



Reconnecting Knoxville

*Reconnecting Communities
Pilot Discretionary
Grant Program*



<https://www.kcdc.org/reconnectingcommunities/>

Knoxville, TN
October 2022

Contents

Project Narrative.	2
Overview.	2
Location & Map	5
Response to Merit Criteria.	6
Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement	6
Mobility and Community Connectivity	9
Project Readiness: Environmental Risk.	14
Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships	14
Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity	14
Benefit-Cost Analysis	17

Project Narrative

Overview

Between the 1960's – 1980's, urban renewal in Knoxville demolished predominantly Black neighborhoods to allow for expanded public infrastructure that ultimately left Black families physically isolated and disconnected from economic opportunity. Today, the scars of that displacement are still visible. One sees the impact of urban renewal not only in the physical landscape surrounding Knoxville's downtown, but also in disproportionately high poverty rates for Black residents, low Black-owned business ownership levels, and a persistent sense of both physical and cultural segregation between historically Black neighborhoods and the thriving downtown and economic redevelopment areas nearby.

Fortunately, in Knoxville, there is a commitment to heal those wounds – a commitment shared by institutions and grassroots alike. In 2020, Knoxville City Council, with the support of Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon, unanimously supported a resolution apologizing for carrying out an Urban Renewal program and acknowledging its many generational consequences on Black businesses and Black communities. The Council then created the Knoxville African American Equity Restoration Task Force to identify strategic solutions to improve areas of disparity and disenfranchisement in the Black community and seek investments of \$100 million to support those strategies.

Reconnecting Knoxville is a part of that mission. If funded, this grant will create clear pathways to physically reconnect the neighborhoods directly impacted by urban renewal with public amenities and economic opportunities that are currently more difficult to access without a car. As described by members of the African American Equity Restoration Task Force, this type of connectivity would advance its goals/mission by promoting economic investment in an

area that has historically seen disinvestment, increasing mobility & access to opportunity, and promoting active/healthy living.

We propose the creation of new multi-modal transportation paths to reconnect underserved communities with highly-sought amenities and both established and emerging development centers within the heart of the City of Knoxville. *Reconnecting Knoxville* will establish a primary circulation corridor that mitigates the barriers posed by eligible facilities and connects East Knoxville, Morningside Park and Downtown Knoxville to the Urban Wilderness, Baker Creek Preserve and the neighborhoods of South Knoxville. Alongside the physical infrastructure, *Reconnecting Knoxville* also will bring to life a long-discussed concept of a “cultural corridor” celebrating and showcasing elements of Black history that were destroyed during Knoxville's urban renewal period.

When completed, this much needed project will reconnect the historically underserved East Knoxville and downtown communities with multiple economic opportunity areas, social services, public amenities, parks, and improved access to major bus and trolley routes. Residents will benefit from these new healthy and safe navigation paths through increased access to parks, schools, churches, KAT bus transfer station, a YMCA, a YWCA, a Boys & Girls Club, Knoxville Botanical Gardens, the downtown Knoxville area, access to the Tennessee River, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Urban Wilderness, a multi-use stadium, shopping, entertainment, and multiple neighborhoods. The downtown and South Knoxville areas will benefit from the creation of a multi-dimensional environment with thriving business, living, learning, arts, and social interaction that is physically accessible to all Knoxvilleans. This project will mitigate the barriers posed by several existing transportation facilities that were constructed between

the 1960's – 1980's as part of HUD's Urban Renewal program and transected the African American communities that existed east of downtown Knoxville. These facilities include: the James White Parkway, Hill Avenue, Howard Baker Jr. Drive, Hall of Fame Drive, Summit Hill Drive, and Willow Avenue (the Redevelopment Highway).

Historical documents from this period of Urban Renewal highlight a prioritization of vehicle traffic over the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. As an example, Summit Hill Drive was created from reconstruction of Vine Avenue and raised to unofficially provide a division between the formerly segregated public housing with the newly cleared area. As was documented in a 1958 Riverfront-Willow Street Redevelopment Project addendum about that project, *"...[Downtown] Loop will tend to create a barrier between the central business district and the Redevelopment Project and negates in many ways the merit of considering the Project as a continuation of the central business district."* The addendum goes on to state *"Although the eastern portion of the Loop would tend to create a barrier between the City's commercial core and the Project as far as the extension of commercial uses are concerned, a significant degree of interdependence between the Project and the central business district would exist if an adequate circulation system was provided which allowed easy vehicular access between the two function areas."*

Unfortunately, the needs of pedestrians, particularly the needs of low income, minority populations living in the adjacent neighborhood, were not a consideration—a failure felt acutely by those who today seek to move through this corridor safely without the benefit of a vehicle.



1935 and 2022 Ariel East of downtown showing addition of current highways, streets and the raising of Summit Hill Drive.

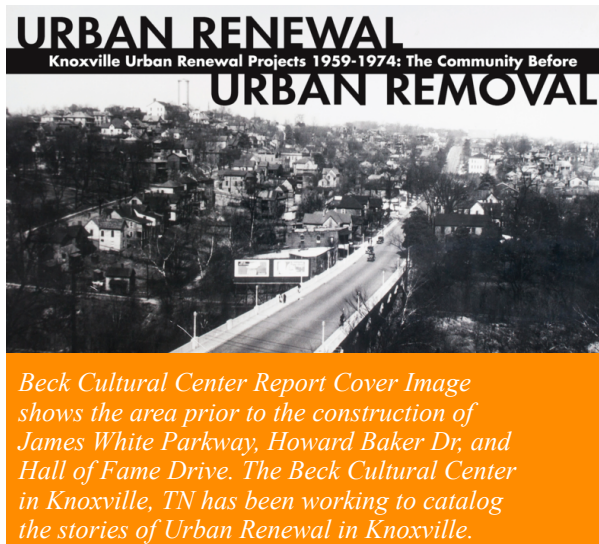
Impacted Communities

The area east of downtown Knoxville was once a vibrant community for African Americans. The area was populated by African American owned stores, schools, and churches. Between 1964 and 1974, however, urban renewal disrupted this community with the construction of James White Parkway, as well as numerous roadways and a variety of public facilities such as the Knoxville Civic Coliseum and Auditorium. Our proposal focuses on areas of the City harmed through the construction of transportation facilities during the 1960's, 70's and 80's that created a physical division of Knoxville, bisecting and destroying neighborhoods, and continuing the practice of economic segregation on both sides of the Tennessee River.

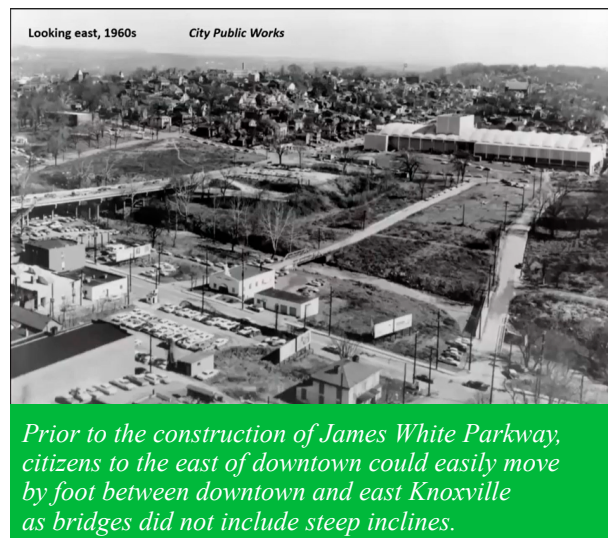
From 1959 to 1974, Knoxville implemented projects to reshape the landscape of the City, demolishing both residential and commercial

buildings in the downtown area and building the interstate loop of James White Parkway. Three urban renewal projects were responsible for the demolition of most of the area: The Willow Street Project, The Mountain View Project, and the Morningside Project. Our proposal for *Reconnecting Knoxville* includes reconnecting areas of all three projects to each other and to the outdoor amenities Knoxvilleians enjoy.

As part of the Mountain View Project, the roads around the Austin Homes Housing Project were reconfigured and raised, creating physical barriers where there were previously none. (See website for details)



A thriving community was transected through the creation of the new roadways and our proposal focuses on reconnecting the displaced residents to the amenities Knoxville has to offer. The scars of urban renewal are not linear. Many streets were demolished or rerouted, making many cuts at the existing tight-knit African American community. The addition of James White Parkway further alienated the distinct African American communities and cemented a permanent barrier to access for the oldest African American communities in Knoxville. Tennessee State Route 71 extended James White Parkway southeast from SR 158 across the Tennessee River to Moody Avenue.



The citizens of South Knoxville were not immune to the destruction James White Parkway caused as shown in this 1969 and 2019 comparison.

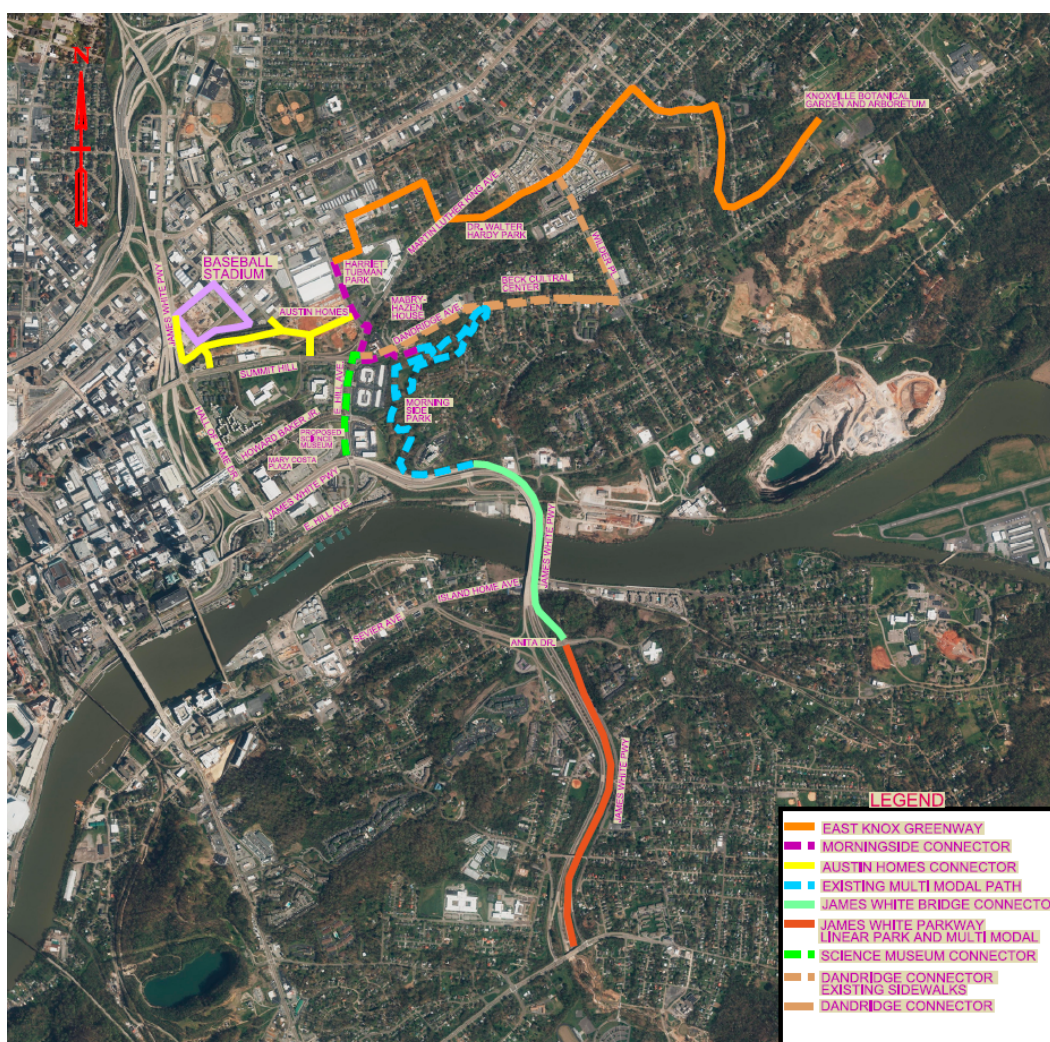


Location & Map

As described in the sections above the projects are located in the historically disadvantaged communities of East Knoxville and the growing communities of South Knoxville. This valuable project will reduce barriers to safe pedestrian movement along the Summit Hill Drive and throughout the James White Parkway corridor, ultimately helping to reconnect historically African American communities with the downtown amenities that they were cut off from during urban renewal.

The project will benefit an economically and racially diverse population that lives, learns, and works in the impacted community. Characteristics of the census tracts surrounding the eligible facilities are outlined in the appendix ([F. Census Tables](#)).

As shown in the map below, *Reconnecting Knoxville* will strengthen and create non-vehicular connections for residents to access economic and recreational development areas. Specifically, it creates intentional connections to increase safe pathways by which residents of historically disadvantaged neighborhoods east of downtown may access jobs, schools, parks, and numerous cultural, recreational, and educational amenities.



Response to Merit Criteria

Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement

Community Engagement is at the heart of our proposed plan. We have intentionally developed the plan to reflect decades of community input about the need to reconnect the African American community to the heart of downtown and amenities intended to serve all Knoxvilleians. To understand Knoxville's past and desire to move forward, we began by assessing what work has already been done and is already happening in the community. This intentionality included communities scattered by Urban Renewal and focused on their access points to a vibrant downtown Knoxville that had been removed or weakened as a result of transportation projects in past decades. (See website for details)

Community input has been gathered within numerous agencies' plans within the footprint of the proposed project. A summary of the community input types is included in the table below. All of this input was used in the development of the plan presented in this proposal.

Specific to this Reconnecting Communities proposal, conversations with the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, a nonprofit organization established in 1975 as a result of Knoxville's Urban Renewal with the mission to preserve, nurture, and teach Black history and culture, helped give voice to more "silent partners" who acutely remember the wounds of urban renewal on people, businesses, and culture within Knoxville's Black community.

Input Type	Year	Who	Project Lead
Greene Magnet School Student park design project	2022	Elementary students at Greene Magnet School	KCDC
KAT Reimagined Planning Process	2022	City of Knoxville Residents, with intentionality to include low income residents	Knoxville Area Transit
Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Design Study	2022	Local Residents and community members	East Tennessee Design Center
Stadium Development	2021-2022	City of Knoxville Residents through Public Input	Sports Authority Board
KCDC Resident Community Needs Assessment	2021	Residents of all KCDC housing sites	KCDC
Austin Homes Master Planning process	2019	Resident of Austin Homes, community members, neighborhood stakeholders	KCDC
Urban Wilderness Planning Sessions	2018-2022	City of Knoxville Residents through Public Input	City of Knoxville
Greenway Corridor Feasibility & Assessment Study	2016	City of Knoxville Residents through Public Input	City of Knoxville
Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Corridor Plan	2006	City of Knoxville Residents through Public Input	Metropolitan Planning Commission

Need Analysis

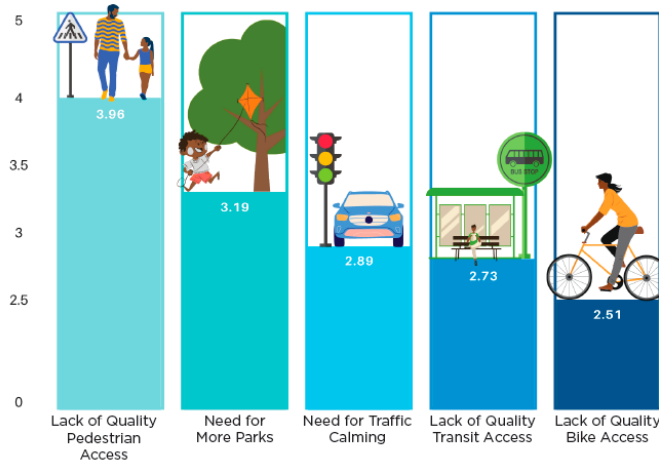
Over the years, residents and community-based organizations have provided a rich amount of input as to their desires for improved connectivity for the residents of East Knoxville. Residents have continually highlighted the need for better non-vehicular connectivity from their neighborhoods to shopping, jobs, and entertainment. Due to space limitations, we have included excerpts from several Community Engagement activities below and have included the full reports on our digital site.

During the most recent Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue Design Study, the East Tennessee Design Center conducted a survey around needed changes to the area infrastructure. The thing people said they liked the most about living near MLK Jr. Ave. was the location in relation to downtown. Other key things included the historic homes and the diversity of the area, as well as the sense of community. The things people cited most as being able to improve their quality of life along MLK Jr. Ave. were more greenways, parks, and police. Other things included more sidewalks and street lights, businesses (like a grocery store), and improvements to existing facades & buildings.

Q7

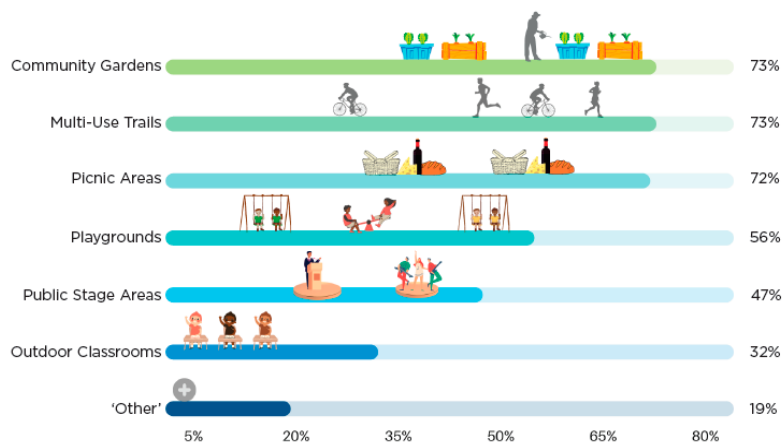
Which of These Concerns You The Most Along MLK Jr. Avenue?

Respondents ranked the five options from 1-5 (most to least concern) and the answers were weighted on a scale from 0-5. The numbers shown are the final weighted scores.



Q9

Which Amenities Would Make You Want to Visit a Park?



* 'Other' included responses such as: dog parks, shaded seating areas, and tennis courts *

	Five Points Community	Five Points Elderly	The Vista at Summit Hill	Isabella Towers
Total Households	353	105	175	236
Response Rate	32%	48%	21%	28%
Nature Trails/Greenway Connector	28.8%	29.5%	13.8%	20.6%
Picnic Areas	56.2%	59.1%	27.6%	55.9%
Open Grass & Green Spaces	15.1%	15.9%	20.7%	23.5%

Residents within the KCDC communities responded to a needs assessment in 2021, receiving a 31% response rate across the properties. From those properties inside the Urban Renewal area, the greatest majority asked for more open grass and green spaces along with picnic areas and the addition of nature trails and greenway connectors. (Austin Homes, now First Creek at Austin, was in redevelopment and vacant at the time.)

Community engagement was a central theme during the 2019 Master Planning process for the redevelopment of the Austin Homes site, one of the original public housing sites in Knoxville and located within the urban renewal area. Despite its proximity to adjacent parks, Downtown Knoxville, and the University of Tennessee, the topography of the Austin Homes site and its neighboring warehouses have isolated the development from its surrounding context. Historic factors such as urban renewal and construction of public infrastructure have further contributed to the isolation of the site. A round of 27 stakeholder interviews, three resident meetings, three stakeholder meetings, and four Open Houses were conducted to give every community member an equal voice and to facilitate one-on-one conversations between the planning team and all interested parties.

Through the process, residents and stakeholders identified a number of opportunities for the area across five categories of community, culture, connection, open space and trust. Within connection and open space themes emerged around better walkability and pedestrian connections,

enhanced transit stops, revitalizing the creek, more public streets, trails, and open spaces. In response to community feedback, approximately 8.9 acres of open space was included in the plan. DOT funds would be used to program the open space, create and connect a trail network to the surrounding neighborhood and provide a safe route to schools and parks. This trail network will play a critical role in connecting Downtown and the Old City to existing Greenways at First Creek and Morningside. Excerpts from the Austin Homes Master Plan specifically addressing connectivity and open spaces are included on the website ([Austin Homes Infrastructure Plans 123019](#)).

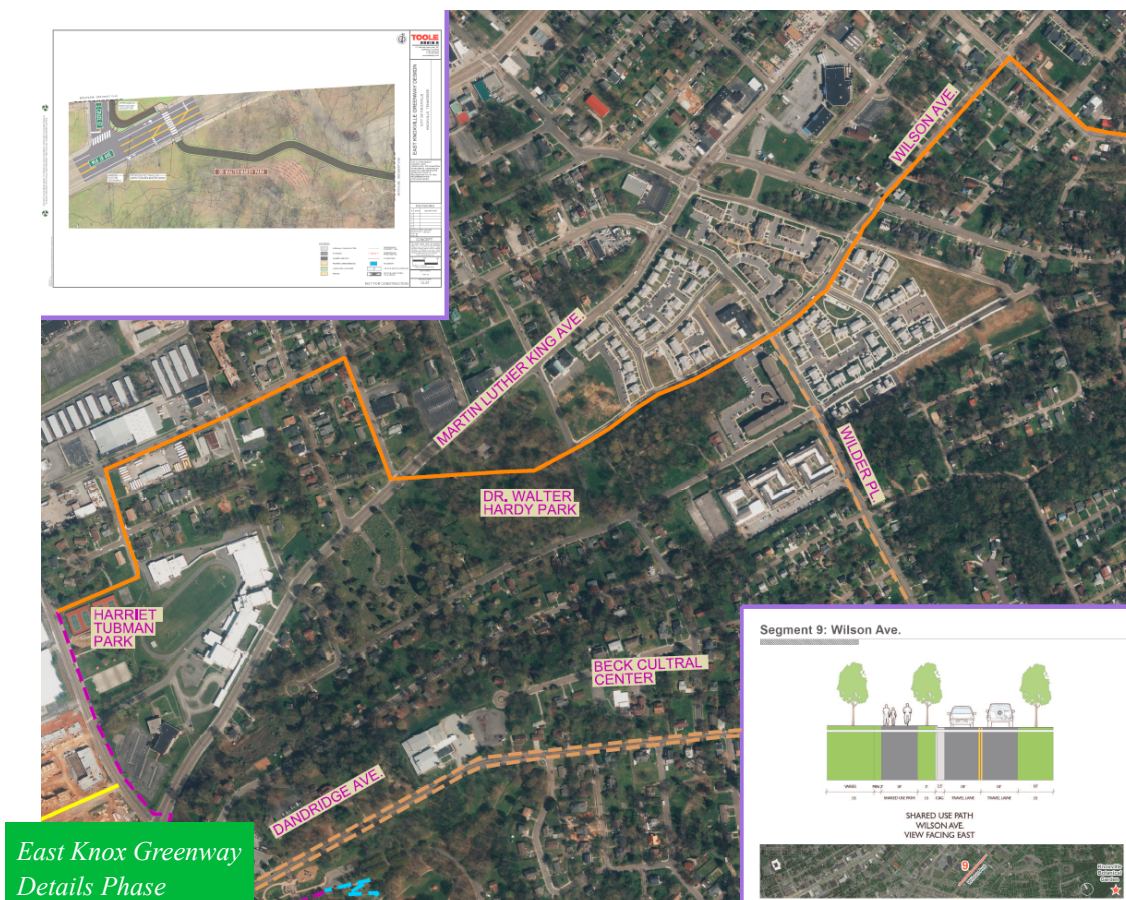
We do not anticipate any substantial negative community impacts or need for displacement from the proposed project. All land is currently owned by the project partners and no displacement will be necessary. Some neighbors may experience noise during construction, however, construction crews will contain the project to reasonable daylight hours.

Mobility and Community Connectivity

Reconnecting Knoxville is a community-inspired approach to increasing safe mobility and connectivity for all, including for people with disabilities. Improving facilities for safe, convenient, and active travel, including walking, bicycling, and transit aligns with several of the City of Knoxville's policy priorities, including a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 and a "Vision Zero" goal to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on Knoxville's streets.

We have intentionally looked at each of the Urban Renewal projects and the surrounding neighborhoods and access points most directly impacted by the addition of James White Parkway and reconfiguration of arterial streets. Infrastructure during this period was designed to support the anticipated growth in automobiles, and as such our infrastructure has

an overreliance on automobiles for accessing downtown and the Urban Wilderness, two amenities that Knoxville touts when recruiting conventions and tourists. The reconfiguration of the streets to create an overreliance on automobiles to traverse topography and distance is currently an impairment detriment to our lower-income citizens including social determinants of health. *Reconnecting Knoxville* projects aim to increase the ability of all residents to have the ability to experience our tourism board's current slogan "we're a-nature-loving-adventure-seeking-artsy-kind-a-town." We propose this network for multi-model connections to increase non-vehicular access for the residents in census tracts 67 & 68 who currently experience no vehicle in the household rate of 36.9% and 46.8% respectively. The average across the city is 11.1%, so these two tracts have a disproportionate number of individuals in need of non-vehicular connectivity.



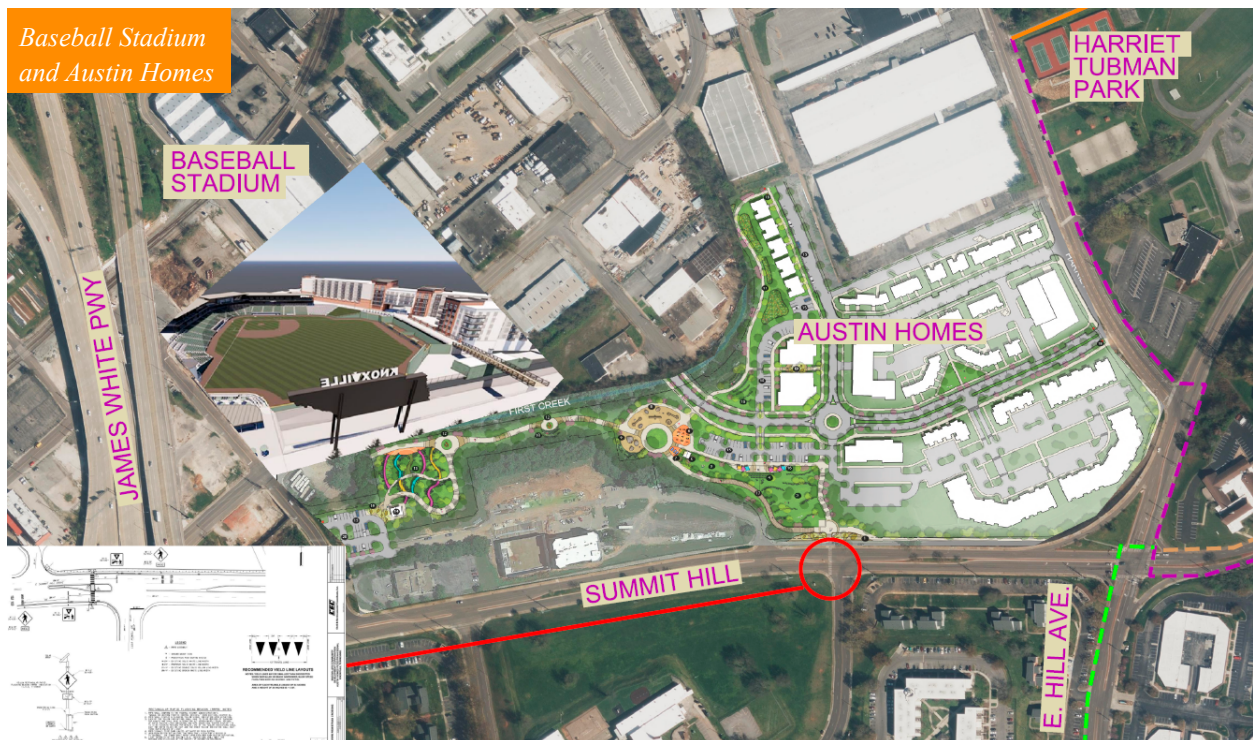
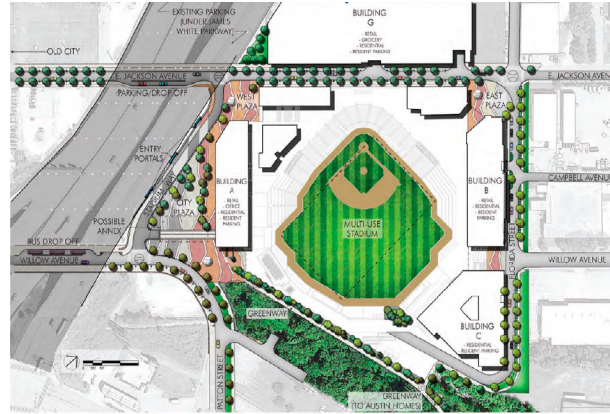
Our proposal will reconnect the East Knoxville community with easily traversed multi-modal pathways, reducing the reliance on automobiles, and increasing healthy options for walking, cycling, and rolling which will promote active travel among East Knoxville residents.

Starting in East Knoxville, plans are underway to connect East Knoxville residents to the existing trail system at the Knoxville Botanical Gardens on Wimpole Avenue. The path will then continue towards Downtown, ending at Harriet Tubman Park, and connecting residents closer to downtown. This path will transect Census Tracts 20, 21, 68 connecting the communities of East Knoxville to downtown, including the Five Points and Eastport subsidized housing communities.

Next, the Morningside Connector will start at Harriet Tubman Park and provide a leisure, park setting pathway connection to Morningside Park, that will include upgrades to ADA accessibility, drainage, and resurfacing. A new park is also planned through the generous gift of \$5.52 million from the BlueCross foundation. The new BlueCross Healthy Place will include an accessible playground for children and many other public amenities.



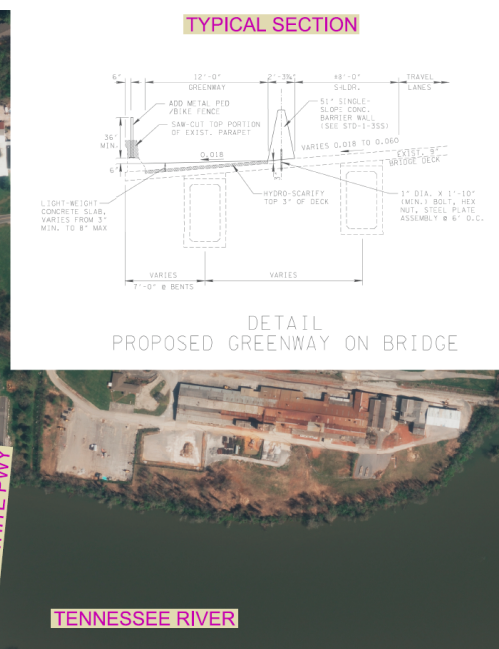
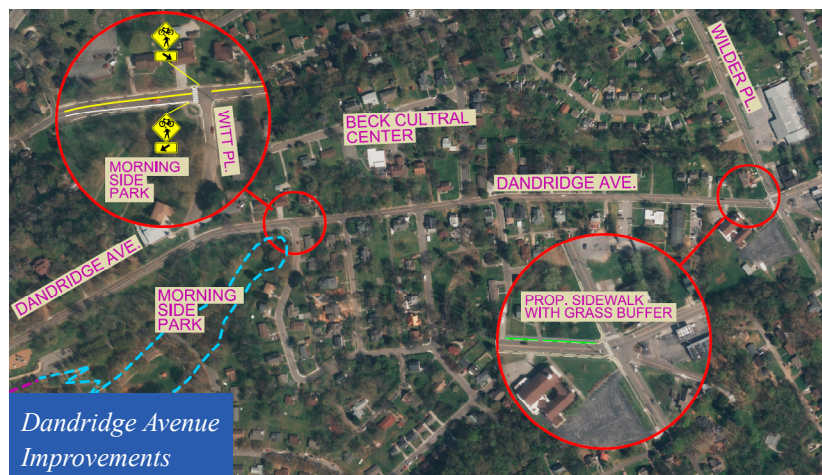
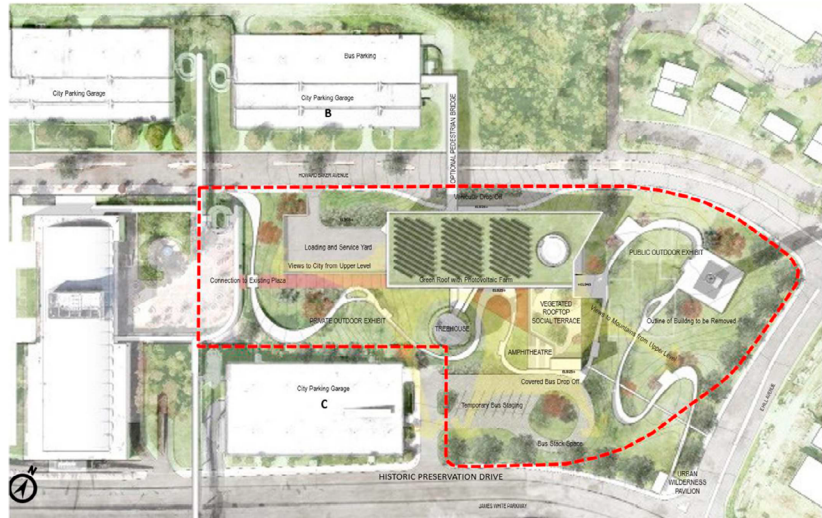
Across from Harriet Tubman Park is Austin Homes public housing, now First Creek at Austin. A pathway will be created to link the new East Knoxville Greenway to downtown connecting to downtown amenities, including several subsidized housing communities. These pathways will connect the East Knoxville Greenway through the Austin site, to a new community park, all in Census Tract 68, and the new downtown ballpark district, in Census Tract 67 after crossing First Creek. This pathway will allow for pedestrian and visual connectivity between downtown and East Knoxville. It will create a connection for East Knoxville to a new economic center with jobs, shopping, and entertainment, safely accessible without automobiles. In addition to the multi-use stadium hosting minor league baseball, semi-professional soccer, and concerts and events. the area around the stadium will include a shopping district, three public outdoor plaza areas including a pedestrian plaza, and artifacts of the history of the Knoxville Giants Negro League Baseball team.



A second path will connect to the corner of Hill Avenue and Summit Hill Drive through a grand staircase from the new Austin Park. The existing pedestrian paths located along E. Hill Avenue will connect Austin Homes and Morningside Park to the proposed privately funded science museum. The Science Museum will include a \$2 million public plaza for cultural recognition at the Mary Costa Plaza located adjacent to the museum.

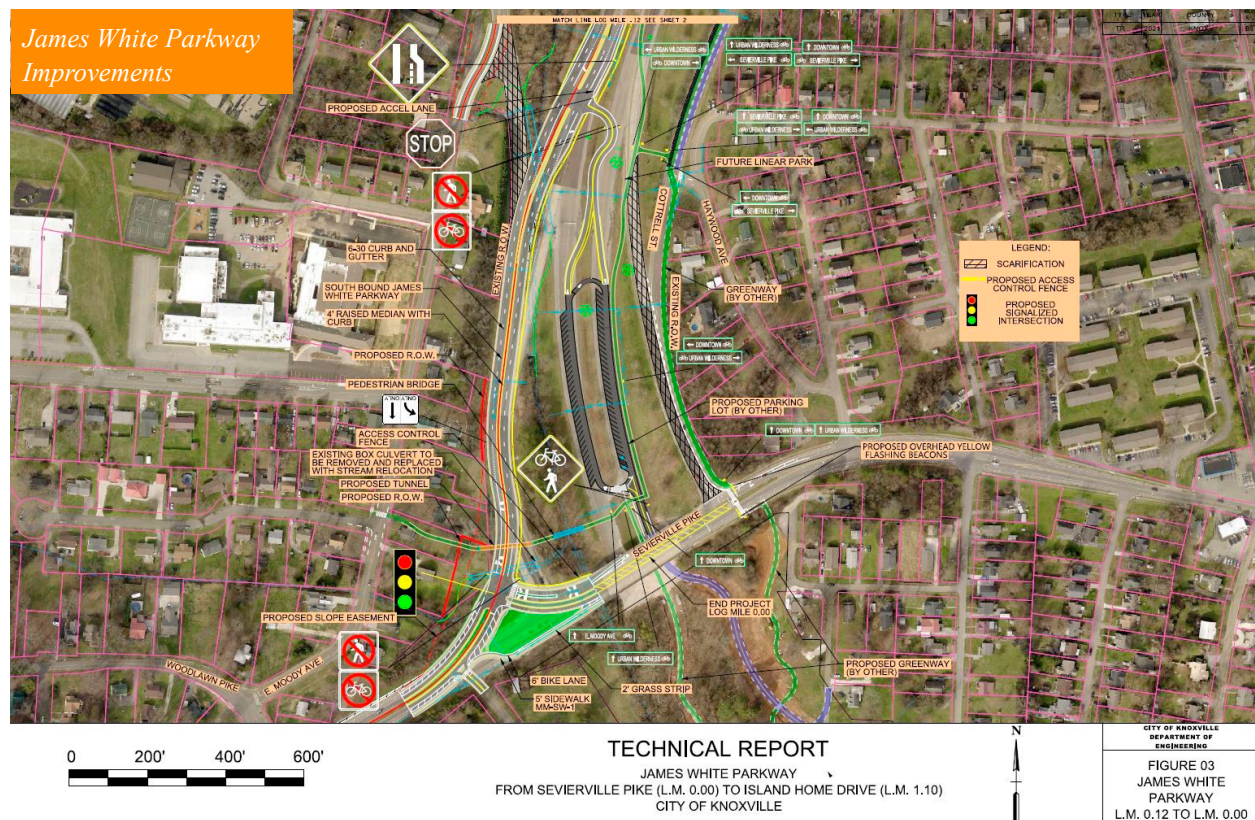
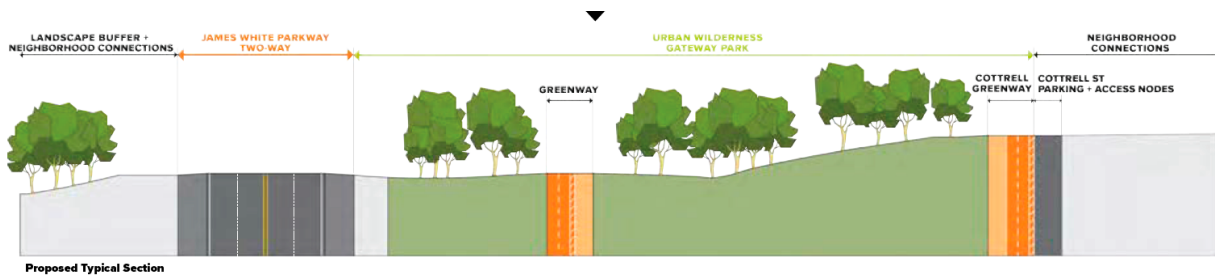
Next, the Dandridge Avenue connector will provide connection to the Beck Cultural Center, Delaney Museum, and with a corridor back to East Knoxville, creates a loop. The improvements will include the addition of a pedestrian crossing for access from Morningside Park greenway at Witt Place to the Beck Cultural Exchange Center and Mabry-Hazen House, and will complete the missing sidewalk along the northside of Dandridge Avenue to Wilder place. This section of Dandridge Avenue is home to the oldest African American neighborhood in the city.

Access to South Knoxville and the Urban Wilderness is limited to three bridges over the Tennessee River. The James White Parkway Bridge is a 5-lane state highway with no sidewalks or bike lanes and is the closest option for connecting East Knoxville to the South Waterfront area and the Urban Wilderness. This



pathway would connect Census Tracts 68 and 8 and mitigate the James White Parkway bridge through a retrofit creating dedicated, barricaded pedestrian and biking opportunities.

The final component of the proposed plan will increase the park and recreation space on the South side of the river by expanding access to the existing Baker Creek Preserve. The current 4-lane divided James White Parkway will be reduced to 4-lane undivided roadway with linear parks and a multi-use path. The proposed new features will connect residents to Knoxville's growing Urban Wilderness and newest outdoor amenity spaces. Need Existing feasibility studies provide basis for further investigation to creatively convert the corridor for better access to daily destinations like jobs, healthcare, grocery stores, schools, places of worship, recreation, and parks.



Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships

Our approach is founded in community feedback received through various public input sessions and methods and from partners in the proposal. Our reconnection solution is grounded in community input to redress the inequities created, and to provide greater access for Knoxville's economically disadvantaged communities. Partnership and support letters are included in the appendix ([A. Letters of Supports](#)).

Our Community Partners will be engaged to ensure our work focuses on the community-developed properties included in this proposal. These partners will form the initial members of a community advisory group to support our planned construction and community development activities to redress the transportation-related created disparities. ([B.Partners](#)).

Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity

The foundation of our comprehensive plan is in community vision and priorities that focus on increasing the mobility and connectivity of residents in lower income census tracts to desirable amenities currently accessible predominately by vehicle. Our goal is to reconnect and create cohesive links between impoverished census tracts in East Knoxville to two economic development engines of the South Knoxville waterfront and the downtown areas.

Our plan includes community restoration, stabilization, and anti-displacement strategies through the expansion of location-efficient affordable housing, mixed-income mixed use development, creating desirable neighborhoods through new connectivity, and the development of public amenities.

Partner	Partnership Type	Type	Federal Match Provided	Non-federal Match Provided
KCDC	Co-Applicant	State/Local Gov't	\$0	\$4.67 m
City of Knoxville	Co-Applicant	Local Gov't	\$0 m	\$24.79 m
State of Tennessee	Co-Applicant	State Gov't	\$4.76 m	\$950,000
Sports Authority Board	Key Partner	Public Entity	\$0	\$5 m
Science Museum	Community Partner	Philanthropic	\$0	\$2 m
African American Equity Task Force	Community Partner	Public Entity	\$0	\$0
Bike Walk Knoxville	Community Partner	Philanthropic	\$0	\$0
Legacy Parks	Community Partner	Philanthropic	\$0	\$0
KICMA	Community Partner	Community-based	\$0	\$0
Beck Cultural Exchange Center	Community Partner	Community-based	\$0	\$0
Aslan Foundation	Community Partner	Philanthropic	\$0	\$0
Greenways Commission	Community Partner	Public Entity	\$0	\$0
Ijams Nature Center	Community Partner	Community-based	\$0	\$0
Knoxville Area Urban League	Community Partner	Community-based	\$0	\$0

Throughout this proposal, there are several components focused on celebrating local history and culture with public art, greenspace, and recreational spaces for residents and visitors. Some of these include the creation of a cultural corridor focused on remembering the lost African American heritage of the area, a Knoxville Giants Negro League Baseball team plaza, playgrounds, green spaces for gatherings and small events, dog parks, and spaces to walk, cycle, and ride safely.

KCDC is committing to develop a third phase of housing at the Austin Homes site which will include affordable and mixed income housing, including a HUD Section 202 component that will bring multi-generational affordable housing to the site. Added multi-modal pathways to provide access to areas around the neighborhood will be important in attracting a mixed income demographic.

Cultural Corridor

Prior to 1963, almost 100% of the African American population lived in Southeast Knoxville from Jackson Avenue to the Tennessee River. Before the three Urban Renewal projects, there were no Blacks in East Knoxville. Urban Renewal broke apart the cohesive African American community and pushed the population further east. Churches, businesses, schools, and houses were lost, and community connectivity was destroyed.

To that end, we are partnering with Beck to develop intentionality around inclusivity and belonging to build an asset-based framework for Knoxville, recognizing and celebrating the African American history that was lost. As part of Reconnecting Knoxville, we will work alongside the Beck Cultural Exchange Center to extend their Cultural Corridor concept that rediscovers and honors the historical narrative that no longer exists. The Beck Cultural Corridor is an interactive excursion where people will journey to learn, discover and experience the rich legacy of African Americans along a vibrant path. The proposed multi-modal pathway will include

markers, maps, and digital assets to illustrate the African American history that once stood along or near the pathway. We will partner with the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, with support from the University of Tennessee to develop the Corridor and the digital assets. Students in the UT Project Excellence Program and graduates of Austin-East High School, located within the project boundary, will be given preference to participate in the digital asset creation.

The Cultural Corridor will include stopping points with benches, gardens, and markers that will allow users to sit, experience being in that spot, and reflect. There will be intentionality in mirroring what once was and to experience what had been. The markers, paired with digital assets such as virtual images, holograms, voices, and sound, will allow visitors to ‘Take a walk around the Bottom’ or experience the former E. Vine Street, bustling with patrons frequenting dozens of African American businesses. The buildings have been lost, but the experiences and the history can be reclaimed for future generations. We propose the inclusion of 10 sites to launch the Cultural Corridor in Knoxville full list on website ([Cultural Corridor Overview](#)).

Economic Development

KCDC, the City of Knoxville, and the Sports Authority Board maintain partnerships with the Knoxville Area Urban League (KAUL). Since 1968, the Knoxville Area Urban League has assisted disadvantaged people attain social and economic stability and self-sufficiency through direct services and advocacy. The League works to provide a skilled and diverse workforce; to increase homeownership; to support economic and small business development, and to enhance education efforts for our youth. The Knoxville Area Urban League is a United Way partner agency and affiliate of the National Urban League. We will utilize this partnership and the diversity procurement services at KCDC and the City of Knoxville to increase utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, Minority-owned Businesses, Women-owned Businesses, or 8(a) firms.

KCDC is committed to contracting with quality firms representative of our community. To disseminate notice of opportunities to the greatest number of businesses, KCDC shares its open bids to other agencies that further disseminate them for us. These include Associated Construction Women, Associated General Contractors of Tennessee, Atlanta Chapter National Association of Black Women in Construction, Black Contractors Association, Centro Hispano de East Tennessee, HUD's Section 3 Opportunity Portal (commenced fall of 2021), Knox County's Supplier Diversity Office, Knoxville Area Urban League, Knoxville Builder's Exchange, Knoxville Equity Partnership, Knoxville's Diversity Business Access Committee, National Association of Black Women in Construction, Small Business Administration, Tennessee Minority Supplier Development Council, Tennessee Small Business Development Center, U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency and WJBE Radio (a minority owned firm). KCDC's Procurement staff conducts "How to Do Business" workshops and seminars whenever feasible and as requested. Each

year KCDC's Procurement staff participate in the City of Knoxville's Budget Rollout Breakfast for businesses and details upcoming major procurements in the new fiscal year. KCDC's Procurement staff is instrumental in the yearly public procurement reverse tradeshow for small/minority/women owned businesses. KCDC also serves on the City of Knoxville's Diversity Business Committee. Finally, KCDC's Procurement Staff serves on the Diversity Outreach Committee of the East Tennessee Purchasing Association (ETPA).

Within the bid documents, KCDC will specify that firms offer requirements as outlined in the Reconnecting Communities NOFO, such as good-paying jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union, the incorporation of strong labor standards, pro-active anti-discrimination and anti-harassment plans, project labor agreements, workplace rights notices, training and placement programs, and local hiring and procurement preferences, particularly for underrepresented workers and individuals with convictions

Project Readiness: Environmental Risk

The improvements identified to reconnect the community divided by the urban renewal construction projects will not only restore the connectivity of East Knoxville, but do so in an efficient manner that utilizes existing infrastructure and ROW when available.

This approach tackles environmental risk by limiting exposure to environmental features and streamlining regulatory processes. This project will construct new multi-use paths, upgrade existing pedestrian crossings, transform inefficient vehicular facilities into complete streets and create linear parks and plazas to embrace the history of the area. Not only are most of these improvements inside or immediately adjacent to existing transportation corridors, but by improving the walking and biking options and providing access to transit they will reduce vehicular trips and emissions to help meet the cities climate goals.

Our strategy for limiting environmental risk includes screening alternate routes and selecting preferred alignments that accomplish the goal of connectivity while avoiding areas that will require extensive permitting, mitigation, or ROW acquisitions. The result is a pedestrian and bicycle network that is achievable and ultimately reduces vehicular trips resulting in improved air and water quality and reducing noise.

The project planning and community involvement previously completed empowers us to quickly finalize design, project permitting, and, where necessary, begin the ROW acquisition process. The NEPA process is underway for the East Knox Greenway, and a comprehensive pre-screening for all other projects is included in the appendix ([D.Project Readiness](#)).

The community engagement process provided direction for our planners to focus on placing new facilities inside existing Right-of Way and on KCDC property. Following this direction we will limit right of way acquisitions and strive to eliminate the need for any relocations of residences or businesses.

All segments of the project that are part of the transportation network and is required to be on the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) will be by the deadline of obligation of funds. ([D.Project Readiness](#)).

Benefit-Cost Analysis

A detailed BCA was performed on the *Reconnecting Knoxville* project. The report and supporting spreadsheet are available in [Appendix E. Benefit-Cost Analysis](#) on the project webpage.

The benefit cost ratio for the project is 3.55 with a 20 Year net present value of benefits totaling \$ 219.2 Million (2020\$) and Total Capital Costs of \$ 61.7 Million (2020\$) or \$83.6 Million (YOE\$). After quantifying the expected net benefits expected under the Build case and taking into account the residual cost benefits of the project for years beyond the analysis period, the BCR for the project suggests that the projects benefits over the analysis period would exceed the expected costs associated with project implementation.

The BCA analysis estimates the economic value that the proposed project will create from the following benefits:

- **Equity:** An estimated 1,176 households will gain new access to healthy recreation and greatly expanded commuting options.
- **Mobility:** Proximity of the trails and connections will attract more pedestrian, bike commuters, and recreational users.
- **Safety:** The trails and connections will reduce the exposure of pedestrians and bicyclists to crash risk.
- **Health:** A physically active population equates to lower health costs.
- **Operational:** High potential for growth in bicycling and savings for the distant future.

Significant benefits such as Equity and Mobility will have an immediate effect on the quality of life for those disadvantaged populations that live near this project. This

project will provide each of these nearby households a safe and effective connection to recreation and job opportunities.

We have included benefits that visitors to the Urban Wilderness and the multi-use stadium will have because of increased connectivity, safety, and comfort of the Knoxville Reconnection project. Visitors to the multi-use stadium will utilize components of this project to access parking and provide improved journeys from the nearby neighborhoods to community and festival events held at the stadium. Visitors to the Urban Wilderness will travel on the Reconnecting Knoxville project to access the stadium, downtown shopping, restaurants, and recreation.

The Reconnecting Knoxville project is also expected to accumulate benefits in tourism and increased property values; however, these are not included due to the difficulty in quantifying their benefits in a BCA.