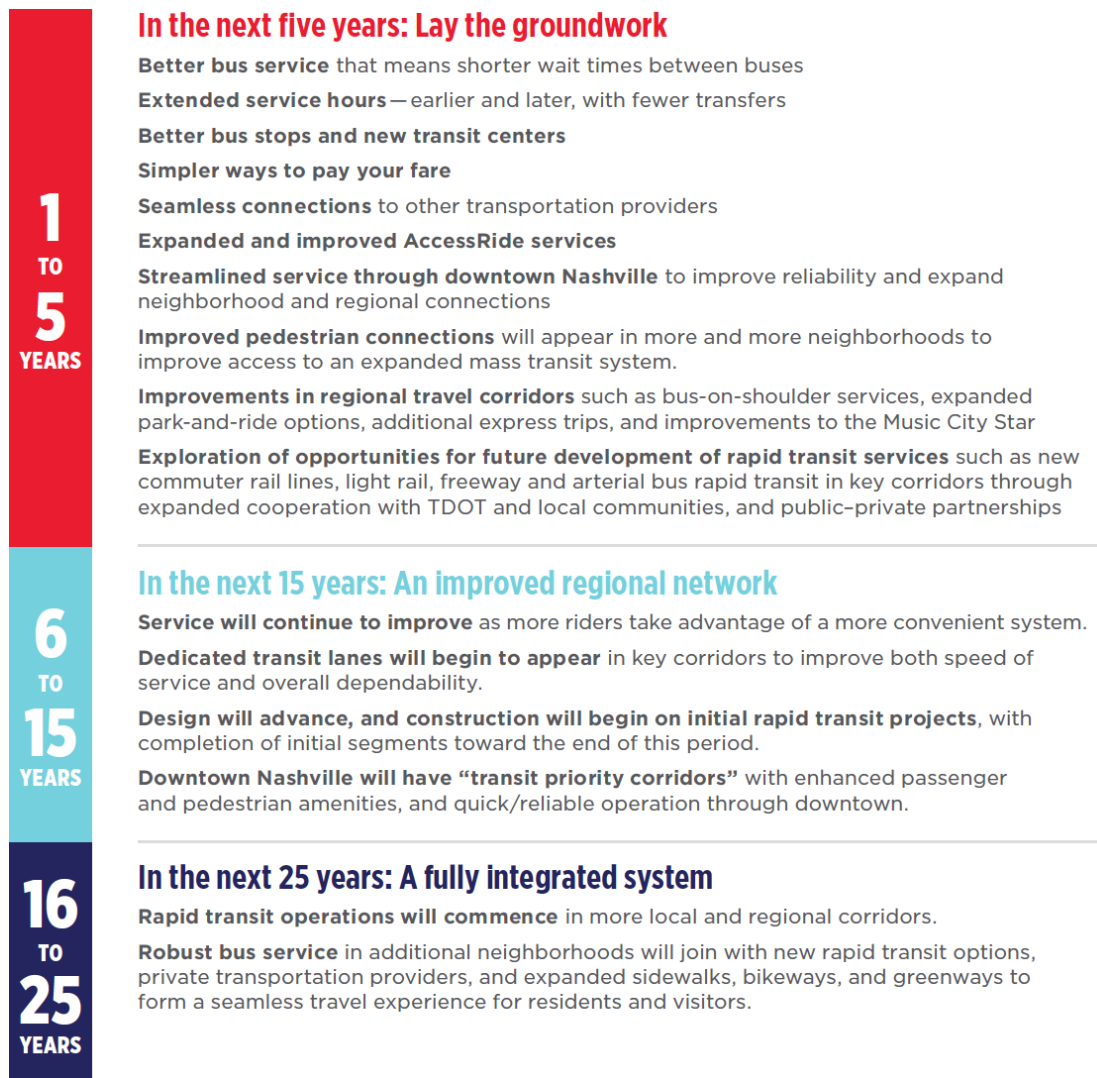


# Chapter 5 Next Steps

As described in Chapter 3, the nMotion program is large and comprehensive and will require significant implementation efforts. These will include near-term work to jump-start improvements, the development of a long-term

implementation strategy that will define which improvements will happen when and how, and further coordination with local, regional, state, and federal partners to identify funding initiatives.

FIGURE 5-1 | PRELIMINARY IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



## Next Steps

The next steps for MTA and RTA to implement the nMotion program will be to develop an implementation plan that describes and defines short-term improvements as well as projects with longer implementation timelines.

All major transit investment programs, including those in Denver, Salt Lake City, and Phoenix, represent long-range efforts. Most include the development of a “Program of Projects” that defines which projects will be implemented when and how they will be financed. MTA and RTA will develop short-term and long-term implementation strategies that will define how this will be done for all projects.

## Short-Term Improvements

MTA and RTA will begin implementing short-term improvements identified in the strategies described in Chapter 3. These initial improvements include the following actions.

### Improve Existing Bus Services

MTA and RTA will initiate a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) to identify changes that can be made with their existing budgets to simplify and improve service. The types of changes that will be made could include making service more direct, improving connections (including crosstown routes), developing through-city routes, and improving schedules. The COA will also assist in setting priorities for short-term service expansion.

### Provide More Service for Longer Hours

MTA will begin to provide more frequent service for longer hours throughout the system, including on weekends. Initial improvements will include longer hours in

the mornings, evenings, and weekends on the highest ridership routes. Over a period of five years, MTA will continue to increase service hours and add more frequent service throughout the service area to cover the entire system. As the region grows, MTA will continue to add service to match growing population needs.

### Improve Express Bus Service

MTA and RTA will initiate a program to improve commuter service. This will include new schedules that serve a broader range of work hours within the first two years and the start of the development of “purpose-built” park-and-ride lots in more convenient locations with real-time information signage and better stop facilities within the first five years.

### Begin Development of Community Transit Centers

The COA will help to identify specific locations to build better connections outside of downtown Nashville. Concurrent with those changes, MTA and RTA will begin the construction of new outlying community transit centers as places to make those connections. The first transit centers will begin the public input and design process within the first year of nMotion implementation.

### Improve Stop and Station Locations

MTA and RTA will begin a program to improve bus stops. This will include more shelters and better signage throughout the MTA and RTA service area. MTA will set guidelines for installation of stop amenities and will establish a goal to prioritize locations to increase the percent of riders accessing these improvements.

## Rebrand Service

In conjunction with the COA changes, MTA/RTA will rebrand itself with a new unified name and image. While MTA and RTA will remain as separate entities, service will be presented to the public as if it is provided by a single system. Specific subcategories of services (such as commuter express service and the frequent transit network) will also be branded to reduce complexity.

## Provide Better Information

Along with presentation of MTA and RTA service to the public as a single system, the agencies will provide information through a single website. Recent MTA service enhancements, such as real-time information, will be extended to RTA and AccessRide services.

## Unify Fares

MTA has recently begun an effort to determine how to simplify fare payment. As part of that effort, MTA and RTA will adopt a simpler, more flexible, single-fare structure. MTA and RTA will also investigate and implement ways to make fare payment easier, including mobile fare payment.

## Improve Downtown Transit

MTA and RTA will participate in Nashville's Downtown Mobility Study to identify transit improvements through the downtown. It is anticipated that this will produce short-term transit priority improvements that can be implemented within the constraints of downtown's existing infrastructure plus more extensive improvements to follow.

## Improve Airport Service

MTA will upgrade express bus service between West End and Nashville International Airport with downtown to operate every 30 minutes seven days a week from early to late. This will provide fast and consistent service for both visitors and airport employees.

## Start Planning and Design for Mid-Term Improvements

### Increase Music City Star Service

Additional service must be accompanied by enhanced safety systems and additional track infrastructure (including passing sidings and double tracks) that must be designed and constructed. Design of federally-required safety measures will begin in the first year of plan implementation and are expected to take five years to fully implement. MTA/RTA will provide additional service, including on Saturdays, which is projected to begin in the 5- to 10-year service period after improvements are installed.

### Implement Express Bus-on-Shoulder Service

MTA and RTA will seek to implement a pilot project in one major freeway corridor to determine costs and needs for additional projects. MTA and RTA will work with TDOT to determine the measures necessary to implement express bus-on-shoulder service. Highway infrastructure would require additional pavement widths and depths prior to full implementation.

### Upgrade BRT-Lite Service

The nMotion program includes the development of Rapid Bus service on

many routes in the proposed Frequent Transit Network, including existing BRT-lite routes. Key improvements will be to provide all limited-stop service, better stop facilities, new branding, and transit priority measures. MTA will start by upgrading existing BRT-lite routes with signal priority and better stop facilities.

## Start Development of Longer-Term Improvements

### Begin Development of High-Capacity Transit Services

Typically, the development of new High Capacity Transit (HCT) services takes 10-plus years from the beginning of required planning studies to the start of service. MTA will start this process as quickly as possible. For new HCT services within Davidson County, MTA has already begun a project to examine different HCT approaches in five corridors. This project, which will be completed within the next year, will also prioritize initial corridors. Based on this prioritization, MTA will proceed with development of its first light rail or BRT line.

RTA will also pursue its first regional HCT project, which it will identify in conjunction with the Nashville Area MPO and the outer counties. One potential approach could be to expand the MPO's upcoming South Corridor Transit Study to include project development for the first regional HCT line.

## Partnerships

Development of the full 25-year nMotion program will require strong partnerships. Most new transit lines will operate on highways and streets controlled by local communities and TDOT. As such, they will need to support the roadway changes needed to implement HCT services such as

light rail, BRT, and Freeway BRT. In addition, for transit to be successful, people will need to be able to walk to and from stops and stations. If light rail were implemented tomorrow on any of our major travel corridors without the development of associated pedestrian facilities, it would fail as too few people would be able to access the service.

It should also be understood that the nMotion program, especially in Davidson County, is designed to serve more concentrated mixed-use development, which is very different from what now exists in many areas. Transit can stimulate development, but it cannot by itself create it. Local communities must enable and encourage transit-supportive development, and a transition to that type of development must accompany or precede the development of HCT (see Figure 5-1).

## Develop Funding Plan

The nMotion process was designed to identify improvements based on need, with the recognition that additional funding will be required for implementation. One of the first of MTA and RTA's next steps to advance the long-term improvements will be to work with local and regional partners to outline possible funding and financing scenarios. These scenarios will help to identify proposed funding sources and the steps needed to implement them (for example, legislative approval or a ballot measure).