



## METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

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Members of the Metropolitan Transportation Licensing Commission  
939 Dr. Richard G. Adams Drive  
Nashville, Tennessee 37207

Dear Members of the Metro Transportation Licensing Commission:

Thank you for your attention on the issue of entertainment transportation vehicles. For over two years, my office has worked with stakeholders, Metro Council and state legislators to regulate these vehicles.

*In February 2020, I said, "We want to ensure that everyone who visits Music City has a great time," but that "the complete lack of local control over these entertainment vehicles in one of our busiest neighborhoods has created safety concerns and tremendous headaches for both downtown brick-and-mortar businesses, residents, and local commuters. By working with the state, we hope to ensure that downtown Nashville remains a fun, world-class tourist destination while implementing commonsense policies that prevent traffic jams and disturbances to local residents and businesses."*

Our persistent work resulted in the passage of state legislation granting Nashville the authority to regulate entertainment transportation. In March of this year, Governor Lee and the overwhelming majority of state legislators approved giving cities like Nashville the ability to solve our own problems in this area. We have spent over two years working to get this body the regulatory authority to deal with entertainment transportation. Now you have the weighty task of solving what has become a problem for our community.

As you determine regulations and the number of permits for entertainment transportation vehicles, I encourage you to pay careful attention to the "public necessity" provision. **Is there a public need for these vehicles in Nashville? Not a private business interest. Not tourist desire. Not market demand. But public necessity.** I echo many thousands of Nashvillians when I say Nashville does not need these vehicles. In fact, there is a public need not to have these vehicles clogging up our public streets and bringing quality of life concerns to our neighborhoods and businesses.

The operators of party vehicles will cite economic impact as a way to rationalize tolerating their noise, traffic disruptions and safety risks. In fact, our business community has made it clear these party vehicles have a negative impact on business in and around downtown.

Party vehicle operators will highlight tourist demand as evidence of their contributions to Nashville's hospitality scene. But when I speak with residents and visitors, hotel managers, restaurant owners, and convention hosts, I hear over and over again that party buses are detracting from the Nashville experience.

And of course, you have heard party vehicle owners cite job creation as a rationale for granting permits. I will remind you that the Nashville Metro Area has a 2.4% unemployment rate, third lowest in the nation. There are many job openings in our hospitality industry. The greater risk is that the disruptive effects of these vehicles result in a loss of jobs downtown as office tenants relocate and guests opt to travel somewhere else.

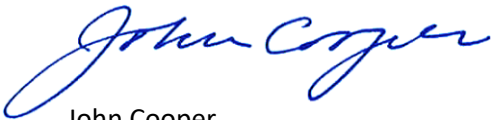
As you consider regulations, I encourage you to establish a distinct category for tour vehicles that are seated and do not involve alcohol. I support the call for hours of operation to end at 11:00 p.m. with restrictions during weekday rush hour. I do not see why this commission should issue any permits for unenclosed vehicles, which pose greater safety risks and disruption. One topic of discussion has been operating zones, which by its very nature is an acknowledgement of the quality of life concerns these vehicles pose to residents and businesses. And as you determine how many permits to award, I would like to point out that any number greater than zero is already a compromise.

To use urbanist Richard Florida's phrase, "blotto tourism" is a threat to a city's image and economy. It is time to regulate the party. Let me reiterate, there is not a public need for these party vehicles. In fact, there is a public need not to have these vehicles on our streets, disturbing residents and businesses.

I ran for mayor to make Nashville work for everyone. And right now, we have an unworkable situation with dozens of party vehicles that only work for the owners and riders who have reckless disregard for quality of life here. Help me fix this problem and protect the public interest.

Thank you for your tireless work on this issue in service of neighbors across Nashville.

Sincerely,



John Cooper  
Mayor