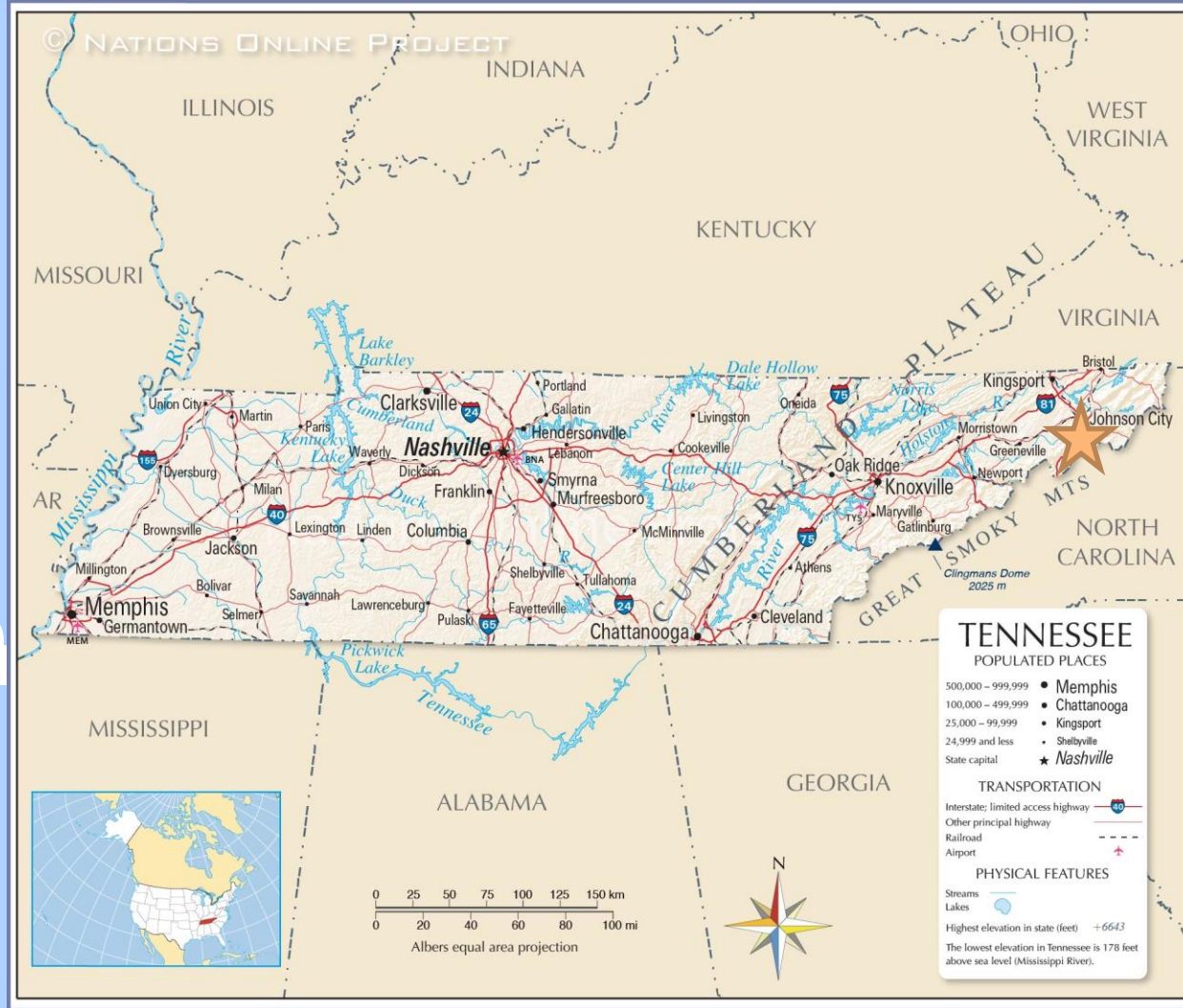


Replacing Frustration With Collaboration

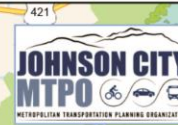


Where are we?

Northeast Tennessee



Who are we? Johnson City MTPO

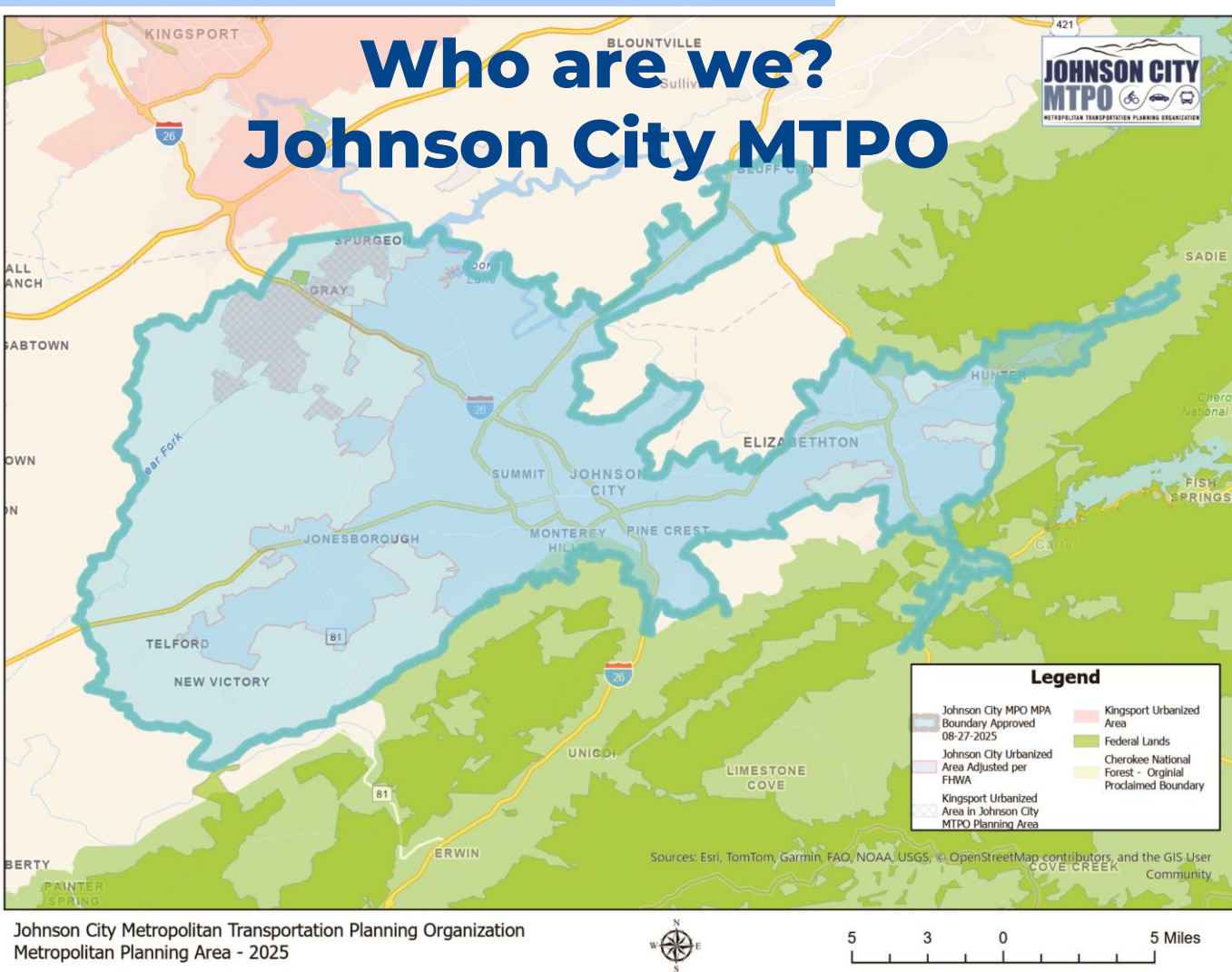


We have a grand total
of 2 Full-Time
Employees:
Glenn Berry &
Mary Butler

We are 300 miles away
from the State Capital
in Nashville.

We get to do it all-

- GIS, MTP, TIP, UPWP,
- Regional ITS
Architecture,
- Corridor Studies,
- Travel Demand
Modeling,
- Administration,
- Board Meetings,
- And more...





128,519

Largest small urban MPO in Tennessee by population



\$1.9 million

In Surface Transportation Block Grant funds per year



AUDIENCE POLL

What state are you visiting from?

Now you know where we're from, what state are you from?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Let us tell you a story

01

Community in Transition

From Agricultural to Urban

03

Did it work?

What worked, challenges, & what we learned

02

Background & Approach

Issues and situation the MPO inherited

04

Can this help you?

Practical strategies for engagement

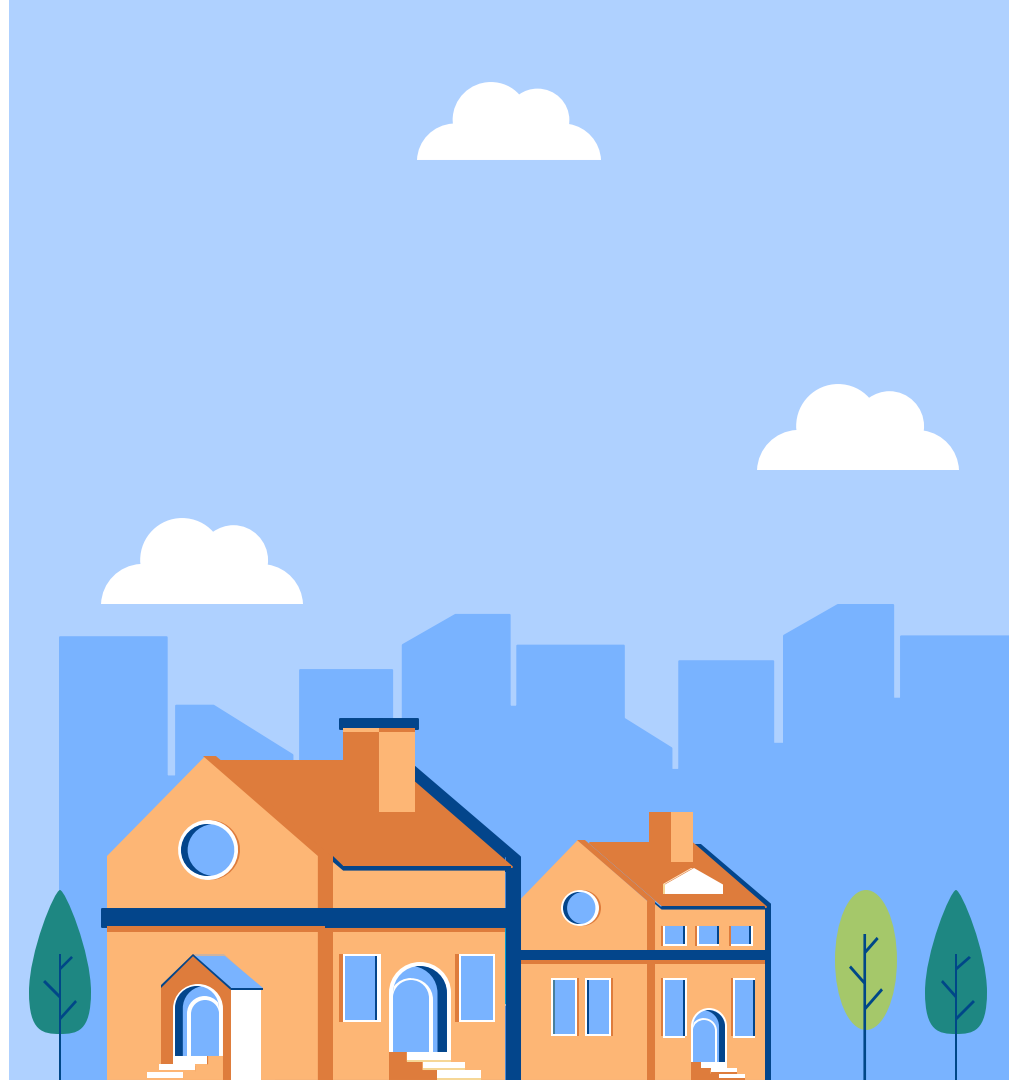
Tony Barnes, the Heart of the Gray Community





01 Community in Transition

From Agricultural to Urban



The Gray Community – Mix of City and County



Transportation,
State Route?
This is something
the MPO can
handle.

Yes, let
Glenn do it.

Boy that was close, I
thought they were going
to say Public Works could
do this.



State Representative



Neighborhood leader



Highway Superintendent
and resident

Andy ... I'm scared. That was over 2 years ago and those people in Gray are still mad as fire!

Barn, Don't Panic – It goes back further than that. But they're just people like you and me. They just want people to be honest with 'em, listen to their concerns, and for us to do our job.



AUDIENCE POLL

Have you experienced a similar problem with community trust?

Have you experienced a similar problem with community trust?

Yes

0%

No

0%

AUDIENCE DISCUSSION

What was a similar challenge you faced in your community and why was it difficult?

AUDIENCE POLL

Stakeholder Engagement Strategies

Which strategies would YOU use for this community? (Choose your favorite 2.)

Be transparent about the process

0%

Meet people where they are

0%

Tailor engagement to the community

0%

Work with community leaders

0%

Maintain ongoing communication

0%

Provide multiple ways to participate

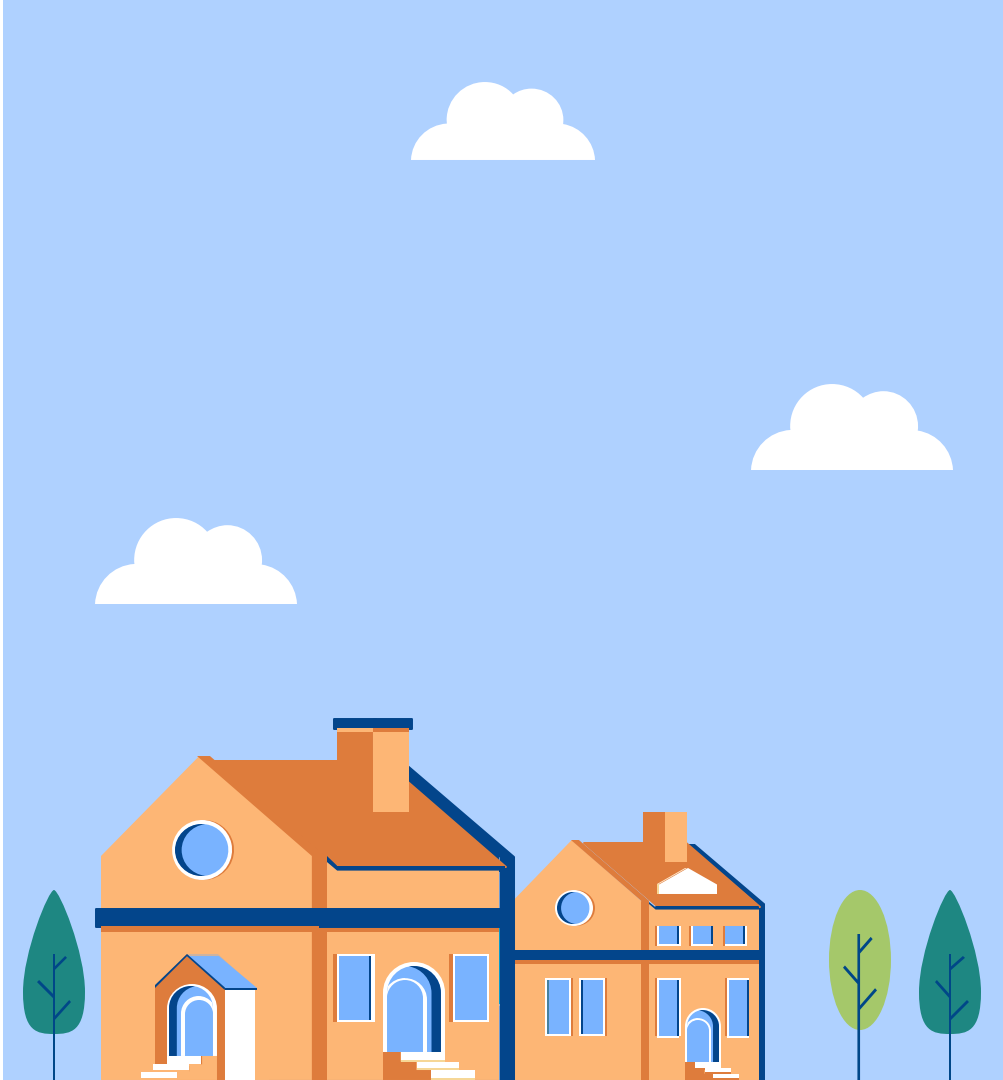
0%



02

Background and Approach

Issues and situation the MPO
inherited





What We Did

1st thing the MPO did, we created a “working group.”

Members:

People in Gray, City Public Works, Washington County Highway Department, Washington County Mayor, State Representative, and others as needed

What we had to manage in the Working Group –
This is about Transportation. But....

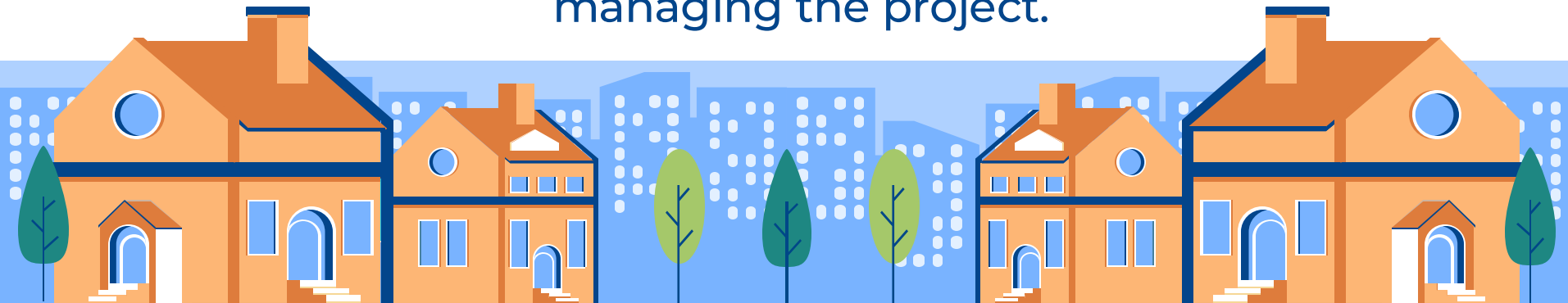
- Let's talk about more the Gray Community.
- What about Police Patrol?
- What about Zoning! Annexation!
- Who picks up the trash along the highways?
- What about that Methadone clinic. I don't like it.



RESULT: WE NEED A CORRIDOR STUDY

City applied for a Transportation Planning grant
from the state's Department of Transportation –
Not Awarded.

The MPO reorganized their UPWP and took
charge of the Corridor Study, funding, and
managing the project.



Before we did any outreach, we picked out key leaders in the community to meet with



**Civic Club
President**



**School Board
Member**



**Former
County Hwy
Superintendent**



**Retired Federal
Govt Planner**

We hired a qualified consultant



**CDM
Smith**

**To become part
of the team**

Public Engagement Plan

Public Meeting 01

May 2025

LISTEN

- Presented existing data
- Gathered input on concerns, needs, and priorities

Public Meeting 03

November 2025

FINALIZE

- Shared refined recommendations
- Collected input on community priorities for implementation

Public Meeting 02

August 2025

REFINE

- Presented draft recommendations
- Based on feedback from Meeting #1
- Collected comments for refinement

Social Pinpoint Website

Social Pinpoint website remained active throughout the project and was updated to reflect materials and feedback from each public meeting.

What we did



Picked a Good Neutral Location

Gym of Elementary School located adjacent to the corridor & created flyers



Collected Emails

Kept the community informed throughout the process.



Open-Forum Style Meetings

Decided on minimal “presentations” in favor of open-forum meetings, with various stations. Meeting staffed by both the MPO (2) and Consultant (5) Team



Focused on Individuals

We all listened and stayed until the last person left.



Online Survey and Project Website

Shared several online surveys and maintained a project website



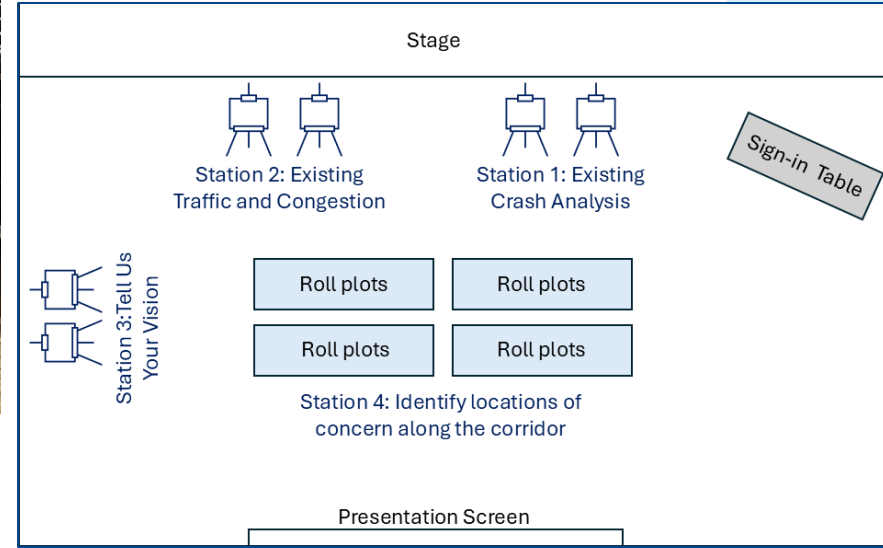
60 people



Came to the First Public Meeting



We LISTENED to the people – Meeting #1



We LISTENED to the people – Meeting #1

JOHNSON CITY MTPD

SR 75 Corridor Study

Vision Board

What transportation-related improvements would make the corridor better?



JOHNSON CITY MTPD

SR 75 Corridor Study

Tell us how you feel!

Place a sticker dot below to let us know how you feel about adding the following improvements along the corridor.

	😊	😐	😞
Right-Turn Lanes			
Sidewalks			
Multi-Use Paths			
Median Landscaping			
Lighting			

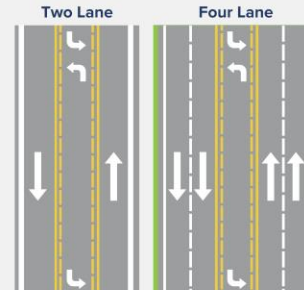
We ASKED the people – Meeting #2



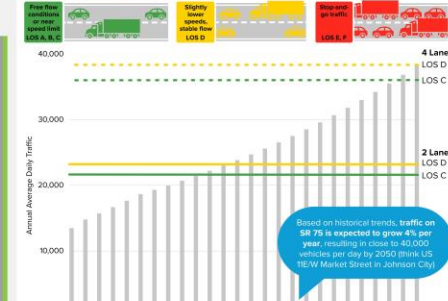
SR 75 Future Traffic

The study team reviewed how the existing two-lane roadway is expected to handle traffic in the years ahead if current travel and growth trends continue. Using a system called Level of Service (LOS), which rates traffic flow from A (free-flow) to F (stop-and-go), we analyzed how well the roadway can keep traffic moving. **The results show that a four-lane roadway will better handle future traffic and reduce congestion if growth continues the way it has over the past several years.**

What will the road look like?

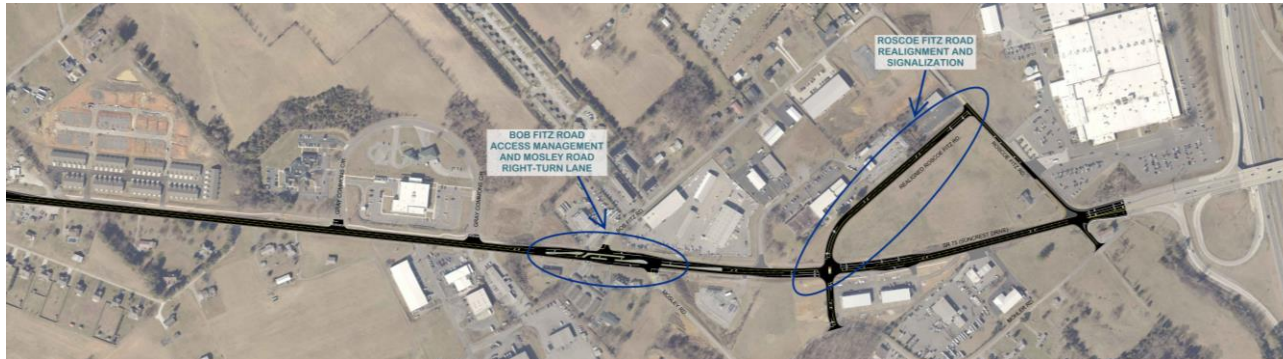
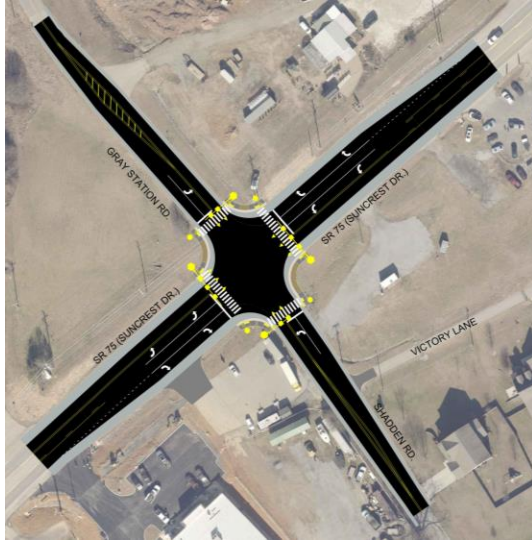


What will traffic look like?

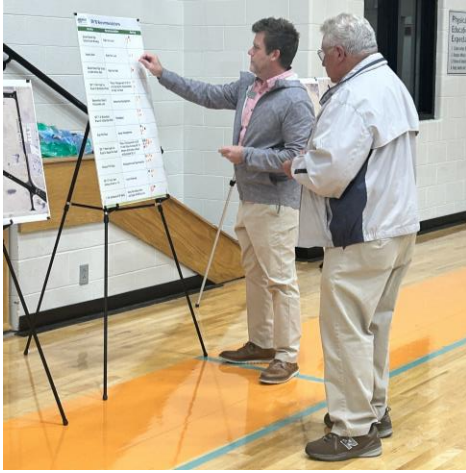


Based on historical trends, traffic on SR 75 is expected to grow 4% per year, resulting in close to 40,000 vehicles per day by 2050 (link to NEM Market Street in Johnson City)

We HEARD the people – Meeting #3



We HEARD the people – Meeting #3



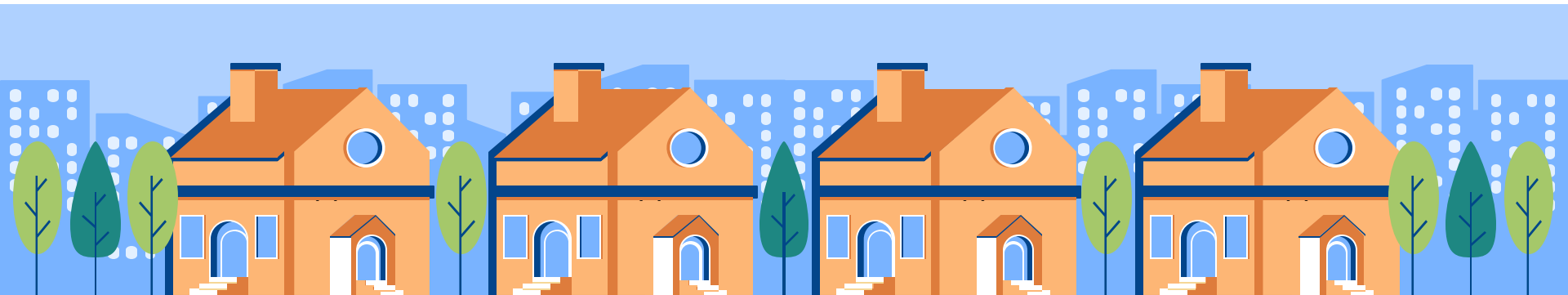
SR 75 Recommendations		
Location	Recommendation	Ranking
Daniel Boone High School South Driveway	Right-Turn Lane	
Mosley Road	Right-Turn Lane	
Daniel Boone High School to Sam Jenkins Road	Multi-Use Path	
SR 75 from Hugh Cox Road to Boonesboro Road	Phase 1 Realignment of SR 75 and Intersection Improvements at Hugh Cox Road	
Boonesboro Road at Hillendale Lane	Intersection Realignment	
SR 75 at Boonesboro Road & Hillendale Road	Roundabout	
Bob Fitz Road	Access Management	
SR 75 from Hugh Cox Road to Blazerview Road	Phase 2 Realignment of SR 75 and Widen Existing SR 75 between Boonesboro Road and Relocated SR 75	
Roscoe Fitz Road	Realignment and Signalization	
SR 75 from Sam Jenkins Road to I-26	5-lane Widening	
I-26 Eastbound Off Ramp	Ramp Reconfiguration and Signal Modifications	



03

DID IT WORK?

What worked, challenges, & what we learned



What do YOU think worked for us?

GUESS WHAT HAPPENED		
01	Meeting individually with Community leaders and listening	YES – That group vouched for us at the public meeting.
02	Managing Community Expectations	To Some Degree
03	Do you think the City and the County get along better now?	NOPE 
04	Are projects actually going to get built?	To Some Degree – Two Traffic Signals are funded, with one ready for construction.

What do YOU think worked for us?

GUESS WHAT HAPPENED

05

Did the state commit to improving (widening) the road?

NOPE – Not in the state's 10-Year Plan. And one of the properties is for sale.



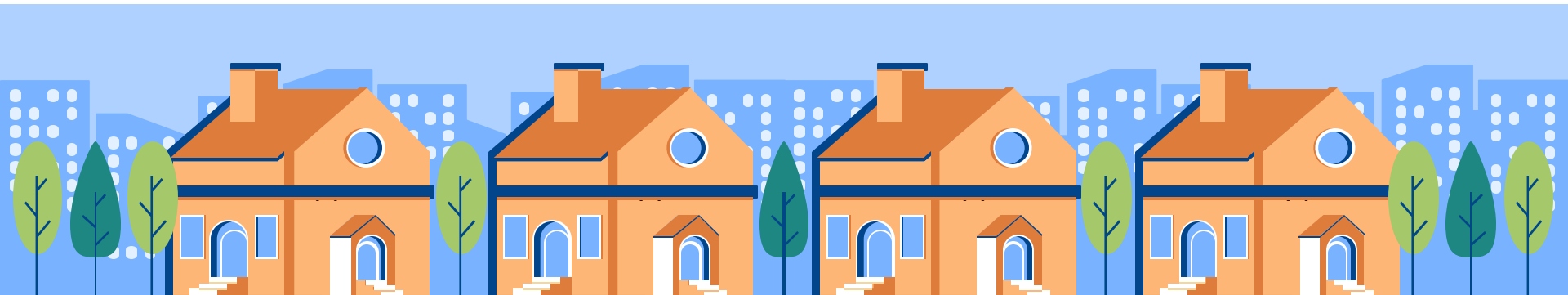
**So, why are the projects not in the
state's 10-Year Plan yet?**
“It depends...”



04

CAN THIS HELP YOU?

Practical Strategies for Engagement





WHAT WE RECOMMEND

- Do not go into the community blind – seek out prominent people who live there, those who are community advocates and volunteers.
- Be honest and don't take things personally.
- Do your due diligence on existing conditions BEFORE meeting with the public.
- It's ok to say you'll get back to someone. But then, actually do it.





WHAT WE RECOMMEND

- Do not promise anything or estimate dates for projects to go to construction. That will backfire.
- Include your elected officials who are not members of your board.
- Follow up with information and be transparent.
- Be available after meetings for follow-up conversations.





AUDIENCE ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS



10 minutes

Think of a project where the public, elected officials, or stakeholders were skeptical or distrustful of the planning process.

As a group, answer the following:

- **What created the distrust?**
 - Previous project experiences? Lack of transparency? Misinformation? Political issues?
- **What strategies helped build trust?**
- **What is one lesson or best practice you would share with other MPOs?**



Choose one spokesperson to share your group's top takeaway.



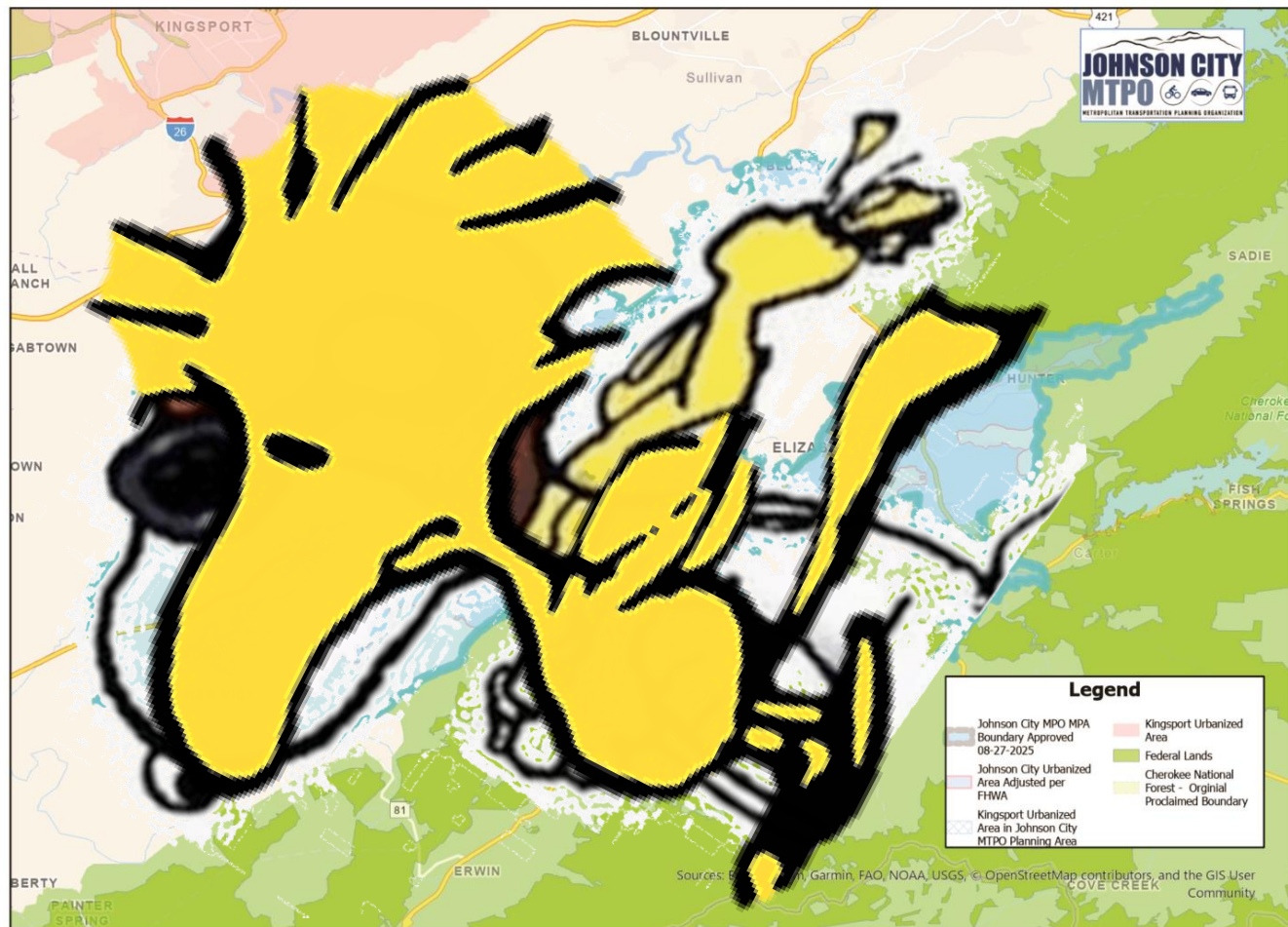
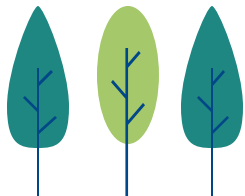


WHAT YOU RECOMMEND



Final Thoughts

What cartoon character does our MPA remind you of?



Johnson City Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
Metropolitan Planning Area - 2025



5 3 0 5 Miles



THANKS!



QUESTIONS?

Glenn Berry	Mary Butler	Melody Butler
glennberry@jcmpo.org	marybutler@jcmpo.org	butlermn@cdmsmith.com



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