



A view of downtown Nashville from a condo at The Encore. Visible are the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, Bridgestone Arena and the Hilton Nashville Downtown. COURTESY OF NASHVILLE DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Let's go downtown

Residents find appeal in Nashville's urban areas

Do you prefer walking and biking to sitting in traffic? Love the hustle and bustle of the city? Maybe you abhor long commutes and enjoy taking a spontaneous stroll to a nearby restaurant for dinner and music.

If this sounds like you, you're not alone. According to Tamara Dickson, vice president for economic development at the Nashville Downtown Partnership, Music City has experienced a growing resurgence in downtown living.

BACK TO THE CITY

"There's been a fundamental shift in people wanting to move back to the city in the last decade," says Dickson.

And that shift has brought a wealth of living options to the city's urban landscape, along with a vibrant community of restaurants, shops and clubs.

"Every year there are more people living downtown. The more people, the more amenities," says Dickson.

Why the appeal? According to Dickson, there are a few reasons. The urban environment. The excitement of the city. Being near dining, entertainment and shopping opportunities.

"It's the whole urban experience — being able to walk out your door and have everything at your fingertips," says Dickson.

RETAIL, RESTAURANTS & MORE

If you live in the heart of Music City, you definitely have options — lots of them.

Take The Gulch, for example. This former railroad yard has been transformed into Nashville's urban hotspot. Properties like Velocity, Terrazzo, Encore and the Viridian offer the ultimate digs for downtown living. And with the tremendous growth here, there's always something to do or some place to go. Shop at Two Old Hippies, Apricot Lane or Urban Outfitters. Work out at Barry's

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Bootcamp or chill out at Sanctuary for Yoga. Meet friends for drinks at Bar Louie or The Pub Nashville. Walk over to Whiskey Kitchen or Sambuca for dinner. If you feel like getting your art on, stroll on over to the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. Head down to the Tennessee Performing Arts Center for a ballet performance or to the Schermerhorn for a musical event.

Dickson points out the number of restaurants found the downtown core today: 197. Just 10 years ago that number was 95.

Andrea Champion, communications director at the Nashville Downtown Partnership, notes that downtown not only has more restaurants but that many of them are locally owned. Among them: Etch, The Southern, Puckett's (5th and Church) and The Farm House.

Downtown retail has made significant strides as well.

"In the past five years, downtown has seen a net gain of 47 retail establishments," adds Dickson.

Another important component of a downtown community is the neighborhood grocery store. There was a time when the downtown core was bereft of this necessity. But that has changed, too, says Champion.

"In 2007, the H.G. Hill Urban Market opened in The Viridian, and the Turnip Truck Urban Fare opened in 2010," says Champion.

The growth, action and entertainment of the city extend way beyond The Gulch proper. There are numerous dining and entertainment options down on Lower Broadway and out on West End. Not to mention The Parthenon, Centennial Park, Hillsboro Village ... the list goes on.

GETTING AROUND

If you live downtown, whether you own a car or not, there's really no need to drive downtown. And, as Champion points out, most urban dwellers don't want to.

"Most people who move downtown want that urban lifestyle and they want to be able to walk to these places," says Champion.

And if you have a car when you move downtown, there's a good chance you won't keep it.

"Many downtown residents choose to get rid of their cars once they move downtown, because they have alternate transportation options," says Dickson.

Dickson cites multiple modes of transportation options in the downtown area, from B-cycle (a bicycle sharing program) and Enterprise CarShare to the Music City Circuit (buses and vans

that circulate the downtown area offering free rides).

In addition, Lyft and Uber, the latest innovations in ride-share services, have established a presence in Music City. There's also the proposed AMP project — a bus rapid transit system that would run from East Nashville to the Saint Thomas Hospital area — which is struggling to build community support and get necessary federal funding.

DON'T FORGET THE MUSIC

In addition to retail and restaurants, downtown Music City has a wealth of — surprise — music hotspots. Nashville has been getting national notice for its music scene — and it's much more than country music that is thriving in Guitar Town; Music City's burgeoning pop scene recently led *The Atlantic* to dub Nashville the "Silicon Valley of the music business." The publication cited the city's transformation from "country music outpost" to a major player in the world of commercial music. Venerable music venues like 3rd and Lindsley and The Station Inn provide unforgettable entertainment. And don't forget the historic Ryman Auditorium, which *Rolling Stone* named #4 on their 2013 list of "Best Music Venues."

OFFICE SPACE

If you're looking to set up shop, office space in The Gulch is plentiful right now. And Dickson points out that Gulch Crossing, which is set to open in 2015, will add another 205,000 square feet of office and retail space.

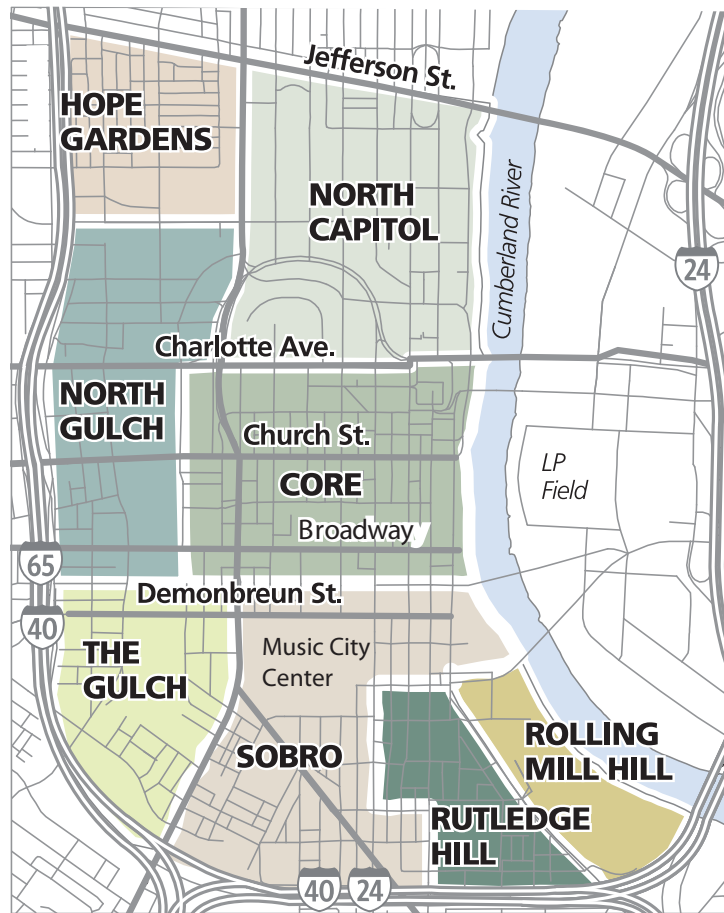
Speaking of the office: Did you know that Forbes.com ranks Nashville fifth among its "Best Places for Business and Careers"? And 16th for job growth? And second among "Best Big Cities for Jobs"?

Dickson, for one, is excited about the future of downtown Nashville.

"Downtown Nashville is becoming a true urban city," says Dickson. "In the next five to 10 years, it will be a true 24/7 city."

These are just some of the reasons to consider living in the heart of Music City. Another reason: You can smugly enjoy the view from your high-rise condo as you Skype with far-off friends and remind them that Nashville is #8 on *Travel + Leisure's* list of America's Best Cities for Hipsters.

DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL AREAS



THE TENNESSEAN

— Diane Hughes, Tennessean Custom Publications