



Together. Forward. Transit

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 20, 2015

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NEW STATE OF THE MTA SYSTEM REPORT SHOWS OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS

NASHVILLE, TENN– Nashville’s population, employment, and associated travel levels have grown much faster than the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s services, and the area’s demographics are changing in ways that will lead to an increased demand for transit solutions.

Although ridership and service levels have significantly increased over the past 10 years, Nashville MTA’s future success will require a much more aggressive approach in order to adequately address the region’s mobility needs.

These are the key findings in a new *State of the MTA System report*, which is the first of a series of reports completed by Nelson/Nygaard, the lead consulting firm for the yearlong nMotion strategic planning process for Nashville MTA and Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA). A similar report on the state of the RTA system will be released in early August.

This first report provides an overview of existing Nashville MTA transit services and an evaluation of how well these services match transit demand in Davidson County, both today and 20 years in the future. Based on those findings, this report presents the key issues facing the local transit authority and serves as a starting point for the strategies and recommendations that will inform the final strategic plan.

Given the current level of funding available, Nashville MTA provides good, efficient service to areas most in need of transit services, but there are many areas that are underserved, according to the report. For service to be more convenient and to attract new riders who currently drive, it also needs to be more frequent and run for longer hours.

Based on the review of the existing system, analysis of the potential transit markets in Nashville and the region, and consideration of Nashville’s current and future peer cities, there are clear opportunities for improving transit service within Metro Davidson County. A summary is below:

- **Develop a high capacity transit network with premium services.** New growth will require higher service levels on existing routes, suggesting a demand for high capacity transit in many corridors, including Charlotte Pike, Clarksville Pike/MetroCenter area, Dickerson Pike, Gallatin Pike, Lebanon Pike, the airport corridor, Murfreesboro Pike, Nolensville Pike, 21st Avenue/Hillsboro Pike, and Broadway/West End Avenue. MTA needs to consider significantly expanding efforts to develop high-quality services, including light rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), rapid bus/BRT lite, streetcar and more.

- **Provide service more often and at more times of day.** Relatively little service operates frequently enough for most potential riders to consider service to be convenient, with only nine routes operating at least every 15 minutes on weekdays. In addition, for a City where the economy is heavily reliant on service workers, few routes run late enough to accommodate later shifts. For those who rely on transit as their sole means of mobility, the limited frequency and spans of service restrict access to economic opportunity. To provide service that more people can use, MTA will need to increase frequencies and provide longer hours of service.
- **Make service more direct.** Projections of overall travel trends indicate that downtown Nashville will continue to be the focal point of the greatest number of trips in the area. However, to become more convenient, MTA will need to develop more crosstown services to provide trips that don't require going through Downtown. The MTA will also need to pursue approaches that will make travel times in key corridors more competitive with private automobile travel.

While much more information is provided about each of these (and other) opportunities in the *State of the MTA System Report*, these opportunities represent the resounding themes Nashville MTA has heard from the public so far. Nashville MTA/RTA will be examining and seeking input on these and other specific strategies and opportunities in the coming months to incorporate into the final plan.

“Despite significant improvements over the past 10 years, Nashville’s transit service has not kept pace with the fast-paced growth of the city,” said Steve Bland, Nashville MTA/RTA Chief Executive Officer. “Our work has begun to identify a number of opportunities for improvements to our system. Over the coming months, we’re going to be asking for your input on what to do next.”

The [full report](#) along with an executive summary are available online.

Next steps

In the coming weeks, MTA/RTA will use the technical work and the public input to issue guiding principles for the project, which will be used to direct the project team as it considers future improvements to our transit system. At the same time, an initial set of approaches to improve transit is being created and will be made available for public comment and discussion. These “transit strategies” will include a detailed analysis of each of the opportunities discussed above as well as many others.

In addition, MTA/RTA continues to survey the public at community meetings and events as well as online to collect feedback for the plan. The latest survey launched on Tuesday asks residents what trade-offs they would make to create a better transit system and can be found online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3DGNCTB>.

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About nMotion 2015

The Nashville area is undergoing a dynamic transformation that has made it a much more attractive city for thousands of new residents. The Metro Transit Authority (MTA) and the Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) are hard at work to provide new and better transit options that ensure everyone can get where they need to in a cost-effective and timely manner. To determine how best to expand Nashville's transit service, we are updating our Strategic Transit Plan, known as nMotion 2015. Over the next year, we hope to gather input from as many Nashvillians as possible to develop the best mass transit system possible. Visit our website at www.nmotion2015.com.

