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The people of Lebanon and Wilson County are making transportation history in Middle Tennessee.

During the first work-week this month, the Music City Star commuter rail between Lebanon and downtown Nashville set a record when it carried an average of 1,000 trips each day. Assuming each of these trips was a round-trip, 500 persons were able to ride the train instead of driving each day.

The success of the Music City Star is spreading. For those who commute to Nashville, the Music City Star is a genuine transportation choice.

A second historic project emerging is an opportunity that is occurring in hundreds of locations across the nation and is now available here because of the Music City Star. It is called "transit oriented development."

Simply put, "transit oriented development" is the attraction of residential, retail and commercial development to a particular location that has, or soon will have, direct mass transit access.

The logic is clear. Direct access to mass transit increases property values, increases tax revenues, adds to the quality of life and obviously provides new riders to mass transit.

Recognizing this, developers have proposed to the City of Lebanon just such a development in west Lebanon along the Music City Star rail line. They have asked that the City rezone this area using the "SP" zone category that is available in the City's zoning ordinance. The developers have also asked the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to add a new Music City Star station in the middle of this development. The RTA has agreed with this request pending final approval of the development by the City of Lebanon.

If this development is approved, the City of Lebanon will continue to lead the way in proving the value of mass transit in Middle Tennessee.

Where “transit oriented developments” have been established across the nation, residential and commercial property values have risen 10-23 percent above comparable properties without transit access. Transit ridership has grown significantly with minimal increase in the cost of the service.

But possibly the most important benefit has been the new choice offered to residents, shoppers and employees: simply walk to the train and climb aboard. This is history in the making and people from around our region will come to Lebanon and see how it was done!