

**2007 Summit for a
Sustainable Tennessee
Report**

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I. Executive Summary

The Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee is the beginning of a multi-year process of conversations between thousands of citizens, companies and institutions in order to build consensus around long-term, visionary, and economically practical solutions for making Tennessee truly sustainable and prosperous.

A statewide sustainability agenda will maximize this opportunity by focusing citizen, corporate and institutional resources toward common goals.

Two closely related, over-arching themes emerged from the *Summit*. One was the need to raise public awareness about the urgency of responding quickly and boldly to growing environmental threats to the state's climate, water, air, wildlife and natural landscapes. The *Summit's* other major theme was that huge economic benefits are in store for the thousands of Tennessee households, communities and companies that are shifting to more sustainable products, policies and practices.

II. Introduction

More than two hundred citizens representing at least eighty Tennessee communities, organizations and agencies gathered at Lipscomb University in Nashville on November 15, 16, and 17, 2007 to begin a multi-phase, year-long process of crafting the state's first sustainability agenda.

Assembled under the banner "*Many Voices. A Common Vision,*" the participants spent three days in working meetings outlining key issues and goals, and discussing strategies and tactics for sharing resources and information. They were invited to share dozens of working models and case studies, and to demonstrate the most effective and environmentally sound practices.

The meeting, titled *The Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee*, was organized by the Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC) and Tennessee Conservation Voters (TCV) with help from dozens of volunteers from several local and statewide organizations.

The goal of last year's *Summit* and the ongoing visioning process is to develop a working plan for raising Tennessee's overall quality of life by making the state more sustainable. Two closely related, over-arching themes emerged from the *Summit*. One was the need to raise public awareness about the urgency of responding quickly and boldly to growing environmental threats to the state's climate, water, air, wildlife and natural landscapes. The *Summit's* other major theme was that huge economic benefits are in store for the thousands of Tennessee households, communities and companies that are shifting to more sustainable products, policies and practices.

A wide range of creative approaches were proposed at the *Summit* focusing around the idea of “sustainability as a source for economic opportunity and community vitality.” The following report outlines the process used to arrive at these ideas, the most popular themes and the feedback from the participants themselves.

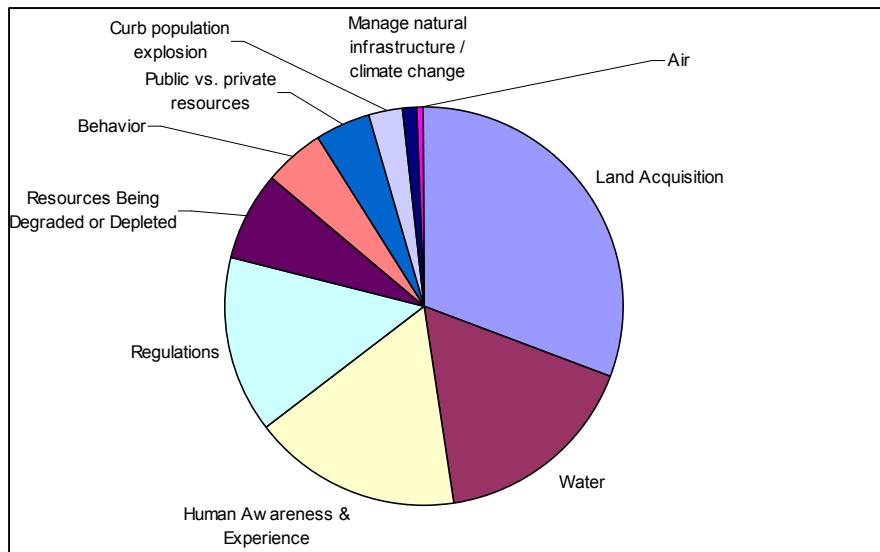
III. Groups

A mind mapping exercise was utilized to create a range of priorities in the four topic areas of the Summit: Natural Infrastructure, Healthy Communities, Quality Growth and Sustainable Design and Development, Sustainable Energy. A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged radially around a central key word or image. The concept was used to create ideas, brainstorm and eventually help develop an action framework.

a. Natural Infrastructure – The protection of habitat, habitat corridors, open space and watershed health.

Top Five Items from Mind Map

1. Land Acquisition
2. Water
3. Human Awareness & Experience
4. Regulations
5. Resources Being Degraded or Depleted

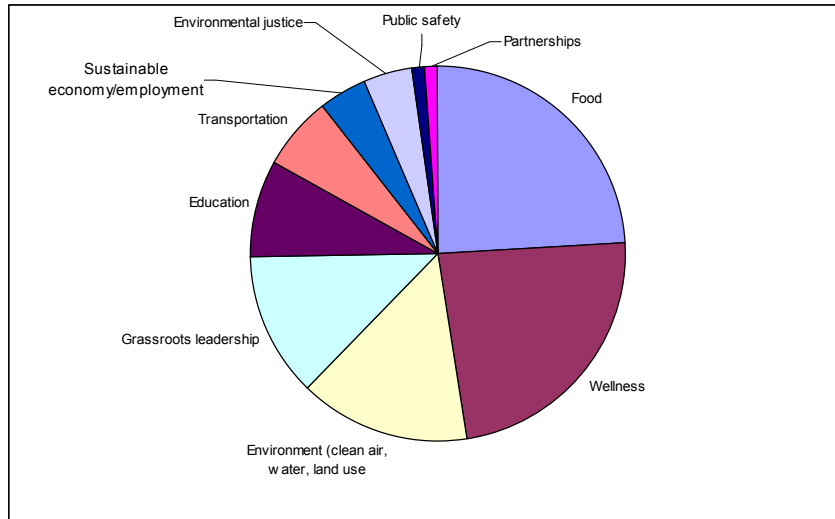


b. Healthy Communities – The connection with the public between public health/wellness and environmental protection / conservation of natural resources.

Top Five Items from Mind Map

1. Food
2. Wellness
3. Environment (clean air, water, land use)
4. Grassroots leadership

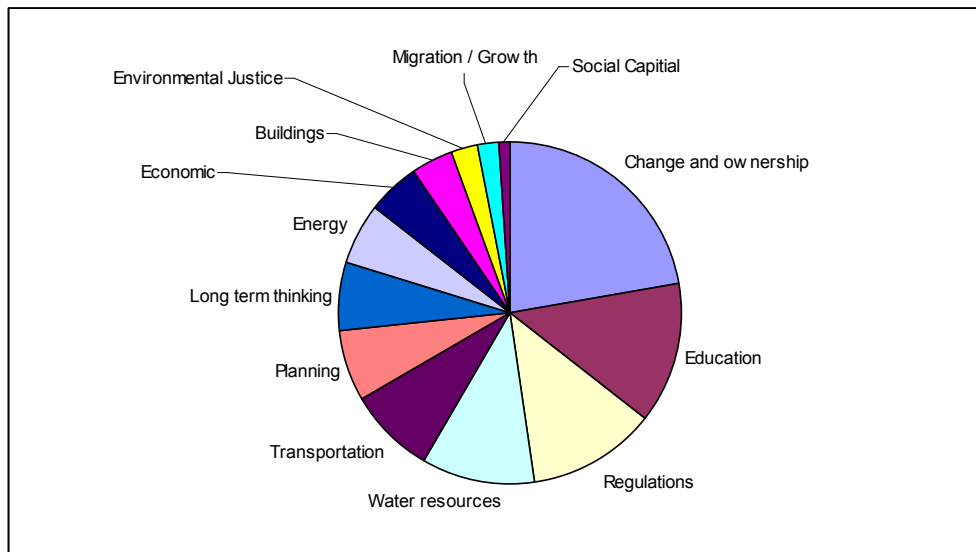
5. Education



c. Quality Growth and Sustainability – How our communities grow so that they incorporate economic development, environmental quality and preserve or improve quality of life.

Top Five Items from Mind Meld

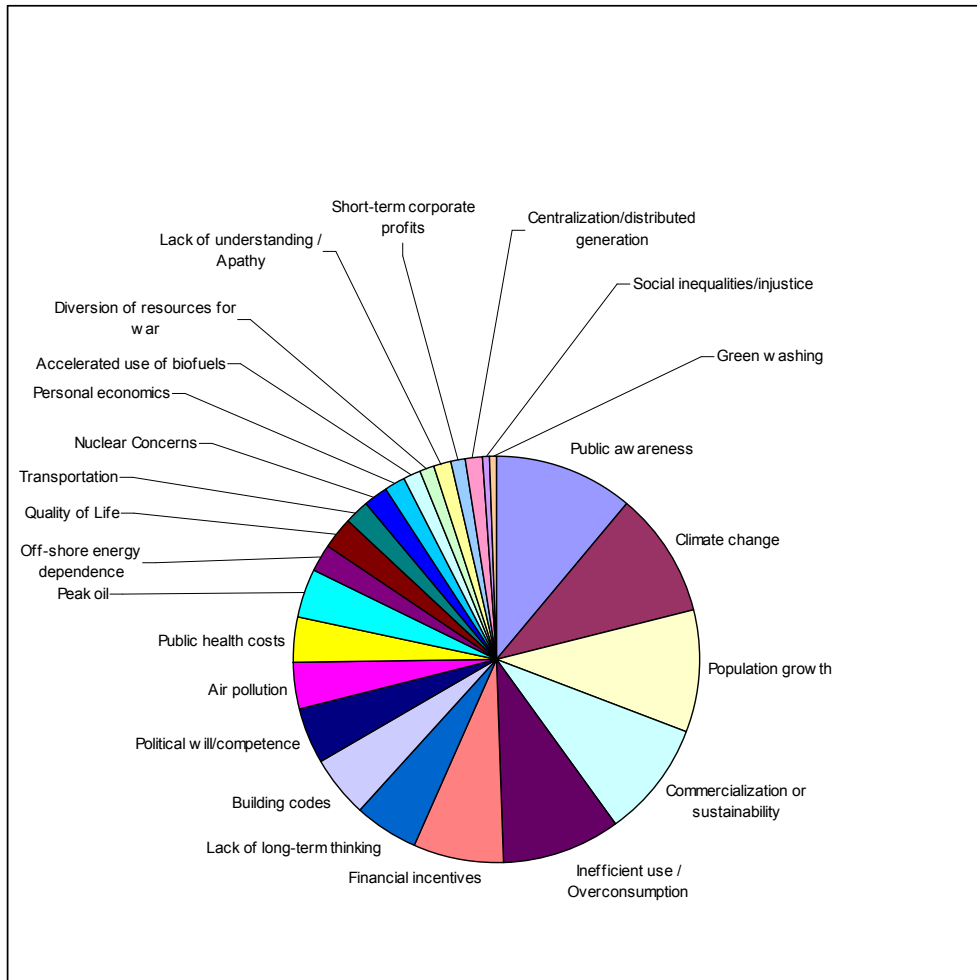
1. Change and ownership
2. Education
3. Regulations
4. Water resources
5. Transportation



d. Clean Energy – Ways for conserving energy and increasing the usage and development of alternative forms of energy that leave little.

Top Five Items from Mind Map

- Public awareness
- Climate change
- Population growth
- Commercialization or sustainability
- Inefficient use / Overconsumption



IV. Overall Themes

- Public education needs to be done on a community-based and on a watershed level.
- In our approach to education we should be proactive and positive instead of reactive and polarizing. Frame the discussion in a win-win format and “we’re all in this together” and build community.

- Collaboration, cooperation and planning and looking at things on a more holistic and systemic level. This idea fed into the concepts of government and public education. Instead of coming to the conclusion that more government subsidies and funding are needed, the focus was on becoming more involved in the political process, finding and supporting candidates, working to support alternatives in all areas.
- Public awareness campaign and tie in money savings and other concepts that the general public can get behind.
- providing creative market incentives for private business and consumers making more sustainable choices
- developing a major statewide public information campaign directed at business, consumers and students emphasizing the many practical benefits of greener lifestyles and practices
- providing incentives and public-private partnerships to encourage investment in and development of denser, more walkable, transit-oriented communities
- promoting healthier, more locally-sourced food systems throughout the state
- instituting new energy policies and land use planning at the federal (TVA), state and local level based on energy efficiency and organized along the state's key watersheds
- purchasing and preserving up to a million acres of greenspace across the state, beginning with land along the state's Mississippi corridor

V. Follow Up

The intent of the Summit was to begin to develop mechanisms by which all stakeholders could start collaborating and work on issue with measurable outcomes. One of those mechanisms was the development of a state energy plan which focuses on the following:

1. Set targets for energy efficiency and renewable energies with plans on how to meet them over the years.
2. Make goals clear, shared, measureable, and attainable.
3. Provide sustainable funding for energy efficiency incentives, consumer education, low-income services, R&D, and environmental protection with the long-term goal of market transformation.
4. State of TN can best support and frame energy policy and programs for Tennessee

Another mechanism is the Regional Opportunity Forums which are held in different regions around the state to build on the important ground work laid at the summit. The Forums are designed to carry on the momentum built at the summit and to discuss problems which are specific to each geographical area in which they are held. The first follow up forum was held in January 2008 in Knoxville, the second will follow on June 12, 2008 in Chattanooga with a third being scheduled in Memphis on September 19 and 20. The Second Annual Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee will be held on November 13-15, 2008 at Lipscomb University in Nashville.