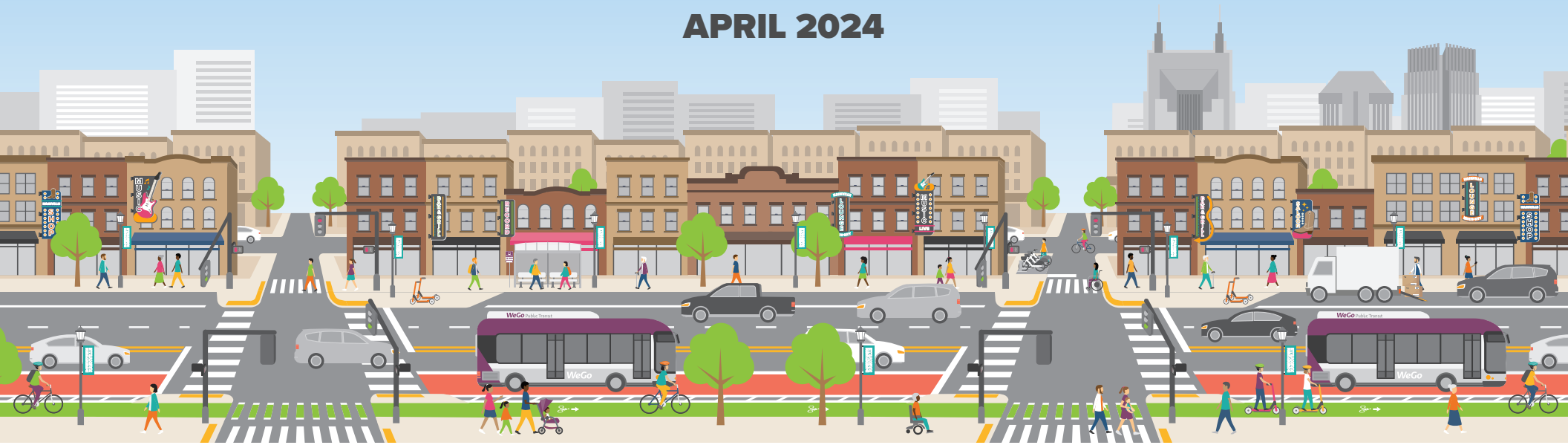


CONNECT DOWNTOWN

Action Plan

APRIL 2024



NDOT

WeGo
Public Transit

TN **TDOT**
Department of
Transportation

**NASHVILLE
DOWNTOWN
PARTNERSHIP**





Executive Summary

Connect Downtown is a 10-year Action Plan to transform mobility for people throughout Middle Tennessee, improving safety, expanding travel options, and supporting Nashville’s climate goals.

Our city and region are booming. In fact, according to a recent report by the Center City District in Philadelphia, Downtown Nashville has experienced the most rapid and strongest urban post-pandemic recovery in the U.S. While that’s great news for our economy, our transportation system just isn’t keeping pace.

Today, people driving and taking the bus Downtown spend more time in congestion, and fewer people are biking and walking than 10 years ago. There’s a special event snarling traffic more often than not, and construction detours make it hard to walk and bike safely in parts of Downtown. Most importantly, we have too few high-quality multimodal options, which means that Nashvillians are often forced to drive.

To respond to these challenges, the Connect Downtown Action Plan establishes a Downtown transportation system that improves safety and accessibility for everyone, balances the needs of all travelers and modes, and reduces traffic congestion.

An outgrowth of many past planning efforts, Connect Downtown was led by the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure (NDOT), in partnership with WeGo Public Transit, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), and the Nashville Downtown Partnership.

The Action Plan been shaped by input from thousands of residents and key Downtown stakeholders, as well as a Stakeholder Task Force and Technical Advisory Committee. More than two years of engagement, technical analysis, and evaluation informed the Connect Downtown recommendations, which address the challenges shown to the right.



People are stuck in traffic.



Travel options don't match desires.



Transit is slow and unreliable.



Loading space is limited.



Nashville is popular.



Streets are unsafe.

Goals of Connect Downtown



Safe and Comfortable



Connected and Convenient



Equitable and Accessible



Sustainable and Resilient



Vibrant and Inviting



Balanced and Reliable

What are Connect Downtown's five big moves?

Addressing the mobility challenges facing Downtown Nashville requires a combination of projects, programs, and policies that serve people using all forms of transportation.

Doing just one thing—or focusing on just one mode of travel—won't have the kind of impact that's needed. Therefore, Connect Downtown's recommendations work as a system of investments that are organized into five big moves.



BIG MOVE 1

Manage Congestion

Upgrade signals, improve traffic operations, and better manage events to keep people moving and improve system resiliency.



BIG MOVE 2

Improve Safety

Advance Vision Zero projects and programs to make Downtown's streets safer for people, especially Downtown's most vulnerable travelers.



BIG MOVE 3

Move More People

Prioritize buses on key corridors and increase the amount of service to provide faster and more reliable trips throughout the region.



BIG MOVE 4

Create Complete Networks

Develop safe, separated, and connected walking, rolling, biking, and scooting facilities to help people of all ages and abilities get into and around Downtown.



BIG MOVE 5

Maximize the Curb

Flex the uses of the curb throughout the day for deliveries, service vehicles, and passenger pick-up and drop-off, including charter buses, to support local businesses, venues, museums, and residents.

Together, these projects and strategies will make travel more reliable, more comfortable, faster, and safer for thousands of Nashvillians. For example, the new Traffic Management Center will help NDOT respond to congestion in real time, clearing traffic more quickly during special events, emergencies, and peak travel periods. And the transit priority corridors will move nearly 50,000 people each day, saving hours a month for bus riders and car drivers!

From new signals to safety projects to more frequent bus service to mobility lanes to flexible curb regulations, Connect Downtown includes projects and programs that support the entire Middle Tennessee region.

This map gives an overview of the major capital projects included in Connect Downtown, and there are many complementary strategies described in the Action Plan. The Connect Downtown projects also amplify other NDOT, WeGo, and TDOT priorities. Building on Metro’s implementation of Vision Zero and WalknBike and WeGo’s investments in nMotion and the Better Bus Plan, Connect Downtown includes projects that make regional investments work better.

TRANSIT PRIORITY CORRIDORS

Connect Downtown recommends **three Transit Priority Corridors (TPCs)** to link WeGo Central with the new SoBro and East Bank Mobility Centers and provide bus service every 3 to 5 minutes:

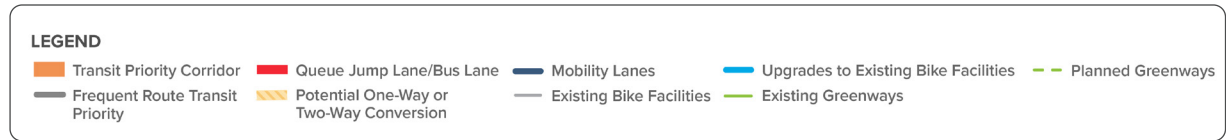
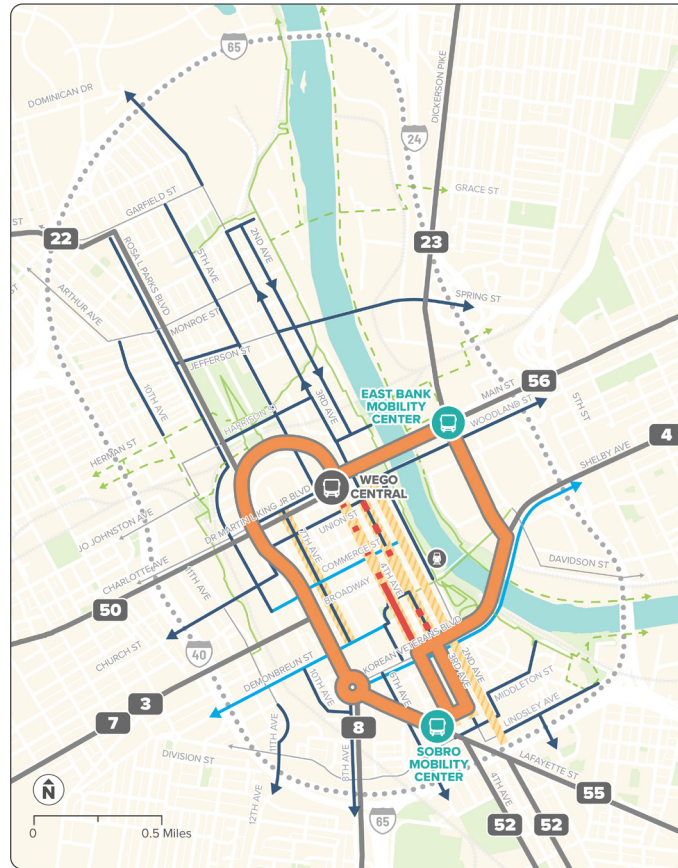
- Westside TPC
- James Robertson TPC
- East Bank TPC

PRIORITY LOADING AREAS

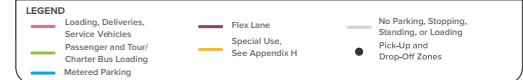
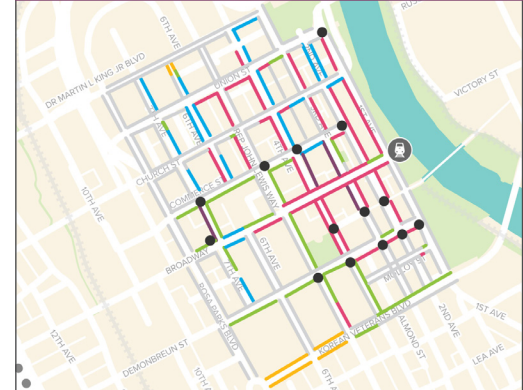
To ensure that the curb provides the most value for the most people—and that the uses of the curb are prioritized for activities that can’t be moved elsewhere—Connect Downtown recommends a focus on **flexible uses and pilot programs that support additional space for loading and deliveries.**

MOBILITY LANES

Downtown Nashville’s future network of mobility lanes **adds new, safe facilities, upgrades select bike lanes, and links to the existing and planned Greenways** system. Projects include the 1st Ave, 3rd Ave, and 7th Ave mobility lanes, as well as a Church St / Union St / Woodland Bridge connector.



FLEXIBLE CURB USES (4 AM – 4 PM)

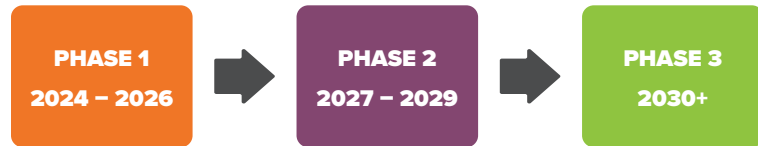


TECHNOLOGY & DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Connect Downtown recommends installing new **adaptive signal technology**, giving NDOT the ability to better manage traffic. Along with new **transportation demand management and event management strategies**, Downtown’s streets will move more people.

Our Big Moves include dozens of projects and strategies, and they can't all be built at once. The good news is that there's a lot of "low-hanging fruit" to get us started—and those projects will make an immediate difference for our region. Doing nothing simply isn't an option, and inaction has its own costs.

Connect Downtown's projects and programs will be delivered in three phases. These phases support rapid progress while balancing fiscal realities and the partners' capacity, but they are not intended to be rigid. After all, implementation doesn't happen overnight; more engagement is needed to work through the design details for most recommended projects.



Nashville will require a significant increase in transportation funding to fully implement Connect Downtown and support our growing city and region.

The projects, programs, and new transit services included in this Action Plan will be implemented through a combination of existing local funds, competitive grant funds, developer contributions, and future partnerships.

Connect Downtown is the first step in developing a mobility system that meets Nashville's current and future needs. We can keep our economy thriving, save lives, reduce air pollution, and create a more equitable region by making meaningful and sustainable investments in transportation infrastructure and programs.

What will Connect Downtown do for you?



Investments in traffic management and "smart" signals will keep drivers moving, support our first responders, make trips more reliable, and improve safety.

By managing congestion Downtown, people will be able to get into, out of, and through Downtown with fewer hassles, including after events and in emergencies.



A complete and connected network of mobility lanes will provide safe, separated facilities for people biking and scooting.

Giving people options to get around Downtown and connect to surrounding neighborhoods means fewer cars on the road.



New transit lanes and more frequent service will make bus trips faster, saving time for the tens of thousands of regional riders who use WeGo's services today.

Giving priority to buses and providing more frequent service for more hours of the day will encourage many more people to take transit, freeing space on the road for people who need to drive and for our first responders.



Additional space for deliveries and loading zones will make it easier to do business in Downtown, supporting both goods distributors and people taking a taxi to a show.

Curb uses that change by time of day will ensure that a musician coming Downtown to play a show has access to a parking space at night, and a delivery driver has room to unload in the early morning.

What's in it for me?

The investments identified in this action plan are the first steps NDOT, WeGo, and TDOT should take in the next decade to keep Downtown, our city, and our region moving.

We know that doing nothing isn't an option—traffic will just keep getting worse and the cost of inaction is too high. We can keep our economy thriving, save lives, reduce air pollution, and create a more equitable region by making meaningful and sustainable investments in mobility infrastructure and programs.

When we've implemented Connect Downtown, these are the stories we'll hear.



Sam loves the Westside Transit Priority Corridor and expanded late-night bus service.

He lives in North Nashville and doesn't have a car, so Sam relies on WeGo to get to work. He was just able to accept a nighttime restaurant job in the Gulch since he can now get home quickly on the bus when his shift ends.





Zaniyah is a 9th grader at Hume Fogg, and she's got a lot more independence now that there are mobility lanes connecting her from the East Bank to school.

She rides over the Woodland Bridge and takes the protected lane on Union St before turning south onto the 7th Ave mobility lane.



Beth drives for a rideshare company and used to dread trying to find her passengers near Broadway.

The new dedicated pick-up and drop-off spaces are making Beth's trips easier and faster—she knows right where to go and so do the people who are trying to find their ride.



Roberto works in the Pinnacle Building and was always trying to beat the clock to pick up his kids at daycare in Nolensville.

Now that 2nd Ave has been converted to a two-way street, Roberto can leave the garage on 2nd and head straight out of town, taking advantage of the new adaptive signals to keep moving.



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