

Ron Littlefield, AICP, is a seasoned planner and politician with more than 40 years experience. He recently retired from elected office after two terms as Mayor of Chattanooga following other years of service on the Chattanooga City Council – including two terms as Chairman. His initial entry into politics was in 1987 when he was elected Commissioner of Public Works for Chattanooga – defeating a 12 year incumbent. Littlefield is a 1968 graduate of Auburn University with a degree in business. His early planning career was characterized by service with the Tennessee State Planning Commission working as a local planner with communities in Southeast Tennessee. He was a member of the old American Society Planning Officials and became a charter member of the new American Planning Association when the two previous national planning organizations merged. He obtained his AICP credential in the early 1970's when the test was still administered orally by a sitting panel of fellow professionals. (Littlefield still considers that ordeal as a true test of courage.)

Over the four decades of his career he held various positions in both public and private agencies and organizations. In the mid 1980's, he served as the first Director of Economic Development for the newly combined Chattanooga / Hamilton County / Chamber of Commerce unified effort to reverse the loss of manufacturing jobs in the city and surrounding region. Following that, he headed Chattanooga Venture and oversaw the undertaking of Vision 2000 – one of the first large scale visioning projects in the US. This successful public participation program is credited with changing outlooks and attitudes in Chattanooga and making the transition to a new economy possible. In his years as Mayor, Littlefield continued to employ public participation methods to sustain and strengthen the transformation of Chattanooga into a balanced community with a clean environment and desirable quality of life. This tactic was instrumental in attracting Volkswagen, Alstom Power and other major employers to Chattanooga – in Littlefield's words "installing a new manufacturing heart in a previously tired old industrial city."