



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

MEDIA RELEASE

DRAFT 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Up for Public & Stakeholder Review

Short, mid, & long-range multi-modal investments to help foster livability, prosperity, sustainability & diversity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Nashville Area MPO today unveiled the first major iteration of its 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, kicking off the next phase of a rigorous program for public involvement over the coming months. The MPO offered a direction for multi-modal transportation policy improvements –including a bold new vision for regional mass transit– to an audience of approximately 500 public and private sector leaders at the second annual *Power of 10: Convening the Region* summit, a collaborative forum to establish regional consensus on a sustainable future for Middle Tennessee.

“Today’s unveiling of the MPO’s draft plan initiatives represents another critical step in our regional efforts to plan long-term for transportation needs,” said Nashville Mayor Karl Dean, who also serves as MPO chairman. “The development of the plan has been bolstered by new partnerships among public and private sector organizations including the Mayors Caucus, the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee, area chambers of commerce, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, the Greater Nashville Regional Council, Transit Now and others. The mayors that serve on the MPO board are now looking to the input of Middle Tennesseans as we prepare to adopt an updated regional transportation plan in October. There are important decisions to be made, and everyone has a voice and a role to play.”

Through the year 2035, MPO plans and programs will draw on four broad **principles**, or strategies for future growth:

- **Livability** – Enhance quality-of-life by supporting increased opportunities for affordable housing, education, jobs, recreation, and civic involvement without increasing the burden on citizens to enjoy their community.
- **Prosperity** – Contribute to regional economic well-being through transportation solutions that reduce the cost of living and doing business, increase access to education, jobs and amenities, and attract new investment.
- **Sustainability** – Support growth and prosperity without sacrificing public health, natural and socio-cultural resources, or the financial stability of this or future generations.
- **Diversity** – Recognize the multitude of needs and variety of perspectives and backgrounds of Middle Tennessee’s citizenry by promoting a range of transportation choices designed with sensitivity to the desired context.

The draft plan primarily rests on a “fix it first” mentality, with priority given to preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure to protect prior investments and improve upon their safety, security, and reliability. Strategies for **system expansion**, or policy direction for **new investments**, are currently up for consideration and discussion: whether to continue the business-as-usual, traditional approach to adding system capacity – primarily through road widening and expansion. Or, to take a different course than that of previous decades, broadening support for multi-modal enhancements in and around residential and employment centers, giving Middle Tennesseans more mobility choices by improving walking, biking and transit facilities, while reducing the overall burden on roadway infrastructure.

The ten-county region is projected to grow by just under one million new residents by 2035. This growth has significant implications for congestion and commute times, as well as other quality-of-life factors such as access to parks and green space, preservation of agricultural and historic properties, air quality, affordable housing, and health.

“A modern, efficient transportation system that supports mobility in *all* modes –from highways to public transportation to bike lanes– is critical for fostering economic expansion and competitiveness, without forfeiting our natural beauty, cultural and historical heritage, and other revered qualities unique to Middle Tennessee,” said Michael Skipper, executive director of the Nashville Area MPO. “The plan’s guiding principles of livability, prosperity, sustainability, and diversity can provide a collective vision for the way our region will live, work, and play over the coming decades.”

The federal government mandates that MPOs plan 20+ years into the future, and account for all regionally-significant road, transit, freight, ITS, walking and biking projects in that plan, regardless of how they're funded. The 2035 plan includes new, more holistic **scoring factors** (ADDENDUM), used by the MPO's multi-modal planners to evaluate all incoming transportation project ideas. These criteria proffer "big picture" consideration for –not only the overriding concern of congestion management– but *more* mobility options for citizens (including transit, walking and biking), freight and goods movement, safety and security, system preservation, sustainable land use practices, health and the environment, and support for and consistency with local plans.

This update to the long-range plan arrives at an ideal moment in Middle Tennessee's history, as the region is now much better positioned to pay for transportation projects that support a higher quality-of-life, due to dramatic changes in federal transportation policies under the Obama administration. To qualify for federal funds, major transit projects must include a focus on **livability** issues – in addition to just cost/time savings, which were the primary criteria under the Bush administration. The federal government seeks to stimulate **comprehensive regional and community planning** efforts that integrate transportation, housing, and other critical investments, helping communities nationwide to make better, coordinated, higher-performing infrastructure investments.

The Nashville Area MPO's draft 2035 plan emphasizes thoughtful, transparent **financial stewardship** by ensuring that transportation improvements meet these regional goals, while encouraging cooperation and coordinated decision-making among Middle Tennessee counties and municipalities. Working with mayors and other regional community, business and civic leaders, the MPO will soon post a schedule for **public and stakeholder meetings** on the plan's content, so that the vision and project list ultimately submitted to the federal government this fall will adequately and accurately reflect the desires of the people who live, work, and play in Middle Tennessee.

"This plan serves as a challenge to Middle Tennessee's leaders, decision-makers, and citizens to reach consensus on new, innovative and self-sufficient means to fund critical infrastructure investments," said Ed Cole, executive director of the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee. "The vision for mass transit expansion unveiled in the draft plan today offers us a blueprint for our transportation network that will not only improve our standard of living and protect the environment, but also allow us to viably compete with other urbanized regions for jobs and economic growth."

Developed with input and guidance from the public, the plan aims to connect people in cities, suburbs and rural areas of the ten-county region, coordinate planning efforts at the national, state, regional and local levels, and offer some means of cohesive consideration for land use, transportation, the economy, and the environment.

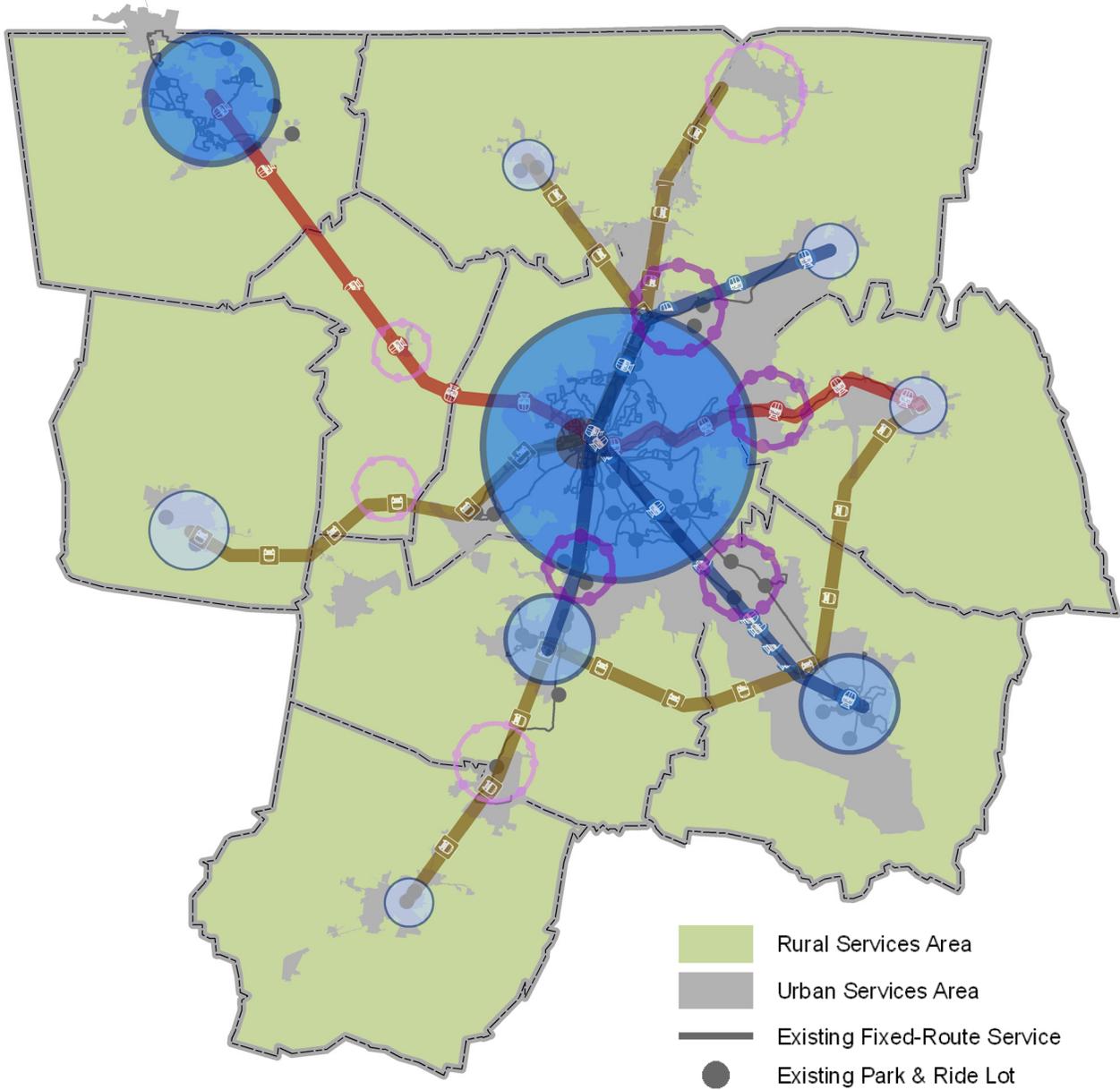
Regional goals for transportation investments over the next 25 years include: system preservation and maintenance; managing congestion to keep people and goods moving; encouraging quality growth and sustainable land development practices; protecting public health and the environment; offering meaningful transportation choices for a diverse population, including the aging; and ongoing support for regional economic competitiveness.

Documents, maps, schedules for public meetings, and other relevant information can be found online at a website dedicated exclusively to tracking the 2035 plan's progress: www.nashvillempo.org/plans_programs/rtp.

About the Nashville Area MPO:

The Nashville Area MPO is the federally-designated transportation planning agency for over 2800 sq. mi. and more than 1.5 million people throughout Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, Wilson, and parts of Maury and Robertson counties. Serving as a regional partnership among the U.S. DOT, Tennessee DOT, local elected leadership, local planning and public works directors, the business community, and citizens across the five-plus county planning area, the MPO leads in the development of the region's long-range transportation plan and short-range Transportation Improvement Program, and contributes to ongoing conversations about issues such as land use, economic development, climate change and the environment, safety and security, and health.

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Find out more at
NashvilleMPO.org

Actual mode, alignment, and technology not finalized until the completion of environmental studies.

**Nashville Area MPO
2035 Regional Plan - Project Evaluation Factors
ENDORSED BY EXECUTIVE BOARD, MARCH 17, 2010**

Factors in Evaluating Projects for the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan

1. Congestion Management

- a. What are the root causes of congestion in the vicinity of the project location (e.g., traffic volume, physical design, crashes, regulations, behavioral, freight, etc.)?
- b. Given the land uses, urban design and community goals for the project vicinity, what level of congestion is appropriate for the project and vicinity (i.e. some commercial centers/Downtowns need greater congestion for visibility/economic development)?
- c. How well does the project address those causes?
- d. How could the project be scoped to include congestion management solutions to optimize its benefit?

2. Multi-Modal Choices

- a. How well does the project introduce, support, or reinforce multiple transportation choices for people to access residences, jobs, schools, food, entertainment, etc?
- b. How can the project be scoped to incorporate facilities for and/or connections to non-motorized modes and transit?

3. Freight & Goods Movement

- a. How well does the project support or harm the movement of freight and goods through the region?
- b. How can the project be scoped to incorporate facilities that aid in the safe and efficient movement of freight?
- c. How can the project be scoped to balance the movement of freight and goods with other community goals?

4. Safety & Security

- a. How well does the project address safety concerns for all users?
- b. Is the project in a high-crash corridor?
- c. How can the project be scoped to increase safety of all users?
- d. How well does the project address security concerns?
- e. Does the project aid/ harm important evacuation routes?
- f. How can the project be scoped to features that help secure citizens and regional resources?

5. System Preservation

- a. How well does the project make use of limited financial resources to ensure the continued productivity of the existing transportation system?
- b. How can the project be scoped to include features the make the facility more efficient (e.g., ITS, design, materials, etc.)

6. Quality Growth/ Sustainable Land Development

- a. How well does the project encourage infill/ redevelopment?
- b. Do area plans call for mixed-used, higher density development? If so, how does the project complement these plans?
- c. Is the project encouraging growth in areas where growth is planned or desired?
- d. Conversely, is the project encouraging growth in areas where additional growth is not planned or desired?
- e. Does the project enhance or contribute to the form and function quality of the surrounding community?

7. Economic Prosperity

- a. How well does the project support or stimulate the local/ regional economy?
- b. How well does the project support freight movements?
- c. To what degree does the implementation of the project create jobs?
- d. How well does the facility connect people with opportunities to engage in economic activity?
- e. To what degree does the project aid in the region's economic competitiveness with other metro areas of the nation?
- f. Is the project supported by business leaders?

8. Health & Environment

- a. Does the project aid/ harm in the preservation of the region's natural or socio-cultural resources (e.g., open space, animal habitat, historic structures, places of worship, community centers, etc.)?
- b. How can the project be scoped to mitigate the negative impacts to valuable resources?
- c. How well does the project support efforts to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, particularly foreign oil?
- d. How well does the project support efforts to improve air and water quality?
- e. Does the project include facilities that provide opportunities for active transportation/ physical activity?
- f. Does the project aid/ harm the advancement of social justice and equal opportunity to destinations throughout the region?
- g. How can the project be scoped to mitigate any negative impacts to predominately low-income or minority communities or persons with a disability?

9. Local Support/ Consistency with Plans

- a. Is the project consistent with local, state, or other regional plans for growth and preservation (economic development, land use, natural features preservation, etc.)?
- b. Has the project been endorsed locally through the adoption of official instruments such as, but not limited to, a local major thoroughfare plan, transportation element of a comprehensive plan, or by resolution of the local governing body?
- c. If on a state-route, is the project endorsed or supported by TDOT?