



Our Future Rides on Transit.



2023
ANNUAL



REPORT



TAMT PARTNERS/ CONTRIBUTORS FOR 2023

ADVOCATES

American Public
Transportation Association
Community Foundation
of Middle Tennessee
CoreCivic
Pinnacle Bank

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Barge Design Solutions, Inc.
City of Clarksville
City of Franklin
City of Murfreesboro
Greater Nashville Realtors
HDR, Inc.
The TMA Group

EDUCATORS

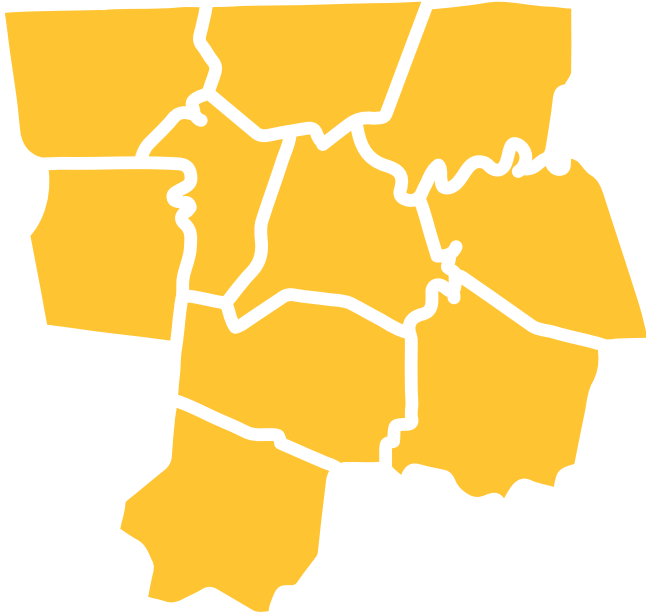
City of Hendersonville
Gresham Smith
Lose Design
Ole South Properties
Ragan-Smith Associates
Wilson County

FRIENDS

Anonymous
Charles Bone
Charles Pirkle
City of Springfield
David Bordenkircher
Emma Hamilton
Joseph Van Deusen
Kathryn Smith
Lose Design
Macdem Teklemariam
Manaen Hall
Mary Vavra
Robertson County Government
Rutherford County, Tennessee
Stephanie Tillman
Town of Thompson Station
Williamson County, Tennessee



OUR MISSION To build support for funding regional transit



OUR VISION

The Transit Alliance is committed to building the necessary support for funding transit because our future is riding on transit. Robust public transit and safe access to service is the key to equalizing access to ensure and maximize our region's resilience and sustainability for the months and years to come. If the region is to thrive in a more equitable way, there have to be short-term public transit service enhancements as well as a long-term drive to ensure dedicated funding for transit.



DEAR PARTNER,

In 2023, we made incredible strides toward our mission of securing dedicated funding for transit. The energy and determination we displayed over the past year are setting the stage for a future where transit is at the heart of our region's growth and development. The theme, "Our Future is Riding on Transit," resonates now more than ever as we continue to push forward.

From organizing a grassroots community listening tour to launching a digital survey, we reached deep into our community to better understand their needs and expectations. Our work culminated in a powerful report to the Mayor of Nashville, offering invaluable insights into public sentiment and the urgency for transit investment. This was not just about conversations but about laying the groundwork for action.

We also commemorated the 5-year anniversary of Nashville's transit referendum, highlighting the importance of continued dedication to securing a sustainable funding source. We reimagined the Transit Citizen Leadership Academy to deepen our outreach and commitment to this cause, educating hundreds of community leaders who stand with us in advocating for better mobility.

I am incredibly proud of how our partnerships and collaborations strengthened in 2023. Together with businesses, organizations, and community leaders, we have built a solid coalition dedicated to seeing transit funding become a reality. The future is bright, and we are ready to keep working—side by side—to ensure that future comes to fruition.

Thank you for being part of this movement. Let's continue to work together to secure a transit system that works for everyone in Middle Tennessee.

Jim Schmitz



*Board Chair,
Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee*



DEAR FRIENDS,

As I reflect on our work throughout 2023, it's clear that the future of Middle Tennessee truly is riding on transit. In 2023, we made strides toward our strategic plan and laid the foundation for a transformational future.

Our efforts to raise awareness and build consensus for transit culminated in Transit Together, our collaborative grassroots listening tour. We engaged with residents across Nashville, ensuring their voices and preferred solutions were recorded. The feedback from our digital survey and public forums offered invaluable insights that we shared directly with the mayor, helping shape the vision for a stronger, more equitable transportation system in Nashville.

The past year also saw a renewal of our passion for education and advocacy. We enhanced the Transit Citizen Leadership Academy, refining and expanding our curriculum to reflect the urgent need for transit funding. By empowering new leaders with the tools and knowledge they need, we are building a stronger, more vocal constituency that is ready to fight for more investments in mobility.

Our work with partners and community leaders amplified our reach. We held a press conference, published op-eds, hosted public discussions, and worked diligently to ensure that the importance of dedicated transit funding remains a central conversation in Nashville and beyond.

As you read through this annual report, I invite you to consider how far we've come—and how much further we will go together. Our future is bright, but only if we continue to invest in it. Join us as we push forward into 2024 with the same determination, passion, and commitment to ensuring that transit remains a cornerstone of our region's progress.

With gratitude and resolve,

Jessica Dauphin

President and CEO

Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee





TRANSIT CITIZEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (TCLA)

Broadening Experiences, Deepening Impact

Building Leaders, Driving Change

2023 was a pivotal year for the Transit Citizen Leadership Academy (TCLA), as we sought not just to educate but to inspire action. With an enhanced program that broadened the learning experience, we empowered our participants to dive deeper into transit and mobility, and ultimately, to volunteer their time and talents to shape the future of transportation in Middle Tennessee.

Councilmember Jacob Kupin of District 19 was part of this year's cohort and honored the class with an official Proclamation from the Metro Nashville Council. The proclamation recognized the Transit Alliance for educating, empowering, and mobilizing leaders through TCLA; building strong stakeholders who are helping to create community-prioritized plans for transit and mobility. It celebrated the class's dedication to making transit a priority across the city and region.

A Dynamic Experience

This year, we intensified the TCLA curriculum, incorporating more immersive field experiences, bringing participants out of the classroom and into the heart of transit and mobility options across the region. These hands-on learning opportunities—exploring transit stations, utilizing existing

public transit modes, and engaging with community transportation hubs—added a new dimension to understanding our regional mobility challenges.

Expert speakers, representing a diverse range of industries, shared invaluable insights with our participants. Their real-world experience provided practical perspectives on transportation policy, funding mechanisms, and community engagement. We also introduced additional networking opportunities, allowing participants to connect more deeply with one another, fostering relationships that will help carry their advocacy work forward beyond the classroom.

Strengthening Collaboration through Group Work

One of the most transformative additions to this year's TCLA was a group work exercise that required participants to collaborate on a group project of the class's choosing. This initiative not only deepened their understanding but also created a sense of shared purpose. The collaborative approach mimics the real-world complexities of addressing transit issues, encouraging creative thinking and cooperative problem-solving. The class opted to split into two groups. Half of the group penned a letter to Metro Council arguing their case for going to the



TAMT President and CEO Jessica Dauphin shares her insights on the future of transit in Nashville during a panel at the Rotary Club of Nashville on July 17, 2023. She was joined by Gail Carr Williams, Chair of WeGo, and Kendra Abkowitz, Director of Sustainability in the Mayor's Office, with moderation by David Plazas.



May 1, 2023, TAMT marked the five-year anniversary of the failed Let's Move Nashville referendum by leading a press conference with support from Nashville nonprofits, urging leaders to prioritize transit and mobility improvements by aiming for a transit funding referendum in November of 2024. The event, attended by then-mayoral candidate Freddie O'Connell, garnered coverage from Middle Tennessee news outlets.

ballot in 2024 to attain dedicated transit funding in order to invest more in mobility. [Letter signed by all participants](#). The other half spent their time together creating two videos. [Video 1](#)—Save money, Eat Brunch! [Video 2](#)—Public Transit Saves Money!

Galvanizing Long-Term Impact through Volunteering

The true testament to the success of TCLA is the lasting impact participants make after completing the program. This year's graduates were especially eager to take their newfound knowledge and apply it through volunteer efforts for the Alliance. Whether serving on

local transit boards, contributing to neighborhood mobility plans, or advocating for policy changes, their involvement is already making a tangible difference.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on the success of 2023, we are reminded that the strength of our region's transit future lies in the hands of these engaged leaders. The TCLA remains a cornerstone of the Transit Alliance's mission, inspiring the next generation of advocates and ensuring that our community's transit goals are realized through collective action.

TRANSIT CITIZEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (TCLA)

*Broadening Experiences,
Deepening Impact*

TCLA CLASS #25, HELD IN 2023





TCLA Class 25 meets at the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center Downtown to ride the bus to Conexion Americas for a class session.



TCLA class participants were welcomed to the Mt. Juliet Chamber of Commerce to hear Transit Oriented Developer Matt Gardner.



David Ewing presents the history of transportation in Nashville to the TCLA class.

REGIONAL TRANSIT AGENCIES



Clarksville Transit Systems **931-553-2470**

Clarksville Transit plans, implements, maintains, and manages a public transportation system that allows for maximum mobility for the community with an emphasis on safety, quality, and efficiency. All routes are planned for maximum mobility efficiency and transfer reliability. There are additional services like paratransit and on-demand response areas available.



Franklin Transit **615-628-0260 or 615-628-0263**

Franklin Transit Authority is managed by the Transportation Management Association (TMA) Group. The TMA Group is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that was established in 1988 as a public-private partnership of business, government, and community leaders.

TMA supports a regional transportation system that provides a variety of accessible, affordable, reliable, and interconnected transportation choices that are both healthy for the environment and for the public. TMA's goal is for everyone in every community and in every stage of life, to have affordable and convenient travel options available to them.

TMA manages a variety of mobility, transit and transportation demand management solutions within the Middle Tennessee region.



Mid-Cumberland Human Resources Agency (MCHRA) **1-800-945-4125**

The rural transportation system for the Mid-Cumberland Region, or Middle Tennessee. MCHRA provides routine service to the public, with particular care for seniors and persons with special needs. MCHRA is a curb-to-curb rural transportation system with flexible schedules to meet the needs of its passengers. Riders are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to medical appointments. While advanced notice is requested, it is not required.



Mule Town Trolley **931-379-2929**

The Mule Town Trolley is a deviated fixed-route service that is part of the SCTDD Public Transportation Program. The trolley system, which serves Maury County, was established in 2013 with a fleet of only two trolleys. In six years, the trolley service has grown substantially due to an increase in ridership. The trolley program has expanded to 12 vehicles and 14 CDL license drivers, transporting over 3,000 commuters a month.



Murfreesboro Transit **615-217-6837**

The City of Murfreesboro Transportation Department is responsible for the administration and operation of public transportation service (Murfreesboro Transit) within the City of Murfreesboro. It also works with and/or assists other regional providers with mobility issues.



WeGo Public Transit **615-862-5950**

We are WeGo. It's not just our name. It's what we do. That forward-thinking movement is extended and enriched by branding that looks and feels the same no matter where it lives in our communities.

The WeGo brand stands for a collaborative commitment to exceptional service, friendliness, integrity and honesty as we connect riders to their community and one another.

We strive to connect people to their lives and community one ride at a time. A community belongs to everyone. So do we.

We take service to heart. Whether you're traveling every day or just here and there, we're here to help by creating positive impressions as we get you where you need to go. We even hope to inspire some joy along the way. We aim to offer support and services that make sense and make your life a little easier.

We're always looking for ways to improve our service by making it more reliable, secure, and connected. Because connecting you to life and community isn't just what we do, it's what makes us who we are.



TRANSIT TOGETHER

A Grassroots Initiative for Regional Impact



Bringing Voices to the Forefront

In 2023, the Transit Alliance launched **Transit Together**, a grassroots outreach effort in partnership with the Network for Sustainable Solutions (NSS), aimed at gathering community-driven insights on transit and mobility challenges in Nashville. Over the course of six months, we held **community listening sessions** that brought together neighbors, advocates, and leaders to discuss mobility concerns, core values, and potential solutions. This initiative provided a platform for residents to directly shape the future of transportation.

Reaching Hundreds, Listening to Thousands

The numbers speak for themselves. **More than 1,100 Nashville residents** participated either in person or via our digital survey. These voices, representing a cross-section of our city, shared what matters most to them when it comes to transit—affordable options, reliable services, and equitable access across all neighborhoods. Their feedback has been instrumental in our ability to ensure that the **Choose How You**

Move transportation improvement plan reflects the true priorities of the community.

Transit Together Results - Core Values That Drive Mobility

During our Transit Together outreach, we asked participants to share the values that matter most when thinking about transit and mobility. Across all communities, the top core values were clear:

- **Sustainability** – Building a transportation system that protects the environment and uses resources efficiently.
- **Community** – Strengthening connections between neighborhoods and ensuring all residents feel included.
- **Balance** – Creating a system that works for everyone, balancing the needs of drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.
- **Accountability** – Ensuring transparency in decision-making and holding transit agencies accountable for results.
- **Equity and Inclusion** – Prioritizing fairness, ensuring access for all regardless of income, location, or background.

These core values shaped the conversations and pointed to a strong desire for a transit system that benefits the environment, fosters a sense of community, and promotes fairness.



Community members discuss mobility challenges they face every day and their preferred solutions.

Key Mobility Challenges Identified

When it came to the most pressing **mobility challenges**, several key themes emerged:

- **Walkability** – The need for safer and more accessible pedestrian pathways.
- **Parking and a Car-Dominated City** – Frustration with the lack of alternatives to driving and the overwhelming presence of cars in Nashville.
- **Safety** – Concerns about the safety of all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.
- **Regional Connectivity** – The challenge of connecting people across city and county lines with reliable transit options.
- **Multimodal Connectivity** – The need for better integration between different transportation modes, including buses, bikes, and scooters.
- **Bus Routes** – The need for more efficient, frequent, and connected bus services.



Notably, **walkability**, a **parking and car-dominated city**, and **safety** were among the top four challenges mentioned across all household income ranges—showing that these are universal concerns for Nashville residents.

Community-Driven Solutions

In response to these challenges, we asked residents to prioritize **transportation solutions**. The top three most prioritized solutions were:

1. **Advanced Transit** – Strong support for higher-capacity transit options such as **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** or light rail.
2. **Bus Connectivity and Frequency** – A call for more frequent buses that connect people reliably across the city.
3. **Infrastructure and Safety** – Investment in safer streets and sidewalks to protect all users, especially in areas where walking is dangerous.

Furthermore, **transit priority corridors**—which would dedicate specific lanes or infrastructure to

prioritize transit vehicles—were consistently ranked in the **top four solutions** across all household income ranges.

Investments for the Future

When asked about the most important areas for transit and mobility investment, the top solutions were clear:

- **Regional Transit Solutions** – Expanding connectivity beyond Nashville to the wider Middle Tennessee region.
- **Transit-Oriented Development** – Encouraging development that supports and enhances access to transit.
- **Transit Priority Corridors** – Focusing investments on areas where transit can move quickly and efficiently.
- **Traffic Calming** – Implementing measures to slow down traffic and improve safety for all road users.

These insights underscore the community's desire for **transformative investments** that prioritize efficient and sustainable transportation modes, better connect the region, and make streets safer for everyone.

A Direct Path to Leadership

We didn't just collect these insights; we took them straight to the decision-makers. **WeGo**, **NDOT**, and the **Mayor's Office** all received the findings from **Transit Together**, and it's clear: **Our voices were heard**. The alignment between the community's feedback and the **Choose How You Move** plan demonstrates how critical this input has been in shaping policy and



Community members gather to discuss mobility challenges and their preferred solutions at Transit Together.

priorities for the city's transit future.

A Model for Regional Action

While Transit Together began with a focus on Nashville, the potential for regional impact is undeniable. The mobility challenges we're tackling—growing congestion, lack of connectivity, and the need for sustainable options—are felt across Middle Tennessee. As we face the realities of growth and development, especially since the failure of the **Let's Move Nashville** referendum over five years ago, the urgency has only intensified. **Communities across the region need to speak up now**, and the Transit Alliance is ready to listen.

Facing Middle Tennessee's New Mobility Challenges

Middle Tennessee is confronting mounting mobility issues, and **Transit Together** has proven that listening directly to communities is the key to effective solutions. We are empowering residents to voice their concerns and aspirations for a more connected future. This collaboration with NSS and other local organizations has strengthened our belief that **residents must play an active role** in shaping transit solutions.

The Future Is Driven by Community

At its heart, **Transit Together** is about **collective action**. It's about empowering neighbors to drive the conversation on mobility and ensuring that transit solutions reflect **their values and needs**. The discussions we facilitated will continue to serve as a guide for local transit planning and policy development—not just in Nashville, but for the entire region. As we move forward, **Middle Tennessee's mobility future** is in the hands of those who live it every day, and their voices will continue to guide the Transit Alliance's efforts to improve access, equity, and sustainability.

Policy and Plans: Championing Downtown Mobility

In 2023, the Transit Alliance actively participated in the transformative Connect Downtown study, a pivotal effort aimed at tackling traffic congestion and improving mobility in the heart of Nashville. This comprehensive plan is a collaboration between **NDOT**, **WeGo Public Transit**, the **Nashville Downtown Partnership**, and **TDOT**, each committed to reshaping how we navigate the downtown core. The release of the Draft Action Plan at the end of the year marks an exciting step toward a more efficient, connected downtown experience. With your support, we can ensure these changes positively impact both residents and visitors alike. [Learn more about the project.](#)

Advocacy: Spotlighting the Need for Transit Funding

On May 1, 2023, the Transit Alliance took center stage to commemorate

a critical moment in Nashville's transit history—the 5-year anniversary of the failed **Let's Move Nashville** referendum. Joined by fellow nonprofits, we hosted a press conference that underscored the need for renewed leadership and investment in public transit. By amplifying diverse community voices, we made it clear: equitable mobility solutions are essential for Nashville's future. Now is the time to revisit transit funding with bold, collaborative action. [Read more about our call for change from WKRN.](#) And from [WSMV.](#)

Point of Departure: Navigating Nashville as a College Commuter

In partnership with the **Tennessee College Access and Success Network**, the Transit Alliance contributed to the groundbreaking **Point of Departure** report, a vital look at the intersection of education and transit. Funded by JPMorgan Chase's New Skills Ready initiative, the report examines the challenges Nashville's college commuters face when accessing higher education through public transit. As part of a panel discussion, our President and CEO highlighted the urgent need to prioritize mobility for students—a key component of expanding educational access across the city. Together, we're driving solutions that help students succeed, one ride at a time. [Read the report.](#)

Get Involved

We invite everyone to be a part of this movement. This is your chance to influence how we tackle the region's mobility challenges and create a transit system that truly serves all.

FOCUSING

on improving public transit and other multi-modal options helps us better preserve our green spaces.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Strategic Investments for Sustainable Regional Impact

2023 was a pivotal year for the Transit Alliance. Using our cash reserves strategically, we invested deeply in programs and outreach that have strengthened our mission to secure dedicated transit funding for Middle Tennessee. Our deliberate focus on demonstrating the value of our work over fundraising has positioned us as a vital leader in the region's mobility transformation.

Key achievements in 2023 include:



Hiring staff to help expand capacity.



Enhanced grassroots outreach to build public and stakeholder support.



Expansion and improvement of our Transit Citizen Leadership Academy (TCLA) program are now more impactful than ever.

While these achievements required greater spending than revenues, our strategies have proven effective. This year marked a turning point, and we are now focusing on strengthening financial support and partnerships to ensure the momentum continues. We know these strategies worked because 2024 was our most successful year--but that report will come out next year!

2023 Financial Overview: Investing in Our Mission

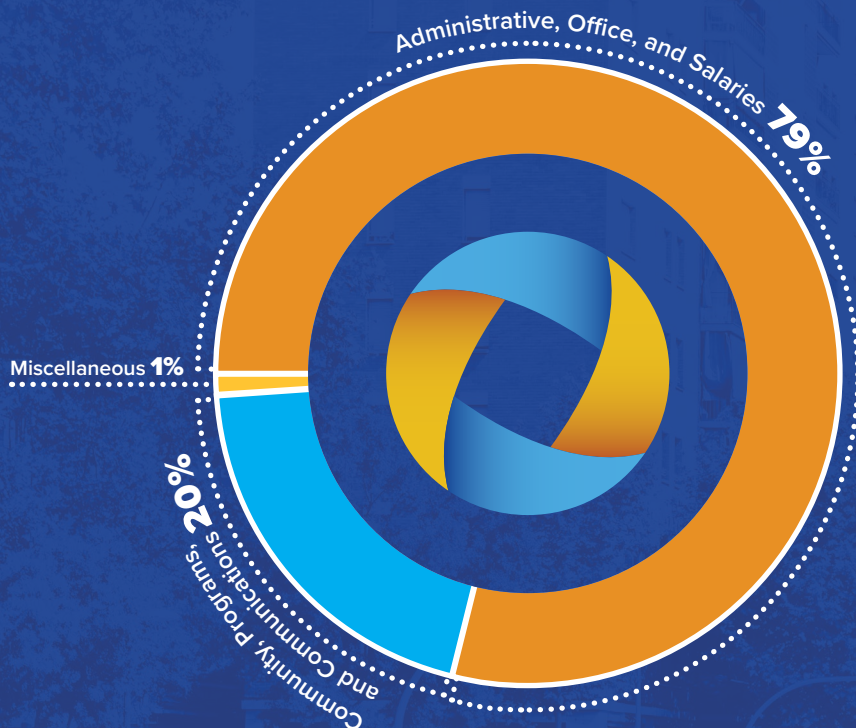
In 2023, we focused on driving transformative impact in Middle Tennessee's transit landscape. This required significant

investment in our programs, grassroots outreach, and operational capacity, strategically supported by our cash reserves.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Transit Alliance End of Year 2023



Total Revenue
\$90,802

Total Expense
\$125,940

Strategic Investments

Over 79% of expenses supported salaries and operational infrastructure, ensuring the capacity needed to deliver on our mission.

More than \$26,000 was directly allocated to programs and events, enabling initiatives such as the expanded TCLA program and the new grassroots outreach.

OUR STAFF



Jessica Dauphin
President & CEO



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ALLIANCE**
OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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