

2017 Scorecard and next steps

Moving Forward's purpose is to ensure the creation of a regional transportation solution through a cohesive community effort. Since its inception in August 2015, Moving Forward has been focused on five objectives that create a path to offering transit choices to Middle Tennesseans. This inaugural scorecard explains the progress that has been made – and the challenges ahead – in achieving multi-modal transportation options for Middle Tennessee. For more information, visit movingforwardmidtn.com.

Complete  Underway  Still to be achieved 

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-  **1. Support the completion of an RTA and MTA Strategic Plan update within one year (2016)** In September 2016, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) adopted the nMotion transit plan. Moving Forward was actively engaged in critiquing and eventually endorsing the final nMotion plan. Their critique and recommendations are found in Moving Forward's 2016 Annual report, found at movingforwardmidtn.com.
 - (federal) 

(state) 

2. Support the identification and passage of state and federal government revenue enhancements for transit within two years (2017) At the federal level, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) became law in December 2015, providing federal funding for transportation and transit through 2020. Future action will be needed at the federal level to continue providing federal funds for transit after 2020. On January 18, 2017 Gov. Bill Haslam proposed transportation funding legislation that includes an increase to the state's gas tax and also enabling legislation that – if passed by the state legislature – would allow local governments to put a dedicated transportation funding source on the ballot for voter approval.
 -  **3. Ensure at least 30,000 engagements with Middle Tennesseans in the transit conversation within two years (2017)** Moving Forward's Public Engagement Task Force has worked with MTA and RTA as these agencies led community outreach for nMotion, providing recommendations on how to reach a diverse range of audiences and co-hosted meetings with MTA/RTA in North Nashville and South Nashville. MTA/RTA achieved a record number of engagements, as well as significant regional input with the assistance of Transit Alliance for Middle Tennessee and Cumberland Region Tomorrow. By the time it was adopted in September 2016, there were 19,964 engagements, such as surveys completed and comments provided, with the nMotion plan.
 -  **4. Identify and secure a local dedicated funding source for transit in the region within three years (2018)** In November 2016, Moving Forward's Revenue and Finance Task Force released the Victoria Transport Policy Institute's (VTPI) study on regional transit funding for Middle Tennessee. The study considered 20 funding sources in light of eight criteria and recommended seven sources for further study. The Task Force expects to undertake a second study to determine how much revenue can be generated per county for a number of potential funding sources. The report can be found at movingforwardmidtn.com. As currently drafted, the enabling legislation in Governor Haslam's transportation funding bill would allow counties to implement a special sales tax to fund transit through a referendum vote. Moving Forward supports the enabling legislation, believing a range of tools should be available for local governments seeking to fund transit.
 -  **5. Support breaking ground on the first rapid transit project in the region within five years (2020)** Breaking ground on the first rapid transit project by 2020 is both ambitious and critical, and can only take place after funding is secured. Transit projects in peer cities often take seven or more years from inception to completion. Middle Tennessee is growing rapidly, and while the influx of residents, businesses and jobs benefits our region, it also strains our infrastructure and can harm our quality of life. Creating rapid transit gives Middle Tennesseans more options – the option to live in the community they desire and still conveniently commute to their job or school; the choice to quickly and safely go downtown for a game or show; the option to move about the region when they cannot drive due to age or ability.

What's next for transit in Middle Tennessee

With the adoption of the regional transit plan and a discussion on local, dedicated funding underway, significant steps have been taken to create regional transportation solutions. Yet the decisions on how to prioritize and fund transit projects remain. Middle Tennesseans must continue to be engaged in the transit conversation – it is imperative to maintaining our region's quality of life. Several critical transit discussions and decisions will occur in 2017.

State Transportation Infrastructure Conversation – Gov. Bill Haslam has proposed a seven-cent increase in the state's gas tax (which has not been increased since 1989) and paired this with a decrease in the state's sales tax on groceries, as well as other taxes. The existing gas tax rate does not allow the state to address the estimated \$6 billion backlog of road and bridge projects. The governor's proposal does not include new funding for transit, but instead allows local governments to raise new revenues for transit.

Enabling Legislation for Counties to Seek Local Funding for Transportation – Moving Forward is pleased that the governor's gas tax legislation includes the enabling legislation that would allow local governments to raise local revenues for transit needs. As currently proposed, a county or city could elect – through a vote of the people – to implement a special sales tax dedicated entirely to transit. This new sales tax, which would be considered a surcharge, would not be subject to the existing caps and limitations placed on the state and local option sales tax. Moving Forward supports enabling legislation that gives counties a broad set of tools to address their transportation needs. Passage of this enabling legislation is critical for Middle Tennessee counties to proceed in securing the local funding necessary to build our future transit network.

Downtown Mobility Study – The nMotion plan adopted by MTA and RTA in September proposed that transit move through downtown on “transit emphasis corridors.” nMotion included a proposal for which streets could serve as the transit emphasis corridors, but concluded that further study was needed. Downtown Nashville is a complex environment with many modes of transportation, but also deliveries, special events and constant construction. Yet if transit cannot move into, around and, more importantly, through downtown in a reliable manner, it will not be a viable option for Middle Tennessee residents. The Downtown Mobility Study is a critical early decision point for the overall regional transit system.

The Nashville/Davidson County Mayor's Office has charged Metro Public Works and other Metro partners to undertake a Downtown Mobility Study to determine which streets should serve as transit emphasis corridors and how these, and a new transit hub in the southern portion of downtown, can exist with all the other users in downtown. Moving Forward will be tracking this study, participating and seeking viable options for the hub of the regional transit system.

High-Capacity Transit Corridor Studies – The adopted nMotion plan also called for further study on the corridors recommended for light rail service – Charlotte, Gallatin, Murfreesboro and Nolensville. These studies, led by MTA, should provide residents, business and property owners along these corridors with a clearer understanding of what higher-order transit would look like and how it would function on the corridor. Moving Forward's Routes, Network and Modes Task Force will be actively engaged in these conversations.

Public Engagement – While the public engagement on transit to date is impressive, there are still many Middle Tennesseans whose lives would benefit from transportation options who have not been engaged. In the coming year, the Moving Forward Public Engagement Task Force will be reaching out to various civic, professional and recreational groups to bring them up to speed on the transit conversation in the region and what it means for these groups and their members.

About Moving Forward

Moving Forward is an initiative led by community and business leaders to ensure the creation of a regional transportation solution through a cohesive community effort. Moving Forward's work is grounded in the values of regionalism, accountability, urgency and collaboration. For more information or to sign up to help, visit movingforwardmidtn.com.

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