



# Chattanooga, Tenn.

## PROFILE:

POPULATION: 166,104  
MEDIAN INCOME: \$35,664  
MEDIAN HOME VALUE: \$134,200  
% W/ BACHELORS DEGREE: 17.2%  
WALK SCORE: 37/100

## STATISTICS:

- Riders of Chattanooga's Bike Share system burned 1 million calories in less than five months after the launch of the system in July 2012. ([Bike Chattanooga](#))
- Creation of the Tennessee Riverwalk in the early 90s saw a 141% increase in adjacent property values between 1988 and 1999 and a 26.5% increase between 1995 and 1999. ([Markeson, 2006](#))

## QUOTES:

*"Chattanooga is facing an incredible period of growth. This is a big opportunity for us to look at land use, planning and transportation holistically. We really need to be looking at how we spend our transportation dollars as a whole and do it to meet the needs of everyone, not just people in cars."*

—[PHILIP PUGLIESE, Outdoor Chattanooga](#)

*"Vision 2000 helped people recognize that we could have whatever kind of town we wanted if we got involved with others to make it happen."*

—[DALTON ROBERTS, Former Executive Hamilton County](#)

*"The 21st Century Waterfront project is a vital component for tourism."*

—[BOB DOAK, president of the Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)



## From Vision to Venture

Chattanooga residents know what a difference 20 years can make in their city. In 1969 Chattanooga was reported to have the worst air quality in the US.<sup>1</sup> A strong mid 20th century manufacturing sector left the city with air pollution so dense that cars needed to run headlights in the middle of the afternoon. Increased regulation of the manufacturing sector over the next decade brought improvements in air quality, but coincided with a decline in manufacturing and the departure of retail that left the urban core a largely abandoned.

After years of population and job loss, Chattanooga's residents were driven to come up with a new direction for their city. In 1984 a group of community, civic and business leaders established the non-profit [Chattanooga Venture](#) to lead their city through the creation of [Vision 2000](#), a collaborative process that resulted in over 2,500 community members generating dozens of project ideas to transform the physical, economic, and political structure of Chattanooga.

These projects included the transformation of the downtown and waterfront. Chattanooga Venture created the [River City Company](#) to lead the physical infrastructure improvements imagined by residents, and the execution of the Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan. The plan included a linear park that would become the Tennessee Riverwalk, conversion of the historic Walnut Street Bridge into one of the longest pedestrian bridges in the world, and the creation of a park where the waterfront met downtown. The Riverpark was an overwhelming success, transforming a blighted waterfront into a community asset, increasing property values, and drawing retail and business back into Chattanooga. More than \$2 billion has been invested in downtown since the first Tennessee Riverpark projects were completed in the early 90s.

The 21st Century Waterfront Plan, established through another community process and executed by River City Company, was a massive \$120 million project that continued the

*"Nobody had any little private angle. I didn't have a little county angle. The mayor didn't have a little city angle. The private sector didn't have a little business angle. We all had one angle, and that was to do something for Chattanooga, and, by George, it worked."*

—[DALTON ROBERTS, Former Executive Hamilton County](#)

*"Chattanooga's vision of a clean, healthy city and protecting the nature of this area is another very important reason why Volkswagen felt very at home here."*

—[STEFAN JACOBY, President and CEO of Volkswagen Group of America](#)



transformation of the river with a focus on providing Chattanooga with space to be an active community. Strong pedestrian connections between downtown and the RiverWalk were achieved by [transforming the Riverfront Parkway](#), a four lane highway originally designed for heavy industrial shipping, into an urban street. This transformation included removing freeway hardware like guardrails, replacing outside lanes with sidewalks and street buffers, and adding pedestrian friendly intersections. Almost 20 years to the month after Chattanooga Venture published its Vision 2000 plan, the 21st Century Waterfront was complete, demonstrating the positive change that can be achieved when a community unites to create a framework for their future.

Today, Chattanooga continues to build on the legacy of change initiated by Chattanooga Venture. With the infrastructure in place to support active transportation, Chattanooga launched its own [bike sharing program](#) in the summer of 2012. Funded initially with a \$2 million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant, Bike Chattanooga offers 300 bikes available for checkout from 30 stations providing connectivity between downtown, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the RiverWalk, and cultural attractions.

Manufacturing is once again growing in Chattanooga, and this time citizens can continue to breathe easy. In 2011, Volkswagen opened it's only American manufacturing plant in Chattanooga. According to Stefan Jacoby, President and CEO of Volkswagen Group of America, "Chattanooga's vision of a clean, healthy city and protecting the nature of this area is another very important reason why Volkswagen felt very at home here." Volkswagen enhanced this vision by building the world's [first LEED Platinum Certified automobile manufacturing plant](#) on a rehabilitated brownfield. The plant and its adjacent 25 miles of paved hike and bike nature trails will also serve as the 2012–15 home of the US World Cycling Championships.

<sup>1</sup> "Chattanooga Air Quality Control Bureau", Accessed August 2012, [www.apcb.org/about/history.aspx](http://www.apcb.org/about/history.aspx)

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