

FINAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT:

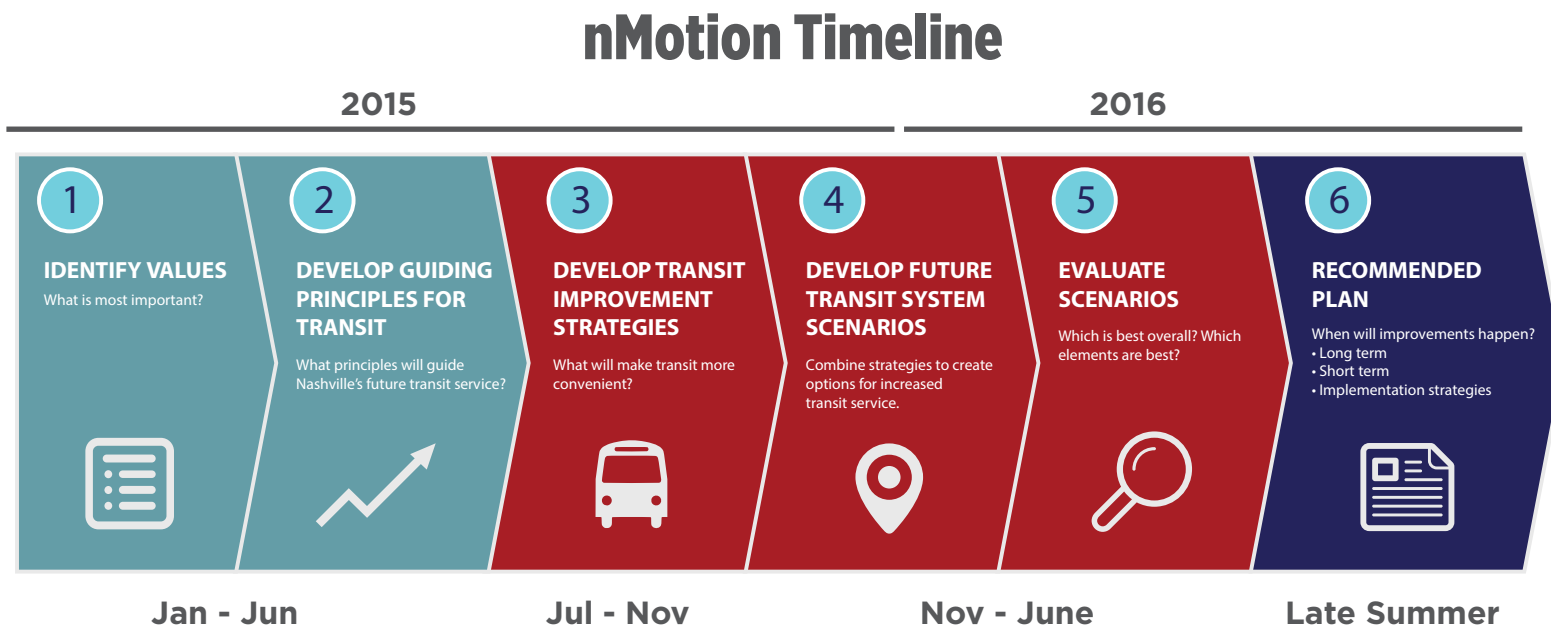
JANUARY - JULY 2016

FINAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

How We Got Here

Since April 2015, the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (Nashville MTA/RTA) have been engaged in a regionwide public discussion of the best strategies to improve regional mobility. Throughout the process, we've collected more than **18,000 survey responses and comments**. In the final phase, the focus was on selecting a long-term transit vision. This study process, nMotion, has been developed with the understanding that input from as many Nashville-area residents as possible will help Nashville MTA/RTA develop the best mass transit system possible. To that end, nMotion has established channels of communication with the public to explore their values and transit needs, created guiding principles for future decision-making, evaluated state-of-the-art transit strategies now being deployed around the world, and most recently encouraged more than 9,000 people to weigh three future transit scenarios.

FIGURE 1 | STRATEGIC PLAN SCHEDULE



How We Got Here

Nashville MTA/RTA incorporated initial feedback into four guiding principles that will shape the development of future services. Guiding principles are high-level statements that define the project vision and reflect community values. After we reviewed comments from thousands of respondents, we created the following principles to guide the development of system improvement strategies that were presented in the next phase of public engagement.

During this process, we've collected feedback on a number of different studies, including:



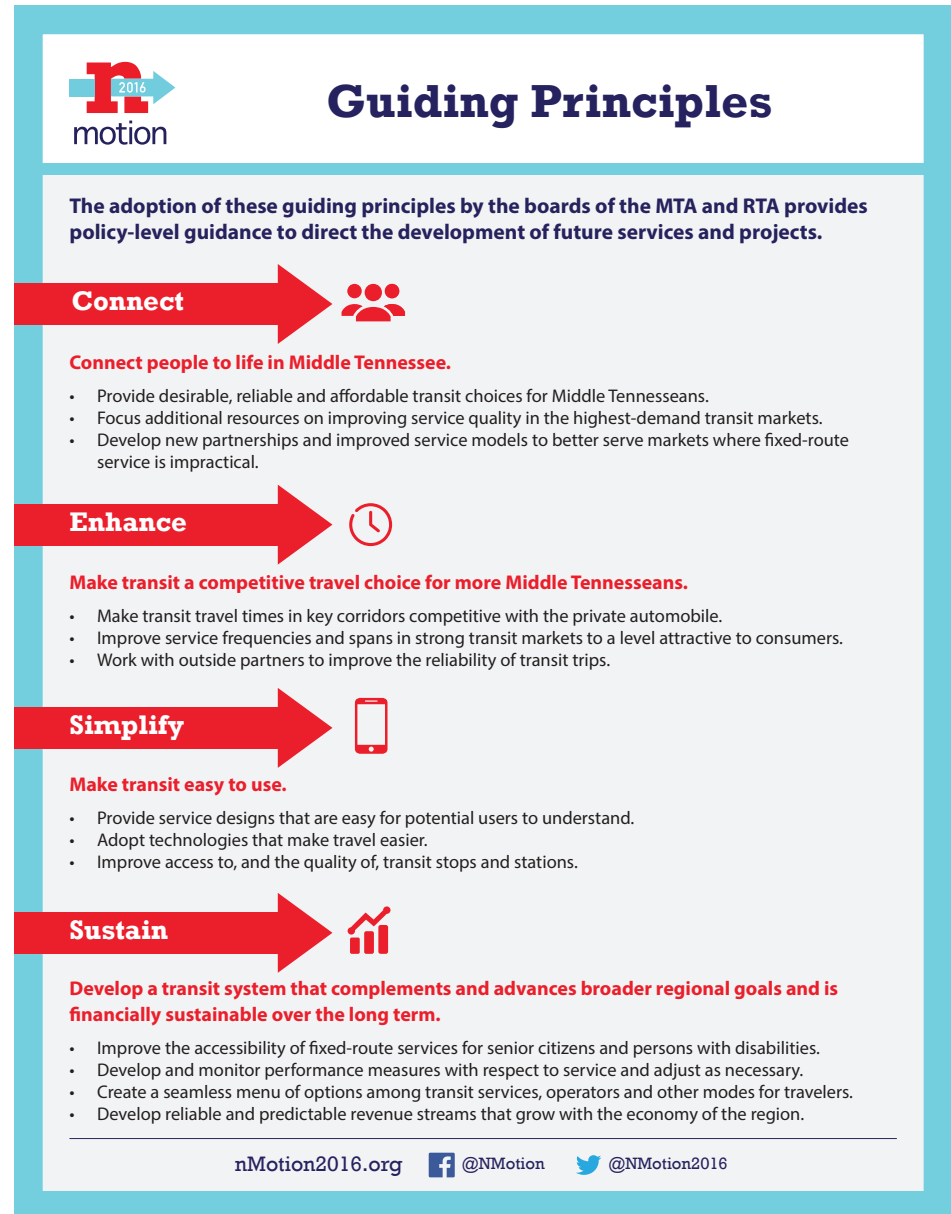
States of MTA and RTA system report



25 transit strategies papers

Between April and December 2015, the nMotion team collected more than 8,500 survey responses and comments from Nashville-area residents who wanted to make their opinions known about values, future trade-offs for services and potential transit strategies that could be implemented before we introduced three future transit scenarios. We spoke to more than 1,000 people in 54 different organizations through our Transit Talk program, held eight focus groups, and connected with thousands more on our social media and email channels. See nmotion2016.org/materials for more information.

FIGURE 2 | GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Public Engagement Findings: What We Heard About the Scenarios

Beginning in February, we asked Middle Tennesseans what they liked – and didn’t like – about three future scenarios for the region’s transit system. All three scenarios would significantly improve the experience for current riders, but vary in their impact on attracting new riders to transit. Each of the three scenarios demonstrates different ways that Nashville could develop public transit through 2040 by showing where improvements could be made. We collected responses using a colorful survey pamphlet and MetroQuest, an online survey tool. An original visual campaign was created to advertise the survey and encourage input using the slogan “Decide Your Ride.”

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Overall, people are supportive of a large investment in a regionwide transit system. Some common statements expressed by survey responders include:

- We are behind other cities in developing transit options.
- We have already waited too long to address traffic issues.
- We don’t want us to become “the next Atlanta.”
- A large investment over 25 years is worth it to create new transit options.
- People have no intention of giving up driving, but would like to be less dependent on their cars and have other options.
- They think it will help Nashville and Middle Tennessee continue to recruit millennials and young professionals.
- Many are skeptical that large numbers of Middle Tennesseans will ever ride buses, leading many to prefer a rail solution.
- As in the Amp debate, people remain conflicted about dedicated lanes for transit. While most perceive dedicated lanes will be necessary to improve transit travel times and reliability, they also remain skeptical about how dedicated lanes would impact overall traffic flow.
- An overwhelming number of respondents recognize that robust mass transit must be accompanied by good sidewalks and easier access to transit stops and stations.

SCENARIO 1

Based on which corridor people said they use, there is consistency that people favor the “Comprehensive Regional Transit System” (Scenario 1), and people want transit on the corridors they use most frequently. There is not a corridor where a consensus said that they do not want enhanced transit options.

Among the people we surveyed at the Music City Central bus station, current transit riders prefer short-term and immediate solutions to improve current service, rather than long-term, regionwide solutions. In general, current transit riders prefer Scenario 1 slightly less than do nonfrequent transit riders.

***As of June 27, 2016, the nMotion process has received 9,386 responses to the MetroQuest survey, bringing total engagements throughout the planning process to 18,860.**

Survey Questions and Results

What Is Important to You?

We asked participants to rank priorities for a future transit system that were identified in earlier stages of public engagement. Each respondent could pick up to four priorities that were important to them.

Rank	Priority	Votes
1	Emphasize Transit	5,341
2	Improve Access to Transit	5,115
3	Ambitious Visionary Plan	4,828
4	Expand to New Areas	4,367
5	Develop Premium Services	3,854
6	Improve Existing Services	3,317
7	Minimize Costs	1,484
8	Emphasize Auto Travel	996

Sample Response Comments

- **Emphasize Transit:** “Transit needs to be able to get people to work faster than it does today. I would like transit options from Sumner to South Nashville, but with current bus schedules it would take me over 2 hours each way. That doesn’t work or encourage me to use transit.”
- **Improve Access to Transit:** “The lack of sidewalks is appalling. Families such as ours often comment how we wished we could walk around our neighborhood, but due to the hills and curves, it’s simply too dangerous.”
- **Ambitious Visionary Plan:** “Nashville is growing at such a rapid pace, if we don’t make an ambitious move, our infrastructure will be outdated by the time it’s completed.”

Rating the Scenarios

We presented respondents with three scenarios. Scenario 1, the scenario with the most investment in transit infrastructure, received the highest average ranking. Scenario 3, the scenario with the lowest amount of investment in transit infrastructure, received the lowest average ranking. Participants ranked each scenario on a 5-point Likert scale.

	Average Rating	Total Votes
Scenario 1	4.48	8,053
Scenario 2	2.71	7,011
Scenario 3	2.05	6,871

Scenario 1 was the highest-rated scenario among key demographics as well. Among a range of ethnicities, ages, genders, ZIP codes and most frequently traveled corridors, Scenario 1 received the highest ranking. We closely examined results from respondents who lived or worked in ZIP codes outside of Davidson County, and found a close resemblance to the responses from within Davidson County. Scenario 1 still received the most votes and the highest rankings.

Regional Response

	Average Rating	Total Votes
Scenario 1	4.45	1,705
Scenario 2	2.57	1,464
Scenario 3	2.15	1,425

Among responses we collected at the Music City Central station, responders ranked Scenario 1 the highest; but the other two scenarios received higher rankings than what we saw on average from other respondents. In this survey, we did not ask respondents to identify themselves as transit riders or nonriders. Therefore, we can only be sure that a responder uses public transportation because they completed a survey at Music City Central.

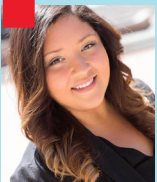
Survey Questions and Results

Music City Central Riders

	Average Rating	Total Votes
Scenario 1	3.73	185
Scenario 2	3.69	186
Scenario 3	3.34	183

Sample Response Comments

- **Make Big Investments Now:** “Expanded modestly over time as the population grows’ isn’t enough. I sat in traffic over an hour on Friday 3/11 trying to get about 4-5 miles into downtown. I sat, on average, through 5 cycles of each stoplight from Church Street to Demonbreun. This isn’t a situation that calls for ‘Modest,’ seeing as how 2 years ago, this trip would have taken about 15-20 minutes, tops.”
- **Make Big Investments Now:** “The time to act is now. We can’t wait until we become like Atlanta, where nobody can get anywhere. Nashville ‘it city’ status will fade quickly. We can get ahead of the curve on this and make a real name for ourselves. If folks are worried about costs, there’s plenty of room for a marginal increase in the gas tax to cover this plan.”
- **Resolving Congestion:** “Improving our existing transit is great, but people don’t use it and upgrading it won’t change that by much. It may sound ridiculous, but people would rather drive than use a bus system. If you give the people a light rail/ commuter rail option, that is quick with no traffic (other than people traffic), people will stop driving their cars during high-traffic times.”
- **Sidewalks:** “A walkable and bikeable Nashville is the most important way to make Nashville sustainable for more growth in the future. Emphasis on tight, walkable neighborhoods where you can get most of your basic needs walking distance from your house.”
- **Transit Priority:** “I don’t believe dedicated bus lanes will work, and our roadways are already clogged – if you take a lane, make it fast rail.”



I used to ride the bus every day for my job at Lipscomb University, but the buses were often late, and I had to ride multiple buses to get back and forth. If the first bus was late, then I’d miss the second bus to get home. I’d consider riding MTA in the future if it were more convenient, but now that I’ve saved up enough money to buy a car, that’s my primary means of commuting.

Karla Chavez

Transit Priority Treatments

We asked respondents where they preferred to develop premium services: on freeways, downtown, along major corridors like West End, Gallatin and Charlotte, or on routes with premium services already. Major corridors received the most votes, but freeways and downtown also received heavy support. Respondents were given the option to justify their answers, and many weighed in on transit priority for dedicated lanes and premium services.

	Votes	Percent
Major Corridors	5,773	36%
Downtown	3,987	25%
Freeways	3,943	24%
Routes With Premium Services	2,444	15%

Sample Response Comments

- **Against Dedicated Lanes:** “We can build mass transit without taking away lanes for cars. Taking away lanes just defeats the purpose. At the rate we are growing we cannot afford any steps backwards.”
- **Against Dedicated Lanes:** “The major roads are already grown to capacity. If you expand them to add a priority lane you’ll make people mad, and traffic is too bad to convert an existing lane to a priority lane.”
- **Elevated Rail:** “Bottom line: Nashville needs public transportation options that reach more neighborhoods more frequently and get people to and from core areas, like downtown and midtown, faster. Rail, especially if it is elevated or put on tracks separate from car lanes, would be best. A system like Tri-met in Portland would appear to fit Nashville well.”
- **Downtown:** “Downtown should be as carless as possible! Other forms of transport should be prioritized from Broadway out.”
- **For Dedicated Lanes:** “I think transit should always have priority over cars. If Nashville wants to survive its current rate of growth and still be a nice place to live, there have to be more and better transit options. Increasing transit capacity and decreasing car capacity is a good move.”
- **For Dedicated Lanes:** “If we don’t give priority to transit, people will continue to drive. Sitting in a traffic jam and watching trains/buses whiz past is the greatest possible advertisement for transit.”

Survey Questions and Results

Improve Access to Transit

Access to transit has been identified as a major issue for Middle Tennesseans from the very beginning of the process. To learn more about what residents would like to see, we asked respondents which type of access they believe needs improvement.

	Votes	Percent
Pedestrian Access	5,981	32%
Park-and-Ride Lots	5,331	29%
Bicycle Access	3,600	19%
Connections With Ride Share	2,515	13%
Vanpool	733	4%
Other	510	3%

Sample Response Comments

- **Biking Access:** “I live on 2nd Avenue and would never consider biking downtown or to another transit hub. The streets are in poor shape, traffic speeds way too fast (in major part to it being one way) and many of the drainage grates have slots that run perpendicular to the road which is a huge safety hazard.”
- **Sidewalks:** “I live on the Charlotte Corridor. There are no or limited sidewalks to get to the stop nearest my house. There’s no pedestrian crossing light at either of the lights to get to the bus stop. Very dangerous.”
- **Rideshares:** “Rideshare would be best for outlying areas where there are no sidewalks and dangerous walking conditions. All neighborhoods should have sidewalks or bike lanes that people could use for busy roads, both to get to transit and to avoid needing a vehicle just to get groceries, drop off a kid, etc.”

Develop Premium Services

We further probed responders’ opinions about specific premium transit modes and which routes should receive premium service and transit priority. We asked respondents to pick their top two choices for premium service modes among Light Rail, BRT, Streetcar, Commuter Rail, and Freeway BRT/Bus-on-Shoulder. Light Rail and Commuter Rail received an overwhelming majority of the votes, 68 percent in total, and there was support for Bus Rapid Transit as well.

	Votes	Percent
Light Rail	5,406	38%
Commuter Rail	4,246	30%
Bus Rapid Transit	2,093	15%
Streetcar	1,218	9%
Freeway BRT/Bus-on-Shoulder	1,153	8%

Sample Response Comments

- **Bus Rapid Transit:** “While I would certainly support bus rapid transit to improve the current system, I would much prefer creating a dedicated funding source to invest in a light rail system that runs not only within Metro Nashville-Davidson, but out to the growing, neighboring suburbs. Light rail would carry far more passengers at a faster rate of speed, creating a more efficient regional transit system that will eventually resolve, or at least make a significant difference in, our traffic congestion issues.”
- **Prefers Rail:** “Rail is the best option, although BRT and Freeway BRT would also be helpful. Streetcars strike me as being more for tourists and not practical for the people living and working in Metro Nashville.”
- **Commuter Rail:** “With the current traffic congestion that will only get worse with time, this city needs to add commuter rail to the surrounding large suburbs. This will relieve congestion from the many day commuters coming in to Nashville for work.”
- **Light Rail:** “Light rail between cities (or sections of Nashville) could greatly reduce road traffic. Along I-65, Charlotte Pike, West End, Gallatin Ave., etc.”
- **Dedicated Lanes:** “Love the picture of buses rolling down shoulders past traffic. That should get people into the buses.”
- **Dedicated Lanes:** “I’m picking things that I assume will get dedicated lanes. That’s the most important part of any rapid transit system. Dedicated lanes. Without that, it’s just more traffic. If you want to give buses dedicated lanes, fine.”

Survey Questions and Results

Expand Service to New Areas

Expanding service to new areas would provide the opportunity for more people to use transit for more trips. We asked respondents to decide which approach to expanding new service was the most important.

	Votes	Percentage
Crosstown Routes	3,250	45%
Express and Reverse Commutes	2,176	30%
Local Service	1,741	25%

Sample Response Comments

- **Crosstown Routes:** “You have to go all the way downtown to catch a bus to Madison. Very inconvenient.”
- **Local Service:** “While getting in and out of downtown is important for weekdays during business hours, tourism and residents close to the city center will need ways to easily move between different parts of the city (i.e., West End to East Nashville, Green Hills to Germantown, etc.). Connecting our neighborhoods in Davidson County is extremely important.”
- **Express and Reverse Commutes:** “While a lot of people are in and around Nashville, many more commute into Nashville from the surrounding areas. Making it easier to gain access to Nashville would vastly improve transit.”



I'd love to use MTA's service to avoid my daily commute in the car; but ever since my job moved to Brentwood, it's not an option for me.

Stephanie Luntz

Invest in Transit

The three scenarios include different levels of spending on transit services. We further explored respondents' attitudes toward the scenarios by asking them what they thought was an appropriate level of investment for Middle Tennessee:

- **Scenario 1; \$5.4 billion,**
- **Scenario 2; \$2.4 billion, or**
- **Scenario 3; \$0.8 billion.**

Nearly three quarters of the respondents selected Scenario 1.

	Votes	Percentage
Scenario 1	5,074	73%
Scenario 2	1,551	22%
Scenario 3	369	5%

Sample Response Comments


- **Scenario 1:** “Y’all, be real. Nashville is growing. We need to improve the infrastructure of this city, in addition to slapping up condos, apartments and houses all over. Investing in the transit is really just a small part of the investment we need to make in infrastructure.”
- **Scenario 2:** “Without knowing more about what this sort of overhaul normally costs, but also wanting us to make an investment in GOOD, QUALITY services and roads (and avoid the I-440 mess), then at least the middle amount should be spent.”
- **Scenario 3:** “I am a homeowner and a taxpayer who will be retiring soon. Property taxes are already too high in my neighborhood and going up. Let’s not saddle ourselves and our children with debt and higher taxes.”

Survey Questions and Results

Most Frequently Used Corridor

	Votes	Percentage
Gallatin	1,219	21%
West End	1,034	18%
Hillsboro	906	15%
Charlotte	650	11%
Nolensville	634	11%
Murfreesboro	621	11%
Lebanon Pike	601	10%
Dickerson	167	3%

“




As a senior I enjoy using MTA's service to enjoy all the different activities happening downtown. I get a discounted rate, and it allows me to save on parking. I would love to use it more for events at night, like concerts at the Schermerhorn, but there's no bus service to take me home after the show.

Kim Yearwood

”

“



I take the bus every day from Bellevue to downtown for my job. It beats driving because I don't have to deal with the congestion, and I can get caught up on my work during my commute. If the bus came more often, I think you could get a lot more people to ride it.

Alyson Bennett

”

Responses by ZIP Code

FIGURE 3 : PARTICIPATION IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE REGION BY COUNTY

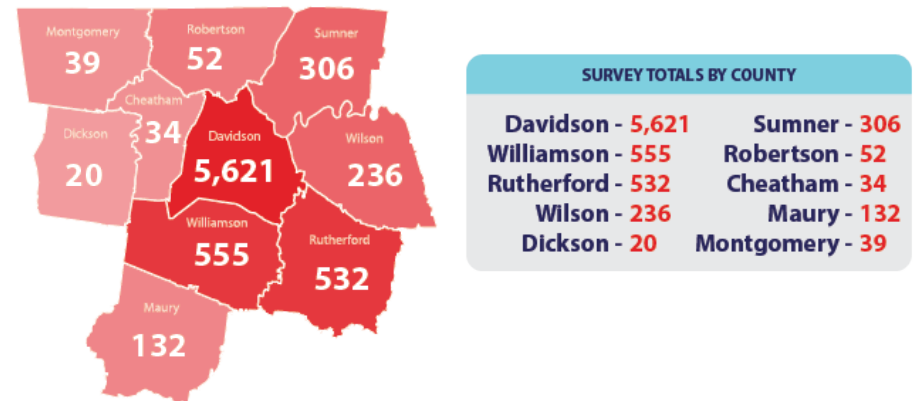
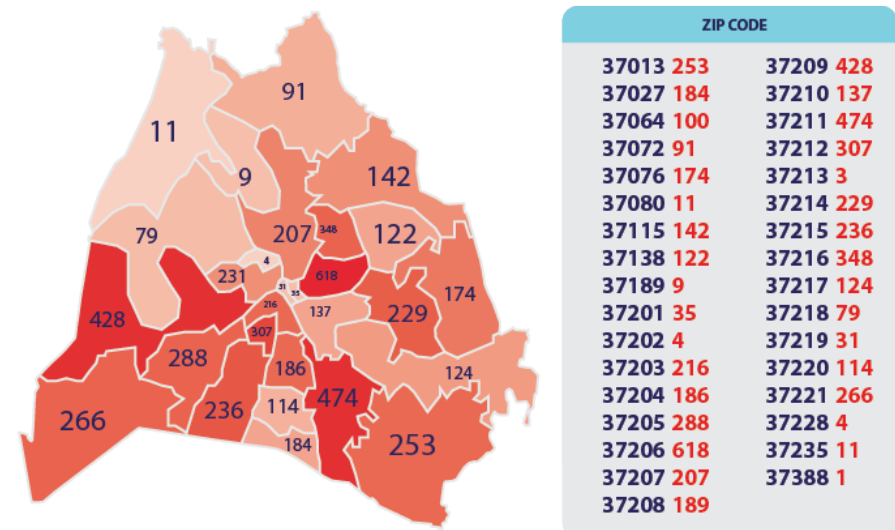


FIGURE 4 : PARTICIPATION IN DAVIDSON COUNTY BY ZIP CODE



Survey Questions and Results: Demographics

Gender

	Responses	Percentage
Female	3,614	50%
Male	3,572	49%
Prefer not to say	111	1%

Age

	Responses	Percentage
17 or under	83	1%
18-24	401	5%
25-34	2,357	34%
35-44	1,570	22%
45-54	1,179	16%
55-64	1,002	14%
65 and older	512	7%
Prefer not to say	114	1%

Ethnic Background

	Responses	Percentage
American Indian	45	.6%
Asian	88	1.2%
Black/African-American	666	9.2%
Hispanic/Latino	231	3.2%
White	5,625	78%
Other	113	1.6%
Prefer not to say	440	6.1%



I love to take my daughters downtown on the weekends, and they love riding the bus. We'd ride it even more if it ran later on the weekends.

Rocio Grissom



Comments at a public meeting



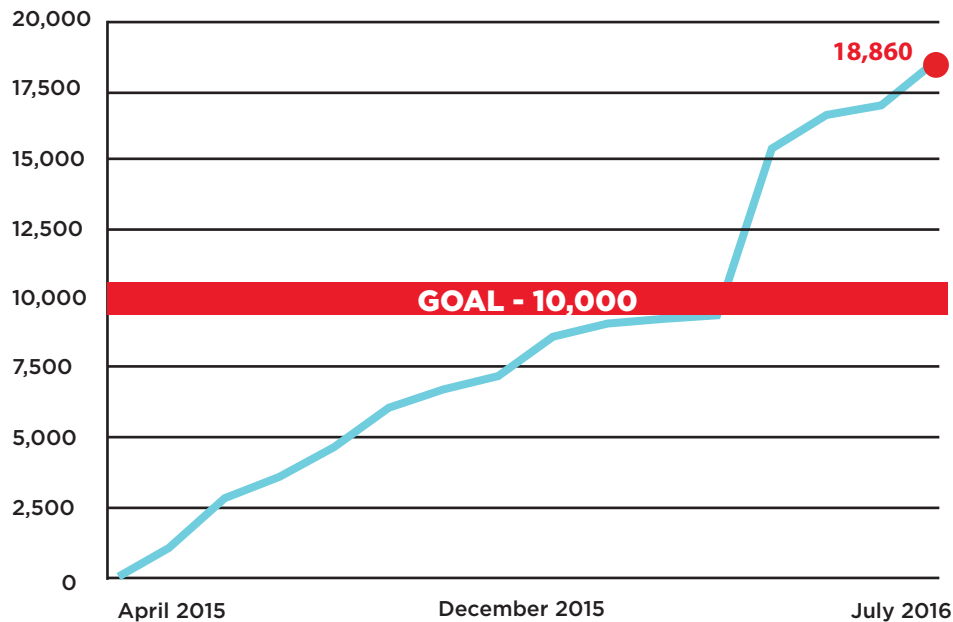
East Nashville public meeting

Public Engagement Activities

Summary of Strategy and Tactics

At the beginning of the planning process in April 2015, MTA/RTA set a goal of 10,000 engagements*. Since then, we've received more than 18,000 engagements.

FIGURE 5 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS* TO DATE



*An engagement is a submitted survey or a comment received via nMotion2016.org, comment cards, Facebook, Twitter or Nextdoor, or on various media websites. Some individuals have engaged with nMotion more than once during the process.

FIGURE 6 | NMOTION PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Engagement activities from January to July 2016 included:

- **Community Meetings:** Hosted and conducted more than 19 large community meetings in Nashville and surrounding counties to share information about the strategic planning process and solicit feedback about the future transit scenarios.
 - 10 meetings in Davidson County
 - Downtown Library
 - East Park Community Center
 - Southeast Community Center
 - oneCITY
 - Glenclyff High School
 - North Precinct
 - FiftyForward Donelson
 - FiftyForward Madison
 - Vanderbilt University
 - Tennessee State University, Avon Williams Campus
 - MTA/RTA teamed up with the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee and Cumberland Region Tomorrow to host nine meetings (one in each county surrounding Davidson County) with business and community leaders.
 - Cheatham County, Pleasant View City Hall
 - Rutherford County, Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce
 - Maury County, Workforce Development and Conference Center at Northfield
 - Robertson County, Robertson County Office Building (Robertson County Chamber)
 - Wilson County, Lebanon Golf and Country Club (Wilson County Chamber)
 - Williamson County, Williamson County Association of Realtors (Franklin Tomorrow and The TMA Group)
 - Sumner County, Sumner County Administration Building
 - Dickson County, Greystone Golf Club (Dickson County Chamber)
 - Montgomery County, Wilma Rudolph Event Center
- **Website:** Built a robust digital dialogue at nMotion2016.org/decide, where residents had the opportunity to view and evaluate the transit scenarios in detail and weigh in on additional topics, such as transit priority, access and premium service.
- **Surveys:** Surveyed residents using web-based and in-person survey tools.
 - More than 9,000 surveys collected to date
- **Transit Talks:** A member of the MTA/RTA staff visited more than 40 organizations to present “Transit Talks” to share updates and gain input from members of the groups.
- **Televised Town Halls:** We worked with our partners at Nashville Public Television (NPT) and WZTV (FOX-17) to produce two town hall specials on transportation.
- **Current Riders:** Advertised directly to riders with advertisements on buses and on information screens at Music City Central and surveyed riders at Music City Central.
- **Email Campaign:** Developed a database of email recipients – totaling more than 8,000 – who receive regular updates on the strategic planning process and provide valuable feedback.
 - Between January and July 2016, more than 2,500 new people subscribed to our email list.
- **Social Media:** Built social media followings on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and shared updates with those audiences.
 - Facebook (2,320 likes)
 - Twitter (711 followers)
 - YouTube (506 views)
 - Nextdoor: Used the neighborhood networking tool Nextdoor to share information with more than 50,000 participants across the community.
- **Focus Groups:** Held four focus groups among Hispanic/Latino, African-American, disabled and low-income populations.
- **Listening Sessions With MTA/RTA Employees:** Held a series of listening sessions to hear directly from MTA drivers and other employees.

For more information on our outreach in 2015, please visit our website at nMotion2016.org/materials.



Public Meeting



NPT Town Hall

Targeted Outreach

Ensuring diverse participation was a top priority during the nMotion process. To support that effort, MTA/RTA retained three consultants who specialize in engaging “hard-to-reach groups.” Those consultants have led efforts to address gaps in outreach throughout the nMotion process.

Surveys included optional questions about demographic information including ZIP code, age and ethnic identification. While not every participant in any one of the engagement activities completed a survey and not every survey respondent completed these optional demographic questions, from those who did, MTA/RTA was able to assess where gaps in outreach exist and devised plans to address those gaps.

As the process continued, connecting to hard-to-reach groups became more challenging, and that’s reflected in the numbers of the final phase compared to the first nine months of outreach. To make up for that decrease in overall participation, we worked with our consultants in the following ways:

- **Media Relations:** Throughout the public outreach process, we worked with the following outlets:
 - *Print/online:*
 - Nashville PRIDE
 - Stay on the Go
 - Tennessee Tribune
 - Urbaanite
 - La Campana
 - El Crucero
 - HOLA TN
 - *Radio:*
 - Fisk radio (WFSK)
 - 92-Q
 - EL Jefe
 - La Bonita
 - Activa
- **Targeted Paid Advertising:** To supplement our media outreach, we pursued a few targeted paid advertising opportunities, including a partnership with the Tennessee Tribune that included print and digital ads and a Take 10 on Tuesdays video feature, radio ads on WFSK and 92Q, and Facebook ads targeting minority groups.

Focus Groups Spotlight

Over the course of the project, we held 12 focus groups to learn more from underrepresented and hard-to-reach groups. We met with a few groups more than once during each phase of the project.

Focus Groups:

- The Contributor
- African-American with referrals from:
 - Alameda Christian Church (Judy Cummings)
 - McGruder Center
 - Keep Nashville Affordable (online group)
 - Nashville Association of Black Journalists (NABJ)
- Latina Social Club Facebook Group
- FUTURO Trevecca Chapter
- Empower Tennessee
- Senior centers including:
 - McKendree Village
 - Richland Place
 - Trevecca Towers
 - FiftyForward Madison



Themes identified across all 12 focus groups were consistent with the general public’s desire for more frequent and dependable service, and service for longer hours. We heard that, in order to ride, the system must be safe and people must be made to feel secure walking to and from stops and while waiting at stops. We heard that people are feeling the impact of an increase in the cost of living in Middle Tennessee. We also heard that transfers are particularly challenging for the low/no-income population because transfers make travel times longer and the fare more expensive. And delays cause missed transfers. For people with disabilities, arriving early or late isn’t just an inconvenience; it is a real safety concern.

Targeted Outreach

- **Targeted Transit Talks:** We held group discussions with the help of the following organizations:
 - Nashville Black Chamber of Commerce
 - NAACP
 - Bordeaux Hills Neighborhood Association
 - Urban League
 - Bordeaux-North Nashville Chamber of Commerce
 - The Tennessee Latin American Chamber of Commerce
 - YMCA Latino Achievers at four high schools:
 - Antioch High School
 - Cane Ridge High School
 - Overton High School
 - McGavock High School
- **Public Meetings:** In addition to the other public meetings, we held two meetings targeting minority groups in North and South Nashville with well-known transit expert Beverly Scott in partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, Conexión Américas and the United Way.



YMCA Latino Achievers



North Nashville public meeting

- **Faith-Based Outreach:** We reached out to the following primarily African-American or Hispanic/Latino churches, including:
 - Mt. Zion Baptist Church
 - Olive Branch Church
 - Watson Grove Baptist Church
 - Victory Church
 - Born Again Church
 - Temple Baptist Church
 - St. John AME church
 - Jefferson Street Baptist Church
 - Spruce Street Baptist Church
 - El Shaddai
 - La Casa de mi Padre
 - Iglesia Católica La Virgen de Guadalupe
 - Iglesia de Dios Hispana de Clarksville
 - Iglesia Una Esperanza Viva Hermitage
 - Iglesia Católica San Patricio
 - St. Ann Catholic Church
 - Islamic Center of Nashville

We presented at Watson Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church and the Islamic Center of Nashville.

Ensuring Regional Participation

About 25 percent of survey respondents who participated in the process reside outside of Davidson County (see figures 7 and 8). To connect with people throughout the region, MTA/RTA partnered with Cumberland Region Tomorrow and the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee. As part of this regional partnership, in the fall and spring, MTA/RTA hosted nine large-scale public meetings, one in each of the counties surrounding Davidson County, in order to hear from residents across the region. In addition, in partnership with the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, MTA/RTA communicated to more than 27,000 frequent voters in Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson and Sumner counties with a postcard mail piece. We received more than 500 responses to the survey as a result.

Outside of Nashville, we heard that people are feeling the squeeze of a longer commute and beginning to internalize the effects on their quality of life. This is especially true for people commuting from Rutherford and Williamson counties. Respondents say they need service to be reliable and faster or comparable to driving their cars. They expressed a similar but slightly lower level of enthusiasm for Scenario 1 over the other options, and also voiced some concerns about the cost and profitability of transit projects in other cities. Residents are looking for a faster means of commuting, not necessarily the highest cost option (i.e., rail).



TRANSIT ALLIANCE POSTCARD

Summary of Participation (April 2015 to July 2016)

FIGURE 7 | PARTICIPATION IN DAVIDSON COUNTY BY ZIP CODE

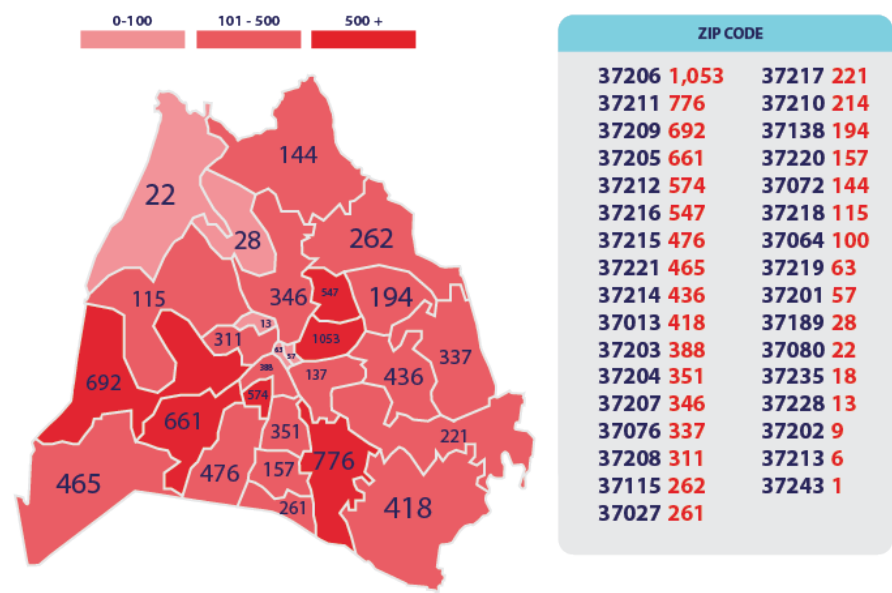


FIGURE 8 | PARTICIPATION IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE REGION BY COUNTY

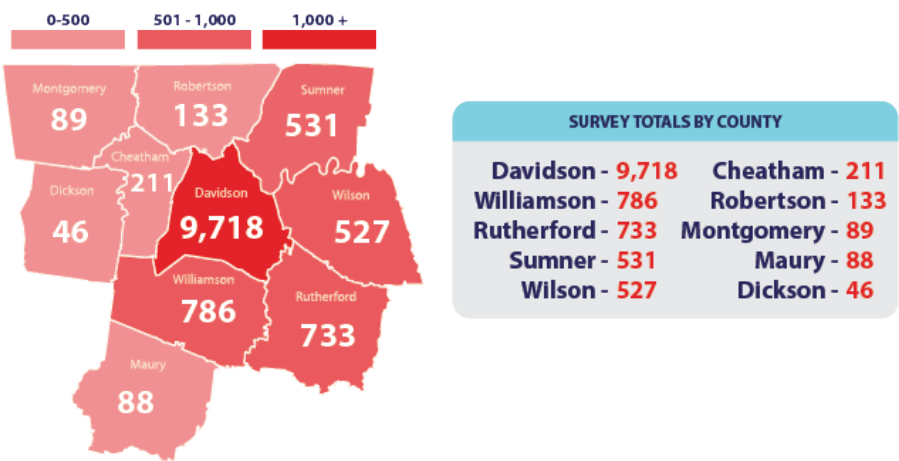


FIGURE 9 | AGE

	Responses	Percentage
17 or under	109	1%
18-24	577	5%
25-34	3,128	34%
35-44	2,193	22%
45-54	1,748	16%
55-64	1,543	14%
65 and older	785	7%
Prefer not to say	207	1%

FIGURE 10 | ETHNIC BACKGROUND

	Responses	Percentage	Census*
American Indian	89	0.7%	0.5%
Asian	152	1.2%	3.5%
Black/African-American	1,247	10.2%	28%
Hispanic/Latino	433	3.5%	10%
White	9,477	78%	65.5%
Other	116	.9%	NA
Prefer not to say	622	5.1%	NA

*DATA FROM UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU, JULY 1, 2015, FOR DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE.

Your Questions Answered

We've compiled a list of common questions that we've heard from residents during our outreach, and you'll find answers here.

Has elevated or underground rail been considered?

Primarily for cost reasons, most work has focused on the development of surface options. For example, while surface light rail can be developed for \$70 million to \$100 million per mile, costs for tunneling often range from \$300 million to \$700 million per mile. However, some sections of underground or elevated service could still be considered – for example, underground in parts of downtown and under or over major freight rail lines.

What about monorail and gondolas?

In all corridors where major transit investments will be pursued, much more detailed analysis will be conducted, including the consideration of additional modes. However, throughout the world, nearly all studies conclude that more widely used modes such as light rail, streetcar and BRT provide more effective service. For the purposes of nMotion, we have identified the modes that experience has indicated would be the most effective. A more detailed examination of alternative modes will be conducted on a corridor-by-corridor basis as part of project development. As part of future studies for major corridor projects, serious consideration for public-private partnerships will be considered, and private-sector respondents may develop other mode alternatives.



Your Questions Answered

Why can't we just widen our major roads and expand our highway system?

Middle Tennessee's transportation system has been built around the automobile. Most people, whether they want to or not, are forced to drive. However, growing numbers of residents and visitors want to be able to travel in different ways – to take transit, to walk and bike. nMotion is designed to develop the more balanced transportation system that is needed to make Nashville and Middle Tennessee a more livable and competitive area.

Cost averages to construct four new lanes of highway can range from \$4 million to \$6 million per mile in rural areas and \$8 million to \$10 million per mile in urban areas. The actual cost per mile depends on location, terrain, construction, lane width, durability, etc. Tennessee already has a backlog of projects that totals more than \$6 billion and needs funding to maintain and repair existing roadways. Continuing to add to these costs is not feasible in the long term.

To widen roadways, land would have to be shifted from its current use to create space for the lanes. This is often very difficult and undesirable where existing neighborhoods, business districts or protected natural environments exist already.

Most importantly, widening roads does not necessarily improve traffic congestion. In cases around the country, the theory of induced demand has been shown to be the case. When roadway capacity is increased, the initial reduction in congestion is limited and the roadways will fill with cars again as population grows or drivers redirect themselves to the improved route.

Why can't we create a new interstate loop so that freight and trucks can bypass the downtown core?

The Nashville region is a logistics hub, and the ability for freight to move through Middle Tennessee is a significant asset to our economy. To address the congestion issues related to freight travel, the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is in the final stages of completing a vision for freight in Middle Tennessee. Among other recommendations, this effort will provide a designated route for freight trucks that would optimize travel for both truck and vehicle traffic throughout the region and explore the ability to restrict freight travel through the downtown area during peak times and incentivize use of preferred truck routes.



Your Questions Answered

Why can't existing CSX tracks be used for commuter rail?

The CSX tracks in Middle Tennessee are some of the busiest freight rail lines in the country. CSX is currently not willing to share its Nashville-area tracks with commuter rail services. The alternative of developing new rail rights of way, while to date not examined, would be difficult and costly. Because it cannot reasonably be assumed at this time that CSX lines would become available for commuter rail use, none of the scenarios include the development of commuter rail on CSX lines. However, this is not to suggest that the region should not further pursue the concept. Input received as part of the nMotion process suggests that there are a number of public policy objectives beyond the scope of this effort that would benefit from the relocation of significant rail freight traffic and facilities away from Nashville's downtown core.

Why does the light rail not extend all the way to cities, such as Franklin and Murfreesboro?

The nMotion team is planning for the next 25 years using growth projections that reflect the way the region's cities and counties expect to develop. In Nashville, there is an emphasis on more focused development that will support light rail. Outside of Davidson County, current plans call primarily for a continuation of existing development patterns, and these will not provide the concentrations of people and jobs needed to fill trains.

That said, it should be noted that the projections being used as the basis of this plan are projections that will likely change as new and/or unforeseen events occur. For that reason, the plan now being developed will be updated periodically to take future changes into account. In the case that Rutherford County, Williamson County or any other county pursues changes in development patterns that would support light rail, the plan could be updated on that basis to include new light rail services.



Your Questions Answered

Can we solve our mobility issues with new technologies, such as autonomous vehicles?

Autonomous vehicles are coming, and some believe as soon as 2020. What is not yet agreed upon is the impact they will have on traffic. Some studies indicate that their use will alleviate congestion, while others indicate that miles of travel will increase significantly (for example, as it becomes easy to send an autonomous vehicle out for pizza, or to commute for longer distances because people can be productive while the car is driving them to work) and that congestion will worsen. In any event, it will always be more efficient to transport large numbers of people in fewer vehicles than fewer people in more vehicles. This is especially the case in urban areas, where the physical space for more vehicles does not exist. To be sure, there will be impacts on the demand for transit, but few believe there will be significantly less demand for transit.

The nMotion process has identified the need for better technology to make service easier to use, and has proposed partnerships with private companies, such as Lyft and Uber, to expand service. While some suggest that autonomous vehicles could be the answer to our mobility needs, it is important to remember that not everyone is able to access this option. Like an investment portfolio, a regional transportation portfolio should be diverse. While it will be important to fully explore the possibilities that autonomous vehicles offer, it is important to keep in mind the needs of all Middle Tennesseans, and the importance of a diverse mobility mix.

Can we use public-private partnerships to fund a transit system expansion?

A bill to allow public-private partnerships in Tennessee passed the state legislature in 2016 and allows transit agencies to partner with private companies to build projects. In virtually all cases, public-private partnerships provide opportunities to develop new projects in a more cost-effective, and often faster, manner. However, public-private partnerships rarely provide private funding for transit projects. We hope to work with private companies that see an opportunity to partner on transit projects in a mutually beneficial way.

