

MANY VOICES : ONE VISION : A GREATER COMMUNITY

STAND

WHERE WE STAND:

**A REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE STAND
2009 COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

INTRODUCTION

In May 2009, Chattanooga Stand initiated a community visioning effort for the Chattanooga region. Over the course of five months, Stand staff and volunteers collected responses from over 26,000 Chattanooga area residents to four open-ended questions, designed to encourage thoughtful input on the region's assets, the challenges that it faces and what can be done to create the best future for Chattanooga.

Stand's visioning process builds on Chattanooga's history of community engagement that has played a critical role in the city's population and economic turnaround. Many of the ideas for physical redevelopment and civic revival that shape Chattanooga today began in the 1980s with a series of initiatives that began with the Moccasin Bend Task Force and came to fruition through Chattanooga Venture and Vision2000. Stand sought to revisit and renew a citizen visioning process for Chattanooga, but also to expand the conversation to a broader range of residents through the visioning campaign that engaged tens of thousands of area residents.

With responses from over 26,000 area residents, Stand is the largest questionnaire-based visioning process on record.

Stand contracted with the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies to assist in the compilation of the information from the questionnaires. The purpose of this report is to identify the most common themes that emerged from the Stand responses and to provide supplemental information and data—much of it from the 2006 and 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Reports¹—that relate to the identified challenges and opportunities in the Chattanooga region.

1. The State of Chattanooga Region Reports (SOCRR) analyze MSA, county, city and subregional level data. For the purposes of this analysis, the Ochs Center has divided the county into 36 subregions, which roughly coincide with large neighborhoods. Appendix D contains a map of the 36 subregions of Hamilton County, which are referenced in this report.

METHODOLOGY

The Stand questionnaire consisted of four open-ended questions:

QUESTION 1. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE CHATTANOOGA REGION?

QUESTION 2. IMAGINE THE BEST POSSIBLE CHATTANOOGA REGION. DESCRIBE IT.

QUESTION 3. WHAT CHALLENGES MUST BE ADDRESSED?

QUESTION 4. WHAT ACTIONS, BIG OR SMALL, CAN YOU TAKE TO HELP?

In addition to the four questions, respondents were also asked a series of optional demographic questions, including gender, age, race, education level and zip code.

Stand staff and volunteers distributed the questionnaires throughout the summer, attending numerous community meetings and events. Additionally, the questionnaire was available online and was distributed through schools, churches, community groups, and large employers throughout Chattanooga. Stand staff consulted with the community organization La Paz De Dios to translate the questionnaire into Spanish, in order to increase access to the Hispanic and Latino population. Over 80% of the questionnaires were completed by hand, versus 19% online.

In its oversight of the process of data analysis, the Ochs Center sub-contracted with the Center for Applied Social Research (CASR) at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga (UTC) to enter and code the Stand responses. With four questions, the option to provide up to five responses to each question, and over 26,000 respondents, CASR staff entered more than 300,000 individual responses by hand into a database.

In order to efficiently analyze such a large number of open-ended responses, it was important to be able to group and code them by category. Stand, Ochs, and CASR staff worked together to develop a coding rubric² that allowed for accurate categorization of the Stand responses. The rubric contained seven very broad themes, which primarily correspond with the broad themes that emerged from the Vision 2000 and ReVision 2000 campaigns. Within each of the seven broad themes there were a number of subcategories, which further helped to accurately reflect the meaning of the open ended responses. For example, within the broad theme of "Places: Natural," there were eleven subcategories, including "scenic beauty," "location," "weather/climate," "cleanliness/pollution," etc. The subcategories were developed primarily in consultation with CASR staff, who had the most comprehensive view of the data after entering all of the responses.

Once the coding rubric was finalized, CASR staff coded each response according to the rubric. Each response could receive up to three different codes. For example, the response "There need to be more parks and nightlife downtown," would have been coded as a 22 for "Downtown," a 71 for "Parks," and a 79 for "Nightlife."

Once the questionnaires were fully entered and coded, the data set was turned over to the Ochs Center for the initial analysis contained in this report. Ochs analyzed responses to each of the four questions and identified the most common themes and subcategories.

Was it a Questionnaire or a Survey?

In some cases, the Stand process has been referred to as a survey. Technically, by asking a series of questions to a group of people, Stand did conduct a survey. But throughout this report, the process—and the instrument used—is referred to as a questionnaire. While Stand may have conducted a survey, it clearly was not a scientific survey—nor was it designed to be one. To maximize response, Stand sought to collect information from as many people as possible. The result is a non-random sample whose responses cannot be generalized to the region's population. Still, given the sheer number of responses from area residents, the Stand questionnaire does provide extremely valuable information about the issues and concerns within the community.

2. Appendix A contains the full coding rubric.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In addition to the four main questions, the Stand questionnaire contained questions on demographics, including gender, age, race, educational attainment and zip code. Respondents were required to provide their zip code; however, all of the other demographic questions were optional and approximately 60% of the respondents provided demographic information.

Of the respondents providing demographic information, 60% were female and 40% were male. Just over 14% were age 17 or under and nearly 22% were between 18 and 24, the age group with the greatest number of respondents. Nearly 18% of respondents were between 25 and 34, while the 35 to 44 age group and the 45 to 54 age group each had 15.5% of respondents. Nearly 11% of respondents were between 55 and 64 and 4.5% were 65 or older. Over 75% of the respondents providing demographic information were white, over 14% were African American, 5% were Hispanic or Latino, and 5% were either Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Multi-Racial or some other race. The demographic composition of Stand questionnaire respondents can be compared to what we know about the actual demographics of the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area based on data from the American Community Survey for 2006–2008.³

TABLE 1. GENDER, AGE AND RACE OF STAND RESPONSES

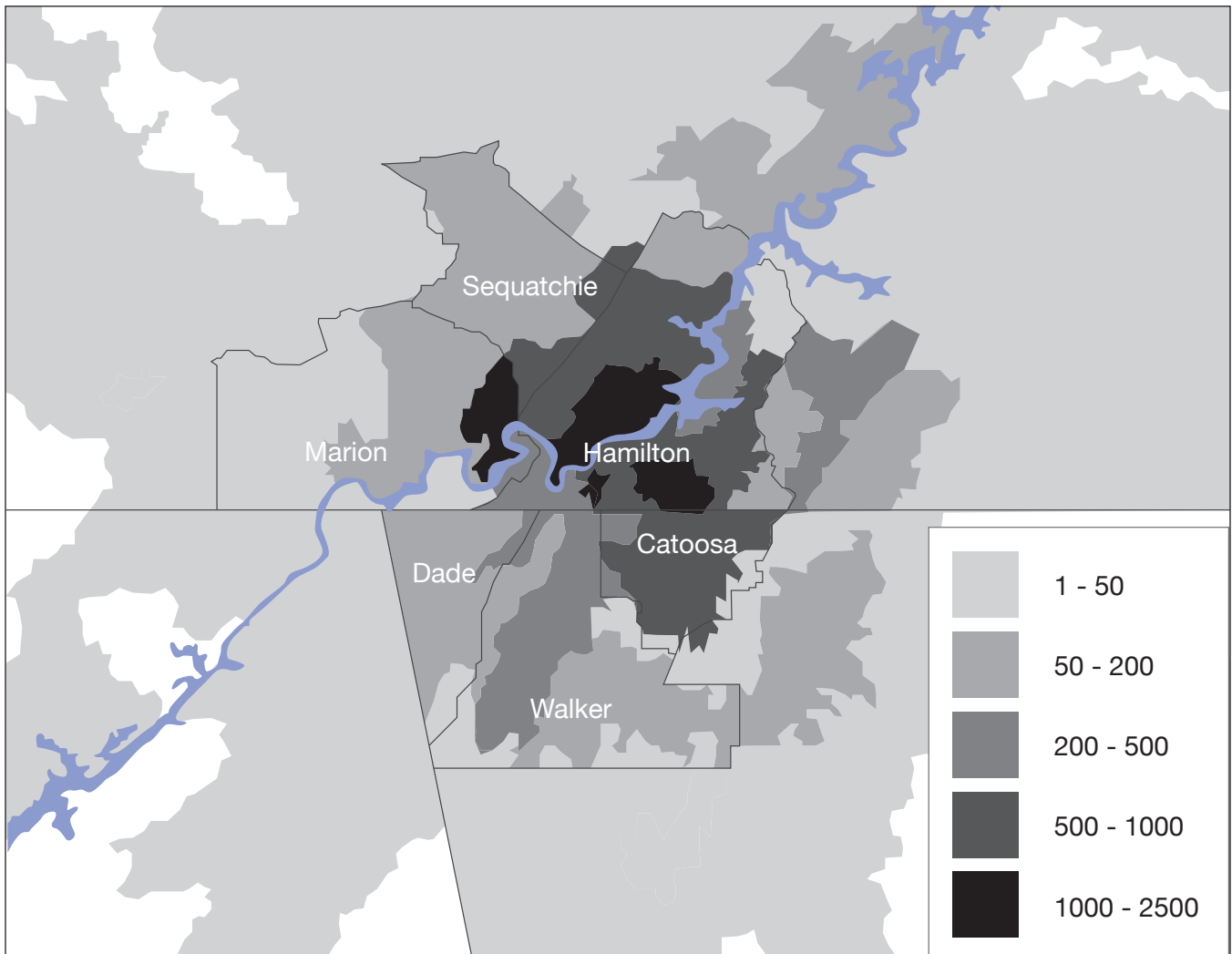
	STAND QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS	2006-2008 DATA FOR CHATTANOOGA MSA
MALE	40%	48%
FEMALE	60%	52%
WHITE	75%	82%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	14%	14%
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER, NATIVE AMERICAN, MULTI-RACIAL, OR SOME OTHER RACE	5%	4%
LATINO ⁴	5%	2%
10 TO 17 YEARS OLD	14%	12%
18 TO 24 YEARS OLD	22%	10%
25 TO 34 YEARS OLD	18%	14%
35 TO 44 YEARS OLD	16%	16%
45 TO 54 YEARS OLD	16 %	17%
55 TO 64 YEARS OLD	11%	14%
65 YEARS OLD AND OLDER	5%	16%

Over 85% of respondents provided valid zip code information. Of these respondents, nearly 76% lived within the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Hamilton, Sequatchie, Marion, Dade, Catoosa and Walker Counties.

3. The American Community Survey is conducted annually by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area is a federally designated area that includes Hamilton, Marion and Sequatchie counties in Tennessee and Catoosa, Dade and Walker counties in Georgia. Approximately 64% of the residents of the MSA live in Hamilton County.

4. For the purposes of the Stand questionnaire, respondents could indicate their race as Latino or Hispanic. The Census Bureau uses Latino or Hispanic as a classification of ethnic origin. In other words, respondents to the ACS could indicate that their race is White (or African American or any other race), but would indicate their ethnicity as Latino. Also, the ACS does not report the percentage of the population that is Latino at the MSA level. It does however, report Latino percentages for four out of the six counties in the MSA—3% in Hamilton County, 2% in Catoosa County and 1% in both Marion and Walker counties. Assuming that Latinos comprise 1.5% of the population in the non-Hamilton County parts of the MSA, we estimate an MSA wide Latino population of 2%.

MAP 1. STAND RESPONSES BY ZIP CODE



WHERE WE STAND

Detailed responses to the Stand questionnaire are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Looking across all of the information collected in the visioning process and comparing that with other research and data, three large themes emerge:

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

STAND RESPONDENTS TREASURE THE AREA'S NATURAL BEAUTY, BUT ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POLLUTION AND CLEANLINESS

Over 50% of Stand respondents⁵ referred to the scenic beauty of the area as one of the things they liked most about the Chattanooga region—by far, the most common response to question one. The most common three answers in the category were “mountains,” “river,” and “scenery/scenic beauty.” Other specific responses that were categorized into scenic beauty included references to Chattanooga’s mountains, lakes, and rivers, including the following:

- »» “Chattanooga is a beautiful city.”
- »» “the Geography—mountains, lakes, rivers, forests, etc...”
- »» “I like the mountains and the river.”
- »» “I love the scenery and natural beauty that surrounds the area.”
- »» “It is beautiful.”

Stand respondents also listed parks (16.3%), access to outdoor activities (12.7%), the size of the city (10.2%), and the weather or climate (9.5%) as things they liked most about the region.

The value that Stand participants place on the scenic beauty of the area was also reflected in their responses to the other three questions. “Cleanliness and/or pollution” was one of the top three responses in questions two, three, and four on the Stand questionnaire.

In response to question two, “Imagine the best possible Chattanooga region. Describe it.” over 15% of respondents referred to cleanliness and pollution. In addition, over 20% of respondents listed cleanliness and pollution in response to question three, “What challenges must be addressed?” The bulk of responses to questions two and three referred to less pollution, cleaner air and water, littering issues, and odors, particularly in the downtown area and around the river.

Value of and concern about the environment is consistent with the findings of the 2006 and 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report surveys of Hamilton County residents.⁶ In 2008, 83% of survey respondents indicated that clean air was very important to their quality of life and 79% indicated that clean streets and neighborhoods were very important to their quality of life.

The 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report also identified data suggesting the basis for some of the Stand respondents’ concerns about the environment:

- »» Among 14 benchmark midsize counties from around the nation, Hamilton County had the second highest number of days for which it exceeded the EPA standard for ozone pollution levels. Ozone is created when emissions from cars, trucks, and factories mix with sunlight, and is primarily a problem on hot summer days. Based on data from the Air Pollution Control Board, the number of good air quality days in Hamilton County declined from 49% in 2005 to 39% in 2007.

5. This report focuses on the percentage of respondents who make a particular response. Respondents were permitted to—and often did—provide multiple responses to each of the four questions.

6. The State of Chattanooga Region Report surveys are based on twenty minute telephone surveys of a random sample of Hamilton County residents. They were conducted in April 2006 and February 2008. While the Ochs Center (then the Community Research Council) was responsible for survey design and analysis, the data was collected by a third party survey research firm.

- »» Air quality issues may be related to development patterns and reliance on cars for commuting. A 2008 Brookings Institution study found that among the nation's 100 largest MSAs, Chattanooga had the 12th highest carbon footprint. Among 14 benchmark counties, Hamilton County ranked third on the percentage of commuters who drive to work alone.
- »» There are also challenges related to water, as well as air. Of 299 miles of streams assessed by the State Department of Environmental Conservation in Hamilton County, 225 miles, or 30% of total stream miles are classified as "impaired," meaning they have levels of pollutants that make them unsuitable for recreational uses.

PLACE

STAND RESPONDENTS VALUE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWN, PARKS AND AREA ATTRACTIONS, BUT ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ISSUES RELATED TO TRAFFIC, ROAD CONDITIONS AND GROWTH

The second most common response category to question one, "What do you like most about the Chattanooga region?" was downtown. Over 30% of respondents referenced Chattanooga's downtown as one of the things they liked about the region. Many of the responses simply stated "downtown," however others referenced specific aspects downtown, such as the following:

- »» "Activities downtown."
- »» "The riverfront."
- »» "The art district."
- »» "Downtown area."
- »» "The downtown area is beautiful."
- »» "There is a lot to do downtown."
- »» "The pedestrian bridge."
- »» "The revitalization of downtown."

Still, some Chattanooga residents want and expect more. In response to question two—"Imagine the best possible Chattanooga region"—the largest number of responses (over 16% of respondents) were related to the Downtown area. Responses suggested the need for further development and additional attractions. Moreover, 8% of respondents indicated specific concerns about Downtown. The most common responses included downtown parking issues, homelessness and panhandling, blight issues downtown, continued redevelopment, and crime in the downtown area.

More generally, 17% of respondents cited Chattanooga's different attractions, 16% cited area parks and 15% cited entertainment options as aspects that they liked most about the region. However, 9% of respondents also said that they would like to see more attractions and entertainment options, such as more options for young adults, more free entertainment events, and more activities on the riverfront. Additionally, 9% of respondents also said they would like to see more parks as part of the "best possible Chattanooga region."

Concern over traffic issues and the development of roads and highways was a common concern that emerged from both questions two and three of the Stand questionnaire. Nearly 15% of respondents listed roads and highways as a challenge that must be addressed: it was the third most common response to question three behind cleanliness/pollution issues and public education. The most common responses in this category related to traffic, road construction, or need for road improvement. Specific responses included the following:

- »» "Traffic is awful."
- »» "Roads need to be repaired."
- »» "Better roads."
- »» "Less traffic and congestion."
- »» "Road conditions."
- »» "Road construction."

Again, the responses to the Stand questionnaire are consistent with other research.

Downtown has helped to drive overall population growth in the Chattanooga region. After population declines of 6.3% in the 1970s and 24.8% in the 1980s, the downtown Chattanooga population grew by 7.4% in the 1990s.⁷ Since 2000, Downtown has seen further residential growth. Between 2000 and 2008, the county subregion containing the central business district appears to have experienced a 9.4% increase in population. Nearby areas associated with Downtown (e.g. North Chattanooga, Fort Wood and Battery Place) appear to have seen population growth of 12%.⁸

Downtown Chattanooga is also the center for tourism and entertainment for the region with the Tennessee Aquarium, the Creative Discovery Museum, Lookouts games, and events at Memorial Auditorium, the Tivoli Theater, the Nightfall concert series and the newly opened Majestic Theater.

The importance of parks to area residents is consistent with the findings of the 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report survey, where 61% of County residents cited parks and recreational opportunities as very important to their quality of life. By and large, there is considerable access to open space in Hamilton County—70 acres per 1,000 residents. Still, several subregions in the county had less than one acre of park space per 1000 residents include Woodmore/Dalewood, Lupton City/Norcross, Westview/Mountain Shadows, Brainerd, and Glenwood/Eastdale.

The 2008 survey also found that 52% of respondents indicated that short commuting time was very important to their quality of life in Hamilton County. Concern about traffic may be relative. Based on Census and American Community Survey data, commute time in the Chattanooga MSA remains largely unchanged. In 2000, 55.6% of Chattanooga MSA residents had a commute of twenty minutes or more compared with 56.7% in 2008. To the extent that concern about roads and traffic is related to development, several data points suggest increasing development in less urban parts of Hamilton County. From 2000 to 2006, a total of 242 new road segments with a median length of 0.15 miles were added to provide access to residential traffic moving from suburban neighborhoods to larger arterial roads connected to major highways. In 2005 and 2006, 45% of new home sales in Hamilton County were in unincorporated parts of the county.

7. Eugenie Birch, *Who Lives Downtown*, Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005. For the purposes of this analysis, Downtown was also defined on the basis of census tract.

8. The analysis was based on both 2000 Census data and residential address data from the U.S. Postal Service.

PEOPLE

STAND RESPONDENTS VALUE THEIR NEIGHBORS AND NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THREE ISSUES RELATED TO HUMAN CAPITAL—EDUCATION, CRIME AND JOBS.

Behind scenic beauty and downtown, the third most common answer to question one, “What do you like most about the Chattanooga region?” was the people of the area. Over 18% of respondents replied that they appreciated the people of the region. The majority of these responses referred to the friendliness, kindness, or helpfulness of the people in the Chattanooga region.

Many Stand questionnaire respondents also referenced specific neighborhoods or the importance of neighborhoods, particularly in response to questions two and three. In response to question two, nearly 13% of respondents referenced issues related to specific neighborhoods in Chattanooga. Commonly mentioned neighborhoods included Alton Park, Brainerd, East Brainerd, East Chattanooga, East Ridge, Highland Park, Hixson, Lookout Mountain, Lookout Valley, MLK Neighborhood, Middle Valley, North Chattanooga, Ooltewah, Red Bank, Signal Mountain, and Soddy Daisy.

This focus on people and the neighborhoods that they live in was consistent with other Ochs Center research. Findings from the 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report survey indicate that, among Hamilton County residents:

- » 72% believed that “a place where all people are welcome” was very important to their quality of life
- » 64% believed that “a strong sense of community” was very important to their quality of life
- » 65% strongly agreed that people in their neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors
- » 57% strongly agreed that people in their neighborhood can be trusted

But Chattanooga residents expressed concern about the region’s future in three areas directly related to the community’s human capital, or the assets and skills of the people in the region.

These three human capital challenges—education, crime and jobs—are directly related to each other.

- » The single most important factor in determining economic success in the region is the educational attainment of its workforce. A recent study by the Center for Labor Market Studies found that, among individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who were not in school, the employment rate for college graduates was nearly one-third higher than for high school graduates and nearly double the rate of high school dropouts.⁹ The annual earnings gap between high school graduates and college graduates now exceeds \$24,000 a year and is greater than the gap between high school graduates and high school dropouts. Moreover, the college attainment rate in an area has an effect on the income of non-college graduates as well. Harvard economist Edward Glaeser notes that “[A]s the share of adults in a metropolitan area with college degrees increases by 10 percent, the wages of a worker with a fixed education level increases by 8 percent. Area level education also seems to increase the production of innovations and speed economic growth.”¹⁰
- » While many factors affect crime rates and numerous cities and counties have been successful in driving down crime even in the face of high unemployment and poverty, it is clear that likelihood of arrest, incarceration and re-incarceration is directly related to education and employment. A 2003 study by the Department of Justice found that incarcerated individuals were twice as likely to have failed to complete

9. Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatriwada, et. al, “The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School,” Center for Labor Market Studies, October 2009. Edward L. Glaeser, “The Dream for a Human Capital Agenda,” Boston Globe, September 5, 2008.

10. Edward L. Glaeser, “The Dream for a Human Capital Agenda,” Boston Globe, September 5, 2008.

11. Caroline Wolf Harlow, Education and Correctional Populations, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 2003 at bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf.

12. Bruce Western, From Prison to Work: A Proposal for a National Prisoner Reentry Program, Brookings Institution, December 2008 at www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/12_prison_to_work_western/12_prison_to_work_western.pdf.

high school as the population overall: 41% of federal, state and local inmates lacked a high school degree compared to 18% of all adults nationally.¹¹ On average, State inmates had 10.4 years of education in 2004. And employment is the critical factor in reducing recidivism for offenders returning from prison. Nationally, two-thirds of inmates returning from prison are re-arrested within three years and half are re-incarcerated: but select transitional job and other employment programs have demonstrated that they can result in reduced recidivism.¹²

EDUCATION:

Concern over public education was the second most common response to question three on the Stand questionnaire, "What challenges must be addressed?" Over 17% of respondents listed an issue related to public education as something that must be addressed. Additionally, over 10% of respondents to question two stated that a good public education system was essential to creating the "best possible Chattanooga region," in response to question two.

The importance of the quality of public education is consistent with the findings of the 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report survey. Among Hamilton County residents, 83% stated that quality schools were very important to the quality of life in the Chattanooga region and 90% of respondents ranked quality public schools as either the most important or very important in creating and retaining jobs in Hamilton County.

The need for improvement is also reflected in the most recent data related to student performance in Hamilton County schools.

- »» Third to eighth grade 2009 TCAP scores for Hamilton County trailed behind the state average for Math, Reading, Social Studies and Science.
- »» Composite ACT scores in 2009 trailed the state average and were lower than in 2007 or 2008.
- »» High school cohort dropout rates have increased from 13.3% in 2007 to 19.1% in 2009.

Based on prior year data, student performance varies greatly by neighborhood and school. For example, 2007-8 TCAP data indicate that, while 79.7% of third graders from Signal Mountain scored advanced on the reading TCAP, just 11.5% in South Chattanooga did. In six Chattanooga neighborhoods—Bushtown/Highland Park, Glenwood/Eastdale, South Chattanooga, Amnicola/East Chattanooga, Ridgedale/Oak Grove/Clifton Hills, and Woodmore/Dalewood—less than 20% of children scored advanced in reading.

On the third grade math TCAP, the percentage of students from Signal Mountain scoring advanced was eight times the percentage of students scoring advanced from Amnicola/East Chattanooga. In addition to Amnicola/East Chattanooga, four other subregions had less than one in five students scoring advanced on the math TCAP. These subregions were Bushtown/Highland Park, South Chattanooga, Downtown, and Ridgedale/Clifton Hills. However, across Hamilton County, the percentage of students scoring advanced on the math TCAP increased in 21 subregions.

CRIME:

Stand respondents also expressed concerns about crime. Over 14% of respondents referenced general crime and over 9% of respondents referenced gang-related crime as issues that need to be addressed in the Chattanooga region. The majority of these responses just state "crime," but many also referenced increasing crime rates and crime in specific areas of the city. In responding to question two, 7% of respondents indicated that a better region would have less crime.

In both the 2006 (87%) and 2008 (90%) State of Chattanooga Region Report surveys, more Hamilton County residents identified safety from crime as very important to quality of life than any other factor. In a comparison with thirteen other cities with a similar population, Chattanooga had the second highest violent crime rate and the highest property crime rate.

There are real demographic and geographic differences in how crime affects residents of Hamilton County. Based on the 2008 countywide survey, 75% of residents said they never or rarely worry about their personal safety. African Americans (43%), 18 to 29 year olds (35%) and persons living in households with incomes under \$50,000 (32%) are more likely to sometimes or often worry about their safety than the population as a whole (22%).

Perception reflects reality. According to the 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report, while African Americans comprise 20% of the Hamilton County population, they represented nearly 30% of all crime victims. Moreover, 43.9% of victims under 18 were African Americans.

Five subregions (Ridgedale/Oak Grove/Clifton Hills, Bushtown/Highland Park, South Chattanooga, Downtown and Amnicola/East Chattanooga) accounted for 14.2% of the County population, but 48.1% of robbery complaints, 45.1% of drug/narcotic violations, 37.9% of aggravated assaults, 28.8% of vandalism and more than one quarter of burglaries and simple assaults in the county in 2007.

JOBS AND ECONOMY:

One in ten respondents referenced jobs as an issue in response to questions two and three. Most of the jobs-related responses referred to creating “quality” jobs and unemployment issues, as follows:

- »» “More quality jobs.”
- »» “More jobs that pay living wages.”
- »» “Job creation.”
- »» “High unemployment.”
- »» “Not enough high-paying technical jobs.”
- »» “Job market.”

In the 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report survey, 80% of respondents indicated that they consider the availability of jobs that pay a living wage to be very important to the quality of life in the Chattanooga area. When asked about the quality and availability of employment in Hamilton County today, most respondents indicated that it was either “fair” or “poor” (68%)—as opposed to excellent or good—28%. Nearly half of African American respondents rated the employment situation as poor—more than double the percentage of white respondents.

Between 2001 and 2007, overall employment grew by 3.2% in Hamilton County. Health Care (45.1%), Information (39.7%), Management of Companies and Enterprises (28.1%), and Accommodation and Food Services (25.0%) were the fastest growing sectors. On a net basis, the 6,418 job increase in Health Care jobs accounted for more than 100% of private sector growth in the county.

Between 2001 and 2006, per capita income growth in the Chattanooga MSA and Hamilton County lagged behind Tennessee and national growth. Hamilton County’s median household income (\$41,855) was higher than Chattanooga’s (\$36,981) and Tennessee’s (\$40,315), but less than the United States’ median household income of \$48,451 in 2006.

WHAT ACTIONS ARE STAND RESPONDENTS WILLING TO TAKE FOR CHATTANOOGA?

Question 4 on the Stand questionnaire was unique in that it asked respondents to list specific actions that they personally could take in order to achieve the best possible Chattanooga region. Over half of Stand respondents stated that they were willing to volunteer, provide community service or increase their community involvement in the Chattanooga region.

Over 32% of respondents stated that they could help by volunteering or providing some kind of community service; this was the most common category of responses to question 4. The most common responses in this category referred to general volunteering or community service; however, other common responses listed volunteering and community service in relation to neighborhood associations, public schools and other community organizations.

The second most common category of responses to question 4 was “Community involvement/Connectivity,” with nearly 25% of respondents stating that they could increase their involvement in the community. Again, most of these responses referred to general community involvement, though other common responses referred to specific community involvement such as attending public meetings, forming neighborhood watch groups and serving as a role model for children and teens.

The other most common responses to question 4 included responses related to environmental clean-up, especially litter (21% of respondents); responses related to communication, including educating others, speaking out about issues, and raising awareness about issues (19.5% of respondents); responses related to civic engagement, including voting, supporting elected officials, and being a good citizen (13% of respondents); and responses related to recycling (12%).

Additionally, over 13% of respondents stated that they could help by continuing or increasing their civic engagement; many of the response were related to voting and supporting responsible elected officials.

CONCLUSION

With over 26,000 respondents and four open ended questions, this report just scratches the surface of the valuable information that will be obtained from the Stand visioning process in the months to come. This report addresses some of the most common responses, but there are many more categories, particularly related to Places: Man Made, Government, People, and Play that are worthy of further exploration and review.

The purpose of this analysis, however, was to identify and attempt to frame the major themes that come from responses to the Stand questionnaire. The results there were loud and clear and consistent with other research.

Chattanoogans are proud of the natural beauty of where they live. They value the transformed Downtown, access to open space and a variety of attractions and entertainment options in the region. They understand the importance of the people who live here—their neighbors—and the neighborhoods that they live in.

At the same time, they see how their region can be even better. They want to preserve and protect the natural beauty that they treasure. They are worried about traffic and road conditions. They want to build upon the success of Downtown, and they understand that the future of the region depends on the ability to take on tough challenges—from public schools to the economy to crime.

Finally, Stand respondents are willing to work in the community in order to build on Chattanooga’s success and to address their areas of concern. They recognize the importance of volunteering and community involvement, as well as the responsibilities of being a good citizen and civic engagement.