ULI Senior Resident Fellow and Green Infrastructure guru Ed McMahon, coauthor of the seminal publication in the topic *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscape and Communities*, visited the Mid-South on June 12th to offer his guidance to the Mid South Regional Greenprint and Sustainability Plan. Throughout his stay in the Mid South, McMahon toured our natural assets and recreation facilities, gave a presentation to the Greenprint Consortium, and had dinner with major funders. As he gave his views on the present condition of conservation in the Mid-South and its trajectory towards a better future, a theme began to emerge: *work to make Memphis and the Mid-South become a “city of choice” that highlights its assets, develops a true sense of place, and balances planned conservation with development.* He illustrated the success of these themes by emphasizing best practices in examples from around the country in places like Montgomery County, Missouri and Charleston, South Carolina

McMahon’s visit was organized by the ULI Memphis District Council and included the financial support from the Hyde Family Foundations and the Mid South Greenway Steering Committee.

During his presentation to the Greenprint Consortium, McMahon listed several other best practices that would guide the Mid-South to a successful balance of conservation and development as we work towards a green infrastructure network:
Planning for conservation is as essential as planning for development, in fact, it can alleviate some of the stresses when planning for future development.

“If your only solution to decreasing congestion is widening roads, then it’s like letting out your belt to fight obesity.” Why not provide alternative modes of transit?

“Place-making is important. People come back and spend their money in places that attract their affection” and the “natural approach can be the cost effective approach.”

Great cities have great parks and great parks put great cities on the map.

“It’s about balance – balancing connections between the people and the land.”

Economic development strategies are changing. Widening the highways are not longer viable options, today it is about attracting a younger talent pool and providing high value leisure. You need to think less about what you don’t have and more about what you do have and how to take advantage of that.

Public ballot measures for open space preservation have high rates of approval and success in the polls.

Montgomery County Missouri developed a very successful model for “wedges of development between corridors of greenspace.”

“The natural approach can be the cost effective approach.”

“You can place a value on a scenic view.”

“As we densify the community, we need to green the community.” We can do this by:
  - Removing paving
  - Creating pocket parks
  - Decking old highways

Charleston, South Carolina Mayor Riley: “We should give the best of the city to everyone.” Creating valuable public spaces can improve overall property values and add to your city’s sense of place.

“Tourism is all about being unique. Memphis needs to keep what makes is unique” that includes its old buildings and conservation areas.

“Every community has assets, some are not as obvious as others.”

For a city to survive, you need a healthy downtown, and you need historic preservation.