



Like many fast-growing American cities, **Nashville faced a dilemma as its population grew 10 percent from 2000-2010.** Only three percent of Davidson County was devoted to parkland.

There were too few places for people to easily access the outdoors, and obesity-related conditions cost area residents an estimated \$255 million annually. On top of that, a devastating 2010 flood—killing 10 and costing roughly \$2 billion—underscored the need to better protect floodplains and buffer waterways that feed the mighty Cumberland River.

Our Role

In 2010, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and the Land Trust for Tennessee asked the Fund to use our national expertise in green infrastructure planning—which involves identifying and protecting valuable natural areas—to lead the development of an open space plan for Davidson County. Our goal was to develop the most progressive open space protection strategy in the Southeast U.S. The result is **Nashville: Naturally**, the first conservation plan that maps every inch of protected open space in Davidson County—and charts a clear vision for how to protect and connect this green infrastructure. Along with ACP Visioning+Planning, Hawkins Partners, Inc. and Clarion Associates, we inventoried and evaluated the region’s natural areas and engaged the public to develop a vision that includes:

- **Improving the Cumberland River system, the source of the county’s drinking water**
- **Building up the sustainable local food supply through urban and rural farming**
- **Improving public health by making it easier for people to bike, walk and play**
- **Protecting scenic and historic places from disappearing to development.**



Strategic Conservation Planning
Green Infrastructure



Conservation Acquisition
Land, Water and Wildlife

50%

increase of the amount of greenway trails built in Nashville since 2011, surpassing the 25-mile goal in five years.



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Why This Project Matters

This plan is building momentum, institutionalizing green space as a community goal, identifying conservation priorities, and attracting new financial investments in green space protection.

Since the plan was adopted by Nashville’s Park Board, the Metro government has spent over \$15 million—including \$5 million in capital bond funds—for open space acquisition, \$10 million for greenway development, and \$30 million for riverfront parks and greenways. This has been levered by funding from many other sources including the Joe C. Davis Foundation.

By the time Mayor Dean left office in 2015, Nashville had exceeded many of the 10-year goals outlined in the plan in just over five years. The open space plan articulated a goal of adding 3,000 acres of parkland in the next 10 years. As of 2015, over 4,500 acres had been added to Nashville’s park system, including key anchors at Antioch Park and Stones River Park that added to more than 500 acres protected by the Land Trust for Tennessee.

“Music City is known for innovation and creativity. Together the private and public sectors can implement the plan’s recommendations and make Nashville a greener, healthier, more prosperous place to work, live and visit.”

Karl Dean
Mayor of Nashville



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About The Conservation Fund

At the Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect more than 7.5 million acres of land.

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