



Randy Allen

RUTHERFORD COUNTY MAYOR

Responses to 2022 Rutherford Neighborhood Alliance survey:

1. What are the 3 most important issues facing Rutherford County and how would you address them?

A. Growth- Public Safety/Traffic/ Emergency response/Education

Rutherford County continues to grow at a rate of about 23 people per day and is projected to be the third largest county in Tennessee by 2050. We must take a proactive approach to improving and maintaining our infrastructure, public safety departments, and schools. We need to focus on today, six-months from today, and five years from today. We can project what will be needed in the future based on our growth rate, but we cannot get there alone. Rutherford County will need to work hand in hand with Murfreesboro, Smyrna, LaVergne, and Eagleville to attract investment, build the right roads, improve school capacity, recruit, and retain our essential workers, improve emergency response times, and prepare our workforce for available jobs.

B. Solid Waste/landfill-

Solid waste disposal in Rutherford County is a complex issue made even more frustrating by the lack of visible progress in finding a long-term sustainable solution. The landfill continues to grow larger, and the smell is becoming evident to more and more of our residents. In addition to the Walter Hill and Lascassas communities, parts of Murfreesboro and Smyrna are reporting that they can also smell the landfill. Currently, there are many different things in process that could change the status/direction of the landfill:

- State Representative Bryan Terry has discovered a TCA code that indicates the counties' contract with the landfill may have expired two years ago. It is under review at both the Rutherford County and the City of Murfreesboro legal departments.
- The Central Tennessee Solid Waste board has approved a resolution to limit Republic's ability to accept waste from counties other than the four member counties (Rutherford, Cannon, Warren, Coffee).
- Rutherford County has received a letter from Republic stating that efforts to limit outside waste to be received by Middle Point landfill's ability to accept outside county waste violates the current contract.
- The City of Murfreesboro has been granted permission to enjoin Republic's lawsuit against Rutherford County to prevent the expansion of the Middle Point landfill.
- The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has regulatory oversight over Middle Point landfill. Even though Rutherford County and/or the



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Central Tennessee Solid Waste board vote to restrict solid waste operations or close the landfill, TDEC will make the final determination.

- The public has also been informed that special waste (aluminum dross) was approved by the state to be dumped in the Middle Point landfill and that the liner has been breached in at least two locations.

The landfill issue is compounded by the fact that, although the Rutherford County commission voted 21-0 to allow the landfill to close in 2018, a “Plan B” solution has not been approved. Commissioner Mike Kusch has led a RFP process to identify a suitable partner for our solid waste issue and these efforts will play a key role in our decision making process.

When Middle Point closes, the mountain of trash will remain, and Republic will continue to be responsible for maintaining compliance with State and Federal regulatory agencies.

If we decide to renegotiate the current contract, we must ensure that every effort is made to preserve our resources in the Lascassas/Walter Hill communities since they are invested in this issue at a greater level than other areas of Rutherford County.

Since the Middle Point landfill is located on the Stones River, we must also make every effort to protect our water supply and prevent long term contamination.

It will be a high priority for my office from day one to provide the leadership needed to develop a comprehensive solid waste plan that works for Rutherford County and all the municipalities within our borders. We will focus on best practices for waste reduction through recycling, composting, education programs, and other potential opportunities associated with revenue generation. We will also explore alternative disposal options including transporting it outside of Rutherford County or working in collaboration with other partners to find safe sustainable alternatives. All options will be on the table, and all stakeholders and municipalities will be encouraged to participate in the process.

C. Affordable Housing

The demand for housing in Rutherford County will continue to increase as the population grows. Unfortunately, this is pricing our essential and entry level workers out of the housing market. This is the result of several factors including the extremely high growth rate associated with low taxes, high performing school systems, and large tracts of available land. In addition, the building industry is being directly impacted by increased material costs, supply chain issues, and rising interest rates. These costs are being passed to consumers through increased sale prices and property value. In this high demand, low inventory cycle, all efforts must be made to preserve what makes Rutherford County a highly desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. Building more inventory without the jobs to support the increasing price point is an unsustainable proposition.



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Many models around the country are incentivizing programs that prioritize affordable options for law enforcement, first responders, and teachers. There could also be an opportunity for private-public partnerships for investment to increase workforce housing to support some of our larger employers. As we work toward a solution, we will need buy in from Murfreesboro, Smyrna, LaVergne, and Eagleville to meet their specific needs.

It will be my goal to bring builders, developers, concerned citizens, business representatives, and elected officials from all communities together to find viable, sustainable solutions to this issue that preserve the integrity of Rutherford County and meet the needs of our community.

2. What, specifically, is your plan for balancing infrastructure and development in the county?

The population of Rutherford County continues to grow larger every day. With growth comes many opportunities as well as inherent challenges. We are way behind on addressing this issue, and it is having a domino effect. Hindsight is always 20/20, and it is easy to see now what we should have been doing 10 years ago. Because of the rapid growth, we have found ourselves in a reactionary cycle that leads to a "as needed" response. We only build what we need now, not what we project is coming five years from now. Many of the issues related to traffic require long term efforts of state officials, local municipalities, and state agencies to bring to fruition. We must work together with all municipalities to identify the priority issues related to our continued growth and communicate our goals for long term, sustainable growth in Rutherford County.

3. What are your ideas about the future of solid waste management in this county?

It will be a high priority for my office from day one to provide the leadership needed to develop a comprehensive solid waste plan that works for Rutherford County and all the municipalities within our borders. We will focus on best practices for waste reduction through recycling, composting, education programs, and other potential opportunities associated with revenue generation. We will also explore alternative disposal options including transporting it outside of Rutherford County or working in collaboration with other partners to find safe sustainable alternatives. All options will be on the table, and all stakeholders and municipalities will be encouraged to participate in the process.

4. How would you address the need for affordable workforce housing?

This may be an opportunity for private-public investment to increase workforce housing and support some of our larger employers (Nissan, Bridgestone, General Mills, Amazon,



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Ingram. etc.). As we work toward a solution, we will need buy in from Murfreesboro, Smyrna, LaVergne, and Eagleville to meet their specific needs.

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5. What is your plan to bring in higher paying jobs?

Rutherford County will prioritize the recruitment and retention of companies that pay higher wages to support the quality of life expected by our residents. This will take a coordinated effort that includes the Chamber of Commerce and existing economic development departments in each of the municipalities to identify the types of employers that make sense for our community and provide a sustainable wage to support families in Rutherford County. We have made great strides in preparing and promoting our students for the jobs that are available in our community, but many of our graduates are leaving for opportunities outside our county. My experience in economic and workforce development has led me to the conclusion that it's not just about being centrally located to major highways. Many employers move or expand here because of our educated workforce. We must capitalize on our multiple pipelines for trained workforce recruitment (RCS, MTSU, MCCC, TCAT, etc.). Since we have not been proactive in recruiting companies that offer a wider range of opportunities, better wages and benefits, many are competing for employees with similar skill sets. Turnover and a disengaged workforce is not good for the company or Rutherford County. It is imperative that we evaluate the current and future market and work closer with our education and business partners to continue to meet the needs that business and our municipalities are looking for.

I will bring a new approach to this issue by engaging state, local, and business stakeholders to address this issue and set a higher bar for success in Rutherford County.

6. What do you consider the advantages or disadvantages of acting as Chair of the County Board of Commissioners?

The advantage of the county mayor being the elected Chair of the County Board of Commissioners is that it prevents any one commissioner or district from having a higher level of perceived influence or representation. When the county mayor, having been elected to represent the entire county, is the Chair of the County Board of Commissioners all commission districts are perceived to have equal representation and influence.

The advantage of the county mayor NOT being the Chair of the County Board of Commissioners is that the county mayor has veto power over legislative resolutions adopted by the legislative body (referenced in CTAS-24 below). The county mayor gives



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up this veto power when elected to serve as the Chair of the County Board of Commissioners.

I will follow the will of the County Board of Commissioners once they have been identified and seated.

The following is referenced from CTAS-24:

The county mayor may be elected chairperson of the legislative body. A county mayor who serves as chair of the legislative body may cast a vote in the event of a tie. T.C.A. § 5-5-109. However, if the county mayor becomes chair, the mayor's veto power is forfeited. T.C.A. § 5-5-103. If not chair of the county legislative body, the county mayor has veto power over legislative resolutions (not administrative or appellate resolutions) adopted by the legislative body