

QUICK COMPARISON OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

	Public Organization	Private Organization	Free-Standing	Regional Planning	Local planning	Assigns Grants	Grant Admin	Community Services	Advocacy Work	Convening Forum	Public Involvement
GNRC	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
MPO	√			√		√				√	√
Rural Planning Organization	√			√						√	√
Regional Transportation Authority	√			√			√	√			√
Mayors Caucus								√	√		
Mid-Cumberland HRA		√	√				√	√			√
Cumberland Region Tomorrow		√	√					√	√		√
Leadership Middle Tennessee		√						√	√		√
Nashville Civic Design Center		√	√					√	√		√
Transit Alliance of Middle TN		√						√	√		√

Public Organization	Public Sector Organization
Private Organization	Private Non-Profit Organization
Free-Standing	Full-service agency not requiring contract authority or staffing services from another, but may be physically located in another
Regional Planning	Responsible for carrying out regional/ corridor planning duties, often mandated by federal or state laws
Local Planning	Assists with county or municipal planning duties, at the request of local communities
Assigns Grants	Is responsible or has the authority to award federal or state grants
Grant Admin	Responsible for implementing or administering federal/state grants for programs (beyond planning grants)
Community Services	Provides infrastructure or social services directly to the community
Advocacy Work	Engages in advocacy and education, including leadership training programs, on specific issues related to the organizations mission to affect policy decisions
Convening Forum	Pulls together community leaders to discuss regional issues
Public Involvement	Directly engages the public in performing its duties or in its decision-making process

Key Regional Organizations in Middle Tennessee

Greater Nashville Regional Council – *Regional Planning and Economic Development*

GNRC is a regional council of governments and state development district which works daily with local elected officials, economic development councils, chambers of commerce, and others to help communities prepare for economic and community development needs. In addition, GNRC administers the Area Agency on Aging & Disability, provides small business loans through the Mid-Cumberland Development Corporation, staffs the Middle Tennessee Tourism Council, and provides technical planning assistance to communities in need of updates to comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, or land development regulations.

Contact: Michael Skipper, [mskipper@gnrc.org](mailto:mkipper@gnrc.org)

Metropolitan Planning Organization – *Regional Policy, Planning, & Grant Funding*

Created by federal legislation, MPOs serve as a regional partnership among federal agencies, state government, local elected leadership, local planning and public works directors, transit agencies, the business community, and citizens across the metropolitan region. MPOs lead in the development of a region's long-range transportation plan and short-range Transportation Improvement Program and contribute to ongoing conversations about issues such as land use, economic development, climate change and the environment, safety and security, and health. The Nashville Area MPO and the Clarksville Urbanized Area MPO work closely with TDOT to set policy, develop plans, and program federal funds for transportation projects in Middle Tennessee.

Contact: Michelle Lacewell, lacewell@nashvillempo.org | Stan Williams, stan.williams@cityofclarksville.com

Rural Planning Organization – *Transportation Project Prioritization*

The purpose of an RPO is to involve local officials in multi-modal transportation planning through a structured process. The goal is to ensure quality, competence, and fairness in the transportation decision-making process carried out by TDOT. The state's twelve RPOs are Center Hill, Dale Hollow, East Tennessee North, East Tennessee South, First Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, West Tennessee, Northwest Tennessee, South Central East, South Central West, Southeast Tennessee, and Southwest Tennessee.

Contact: Dianna Tomlin, dtomlin@nmchra.com

Regional Transportation Authority – *Regional Transit Operator*

Created by state statute in 1988 (amended in 2009), the RTA is responsible for developing, managing, operating, and maintaining are regional transit system for the citizens of Middle Tennessee. The RTA oversees the largest commuter vanpool program in the Southeast, facilitates thousands of carpools, coordinates regional Relax & Ride regional bus routes, and the area's first regional rail project. Recent amendments to state law designate the RTA to serve as the administrator or regional dedicated funding for transit projects and services.

Contact: Steve Bland, steve.bland@nashville.gov

Mayors Caucus – *Political Leadership, Mayoral Collaboration, Relationship Building*

The Caucus was formed on July 22, 2009 in order to provide leadership on important issues facing a rapidly changing regional landscape. Transportation, and particularly the pursuit of a modern mass transit system, served as the early catalyst, but in its brief history the Caucus has served as an effective forum for building personal relationships among mayors and has helped local governments support each other on issues ranging from flood recovery to proposed state legislation.

The purpose of the Mayors Caucus is to foster communication and coordination among cities and counties across Middle Tennessee; advocate public policies beneficial to cities and counties, and the region as a whole; promote a positive image of the region as a place to live, work, and play; cultivate and maintain a strong and engaged civic culture; and strengthen vital partnerships with the business community to ensure economic prosperity.

Contact: Michael Skipper, [mskipper@gnrc.org](mailto:mkipper@gnrc.org)

Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency – Non-Profit Social Services Provider

Founded in 1974, the MCHRA is an independent, non-profit organization committed to helping individuals and communities across 13 counties become more self-sufficient. Mid-Cumberland provides services to children, youth, seniors, and disabled individuals. Services include Meals-on-Wheels, rural transportation services, staffing for the Middle Tennessee RPO, among many others. MCHRA receives its funding from a variety of sources including state and federal grants, local government contributions, GNRC, United Way, private donations.

Contact: Jane Hamrick, jhamrick@mchra.com

Cumberland Region Tomorrow – Quality Growth Advocacy

Cumberland Region Tomorrow is a private, non-profit, citizen-based regional organization working with public and private partners dedicated to advocating for good planning for the future livability and economic vitality of the ten-county region.

Contact: Carol Hudler, carol@cumberlandregiontomorrow.org

Leadership Middle Tennessee – Education and Collaboration

LMT is a regional leadership program founded to engage community and business leaders in the 10-county region. The program is a series of 10 monthly day-and-a-half issues-focused sessions designed to give participants a greater understanding of the critical issues and key players in the region, motivating them to use their skills to become regionally engaged.

Contact: Lee Rucks, president@leadmt.org

Nashville Civic Design Center – Urban Design Studio and Advocacy

Founded in 2000, the NCDC is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to elevate the quality of Nashville's built environment and to promote public participation in the creation of a more beautiful and functional city for all.

Contact: Gary Gaston, gary@civicdesigncenter.org

Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee – Education, Advocacy, and Campaigns

Comprised of representatives from the business community, the Alliance is a non-profit organization committed to communicating the value of regional mass transportation needs and options. The Alliance fosters education across the region about the economic value of mass transit investments. Through these communication and education efforts, the Alliance will actively participate in the steps necessary to secure dedicated revenues for mass transit investments in the months and years ahead.

Contact: Jo Ann Graves, JoAnn.Graves@thetransitalliance.org

There are many other local organizations that play a role in regional collaboration including, but not limited to, area chambers of commerce, other non-profit organizations, area colleges and universities, and state agencies.

Prepared by the Greater Nashville Regional Council, last edited on October 24, 2016