

# NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

## Partnership 2020



*Market Street brought the right people together and asked the right questions. They helped us develop a strategy with consensus, identifying Nashville's unique strengths with the right data and metrics to allow us to measure our progress. They've been our partners in building a bright future.*

-Ralph Schulz, President and CEO, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce

### **Background**

The Nashville, Tennessee region is one of America's rising economic stars. Previously known for its music industry, Nashville is increasingly being recognized as a talent magnet and top economic performer. Its success in attracting a number of prominent headquarters firms and logistics and manufacturing companies placed Nashville near the top of multiple "best places" lists in recent years. Further enhancing the city's reputation as a music and creative hub is the network television show "Nashville," which is extending the Nashville brand to an even broader audience.

Market Street began its relationship with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce in 2005 when our firm was hired to update the region's **Partnership 2010** economic development strategy. The success of the Partnership 2010 plan led Nashville to be named the number one "Hot Headquarters Metro for the 21st Century" by Business Facilities in 2005 and "America's Hottest City" by Expansion Management in 2006. The relocation of Nissan Motors to Nashville from Los Angeles in 2005 created over 1,300 jobs paying an average salary of \$80,000. Other high-profile post-Partnership 2010 announcements were Gateway Computers and Dell Computers.

The Chamber again retained Market Street to conduct a mid-course assessment of Partnership 2010 implementation. This review set the stage for the Chamber's next five-year strategic process, Partnership 2020. Soon after receiving the "Chamber of the Year" award from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives in 2009 and being named by Site Selection magazine as a one of the nation's top 10 economic development groups, the Chamber brought Market Street back to guide **Partnership 2020** planning. The resulting strategy contained key actions that enabled the Nashville Area to address priority competitive issues such as the pursuit of regional cooperation and coordination, challenged school performance in certain metro school districts, the need for increased capacity and coordination of the K-16 workforce pipeline, lingering pollution issues, enhanced transit capacity, and deficits in certain key "New Economy" criteria such as educational attainment, innovation, and technology commercialization. Although the region had made progress in many of these areas, there was still much work to be done.

The Chamber recently engaged Market Street to conduct a third strategic planning process for the region and Partnership 2020. The Partnership 2020 strategy includes support for the launch of a new Nashville



Regional Export and Trade Initiative, a new Business Assistance Office, and a Corporate Coalition for Commute Alternatives. A wide variety of initiatives supporting talent development objectives have also been included from advocacy for expanded pre-K funding to fellowships to help retain college graduates. Multiple initiative are to be advanced or supported by the Research Center at the Nashville Chamber, an influential and valuable component of Partnership 2020 programming. The new five-year P2020 strategy was officially launched in June 2016.

### *Implementation Highlights*

In the years following Partnership 2010's rollout in 2005, public education was invigorated by the advent of career academies; economic diversification increased through the effective marketing of the Nashville region and the work of various industry councils, crime was significantly reduced through a comprehensive approach, regional connectivity was enhanced through growing public transit capacity, and urban blight was reversed in several key areas of the region. In recent years, a number of major regional initiatives and success stories have emerged from the Partnership's strategic planning efforts:

- The Entrepreneur Center of Nashville, a vision that grew out of Partnership 2010, opened in 2010 and soon became the "front door" for individuals looking to create companies in Nashville. The "Building Innovation" campaign is currently raising \$8 million to provide the founding endowment to fund Center operations and optimize the Center's facilities.
- The Research Center at the Chamber has continued to produce award-winning publications and emerged as a strong source of non-dues revenue for the Chamber.
- In 2014 and 2015, Partnership 2020 announced multiple relocations and expansions including at least four 1,000+ projects (Nissan North America, Community Health Systems, Under Armour, and Unipres).
- In 2016, the Chamber and its various partners in education and workforce development launched the Middle Tennessee Reconnect Community (MTRC) to encourage more than 200,000 residents in the region that currently possess some college education to re-enroll and complete their degree, supporting the state's "Drive to 55" program.
- The Partnership's economic development team has continued an aggressive, best practice marketing and corporate recruitment program that emphasizes relationship development and maintenance, conducting multiple out-of-market trips each year to meet with targeted contacts, as well as hosting numerous inbound trips each year.
- The Chamber launched a new Live It Nashville initiative to promote the region's quality of life and complement its technology-focused talent attraction efforts, initially guided by the WorkIT Nashville initiative. WorkIT Nashville was developed in partnership with the Nashville Technology Council, whose collective efforts to match job seekers with available positions and relevant training opportunities was enhanced by the receipt of a recent TechHire grant from the Department of Labor.

