

MATT WILTSHIRE



Policy Priorities: *Education*



I. Introduction

II. 0-5: Early Education

- Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare options while building a career pipeline for certified childcare providers
- Create a resource to help families of young children connect with needed supports

III. K-12 Education

- Recruit, retain, and increase support for teachers
- Make our schools safer

IV. High Education / Workforce

- Increase the number of Nashvillians who earn a college degree or a workforce certification
- Amplify existing programs and deepen community partnerships so more students are able to connect with college opportunities and workforce certifications



MATT WILTSHIRE



Policy Priorities: *Education*

“I’m running for Mayor so that every person in this city has a real opportunity to fulfill their dreams and realize their full potential”

– Matt Wiltshire



I. Introduction

If everyone in our community is going to have an equal shot at the American dream, every Nashville school needs to be a world-class school. As a graduate of Hume-Fogg High School whose own children have all attended (or, in the case of the youngest, will soon attend) MNPS for some or all of their schooling, Matt understands that leveling the playing field for every Nashville student is the most important thing we can do as a city.

Matt believes that Nashville’s public schools can and should be **the best in the country**, and as Mayor, he will take full responsibility for supporting and improving them. In collaboration with the school board and the Director of Schools, Matt will lay out a clear, unifying, equitable vision for what our schools can be that includes goals, timelines, and accountability. To determine whether schools are serving all students well and help ensure equity of opportunity and outcomes for our students, Matt will commit to **publishing and discussing comprehensive data** about the city’s public (traditional and charter) and private schools each year.

Matt knows that, today, we are asking our school system to “solve” a whole host of broader issues in our society – poverty, violence, hunger, trauma, and homelessness – while also educating kids who are bringing those challenges into the classroom. He will capitalize on the Mayor’s unique ability to **bring together the public, private, and nonprofit sectors**, and he will focus them on a common goal: providing additional support services so teachers can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning.

II. 0-5: Early Education

Childcare is an important form of early education. When families have access to high-quality childcare, it profoundly benefits not only their children’s school readiness and overall development, but our economy and our community’s future. But today, Nashville is facing a childcare crisis.

Our current childcare system does not meet the needs of families or employers. A whopping 98% of Nashville parents of children under age five [reported](#) that inadequate childcare hurt their work productivity and/or career opportunities. In a state where childcare [costs more](#) than our average in-state college tuition, it is unsurprising that two-thirds of Nashville parents also [report](#) that affordability is a major challenge.

As Mayor, Matt will focus on ensuring that Nashville meets the needs of children in their most formative years – their first 1,000 days of life.

Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare options while building a career pipeline for certified childcare providers

As Mayor, Matt will work to ensure that every child in Nashville has **access to high-quality early care**. To create more access, we need to train and hire more teachers.

Today, nearly half of Nashville parents [report](#) that finding quality care is a “major problem” that impacts their employment. Some of the parents struggling to find childcare are

“We need to provide additional support services for kids, so that our teachers can focus on teaching and our kids can focus on learning in the classroom”

– Matt Wiltshire, Tennessean, 05/24/23

teachers themselves. With Nashville facing both a childcare *and* a teacher shortage, Matt will partner with MNPS on a solution that could help address both issues:

adding high-quality childcare centers to some of our high schools.

This model is [already working](#) at Nashville’s STEM Prep, where the Little Wonders Early Learning Center offers high-quality childcare spots to both teachers and community members. Not only would expanding on this idea help parents and teachers, it would **create a career pathway** for high school students interested in becoming early childhood care providers.

Matt will also work to expand [partnerships](#) with organizations that support **home-based childcare providers serving Nashville’s communities of color**, e.g., the Raphah Institute. Not only do these providers play an important role in increasing childcare access, they are a critical solution for families that need childcare outside of daytime business hours.



Create a resource to help families of young children connect with needed supports

Thanks to the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, Nashville has a great [website](#) that features more than 2,600 resources for childcare providers. We need the same thing for families who are seeking childcare, or who want to connect with any of the other Nashville resources that exist to help navigate a child's first 1,000 days. As Mayor, Matt will pursue a public-private partnership to help create ***a one-stop shop of integrated resources*** for Nashvillians who want to be the best parents they can be.

III. K-12 Education

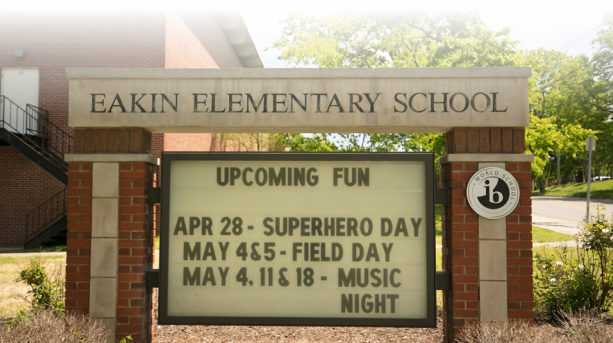
Every parent and guardian in Nashville should be able to choose from a variety of great public schools, beginning with the one in their own neighborhood.

Enrollment in MNPS [is down](#) 14% over the last decade. Declining student enrollment is a nationwide trend that in Nashville has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Reduced enrollment [means](#) less per-pupil funding from the state, which MNPS must address at the same time that it is facing increased challenges, from school safety to teacher shortages.

As Mayor, Matt will partner with families, nonprofits, and the private sector to expand our schools' ability to meet students' evolving needs. He believes deeply that everyone in our community is responsible for our schools' success, and he will build pathways that allow parents and volunteers to take on a more active role. In addition to prioritizing MNPS in budgeting decisions, Matt will work to ensure that all Nashville families have school options that meet their needs, and all children have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

Recruit, retain, and increase support for teachers

Nationwide, far fewer people are becoming teachers today than they were a decade ago, and Nashville is no exception. Teachers are also leaving the profession at higher rates than before, which only exacerbates the teacher shortage. In Nashville, that means that MNPS regularly averages dozens (and sometimes [hundreds](#)) of vacancies at a time.



“Every parent and guardian in Nashville should be able to choose from a variety of great schools”

– – Matt Wiltshire, Tennessean, 05/24/23

As Mayor, Matt will **lead a citywide effort to recruit and retain teachers**. He'll start by focusing on affordable housing, which is a [barrier](#) for many who want to teach in MNPS. Matt has a proven track record of creating housing options for Nashvillians, and he will move aggressively to accelerate the pace at which affordable housing units are developed. He will work with developers to create **housing options specifically for teachers** (as well as first responders and other vital public servants), and he will help connect teachers to housing opportunities like the Teacher Next Door program, a federal program that [offers](#) qualifying Nashville teachers grants of up to \$6,472 and down payment assistance of up to \$10,681.

Matt knows that, today in Nashville, we are asking our teachers to solve problems that stretch far beyond their classroom walls, but we are not compensating them in proportion to the magnitude of this near-impossible task. While Nashville's teachers are the [best paid](#) in the state, our cost of living is also the [highest](#). And unfortunately, school funding has fallen as a percentage of Metro's budget, from 42% ten years ago to just 37% this year. As Mayor, Matt will ensure that Metro's budget aligns with our city's priorities, and that **schools are at the top of that list**.

Make our schools safer

As a father of school aged children, Matt knows the gut-wrenching anxiety that far too many parents feel when they are unsure if their children are safe at school. In the months since the horrific shooting at the Covenant School, he has called on state leaders to do more to keep children safe by passing common-sense laws that will reduce gun violence.

Matt knows there is always more to do at the city level, too. As Mayor, he will partner with MNPS and [Sandy Hook Promise](#), the nonprofit founded and led by families whose loved ones were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, to **bring its [Say Something program to all public schools](#)**.

This first-of-its-kind, no-cost program is based on the fact that, in four out of five school shootings, the attacker told people of their plans ahead of time. It teaches students to recognize the warning signs of someone at risk of hurting themselves or others, and to say something to a trusted adult to get help. It also provides them access to an app, website,



and hotline where they can make [anonymous reports](#). Further, *Say Something* partners with school districts to map law enforcement, mental health, and school officials together so that, **when viable threats are reported, immediate action can be taken.**

“Nashville should have the best public schools in the country”

– Matt Wiltshire, Tennessean, 05/24/23

IV. Higher Education / Workforce

Today, less than half of MNPS graduates [are enrolling](#) in college – the lowest amount in over a decade. While not every good job opportunity requires a college degree, college graduates earn on average [63% more](#) than those with just a high school diploma. Students who choose not to enroll in college immediately after high school need pathways to high-skill, high-demand jobs, but they often struggle to access them.

As Mayor, Matt will set a citywide goal for the percentage of Nashville students who graduate from college or earn a workforce certification, and he will partner with MNPS, higher-education partners, the private sector, and nonprofits to fulfill that vision.

Increase the number of Nashvillians who earn a college degree or a workforce certification

The equity gap among college-going students in Nashville is the largest it has ever been: Black and Latinx students are far [less likely](#) to enroll in college than are their white and Asian counterparts. And high schools with the lowest college-enrollment rates [serve](#) high populations of both low-income students and students of color.

When it comes to increasing college-completion rates, Matt knows that experts have already identified [what works](#). He will provide the **political will necessary to increase momentum** and the funding needed to sustain the initiatives that lead to successful student outcomes. He will start by working with MNPS and community partners to expand [efforts](#) to ensure that every high-school student is guaranteed regular one-on-one meetings with a college-access professional who can help them navigate toward college completion.



Regardless of whether they are college-bound, students need access to more marketable, high-skill training that prepares them for success in high-demand fields. MNPS's career-based learning [program](#) helps students earn high school credit while working in paid positions at partnering businesses. As Mayor, Matt will work with school leaders to **sustain and scale this [successful initiative](#)**, which grows students' career skills and connects them with workforce certifications. He will also **partner with Nashville's community colleges and technical schools**, along with businesses, to help increase students' access to career pathways in high-demand fields that align with employers' needs.

Amplify existing programs and deepen community partnerships so more students are able to connect with college opportunities and workforce certifications

From [Nashville GRAD](#) to the [College Success Collaborative](#) and beyond, Nashville boasts successful programs that can help students pursue higher education and workforce certifications. The problem? Many students and families don't know about them, and if they do, they don't know how to access them. As Mayor, Matt will work with community partners **to help expand these programs and make them more visible and accessible** to the families who will benefit from them.



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MATT WILTSHIRE



Policy Priorities: *Public Safety*



I. Introduction

II. Reducing Gun Violence

- Enforce court orders to dispossess violent individuals of their guns
- Partner with religious institutions, nonprofits, and the private sector to expand successful gun-buyback and gun-retrieval programs
- Expand programs to make free gun locks available to any Nashvillian who wants one

III. Addressing Mental Health Issues

IV. Growing, Diversifying, and Efficiently Deploying Our Police Force



MATT WILTSHIRE



Policy Priorities: *Public Safety*

“With all of the excellent colleges training teachers and dedicated nonprofits here, Nashville should have the best public schools in the country. To reach that goal we’re going to need to bring together the public sector, the private sector and the nonprofit sector to align our goals and efforts.” – Matt Wiltshire



I. Introduction

For many Nashvillians, our city doesn’t feel as safe as it once did. Matt knows that protecting communities is local government’s most fundamental responsibility, and as Mayor, public safety will be one of his top priorities.

As Mayor, Matt will fully staff our police department and work to reduce violence and get guns off our streets. He will double down on programs that divert community members experiencing behavioral health crises from the criminal justice system. And he will focus on breaking down silos and implementing unique, high-impact solutions that harness the power of partnerships with the nonprofit community and the private sector.

“Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community, and increasingly Nashville feels less safe than it used to.”
WKRN, 05/09/23

II. Reducing Gun Violence

Nashville’s annual homicide rate, which [peaked](#) at 114 in 2020, remains over 100. Ten years ago, [it was](#) 40. Violent crime rates here [rose](#) nearly 5 percent last year.

In a city still mourning the tragic shooting at the Covenant School, Matt will use his power as Mayor to help ensure that people whom a court has ordered not to possess guns do not, in fact, possess them. In a state with some of the [laxest](#) gun safety laws in the nation, Matt will harness the power of local government to get firearms off our streets, and he will strongly encourage gun owners to store their firearms safely.



Enforce court orders to dispossess violent individuals of their guns

Tennessee has a system for dispossessing some potentially violent individuals of their guns, but it [isn't working](#) like it should.

Our state's current gun-dispossession [process](#) was put in place in 2009. It allows victims of domestic violence and stalking to tell a court if their abuser has a gun and ask the judge to decide whether the weapon must be surrendered. Following the tragedy at the Covenant School, Governor Lee [proposed](#) expanding this process and allowing the general public to seek these extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) for people deemed potentially violent to themselves or others. The Tennessee General Assembly may consider the governor's proposal at a special session this August.

But there's [a problem](#): Tennessee's current protective-order process has a significant and potentially dangerous loophole, which kicks in once a court orders a domestic-violence abuser to give up his or her firearms. While other states require abusers to turn over their guns to law enforcement, Tennessee allows them to give their guns to a third party, like a friend or a relative. Significantly, our state is the only one in the country that does not require abusers to say which third party, or whether that person is legally allowed to possess a firearm.

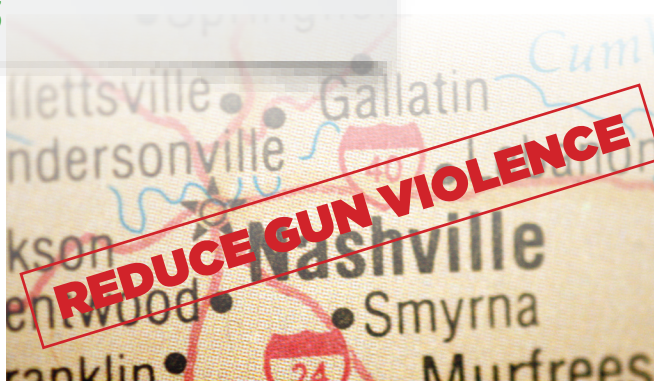
What's worse is that our state has no mechanism to ensure that the abuser actually turned over his or her guns to anyone. In theory, he or she is supposed to fill out an affidavit confirming surrender of the weapons, but advocates for domestic violence victims in Nashville say that form rarely gets filed with the court. How significant is this problem? In 2023, advocates here counted **nearly 30 violent offenders each month** who failed to prove to the court that they had actually dispossessed themselves of their firearms.

Matt knows that if our state's current firearms dispossession system is not enforceable, expanding it will not do enough to make Nashvillians safer. As Mayor, he will advocate with the state for the sort of gun safety laws that Nashvillians want and deserve. Beyond that, he will ensure that Nashville's courts and law enforcement officers have every resource they need to enforce dispossession orders.

"When I was at MDHA we worked directly with Metro Police and entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that increased patrols and got officers out of their cars walking the beat. We saw tremendous results in reduction of crime at those sites." - Matt Wiltshire, Tennessean, 05/24/23



DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE



REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

“Prioritizing investments into mental health resources and evidence-based violence interruption programs are going to be critical in order to address violent crime.”
WKRN, 05/09/23

Matt will ensure that **Nashville’s courts have the funding necessary** to ensure that domestic violence offenders – along with those deemed to be a threat to themselves or others, if the legislature adopts Governor Lee’s proposal this August – comply with dispossession orders. He will also ensure that **law enforcement officers have the resources they need** to follow up when someone has failed to dispossess.

Partner with religious institutions, nonprofits, and the private sector to expand successful gun-buyback and gun-retrieval programs

Nashville’s government has long partnered with a variety of organizations, from sports teams to religious institutions to businesses, to host gun-buyback events. Participants in these events turn in firearms to law enforcement officers in exchange for gift cards, tickets to a sporting event, or even gas money. Gun buybacks have [taken](#) hundreds of guns off the street in recent years. The MNPD has also [partnered](#) with churches on gun-retrieval programs that offer Nashvillians a safe and trusted place to surrender firearms safely, with no questions asked.

As Mayor, Matt will **expand community partnerships to help more Nashvillians access gun-buyback and gun-retrieval programs**. While these initiatives on their own will not do enough to curb gun violence, Matt knows that anything we can do to get guns off our streets is a good thing, especially if these efforts are part of a broader effort to make our community safer.

Expand programs to make free gun locks available to any Nashvillian who wants one

Stolen guns [are](#) routinely used in criminal activities, and more than 70% of all guns stolen in Nashville are taken from vehicles. Gun owners are significantly [less likely](#) to have a gun stolen if they store all of their guns locked and unloaded, but more than half of gun owners do not. As Mayor, Matt will expand on the Metro Health Department’s gun lock-by-mail [program](#), as part of which free gun locks are available by mail to anyone who orders one, by working with the MNPD to **equip their patrol officers with free locks** to distribute as part of their work in the community.

III. Addressing Mental Health Issues

Our whole community benefits when Nashvillians experiencing behavioral health crises are connected to mental-health services and diverted out of the criminal justice system. Not only do these individuals receive the appropriate care they deserve, law enforcement resources are preserved for situations that actually require them.

Good Health
↓
Good Life





A number of successful pilot programs are aimed at helping our city meet these goals. [Partners in Care](#) has been a big success so far. It [pairs](#) mental health professionals from Nashville's Mental Health Cooperative with specially trained police officers, who together respond to 911 calls and other emergencies that may involve a mental health crisis. Once on the scene, MNPD officers [stabilize](#) the situation so clinicians can assess the individuals and connect them to the behavioral healthcare they need.

Last year, this growing program [responded](#) to more than 3,000 calls for service and diverted the vast majority of individuals – about 96% – out of the criminal justice system. Even with that level of service, this program has [not yet reached](#) every police precinct in Nashville. As Mayor, Matt will **make its expansion a priority**.

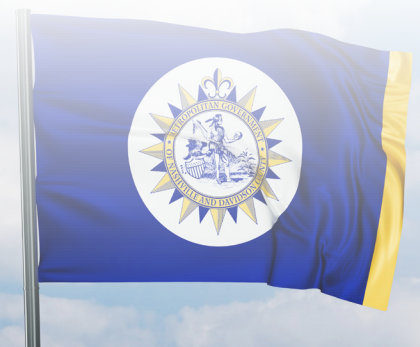
Today city ambulances sent by Fire Department dispatchers [take](#) more than 120 people experiencing behavioral health crises to the emergency room every week. Nashville's new [REACH](#) pilot program aims to reduce these numbers and free up valuable ambulance space.

REACH pairs a paramedic from the Nashville Fire Department with a master's-level clinician from the Mental Health Cooperative. Together, they arrive in an SUV and help the person in crisis get where they need to go – whether that's the Mental Health Cooperative, Centerstone, or even their own home – without an unnecessary ambulance transport.

This promising program is still in its pilot phase. The Metro Health Department is analyzing data to measure REACH's effectiveness. As Mayor, Matt will follow its progress, and if the data shows that the program works, he will **ensure that it has the resources it needs to expand**.

IV. Growing, Diversifying, and Efficiently Deploying Our Police Force

Across the country, police forces are struggling to recruit and retain police officers, and the Nashville MNPD is no exception. It has [grappled](#) with this challenge for years, particularly with respect to recruiting and retaining women and people of color.



Matt knows that Nashville's police officers and firefighters put their lives on the line every day for the safety of our city. As Mayor, he will support them by doing what he can to help fully staff and diversify their departments. He will also work to free up the officers we have by partnering with the MNPD to explore the idea of sending [civilian first responders](#) to calls that don't require a law enforcement response.

When it comes to training future generations of law enforcement officers, Nashville's HBCUs are a valuable - but underutilized - resource. [TSU's](#) criminal justice education program, for example, is one of the largest in the nation. Across [the country](#), and even here in [Tennessee](#), cities are facilitating partnerships between police departments and universities, including HBCUs. These efforts strengthen the college-to-police pipeline by allowing potential recruits to get hands-on experience, and potentially class or Police Academy credit, before they graduate. As Mayor, Matt will work with the **MNPD**, **HBCUs**, and programs like the city's **POWER Youth Summer Employment Initiative** and the MNPD's **Police Explorers program** to pursue and expand innovative opportunities like these.

Only 12 percent of Nashville's police officers are women, a rate that falls [below](#) the national average. And yet, we [know](#) that women officers generate fewer complaints from the public, fewer use-of-force incidents, and fewer lawsuits. The MNPD has [pledged](#) to ensure that women make up 30 percent of our police force by 2030. As Mayor, Matt will help reduce barriers to women entering - and staying in - law enforcement by partnering with the MNPD to expand family-friendly [policies and resources](#), e.g., childcare access and job-sharing arrangements, that **support women (and men) in balancing the demands of the job and the needs of their families.**



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MATT WILTSHIRE



Policy Priorities: *Quality of Life*



I. Introduction

II. Affordable Housing

- Help Nashvillians stay in their homes
- Add more affordable housing units

III. Transit and Infrastructure

- Build gold-standard mass transit along Murfreesboro Pike to the airport
- Provide more buses, more often, along with better transit centers in more places

IV. Parks, Greenspace, Greenways and Sustainability

- Ensure that every area in the urban core is no more than a ten-minute walk to a greenway
- Expand our parks system
- Stay focused on sustainability and environmental justice

V. Equitable Economic Development

- Partner with HCBUs and other leaders to envision and implement the Jefferson Street Academic Mile
- Partner with leaders in South Nashville to transform Nolensville Pike and The Global Mall



MATT WILTSHIRE



Policy Priorities: *Quality of Life*

“I think you’ll hear a number of the same priorities from the different candidates for Mayor. Where you’ll find the biggest difference is who has specific ideas, who has taken on big challenges and who has actually delivered results – that’s what sets me apart.” – Matt Wiltshire



I. Introduction

Matt grew up in Nashville, and he has a long-term vision to tackle our city’s biggest challenges. As Mayor, Matt will partner with community leaders, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations to meet a singular shared goal: making Nashville one of the nation’s best places to live, work, and raise a family.

“In less than three years at MDHA we had some real success. MDHA opened more than 500 units of mixed-income housing and assisted the development of an additional 3,500 units of affordable housing by the private sector.”

WKRN, 05/09/23

II. Affordable housing

Nashville is becoming an increasingly expensive place to live. The cost of living here has risen in large part because the supply of housing hasn’t kept up with the growing demand. Matt knows we can’t let rising costs squeeze out the people who built this city. He will help cost-burdened seniors age in place and ensure that Nashville is a city where their kids can afford to stay and raise their families, too.

In 2019, Matt helped create an ambitious affordable housing plan and left a great job in the Mayor’s Office to move over to MDHA, the city’s public housing authority, to implement it. As the **first affordable-housing expert** to serve as Nashville’s Mayor, Matt will focus on solutions that help more Nashvillians stay in their homes and add more affordable housing units to the pipeline.

“Nashville is facing an affordability crisis. A 2021 analysis showed nearly half of Nashville renters were cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their monthly income in rent.”

WKRN, 05/09/23

Help Nashvillians stay in their homes

Seniors aged 65+ are the [fastest-growing](#) age group in the city. And today [more than half](#) of them are experiencing “livable income poverty,” which means they operate with fixed monthly incomes that don’t cover basic living expenses such as housing, transportation, food, or medical care.

Building
Affordable Homes

New council homes for rent

MATT
WILTSHIRE
FOR MAYOR





To keep more low-income seniors in their homes, Matt will **streamline Metro’s tax-freeze program and help more people apply for it.** To qualify today, seniors must show that all owners of their home collectively earn no more than [\\$60,000](#) each year, be up-to-date on their current property taxes, and recertify their eligibility every year . Matt will streamline the application process, and increase Metro’s outreach to seniors who might benefit from it. He will also connect seniors with other Metro resources – like [Home Uplift](#) and our [Financial Empowerment Center](#) – that can help them lower their utility bills and manage their financial futures.

Matt will also work to increase all eligible Nashvillians’ access to programs that can help them stay in their homes. He will partner with the Metro Trustee’s Office to increase outreach around its [tax-relief programs](#), which are available not only to seniors, but to homeowners and veterans with a disability. And he will continue to partner with nonprofit organizations like The Housing Fund, whose instrumental [Housing Resiliency Fund](#) helps low- and moderate-income homeowners afford increases to their property taxes.

Add more affordable housing units

Matt has a proven track record of creating affordable housing for Nashvillians. As Mayor, he will move aggressively during his first year in office **to increase and create sustainable, demand- based funding for the Barnes Fund**, which makes competitive grants to nonprofit housing developers to increase affordable housing options for Nashvillians.

Matt will **accelerate the implementation of MDHA [Envision’s program](#)** to transform areas of concentrated poverty into thriving mixed-income neighborhoods through Metro funding and by aggressively pursuing public-private partnerships. He also will **pursue public-private partnerships** with churches, nonprofit landholders, large institutions, and even schools to construct affordable housing on underutilized land. This proven model [has worked](#) for Nashville in the past, and Matt will expand on it.

Further, Matt will work with Metro Codes to **streamline the permitting process** for affordable housing projects and ensure that those projects are prioritized for review. He will ensure that, **before Metro sells any land to a private developer**, it first considers whether that space could be appropriately used for affordable housing.

“We must make investing into affordable housing a top priority. That starts with strengthening the Barnes Housing Trust Fund” - Matt Wiltshire





“Wiltshire’s campaign prioritizes public infrastructure and finding funding for affordable housing and education.”

WPLN, 04/18/23

III. Transit and Infrastructure

Nashville has been making transit and infrastructure plans for years. And in that time, traffic has gotten worse. [1,200](#) of our bus stops still lack shelters. And a [recent](#) survey ranked our transit system among the least used in the nation. Nashvillians are ready to move from plans to action, and Matt is the strong leader who can make that happen.

Nashville has fallen behind our peer cities when it comes to public transportation. In fact, we’re the [last city](#) of our size without dedicated funding for transit. In the long-term, finding a source of sustainable funding [will be key](#), and Matt will work with advocates to determine the optimal time to go to voters. In the short-term, Matt will prioritize transit projects that help build a culture of mass transit, along with investments that offer better service to current riders and help bring in new ones.

Build gold-standard mass transit along Murfreesboro Pike to the airport

Before the end of the year, Matt will prioritize and accelerate the process to bring **dedicated-lane mass transit to Murfreesboro Pike** along a route that connects downtown to the airport. And because Matt knows that transit and affordable housing go hand in hand, he will lead efforts to put **affordable housing options near the transit stops** along that route. That way, workers can get to jobs downtown or out to the airport, which is a large employer, without getting stuck in traffic or having to pay up to \$40 for parking.

Carrying 4,000 people a day, the Murfreesboro Pike route boasts WeGo’s [highest daily ridership](#). Building a premium transit line here will pull traffic off the interstate and help build a culture of mass-transit in Nashville. This project, which the airport can help pay for, [has been](#) included in Nashville’s transit plans for years. Matt will move beyond planning and start building. This project is well-positioned to receive funding for up to 70% of the cost from the federal government and the Airport Authority can pay for all of the infrastructure from the airport to the first transit stop. The remaining cost for Metro government is well within the city’s existing financial capacity.

Provide more buses, more often, along with better transit centers in more places

Matt will bring Nashvillians the bus system they deserve. With more buses running more hours each day, riders’ commute times will be shorter. Increased crosstown bus routes will mean they are able to reach their destination without having to transfer downtown. And new neighborhood transit centers with upgraded bus stops will improve riders’ overall experience and help spur transit-oriented development.

WeGo has been pushing to upgrade our bus system for years, but plans have faltered under a lack of funding. As Mayor, Matt will lead the way – and direct the resources – to move from plans to action.





IV. Parks, Greenspace, Greenways and Sustainability

Nashvillians came together in 2017 to create [Plan to Play](#), a ten-year vision for Metro parks, greenways, and green space. It outlines the investments needed to take care of what we already have while growing our parks system intentionally, equitably, and sustainably.

In the years since, Nashville has lagged behind our peer cities when it comes to investing in our park system. While Atlanta's investment is \$206 per person each year, and Austin's is \$178, Nashville's is only \$52. Our city has been under-investing in our parks system just when we've needed it most. Thanks to this lack of funding, our parks today [rank](#) in the bottom ten in the nation. As Mayor, Matt will turn this around and finish what Plan to Play started.

Ensure that every area in the urban core is no more than a ten-minute walk to a greenway

Nashvillians have [identified](#) greenways as the parks amenity they want most. About 100 miles of them criss-cross Nashville today. As Mayor, Matt will expand greenways so that every Nashvillian in the urban core lives within a ten-minute, or half-mile, walk to one. He will start by **accelerating the completion of the [City Central Greenway](#)**, a planned 23-mile loop that will connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, business districts, and transit stops.

Matt understands that greenways are a critical part of our transportation network. With construction in Nashville continuing at a record pace, Matt will **partner with private developers to ensure their co-investment** in the greenways that will help residents connect to transit options.

Expand our parks system

Parks encourage Nashvillians to live active lifestyles, which reduce or prevent many physical and mental health problems. They improve public health by cleaning the air, and they make Nashville more resilient to flooding and other components of climate change. [Plan to Play](#) found that, while Nashville has by no means completed our work to protect large rural properties, we must become equally adept at acquiring and developing smaller urban parks.

As Mayor, Matt will make good on this finding by **prioritizing the restoration of Fort Negley**. A piece of Civil War and civil rights history in the heart of our urban core, the fort has presided over Nashville's evolution from a frontier town to a bustling metropolis. The [master plan](#) completed in October 2022 envisions an open-air museum that preserves the fort's history while fully engaging with the community. When completed, Fort Negley's restoration will add 64 acres of parkland to our urban parks system – a rare and valuable opportunity.





Matt will also prioritize opportunities to preserve Nashville's [Highland Rim Forest](#), which arcs around Nashville and connects a wide range of Nashville's parks, among them Randor, Warner, West Meade, Bells Bend, Beaman and Whites Creek. This vast urban forest plays an important role in reducing greenhouse gasses and reducing climate change.

Stay focused on sustainability and environmental justice

Matt knows that climate change [is making](#) Nashville hotter, and that our hottest neighborhoods are some of our [least resourced](#) and most vulnerable. Matt understands that **climate issues are equity issues**. He will keep Metro's commitment to reducing [carbon emissions](#), generating more [solar energy](#), and planting [half a million trees](#) by 2050.

V. Equitable Economic Development

In 2011, Matt left a successful career in the private sector to take on what at the time was one of the city's biggest challenges: unemployment. Over the next eight years, working with three different mayors, he helped bring the city's unemployment rate down from more than eight percent to two percent, the lowest of any city in the country. During his tenure, Nashville added 42,000 jobs, and the city developed incentives for small businesses that invested in diverse neighborhoods.


While Nashville's economy has continued to grow, today far too many people are being left behind. Matt knows that different times require different tools and different strategies. As Mayor, he will work with community leaders to craft equitable economic-development initiatives that will revitalize key corridors in North and South Nashville.

Matt is deeply familiar with the economic-revitalization tools Metro has at its disposal. As appropriate, he will pursue strategic land swaps, target affordable housing developments, and work to expand opportunities for BIPOC-owned businesses.

Partner with HCBUs and other leaders to envision and implement the Jefferson Street Academic Mile

The Jefferson Street Academic Mile is home to three HBCUs: Fisk, Meharry Medical College, and TSU. Leaders at these historic universities [have spoken](#) of redeveloping the Academic Mile in a way that enhances the economy, the health, and the social vibrance of North Nashville. As Mayor, Matt will **partner with these leaders and marshal Metro's resources** to help plan for and accelerate this transformative vision.





MDHA operates public housing at Andrew Jackson Courts, which is adjacent to Fisk University. Matt will work with MDHA and Fisk University to pursue a redevelopment of Andrew Jackson Courts in a way that will add mixed income housing, including student housing, that Fisk desperately needs as it continues to grow and thrive. In addition, Matt will pursue opportunities to create a world class collecting art museum with Fisk University and community stakeholders to help show off the incredible art the university already has. At the other end of the Academic Mile there are 100 acres on the North side of TSU's campus that are ideally situated to house a federal research campus and develop new corporate pipelines to employment for TSU students.

Partner with leaders in South Nashville to transform Nolensville Pike and The Global Mall

One of the most racially and ethnically diverse corridors in the state of Tennessee, the Nolensville corridor [is home](#) to the largest number of immigrant families in Nashville. The vibrant area plays home to landmark destinations like the Nashville Zoo and Plaza Mariachi, along with a cornucopia of BIPOC-owned businesses and some of our city's best ethnic restaurants. But a [2022 NDOT study](#) found that most people do not feel comfortable walking or biking along Nolensville Pike, and with good reason: 18 people have died due to traffic crashes there since 2014 – and 40 percent of the victims were pedestrians. Large swaths of the corridor lack sidewalks, streetlights, and safe crosswalks. As Mayor, Matt will **partner with community leaders and immigrant-focused nonprofits** to ensure that this invaluable corridor gets the **resources it deserves**.

Though those who grew up in Nashville may remember it as Hickory Hollow, the shopping district now known as The Global Mall at the Crossings has begun a transformation in the years since it was a struggling shopping mall. Today it is home to the Southeast Branch of the Nashville Public Library and the Southeast Regional Community Center, along with a satellite campus for Nashville State Community College and the Ford Ice Center. As the southern terminus on the Murfreesboro Pike corridor that Matt has prioritized for gold-standard mass transit, the site has a world of potential and is ready for a reinvention. This summer, Metro will complete a [master plan](#) that builds on community ideas to guide future development at The Global Mall. **As Mayor, Matt will partner with community and private-sector leaders to explore commercially viable development opportunities** that align with community goals.



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