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**New Report on Chattanooga Environment Finds Links Between Transportation,  
Land Use and Carbon Footprint**  
*Ochs Center Study Examines Environmental Issues Across Region  
and At Neighborhood Level*

At a press conference at GreenSpaces today, the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies released a detailed study of environmental conditions and issues in the Chattanooga region. The report, the second in a series of seven reports that comprise the *2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report* (SOCRR), examined two dozen indicators related to carbon emissions, land use and conservation, air quality and water quality in the six county Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, Hamilton County and thirty-six subregions within Hamilton County.

Major Findings from the Report include:

- | In a survey of 1,000 residents in Hamilton County, **over 82% of respondents stated that clean air was very important to their quality of life.** Over 61% of respondents stated that parks and other recreational opportunities were very important to the quality of life in the Chattanooga region.
- | The per capita carbon footprint of the region is relatively large and growing. **In 2005, the Chattanooga MSA released 3.11 metric tons of carbon per capita due to residential energy use and transportation. According to the Brookings Institution, the region had the 12<sup>th</sup> highest per capita carbon emissions out of the 100 largest metro areas in the United States.** Between 2000 and 2005, the per capita carbon emissions due to residential energy use increased by 4.1%.
- | Land use development in Hamilton County has tended to be low-density at the edges of the county. **In 2005 and 2006, 47% of all home sales were in unincorporated parts of the County.**
- | Residents of Hamilton County are heavily dependent on automobiles for transportation. **Over 80% of residents rely on their own car for travel to and from work.** Less than 1% of the population utilizes public transportation and, **within the city limits less than 50% of residents live within walking distance (1/4-mile) of a bus stop.**
- | The amount of parks and open space in Hamilton County is fairly high at just **over 70 acres per 1,000 residents.** Still, several areas within the County lacked access to parks and open space. Subregions that had less than one acre of park space per 1,000 residents include Woodmore/Dalewood, Lupton City/Norcross, Westview/Mountain Shadows, Brainerd, and Glenwood/Eastdale.

- ‡ **The number of days in Hamilton County that received a “good” rating for air quality declined between 2005 and 2007.** In 2005, 49% of measured days were rated as “good” and 51% of days were rated as “moderate” or “unhealthy for sensitive groups.” In 2007, 39% measured days were rated as good and 61% of days were rated as moderate or unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- ‡ **Of the 299 miles of streams that have been assessed in Hamilton County, 225 miles of streams have been categorized as impaired.** This amounts to 30% of the total miles of streams in Hamilton County.
- ‡ Nearly 50% of streams and rivers that have been listed as impaired have been contaminated by E. coli.
- ‡ A small number of subregions contain the majority of industrial sources of air and water pollution within Hamilton County. The neighborhoods with the highest number of permits for air emissions were Amnicola/East Chattanooga, South Chattanooga, and Mountain Creek/ Moccasin Bend.

“With growing interest in the environment both locally and nationally, we thought it was important to put a spotlight on what we know about environmental conditions in our region,” said David Eichenthal, President and CEO of the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies. “Recent studies have found that our region’s carbon footprint is one of the highest per capita in the nation. Our study points to the clear relationship between land use, transportation and carbon footprint. It also highlights real differences at the subregion level when it comes to important environmental indicators such as access to open space and access to public transportation.”

The report on the environment was authored by Dr. William Tharp, Senior Policy Analyst, and Lori Quillen, Policy Analyst. The 2008 State of Chattanooga Region Report on the Environment can be downloaded at the Ochs Center website - [www.ochscenter.org](http://www.ochscenter.org). The development of the State of Chattanooga Region Report was generously supported by grants from the Lyndhurst Foundation, Benwood Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, as well as funding to the Ochs Center from the United Way.