

# Perfectly BLOUNT.

**A Three-Part Plan to Ensure Sustainable  
Controlled Growth, Workforce Development,  
and Community Development**

**BLOUNT COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

# Introduction

**AT BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP**, we understand that most Blount Countians love living here but are concerned about the fast pace of growth and preserving our quality of life.

***We are too.***

Blount Partnership is made up a group of Blount County residents working for the community every day. We understand that change can be scary and growing too fast is not good for any of us.

The most recent census report shows the population of Blount County is growing at the rate of 1% annually. However, there are some concerns that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the census may be under reported by as many as 10,000 residents.

Blount Partnership has developed a three-part plan to be executed over the next two years. The plan is focused on community building and workforce development to help manage sustainable, controlled growth in our county. It is not about bringing additional big industry to our area, but to continue to focus on building a vibrant community for Blount Countians to live, work, and play.

As the unifying organization collaborating with County and City governments, citizens, entrepreneurs, elected officials and community leaders, we are committing to preserving the wonderful attributes of this beautiful place we call home while ensuring Blount County is a viable place to live, work, and play for generations to come.



**“Now, more than ever it is important for us to work together for a better, brighter Blount County that meets our needs now and in the future.”**

**— BRYAN DANIELS**  
*President, Blount Partnership*

# PERFECTLY *Placed.*

## THE OUTDOOR BLOUNT INITIATIVE

**WE LIVE** in one of the most beautiful parts of the world and love the access we have to outdoor activities and fun. Nestled in the foothills of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, we can't imagine living anywhere more perfectly placed.

Our goal over the next two years is to continue to build the Blount County outdoor recreation brand and economy while increasing the access to and caliber of natural destinations and connections between places.

## How We'll Do It

- Increase promotion of outdoor recreation in Blount County so residents and visitors know what the variety of outdoor activities available—most are free of charge.
- Explore urban design solutions like protected bike paths and pedestrian crosswalks to increase connectivity and enjoyment in Townsend.

## Upgrades We'll Be Exploring



Maryville College woods



Frisbee golf installation



Increase Greenway connectivity



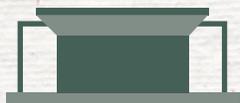
An easy-to-use mobile app with a community calendar for outdoor activities



Explore potential biking potential areas



Further development at Pellissippi Place



Increased utilization of Greenway amphitheater



Explore adding bike lanes



Roll out more year-round activities



Further redevelopment of our urban centers



## GROW OUR CREATIVE ECONOMY

**BLOUNT COUNTY** is already home to a vibrant creative class of artisans, makers, musicians, breweries and whiskey distilleries with an excellent food scene. We have first-class entertainment venues including Clayton Center for the Performing Arts, Greenway Amphitheatre, and Maryville College.

Communities who commit to a building a lively arts and culture scene thrive. We plan to invest in continuing to grow the local creative economy through creative placemaking, building the foundation for artists to live and work in the community, and providing resources and guidance for creative businesses and professionals.

### How We'll Do It

- Connect local players to develop a creative network and the exchange of resources and guidance for arts, students, professionals, and businesses.
- Discuss more utilization of the amphitheater.



### Upgrades We'll Be Exploring



Improving gateways with art



Spaces to display public art



Connectivity to assets via bridges



More community-wide events



Water/river events



Murals



Rooftop music venues



Encourage growth in casual outdoor dining

# PERFECTLY *Planned.*

**BLOUNT PARTNERSHIP** conducted a community-wide survey in 2022 and 62% of respondents believe Blount County is growing too fast, and some question whether we have the infrastructure to support it.

That's why our focus is developing the workforce that is already here. We are also focused on community-building and ensuring that the vitalization of

downtown Maryville and Alcoa continues to serve our current population.

Many young people have left the area to work in larger markets. We want to change that by continuing to create an environment and culture that they want to be a part of.

*Let's keep our kids in Blount County for generations to come.*

## BLOUNT COUNTY INNOVATION

Blount Partnership wants to invest in branding and marketing Blount County as a hub of innovation. Many communities offer resources for entrepreneurs and hubs that serve as incubators while they build homegrown businesses.



## How We'll Do It

- Ensure existing resources and programs are available to small businesses and we are successfully engaging local businesses to encourage growth.
- Expand economic development investments beyond big companies to include small businesses.
- Prioritize attracting small businesses in priority and high wage sectors to relocate to or have a presence in Blount County.



# Initiatives We'll Be Exploring



Explaining education resources for start-ups



Venture capital for seed money



Complete Pellissippi Parkway



Address attainable housing infrastructure



Seek fiber optic utility



Create an innovation center and business incubator to share resources



Improved access to broadband





## AFFORDABLE HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**WE UNDERSTAND** that affordable housing is hard to find, and our entire region is facing the same problem. Tennessee was the fourth most moved to state in 2021 and 2022 and East Tennessee is expected to have a huge population boom over the next 20 years.

In addition, inflation, increased costs due to Covid-related supply chain shortages and the rise in costs of building supplies have contributed to skyrocketing housing prices and a slow down on many infrastructure projects in the state.

Blount Partnership is working to ensure that the full economic impact of major new investments in Blount County are being realized. We are collaborating with local governments on practical plans to increase quality house supply, the presence of supply-chain businesses and other goods and services, and workforce development opportunities.

### How We'll Do It

- Review opportunities and develop an action plan to ensure that direct and indirect economic impacts of major new investments are understood, captured, and retained in Blount County.
- Evaluate how to increase the affordable and attainable housing choices available for Blount County.
- Review current housing initiatives and studies underway by other organizations within Blount County.
- Enact the plan to create new quality housing, ensure the presence of supply-chain businesses and other amenities, goods, and services, and invest in workforce training.
- Continue to revamp the plan and ensure it is evolving to meet the needs and demands of major new investments in the community's future.

### We're Exploring



New apartments and condominiums



Younger workforce availability



New company engagement in training



More rental units - smaller homes



Land access for developers



Comprehensive study/plan for county housing and infrastructure



Zoning



## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

**EQUAL ACCESS** to Broadband is critical to equity, education and business development. Blount Partnership will continue to support current

initiatives to expand broadband infrastructure and improve access, creating innovative solutions for residents alongside businesses and institutions.

### How We'll Do It

- Begin collaborating with elected officials and other representatives to explore expanding infrastructure upgrades to include residents.
- Continue to pursue federal funds for expanding broadband access.
- Continue investing in infrastructure upgrades in key areas throughout the County.
- Continue to ensure equitable access to broadband infrastructure and other connectivity to reduce the digital divide and improve outcomes for residents and businesses.



## Initiatives We'll Be Exploring



Researching grants for broadband from federal sources.



Placing broadband in open spaces like downtown Maryville, Alcoa, and Townsend.



Advocate for affordable access to broadband in areas and apply for grant money.\*

*\*State and federal governments have funds available and allow for entities like economic development organizations to apply for these funds for both homes and businesses.*



## CAREER AWARENESS & CURRICULUM EXPANSION

### Keeping Our Kids in Blount County

**IT ALL BEGINS** with quality education. Blount Partnership is committed to helping enhance and expand local public-school curriculums to better prepare students for a variety of post-high school opportunities. If young people are aware of career opportunities in the County, we have a better

chance to keep them here and “grow our own.” Ensuring students’ preparedness for their financial and professional futures will improve their individual lifetime outcomes and can also contribute to the growth of priority sectors in the local economy, and to the population of young people in the community.

#### How We’ll Do It

- Examine opportunities for low-cost, short-term solutions to curriculum expansion, such as engaging local business leaders. Enact these solutions to ensure current students have access to the opportunities.
- Perform a more comprehensive curriculum review and explore the possibility of incorporating these subjects into official school curriculums.

#### We’re Exploring



Access to aviation training



Include Blount Workforce Advisory Collaborative



Include entrepreneurship and Sky City in the workforce collaborative

**Funding Sources:** The three public school systems can use accessible funds to enhance and expand curriculum offerings. Business and community leaders could also contribute their time and expertise as teachers and mentors for financial literacy and/or entrepreneurship course for students.



# What to Expect



Transparency and expanded communication from Blount Partnership



Perfectly Blount Gear — show your Blount County pride with stickers, yard signs and tee shirts



Community-wide events



Email updates



Social media updates



Perfectly Blount community ambassador program



More positive news stories on Blount County



Major effort to deliver this plan community-wide by presenting to civic groups, churches, middle and high schools

[Sign-up for email updates](#)

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We're all in this together. Let's show the world how one of the oldest counties in Tennessee comes together to solve problems, support each other, and personify the Volunteer Spirit.



Blount  
Partnership

[blountpartnership.com](http://blountpartnership.com)