

moving forward 2024 SCORECARD

Moving Forward’s work to expand mobility options in Middle Tennessee is grounded in the values of accountability, collaboration, equity, regionalism, and urgency. This scorecard tracks progress made in 2023 on Moving Forward’s goals. Moving Forward remains committed to securing dedicated funding for transit. The community benefits when we equitably invest in transit and residents can benefit from affordable, convenient, safe, and dependable transit. For a deeper dive, visit movingforwardmidtn.com.

Complete 

Underway 

Ongoing 

1. Facilitate a regional approach to improve mobility

In 2019, Moving Forward researched how peer regions coordinate to provide regional transit and found that while there are multiple models of regional coordination on transportation and transit infrastructure, all the peer regions have funding streams dedicated to transit. Middle Tennessee counties do not possess dedicated funding for transit. There remains work to do on a regional approach to improve mobility under the guidelines provided through the IMPROVE Act which requires counties to approach dedicated funding on the ballot county-by-county. Read the report at movingforwardmidtn.com.

2. Update the Nashville Area MPO 2045 regional transportation plan in 2021 | Update the WeGo strategic plan (nMotion) in 2022

In 2021, mayors and transportation officials across Middle Tennessee adopted an update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP allocates more than \$10.5 billion in anticipated federal grants and matching funds to improve transportation throughout Davidson, Maury, Robertson, Sumner, Rutherford, Williamson, and Wilson counties. While WeGo has not directly updated nMotion, updates have been strategically incorporated through the Nashville Transportation Plan and Better Bus improvements.

3. Advocate for near term projects to improve mobility that move Middle Tennessee toward a robust, regional, multimodal transportation system

Middle Tennessee can make innovative, incremental improvements to its multimodal transportation system to provide “proof of concept” and demonstrate that Middle Tennessee local and state governments can deliver projects successfully. Throughout 2023, WeGo and the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure (NDOT) focused on creating efficiencies through foundational improvements to QuickTicket/best value fare capping, bus stop and Vision Zero infrastructure, and expansion of transit centers in North Nashville and South Nashville. The Connect Downtown Study also released its draft proposals on how to move people and goods more safely and efficiently through the downtown core through a variety of mobility options.

4. Advocate for and secure dedicated funding for transit and mobility in the region in the next Metro Nashville mayoral term (2023 – 2027)

The Middle Tennessee region is the only metro area of its size in the country without a local, dedicated source of funding for transit. This limits the region’s ability to receive state and federal funding, which often requires a local match of some size. No action was taken on this goal in 2023. Moving Forward looks forward to future opportunities to approve dedicated funding on the ballot.

5. Begin construction on first phase of the WeGo strategic plan in the region by 2026

This objective is critical for Middle Tennessee to continue to be a prosperous region for its vibrant and diverse residents and neighborhoods. Reaching this goal is difficult if local, dedicated funding is not secured. No action was taken on this goal in 2023.

2023 TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SUCCESS ON THE BALLOT

Moving Forward is committed to securing dedicated funding for transit and believes that investment is critical to aid in our region’s continued prosperity. The Middle Tennessee region is the only metro area of its size in the country without a local, dedicated source of funding for transit. Though an off-year election with fewer items on the ballot, during the 2023 general election cycle, communities across the country supported dedicated funding streams for transit and transportation-related infrastructure. With nine of the eleven public transportation measures that were on the ballot this year passing, transportation had huge wins.



Source: Transportation for America and APTA Center for Transportation Excellence, 2023

The Path to Dedicated Funding for Transit

In 2017, Governor Bill Haslam signed the IMPROVE Act into law. This law allows for some cities and counties to raise dedicated funds for future transit projects through a voter referendum process. The legislation includes a provision whereby counties with 112,000 population or more and the largest four cities across the state may impose a surcharge with the funds dedicated to transit projects. A transit ballot initiative must be voted on county-by-county.

Counties in the 10-county Middle TN region that ARE ABLE to hold a referendum:



Counties in the 10-county Middle TN region that ARE NOT ABLE to hold a referendum:

Local Surcharges for Transit Projects

The possible surcharges, with their limits, are available only if that local government is currently collecting that tax. These possible surcharges include:

- **Local option sales tax (capped at 2.75%)** | *In Davidson County, the current combined state & local sales tax rate is 9.25%*
- **Hotel / Motel tax (no more than 20% aggregate of taxes & surcharge, the local portion is capped at 8%.)** | *Local portion is currently at 7% | In Davidson County (excluding Goodlettsville), the current combined state & local hotel / motel tax is 16.25%, with an additional fee of \$2.50 / night*
- **Business privilege tax (no more than 20% of current rate)**
- **Residential development fee (no more than 20% of current rate)** | *Davidson County does not currently collect a residential development fee and is preempted from collecting this fee*
- **Local car rental tax (no more than 20% of current rate)** | *In Davidson County, the current combined state and local car rental tax is 4%*
- **Wheel tax (no more than the \$200 as the aggregate of taxes and surcharge)** | *In Davidson County, the current wheel tax is \$55*

A third party must run a feasibility audit, analyzing the anticipated costs, risks, and liabilities of the transit improvement program, the anticipated revenue generated by the surcharge and transit improvement program, and the local government's financial position. Following the third-party analysis, a county or city's legislative body must approve the Transit Improvement Program – the list of projects – and the revenue sources. Once the local legislative body approves the TIP and revenue sources, the county election commission schedules the referendum for an upcoming election. Projects funded through the ballot initiative must be transit-related projects.

Mayor O'Connell's 15 Fixes on Day One - Transit

Soon after the election, Mayor Freddie O'Connell released his "15 Fixes on Day One" – a list of fifteen priorities that his office would begin working on from day one. One of those fifteen priorities included the "Frequent Transit Network." Mayor O'Connell promised to take the necessary steps to continue to build out a frequent transit network, "one that brings transit closer to communities, extends hours and frequencies, and introduces more technology." Mayor O'Connell also committed to focusing on planning and developing the Sobro, East Bank, and Southeast community transit centers.

Source: <https://www.readyforfreddie.com/15-fixes>

Mayor O'Connell's Transition Committee Recommendations on Transportation and Mobility

One of Mayor O'Connell's transition committees, How Nashville Moves, focused on identifying short-term fixes and long-term initiatives around transportation and mobility in Davidson County. The committee focused on guiding principles and centered policy recommendations around those guiding principles. Recommendations included Mayor O'Connell using his platform to help rebuild Nashvillians' trust in the transportation system and encouraging Mayor O'Connell to make an early determination about a transit referendum, shaping a plan that works for Nashville. To learn more, visit <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/mayor/transition-committee/how-nashville-moves>.

Source: <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/mayor/transition-committee>

