

SECTION

1

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On April 27, 1999, the cities of Smyrna and La Vergne entered into an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Transportation to provide management and funding for the development of this Greenway Master Plan. Design services are being paid for through Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) funds (80%) and through the two local governments (20%). Additionally, a direct federal appropriation in the amount of \$5.1 million for construction has been secured and will be shared evenly between the two communities.



Rutherford County

Rutherford County covers nearly 600 square miles in Middle Tennessee and is bordered on the north by Wilson County, on the south by Bedford County, on the west by Williamson and Davidson counties, and on the east by Cannon and Coffee counties. According to the US Bureau of the Census, Rutherford County's 1995 population was 148,041—an increase of approximately 20% over the 1990 population and nearly 57% over the 1980 population resulting in one of the fastest growing areas of the country.

La Vergne

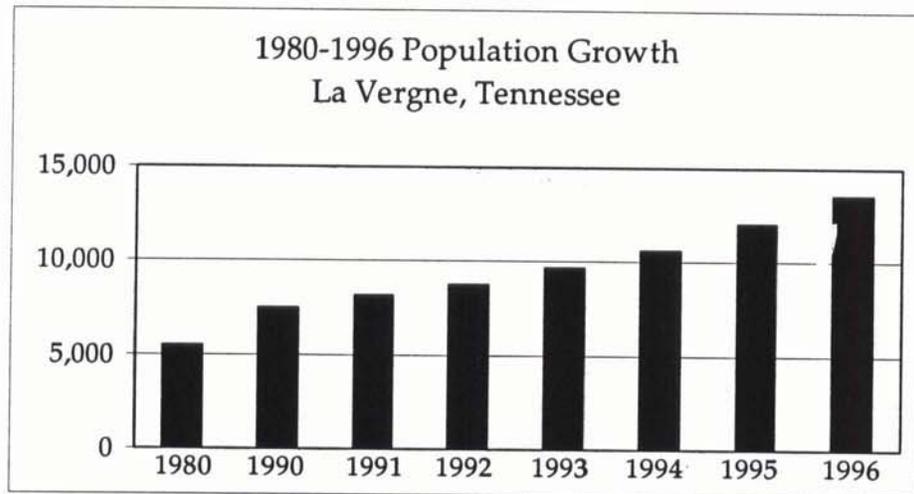
La Vergne is located 18 miles southeast of Nashville and eight miles northwest of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The community is adjacent to I-24; 15 miles south of I-40 and 13 miles east of I-65. La Vergne is also served by the CSX Railroad, Smyrna Airport and Nashville International Airport.

La Vergne "... was named for Francis Leonard de Roulhac de La Vergne. Roulhac was born in France on March 15, 1767, and upon coming to America he settled in the northwestern part of Rutherford County and changed his name to Francis Roulhac. The town was not officially named La Vergne until after his death in 1852. With the coming of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad in 1851 La Vergne developed into a busy freight station.

La Vergne has been incorporated three times—the first in 1860, then 1925, and the last time in 1972. The town has a mayor and commissioner type of government . . . One of the most interesting and unique aspects of community life in La Vergne is the cultural exchange which is carried on with La Vergne, France, a city located in southern France in the province of Lot. Dignitaries and other interested citizens of the two La Vergnes exchange visits and are introduced to the culture of the respective communities." ¹

La Vergne Demographics

La Vergne's 1980 population was 5,495; its 1990 population was 7,499 and its estimated 1996 population was 13,562. Recent data indicates that La Vergne is the fastest growing community in the state. La Vergne grew at a rate of 12.11% between 1996 and 1998 to reach an approximate current population of 16,000. Between 1980 and 1996 the community's population increased by 246% making it the 33rd largest city in the state.



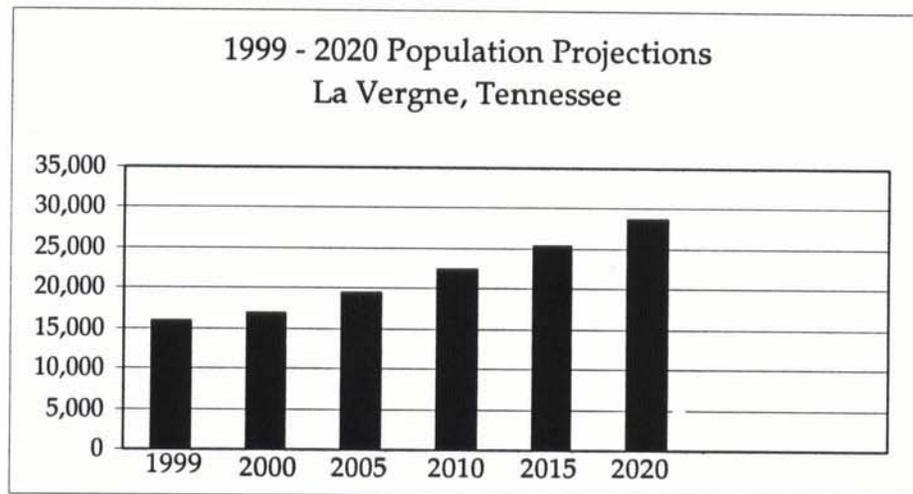
Source: Population Estimates for Tennessee Cities, 1990-1996. State of Tennessee, Department of Economic and Community Development

Per the 1990 Decennial Census, 28.7% of La Vergne's residents were under 18, 46% were between 18 and 24, approximately 25% were between 25 and 64 and only one-half of one percent were over 65. Over 7% of the community's citizens over 25 had bachelor's degrees or higher, and 66% were high school graduates. The median household income in La Vergne was \$31,250.00; the median family income was \$33,634.00 and the per capita income was \$11,543.00. As a point of reference, 1990 Census data for the State of Tennessee indicated that 25% of Tennessee's residents were under 18, 11% were between 18 and 24, approximately 51% were between 25 and 64 and 13% were over 65. Of the state's total population, 16% had bachelor's degrees or higher and 67% were high school graduates. The median household income in Tennessee was \$24,807.00; the median family income was \$29,634.00 and the per capita income was \$12,255.00.

¹ Mabel Pittard. *Rutherford County*. (Memphis: Memphis State University Press 1984) 113-114

A review of population data, per census tract, indicates that the highest concentrations of population in 1990 (320 persons per square mile) were north of I-24, south of Murfreesboro Road and east of Hurricane Creek in census tract 402. Lowest concentrations (78-145 persons per square mile) were south of I-24 and medium concentrations (181 persons per square mile) were north of Murfreesboro Road. La Vergne's Existing Zoning Plan indicates a major shift since 1990—the area of census tract 402 is zoned primarily industrial. The Existing Land Use Patterns map also indicates that this area is industrial with some commercial and very little residential use.

Population projections developed by the University of Tennessee forecast the following La Vergne growth patterns for the early 21st Century:



Source: *The University of Tennessee, Center for Business and Economic Research. March, 1999*

Smyrna

"The first settlement near what is now Smyrna was probably made in the Stewart's Creek area around 1800 by William Adkerson, Owen Edwards, John Etta, Thomas Howell, and Thomas Nelson. The records indicate that William H. Davis purchased land in this vicinity in 1810, and donated the acreage on which the original Smyrna Presbyterian Church was erected. This church received its name, Smyrna, from one of the seven churches mentioned in the Apocalypse of St. John. By 1820 the church, aided by Reverend Samuel Hodge in procedures of organization, was officially recognized by the presbytery. Many of the original members of this religious body came from an earlier Presbyterian church that had been located at Jefferson.

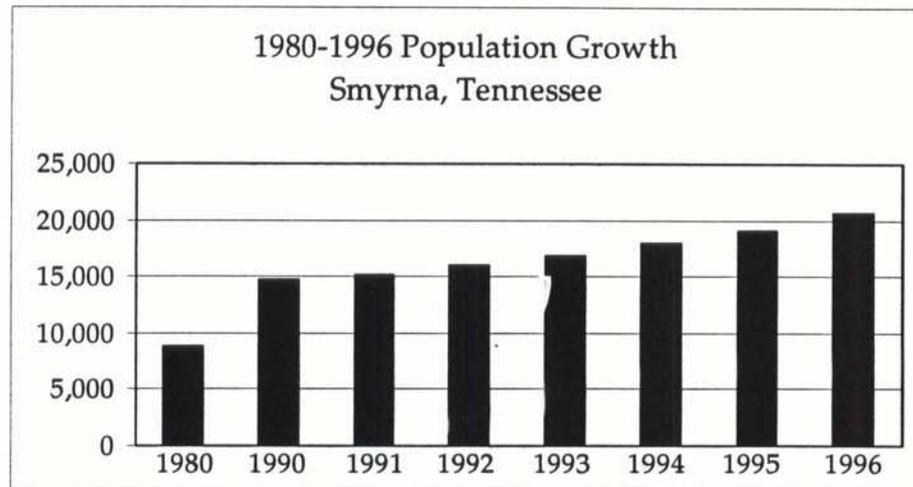
"Perhaps the most significant event that stimulated the growth of Smyrna in the 1800s was the coming of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. Railway officials in 1851 established a way station at Smyrna to better serve the marketing

and transportation needs of wealthy plantation owners in the county and nearby areas."

"Smyrna was often in the path of Northern and Southern troops during the Civil War as these armies advanced either to or from Nashville. Many cavalry raids were made in this vicinity by General Nathan Bedford Forrest. The boyhood home of Sam Davis, Smyrna's Civil War hero, is located in the Stewart's Creek area and is a tourist attraction of great importance."²

Smyrna Demographics

Smyrna's 1980 population was 8,839; its 1990 population was 14,717, and its estimated 1996 population was 20,708. Between 1980 and 1996, the community's population increased by 134%. Smyrna's current population is approximately 24,077.



Source: *Population Estimates for Tennessee Cities, 1990-1996*.
State of Tennessee, Department of Economic and Community Development

Per the 1990 Decennial Census, 30% of Smyrna's residents were under 18, 42% were between 18 and 24, approximately 10% were between 25 and 64, and 7% were over 65. Over 11% of the community's residents 25 or older had bachelor's degrees or higher, and 70% were high school graduates. The median household income in Smyrna was \$31,155, the median family income was \$34,797 and the per capita income was \$11,864. Again, as a point of reference, 1990 Census data for the State of Tennessee indicated that 25% of Tennessee's residents were under 18, 11% were between 18 and 24, approximately 51% were between 25 and 64 and 13% were over 65. Of the state's total population, 16% had bachelor's degrees or higher and 67% were high school graduates. The median house-

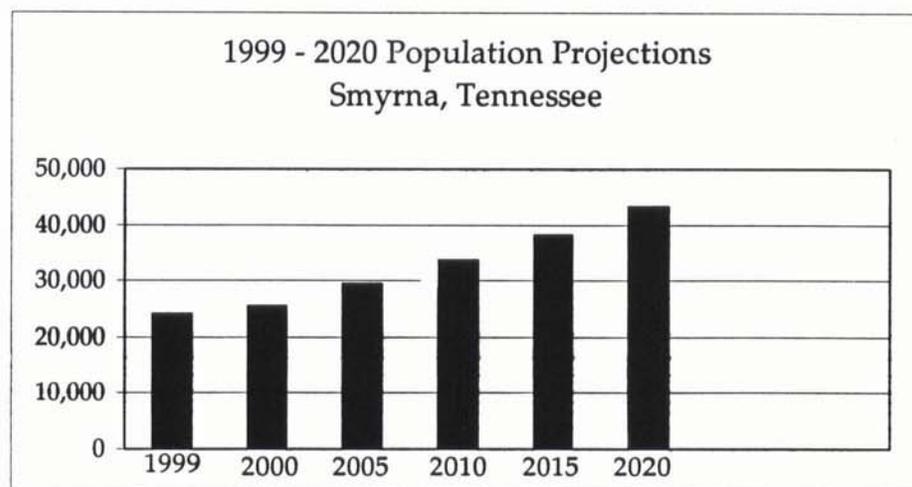
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hold income in Tennessee was \$24,807.00; the median family income was \$29,634.00 and the per capita income was \$12,255.00.

To identify population density and potential growth in Smyrna, census tract maps indicating population in 1990 were reviewed. Currently the area bordered by Sam Ridley on the west, I-24 on the south, Lowery on the north and the city limits on the east is most densely populated, at over 700 persons per square mile. This corresponds with the obvious core of the community, both commercial and residential. Therefore, it is anticipated that bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be prioritized for this area in order to serve the existing and future level of residents. The second most highly populated area of the community is north of Lowery and includes residential areas along Weakley Road as far north as Percy Priest Lake—between 350 and 550 people per square mile reside in this area. The tracts south of I-24 in Rutherford County are less densely populated at only 50 to 180 people per square mile. However, this portion of the county is very likely to see residential growth in the future as existing farms yield to Smyrna expansion. For that reason, the greenway plan must consider connections to anticipated future development south and east of the interstate in Rutherford County.

According to the Parks and Recreation Department's Master Plan, four major residential areas required attention relevant to recreation in 1995. "The first area is the homes located north of Ridley Parkway along the Weakley Lane corridor. The second area is the expansive central core of the City which is located within the inner loop (i.e., Ridley Parkway, Nissan Drive, and Old Nashville Highway). The third and fourth areas are the high growth areas extending south and west along Ridley Parkway and Almadale Road, past Old Nashville Highway."³

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Smyrna and La Vergne's Civil War Heroes were Sam Davis and Mary Kate Patterson. Sam Davis was born in 1842 near Smyrna, Tennessee. He spent his boyhood working on his father's farm and later attended the Western Military Institute, which is now Montgomery Bell Academy, in Nashville. When war broke out between the states, Davis enlisted in the First Regiment of Infantry in 1861 and eventually became a member of General Braxton Bragg's scouts in 1863.

Bragg's scouts were active in Middle Tennessee working in and around union lines and securing information through observation of troop activity. In the latter part of 1863, Bragg dispatched scouts led by Captain Shaw to Pulaski, Tennessee to determine the movements of union troops led by General G. M. Dodge. Shaw is said to have entered Pulaski disguised as an herb doctor and somehow was able to obtain information forwarded to Dodge from Union headquarters relative to his position and further occupation. Captain Shaw entrusted this information to Sam Davis on November 19, 1863 and charged him with carrying the message through Federal lines to the Confederate encampment at Chattanooga. Davis had not traveled far from Pulaski when he was captured by a unit of the Seventh Kansas Cavalry. Incrementing papers were found hidden in his boots, including a communication to the Provost Marshal-General of the Army of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Davis was immediately arraigned before General Dodge, but refused to divulge the source of his information. Davis was court-martialed on November 26, 1863 and sentenced to be hung the next morning in Pulaski. Before ascending the scaffold the young soldier said, "If I had a thousand lives, I would lose them all here and now before I would betray my friends or the confidence of my informer."⁴ Davis's body was later brought back to his family home in Smyrna and buried there in the garden.

The Sam Davis Home is located at 1399 Sam Davis Road in Smyrna and has approximately 15,000 visitors per year-admission for adults is \$4.00 and for children is \$2.50. The home is supported by the Sam Davis Memorial Association, visitors' fees and the Tennessee Historical Commission. Additionally, the cities of La Vergne and Smyrna as well as Rutherford County contribute to the 160-acre facility's operating costs. Future plans include expansion of educational programs, a new visitors center and museum.

Mary Kate Patterson

Mary Kate Patterson Davis Hill Kyle was born in 1837 and, "... spent the Civil War years slipping medical supplies out of Union-occupied Nashville to her doctor father in Rutherford County. She hid the quinine, morphine, cloth, pins, and other badly needed supplies in her buggy or strapped around her waist. Her secret for success-keeping on the good side of the Union commanding general.

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"Mary Kate's brother was a member of Sam Davis' unit, the Coleman Scouts. After the war she married Sam's older brother John. Tragically, he was killed in a steamboat explosion. Kate married twice more, had no children, and remained devoted to the Lost Cause and its veterans."

"She applied for a Confederate widow's pension when she was ninety-one years old. Stating that she was homeless and penniless and making her home with her brother and his family, she received the pension and lived two more years. In honor of the outstanding role she played, Mary Kate Kyle was buried in Confederate Circle [in Nashville's Mount Olivet Cemetery]. Her marker was donated by the Sam Davis Memorial Association in Smyrna, Tennessee."⁵

According to an 1896 account in *Confederate Veteran* magazine by a former scout, "Miss Kate Patterson . . . lived ten miles from Nashville. [She] would go into Nashville, get what information was needed and place it in a designated tree, stump or log to be conveyed to us by our secret scouts. I have often wondered if the diagram of works around Nashville found on the person of Sam Davis was not gotten through [her]."⁶ However, another article in the *Confederate Veteran* by Miss Patterson refers to the day Davis left for Pulaski and states, ". . . Sam gave me a list of articles to get for him in Nashville. I got in my buggy with cousin, and started for Nashville, got everything he wished, also a lot of the latest newspapers. We lived nine miles from Nashville, got back about sundown, and that night Sam started for the South."⁷ However, Miss Patterson also referred to a story told to her by Captain Shaw. Shaw told Patterson that ". . . the papers that Sam had were stolen from Gen. Dodge's table while he was at a meal, by a negro [sic] boy."⁸ As Miss Patterson was the author of this account, it does not appear that she ever claimed to have provided Davis with the information that led to his execution. However, like Davis, her contribution to the war effort was significant. The Mary Kate Patterson home in La Vergne is a private residence, but other opportunities exist along the proposed greenway to create interpretive exhibits telling the story of this local heroine.

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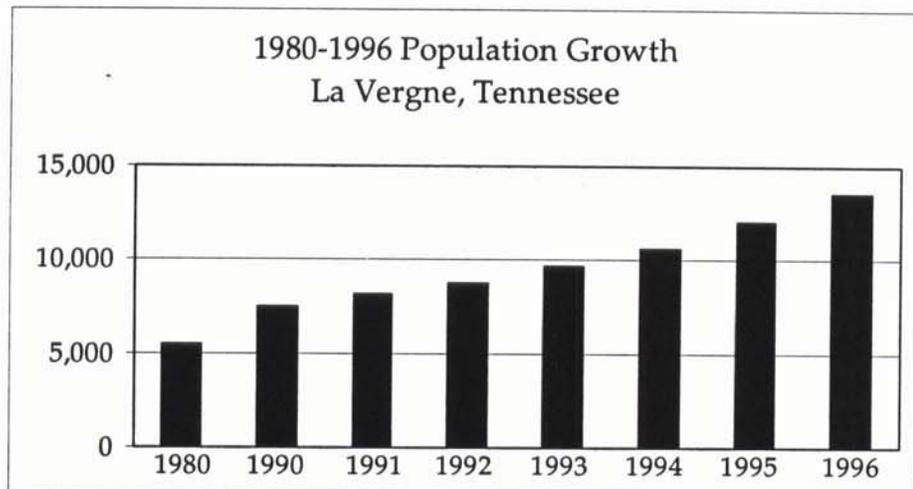
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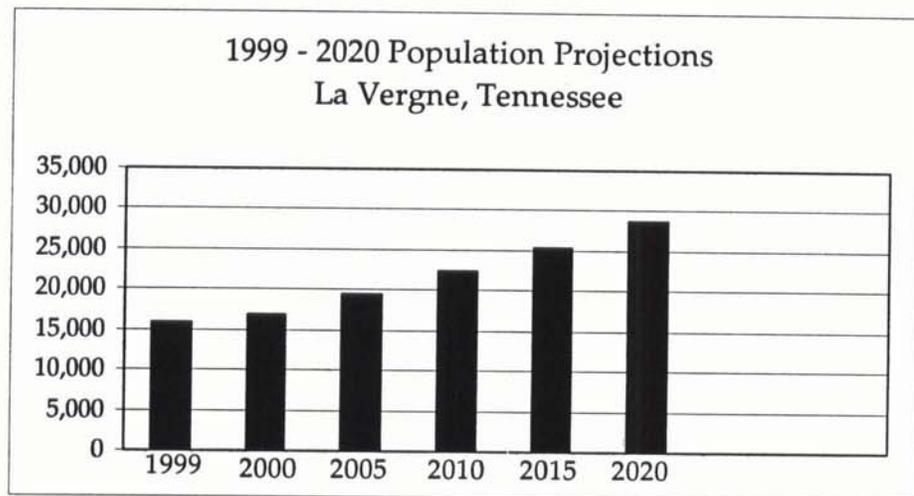
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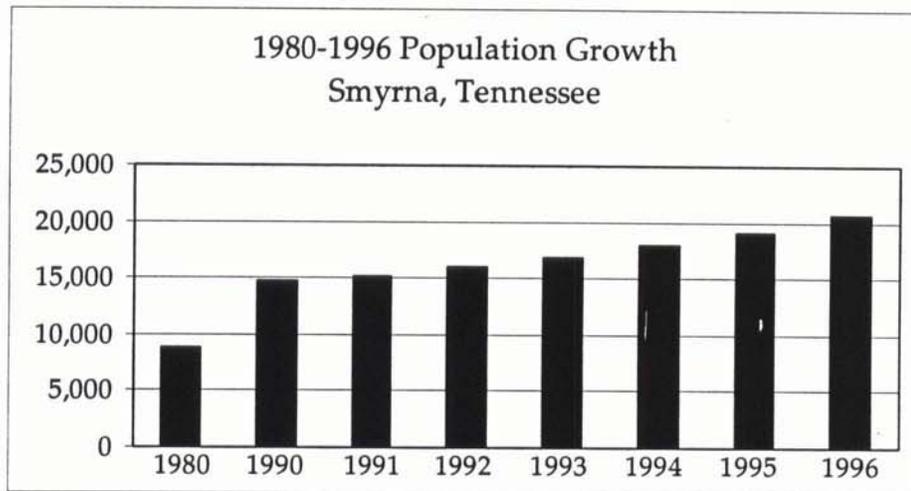
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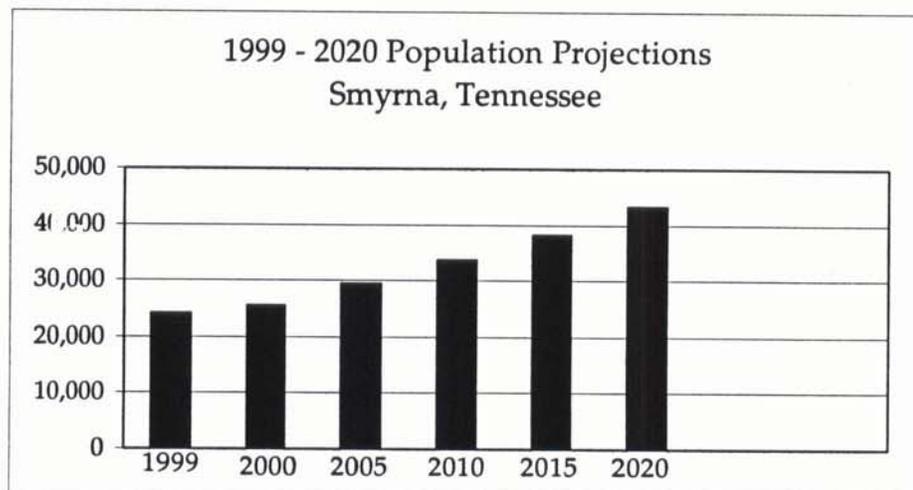
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