety

Beyond capacity concerns, improving connectivity and increasing roadway safety are issues facing the city as it plans for the future. The map below shows the locations of all car crashes, including those that resulted in a fatality or a suspected serious injury between 2018 and 2022.

Roadway safety is a vital aspect of transportation because people should be able to get from point A to point B safely. Whether an individual is riding the bus to work, driving to the grocery store, or walking to the park, they should have confidence that their trip will be safe. When trips are perceived as unsafe, it can discourage trips from happening, and thus limit access to

opportunities. To prevent the loss of life, injuries, and other negative outcomes associated with poor roadway safety, the region is committed to improving safety for all users of the system.

**Figure 24. Map of Crashes by Severity**



## Multimodal Accommodations

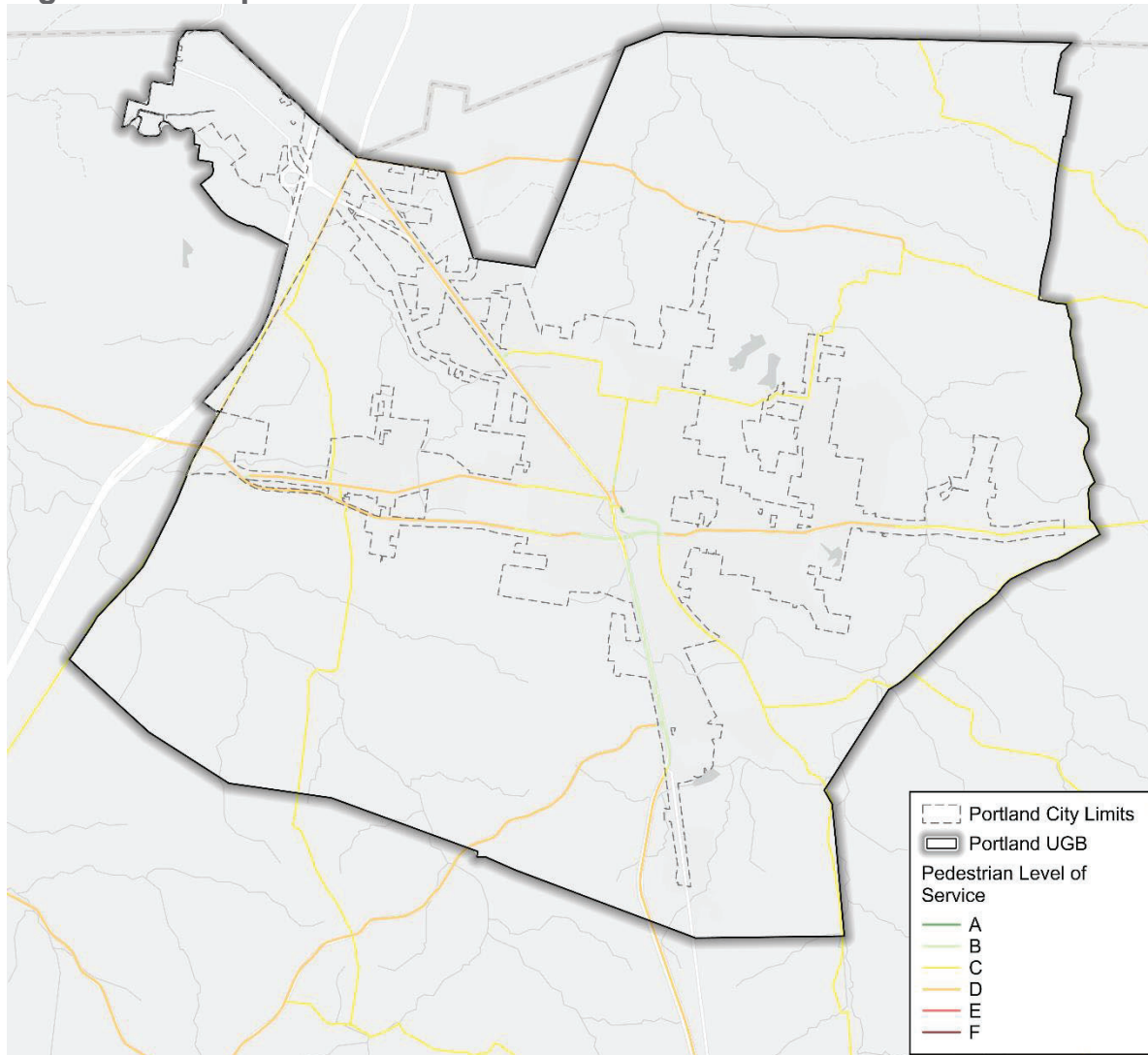
Mobility challenges in Portland also include limited sidewalks, misaligned street connections, and the lack of public transit. With no local public transit service, the nearest fixed-route public transportation option is the Regional Transportation Authority Express Bus 87, with park-and-ride stops in Gallatin and Hendersonville. On-demand public transportation service, provided by Mid Cumberland Human Resource Agency, is available in the city. Community sentiment is that alternative modes of transportation would make Portland better since they identified the lack of transit and sidewalk connections as contributing factors to a poor quality of life.

Many factors influence one's decision to walk, bike, or use public transit when making a decision about how to get around. Many of these factors have to do with the physical environment which includes the presence of adequate walking and biking accommodations and the availability of

transit service. Various tools have been developed in recent years to assist engineers and planners in evaluating the ability of roads to serve pedestrians and bicyclists.

Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) is a nationally-used measure of user comfort level as a function of a road corridor's geometry and traffic conditions. To calculate PLOS is to assign a grade, A through F, to a portion of roadway. This grade is meant to correspond to the perceived level of service that the roadway provides to pedestrians. The evaluation of pedestrian levels of service involves the walking conditions within the shared roadway environment (e.g. sidewalk or path to the side of the roadway) since pedestrians typically do not utilize the roadway unless there is no other option.

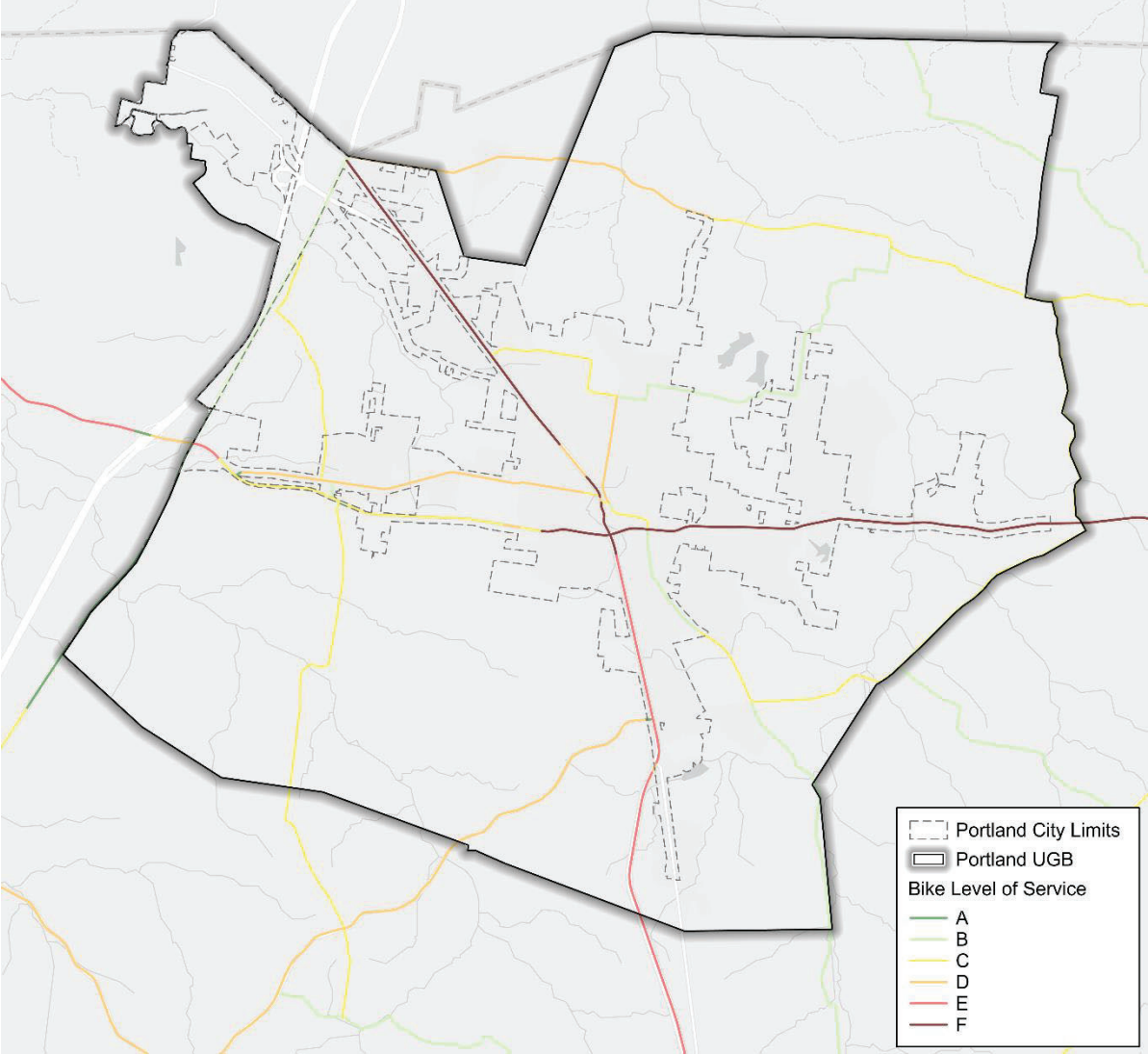
**Figure 25. Map of Pedestrian Level of Service**



Similar to the PLOS analysis, a Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) model for the Nashville region was developed based on NCHRP Report 616 for the analyses of the roadway segments inventoried in the Nashville MPO area. Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) is a nationally-used measure of on-road bicyclist comfort level as a function of a roadway's geometry and traffic conditions. To calculate BLOS is to assign a grade, A through F, to a portion of roadway.

This grade is meant to correspond to the perceived level of service that the roadway provides to bicyclists. A BLOS model for bicyclists incorporates “quality of service” by accounting for measures like comfort, safety, and ease of mobility. Roadways with a better (lower) score are more attractive (and usually safer) for cyclists.

**Figure 26. Map of Bicycle Level of Service**



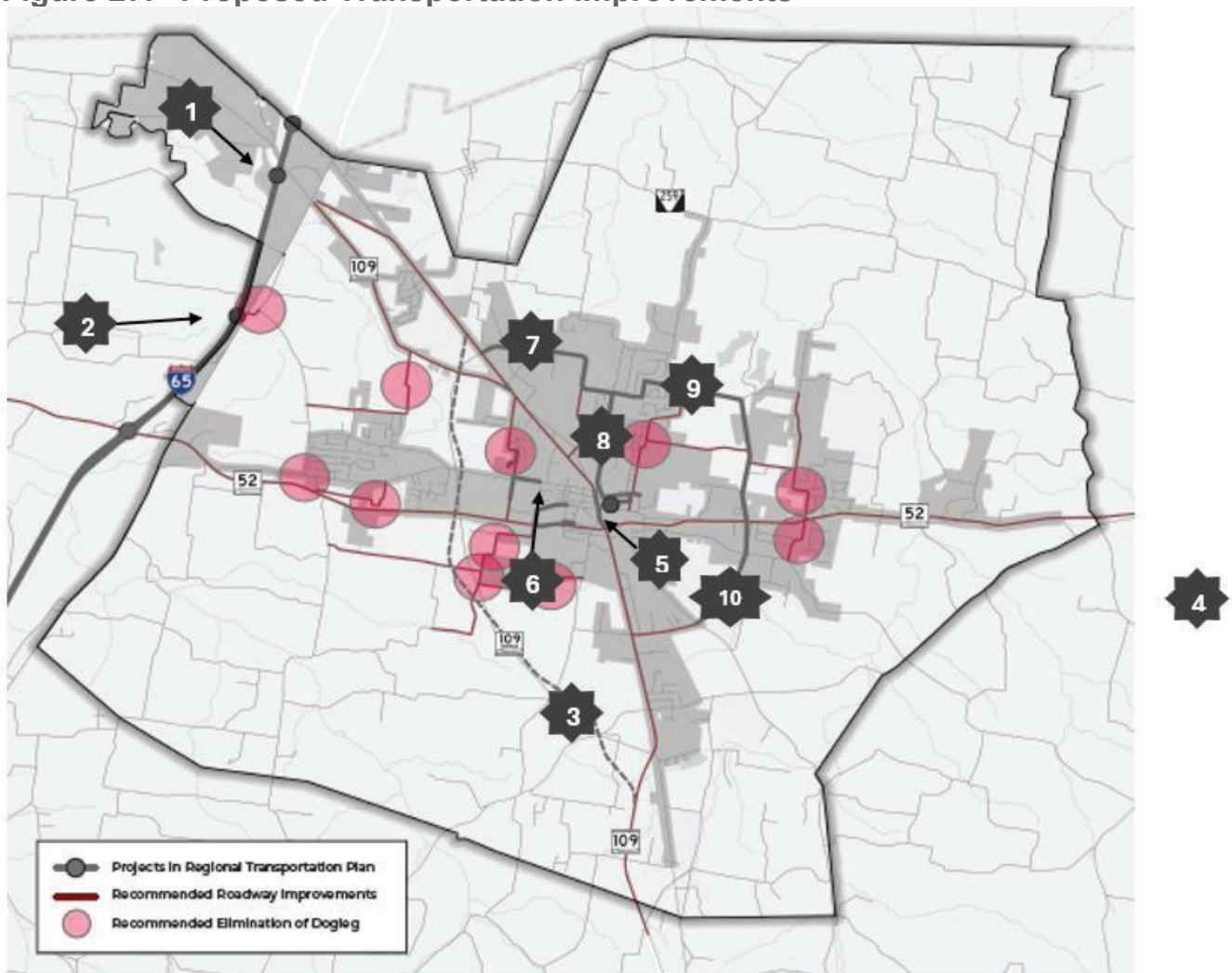
# Proposed Improvements

*Preserving Portland* includes proposed transportation improvements to help the city prepare for future growth. The City of Portland is a member of a seven-county federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staffed by GNRC. The MPO is the formal forum for cities, counties, public transit agencies, county highway departments, and the TN Department of Transportation to cooperatively plan for transportation improvements and to prioritize the use of federal and state funds to pay for roadway and other transportation projects.

*Preserving Portland* took into consideration planned transportation improvements to help the city prepare for future growth and identify locations where additional investment will be needed to address specific issues. The map below depicts recommended transportation improvements (red) and projects already identified in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (gray) which includes TDOT and local government projects scheduled for implementation by 2045.

More information Regional Transportation Plan projects in and around Portland and across the region is available online at [GNRC.org/transportation](http://GNRC.org/transportation).

**Figure 27. Proposed Transportation Improvements**



More information and interactive maps: [www.gnrc.org/maps/rtp](http://www.gnrc.org/maps/rtp) | [www.gnrc.org/tip](http://www.gnrc.org/tip)

## Key Projects

### 1. SR-109 & I-65 Interchange Lighting Project

- This project involves the installation of lighting at the SR-109 and I-65 interchange in Portland in order to enhance safety at the interchange.
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

### 2. I-65 Weigh Station Near the TN/KY State Line

- This project will consist of the renovation and reconstruction of the current site, including the ramps, truck parking, and the addition of an inspection pit with a shed. It also includes upgrading the lighting, reconstructing the weigh scale building, and replacing the landscaping on the southbound side of I-65.
- *Lead Agency: TDOT*

### 3. SR-109 Portland Bypass

- SR-109 - Portland Bypass from SR-109 south of SR-76 to SR-109 near Kirby Dr. (IA)(TMA)
- *Lead Agency: TDOT*

### 4. Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

- Develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

### 5. Portland Intelligent Transportation System (Phase 2)

- This project will improve traffic operations for the four (4) signalized intersections along SR-109 between SR-52 and College Street. The project will include the installation of new traffic signal cabinets and Advanced Traffic Controllers at these four intersections. The project will also include improved vehicle detection equipment that will improve detection performance and reliability for each traffic signal. Fiber optic interconnect will be constructed between these traffic signals to ensure time synchronization and the enhancement of traffic flows along SR-109 through downtown Portland. This project will also include the development of new signal timings and phasing improvements, which will then be implemented at the four signalized intersections along SR-109.
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

### 6. Portland Pedestrian Connector Project

- This project includes two separate sections of sidewalk extensions and provides a complete pedestrian connection from Portland High School and Portland West Middle School to three separate residential areas. It includes approximately 6,000 linear feet of sidewalk, curb ramps, pavement marking upgrades, signage, stormwater improvements, and potential landscaping and pedestrian amenities. The proposed extensions will be along Searcy Lane from Portland High School to College Street, College Street from Searcy Lane to SR-109, West Market Street from WB Dye Road to SR-52, Sandye Avenue from SR-52 to Oak Street, and Oak Street from Sandye Avenue to SR-52.
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

## 7. Kirby Road Widening

- This project will widen Kirby Road to three 12' lanes with shoulders, curb and gutter, and sidewalks. The project will begin at SR-109 and end at North Russell Street, tying into the East Connector project (RTP: 2924) at the eastern terminus.
- Termini: S. Russell Street to SR-52, 2 future lanes
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

## 8. North Russell Street Reconstruction

- This project will reconstruct North Russell Street from E McGlothlin Street to Kirby Drive to include two 12' lanes with curb and gutter, and sidewalks.
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

## 9. East Connector

- This project will construct a new route connecting Westland Avenue to SR-52 East in northeast Portland. The proposed route will follow a new alignment north of SR-52 to Westland Road. Existing segments of Westland Road will be upgraded to 3 lanes.
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

## 10. Longview Drive Extension

- This project will extend Longview Avenue in a northeasterly direction to SR-52 East. The route will include 2 lanes, curb and gutter, and sidewalks.
- *Lead Agency: Portland*

## Key Strategies

### Adopt a Fix-it-First Approach

A commitment to annual maintenance protects the value of the city's current assets. The prioritization of maintenance of the transportation system over capital expansion projects can help ensure funding levels are sufficient and reliable for the ongoing maintenance of the system.

### Reinvest in Existing Infrastructure

Reinvestment in existing infrastructure maximizes the economic impact of limited transportation dollars and ensures that roadway networks are not overextended beyond the city's ability to maintain its assets. Emphasis should be placed on the modernization of the major corridors in order to retrofit them to improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians. In addition to accommodating nonmotorized users, reinvestment can consist of upgrading outdated traffic signals and technology to leverage emerging technologies.

### Implement Pavement Management Systems and Recycled Materials

Pavement management systems allow asset owners to assess the maintenance needs of their transportation assets to determine the appropriate funding levels and prioritize the most pressing roadway needs. Currently, only a select number of larger cities within the region maintain a pavement management system. Expanded adoption and implementation of pavement management systems by communities across the region can ensure that assets beyond the federal-aid network are also properly maintained.

Advancements in technology over the past decade have increased the types and uses of recycled materials in transportation construction as it has been shown to reduce cost, save time, and in

some cases superior performance and long-term environmental benefits. Improved coordination with the solid waste providers in the region can increase the amount of recycled material used in transportation infrastructure, and requires the identification or implementation of suitable processing facilities to refine construction debris, tires, and glass so material is more easily integrated.

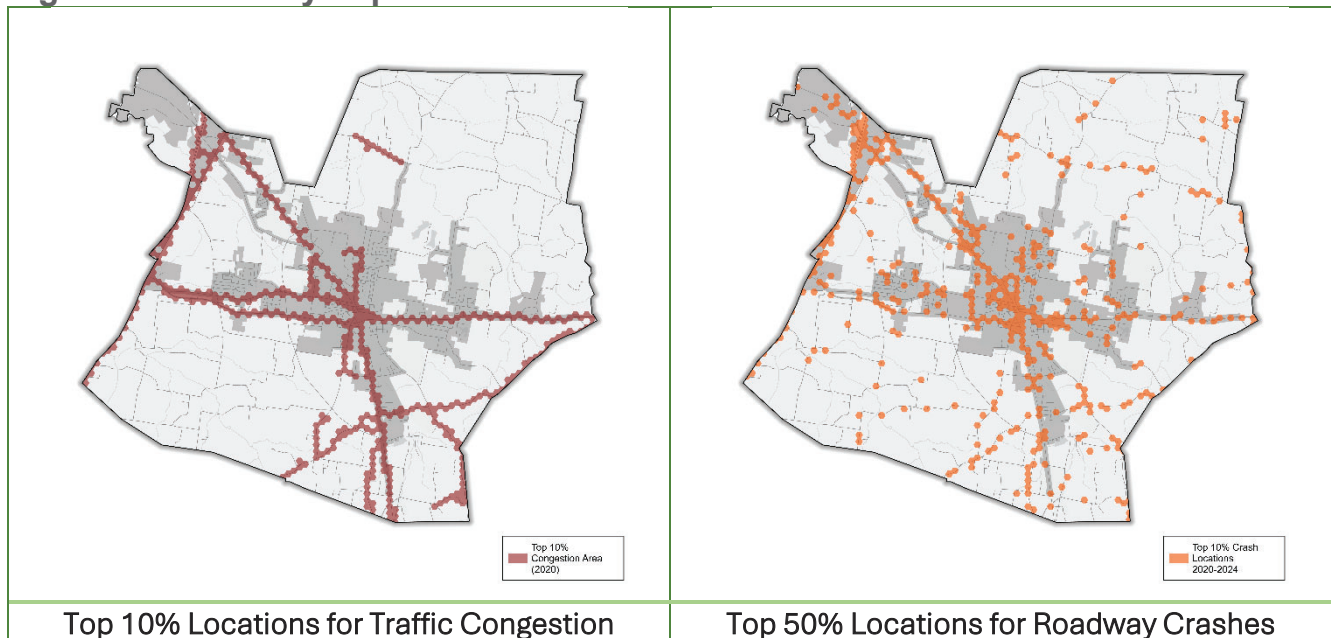
### Modernize Corridors with Multimodal Accommodations

A safe transportation system relies on the availability of transportation facilities for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. With decades of auto-oriented investments behind us, the time is now for retrofitting roadways to include options for all. The major corridors in the region are predominately designed for motorized vehicles, yet pedestrians and bicyclists also depend on these pikes to access key transit routes and destinations. The modernization of these major corridors to provide safe access for nonmotorized users will require upgrades to provide sidewalk continuity along the corridor and safe and frequent opportunities to cross the corridor.

Improving access to alternative modes of transportation can help reduce the burden placed on roadways to support travel demand. Multimodal strategies include programs and projects that give people choices beyond just driving alone in their cars.

As the region’s roadway capacity is expected to become increasingly overwhelmed by travel demand, travelers will seek options that can get them to destinations timely and dependably. The region will need to move people more efficiently than driving alone. High capacity transit service will be necessary to ensure reliable and convenient travel along the region’s main corridors and active transportation investments will help ensure safe access to transit and reduce the need for shorter automobile trips that can be made by walking and bicycling.

**Figure 28. Priority Improvement Areas**



## **Improve Intersection Controls to Reduce Severity**

Intersections are a source of conflict between roadway users and are a common location of severe crashes. In addition, about one third of all bicycle and pedestrian crashes occur at intersections. Thus, improvements at traffic signal infrastructure, implementation of safer intersection design, and investment in ITS improvements can help reduce the number of severe crashes in Portland. Safety countermeasures such as constructing crossing islands, roundabouts, and raised crossings can also reduce crash severity for nonmotorized users at intersections.

## **Enforce Motor Carrier Safety**

Tennessee has more through trucks on its roadways than any other state in the country. The high prevalence of trucks and their greater potential to result in severe crashes elevates the importance of enforcing laws and regulations of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Strategies to update weigh stations, target enforcement, and increase inspections can help reduce the occurrence, frequency, and severity of CMV crashes.

## **Promote Safety Education**

Safety education is necessary to complement engineering improvements to address safety. Through coordination between safety agencies, education stakeholders, and others from the transportation community, education and outreach efforts can be implemented throughout the region to increase awareness for both drivers and active transportation users.

## **Enforce Traffic Laws with Technology**

The safety consequences of running red lights, speeding, and other dangerous driving practices can be serious, if not fatal. Investing in automated enforcement technologies like Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras and Red-Light Cameras can dramatically improve high crash corridors and save numerous lives. Enforcement technology is critical in changing unsafe driving behaviors and can help prevent severe crashes.

## **Improve Incident Response**

Crashes are a frequent occurrence on the transportation system. Roadway traffic incident management can help minimize injury and potential fatalities through swift action and coordination from all first responders. Continued investment in the operation of incident response is essential in Tennessee to improve emergency response and improve safety outcomes in the area.

## **Greenways and Multi-Use Trails**

A regional study is being planned for 2025-2026 to identify recommendations for new connections within Portland and across the region by greenway or multi-purpose trail.

## **Minimize or Mitigate Environmental Impacts**

Avoidance strategies prevent negative environmental impacts before they happen by implementing projects in places or with features that minimize environmental conflicts or challenges. These strategies are best deployed by project sponsors and their design and engineering teams. Key avoidance strategies consist of: 1) design modifications that may result in raising a transportation asset out of a regulatory floodplain, utilizing a clear-span bridge to cross a river or stream, green infrastructure to improve the quality of stormwater discharge, or culverts to allow safe crossings for wildlife migration, and 2) alternative alignments to connect logical termini of a project in a manner that reduces the direct overlap or intersection with natural or sociocultural resources.

Mitigation strategies recognize that an environmental conflict may be unavoidable and therefore attempt to compensate for that impact by investing in resource conservation or restoration within the project vicinity. These strategies likely require significant participation from project sponsors but may also require participation from other project partners or collaborators. Key mitigation strategies include restoration/compensation programs, excavation and relocation, and wetland/stream mitigation banking.

# Chapter 6. Implementation Guidance

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*Preserving Portland* is an important step in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the city and its surrounding areas, but several more must be taken to achieve its goals. The city government is prepared to focus its energy and prioritize its resources to implement a set of recommendations that will guide the community on its path towards its vision.

Recommendations are presented in a logical sequence of steps to be taken subsequently to the plan's adoption, but they do not necessarily need to be taken in exact order. The city should maintain flexibility as it works with residents, property owners, and developers to implement *Preserving Portland*, over time, as opportunities arise.

## Next Steps

A comprehensive plan becomes a reality when the community makes choices to realize the vision. What regulations and policies are implemented, the investments the community makes, and decisions for the “what goes where” will determine the success of the comprehensive plan. When Portland leaders are committed to making decisions consistent with *Preserving Portland*, it will be through the following:

- **Land Use and Design Regulations** - The comprehensive plan provides policy guidance for the zoning ordinance, which determines land use, density, and other characteristics of the built environment, and for the subdivision regulations, which determine the division of land and the provision of standards for infrastructure. After the plan is adopted, the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations should be updated to reflect the plan. Additionally, the city may consider a design review manual to guide future development's urban design and architectural elements.
- **Small Area Plans** - The comprehensive plan cannot provide detailed directions for what should happen on every block or parcel of land. However, more focused plans and studies can be conducted for specific neighborhoods, centers/hubs, and corridors to develop in a manner that reflects the spirit and intent of the comprehensive plan at a more granular level.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure** - The comprehensive plan provides guidance for infrastructure investments to improve conditions, capacity, or change how infrastructure is used.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space** – The comprehensive plan supports the recommendations of the 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and expands on the intent of the plan by identifying areas for future parks and recreation facilities and infrastructure. The city should use the comprehensive plan to help guide future investments and infrastructure priorities.

## Update Regulatory Tools

### Zoning

The city is empowered to adopt and amend a zoning ordinance, pursuant T.C.A. §13-7-201, to "regulate the location, height, bulk, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures; the percentage of the lot that may be occupied; the sizes of yards, courts, and other open spaces;

the density of population; and the uses of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, public activities, and other purposes ..." and establish special districts or zones "subject to seasonal or periodic flooding ... and such regulations may be applied therein as will minimize danger to life and property." Zoning regulations may provide for the transfer of development rights under procedures and restrictions set out in T.C.A. § 13-7-201(a)(2).

The planning commission is responsible for certifying to the local governing body a zoning plan, the text of a zoning ordinance, and zoning maps. Any change in the ordinance, including the zoning map, must be referred to the planning commission for approval for recommendation and consideration by the local governing body. The planning commission's disapproval may be overridden by a majority vote of the entire legislative body. The same procedure applies to any zoning ordinance text amendment. T.C.A. §§ 13-7-201–204.

With the adoption of *Preserving Portland*, the city should consider an update to the zoning ordinance to ensure its consistency with the community vision.

### **Subdivision Regulations**

The Tennessee Code gives local governments, via their planning commissions, the authority to adopt and enforce subdivision regulations. These regulations that manage the subdivision of property is a common and essential method for implementing a community's comprehensive planning program.

"Subdivision" in this context is not simply the residential development you live in. It is how communities grow and develop over time. It involves the process of dividing raw land into lots, streets, parks and the other spaces that together form the underlying development pattern and structure of a community. Regulating this process is critical to any community that is interested in planning for its future. Once an area has been divided into lots, the street system has been established, and utilities have been installed, a development pattern has been established that is unlikely to be changed. The application of well-crafted subdivision regulations provides a community with the best opportunity to ensure that newly developed neighborhoods and other areas are properly designed, constructed, and integrated into the surrounding area.

### **Develop Subarea Plans**

Chapter 5 of this plan envisions special districts or focus areas that will require more detailed community planning. Subarea land use and infrastructure plans should be developed for these areas in collaboration with area residents and existing businesses to help the city, private developers, and major employers increase their chance for successful outcomes.

### **Develop Functional Plans**

In addition to localized land use plans, many communities will develop functional plans to provide further guidance for the prioritization of services and infrastructure. Some examples of functional plans that align with *Preserving Portland* recommendations include:

- Downtown/ Main Street Revitalization Plan,
- Open Space Plan,
- Historic Preservation Plan,
- Freight and Goods Movement Plan,
- Curbside and Access Management Plan,
- Broadband and Technology Deployment Plan,

- Solid Waste Management Plan,
- Traffic Management Plans, and
- Community Improvement Plans.

## **Regular Review of Urban Growth Boundaries**

*Preserving Portland* should help inform Sumner’s and Robertson’s “Countywide Growth Plans” required by Public Chapter 1101. The local jurisdictions should embrace coordination and collaboration during the development review process to ensure consistency with the countywide plan and those plans of each neighboring community.

## **Align Capital Improvement Plans and Budgets**

Government budgets are an expression of a community’s values and priorities. As city develops its annual budget, significant effort should be made to prioritize the infrastructure needs and projects identified through *Preserving Portland*.

The public finance experts who comprise the Government Finance Officers Association recommend the following strategies to ensure the effective use of public tax dollars and their alignment with community expectations.

## **Leverage the Development Review Process**

The city should evaluate its development review process to ensure that it yields results that are consistent with *Preserving Portland* and consider opportunities to streamline the review process for development proposals that make a clear attempt at implementing recommendations from the plan.

Development review plays a significant role in a community’s ability to create a diverse and attractive place to live and work. New development and redevelopment can improve the city’s tax base, provide diverse opportunities for housing choice, improve options for mobility, and create new employment opportunities. Development review can be an effective tool for retaining and enhancing quality of life by ensuring development proposals:

- are consistent with the plan and associated land development regulations,
- consist of high-quality building design and effective site planning,
- include the necessary public improvements to limit the city’s maintenance, service, and replacement costs, and
- provide an overall public benefit.

In most communities, the land development approval process includes standards, and forms have been developed incrementally over the years and, in many cases, have become increasingly complex and challenging for applicants to navigate. In a lot of communities, the local development review process is criticized for being unpredictable and taking too long.

## **Monitor Progress to Maintain the Plan**

The Planning Commission is responsible for maintaining the plan to accurately reflect current community conditions and the community’s vision and priorities for the future. Maintenance of the plan includes minor plan amendments, progress reports and significant plan updates, each of which is described in more detail below.

## Online and Interactive Plan

The PreservingPortland.org website, initially launched to serve as the official clearinghouse for information related to the planning process, will continue to be a community resource throughout the life of the Plan. The site includes the full text of the plan and links to relevant documents. The website will be updated periodically with new data and maps and be used to track the city's progress towards implementation including amendments to policies and policy type or land use designations.

## Annual Progress Report

The Planning Commission and its staff should prepare an Annual Report for submittal and presentation to city elected officials. The report should contain the status of implementation, significant actions and accomplishments, as well as recommendations for needed actions and programs to be developed and implemented in the coming year. The time schedule for preparing the Annual Report should be coordinated with the preparation of the annual budget so that the recommendations will be available early in the budgeting process.

## Periodic Updates

Minor plan amendments provide opportunities for relatively minor updates and revisions such as changes in Place Type designations and recommended actions to ensure continued consistency with ordinances and regulations. Amendments should be an ongoing process throughout the year and be prepared and distributed in the form of addenda to the adopted plan. The Planning Commission should review and approve proposed changes following plan adoption procedures.

Major updates to the plan should occur at least every five to ten years. These updates will ensure continued usefulness of the plan for use by public officials, staff, and others. Plan updates will be a significant undertaking involving public officials, departments, and citizens and consultant services may be utilized if necessary. As part of a plan update, the base data including population projections and existing land use should be reviewed and updated. Additionally, the goals, objectives and policies of the plan should be analyzed and reviewed to determine their effectiveness and relevance to current conditions.

# Strategies for Success

## Intergovernmental Coordination

Successful implementation of *Preserving Portland* will depend greatly on the ability of the city government to work with its county, regional, state, and federal governmental partners and its network of private sector developers and investors. Middle Tennessee has a proven track record of fostering intergovernmental coordination to plan and deliver infrastructure projects and policy or legislative solutions to benefit cities and counties across the entire region. Specifically, Portland should:

- Provide leadership in regional planning efforts sponsored by the Greater Nashville Regional Council,
- Coordinate with local municipalities to establish a process for adoption and implementation of the recommendations of the plan for areas within and just outside the UGB,

- Work together with county school districts to achieve the mutual goals and policies and to efficiently plan for development in the community as a whole and not as individual parts,
- Coordination with state economic development efforts, social service programs and environmental and public infrastructure programs.

### **Non-Profit Collaboration**

The city should leverage the expertise and capacity of community leaders from local non-profits and faith-based organizations to enhance and expand much-needed social services and basic necessities to those individuals in need of community assistance programs. These leaders are already working on the front lines with the most vulnerable citizens of Portland and have proven track records of success coordinating services and support to these individuals.

### **Citizen Engagement and Customer Feedback**

Measuring the pulse of the community on a regular basis through statistically valid citizen satisfaction surveys will provide the feedback necessary to know if the public perceives that the city is on the right track with its initiatives and investments. Moreover, benchmarking those survey results with other counties will provide an opportunity to show where Portland is outperforming its peers in important quality of life indicators.

