

TENNESSEE RIVERPARK

(1986 - 2007)

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

The most comprehensive and inclusive planning process ever undertaken in Chattanooga and Hamilton County was accomplished between 1982 and 1985. The Moccasin Bend Task Force, a citizen committee appointed by Chattanooga and Hamilton County governments, led this unique community process. Task Force Chairman Rick Montague inspired everyone to make this a true community planning process. The consulting firm of Carr, Lynch and Associates of Cambridge, MA provided direction, drive and enthusiasm helping us to celebrate the wonderful asset that is the Tennessee River. The City, County and Lyndhurst Foundation shared funding for the planning phase.

Following hundreds of public and private meetings involving thousands of citizens, the Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan was completed in March 1985 and later presented to an overflow crowd at the then new Chattanooga-Hamilton County Convention and Trade Center. During the next few months the City, County and Regional Planning Agency adopted this comprehensive plan.

The visionary plan advised that the Chattanooga riverfront was owned by everyone and should be developed “under a guiding idea which will bring its banks to life, make it a central point of pride for the City’s people, and move it to the forefront of national consciousness”. By reconnecting with this great river, the city was to make over its image and fuel the engine of central economic development.

Many cities around the country have also realized the importance of packaging together their separate natural and man-made attractions, historical sites and activities and have attempted to link these scattered and disjointed elements to create an organized comprehensive urban cultural park system. Few have had the success of Chattanooga and Hamilton County in sparking new development and investment and in fostering pride from local residents, at least in such a short period of time.

Chattanooga's riverfront renaissance story is now being told internationally. In a very short time span (1985-2006), a series of successful public and private endeavors have helped create new national attractions, inspiring new riverfront parks, new retail, restaurants and housing all linked by a delightful riverfront trail system.

Summary of Completed Riverpark Developments/Costs

During the past twenty-one years (1986-2007) nearly \$118 million in public and private funds were expended/committed to design and build 12 miles of riverwalk and several new riverfront parks including the Fishing Park near the C. B. Robinson Bridge, Ross's Landing Plaza, Lookout Rowing Center, Coolidge Park, Ross's Landing Park and Renaissance Park. The RiverCity Company was chartered in 1986 to help guide this community effort. Between 1986 and 1989, most of the RiverCity activities were devoted to planning and land assembly.

- (1) In May of 1989, the initial phase of the Tennessee Riverpark near the C. B. Robinson Bridge was completed. The "Fishing Park" includes a 50-acre riverfront park and more than three miles of riverfront and inland trails. The park contains five 50-foot fishing piers, picnic and trail shelters, a unique children's playground, restaurant with bait and tackle shop, public boat ramp and boat/trailer parking and several public sculptures. The riverwalk allows walkers, joggers, bikers and fisherman to engage the river along the full length. It meanders near the river edge, sometime along the crest of the bank and often dipping near the water. Bank fisherman seek out their own special fishing spot along this route and for boaters there are boat ramps at either end. This initial project cost \$4.9 million of private, state, federal, city and county funding. It set the standard for all future riverfront development in Chattanooga. From opening day it has been very successful and attracts citizens of all incomes, races and ages creating a melting pot where citizens feel comfortable and relaxed. Since the park opened, five additional parking areas have been added to accommodate the crowds coming to this special park site.

Following this initial success story, the community moved forward, adding nearly 6 more miles of riverfront trails and other unique gathering places along the Tennessee River.

- (2) In 1991, the Tennessee Valley Authority extended the riverwalk to the base of the Chickamauga Dam – a TVA hydroelectric facility. TVA used the design standards we adopted from the initial phase. This trail and park extension cost \$1 million and came from a special federal appropriation to TVA. This segment includes a large picnic pavilion, scattered picnic tables and trail shelters, a handicapped fishing pier near the Dam and a boat launch and boat/trailer parking. Depending upon your perspective, this is either the beginning or end segment of the Tennessee Riverpark, as the riverwalk trail does not extend to Chickamauga Lake (above the Dam).

- (3) Ross's Landing Plaza was designed to open simultaneously with the Tennessee Aquarium in May 1992. This urban park was designed to celebrate our community history. It challenges the park user to explore our past and allows children (of all ages) to get wet along the manmade stream and waterwall. The park cost \$8,100,000 with another \$1,950,000 necessary to relocate Broad Street and change major utility systems at the site. Two major state grants were obtained. The first (\$3,350,000) was part of the \$9,000,000 state grant from the Alexander administration. The second (\$4,000,000) was provided by the McWherter administration. Additionally, \$2,500,000 was made available from county bonds backed by the hotel/motel tax collections. The plaza is constructed as a series of time bands, which step back in history as one proceeds towards to Tennessee River. Chattanooga's railroading past, the bottling of Coca Cola, the Civil War era, the Cherokee removal, the settling of Chattanooga and the impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority are all interpreted via subtle exhibits. Additionally, the landscaped bands in the park are planted with native trees, shrubs and groundcover. The land upon which the Tennessee Aquarium and Ross's Landing Plaza are built was donated by the RiverCity Company.
- (4) In May 1993 the historic Walnut Street Bridge was restored for public use as a linear pedestrian park. The development cost was \$4,500,000 with funding from the city, federal and private sources. It is the oldest (113 years old) and largest surviving truss bridge in the South. It is also the largest pedestrian bridge in the world (just under 1/2 mile in length). Once destined for destruction, it now connects the north and south shores and forever demonstrates this community's growing commitment to the river and area revitalization. Since opening, the Northshore commercial district along Frazier Avenue has become revitalized with unique shops, art galleries and restaurants. The new streetscape program along Frazier Avenue contains 13 bronze dance steps inviting visitors to go "stepping out on Frazier Avenue".
- (5) Additional riverwalk segments were funded between 1993 and 1995 to tie together Ross's Landing and the Bluff View Art District. Vertical riverwalk connections included stairs up to the Walnut Street Bridge and down to the river and a dramatic switchback allowing handicap access from below the Walnut Street Bridge (Martin Amphitheatre) to the Hunter and Houston Museums. Artwork is placed along the riverwalk in this segment. Attractive brick landings were included on either side of the Walnut Street Bridge and the Bluff Furnace Exhibit were added tracing early industrial history at this site. An exhibit signage package was developed to allow visitors to learn more about our area history on and near the Walnut Street Bridge. The Martin Amphitheatre provides a unique music venue below the bridge covered by Riverfront Parkway. The total development cost was \$2,209,500 with funding from private, federal, city and county sources.

- (6) The new Lookout Rowing Center and connecting riverwalk segment was completed in 1996. \$450,000 of private funds was necessary to design and build the rowing center. The U. S. Women's Rowing Team trained here for the 1996 Olympics. The Tennessee-American Water Company committed \$50,000 for a unique interactive exhibit along the riverwalk telling the history of providing water for drinking from the Tennessee River intakes near this site. Federal, private, city and county funds provided for the riverwalk and park construction here. Showing the cooperative effort, a public restroom was added to the privately funded rowing center. A portion of the trail here is decked to maintain an existing wetland. Total project cost was \$2,353,000.
- (7) Separate contracts were approved in 1997 and 1998 to extend the riverwalk from the Bluff View Art District eastward to connect to the Rowing Center. The first segment included an overlook and two riverpark-blue pedestrian bridges crossing the Veteran's Bridge and a new riverwalk segment fronting the historic Battery Place neighborhood. This segment was planned in workshops held in Battery Place homes. In the second segment, the riverwalk meanders between the private Manker Patten Tennis Facility and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga football practice field and across a low area maintained in its natural state. It offers urban dwellers a close-by escape to a newfound natural area. These two contracts totaled \$3,540,300 with funding from private, state, federal and city and county sources.
- (8) The Riverpark component completed in October 1999 is Coolidge Park and the Northshore riverwalk. This exciting new public park was the most anticipated new development in years. Coolidge Park was built on key downtown riverfront property formerly leased at \$1 a year to the Navy/Marine Corps Reserve Center. When Staff Sergeant Charles Coolidge returned as a hero and winner of the Medal of Honor from World War II, Coolidge Riverside Park was named in his honor. This use was a short one as it soon was leased to the Navy as a Navy/Marine Corps Training Center for the grand total of \$1 annually. This situation existed for nearly fifty years! Fortunately, it has now been "recaptured" and a new 8-acre urban park has been developed on the Northshore of the Tennessee River directly across the river from the Bluff View Arts District at the northern terminus of the historic Walnut Street Bridge. The new park includes a delightful, historic 3-ring carousel containing 52 animals and an interactive water feature with 8 large animals spewing water into the center rings.

Coolidge Park also includes a riverfront stage, a multi-use pavilion, open space for picnicking, flying kites or throwing frisbees, and both inland and waterfront walking paths. A kayak/canoe launch allows boaters to put in between the Veterans Bridge and the historic Walnut Street Bridge. The Walnut Wall Climbing Facility allows rock climbers an in town venue to learn this skill. Two pedestrian alleys connect from Frazier Avenue to the park and a stairway connects the park to the Walnut Street Bridge. This park is unique as probably 50% or more of the new visitors see the park first from above – viewing it from the Walnut Street Bridge. Therefore, multi-color pavers beckon the visitor to this unique and special place.

Total development costs of Coolidge Park exceeded \$8.3 million with funding from private, state, federal, city and county sources. 70% of the funding for this new public park comes from contributions by the Tonya, Lyndhurst and Benwood Foundations. City and County governments continually support the riverwalk operations including parking and trail maintenance, programming and area security.

This community's successes up to this point in time were indeed significant. Yet, rather than relax and relish these recent accomplishments, we used this positive momentum to complete the task at hand as "we have miles to go before we rest".

MILLENNIUM RIVERPARK PROJECT

This latest riverpark development extends the Tennessee Riverpark from the existing boat launch ramp at the original "Fishing Park" downstream to connect with the riverwalk near the Rowing Center. This segment is approximately 5.5 miles in length. Completed in May 2005, the riverside park and trail system is now continuous from the Chickamauga Dam to Ross's Landing Plaza and the Tennessee Aquarium and extending across the restored Walnut Street Bridge to Coolidge Park, making it nearly thirteen miles in total length.

At approximately one-third of the 5.5-mile distance (beginning at the Boathouse Grill), the trail passes by a natural inland pond. Near this location, a new private development is under construction to include a new warehouse for the Chattanooga Food Bank and other developments. The trail passes near this pond and a new roadway would connect to Amnicola Highway. New parking for park and trail users was added here. As the trail begins to move inland, it passes near other wetland locations and is heavily buffered from the existing roadway by existing trees and vegetation.

The trail then moves further inland to connect directly with the Amnicola Marsh Wildlife Preserve. There have been considerable improvements at this site allowing the trail user to view the marsh area from several unique overlooks along the periphery of the marsh. There is a road connection here to Amnicola Highway with adequate supportive parking. This site includes picnic facilities, public restrooms and a ranger station..

The Riverwalk then meanders through a series of green spaces and near some private businesses. It will then connect to a spectacular pedestrian bridge to span South Chickamauga Creek. Overlooks will take full advantage of both river and creek views. There will be a direct link up here between the Tennessee Riverpark and the South Chattanooga Creek Greenway. Road access was developed to/from Amnicola Highway at a new signaled intersection and adequate new parking was added along with new public restrooms. A unique trail extends along South Chickamauga Creek out to a point of land where the Tennessee River and Chickamauga Creek intersect.

The preliminary cost estimates following the master plan development indicated that it would cost nearly 13 million to complete the design and build this project. This sum includes the full extension of the riverwalk trail, added roads and public parking areas at key locations, lighting, signage and planting and irrigation.

Approved funding sources for the Millennium Phase include:

Hamilton County	-	\$2,000,000
City of Chattanooga	-	\$680,000
Federal Funds (5 grants)	-	* <u>10,144,078</u>
Current Funds Available		\$12,824,078
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 federal grants (1st TEA 21 grant - \$2,844,160, 2nd TEA 21 - \$2,891,918, STP grant - \$300,000, STP grant - \$1,320,000, STP grant – 2,788,000) 		

21st CENTURY WATERFRONT PLAN

This latest project proves the extent to which the citizens of Chattanooga have adopted the “Chattanooga Way” of conceiving, funding and implementing a major project. In May 2002 former Mayor Bob Corker held the initial planning charette with the assistance of staff from the RiverCity Company and City Planning and the professional staff of Hargreaves Associates. In May 2005 this \$120 million project was opened for public use. Thus, in three years the plan was prepared, design was accomplished, construction was completed and the community celebrated this latest milestone development.

This project represents the final piece of the puzzle to reconnect downtown Chattanooga to our riverfront. It also connects Ross’s Landing and the Hunter Museum of American Art – bringing the Hunter Museum down off the hill. Components elements include narrowing Riverfront Parkway from a 5-lane high-speed downtown by-pass highway to a 2-lane road through a new delightful riverside park. This major roadway change was accomplished by adding 4 new at-grade signalized intersections giving drivers a variety of new access points into the downtown. Expanding the transient docking from 200 to 2800 linear feet, opening a \$30 million saltwater addition (Ocean Journey) to the original Tennessee Aquarium – the largest freshwater aquarium in the world. Developing a new 23.5-acre wetland park along the north shore of the riverfront. Adding a \$20 million addition to the Hunter Museum of American Art. Building a pedestrian connection across the new Holmberg Pedestrian Bridge and through the new First Street Park. Adding new public art totaling more than \$1.5 million. Upgrading the exhibits at the Creative Discovery Museum at a cost of more than \$3 million. More than \$69 million of this \$120 million project came from public funding (city/county, state, federal) showing the value given to the making of great public spaces by our local elected officials. Public funding sources included: \$56M bonded by City against revenues from a negotiated county-collected hotel/motel tax, state and federal grants, land sales and expected parking revenues.

It is expected that this catalytic impact of this investment will be enormous. Already, by Fall 2005 in new housing development, more than \$119 million investment has been announced for new condominium and apartments near the waterfront.

TENNESSEE RIVERPARK 1988-2003
HOW HAVE THESE PROJECT BEEN FUNDED? DESIGN & CAPITAL COSTS
(In Thousands)

<u>PROJECTS:</u>	<u>PRIVATE:</u>	<u>STATE:</u>	<u>FEDERAL:</u>	<u>CITY/COUNTY:</u>
FISHING PARK (\$4,918,000)	\$755	\$2,150	\$213	\$1,800
TVA SEGMENT (\$1,000,000)			\$1,000	
ROSS'S LANDING PLAZA* (\$8,100,000)		\$5,400	\$200	\$2,500
WALNUT ST. BRIDGE (\$4,500,000)	\$400		\$2,000	\$2,100
MARKET ST.-HUNTER AMPHITHEATRE (\$2,209,000)	\$1,742		\$320	\$147
ROWING CENTER (\$2,353,000)	\$853	\$100	\$600	\$800
BLUFFVIEW-BATTERY PLACE/MABEL-H2O CO (\$3,540,000)	\$1,845	\$175	\$1,080	\$440
COOLIDGE PARK/ BANK STABILIZATION (\$8,361,000)	\$5,895	\$350	\$726	\$1,390
MILLENNIUM SEGMENT (\$12,824,000)			\$10,144	\$2,680
21st CENTURY WATERFRONT (\$69,500,000)	\$200	\$200	\$8,200	\$60,900
TOTALS TO DATE: (\$ 117,305,000)*	\$11,690 (10%)	\$8,375 (7%)	\$24,483 (21%)	\$72,757 (62%)

*the value of the land donated by RiverCity upon which the Tennessee Aquarium, Visitors Center, Ross Landing Plaza & Creative Discovery Museum are built wasn't calculated in this summary

TENNESSEE RIVERPARK (1998 – 2005)

How have these projects been funded?

(BACKUP NOTES)

1. FISHING PARK – Area of Riverwalk and Park Development (including first 2 miles of riverwalk) near the C. B. Robinson Bridge - \$4,918,000

\$2,150,000	-	State grant as part of the \$9 million from the Alexander Administration
\$650,000	-	Private funding for design, environmental review, legal fees for land easements, archaeological review and removal, engineering, surveys, other consultants (Lyndhurst)
\$213,000	-	Federal grants for docks
\$105,000	-	Private gifts collected for fishing piers (major donors) and smaller individual donations – names on plaque at park
\$900,000*	-	City of Chattanooga (\$850,000 loan from Lyndhurst grant)
\$900,000*	-	Hamilton County (\$850,000 loan from Lyndhurst grant)

***\$1.7M (\$850,000 loaned to City and same amount to County) from Lyndhurst grant funds at no interest over a 5-year payback term by the RiverCity Company. Loans were repaid and these funds were used again for future riverwalk design and development costs.**

Several additional contracts have been awarded by the County over the years in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers and City of Chattanooga for bank stabilization/erosion control – local match for these federal funds came from the City and County. Much of these costs are not included in this summary.

2. TVA SEGMENT - \$1,000,000

\$1 million from a special congressional appropriation to the Tennessee Valley Authority was used to construct the riverwalk segment near the Chickamauga Dam. TVA followed the design guidelines for the riverpark and also made improvements to the existing boat launch, a large handicapped accessible fishing dock, added parking, picnic shelter and public restrooms. County Park rangers have since taken over the management of this segment.

3. ROSS LANDING PLAZA - \$8,100,000

- \$5,400,000 - This sum came from two separate state appropriations. \$3,350,000 was provided by the Alexander Administration and \$4,000,000 was provided by the McWherter Administration. These funds were originally planned for the Tennessee Aquarium. When it was determined that the Aquarium could be privately funded, an agreement was reached with the State to allow these funds to be expended for needed road changes (moving the intersection from Broad Street and Riverfront Parkway to Chestnut Street and Riverfront Parkway) and accomplishing a major sewer relocation (\$1,950,000) and helping to build Ross's Landing Plaza (\$5,400,000).**
- \$2,500,000 - Bonds for this amount were issued by Hamilton County backed by Hotel/Motel Tax collections.**
- \$200,000 - Grant from Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency for docks.**

Note: The RiverCity Company also donated the land upon which both the Tennessee Aquarium and Ross's Landing Plaza was built – estimated value - \$3M

4. WALNUT STREET BRIDGE RESTORATION - \$4,500,000

- \$2,100,000 - City of Chattanooga**
- \$2,000,000 - Federal Grant Funds from D.O.T.**
- \$400,000 - Private funds raised by Chattanooga Venture from private/corporate gifts and plank sales**

5. MARKET STREET BRIDGE-HUNTER MUSEUM RIVERWALK - \$2,209,500

This work was accomplished in several contracts. It included the riverwalk vertical stairway connection to the Walnut Street Bridge and to the river, the switchback to the Hunter Museum, the riverwalk across the Hunter property, the Maurice Martin Amphitheatre, Bluff Furnace exhibits, historical signage and landings at the north and south ends of the bridge. The following funding sources were used:

- \$774,000 - Tonya Grant Funds**
- \$351,500 - Lyndhurst Grant Funds**
- \$354,500 - Chattanooga Venture Bridge Fund (private)**
- \$204,000 - Hunter Museum**
- \$320,000 - Federal (D.O.T.)**
- \$93,500 - City of Chattanooga**
- \$54,000 - Hamilton County**
- \$33,000 - RiverCity for riverwalk segment in front of RiverSet Apts.**
- \$25,000 - Anonymous Private Gift**

6. ROWING CENTER SEGMENT - \$2,353,000

- \$450,000 - Private cost of Rowing Center Building
- \$362,000 - Lyndhurst
- \$450,000 - City of Chattanooga
- \$350,000 - Hamilton County
- \$100,000 - State of Tennessee
- \$600,000 - Federal (ISTEA)
- \$41,000 - Bubba Morgan toward parking lot @ Sand Bar

7. BLUFF VIEW/BATTERY PLACE/MABEL TO WATER CO. - \$3,540,300

- \$1,080,000 - Federal (2 ISTEA grants)
- \$950,000 - Tonya
- \$827,300 - Lyndhurst
- \$175,000 - State Grants
- \$220,000 - City of Chattanooga
- \$68,000 - Manker Patten Tennis Facility

8. COOLIDGE PARK/NS RIVERWALK - \$8,361,000

- \$3,250,000 - Tonya
- \$2,000,000 - Lyndhurst
- \$300,000 - Benwood (\$250,000 – Fountain, \$50,000 – Carousel)
- \$350,000 - State Grants
- \$428,000 - Federal (ISTEA)
- \$820,000 - City of Chattanooga (\$250,000 phase I, \$180,000 phase II, \$250,000 carousel, \$50,000 demolition, \$40,000 riverwalk extension, \$50,000 bank stabilization match – estimate)
- \$570,000 - Hamilton County (same as City w/o \$250,000 carousel loan)
- \$298,000 - Federal (Corps of Engineers) estimate on bank stabilization
- \$195,000 - Carousel animal sponsorship by Friends of the Carousel
- \$100,000 - Anonymous donor toward carousel
- \$40,000 - Proceeds from Brick Sales Program
- \$10,000 - Jewish Community Federation (toward trees along River St.)

9. MILLENNIUM RIVERPARK SEGMENT - \$12,824,078
(based upon cost estimates of design/construction – to be bid in Spring 2001)

- \$10,144,078 - Federal/State (5 grants)
- \$680,000 - City of Chattanooga
- \$2,000,000 - Hamilton County

10. 21ST CENTURY WATERFRONT - \$69,500,000

TENNESSEE RIVERPARK – CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE A TWENTY-YEAR PERSPECTIVE (1985 – 2005)

No one involved (including yours truly) in the earliest planning regarding the future use and enjoyment of the riverfront in Chattanooga could have imagined what has transpired in twenty short years. And we all thought we were dreaming big at the time.

The dream has been magnified by one success after another and the care and feeding of many energetic leaders from both the private and public sectors. It is a story of a city that has learned to implement plans perhaps better than any in the nation. It is filled with many heroes, but I'll stick to the story and not mention every individual effort for fear of overlooking someone having a key role in this river renaissance. It is a story that many people tell differently and often bring up different heroes, which in itself shows some of the magic of this accomplishment.

It is a story about setting a very high standard and then meeting or exceeding that standard with almost every new addition. And, it is about collectively celebrating our successes – something we also do very well. As we continue forward, it is also about allocating the necessary resources to care for, manage and animate these delightful special places.

The planning actually began in earnest in mid 1982 with the appointment of the Moccasin Bend Task Force by the City and County. The next three years, resulting from the will of the Task Force Chairman Rick Montague, saw the most inclusive planning process ever witnessed in Chattanooga (before or since) with hundreds of public meetings and thousands of participants. They turned out to discuss, debate and contemplate what might happen if we let our minds imagine greatness along this 22-mile river corridor running between the Chickamauga Dam and the Marion County line. A public meeting was held in May 2005 at the new Convention and Trade Center and the crowd was so large we had to expand to include two rooms. After the presentation by architect Steve Carr, it was similar a church revival. Audience members actually came down front to testify, visibly moved by the presentation and its potential for our community!

The Plan called for a necklace along the river frontage called the Tennessee Riverpark that would have sparkling jewels along its length to help draw citizens and visitors alike to the shores. It projected a new hotel, new restaurants, new housing and new visitor attractions would follow. It was expected the build-out would take 25 years. The Plan also recommended a new non-profit company be created and charged with assisting the City and County in accomplishing this visionary plan.

The results are in and they are amazing! Whether you have been a staunch opponent of these efforts or a faithful supporter, you cannot deny the progress.

CONFIDENCE BUILDER...

The City, County and RiverCity Company started the initial physical project in 1987. It involved the development of a new 55-acre public park with the first segment of riverwalk extending from the C.B. Robinson Bridge toward the Chickamauga Dam. It required gaining land control from 9 different landowners including TVA, State of Tennessee, Olan Mills, City of Chattanooga and a railroad company. Hubert Fry, a local sportsman and TWRA commissioner, had been working on elected officials to put some fishing piers on this site which at the time was only accessible by a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Hubert was soon amazed at the project that unfolded there. This new park opened in May 1989 and immediately was a hit! The next segment was later funded by TVA to extend the riverside trail to the Dam.

Armed with that one success story and now having two willing partners in the City and County, the next effort was to begin the river renaissance at Ross's Landing – the historic location where our downtown and river meet and the birthplace of Chattanooga. Following considerable public debate, the decision was made to raise private funds and build the Tennessee Aquarium – the largest freshwater aquarium in the world! And with pomp and ceremony, the Tennessee Aquarium opened in May 1992 along with the wonderful public plaza surrounding it. Shortly after this the Walnut Street Bridge was opened as a linear park connecting the downtrodden Northshore. Other segments of the riverwalk were added taking the visitor or local pedestrian up through the developing Bluff View Arts District, across and through the historic Battery Place neighborhood, beyond the Manker Patten Tennis Facility, Scrappy Moore practice field and the Lookout Rowing Center to what is now the Boathouse Grille.

Then, we skipped across the river and developed Coolidge Park – a truly remarkable public park at the former site for over 50 years of the Navy/Marine Corps Reserve. The opening of the Walnut Street Bridge and the development of Coolidge Park has triggered millions in new development activity and investment in the Northshore area. During this park development, the riverwalk was completed from behind the Chattanooga Theatre Centre to the Market Street Bridge.

In May 2005 we celebrated the many new facets of the 21st Century Waterfront Plan, which effectively completes the river renaissance at Ross's Landing and opens a new 23-acre wetland park adjacent to Coolidge Park. And

In June 2005 the new 5.5-mile Millennium Phase of the Tennessee Riverpark opened connecting from the Boathouse Grille to the original Fishing Park. It is yet another truly remarkable segment complete with three separate lighted parking areas, public restrooms, picnic facilities, Tennessee River/South Chickamauga Creek/Amnicola Marsh overlooks and historical signage. It also includes the new ArrowPointe Park – which will most certainly become yet another community favorite.

Completion of this latest riverwalk phase provides a continuous 10-mile riverside trail from the Chickamauga Dam to the Olgiati Bridge along our south shore. Few municipalities in the world have this type of public quality of life amenity. No other community can copy the awesome beauty of our riverfront, landscape and terrain. We are indeed truly blessed!

Future phases along the north shore should be added soon to connect Rivermont Park to the North Chickamauga Creek Greenway and to extend the riverwalk from the new Renaissance Park westward to the new National Park at Moccasin Bend. This last segment is ironic in that Moccasin Bend was where we started. I guess we'll save the best for last.

Additionally, and critical, there are plans in the works to extend the North Chickamauga Creek Greenway over to Hixson High School along the creek. And, a greenway is planned along South Chickamauga Creek connecting to the Brainerd Levee and into Georgia. These new greenways will connect this wonderful river amenity into many, many neighborhoods. Soon a bicyclist can come down on a Saturday morning from Brainerd and enjoy coffee and pastries beside the downtown riverfront. Who would have “thunk” it in this lazy, laid-back, mid-sized southern city.

Chattanooga, at least in the past decade, has been a city that excels in plan implementation. This newfound ability and the short window of time in which the river renaissance has occurred bring a steady pilgrimage of city leaders to Chattanooga from around the globe. They also marvel at the quality of the product. Somewhere along the line, heavily influenced by Stroud Watson and our Design Center, we have learned to avoid the average. Average is average no matter how well you package it. Excellence on the other hand shows through. You must beware as both excellence and mediocrity are contagious! Being average means you are as near the bottom as you are to the top – that doesn't impress us in Chattanooga any more!

We also have learned to partner well. Given the current demand upon both local governments and the private sector, real progress requires the best minds of both to join forces to achieve success. I like to call it “Conspiring to Do Good”. Other cities have equally visionary plans but seem to have difficulty getting their private and public leaders on the same page.

The other, almost unmatched resource in Chattanooga's quiver is the funding by local charitable foundations to support quality visioning, planning, design and development activities. Lyndhurst, Tonya, Benwood, Community and other local foundations have helped this community dream big and develop wisely. These are hometown heroes of the highest order who have never asked our community for thanks or acknowledgement.