



Mayors and Transportation Officials Adopt Update to Regional Transportation Plan

The update allocates more than \$10.5 billion in anticipated federal grants and matching funds to Middle Tennessee projects between 2021 and 2045.

February 17, 2021

Contact: Michelle Lacewell
mlacewell@GNRC.org
(850) 527-4203

Nashville, Tenn. - Today, mayors and transportation officials from across Middle Tennessee adopted an update to the region's transportation plan. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) allocates more than \$10.5 billion in anticipated federal grants and matching funds to improve transportation throughout a seven-county planning area that includes Nashville and the surrounding counties of Maury, Robertson, Sumner, Rutherford, Williamson, and Wilson. The Plan can be found online at GNRC.org/Transportation.

Over the last three years, the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) has worked with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and local governments to conduct studies, public meetings, and research to inform the Plan's recommendations. The Plan intends to help ensure coordination among existing transportation planning efforts of TDOT, transit agencies, and area cities and counties – including the high-profile planning effort in Davidson County recently endorsed by the Metro Council. The Regional Transportation Plan is updated every five years to account for shifts in community issues and concerns, advancements in technologies, fluctuations in funding levels, and changes in federal regulations.

"I am grateful for partnership among the mayors across the region and their support of this plan," said Transportation Policy Board Chair and Town of Smyrna Mayor Mary Esther Reed. "Over the last year, while community leaders shuffled priorities to address the COVID crisis, GNRC staff worked tirelessly to ensure the adoption of this plan occurred on time, keeping the region, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, transit agencies, and local governments eligible for federal grants."

Plan Highlights

GNRC developed the Regional Transportation Plan through a collaborative process with extensive opportunities for feedback from members of the public, other government agencies, area non-profit organizations, and area businesses. The RTP's recommendations aim to address growing concerns related to traffic congestion, roadway and pedestrian safety, and the rising costs of living for many Middle Tennesseans. However, the Plan is not a wish list.

(more)

Federal law requires each U.S. metro area to prepare a plan that includes a balanced budget that weighs priorities with realistic expectations for funding based on current trends.

Sixty-five percent of the Plan's funding is allocated to specific projects that can be viewed on an interactive map at GNRC's website. The remainder of the funding is programmed to support ongoing maintenance, roadway safety improvements, transit vehicle acquisition and replacement, and routine upgrades to traffic operations, sidewalks, and bicycle routes.

More than \$4 billion of the total funding is allocated to projects from the IMPROVE Act. That state legislation, passed in 2017 by the Tennessee General Assembly, increased revenue for transportation projects and earmarked those dollars for a long list of improvements identified over the last few decades.

While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability to engage the public during much of 2020, a significant portion of public outreach was conducted throughout the development of the Plan before the onset of social distancing guidelines. The Plan update kicked off in October 2019 at an event held at the Frist Art Museum with Governor Bill Lee and more than 250 regional community and business leaders. More than 13,000 visitors have interacted with materials made available on GNRC's website since then. A virtual workshop was held earlier this month to answer questions about the draft plan.

Robertson County Mayor Billy Vogle, vice-chair of the Transportation Policy Board noted, "Even with this update, GNRC's work with local and state leaders will be an ongoing process, and public input is critical at the local level to ensure projects meet the needs of the community as they are implemented."

GNRC's Transportation Policy Board, formerly referred to as the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is empowered by federal law to prioritize and program federal transportation funds for a seven-county area that includes Davidson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson counties. Federal regulations require metro areas in the United States to conduct continuing, comprehensive, and collaborative transportation planning by developing a long-range transportation plan. In Middle Tennessee, the RTP fulfills this requirement. Updates on projects as they move through the implementation can be found in the Transportation Improvement Program, [GNRC.org/TIP](https://www.gnrc.org/TIP).

###

About the Greater Nashville Regional Council: GNRC is established by the TN General Assembly as the regional council of governments for Middle Tennessee. The Regional Council convenes more than 60 area mayors with state and federal officials for cooperative policymaking and to prioritize public funding for infrastructure projects and social services. GNRC is federally recognized as the region's lead transportation planning organization, economic development district, and area agency on aging and disability. More info at [GNRC.org](https://www.gnrc.org).