

Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee

Application: Davidson County FY2020 Direct Appropriation Funding

1. What services does your organization provide to the residents of Davidson County?

The Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee's mission is to build support for funding regional transit. The Transit Alliance works with contributors, communities, and regional leaders to educate, empower, and mobilize constituencies.

Transit Citizen Leadership Academy (TCLA) is the primary program for empowering communities through education. TCLA is a six-session, 30-hour program designed to equip participants with the tools to lead conversations about the value of multimodal transit in the Middle Tennessee region. Sessions explore funding for projects, current reality, utilizing technology and incentives, transportation demand management (TDM), and more. Speakers are experts and industry professionals from Federal Highway Administration, TN Department of Transportation, Vanderbilt University, Greater Nashville Regional Council, and elected leaders, like Mayor Randall Hutto.

The Transit Alliance traditionally hosts three TCLA per calendar year. The Transit Alliance is a regional organization and typically we strive to fill each Academy with representatives from all 10 Middle Tennessee counties. To-date, we have 356 regional alumni.

2. How many residents are you currently serving and how do they benefit?

The Transit Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit serving 1.8 million residents of the Middle Tennessee region, including the following counties: Cheatham, Dickson, Davidson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson.

Through the TCLA and various other community engagements, the Transit Alliance has reached thousands of regional residents. More specifically, of the 356-total regional TCLA alumni, 135 are Davidson County residents. In addition, we have a membership list of over 4,000; over one thousand followers on Facebook and over 1,300 on Twitter.

These alumni, members, and social media followers get timely and relevant transportation-related updates on WeGo Public Transit and RTA news, road/sidewalk/transit projects, economic development in the region, trends in transit and research studies from reputable sources nationally, and more. They receive monthly email updates, quarterly regional e-newsletter updates, and instant social media notification for things like WeGo Public Transit detours.

3. How much funding are you requesting from Metro?

\$10,000

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4. If funding is awarded, how many additional residents will be served and how will they benefit?

The Transit Alliance proposes a TCLA for the Fall of 2019 with at least 25-30 participating Davidson County residents and elected/appointed officials. Class participants are empowered with facts regarding the value a multimodal transit system brings to Nashville and the region.

Given an individual's sphere of influence, the multiplier effect could be exponential. At minimum, each of the 30 participants influence 10 people within their network, becoming 300 people. Then, those 300 people each influence 10 people, becoming 3,000. This community empowerment model has the ability to change the dialogue regarding public transit in their respective communities.

5. In addition to serving more residents, are there other community benefits Metro funding would help you achieve?

Metro funding would help the Transit Alliance empower communities in the county to continue to learn and discuss the value of multimodal transit. It would drive community engagement and input. Through education programs like the TCLA, community empowerment is achieved.

6. How would you use this funding to help create a more equitable Nashville, where all residents have an opportunity to participate in the city's success?

Knowledge is power. Bringing the facts to Davidson County residents and elected/appointed officials will facilitate deeper, more meaningful, and productive transit conversations and policies.

Transportation is key to education attainment, health outcomes, community equity, and more. Research shows that a robust and well-connected public transit system with frequent and rapid transit service helps to support more equitable communities.

With the cost of living inside the city rising, many long-time residents are feeling the pinch of being cost-burdened—spending 50% or more of household income on housing and transportation costs. When polled, four of ten households admitted having difficulty 'covering monthly expenses.' (*Nashville Region's 2018 Vital Signs*. Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. www.nashvillechamber.com/vitalsigns). With the cost of owning and maintaining a personal vehicle costing anywhere from \$9,000 to \$12,000, it's no surprise transportation rivals housing in percentage of annual income (25% vs. 28%, respectively).

Public transit that includes sidewalks, clearly marked pedestrian and bikeways, and a well-designed and thoughtfully connected Greenway system can help. It is critical to the growing city to dismantle the 'Nashville is a one-person, one-car town' mentality in favor of a more nuanced understanding of what public transit is and can do for Nashville.

Educating Nashville communities about the value of multimodal transit is key to ensuring our residents are able to take part in the city's success, to sustain our economic growth, to preserve our natural and green spaces, and to support more positive environmental impacts.