

TENNESSEE RIVERLINE

652 YOU
TO

ROANE COUNTY, TN

Roane County, TN

2019 Pilot Community Program Report

a publication by the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tennessee RiverLine

The Tennessee RiverLine is a continuous system of paddling, hiking and biking trails along the Tennessee River's 652-mile reach from Knoxville, TN, to Paducah, KY. Envisioned as North America's next great regional trail system, the Tennessee RiverLine frames the Tennessee River landscape, adjacent public lands and communities and the adventure experiences they offer on and along the river as a dynamic 1.2 million acre park.

The Tennessee RiverLine was proposed by students in the **University of Tennessee River Studio** – a teaching, research and outreach initiative of the UT School of Landscape Architecture – in 2016 as a strategy to improve public health, promote economic development and foster stewardship of the Tennessee River's fragile ecosystems. Stakeholders inspired by their creativity and these strategic intentions formed the **Tennessee RiverLine Partnership**: a consortium of representatives from federal, state and local organizations, including the National Park Service and TVA, that stewards the vision and promotes development of connected outdoor recreation opportunities across the Tennessee River's diverse communities.

Since its inception, the Partnership has understood that the ultimate success of the Tennessee RiverLine is dependent on the support of key stakeholders for the vision, the participation of Tennessee River Communities and the extent to which their leaders, residents and visitors are empowered to shape it.

With this in mind, the Partnership invited all 71 counties, cities and towns along the Tennessee River to apply to the 2019 Pilot Community Program. 17 completed applications were submitted, representing 30 communities home to 1.25 million people in three states. This response was a resounding endorsement of widespread interest in and support for the Tennessee RiverLine Vision by 50% of all Tennessee River communities.

652 to YOU in Roane County

Roane County, TN, was one of five successful applicants selected to represent the diversity of all cities, counties, towns and rural communities along the Tennessee River. Roane County's application, submitted by Roane County Government on behalf of itself and the Cities of Kingston, Rockwood, and Harriman, presented a unique opportunity to study the RiverLine vision with a scenic, rural county proximate to a major metropolitan area and that would soon be engaged in County-wide recreation and trail master planning.

The Roane County Planning Committee collaborated with Partnership staff for two months to design 652 to YOU to achieve desired objectives. Chief among these objectives was to listen to feedback from leaders and residents regarding the Tennessee RiverLine vision and to understand local ideas and aspirations for an enhanced relationship with the Tennessee River. From these interactions, recommendations would be offered for how Roane County may reach these aspirations and help fulfill local and regional visions for the Tennessee RiverLine.

Held July 22-24, 2019, 652 to YOU in Roane County included a driving tour of existing river assets, a leadership workshop, a pontoon boat tour of Watts Bar Lake with Planning Committee members and a community engagement event. The program benefited from the participation of 18 community leaders and 60 residents on site, as well as respondents to an online survey: RiverGauge.

Both leaders and residents shared an aspiration to become a regional 'hub' of recreation activity in order to increase economic development through tourism, healthy lifestyle opportunities, and the quality of life in Roane County. They also shared enthusiasm for the Tennessee RiverLine as an opportunity to leverage existing recreation amenities and guide future investments, and they recognized the need to enhance available information about existing recreation

opportunities, ecotourism amenities and supporting services in the County, such as overnight accommodation.

Community leadership see recreation and ecotourism as drivers of economic growth in Roane County. They feel the rural 'resort-like' quality of Watts Bar Lake, coupled with its proximity to economic centers in Knoxville and Oak Ridge, position it well to provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. Leaders also recognize that existing river amenities require maintenance, that future investments need to be planned and promoted strategically, and that growth may threaten the area's natural beauty and water quality if not planned carefully.

Residents overwhelmingly selected trails and connective systems, including water trails, as well as overnight accommodations and camping as top priorities for new investments. Thiefneck Island, Kingston Waterfront and the county-owned properties on Caney Creek are hotspots of existing river use and new investment opportunities. Residents also recognize the health and water quality benefits these and other Tennessee RiverLine investments may offer.

Eight **recommendations** are offered to help overcome challenges and achieve these aspirations through regional and local visions for the Tennessee RiverLine. The realization of both will require sustained commitment, action, investment and partnership from Roane County leadership and residents, local and regional stakeholders, including TVA and the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership.

- 1) Continue Cultivating Paddle Culture
- 2) Enhance Gear Availability
- 3) Engage Rivers as Connectors + Blue Space
- 4) Education: River as Shared Space
- 5) Invest in Opportunity Landscapes
- 6) Optimize Lodging, Campgrounds for Paddle Users
- 7) Leadership Development
- 8) Leverage Existing, Advocate for New Funding Sources



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE TENNESSEE RIVERLINE VISION

The Tennessee RiverLine is a continuous, system of paddling, hiking and biking experiences along the Tennessee River's 652-mile reach from Knoxville, TN, to Paducah, KY, that:



Celebrates the scenic beauty, rich diversity and storied history of the Tennessee River and the Tennessee River Valley



Connects people and communities to each other, their river heritage and the Tennessee River landscape, and



Catalyzes new investments in economic opportunity, social health and ecological stewardship

River As Park

The 652-mile Tennessee River and its nine scenic reservoirs are a continuous 470,000 acre landscape that is accessible to the public - residents and visitors alike - offering opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, camping and other types of water-based recreation.

Because of this continuity and public accessibility, the Tennessee RiverLine is first and foremost a water trail that offers users of all ages and skill levels the opportunity to safely paddle the storied Tennessee River for an afternoon, a day, a weekend, a week, a month or longer.

The river's banks are also home to more than 700,000 acres of National Parks, recreation areas and wildlife refuges, state and local parks, as well as diverse cities and rural communities. Each offer their own unique stories, experiences and river access to Tennessee RiverLine users while providing opportunities to paddle, hike, bike, climb and enjoy nature as they are immersed in the beauty of the Tennessee River landscape.

When considering the river, these public landscapes and river communities as a whole, a dynamic 1.2 million acre park suddenly comes into focus. This landscape of opportunities and experiences connected by the river is also the vision for the Tennessee RiverLine.

A Trail Like No Other

The Tennessee RiverLine connects a region, its dynamic communities, countless points of interest and numerous existing opportunities to hike, bike and paddle, but it is much more than a recreational trail.

By providing a framework of opportunities for all Tennessee River communities and land owners to enhance their relationship with the river, the Tennessee RiverLine is positioned as a strategic infrastructure of local and regional economic development, a quality of life amenity for enhanced public health, and a strategy to build a multi-generational constituency of users advocating for and participating in the stewardship of the river's fragile ecosystems and biodiversity.

Initial reaches of the Tennessee RiverLine will be comprised of existing water trails, access points and other supporting amenities whose stakeholders agree to be identified as a part of the larger trail system. Over time, investments in new infrastructures of public access, information and experiences, as well as reinvestments in existing amenities, connect to provide a continuous and safe Tennessee RiverLine.

Guiding Principles

A flexible framework of guiding principles unifies the Tennessee RiverLine across geography and time while allowing it to manifest in each community in a manner that is expressive of their unique place.

For more information about the Tennessee RiverLine's guiding principles, please visit tnriverline.org.

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership

This bold vision for the Tennessee RiverLine originated in the UT School of Landscape Architecture's Tennessee River Studio in the fall of 2016. The students' proposal was received by regional stakeholders with such interest and enthusiasm that in fall of 2017, it catalyzed the formation of the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership.

The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership is a diverse volunteer consortium of Tennessee River advocates from across the Tennessee River Valley and beyond. Each individually, and the Partnership collectively, is committed to building a shared vision for the Tennessee RiverLine and stewarding it toward implementation.

The growing Partnership is comprised of tourism and recreation professionals, scholars, planners, agency leaders and non profit directors, including representatives from the following entities and organizations:

- The National Park Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Tennessee River Valley Stewardship Council
- Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association
- UT College of Architecture + Design
- UT School of Landscape Architecture
- The Tennessee River Studio
- UT Chattanooga, Interdisciplinary Geospatial Technology Lab
- Tennessee State Parks
- Tennessee Department of Health
- Tennessee Department of Tourist Development
- City of Knoxville
- Lose Design
- River Discovery Center (Paducah, KY)
- Tennessee Aquarium



A VISION

for north america's next great regional trail system

2019 PILOT COMMUNITY PROGRAM: 652 TO YOU

Since its inception, the Partnership has understood that the ultimate success of the Tennessee RiverLine is dependent on the support of key stakeholders for the vision, the participation of Tennessee River Communities and the extent to which their leaders, residents and visitors are empowered to shape it.

The 2019 Pilot Community Program, later branded 652 to YOU was designed as an opportunity for the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership to evaluate the vision from the perspective of Tennessee River communities and to begin mobilizing local efforts and expertise to realize the vision.

Through a competitive application process, the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership invited applications from all communities immediately adjacent to the Tennessee River. Application evaluation criteria included a demonstrated understanding of the applicant community's relationship to the river, an articulated desire to understand how their community could benefit from the Tennessee RiverLine, and capacity to collaboratively plan and support pilot program activities in their community.

17 completed applications were submitted, representing 34 communities home to 1.25 million people in three states. This response was a resounding endorsement of widespread interest in and support for the Tennessee RiverLine Vision by 50% of all Tennessee River communities.

From this applicant pool, the Partnership advertised that it would select four or five communities to participate in the Pilot Program. While it is not possible for such a small sample to typify all other Tennessee River communities, a participant pool was desired that represented the diversity of community sizes, types and geopolitical contexts found along the Tennessee River's 652-mile reach.

The five communities selected as 2019 Tennessee RiverLine Pilot Communities are:

- Roane County, TN, pop. 53,000
- Bridgeport, AL, pop. 2,500
- The Shoals, AL, pop. 147,000
- Benton County, TN, pop. 16,000
- Paducah/McCracken County, KY, pop. 65,000

652 to YOU PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Before 2019 Pilot Communities were selected, the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership developed the following list of desired outcomes for the 652 to YOU Pilot Community Program:

1. Share and build excitement around the current vision for the Tennessee RiverLine
2. Understand what a community sees in itself as its greatest strengths and assets
3. Gain feedback to Tennessee RiverLine vision as currently proposed
4. Listen to new ideas that might be incorporated into the vision for the Tennessee RiverLine
5. Understand the existing perceptions, use patterns and conditions in Tennessee River communities related to the river and river access
6. Identify future opportunities through which a Tennessee River community can enhance its relationship with and access to the River, and thus the Tennessee RiverLine
7. Understand how the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership can be a resource to help Tennessee River communities realize this enhanced relationship
8. To showcase the importance, value and beauty of the Tennessee River regionally and locally





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ROANE COUNTY, TN



COMMUNITY GOALS + AGENDA

Planning and executing the 652 to YOU program required time and effort of all members of the Roane County Planning Committee. In recognition of this investment and partnership, Tennessee RiverLine Partnership wanted to be certain that each community was able to accomplish the goals that motivated their application to the Pilot Program. Based on their application materials and discussions with Tennessee RiverLine staff, the following goals were identified to guide 652 to YOU efforts in Roane County:

- Promote Roane County as a regional resource and recreation hub
- Demonstrate the value of existing river assets to Roane County citizens
- Provide scenarios to bridge the gap between community members who want to maintain the status quo and community members who want to see change
- Develop paths forward and have community members prioritize potential projects
- Understand how the Tennessee RiverLine can be component to Roane County's larger recreation vision and master plan

To achieve these goals and the overall program outcomes, the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership and the Roane County Planning Committee collaborated to design a 652 to YOU Program agenda that included four principal activities: a Windshield Tour, a River Experience, a Leadership Workshop and a Community Engagement Event.

To optimize the time of the Roane County Planning Committee and attending members of the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership, the following two-and-a-half day agenda for the 652 to YOU Pilot Community Program was planned and executed:

Monday, July 22

900am - 1200pm	Windshield Tour of River Access in Roane County
100pm - 400 pm	Community Leadership Workshop

Tuesday, July 23

900am - 1200pm	Boat Tour of Tennessee River (postponed due to rain)
500pm - 700 pm	Community Engagement Event

Wednesday, July 24

900am - 1200pm	River Experience: Boat Tour of Tennessee River
100pm - 300pm	Wrap-up Meeting with Planning Committee

RIVER EXPERIENCE: BOAT TOUR

The Planning Committee for each Pilot Community was asked to plan a “River Experience” that would allow Tennessee RiverLine staff and community members an opportunity to interact with the Tennessee River. The activities were completely conceptualized and organized by planning committee members.

In Roane County, the help of Bunch Marina was enlisted to offer a pontoon boat tour of the county’s various waterways and recreational opportunities. The tour launched from Kingston City Park and covered approximately 15 river miles between the White Stone Inn and Roane County Park. The tour revealed the river’s scenic and ‘resort-like’ qualities in Roane County, as well as the amount of single family residential development happening along its shores. Shoreline erosion challenges triggered by heavy rains in spring 2019 and the loss of stabilizing vegetation were also observed during the tour.



WINDSHIELD TOUR

Six Tennessee RiverLine staff members were led by Mike Beard, Director of Roane County Parks and Recreation, and Josh Lentz, Roane County Parks and Recreation Staff. The purpose of the tour was to introduce Tennessee RiverLine staff to the following existing river assets and discuss the challenges and opportunities of public river access associated with each.

- **City of Kingston Waterfront** - Only a short distance from Clinch River’s confluence with the Tennessee, this waterfront area is a combination of multiple assets including a boat ramp and courtesy dock, playground and pavilion amenities, and close proximity to town.
- **Riley Creek Campground** - A large, well maintained campground that seems to get plenty of use by RV and tent campers. It was noted that it might be difficult to find from a watercraft a challenge that could have multiple solutions.
- **Roane County Park** - Home to a nice play area, trails and a new paddle launch site, the Roane County Park is a good example of park design optimized for paddlers with its dedicated kayak launch and storage racks.
- **Caney Creek Property** - Accessible by crossing an old bridge currently overgrown with brush, this property can provide multiple outdoor recreation opportunities through future planning and development.



LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The Leadership Workshop was an opportunity for diverse community leaders with an interest in leveraging the Tennessee River as a community asset to come together for a facilitated discussion. Attendees included elected and appointed officials from county and city government, Roane Alliance staff and recreation planning consultants, as well as representatives from TWRA and TVA. Following a presentation of the Tennessee RiverLine vision, staff from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program led the discussion to identify opportunities for moving the Tennessee RiverLine forward in Roane County as well as barriers to that aspiration.

The workshop involved identifying consensus opportunities and issues among attendees. The discussion was facilitated first to capture the perceived strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within Roane County, and then give participants an opportunity to prioritize each list. The items that received the most priority votes prompted further discussion to build dialogue and consensus around larger aspirations relative to the community's relationships with area rivers, future priorities for the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership and next steps for the community leadership.

Leadership Discussions: The discussion was largely driven by the participants' interests and comments. One comment often sparked a longer conversation thread. Although there was no set list of questions, the facilitator used prompts similar to those found below in order to focus the conversation about the Tennessee River:

Strengths: What is your relationship with the river, and what are your strengths and assets that make it what it is?

Weaknesses: What do you think other communities have or are doing better than you are?

Opportunities: What trends related to the river use and/or the Tennessee RiverLine do you see occurring that are positive in your community?

Aspire: What are some goals that your community can work towards over the next 5 years that are aligned with the vision for the Tennessee RiverLine, that support its implementation, and that leverage existing strengths and assets, take advantage of emerging opportunities and overcome identified challenges.

Next Steps: What are some goals that the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership can work on over the next five years that would support your community's goals and aspirations relative to the Tennessee RiverLine and its implementation?

Analyzing the Discussion: The collected information was analyzed with qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitatively, topics were summarized through the facilitator's notes taken during the discussion. For example, the topic "significance of the River to the community's heritage" was discussed in Roane County, which is a brief synopsis of a more complete dialogue.

Quantitatively, each note that was recorded by the facilitator was thematically categorized according to its content. For example, "Scenic beauty and sunsets (2 votes)" and "Aquatic diversity - fishing (2 votes)" were both classified in the "Natural Resources" strength category, which would then have a total value of 4 priority votes. Both comments tell a consistent story for Roane County and provide valuable data for the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership to inform recommendations and help direct their future efforts.





LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

SWOT exercise

1052 YOU

Roane County, TN

TENNESSEE RIVERLINE 652

Strengths

- Vastness of River
- Existing Access to River w/ Parks + Good Amenities
- Not much industrial development → lots of natural beauty
- Diversity of seasonal events + activities
- Retail locations close to water courses
- Incredible opportunity for future TN Riverline

Strengths

- ... of the area
- ...
- ...
- ...

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Citizens &

Members &

Roane County

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP: SWOT ANALYSIS

On July 22, 2019, 18 community leaders from around Roane County, including Planning Committee members, convened to identify and prioritize local strengths, weaknesses and opportunities related to their relationship with the Tennessee River, and to explore how the Tennessee RiverLine could be a framework to leverage their strengths and assets in order to accomplish their broader community aspirations.

Roane County leadership has a grand vision of becoming a recreation village and a regional eco-tourism destination, capitalizing on their natural assets and existing outdoor recreation infrastructure. Numerous opportunities all revolve around building their recreation infrastructure and using trail systems to foster downtown revitalization and community connectivity. Despite these strengths and opportunities, Roane County faces challenges including access to funding for built infrastructure projects and attracting businesses that support their recreation hub vision to key locations.

Across all five Pilot Communities, hereafter referred to as 'the regional scale,' there was not a consistent ranking of strengths, weaknesses or opportunities. Each community presents unique assets and challenges for realizing their

vision for the Tennessee RiverLine. The uniqueness of each community will need to be matched with creativity and innovation by community leadership and the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership to capitalize on every community's assets while addressing weaknesses.

Strengths: Roane County leadership agreed with other communities by ranking its natural assets as their community's greatest strength. Natural assets received 30% of all priority votes in Roane County compared to the overall regional average of 18%. Outdoor recreation opportunities was ranked as the second highest strength with a note about the existing diversity of uses on the river, including fishing, kayaking and paddle boarding (17%). This suggests that leadership perceives that there is already a culture of outdoor recreation on the river supported by users who recognize and have a desire to preserve the area's natural beauty.

Regionally, Roane County's strength of the outdoor recreation opportunities was only matched by Benton County, a similarly rural location with a high number of river access points and ample public land; however, Roane

County ranked river infrastructure its third greatest strength with 16% of the priority markers compared to Benton County's 2%. This indicates a recognition of the quality of the river access infrastructure available in Roane County compared to other similar communities along the river.

Weaknesses: Although there is an outdoor recreation culture in Roane County, the infrastructure required to support these activities take long-term public investment. Funding opportunities (20% of the priority votes) ranked as the highest weakness followed by a lack of lodging opportunities (16%), coordinated river development efforts (14%), and a poor public perception of water quality. The recreation community drawn to Roane County is looking for a comprehensive, cohesive outdoor experience, and the leadership group noted that such an experience is not yet available due to funding limitations and lack of investor support. Additionally, the public perception of water quality suggests that education and real-time information relative to acceptable safety standards are necessary. Both could foster more river use by Roane County residents and visitors.

STRENGTHS



Paducah / McCracken Co. , Ky	12%	3%	5%
Benton County, Tn	12%	22%	2%
The Shoals, Al	28%	0%	6%
Bridgeport, Al	9%	0%	16%

WEAKNESSES



Paducah / McCracken Co. , Ky	0%	14%	0%
Benton County, Tn	2%	4%	0%
The Shoals, Al	0%	9%	4%
Bridgeport, Al	7%	25%	5%

OPPORTUNITIES



Paducah / McCracken Co. , Ky	21%	0%	0%
Benton County, Tn	29%	27%	13%
The Shoals, Al	16%	3%	0%
Bridgeport, Al	35%	14%	11%

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP: SWOT + ASPIRE

Regionally, tourism and supporting amenities such as restaurants and lodging was the highest ranked weakness with an average of 13%. Roane County was slightly above the average with 16% of local weakness votes. Roane County did have a few unique weaknesses compared to other Pilot Communities, including funding sources (20% Roane County, 6% Regionally) and coordination of river development visions (15% Roane County, 5% Regionally). This suggests that Roane County has a different set of challenges to realizing its RiverLine aspirations, including coordination amongst multiple local governments.

Opportunities: Roane County leadership group sees the potential to become a recreation hub and featured destination as part of the broader Tennessee RiverLine system. They discussed and ranked the highest opportunity as further leveraging their ongoing outdoor recreation planning efforts to align with the Tennessee RiverLine vision (21%). Secondly, they noted that there is an opportunity to build upon that vision by connecting and developing the downtowns of Roane County cities with multi-modal trail systems that also connect to adjacent Loudon and Anderson Counties (20%). The confluence of these two opportunities link the 'hub and spoke' concept that is the leadership's vision for Roane County and corresponds well to the Tennessee RiverLine vision.

Roane County agreed with many other communities that recreation infrastructure was a highly ranked opportunity. Roane County leadership also agreed with Bridgeport that the Tennessee RiverLine presented an opportunity to catalyze further development in their downtown areas, enhancing social vibrancy and economic activity. Both Roane County and Bridgeport have relatively low population densities and downtowns that are adjacent to the river that could provide valuable amenities and services to long-distance paddlers on the Tennessee RiverLine.

Aspirations: Establishing Roane County as a 'recreation village' was the leadership group's top aspiration. Their vision is to become a multi-modal destination and hub for outdoor recreation activities including kayaking, fishing, horse trails, off-highway vehicles, Manhattan Project Tour, hiking trails, camping, water sports and power boats.

The second and third ranked aspirations keep recreation as a cornerstone for the future of the community and its economic development. Leadership seeks to create a healthier community both physically and mentally and to set the example regionally for the Tennessee RiverLine.

A foundation for realizing these aspirations can be set by increasing gear availability and equal access opportunities for all community members, holding events to introduce people to the river and increasing trail connectivity. The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership can help by providing conceptual designs, facilitate coordination between entities to align the riverfront development, and provide the regional plan framework with the role that each community plays as a part of the 652-mile trail.

The top voted aspirations of other Pilot Communities varied greatly and included related topics: developing a partnership between federal, state and local entities to develop the waterfront; connecting the community to the river through tourism and business attraction; embracing the community's river heritage and become a great steward for it; and developing interpretive and wayfinding signage plans for Tennessee RiverLine sites.

Next Steps for the RiverLine: The next steps discussion sought to identify discrete tasks the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership could focus on in order to help Roane County fulfill its aspirations while leveraging their strengths and opportunities. The leadership group asked the Partnership to consider the following actions in their future work:

- Incorporate Tennessee RiverLine design and planning support for communities into University of Tennessee Landscape Architecture coursework
- Provide case studies and models on how to use equipment, build partnerships
- Establish specifications for kayaks and paddle board equipment and other RiverLine amenities

Next Steps for the Community: The leadership group considered the following as their own next steps:

- Perform an economic impact analysis for outdoor recreation infrastructure and opportunities
- Incorporate and prioritize the Tennessee RiverLine into the planning processes already underway
- Apply for funding to continue toward building Roane County as an outdoor recreation hub
- Share and publicize the Tennessee RiverLine with the community through various means
- Implement the Rockwood Greenway trail to the lake with restroom amenities
- Tie the work in with Health Action Plans

"The cultural and social possibilities of the RiverLine are extremely important, as well as recreational activities that can be expanded in scope and accessibility."

- Workshop Participant



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT METHODOLOGY

The Tennessee RiverLine sought to create a space where diverse community members could contribute their knowledge, provide feedback and build a conversation around any topic that is relevant to the Tennessee RiverLine vision in the community. Community engagement event activities were tailored to participants with diverse engagement preferences and built to cover the full public participation spectrum, from answering direct questions to offering unique solutions and new ideas.

652 to YOU Event: The community engagement event was kicked off with a presentation by the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership's Director, Brad Collett. The presentation outlined the Tennessee RiverLine vision and its origins, showcased the community and the River Valley's unique assets, and called to mind the potential benefits the Tennessee RiverLine offers its users and Tennessee River communities. Roane County's presentation has been shared with the Planning Committee. If interested, please request this file from a Planning Committee member.

After the presentation, the participants were invited to an open house style space where they moved from activity to activity at their own discretion. Scenario testing - What If?, participatory mapping - MAP IT!, and roundtable discussion activities were available to all participants. Recognizing that a two hour time slot on a weekday evening would not allow the participation of all who were interested, and that some people prefer to participate from the comfort of their home, an online tool called RiverGauge was also developed.

Map It! + RiverGauge: The Map It! activity at the community engagement event featured a table top 6'x3' cartographic map along with a corresponding 12'x7' wall mounted map of satellite imagery for the area. Participants were encouraged to interact with the maps by placing markers on locations where they currently recreate or would like to improve recreation opportunities in the future. Community members were allowed to place as many

activity markers as they wished. The facilitator helped attendees find the markers they were looking for and prompted them with questions to encourage participation.

RiverGauge was designed as an online complement to Map It!. This participatory mapping application allowed respondents to share the locations of where they currently use the Tennessee River and where they would like to see improvements. Markers and lines could be drawn directly on to a Google-style map, to which comments could also be added.

A summary of results from these activities are included in this report. All Map It! and RiverGauge data collected in Roane County, including qualitative comments and respondent demographic information, will be shared with community leadership in a GIS format.

What If?: A scenario testing activity was created to prioritize future investments and for participants to share what they foresee as the benefits and challenges of implementing the primary system elements/amenities of the Tennessee RiverLine. Participants were presented with a series of boards with example images for each element category. These images illustrated the range of forms each element could take in their community. Each participant was given three stickers to act as priority markers, allowing them to vote on which elements they think should be their community's highest investment priorities. Post-it notes were provided to allow comments to "How would this benefit your community?" and "Why might it be challenging to implement this?" prompts. Finally, the "What Else?" board captured any ideas outside of the provided categories for community members to share.

Roundtable Discussion: A facilitator began discussions with the open-ended prompt of "What would the Tennessee RiverLine mean to your community?" Interested participants sat down at the table for anywhere from 3-10 minutes to

discuss opportunities, concerns, and their ideas for moving the community and Tennessee RiverLine forward. Audio of all roundtable discussions was recorded, and notes were created for topics relevant to how the Tennessee RiverLine is seen as an asset to each community.

Registration and Exit Surveys: Registration and exit surveys were used to understand participant demographics, feedback about the event, and participants' final impressions of the Tennessee RiverLine vision. Registration was done online and at the event venue. Exit surveys collected feedback after the event including how well the participant felt that they were able to contribute to local visioning, any improvements that should be made for the next event, and open-ended questions to share enthusiasm and concerns for the Tennessee RiverLine vision.

"Roane County has an opportunity to become a recreation village; a multi-modal hub of activities including kayaking, fishing, hiking, biking and horseback riding. We can set an example for other RiverLine communities!"

- Event Participant



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT: What If?

What If? was developed as a scenario testing activity to open a discussion around **Tennessee RiverLine System Elements** (below) in Roane County. The activity's primary goal was to encourage imaginative thought around needs and opportunities for amenities and other infrastructures that promote an enhanced relationship with the Tennessee River and supports the local Tennessee RiverLine vision.

The What If? activity presented eight Tennessee RiverLine System Elements and asked event participants to share their thoughts about how each would benefit their community as well as any impediments they foresaw to the implementation of each. Participants were also asked to identify up to three system elements that they consider future investment priorities for Roane County.

By the Numbers: Roane County 652 to YOU event participants identified the **Trails, Paths, and Routes** element as their highest investment priority with 17.8% of total priority votes. Trails were closely followed by the **Overnight Lodging and Camping** element with 16.5% of total votes, and the **On-River Events and Activities** element with 14.6% of total votes.

Trails, Paths, and Routes (27 votes): Particular emphasis was placed on the health benefits of trails for families and the community. Mapped routes and well-marked trails were indicated as highly important for developing a user-friendly trail system.

Overnight Lodging and Camping (25 votes): Comments to this element indicate the community's desire to develop its hospitality industry in conjunction with trail systems and the Tennessee RiverLine. Overnight accommodation of a range of types were recognized as a critical infrastructure to attracting recreational tourists, from primitive and floating campsites to adventure hostels.

On-River Events and Activities (22 votes): The comments in this category shared enthusiasm for the variety of unique events possible on the river. Fishing tournaments, personal watercraft rentals, outfitter demos and excursions, and concerts on the water were suggested as potential event opportunities. The community recognizes liability, planning capacity, access to the river, safety, local perception and alcohol regulations as challenges for hosting such events.

Outside of the Top Three: While the categories of Educational and Interpretive Sites, River Pavilions and Waterfront parks did not land in the top three, each element garnered comments suggesting that they may also be value-added and priority investments. Comments indicate that Educational Sites would be an opportunity to teach stewardship and conservation of natural resources, particularly at Fort Southwest Point. While River Pavilions raised questions of cost and ecological impact, there was recognition of the economic and social benefits of infrastructures that provide space for outfitters, gear rental and storage, and hospitality amenities, like showers and restrooms. The community likewise recognized how Waterfront Parks improve quality of life and provide safe and healthy recreational spaces for children and families.

What Else?: A blank What If? board was provided to capture investment ideas and opportunities that fell outside of standard RiverLine Elements. Participants' responses to this prompt emphasized the importance of infrastructure to support tourism: restaurants, hotels and stores of convenience are seen as vital components of a healthy recreation and eco-tourism economy on the river.



public spaces



connective networks



river access + launch points



overnight accommodation



wayfinding + river info



programming + events



habitat enhancements



interpretation + education



multi-use pavilions



gear access + storage

RiverLine Element Investment Priorities in Roane County

teal numbers indicate percentage of total What If? investment priority markers placed by Roane County participants
gray numbers indicate percentage of the respective What If? element's priority markers placed on an element variation

Trails, Paths, Routes

17.9%



25.9%

Single-Track Unsurfaced hiking and biking Trails



25.9%

Riverside Greenways



18.5%

Scenic Wooded Trails

Overnight Lodging and Camping

16.6%



24.0%

Large Developed Campground with Marina



16.0%

Floating Rental Cabins



16.0%

Primitive Campsites

On-River Events and Activities

14.6%



31.8%

Kayaking and Rowing



27.2%

Fishing



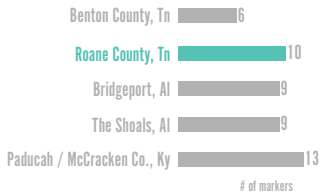
9.00%

Swimming Structures

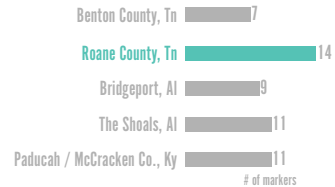
Around the Region

numbers indicate number of What If? investment priority markers for all elements in each pilot Community

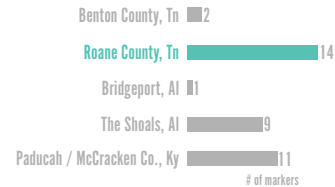
Educational and Interpretive Sites



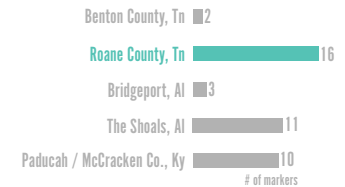
Wildlife Habitat and Riverbank Enhancements



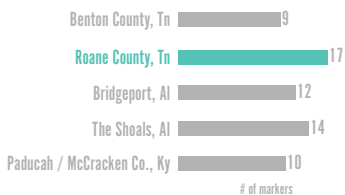
River Pavilions



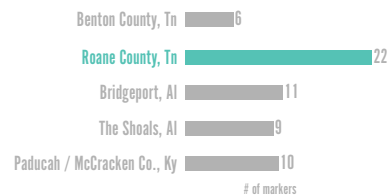
Waterfront Parks



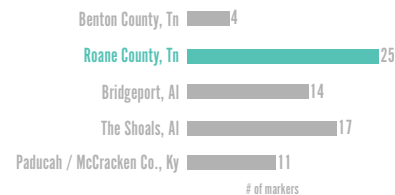
Boat Launches and River Access



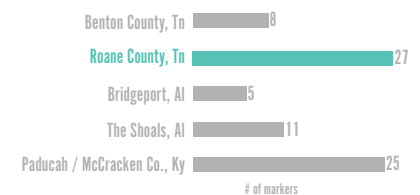
On-River Events and Activities



Overnight Lodging and Camping



Trails, Paths, and Routes



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT: MAP IT! + RiverGauge

Map It! and RiverGauge were designed to identify existing assets, use trends and investment priorities related to Tennessee River access and experiences at local and regional scales. Both activities prompted participants with the same fundamental questions: *Where on or along the Tennessee River do you currently...?* and *Where would you like to improve...?* Through Map It!, event participants placed activity markers on maps corresponding to where and how they currently experience the Tennessee River or have ideas for future improvement. Community members unable to attend the event shared the same insights online using RiverGauge. Collected data shaped this report's recommendations and will help identify gaps in amenity distribution across the river's 652-mile reach.

Map It! and RiverGauge in Roane County: Community Engagement Event participants placed a total of 135 markers on two feature maps that were part of the Map It! activity. An additional 110 markers were added in Roane County through RiverGauge. 245 markers represents 30% of those placed by all pilot communities and 8% of total markers collected.

Where Do You Currently?: Map It! and RiverGauge offered participants 16 marker types to indicate where they currently use the river as single points or routes. Predefined markers included access the river, kayak/canoe, hike, bike, walk/run, swim, stay overnight, hunt and fish. Qualitative comments associated with markers were collected through informal conversations or a 'share a comment' prompt online. In Roane County, the three most common responses to the *Where do you currently...?* prompt were **Access the River, Fish** and **Swim**. All were well distributed across the river in Roane County, with clusters observed for Access the River markers at Kingston City Park, 58 Landing and on Caney Creek, Fish markers on the Clinch and Emory Rivers, and Swim markers at Riley Creek Campground and Roane County Park.


Where Would You Like to Improve?: Participants were likewise offered 16 marker types to indicate where they would like to improve river access and activity amenities, as well as suggest location where improvements to water quality, shoreline stability and habitat health are needed. Roane County's top three improvement markers were **Trails (Bike, Hike, Walk), Overnight Accommodation** and **Water**

Quality. Trail markers were clustered on Thiefneck Island, around Caney Creek cove, along the Kingston Waterfront between Kingston City Park and properties immediately across the Decatur Hwy bridge. Clusters of Overnight Accommodation markers were noted on Thiefneck Island and county-owned property near Roane State. Comments suggesting pursuit of limited conditional public access to campsites at Camp Buck Toms were also offered. Water quality concerns were spread across the river with comments focusing on litter from sportsmen, invasive aquatic plant species, and the county's history of water quality threats from TVA and DOE waste management practices.


Key Takeaways: A higher number RiverGauge markers in Roane County identified locations of current river access points and uses when compared to other communities, suggesting there already is a wealth of existing river experiences and supporting amenities and a robust on-water culture in Roane County. Improvement clusters often overlap with those of current use, suggesting opportunities to enhance existing amenities and experiences and establish connective networks between them.




WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY?



Access The River



Fish



Swim

Paducah / McCracken Co, Ky



Benton County, Tn



The Shoals, Al



Bridgeport, Al



WHAT WOULD YOU IMPROVE?



Trails



Overnight Accommodation



Water Quality

Paducah / McCracken Co, Ky



Benton County, Tn



The Shoals, Al



Bridgeport, Al



245 30%

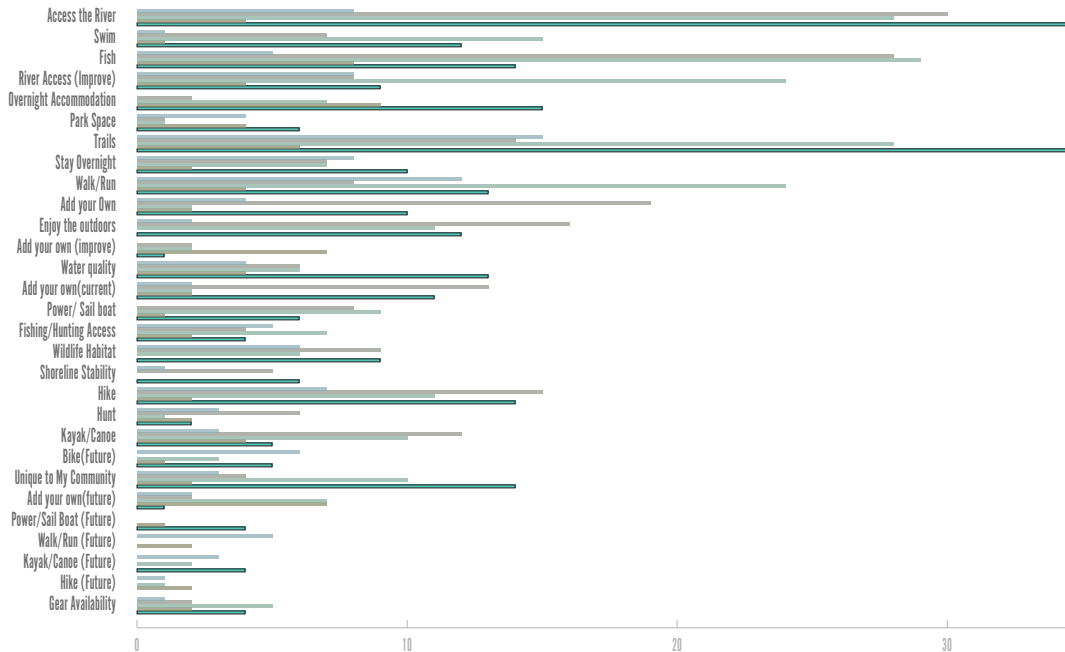
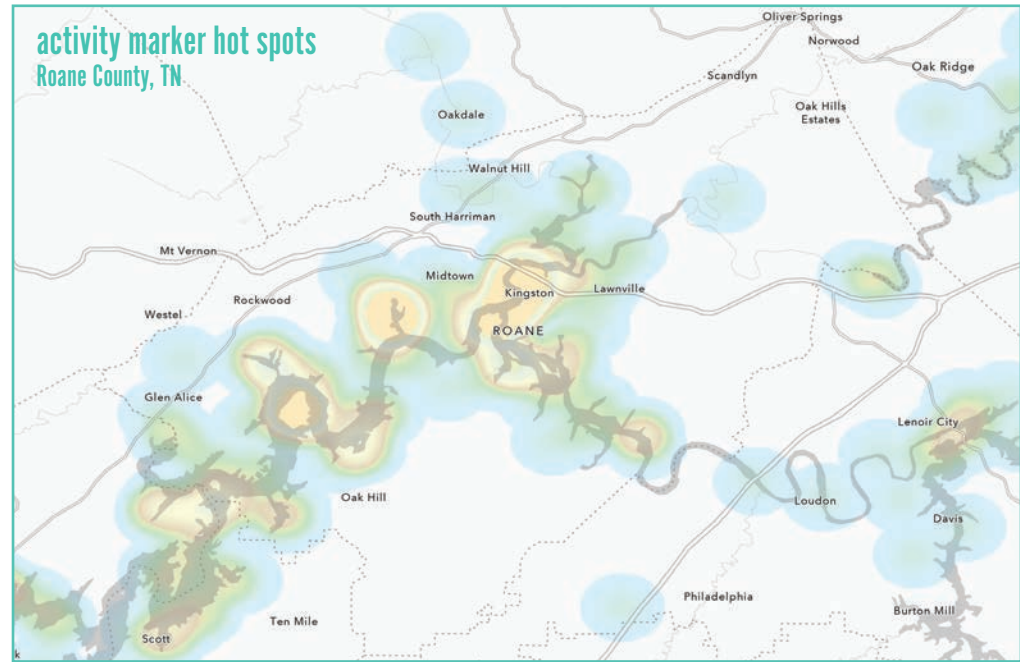
individual markers

of total markers from all communities

top 3 from map it!



top 3 from RiverGauge



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

During the roundtable discussion, there was a general feeling that Roane County is a small distressed community, but after hearing the presentation and talking with fellow community members, they gained optimism in the outdoor recreation opportunities as a path to a bright future. Many participants were not aware that Roane County has so much recreation infrastructure. Primarily, they did not know about the many water access points across the county, including both the older boat ramps and the new kayak launches. These comments resulted in two suggestions.

First, the participants at the roundtable talked about having a central location where information about all outdoor recreation experiences would be available. Currently, they have to look on many websites to find information about access, safety and supporting amenities component to a trip on or along the river system. Along the same vein as information access, the participants also commented that wayfinding and signage, especially from the highway, would be a useful for visitors who are unfamiliar with the area. The comment that it feels like people often drive by, but they never use the river in the community sparked further conversation about how to get more people on the river. In

addition to the previously mentioned information access, participants discussed having more river access, more programming and events, and facilitating a day trip for the community to experience the river.

Finally, comments were offered about putting hiking trails on Thiefneck Island and how to balance tourism and natural resource protection in Roane County. Consistent with previous discussion about wayfinding and centralized information resources, many people suggested that there are currently hiking trails on Thiefneck Island, but many didn't know about them.

There seems to be many unknown areas of outdoor recreation in Roane County, but to the point about balancing tourism and ecological protection, the question was posed if more people learned about areas, would their beauty be lost in the increased usage. "If people don't use it, then they won't care about it," was the consensus of the table. A middle ground was offered where tourism dollars could be put toward preservation and restoration, and that such balance needs to be a central part of a cohesive vision from the start.

"It feels like people in the community live by it but never use the river. This is about making it enjoyable today and preserving what we have for future generations."
- Event Participant



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT: PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

The Tennessee RiverLine and the Roane County leadership sought to achieve broad representation of community groups and to ensure that all participants had a chance to fully contribute to the community engagement event. In Roane County, a total of 60 people attended the community engagement event. Referring to the age distribution chart in the infographic below, there was a relatively even distribution of ages with highest participation in the 41-59 age range. For the Roane County event, some families brought their children, which increased the percentage of the under 25 demographic to 10% - the highest among all community events. The Tennessee RiverLine is an opportunity to enhance civic involvement among younger generations. Marketing the engagement events as family-friendly could accomplish this goal in the future.

On average, participants traveled 12 miles to the community engagement event with a median of 5 miles. The 12 mile average was the lowest among all communities indicating the Roane County event may have attracted more people from within the community whereas other communities drew people from their broader regions who were interested in learning about the Tennessee RiverLine. This might suggest

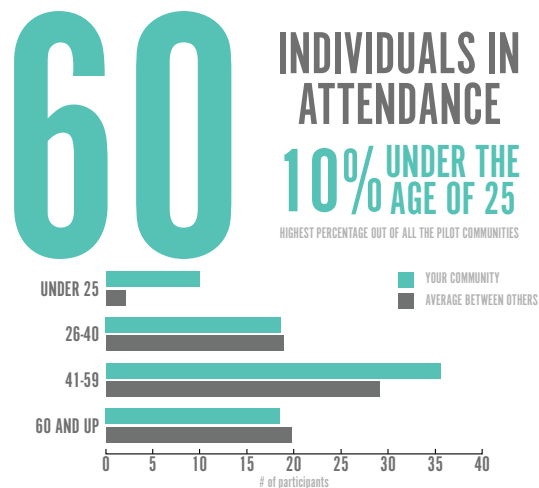
that there is a contingent of people within and around Roane County who are deeply interested in the project, but they did not attend the event. Engaging this interest will be a great strength for the Tennessee RiverLine and Roane County in the future.

True to the Roane County river culture, 35% of survey respondents offered that they use the river every week, again, the highest among all Pilot Communities. There were no respondents who said they rarely or never use the river. It is clear that Roane County has a unique group of people who use and are committed to their river system.

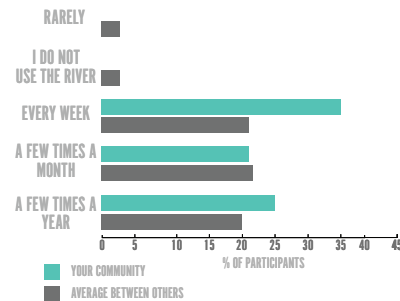
Survey respondents indicated a range of anticipated levels of Tennessee RiverLine use: 73% said they would like to spend the day or the afternoon on the Tennessee RiverLine; 47% noted that they would want to travel 15-25 miles over a weekend; 7% expressed interest in doing the entire 652 miles in a single trip; 63% would experience the Tennessee RiverLine by hiking and/or biking along the Tennessee River. These rates of anticipated Tennessee RiverLine use are among the highest reported by all Pilot Communities.

Roane County is most excited about the economic development opportunities of the Tennessee RiverLine and most concerned about the funding that will be required to build the necessary infrastructure. Participants noted that they would like to see community leadership focus first on seeking funding opportunities for trail system development, uniting local leadership around the RiverLine vision, increasing awareness of the project, and getting more people involved in local Tennessee RiverLine efforts.

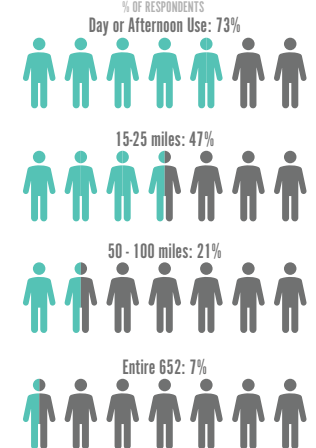
"This could really improve the already great life on Watts Bar Lake!"
- Survey Respondent



HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR COMMUNITY USE THE RIVER?



ANTICIPATED RIVERLINE USE?



RECOMMENDATIONS

It is in the context of these experiences, insights and feedback gained through the 652 to YOU program in Roane County that the following recommendations are offered to:

- Continue building a vision the Tennessee RiverLine in your community
- Take meaningful action that enhances the your community's relationship with the Tennessee River
- Help elevate the visibility of the Tennessee RiverLine in your community and around the region

The means through which the Tennessee RiverLine can support you in their pursuit is listed for each recommendation.

1. Continue Cultivating Paddle Culture

A culture of canoeing and kayaking in Roane County contributes to public health, the county's economic development and creates new entrepreneurship opportunities. Continue building this culture and local RiverLine momentum through low-cost, high-reward community paddle events, and establish a Roane County Kayak + Canoe Club.

Be strategic when selecting event routes, launch points and the communities and partners they engage. Paddle events are opportunities to educate about the river's many stories, as well as to build relationships and gather meaningful feedback that will help identify priorities for the future development of the Tennessee RiverLine in Roane County. Feedback topics may include, but should not be limited to, access point conditions and amenity needs, user comfort and potential opportunities for interpretation, shoreline stability and habitat enhancements.

Next Steps: Planning and promotion of future community paddle events in summer and fall of 2020 may begin immediately. Event scheduling with long lead times helps establish recognition and continuity of the Tennessee RiverLine brand, as well as paddle culture in the community. Potential routes to consider include Harriman to Kingston City Park on the Emory River, and Kingston City Park to Roane County Park on the Clinch and Tennessee. Also, consider events themed to the community's river heritage or wildlife viewing that may include interpretation by an expert guide. Promote events through communication channels, and to target groups that will be inclusive of demographic minorities typically underserved by outdoor recreation opportunities and help attract a diversity of participants.

Keep the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership informed about these activities so we can assist in their planning and promotion. Regular participants in these events should be approached to establish a canoe and kayak club who can assist in the planning of regular paddling activities and community events. Formal and informal methods to collect event participant feedback should be developed and used regularly. Feedback should be addressed when possible and shared with the Partnership. Building a local paddle culture and feedback collection will be a focus of the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#) that will be announced in summer 2020.

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership will share a paddle event tool kit that provides guidance for event planning, promotion and feedback as part of Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#). The Partnership will support events through cross-promotion and provide branded materials. The Partnership also assist by sharing creative strategies to secure gear that allows event participation by local residents who do not have their own.





RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS ctd.

2. Enhance Gear Availability

Gear availability for residents who do not have their own is limited to that which can be rented from Kingston Parks and Recreation through the Kingston Community Center. This creates a barrier to building a paddle culture within the community and equitable access to river experiences. To overcome this barrier, develop partnerships and engage entrepreneurs for gear demonstrations, guided excursions, pop-up shops, paddle share programs and rental opportunities convenient to the river.

In Roane County, EZ Troll Mountain Outfitters is the closest location to the river where paddling gear can be purchased. EZ Troll is 2.2 miles from the nearest Tennessee River access point at Roane County Park. For a distance RiverLine user without alternative transportation options, this is a 45-minute walk on a 2-lane state highway without dedicated pedestrian routes. Multi-modal transportation options, such as ride and bike share, and pedestrian systems that connect existing river access points and gear locations should be considered. In addition, encourage and/or offer incentives to area marinas and marine companies, such as Bunch Marine, to sell or rent paddling gear.

Next Steps: Initiate a conversation with local outfitters, guides, marinas, marine companies and Parks and Recreation Departments about how existing gear available for short-term use may be better promoted and easier to access. Also, discuss new creative approaches (i.e. pop-up shops, etc.), programs and locations to make gear more accessible, visible and affordable to those who do not currently own a canoe or kayak. This may include paddling displays and demonstrations at area Farmers' Markets or app-operated rental lockers near safe river access points. Enhancing gear availability will be a focus of future stages of the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#).

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The Shoals was part of a collaborative grant application to the North Face Explore Fund, prepared by the Partnership in spring 2020, to purchase a fleet of kayaks for local programming. The Partnership will research and share additional innovative gear solutions, and help facilitate related discussions amongst community stakeholders, if determined appropriate and needed by community leadership.

3. Engage Rivers as Water Trail Connectors + Blue Space

As Roane County moves forward with recreation master planning, the Tennessee River and its tributaries should be integrated into those plans as open 'blue space' and connective trail systems. Consideration should be given to the needs of a range of RiverLine users, such as dedicated canoe/kayak access points, land and water trail intersection points with intermodal gear (bikes, kayaks, etc.) exchanges, rentals and storage, trailhead wayfinding information and heritage/environmental interpretation. Consider the opportunities for Clinch and Emory River water trails to establish connectivity between Harriman, Oak Ridge, K-25, and Kingston, while Riley Creek Campground, Kingston Waterfront and Roane County Park readily anchor a local Tennessee River Water Trail. Caney Creek access points and coordinated trail/greenway development would better connect Rockwood to the Tennessee Riverline.

Where public land may be unavailable or limited, consider the surface of rivers and reservoirs as available 'landscape' for floating amenity development, including multi-use pavilions, rest and camping platforms, swimming enclosure and piers, paddle instructional areas and boat launches. Floating amenities may mitigate National Environmental Protection Act permitting challenges due to their reduced footprints on and impacts to federally owned land.

Next Steps: Parks and Recreation + Trails master plans should include the Tennessee RiverLine, as well as water trails on the Emory, Clinch and Tennessee Rivers, as part of a comprehensive open space and trail network. The surface of rivers and reservoirs are also a publicly-accessible landscape, with existing access from public lands, where new recreation amenities may



RECOMMENDATIONS ctd.

be proposed as floating structures. These 'bluespaces' afford public space, county-wide connectivity and new feature destinations at a fraction of the cost, time and effort that would be required to accomplish as similar level of connectivity through the design, land and easement acquisition, constructing and management of greenways and parks. Create plans for new infrastructures of inter-modal gear rental and storage, safety and wayfinding information and other amenities determined necessary at intersections between existing and future public spaces and trails. Establishing local water trails will be a focus of future stages of the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#).

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The University of Tennessee River Studio has studied creative concepts for water trail and 'blue space' systems in Roane County, which may help stimulate dialogue within the community. These concepts were shared in January 2020 at the Tennessee RiverLine Summit. Through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#), the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership will support water trail development by providing feedback to plan drafts and provide additional insight to the Tennessee RiverLine vision. The Partnership may also participate in advocacy discussions with key stakeholders, including TVA and municipalities as determined necessary by Roane County Leadership.

4. Education: River as Shared Space

Motorized watercraft dominates on-water culture, and the infrastructure on Tennessee River/Watts Bar Lake is optimized for its use. Education initiatives should be organized that are targeted to motorized and non-motorized river users regarding recognition of the river as a shared space where all user groups are welcome. Regulations and best practices for safe occupation of the rivers' surface, boat ramps and marinas should be key messages.

Next Steps: Initiate a conversation with existing marine companies and marinas about effective ways to educate boaters regarding the river as shared space, informing them of the likely increase in non-motorized recreational craft on the county's rivers and reservoirs. Guided excursions and community paddles should always include a safety orientation, including respecting the navigation channel, rights of way and signaling to other boaters. The Coast Guard Auxiliary may be engaged to offer boating safety classes, and future canoe and kayak clubs can be enlisted as shared space ambassadors in the county. Safe river use by paddlers will be a focus of the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#).



Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership can help make connections to the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other existing water safety education resources around the region. If such a program does not already exist, the Partnership will advocate that a "Share the River" campaign be developed in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and TVA. Through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#), safe river use resources will be shared with the local leadership team for use during community paddle events and other on-river activities.

5. Kingston Waterfront + Theifneck Island as Opportunity Landscapes

The data collected during 652 to YOU programming shows Kingston Waterfront and Thiefneck Island as landscapes where existing river experiences and interest in amenity and access enhancements are concentrated.

Kingston's public waterfront and immediate proximity to the Tennessee River provides a unique opportunity for the City to become a RiverLine 'basecamp' that provides essential goods, services, comfortable lodging, information and amenities for local and distance users. Consideration should be given to the "gateway experience" - the aesthetic image of the shoreline and ability of users to readily and comfortably access Kingston from the river - that may require shoreline and amenity enhancements. These enhancements could include, but are not limited to, new access points with distance user amenities (gear storage, showers and changing areas, restrooms), multi-modal transportation options (ride share, bike share), and the development of new or enhanced connective systems to and along the river (greenways, bike lanes, etc.). These same investments provide enhanced accessibility of the river and riverfront to local residents and would be in agreement with investment priorities shared through What If?, Map It! and RiverGauge responses. Erosion control tactics along the waterfront that include the introduction of riparian trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses and aquatic plants would also improve aesthetics, enhance user comfort by increasing shade and provide wildlife habitat.

RECOMMENDATIONS ctd.

Thiefneck Island is TVA undeveloped recreation land and a TWRA Wildlife Management Area. Both have opportunities and limitations for development and public access. Information regarding the availability and location of existing amenities on Thiefneck Island, including beaches for safe launching, hunting trails and primitive campsites should be made more readily available. Conversations with land owners and land managers may lead to opportunities for new low-impact enhancements on the island. Enhancement ideas expressed through 652 to YOU programming and the RiverGauge survey include additional hiking, biking and walking trails, wildlife viewing areas, boardwalks and primitive campgrounds. Increased use of Thiefneck Island would require user education about Leave No Trace principles, the fragility of shorelines and habitats and hunting seasons. Improved access points may be necessary to protect valuable wildlife habitat and shoreline stability.

Next Steps: Initiate conversations with TVA and TWRA regarding access and amenity enhancements to Thiefneck Island, as well as access, amenity and habitat/aesthetic enhancements at the Kingston Waterfront as a part of ongoing Parks and Recreation + Trails master planning.

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The University of Tennessee River Studio shared creative concepts for enhancements to Thiefneck Island and the Kingston City Waterfront that may be used to stimulate dialogue within the community. These concepts were shared at the 2020 Tennessee RiverLine Summit. Through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#), the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership will support planning and design initiatives by providing feedback to plan drafts and provide additional insight to the Tennessee RiverLine vision. The Partnership may also participate in advocacy discussions with key stakeholders, as determined necessary by Roane County Leadership.

6. Optimize Lodging + Campgrounds for Paddle Users

Overnight accommodations that are convenient and optimized for individuals arriving by canoe or kayak – their distribution and amenity offerings - are critical to fulfilling the Tennessee RiverLine vision and providing a quality user experience.

There are multiple motels in the county, but all are situated in immediate proximity to interstate 40. The closest motel to the Tennessee River is in Kingston at Exit 352, which is a 1.5 miles walk from the closest river access point. Low-cost accommodation models, such as Chattanooga's Crash Pad, that offer proximity, comforts and amenities to meet the needs of a distance RiverLine user and other recreation enthusiast visiting the county should be explored. Short-term rentals convenient to the Tennessee River through programs, such as AirBNB or VRBO may also be used for overnight accommodation.

There are significant gaps between developed campgrounds on the Tennessee River leading in and out of Roane County. The average distance user typically covers 10-15 miles a day on the water, but there are 34 river miles between Yarberr Peninsula Campground (Loudon County, river mile 604) and Riley Creek Campground (river mile 570). The next known improved campground downriver from Riley Creek that allows tent camping is Shelton's Campground (river mile 545), which would require a 25-mile paddle over 2-3 days. TVA undeveloped recreation land between these developed campgrounds and lodging in the City of Loudon (River Mile 592) may mitigate these gaps, but additional primitive camping areas with low-impact camping areas would also enhance user experience on these reaches of the river.

Existing campgrounds at Riley Creek may require improvements for paddle users, including designated tent and hammock camping areas or pads, dedicated kayak access points and opportunities to secure boats and gear.



RECOMMENDATIONS ctd.

Next Steps: The distribution, available amenities and quality of user experience of overnight accommodations in Roane County should be studied in greater detail through mapping study and ground-truthing. Such an inventory will be completed through the County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#).

Study potential locations and distribution of new and/or improved campgrounds for tent or hammock camping as a part of ongoing Parks and Recreation + Trails master planning. Ensure that improved camping options are available at least every 10 river miles. These campgrounds may include designated access points and trailhead amenities, rain canopy/shelter, potable water supply, cleared space and leveled terrain for tents, fire ring, table and seating.

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The University of Tennessee River Studio has developed creative concepts and amenity toolkits for RiverLine campsites. These concepts were shared in January 2020 at the Tennessee RiverLine Summit. Through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#), the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership may be engaged during future planning to provide feedback on campsite distribution and locations, as well as to provide insights to amenity needs and campsite design.

7. Leadership Development

Roane County has sustained momentum established during 652 to YOU summer programming by hosting a community paddle event and promoting the RiverGauge survey. A leadership team that includes county and city leadership, as well as individuals who participated in the leadership workshop and community engagement event, should be formed to carry this momentum forward. Their charge may include, but should not be limited to, maintaining regular communication with the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership, local leadership and community members, planning and coordinating local Tennessee RiverLine programs, and serving as ambassadors for the local and regional RiverLine vision. Cultivating grassroots support and leadership from community members should be a priority so that the energy, enthusiasm and effort for the Tennessee RiverLine may be sustained beyond the tenures of current elected and appointed officials.

Next Steps: 652 to YOU Planning Team members should consider transitioning to a Roane County RiverLine Leadership Team that meets on a recurring basis. Identified discussion leaders and knowledgeable participants from the leadership workshop and community engagement event should be given consideration for membership on this leadership team. A local leadership team will be established through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#).

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership will support local leadership teams by providing guidance to establish goals and activity plans through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#). The Partnership will share branded materials for team activities and programming. The Partnership will connect Roane County leadership to participants from neighboring communities for coordination and collaboration, which began with the January 2020 Tennessee RiverLine Summit.



8. Leverage Existing Funding Opportunities, Advocacy for New Sources

The Tennessee RiverLine vision includes dimensions of public health, multi-modal transportation, rural economic development, recreation and tourism, as well as environmental stewardship and education. Addressing these aspects of the Tennessee RiverLine in your plans advance the local vision will qualify those projects for a range of existing funding programs offered through state and federal granting agencies, as well as financial support from philanthropic foundations and corporate sponsorship programs.

Expressing support for the Tennessee RiverLine to state and federal representatives, agency officials and neighboring communities will elevate the profile of the project and the possibility that state or federal funding streams become dedicated to support Tennessee RiverLine development.

Next Steps: Roane County leaders and residents can help build visibility of the Tennessee RiverLine by making sure their state and federal representatives are aware of the Tennessee RiverLine and Roane County's participation in the 2019 Pilot Community Program. In addition, continue cultivating your county's belief in the vision and support for its realization locally by sharing Tennessee RiverLine information at appropriate community events, and regionally by encouraging neighboring communities to do the same. Such support may take the form of resolutions adopted by city councils and county commissions. When determined appropriate, Roane County would also be looked to as a regional champion to help advocate for funding from state and federal sources. Such coordinated and formal advocacy efforts will be a part of the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#).

Tennessee RiverLine Partnership Involvement: Through Roane County's participation in the [Tennessee RiverTowns Program](#), the Partnership will share grant programs and other funding opportunities that may be used to support local Tennessee RiverLine projects. The Partnership will provide feedback and help edit grant applications and provide letters of support when determined necessary. The Partnership will also share example resolutions with supporting information for community councils or commissions to consider adopting. The Partnership will provide leadership in the execution of a coordinated advocacy effort for dedicated state or federal funding when such an opportunity presents itself.

Potential Grant Opportunities:

The following existing grant programs are offered as potential funding sources for new investments aligned with the Tennessee RiverLine vision in Roane County, TN

1. **Tennessee Recreation Educational Services**, a division of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) is responsible for administering federal and state recreational grant programs to local governments. Programs for which RiverLine-related investments may qualify include the Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF), the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), the Tennessee Recreation Initiative Program (TRIP), and Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF). Each program has a match requirement and specific regulations for the applications. For more information visit the Recreation Education Services page at tn.gov.
2. **Tennessee Department of Health Built Environment Grants** - Administered by the Office of Primary Prevention, the Tennessee Department of Health recently offered two built environment grant programs: Rural Access to Health through Healthy Built Environment Grants (2017), and Access to Health through Healthy Active Built Environments Grants (2018). These programs aim to increase access to safe and publicly-accessible places that provide opportunities for physical activity for a diverse group of users, including those who live, visit, work, play, worship and learn in the community. The renewal of these programs is subject to funding availability, yet is suggestive of the DOH's recognition of the relationship between the built environment, active lifestyles and recreation, and public health. Such recognition is likely to lead to future funding opportunities for which RiverLine-related investments in Roane County would qualify.



3. **Tennessee Department of Transportation** is the state administrator of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration' Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). This program funds a variety of activities related to improving transportation assets, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, environmental mitigation, and creating or improving recreational trails projects. Eligible projects include the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into trails. There is no grant value minimum or maximum, and a 20% local match is required. TAP applications are due each October. For additional information, visit tn.gov/tdot/program-development-and-administration-home/local-programs/tap.html.
4. **The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** accepts grant applications for projects and programs that fall under one of more of their strategic investment goals. Goals in their 2016-2020 Strategic Plan that align with the Tennessee RiverLine's comprehensive vision include 1) Economic Opportunities: Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy, and 4) Natural and Cultural Assets: Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets. The ARC's Asset Based Development Initiative supports strategies that leverage the region's cultural assets, natural assets, structural assets, and leadership/community assets. Contact Crystal G. Davis, Alabama ARC Program Manager and ADECA Community Services Unit Chief at 334.353.2630, and visit arc.gov/funding/ARCGrantsandContracts.asp for more information about grant eligibility and application processes.
5. **National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program** supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. This is the same NPS program that the Tennessee RiverLine has partnered with since October 2017. For program information in Tennessee, contact Alison Bullock at alison_bullock@nps.gov or 423.987.6128.
6. **Tennessee Valley Authority** - While TVA does not have a formal grant program, they do work directly with communities and organizations to support a range of recreational, educational and economic development efforts around the valley. Opportunities for such support should be discussed with TVA Natural Resources staff, including those who attended 652 to YOU programming in Roane County.
7. **The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA)** manages a website with a diversity of current grant opportunities. Learn more at <https://www.npra.org/our-work/Grant-Fundraising-Resources/>



CONCLUSION

The robust and enthusiastic 652 to YOU program participation witnessed from community leaders and engaged residents of Roane County confirmed widespread community support for the Tennessee RiverLine vision. Thanks to the effort of the Roane County Planning Team, the program was thoughtfully designed and delivered in a manner that enabled local leadership and the Tennessee RiverLine Partnership to gain valuable feedback and new ideas. Both will be used to inform the evolution of the regional vision, as well as how the Tennessee RiverLine may initially take form in Roane County. The recommendations in this report offer quality of life and healthy lifestyle benefits to county residents and visitors alike, and support efforts to enhance Roane County's position as a regional recreation destination.



Celebrate: Roane County's wealth of heritage and natural assets will be showcased as a part of the Tennessee RiverLine experience. Here, the landscape is crowded with living histories amidst frontier-era fortifications, antebellum architecture, quaint mainstreets and landmarks of America's Atomic Age. Visitors and residents immerse themselves within this history as the Tennessee River meanders amidst East Tennessee's scenic valley and ridge region - a dynamic landscape that is home to diverse wildlife species.



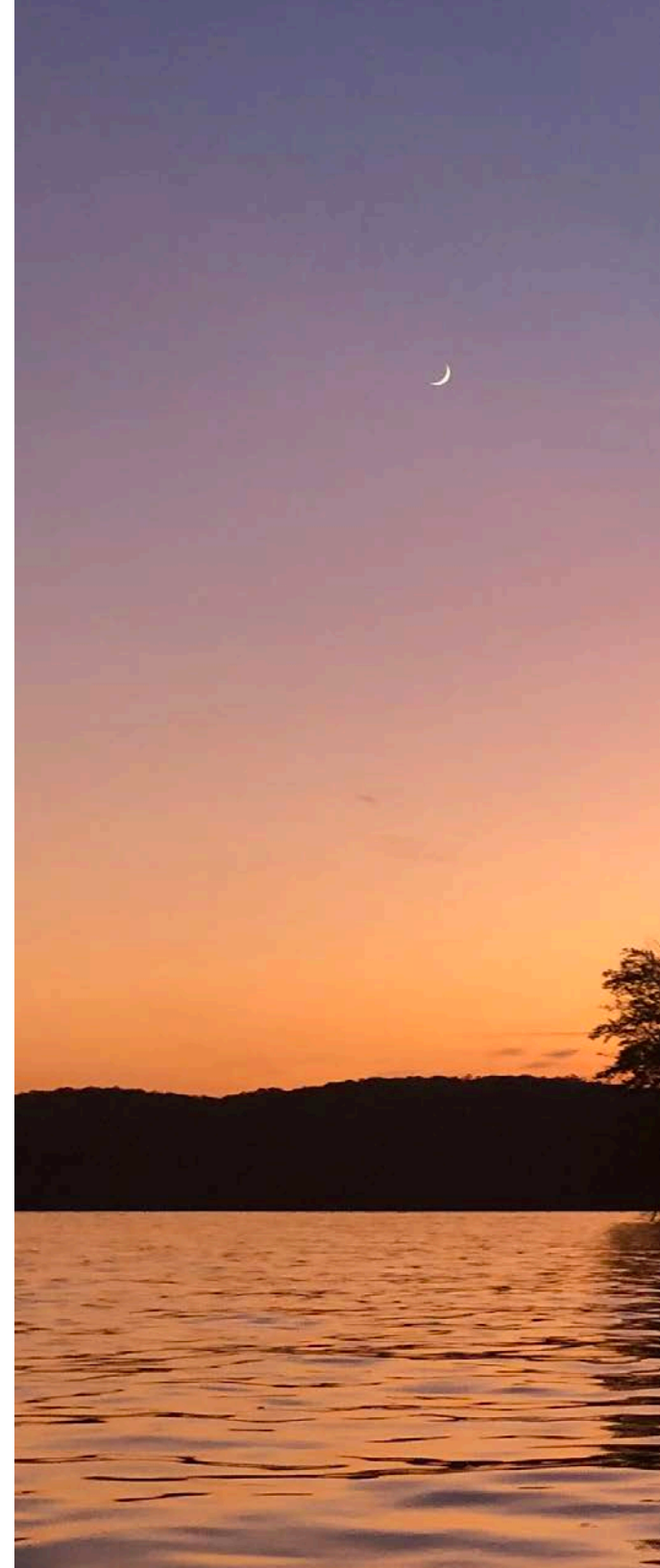
Connect: Through the Tennessee RiverLine, the communities of Roane County find a contemporary opportunity to collaborate across political boundaries and build relationships across the river's reach. By acting upon the recommendations offered in this report that exercise the "River as Park" concept, the Tennessee River and its tributaries become accessible, safe and social landscapes that build a sense of community among its users and achieves aspirations to establish recreation connectivity across the county.



Catalyze: Strategic investments that provide for multi- and inter-modal connectivity, accommodation and 'gateway experiences' help Roane County position itself as an anticipated destination and major trail-head on the Tennessee RiverLine. These investments provide opportunities for recreation and healthy lifestyles that enhance a quality of life in Roane County, which can stimulate entrepreneurship, private investment, and future economic growth. By increasing river access and use, the richness and vulnerability of its ecosystem, and generations of Tennessee RiverLine users invested in its stewardship take center stage.

Realizing the vision for the Tennessee RiverLine locally and regionally will not come without challenges. All communities along the Tennessee River, TVA and the agencies charged with its care must come to this project with a renewed purpose and sense of partnership in order to accomplish a shared goal of a safe, responsible, and productive relationships with the Tennessee River landscape. Existing resources will need to be leveraged, and new resources will need to be identified to catalyze and sustain the RiverLine's development in Roane County.

Thanks to a successful 652 to YOU program in Roane County and Benton County, TN, Bridgeport and the Shoals, AL, and Paducah/McCracken County, KY, the profile and credibility of the Tennessee RiverLine has been elevated across the region and beyond. The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership is likewise better prepared to design and sustain an organization capable of providing value-added creative ideas, supporting services and resources, and coordinating efforts necessary for all Tennessee River Communities to achieve something by working together that none could accomplish by themselves: realizing the Tennessee RiverLine, North America's next great regional trail system.



A full-page background image showing a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a gradient of purple, pink, and orange. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow. A line of trees is silhouetted against the bright part of the sky. The water in the foreground is dark with many small, shimmering reflections of the sunset light.

CONCLUSION



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was through the commitment and effort of the following individuals that 652 to YOU was such a success in Roane County. The Tennessee RiverLine Partnership extends its unending gratitude for all that they did.

- Ron Woody - Roane County Executive
- Jamie Kinard - Roane County Grants Manager
- Mike Beard - Director, Roane County Parks & Recreation
- Pamela May - Executive Director, The Roane Alliance
- Stephanie Wright - Kingston City Council Member
- Renee Crow - Roane County Planner & GIS Coordinator
- Abby Bertram - Roane County Communications Intern
- Becky Ruppe - Director, City of Rockwood Parks & Recreation
- Chase Clem - City of Kingston Parks and Recreation
- David Bolling - City Manager, City of Kingston

Tennessee RiverLine 652 to YOU Team:

- Brad Collett, Director
- Nathan Hilbert, NPS RTCA Fellow and Tennessee RiverLine Project Manager
- Dustin Toothman, Planning and Design Intern
- Wesley Lamberson, Planning and Design Intern
- Whitney Brothers, Communications Manager
- Alison Bullock, NPS RTCA Planner, 652 to YOU Program Facilitator

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