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NASHVILLE MTA/RTA STRATEGIC PLAN



STATE OF THE RTA SYSTEM REPORT

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM



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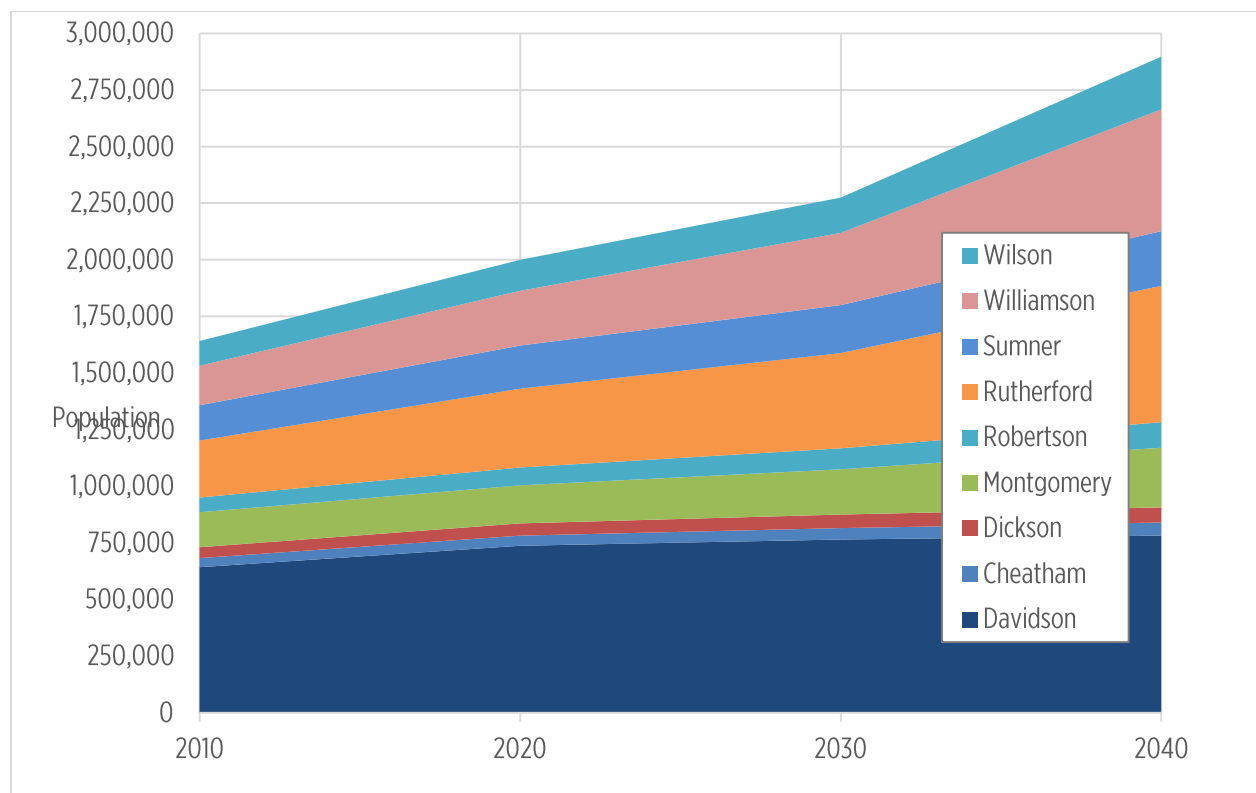
4. ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM

At the present time, transit needs outside of Davidson County are still relatively limited. The transit services that are provided are also limited:

- **Commuter service to and from downtown Nashville:** Music City Star and RTA's express bus routes to and from Nashville
- **Local service in regional centers:** Rover in Murfreesboro, Franklin Transit, and Clarksville Transit
- **Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency:** Provides curb-to-curb transportation services throughout the Cumberland Region, excluding Davidson County; the service is open to all, with priority for medical trips

However, transit needs are growing significantly. Since 1965, Middle Tennessee has grown from approximately 750,000 residents to over 1.7 million. Today, the Nashville area has approximately the same population as the Austin, TX and Charlotte, NC areas. Looking forward, rapid growth will continue; by 2040, the region is projected to have nearly 3.1 million residents (see Figure 47). This growth will mean that the Nashville area will become larger than either Portland, OR or Denver, CO are today and nearly as large as Seattle, WA is today. These are all cities that have developed very robust transit systems over the past few decades—transit systems that have made those cities and regions much more livable and competitive.

FIGURE 47 NASHVILLE AREA PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH 2010 TO 2040



Importantly, most of the population growth—111%—will occur in the nine counties surrounding Davidson County, while employment growth will be split much more evenly between Nashville and the surrounding counties. This growth, and the distribution of the growth, will greatly increase the demand for transit service to and from Nashville, for reverse commute service from Nashville to outlying counties, and for new and expanded services in the outlying counties. This chapter describes issues with existing services that will need to be addressed to improve those services and to meet future needs.

MAJOR ISSUES

As described in the Overview of Existing Services and the Market Analysis, there are a number of issues with RTA's existing services that need to be addressed in the short term and many market-based demands for improvement in the longer term:

- **Service is limited.** RTA commuter services—the Music City Star and express bus routes—typically provide only two to three trips in each direction that serve a short window of work hours. Local services only operate during the daytime, and most operate only once an hour. More service, including longer spans, will be required to provide potential riders with sufficient flexibility to make service convenient.
- **Express bus services are fast, but not fast enough.** Most express routes make only one or two stops in outer areas and then express to Nashville. However, they are stuck in the same traffic as automobiles to and from Nashville, and then are slow within Nashville. Improvements are needed to make express bus service faster.
- **Express bus park-and-ride lots are often inconveniently located.** Most park-and-ride lots are located at places where a local business, church, or other organization has agreed to share use of their lots, rather than at locations that would be most convenient to users. To make service more attractive, park-and-ride lots at more convenient locations will be needed. This is especially true for MTA and RTA express bus services.
- **Most park-and-ride lots are not marked.** Many park-and-ride lots, especially those shared with local organizations, provide no indication that they are park-and-ride lots, nor do they provide any information on available services. This makes it difficult for users to learn that services are available, and for first time users to find it. Better signage and information is needed to make park-and-ride lots more visible and service easier to use.
- **Express bus schedules are not well-suited for typical work schedules.** Nearly all express routes operate with limited schedules designed for state employees who work early schedules. As a result, nearly all trips arrive in downtown Nashville before 7:30 AM and the last trips depart before 5:00 PM. Consequently, most express bus riders are state employees, as service is effectively not available for those with more typical work schedules. Longer spans of service will be needed to serve a wider range of work schedules.
- **Demand will grow for more robust transit service.** The growth that is occurring in Davidson County and the surrounding counties will create demand for all day regional services (in a similar manner as has already occurred in the Murfreesboro corridor).
- **Demand for reverse commute service will emerge.** As employment continues to grow in outer areas such as Brentwood and Cool Springs, more Davidson County residents will begin to commute outward. These numbers will be lower than commutes to Nashville, but will create demand for reverse commute service.
- **Demand for local service will grow and emerge.** At present, local transit service is provided in Clarksville, Franklin, and Murfreesboro. As these communities grow, the demand for more local service will grow. In addition, demand for local service will likely emerge in other communities, including Gallatin, Hendersonville, Goodlettsville, Cool Springs, and others.
- **First Mile/Last Mile connections will become increasingly important.** As the RTA expands regional services, new ways will need to be provided for people to access them. At present, access and egress is largely limited to park-and-ride, kiss-and-ride, and Clarksville Transit local bus service.
- **Higher quality services will be needed.** Throughout the country, there has been an increased emphasis on the development of new types of higher quality transit services. These include commuter rail, rapid transit, light rail, Bus Rapid Transit, Rapid Bus/BRT lite, streetcar, and more. The stakeholder outreach conducted for this effort has made it clear that one of the strongest desires among Middle Tennessee residents with respect to transit is for higher quality services.

SERVICE IS LIMITED

Including the Music City Star, the RTA provides 11 routes/lines that connect the nine counties surrounding Davidson County with Nashville. These routes do serve all major corridors, but service is very limited (see Table 9).

- All RTA services only operate on weekdays.
- With the exception of Route 96X Nashville/Murfreesboro Relax & Ride and a single Friday evening round trip on the Music City Star, all service operates only during peak periods.
- Most routes provide only two or three AM inbound and PM outbound trips, which does not provide sufficient flexibility for many riders.

TABLE 9 EXPRESS BUS SERVICE ONE-WAY TRIPS

Corridor	Route	One-Way Trips		
		AM Inbound	PM Outbound	Other
North	87X Gallatin Express	2	3	0
	92X Hendersonville Express	2	3	0
Northwest	89X Springfield/Joelton Express	2	2	0
	94X Clarksville Express	3	3	2
West	88X Dickson Express	2	2	0
South	91X Franklin Express	3	3	0
	95X Spring Hill Express	2	2	0
Southeast	84X Murfreesboro Express	3	3	0
	86X Smyrna/La Vergne Express	3	3	0
	96X Nashville/Murfreesboro Relax & Ride	4	4	10
East	Music City Star	3	3	See Note

Note: The Music City Star provides an evening trip on Fridays.

In addition, and as described further below, express bus schedules are designed to serve the work schedules of state employees, rather than a broader time span to serve both state employees and those that work more typical work schedules. This further limits service. To make commuter services available to a broader cross-section of Nashville's commuters, more service will be required to provide commuters more flexibility and that will serve a wider range of work schedules.

Local services only operate during the daytime, and most operate only once an hour. More service, including longer spans, will also be required to provide potential riders with sufficient flexibility to make service convenient.

EXPRESS BUS SERVICES ARE FAST, BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH

Most express routes make only one or two stops in outer areas and then run express to Nashville. However, they are stuck in the same traffic as automobiles to and from Nashville, and then are slow within Nashville. As part of the outreach conducted at the beginning of this study, many have stated that express bus service is not attractive, in large part, because "it is stuck in the same traffic as everyone else." The fact that transit service is too slow to be attractive has been a predominant theme of an extensive outreach program.

Express bus trips are slower than trips by private automobile for three reasons:

1. Park-and-ride lots are often inconveniently located. As a result, many people either travel out of direction, or would have to travel out of direction to access express bus service.
2. Buses are, in fact, stuck in the same traffic as regular traffic.
3. Service within Nashville is very slow, especially between downtown and the West End.

Each of these issues can be addressed to make RTA express bus service faster. First, and as described in more detail below, most park-and-ride lots are inconveniently located. Ideally, park-and-ride lots should be located along a line between where commuters work and where they are going. At the present time, too many park-and-ride lots are not. This requires commuters to drive out of their way to access them, which increases travel times.

Second, most of Middle Tennessee’s freeways—especially I-24 and I-65 to the south—are very congested during peak periods, and express buses are stuck in the same traffic as regular traffic. Transit is most attractive when it can provide a travel time advantage over automobile travel, and existing express bus service does not. There are a number of ways to make express bus service faster, include allowing express buses to use freeway shoulders when regular traffic is congested (see Figure 48) to constructing stations and park-and-ride lots along freeways so that buses do not have to lose time exiting and re-entering freeways to serve intermediate stops.

FIGURE 48 BUS ON FREEWAY SHOULDER OPERATIONS (MINNEAPOLIS AND CHICAGO AREAS)



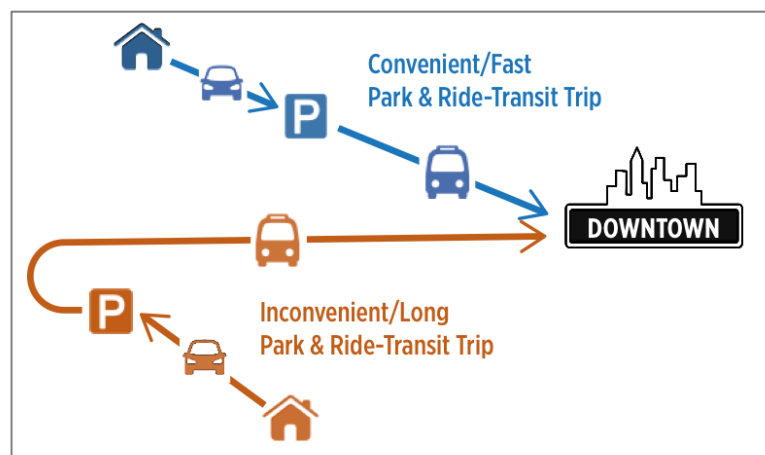
Finally, travel times are slow once buses exit freeways and enter downtown Nashville. Many express routes serve both downtown and the West End, and travel times between downtown and the West End are as long as 20 minutes. Improvements to downtown transit operations including Transit Emphasis Corridors and transit priority, in addition to improving local transit, would also make express service faster.

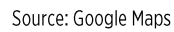
PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS ARE OFTEN INCONVENIENTLY LOCATED

Most park-and-ride lots are located at places where a local business, church, or other organization has agreed to share use of their lots, rather than at locations that would be most convenient for users. The development of park-and-ride lots in this manner reduces costs, but often results in park-and-ride lots being located in places that are inconvenient to express bus users. Ideally, park and ride lots should be located along a line between where people live and where they are traveling to avoid out of direction travel that increases total travel times (see Figure 49).

At the present time, a large proportion of park-and-ride lots require out-of-direction travel; one example is the two park-and-ride lots that are served by Route 95X Spring Hill. In the Spring Hill area, most live in an area bounded by Thompson’s Station Road to the north, Route 6 to the west, Route 396 to the south, and I-65 to the east. As a result, residents must drive west and/or north to the Thompson’s Station Baptist Church Park-and-Ride Lot and then ride the bus south and east for more than 20 minutes before heading north on I-65 (see Figure 50). Alternatively, they must drive up to four miles south to the Kroger park-and-ride lot to catch a northbound bus.

FIGURE 49 CONVENIENT AND INCONVENIENT EXPRESS BUS TRIPS





Many travelers will avoid transit if it requires too much out-of-direction travel. To make service for attractive and more convenient, the RTA will need to develop more purpose built park-and-ride lots that are at or very close to intersections with major highways and along the direct paths of express routes. The park-and-ride lot at Exit 8 on I-24 in Clarksville is an example of the park-and-ride locations that will be needed (see Figure 51).

FIGURE 51 CLARKSVILLE/ROSSVIEW ROAD PARK AND RIDE LOT AT I-24 EXIT 8



Source: Google Maps

MOST PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS ARE NOT WELL MARKED

For people to be able to use transit, they need to be able to find it. At the present time, most RTA park-and-ride lots are completely unmarked, with no indication that park-and-ride spaces or express bus service is available, no designated bus stops, and no information on available services (see Figure 52). Some park-and-ride lots do have signage, but even these lots do not have designated bus stops or service information. Furthermore, many of the park-and-ride lots are not indicated on the RTA system map.

The lack of information increases uncertainty among potential riders about whether the service actually exists, and for first time riders, about whether they are at the right place. The lack of signage also makes it harder for local residents to learn about the availability of service. To make it easier for potential riders to learn about the availability of service and to prevent negative first impressions due to the inability or difficulty in finding the lots and express service, the RTA will need to improve signage and information.

FIGURE 52 UNSIGNED AND SIGNED PARK AND RIDE LOTS

UNSIGNED: PLEASANT VIEW



SIGNED: DOWNTOWN SPRINGFIELD



EXPRESS BUS SCHEDULES ARE NOT WELL-SUITED FOR TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULES

Nearly all express routes operate with limited schedules designed for state employees who work early schedules. As a result, nearly all trips arrive in downtown Nashville before 7:30 a.m. and the last trips depart before 5:00 p.m. (see Table 10). On two routes (91X Franklin Express and 95X Spring Hill Express), the last trips depart from the West End or Music City Central at 4:08 and 4:10 p.m., respectively. Consequently, most express bus riders are state employees.

State employees tend to work earlier hours than other downtown employees, many of whom start at 8:00 a.m. or later and work until 5:00 p.m. or later. To serve a broader cross-section of Nashville's workers, service spans will need to be extended to serve start times up to at least 8:30 a.m. and end times until at least 5:30 or 6:00 p.m.

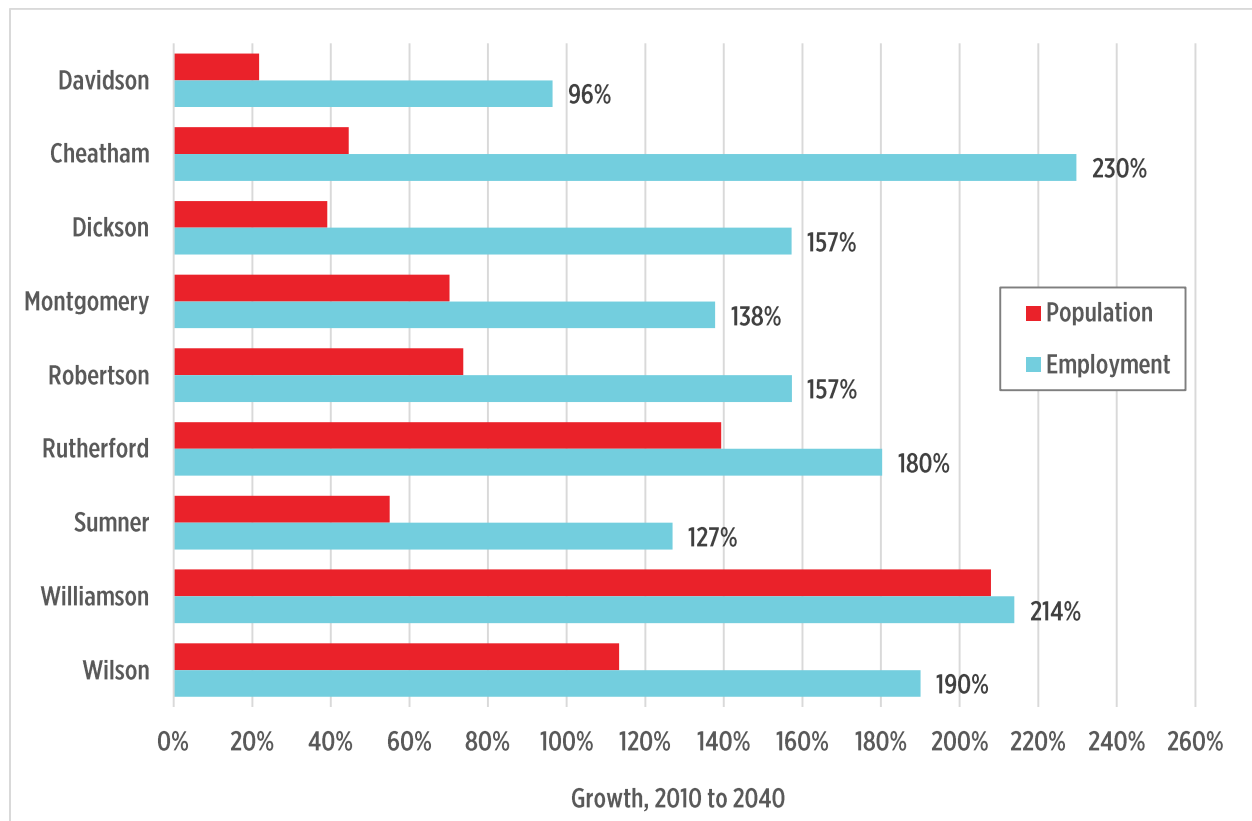
TABLE 10 EXPRESS BUS SPANS OF SERVICE

Corridor	Route	Last AM Arrival at MCC	Last Departure from MCC	Last AM Arrival at West End	Last Departure from West End
North	87X Gallatin Express	7:15 AM	5:10 PM	7:35 AM	4:37 PM
	92X Hendersonville Express	7:20 AM	5:12 PM	7:40 AM	4:38 PM
Northwest	89X Springfield/Joelton Express	7:20 AM	5:10 PM	7:44 AM	4:37 PM
	94X Clarksville Express	7:45 AM	4:50 PM	--	--
West	88X Dickson Express	7:25 AM	4:50 PM	--	--
South	91X Franklin Express	8:04 AM	4:55 PM	8:08 AM	4:08 PM
	95X Spring Hill Express	7:22 AM	4:10 PM	--	--
Southeast	84X Murfreesboro Express	7:45 AM	4:43 PM	--	--
	86X Smyrna/La Vergne Express	7:45 AM	4:48 PM	--	--
	96X Nashville/Murfreesboro Relax & Ride	All Day		--	--

DEMAND WILL GROW FOR MORE ROBUST TRANSIT SERVICE

Between 2010 and 2040, the population of the 10-county area will grow by 80% from 1.7 million to nearly 3.1 million, and the number of jobs will grow by 80% from 1.1 million to nearly 1.9 million. Most of this growth will occur outside of Davidson County, where population will increase by 111% and jobs by 100%. The largest increases will occur in Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson, and Montgomery Counties (see Figure 53).

FIGURE 53 POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY COUNTY



These increases will have profound impacts on travel within the region, including the demand for transit:

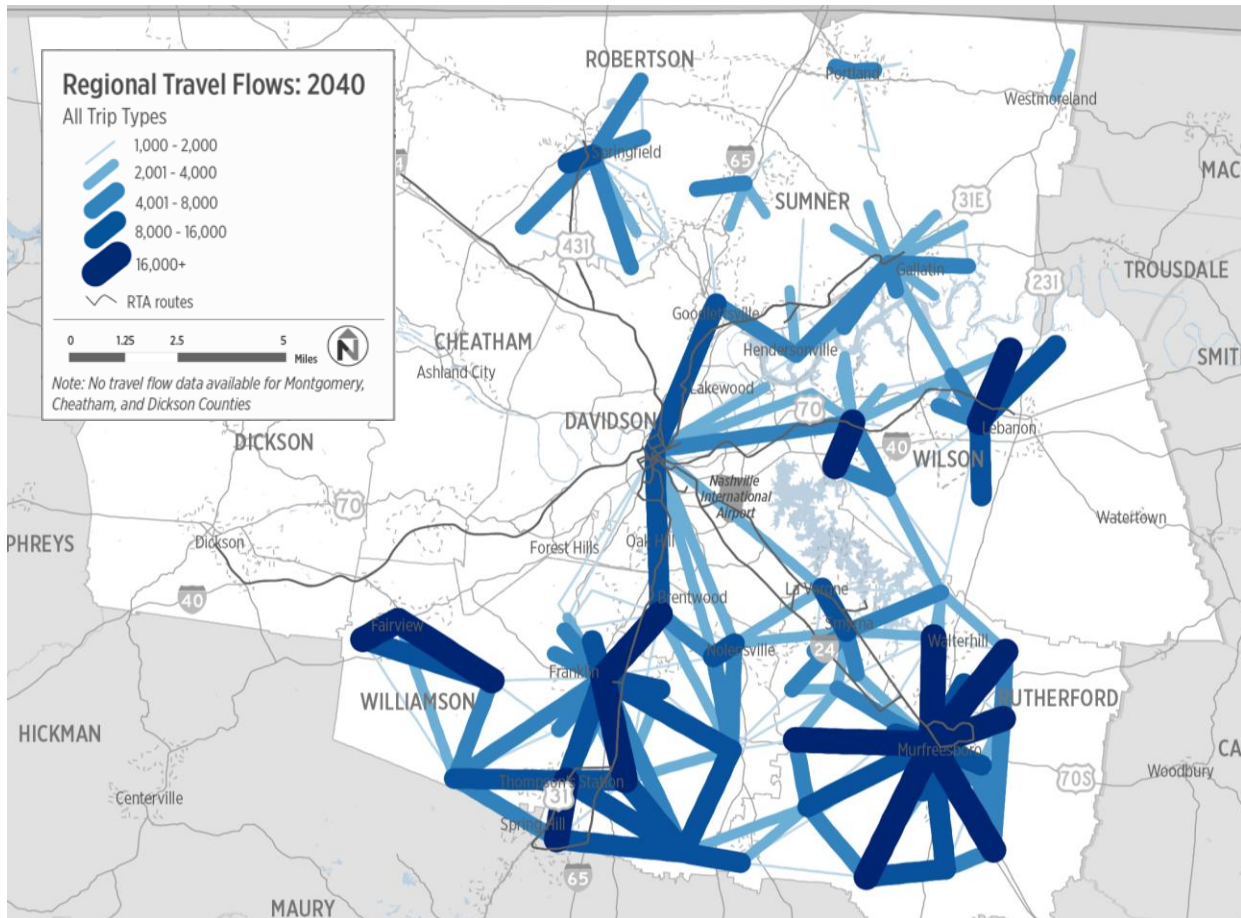
- The number of commuters to Nashville will increase significantly, as 111% of the region's population growth will be in the nine counties surrounding Davidson County, and 38% of the new jobs will be created within Davidson County. This will create significant new demands for commuter services to and from Nashville's core.
- By 2040, the number of jobs outside of Davidson County will increase from 534,000 to more than a million, and from 50% of the region's total to 55%. These increases in jobs will mean that many Davidson County residents will begin commuting to jobs outside of Davidson County, which will increase the demand for reverse commute service.
- Increases in both population and jobs will increase the demand for local services, both to serve local trips and connect with regional services. This will increase the demand for all day local and regional services (as has already occurred in the Murfreesboro – Nashville corridor).

All Day Regional Service

Through 2040, demand for all day transit service will grow from between a number of regional centers and Nashville, and for service to and from regional centers. As shown in Figure 54, there will be high levels of transit demand along four regional corridors:

- **Northeast Corridor**, between Gallatin and Nashville, including Hendersonville and Goodlettsville
- **East Corridor**, between Lebanon and Nashville, which is served by the Music City Star
- **Southeast Corridor**, between Murfreesboro and Nashville, including Smyrna and La Verge
- **South Corridor**, between Spring Hill and Nashville, including Franklin, Cool Springs, and Brentwood

FIGURE 54 2040 REGIONAL TRAVEL FLOWS – ALL TRIP TYPES



At present, only the southeast corridor is served with all day transit service (Routed 96X Murfreesboro Relax and Ride). This route currently provides 19 one-way trips that operate with irregular headways that range from 60 to 162 minutes. The other corridors are served by commuter services—the Music City Star and express bus routes—that only provide peak period, peak direction, weekday service.

For the northeast, southeast, and south corridors, the Nashville Area MPO’s 2035 Regional Transportation Plan envisions “either light rail transit or dedicated lane BRT that would operate at high levels of service throughout the day. The specific mode or technology used will be determined by future study and depend heavily on development patterns, anticipated ridership, cost of construction, and public support for funding.” Other options, such as Freeway BRT and BRT lite/Rapid Bus would also be potential solutions. In the East Corridor, Music City Star service could be increased to provide all day service.

Reverse Commute Service

By 2040, it is projected that the number of jobs in the nine-county area surrounding Davidson County will increase by 100% to more than one million. With these changes, more Davidson County residents will begin to commute outward. While these numbers will be lower than the number of trips to Nashville, they will still likely grow to be sufficiently

high to warrant reverse commute service. As shown in Figure 55, the areas where the largest number of jobs will be located are in the northeast, east, southeast, and south corridors:

Northeast

- Goodlettsville
- Hendersonville
- Gallatin

East

- Lebanon

Southeast

- La Vergne
- Smyrna

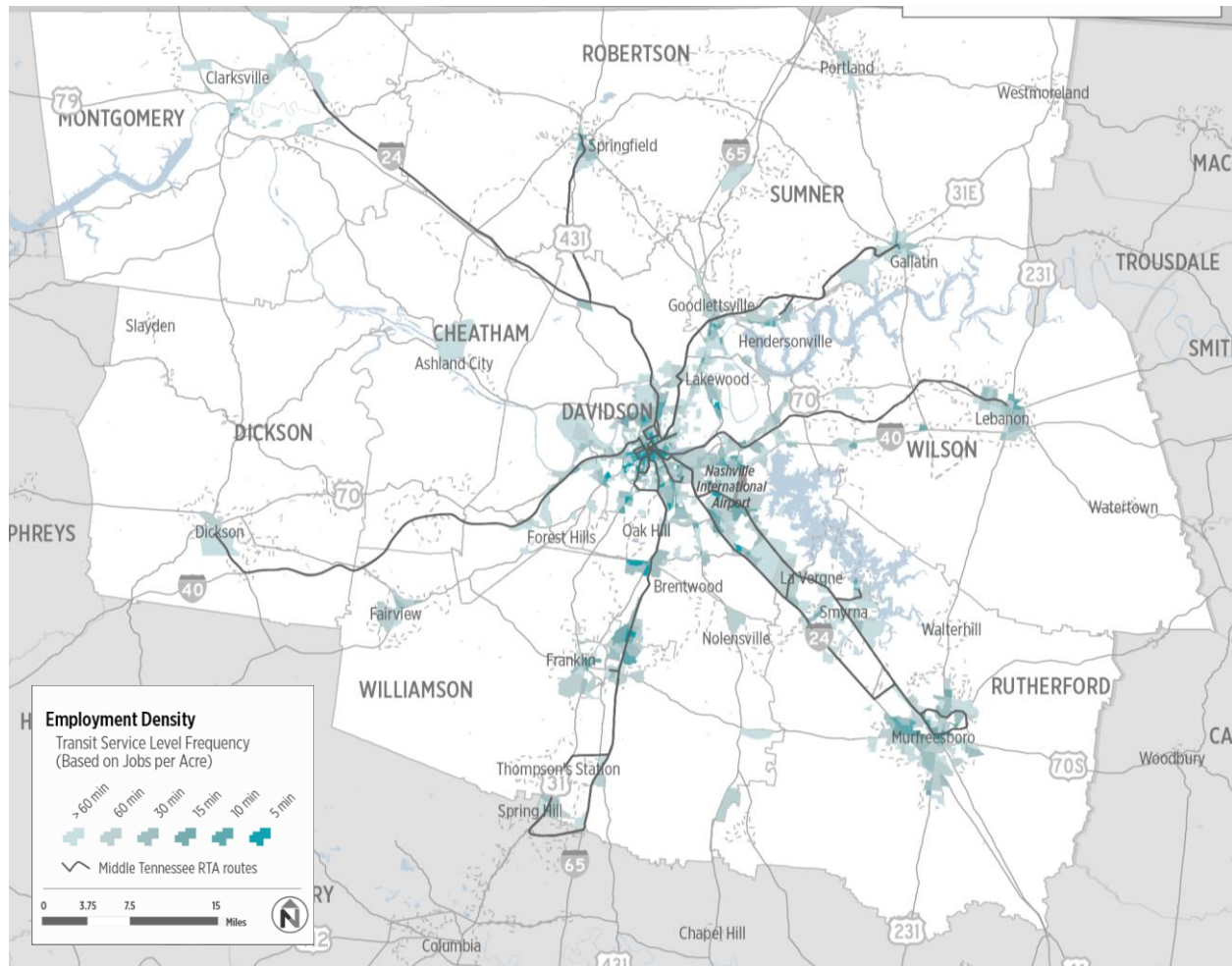
South

- Brentwood
- Cool Springs

Increases in jobs in these areas will create much more bi-directional demand than currently exists. Whereas these corridors are all currently served by express routes, those services are designed to serve those who commute to Nashville, and not those who commute from Nashville. Potential options for reverse commuter services include bi-directional service on the Music City Star and existing express routes and new reverse commute routes. In addition, the development of all day regional services, as described above, could also serve reverse commute trips.

Finally, and as described in more detail below, a particular challenge associated with the development of reverse commute trips will be last mile connections. While it will be possible to provide a variety of fixed-route services to outer areas, the final connection will still need to be made from fixed-route transit service to work sites and other areas. There are a number of different ways to develop these connections, and these will require the cooperation and involvement of local communities, local transit systems, and local businesses and other organizations.

FIGURE 55 2040 EMPLOYMENT DENSITY



Local Service

At present, local transit service is provided in Clarksville, Franklin, and Murfreesboro. As these communities grow, the demand for more local service will grow. In addition, demand for local service will emerge in many communities that are not currently served (see Figure 56). These include:

Northeast

- Goodlettsville
- Hendersonville
- Gallatin

East

- Lebanon

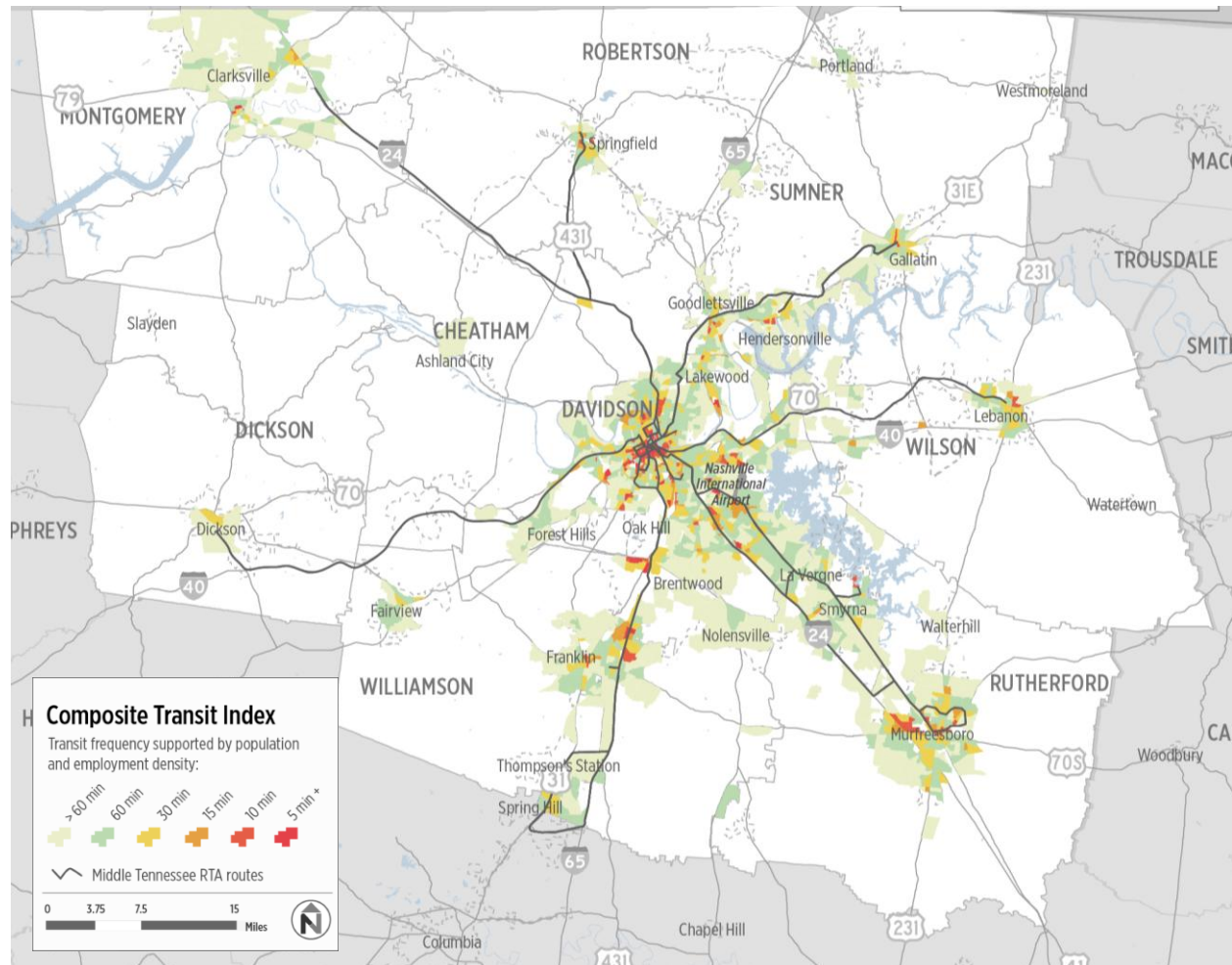
Southeast

- La Vergne
- Smyrna

South

- Brentwood
- Cool Springs

FIGURE 56 2040 TRANSIT DEMAND



The Nashville Area MPO's 2035 RTP also stresses the need for improved local transit services:

- Urban Fixed-Route Service:** “By far the most critical piece of the long-range vision, the region must continue to expand the existing urban fixed-route services in Nashville, Clarksville, Franklin, and Murfreesboro. Urban services are the backbone of any regional transit system and must be optimized in order to ensure the success of investments in regional rapid transit or commuter rail. The vision calls for continued investment in existing local bus systems, the eventual introduction of fixed-route service in Springfield, Gallatin, Lebanon, Columbia, and Dickson, and the return of the urban streetcar in downtown Nashville, which serves as the central hub for the region.”
- Suburban and Commuter Circulators:** “As the region begins to implement rapid transit, commuter rail, or express coach services in each of the regional corridors, the vision calls for the development of local circulators in markets where a full-fledged urban fixed-route system would not make sense. Such local circulation will be important to customers to access regional services from primary destinations within their community. Suburban circulators, which would operate throughout the day, are envisioned for places like Goodlettsville, Hendersonville, Smyrna, La Vergne, and Brentwood, while commuter circulators, which would operate during peak commuting times, are envisioned for places like Portland, Spring Hill, Kingston Springs, and Ashland City.”

There are a number of different ways in which local services could be expanded. In those that are located close to existing transit, those systems could expand outward. For example:

- Nashville MTA could expand northward to Goodlettsville, Hendersonville, Gallatin, La Vergne, Smyrna, and Brentwood.
- Franklin Transit could expand north and south to Cool Springs and Spring Hill.
- Murfreesboro's Rover could expand north to Smyrna and La Vergne.

A second option would be that RTA could begin providing local services in emerging areas, including those listed above and others such as Lebanon. A third option would be that local communities could develop their own systems, similar to the approaches used in Clarksville, Franklin, and Murfreesboro.

FIRST MILE/LAST MILE CONNECTIONS WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT

First mile/last mile connections are a particular challenge outside of Davidson County and, to a lesser extent, within Davidson County. This is due to poor pedestrian connections in many areas and the way the region sprawls. There are many different ways to provide, encourage, and enable first and last mile connections, most of which are best suited to specific situations. The implementation of most will require partnerships:

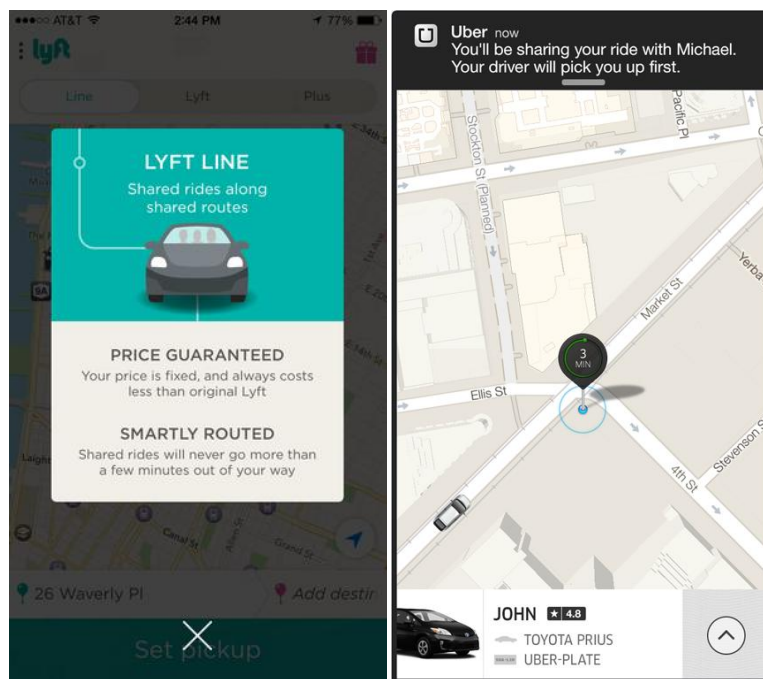
- **Pedestrian Improvements:** One of the largest barriers to transit service outside of Nashville's urban core is poor pedestrian conditions that force transit passengers to walk along major arterials that lack sidewalks and cross streets that lack pedestrian signals or crossings. Local communities will need to take action to make it easier to walk to and from transit.
- **Bicycling Improvements:** In a similar manner as pedestrian access, the region's communities will need improved bicycle facilities to make it easier for people to ride bikes to and from transit. Concurrently, Nashville MTA and RTA can improve bicycle facilities at stations and stops and on board transit vehicles, especially as the agencies develop high capacity transit services.
- **Park-and-Ride/Kiss-and-Ride:** Especially in outer areas, park-and-ride and kiss-and-ride will remain among the most important ways to connect with RTA services. At the present time, RTA and Nashville MTA's primary focus is to develop park-and-ride lots at locations where local businesses and other organizations are willing to make parking available to transit riders. This approach reduces costs but also results in many park-and-ride lots in inconvenient locations. To make service more attractive, Nashville MTA and RTA will likely need to develop more purpose-built park-and-ride lots in more convenient locations, such as the Clarksville park and-ride-lot at the Exit 8 interchange along I-34 (see Figure 57).

FIGURE 57 CLARKSVILLE, TN PARK-AND-RIDE LOT



- **Shuttles:** As service expands, especially outward in the nine counties surrounding Davidson County, it is certain that new shuttle services will be needed to provide connections between Nashville MTA and RTA services and local job sites and other local attractions. These shuttles could be provided by local organizations, transportation management associations (TMAs), and/or Nashville MTA and RTA. The TMA Group—which operates fixed-route and paratransit service for Franklin Transit and manages VanStar vanpool on behalf of RTA and Williamson County—could be a partner in these efforts. Considering the demands on Nashville MTA and RTA to provide more high-level transit services, having these services offered by private employers and other organizations, such as TMAs, would produce a more robust regional transit system. It would also ensure that shuttle services are tailored to specific local needs.
- **Private Rideshare:** Private rideshare companies and their services, and especially those like UberPool and Lyft Line (see Figure 58), provide the potential for transit systems to expand transit services to lower demand areas through partnerships rather than through the provision of direct service. While the development of these types of partnerships is still in the very early stages, they provide the potential to start service more quickly, provide service at lower costs, and better tie expenditures to utilization levels.

FIGURE 58 LYFT LINE AND UBERPOOL APPS



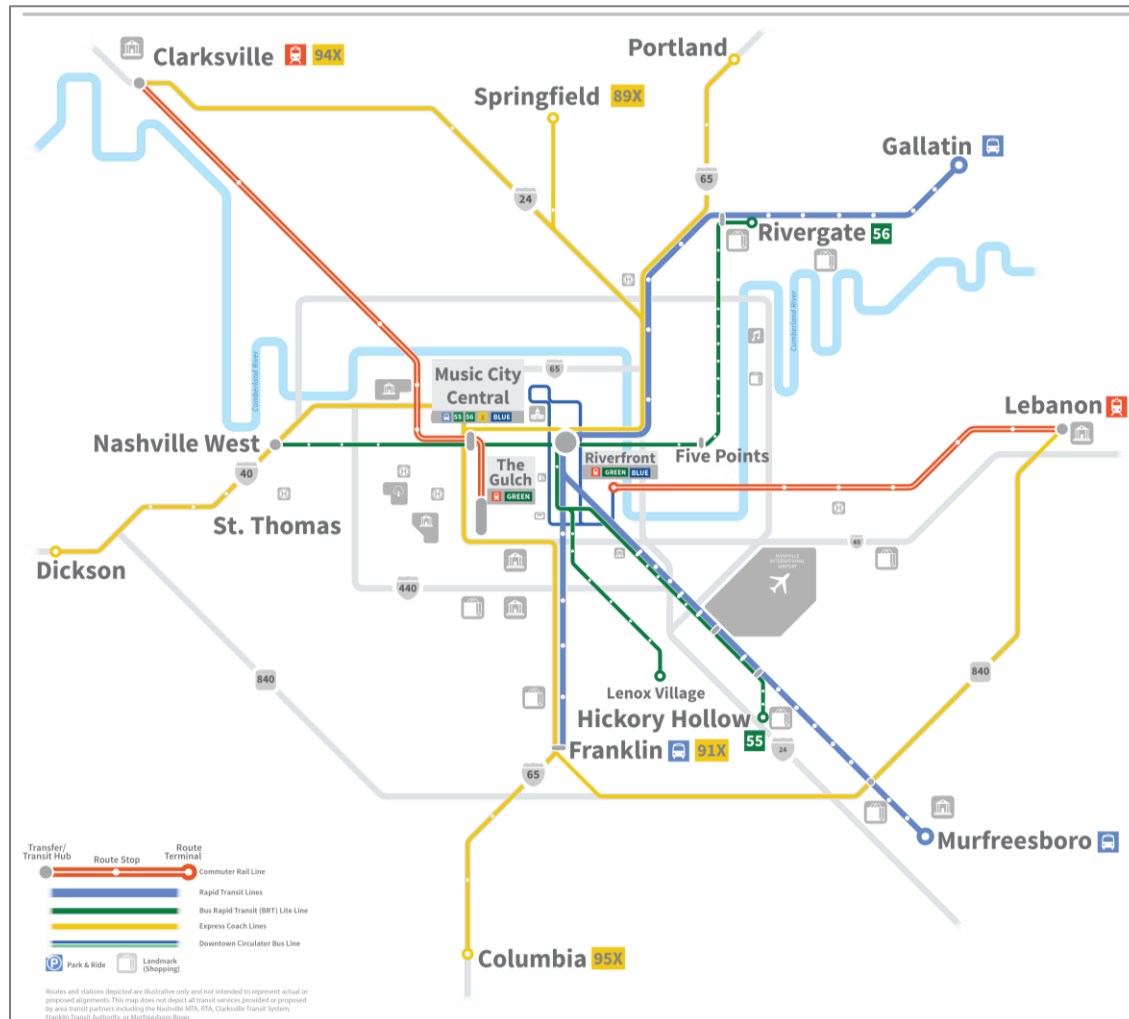
Finally, as has been the case throughout much of the rest of the United States, the development of TMAs to address specialized local transportation needs would greatly enhance first mile/last mile connections. As Davidson County and Middle Tennessee have sprawled, more of the region's residents live and work in areas that cannot be cost-effectively served by traditional fixed-route transit. In these areas, Nashville MTA and RTA will need assistance from private companies and other organizations to provide first and last mile connections.

HIGHER QUALITY SERVICES WILL BE NEEDED

Throughout the country, there has been an increased emphasis on the development of new types of higher quality transit services. These include commuter rail, rapid transit, light rail, Bus Rapid Transit, Rapid Bus/BRT lite, streetcar, and more. In addition, the stakeholder outreach conducted for this effort has made it clear that one of the strongest desires among Middle Tennessee with respect to transit is for higher quality services.

The Nashville Area MPO's 2035 RTP also emphasizes the development of higher quality services, and in particular "Rapid Transit" and commuter rail (see Figure 59):

FIGURE 59 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TRANSIT VISION



- Rapid Transit:** "Three corridors are identified for future regional rapid transit service, including the region's northeast, southeast, and south corridors. These areas are the most densely populated and fastest growing within the region and have a well-established pattern of cross-county travel. The long-range vision for rapid transit in these corridors includes the development of either light rail transit or dedicated lane BRT that would operate at high levels of service throughout the day. The specific mode or technology used will be determined by future study and depend heavily on development patterns, anticipated ridership, cost of construction, and public support for funding."
- Commuter Rail:** "The long-range vision calls for continued support for the Music City Star's east corridor commuter rail service and the development of a new commuter rail line in the region's northwest corridor to connect Clarksville and Nashville, two of Tennessee's five most populous cities."
- Express Coach Service:** "In corridors with strong commuting patterns but without the land development patterns or traffic congestion to warrant dedicated lane transit service, the vision calls for the implementation of premium express coach service. Such service will offer a comfortable and stress-free ride

to and from work for commuters, providing enhanced amenities along the way including high-back seats, wireless internet access, onboard televisions, and restrooms.”

SUMMARY

Over the past few decades, the nine counties surrounding Davidson County have grown from largely rural areas anchored by small regional centers to become part of the greater Nashville metropolitan area. By 2010, the nine counties had grown to a total population of more than one million people. Over the next 25 years, the total population of the nine counties is projected to more than double to over 2.3 million people.

Employment will grow even faster than population. In 2010, the nine-county region had a total of 534,000 jobs, or one job for every two residents. In 2040, the number of jobs in the nine-county region is expected to reach one million, or one job for every 2.1 residents. The growth in both population and employment will produce much higher volumes of travel overall, including to and from Nashville and within the nine-county region. Increasing population and employment densities in traditional regional centers and in new emerging areas will greatly increase the demand for transit, and for new types of transit:

- Much more robust commuter service to and from Nashville, including the development of higher quality services such as commuter rail, BRT, and potentially light rail.
- Reverse commute services from Nashville to growing job centers in outlying counties.
- All day regional services to connect regional centers with Nashville and each other, particularly in the northeast, east, southeast, and south corridors.
- Expanded local services in and around expanding regional centers.
- Strong integration between local and regional services.
- The development of first mile/last mile connections between fixed-route transit services and job sites.

These types of improvements will be critical to the region’s success. The region’s freeways, and in particular I-24 and I-65 to the south are already badly congested. Residents and businesses also desire more and better transit in increasing numbers. The *2014 Nashville Vital Signs Report*, which was produced by the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and the Nashville Area MPO, concluded that, “The ability of our residents to move around the region in their cars is quickly deteriorating and will continue to do so unless we provide better transit options.” The stakeholder outreach process conducted for NashvilleNext showed that improving transit was the second highest priority for Nashville’s residents, and the “preferred future” includes a much stronger transit system. The stakeholder outreach that is being conducted for this effort is also showing a very strong desire for convenient and attractive high quality transit services that will provide compelling travel options.