



NEWS RELEASE



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The Amp clears another major hurdle ***FTA accepts the Amp into project development***

NASHVILLE – The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has given the green light to officials at the Nashville Metro Transit Authority (MTA) on their quest to pursue federal funding for Nashville Mayor Karl Dean’s proposed Amp Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which will connect East and West Nashville.

MTA was notified late last week that it has provided sufficient information to enter the project development phase as outlined under FTA’s Small Starts grants program. Successfully completing project development will put the Amp on track to be recommended for up to \$75 million in federal funding.

“This is a major step forward for the Amp,” Mayor Dean said. “Being accepted into project development is essentially the FTA saying we’re on the right track with our project and they want to help us get to a point where it can be recommended for federal funding. We have been planning this project since 2009, and this is evidence that the FTA is pleased with the steps we’ve been taking and the process we’re going through. This confirms that this is a viable transit project for Nashville and it’s going to change the way people travel in our city. We are no longer just talking about the problem of looming traffic congestion; we are on a path to do something about it.”

Earlier this year, the Metro Council approved \$7.5 million in Mayor Dean’s FY 2014 capital spending plan to cover the next stage of engineering for the Amp, and those funds were contingent on acceptance into project development. The funds will now be available to MTA to complete final design and engineering. Once the work is completed, another series of community meetings will be held to continue to seek public input on the plans. Ultimately, the project details will be submitted to FTA in an application for the federal funding to cover a substantial portion of the project’s cost.

In the letter to the transit authority, FTA outlined the project’s next steps and recognized that many of them have already been completed by MTA. For example, the MTA board and city leaders have already selected the “locally preferred alternative” or transit mode – BRT. Plus, it has been adopted into the region’s long range transportation plan as required.

The designation of project development gives MTA and the city “pre-award authority” to incur costs for activities prior to the approval of federal dollars for the Amp. The FTA letter outlines what type of activities may be completed for reimbursements, such as final design and engineering. Other activities, such as work for evaluating utility relocation needs and real property acquisition, are listed as well.

The Amp will be Nashville’s first full service BRT system with dedicated transit lanes. The 7.1 mile route will stretch from Five Points in East Nashville to St. Thomas West Hospital.

It will function much like light rail or a subway with off-board ticketing, real-time travel information, and sleek rapid transit vehicles with double doors that open at level with station platforms to allow multiple passengers to board at once.

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“The goal of this project is to change the way people in Nashville use public transit in our city by making it a real alternative to a car,” said Paul J. Ballard, Chief Executive Officer for Nashville MTA and the Regional Transportation Authority. “Residents in all parts of the city and region will benefit from this project. If we can make the first full-service BRT line with dedicated lanes successful, then we can expand the concept to other areas, and that is our ultimate goal.”

In East Nashville, the Amp station will be near East Nashville Magnet School on 10th Street. Amp vehicles will travel on Main Street to Woodland Street, stop at the LP Field station near the existing Park & Ride, go over the Woodland Street Bridge to 5th Avenue North next to the Music City Central downtown transit station, travel down 5th Avenue North to Church Street, and on to Broadway/West End making stops at stations near the Frist Center, The Gulch, Vanderbilt University, Centennial Park, Acklen Park, Elmington Park, Cherokee Park, and St. Thomas West Hospital.

For more information about Nashville’s rapid transit project, visit www.nashvillemta.org, <http://www.nashvillemta-amp.org/AMP-Current-Status-Nashville-MTA.asp> or <http://thetransitalliance.org/amp> the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee website.

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