



BRING BACK THE BLVD



For Immediate Release

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Mayors Wamp and Kelly Launch Bring Back the BLVD to Revitalize Historic Rossville Boulevard

Opportunity Zone Designation Would Incentivize Investment Where Infrastructure Exists

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN (July 20, 2026) — Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp, Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly, and community leaders today launched **Bring Back the BLVD**, a joint initiative to attract new investment, support local businesses, and restore Rossville Boulevard as a thriving commercial corridor.

The initiative comes as the State of Tennessee selects a new round of federal Opportunity Zone designations under the recently enacted Opportunity Zones 2.0 program. As part of that process, Mayor Wamp is recommending the Rossville Boulevard corridor as his top priority for inclusion as an Opportunity Zone. If approved, the designation would create federal tax incentives to encourage private investment in existing properties, transforming vacant and underutilized sites into new opportunities.

“We should prioritize investing in communities where the infrastructure already exists, not pushing growth farther out,” said **Mayor Wamp**. “Rossville Boulevard has the infrastructure, location, and employment base to thrive once again. This kind of restorative growth strategy will ensure that our families benefit from the new opportunities coming to Chattanooga and Hamilton County.”

Rossville Boulevard has long served as a gateway into Chattanooga and Hamilton County, connecting neighborhoods, businesses, and industry. Once a central hub for commerce, the corridor remains well positioned for renewed investment because of its strategic location and existing infrastructure. The Opportunity Zone designation would build on those assets by spurring reinvestment in an established business district rather than expansion into undeveloped areas, helping create jobs closer to where people are.

“Opportunity Zones are one of the best economic development tools we have in our toolbox because they encourage investors to put down deep roots and stay committed to a neighborhood’s long-term success,” said **Mayor Kelly**. “When private dollars fill vacant storefronts or build new commercial spaces, it stabilizes local property tax revenues, creates neighborhood job opportunities, and complements city-funded initiatives like commercial facade and storefront activation grants. The Rossville Boulevard Opportunity Zone is the natural

next step in years' worth of collaboration we've seen across local and regional government, community organizations, business and property owners, and other stakeholders."

The effort reflects years of dedication from local business owners, property owners, and community partners who have helped shape Rossville Boulevard's revival.

"Investing in Rossville Boulevard has always been about believing in its potential," said **Heidi Hefferlin, founder and managing partner of HK Architects**. "Our team has been proud to work alongside neighbors and community partners to help create a stronger sense of place and show what's possible here. I'm grateful to everyone who has continued to believe in the Boulevard over the years. That persistence has helped spark the momentum for its next chapter of redevelopment."

The Opportunity Zone recommendation now moves to the State of Tennessee for consideration.

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