

Q and A Responses Part 2 –

How would the city talk about light rail if it can't address the bus system issues?

Cities are diverse places and they must plan for the here and now and their futures. The presence of transportation options is a large factor in getting people to use public transit. Light rail is just one of many options at a city's disposal. The city listens to suggestions from the public and throws out many more options to see how people receive them. Many cities utilize many types of public transit to increase ridership and decrease stigmatization. It is a question of using the right options for the right jobs.

What are the thoughts to address racial segregation?

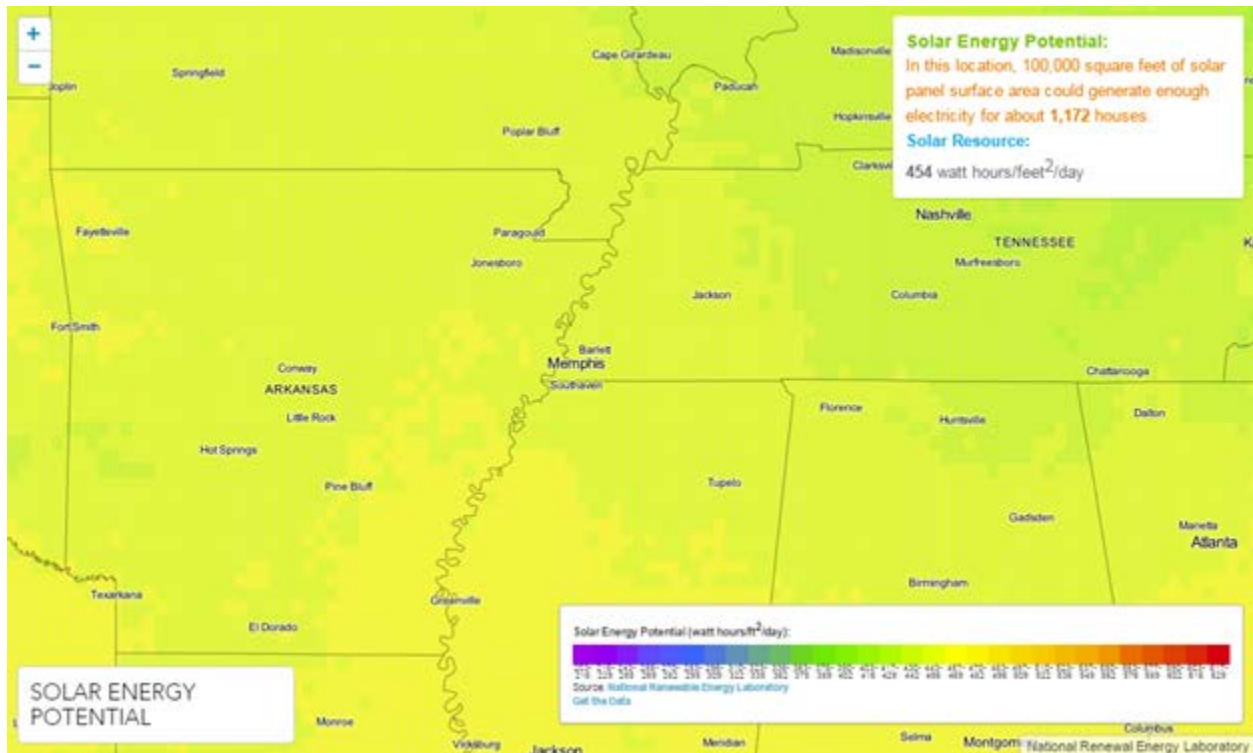
Racial segregation is one a major issue that this city faces. It has had a crippling effect on this city for generations. A city that cannot rise together is not going to rise very far and the detriment will be for generations to come. Unfortunately, we suffer from segregations that go far beyond race and we must work to resolve these. From the perspective of a comprehensive plan, we're trying to be inclusive in our process and develop recommendations that create more access to opportunities like jobs, improved home value, and transportation improvements. We hope that by leveling the playing field, we can decrease some of the racial and economic segregation of the city.

How do you talk about urban growth, especially the market driven growth towards suburbs and east and increasing density and integration?

For a region to thrive it needs a quality dense core to build around. Without this there are not enough tax dollars to serve the citizens and the needs of the community. Tax dollars go a lot farther and can serve a lot more people in a denser environment and business and jobs are also more easily attracted and grown. Strong nodes surrounding a strong core create a strong region. Planning needs to take care to assist in the development and retention of these existing nodes. We have an opportunity through this process to determine where that urban growth should occur and what density looks like for Memphis. Should it occur in the core of the city, or is there some compromise between growth in the core and growth around other activity centers? That's a question we're hoping to answer with citizen input and feedback.

Need clean energy by the city, especially solar in blighted areas.

Memphis is in its early stages of reliance on renewable energy resources. Some of the barriers we face are cost, the rate of technology progression, and regulatory and policy issues. However, the use of clean energy is a topic we are exploring.



Need to show how much energy the City of Memphis uses (government) [sic].

In late 2014, Memphis Bioworks completed a regional inventory of public fleets in the Memphis area and created a plan for gradual replacement of the existing fleet with alternatively fueled and energy efficient vehicles. In Shelby County, there are essentially three recognized standards being used to design energy efficient commercial and industrial buildings and one local standard for designing an energy efficient residential structure. The third-party standards that are nationally accepted for commercial or industrial buildings are Energy Star, LEED, and Green Globes; and the local residential standard developed by MLGW is EcoBUILD (Sustainable Shelby 2014 Report).

Make a dashboard with targeted goals.

The Sustainable Shelby Plan has a variety of goals and strategies pertaining to clean energy with completion dates, progression updates, and more. The Office of Performance Management is also releasing a dashboard on various city efficiencies in the Fall of 2017. At the conclusion of the planning process, we'll develop a reporting tool to track goals and measure progress.

Change to LED lamps.

In 2009, the Memphis Unified Development Code (UDC) was amended to set minimum standards for energy efficiency for all rental properties. Though this is a fraction of the housing units in Memphis, and there are a variety of ways for energy efficiency, LED lighting implementation will surely be a part of it. The comprehensive plan is also looking at what's the city's role in encouraging and implementing the use of LED lights for energy and costs savings.

Sign on to the mayor's Paris Climate Agreement.

Mayor Strickland has signed the Climate Mayors Letter in which mayors “commit to adopt, honor, and uphold the commitments to the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement.”

Measure consumption by city government.

The City of Memphis currently tracks energy use in 52 public facilities and 38 county facilities using ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. This City tracks energy use in 99% of the square footage of building space owned by Shelby County Schools. There is no comprehensive retrofit strategy currently in place in Memphis but designing with green infrastructure is encouraged and is being considered as a part of the comprehensive plan.

Improve communications: How to get the “workforce” needs, designs, use locations, to know to use employer IDs and there needs to better describe communications to recruit, selection, and employer responsibilities also to do their share of training.

We need to work closely with employees to better understand their needs and to ensure better linkages between potential employers and residents. The workforce and entrepreneurial development committee is thinking through strategies to ensure that people have skills that match available jobs and local industries.

Nashville moved to “metro”. Combined city and county structures, operations, and accountability in April 1963. Other cities have gone to study a true metro government. It houses and benefits of being a capitol government.

Memphis is a part of a tristate region – Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi, we are also bordered by several counties in the state, this one of the many differences between Nashville and Memphis. In 2010, consolidating City of Memphis government and Shelby County government was a referendum item on the ballot and had to be passed in both the City and the County. The referendum failed to pass. While we work closely with regional agencies like the MPO and The County Division of Planning and Development, the comprehensive plan will provide a vision and goals that will help outside agencies better understand the cities goals and strategies.

What can we do to improve and invest in neighborhoods when the appraisal quotes [won't] allow you to get the loan to improve the house you want to purchase? [assuming the appraisal is low, and the cost to improve the home is high].

There are a variety of organizations working to improve blighted properties and neighborhoods. The Tennessee Housing Development Agency offers forms of assistance to repair homes for various low- and very low-income homeowners at <https://thda.org/homeowners/need-home-repairs>. The comprehensive plan should outline a redevelopment strategy for districts where appraisals and home values are lower, thus decreasing home equity and the ability to purchase or sell a home in those areas.

For such a creative and entrepreneurial city, I'm concerned that the role of the arts to help make a great city doesn't seem to be addressed, at least not yet. Thoughts?

Memphis 3.0 is partnering with the Urban Arts Commission (UAC) to incorporate local artists into the planning process. Using creative problem solving and the like, we will help develop approaches that are unique and will also maximize the voices heard in the process. We also hope this relationship strengthens the voice of the arts in this process. Other arts and culture issues are being addressed through the working group: Design, Art, and Preservation, which have identified some cultural and historical assets throughout the city.

Zoning that protects lower income neighborhoods from negative developments.

Gentrification is an issue that Memphis 3.0 is certainly looking at, however Memphis has suffered more from displacement than gentrification. Values in areas that have been redeveloped have not risen as to push people out of their homes on a large scale (gentrification), but people who move out of an area to demolition/redevelopment can rarely afford to move back in (displacement). Bottom line, NEITHER IS A GOOD SITUATION. Through this process, we must be careful and intentional about building in “safety nets” or policies and restrictions that will protect existing homeowners from rising home values and prevent displacement and gentrification. We can learn from other places like Montgomery County, Maryland that have developed policies to promote housing affordability.

How are the Memphis community’s relationship with the Memphis Police Department considered?

The Memphis Police Department is a separate entity from Memphis 3.0, however increasing safety is a guiding principle we are using to guide the development of goals and recommendations for the plan. Memphis 3.0 looks to increase safety in neighborhoods through good design, street upgrades, and implementation of current neighborhood plans. We believe by increasing density or “eyes on the street” we can reduce the opportunity to commit a crime. Additionally, addressing long standing issues like blight and increasing job access are other crime deterrents that influence the goal setting of the process.

Can some of the empty buildings be used to create recreational facilities for [families]? Such as bowling, skating, teaching chess and other games.

Strategies for building reuse will be a part of the completed plan. So far, facility reuse is being discussed as it relates to vacant school buildings, civic spaces, and current sports fields and facilities, but certainly the criteria can be expanded to include empty buildings once deemed safe, and appropriate for the activity. While the comprehensive plan will not get into the specifics of what should go in the building (like a bowling alley or skating rink), it will determine what partners may be needed to bring certain facilities back online, the land use for the area surrounding the site, and what types of activities are best supported in that district.

How do the 3.0 Plan fit with current efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and the big major employers?

One of the goals of the Chamber was the creation of a long-range plan, since we’ve begun that process, members of the Chamber remain involved and updated on our work. The Chamber has representatives on several of our working groups. One of which is the co-chair of our Economic Growth and Development working group. As a co-chair, they are helping to frame and outline the priority factors for the Working Group, and they are likely to incorporate the concerns of the chamber and the ecosystem that their organizations support. Our goal here is to understand the needs of major employers as it relates to workforce, and understand the direction and potential of the city as it relates to opportunity sectors for Memphis.

What can we do to get more Federal grants—educational, employment, housing improvements, etc.-- to improve our city?

In the current climate, federal grants and funding for certain programs may be decreasing. However, cities that can mobilize broad cross-sector partnerships are the most competitive when grant opportunities are released. Not only does the working group structure of 3.0 create the opportunity and forum for these types of multi-department, multi-organization partnerships,

but also offers the capability to plan and organize for these grants ahead of time. By including the public in the process, we can tailor requests to the needs and desires of the public along with the quantitative data that's usually required for submission.

Grow in Place! Revitalize what we have! Comment Please.

These concerns are not lost on the 3.0 team. The city is currently approaching the point of being built out to its limits. More than half of the newly developing units of housing are projected to come from the rehabilitation of existing buildings and land over the next 20 years. Currently over 30% of the population is over the age of 50. The city does not have the capacity to build or even incentivize the private sector to build senior housing. The city must invest in efforts to age and grow in place over the next 20 years.

Does the population you're referring to include more than just the city of Memphis, or extend to the Greater Memphis area which includes more of the suburbs? How do you plan to bring people and businesses towards the inner city and do you even think that sprawl is an issue?

The City very much considers sprawl to be a concern. Sprawl affects the city's ability to develop vibrant communities, to connect workers/job seekers with places of employment, to provide basic services and high quality public transit. Not only has the city reached its limits for outward expansion but it is ill served by doing so. The opposite of sprawl is density. To achieve density, we must not only encourage people to move to the city but also retain and invest in the populations we already have. That means having affordable housing, education and training opportunities, and amenities that offer a high quality of life, all of which we are working to address through this process.

How did you ensure participation parity among zip codes; specifically comment data? Were priorities different communities?

Since zip codes extend past the city's boundaries, the planning department usually tries to use other geographic categories to measure coverage. In the initial conversations, we hosted meeting across the city, hoping to hit every neighborhood so that people can conveniently become a part of the process. We also ask for zip codes at these meetings so that we can tailor our engagement strategy. By using zip codes, we'll know what areas we need to increase our engagement. Teams of planners will be stationed in each district, at various locations, for a little over two months at a time during the next stage in the process – district planning. And yes, priorities are different for each community. During the first three phases of the process (background, vision, goal setting and growth, we're looking at major issues that are city-wide, so collectively what Memphians are saying needs to be improved for the success of the city. In the district planning, we'll take a more drilled down approach to develop district-based strategies to address key issues.

What can we do to have cameras at every park?

Cameras are usually more in line with the capacity of the police, but there is a role that citizens can play in that as well. 3.0 has several government and non-government partner organizations through which we could work towards that goal. That sort of effort would need to be prioritized by citizens. This has been mentioned in several community meetings. Currently, the Neighborhood Crime Prevention grant awards small grants to neighborhood associations for

activities that will prevent and deter crime like cameras. This discussion may be further refined at the district level.

Gentrification—How to avoid market forces that price people out?

About 26% of Memphians live at or below the poverty level. In our public meetings and working group meetings, we've talked about quality affordable housing and current housing stock. We certainly want our city to grow, but not at the expense of those currently living here, especially ones who face financial difficulty. As we build out the comprehensive plan, we're keen on policy development that will protect current homeowners in certain markets. Equity is a pillar of the Memphis 3.0 plan, and so ensuring that opportunities for affordable housing are as evenly distributed is a goal that we strive to achieve.

Are you also reviewing sustainable Shelby, a project many Memphians put a lot of time into?

Yes, Sustainable Shelby is one of many past and ongoing planning efforts we are reviewing to align our current efforts with. In addition, the goal is to study the successes and failures of the past plans and to use them for knowledge and alignment. The Sustainability working group has been incorporating Sustainable Shelby and the Greenprint into their work.