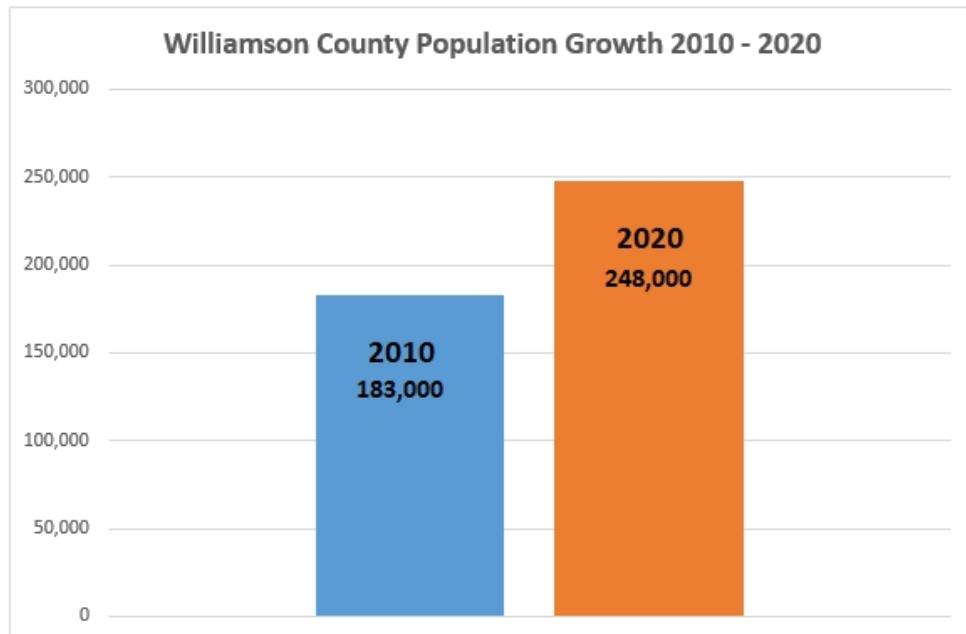


# Regional Growth Planning in Williamson County

## Introduction

With a population increase of approximately 35% since 2010, Williamson County ranks as the fastest growing county in the state of Tennessee and among the fastest growing counties in the nation.

*Figure 1: Change in population 2010 - 2020*



These population figures underscore the need to plan proactively so that additional growth can be accommodated in a way that can be fiscally supported and that is consistent with community values.

To that end, the seven jurisdictions within Williamson County (Brentwood, Fairview, Franklin, Nolensville, Spring Hill, Thompson's Station and Williamson County) are collaborating on a regional (within Williamson County) growth planning effort that is geared toward identifying appropriate areas for future growth that can be supported by the provision of adequate and timely infrastructure and public services.

At this stage of the process, each jurisdiction is working independently to identify where new development should occur over the next 20 years, taking into account population projections and the costs of providing infrastructure and other services, among other factors.

## Background

## Williamson County Growth Plan

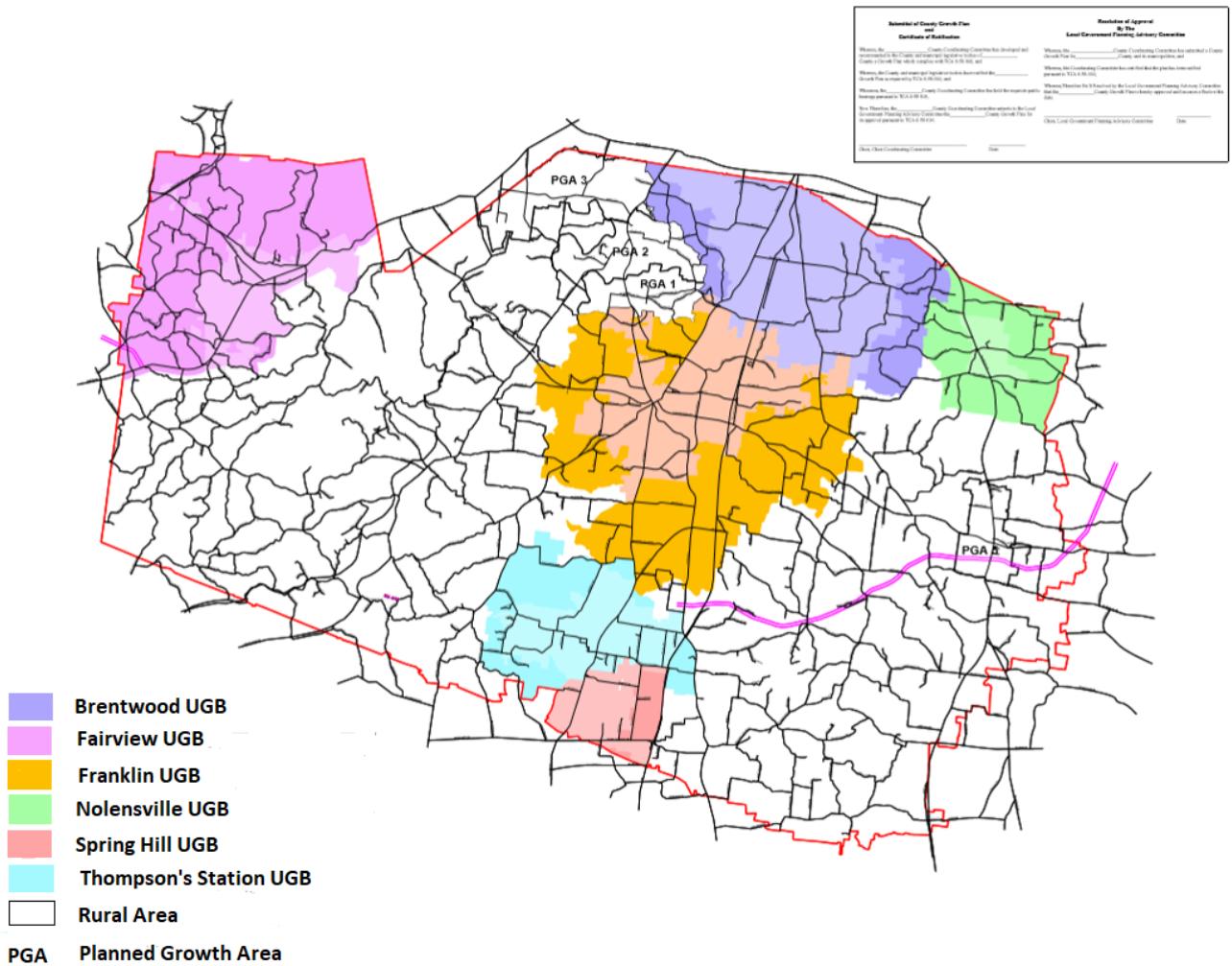
The Williamson County Growth Plan is a state-mandated plan, adopted in 2001, that depicts the following:

Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB's) – These are areas outside of and surrounding the city limits of the municipalities that are projected to accommodate future growth and which are envisioned as becoming part of the municipality in the future.

Rural Areas – These are areas in the unincorporated county and outside of UGB's that are intended to remain rural in nature.

Planned Growth Areas (PGA's) – These are areas in the unincorporated county and outside of UGB's where a higher level of growth is anticipated than in the surrounding Rural Areas.

*Figure 2: Current Growth Plan (adopted 2001)*



The current Williamson County Growth Plan has not been updated since its adoption in 2001. Therefore, in many cases, it no longer reflects logical and feasible annexation areas. Additionally, the Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which was adopted in 2020, makes land use recommendations for the unincorporated county that are not fully consistent with the Growth Plan.

Therefore, it is very likely that the current growth management planning taking place between Williamson County and the six (6) aforementioned jurisdictions will trigger a need and desire to update the Williamson County Growth Plan.

### **Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan**

The Williamson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Comp Plan) is the County's chief policy document with respect to land use, development, preservation and public facilities. The Comp Plan outlines the County's long-range vision for the future and contains specific goals and objectives geared toward achieving that vision.

The vision and recommendations of the Comp Plan are implemented to a large degree through zoning regulations, which govern how property may be developed. Therefore, the Comp Plan is very instrumental in determining future land use patterns.

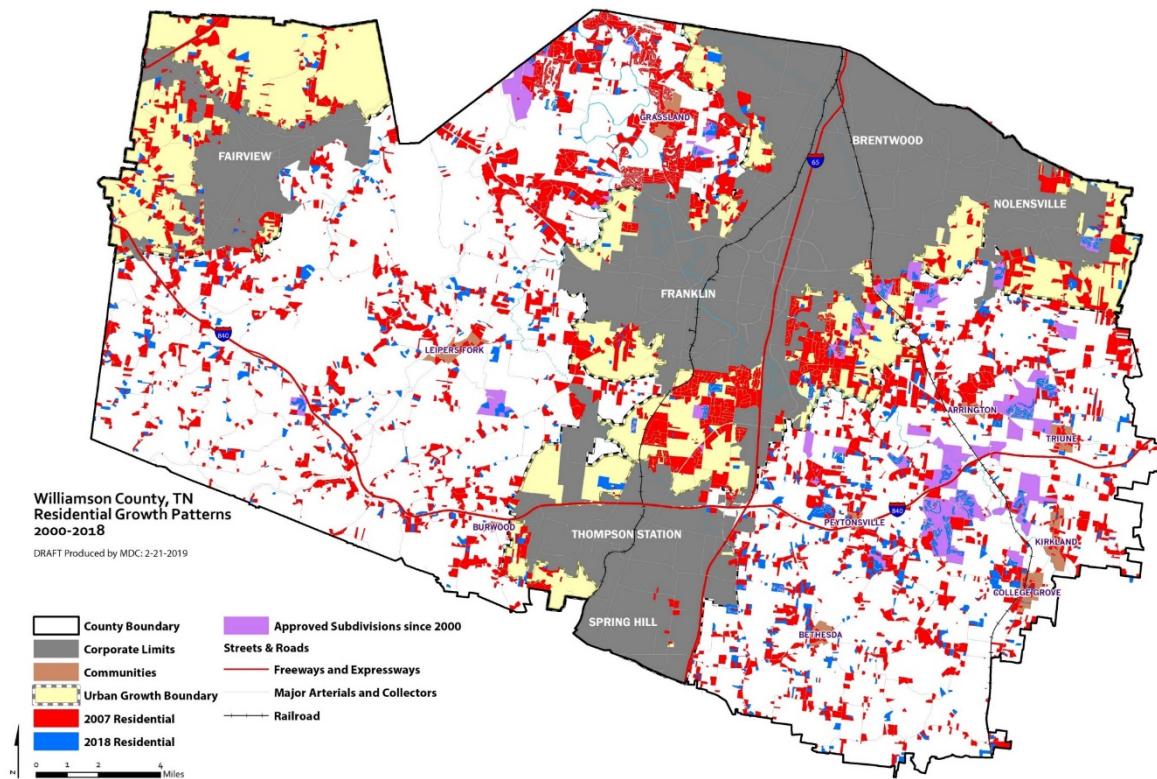
### **2007 Comp Plan**

The County's Comp Plan was updated in 2007 following a multi-year process that included a very significant amount of public engagement. The most predominant theme that emerged from public meetings at that time was the strong desire to preserve rural character in outlying areas by focusing the majority of growth in and around the cities, particularly in the Urban Growth Boundaries. That theme became very prevalent in the 2007 Comp Plan, which included strong language emphasizing the desire to preserve rural character.

At one point during the process, it was recommended that allowable residential densities in rural areas be reduced from 1 unit per acre to 1 unit per 5 acres as a means to accomplish the goal of preserving rural character. However, late in the process, that recommendation was removed from the Plan.

As a result of the decision not to reduce rural densities, a significant amount of development occurred in rural areas of the County after the 2007 Comp Plan was adopted (See Figure 3). That development trend resulted in a chipping away of rural character and exacerbated a growing traffic concern on County roadways, most of which were not designed or intended to handle significant traffic.

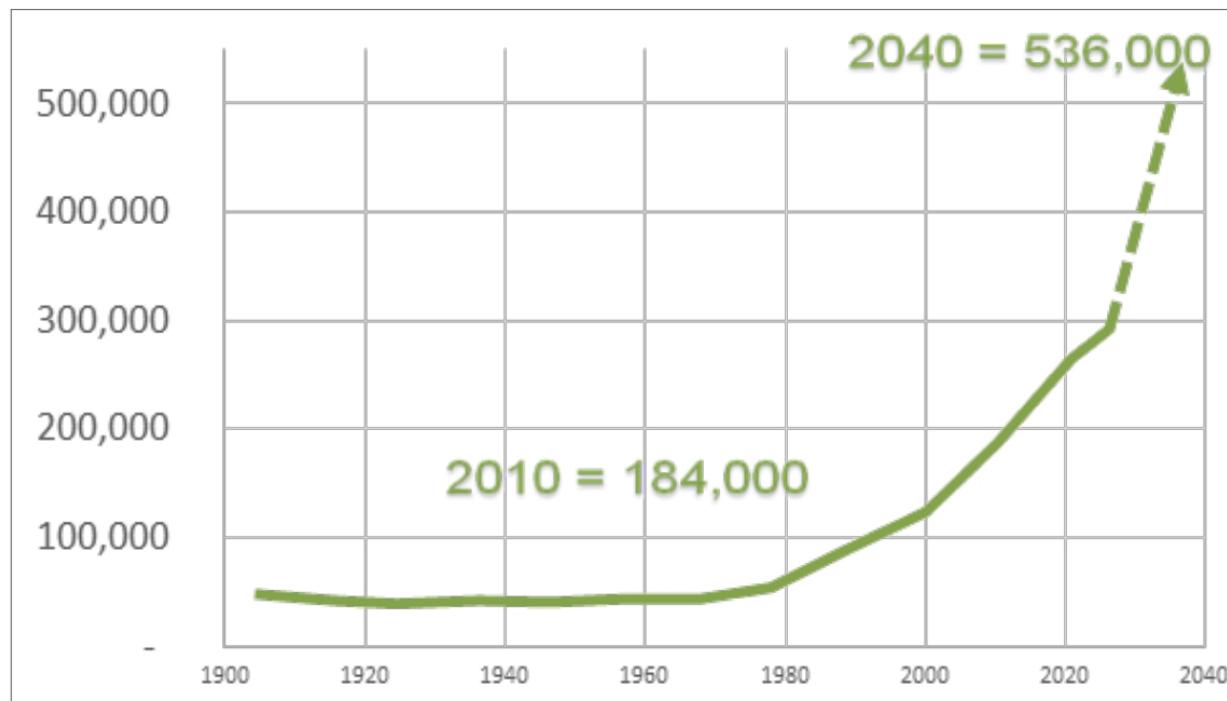
**Figure 3: Development Trends** – Note that the yellow shading represents the Urban Growth Boundaries. Rural areas are shown in white. The red represents development that occurred prior to the 2007 Comp Plan. The blue and purple shades represent development that occurred between the time that the 2007 Comp Plan was adopted and 2018.



These development trends were viewed as concerning, particularly in light of the rapid growth that the County was experiencing, as well as population projections that indicated that the pace of growth was likely to accelerate in the future.

According to the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) population forecasts, approximately 350,000 additional residents may reside in Williamson County by the year 2040. This projection is based on development demand, land capacity, and land use and development policies that were in place when the projections were made. While the MPO's population forecast may be viewed as a high-end projection, the fact remains that Williamson County is expected to receive a staggering amount of growth between now and 2040.

**Figure 4: Population Projections (source – Nashville Area MPO)**



## **2020 Comp Plan**

In 2018, the County began the process of updating the Comp Plan once again, with the primary goal of determining whether the County:

- Still wanted to preserve rural character in outlying areas by focusing the majority of growth in and around the municipalities; or
- Wanted to conclude that the continuation of suburban development sprawling into rural areas is acceptable and that the previous policies are no longer appropriate.

Like in the 2007 Comp Plan process, the process involved extensive citizen participation as well as guidance and direction of an Advisory Committee comprised of various community stakeholders. Public comments received via public meetings and online input opportunities were overwhelmingly in favor of preserving rural character.

## Growth Scenarios

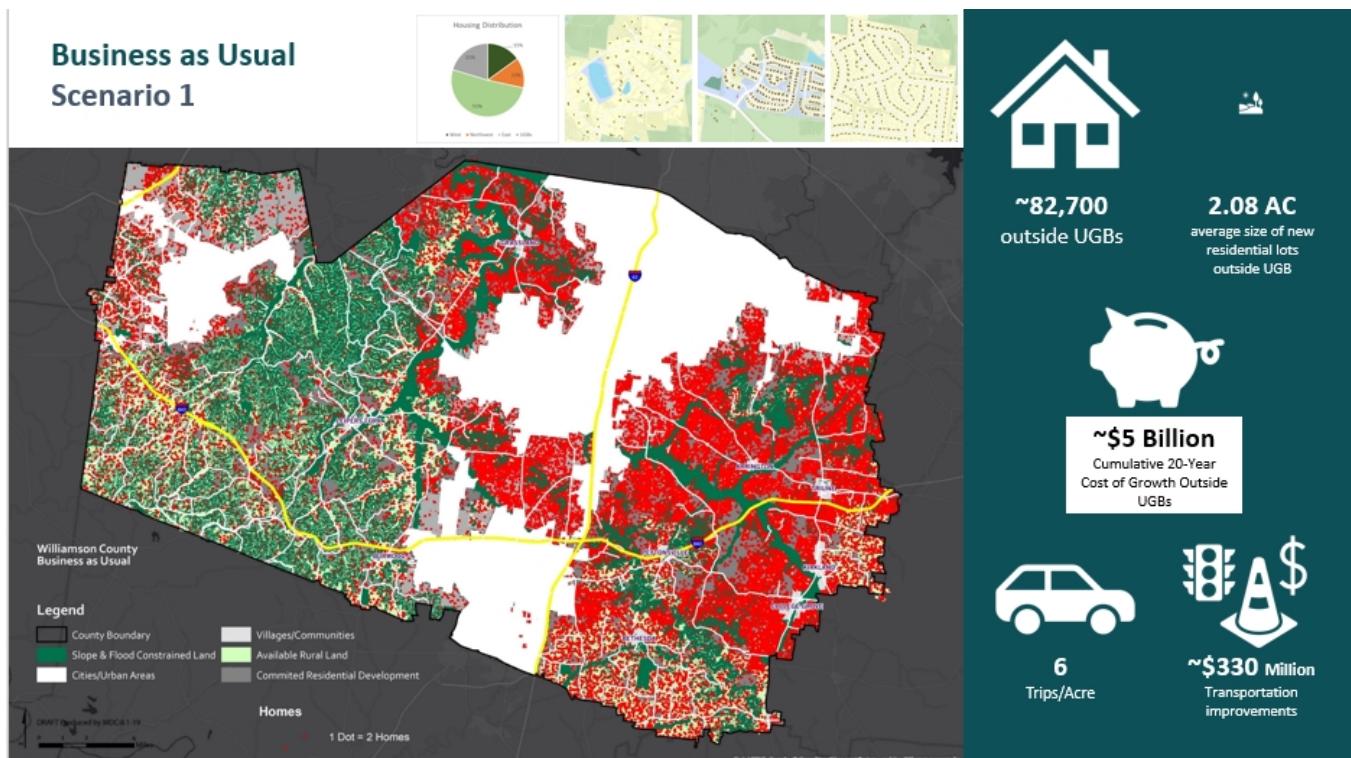
In order to best evaluate the impact and merits of various land use strategies, the County's consultant was asked to prepare a couple of different scenarios and to evaluate them based on the following 3 criteria:

- How does each scenario align with citizen desires related to community character?
- How would each scenario impact traffic conditions and the need for roadway improvements?
- What are the overall fiscal impacts of each scenario for the County (and taxpayers)?

### Scenario 1 – “Business as Usual”

This scenario evaluated the impact of the unincorporated County building out based on then-current development policies where large portions of the rural areas allowed residential development at a density of up to 1 unit per acre.

**Figure 5: Growth Scenario 1 analysis**



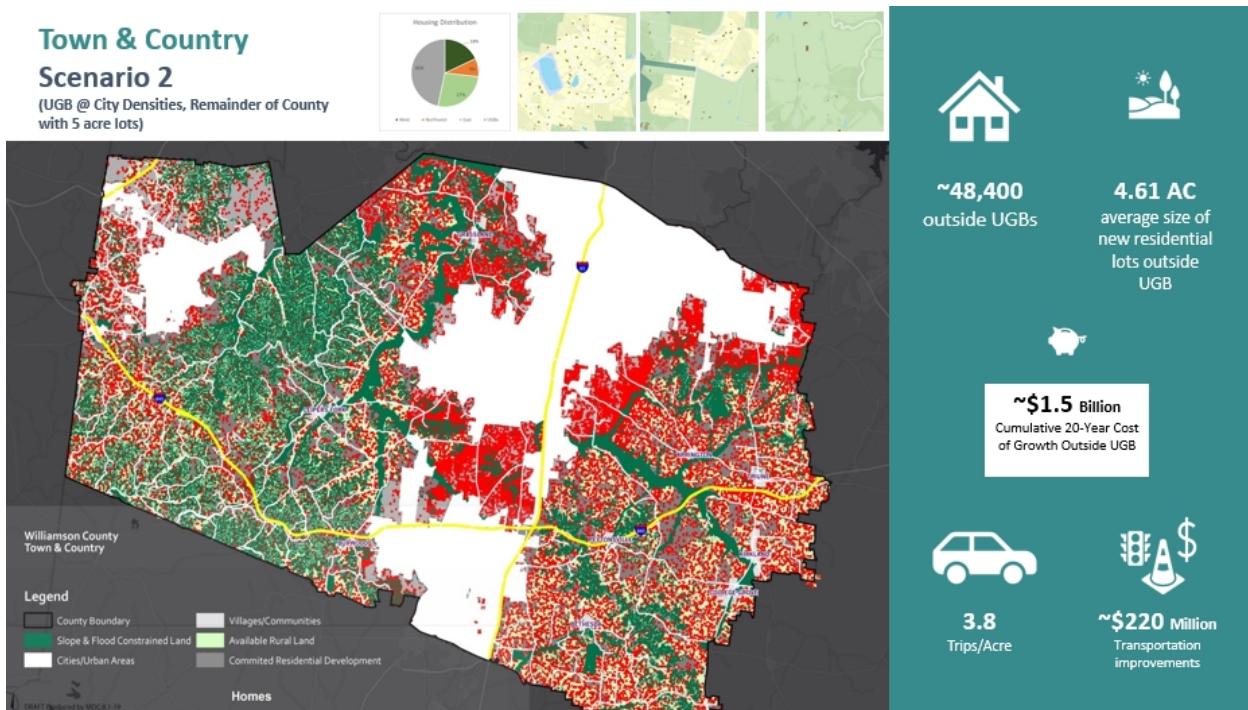
Evaluation of this scenario concluded that it would result in:

- Approximately 82,700 dwelling units in unincorporated areas outside of UGB's;
- An average lot size of approximately 2.08 acres;
- The generation of 6 automobile trips per acre;
- A need for approximately \$330 million in transportation improvements; and
- A \$5 billion cumulative 20-year cost of growth outside of UGB's to the County (and, by extension, taxpayers).

## Scenario 2 – “Town & Country”

This scenario evaluated the impact of the County building out with the majority of rural areas outside of UGB's developing at a maximum residential density of 1 unit per 5 acres, and with the UGB's developing at municipal densities.

**Figure 6: Growth Scenario 2 analysis**



Evaluation of this scenario concluded that it would result in:

- An approximately 43% reduction in housing units outside of UGB's.
- A more than doubling of the average lot size
- A reduction of \$110 million in necessary transportation improvements
- A \$3.5 billion reduction in the cumulative 20-year cost of growth outside of UGB's to the County (and, by extension, taxpayers).

## Community Consensus

These two scenarios were presented to the community, the Advisory Committee, the County Commission and the Planning Commission, and the overwhelming consensus of each of these groups was to pursue Scenario 2.

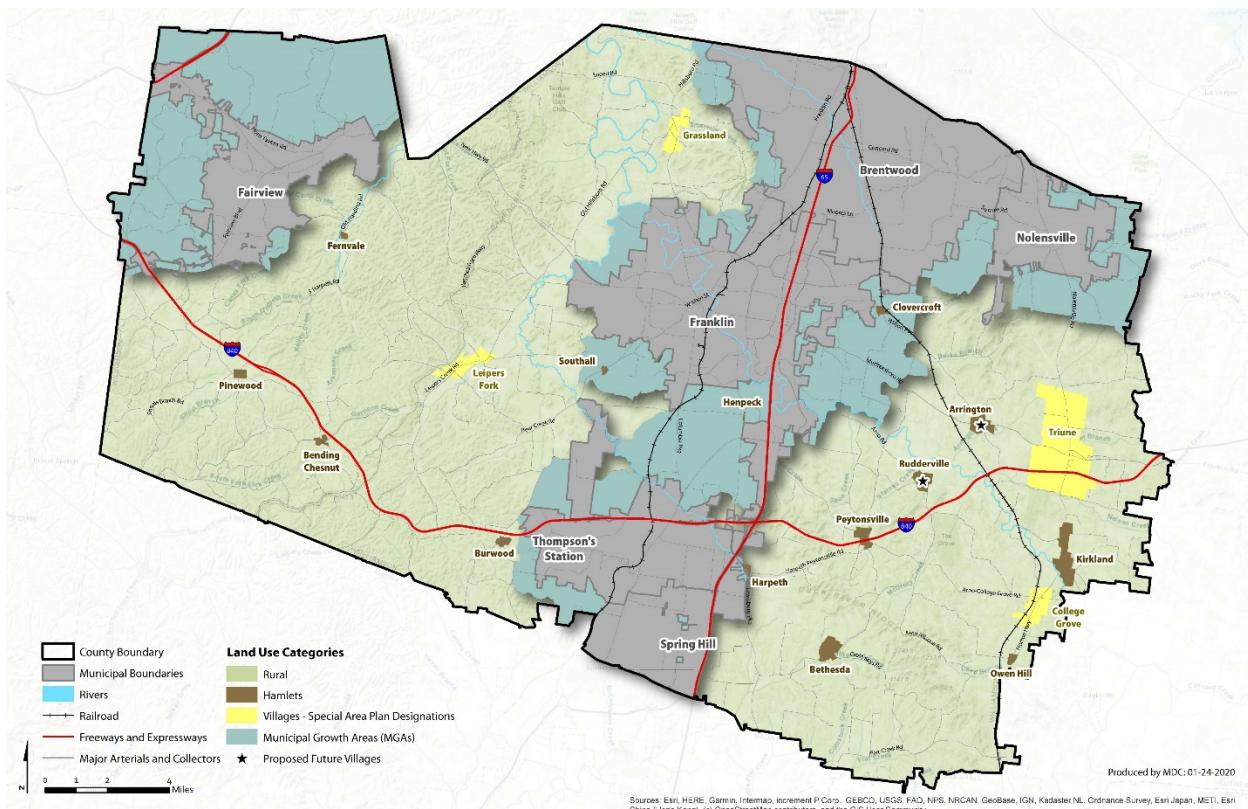
The Plan was adopted by the Williamson County Planning Commission and endorsed by the County Commission in the spring of 2020.

## Key Recommendations of Plan

While the Comp Plan contains numerous goals and objectives covering a range of topics, including land use, natural and historic preservation and public services/facilities, a few key recommendations are:

1. Reduce allowable residential density from 1 unit per acre to 1 unit per 5 acres outside of UGB's, except in areas designated as Hamlet and areas that were subject to Special Area Plans (College Grove, Grassland, Leiper's Fork and Triune). This recommendation is depicted in figure 7: Future Land Use Map below.

**Figure 7: Future Land Use Map**



This recommendation was implemented in November, 2020 when the County rezoned large areas of the unincorporated County consistent with the Proposed Land Use Map. ;

2. Convert the Arrington and Rudderville Hamlets to Villages, but only after Special Area Plans and tailored zoning district standards have been developed; and

3. Pursue the creation of a regional growth management plan in collaboration with each of the cities, focusing on common goals and actions on critical issues that require coordination between the municipalities and the County. Implementing this recommendation is currently underway, as the County and all six municipalities are engaging in a growth management effort geared toward identifying appropriate areas for future growth that can be supported by the provision of adequate and timely infrastructure and public services. The County's current effort is focused on identifying (or confirming) rural areas and Planned Growth Areas (PGA's) within the unincorporated County outside of UGB's.

## **What We Are Working On Now/ Public Feedback**

As mentioned on page 1, the seven jurisdictions within Williamson County (Brentwood, Fairview, Franklin, Nolensville, Spring Hill, Thompson's Station and Williamson County) are collaborating on a regional (within Williamson County) growth planning effort that is geared toward identifying appropriate areas for future growth that can be supported by the provision of adequate and timely infrastructure and public services.

The County's current effort is focused on identifying (or confirming) Rural Areas and Planned Growth Areas (PGA's) (see description on page 2 above) within the unincorporated County outside of UGB's.

The recently adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan (see page 3 above) was the result of a long, very thorough process focusing on these same growth-related issues. A great deal of analysis and extensive public input went into developing the Comp Plan recommendations. Therefore, we believe that the Comp Plan recommendations regarding land use and growth should drive these decisions.

Having said that, we are very interested in knowing what the public thinks. To that end, we are seeking YOUR input regarding the proposals below.

### **Proposed Planned Growth Areas (PGA's)**

Based upon recommendations from the Comp Plan, as well as adopted Special Area Plans for College Grove, Grassland, Leiper's Fork and Triune, we recommend:

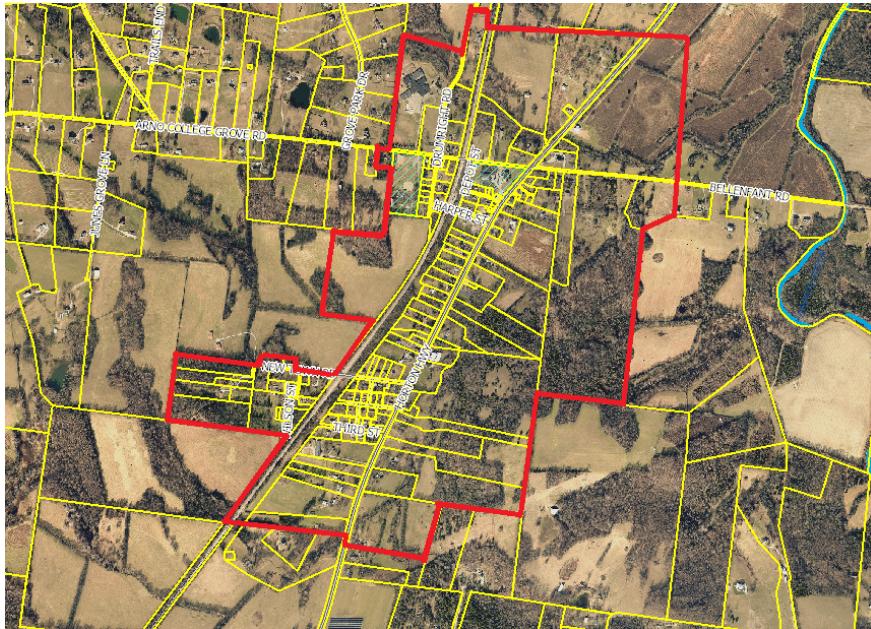
### Eliminating the following existing PGA's:

- **PGA's 1, 2, and 3** (see Figure 2 on page 2) – The Comp Plan recommended a rural land use designation for these areas, and in November of 2020 the majority of these areas was rezoned to a 1 unit per 5 acre designation. Therefore, we don't believe
- **The portion of PGA-5 that is zoned TCA-1** – The Triune Special Area Plan recommended low-density residential for this area, and in November of 2020 this area was rezoned to a 1 unit per 5 acre designation.

### Classifying the following as PGA's:

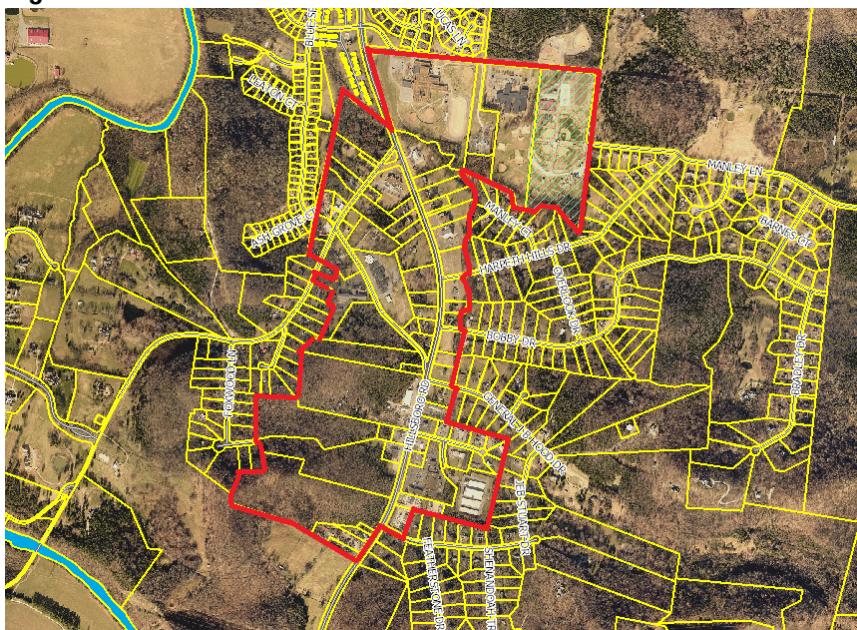
- **College Grove Village** – A Special Area Plan and tailored zoning district standards have been developed for this area. It is recommended that the PGA boundaries for this area coincide with the College Grove Village zoning district (see figure 9 below).

**Figure 8: College Grove PGA**



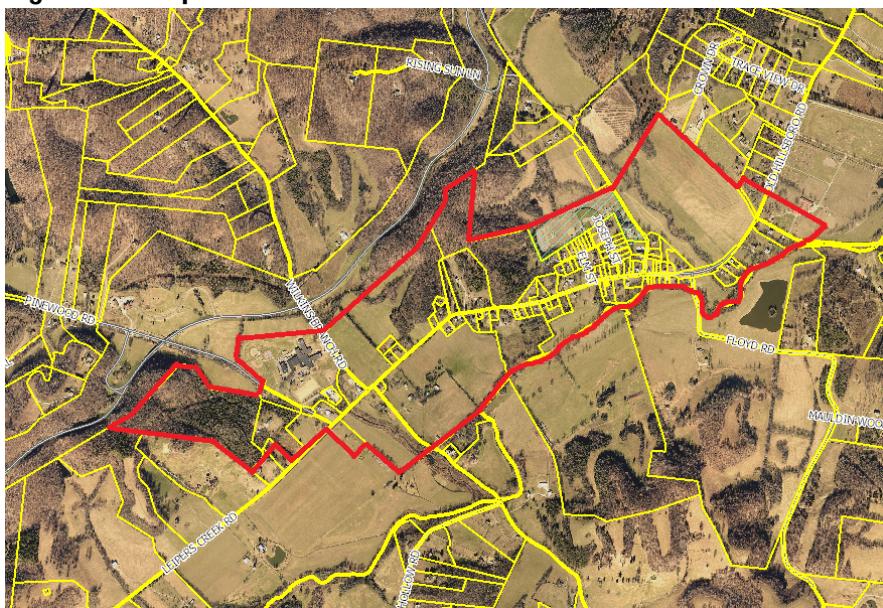
- **Grassland** - A Special Area Plan and tailored zoning district standards have been developed for this area. It is recommended that the PGA boundaries for this area coincide with the Grassland Village zoning districts (See figure 10 below).

**Figure 9: Grassland PGA**



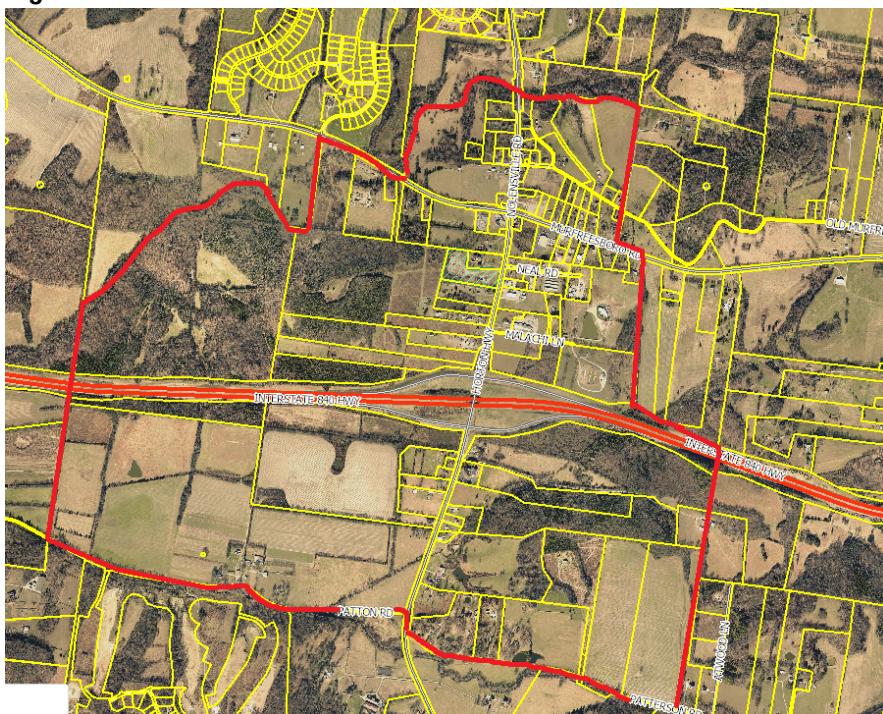
- **Leiper's Fork** - A Special Area Plan and tailored zoning district standards have been developed for this area. It is recommended that the PGA boundaries for this area coincide with the Leiper's Fork Village zoning district (see figure 11 below).

**Figure 10: Leiper's Fork PGA**



- **Triune** - A Special Area Plan and tailored zoning district standards have been developed for this area. It is recommended that the PGA boundaries for this area coincide with the boundaries of the TCA2, TCA3 and TCA4 zoning districts (see figure 13 below).

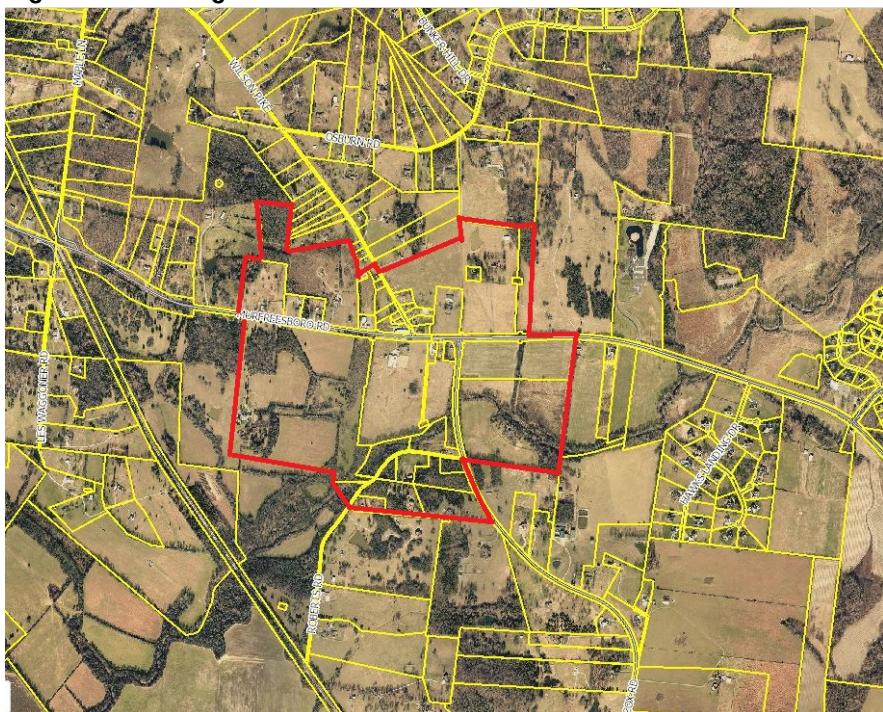
**Figure 11: Triune PGA**



### Adding the following as PGA's

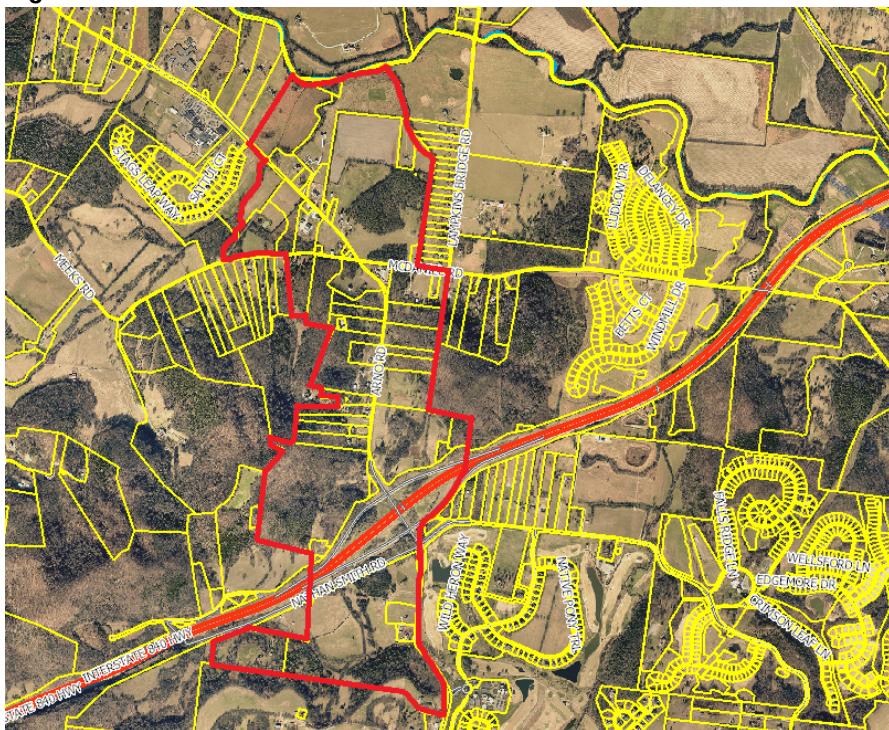
- **Arrington** – This area is identified as a PGA by virtue of the Comp Plan recommending its conversion from a Hamlet to a Village following the creation of a Special Area Plan and tailored zoning district standards. The boundaries of this proposed PGA coincide with a proposed “study area” for the future Special Area Plan process (see figure 8 below). It should be emphasized that it is unlikely that the result of the Special Area Plan will be to treat the entire study area the same from a recommended future land use/density standpoint.

**Figure 12: Arrington PGA**



- **Rudderville** - This area is identified as a PGA by virtue of the Comp Plan recommending its conversion from a Hamlet to a Village following the creation of a Special Area Plan and tailored zoning district standards. The boundaries of this proposed PGA coincide with a proposed “study area” for the future Special Area Plan process (see figure 12 below). It should be emphasized that it is unlikely that the result of the Special Area Plan will be to treat the entire study area the same from a recommended future land use/density standpoint.

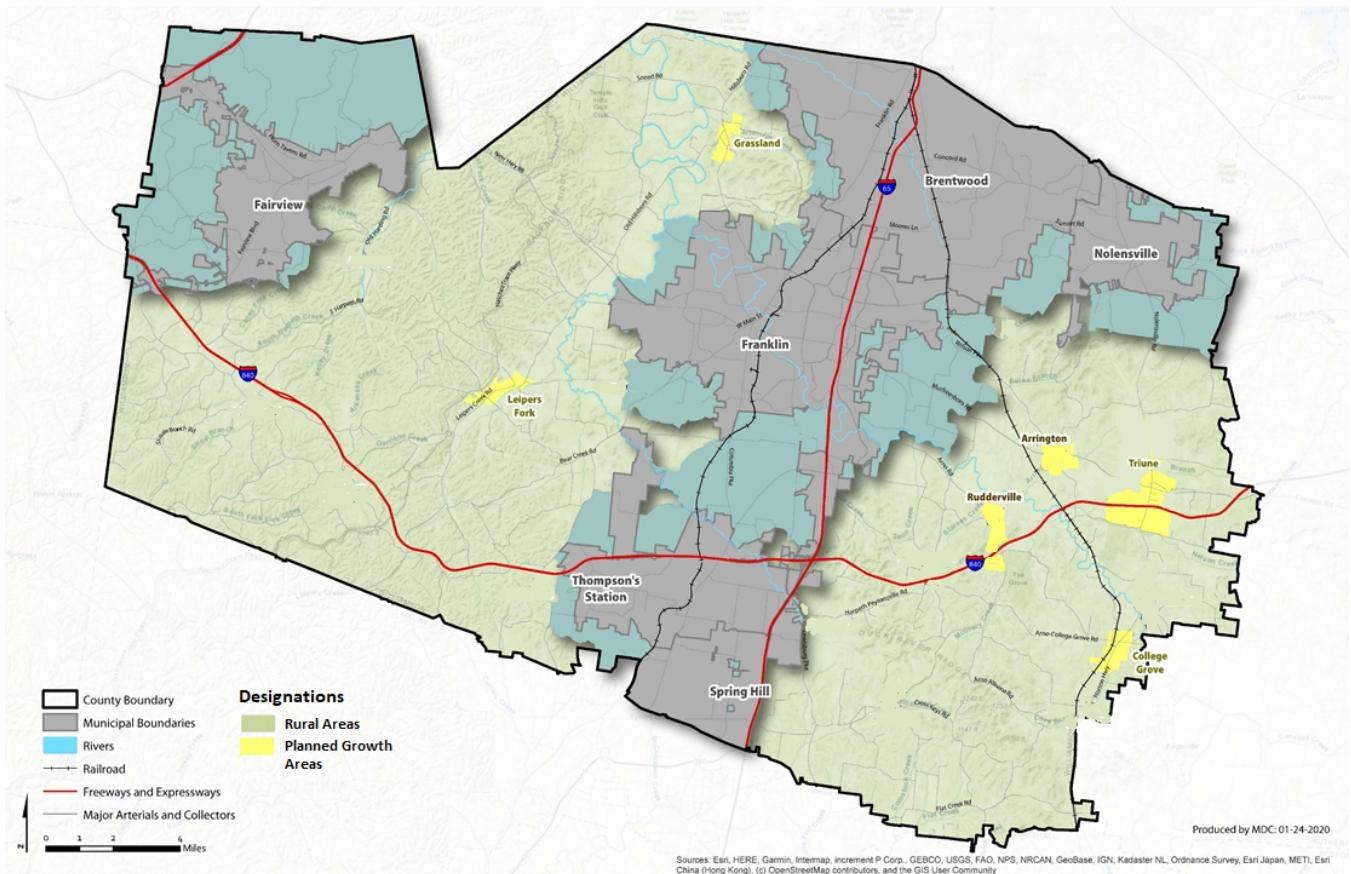
Figure 13: Rudderville PGA



## Proposed Rural Areas

Based upon the land use recommendations of the Comp Plan as well as the County's recent action to reduce allowable residential densities in outlying areas, we recommend that all land located outside of UGB's and PGA's be designated as rural areas (see Figure 14 below).

**Figure 14: Proposed Rural areas and PGA's**



## Public Feedback Questions

1. Do you have any comments about the proposal to add Arrington as a Planned Growth Area (PGA) in light of the fact that the Comp Plan recommends that this area should become a Village following the creation of a Special Area Plan and tailored zoning standards for this area?
2. Do you have any comments about the boundaries for the proposed Arrington PGA as shown in Figure 12, understanding that it is unlikely that the result of the Special Area Plan will be to treat the entire study area the same from a recommended future land use/density standpoint?
3. Do you have any comments about the proposal to add Rudderville as a Planned Growth Area (PGA) in light of the fact that the Comp Plan recommends that this area should

become a Village following the creation of a Special Area Plan and tailored zoning standards for this area?

4. Do you have any comments about the boundaries for the proposed Rudderville PGA as shown in Figure 13, understanding that it is unlikely that the result of the Special Area Plan will be to treat the entire study area the same from a recommended future land use/density standpoint?
5. What other thoughts do you have regarding the material presented here, particularly related to the proposed Planned Growth Areas (PGA's) and Rural Areas?

Please send your answers to these questions via email to  
[michael.matteson@williamsoncounty-tn.gov](mailto:michael.matteson@williamsoncounty-tn.gov)

**Note: Once the municipalities have defined their draft updated Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB's), this material will be updated with additional Williamson County recommendations and additional opportunity for public feedback.**