

How America's Dirtiest City in 1969 Became One of The Greenest

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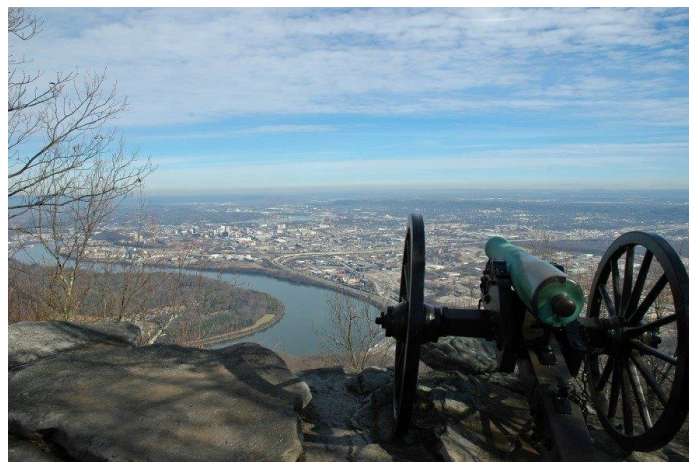
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Image via Wikipedia

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One of America's dirtiest cities has completely altered its legacy as one of the country's greenest. Over the last few decades, Chattanooga, Tennessee has been transformed from a [smog-filled](#) city named America's dirtiest in 1969 to a clean livable community. A pioneer in green urban policy, the Chattanooga city government has enacted a series of bold sustainability policies, through which its citizens enjoy the benefits of a clean environment and cutting-edge [clean technology](#).



Chattanooga in its current green renaissance is far from its 20th century form. In 1969, the [EPA](#) declared Chattanooga to be the dirtiest city in the United States after identifying high levels of ozone, particulates and other toxic substances in the local air. This prompted some serious soul-searching. “There was a huge push to turn the city around and make it inviting,” says Andrew Griffin Frye, an engineer at the [Tennessee Valley Authority](#). The first major move towards a better city came in 1992 with the introduction of free, all-electric shuttle buses in the downtown area. The electric shuttle system serves 1,000,000 passengers per year and has helped to reduce the area’s congestion and [air pollution](#).

In 2012, the city opened its bike-sharing system, Bike Chattanooga, which currently consists of 300 [bikes](#) at 33 stations. Other cities, including much-promoted bike haven Portland, Oregon, have consulted with Chattanooga in creating their own bike-share system. Chattanooga’s latest venture is its soon-to-open electric car-sharing program, which will feature twenty Nissan Leafs by the end of the summer. These [electric cars](#) will be powered by three new solar power generation sites. This clean energy is then sent to the car charging lot, where owners of electric vehicles may also charge their vehicles for free.

To combat air pollution, the city has decommissioned all but five of its [coal](#) plants. In 2014, Chattanooga was recognized as one of the top 15 American cities for air quality improvement. The clean air complements the region’s natural beauty of rolling hills, scenic valleys, and mountainous wilderness. Other American cities could learn much from Chattanooga’s trailblazing work to build a more sustainable, healthy urban environment.

Via [Good](#)

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