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# Transportation Plan for the Cold Weather Overflow Shelter

*Updated: October 29, 2021*

## Background

On evenings when the cold weather overflow shelter is open (e.g., on nights during which the temperature is expected to be at or below 28 degrees), Metro will open the shelter at the new location at 3230 Brick Church Pike at roughly 7:00pm. This document summarizes the transportation plan to ensure persons experiencing homelessness can access this new location.

## Building in Prior Years

Several practices have proved successful in recent years regarding transportation and communications. We are continuing with these, including the following:

- **Cold Weather Bus Passes:** Metro and WeGo/MTA will continue to provide 350 cold weather bus passes. This is the same number of passes available last year, and the passes will function in the same way.
- **Text Communication System:** Both outreach workers and persons experiencing homelessness can sign up to receive text notifications about the cold weather overflow shelter. Text the word **Nashvillewinter** to 84483. You will get a text roughly 24 hours in advance of each 7:00pm. opening of the cold weather overflow shelter.
- **“Day of” Flyers:** Neighborhood Health will distribute “day of” flyers announcing the shelter will be open on a specific day. See attached draft. You can copy and distribute the flyers. Email [bhaile@neighborhoodhealthtn.org](mailto:bhaile@neighborhoodhealthtn.org) to be added to the listserv.

In addition, outreach workers will canvas across Davidson County on nights the cold weather overflow shelter is open to make people aware of the shelter and help them get indoors.

## Overview Hub-and-Spoke Approach

The transportation plan relies on WeGo/MTA, canvassers and outreach workers, and contract shuttle providers. It works as follows:

- **Downtown:** Canvassers and outreach workers downtown can direct individuals on the street to WeGo Central.<sup>1</sup> These individuals can then take the #23B bus to the cold weather overflow shelter at 3230 Brick Church Pike.
- **Other Areas:** Canvassers and outreach workers can help individuals on the street or in encampments to get to four (4) designated pick up locations across West, South, and East Nashville. A free shuttle will arrive at these locations at scheduled times to transport individuals to WeGo Central. These individuals can then take the #23B bus to the cold weather overflow shelter at 3230 Brick Church Pike.

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<sup>1</sup> WeGo Central is located at 400 Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Boulevard (formerly 400 Charlotte Avenue). We reference 400 Charlotte Avenue here since this is the address identified in Google Maps.

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On evenings when the cold weather overflow shelter is open, individuals who cannot pay the bus fare for the #23B bus originating at WeGo Central will still be allowed to ride. Individuals staying at the cold weather overflow shelter can get free bus passes the next morning to return downtown. This system also makes accommodations for persons with pets (since these individuals cannot ride WeGo with animals that are not service animals).

### Role of WeGo/MTA

Working closely with stakeholders, WeGo/MTA developed an innovative solution to help transport individuals from downtown to the cold weather overflow shelter. Specifically:

- On nights that the cold weather overflow shelter is open, WeGo operators on the #23B route will use a counting mechanism to tally the number of riders who board the #23B bus at WeGo Central but who cannot pay their fare. They will allow these individuals to board the #23B there starting at 7:00pm through the end of the night.
- WeGo will bill a designated funding mechanism for the cost of the bus passes (\$2) for each of these riders.<sup>2</sup>
- Neither Metro nor nonprofit organizations will need to provide staff at WeGo Central to facilitate this process. For the first few nights, though, 1-2 outreach workers will be at WeGo Central to guide individuals experiencing homelessness to the #23B bus, etc.

**Special Care:** The #23B bus will pull into the parking lot at 3230 Brick Church Pike on nights when the cold weather overflow shelter is open in order to allow patients to disembark directly in front of the shelter.

Also, individuals with pets (other than trained service animals) cannot ride WeGo/MTA buses. To address this gap, a free shuttle will run from WeGo Central at least two times per night to take these individuals and their pets to the cold weather overflow shelter. The shuttle can also bring them to a designated location in downtown Nashville the next morning.

Metro Social Services will distribute bus passes to individuals at the cold weather overflow shelter so they can board the #23B bus in the morning to return to downtown.<sup>3</sup> Metro Social Services will rely on the contracted shuttle service to transport individuals with pets in the morning (since these individuals cannot ride WeGo with animals that are not service animals).

### Role of Canvassers/Outreach Workers

Outreach workers and service providers can promote the new transportation system during their ongoing work downtown and in encampments. On nights the cold weather overflow shelter is open, outreach workers and canvassers will help individuals downtown to get to WeGo Central – and help those in West, South, and East Nashville to get to designated pickup locations to

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<sup>2</sup> The estimated total cost for the WeGo/MTA services would be \$6,000 if we assume 100 riders per night for 30 nights the shelter is open and \$2 per ride (i.e., 100 x 30 x \$2). Metro Social Services is seeking funding from American Rescue Plan allocations and other sources to cover these costs and has executed an agreement with WeGo to pay these costs.

<sup>3</sup> Metro Social Services will provide to WeGo by 3:00am an estimate of the number of individuals at the cold weather overflow shelter requiring such transportation that morning.

catch the free shuttle to WeGo Central or the shelter. Metro’s new Flex Team will also provide assistance.<sup>4</sup>

**Special Care:** Outreach workers and canvassers may offer to write “23B” using Sharpie pens on the hands of those who go to WeGo Central to help them remember the correct bus line. Alternatively, they can provide bracelets with “23B” printed on them.<sup>5</sup>

**Role of Free Shuttle Service**

Metro Social Services will contract with a transportation provider to operate a free shuttle service on nights when the cold weather overflow shelter is open. The free shuttle service shall:

1. Pick up passengers at four (4) designated locations in West, South, and East Nashville to transport them to WeGo Central (where they can catch the #23B bus to the shelter) or directly to the cold weather overflow shelter itself.

Pick-up Location	Address	Pick-up Time #1	Pick-up Time #2
<b>Brookmeade Park</b>	7002 Charlotte Pk	TBD	TBD
<b>Walmart Supercenter</b>	4040 Nolensville Pk	TBD	TBD
<b>Dollar General Market</b>	301 East Thompson Ln	TBD	TBD
<b>City Road Chapel UMC</b>	701 Gallatin Pike S. (Madison)	TBD	TBD

2. Pick up passengers with pets at WeGo Central to transport them and their pets to the cold weather overflow shelter;
3. Pick up all passengers with pets at the cold weather overflow shelter on each morning after Metro operates the cold weather overflow shelter and transport them to a designated location in downtown Nashville; and
4. Pick up passengers (with or without pets) at locations as requested on an *ad hoc* basis by the Office of Emergency Management and transport these passengers to the cold weather overflow shelter.

**Special Care:** The shuttle service may offer Sharpie pens to riders so they can write “23B” using Sharpie pens on their hands to help them remember the correct bus line. Alternatively, they can provide bracelets with “23B” printed on them.

<sup>4</sup> This work would not result in new costs to Metro because funding for the Flex Teams has been secured. No additional contracting is needed.

<sup>5</sup> Stakeholders recommend against relying only on paper handouts with the bus number as these may be easily lost.