

## Appendix B: Public Input on MTA Priorities

The Nashville Strategic Master Plan process has been through three sets of public meetings and a daylong stakeholder meeting which have helped to establish priorities for the MTA for its budgeting process. In general, what was heard from the public is that they want more service—more frequent buses to eliminate overcrowding and to reduce waits, more service in the evenings and weekends and service to areas that don't have service. They want service to be faster by eliminating stops or providing cross-town service. And non-riders, in particular, want more information about service. Following is some of the information collected at the public meetings.

### November 2008 Public Meetings

Five public meetings were held over three days in November 2008 to gain initial input from the public regarding Nashville MTA's Strategic Master Plan. Seventy-six people attended the meetings. Following is the meeting schedule and locations:

- Monday, Nov. 17, 2008 from 4 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the Madison Library, 610 Gallatin Road
- Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008 from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. at Music City Central Community Meeting Room, 400 Charlotte Ave.
- Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Easley Community Center (formerly Rose Community Center) at 1000 Edgehill Ave.
- Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2008 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Bordeaux Library, 4000 Clarksville Pike
- Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2008 from 4 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at University School of Nashville, 2000 Edgehill Ave.

Following are the top issues that emerged from those meetings:

- Hub and spoke system inefficient for riders; crosstown routes needed; park and rides needed. "I can't ride for an hour for a 12-minute drive."
- More express service needed.
- More frequency needed.
- Many buses are too crowded
- Later service hours needed
- Dedicated funding needed
- Need better bus and rail coordination (local, regional, statewide)
- Organize routes around work, medical, shopping. Figure out a way for grocery and other shoppers to more efficiently get their purchases home.
- Need more information and technology solutions, i.e., Google maps, version of MTA website for cell phones, real time info on buses, in shelters, etc.
- Improved safety on student routes
- More sidewalks needed everywhere
- Teach people how to ride the bus. This is a barrier.
- Green solutions desired and valued.
- Attract the less frequent rider.

Questionnaires were distributed at the November 2008 public meetings: Respondents were asked to provide ratings from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important) for the following improvements. There were 76 attendees in all, and 55 provided answers to the questionnaire. As can be seen service frequency was the most important improvement followed by a near tie for better information, on-time performance and making service faster. Note the lowest score for eliminating transfers—which may be a sign of the improvement represented by Music City Central Station.

Improvement	Number of Respondents Rating 4 or 5	Total of All Ratings Weighted by Score
Service frequency	49	242
More info at stops	39	219
On-time performance	41	217
Make service faster	39	217
Connect downtown with major employer	34	207
More shelters	35	206
Service to new neighborhoods	35	201
Eliminate transfers	27	185

At the November public meeting held at the University School some participants came with a web survey they had taken of 165 people. Most of those answering were not transit riders. Of those responding, 37 or 22% regularly used the bus. These folks indicated unfamiliarity with routes and schedules in addition to other issues.

Reasons for Not Taking Transit or Problems if Do	Percent Indicating Problem	Number
Routes are inconvenient.	53.8%	84
It's easier to just drive.	53.2%	83
I'm unfamiliar with the routes and schedules.	45.5%	71
Travel by bus takes too long.	44.2%	69
Buses run at inconvenient times.	32.1%	50
It's hard to plan a multi-stop trip.	31.4%	49
Buses don't regularly service the area I live or work.	28.8%	45
Buses don't regularly service the areas I want to get to.	22.4%	35
There's a lack of good bus shelters.	17.3%	27
Buses are not reliable.	14.7%	23
I'm scared of the bus.	8.3%	13
I don't really have any problems with the bus	3.8%	6

**December 16 Stakeholder Meeting:**

After a discussion of what were the priorities for MTA, 24 stakeholders voted with colored dots to indicate what was most important to them (red was most important, green next, blue next and yellow least). The absolute number of votes is indicated in the first column, whereas the weighted votes are indicated in the second column.

Item	Votes	Weighted Votes.
Increase frequency	12	42
Downtown Circulator	13	30
Cross-town routes	8	24
Attracting choice riders	8	21
Public education and marketing	6	17
MTA part of planning process	5	15
Reliability of service	6	14
Provide service to areas with no other transportation	6	12
Improve customer information technology	5	11
Feeder service	3	10

## January 2009 Public Meetings

A second round of public meetings to gain public input on the Nashville MTA Strategic Master Plan was held January 20 through January 22, 2009. Five meetings over three days were held throughout Nashville, and attracted 43 attendees. Following is the meeting schedule and locations:

- Tuesday, January 20, 2009 from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Antioch Community Center, 5023 Blue Hole Rd.
- Tuesday, January 20, 2009 from 4 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the East Library, 206 Gallatin Rd.
- Wednesday, January 21, 2009 from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m., Music City Central Community Meeting Room, 400 Charlotte Ave.
- Wednesday, January 21, 2009 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., Looby Library, 2301 MetroCenter Blvd.; and
- Thursday, January 22, 2009 from 4 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., University School of Nashville, 2000 Edgehill Ave

The meeting format was open house and information station-style with multiple stations staffed by content experts and a note-taker with graphic boards available illustrating key points and providing a focus for discussion. Five hundred and nineteen attendee comments were documented from the attendees. In general, the attendees liked the opportunities shown including increased frequency on particular routes, Gallatin BRT, downtown circulator and mini-hub concept.

Participants were asked to allocate 100 points between different improvements the MTA could make to indicate their preferences. Following are the results:

Improvement	Average Points
More buses/ more often (increase frequency of buses on key routes)	28
Faster transit trips (fewer bus stops, traffic signal priority, avoid going downtown to transfer)	24
Serve new areas (connect to areas that do not have service today)	22
Easier to use (signage, better access to information, simpler schedules)	12
Improve the image of transit (marketing, "how to Ride" training, nicer buses, nicer shelters & benches at stops)	14
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>

Participants were also presented with specific ideas for improving MTA service and asked to rate these ideas on a 1 to 5 scale. These ratings did not show great distinctions among the proposed services, but BRT was rated the highest. Following are the ratings:

Improvement	Average Points
BRT	4.5
Mini-Hubs	4.3
More frequent service on specific routes	4.3
Downtown Circulator	4.1

### July 2009 Public Meetings

A final round of public meetings to gain public input on the Nashville MTA Strategic Master Plan was held July 28 through July 30, 2009. Four meetings over three days were held throughout Nashville, and attracted 80 attendees. Following is the meeting schedule and locations: The meeting format was presentation-style followed by questions and answers. Graphic boards were available illustrating key points and providing a focus for discussion before and after the presentation.

- Tuesday, July 28, 2009 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the North Library, 1001 Monroe St.
- Wednesday, July 29, 2009 from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at Music City Central Community Meeting Room, 400 Charlotte Ave.
- Wednesday, July 29, 2009 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the Southeast Library at 2325 Hickory Highlands Dr., Antioch.
- Thursday, July 30, 2009 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., Green Hills Library at 3701 Benham Ave.

Meeting attendees included a strong mix of riders, most of whom are calling for more transit, more frequent transit, expansion of service into evening and weekend hours, additional fare choices, and interconnectivity with regional transit. One hundred and eighty-five attendee comments were documented.

Publicity for the meetings included a news release, Web banner for partner Web sites, email blasts to distribution lists, posted bus signs, fliers posted in neighborhood one week before, day-of-meeting outdoor and locale signage, and ads in the City Paper and El Crucero.

In general, people seemed pleased with the plan. There were many comments unrelated to the plan including several from those opposed to higher fares and paying a double fare when transferring. There were also many complaints and concerns about teenagers on the buses. There were calls for more service and crosstown routes. People were interested in learning more about the Gallatin BRT, the downtown circulator and the mini-hubs.