



Municipal Technical Advisory Service
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

February 26, 2025

Mayor Dalton, Vice Mayor Berry, Commissioner Fairbanks-Harvey, Commissioner Holmes, Commissioner Wilkinson
City of Red Bank
3105 Dayton Boulevard
Red Bank, Tennessee 37415

VIA ELECTRONIC

Dear Red Bank City Commission:

Thank you for allowing MTAS to participate in the Commission's strategic planning process on February 25, 2025. It was a great retreat and I firmly believe that the results were worth the time and energy.

As you recall, we began the session with an overview of the strategic planning process. The objectives of the process were to create a mission statement, scan the internal and external environments, create a vision statement, select values, and then to devise goals to guide the city in achieving its vision. I believe we successfully fulfilled all of the stated objectives.

We discussed the different roles that elected officials and staff perform and the percentages of time that each group should devote to planning. The Commission should spend a greater amount of time in planning (steering) than any other group in the municipal government.

The first task was to create a mission statement. A mission statement should explain the purpose of a town's being and why it exists. The Commission reviewed the current mission statement and decided to make a few changes. The new mission statement is:

The City of Red Bank is a safe and thriving community with an engaging, transparent government that builds on our rich history, provides excellent and efficient services, and welcomes all.

The Commission then studied a variety of statistics about state information, Hamilton County facts, and Red Bank-specific statistics. Using all of this information, the Commission then was charged with coming up with a vision statement that builds upon the city's mission and takes it to the next level; a desired future state. The updated vision statement is below:

Red Bank strives for a vibrant, growing and inclusive community by pursuing excellence, enhancing safety, celebrating our neighborhood character and stewarding our natural landscapes.

The next step was to do a SWOT analysis – identify the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats facing the City of Red Bank. These were not necessarily agreed on by the entire team but were items offered by individual members.

The strengths that were listed include:

- Highly skilled, competent, and efficient staff
- Employer of choice
- Great community to serve
- Recycle center
- Commission is well-representative of the community
- Several major plans are in the works

- Upcoming capital improvement plan (CIP)
- Dayton Boulevard traffic study
- More fully staffed and this widened the bandwidth of the city
- Supportive commission (continuity of vision and support of staff)
- Community volunteers on boards and committees
- Parks and recreation added amenities / AOA (active older adults) programming
- Strong relationship with PARTAS
- Strong partnerships with other governments and non-profits
- Positive public image
- Strong leaders at department head level
- Jubilee in May and Christmas Festival/parade
- Transparent city government
- Newly established Community Development Department
- iWorQ software
- Responsiveness to residents (more than larger cities)
- Supportive ecosystem (agencies, non-profits, business, jurisdictions)
- City resiliency over the years
- Potential to match county tax relief for residents
- Public relations
- Steep slopes ordinance in place
- Proximity to outdoor resources
- Stable, capable employee base
- 70-year celebration
- Open land available for development
- Opportunity for infill development
- Great WWTa representative
- Strong fiscal position and fund balance
- Proximity to Chattanooga
- Goodwill abounds
- Cleanup days by residents
- Low debt, good loan standing, clean audits
- Increased property values
- CARTA care-a-van
- Desirable place to live
- Young families moving in
- Traffic studies (knowledge from this)
- TML membership
- City website
- Momentum from improvements – results are visible
- Red Bank city Cemetery improvements
- Stormwater Department and management
- Stormwater inventory

- Stormwater fees – keeping up with basic maintenance
- Vacant buildings available for new businesses
- City beautification
- Cyber-security improvements
- In-house auto shop
- Successful history with grant applications and funding
- Library card program
- ARPA funds being well executed
- Comprehensive plan nearing completion
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan adopted
- Compact geographic site
- Public art initiatives progressing

The weaknesses identified were:

- Slow growth and development that limits revenue and opportunities
- Land locked
- Lack of sewer infrastructure
- No library in city limits
- Outdated zoning and land use policies (ADUs, lot size minimums, square foot minimums, parking minimums)
- Limited revenue resources
- Aging pool
- Welcoming signage needs updated
- Additional beautification of entrances needed
- Lack of business diversity
- Lack of a hotel
- Need to prioritize projects (so much to do but must balance resources)
- Lots of plans but need laser focus
- Dayton Boulevard, Morrison Springs, and Ashland Terrace over built as a highway (possibly causing dangerous speeds)
- Limited staff bandwidth
- Digital messaging and engagement on website
- Space between City Hall and Fire Department and need to create a park or develop
- Heavily property tax dependent
- Need to “tell our story” through different communication channels
- Out of compliance with National Park Service
- No curbside recycling
- Limited sway in regional and state politics
- New technology initiatives are slow moving
- Lack of sidewalks in Red Bank / connectivity
- Poor multi-modal connectivity to Chattanooga
- No bicycle infrastructure
- No public transit for general public
- Limited resources for a goals / dreams
- No parks north of Ashland Terrace

- Pass-through for commuters using Morrison Springs and Ashland Terrace
- No signature park or large-scale gathering grounds
- No flat area for walking
- No managed wildlife habitat or green infrastructure
- Lack of linear parks (greenways, trails)
- Red Bank City Park has a mote in the middle
- No parks program for residents under 55
- Decades of car-centric development
- Oversized / empty parking lots
- Lack of program for neighborhood gatherings (planned block parties)
- Incomplete ADA network
- Need for traffic calming methods throughout the city (especially parallel feeder roads to Dayton Blvd)
- Stringers Branch water quality (Impaired Stream)
- No paid parental leave for employees
- No Tree Board or mature tree ordinance
- No city business directory
- Outdated short term rental policies

The opportunities in the area include:

- Crosswalks on streets
- Social media growth
- Multi-modal connectivity into Chattanooga
- Former Red Bank Middle School site
- Implement Comprehensive Plan and Parks Master Plan
- CARTA partnership for PARA and micros transit
- Recruit eateries to Red Bank to fill vacant places
- Project funding availability
- Destination projects (e.g. Former Red Bank Middle School site, traffic garden, Godsey Ridge development)
- The Field (cemetery on Stringers Ridge)
- Expand relationship with Trust for Public Land
- Grant funding
- Connect to community more through parks and recreation
- Comprehensive plans and vision that others can see and implement
- Use bonds
- Alpine Elementary School site
- Potential for CARTA care-a-van funding from county
- Micro-grants from city to residents
- Development of land and sewer
- Public art partnerships (1st Friday art crawl, porch fest)
- Data analysis possibilities
- Non-profit partnerships
- Bike and outdoor groups and agencies (e.g. White Oak Bicycle Co-op)
- Connect with churches

- Utilize churches for parking, facilities, education resources, recreation
- Engagement of new residents
- Safe streets for all / Vision Zero / complete streets policies
- Walkable cities / Small Town Hometown grants and policies
- Tree City USA
- Expanded pool programming
- Trust for Public Land engaging with Hill Pointe HOA, TN America, White Oak Chattanooga Memorial Garden
- Partnerships for additional community resources (Community Fridge for food security, housing initiatives)
- Redevelopment of underutilized or abandoned properties
- Philanthropic partnerships
- Red Bank Bicycle Boulevard
- Low-cost activation of unused city property
- Satisfy conversion agreement
- EV charging
- Waldens Ridge connectivity
- History Celebration – 70 years
- Additional businesses
- Economic development opportunities for partnerships with Chamber, Incubator, SBDC

And finally, the threats are:

- Loss of funding from state or federal
- Passthrough commuters on Morrison Springs and Ashland Terrace
- Political opposition against the city
- Political volatility and possible entrapment / preemption
- Increased housing costs
- Continuity of vision and leadership (possibly ending at some point)
- State legislature (current possible threats: elimination of grocery tax, pay county for ambulance services, pay for Assistant District Attorneys, property tax cap)
- No elementary school in the city limits (loss of Alpine Crest)
- Economy and affect on income levels and spending/investments in the city
- Misinformation
- Rising food costs
- So many options from plans to implement (some may not be done)
- Loss of staff capacity if they leave
- Loss of school funding at federal and state levels
- Increased severe weather events (especially flooding)
- Hamilton County's demand for payment
- School voucher
- Hamilton County / Chattanooga taking ideas or accessing funding
- Inflation and cost of living increases
- Cherokee Tunnel
- Increased taxes
- Unwilling committees or planning boards
- Lack of county tax increases over the years
- Wildfires
- Vacant buildings

- Business competition outside of the city and money leaving
- Cyber attacks
- Loss of planned developments
- Norfolk Southern
- Utilities possibly not working with them
- Incomplete sewer network
- Urban heat island effect
- Healthcare crisis
- Negative reputation from past decades
- No storm shelter in Hamilton County

Next, each Commission member worked individually to identify goals that: address the key issues, meet the mission of the city and help the city to achieve its vision. Each member took a turn listing a goal until all goals everyone had were listed on a chart. Commission members were given five stickers and asked to place them on the chart. The number of votes originally received is in parenthesis beside each goal listed:

- Develop a new land conversion agreement with TDEC and NPS. (4)
- Enhance and expand use of the city website to sustain community engagement and awareness. (0)
- Create priorities for safe streets: curtailing speeding, enhancing pedestrian walkability, and protected cycling routes. (3)
- Begin development at the former Red Bank Middle School site. (1)
- Increase economic development efforts. (4)
- Open a brick-and-mortar library in the city limits. (1)
- Implementation of the Parks Master Plan. (2)
- Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. (0)
- Develop mechanism to expand sewer to promote growth and development. (2)
- Prioritization and implementation of Capital Improvement Plan. (2)
- Increase sidewalks and crosswalks in North Red Bank (0)
- Implement curbside recycling. (0)
- Low-cost activation of city property by making improvements (i.e. tables, gardens, etc.). (2)
- Actively engage Hamilton County (especially Wamp and Sharpe). (0)
- Conduct monthly community outreach with residents (i.e. Coffee and Commissioners). (2)
- Modernize zoning and land use ordinances. (2)
- Explore affordable housing initiatives. (0)
- Actively engage Senator Watson, Senator Gardenhire, and Representative Reneau. (0)
- Identify and celebrate areas of Stringers Branch. Take ownership and/or partner where possible. (0)
- Explore food security initiatives. (0)

The result was five goals. After the first round of voting, there were three goals selected and there was a five-way tie between goals with two votes each. After discussion and an additional vote, the decision was made to move forward with two additional goals. The Commission also assigned a board member to each goal and that name is in parenthesis beside the goal. In no particular order, the goals were:

- 1) Develop a new land conversion agreement with TDEC and NPS. (Mayor Dalton)**

- 2) Create priorities for safe streets: curtailing speeding, enhancing pedestrian walkability, and protected cycling routes. (Vice Mayor Berry)**
- 3) Increase economic development efforts. (Commissioner Holmes)**
- 4) Implementation of the Parks Master Plan. (Commissioner Wilkinson)**
- 5) Low-cost activation of city property by making improvements (i.e. tables, gardens, etc.). (Commissioner Fairbanks-Harvey)**

The final step in the process of strategic planning is to create a list of programs and policies (objectives) that will help the city achieve its goals. I am happy to assist you with this step as needed.

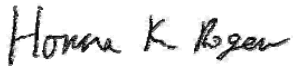
It is important to note that in addition to the Commission, City Manager Martin Granum also participated fully in the day. He contributed to all steps except for the goals section. Also in attendance from the city was Director Tracey Perry.

In closing, this is an ambitious plan and one that should be a living document; examine it regularly and adjust as needed but always keep the vision in mind when doing so. I encourage you to set a time now for review, whether that is three, six, or twelve months away.

Giving up a full day, especially during the work week, was a big sacrifice on the part of the elected officials. You are all to be commended for your active participation and tenacity throughout the process.

I look forward to completing the process with you and the Commission and hope that you will contact MTAS if we can be of any assistance to the city in achieving its goals and vision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Honna K. Rogers".

Honna Rogers
Municipal Management Consultant