

Blount County Green Infrastructure Plan

Blount County, Tennessee

July 23, 2009

Blount County Green Infrastructure Plan

Blount County Planning Commission

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Certified Adopted July 23, 2009

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Blount County Green Infrastructure Plan

1) Introduction.

We are growing. We are growing into green spaces – farmlands, forestlands, open spaces, watersheds, wetlands, hills and mountains. Green spaces are valued. We need to plan for green infrastructure.

The above four statements summarize the motivation for adopting this Green Infrastructure Plan for Blount County. For the purpose of this Plan, green infrastructure includes but is not limited to farmlands, forestlands, rivers, streams, wetlands, mountains, parks, greenways, recreation fields, and the natural and constructed areas of green and open space that enhance and preserve rural character, provide recreation opportunities, conserve and protect the natural environment, and enhance the livability of the county.

The Green Infrastructure Planning Process had its beginning in four recent plans and studies. First was the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan developed in 2003 to 2005. That Plan identified a need for about 400 acres of active and passive recreation areas, and also identified preservation of natural areas as a needed adjunct to a parks system. (Master Plan available at www.blounttn.org/planning under the Plans Section).

Second were the Blount County Growth Strategy, and the related City of Maryville Urban Growth Strategy, developed by Hunter Interests, Inc (HII), in 2004 to 2005. The growth strategies included several recommendations that relate to developing a green infrastructure plan, including a recommendation to develop an open space plan as part of a parks and recreation plan. (County Growth Strategy available at www.blounttn.org/planning under the Plans Section).

Third was work by the Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC), appointed by the County Commission in June of 2007 to address a recommendation in the HII County Growth Strategy concerning a purchase of development rights program. The Committee submitted its report in March 2008

(see Appendix D). The final report was forwarded to the Planning Commission by the County Commission in February 2009 for consideration in this Plan.

Fourth, the most recent was revision of the Policies Plan, adopted by the Planning Commission on September 25, 2008. In that Plan, the Planning Commission committed to a Green Infrastructure Planning Process to identify strategic and priority lands for conservation, preservation and protection, and to planning for open spaces and parks. (Plan available at www.blounttn.org/planning under the Plans section)

The purpose of this Green Infrastructure Plan is to extend previous work, in particular to: focus on the reasons for pursuing green infrastructure by addressing why it is important and what benefits accrue; identify avenues of implementation; identify priority geographical areas for green infrastructure to guide future activities; and identify and prioritize actions and resources necessary to address green infrastructure.

This Green Infrastructure Plan is a strategic plan. The intent is to incorporate this Plan into a larger Comprehensive Plan in the near future, and to continue planning at more detailed levels as implementation activities are undertaken.

The Green Infrastructure Planning Process was the work of many individuals and groups. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was represented by Liz Upchurch, and provided assistance in developing planning process materials and facilitation. The Southeast Watershed Forum (SEWF www.southeastwaterforum.org) was represented by Jane Fowler under contract to provide education materials and facilitation advice, and to conduct two workshops geared toward Planning Commissioners. The SEWF also provided support funding via grants from the Wildlife Conservation Society and US EPA. The Planning Process was a joint effort of the Planning Commissions and Planning Staffs of Alcoa, Maryville, and Blount County, and the Planning Commissions of Friendsville, Louisville and Townsend along with Planners from the State of Tennessee E&CD Local Planning Assistance Office serving the smaller cities in the County.

This Green Infrastructure Plan is divided into fourteen sections, covering the following subjects:

- 1) introduction (present section);
- 2) two definitions of green infrastructure;
- 3) components of green infrastructure;
- 4) growth in the county;
- 5) relation of green infrastructure to previous plans;
- 6) benefits of green infrastructure;
- 7), 8), 9), 10) & 11) components of green infrastructure implementation (five sections);
- 12) results of mapping workshops to identify priority areas for green infrastructure;
- 13) workshop results on priority reasons and purposes of green infrastructure; and
- 14) strategic plan for priority implementation activities, resources and geographic focus for the future.

Four appendices at the end of the Plan provide:

- A) results of citizen mapping workshops;
- B) results of a Planning Commission mapping workshop;
- C) results of implementation strategies workshop; and
- D) report of the Growth Management Advisory Committee on strategies for a Purchase of Development Rights program.

A short Bibliography is provided at the end of the appendices, and includes useful references available on the internet at the date of this Plan.

2) What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure may be defined in several ways. In a comprehensive, ecology-focused definition, green infrastructure may be defined as follows:

An interconnected network of natural areas and other open spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clean air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife. Used in this context, green infrastructure is the ecological framework for environmental, social and economic health – in short, our natural life support system. (Green Infrastructure – Linking Landscapes and Communities, p. 1, Mark A. Benedict and Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund, Island Press, 2006.)

Others use the term Green Infrastructure in more limited application to various aspects of parks, greenways, urban landscaping, and more natural ways to address storm water runoff.

This Plan is limited in the use of the term green infrastructure. While broad ecological systems are important in concept, this Plan does not provide the detail of research and analysis in biological systems to claim a comprehensive approach to conserving a wide array of natural ecosystem values and functions. Neither does this Plan focus just on specific parks, greenways, landscaping characteristics, or storm water issues. At the same time, this Plan assumes that efforts to address green infrastructure should reap benefits to the natural environment, and may address more specific issues as well.

We need to start somewhere. For the purposes of this Plan, in the planning context of Blount County, the following definition will serve:

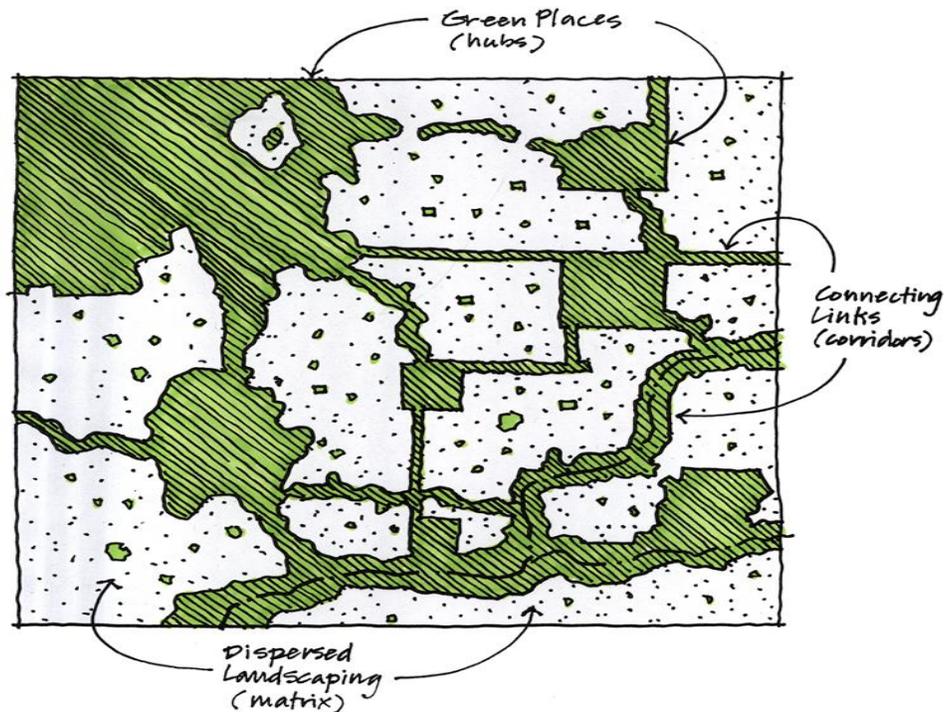
Green infrastructure includes but is not limited to farmlands, forestlands, rivers, streams, wetlands, mountains, parks, greenways, recreation facilities, and the natural and constructed areas of green and open space that enhance and preserve rural character, provide recreation opportunities, conserve and protect the natural environment, and enhance the livability of the county.

Using the word “infrastructure” in this context is intended to highlight the importance of green areas and open space in the overall development framework of the county. Grey infrastructure already is being addressed, such as roads,

schools, utilities and public buildings. Green infrastructure is also important, as illustrated in existing plans for the county and the commitment to this Plan.

3) What are components of green infrastructure?

The ideal pattern for green infrastructure is a connected network and matrix of components that would look something like the illustration below. The connected network is composed of two elements. Hubs anchor the green infrastructure network, and provide origin or destination for wildlife, people, and ecological processes. Hubs can be large conservation areas, but can also be parks and productive lands. Links are relatively narrow, linear segments of land connecting hubs, providing biological or hydrological connections or corridors. Links also allow movement of people and wildlife, and can integrate recreational activities such as bicycle and pedestrian paths.

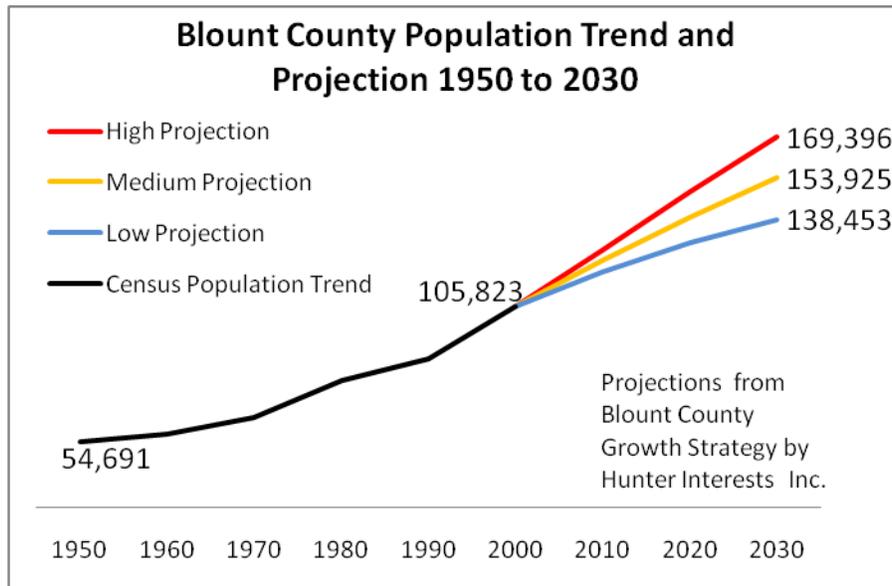


Graphic – UT College of Architecture and Design Green Vision Studio

In addition to the ideal connected network, smaller areas or sites which are not connected to larger hubs or each other are also recognized as part of the landscape matrix of green infrastructure. These are more locally important areas that may be as small as a patch of wetland, a “pocket park,” open space designed in a subdivision, or even a special landscaped place on an individual lot.

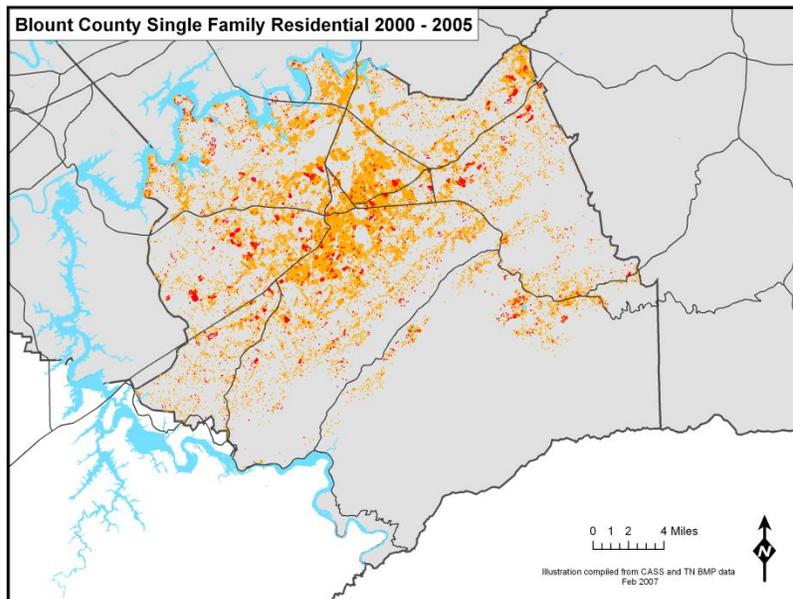
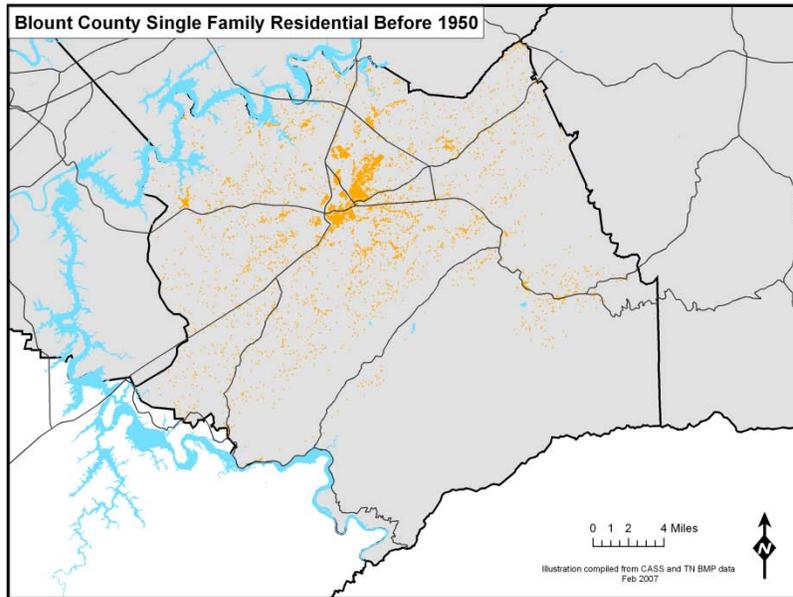
4) We are growing. We are growing into green spaces.

Blount County grew continuously from a population of 54,691 in 1950, to a population of 105,823 in 2000. The most recent estimate of population for July 2008 was 121,511 (US Census Bureau). The Hunter Interests, Inc. (HII) Blount County Growth Strategy projects that county population could increase in a range from low of 138,453 to high of 169,396 by the year 2030.



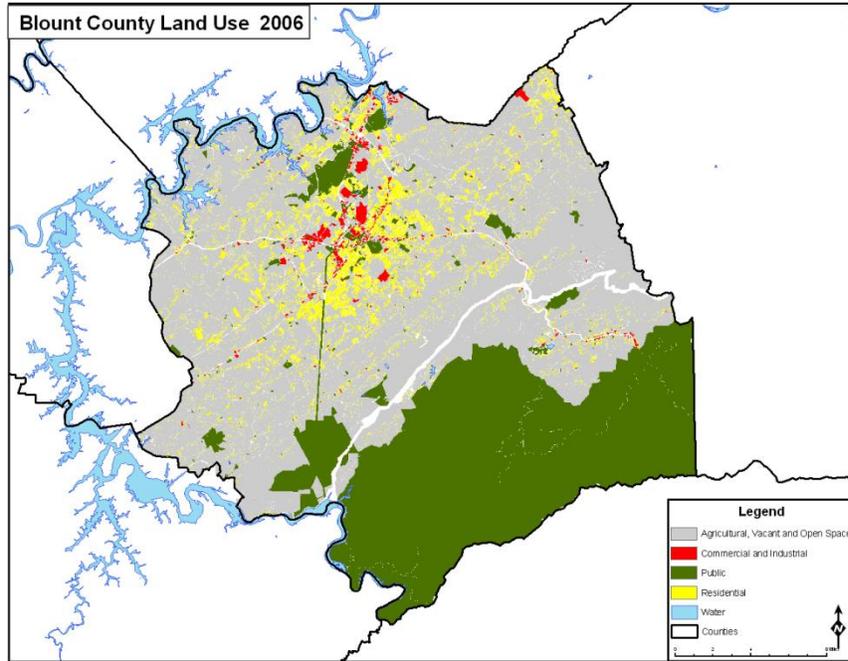
Population growth is associated with the conversion of rural land to urban and suburban use. In 1950, the residential development pattern showed a relatively tight concentration in and around the two largest cities of Alcoa and Maryville (map on next page). By 2000, the residential development pattern showed a

much wider dispersion into the rural parts of the county, with growth from 2000 to 2005 showing a sprawling pattern (red in second map below).



Maps produced by the E&CD Local Planning Assistance Office, East Tennessee Region.

Adding other land uses to the mix (next page) shows that Blount County still has a large percentage of its area that is not developed into urban and suburban uses.



Map produced by the E&CD Local Planning Assistance Office, East Tennessee Region.

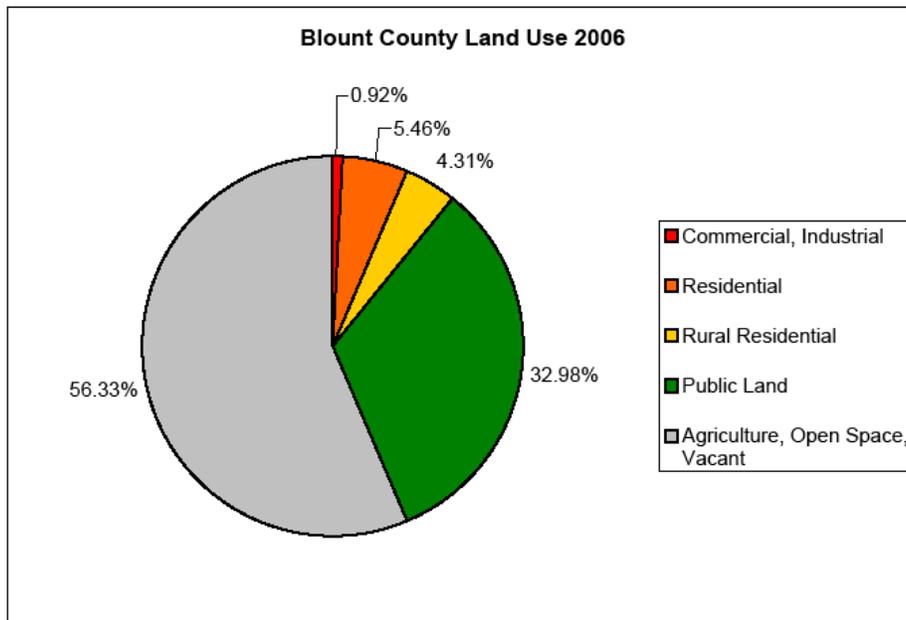


Chart produced by the E&CD Local Planning Assistance Office, East Tennessee Region.

A large amount of land in Blount County may be counted as green space. Approximately 25 percent of land area is in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and is protected, but much of the remainder is subject to varying degrees of growth pressure. This green space is valued by the citizens of the county, and by those visiting the county as tourists. The value of green space indicates a need to address its long term integrity in the face of continued growth.

5) Green spaces are valued – green infrastructure and existing plans.

Plans embody the values and expectations that a community holds for the future. The Blount County Policies Plan is one of the starting points for this Plan. The Policies Plan provides several guiding principles, goals and implementation strategies that can illustrate why green infrastructure is important. Three of the five guiding policies are:

The rural, small town and natural character of the county should be preserved.

Land use and development should be managed and regulated in order to preserve the quality of our growing county.

Growth and development should be balanced with provision of adequate public infrastructure.

Part of the character of the county, the quality of our growing county, and adequate public infrastructure relates to green infrastructure, as illustrated in several more detailed objective policies and implementation strategies as follows:

New development should be designed to fit into the rural character of the county.

Rural character should include trees and natural vegetation, open space, and natural features.

Farmland should be preserved both for open space and to conserve prime agricultural production areas.

Encourage conservation groups to accept voluntary donations of land, and to accept money contributions for purchase of development rights.

Pursue a purchase of development rights program.

Our beautiful and scenic environment should be protected, including commonly shared viewsapes, ridge tops, lakeshores and river banks.

The lakes, rivers and streams in the county should be protected as a part of our natural environment and drinking water resource, and as part of our scenic and recreational resource.

Preserve and provide formal open space for parks and recreation.

Development on mountains and ridge tops should be regulated to protect sensitive areas of slope and viewsapes.

Plans should be formulated to address schools, roads, parks and recreation, and other public infrastructure for growth and development, including a comprehensive plan, capital improvement program and capital improvement budget.

Green infrastructure in the form of preserved farms, open space and natural recreation areas, is important to community character and quality of life. A green infrastructure plan should be formulated to identify strategic and priority lands, and should be incorporated into a county comprehensive plan.

Two other planning studies that illustrate the value of green infrastructure are the Blount County Growth Strategy and the companion Maryville Urban Growth Strategy, both produced by Hunter Interests, Inc (HII) from 2004 to 2005. The Blount County Growth Strategy envisioned plans that would: address open space as a supplement to the parks and recreation plan of the county; address measures that would help insure preservation of rural character, including a purchase of development rights program and regulations that require conservation of green space within developments; and address preservation of land to prevent harmful

effects in environmentally sensitive contexts. In the Maryville Urban Growth Strategy, which covered also the area within the Urban Growth Boundary outside city limits, the statement was more explicit: “Expand the green infrastructure system to preserve open space, and add elements that will benefit water quality, soil conservation, and the overall quality of life.” (Action Area 1.)

The Alcoa/Maryville/Blount County Recreation and Parks Master Plan illustrates the high value that citizens place on our parks and recreation facilities, especially the greenway system within the cities of Alcoa and Maryville. The Plan also notes that national standards indicate a need for preservation of green areas as follows:

According to the NRPA (National Recreation and Parks Association), natural resource areas are defined as “lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/ buffering.” These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources
- Lands unsuitable for development but offering natural resource potential (examples: parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainageways and ravines, surface water management areas--man-made ponding areas--and utility easements)
- Protected land, such as wetlands, lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes and ponds

Acquisition of natural resource areas and preserves serves to enhance the quality of the community by maintaining a portion of its natural amenities. (Master Plan p. 6.5)

Based on a recommendation of the County Growth Strategy, the County Commission formed a citizen Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) to study the feasibility of starting a purchase of development rights program. This indicated a commitment to address at least one aspect of green infrastructure. The GMAC identified many means of funding a purchase of development rights program. Selected means of funding from that study have been incorporated in the sections of this Plan that address implementation options. Maps of land with characteristics of interest for conserving or preserving green areas were produced

in the process of GMAC study, but were not used to identify specific priority areas for program activity. Many of those maps were used in this Plan.

6) What are the benefits of green infrastructure?

While plans and reports highlight the value placed on green infrastructure in the county, more explicit identification of benefits may be useful in understanding why green infrastructure is important. Many sources provide lists of benefits, with varying degrees of specificity or focus. The various sources often repeat many of the elements listed below. The following indicates the wide range of benefits attributed green infrastructure as gleaned from various sources.

Provision of Habitat. Green spaces, particularly conserved and relatively undisturbed areas such as forests, grasslands, wetlands, rivers and streams, provide habitat for wildlife and plants. Wildlife and plants are part of the rural and natural character of the county valued by its citizens, and also valued by visitors to the county. Wildlife can be enjoyed in its natural state, and also is a base for recreational hunting and fishing. Plants, particularly native species, help define the character of a community and are enjoyed as part of the natural environment through such recreational activities as nature hiking.

Food Production. Productive farmlands are an important part of green infrastructure, and provide products for consumption and sale. Farmlands are also an important part of the rural character of the county valued by citizens.

Management of Storm Water. Under grey infrastructure approaches, storm water management is often engineered with hard surfaces such as curbs, drainpipes, riprap, and concrete water channels. A green infrastructure approach would integrate more natural mechanisms for managing storm water, such as grass lined ditches, bio-swales, rain gardens, vegetated stream buffers, and preservation or construction of wetlands. The expense of green infrastructure can be less up front than engineered gray infrastructure since undisturbed nature provides much of the infrastructure already. Water quality also can be integrated

into storm water management more effectively, with green infrastructure providing natural mechanisms for filtering out and processing pollutants.

Flood and Erosion Control. On a larger scale, the provision and preservation of green infrastructure can reduce the risk of flood. This operates on three levels. First is the reduction of erosion with proper management of land cover within a watershed. With reduced erosion, streams and rivers are less likely to be silted, thus providing more sustained capacity to accommodate flood events. Second, green infrastructure can protect the flood channels from deterioration by stabilizing stream and river banks. Third, green infrastructure within a watershed can provide a more natural and gradual release of water into a system, particularly providing greater infiltration of water into the ground. This reduces the concentration of storm water runoff and the severity or frequency of floods.

Recharge of Ground Water. Pervious land cover provides a means for recharge of ground water by natural infiltration through the soil. Deep rooted plants such as trees in forests over large areas are particularly important, but on a smaller scale just choosing green or constructed pervious cover over hardened and impervious surfaces in development of land can improve ground water recharge.

Sustainable and Reliable Water Source. Related to recharge of ground water and the slow release of water in a watershed is the issue of sustainable and reliable water sources for public consumption. For individuals on wells, this may be very important locally. For public water supplies with intakes in rivers, this is also important since a substantial part of long term and sustained river flow relies on infiltration and slow release of water in the servicing watershed. Recent drought conditions have highlighted this issue for the Alcoa and Maryville water systems with intakes along the Little River, serving the water needs of the majority of Blount County residents and businesses.

Environmental Education. Having green infrastructure accessible to the population can provide opportunities for education on the environment. Seeing natural processes in action is an effective education tool and can provide an important addition to classroom instruction.

Improvement of Air Quality. Green infrastructure, particularly trees, can help remove particulate matter from the air, and can provide localized cooling effects that reduce the production of ground level ozone. Green infrastructure sequesters carbon, and may play a role in reducing carbon dioxide, identified as a factor in climate change.

Reduction of Heat Loads and Increase in Energy Efficiency. Tree shade can be used to beneficial effect in shielding structures from the sun's heat, reducing the local heat load for air conditioning, and thus increasing energy efficiency. Green vegetation on roofs, or roof gardens, can be effective in reducing swings of internal building temperature from flat roofs. Broader based urban green infrastructure, particularly trees, can reduce the heat island effect in cities.

Recreation Opportunities. Green infrastructure can provide a wide array of recreation opportunities. Large natural areas, such as our Great Smoky Mountains National Park, can be accessed by hiking and camping. Wooded areas can provide wildlife observation opportunities. Forests and grasslands can provide hunting opportunities. Streams and rivers can provide fishing, canoeing and swimming opportunities. Parks can provide picnic and playground opportunities. Sports fields provide a community with opportunities for exercise and competitive games. Greenways can provide walking and biking opportunities.

Tourism Draw and Economic Development. Our Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a large tourist draw for the county. In addition, people visiting the area enjoy our other rural and mountain areas as the "quiet side of the Smokies". A defined community character and provision of parks and greenways are often factors that draw businesses to locate in an area.

Increase in Property Value. Studies have shown that property values are greater the closer the property is to certain types of green infrastructure such as conservation areas. Landscaping, defined open space within a development, and conserved stands of trees enhance the value of most properties. Vistas of mountains, forests and pastoral settings demand a premium for residential properties.

Improved Community Health. An emerging body of evidence shows that access to green infrastructure enhances both the physical and mental health of people. Parks and greenways can encourage healthy exercise and a break from stressful urban and suburban settings. Sports fields provide opportunities for directed and organized exercise. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities can provide a more healthy transportation alternative within an accessible mixed use community. In addition, the water quality and air quality improvements derived from green infrastructure can benefit the health of a community's citizens.

Synergy of Integrated Approach. The focus on individual types of green infrastructure and specific benefits can be productive, but it is the combination of several green infrastructure components, particularly over large areas, that can define the overall character and livability of a community. The individual components often work together to produce more than the sum of the separate parts. Green infrastructure is best approached as the integration of multiple components that consider various ecological, economic, recreational, esthetic, and health benefits together.

7) How can we implement Green Infrastructure?

Reaping the benefits of green infrastructure over the long term takes action. There are many ways to implement green infrastructure. Implementation involves four main categories: People; Organization; Action; and Funds and Other Resources.

People can include individual citizens, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies. Organization involves how people come together for a common or coordinated effort. Actions can include activities on individual properties, specific projects, organized programs in support of individual or group actions, and integrated programmatic activities over a whole or major part of a jurisdiction or area of concern. Funds can come from a wide array of sources, including individual contributions, grants from government agencies and non-government organizations, and monies budgeted and programmed from local

public coffers. Resources may also include in-kind materials, use of machinery, and time and effort of people involved.

There is a vast array of groups, organizations, agencies, programs, and resources that can be tapped to implement green infrastructure. The following four sections provide a broad survey, based on several sources including: report of the Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC see Appendix D); The Alcoa/Maryville/Blount County Parks and Recreation master Plan; review of the book Green Infrastructure – Linking Landscapes and Communities by Mark A. Benedict and Edward T. McMahon (The Conservation Fund, Island Press, 2006); education materials developed by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Southeast Watershed Forum for the Blount County Green Infrastructure Planning Process; the TDEC Recreation & Educational Services, 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan (<http://www.tennessee.gov/environment/recreation/greentrails.shtml>); and an internet search, particularly lists provided by the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation website (<http://www.tenngreen.org/greenwaysandtrails.htm>) and the Conservation Fund's Green Infrastructure website (<http://www.greeninfrastructure.net/organizations>).

8) People, agencies and other organizations.

Private Citizens and Property Owners. While some green infrastructure activities may be on public lands, what private citizens and property owners do on their land will be very important in conserving, preserving and protecting land for green infrastructure. This may take the form of donating a conservation easement, or may be as simple as planting and maintaining trees, establishing a rain garden, or proper maintenance of land cover for water quality. Citizens and property owners should be seen as stewards of the land and valued partners in implementing a green infrastructure plan.

Local Non-Governmental Organizations. Several local non-governmental organizations can play a role in implementing a green infrastructure plan.

The Little River Watershed Association (LRWA <http://www.littleriverwatershed.org/>) focuses on water quality issues, and sponsors education and action programs that could increase green cover in relation to the river and streams of the watershed.

The Little River Water Quality Forum (LRWQF) is composed of interested individuals, representatives of non-government organizations, and representatives of local, state and federal agencies that support water quality activities in the watershed. The Forum is a venue for communication and sharing ideas, and has served as a base to sponsor grant applications.

A new group is forming to address water quality issues in the Baker Creek and Nine Mile Creek watersheds with assistance from TVA. The structure is similar to the LRWQF, and provides a venue for communication and sharing ideas, and sponsoring grant applications.

The Environmental Health Action Team (EHAT) is a part of the Blount County Community Health Initiative (BCCHI), and has identified links between green infrastructure and health. The BCCHI was formed by a partnership that included Blount Memorial Hospital and the Blount County Chamber. Activities of the EHAT were funded in part by a grant from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

The Foothills Land Conservancy (FLC <http://www.foothillsland.org/>) is located in Maryville and serves a region adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park that includes Blount County. The FLC facilitates the establishment of conservation easements and preservation of land, and has partnered with several national and regional conservation groups.

Blount County Master Gardeners are trained by the University of Tennessee Extension Service, Master Gardeners Program (<http://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/>), and can provide support services for horticulture and gardening in Blount County.

The Center for Strong Communities is based at Maryville College (<http://www.maryvillecollege.edu/about/csc/index.asp>) and can provide assistance in community networking and capacity building for non-profit organizations.

National, State and Regional Non-Governmental Organizations. There are several non-governmental organizations based outside Blount County that may support local efforts in green infrastructure implementation. The following focuses on organizations that can help in funding and packaging green infrastructure projects or programs, or building local capabilities. There are many other conservation oriented organizations that are geared more to advocacy and education that are not included below.

The Southeast Watershed Forum (SEWF www.southeastwaterforum.org) provided part of the funding and support to conduct the Blount County Green Infrastructure Planning Process. The SEWF has also been active in Blount County in the past as a partner in several TVA initiatives that benefited the county. The SEWF is concerned primarily with assisting communities and organizations to better protect land and water resources through watershed friendly growth using training programs, special reports, on-line resources, and forums to promote dialogue and partnerships.

The Center for Watershed Protection (<http://www.cwp.org/>) has developed checklists to assess local regulations, and a roundtable process that can assist in developing appropriate local regulations focusing of the use of green infrastructure to address storm water issues. TVA and the Southeast Watershed Forum have tailored these materials for use in over 200 southeastern communities, including Blount County.

The Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org/>) is concerned with preserving biodiversity and the land necessary to insure such biodiversity. The Nature Conservancy provides a wide range of information on tools for preservation, particularly conservation easements, and provides a possible avenue for leveraging funds for high priority conservation easements.

The Conservation Fund (<http://www.conservationfund.org/>) is concerned with land and water conservation, and assists partners in building capacity, identifying priorities for conservation, and structuring and funding the acquisition of conservation properties. The Conservation Fund partnered with the Foothills Land Conservancy and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to conserve Kyker

Bottoms, partnered in conservation agreements for Alcoa Power Generating Inc. (Tapoco land), and worked with the Foothills Land Conservancy and private parties to establish a conservation easement on 769 acres of land bordering the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The Trust for Public Land (<http://www.tpl.org/>) is concerned with conserving land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places. The Trust can help leverage funds and facilitate transactions for conservation parks, playgrounds, historical sites, and protected natural areas.

The Conservation Campaign (<http://www.conservationcampaign.org/>) is an affiliate of the Trust for Public Land and is concerned with assisting public awareness and support campaigns, including ballot initiatives.

Open Space Institute (OSI <http://www.osiny.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage>) is concerned with many aspects of conservation and preservation, including wildlife habitat. The OSI partnered in the Southern Appalachians, including Tennessee, to create State Wildlife Action Plans. The OSI also facilitates building organization capacity and funding of conservation projects.

National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO <http://www.naccho.org/>) is concerned with public health issues, including healthy community design which includes elements of green infrastructure. NACCHO provided funding for activities of the Environmental Health Action Team (EHAT) in Blount County, and provides an avenue for continued networking for information and resources.

Land Trust for Tennessee (<http://www.landtrusttn.org/>) works in similar fashion to the Foothills Land Conservancy to facilitate establishment of conservation easements, with limited direct purchase of land.

Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation (<http://www.tenngreen.org/>) is focused on land and water conservation, with some funding of greenway connections.

East Tennessee Quality Growth (ETQG) is a newly formed non-governmental organization covering 16 counties, and includes members from Blount County. ETQG may provide a venue for exploring regional green infrastructure initiatives.

Federal and State Government. There are several federal and state government agencies that may address parts of green infrastructure. Below, federal agencies that have similar partners or function in state agencies are listed together in that sequence. Federal agencies often funnel funds for local projects and programs through state agencies, and state agencies can facilitate access to federal funds.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA <http://www.tva.gov/>), and particularly the Little Tennessee Watershed Team covering all the watersheds in Blount County, supported the Green Infrastructure Planning Process. The Watershed Team and other divisions of TVA also have supported several related planning processes and programs in the County over the years, mainly concerned with water quality issues.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a green infrastructure focus as part of its mission to protect water quality and assist storm water management through the NPDES program (http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=298). The EPA can be a source for federal program and grant funds. Blount County through the Soil Conservation District and the Little River Water Quality Forum received a Targeted Watershed Grant for \$835,000 from EPA. EPA also sponsors several regional Environmental Finance Centers in Universities to provide assistance to localities in developing funding strategies (University of North Carolina and University of Louisville for Region 4 which includes Tennessee - <http://www.epa.gov/efinpage/>).

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC <http://www.state.tn.us/environment>) has several grant programs that may be used as resources for green infrastructure implementation. Blount County is availing of one such grant through the Recreation Trails Program for greenway expansion planning and design sponsored in part by the Smoky Mountains Greenway Council. TDEC also developed the 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan that can be useful in further planning in the County.

US Department of Agriculture (USDA <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>) is a resource for funding on full and cost share basis to private landowners, non-

government organizations, and state and local governments, for many components of green infrastructure related to farming.

Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDOA <http://www.state.tn.us/agriculture/>), particularly the Division of Forestry and the Water Resources Program, is a resource for funding many components of green infrastructure. Blount County through the Soil Conservation District has accessed funds through the several grant programs.

US Department of Interior (USDOI), and particularly the National Parks Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service provide avenues for addressing green infrastructure issues. The National Parks Service (<http://www.nps.gov/>) can be instrumental in addressing issues related to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP), being the largest green infrastructure hub in the County. The Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://www.fws.gov/>) is concerned with fish, wildlife and plant conservation, and can be a resource for technical assistance and funding.

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA <http://www.state.tn.us/twra>) partners with many other agencies to provide funding opportunities for wildlife habitat restoration and conservation. TWRA also developed the State Wildlife Action Plan as part of the Tennessee Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. The data set from the Action Plan was used to create one of the maps used in this green infrastructure planning process.

US Department of Transportation (USDOT <http://www.dot.gov/new/index.htm>) can be a source of funds for green infrastructure related to bicycle and pedestrian paths, particularly through SAFETEA-LU funding.

Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/>) is a channel for federal transportation funds in addition to funding in state budget. TDOT works through the Knoxville Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) to plan and program funds for the region including Blount County.

The University of Tennessee, and particularly the UT Institute of Agriculture, and the UT Agricultural Extension Service, provide a wealth of technical assistance and resources that can bear on green infrastructure. The UT institute of Agriculture

owns and will operate a newly acquired and designed dairy farm off of Ellejoy Road, and has assisted in designing and installing stream buffer demonstration projects along the Alcoa greenway system.

Regional Cooperation. Blount County and its Municipalities are members of several regional agencies and councils that can facilitate green infrastructure efforts across jurisdictional boundaries.

The Smoky Mountains Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D <http://smokymountainrcd.org/>) is a multi-county council with connections to the Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA, and provides a channel for grant funds that can be used for green infrastructure. Blount County has a representative on the Council.

The Smoky Mountains Greenway Council (SMGC) functions by intergovernmental agreement and includes Blount County membership. The SMGC provides a venue for regional green infrastructure initiatives related to linking local parks and greenways to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO - <http://www.knoxtrans.org/>) is a regional, governmental organization with Blount County membership. The TPO is a conduit for approving funds for transportation projects in the urbanized region around Knoxville, and includes planning for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The East Tennessee Development District (ETDD <http://www.discoveret.org/etdd/>) is a 16 county regional, governmental organization with Blount County membership. Among its many functions ETDD provides assistance in grant writing, including grants for greenways.

Local Government. County Government will be one of many agencies involved in implementing this Plan. However, a caveat is needed.

This Green Infrastructure Plan is a plan of the Blount County Planning Commission, but this does not imply that the only agency for implementation should be County Government using County resources. Given the severe economic difficulties related to a recession at time of writing this Plan, it is

doubtful that County Government resources will play a major role in the near future without substantial outside assistance.

Local government includes all municipal governments in the county, being the Cities of Alcoa, Friendsville, Louisville, Maryville, Rockford and Townsend. Although this Green Infrastructure Plan falls under the auspices of the Blount County Planning Commission, effort was made to include all other municipal planning commissions in the planning process. Coordinated action across jurisdictions would be beneficial to an overall effort in the county.

Within County Government, several divisions have potential to play important roles in implementing this Plan.

The County Commission is the legislative body of County Government, and will play a prime role in adopting possible regulations and allocating local funds.

The Blount County Planning Commission will play a role in further refining and integrating this Plan into other plans of the county, particularly a Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission may also play a role in regulation: through the Subdivision Regulations and approval of plats; through approval of site plans under zoning; and through making required recommendation on amendments to zoning regulations.

The Board of Zoning Appeals may play a role in approving certain site plans under zoning.

Divisions under the County Mayor's office that may play a role are the Planning Department, Building Commissioner, Storm Water Department, Soil Conservation District Office, and Accounting and Budgeting Office.

The Parks and Recreation Commission along with the Parks and Recreation Department is a joint undertaking of Alcoa, Maryville and Blount County, and may play an important role in addressing the greenways, parks, and recreation aspects of Green Infrastructure.

The School Board and School Department may be involved where recreational fields and environmental education sites are included in plans for schools.

9) Organization for implementation.

Implementation of any plan takes sustained organization and effort. There is strength in numbers, and strength in a coalition of common interests. One of the first actions for implementation of a green infrastructure plan should be convening of stakeholders and interested parties, determining what is being done now that relates to green infrastructure, sharing information on available resources and capabilities, finding common ground for mutual support, and agreeing on priority activities to extend the effort functionally and geographically into the future.

This Green Infrastructure Plan is a first step and commitment by the Blount County Planning Commission to participate in a coalition, but will require the buy-in of many people, organizations and agencies, along with their continued support to maintain the effort. This has been done for other purposes in Blount County, with the Little River Watershed Association and the Little River Water Quality Forum, and also with Keep Blount Beautiful, the Blount County Community Health Initiative, and the Blount Chamber Partnership. These local organizations can provide models for a sustained green infrastructure effort, and may become partners themselves in that effort.

The Growth Management Advisory Committee recommended that a non-profit organization be formed to handle any purchase of development rights or transfer of development rights program. Such non-profit was recommended to be separate from County Government, supported by initial public funding for two years, and be self sustaining within two years. A non-profit could also be an administrative support for continued functioning of a coalition.

10) Actions for implementation.

Actions for implementation of green infrastructure can take many forms at many different scales, from the individual property to the whole community.

Individual Property. At the smallest scale of the individual property, be that a residential lot, a business site, or a farm, the actions of owners can cumulatively support the functioning of a complete green infrastructure. With the exception of land purchased for public use such as parks, greenways, or recreation fields, the actions of individual citizens on their properties will play a pivotal role in implementing a green infrastructure plan.

Actions that may be appropriate for individual property owners include adoption of best management practices on their land, or dedication of conservation easements. Examples of best management practices at the level of the individual owners may range from constructing rain gardens and planting trees on a residential property, to using natural landscape treatment of storm water on a commercial site, to fencing cattle out of streams and allowing deep rooted vegetation to grow along waterways on a farm. For larger tracts, particularly for farmland and forest land, dedication of conservation easements that protect the natural or productive base while eliminating the pressure for future development may be considered by a property owner, with potential tax benefits to the owner and possible financial assistance from government or non-government programs.

Actions that may be appropriate to support individual property owners may include education, technical assistance, and monetary or other incentives. Lack of knowledge on best management practices often is the immediate barrier to proper stewardship, and a targeted education program can provide that knowledge. In the same vein, not knowing how to implement a specific practice may warrant direct technical assistance. For access to government and non-government programs, or for declaring a conservation easement, technical assistance may take the form of help in navigating the process of grant writing or drafting legal documents. There are many sources of monetary assistance to individuals for implementing best management practices, especially for farming activities. A simple public recognition of a job well done can be an incentive for the individual to continue doing the right thing.

Development Transition. On another scale, the conversion or development of land to residential or other use provides an opportunity to retain green areas

within new developments as ownership and control of the land passes from original owner (often a farmer or farmer's family), to developer (sometimes also the original owner), to ultimate home owner. Actions may take the form of zoning or subdivision regulations or other specific regulations within the development permitting process. Actions also may take the form of education, incentive, and public recognition of appropriate design. The ultimate goal is to provide some aspects of green infrastructure within each new development as it is being planned and built, possibly with linkage to other elements of green infrastructure in a community network. This is the focus of development designs called cluster subdivisions (see <http://www.plannersweb.com/articles/are015.html>) conservation subdivisions (see <http://www.landchoices.org/>), and low impact development (see <http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/index.html>).

Community Projects and Programs. At a larger community scale, actions may take the form of specific projects or programs. These may be governmental or non-governmental based. Mentioned above are support programs of education, and technical and monetary assistance to individual property owners. Such programs may best be developed within the context of a coalition of partners noted in Section 9 above.

Geographically, projects and programs can focus on a specific neighborhood, a watershed, a jurisdiction such as the County, or on common issues that cross jurisdiction boundaries. The form of a community's development may also be subject of geographical focus, with such alternatives as growth boundaries or incentives for cluster development in specified areas in order to protect more rural and natural settings.

Local Government. Local government usually takes the lead in providing much of the parks and recreation infrastructure in a community, such as greenways, neighborhood parks and public sports fields. Even with parks and recreation facilities, there may be possibilities to forge public-private partnership, and some recreation facilities may be appropriate as private for-profit projects.

If a property is of great community importance for preservation, local government may opt to purchase the property outright. However, this can be very expensive,

places the property off the tax role, and places the decision on the use of the property in the political arena. Alternatives are programs such as Purchase of Development Rights (PDR see <http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1263.html>) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR see <http://ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/1264.html>) that result in the voluntary restriction of future development on subject properties, while the properties remain in private ownership. Purchase of Development Rights programs can be pursued through governmental and non-governmental organizations, or a partnership of both. There are a growing number of communities around the country that have voted to fund a Purchase of Development Rights program with dedicated local government funding. Transfer of Development Rights programs are usually pursued through government since the base mechanism for operation depends on some sort of land use regulation.

If a specific function of the land is important, management agreements or leases may be considered, short of outright purchase. Under a management agreement, a property owner voluntarily enters into a contract to preserve and maintain a certain aspect of his or her property, such as a wetland, for a specific period of time, usually with some cost sharing arrangements. A lease allows a second party to take control of land under specific terms and period of time. The lease may be held by a government or non-government agency, and the title of the land stays with the owner.

Continuous Planning and Education. One of the most important actions, particularly for government, is to continue planning for green infrastructure. This is done for schools and roads, and also should be done for green infrastructure. Planning should include as many partners as are willing to put forth the effort for long term implementation. This relates to the discussion in Section 9 above.

One of the first actions for implementation of a green infrastructure plan should be convening of stakeholders and interested parties, determining what is being done now that relates to green infrastructure, sharing information on available resources and capabilities, finding common ground for mutual support, and agreeing on priority activities to extend the effort functionally and geographically into the future.

Along with convening of potential partners, actions to bring green infrastructure to the attention of the public would be helpful. This may take the form of cooperative participation in on-going events of stakeholders and interested parties, and creation of education events that focus directly on green infrastructure.

Funding. Implementation of green infrastructure will take acquisition and commitment of resources. A very important resource is funding. Specific actions need to be geared toward acquiring, budgeting, expending, and monitoring of funds for green infrastructure. For local government, the acquisition of funds can be leveraged by placing an amount of public funds on the table in expectation of gaining outside resources in return. Aggressive, directed and leveraged pursuit of grant and other outside resources would be an appropriate strategy and action.

11) Funds and other resources for implementation.

Funding assistance exists or can be created for almost any aspect of green infrastructure implementation. It is not the purpose of this plan to identify projects linked to specific funding sources. However, it is useful to note the wide array of sources available.

Without being exhaustive, state and federal funding possibilities include the following: Wetland Acquisition Fund, State Lands Acquisition Fund, Agriculture and Forestry Acquisition Fund, Heritage Conservation Trust Fund, Tennessee Forest Legacy Program, Wetland Reserve Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Recreational Trails Program, Local Parks and Recreation Fund, Conservation Innovation grants, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Wetland Reserve Program, Forest Legacy Program, State Revolving Fund Program, SAFETEA-LU transportation sources, Challenge Cost Share Program, Safe Routes to Schools program, Community Development Block Grants, Stream Access Program, and Urban Forestry grants.

Most outside resources require some direct monetary participation by the local recipient. For local government this usually means matching resources for a

grant. In some instances, such resources may include in-kind accounting, such as government staff time or use of public machinery. However, in most instances, the local government will need to put up some funds as a match. Typically, the match will be from 20 to 50 percent of the total project or program cost.

Local governments generate funds through taxes, fees, and borrowing. Borrowing implies paying off the principal and interest using the other two mechanisms of taxes or fees over a period of time. Other funds may come from State shared revenue, or from grants or other mechanisms for transferring funds from State or Federal governments. Ultimately, even the shared or transferred funds come from taxes and fees. Although rare, direct donation of monies from the public to government may also generate some revenue.

The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan available at www.blounttn.org/planning under the Plans Section – especially Section 8), and the report of the Growth Management Advisory Committee (GMAC see Appendix D), identified several possible avenues for generating funds for green infrastructure.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the following for consideration as funding options: development impact fees; land set-asides in new development; local option sales tax revenues; revenue bonds; general obligation bonds; fees and charges; advertisement sales (at public facilities and events); concessions and merchandise sales; naming rights (for public facilities); hotel bed tax; utility round-up (rounding up to nearest higher dollar on utility bills); partnerships with schools, hospitals, and private concerns; sponsorships and cooperative marketing partnerships; philanthropic donations; general purpose or operating support grants; planning grants; facilities and equipment grants; matching grants; seed money or start-up grants; management or technical assistance grants; and program related investments from foundations.

The GMAC report identified the following for consideration as funding options for a purchase of development rights program: increase in hotel and motel tax; real estate transfer fee; increase on document recordation fee (Register of Deeds); dedicated one cent on property tax rate; dedication of greenbelt roll back taxes; increase in sales tax; donation box on property tax bill (voluntary donation); state

license plate; wheel tax; dedication of windfall revenue (revenue above projected budget revenue).

Given that there is a wide array of funding sources, it is important that any sustained effort also sustain contacts with those who can provide resources, keeping the sources abreast of local initiatives, and keeping local actors abreast of specific funding opportunities. The focused pursuit of funding will be necessary to sustain any effort. This should be one of the functions of a coalition or non-profit mentioned in Section 9 above.

12) Mapping priority areas for green infrastructure.

Assume that appropriate projects and programs have been identified, and adequate funding has been secured. Where will the implementation occur? In a sense, green infrastructure should be considered everywhere, from individual residential lots to large preserved areas. However, not all locations have the same importance or community impact. It is important to prioritize *where* geographically green infrastructure efforts and resources should be focused.

A major part of the Green Infrastructure Planning Process was a series of mapping workshops to identify priority areas within the county and its municipalities. The first set of eight workshops targeted participation by citizens, and were held in the month of October 2008 as follows by venue:

- 10/13 – Middlesettlements Elementary School;
- 10/14 – Heritage High School; 10/16 – Friendsville Elementary School;
- 10/20 – William Blount HS 9th Grade Academy;
- 10/21 – Alcoa Service Center;
- 10/27 – Townsend Elementary School;
- 10/28 – Porter Elementary School; and
- 10/30 – Maryville City Hall.

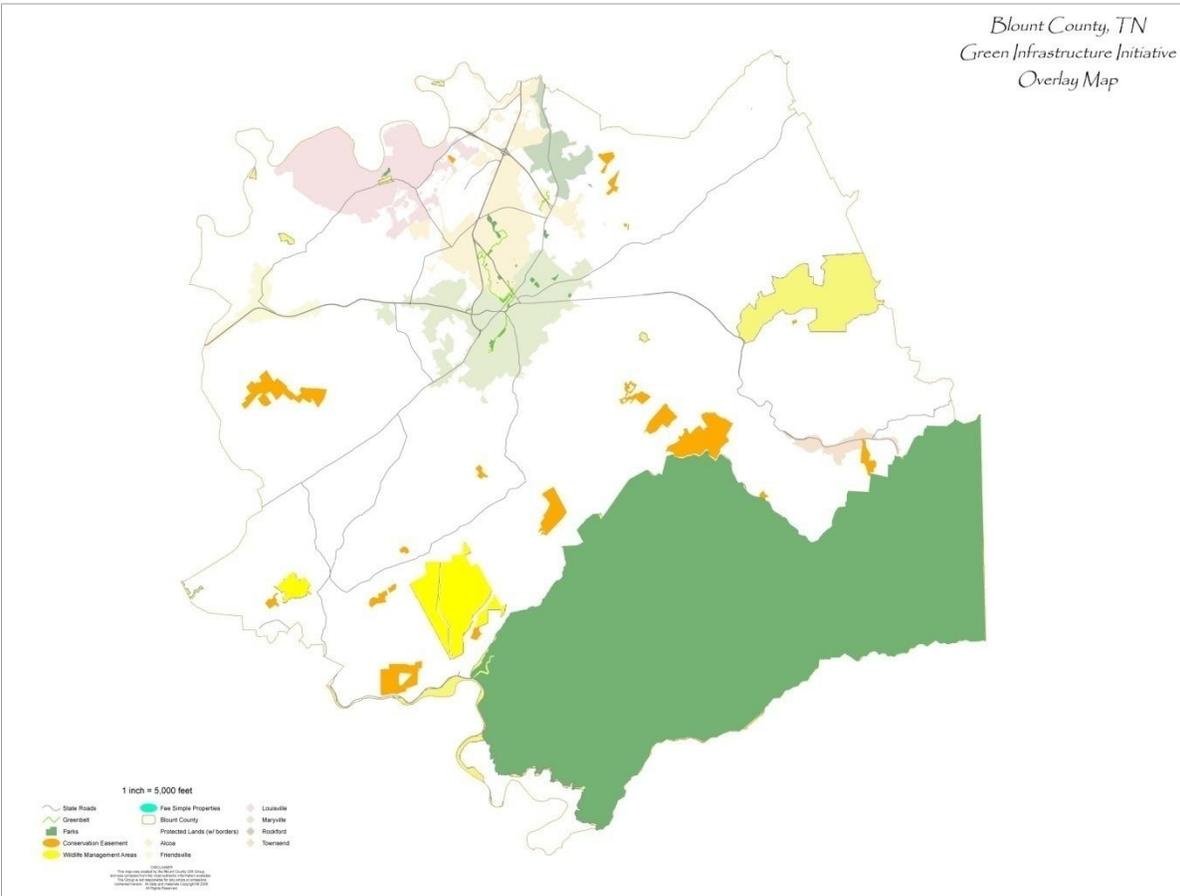
A separate workshop for members of the various Planning Commissions in the county was held January 26, 2009 at the Maryville City Hall using the same format as the citizen workshops.

The core of the workshops was a map based activity for participants to identify priority geographic areas for conservation, preservation and/or protection as green infrastructure. Each workshop site had potential for several activity tables. In total, 84 citizens participated at 18 workshop tables in October, and 32 Planning Commissioners and staff participated at five workshop tables in January.

The citizen workshops were facilitated by the planning staffs of Alcoa, Blount County and Maryville, and planners from the Local Planning Assistance Office serving Friendsville, Louisville and Townsend. The Planning Commissioner's workshop was facilitated by representatives from TVA and the Southeast Watershed Forum. TVA and the Southeast Watershed Forum assisted in the overall design of the process and trained facilitators. Detailed reports of workshop results by venue and table are in Appendix A for the October sessions, and in Appendix B for the January session.

Participants were asked to use a clear overlay map to draw boundaries around areas that they considered priority areas for green infrastructure. Six other maps with various information were available on paper at the same scale, and allowed viewing through the clear overlay map. Resultant overlay workmaps with identified areas were digitized and summarized by the Blount County GIS Group.

The following base maps were used in the Green Infrastructure Workshops. The maps were produced by the Blount County GIS Group headed by Ray Boswell. The maps identified several geographical characteristics that were considered useful in delineating areas for green infrastructure, and may be used in more detailed planning as a green infrastructure program progresses in the county.

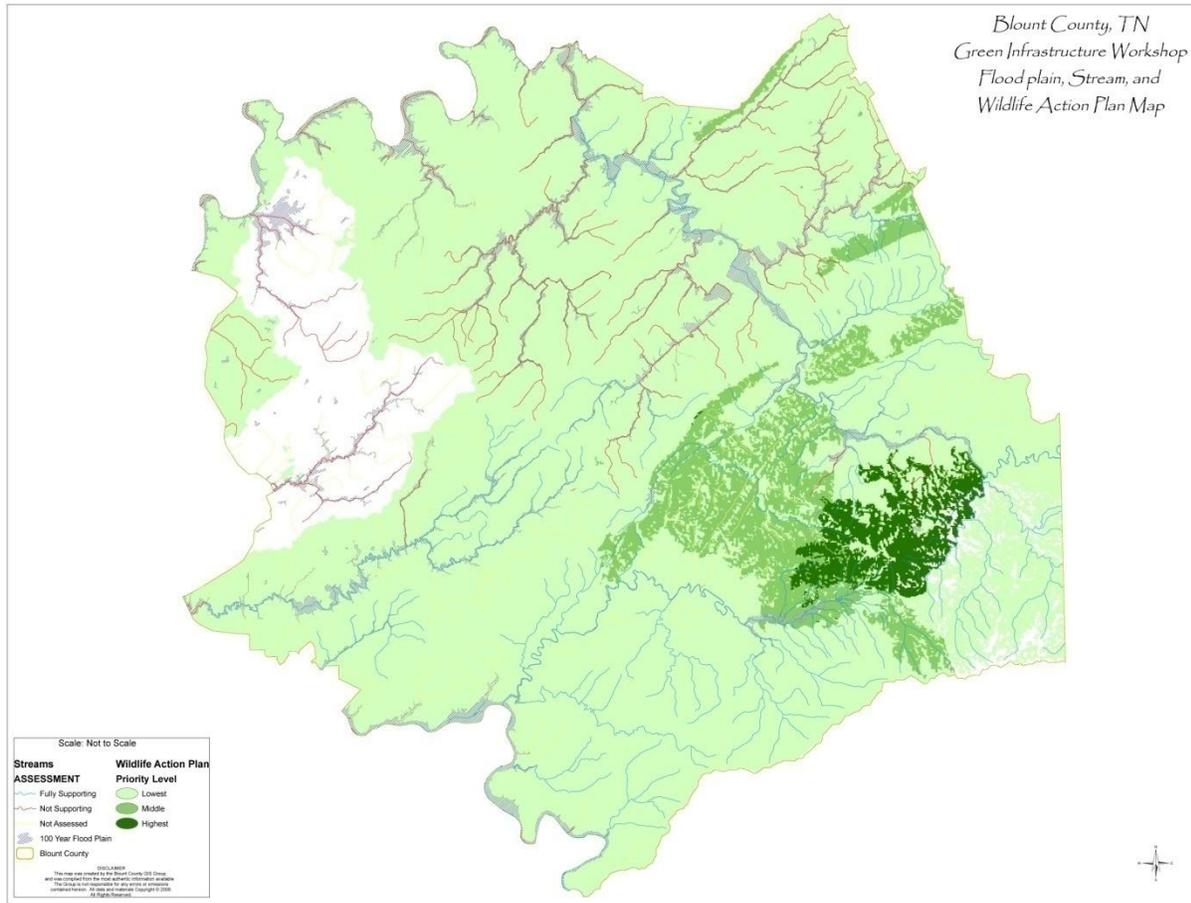


The above map was utilized as a clear overlay work map on which participants in workshops drew to delineate areas that were priority for green infrastructure.

The map contained three specific items of information useful in considering existing green infrastructure hubs. First in green were existing parks in the county, particularly the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) to the south, and the greenbelt park system in the cities of Alcoa and Maryville. The GSMNP may be considered the largest hub for green infrastructure in the county.

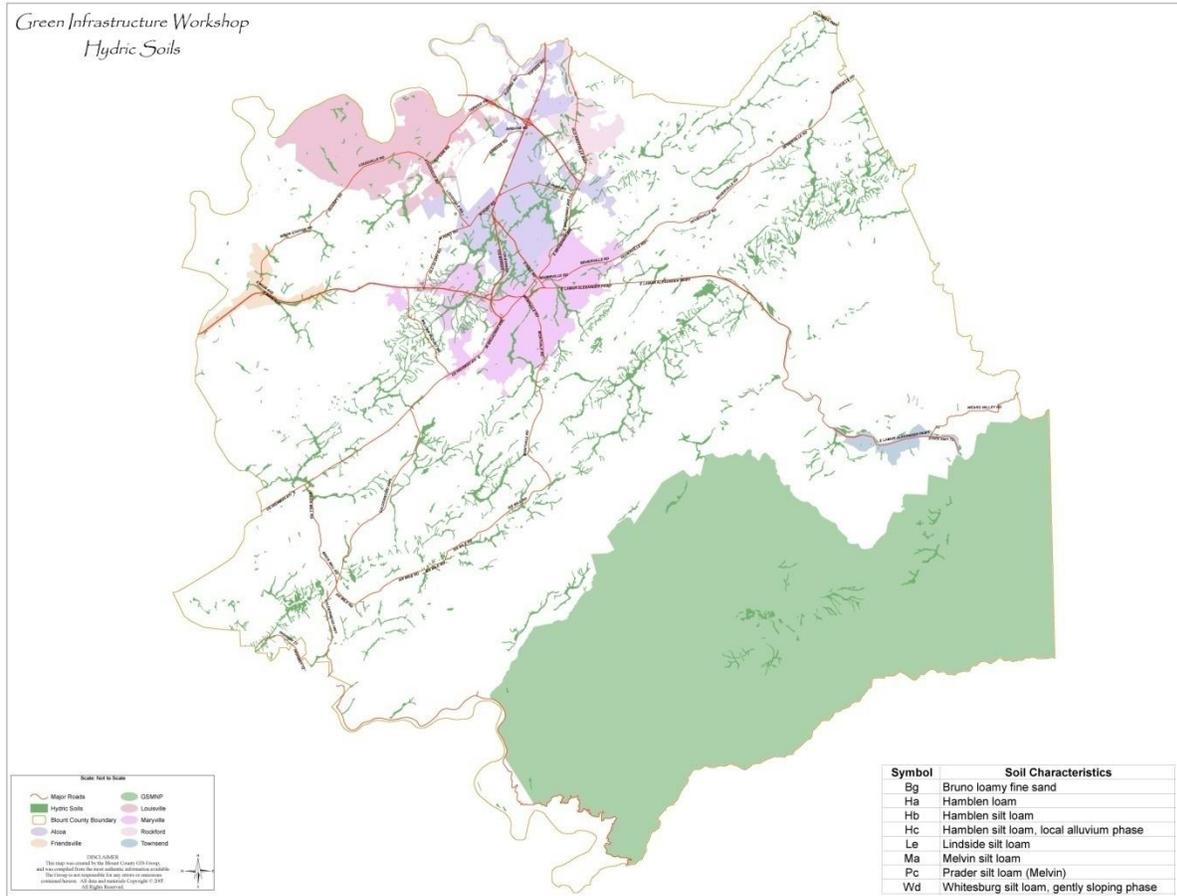
Second were wildlife management areas in yellow. Note that the management area shown in the vicinity of East Millers Cove Road at the right of the map is no longer current, but present owners have stated intention of providing substantial conservation areas.

Third were existing conservation easements in orange, many held by the Foothills Land Conservancy based in Blount County.



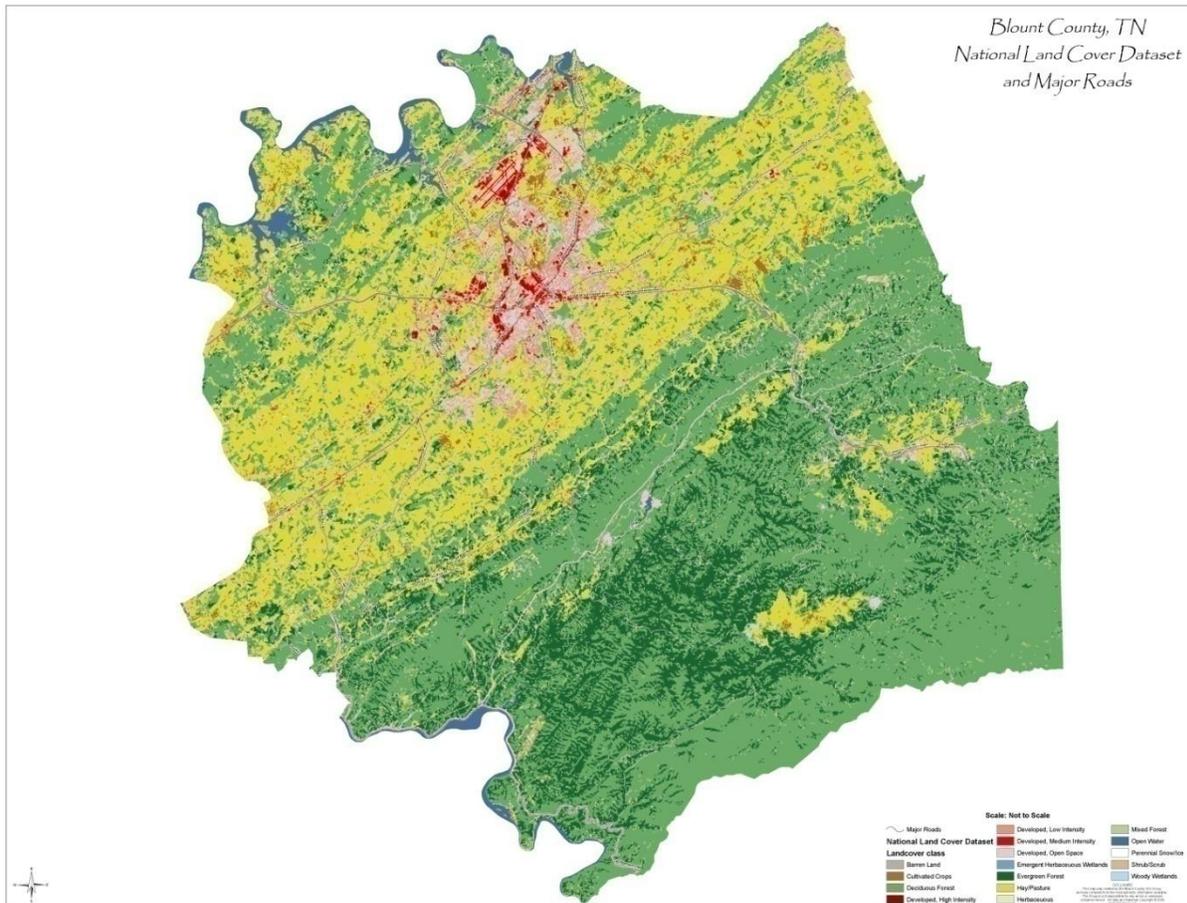
The above map was used as one of several base maps which were placed under the clear work map to guide consideration of priority green infrastructure areas. This map was used by several tables, particularly for identifying areas associated with streams and watersheds, and to a lesser extent areas specifically associated with wildlife.

The map provided four types of information. First were the river and stream systems in the county. Second was the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) 303d classification of supporting waterways or non-supporting waterways (in red) as indication of water quality or pollution problems (http://www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/publications/2008_303d.pdf). Third were the 100 year flood plains (hatched areas along rivers and streams) from FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Fourth was a summary classification of wildlife habitat priority levels (in shades of green) from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Wildlife Action Plan (<http://www.state.tn.us/twra/cwcs/tncwcs2005.pdf>).



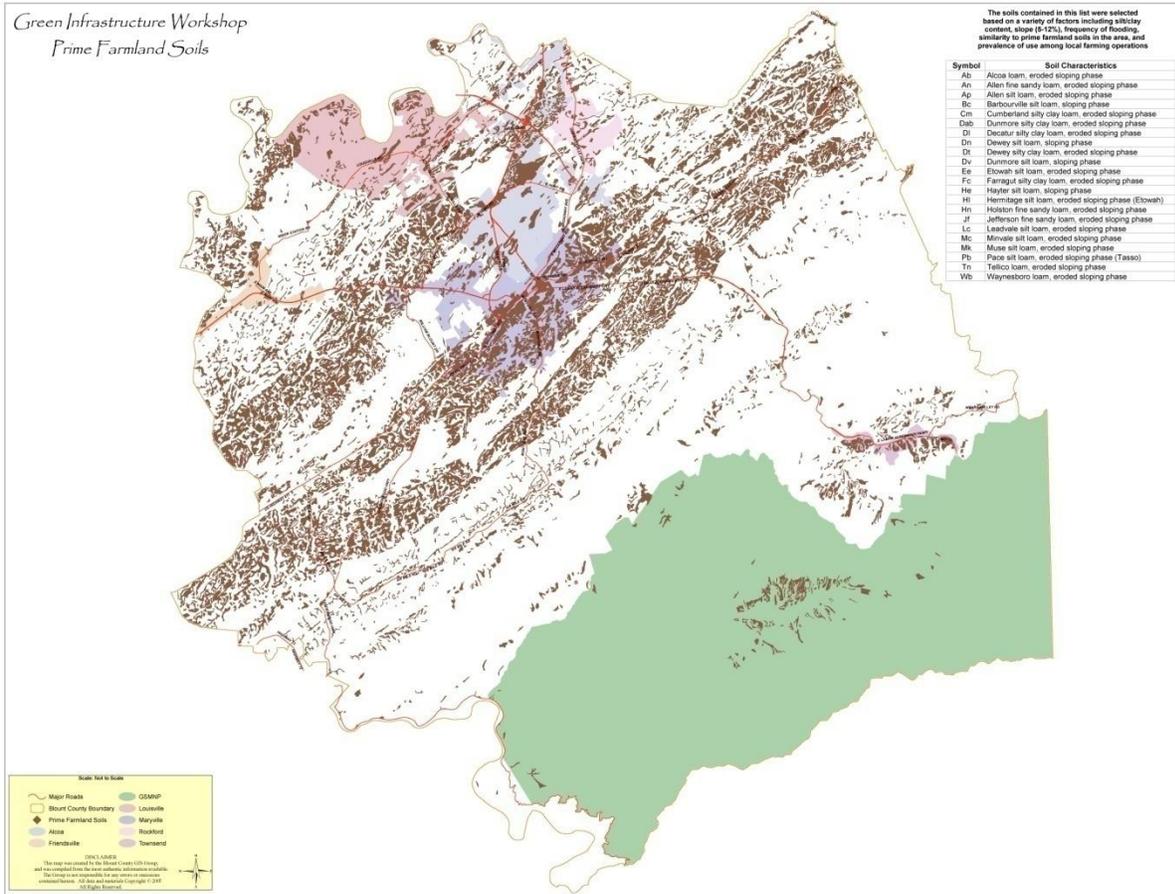
The above map was used as one of several base maps which were placed under the clear work map to guide consideration of priority green infrastructure areas. This map was used infrequently, indicating either low interest in the information provided, lack of knowledge of what the map portrayed, or provision of similar information on other maps. In particular, most of the hydric soils were associated with streams and rivers that were portrayed on the Floodway, Stream and Action Plan map.

The map portrays the distribution of hydric soils in the county, or “those soils that are sufficiently wet in the upper part to develop anaerobic conditions during the growing season”, as identified by the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (<http://soils.usda.gov/use/hydric/>). Hydric soils are useful in identifying areas of existing or potential wetlands.



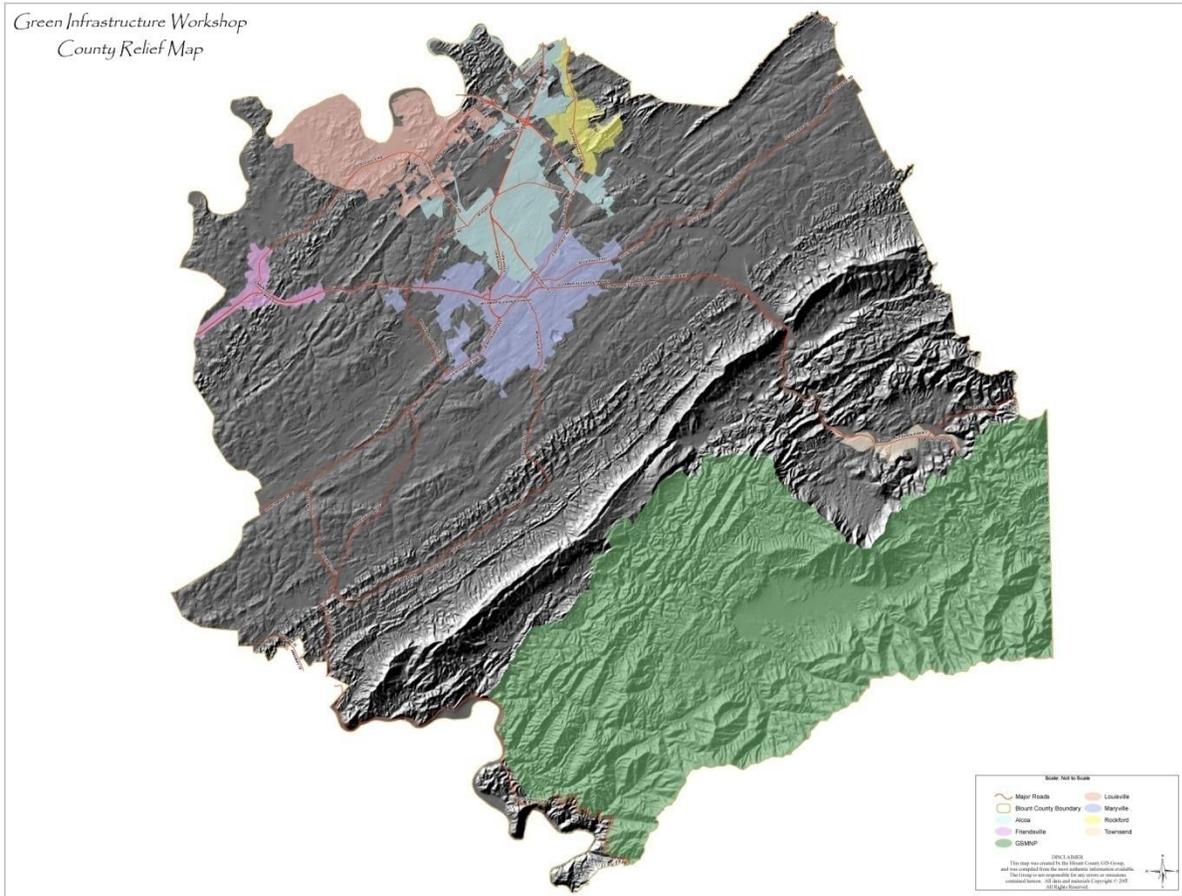
The above map was used as one of several base maps which were placed under the clear work map to guide consideration of priority green infrastructure areas. This map was used by several tables, particularly in identifying areas associated with farming and forests.

The map provided three general types of information from the National Land Cover Dataset of the USGS Land Cover Institute (<http://landcover.usgs.gov/>) from interpretation of satellite imagery. First was generalized urban and suburban land pattern in red and pink. Second was the pattern of agricultural land, mainly in yellow and orange. Third was the pattern of forest land in shades of green.



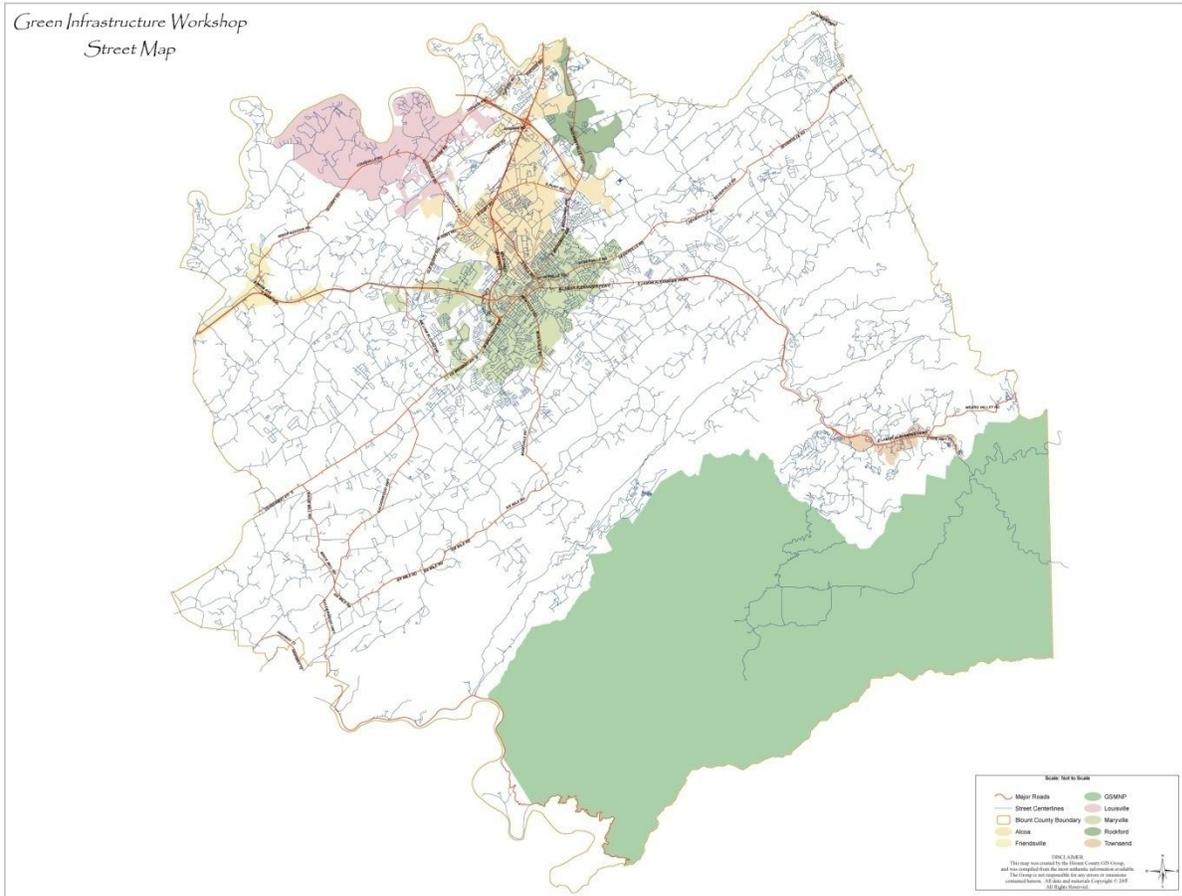
The above map was used as one of several base maps which were placed under the clear work map to guide consideration of priority green infrastructure areas. This map was used by several tables, particularly in identifying areas associated with farming.

The map is a composite of several different soil types identified as locally significant to farming, and termed prime farmland soils for the mapping workshops. The list of locally significant soils was provided by Terron Hillsman of the USDA National Resource Conservation Service regional office.



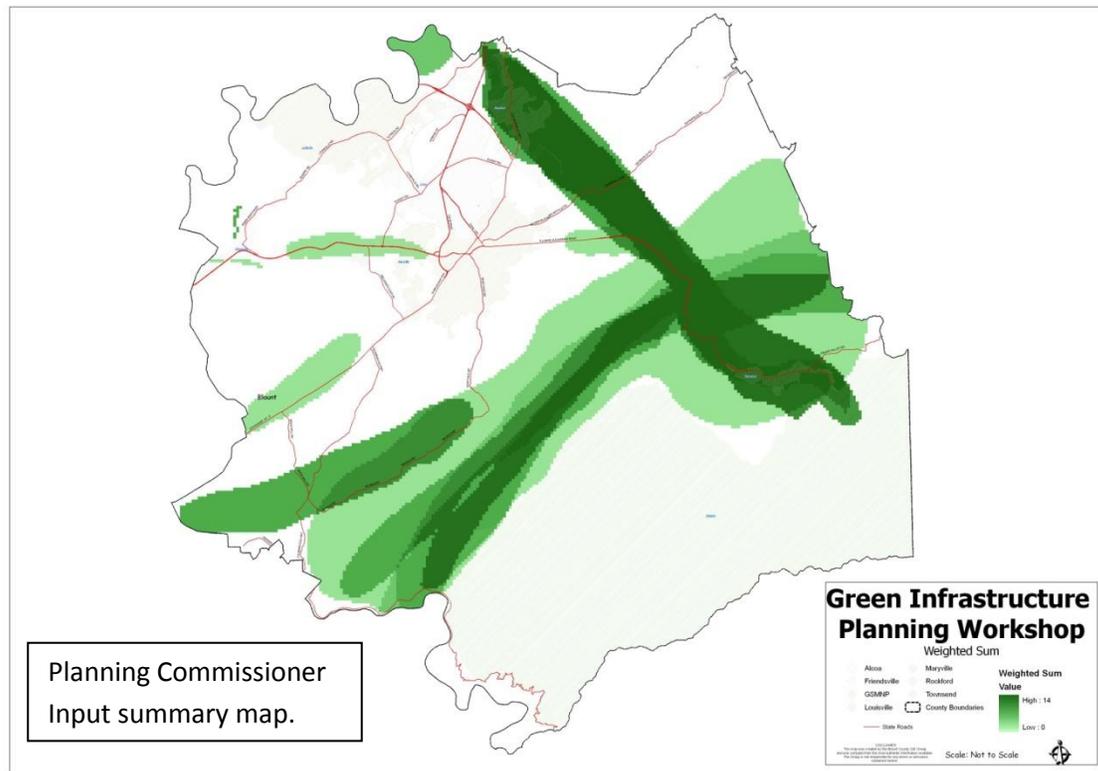
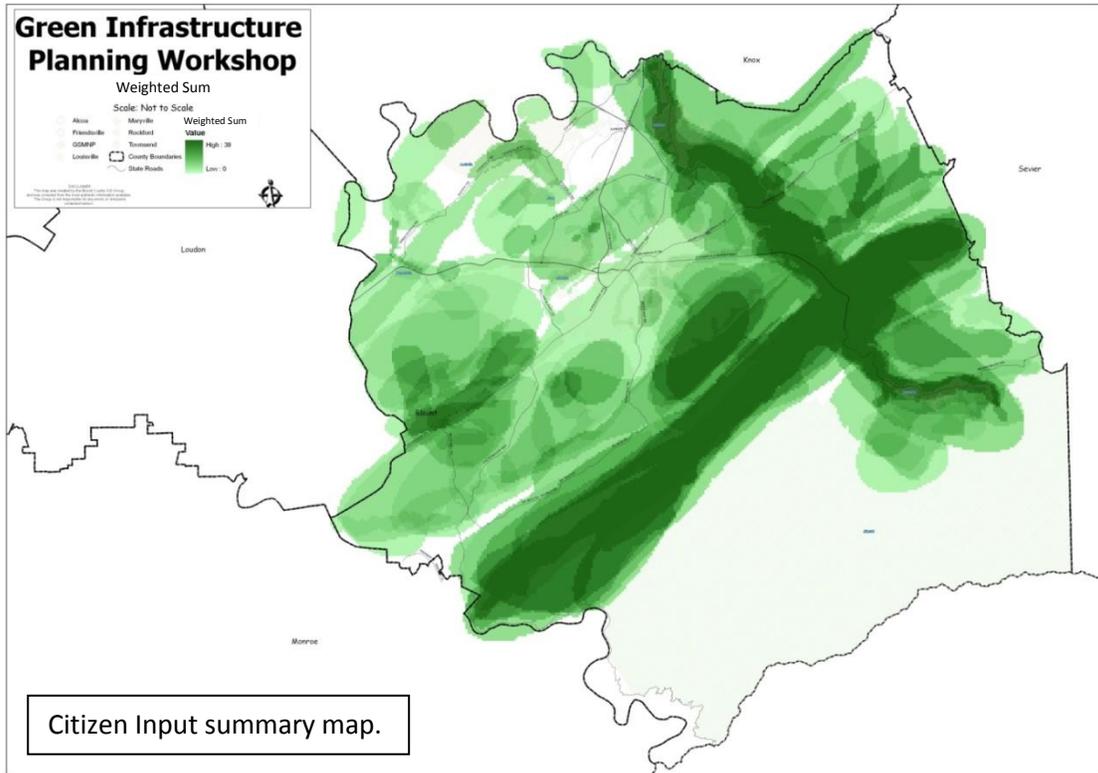
The above map was used as one of several base maps which were placed under the clear work map to guide consideration of priority green infrastructure areas. This map was very popular and used by several tables, particularly in identifying areas of high relief and visibility in the county such as the Chilhowee Mountain Range running southwest to northeast on the map just above the GSMNP in green.

The map was produced by interpretation of USGS elevation information, and highlights the hills and mountains in the county.



The above map was used as one of several base maps which were placed under the clear work map to guide consideration of priority green infrastructure areas. The map did not provide information on land characteristics as a basis for identifying green infrastructure areas, but did provide location referents of streets for those interested in identifying specific locations in the county. This map was very popular and used by several tables to locate properties or areas in the county.

The following two maps present composite summaries using weighted sums of ranked priorities for the mapping workshop results held in October for citizen input (first map) and January for planning commissioner input (second map).



The first map shows more detail than the second map due to the first being based on 18 individual maps (October 2008 with eight workshop sites), while the second was based on six individual maps (January 2009). In addition, for the second map workshop (January 2009) the planning commissioners were presented with the results of the first round of eight workshops, along with the first summary map presented above. This knowledge of previous workshop results may have influenced and focused the delineation of areas by the planning commissioners.

The two maps are similar in identifying two major geographical areas as top priority. The first priority in both maps was the Little River. In the citizen input workshop maps, other elements of the whole Little River Watershed were often delineated, while the planning commissioner workshop maps generally limited delineation to the main channel and nearby land.

The second priority in both maps was the Chilhowee Mountain range, including the following surrounding valley context in many instances: Happy Valley and West Millers Cove to the south bordering the GSMNP; parts of East Millers Cove to the south of Chilhowee Mountain and northeast of the Little River; and the knobs or hills to the immediate north of Chilhowee Mountain.

Other priority areas include: the Crooked Creek watershed to the north of Chilhowee Mountain with outlet to the west side of the Little River; the Ellejoy Creek Watershed to the north of Chilhowee Mountain with outlet to the east side of the Little River; the Baker Creek Watershed flowing toward the Little Tennessee River in Loudon County to the southwest, particularly along Highway 411 South; parts of the Nine Mile Creek watershed flowing toward the Little Tennessee River in Monroe County to the southwest and located north of Chilhowee Mountain; and parts of Tuckaleechee Cove to the north and south of the Little River and Townsend.

See the detailed report of the mapping workshops in Appendices A and B for a complete review of priority areas by workshop venue and mapping table.

13) Reasons and purposes for priority areas.

Participants in the mapping workshops were also asked to identify the reasons for selecting specific priority areas, and to identify the purpose or use of the area for green infrastructure. These two items seemed to get mixed together or repeated on many of the forms submitted. This was particularly true for results of the planning commissioner workshop session. The following presents common green infrastructure themes from the mapping workshop results.

By far the most cited reason or purpose for selection of priority green infrastructure areas was preservation or protection of water resources such as streams, rivers and wetlands. The most frequent focus was the Little River, but also included Baker Creek, Crooked Creek, Ellejoy Creek and Nine Mile Creek.

Water resources were followed closely in importance by provision of recreation opportunities in many contexts from parks to greenways to open space in general. Protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat also was identified as important in many contexts. Scenic views and scenic qualities frequently were cited and focused most often on the Chilhowee Mountain range, but also on waterways and rural character. Other frequent reasons or purposes were preservation or protection of farmland, the draw of tourism to the county, and preservation of green space or open space in general.

14) A Strategic Plan.

The following provide a set of strategies as a start for what should be a long term commitment to systematically addressing green infrastructure in Blount County. The level of strategy is less detailed than specific projects or programs, but of greater detail than broad supporting statements.

The following strategies highlight principles and priorities. The principles may be seen as policy statements that supply guidance and indication of underlying thought. The priorities are more action oriented. The sequence of strategies does not necessarily imply greater or lesser importance.

STRATEGY 1 - Principle. Implementation of green infrastructure will require the organized and sustained effort of a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties. **Priority** . Convene stakeholders and interested parties into a sustainable forum to determine what is being done now that relates to green infrastructure, share information on available resources and capabilities, find common ground for mutual support, and agree on specific priority projects, programs and activities to advance green infrastructure functionally and geographically into the future. Personnel from County Government may take the initial lead in this. However, all partners will need to take an active role in the forum to make it sustainable.

STRATEGY 2 – Principle. There are already many groups in the county that are addressing aspects of green infrastructure, and these may be considered as an initial base on which to build. **Priority**. Build on the activities of the Little River Watershed Association, the Little River Water Quality Forum, the Baker/Nine Mile Creek Water Quality Forum (in initial formation), the Blount County Community Health Initiative – Environmental Health Action Team, the Foothills Land Conservancy, and other local groups with initiatives that may be related to implementing green infrastructure.

STRATEGY 3 - Principle. What private citizens and property owners do on their lands will be very important in conserving, preserving and protecting land for green infrastructure. The actions of individual citizens on their properties will play a pivotal role in implementing a green infrastructure plan. Citizens and property owners should be seen as stewards of the land and valued partners in implementing a green infrastructure plan. **Priority**. Develop projects and programs to support property owners in adopting best management practices and proper stewardship of the land. Such project or program activities could include education and training, direct technical assistance, and monetary and non-monetary incentives.

STRATEGY 4 - Principle. Green infrastructure is important and should be given substantial consideration when planning for overall development in the County. **Priority** . Incorporate the Green Infrastructure Plan into a Comprehensive Plan for the County, and include green infrastructure in budgetary considerations such as a capital improvements program and capital improvements budget.

STRATEGY 5 - Principle. Planning for green infrastructure should consider overall ecological benefits of preservation and conservation, balanced with active use of public open spaces. **Priority** . Prioritize active use sports fields, greenways and bicycle/pedestrian paths in a balanced way along with passive use conservation areas in an overall approach to green infrastructure. This may be done as an adjunct to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

STRATEGY 6 - Principle. All geographical scales of green infrastructure should be given value in an overall program to implement a green infrastructure plan, but priority should be given initially to areas identified by citizens in the green infrastructure planning process. **Priority**. Consider the following as initial priority areas for green infrastructure implementation: Little River corridor and tributary watersheds, particularly Ellejoy Creek, Crooked Creek and Tuckaleechee Cove; Chilhowee Mountain range and associated areas of the Knobs, Happy Valley, Top of the World, and East and West Millers Cove; Baker Creek and Nine Mile Creek watersheds, particularly wetlands in proximity to Highway 411 South. Also support the cities in any priority areas they may identify within their own jurisdictions, and coordinate linkages with such areas.

STRATEGY 7 - Principle. The focus on individual types of green infrastructure and individual benefits can be productive, but it is the combination of several green infrastructure components that can define the overall character and livability of a community. The individual components often work together to produce more than the sum of the individual parts. Green infrastructure is best approached as

the integration of multiple components that consider various ecological, economic, recreational, esthetic, and health benefits together. **Priority**. Design green infrastructure projects or programs to capture multiple benefits, and assess individual proposals for ability to capture multiple benefits to the public.

STRATEGY 8 - Principle. Some aspects of green infrastructure should be provided within each new development as it is being planned and built, possibly with linkage to other elements of green infrastructure in a community network.

Priority. Explore incentives for cluster subdivisions, conservation subdivisions, and low impact development designs that integrate functional green infrastructure in new development.

STRATEGY 9 – Principle. Provisions for incentives and flexibility for development design in regulations will be more acceptable in the community than direct requirement for open space. **Priority**. Consider incentives and provisions for flexible design first when proposals for regulatory provision of open space are proposed.

STRATEGY 10 – Principle. Regulations addressing aspects of green infrastructure should have a clear relationship to advancing the public health, safety and welfare. **Priority**. Assess existing subdivision regulations, zoning regulations, and storm water regulations for effectiveness in addressing critical green infrastructure issues. Assessment may utilize checklists developed by the Center for Watershed Protection and others.

STRATEGY 11 - Principle. Provision of traditional public infrastructure for parks and recreation may also consider partnerships with non-governmental and for-profit entities. **Priority**. In planning for public parks and recreation, explore

alternative implementation funding that may include partnerships with non-governmental and for-profit entities.

STRATEGY 12 - Principle. Purchase of development rights may be a cost effective alternative to outright purchase of land for preservation and conservation.

Priority. Build on the work of the GMAC and continue to pursue a purchase of development rights program to implement green infrastructure.

STRATEGY 13 – Principle. Transfer of development rights may be a viable avenue for focusing incentives within a regulatory context. **Priority.** Explore the feasibility of identifying a program for transfer of development rights, including specific identification of sending and receiving areas and legal and administrative mechanisms for accommodating such transfers in the development permitting process.

STRATEGY 14 - Principle. There are many external sources that should be pursued to support local green infrastructure implementation. **Priority.** Identify likely external resources for implementation of green infrastructure in the county, maintain a data base of such resources with specific agency and personnel contacts, and contact such agencies and personnel on a regular basis to keep them informed on what is occurring in the county and keep the data base updated. Project and program proposals that are eligible for outside funding should be developed, and such outside funding should be vigorously pursued.

STRATEGY 15 - Principle. Local County Government funding will have greatest impact as leverage towards larger funding resources outside County Government, such as matching funds for grants, or part of larger programmed funds including other partners. **Priority.** The County should dedicate funding resources of its own in order to be an active partner in addressing green infrastructure. The

County Commission should explore one or several viable sources of local funding. The Planning Commission suggests the following, from the GMAC report, as likely alternatives to generate needed funding: portion of hotel/motel tax; real estate transfer fee; Register of Deeds document recording fee; one cent on the property tax rate; greenbelt roll back taxes; and dedicated special state license plate. Local funds should be used mainly as leverage for partnered funds either locally or from outside sources.

STRATEGY 16 - Principle. Public awareness of the components, value and benefits of green infrastructure is important to a sustained green infrastructure implementation effort. **Priority.** Provide a wide array of opportunities to inform the public on what green infrastructure is, why it is valued, and what benefits accrue to the community.

STRATEGY 17 - Principle. Green Infrastructure is part of a larger consideration of all infrastructure needs in the County, and the participation of the County Government will be limited by budgetary constraints in the near future. **Priority.** Approach the implementation of Green Infrastructure in an incremental manner, balancing consideration of all infrastructure needs in relation to County resources.

STRATEGY 18 - Principle. To be effective and sustained in the long term as the County grows and develops, planning for green infrastructure needs to be continuous. **Priority.** Progress from a strategic planning base to specific projects and programs. Build a more detailed analytical base for green infrastructure planning as implementation progresses. Planning should work toward the ideal integrated green infrastructure network of hubs, linkages and a significant matrix of related sites. Evaluate, revise and readopt the Green Infrastructure Plan on a regular basis, such as every five years or sooner if circumstances warrant.

APPENDIX A

Report of Green Infrastructure Planning Workshops by Venue, Date and Table and Participant Comments Prepared by Blount County Planning Department January 8, 2009 (reformatted from original report minus appendix)

Eight Green Infrastructure Workshops were conducted in Blount County from October 13 to 30, 2008 at the following sites:

- 13th Middlesettlements School
- 14th Heritage High School
- 16th Friendsville Elementary School
- 20th William Blount High School Freshman Academy
- 21st Alcoa Service Center
- 27th Townsend Elementary School
- 28th Porter Elementary School
- 30th Maryville City Hall

The core of the workshops was a map based activity for citizens to identify priority geographic areas for conservation, preservation and/or protection as green infrastructure in the county, including the municipal jurisdictions of Alcoa, Friendsville, Louisville, Maryville, Rockford and Townsend. Each workshop site had potential for several activity tables. In total, 84 citizens participated at 18 workshop tables. The workshops were facilitated by the planning staffs of Alcoa, Blount County and Maryville, and planners from the Local Planning Assistance Office serving Friendsville, Louisville and Townsend. The process was assisted by TVA and the Southeast Watershed Forum, and the Blount County GIS Group.

The following is report of the mapping activity, listing top three priorities and presenting maps by venue, date and table number. The table reports are correlated with digitized and color coded overlay maps on which areas are circled and identified by priority number. Following the table reports, participant comments are reported.

1 - Middle settlements Elementary School 10-13-08 Table 1 of 2

Priority #1 – Lackey Creek and Louisville Park

Reasons for selecting: Scenic environment, protect rivers and streams

Proposed functions or uses: Protect lake, rivers and streams; preserve rural, small town and natural character of city

Priority #2 – Lowes Ferry and Poland Creek

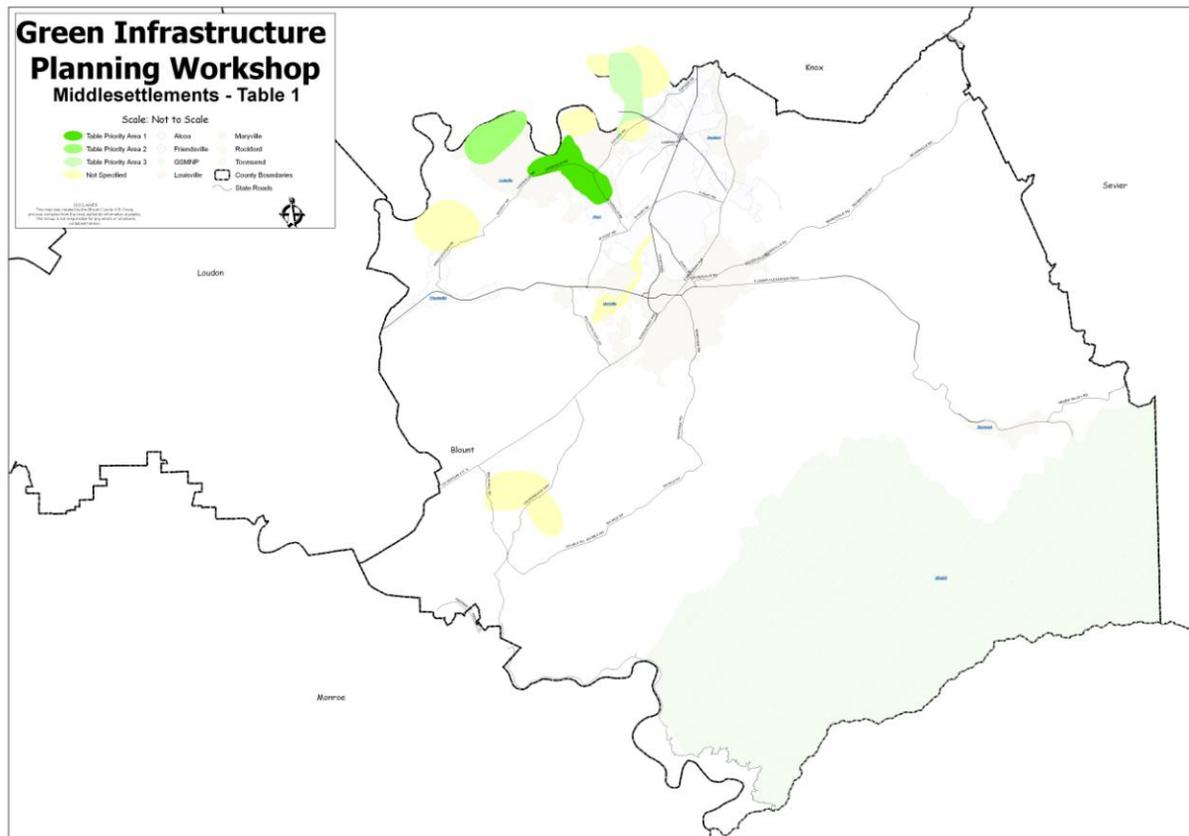
Reasons for selecting: Scenic environment; protect rivers and streams; public land and use

Proposed functions or uses: Preserve for parks and recreation

Priority #3 – Bear Hollow and Peninsula – Jones Bend Road – Georges Creek

Reasons for selecting: Public land use

Proposed functions or uses: Preserve wildlife, preserve for parks and recreation



2 - Middlesettlements Elementary School 10-13-08 Table 2 of 2

Priority #1 – Louisville Road from Topside to Firehall

Reasons for selecting: Historic (Point Park and Old Downtown), agriculture

Proposed functions or uses: Tourism, water sports, agriculture

Priority #2 – Lovingood, Hanson and Dean farms

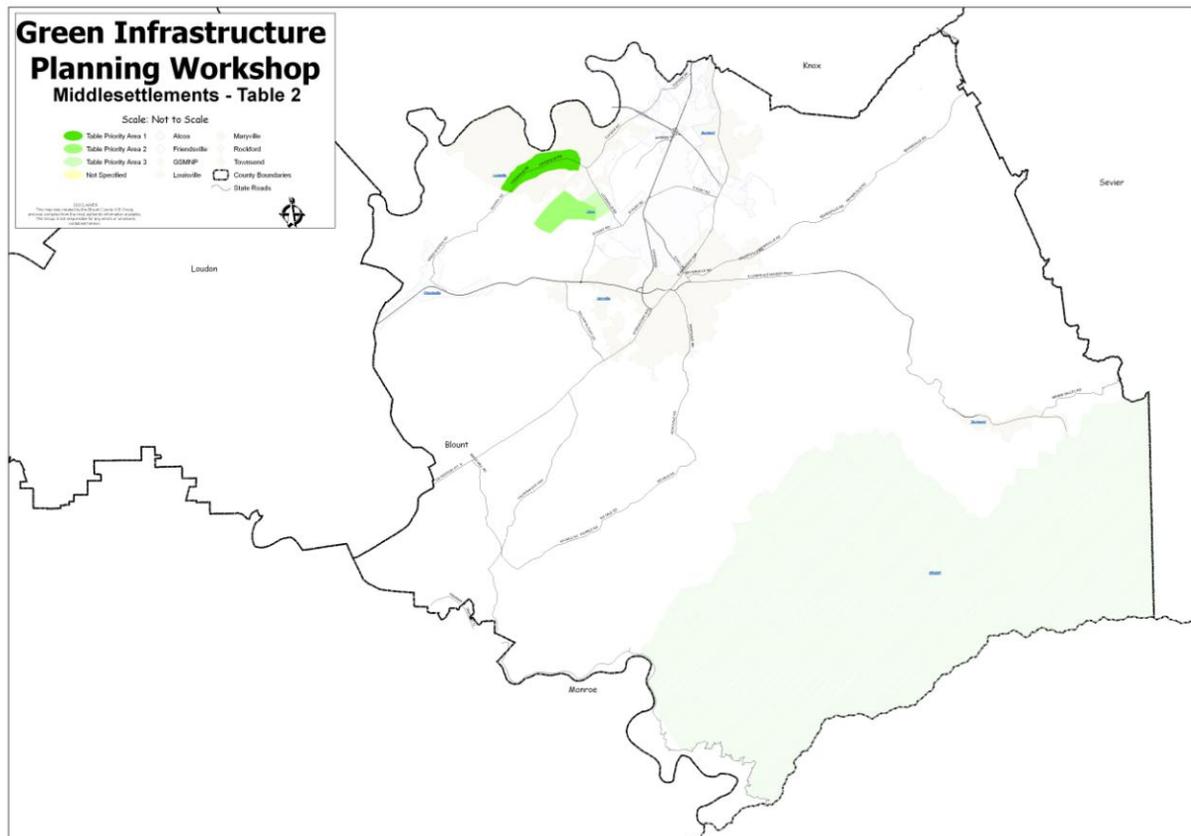
Reasons for selecting: Already available for public use, buffer from commercial use

Proposed functions or uses: Farming, horseback riding, wildlife preservation

Priority #3 – North industrial park

Reasons for selecting: Beautiful views, not developed

Proposed functions or uses: Tourism, equestrian, hiking, farming



3 - Heritage High School 10-14-08 Table 1 of 2

Priority #1 – Walland area, East Millers Cove (West Millers Cove also mentioned but not shown on map)

Reasons for selecting: Watershed, air quality, wildlife, farms, river recreation

Proposed functions or uses: Non-commercial, limited development, preserve as much green space as possible

Priority #2 – Walland to Townsend

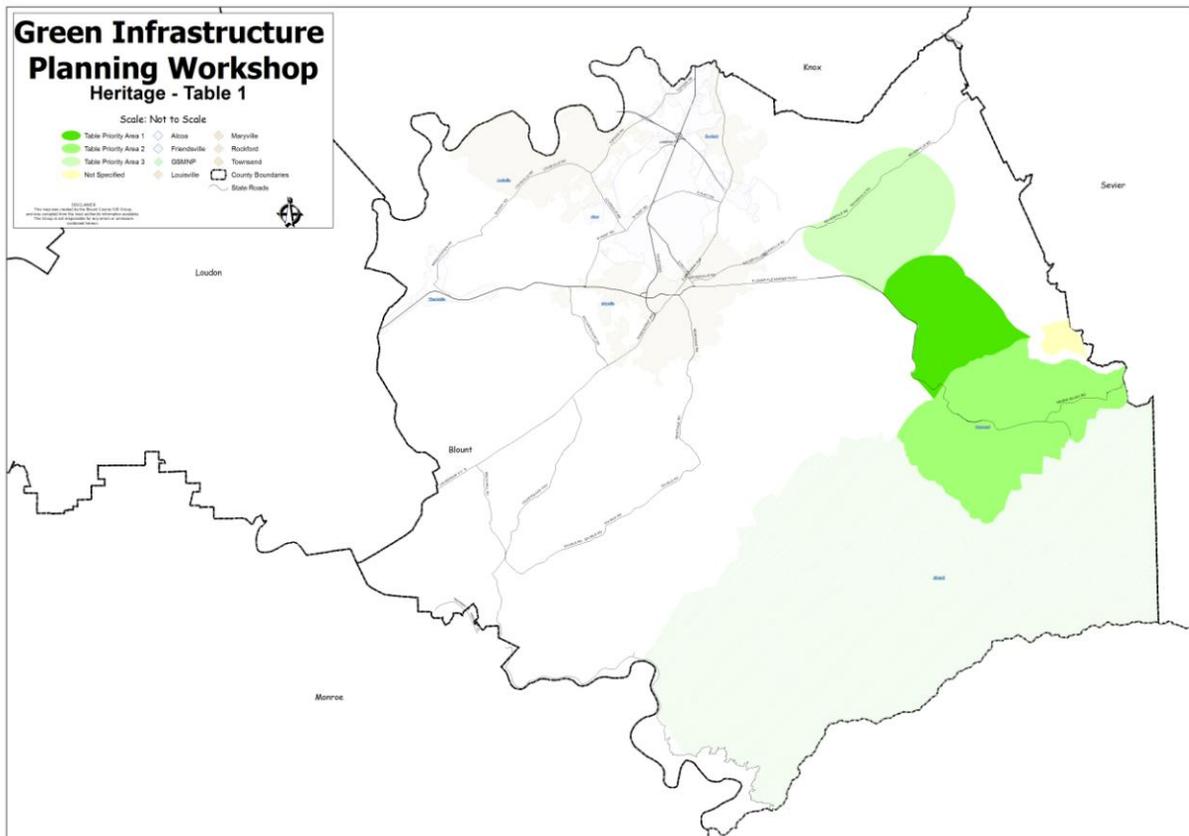
Reasons for selecting: Water and air quality, limited space available, preserve tourism quality, river recreation

Proposed functions or uses: Service tourism industries on highway only

Priority #3 – Walland to Sevierville Road

Reasons for selecting: Farmland use

Proposed functions or uses: Farm, river recreation



4 - Heritage High School 10-14-08 Table 2 of 2

Priority #1 – Little River

Reasons for selecting: Little River watershed, gateway to Smokies, tourism

Proposed functions or uses: Farming, water resource, recreation, preservation

Priority #2 – Chilhowee Ridgeline

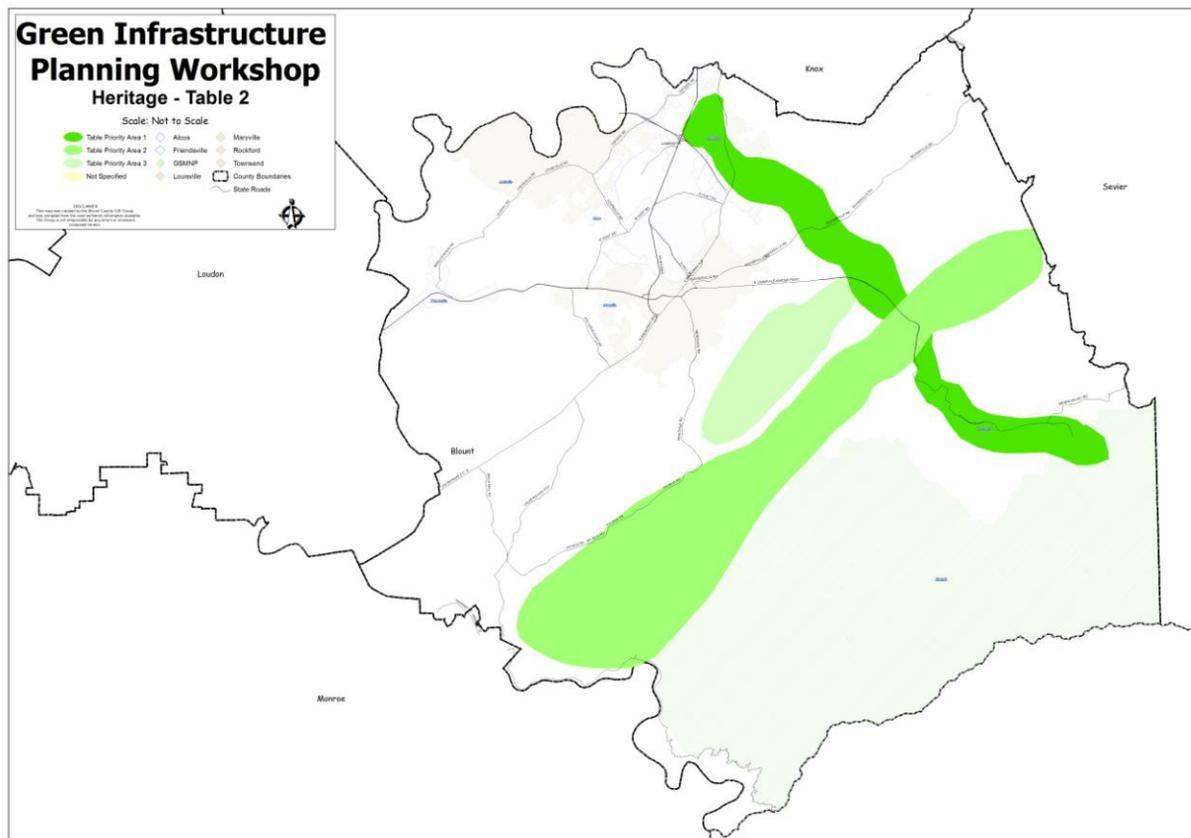
Reasons for selecting: Views, wildlife habitat, preservation

Proposed functions or uses: Recreation, Foothills Parkway

Priority #3 - Knobs

Reasons for selecting: Views, wildlife habitat

Proposed functions or uses: Preservation, views, unique geology



5 - Friendsville Elementary School 10-16-08 Single Table

Priority #1 – Gallagar Creek

Reasons for selecting: Wetland, wildlife, pollution

Proposed functions or uses: Conservation, recreation, park and trails

Priority #2 – Prime farmland north and south of Hwy 321

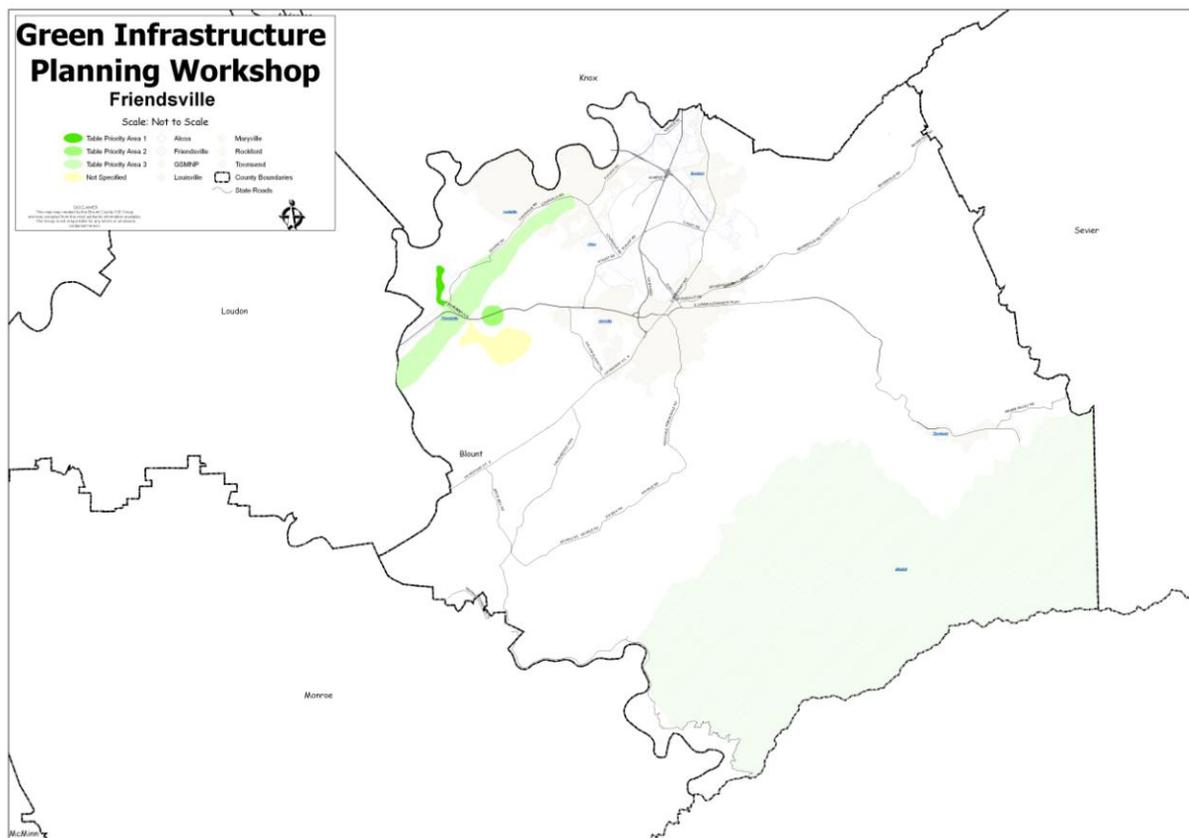
Reasons for selecting: Important farmland, old quarry spring fed

Proposed functions or uses: Preservation (Baldwin and Lane century farms)

Priority #3 – Knobs from Louisville to county line

Reasons for selecting: Scenic and wildlife

Proposed functions or uses: Wildlife preservation, trails, recreation



6 - William Blount High School Freshman Academy 10-20-08 Table 1 of 3

Priority #1 – Chilhowee Mountain

Reasons for selecting: Viewscape

Proposed functions or uses: Wildlife, value of tourism

Priority #2 – Bakers Creek

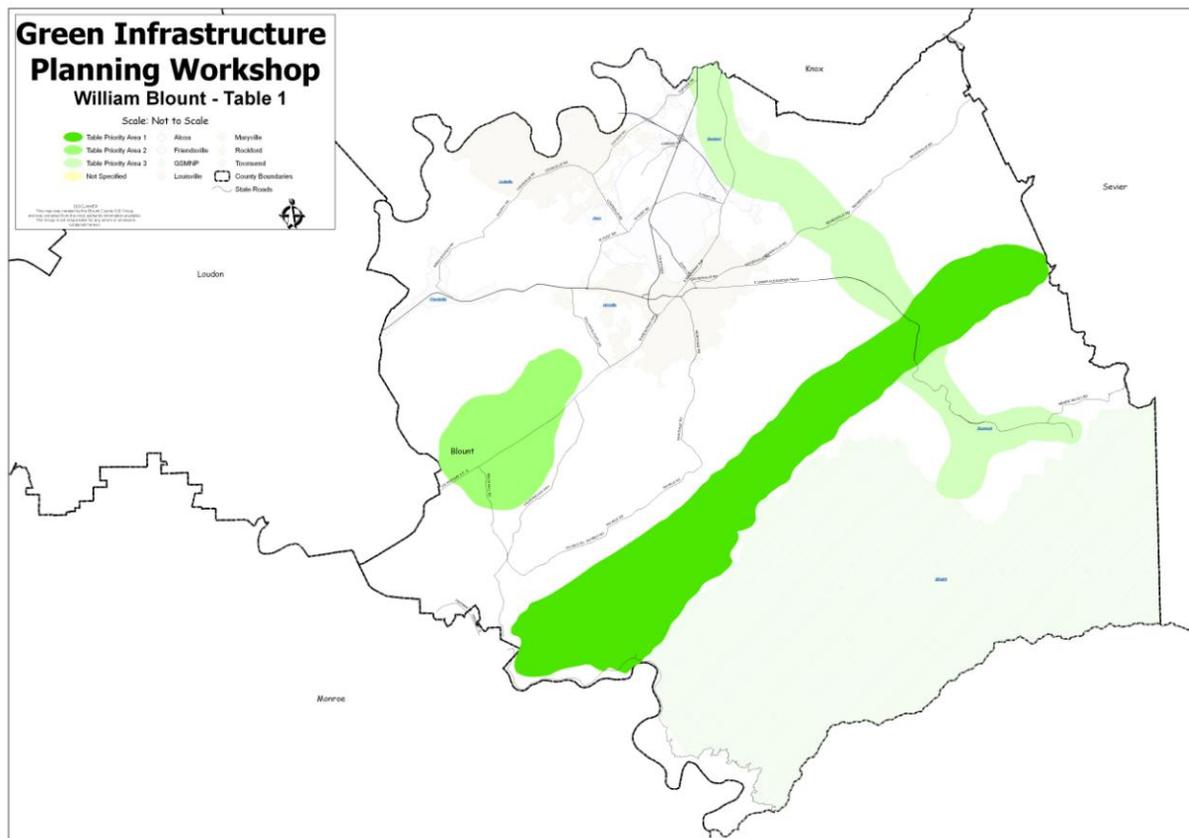
Reasons for selecting: Wetland, lightly developed

Proposed functions or uses: Wildlife, tourism

Priority #3 – Little River Watershed

Reasons for selecting: Water supply, wetlands

Proposed functions or uses: Greenway, buffer zone



7 - William Blount High School Freshman Academy 10-20-08 Table 2 of 3

Priority #1 – (generally Baker Creek by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: Stream protection, existing protected land linkage

Proposed functions or uses: Wildlife corridor

Priority #2 - (generally developed area just south of Maryville by reference to map)

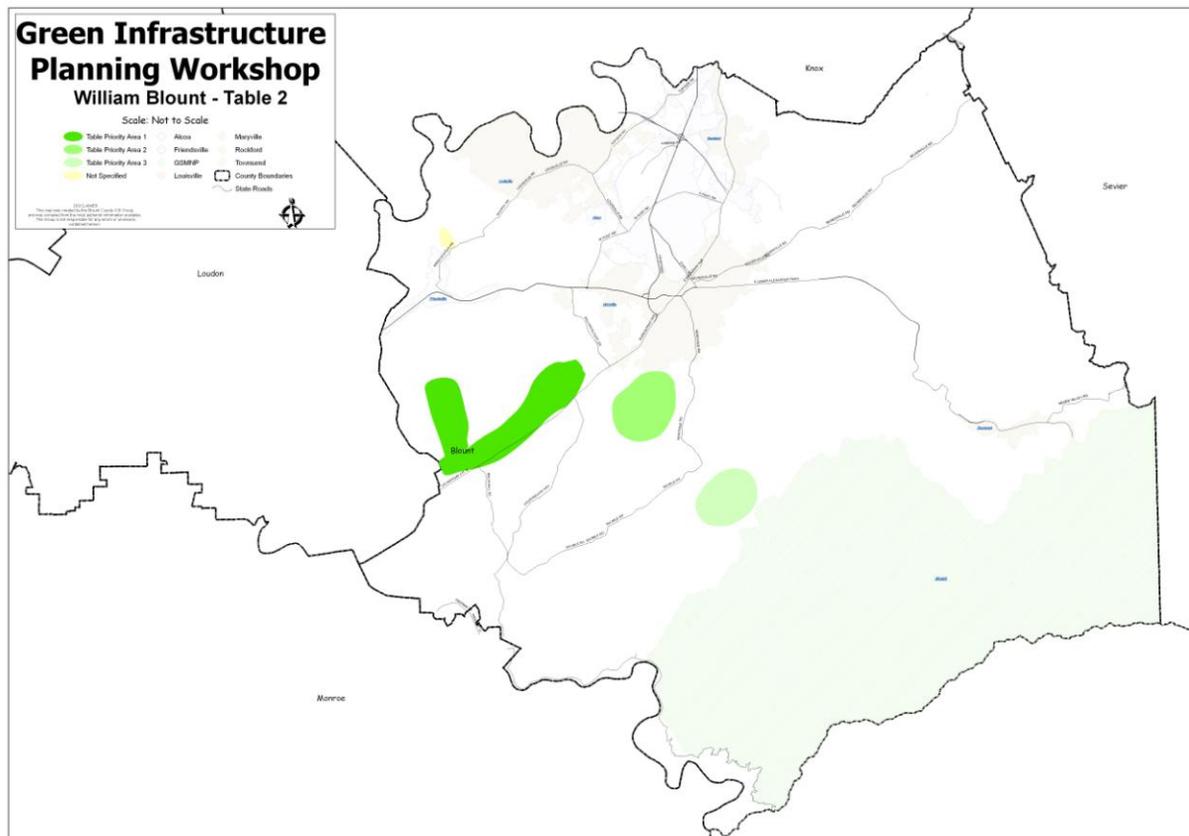
Reasons for selecting: People funnel into the only park in that area – Sandy Springs (too crowded)

Proposed functions or uses: New County park (with playground equipment, etc.)

Priority #3 - (generally area around Montvale Road on Chilhowee Mountain by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: Add to existing protected land (already green, expand it to keep it that way)

Proposed functions or uses: Wildlife habitat



8 - William Blount High School Freshman Academy 10-20-08 Table 3 of 3

Priority #1 – Area west of Friendsville

Reasons for selecting: Farmland and also good view for tourist

Proposed functions or uses: (none indicated)

Priority #2 – Area from Henry Lane to Old Niles Ferry

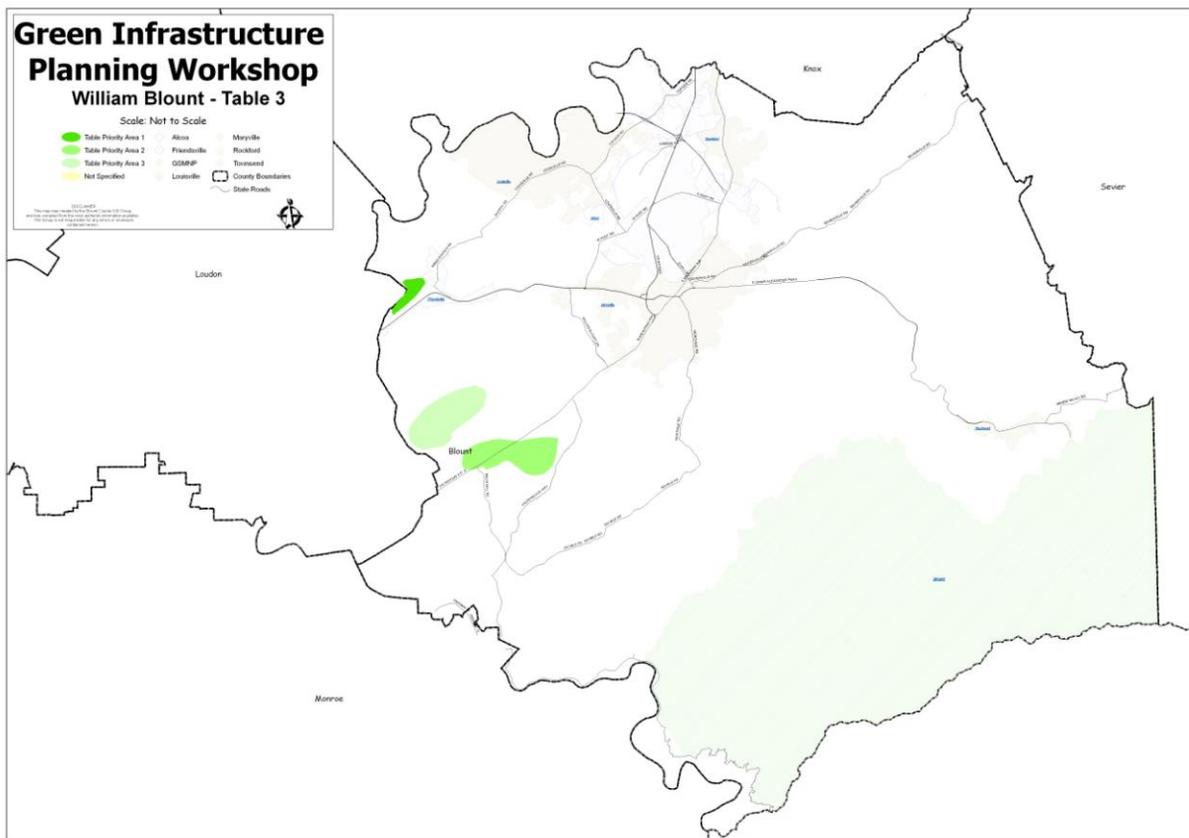
Reasons for selecting: Wetland, farmland and tourist attraction

Proposed functions or uses: (none indicated)

Priority #3 – Farmland - chosen

Reasons for selecting: Because it joins land already preserved

Proposed functions or uses: (none indicated)



9 - Alcoa Service Center 10-21-08 Table 1 of 3

Priority #1 - Little River Watershed

Reasons for selecting: Public health, drinking water, recreation

Proposed functions or uses: Water quality

Priority #2 – Foothills viewshed (Chilhowee Mountain, Three Sisters, Little Mountain, Knobs)

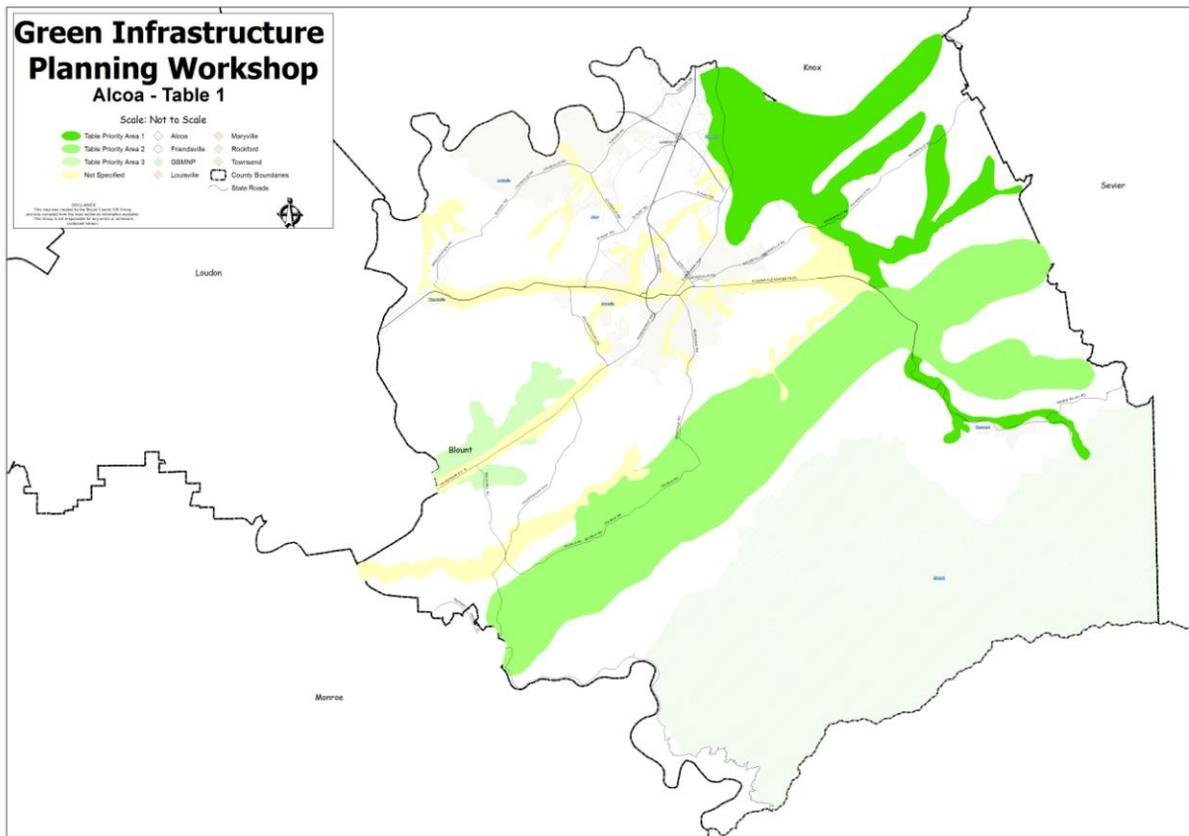
Reasons for selecting: Tourism revenue, wildlife habitat

Proposed functions or uses: Preservation

Priority #3 – Baker Creek

Reasons for selecting: development threat

Proposed functions or uses: Planned corridor sensitive to wetlands/waterways



10 - Alcoa Service Center 10-21-08 Table 2 of 3

Priority #1 – (generally farmland to southeast of Maryville by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: Historic (great warpath), farmland, streams and recreation (connects several bike paths)

Proposed functions or uses: recreation, preservation, historic area

Priority #2 – Links to multiple conservation easements (along Chilhowee Mountain and Knobs by reference to map)

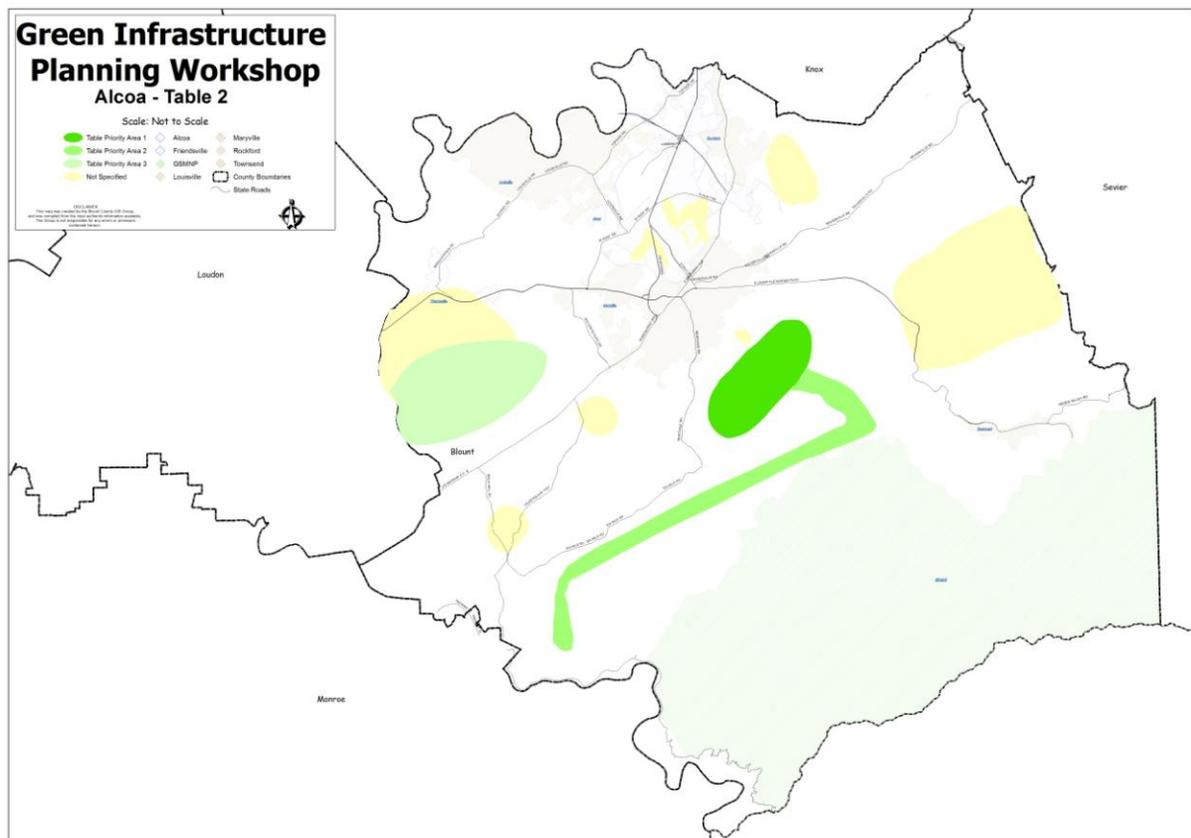
Reasons for selecting: Geographically logical to connect existing conservation easements

Proposed functions or uses: Natural wildlife corridors

Priority #3 – (generally farmland in Baker Creek watershed by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: Prime farmland

Proposed functions or uses: Farming (no farms – no food)



11 - Alcoa Service Center 10-21-08 Table 3 of 3 (see also map on following page)

Priority #1 – Vera Drive

Reasons for selecting: Already a public property

Proposed functions or uses: Recreation/park

Priority #2 - Middlesettlements

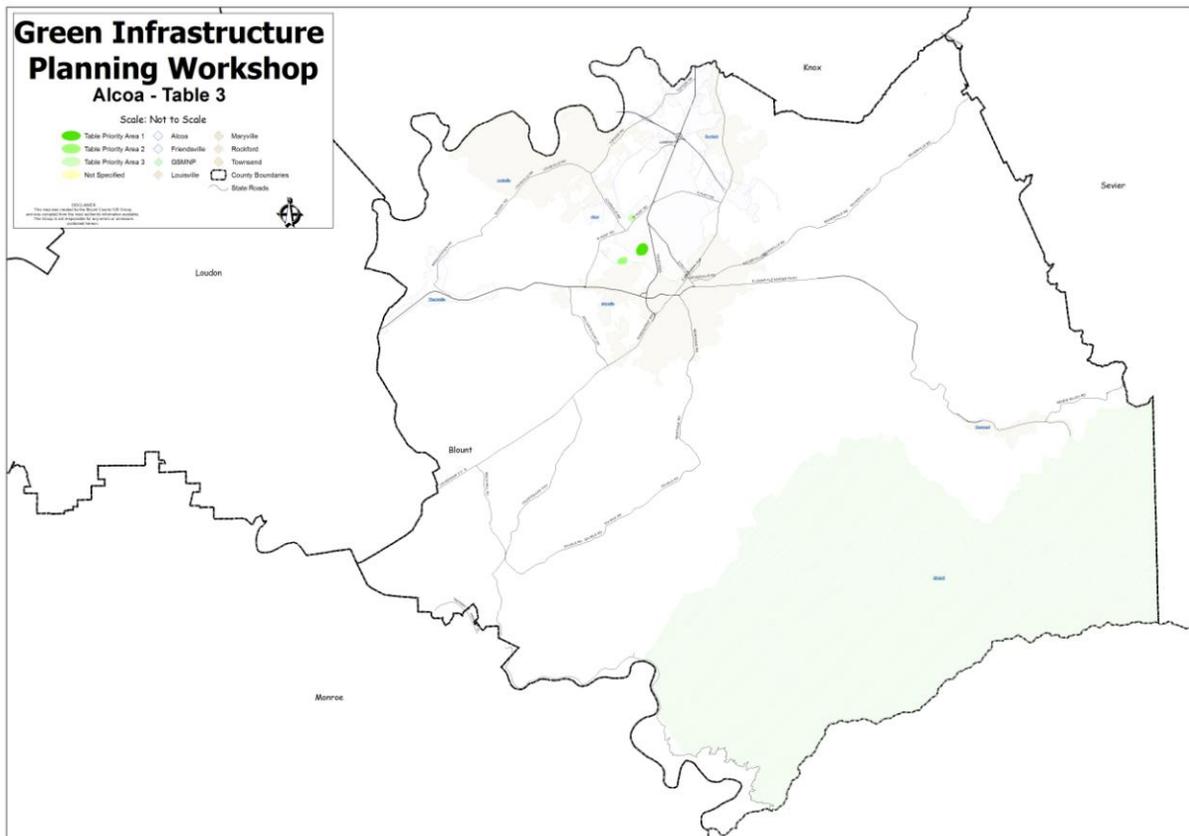
Reasons for selecting: Much is limited for agriculture, borders Pistol Creek, could be linkage to #1

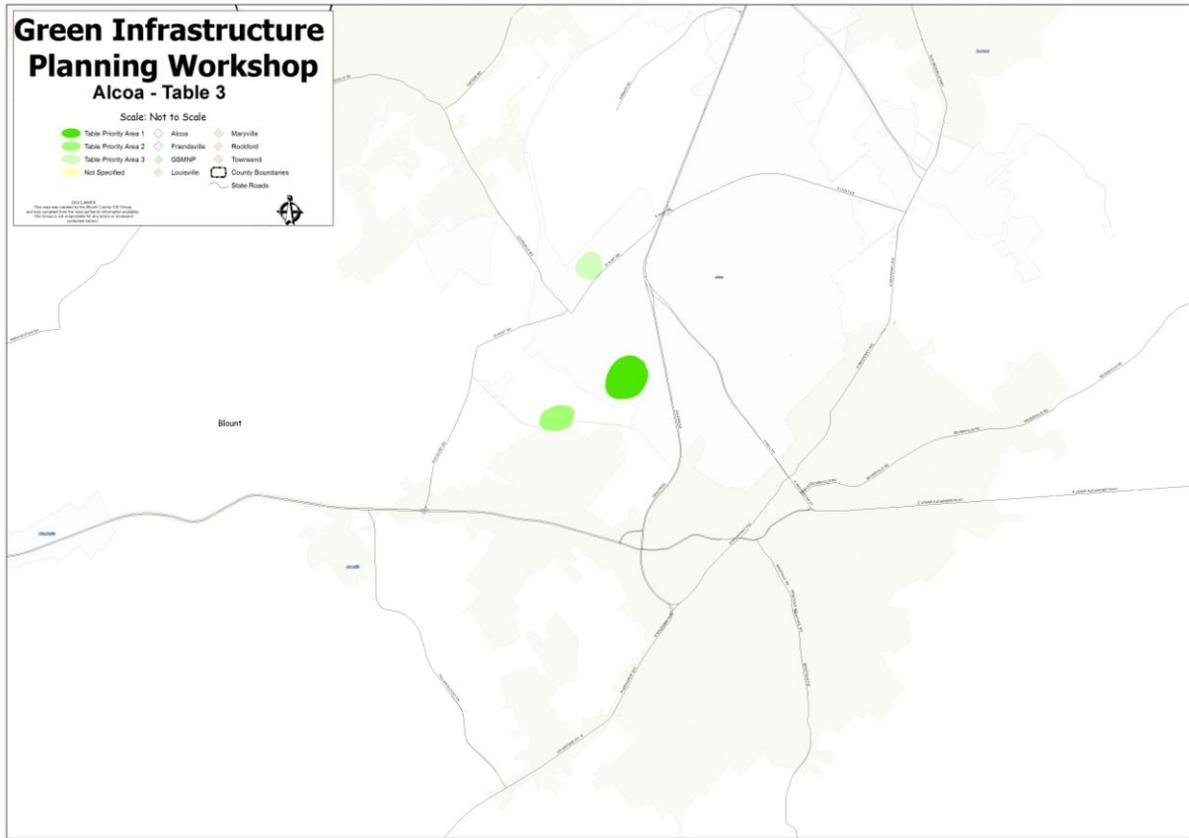
Proposed functions or uses: Recreation/park

Priority #3 – Airport at St. Ives

Reasons for selecting: Area is now quasi-public area

Proposed functions or uses: Parks or recreation





Enlargement to show detail.

12 - Townsend Elementary School 10-27-08 Table 1 of 2

Priority #1 – Little River Watershed

Reasons for selecting: Protection of drinking water, wildlife, recreation

Proposed functions or uses: see above

Priority #2 – Farmland under major development pressure (around proposed Pellissippi Parkway by reference to map)

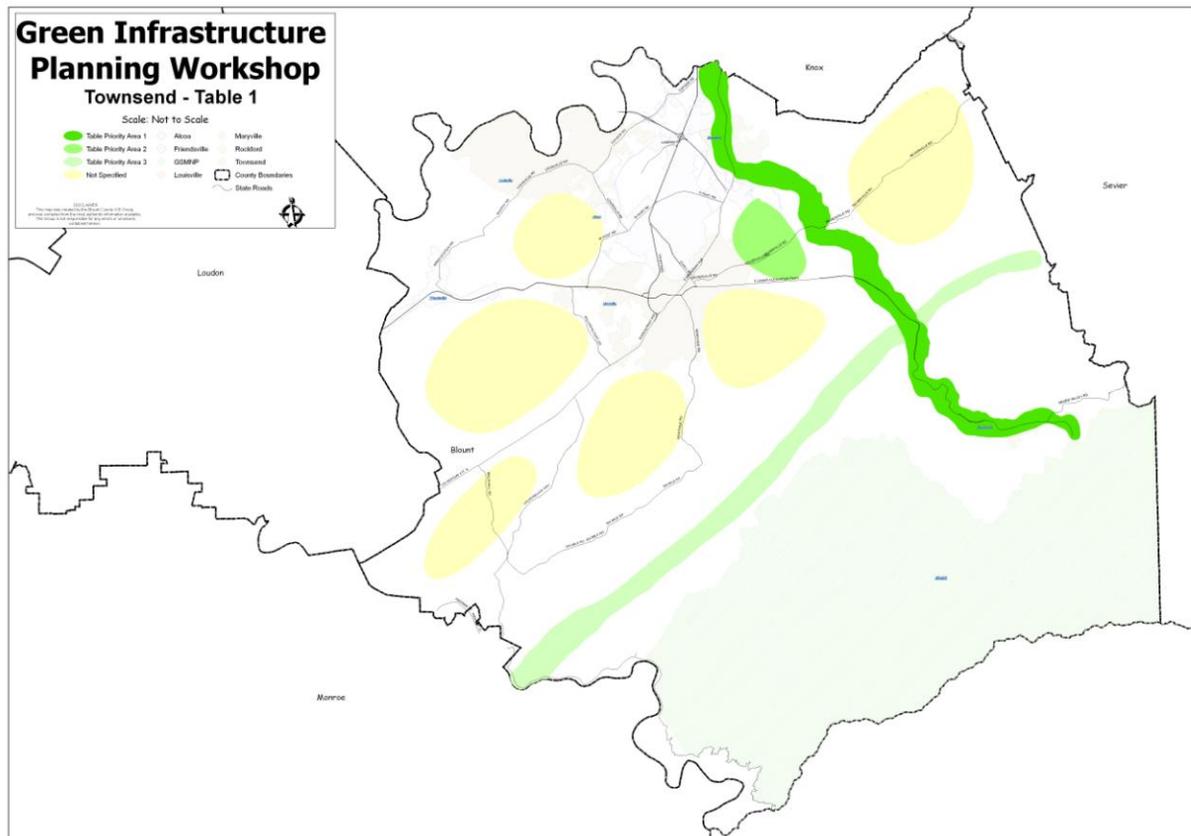
Reasons for selecting: Food and fiber for future and family farms

Proposed functions or uses: see above

Priority #3 – Wildlife corridor (Chilhowee Mountain by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: Natural features for wildlife

Proposed functions or uses: see above



13 - Townsend Elementary School 10-27-08 Table 2 of 2 (see map on following page)

Priority #1 – (generally Walland gap, Millers Cove and Little River approaching Townsend by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: As the approach into the Cove, we believe that this area should be preserved for aesthetics.

Proposed functions or uses: Pleasant appearance. Three Sisters could be great recreational/wildlife viewing area.

Priority #2 – (generally Top of World and Happy Valley by reference to map)

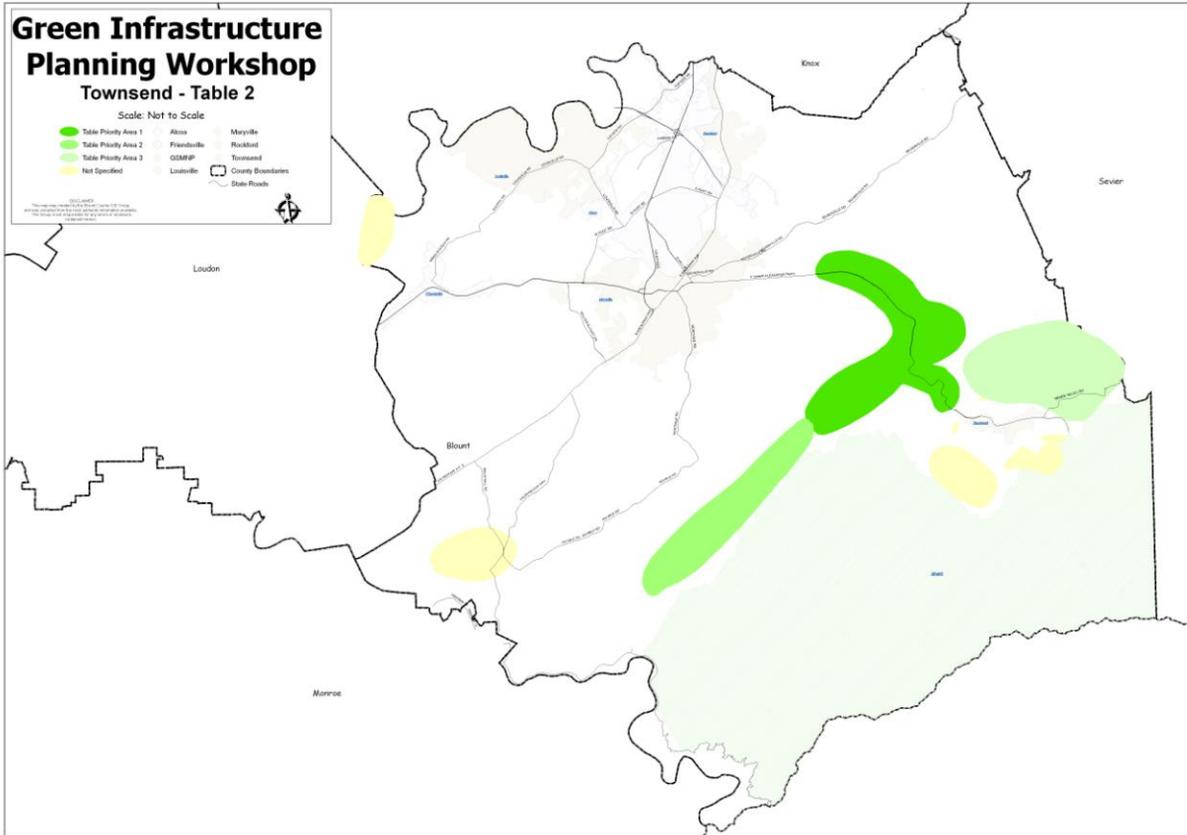
Reasons for selecting: To preserve viewscales from within the GSMNP looking toward the Foothills Parkway Ridgeline.

Proposed functions or uses: Pleasant appearance.

Priority #3 – (generally Mountains north of Townsend and along Wears Valley Road by reference to map)

Reasons for selecting: To preserve the beauty of Townsend and viewscales to the East.

Proposed functions or uses: Pleasant appearance, recreation (hiking).



14 - Porter Elementary School 10-28-08 Single Table

Priority #1 – Little River

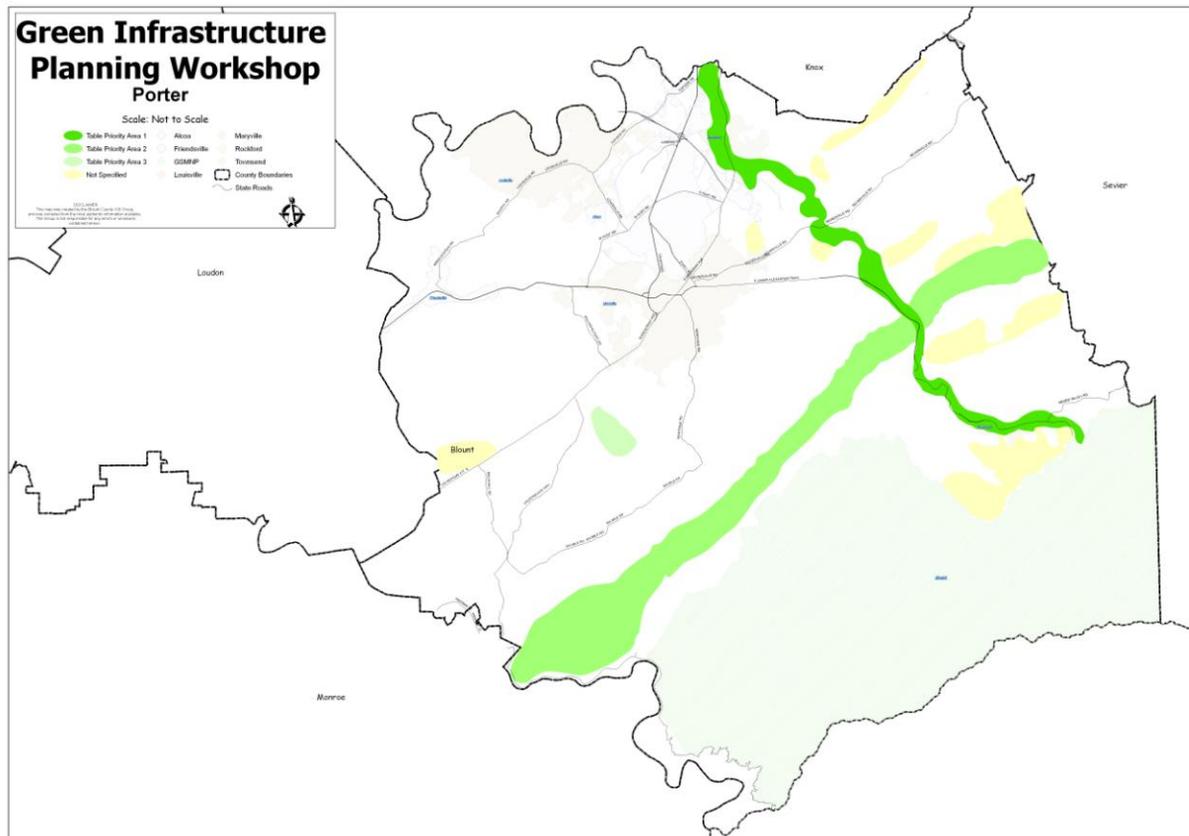
Reasons for selecting: Drinking water supply, wildlife, recreation, natural beauty
Proposed functions or uses: Recreation, greenway, trails, bird watching, canoeing, drinking water sources

Priority #2 – Chilhowee Mountain Range

Reasons for selecting: viewscape, wildlife corridor, migratory birds, unique plants, link to the GSMNP
Proposed functions or uses: bird watching, tourist destination, viewshed, camping, biking

Priority #3 – Carpenters area

Reasons for selecting: In the path of growth and need for recreation area
Proposed functions or uses: Recreation and greenspace preservation



15 - Maryville City Hall 10-30-08 Table 1 of 4

Priority #1 – Chilhowee Mountain Range Ridge-top

Reasons for selecting: Primary scenic view and watershed for Blount County

Proposed functions or uses: Current use Foothills Parkway.

Priority #2 – Foothills farmland

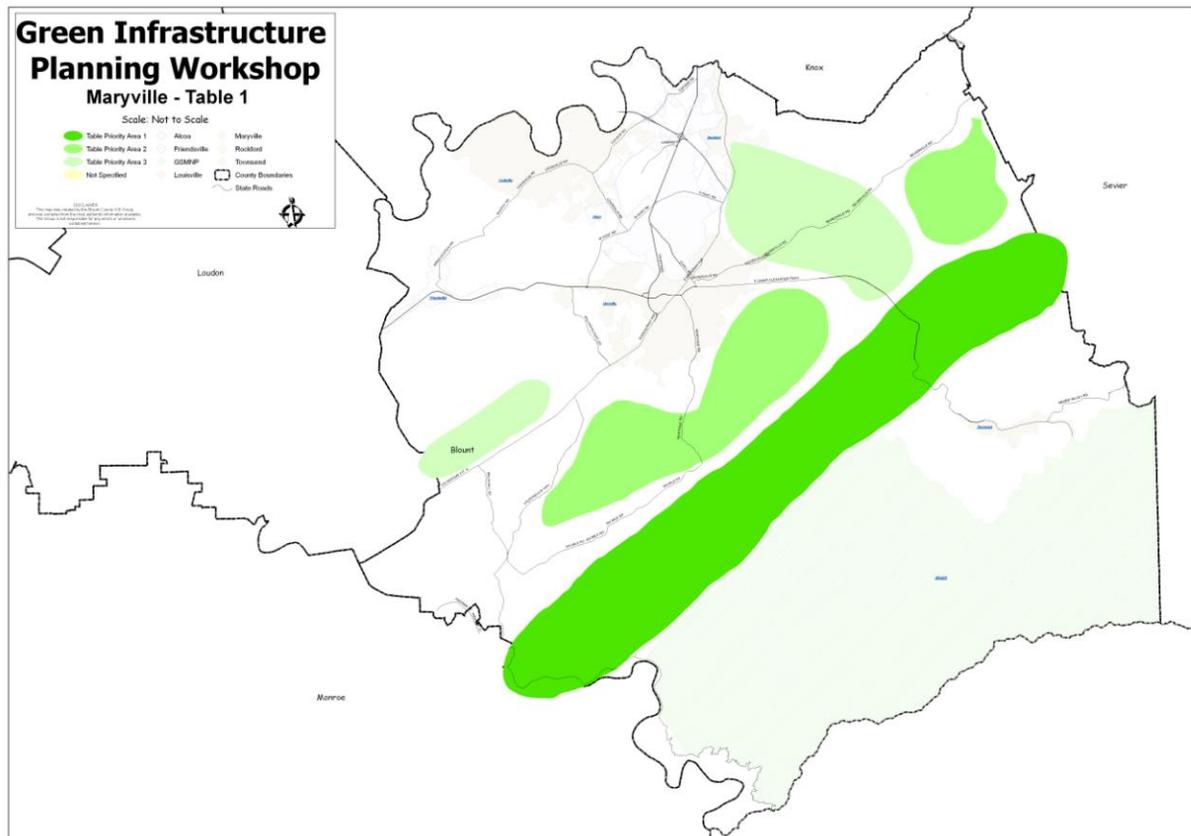
Reasons for selecting: Scenic, food production, buffer for watershed.

Proposed functions or uses: Food production, rural recreation.

Priority #3 – Wetlands/River

Reasons for selecting: Little River and Baker Creek watershed contains majority of water sources for North and South Blount County.

Proposed functions or uses: Wetland conservation, recreation.



16 - Maryville City Hall 10-30-08 Table 2 of 4 (see map on following page)

Priority #1 - Little River Corridor

Reasons for selecting: Scenic beauty, buffer development from along river, protect water source.

Proposed functions or uses: additional hiking and biking trails, designated river access.

Priority #2 - Farmland adjacent to Vulcan Materials on Montvale Road

Reasons for selecting: Large site in city available for recreation, lack of use due to quarry, serve as buffer to residential.

Proposed functions or uses: Potential active park.

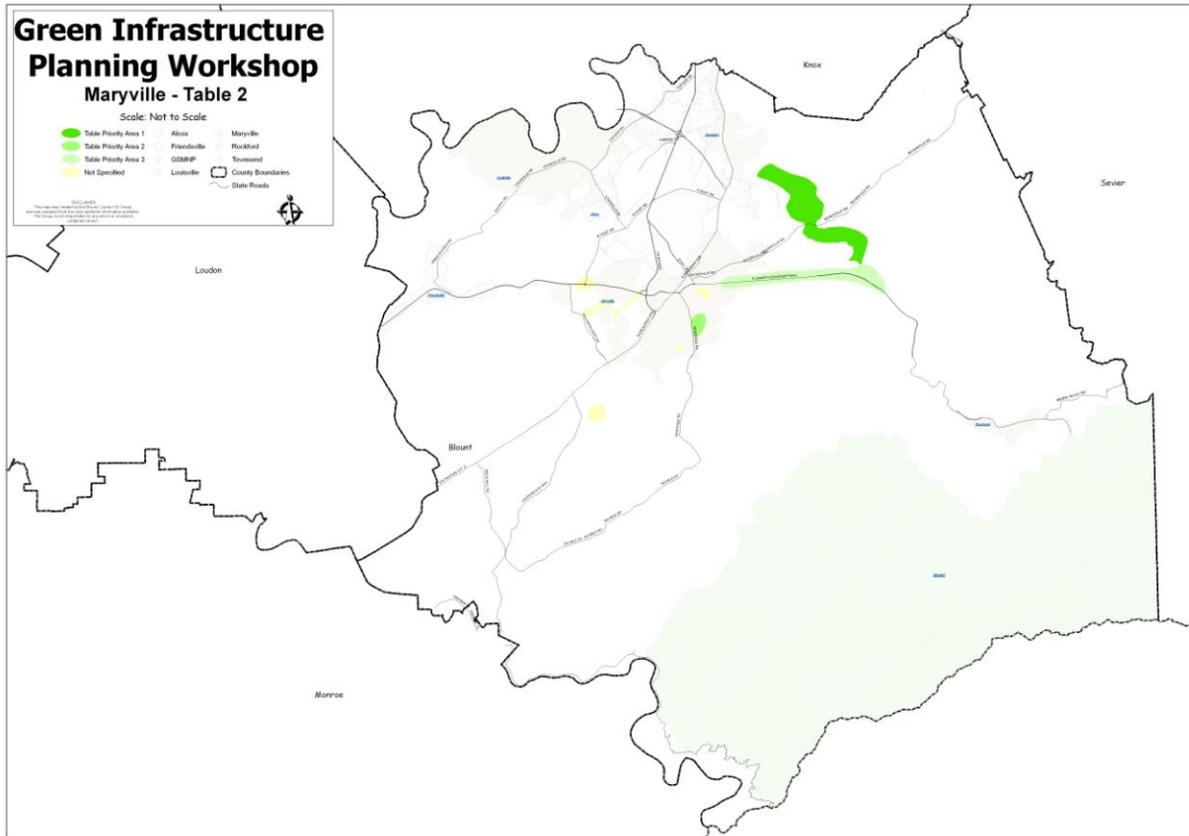
Priority #3 - 321 Corridor

Reasons for selecting: Connectivity to Townsend Greenbelt, avoid continuous commercial development.

Proposed functions or uses: Extension of paths to connect Great Smoky Mountains with Maryville, connect to Amerine Park.

Other Comments:

- 1) Preserve wetlands near Monroe County line 411 S – proposed site of sports complex.
- 2) Use railway for additional connectivity to designated parks.



17 - Maryville City Hall 10-30-08 Table 3 of 4 (see map on following page)

Priority #1 – Little River watershed and tributaries

Reasons for selecting: Water source is critical to residents; critical to wildlife, plant life and tourism.

Proposed functions or uses: priority for forested areas.

Priority #2 – Happy Valley corridor

Reasons for selecting: Key for wildlife migration and avoid development; bridge this gap (parkway), viewscapes;

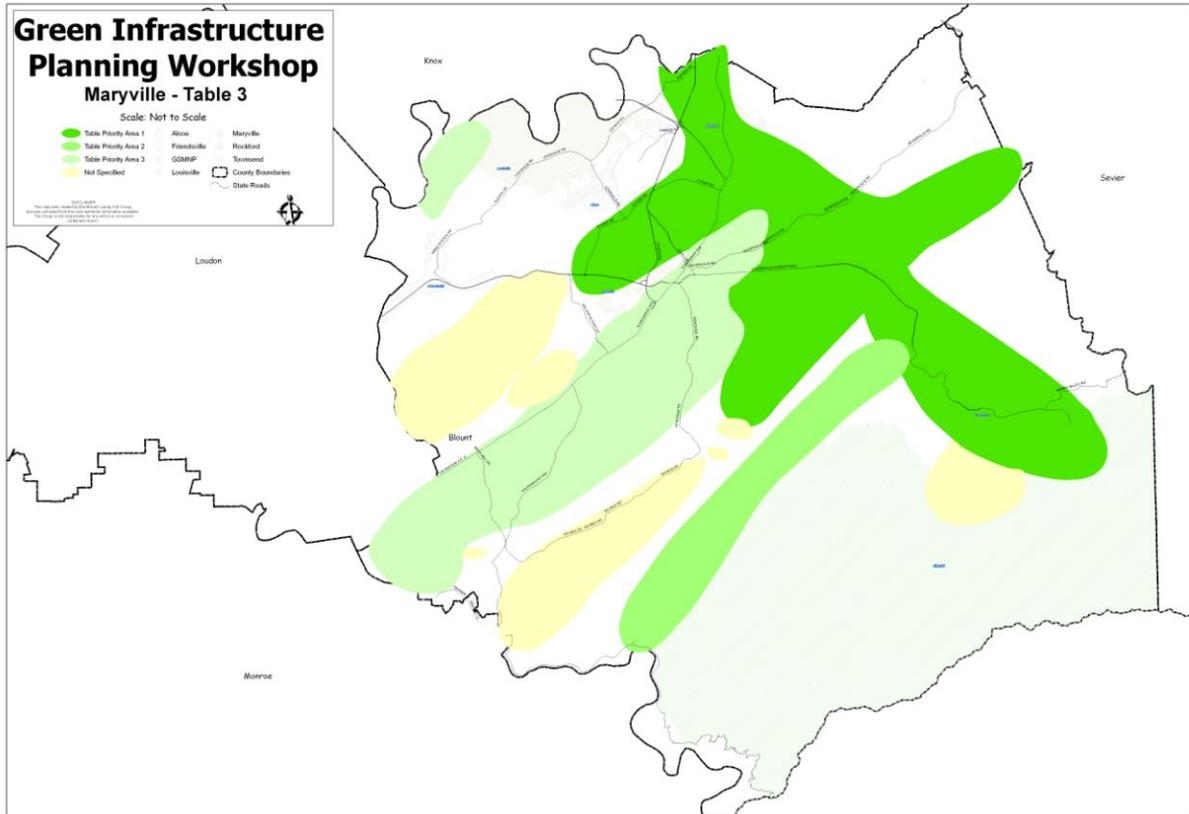
Proposed functions or uses: Water system drainage; priority for forested areas.

Priority #3 – Rich agricultural land

Reasons for selecting: Support local economy, local food production and land impacts to water resources

Proposed functions or uses: Fresh markets/farmers markets; food security; encourage local food purchasing; open space; critical to support water, food and wildlife as these are interconnected to local citizen livelihood, support local economy and tourism.

Other Comments: Forested lands – provide needed oxygen and improved air quality; interdependence of all elements and struggle to focus on one section as all are key elements to survival.



18 - Maryville City Hall 10-30-08 Table 4 of 4 (see map on following page)

Priority #1 – Areas surrounding county schools

Reasons for selecting: greatest community impact, creates community focus, creates campus atmosphere

Proposed functions or uses: outdoor classrooms, sports fields

Priority #2 – Baker Creek watershed and wetlands

Reasons for selecting: Great development pressure, tourist corridor, good farmland, unique wetlands

Proposed functions or uses: Public park, farming/agriculture, viewscape

Priority #3 – Crooked Creek watershed

Reasons for selecting: Currently undeveloped, protect Little River

Proposed functions or uses: Agriculture, protection

Other Comments:

Crooked Creek Watershed

Viewscape

 Crooked Creek; 321 corridor Heritage to Townsend; Sevierville Road;

 Wears Valley; River or lake views; Lake front

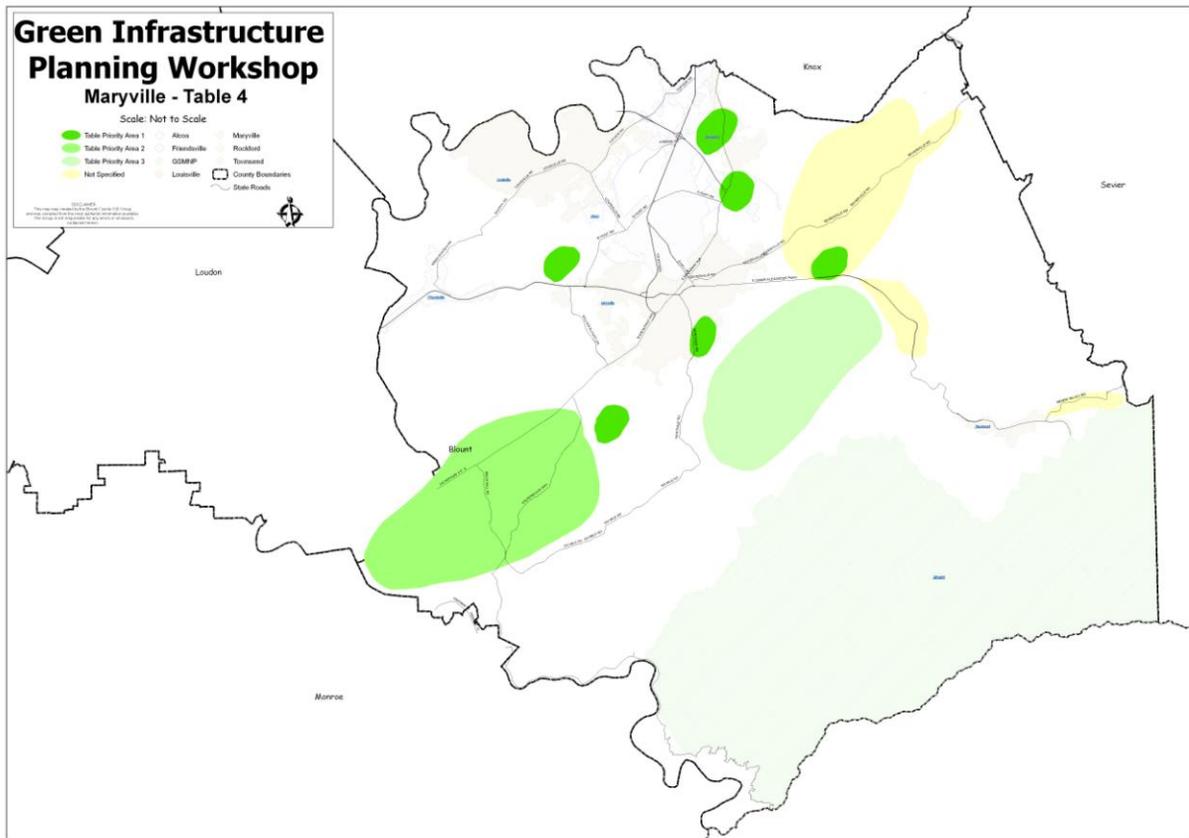
Greenspace school areas could be dual purpose

Agriculture areas development pressures

 Nails Creek watershed; Baker Creek watershed

TN River

 Publicly owned; Privately owned



Report of written comments from Green Infrastructure Workshops

Participants at the workshops were asked to submit optional Comment Sheet with following instruction:

Comments – Feel free to give us any suggestions about criteria we should use to set priorities for the protection of green infrastructure, specific geographic areas of concern, implementation strategies, and any other areas of concern or interest.

Other options for comments were by mail, and e-mail regardless of participation in the workshops.

The following were 18 sets of comments received by December 8, 2008:

From Sue Dawson

- 1) Create 100 acre greenspace islands around each county school – multipurpose, could be determined by the community, campus atmosphere, multipurpose greenspace
- 2) Provide access to TN river
- 3) Add & refine public access areas for Little River
- 4) Restrict visual impact of development along 321

From anonymous

Another area I would like to see preserved is the farmland on 411 South (heading toward Vonore) and 321 South (toward Lenoir City). Both of those used to be beautiful drives, but they are quickly being ruined by businesses and subdivisions along the way.

From Joe Gallagher

A- Preserve wetlands

- 1- Hwy 411 near Monroe (Loudon) County Line possibly all or part of site of formerly proposed sports center.
- 2- Terminus of Topside Road at (or near) Louisville Road and extending to Dug Gap Road.

B- Preserve scenic, rural nature of Blount County

- 1- Don't allow Townsend to look like Wears Valley
- 2- Don't develop 411 South with big box stores.
- 3- Don't build proposed southern loop.

C- Develop & improve roads in a manner that will add to rural & scenic style of Blount County.

D- Mandate scenic, landscaping designs for major commercial zones – starting with 129 By-Pass & also 411 South in Maryville and 321 towards Townsend (especially from Blount Mem. Hosp. beyond Heritage H.S.)

Thanks for the forum.

From anonymous

If we had been asked to identify functional priorities instead of location priorities, we may have observed:

- 1) What participants value, not where, and
- 2) The importance of relationships among the functions.

Having all the maps (roads, agriculture, water, wildlife) was a terrific aid to what you asked us to do. Having a bit more time would have been welcome.

From anonymous

Make study to see how bike trail in Townsend is used for bike riding.

Let property owners vote on use of land set aside.

¼ of Blount County is in GSMNP which is a greenway.

Present program in manner so people with other views can express concern.

From Anita Blatnik

Obvious from all the groups – our watershed is critical.

Loved the idea of connecting Maryville to Townsend down 321 – already a scenic hwy & I know of 3 people (separate) who told me they biked from Maryville to Townsend w/in the past two weeks.

Keep in mind the impact on our air quality.

Thanks for asking for our input.

From Adrienne Schwarte

This is a great program to receive citizen feedback. I'd like to see some local organizations that focus on watersheds, air quality and wildlife management to be parts of this process (as many members of your planning cmt. might be). As future planning continues I'd like to see a focus on interdependence, relationship to the holistic goals of sustainability and transparency in planning (which this current session does).

Protection focus

- 1) Little River, forestry lands, agricultural land (focused on organic agriculture & more cropland, less livestock), wildlife management spaces; (compiler note - no continuation evident)

From anonymous

Criteria: promote the rural nature of the county.

Specific geographic areas:

Chilhowee Mountain, ridgetop development is a huge concern. This view is a cash cow for the county – it brings in tourists, it is a selling point for realestate, etc.

Wetlands and rivers – Baker's Creek/Henry Lane area & the Little River Farmland – areas along the mountain & northeast of Maryville in particular.

From Kay Hultquist

As a whole, I think it was an excellent format and presentation. My only suggestion is to consider the possibility of pre-registration and sending the handout to registered participants prior to the workshop for study. (It probably taken me a little longer than most to "take in" the available resource and

instructions.) I agree with the group that presently underserved areas outside of the city should be considered first, and I liked the three priorities.

However, in line with the mandate that the participants in the 2020 Vision Program gave in desiring connections between neighborhoods, I still feel that the acquisition and conversion of the old railroad bed from Pearson Springs Park to Heritage Hills and the 5-acre area off and connecting Briarcliff, Windridge, and Jamestown would be great assets and a viable part of the green infrastructure. As a longtime (unsuccessful) advocate of “rails to trails”, I have wanted to see parts if not all of the former rail corridors from Maryville to Walland, Maryville to Tallassee, and Mentor to Friendsville converted to walking and bicycle trails and recognized for their historic significance (Walland and beyond as access to the Smokies, Tallassee and beyond for the development of the Aluminum Co. dams and the timber resources of Alcoa, and the Friendsville route for access to the marble quarries and the communities of Friendsville and Louisville.)

From Dick Randolph

Wind generators are not even close to being a significant contribution to energy independence. Maybe someday they could be meaningful, but for now, since a big part of Blount Counties’ economy depends upon the mountains, we don’t need windmills on the ridgetops. (Compiler’s note – accompanied by a handout news clipping).

From Dick Randolph

There were two table groups.

Ours tended to protect clean water in the Little River basin north of Heritage, and in Tuckaleechee. We also wanted to preserve the non-commercial character of the 321corridor and Townsend. Also, the natural look of the mountains along the corridor were important. Our table circled the entire Tuckaleechee valley. Some of that was by default, for not knowing where avoid unreasonable limits. The thrust of Tuckaleechee was clean water (from the foothills) wildlife, and scenic values on the visible slopes, and limits on commercial development.

I liked the other table's interest in the entire Chilhowee Mountain range. They also emphasized more of the Little River corridor. Maybe some park development there can be considered.

From Dick Randolph

I had a better feel for the exercise this time (2nd time). Again, the Little River and Chilhowee Mt were selected by the group. Scenic values were emphasized, including the corridor from Walland to Townsend.

So far, not many are commenting on the stream values, except for the Little River. Keeping upstream branches pure should be a value.

Some folks are anti-regulation which translates into anti-government, even for non-intrusive purchased or conservation easements. I suggest the County Commission de-emphasize land purchase (except for specific value, such as a park) and dwell more on subdivision regs and conservation easements. Money allocation would be more efficient that way as well.

(Compiler's note – the following was a sticky note attached to comments sheet by Dick Randolph)

The areas circled by me below the new Parkway in SE Blount Co. – are the mountains seen from Townsend proper – e.g., from the guest rooms at Highland Manor.

From Jeanie Hilten

Look at the Foothills Land Conservancy methods of working with landowners to establish conservation easements – voluntary.

Look at economic values of watershed protection, forests, farms – the services I hope lands provide.

Crucial areas are those under eminent pressure.

In order to keep good water quality of Little River need to protect the small watersheds feeding in.

Protect the rest of Chilhowee Mtn – wildlife, forest recreation.

Educate county planning commission about costs of approving ridgetop, steep mtn, & floodplain development.

From Debbie McNelly

- 1) Springbrook Rd off of Wright Rd, has no lights (this is part of greenbelt/greenway) no lights till you get to Central Baptist Church!
- 2) Could lights be installed from McArthur Rd Bridge (city limits) to Springbrook Rd? McArthur Rd Alcoa connects to the Greenbelt!

From anonymous

Protect our mountains & watersheds veiwscapes.

Tourists come to Blount Co. to see the green/wildlife not buildings for lease dotting our highways.

From Carolyn Pullias

- 1) We must protect the water quality of our streams along with the water shed throughout the county.
- 2) In keeping development to a conservative minimum, this will preserve & conserve land and air altogether. Doing so, this will maintain the natural beauty and quality of life.
- 3) Preserve the ridge tops and mountain tops. Keep development to a minimum with the least affect to the landscape.

From anonymous

Mountain top protection

Limit density of housing i.e. where sewer & wells are private

Clean water in rivers & streams

From Mike Cook

Implementation of PDR's very important to farming

Any mountain development require do water hydrology studies

Preservation of Little River for recreation & water very important

From William (Booty) Miller

I attended the Green Infrastructure Workshop at William Blount Ninth Grade Academy on October 20, 2008. I was pleased that, in spite of a fair amount of diversity among those attending, there seemed to be a high level of agreement in identifying priority areas for conservation, preservation, and protection.

My group unanimously identified three areas for preservation:

1. Chilhowee Mountain
2. The Wetland on Baker's Creek (near Henry Lane)
3. The Little River Watershed

Also, the group was highly interested in establishing a **BIKE TRAIL** that joined and was tied to Carpenters Grade Road. Someone related that this particular route was so outstanding because it paralleled Chilhowee Mountain. In the past there have been proposals to tie a bike or walking trail to the old railroad bed in that area.

I believe that both of the other groups present in the meeting identified the same sites.

My Priorities for Preserving:

Chilhowee Mountain - Rationale for Selection:

1. Development on steep slopes produce run-off, changes the direction of waterways and speeds up the water flow in different areas. These factors cause silting up of streams and wetlands down grade. Hence, development could cause this to be the fate of Chilhowee Mountain.
Sidney Lanier Lake is the story of a small lake on the Montvale property that was destroyed by siltation after the road over Chilhowee Mountain was constructed.
2. Chilhowee Mountain has a rich history. Inhabitants and travelers include Native Americans and Spanish explorers. Civil War times saw the gaps of the mountain occupied by Confederates, Union troops and "Bushwhackers."
It has been reported that gold has been discovered in only two places in Tennessee. The two places are Coker Creek and Chilhowee Mountain. A local legend has it that part of a highjacked Civil War

gold shipment is still hidden on this mountain (I haven't found it yet).

3. It has been reported recently that as much as 40% of sales tax income for Blount County comes from tourism. Tourist come to see our mountains, streams and green spaces not our fine buildings. Chilhowee Mountain is the fore ground and gatekeeper of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, the nation's most visited park, and needs to be protected to remain in that state. Chilhowee Mountain is the most striking site for visitors from many vantage points throughout the county. Wonderful views of the mountain can be gained from US411, from Six Mile Road, from Montvale Road near the Maryville Municipal Building, from Carpenters Grade Road, from Hwy. 321, from Ellejoy Road and many others. The most often repeated refrain in real estate ads in Blount County is "a splendid mountain view."
4. Chilhowee Mountain is a wildlife habitat. Hunting is common on the mountain.
5. Building on Chilhowee Mountain could promote disasters. The mountain is subject to landslides as is evident from the incidents on the Foothills Parkway. At least once in recent history, Chilhowee Mountain has been the epicenter of an earthquake. Also, development in mountain areas eventually call for increased infrastructure at county expense. TACIR has pointed out that about 40 years are required for subdivisions to pay for the required infrastructure.

The Wetlands on Bakers Creek (near Henry Lane) - Rationale for Selection:

1. Wetlands serve to purify waters polluted upstream and agriculture areas using chemical fertilizers. This wetland on Bakers Creek serves this purpose and thereby helps to filter the waters that flow into Tellico Lake.

2. This wetland serves as a wildlife habitat in the same fashion as Kyker Bottoms.

The Little River Water Shed - Rationale for Selection:

1. A map of Blount County shows that there appears to be a divide in the county wherein the waters of Hess Creek, Reed Creek, Ellejoy Creek, Crooked Creek, and later Pistol Creek and their tributaries flow into the Little River while Six Mile Creek, Nine Mile Creek, Four Mile Creek, Cochrans Creek, Abrams Creek, Bakers Creek and their tributaries flow into the Little Tennessee now Tellico Lake. More of the watershed on the western side of the county is forested and thereby better protected. More of the eastern section or the Little River watershed is cleared and used for farming. That portion greatly needs protection. Most of Blount County's drinking water comes from Little River and that watershed.

I appreciate the fact that Mr. John Lamb and the Planning Commission are holding these meetings and listening to what the citizens of Blount County are saying and the vision they have for the future of the county. I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts.

From Rene Hoyos (not a participant – via mail - see next page)

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P.O. Box 1521
Knoxville, Tennessee 37901
123A South Gay Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

October 27, 2008

Mr. John Lamb
Blount County Planning Department
Blount County Courthouse
327 Court Street
Maryville, TN 37804-5906

Dear Mr. Lamb,

The Tennessee Clean Water Network would like to commend you and your County's efforts to support and encourage environmentally protective measures by developing the County's Green Infrastructure Plan. The recognition and incorporation of environmentally sensitive measures into planning and development procedures is of the utmost important as our state faces the greatest degree of land development ever.

As you and your fellow citizens and residents work to create a comprehensive and protective plan, we encourage you to make sure you include the protection of our state's valuable water resources, especially wetlands. Our nation and our state have experienced a significant loss of wetlands over the previous 50 years. This loss is dangerous to water quality and detrimental to securing land stabilization in flood prone areas. Please make certain these important ecological and environmental areas are protected and preserved during your planning process.

Again, we praise your efforts in this important endeavor and encourage you and the County to take steps to develop a plan going above and beyond traditional practices to ensure the most effective measures are incorporated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renée V. Hoyos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Renée Victoria Hoyos,
Executive Director

APPENDIX B

Report of Planning Commissioner Green Infrastructure Mapping Workshop Prepared by Blount County Planning Department February 23, 2009

A Green Infrastructure Planning Workshop was conducted in Blount County on January 26, 2009 at the Maryville City Hall. Planning Commissioners and staff from all municipal and county Planning Commissions were invited, with 32 commissioners and staff participating at five tables. The core of the workshop was a map based activity for participants to identify priority geographic areas for conservation, preservation and/or protection as green infrastructure in the county, including the municipal jurisdictions of Alcoa, Friendsville, Louisville, Maryville, Rockford and Townsend. The following is report of the mapping activity, listing top three priorities and presenting maps by table.

The table reports are correlated with overlay maps on which areas are circled and identified by priority number color codes (darker green higher priority).

Table A

Priority 1 – Gallagar Creek

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: wildlife preservation; protect water quality; buffer on stream banks; greenways and walkways.

Priority 2 –Railroad right-of-way (Friendsville area)

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: preserving open space; walking; recreation.

Priority 3 – Knobs from Big Springs Road to Kiser Station

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: preserving ridge tops, streams, wildlife; wildlife protection; stream protection; control erosion; preserve city forest areas; preserve views.

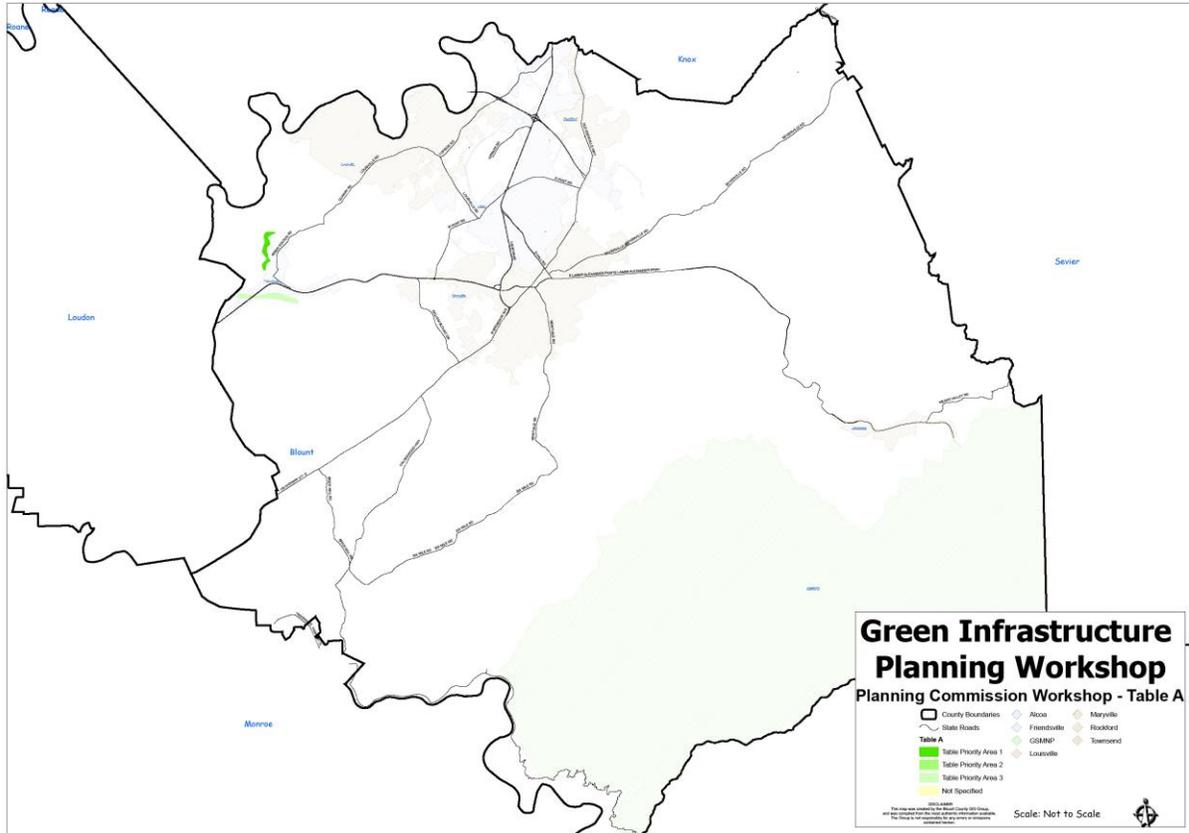


Table B

Priority 1 – Little River (inferred from map)

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: water source; clean water for long time.

Priority 2 – Chilhowee (mountain)

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: asset to tourism; watershed.

Priority 3 – 6 Mile/midlands below Chilhowee Mountain

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: conversion of lands.

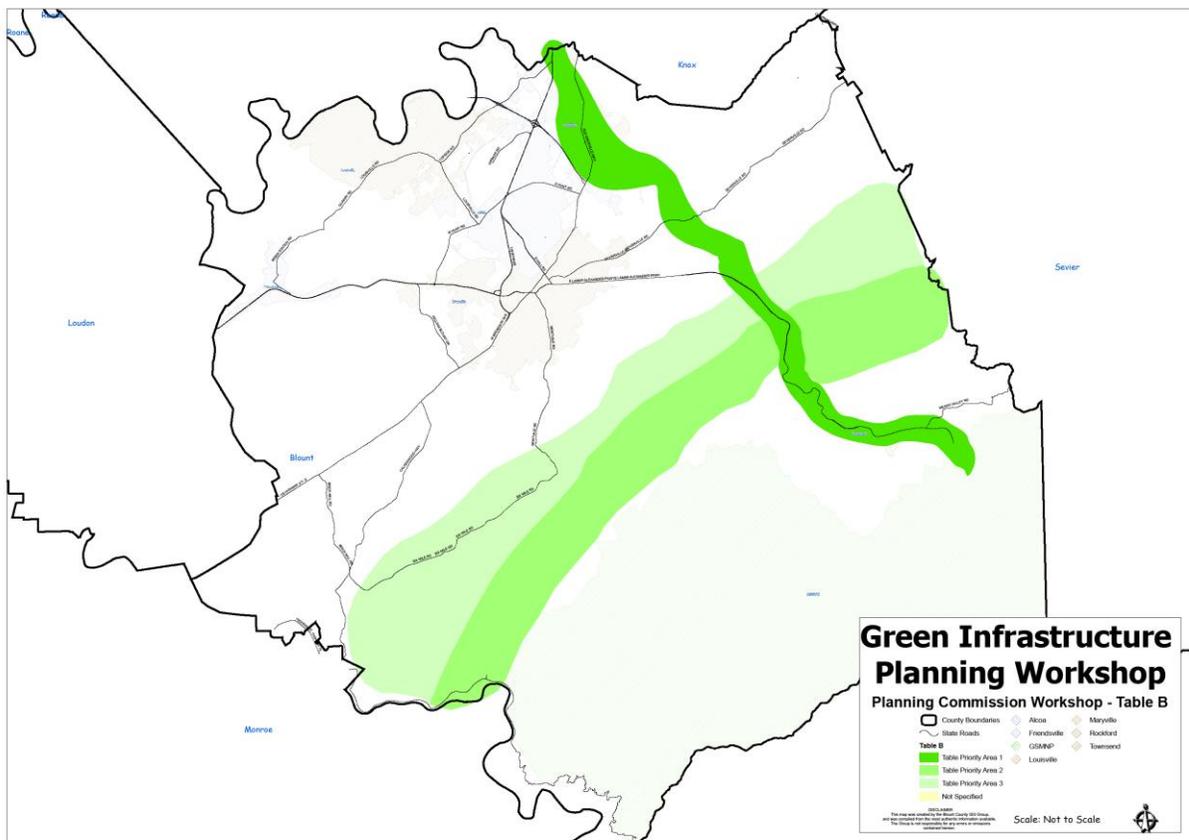


Table C

Priority 1 – Little River Watershed

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: water!

Priority 2 – Chilhowee Mountain

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: aesthetics; gateway to GSMNP.

Priority 3 – 321 South

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: development, signs, lighting; rural character.

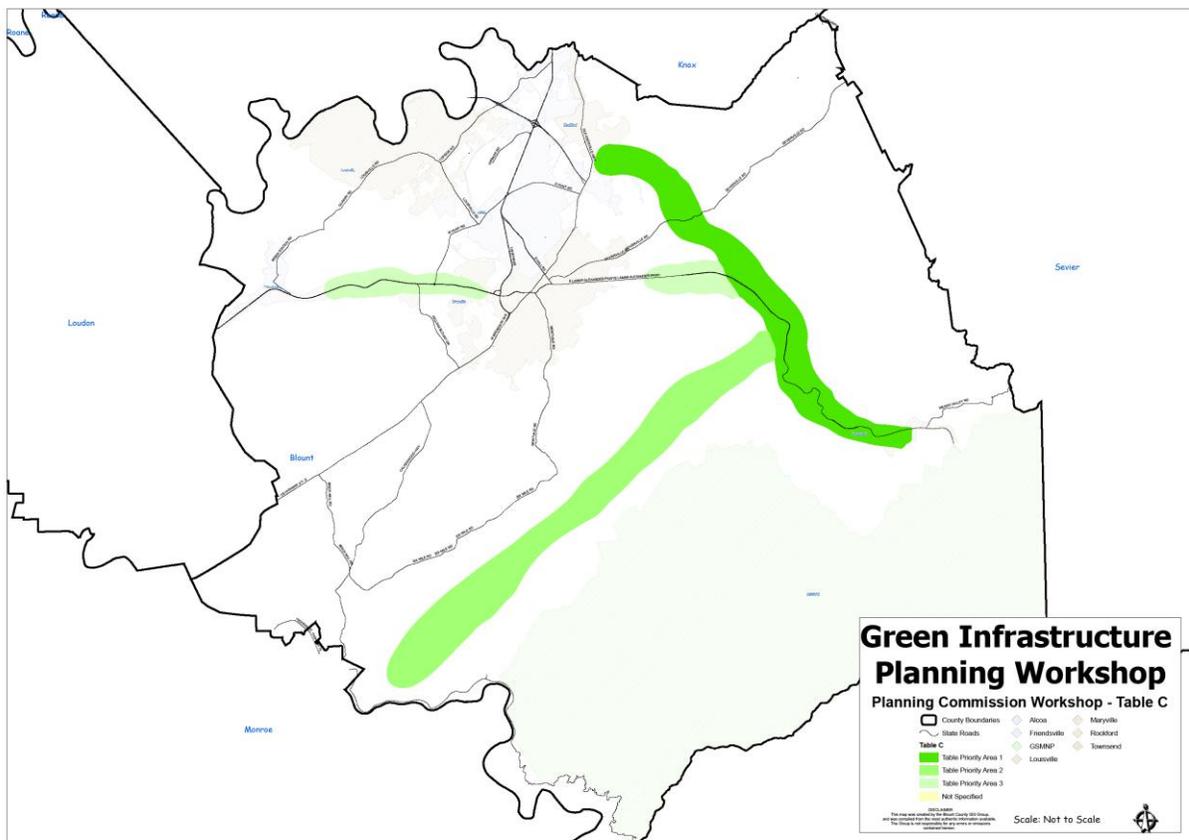


Table D

Priority 1 – Little River watershed

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: environmentally constrained; water quality; wildlife; open space/natural habitat/recreation.

Priority 2 – Bear Hollow area (above Topside Road)

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: view protection; environmentally constrained; water quality; wildlife; recreation; natural habitat; select cluster development.

Priority 3 – Chilhowee (mountain)

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: view protection; water quality; wildlife; open space.

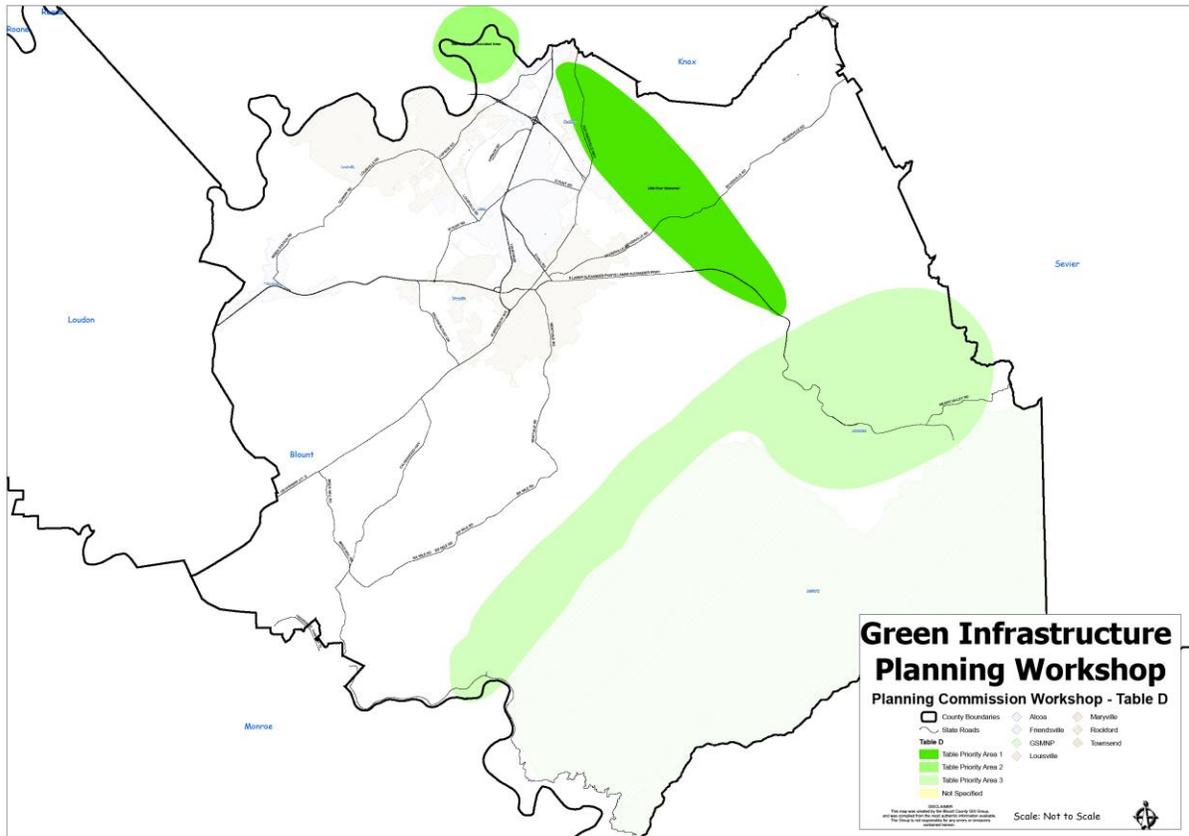


Table E

Priority 1 – Little River watershed

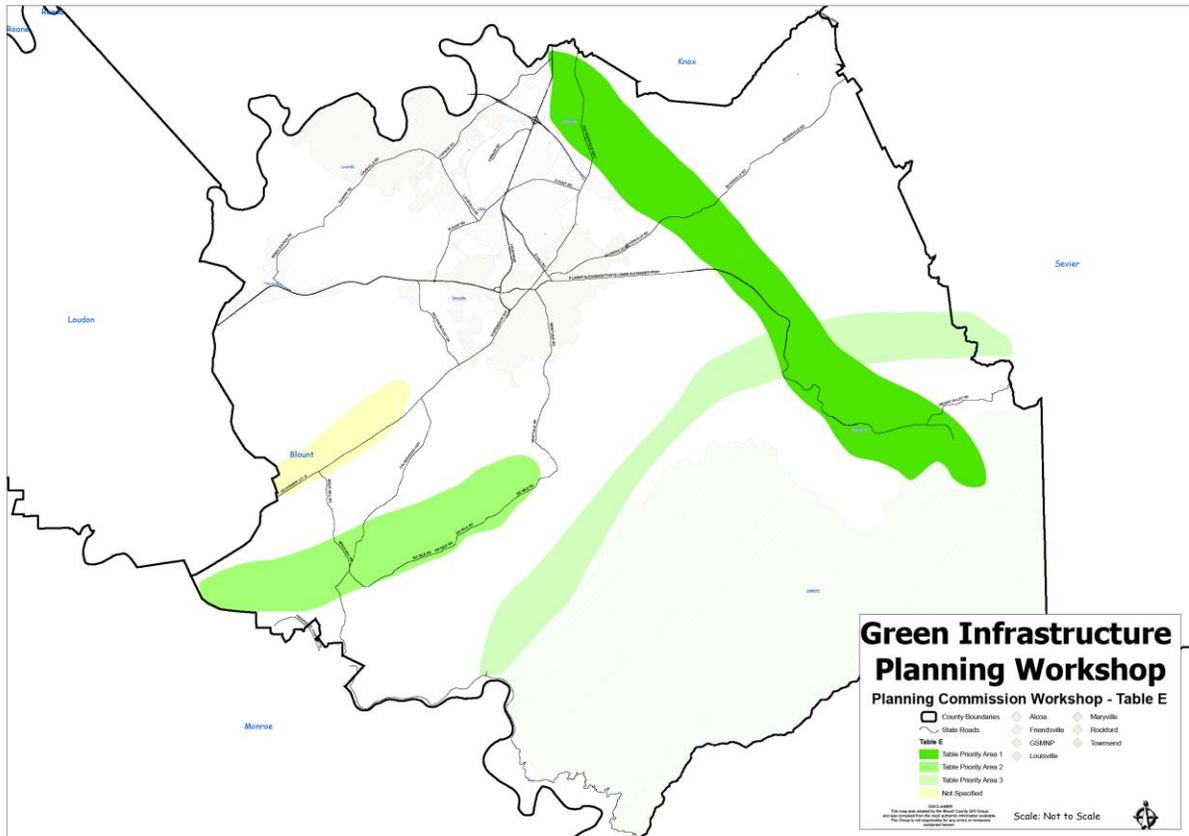
Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: water source; tourism value.

Priority 2 – Bakers Creek (map showed Nine Mile Creek circled)

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: agriculture area; buffering opportunity.

Priority 3 – Chilhowee Mountain

Reasons for selecting and proposed functions or uses: viewshed protection; wildlife protection; erosion control.



APPENDIX C

Report of Green Infrastructure Planning Workshop on Implementation Strategies Prepared by Blount County Planning Department March 17, 2009

A Green Infrastructure Planning Workshop was conducted in Blount County on February 23, 2009 at the Blount County Public Library. The Public along with Planning Commissioners and staff from all municipal and county Planning Commissions were invited, with 51 participants on the sign-in sheets. The core of the workshop was presentation of implementation alternatives and a small group breakout activity for participants to identify priority strategies and needed help to implement green infrastructure in the county. The group areas within the session room were pre-numbered, and not all numbered areas formed groups. The process was somewhat limited for time and results on written forms did not consistently follow formats. The following is report of five small group results as indicated on forms handed back after the workshop.

Group 1 area

Implementation Strategy or Tool 1: Identify context sensitive areas - with help needed from TDEC, TVA, TWRA, and other to ID the sensitive areas

Implementation Strategy or Tool 2: Connect (illegible) greenspaces to (illegible) public use – with help needed from property owners, developers, etc., to educate why green space is important

Implementation Strategy or Tool 3: (illegible)

Group 3 area

Implementation Strategy or Tool 1: private agreement between the property owner and a third party - with help needed from Foothills Land Conservancy or other private conservancy

Implementation Strategy or Tool 2: Regulations on new development to incorporate green areas and pedestrian areas in urban growth – with help needed to inform developers about market incentives to have green areas in development

Implementation Strategy or Tool 3: Establish recreation areas in county – with help needed by fees on private developers without tax increases on county residents

Group 4 area

Implementation Strategy or Tool 1: Water quality protection through regulations for bioswales, permeable surfaces and tree canopy - with help needed from Planning Commission and Townsend City

Implementation Strategy or Tool 2: Zoning density bonus – with help needed to inform state, county city for legislative changes

Implementation Strategy or Tool 3: Greenway interconnections – with help needed from lawyers (to determine) how can you require i.e. sidewalk connections without a takings

Additional comments: water, water, water

Group 5 area

Implementation Strategies (reporting on form seemed to be a continuous list): Consistent revenue source; make case that open space is an economic development incentive; % hotel/motel (tax); impact fees; wheel tax – this is air quality issue; we recognize political realities of these strategies; transfer tax on deeds; the key is education and what open space means to this community in tourism dollars; keep after state/federal monies – brownfield; my group is fairly opinionated on the strategies; we obviously focused on what strategies locally will help with the need for open space and infrastructure; we want to look at impact fees for urban services; growth committee; need to look at taxes

Group 6 area

Implementation Strategy or Tool 1: Interconnect Maryville and Alcoa greenways to Rockford and Townsend; utilize existing ROW held by government for bike and greenway trails; no ROW purchase necessary; use pervious concrete; promote use of trails along ROW - with help needed from TDOT and cities

Implementation Strategy or Tool 2: Increase density, promote sewer instead of septic system in residential developments – with help needed from County Government (Commission) and development community

Implementation Strategy or Tool 3: Promote voluntary conservation easements such as Foothills Land Conservancy involving no federal, state or local government funds

APPENDIX D

Summary Outline

The Growth Management Advisory Committee was commissioned by the County Public Service Committee and approved by the Blount County Commission in June 2007. The charge of this committee was to recommend a program or process plus funding sources in order to procure development rights of farmland and open green space.

Blount County has 352,000 acres of which 153,000 acres are farmland. There are approximately 2900 parcels of which 15 acres or more are in the greenbelt classification. This committee feels that the commission's timing and direction is right on target in looking for ways to preserve the rural character of Blount County at the request of our citizens.

As we prepare this report, the committee has conducted sixteen meetings and has met with fourteen individuals who have the knowledge and experience to draw from. We have attended two seminars given by nationally recognized individuals plus have conducted a huge internet search of the counties and states in this United States for land procurement.

This report identifies the individuals we have met with and the information gathered. This report also includes facts & figures on tourism, growth and incentives for individuals who want to sell their development rights, funding options and a guideline to put the organizational structure in place. Informational maps are attached to this report.

This report provides a prioritized list of funding options that exceeds (conservatively) \$1.7 million dollars that the commission could utilize. These funding vehicles provide new and innovative means for funding a program of this nature. The commission can vote to task this committee with implementing the next step in the process or establish a new committee who can follow the guidelines in this report, if they choose to, in order to set up the proposed organizational structure. The committee recommends establishing a non profit foundation similar in nature to The Legacy Parks Foundation in Knoxville, Tennessee. With a conservative figure of \$1.7 million dollars in funding identified in this report and \$300 million annually that are available in Federal & State Grants, the committee feels there is every reason to believe this program should succeed if allowed to move forward.

This committee thanks the commission for showing faith in the GMAC and the perspectives of Blount County Citizens. This allowed the committee to formulate this report in order to preserve Blount County's local heritage, environment, open green space, local economy and rural character of Blount

County for current and future generations.

Growth Management Committee

Mission Statement

The Blount County Growth Management Committee (GMAC) is a civilian organization that will facilitate information to the Blount County Public Service Committee and the Blount County Commission. The GMAC objective is to develop and recommend a program or process for the procurement of Development Rights for identified green space within Blount County.

Sources of Information

1. Bill Clabough = Foothills Land Conservancy
2. Billy Minser = Foothills Land Conservancy
3. Ed McMahon = Conservation Funds "American Greenways Program" & Author
4. Terron Hillsman = USDA Department of Natural Resources Conservation Services
5. Cheri Cruze & Karen Bailey = Cruze Farm Easement
6. Gerry Cohn = American Farmland Trust
7. Liz Upchurch = TVA Watershed Operations
8. Keri Johnson = TVA Little Tennessee Watershed Team
9. Gregg Babbitt = Tennessee Stream Mitigation Program
10. Wally Adkins = Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
11. Pete Clausson = Heritage Conservation Trust Fund
12. Carol Evans = Legacy Parks Foundation
13. Joe Huff = Maryville & Alcoa Parks & Recreation
14. Herb Handley = Smokey Mountain Convention & Visitors Bureau
15. Internet Research

Tourism Facts & Figures

- The Visitors Bureau was established in 1979.
- They use brochures, print ads, TV & radio spots, billboards and are moving towards the electronic future with an expanded web site.
- 50% of the business is generated around the airport motel/hotels and is mostly business people or travelers.
- The hotels/motels around Townsend generate the other 50% which is mostly tourists but they are now focusing on getting business people for meetings and conventions.
- Pigeon Forge & Gatlinburg were formerly Blount County's main competition but Chattanooga & Myrtle Beach are now pulling people away because of the internet.
- There will be an estimated \$4,000,000.00 collected in sales tax from tourist related businesses in Blount County this year and an additional \$650,000.00 coming from the hotel/motel tax.
- A U.T. study shows that the tourist sector of Blount County employs more than 2800 individuals with an annual payroll of \$69, 000,000.00.
- Tourists spend more than \$250,000,000.00 annually at these businesses.

It is clear to the committee that a PDR program will enhance the Visitors Center and tourism in Blount County by maintaining the rural character that draws the people here.

Growth Figures

- Population in 1970 = 63,744
- Population in 1980 = 77,700 = 22% Increase
- Population in 1990 = 85,969 = 10.5% Increase
- Population in 2000 = 105,823 = 23% Increase
- Estimated population in 2010 = 126,900
- Estimated population in 2020 = Between 130,000-148,000.
- Estimated population in 2050 = Between 145,000-203,000.
- Calculated growth rate from 2000-2010 = 20%

The population explosion over the past two decades reconfirms the need to put a PDR/TDR program in place rather than later in order to protect the reason most of us settled here, for the rural character and the natural unencumbered beauty of Blount County.

Gerry Cohn's Six Step Protection Program

- Making the case to the public.
- Providing Tools (Information) to the landowners.
- Profitability, marketing and agricultural sector infrastructure.
- Planning/Legal/Regulatory framework.
- Protecting the land.
- Recourses, raising the money and linking to more expertise.

The steps above would protect wildlife, water quality, produce fresh food products, protect rural heritage, promote tourism and stabilize the economy.

Liz Upchurch's Overview

- Develop a vision and specific goals for the green space infrastructure.
- Identify areas to conserve.
- Set priorities for land conservation based on goals set.
- Identify land conservation strategies and tools.
- Seek review and input.
- Adopt and implement plan.
- Develop regulations such as buffer, transfer or PDR rights.
- Establish incentives for tax benefits, density bonuses or reduced infrastructure.

This is very similar or we should say it coincides with Ed McMahon's six step approach. While moving forward with this plan, remember, the greener we get, the better the environment will be around us.

Incentives for PDR/TDR

- You can sell a portion of the development rights or all of it.
- Your land is forever farmland, forest or open space but you'll receive a fair price for the development rights.
- You avoid legal battles with family members on what to do with the property.
- You can set aside an acre or so each for your loved ones in the agreement.

- You can restrict clear cutting of your forest land.
 - You can protect the natural wildlife, fish, plants or similar ecosystem on your property.
 - You can provide outdoor recreational or educational use for the general public.
 - It preserves open space which yields a significant public benefit.
 - It preserves properties of historical importance, land areas or certified historic structures.
- Bottom-line, the landowner can draw up the PDR agreement that satisfies his or her specifications and needs upfront while receiving financial value to support them.

Funding Options

The following are the GMAC's suggestions and innovative ideas in seeking funding for this program as set forth by our mission statement and the charge from the Commission.

1. Motel & Hotel Tax

- The committee recommends a 1% increase on the tax rate from 4% to 5%.
- The committee estimates this would bring in an additional \$400,000.00.
- .5% of the recommended increase would go to the purchase or transfer of property development rights.
- .5% of the recommended increase would be divided up just as the present 4% rate is. 50% to advertising. 37.5% to the county general fund. 12.5% to the Smokey Mountain Convention & Visitor's Bureau.
- We're assuming the Smokey Mountain Convention & Visitor's Center will stand by this action since it would increase their business revenue.
- Presently Knoxville & Chattanooga are at 8%.
- Pigeon Forge & Gatlinburg are presently at 3% but the additional taxes they have in place would bring their rate to over 5%.

The committee believes that because this revenue is generated from tourism, this money is the perfect fit for preserving the rural character of Blount County.

2. Real Estate Transfer Fee,

- The committee recommends implementing this fee at a \$100.00 per \$100,000.00 value sold.
- The recorder's office expenses for this program would be extracted from this fee.
- The remaining revenue would go for procurement of development rights.
- This would only impact individuals who have sold or are transferring property.
- A private act would have to be established and approved to implement this.
- There were 5630 property transfers in 2007.

This fee fits into the charge the committee was given since it the income would be generated from land sales.

3. Alternative or Option on Recording/Transfer Fee.

- Amend Chapter 370 of Blount County, a private act established in 1972.
- The committee recommends raising all transfer fees to \$5.00 versus the existing \$1.00 fee per transfer which would generate approximately \$175,000.00.

4. Set Aside one Cent on the Tax Rate.

- The committee suggests that the budget committee set aside one cent on the tax rate for procuring

development rights.

- This would be about \$255,000.00.
- This would be enough to put a structure in place to oversee land procurement and move it forward. Structure will be discussed in another section.

The committee believes once the proper structure is approved and put into place, the program would become self sufficient.

5. Greenbelt Roll Back Taxes

- This is land that that is presently placed in greenbelt for a tax break under Tennessee law.
- From 2002-2006, land sales out of the greenbelt generated an average revenue of \$116,110.00 per year.
- The committee is requesting a percentage of this revenue go for procuring development rights.
- According to data from the planning department, it is stated that it takes a property forty years to break even on the cost of a development because of the high cost of infrastructure and the services needed.
- Farm land maintains the rural character of the county and puts less strain on the services provided by the county.
- Presently there are 1302 farms in Blount County which total 105,148 acres.
- 2002 records show that there are 619 full time farmers in Blount County with the average age being fifty-seven.
- 2002 records show market value of crops produced is \$15,000,000.00. Value of livestock sold is \$9,352,000.00. Total value is over twenty-four million dollars.

The committee feels these taxes are related to the specific charge we were given and should be considered for maintaining green space in the county. This would also help keep the service cost for Blount County under control and preserve our farmland.

6. One Half Percent Increase on the Sales Tax.

- The committee recommends that the county take the sales tax from 9.25% to the limit of 9.75% because it's the committees understanding that the state may consider taking this revenue unless the county acts first to secure it. We feel the funds need to stay in Blount County.
- We suggest that 50% of the half cent increase go for our PDR/TDR program and the other half to the schools.

7. Donation Box on Property Tax Bill.

- Administered by the Trustee's office.
- Every individual property owner would be given the opportunity to check the box if they so desire and add any amount they choose to go towards the PDR/TDR program.
- This would be voluntary only.
- Would require marketing and promotion once organizational structure is in place.
- Funds collected would only be used for the PDR/TDR program.

The committee feels this provides an avenue for all the property owners of Blount County who want to be involved, to step up and protect the rural character of the county.

8. State License Plate.

- Seek approval from the state to develop a plate for this program.
- We must have a minimum of 1000 individuals who are willing to purchase this plate.

- There are roughly 130,000 vehicles in Blount County to draw from.
 - This program opens the availability of grant money through the agricultural license tag that is already in place.
 - This program could generate in upwards of \$31,000.00 per year.
- The committee feels this is just another way for the citizens to show their true feelings on preserving the green space and can be extended to visitors throughout the state.

9. Wheel Tax

- If the county chooses to institute a wheel tax, the committee recommends 15% go for the PDR/TDR program.
- This allows all non-property owners that live and drive in Blount County (An estimated 29%) to share in the cost of the PDR/TDR program.

10. Wind-Fall Revenue

- The county passes a balanced budget each year that goes into effect July 1 of each year.
- The committee is suggesting that the PDR/TDR program receive 10% of any revenue that exceeds the estimated revenue for each fiscal year.

Federal and State Grant Opportunities

1. USDA-NRCS: American Farmland Trust "Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program" \$72 Million Annually
2. State of Tennessee: Heritage Conservation Fund, \$10 Million State Set Aside Annually
3. State Department of Agriculture: Agriculture Tag Grants
4. TWRA & NRCS: Wetland Reserve Program, \$227 Million Annually

Organizational Structure

It is the recommendation of this committee that a nonprofit organization be established similar in nature to the Legacy Parks Foundation in Knoxville, Tennessee. The organizational structure and implementation of such an organization could be established through a volunteer committee similar to the present GMAC committee or a subset of the commission. The success of a preservation entity that can produce PDR agreements, obtain grant funding (Federal & State grants equal \$300 million annually), work with inter-government groups, market, promote an ultimately manage a PDR/TDR program of this magnitude would require a full time individual.

In addition, it is the belief of this committee that this individual should not be a government employee. This recommendation also encompasses establishing a collective pool of funding for the start up of this organization. This funding would consist of \$100,000.00 annually for twenty-four months and would be subsidized by the Blount County Commission, City of Maryville and the City of Alcoa.

The nonprofit organization would then use a compilation of the aforementioned funding mediums provided by this committee in order to grow the program and achieve sustainability.

- The committee feels that once funding is approved, the above suggestions can be implemented

in a reasonable timeframe. Any or all funding that is approved would go into a separate fund and could not be drawn from until the structure is in place and approved.

- If the program fails to move forward, the procurement fund would go back in the general fund. The committee feels this program could be self sufficient within 24 months.

Closing Summary

The committee encourages our public officials and citizens to read this carefully and please don't be afraid to ask questions for complete clarification and understanding.

The committee thanks the commission for this opportunity to serve you and the citizens of Blount County in an effort to preserve our rural character and natural beauty which is the foundation of this county.

The committee encourages the citizens & commission to continue to support this and move it forward to preserve the present and have it available for future generations to see and enjoy.

Respectfully Submitted,
Growth Management Advisory Committee

Committee Members:

Bill Newby
J.C. Franklin
Doug Gamble
Glenda Eastridge
Ken Voorhis
Bruce Guillaume
C. Johnathan Sitzlar- Chair

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