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Farragut at a Crossroads

Farragut is a relatively new community. In 1980 it officially converted from a suburban, bedroom community of Knoxville, to a real town. Farragut has many assets: reasonably well-to-do residents, lots of shopping (Turkey Creek serves a regional patronage), interstate highway access, and is close to Knoxville and Oak Ridge. It also has good access to recreation amenities: the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) waterway, good parks, and the beginning stages of a pathway system. It also attracts residents due to its lack of property taxes and good schools—it seems at first glance to doing extremely well, and it is.

Farragut is facing a number of challenges that have potentially negative implications for its future.

ISSUES FARRAGUT FACES

The following are briefs description of the major issues facing the town in the coming years.

Lack of a “heart” for the community

Farragut has evolved from a sparsely populated rural bedroom community to become a well-rounded residential community. It has a variety of commercial centers ranging from regional shopping (Turkey Creek) to smaller strip and big-box centers. In spite of all this, Farragut doesn’t have a true downtown and the sense of place that emanates from a pedestrian-oriented town center. How can Farragut bring about a downtown that has a multitude of events that attract local and regional residents to shop, work, and play? What elements will make up the downtown?

This plan incorporates and gives form to the 7 Key Principles of the Farragut Board of Mayor and Aldermen’s Strategic Plan:

1. History
2. Beauty: Natural and Built
3. High Quality Residential Choices
4. Multiple Activity Centers
5. Convenient Living
6. Outstanding Recreational Opportunities
7. Community Spirit

Declining shopping centers

While Turkey Creek brought a myriad of new shopping options to Farragut, and draws shoppers from the region, it has also drawn patrons away from many existing stores and smaller shopping centers on Kingston Pike. The resulting competition is causing many older centers to experience “step downs” in the quality of tenants, declining maintenance, and even vacancies are starting to appear at a disturbing level. This not only erodes property values, but also presents a negative image of Farragut along this major thoroughfare.

Lack of housing choice

Farragut is comprised primarily of single-family homes on relatively large lots—which cater to a narrow range of family types. As young professionals, starter families, and elderly retirees increasingly enter the housing market, they often seek small starter houses or condos, and less yard to maintain. A greater variety of housing choices will not only expand Farragut’s appeal, but will also permit residents to remain through-out several stages of life.

Lack of access and connectivity throughout the town

A large number of residential subdivisions have only a single entrance (See Figure 1). While this creates a high degree of privacy for the neighborhood, single-entry subdivisions also have impacts on the rest of the community:

- force all neighborhood traffic onto major collectors, increasing congestion and traffic impacts on residences located along collector streets
- limit accessibility for emergency vehicles

- result in inefficient circulation for school buses, increasing travel times and the number of buses/drivers needed

People are also dissuaded from using alternative travel modes in Farragut—trails are disconnected and it is dangerous to bike on roads with cars traveling at 50 miles per hour without an adequate buffer.

For the few development opportunities that remain, increased connectivity including a street grid and trails, between major destinations will help reduce traffic congestion on major thoroughfares, reduce response times for emergency vehicles, and even encourage walking and biking.



Figure 1: Farragut’s single entrance subdivisions.

Missed opportunities to take advantage of heritage

Many in the community feel that Farragut has no heritage. Brief research suggests otherwise: Concord Village, Campbell Station, a pioneer era rock quarry, the TVA, and not least, agricultural heritage that is evident in the scenic barns and large open fields that remain. Heritage can have a unifying influence in a community, as well as generate tourism opportunities.



Limited opportunities for infill and expansion

The town is substantially built-out. In addition to a limited number of remaining vacant parcels, there are only a handful of opportunities for outward expansion. As the town seeks to fill additional needs, such as residential diversity, additional employment types, and improved gateways it needs to take advantage of the few remaining vacant parcels and potential annexation areas.

Lack of a coherent image

Today, Farragut’s best asset is the large number of attractive, well-maintained residential neighborhoods. However, the more visible aspects of community identity are somewhat nondescript:

- many of the older buildings have a consistent use of red brick buildings and semi-colonial themes, but it is being eroded by a diversity of materials and nondescript styles that many in the community find undesirable
- first impressions at the entries to town are a confusing jumble of signs, power poles, and parking lots
- the many creeks and natural areas are often hidden and inaccessible

As Farragut faces the future, will a more coherent character attract more business or residents? How does one know they’ve entered Farragut? What character should the streets have? Can a little more consistency in signage and building materials / styles present a more attractive first impression? Are there open vistas that should be protected? Answers to all of these questions will help form Farragut’s identity.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

This 2012 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) updates the previous plan (Land Use and Transportation Master Plan, or LUTMP) adopted in 2001. Since that plan was adopted, the Town more recently engaged in another planning effort known as the Strategic Plan.

The 2012 CLUP incorporates and refines the principles from the LUTMP, Strategic Plan, as well as other town plans such as the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, the Parks and Leisure Services Plan, and the Transportation Policy Plan. The CLUP is intended to become the single, long-range, overarching plan that steers the Town into the future and provides specific policies and actions that can help achieve the plan.

In order for the CLUP to be effective as a unifying document, the town shall follow these policies:

Policy 1: All Town decisions should be consistent with the CLUP. If a proposed action or project is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, either the action/project should be modified, or the CLUP amended.

Policy 2: The CLUP should be updated as often as necessary to remain current. Even if no major changes occur, the plan should undergo a major review (and update if appropriate) at least once every five years.

Policy 3: Future updates of the Strategic Plan (SP) and the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) should be considered as a prioritization (SP) and implementation program (CIP) for the CLUP. Updates to the Strategic Plan should reference the sections of the CLUP. If the strategic planning effort recommends a major divergence from the plan, then the Town should update the CLUP.

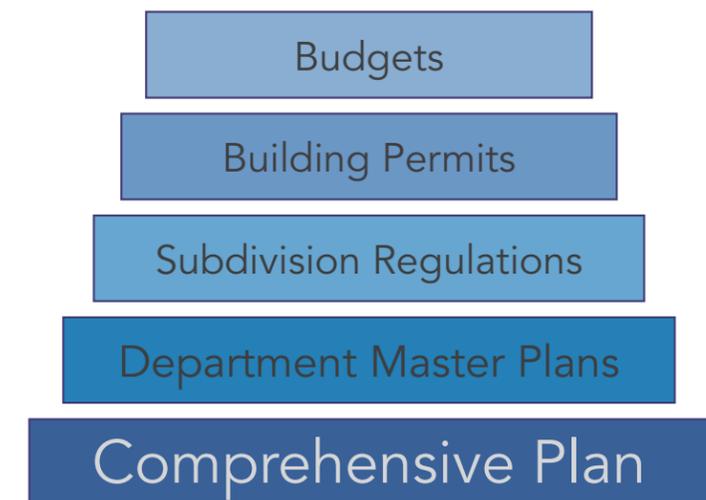


Figure 2: A comprehensive plan serves as the foundation for other plans.

UPDATING THIS PLAN

As conditions change (e.g., community opinions change, the economy adjusts) updates to the plan become necessary. Two types of updates are envisioned:

- A **major** update to the Plan is one that substantially changes the land uses, goals, or intent of the plan. Major updates should include substantial public outreach to help ‘check’ that the plan reflects current attitudes (for an example of substantial public outreach please see the appendices, which are available on the Town’s website www.townoffarragut.org).
- **Minor** updates are less overarching. They do not change the focus of the plan. They may include clerical corrections, minor updates to data, and other changes that clarify the intent of the plan. An example may be a neighborhood that is willing to dedicate substantial open space rather than the residential land use designated in this plan. Minor updates should be made as often as necessary. They may be made administratively, with notification of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, Planning Commission, and public.

