

## **CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

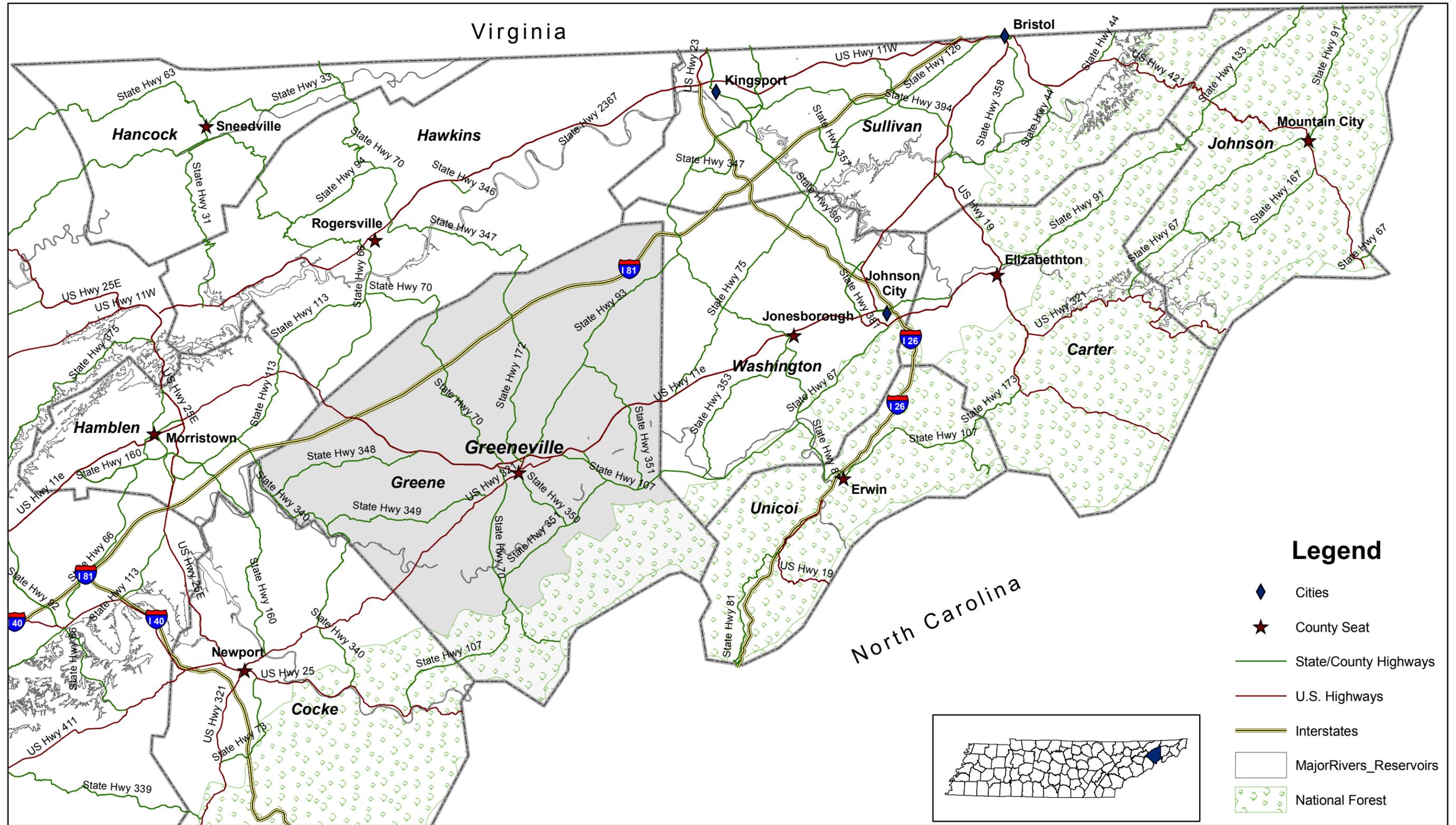
To effectively plan for any community, gathering information concerning its background is necessary. The size and location of a community are important aspects of a community. Information on a municipality's early settlement and events affecting past development assists in planning for its future development. An understanding of the community's political history and governmental structure helps to reveal the atmosphere in which future planning will take place. Background data for the Town of Greeneville is presented in this chapter.

#### **Location and Size**

The Town of Greeneville, comprising a total land area of approximately 17 square miles, is situated between the population centers of Knoxville and the Tri-Cities of Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City, and is located in the center of Greene County. Greene County embraces an area of approximately 624 square miles located in the southern portion of Upper East Tennessee with a portion located within the Unaka Mountain Range of the Cherokee National Forest. Greene County is bounded on the northwest by Hawkins and Hamblen Counties, on the north and northeast by Washington County, on the southeast by Unicoi County and Madison County, North Carolina and southwest by Cocke County.

Highways located in Greeneville include U.S. Route 11E which connects the town to Johnson City approximately 31 miles to the east. Morristown is located off Interstate 81 approximately 30 miles to the west. U.S. route 321 connects Greeneville to Newport approximately 26 miles to the south. Knoxville is approximately 70 miles to the west on Interstate 81. Other major traffic routes are State Highway 93 (Kingsport Highway) connecting Greeneville with Kingsport approximately 44 miles to the south. State Highway 172 (Baileyton Highway) connects Greeneville with the municipality of Baileyton and Interstate 81. State Highway 70 (Lonesome Pine Trail) connects Greeneville with Hawkins County as well as intersecting with Interstate 81. State Highway 107 connects Greeneville with Erwin approximately 31 miles to the east.

The regional setting for Greeneville is shown on Illustration 1.



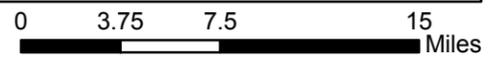
# GREENEVILLE

T E N N E S S E E

## Location Map Illustration 1



State of Tennessee  
 Department of Economic & Community Development  
 Local Planning Assistance Office  
 Johnson City, Tennessee  
 Map Printed: March 9, 2009  
 This map is not an engineering map.



## Early Settlement

Greeneville began with a 300-acre tract of land owned by Robert Kerr. The land, centered on the Big Spring, lies behind the Greeneville/Greene County Library on North Main Street.



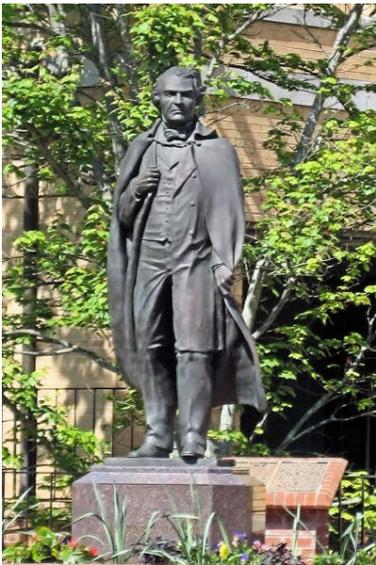
Big Spring

Greeneville, Tennessee's second oldest town was founded in 1783 and served as the capital of the Lost State of Franklin, from 1785-1788. The area's first European settlers were Scots-Irish who came from other areas of the southeastern United States. The town and county were named for Revolutionary War hero General Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island. Frontiersman David Crockett was born in Greene County, near present-day Limestone in 1786. He died in Texas in 1836 defending the Alamo during the war for Texas' independence from Mexico.

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Big Spring Source



Andrew Johnson Statue

Greeneville is the home and burial place of Andrew Johnson, the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. In 1829 he was chosen as alderman and in 1834 became Greeneville's mayor. During the next 30 years he served in both the Tennessee and United States legislatures. After Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865 Andrew Johnson then became the 17<sup>th</sup> President. His home and tailor shop, as well as a visitor center, and a national cemetery where he is buried, are open to the public and maintained as a National Historic Site by the U.S. Park Service. During the Civil War, Greeneville changed hands numerous times. Although the state as a whole had voted to secede,

East Tennessee was an island of predominately Unionist sentiment in the South.

In September 1864, Confederate General John Hunt Morgan, an overnight guest of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Williams of Greeneville, was killed here during a surprise attack by Federal troops.

On the lawn of the Greene County Courthouse are two monuments that commemorated the Civil War. One is dedicated to local troops who served in the Grand Army of the Republic (Union), and another memorializes General Morgan, known as the “Thunderbolt of the Confederacy.” Greeneville is thought to be the only town in the United States that pays tribute to both the Union and the Confederacy in its courthouse square.

### **United States Courthouse**

In 1903 the corner of Summer Street and Main Street became the location for one of only 15 federal courthouses to be built in the early 1900’s. It took two years to complete and the new building officially opened on June, 1905. It served as both federal courthouse and post office until 1983 when the post office moved to its new location on West Summer Street.



**U.S. Courthouse Eastern District Tennessee 1905**

In September 2001 the federal courthouse moved to its new location at the corner of West



**James H. Quillen U.S. Courthouse Eastern District Tennessee, 2009**

Depot Street and North Irish Street and was renamed the James H. Quillen U.S. Courthouse. The former courthouse served the 10 county Northeastern District for nearly 100 years and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Major Events Affecting Development**

The early economy of the area was made up almost totally of agriculturally oriented activities. However, following World War II, other non-agricultural activities became a part of the local economy as a number of manufacturing firms located in and around Greeneville. This helped provide additional employment opportunities and relieved a declining agricultural economy by providing a means of livelihood for a growing number of people. Although agricultural activities still play a major role in the area, a better balance in the economy has been achieved. These trends toward a more sophisticated economy should continue through the foreseeable future and, therefore, should help the citizens of Greeneville and Greene County have a more promising future.

**Findings:** Several of the major events affecting past development in Greeneville and Greene County will continue to affect development in the future. Potential positive elements favoring Greeneville and Greene County is their location along a major interstate with several exit points leading into Greeneville. With its geographical characteristics, the area lends itself to industrial development as well as continuing agriculture uses. With the ever changing times Greeneville has the potential to shift from heavy manufacturing to technology and service driven industries.

## **GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE**

Knowledge of the municipality's governmental structure is an important aspect of planning for its future. A municipality's form of government, financial capability, and Planning Commission status directly affect its ability to plan for growth and development. The purpose of this section is to provide a general examination of the governmental structure of Greeneville, to briefly describe its functions, and to assess its potential influence on future development.

Greeneville was first established as a town and as the county seat of Greene County in 1783 and was officially incorporated in 1903; a basic charter was adopted under a private act of the State of Tennessee, Chapter No. 563 making it Tennessee's second oldest town by charter. This charter designated the community as the "Town of Greeneville" and established the mayor and aldermanic form of government. It called for the qualified voters of the town to elect a town council consisting of a mayor and four aldermen at large. The municipality operates under a strong mayor form of government with the

mayor serving as chief executive officer and presiding member of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The mayor and aldermen are elected by the citizens of Greeneville to two year terms. The regular meetings of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen are held bi-weekly on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

The office of mayor is a full-time position, overseeing much of the day-to-day responsibilities of the town and attending all committee meetings. Under the strong mayor form of government the chief executive officer can have significant influence on plans for future development. The town recorder also attends all committee meetings and is the primary assistant to the mayor in administering the governmental responsibilities. The Town of Greeneville employs 178 full-time and 94 part-time persons who carry out the various municipal functions.

### **Municipal Finances**

The financial stability and capability of a municipality directly affects its ability to accomplish planning goals. An analysis of its revenues and expenditures is necessary to determine this financial stability and capability. According to the “*Town of Greeneville Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports*” for the years ended June 30, 2000 and June 30, 2008, the municipality's total revenues have increased a total of \$5,137,989 from \$15,823,781 in fiscal year 2000, to \$20,961,770 in fiscal year 2008, and for the same period total expenditures have increased a total of \$7,134,147 from \$15,211,419 to \$22,345,566.

As with most municipalities, the largest source of revenue for the Town of Greeneville is the property tax levy. The current municipal property tax rate is \$1.859 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation of real property. From fiscal year 2000, to fiscal year 2008, the total property tax levy has increased from \$6,510,790 to \$8,328,858.

The second largest source of revenue for the municipality is the local option sales tax. From fiscal year 2000, to fiscal year 2008, revenue from the local option sales tax has increased from \$4,491,725 to \$6,338,962.

Public safety, which includes the police and fire departments, is the category of largest expenditure for the municipality. From fiscal year 2000, to fiscal year 2008, expenditures for public safety increased from \$4,110,006 to \$5,240,772.

The second largest expenditure for the municipality is in the category of highways and streets. From fiscal year 2000, to fiscal year 2008, expenditures for highways and streets increased from \$1,314,654 to \$1,810,859 over the same period.

### **Municipal Planning Commission**

On August 6, 1946, the Greeneville Board of Mayor and Aldermen, through Ordinance No. 531, created and established the Greeneville Municipal Planning Commission. This ordinance created an eight member Planning Commission consisting of the mayor, one alderman selected by the town council, and six citizens appointed by the mayor. Also on that date, the Greeneville Board of Mayor and Aldermen first entered into a contract with the Tennessee State Planning Commission for planning assistance. Greeneville has since, to comply with a new state law, added two members from the planning region.

Since its creation, the Greeneville Planning Commission has been very active in carrying out its functions, and in its role as advisor to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. In addition to various official planning documents, including long range development plans and zoning, subdivision and floodplain regulations, the Planning Commission has also prepared numerous special studies, short and mid-range plans, and grant applications addressing public facilities, housing, transportation and recreation improvements. The Planning Commission has regional planning jurisdiction within its adopted Urban Growth Boundary, which allows the town the ability to plan for development in the municipality's potential growth area.

Greeneville is served by a planning contract by the Upper East Tennessee Region Office of the Local Planning Assistance Office, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. The officers of the Planning Commission are chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The regular meetings of the Planning Commission are held monthly.

### **Historic Zoning Commission**

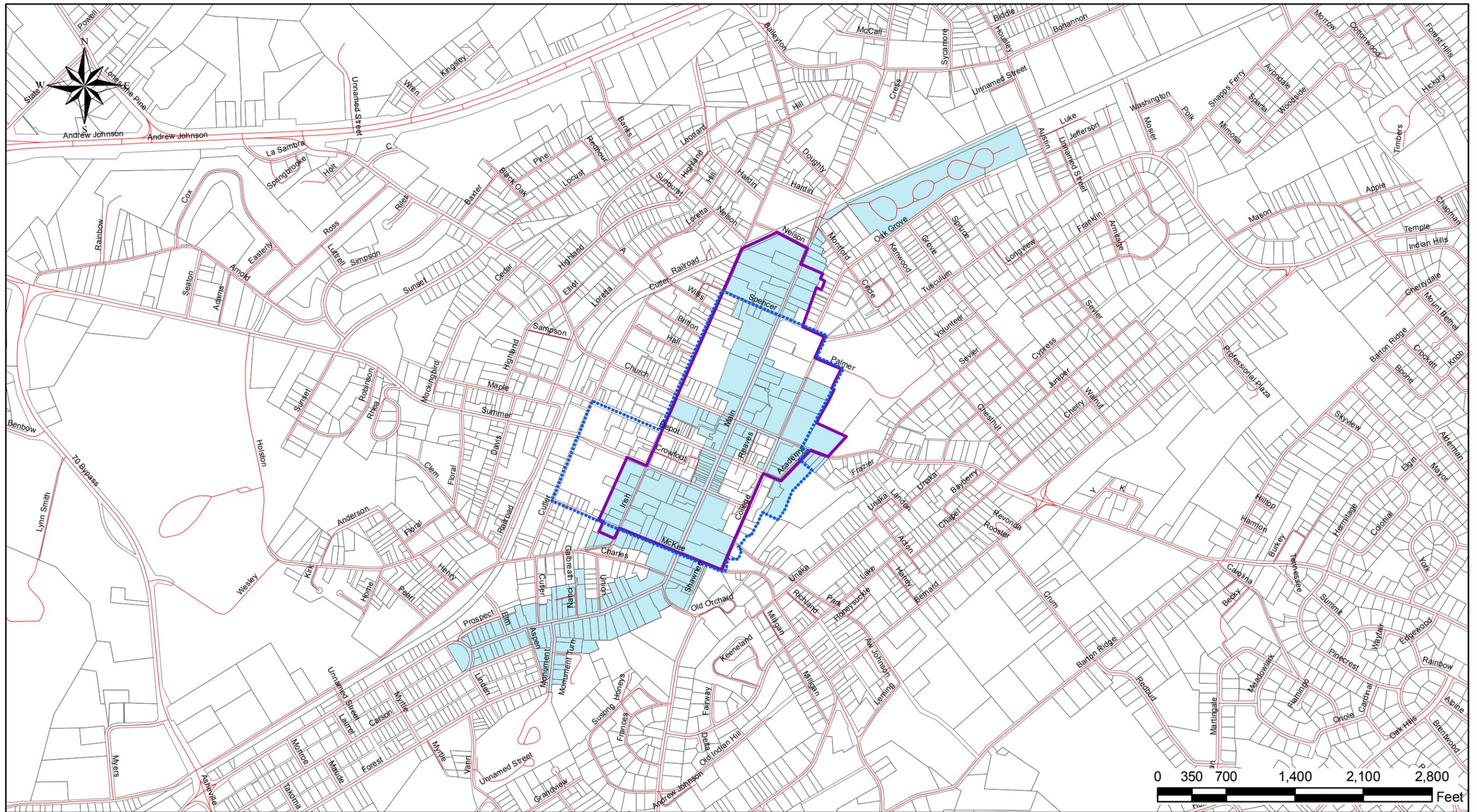
The Historic Zoning Commission consists of 9 members. These members are appointed by the mayor to five year terms. Under the historic zoning provisions of the town's zoning ordinance and in conformity with state enabling legislation, the commission reviews all requests for building and demolition permits within the historic zoning districts. The National Register Historic District and the Local Historic District are

depicted in Illustration 2. The historic zoning commission works to ensure that the following policies are adhered to:

Review of criteria, procedural policies, and the consequences of decisions will extend beyond the tenure of any commission member. It is most essential that policies be based on what is important to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the Historic District. Highest priority then should go to the preservation and restoration of significant structures, historically and architecturally, and sites that express the unique characteristics of the particular periods in which they were built. The Historic Zoning Commission works in conjunction with the Main Street Program to ensure that this mission is carried out. It should be noted that Greeneville's Main Street Program is one of the original participants in the nation.

The significant structures, historically and architecturally, should be controlled only to the degree necessary to make them compatible with the general atmosphere of the District, with regard to alterations, additions, signs, site work and the like.

**Findings:** Under the strong mayor form of government the chief executive officer can significantly influence the direction of the municipality's planning program. The current board of Mayor and Aldermen are committed to a quality planning program and are fully supportive of the role of the Planning Commission. This allows the Greeneville Regional Planning Program to operate in an atmosphere which is very conducive to effective planning. With regional planning authority, the Planning Commission can directly guide land use development in the municipality's potential growth area.



# GREENEVILLE

T E N N E S S E E

## Historic Districts Illustration 2

- Legend**
- - - - - MSPAB
  - NRHDB
  - Historic Zoning

State of Tennessee  
 Department of Economic & Community Development  
 Local Planning Assistance Office  
 Johnson City, Tennessee  
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## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The Town of Greeneville is the county seat of Greene County, Tennessee, and has been the center of commercial and industrial activity in the area. The town's central location, its proximity to Interstate 81 and State Highway 11E, and recent developments which has occurred, would appear to ensure future growth and prosperity for the community.

The municipality operates under a strong mayor form of government and development can be greatly affected by the leadership of the chief executive officer. Financially, the municipality has the capacity to address some public improvement needs. Regional planning authority enhances the town's ability to effectively plan for its potential growth.