



## July 11-12 Nashville, TN

“These bridges were built to move cars, and are not welcoming to those walking and biking along the corridor—but with the vision of community members, they could become gateways and assets to reconnect the community.”

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The construction of Interstate 40 in the 1960s displaced 1,400 North Nashvillians, mostly African Americans, and isolated historically significant business districts and neighborhoods like Elizabeth Park, Fisk, and Meharry from one another. Jefferson Street, which runs parallel to I-40 for several blocks, serves as a spine connecting neighborhoods with a rich history as the epicenter of the African American community in Nashville. The city’s three Historically Black Colleges and Universities—Fisk University, Tennessee State University, and Meharry Medical College—are all located in these neighborhoods, as well as some of the oldest black church congregations in the city.

The plan for this two-day design workshop is to utilize well-established community partnership networks along the Jefferson Street Corridor, gather input from community residents and business owners, synthesize ideas, and pursue implementation funds for projects that improve the connectivity between neighborhoods that have bisected by I-40.

## CURRENT CONDITION

The Jefferson Street bridge, built in 1967, over I-40 carries approximately 14,000 vehicles per day. In 2013 it was rated in good condition, but narrow, cracked sidewalks and wide travel lanes create a hostile pedestrian environment. The D.B. Todd Boulevard Bridge over I-40 carries 10,000 vehicles per day and was also built in 1967. That bridge is currently considered to be functionally obsolete.

In 2015, the Tennessee DOT replaced eight I-40 bridges dating to 1967-1969. The Jefferson Street and D.B. Todd Boulevard bridges have not been replaced and are not yet structurally deficient, but they significantly impede safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycling flow across the interstate.

Today, Jefferson Street features strong educational institutions, tight-knit communities, and a well-organized business alliance: the Street United Merchants Partnership (J.U.M.P.). Through the Gateway to Heritage project, the community has secured funding to enhance Jefferson Street, the interstate overpasses, and the 28th Avenue interchange. The project, which includes a public plaza, honors the area's history and successfully improved the overpass and interchange at 28th Avenue.

## PROJECT GOALS

### *Improve Connectivity Along Jefferson Street*

Metro Planning and the local community both recognize the need to improve connectivity to Jefferson Street. The city's 2015 NashvilleNext General Plan identifies significant walking project and biking projects—originally components of the Gateway to Heritage Walking Improvements project.

### *Plan for Aging Infrastructure*

While Jefferson Street and D.B. Todd Boulevard bridges are not yet structurally deficient, they continue to age. The community sees their replacement as an opportunity to reconnect bifurcated neighborhoods and expand access to social and economic activities.

### *Connect to Past Worked & Ongoing Efforts*

The Gateway to Heritage Walking Improvements Project proposes small-scale highway treatments such as partial capping and pedestrian/bicycle overpasses or underpasses.

### *Partially Cap the Highway*

A large-scale intervention like a partial cap could create new developable land, improve parking, and support affordable housing for parcels rendered undevelopable by the construction of the highway. A smaller-scale intervention could also have profound impacts, such as a “quick-build” project for immediate improvements to conditions on the existing bridge deck. As part of the design session, participants will be asked to help identify specific measurable benefits of the proposed design.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

No funding is currently obligated for the next phases of the Gateway to Heritage or the North Nashville Protected Bikeway. In early 2016, the Nashville Area MPO adopted its Regional Transportation Plan which includes investment in Nashville's downtown interstate loop.

When I-40 was being built, FHWA considered granting air rights for a plaza with shopping and parking.