



movingforward
mobility solutions for our region

ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022



Moving Forward is dedicated to advocating for regional mobility solutions that work for Middle Tennesseans. Moving Forward empowers business, community, and transit thought leaders to engage in the critical transportation issues facing Middle Tennessee by reviewing the region’s progress toward greater mobility options and identifying mobility, and specifically transit, solutions for the region.

Moving Forward is governed by a coordinating committee with two issue-specific task forces, each of which are led by business and community leaders. Moving Forward engages in conversations with elected officials and the public sector – the Tennessee Department of Transportation, the Greater Nashville Regional Council, WeGo (the Metropolitan Transit Authority), and mayors throughout Middle Tennessee – to advocate for regional mobility solutions. Moving Forward brings business and community insight and innovation to the conversation.

Started in August 2015, Moving Forward relaunched in 2019, with the following values and goals.

MOVING FORWARD’S VALUES

Accountability, collaboration, equity, regionalism and urgency.

MOVING FORWARD’S GOALS

- 1 **Facilitate a regional approach to improve mobility.**
- 2 **Update the Nashville Area MPO 2045 regional transportation plan in 2021.
Update the WeGo strategic plan (nMotion) in 2022.**
- 3 **Advocate for near-term projects to improve mobility that move Middle Tennessee toward a robust, regional, multi-modal transportation system.**
- 4 **Advocate for and secure dedicated funding for transit and mobility in the region in the next Metro Nashville mayoral term (2023-2027).**
- 5 **Begin construction on the first phase of the WeGo strategic plan in the region by 2026.**

MOVING FORWARD COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Todd Rolapp
Bass, Berry & Sims
CHAIR

Ashley Northington
RW Jones Agency
VICE-CHAIR

Al Pramuk
Gresham Smith
CHAIR OF MOBILITY POLICY TASK FORCE

Dr. Curtis Johnson
Tennessee State University
VICE-CHAIR OF MOBILITY POLICY TASK FORCE

Erin Hafkenschiel
Think Tennessee
CHAIR OF MOBILITY PLANS TASK FORCE

Jack Gaughan
RE/MAX Choice Properties
VICE-CHAIR OF MOBILITY PLANS TASK FORCE

MOVING FORWARD TASK FORCE

Mobility Policy Task Force

Creates original research and input to guide policy; responds to legislative or administrative action; ensures volunteers are aware of policy issues at the federal, metro and state level.

Mobility Plans Task Force

Provides the business perspective to the region's plans and projects; creates opportunities to provide project/topic specific information to business and community leaders; aids business and community leaders in amplifying mobility messages throughout the community.

2022 SCORECARD

Moving Forward releases an annual scorecard each January showing what progress has occurred on its five mobility goals.



MOVING FORWARD 2022 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 the progress made in 2021 on Moving Forward's goals to create multi-modal mobility options for our region. To learn more about Moving Forward's work, 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, all of the peer regions have funding streams dedicated solely to transit. Middle Tennessee does not possess dedicated funding for transit. 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 early 2021, mayors and transportation officials from 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 a planning area that includes Davidson, Maury, Robertson, Sumner, Rutherford, Williamson, and Wilson counties. WeGo recognizes the need to update its strategic plan, nMotion, and intends to begin data collection on travel patterns post-COVID and rider preferences in 2022.

 3. **Advocate for near term projects to improve mobility.**

Middle Tennessee can make innovative, incremental improvements to its multi-modal transportation system to provide "proof of concept" and proof that our local and state governments can deliver projects, even as we work towards a referendum for dedicated funding. Throughout 2021, Moving Forward supported near-term transit and mobility initiatives and championed increased funding for transit in Metro Nashville's Capital Spending Plan and Operating Budget.

4. **Identify and secure dedicated funding for mobility in the region by 2024.**

The Middle Tennessee region is the only metropolitan area of its size in the country without a local, dedicated source of funding for transit. No action was taken on this goal in 2021.

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

This objective is ambitious but critical for Middle Tennessee to continue to be a prosperous region for its vibrant and diverse residents. Reaching this goal is difficult if local, dedicated funding is not secured. No action was taken on this goal in 2021.

METRO NASHVILLE-DAVIDSON COUNTY'S 2021 TRANSPORTATION/TRANSIT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For this analysis, Moving Forward considered the projects listed in the "Initial Program (2021-2023)" in Nashville-Davidson County's adopted Transportation Plan (page 15 of Appendix 2). After discussion with Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT) and WeGo staff, the progress of the projects is categorized and described below. For this analysis, Moving Forward did not report on "state of good repair" and combined the two types of bus shelter projects.

▶ **NASHVILLE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND MULTIMODAL INFRASTRUCTURE (NDOT) (PG. 172) (COMPLETED)**

NDOT was launched in July 2021 with a new executive director in January 2022.

▶ **SIDEWALK PROJECT PROGRAM (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

Mayor Cooper announced last year key personnel changes and an internal review process to determine the best paths for realignment of the transportation functions at NDOT and Planning. This process evaluated efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability to improve sidewalk construction time by 50% and reduce costs by 20% within 12 months. NDOT has been steadily repairing and building new sidewalks and at Mayor Cooper's 2022 State of Metro, he announced that NDOT has added over 20,000 linear feet of new sidewalk and total sidewalk completions are up over 10%. In conjunction with the Vision Zero plan, NDOT released a WalknBike update for sidewalks and bikeways across Nashville in February 2022. To see NDOT's bikeways and sidewalks tracker, visit <http://mpw.nashville.gov/walknbike/>.

▶ **MLK/CHARLOTTE AVENUE INNOVATION AND HEALTH CORRIDOR (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

WeGo and NDOT are working together on their Advanced Transportation Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program (ATCMTD) project with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to integrate transit-signal communication and incorporate headway-based management into the Charlotte corridor. Progress is currently being made toward filling gaps in the bikeway network along Charlotte Pike as new bike lanes are added in coordination with TDOT's repaving project.

▶ **VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN AND ONGOING SAFETY IMPROVEMENT (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

The first public draft of the Vision Zero Action Plan was released December 15, 2021, which focused on a high injury network of streets and intersections to help guide investment, with an action plan that focuses on short-, medium-, and long-term goals and a focus on equity. After community conversation, the final Vision Zero Action Plan was launched. NDOT staff are currently developing a five-year implementation

plan that identifies specific projects and programs that Metro Nashville staff and partners will develop and execute. NDOT anticipates completing the implementation plan in late summer 2022. The Vision Zero Action Plan can be found at <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/transportation/plans-and-programs/vision-zero>.

▶ **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CENTER (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

The Traffic Management Center is currently under development and will be housed in existing space at the Howard School Metro office complex. At the new hub, NDOT will be able to better manage traffic signals, gather traffic-flow information and share updates with drivers in real time, improving safety and reducing congestion. In January 2022, Mayor Cooper announced a fully funded traffic management center with TDOT awarding Metro Nashville with a federal CMAQ grant.

▶ **GREEN HILLS/HILLSBORO TRANSIT CENTER (COMPLETED)**

The Hillsboro Transit Center celebrated its grand opening on March 31, 2022. The project was in collaboration with Metro Nashville Public Schools, TDOT, NDOT, and WeGo. The transit center is located adjacent to Hillsboro High School. This transit center includes covered bus bays, ticket vending machines, lighting improvements, real-time bus information, ADA compliant infrastructure, a climate-controlled waiting room, exterior waiting areas, phone charging stations, and Wi-Fi. There is also clear connection to the transit center via sidewalks, crosswalks, shared rides, and bike and scooter infrastructure. The opening of the transit center was in conjunction with WeGo's annual Spring Service changes, including the extension of the Number 17 - 12th Avenue South bus to the Transit Center, which currently terminates at Lipscomb University.

▶ **NORTH NASHVILLE/CLARKSVILLE PIKE TRANSIT CENTER (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

After completing demolition and design conversations with the community, WeGo is currently opening construction bids for the North Nashville/Clarksville Pike Transit Center. Leading up to the center opening, WeGo is planning to extend the 21 - Wedgewood Bus to this location (it currently terminates at TSU) and anticipates extending the 9 - Metro Center and 14 - Whites Creek to this center upon opening. The new Trinity Lane Crosstown will be funding dependent, but WeGo will be seeking funding for it in the Metro Operating Budget for FY2023-24.

▶ **BETTER BUS SERVICE EXPANSION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

With the partial funding of the next phase of Better Bus in Metro's FY23 budget, WeGo is looking at two phases of service expansion in the upcoming fiscal year. The fall change (October 2022) will be focused on additional WeGo Link Zones (increasing the size of Antioch, adding South Nashville, Hermitage and Goodlettsville) and expanding Access on Demand service hours. Service expansion in Spring 2023 will

include another extension of service hours on frequent network routes to 1:15 a.m., later service on route 6 and route 42, and additional “all day” frequency on route 7 - Hillsboro, route 8 - 8th Avenue South, route 75 - Midtown, and route 77 -Thompson/Wedgewood. This change would move route 7 - Hillsboro to the “frequent transit network.” Once this change is complete, WeGo will be about 35% of the way to completing the Better Bus Plan.

▶ **NOLENSVILLE PIKE BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS (COMPLETED)**

On Nolensville Pike, WeGo, in partnership with TDOT and NDOT, completed significant infrastructure upgrades along Nolensville Pike incorporating improved bicycle and pedestrian access last year. The only things that remains are the Fairgrounds stations, which need to be coordinated with other related infrastructure. WeGo is currently waiting for design development of the intersection improvements planned for the Wingrove/Nolensville intersection. The Fairgrounds station is currently in design with some adding complications due to ongoing development of the site and with the fact that the current inbound stop is in the Brown Creek Floodplain.

▶ **EXPANSION OF BUS SHELTERS (PROGRESS WITH DELIVERABLES)**

The Metro Nashville Transportation Plan assigned \$16.4 million to stop/shelter improvements. 68 new sites and 25 expanded sites were identified based on WeGo’s boarding criteria (25+ average daily passenger boardings at a location). As of December 2021, WeGo had completed 24 stops, were about to construct 8 stops, and were in design review and development on 14 stops. This year, WeGo celebrated the completion of their 250th bus shelter location. 24 new locations have been completed since the beginning of 2021, with another 17 in development. The expansion of shelter/stop upgrades will be a never ending process as more will always be needed as service expands.

▶ **BEST VALUE FARE CAPPING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT (COMPLETED)**

WeGo’s mobile app and smart cards are up and running, with right under 50% of WeGo daily trips being taken with QuickTicket Fare products. The percentage of total rides being taken with QuickTicket Fare products are increasing every month.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEDICATED FUNDING FOR TRANSIT AND MOBILITY

Moving Forward remains committed to securing dedicated funding for transit. Moving Forward believes that investment in transit and transportation that provides access for all Middle Tennesseans to get to jobs, education and amenities will aid in our region's continued prosperity.

The Middle Tennessee region is the only metropolitan area of its size in the country without a local, dedicated source of funding for transit. Cities that proceeded with creating or expanding dedicated transit funding during COVID and that were poised to exit COVID stronger and more equitably include:

- Austin, Texas
- San Antonio, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Seattle, Washington

The lack of dedicated funding for transit severely limits the region's ability to receive state and federal funding, which often requires a local match. Impacts of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act could be transformational for transit and mobility needs across our country, and those areas which benefit most will be prepared by having project funds available from a dedicated source.

To retain our quality of life, to ensure that our residents have access to jobs, education, as well as amenities, and to build a robust transit system—we must have dedicated funding for transit.

METRO NASHVILLE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

WEGO FY23 BUDGET

On April 22, 2022, Mayor Cooper delivered his State of Metro Address proposing his FY22-23 Capital Improvements Budget (CIB) and his Operating Budget. Mayor Cooper reiterated in his State of Metro that his FY20-21 budget was a “crisis budget” and his FY21-22 budget was a “investment budget” heading towards Nashville’s economic recovery. Last year, Mayor Cooper restored WeGo funding to pre-pandemic levels, with a reliance on one-time federal funds to implement the first phase of Better Bus. As a result, in FY22, WeGo has been able to make some steady investments into their transportation network such as bus stops and shelters, the opening of the new Hillsboro Transit Center, and beginning the work for the North Nashville Transit Center. This year, Mayor Cooper focused on a budget that centered on full recovery and an investment in the fundamentals and proposed \$64.4 million for WeGo and RTA’s Operating Budget, a 20% increase from his FY22 Operating Budget. Broken down, WeGo would receive \$62.6 million, RTA would receive \$320,000 and the Commuter Rail would receive \$1.5 million.

On June 7, 2022, Moving Forward leadership submitted a letter to Vice Mayor Shulman and members of the Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County in support of Mayor Cooper’s proposed operating funds for WeGo and RTA. The letter urged members of the Metro Council to support Mayor Cooper’s commitment to fully funding WeGo and RTA’s budget request of \$64,431,100 which would allow WeGo to continue current operation levels. This offset the cost of service expansions covered by federal pandemic relief dollars in FY22, while also supporting the implementation of Better Bus. The letter also reiterated Moving Forward’s message of dedicated funding for transit and mobility. To retain quality of life, to ensure that residents have access to jobs, education, as well as amenities, and to build a robust transit system—Nashville must have dedicated funding for transit.

A few days after Mayor Cooper presented his proposed Operating Budget, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) and Metro Nashville were informed that there was going to be a \$22.6 million dollar hole in MNPS’ budget due to a difference in expected state funding. To overcome this budget shortfall, Metro Nashville and MNPS worked together to pull funding from a variety of different sources. One such funding source was \$1 million from WeGo’s FY23 operating budget. Due to some remaining American Rescue Plan funds (ARP) and supply chain issues WeGo was currently having around equipment, WeGo was graciously able to forgo the \$1 million and fill in that money with delayed equipment and some remaining one-time ARP funding. During the debate and conversations at Metro Council, a few council members attempted to fill in and add money to WeGo’s budget, but no amendments doing so were ultimately successful.

On June 21, 2022, Metro Council adopted the FY23 budget, which included the \$1 million decrease in WeGo’s operating budget due to the MNPS budget shortfall. Even with this decrease, the budget of \$61.6 million is a growth in funds from the previous year and will allow WeGo to continue to invest in their system and work towards the next phase of Better Bus.

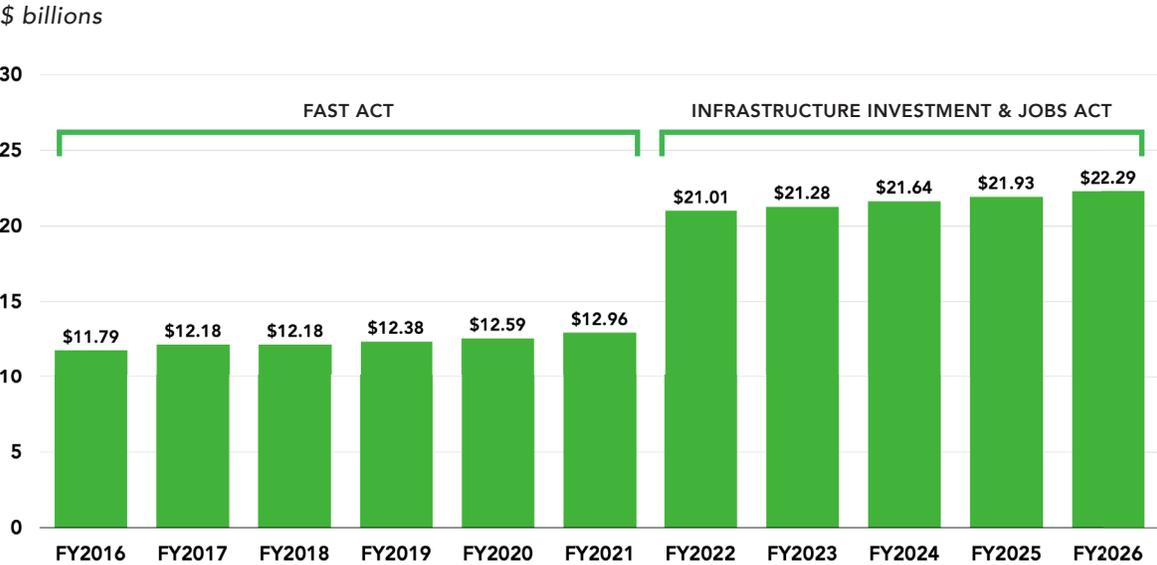
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA)

Middle Tennessee is poised to benefit from federal funding related to COVID and to the passage of the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.” With these funding sources, the region is positioned to accelerate the delivery of some long-awaited, necessary projects. It is important to note, however, that most of the federal dollars available for infrastructure investment are one-time funding; state and local funding will be needed for continued maintenance and operations.

Furthermore, without increasing the availability of local funding, the region will not be as competitive for new grant programs requiring matching funds.

IIJA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Annual Authorized Total Federal Transit Administration Funding Levels



TRANSIT 101: THE PATH TO DEDICATED FUNDING FOR TRANSIT

On Wednesday, April 26, 2017, Governor Bill Haslam signed the IMPROVE Act into law. This law provides Tennessee with a sustainable source of funding for our infrastructure needs. It also 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.

COUNTIES IN THE 10-COUNTY MIDDLE TN REGION THAT ARE ABLE TO HOLD A REFERENDUM:

- Davidson County
- Montgomery County
- Rutherford County
- Sumner County
- Williamson County
- Wilson County

COUNTIES IN THE 10-COUNTY MIDDLE TN THAT ARE NOT ABLE TO HOLD A REFERENDUM:

- Cheatham County
- Dickson County
- Maury County
- Robertson County

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**
(Limit: capped at 2.75%)
In Davidson County, the current combined state and local sales tax rate is 9.25%.
- ▶ **Hotel/Motel tax**
(Limit: no more than 20% aggregate of taxes & surcharge)
In Davidson County, the current combined state and local hotel/motel tax is 15.25%, with an additional fee of \$2.50 /night.
- ▶ **Business privilege tax**
(Limit: no more than 20% of current rate)
- ▶ **Residential development fee**
(Limit: no more than 20% of current rate)
Davidson County does not currently collect a residential development fee.

▶ **Local car rental tax**

(Limit: no more than 20% of current rate)

In Davidson County, the current combined state and local car rental tax is 4%.

▶ **Wheel tax**

(Limit: 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, which could possibly include analyzing the anticipated costs, risks, and liabilities of the transit improvement program, the anticipated revenue generated by the surcharge and transit improvement program, as well as the local government's financial position.

Before the third party may run the analysis and decide, the local government shall obtain approval from the comptroller of the treasury of the selection of the firm and the procedures to be used by the firm in making the determination.

Following the third-party analysis, a county or city's legislative body (council or county commission), must approve the Transit Improvement Program (TIP) – 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.

The surcharges and the projects must be approved by the voters through referendum.

It is also important to note, while funding raised through the IMPROVE Act's increase in gas tax rates has provided revenue for transportation projects, the projected funding is not keeping pace with the number of projects that need to be funded. (It is important to recall that IMPROVE Act funds cannot be spent on transit projects; the funds are intended only for non-transit projects.)



WHAT'S NEXT FOR MOVING FORWARD

Moving Forward will continue to advocate for transit and mobility needs throughout the Middle Tennessee Region. The necessary investment in transit for a growing region is only increasing, and our region is the only metropolitan area of its size in the country without a local, dedicated source of funding for transit.

70% of respondents said problems with transportation in the region are a moderate or significant threat to our local economy.

Vital Signs 2021

Moving Forward's goal of advocating for and securing dedicated funding for transit and mobility in the region during the next Metro Nashville mayoral term (2023-2027) will play a critical role in advocacy efforts in the coming years. A community vision for transit and mobility will ensure that Middle Tennessee residents and "Nashvillians" as a whole will benefit from investments that connect communities as well as provide access to jobs, education, and economic opportunity.

We look forward to continuing our work together as we focus on transit and mobility solutions for our region. Join Moving Forward's efforts to create regional mobility solutions in Middle Tennessee by signing up at movingforwardmidtn.com.





m^ovingforward
mobility solutions for our region

JULY 2022