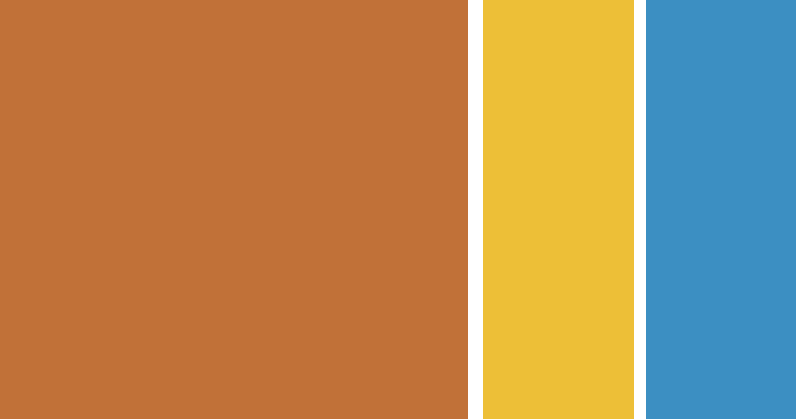




# A STRATEGIC PLAN TO EMERGE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR ACTION



2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

**TRANSIT ALLIANCE**  
OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

# AN ADVOCATE FOR ACTION

Since 2009, the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee has served as the region's lead advocacy organization focused on raising awareness about the importance of a robust public transit system. Through its Transit Citizens Leadership Academy and advocacy work the Alliance has empowered champions who have called for the creation of a dedicated source of funding to expand and modernize the region's transit options.

### THE NEED FOR AN UPDATED STRATEGIC PLAN

The Transit Alliance's last strategic plan was drafted in 2015 and identified organizational priorities through 2020. In addition to extending its outlook, Alliance's leadership determined the time was right to update its strategic plan to determine how to:

- leverage lessons learned to support future attempts to establish dedicated funding for transit,
- assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on community priorities, transportation needs, and outreach strategies,
- better understand/define the role of the Transit Alliance in relation to other similarly aligned agencies and organizations, and
- how to position the organization to champion the implementation of local and regional transportation plans.

Working together, Transit Alliance board members identified a series of questions to be answered through conversations with stakeholders that would shape the strategic plan. The goal of the process was to reveal the role the Alliance should play moving forward and establish goals for the organization to guide its work for the next five years.

## PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

**OBJECTIVE:** Define a clear path for the organization's future.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Determine the **best use of resources** by leveraging lessons learned
- **Identify ways to mobilize alumni** to advocate for better transportation
- Produce a **relationship map** of organizations involved in transportation
- Position the Transit Alliance to be at the forefront of **advocating for the use of emerging transportation technologies**
- Define the **role of the Transit Alliance** in relation to other agencies and organizations in the transportation space
- Explore how **different futures could alter Transit Alliance's priorities** and focus
- Position the organization to help the region **promote and implement adopted transportation plans**
- Assess the **impact of COVID-19** pandemic on community priorities



# PLANNING PROCESS

Identify Plan Objectives

Conduct Self Assessment

Engage Stakeholders

Establish Organizational Goals

Evaluate Best Practices

Set Priorities

Implement Plan

The Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) provided facilitation services and research support for the strategic plan. The process included a series of planning sessions with Transit Alliance staff and board members, an online survey among individuals within the Transit Alliance network, one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, and a review of peer organizations across Middle Tennessee and the nation.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The feedback gathered through the various stages stakeholder engagement identified the following key takeaways.

**There is ambiguity among stakeholders related to the Alliance's mission.**

**The pandemic temporarily curtailed regular travel behaviors but did not eliminate the need to address growing congestion and roadway safety issues.**

**There is a perception that the transportation advocacy space is saturated with organizations that have similar roles.**

**Transit is still essential. However, most want to see it addressed as part of a broader transportation solution.**

**Middle Tennessee needs a leading community-based transportation advocate.**

**Advocating for transit investments has to include emerging issues such as social equity and housing affordability.**

**The Alliance has demonstrated success in mobilizing community leaders and industry experts but must strengthen its ability to activate interested individuals at the grass roots level.**

# THE NEXT CHAPTER

The Transit Alliance has a rich history of educating community leaders on the need to fund an expansion of public transit options. Through the implementation of this strategic plan, the organization is poised to evolve its role into a comprehensive **ADVOCATE FOR ACTION** to champion a broad set of transportation solutions that address current challenges and help prepare Middle Tennessee for the future.

## PILLARS FOR SUCCESS

Four Pillars for Success provide a vision for the Transit Alliance's future. By becoming a forum for conversation, a resource for mobilization, a voice for advocacy, and a champion for accountability, the Alliance will establish the programs and resources necessary to serve as the region's leading transportation advocate.



### A Forum for Conversation

Provide a safe place for residents, businesses, and other non-profit organizations to share their perspectives on the issues and provide feedback on transportation plans and funding proposals.



### A Resource for Mobilization

Provide tools for constituents to effectively engage public agencies to improve their communities, and participate in the studies, plans, and budgets that define the projects being implemented by TDOT, area transit agencies, and municipal and county governments.



### A Voice for Advocacy

Earn the trust and credibility necessary to speak on behalf of a diverse coalition of partners when solidarity is essential to overcome obstacles that prevent acting on transportation plans that benefit the region.



### A Champion for Accountability

Show the strength and independence required to hold each other, non-profit partners, public agencies, and elected officials accountable for delivering on their commitments.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A set of strategic priorities and related key actions provide a path for the Transit Alliance to achieve the vision established in each of the Pillars of Success. Working together, the Alliance's leadership will develop specific tactics and metrics to track the implement these priorities.

1

## Become a Visible Champion for Transportation Solutions

Build upon success as a transit advocate to widen messaging and outreach to promote a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that works for all Middle Tennesseans.

2

## Maintain a Diverse and Well-Informed Board of Directors

Shape the board to better reflect the diversity of the region and empower its members with a strong knowledge of the local transportation decision-making process.

3

## Activate the Alumni Network through Meaningful Engagement

Encourage alumni to serve as representatives of the organization and mobilize the network to weigh in on local, regional, and state decisions that impact transportation outcomes.

4

## Harness the Energy of the Grass Roots Network

Leverage the organization's access to community leaders to reach into neighborhoods and civic clubs to create everyday champions out of local residents.

5

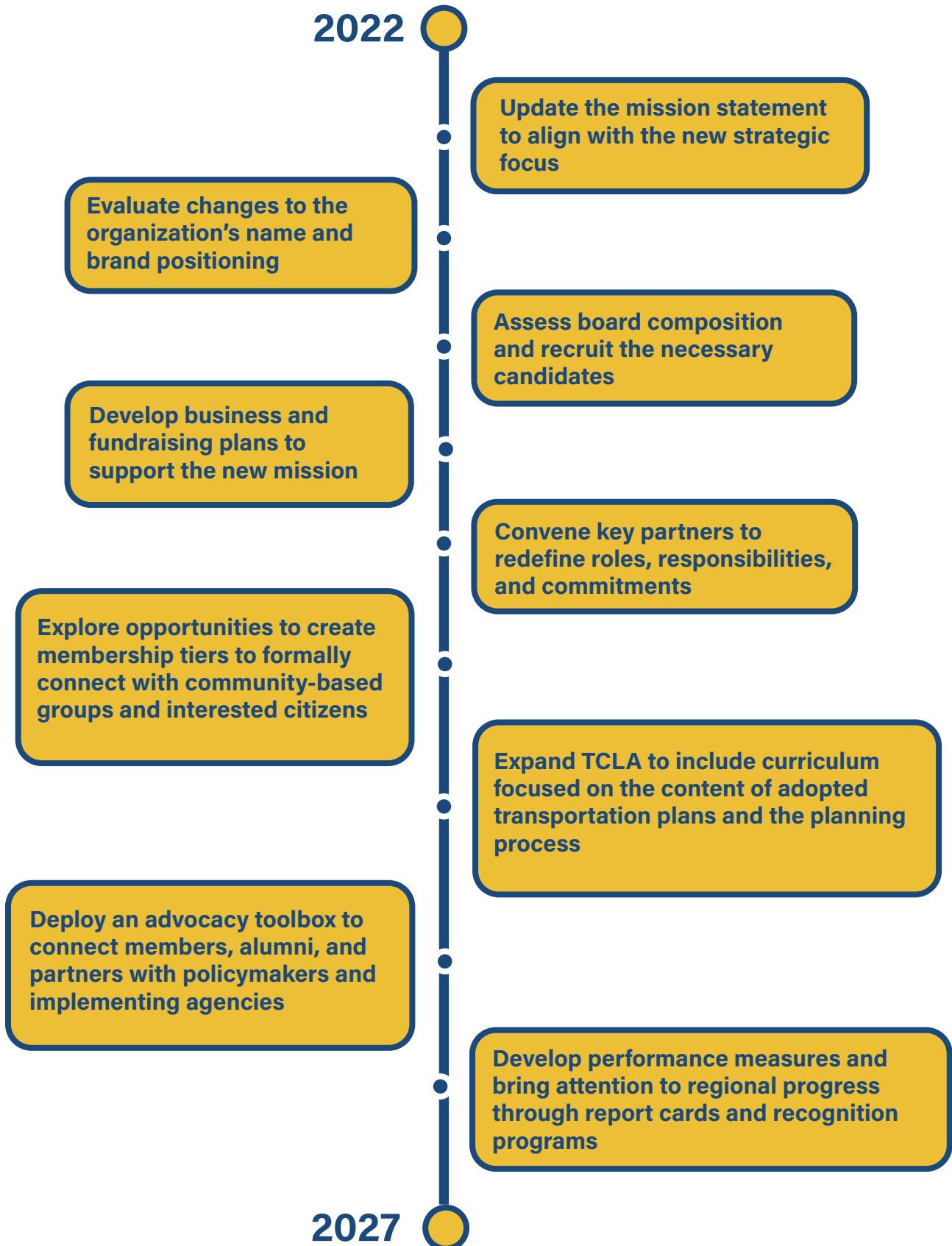
## Achieve Financial Sustainability to Focus on Mission

Diversify and grow funding streams and minimize reliance on any one donor type to help protect the integrity of the mission and allow staff to focus on delivering programs.



# KEY ACTIONS

Specific tactics make up a set of actions to implement the strategic plan. Each action supports the vision established by the Pillars for Success and provides immediate next steps for the Transit Alliance’s leadership.



## ABOUT THE TRANSIT ALLIANCE

The Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) established in 2009 to help build support for funding regional transit across the greater Nashville area. Its creation was inspired by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Study Mission to Denver, Colorado, earlier that year. A critical component of Denver's success is attributed to the community and political support built through its "Transit Alliance," a public-advocacy organization charged with empowering citizens to lead the transformation of the region's transportation system.


The Transit Alliance is guided by a 12-member Board of Directors representing government and private sector leaders. The Alliance is housed at the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, which also provides business/operational support. A President and CEO serves as the organization's only staff and is responsible for implementing an annual budget of approximately \$140.5k (2020) to support the organization's operations and programming.

The Transit Alliance member network includes graduates of its Transit Citizen Leadership Academy (alumni), financial donors (contributors), and public and private-sector organizations who help carry out the mission of the Transit Alliance or who have a role in planning, funding, building, or operating public transit (partners).





**TRANSIT**  **ALLIANCE**  
OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE



**TheTransitAlliance.org**  
500 11th Ave N, Suite 200  
Nashville, TN 37203  
315.743.3051

