

THE RIVER PROSPERITY PROJECT

# Theory of Change

Building Shared Prosperity Along the Cumberland River

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2026 – 2028 | Isaac Addae, PhD, Executive Director

# AT A GLANCE

**\$8.6B+**

In East Bank  
Development Capital

**\$250K**

Committed Philanthropic  
Funding Secured

**3**

Early-Action Partner  
Projects Launched

**2029–30**

Anticipated  
Super Bowl Window

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The River Prosperity Project channels the economic momentum rising on Nashville's East Bank so that East and North Nashville neighborhoods share in real, lasting prosperity — not just witness it from the sideline.

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- 3 early-action projects launched
- 3+ community listening sessions hosted
- 10 corporate partners at \$10,000+ each

# 01 The Situation

## Titans Stadium

**\$2.1 Billion**

New NFL stadium anchoring the East Bank corridor, with a Super Bowl anticipated in 2029 or 2030

## Oracle HQ Campus

**\$4.5 Billion**

80-acre world headquarters campus in the River North district; demolition underway, first buildings expected by 2030

## Eastpoint

**\$3.0 Billion**

Mixed-use neighborhood on 30 acres of Metro-owned riverfront land with 1,500+ housing units and new public greenspace

Nashville is at a generational inflection point. The total public and private investment committed to the East Bank corridor represents the largest concentration of development capital in the city's history.

## 02 The Problem

"Growth without intention produces displacement, not shared prosperity."

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East and North Nashville sit directly adjacent to the development surge — communities with deep roots, diverse populations, and significant unmet needs.

Without deliberate strategy, long-term residents face displacement as property values rise and wealth concentrates among those already well-positioned.

Nashville has grown before. The communities most in need of that growth have rarely been the ones who benefited from it.

The window of civic opportunity is real — and it will not remain open indefinitely.

## 03 Our Theory

### A Specific Causal Belief:

IF residents and community leaders in East and North Nashville are actively engaged to define their own prosperity goals, AND IF a dedicated quarterback organization simultaneously builds a network of institutions, investors, and partners capable of deploying resources toward those goals — THEN capital and opportunity will flow where they are needed most. Shared prosperity becomes achievable, not merely aspirational.

### Neighborhoods Must Be Heard

Focus areas and priorities must emerge from sustained engagement with people who live and work in East and North Nashville — not predetermined by funders, planners, or outside stakeholders.

### A Network Must Be Built

Regional leaders, investors, developers, employers, artists, and government partners must be convened around a shared vision and equipped to act in alignment with neighborhood goals.

**The River exists at the intersection of both.**

## 04 How It Works: The Quarterback Model

The River does not deliver programs, hold project funds, or compete with ecosystem partners. Its role is to coordinate, connect, and catalyze.

### ENGAGE

Neighborhood stakeholders identify the specific projects and programs most critical to their prosperity

### BUILD

A network of businesses, artists, developers, site selectors, economic development orgs, and government partners

### FACILITATE

Partnerships among implementation partners and ensures alignment across the ecosystem

### TRACK

Clear neighborhood goals and their achievement over time through shared measurement

### PROMOTE

The initiative's vision regionally to attract new funders and partners

### COORDINATE

Fundraising and policy support across the full ecosystem

## 05 Early-Action Projects

Three partner-led initiatives are already underway — proof that the quarterback model is operating before the shared community agenda is fully defined.

### Holladay Ventures

#### Affordable Housing & Early Learning

Mixed-use affordable housing and early learning center at 100 Meridian St (McFerrin Park). The River convenes the capital raise — a blended philanthropic and impact investment model with an August 1, 2026 commitment deadline.

### Corner to Corner

#### Entrepreneurship Infrastructure

Long-term facility lease in North Nashville to anchor entrepreneurship support infrastructure. The River is facilitating capital coordination and strategic partnerships to lock in the lease and build sustainable programming.

### Nashville Innovation Alliance

#### Technology Sector Employment Pathways

Stakeholder-driven workforce strategy to create employment pathways in Nashville's technology sector for residents of East and North Nashville. The River leads stakeholder engagement and sector alignment.

These early-action projects were selected based on partner readiness and alignment with The River's pillars. They are proof of concept — their outcomes will inform, not predetermine, the community-shaped agenda that follows.

## 06 What We Are Measuring

The River tracks outcomes, not just activities. Shared metrics hold the ecosystem accountable and enable transparent reporting to funders and community.

0

1

### Capital Mobilized

Total dollars and sources directed toward partner-led projects

0

3

### Small Businesses Supported

Businesses supported through ecosystem partners in target neighborhoods

0

5

### Community Engagement

Listening sessions hosted and total resident participation counted

0

7

### Ecosystem Alignment

Partners operating within the shared strategic framework

0

2

### Affordable Housing

Units created or preserved through ecosystem partner projects

0

4

### Workforce Placements

Residents of East and North Nashville placed in higher-wage industries

0

6

### Corporate Partners

Companies committed and total corporate revenue mobilized annually

# 07 Three-Year Strategic Roadmap

Year 1

2026

## Foundation & Proof Points

- Establish governance & execute fiscal sponsorship
- Launch three early-action partner projects
- Host 3+ community listening sessions
- Secure 10+ corporate partners
- Demonstrate quarterback model value

Year 2

2027

## Expansion & Momentum

- Scale entrepreneurship & workforce programs
- Expand corporate partner coalition
- Launch 2+ new community-informed initiatives
- Develop shared measurement framework
- Transition cornerstone funders to multi-year

Year 3+

2028–2030

## Regional Impact & Super Bowl Activation

- Demonstrate measurable outcomes across all pillars
- Activate Super Bowl as national visibility platform
- Begin documenting the Nashville model for replication
- Evaluate long-term org structure beyond fiscal sponsorship
- Position as national model for inclusive development

# 08 Funding Strategy

## Two-Component Funding Model

### Cornerstone Foundation Partners

**\$200,000 – \$300,000 / year**

- Carolyn Smith Foundation — \$150,000 (committed)
- The Healing Trust — \$100,000 (committed)
- 2–3 cornerstone partners provide philanthropic backbone

### Key Industry Support Coalition

**\$120,000 – \$200,000 / year**

- \$6,000 – \$10,000 per company
- Year 1 target: 20 corporate partners
- 6 sectors with named Sector Champions

## Budget Overview

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Annual Operating Budget | <b>\$350K – \$400K</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------|

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Year 1 Committed Funding | <b>\$250,000</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Corporate Coalition Target | <b>\$120K – \$200K</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 3-Year Total Budget | <b>~\$1.72M</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------|

The River does not receive or manage project partner funds. All capital raised for partner projects flows directly to the implementing organization.

# 09 Why Now

Three forces create a window of opportunity that will not remain open indefinitely.

## 01 Capital is Moving

Billions of dollars in public and private investment are reshaping Nashville's East Bank in real time. The decisions being made today about land use, workforce strategy, and community benefit will define outcomes for the next generation.

## 02 Community Trust is Fragile

Long-term residents and community organizations need to see a credible, accountable intermediary standing between their interests and the development surge. The River fills that role — but only if it moves with urgency.

## 03 The Super Bowl Window is Real

A Super Bowl in 2029 or 2030 creates a nationally visible moment for Nashville to demonstrate what community-centered economic inclusion looks like at scale. That opportunity must be earned now, not improvised later.

# Shared Prosperity is Achievable. Not Merely Aspirational.

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Our role is not to deliver programs. It is to ensure the right people are in the room, the right resources are moving, and the right communities are benefiting. That is the quarterback promise.

**Approve the Year 1 Budget**

**Confirm Organizational Structure**

**Align on Early-Action Project Priorities**