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Velocity2040 Community Visioning Survey Results Shape Goals for Our Next 20 Years

Feb. 7, 2019 - Velocity2040 community-wide visioning survey results show five top priorities for the next 20 years in Hamilton County and Chattanooga as our community works together on a bold, new vision for our future.

The Velocity2040 survey drew participation from 4,816 residents representing every facet of our community. Survey results, including 4,765 comments, point to five major community goals for the Hamilton County of 2040:

- 1.) We're the smartest city in the South, focusing on educational excellence for all students
- 2.) Every resident thrives economically
- 3.) 20 minutes or less is our transit standard
- 4.) Diverse leaders represent the full spectrum of who we are
- 5.) A collaborative process for solving challenges with openness and respect has transformed neighborhoods and brought our governments together

Disclosing demographic data was optional. About 18 percent responding did not share their race and 13 percent chose to not share their age.

Of those who shared age and race, about half of the participants were under age 49, and one in eight were under 30. African-Americans made up 16 percent of participants – almost a mirror of the population composition of Hamilton County, where African-Americans comprise 19.5 percent of the population.

Four percent of respondents were Hispanic, closely approximating the 5.7 percent Hispanic share of Hamilton County's population. The survey was offered in Spanish and English. Volunteers assisted with in-person canvassing in specific areas to ensure participation and inclusion. Participants fell across the income spectrum, and half work at least full time. About 19 percent of respondents chose not to share income ranges.

The Velocity2040 community visioning survey results will **inform Chattanooga Climbs, Advancing Economic Development and Talent Initiatives**, a five-year strategic plan for implementing steps and metrics focused on the jobs and talent goals of the Velocity2040 vision. Avalanche Consulting, nationally recognized for its work in this area, will facilitate this plan. Strategy development is underway and the Chattanooga Climbs plan should be complete in April. The Chattanooga Chamber Foundation, with the support of private sector investors, is leading this work.

Find the full Velocity2040 report [here](#), including a list of Velocity2040 community partners, and full survey results [here](#).

Select Survey Participant Quotes:

- “I believe we need to seriously look at [...] making high standards of education more accessible to all. We need to look at how to improve education for the majority of our students.”
- “I believe all our schools must educate children on current and future technologies. All students should be exposed to robots and automated guided vehicles. At the same time, we must also focus on trades such as welding, electrical and plumbing. Show our children multiple career paths.”
- “I believe we need to [...] encourage our youth to become business owners. A lot of people with college degrees graduate, work in a field they didn’t get a degree in, only to be left with mountains of debt. Teaching our future generations to become business owners should be an initiative we should focus on now.”
- “College is not for everyone. Teach a kid to be able to make a good living.”
- “We have outgrown our infrastructure.”
- “We need to offer working mothers better child care and support. I am a single mother myself needing more support than I have.”
- “We need to look at how we might foster a shared sense of community identity such that people see the point of working, volunteering, and investing their resources together to make our community a great place.”
- “We need to actively address systemic racism in our community in all of its manifestations.”

Community Quotes:

“Visioning has been a big part of Chattanooga’s past and future. If you look back 30 years ago, the way we have reimagined our city has been integral to where we are in 2019. It’s always been not just the visioning part, but the execution part. We have taken dreams and turned them into reality. That is what I expect to happen again with Velocity2040.”

- Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke

“I’m excited about Velocity 2040 because it gives the community the opportunity to have input into visioning out to the year 2040. It’s really important to get that input from our community.”

- Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger

“As students matriculate through their K-12 experience, we don’t want them to just have received a diploma. We want our students to graduate with real opportunity and be able to plug into their interests and desires.”

- Dr. Bryan Johnson, Superintendent, Hamilton County Schools

“By 2040, it’s our goal to have everyone be able to get where they need to be in 20 minutes or less, all across the board.”

- Amy Kerin, Receptionist, Signal Centers

“Collaboration is going to take everyone, to improve our community. Not just one entity. We need the City, we need the County, we need all of our elected officials, we need the residents, especially the residents, and the businesses and the faith community. All are foundations that contribute to make it happen.”

- Dr. Everlena Holmes, Community Volunteer

“When you look at what has happened over the last 20 years, it’s evolved tremendously. We see no reason why it won’t continue to do that over the next 20 years. The job market is going to evolve and I really see that one of those big pieces is going to come from automation. That’s going to cause a lot of things to change and I think that we need to be prepared for that as we move forward over the next 20 years.”

- Terry Hart, President & CEO, Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport Authority

“If we are more mindful of creating diverse talent, it will inevitably create a place that people are drawn to. When people see others like themselves in leadership roles and in industries they want to be part of, they will automatically reach out to those types of cities.”

- Lili Sanchez, Communications & Business Development Coordinator, La Paz

“Citizens of this city, along with area leaders like the Chattanooga Chamber, completely understand one important concept: What helps *some* of us helps *all* of us. As the Director of Marketing and Development at Signal Centers, I see firsthand how issues addressed in the Velocity2040 survey, such as infrastructure, affect those living with disabilities. Serving on the Chamber’s Velocity2040 Communications Committee gave me the opportunity to observe how much the Chamber prioritizes inclusion. All voices were heard. All opinions were sought. Everyone in Chattanooga had the chance to say, ‘This what I think!’ It was especially meaningful for me, as a member of the LGBTQ community, to take the survey, knowing this was a unique opportunity to share my perspective.”

- Chris Berryman, Director of Marketing and Development, Signal Centers

About Velocity2040

The Velocity2040 community visioning process began in 2018. Nearly 5,000 Hamilton County residents responded to a survey asking them to share their hopes and dreams for the year 2040. Data from the Velocity2040 survey will be shared on Feb. 7 and on the **Velocity2040.com** website. Many organizations and individuals will work on projects that help our community achieve goals set from the Velocity2040 Vision. As part of this, the Chattanooga Chamber Foundation is leading the development of a five-year strategic plan to advance economic development and talent initiatives.

About Chattanooga Climbs, Advancing Economic Development and Talent Initiatives

Who – The Chattanooga Chamber Foundation, with funding from private sector investors, hired Avalanche Consulting to help facilitate a five-year strategic plan for economic development and talent initiatives. We call this planning process **Chattanooga Climbs, Advancing Economic Development and Talent Initiatives**. Nationally recognized for their work in this area, Avalanche Consulting has completed similar plans for a number of [other communities](#) across the country.

What – The Velocity2040 community visioning survey results and community input informs the five-year plan. The Economic and Talent Initiatives Plan will be a strategy that benchmarks Chattanooga and Hamilton County against other communities. The Plan will lay out specific tactics, goals and metrics to help us move toward the Velocity2040 Vision over the next five years as it relates to economic development, talent and workforce goals.

Where – Planning covers primarily the City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County.

When – The initial data analysis portion of the planning effort began during the fall of 2018. Strategy development begins in February (2019) and the plan should be complete in April (2019).

How –In addition to information developed during the Velocity2040 Visioning process, others with a specific stake in economic and talent development have been intentionally engaged, through meetings, one-on-one interviews and group interviews, including:

- Business leaders
- Faith leaders
- Educational professionals
- Both the City and County Mayors
- Superintendent of Schools
- Elected officials
- Site selection consultants
- Entrepreneurs
- Early to mid-career professionals

Additionally, many of those listed above are represented on the 50+ person steering committee launching this work. The Avalanche Consulting team is also conducting substantial data analysis on Chattanooga/Hamilton County and benchmark cities.

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