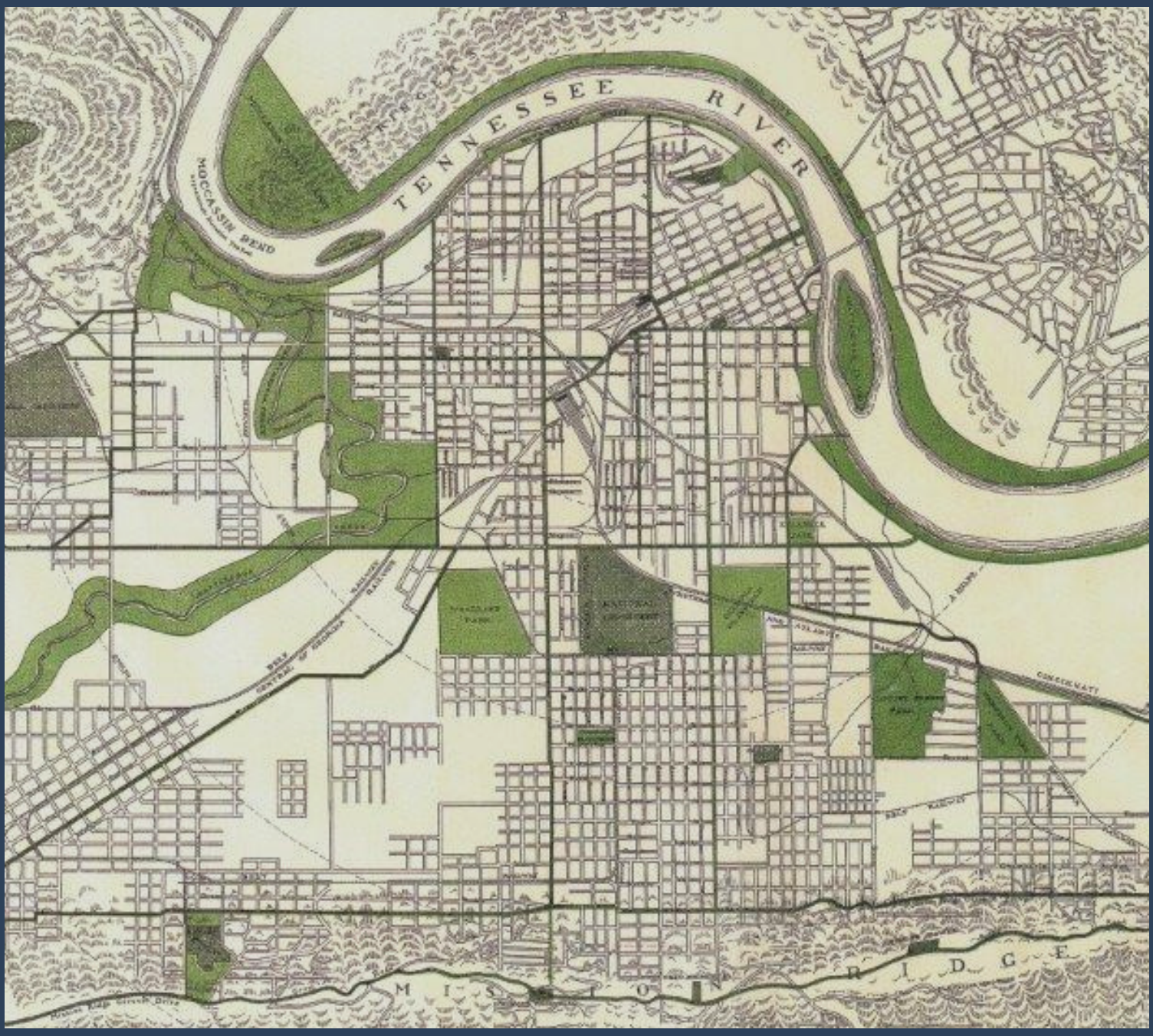
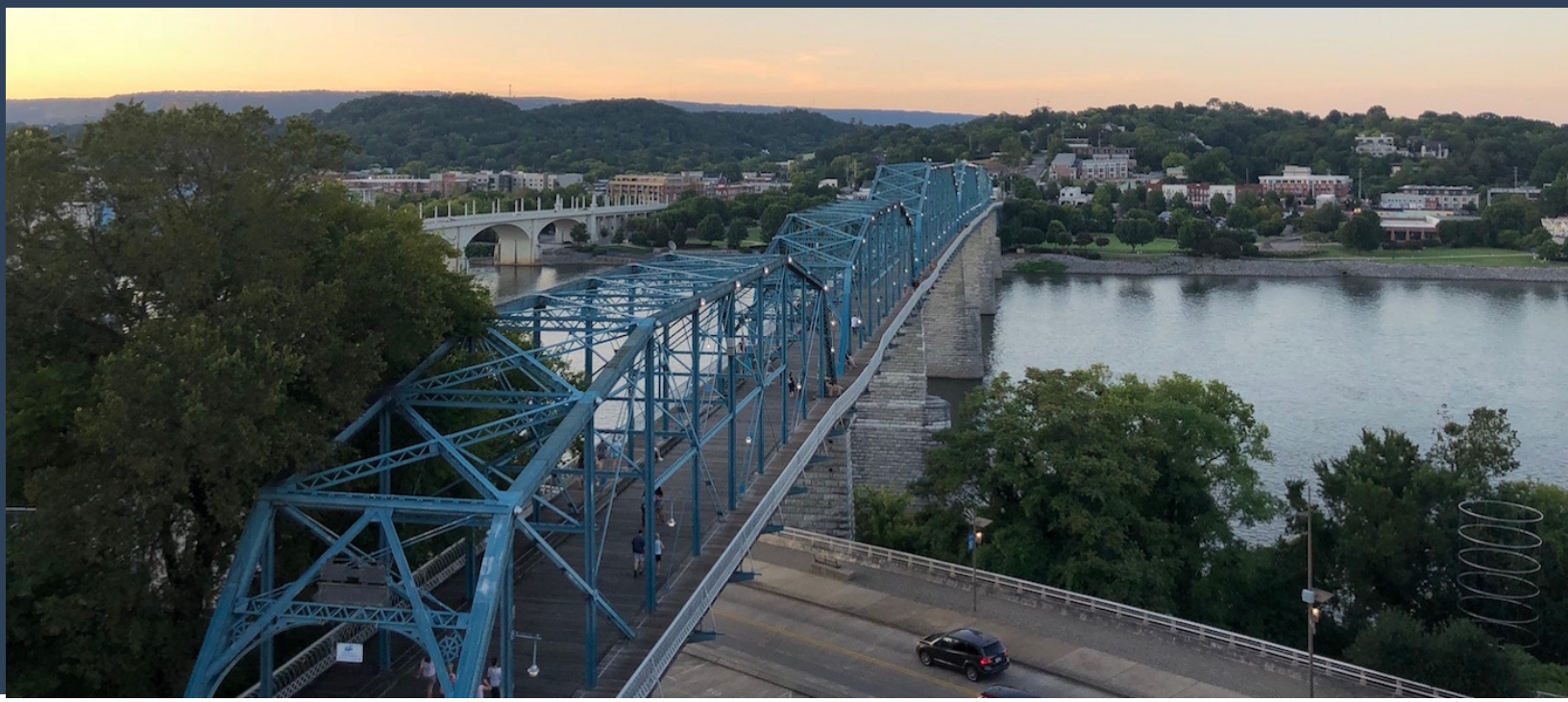
9 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE TENNESSEE RIVERPARK



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9 LESSONS LEARNED

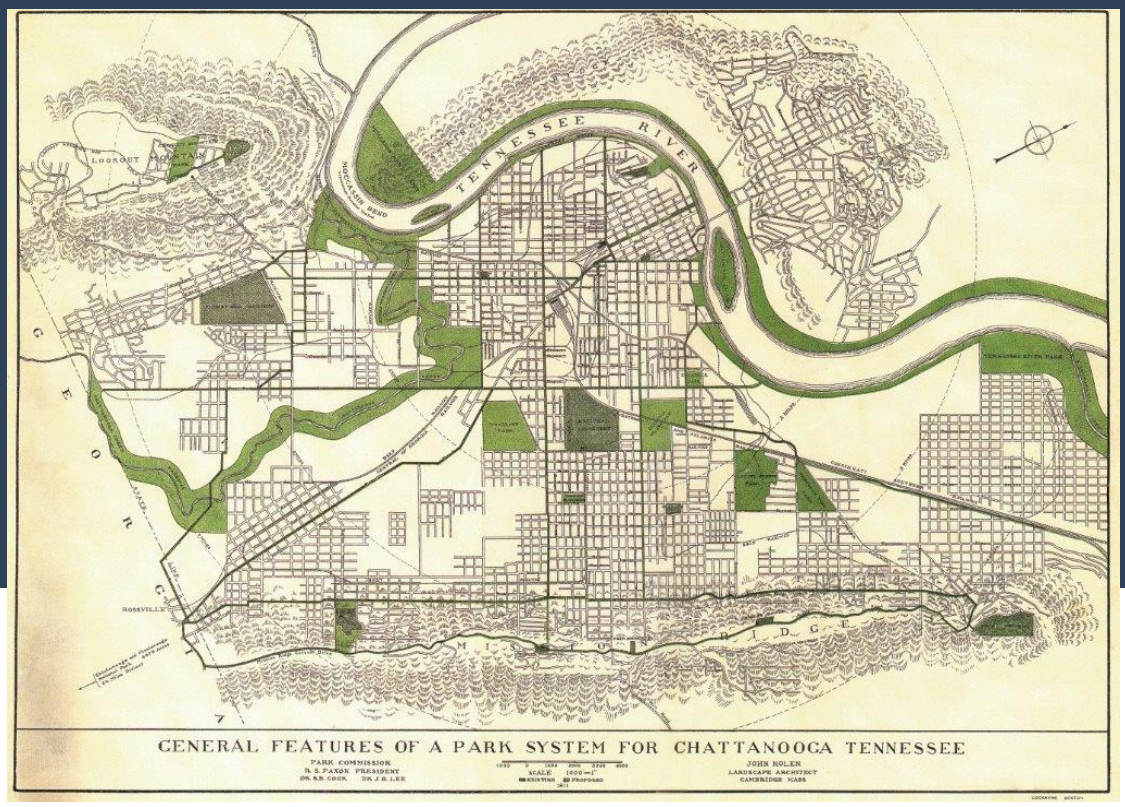


Ive had the opportunity to have a front row seat watching and participating in the Chattanooga Rennaissance. These lessons come from my experience and from interviews with the pioneers of the Moccasin Bend Task Force. These 9 are not the only lessons, but these are foundational and will be relevant to your community as you are implementing your park and greenway plans.

I look forward to hearing from you!

CREATE SOMETHING FOR YOUR CITY

1



You must create a project that reflects what is unique to your City. You can visit, study, bring in special speakers – but you cannot copy and paste. Your city is unique: it has a unique history, unique people, unique geography, unique stories – embrace it! Walkways along rivers were not a new idea at the time the TN Riverpark was created – but it clearly reflects and embraces what was unique to Chattanooga at the time and still does – the river, the mountains, the ridges, the history of the river. It is generational!

CREATE A PLAN &INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPLEMENT

2



Plans are not worth much if they are not implemented. The Riverpark Masterplan called for the creation of a non-profit to wake up every morning thinking about the Riverpark. This type of infrastructure ensures the plan is not sitting on the shelf. It does not have to be a private non-profit, it can be a public agency, but it has to have authority, direction and focus.

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3



The community engagement around The TN Riverpark Masterplan was unprecedented for its time. Over 65 official formal public meetings all over the city. You must talk to the residents in the neighborhoods where the greenway or park will be located to ensure the park reflects their needs, interests, and ideas. There are many ways to engage. The bottom line here is: early and often! Commit to listen, respond and be willing to acknowledge and even change your ideas based on the feedback you gain from the neighborhood.

LOW HANGING FRUIT

4



Start where you can get traction and have a little success! The leaders of the TN Riverpark started in an area along that river that was in “friendly hands.” The land was owned by the City, the County, or a local Community College. These landowners were willing to allow the Riverpark to be on a portion of the land at no cost. This was a good testing ground for the Riverpark: test negotiations, test design, test landowner expectations and finally test the success of Phase 1 of the actual Riverpark. This success generated momentum!

LEVERAGE PRIVATE MONEY

5



The Chairman and Executive Director of a local foundation iare in the canoe dreaming about the next segment of greenway. Raising private capital will get you started on the right path. You must raise some private money at the beginning. It can be a small amount but you must raise something. Private funding allowed the design of the Riverpark to be quicker and allowed the community to dream big. Private funding was used to match public grant funding and the private funds leveraged confidence in the project from the general public.

QUALITY MATERIALS & MAINTENANCE

6



The quality of design, materials and maintenance makes a difference. If you set a low bar it will be treated that way. The leaders of the TN Riverpark stuck to high quality design, materials, and maintenance. The level of trash and vandalism is at a minimum compared to other public properties. The attention to detail demonstrated the priority the local government put on this special place.

WHEREVER YOU START MAKE IT GREAT...MEMORABLE

7



First, you have to get started! So get started! Second, you can build a greenway almost anywhere but wherever you build it make it memorable. The Riverpark was not always supported like it is today. The very first grand opening was special. People were surprised. People were excited. It was important to get this first segment kicked-off right.

WILLING TO LISTEN AND CHANGE FOCUS

8



The Taskforce was focused on the wrong thing until one person spoke up. They were focused on a piece of land versus the entire river. The team was willing to listen to this one person and realize that it had merit. They listened, paused the process and tested the idea with a few community leaders, then shifted their focus towards the grander vision. True leaders listen and know when to shift.

CONSISTENT CELEBRATIONS

9



Celebrating your milestones is CRITICAL and FUN! Celebrations inspire the general public and your team. They should be used to recruit more fans and volunteers. Celebrations allow you to share the grand vision while celebtrating the small victory of the day. If done well, celebrations will allow you to gain momentum with politicians and funders and move towards your next major milestone!