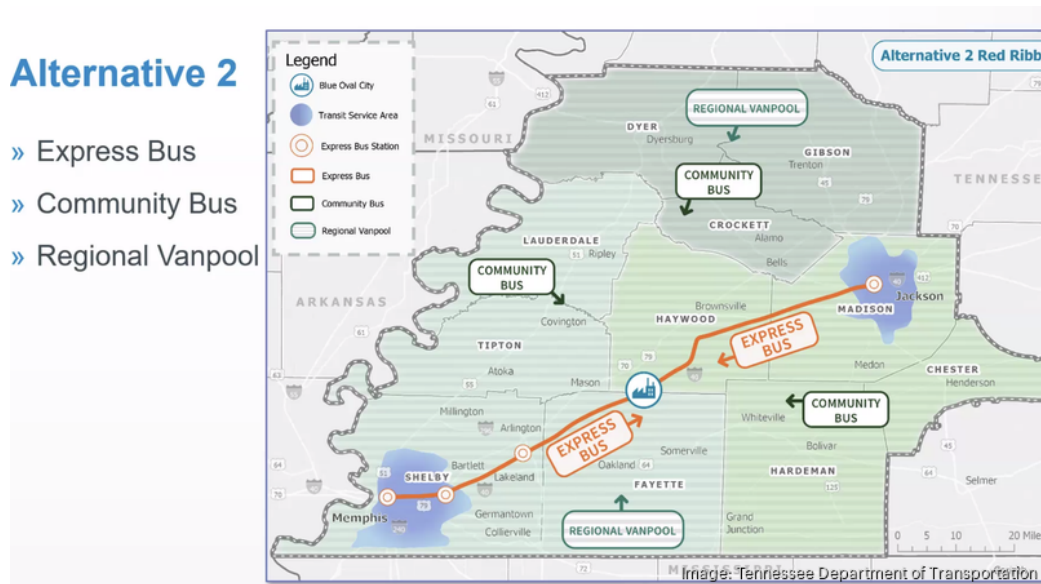


BlueOval City transit study findings from TDOT revealed at community meeting

Apr 12, 2023, 2:22pm CDT



Tennessee Department of Transportation

TDOT's recommended transit plan to get BlueOval City's workers to the plant.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) revealed its BlueOval City transit study at the latest BlueOval Community Impact Meeting held today, April 12.

The TDOT-led study focused on five possible modes of transportation for the estimated 7,000 workers who are to report to

BlueOval City daily once production commences. That number is an increase from prior figures due to estimates on additional workers to be located at the recently announced on-site supplier park. Ford Motor Co. provided TDOT with hiring data to help with the transit study, per a Ford spokesperson.

"Ford is exploring how to remove transportation barriers that could prevent someone from pursuing an opportunity in connection with BlueOval City," the spokesperson said. "We are working with local governments and other stakeholders to develop transportation options."

The plan was presented by Cambridge Systematics, a Massachusetts-based consulting firm. The firm's principal, Tom Harrington, and senior associate, Sarah Windmiller, were on hand in Jackson, Tennessee, to present and answer questions.

The study provided three transit alternatives, each with different solutions to getting workers to the plant. The study had the assumption built in that most BlueOval City workers will be coming from the Memphis metro.

Alternative 1 has the Memphis-area workers taking commuter rail to BlueOval City. The rail would utilize built track but would have to share with industrial rail users, which might cause a reliability issue. Workers from Jackson would utilize an express coach bus.

Alternative 1 has an estimated capital cost of \$490 million to \$600 million and an estimated operation and management cost of \$5.4 million to \$6.5 million annually.

Alternative 2 is nearly the same as Alternative 1, except rather than rail, Memphis workers would have an express coach bus too. The cost for this plan is estimated between \$8.6 million and \$12.1 million and has an estimated operation and management cost of \$3 million to \$4.1 million annually.

Alternative 3 replaces the Memphis and Jackson express coach bus lines with standard transit buses. The cost for this plan is estimated between \$10 million to \$14.6 million and has an estimated operation and management cost of \$2.8 million to \$3.7 million annually.

All three alternatives also see community buses launching from Hardeman, Tipton, and Crockett counties. All remaining areas

would be covered by regional van pools.

Cambridge Systematics recommended Alternative 2, which, according to Harrington, had lower upfront costs and a cost/benefit ratio of 2.76. Alternative 1 had a cost/benefit of 0.28 and Alternative 3 had a cost/benefit ratio of 2.85. The key impact measures going into those calculations were direct expenditures, travel cost savings, travel time value savings, crash cost savings, fuel savings, and emissions reductions.

Alternative 2 was also selected by TDOT for its flexibility and ability to utilize existing infrastructure, with four pickup centers singled out in the study. It highlighted Downtown and the Wolfchase area as park-and-ride locations and Airways Boulevard and American Way as a transit center.

Suggested pickup centers for other modes in the region include Old Hickory Mall in Jackson, and in Ripley, Covington, Oakland, Trenton, Dyersburg, Alamo, Henderson, Bolivar, and Brownsville.

The suggestion of Alternative 2 was not final. Today's meeting was in Jackson, but two sessions are scheduled to cover the same information and feature a Q&A on Thursday, April 13, from 5-6 p.m. and again from 6-7 p.m. in the Cordova Library at 8457 Trinity Road.



Stephen MacLeod

Reporter - *Memphis Business Journal*
