

Mayor calls for moving forward on transit during annual State of Metro Address

Nashville Mayor Megan Barry outlined a bold vision for the future of Nashville and Davidson County during the 54th Annual State of Metro Address with public transit serving as the cornerstone of her plans for a livable Nashville.

She proposed a \$7 million increase to the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) operating subsidy, the largest single-year increase ever, which includes funding for light rail service along Gallatin Pike.

“We cannot wait another year to start the process of building our first light rail,” Mayor Barry said. “I’m very happy to announce that (April 26) the work begins to create light rail service on the Gallatin Pike corridor. I’m excited to have the city start the



Mayor Barry

process of making light rail available to our citizens. ... We will be a 21st-century, transit-oriented city, and we are not going to look back 10 years from now and say we failed when we had to succeed.”

Her call to bring light rail to

Gallatin Pike speaks to the need for light rail along all five of Nashville’s main corridors, which was identified through the nMotion process. Gallatin Pike carries the most transit riders in the Nashville MTA service area and has the highest potential for community support of transit-oriented development projects within Nashville.

“Mayor Barry has once again demonstrated her unwavering commitment to public transportation by focusing on transit projects aimed to improve the quality of life for those living and working in Nashville and throughout Davidson County,” Nashville MTA Board Chair Gail Carr Williams said. “We are very encouraged by her progressive, transit-focused leadership in seeing the vision

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Paramore Breen named to Nashville MTA Board

Hannah Paramore Breen has been named as the newest member of the Nashville MTA board. She was confirmed in a vote by the Rules-Confirmations-Public Elections Committee and approved by the Metro Council on March 21. Her first MTA board meeting was March 23.

“As a young entrepreneur with experience in communications, Hannah adds an important voice to the Metro Transit Authority as we seek to improve and expand public transit options in Nashville,” Nashville Mayor Megan Barry said.

Paramore Breen, is an entrepre-



Paramore Breen

neur, international speaker, digital marketing expert, and Executive Vice President/Founder of Paramore Digital in Nashville, Tennessee, a \$5 million, 15-year-old company of about 25 people. She works with a variety of organizations throughout the country including tourism in Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, Washington, Virginia, and West Virginia.

“The MTA is such an important service to our growing, thriving city, and we have a lot of work ahead of us to continue to make Nashville a great place to live, work, and play,” Paramore Breen said.

“I’m very excited and look forward to

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New Route 77 Thompson Connector service begins

Customers living in South Nashville between the 100 Oaks and Murfreesboro Pike areas now have a cross-town route providing direct service along Thompson Lane. This new service, which began on April 3, connects two of the busiest routes – Nolensville Pike and Murfreesboro Pike – and allows customers to navigate between the two corridors without having to travel Downtown.

The Route 77 Thompson Connector is the first step in Nashville MTA’s response to calls for more cross-town routes, linking neighborhoods to neighborhoods without entering the downtown footprint, as identified

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MTA moves operations to Music City Center, excels during presidential visit

On March 15, the Nashville MTA successfully moved its Downtown transit operations from Music City Central (MCC) to the Music City Center in an effort to maintain service levels during a recent visit by President Donald Trump to Nashville.

The closure of MCC was a requirement of the Secret Service and affected all building operations, including parking, Dunkin' Donuts and the Music City Market on the 4th Avenue level of the building.

Staff worked as a team alongside city officials to find an alternate hub location, reroute buses, relocate operations personnel and vehicles, and provide as consistent a level of service as possible for its customers.



An MTA bus pulls into the temporary station at the Music City Center.

On the day of the President's visit, all bus routes were on detours, Music

City Central (MCC) closed at 9:45 a.m., and bus service transitioned to 6th Avenue between Korean Veterans Boulevard and Demonbreun Street. The first buses departed from the temporary location after 9:45 a.m. and operated from there for the remainder of the day. Bus bays were grouped in threes and marked with signs along 6th Avenue. In addition, MTA/RTA staff were available on-site to assist customers.

Service throughout the day was subject to change due to rolling road closures, police activity, and potential sidewalk and street crowding concerns, but operations remained smooth. MTA kept riders updated on affected routes and stops via Twitter, Facebook, its real-time bus information apps, and Customer Care representatives.

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and goals identified by the nMotion study come to life."

Mayor Barry's proposed plan provides also includes:

- extending the Music City Circuit to North Nashville and TSU along Jefferson Street;
- funding for the purchase of new hybrid buses to replace an aging diesel fleet;
- upgrading Nashville MTA's fare collection system;

- eliminating transfer fees;
- expanding service hours;
- beginning to implement out network of neighborhood transit centers; and
- AccessRide improvements, including the start of several "Mobility on Demand" pilot projects to address community mobility needs where traditional fixed-route services are not productive.

"We look forward to working with Mayor Barry's office as well as

our partners on the Metro, regional city and county, and state levels to build a robust transit system that will meet the demands of our growing city," Nashville MTA CEO Steve Bland said. "From the passage of (Tennessee) Governor Bill Haslam's IMPROVE Act to Mayor Barry's remarks, there is no doubt that Middle Tennesseans are supporting initiatives to address our mobility issues and allowing Nashville to continue to grow into the vibrant city it has become."

Thompson Connector *continued from page 1*

through the nMotion process.

"This route is the result of us listening to the needs and demands of our riders," Nashville MTA CEO Steve Bland said. "By providing more transfer opportunities for riders in South Nashville, we can help alleviate the travel times they experience. If we can cut an hour off of someone's commute, that's an extra hour they have to spend with their families and friends, which improves the overall quality of life for residents of Nashville."

Service for the Thompson Connector is provided between 100 Oaks and Glastonbury Road and operates as a



MTA CEO Steve Bland speaks at the Route 77 Thompson Connector launch event.

fixed-route service with three flex points served only on request by phone. Flex points are located at the intersection of Sidco and Norris, Radnor Towers and Greentree Terrace apartments. Service is operated by vans and runs every 45 minutes on weekdays and 90 minutes on Saturdays. Transfer points to Nashville MTA routes 1 100 Oaks, 15 Murfreesboro Pike, 17 12th Avenue South, 52 Nolensville Pike BRT lite, and 55 Murfreesboro Pike BRT lite are available.

On April 4, the Nashville MTA partnered with Nashville Mayor Megan Barry and the Metro Council to kick off the new service with a short program at Coleman Park Community Center.

Nashville MTA Employee Profile

Name: James Dunn **Age:** 50 **City of residence:** Madison
Length of employment: 28 Years **Position:** A-Repairman



Dunn

For nearly 30 years, James Dunn has served in various roles in the maintenance department for the Nashville MTA. When asked how he stays motivated after that much time, he says it's simple.

"It is all about the motive of being as excited as you were on the first day," Dunn said. "You come to work, not let others influence you, be the best, and do your best."

What kinds of hobbies and interests do you have outside of work? I love gospel and jazz music and recently recorded a new CD; I serve as head pastor at Victory International Life Changing Ministries in Madison. In addition, I was part of the Nashville MTA band Transit that won the Music City Corporate Band Challenge in 2009, and wrote the jingle promoting MTA titled "Come On and Ride MTA."

What is something people would be surprised to know about you? I was raised in Ohio and am the fifth child out of 18 children. My brother needed a kidney transplant, and I was a match so I gave my brother a kidney. Following the transplant, my brother lived another five years.

What are three words that best describe you? Loyal, dependable and faithful

What is an ability you wish you had? Being able to heal people

What is the first concert you attended? The Wayans Brothers at TPAC in Nashville

Tell us a little bit about your family. I have been married to my wife Inger for 28 years and have two daughters and a son. Karyn is a school teacher; Destiny is a homemaker; and son James attends TSU and will graduate with a Bachelor's in Music. I am also a proud grandfather of two grandsons.

What's one thing on your bucket list? Ziplining

What is the best vacation you've taken? A cruise to the Bahamas; will be taking another cruise in September to Jamaica.

What television show/movie is your favorite? "Love & Basketball"



Dunn's new album, *Purpose Comes Around Again*

News & Notes

APTA Roadeo

Nashville MTA bus operator Jerome Horton and mechanics Troy Willis, James Kerce and Ryan Risner competed at the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 42nd International Bus Roadeo in Reno, Nevada in May.

Last fall, Horton finished second in the 40-foot bus division at the Tennessee Public Transportation Association (TPTA) Roadeo. Joyce Banks, who finished first and took home the Big Wheel in the cutaway van division at the 2016 TPTA Roadeo, attended as an observer.

MTA mechanics Willis, Kerce and Risner participated in a maintenance team competition. At the 2016 TPTA roadeo, Willis brought home the "Big Wrench" for his victory in the bus maintenance division and Ryan Risner finished third. In the van maintenance division, Kerce brought home the Big Wrench for his victory.



Horton



Kerce, Willis, and Risner

ABBG customer survey

Nashville MTA conducted a survey April 24-May 21 to find out what customers think of MTA bus services.

The 20-question survey took only five minutes to complete and was being conducted simultaneously through the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) by 18 transit agencies across the country. By doing so, similar transit agencies can find out what their passengers think of the service they provide. These agencies will compare the results of the surveys, so that we can learn from each other and work toward giving you even better service.

Utility payment kiosk

The Nashville MTA will be providing multi-option bill-pay services at Music City Central (MCC) for all basic utilities including electric, sewer, gas, and more.

In response to concerns regarding access to local utility providers by elderly and disabled riders, the Nashville MTA is in the planning process to provide payment options through an ATM-like payment kiosk at MCC.

By providing a convenient, central location to pay utilities, this service will help to reduce travel time and additional fares.



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If you have suggestions for future
articles, please submit them to the
MTA communications office.



The Charles Mitchell Story

Charles Mitchell walks quietly into a room and removes his hat. Dressed to the nines in his suit and tie, the soft-spoken Nashville MTA Director of Operations greets you with a warm smile and kind words.

The self-proclaimed “average Joe” is an unassuming man who openly admits that he is probably hard to get to know. He doesn’t talk that much, explaining that he’s simply “a quiet person.”

However for Mitchell, conversation is not needed. He leads by example and has successfully guided Nashville MTA operations the last several years. In July, he will retire after nearly three decades with the agency.

“It took me a couple of years to actually come to the decision,” Mitchell said of his upcoming retirement. “Now, I’m excited about it. There are new adventures ahead for me. The first couple of months I’m probably not going to do anything. Then after that – just kind of re-evaluating what is it that I really want to do.”

Mitchell came to the Nashville MTA in January 1989 as a part-time bus operator, never knowing this would turn out to be his chosen career path. He turned on the road to transit when the city opted to widen a street on which he owned a business.

“I had a service station business with a 24-hour wrecker service and the city came through and widened the street where I was,”

said Mitchell, who served four years in the Air Force during the Vietnam era. “They got too close to my pumps so I was either going to have to close down or move. I just decided I would close down and sell out and try to do something different.”

At the time, he had already applied at the Nashville MTA so he thought: “Why not work here maybe a year or two and go back out and get into another business of some sort?” Twenty-eight years and three promotions later, he is still here.

“When I look back on it, it doesn’t seem like it’s been that long,” said Mitchell, who is the youngest of five siblings and proud father of five grown children. “But it’s been a learning experience. It’s been a

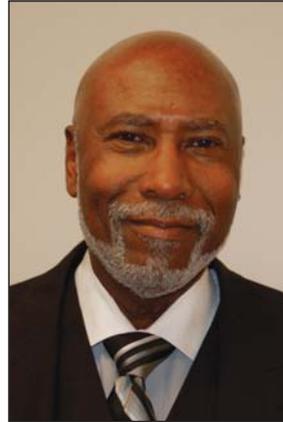
really good ride for me.”

Mitchell worked two years as a part-time bus operator before assuming the job full time. In 2002, he was promoted to operations supervisor and in 2011 took on his current role of director.

As his career winds down, it’s been his role in management that he claims has brought him the most rewards. His biggest accomplishment: helping people.

“The good part about it is people will forget everything about you but they will never forget how you treat them,”

Mitchell said. “One of the main things they will remember me for is that I was fair to everybody. I treat everybody the same, with the same respect, and I was always available when someone needed assistance.”



Mitchell

**2002 - MTA Rodeo
1st Place**

**2002 - TPTA Rodeo
2nd Place**

**2004 - Corecipient,
Organization
Exemplary
Performance
Award**

**2009 - TPTA Urban
Employee of
the Year**

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being a part of that.”

Paramore Breen is active in the community, serving on the advisory board for Synovus, The Bank of Nashville, The YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, Fisk University School of Business, Downtown Partnership and was the first chair of Moving Forward’s Public Engagement Task Force. Her passions include golf, travel, the YWCA, and The Frist Center

for the Visual Arts. She studied classical piano at Belmont University.

“We are very excited to see the addition of Hannah to the Nashville MTA Board of Directors,” MTA CEO Steve Bland said. “Her background in marketing and community engagement makes her an incredible asset to MTA as we move into seeing nMotion become a reality and strive to connect Middle Tennessee through transit.”