Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2024-369, **Version:** 1

A resolution expressing the endorsement of the Metropolitan Council for the Connect Downtown Action Plan.

WHEREAS, due to population growth in Nashville between 2013 and 2023, including a 365% increase in the downtown residential population, downtown Nashville is experiencing transportation challenges including traffic congestion, limited travel options, slow and unreliable transit service, limited loading space, special event closures, disconnected sidewalks and bike lanes, and High Injury Corridors; and,

WHEREAS, traffic modeling has clearly shown that doing nothing to address these transportation challenges is not an option; and,

WHEREAS, to address these transportation challenges, the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure (NDOT) has been leading a joint project in partnership with WeGo Public Transit (WeGo), the State of Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), and the Nashville Downtown Partnership (NDP) to improve mobility and improve traffic congestion in the downtown core ("Connect Downtown") for the past two years; and,

WHEREAS, the goals of Connect Downtown are the following:

- **Safe and Comfortable:** Create transportation networks that enhance the quality of life for all Nashvillians, especially the city's most vulnerable travelers;
- **Connected and Convenient:** Develop an integrated mobility system that seamlessly and efficiently connects downtown Nashville with easy-to-use and reliable travel options;
- **Equitable and Accessible:** Ensure equal access to mobility options that meet the needs of everyone traveling to, through, and around downtown Nashville;
- **Sustainable and Resilient:** Address the climate crisis to create a more resilient downtown Nashville and Middle Tennessee region;
- **Vibrant and Inviting:** Maintain a prosperous downtown by providing a transportation system that makes it easier to do business and encourages people to spend time here;
- **Balanced and Reliable:** Expand and enhance mobility choices to manage traffic congestion and create a more predictable transportation system in downtown Nashville; and,

WHEREAS, through Connect Downtown, NDOT and its partners have examined the needs that downtown's street networks must serve and analyzed options to better manage downtown's increasing congestion through improvements in traffic operations, curbside access, transit connectivity, and pedestrian and bicyclist safety; and,

WHEREAS, Connect Downtown has relied upon the value of existing studies, plans and programs from NDOT, TDOT, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, and others to leverage the value of previous initiatives, such as:

- NashvilleNext General Plan, which is inclusive of Access 2040 and Major and Collector Street Plan,

Downtown Community Plan and Midtown Study

- Downtown Code
- Edgehill Community Planning Study
- Vision Zero Action and Implementation Plans
- Metro Nashville Transportation Plan
- 2022 WalknBike Plan
- Imagine East Bank (including follow up planning and design work)
- 2nd Avenue Community Planning Study and Second Avenue Rebuild
- Pie Town Mobility Study
- SoBro Master Plan
- nMotion and Better Bus, among others; and,

WHEREAS, the Connect Downtown project team engaged thousands of Nashvillians through four online surveys, 5,700 survey responses, 25 open houses and listening sessions, 14 festivals and pop-up events, four focus groups, seven Stakeholder Task Force and Technical Advisory Committee meetings, 80+ newsletters, 75 targeted stakeholder meetings, and 95,000+ social media impressions on the draft Action Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Connect Downtown project has been completed; and,

WHEREAS, as a result of the Connect Downtown project, NDOT and its partners have devised the Connect Downtown Action Plan ("the Action Plan"), attached hereto as Exhibit A, which sets forth recommendations for a downtown transportation system that improves safety and accessibility for everyone, balances the needs of all travelers and modes, and reduces congestion; and,

WHEREAS, the Action Plan organizes dozens of project, program, and policy recommendations into five "big moves":

- **Mange Congestion:** Upgrade signals, improve traffic operations, and better manage events to keep people moving and improve system resiliency;
- **Improve Safety:** Advance Vision Zero projects and programs to make downtown's streets safer for people, especially downtown's most vulnerable travelers;
- **Move More People:** Prioritize buses on key corridors and increase the amount of service to provide faster and more reliable trips throughout the region;
- **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;
- **Maximize the Curb:** Flex the uses of the curb throughout the day for deliveries, service vehicles, and passenger pick-up and drop-off to support local businesses and residents; and,

WHEREAS, the Action Plan's signature projects include adaptive signal technology, transit priority corridors, transit and mobility centers in SoBro and on the East Bank, additional transit service throughout the region, expanded and connected lanes for bikes and scooters, intersection safety improvements, flexible curb regulations and innovative loading zone pilot projects, and a robust transportation demand management

program; and,

WHEREAS, the Action Plan recommendations will be implemented in three phases, with a focus on immediately implementing technology-focused projects (e.g., new signals), curb management activities (e.g., Smart Loading Zone Pilot Program), and quick-build projects (e.g. mobility lanes), while, at the same time, beginning engineering studies and preliminary design for more complex projects; and,

WHEREAS, the Action Plan will afford the Metropolitan Government a downtown system-level, performance-driven approach to transportation infrastructure and will maximize competitiveness for grant opportunities that would leverage and enhance local funding over the life of the Action Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Action Plan projects will each be advanced with individual funding strategies while more comprehensive dedicated funding possibilities are reserved for possible future consideration; and,

WHEREAS, projects described in the Action Plan that have not been previously adopted as part of the Capital Improvements Budget (CIB) will either be included in forthcoming CIBs or added to the current or to future CIBs by amendment before they are constructed, pursuant to applicable laws and requirements; and,

WHEREAS, the Action Plan is a living document that requires continuous evaluation and updates as projects are implemented, downtown Nashville continues to evolve, and transportation issues arise; and,

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council believes that both Connect Downtown and the Action Plan will provide useful direction for transportation-related projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as endorsing the Connect Downtown Action Plan, attached as Exhibit A, hereto.

Section 2. This resolution is not a request or authorization to fund or finance any portion of the Connect Downtown Action Plan and any such request must be addressed by future legislation.

Section 3. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.