

# Building Thriving Neighborhoods and Prosperity for Every Chattanooga:

---

A platform for Chattanooga  
candidates and elected  
representatives



CHATTANOOGA  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ENTERPRISE



# CEO Introduction

---

**CNE believes that the future of Chattanooga is rooted in the vibrancy of all our neighborhoods and the prosperity of all our people.**

In 2020, the importance of local leadership and civic involvement in supporting a community where there is fair access to wealth-building opportunities and resources for working families is more apparent than ever. Access to a safe and secure place to call home is at the center of our city's economic security, success and the well-being of its residents. The pandemic and resulting economic fallout, coupled with widespread civil unrest around the issues of racial equity and social justice, have focused our attention on the fact that we must create an inclusive city that serves and provides opportunities for all Chattanooga residents.

It is against this backdrop that CNE is calling on our community's political leadership - current elected officials as well as those who are actively seeking office - to create and sustain a vision for our city. Chattanooga is experiencing rising housing costs and stagnating incomes. Low-income households and people of color continue to disproportionately live in neighborhoods with substandard housing and few amenities. This presents a compelling need to create policies and programs that recognize housing and neighborhoods as an essential component of a prosperous, inclusive city.

CNE has over 34 years of experience in strengthening Chattanooga's distressed neighborhoods and providing affordable rental and homeownership opportunities to its residents. Our values rooted in inclusivity and diversity, collaboration, affordability and livability, creativity and measurability coupled with our experience makes us well positioned to recommend the following policy platform: *Building Thriving Neighborhoods for Every Chattanooga: A platform for Chattanooga candidates and elected representatives*. We believe in this platform and feel it provides a starting point for building out the essential components of an equitable housing and neighborhood policy for Chattanooga.

*Martina Guilfoil, CEO*



# Opportunity Statement

For three decades, Chattanooga has experienced growth that has changed its demographics and economy.

**Growth generates wealth building, job opportunities, higher standards of living and an increased tax base for public use. The key question for our city moving forward is not whether growth will continue to occur, but how will it occur and who will it benefit.**

The average Chattanooga renter earns \$14.23/hr allowing them to afford a monthly payment of \$740. Yet, the average rent for a one-bedroom is \$1,015.

The median price of homes in Chattanooga rose to \$247,000 in August 2020, up 23.5% from the same period last year. This requires an income of roughly \$31.73/hour to qualify.

Access to quality, affordable homes in thriving neighborhoods is a cornerstone of the economy and essential to the City's functioning. It is also the foundation of family stability and prosperity, and having this foundation can combat poverty and improve health, education and safety outcomes. Chattanooga's growth has attracted new residents and investment, but it's also driven up housing costs while wages for low and middle income families remain stagnant. Therefore, the resulting gap between what families can afford and what is available in the market has lessened opportunities for stability and wealth building.

Working to ensure residents have access to quality, affordable housing in thriving neighborhoods is a solution for inequity in our city. It is imperative that our next Mayor and Council prioritize our neighborhoods and the homes within to nurture a vibrant Chattanooga that we can all call home.

## Platform Values

In order to balance private investment with the needs of income-diverse households, CNE recommends the following values drive the development of a Housing and Neighborhoods Framework:

- 1. Thriving Neighborhoods.** All Chattanooga neighborhoods have quality housing, successful businesses, job opportunities, transportation and well-maintained public spaces.
- 2. Stable Households.** Chattanooga supports the improvement of people's lives and advances prosperity for all its residents.
- 3. Inclusive Economic Growth.** As Chattanooga benefits economically from improved neighborhood conditions, the increased revenues are invested into opportunities benefiting all Chattanoogaans.

## Action Steps

To support these core values, CNE recommends our community's next Mayor and Council take the following action steps and strategies within year one:

**Adopt a framework to support thriving neighborhoods and housing** that balances economic growth with the needs of residents.

- 1. CREATE** an economically inclusive framework for thriving neighborhoods and housing that guides the administrative goals and strategies of the City of Chattanooga.
- 2. ESTABLISH** an executive-level position to lead citywide efforts focused on achieving the Mayor's neighborhood and housing goals, while ensuring alignment and momentum across all departments and decision-making bodies.
- 3. FORM** a multi-sector Housing Commission to work alongside city leadership to create and guide the framework, integrate resident input and act as an accountability partner.

## Action steps continued...

**Develop neighborhood-level strategies** that address the unique market conditions of each neighborhood positioning each for success.

1. **UTILIZE** CNE's Healthy Neighborhoods report as the guiding principles for undertaking neighborhood reinvestment and market building to create positive change and impact.  
[View report online.](#)
2. **CREATE** outcomes and metrics that are inclusive of improved market outcomes, income diversity goals and resident wellbeing indicators.
3. **IDENTIFY** and **IMPLEMENT** policies and programs that build neighborhood market strength and balance livability and affordability for income-diverse residents.

**Increase affordable housing production, rehabilitation & preservation** including home ownership, rental and home improvement.

1. **ESTABLISH** a 10-year plan with annual goals of increasing homeowners, rental units and rehabilitated housing.
2. **ADOPT** policy interventions and strategies that promote affordable, quality housing solutions.
3. **FIX** the development practices that act as regulatory and cost barriers to new housing development by updating and revising current building and zoning codes.

**Increase city investment** in housing to achieve affordable housing production and preservation goals.

1. **ASSESS** and align all current allocated funds to support housing and neighborhood goals.
2. **PARTNER** with private and philanthropic partners to leverage city investment in housing and neighborhood goals.
3. **ESTABLISH** a Housing Trust Fund by identifying the revenue streams allowed under state and local statutes that will provide dedicated, ongoing funding to achieve the goals and outcomes of the framework.

## Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise Board of Directors

---

**Eugene “Buck” Schimpf, Board Chair**

**Michael Stewart, Board Vice Chair**

**Marie Hurley Blair, Board Secretary**

**Jerry Lee, Board Treasurer**

Montrell Besley

Jenny Hill

Rebekah Marr

Erskine Oglesby

George Ricks

Chris Sands

Demetrious Smith

Andrea Hardaway

Matt Lyle

Crystal Sorrells

TD Scott

---

### SOURCES FOR FACT BUBBLES:

(1) [Out of Reach 2020: Tennessee, National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)

(2) CoStar Analytics for city of Chattanooga, all one bedroom units

(3) [Chattanooga area home prices, sales rise despite coronavirus pandemic, Chattanooga Times Free Press](#)



CHATTANOOGA  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ENTERPRISE

---

**Contact Policy Advocate, Alexa LeBoeuf:**



[aleboeuf@cneinc.org](mailto:aleboeuf@cneinc.org)



(423) 756 - 6231

