

The Region's Plan Policy Framework

Public Review 7/14/15 – 7/27/15

Comments Received & ARC Responses

The review and comment period for The Region's Plan Policy Framework occurred from July 14, 2015 through July 27, 2015. An email was sent to everyone who had participated in online surveys, public meetings, community forums and panel discussions since June 2014 inviting them to download a copy of the framework for review. A microsite was created to display the framework and proposed policies. Additionally, the request for review was advertised via various ARC newsletters and presentations.

ARC received 40 public comments via email. The comments and response are summarized below by category. A summary of all ensuing edits to The Region's Plan Policy Framework based on these comments and other review is also included at the end of this document.

Healthy, Livable Communities – General

Public Comment #1:

My background is in higher education so some of my comments come from that vantage point.

Higher Education- needs to be a focus on the strength of BOTH job development and the benefit to the region and society of intellectual knowledge development (i.e. innovative thinking).

Residential areas- great attention in the development of new residential areas with "up-front" thinking about how the persons moving in will get in and out of their area to shop, work, and play. Current practice seem to support approving all kinds of residential development; then after-the-fact when people start complaining about not being able to move from one place to the other attention has to be targeted to the problem often at a much greater cost than if it was done prior to the development.

A "correction"- on page 18 "Ensuring Comprehensive Transportation...", "Improve transit & non-single occupant..." the word "sage" should be "safe".

Traffic congestion observation- I've spent almost my whole life in higher education and most recently since moving to the greater Atlanta area, I found the most consistent answer to parents and new students relative to where they should look to live when considering housing as a student was that I'd tell them it could be the most important decision they would make if coming to the greater Atlanta area.

If they didn't strategically consider housing that would allow them to travel opposite of the "rush of traffic" or perpendicular they could add anywhere from 1-2 hours a day to their time away from home.

In my own case I live in Woodstock and worked in Marietta and no matter which of my 4 routes I traveled the 17 miles from home to work (almost all were expressway) the best I could do was 45 minutes each way and could easily expand to 90 minutes. When I would share this example with parents and prospective students they often thought I was kidding.

I recently retired, but continue to do some work for the University from home; by far the absolute best part of this new arrangement is not having to make the commute to and from work each day. I've basically given myself 15 to 20 hours of additional time to do more pleasant things each week.

For a number of years I worked at a college and lived in San Diego, CA and prior to moving there heard about how terrible the traffic was; there is no comparison to how bad traffic is, as the Greater Atlanta area is significantly much worse.

I hope these comments and observations are of assistance to you as your project progresses.

ARC Response:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts regarding The Region's Plan Policy Framework. Many of the issues you raise are considered and addressed in ARC's detailed plans, which will be guided by this comprehensive policy framework. Please stay connected with ARC to learn more about opportunities to stay involved as we continue to develop specific actions related to The Region's Plan vision. I also encourage you to seek out opportunities to participate in the local development work within your city and county as you can have a valuable impact. We have also corrected the text in the document to "safe" as intended.

Public Comment #2:

I am very heartened to find the planned goals around the Healthy Livable Communities. As an Executive Director of an emergency housing program for homeless women and children, we are studying the trends of poverty growth in the suburbs. We serve the cities of Sandy Springs, Roswell, Alpharetta, Milton and Johns Creek. Affordable housing is rapidly declining with the gentrification of old apartment complexes and new housing.

We would definitely be willing to participate in any forums on these issues. We have convened the North Fulton Poverty Task Force, which has met monthly for over a year to look at gaps in service. Stakeholders include non-profit, corporate and faith leaders. Happy to share any developments, etc., with our group.

ARC Response:

Thank you. The Region's Plan Policy Framework is a set of objectives and policies intended to help ARC identify specific actions within various programs and plans in order to achieve key goals, such as providing healthy, livable communities throughout the region. As part of this and on-going work, ARC has established the Policy, Equity, Opportunity Committee to explore issues around regional poverty. We will be certain to keep you included on our mailing lists as we host various forums and event related to these issues. You can learn more about the [Poverty, Equity, Opportunity Committee at ARC's website](#). Also, you can [sign up for The Regional Newsbriefs](#) for more regular information about ARC's work.

Public Comment #3:

You've developed a very attractive set of images and words to describe ARC's vision of the future. Not sure this vision is comprehensive enough for the entire region – is very Atlanta-centric as opposed to REGIONAL with all the patchwork of very urban, transitioning, suburban, rural, and undeveloped natural spaces – all with very different requirements and considerations.

This is a very nice PR tool, but the most important part, realizing the vision, is not given a lot of thought/attention. We need to be thinking about SPECIFIC ways to call citizens of the region (and its leaders) to ACTION to actually accomplish better outcomes and to communicate what those are. Most of us don't care that we're the 7th biggest this and 4th biggest that. We care about being as great at the important things that all of us value – safety, choices, affordability, cleanliness, quality education, health, forward-thinking, caring, etc. That should be the subject of your next presentation....thanks for sharing.

ARC Response:

The Region's Plan Policy Framework is intended to provide an overall vision with specific objectives and policies designed to accomplish goals established by ARC's Policy Board. These objectives and policies reflect partnerships from around the entire region and were developed through extensive engagement with regional policy makers, local governments, community stakeholders and the general public. Each policy will then be supported by specific actions included within ARC's divisional plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Development Guide, the Water District Plan and so on.

Public Comment #4:

1. Neighborhoods, Communities & Housing - the City needs to work hard to ensure that the existing housing in historic neighborhoods and the overall fabric of those historic neighborhoods is maintained. Ordinances that discourage heavy development and larger new structures or that encourage developers to tear down of historic homes will discourage the displacement of already diverse neighborhoods and communities. There should be some protections to prevent existing residents from being priced out of their homes and discourage the fracturing of existing communities. This is an existing issue in the City of Decatur. It has occurred over the past several years in the City of Decatur as neighborhoods such as Oakhurst, East Lake, and Kirkwood have changed drastically in diversity and existing residents have been pushed out by soaring taxes. Diverse communities have been split or broken apart where residents sold out because they were unable to pay increased taxes. Developers have taken advantage paying little for old historic bungalow homes then tearing them down to build larger scale structures which are unsupported by the City of Decatur's existing infrastructure.

2. Arts & Culture - The Region's Policy Framework mission should also secure the artistic and cultural history for the City of Atlanta. The City of Atlanta has a long and fascinating history and a thriving artistic and cultural community. Arts & Culture are one of the most important draws for new business interests and tourism to our city. Atlanta has done little to preserve these treasures and we almost lost a world class symphony in the past year. The protection and growth of our cultural and artistic legacy should be a part of the Region's Policy Framework if the City of Atlanta is ever to truly be a world-class city.

The items I have listed are noticeably missing gaps in the draft Region's Policy Framework. Without securing existing communities, neighborhoods and housing, the City of Atlanta is not truly leveraging its existing assets and the City's reputation as an environmentally conscious, international city. Arts and culture are an integral part of our city and should be protected, preserved and thrive as a part of our identity and an integral part of any regional development plans for the future of the city.

ARC Response:

The Region's Plan Policy Framework is intended to provide an overall vision with specific objectives and

policies designed to accomplish goals established by ARC's Policy Board. Each policy will then be supported by specific actions included within ARC's divisional plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Development Guide, the Water District Plan and more. One such plan is the [Regional Resource Plan](#), available on ARC's website. In this plan, ARC outlines specific policies to enhance the visibility and management of historic, cultural and natural resources while planning for their place as a part of the region's future growth. New cultural and artistic assets are developed through ARC's growing public arts programs. If you would like to learn more about ARC's work with Regional Resources, feel free to contact aduncan@atlantaregional.com

Public Comment #5:

I do not seem any element to the plan to address safety and crime especially in the areas of Atlanta. I am thinking primary of Midtown and the number of carjacking. Public safety has to be a key component.

ARC Response:

The Region's Plan Policy Framework is intended to provide an overall vision with specific objectives and policies designed to guide actions included within ARC's divisional plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Development Guide, the Water District Plan and more. One of the policies identified on page 21 is to "Promote public safety efforts to create vibrant 24-hour communities."

Public Comment #6:

First thank you for sharing the update on the ARC Plan for the Region. The report shows an exciting picture of growth and stabilization of resources. I do have comments relating to housing and the jobs growth. The concern is that the plan does not serve individuals that represent peripheral middle income households. A high percentage of Individuals and families with skills, secondary and higher education have limited access to the improved transportation (mass transit), convenience of parks and walkability near their residences due to recent developers in the city centers targeting high income earners. The groups I am referencing are recent college graduates, young families and recent retirees that want to have availability to the new and improved urban centers.

My question is, ""How can developers be encouraged, incentivized to include more affordable housing options that are convenient to the city of Atlanta? Options that include fluid transitions to Mass Transit stations (easy access lanes from interstate, better signage to mass transit services, frequent rider discounts/incentives). You may have addressed these and I missed it in the report. If so, please share that information.

Overall, I think we are moving in the right direction we just don't want to leave behind and marginalize a significant number of our citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to share.

ARC Response:

Thank you for your comment, which makes many good points. ARC incorporates specific attention to equity throughout all of its planning efforts. One such effort is through a regional analysis around Equitable Target Areas to help identify communities of specific concern. Additionally, ARC manages the

Livable Centers Initiative to help promote access to a variety of housing and transit options near job centers throughout the region. ARC is also managing the development of Unified Bus Stop Signage under the guidance of the Regional Transit Committee. Specific to housing, ARC continues to work with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to encourage housing tax credits for projects that connect affordable housing to transit and jobs.

The City of Atlanta is responsible for the Atlanta Beltline and has established the Affordable Housing Trust Fund among other programs.

Public Comment #7:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to review the draft plan. While what you are proposing looks good, I have to say Kennesaw in Cobb County has already surpassed your goals.

The number of apartments both built, approved and pending exceed the projections which appear to be predicted.

While new growth is exciting and revenue generating, we must be careful with over developing. What will be done to honor those who have spent years investing in their properties and communities?

ARC Response:

The Livable Centers Initiative is the key way that ARC helps cities and community organizations engage the public on how they want their communities to grow. The City of Kennesaw is currently in the final stages of completing its Kennesaw Town Center LCI Major Plan Update. The goal of its plan echoes your concern about over-development: “This study seeks to create an active downtown Kennesaw that serves its multi-generational community with a mix of uses and community amenities, while preserving its small town charm.” For more information about the Downtown Kennesaw LCI Plan, contact Darryl Simmons, Planning & Zoning Administrator, dsimmons@kennesaw-ga.gov.

Public Comment #8:

I like the picture and wording of Urban Farming. How about more of that in the Region, not just Atlanta? Gwinnett finally is allowing 2 hives and 2 swarms on 10,000 sf for residential areas. Can you encourage the Region (HOAs, counties and cities) to be less restrictive to allow cottage industry urban farming, beekeeping, etc. to supplement their income. Encourage pollinator friendly plants, rain barrels, etc.

ARC Response:

Supported by The Region’s Plan, The Regional Resource Plan guides ARC to consider planning and protection for resources that create opportunities for local food production activities. This work is accomplished through partnerships with non-profit organizations and local governments. As a resource, ARC has begun to identify an inventory sites where community agriculture is taking place, and this can be found at www.atlantaregional.com/communityagriculture. Communities around Metro Atlanta are finding new ways to support community agriculture whether it is by supporting a community garden in a public park, providing fresh produce direct to citizens, implementing zoning to allow for agricultural uses, or revising policy documents such as local Comprehensive Plans. ARC has provided technical support upon request to many communities pursuing these goals, and well as community groups and

non-profits that seek to work with policy makers to bring about local change. For more information, you may contact Allison Duncan at aduncan@atlantaregional.com.

Public Comment #9:

Bicycling, walkability, and gardening are two key components to sustainability for the ARC region!

Glad to see they were included --- could have been even MORE of a focus!

-- supporter of the Peachtree Creek Greenway (a bike path and linear park connecting Brookhaven, Chamblee, Doraville, and "LaVista Hills" to the Beltline!)

ARC Response:

ARC recognizes the important of bicycling, walking and healthy food access in the Region. The agency is currently updating the Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian plan, of which the Peachtree Creek Greenway is a part. Results of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan will be included in full-stop in The Region's Plan, ARC's comprehensive document. Updates about the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan are available at www.atlantaregional.com/bikeped.

Public Comment #10:

I've said it before and I'll say it again for what it's worth. The Atlanta metro area is in desperate need of a rail system that stretches well beyond marta. Most of the traffic comes from outside the Atlanta area like from gwinnett and further yet the only way in is I 85. I myself now take grta as I got fed up with traffic and I'm not sure whether or not that will continue. The Governor seems to think that adding more concrete is the answer but it is not. If you look at other major cities like NY and Chicago you will see a much more sensible approach to traffic. This Governor seems to raise his nose at the thought of mass transit and it will be the downfall of the state. A facelift is also needed for many parts of Atlanta as there are too many depressed areas. A major shift in the approach to how crime is fought needs to happen. If you look at the crime stats for atl they are not pretty People are scared as there are armed robberies,car jacking all over the city and on the uprise quickly. A major change needs to happen quickly.

ARC Response:

Transit in the Atlanta region is as much a political issue as a financial one. The current governance structure of MARTA does not allow it to operate outside the counties that have approved a 1% sales tax for its operations. Currently, only Fulton, DeKalb and Clayton counties have agreed to participate in the MARTA system. By act of the Georgia legislature, Cobb and Gwinnett may also eventually opt into the MARTA system, until then MARTA can only run rail and buses in three metro area counties. Other counties are currently not allowed to opt into the MARTA system.

Financially, it is very expensive to build rail over such long distances as exist in our region. MARTA has been studying extending rail into Clayton County, up GA-400 in North Fulton, to the Emory area and to the East along I-20. These projects will likely be reflected in the Region's Plan and we invite you to provide public comment and participate in the development of that plan over the coming months.

That said, Cobb, Gwinnett and GRTA do provide bus services along the major highway corridors into the city center. Plans are in place to expand GRTA service in the future to connect more locations. With the State's development of new managed lanes on the freeways, transit buses will have a unique

congestion-avoiding advantage.

The Region's Plan Policy Framework is intended to provide an overall vision with specific objectives and policies designed to guide actions included within ARC's divisional plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Development Guide, the Water District Plan and more. One of the policies identified on page 21 is to "Promote public safety efforts to create vibrant 24-hour communities."

Comprehensive Transportation System

Public Comment #11:

As far as transit expansion goes, all the regions transit agencies need to be under 1 agency. I have attempted to travel to Cobb County via MARTA and CCT. It is more headache than it is worth, because of having to load MARTA trips and stored cash value for the 2 different transit agencies. Transit expansions needs to be coordinated across multiple jurisdictions and not just stop at a county line; eg: Cobb Pkwy BRT plan.

Affordable housing in all areas of the metro are important.

ARC Response:

Thanks for the thoughtful comment on regional transit governance. The Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Transit Committee (RTC) and Transit Operators Subcommittee (TOS) play significant roles in service coordination between the region's many transit operators. The RTC and TOS are comprised of representatives from transit agencies and local governments, and work together to improve the rider experience for those traveling regionally. Past work from these committees has included planning support to the Breeze fare payment system, coordinating the distribution of federal transit funds, establishing transfer agreements between transit agencies, and the development of a regional trip planning website. These committees continually look for new ways to improve the regional transit experience, and will evaluate the development of a regional fare media product, regional coordination on the implementation of new bus stop signage, and the development of a regional app and website to view real-time transit information.

We'll be sure to forward your comment along to our regional transit operators for their consideration as well.

Public Comment #12:

I received your email soliciting opinions and feedback. Here is mine:

- The plan appears to be addressing all of the critical needs. I am encouraged by these categories.
- I fear the planning phase is taking too long. We've heard the same pain points and projected future state for decades, yet very little has changed. I'm jaded. I need to see action sooner than later.
- I do not see a plan for communicating the status of initiatives. Where will we go to see the status of projects underway?
- Who is going to be the program manager for this collection of projects?

- I just returned from a trip to Los Angeles. In the time since my last visit (2008), they have already constructed a rail line to connect Santa Monica with Downtown Los Angeles. Construction began in 2012 and it will be complete this year. In the same time, what have we built? A glorified bicycle trail called the Beltline? We must do better in order to address needs that are now years old and to remain competitive with other cities. (reference: <http://www.buildexpo.org/ppm-faq/what-phase-of-the-project-is-under-construction/>)

Thank you for reading my feedback. I hope you treat this as a project, like the ones the general public are accustomed to in their workplaces. We need status reporting, transparency, and forecasts.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on The Region's Plan Policy Framework. This comprehensive framework will guide specific strategies within ARC's various work plans, including The Regional Transportation Project (RTP). To develop the RTP, ARC is conducting extensive technical analysis and outreach with state and local planning partners to determine the need and purpose of many projects. While the level of existing congestion is a major consideration in funding recommendations, the plan also must account for safety concerns, regional equity, project readiness, the level of public and political support and future growth assumptions. The plan is updated on a regular cycle at a minimum of once every four years, so the need and purpose for many projects will be reassessed and can either be accelerated or delayed in the future as appropriate.

Once the decision is made to advance a project, the timeline for environmental review, engineering/design, right-of-way acquisition and construction can be quite lengthy. Streamlining the process as much as possible is a topic of considerable ongoing discussion within the transportation profession to address public and political dissatisfaction with the perceived slow pace of progress. ARC provides detailed information on each project, include the project sponsor, as well as status updates in the [Planit database](#) and the [Breaking Ground report](#), both of which are regularly updated.

Public Comment #13:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. It looks like you are on the right path to send the Atlanta metro region in the right direction for the future.

Specifically for Spalding County, I would like to see in the plan a proposed Rails to Trails project to make Griffin and Spalding County a more healthy, livable community by developing a seven-and-a-half mile, walkable path that can be jointly used by walkers, runners and bicyclists of all ages and abilities from downtown Griffin, past the UGA campus, past the Dundee Lake recreation area, past Sun City Peachtree to the Henry County line where it can connect with Henry County's fine network of trails. This trail could follow the overgrown right of way of what is known as the Roosevelt Railroad. Spalding County had a study done in 2011 that outlines the particulars of such a trail.

ARC Response:

Thanks for reviewing and commenting on the Region's Plan Policy Framework. The framework is supportive of providing communities with resources to develop multi-use paths for transportation purposes. All transportation projects have to be proposed by a local jurisdiction. We'll forward your comments on to Spalding County for them to consider and we encourage you to actively participate in your county's transportation planning process.

Public Comment #14:

The website looks great, very well done!

I appreciate all of the hard work that has been put into this process.

My comment would be please do not put too much emphasis on transit in Metropolitan Atlanta. Henry County is working right now to expand the quality of the transit services that we provide to the citizens of Henry County. The same thing should happen across Metropolitan Atlanta. However, please recognize that the vast majority of commuters use private vehicles. When evaluating the comments that you receive, please recognized that survey results can be skewed in favor of one special interest group or another. Extrapolating survey results across the entire Region may introduce inaccuracies.

Please do not recommend funding policies that are based on the opinions of those who do not represent the majority of Metropolitan Atlanta commuters (even those commuters who may not have participated in the surveys).

ARC Response:

Thanks for your comments. ARC collects data from the public in a variety of ways and while some surveys are not scientific, the Metro Atlanta Speaks survey is, in fact, a statistically valid sample of metro Atlanta citizens. We at ARC use these opinion polls to help shape policy for the Atlanta region.

That said, there is no emphasis placed on any one mode of transportation over another in the Region's Plan Policy Framework. The framework outlines policies to equally ensure the success of all modes of transportation in the Atlanta region to maximize the benefit of the dollars we spend on transportation. Decisions about prioritizing modes will occur later in the Regional Transportation Plan development process.

Public Comment #15:

You can tell me why MARTA is not able to expand rail to the suburbs? Rail needs to be expanded an hour or more on every freeway in all directions. Atlanta should be striving to be like New York City, DC or Chicago. I would vote for any initiatives that investing rail expansion over road projects.

As for water conservancy, why hasn't Georgia built more man-made lakes to store/collect more water?

ARC Response:

Thanks for taking time out of your day to review and comment on the Region's Plan Policy Framework. Transit in the Atlanta region is as much a political issue as a financial one. The current governance structure of MARTA does not allow it to operate outside the counties that have approved a 1% sales tax for its operations. Currently, only Fulton, DeKalb and Clayton counties have agreed to participate in the MARTA system. By act of the Georgia legislature, Cobb and Gwinnett may also eventually opt into the MARTA system, until then MARTA can only run rail and buses in three metro area counties. Other counties are currently not allowed to opt into the MARTA system.

Financially, it is very expensive to build rail over such long distances as exist in our region. MARTA has been studying extending rail into Clayton County, up GA-400 in North Fulton, to the Emory area and to the East along I-20. These projects will likely be reflected in the Region's Plan and we invite you to provide public comment and participate in the development of that plan over the coming months.

That said, Cobb, Gwinnett and GRTA do provide bus services along the major highway corridors into the city center. Plans are in place to expand GRTA service in the future to connect more locations. With the State's development of new managed lanes on the freeways, transit buses will have a unique congestion-avoiding advantage.

There are currently 3 reservoirs in various stages of planning and permitting within the 15-County Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District area. The most recent reservoir, Hickory Log, was completed in 2008.

Public Comment #16:

Excellent document. Thank you for providing the opportunity to review.

With community congestion worsening on our feeder roads & interstates, please consider revisiting outer arcs if the outer loop was deemed not viable.

A common thread in the document appears to be towards the focus of disadvantaged individuals & communities. I would encourage programs helping those that are unable to help themselves and people that have the drive to succeed versus another unsuccessful government grant / poverty program that believes it can motivate the folks that choose to live off of others.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on The Region's Plan Policy Framework. This comprehensive framework will guide specific strategies within ARC's various work plans, including The Regional Transportation Project (RTP). To develop the RTP, ARC is conducting extensive technical analysis and outreach with state and local planning partners to determine the need and purpose of many projects. While the level of existing congestion is a major consideration in funding recommendations, the plan also must account for safety concerns, regional equity, project readiness, the level of public and political support and future growth assumptions. The plan is updated on a regular cycle at a minimum of once every four years, so the need and purpose for many projects will be reassessed and can either be accelerated or delayed in the future as appropriate.

Following guidance from the federal government as well as local policymaker input and community feedback, ARC recognizes the role that planning serves in increasing connections for people to reach economic opportunity through access to transportation, education, resources and other essential services.

Public Comment #17:

I would love to see some bike paths and more sidewalks in the Gwinnett area. Right now it is not safe to ride a bike except in parks. It would be nice to be able to use a bike as transportation.

I visited Irvine, CA and that had a wonderful system of bike paths. If there is any plans for this, it would get my vote.

P.S. I'm 60 years old so I probably wouldn't be utilizing it but it is a wonderful idea."

ARC Response:

ARC recognizes the important of bicycling, walking and healthy food access in the Region. The agency is currently updating the Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian plan, of which the Peachtree Creek Greenway is a part. Results of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan will be included in full-stop in The Region's Plan, ARC's comprehensive document. Updates about the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan are available at www.atlantaregional.com/bikeped.

We will share your comments with Gwinnett County and we encourage you to participate in the local planning process through the County as well as your local city.

Public Comment #18:

I love the plans and I believe they are exactly what Atlanta Metro Region needs. However, regarding the transportation, I totally agree that MARTA should expand at least by 100 miles and also add new rail lines and stations. There needs to be a direct line going NW to SE and NE to SW to cross the current rail lines and outside of the Perimeter. Basically, that would give you transportation to all points of the Metro Atlanta Region. Currently, MARTA trains runs in a straight line North and South and East and West. With the exception of the Doraville line which branches out. Adding diagonal rail lines would include all points in the perimeter and outside region.

Also, I greatly feel that the MARTA Rails should change its name to "METRO", the city buses could continue with the name MARTA. MARTA trains has had a negative stigma for years and I think a fresh new approach and a new name that's very inclusive would enhance the transportation system. I would also like to suggest that the trains have a new fare structure similar to Washington DC's METRO and San Francisco's BART, that would help keep the METRO with the funding it would need to maintain a really good safe, clean Rapid Transit system that would attract your business and working professionals. The City buses could remain at a lower fixed cost for the elderly, students and lower income riders, so they will have transportation and not be priced out of transportation that's needed. Of course, the trademark Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority would stay. Similar to Georgia Power, A Southern Company. Example: METRO, operated by Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

ARC Response:

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Financially, it is very expensive to build rail over such long distances as exist in our region. MARTA has been studying extending rail into Clayton County, up GA-400 in North Fulton, to the Emory area and to the East along I-20. These projects will likely be reflected in the Region's Plan and we invite you to provide public comment and participate in the development of that plan over the coming months.

That said, Cobb, Gwinnett and GRTA do provide bus services along the major highway corridors into the city center. Plans are in place to expand GRTA service in the future to connect more locations. With the

State's development of new managed lanes on the freeways, transit buses will have a unique congestion-avoiding advantage.

We'll be sure to pass your comment along to our planning partners at MARTA regarding rebranding.

Public Comment #19:

EXCELLENT LONG-TERM REGIONAL PLANNING. HOWEVER, I CANNOT EMPHASIZE ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF RADICALLY IMPROVING MASS TRANSPORTATION IN THE REGION. WE ARE CHOKING IN OUR SINGLE-DRIVER AUTOS. WE MUST LOOK TO CITIES LIKE NYC, LONDON, PARIS..... THEIR SUBWAYS GO EVERYWHERE. IF METRO ATLANTA TRULY WANTS TO DECLARE ITSELF AN INTERNATIONAL CITY, MARTA MUST BE ENHANCED RADICALLY TO GO EVERYWHERE, JUST AS THE SUBWAYS OF THESE INTERNATIONAL CITIES DO! A PUSH TO BUILD MARTA UP TO ALPHARETTA IS A FIRST STEP. ALSO, ALONG THE LINES OF THINKING INTERNATIONALLY, THE DOWNTOWN ATLANTA MUST BE MADE TOTALLY SAFE TO ENSURE THAT VISITORS AND FOLKS FROM ALL OVER THE REGION WILL BE WILLING TO COME DOWNTOWN 24/7, TO ENJOY RESTAURANTS, HOTELS, SPORTS, SYMPHONY, ENTERTAINMENT, CONFERENCES, ETC. BECAUSE OF CONCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ON THE PART OF SUBURBANITES ABOUT DOWNTOWN SAFETY, THERE IS A HUGE RELUCTANCE, YET, IN THE SUBURBS TO DO SO; AND THIS IS A GREAT DETRIMENT TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE VITALITY OF DOWNTOWN ATLANTA.

ARC Response:

Thanks for taking the time to provide comment on the Region's Plan Policy Framework. Having a world-class comprehensive transportation system is a key goal of the Region's Plan. Regional transit is an important component of any metropolitan area's transportation system. The Policy Framework outlines strategies that ARC can follow to ensure the transportation investments we make maximize benefit for the dollar. Policies to support transit's success are outlined to boost economic competitiveness and reduce environmental impacts.

One of the policies identified on page 21 is to "Promote public safety efforts to create vibrant 24-hour communities." Central Atlanta Progress and the Ambassador Force of Downtown Atlanta, as well as the City of Atlanta Police are downtown regularly providing information, security and resources to residents and visitors.

Public Comment #20:

ARC's developer-driven "planning" continues apace. For the ordinary Metro Atlanta resident, there is much less here than meets the eye. A quote: "...yet 15 percent of the 10 county region's jobs are located within a half mile of a MARTA Heavy Rail station..." It seems to me that the more relevant fact is: How far from the jobs do the workers filling those jobs live? We live in the least-dense metropolitan area of its size in the world. We are a network of suburban clusters, not a hub-and-spoke metro area. Rail cannot ever be a real transportation solution for this area, and actually INCREASES the carbon footprint over auto-based solutions. We are subsidizing this non-solution with tax dollars that could otherwise go to providing real solutions. Today's \$2.50 ride on MARTA actually costs around \$12.50. Additionally, spending almost \$1 billion on "managed lanes" is a ridiculous use of precious capital that will not yield a noticeable improvement in congestion. Politically-correct but factually questionable statements like the following reduce the credibility of the ARC plan: "A robust system of

transit is a key component to the transportation system of any large urbanized area. Transit services help mitigate congestion and improve air quality by offering motorists a viable alternative to single occupant vehicle usage.” A focus on bus rapid transit (BRT) would provide a much more effective transportation solution. Another focus should be on creative ways to improve the major E-W and inter-cluster arteries such as Holcomb Bridge Rd, Old Milton Parkway, etc., to eliminate stoplights and facilitate continuous flow. The incessant focus on transportation funding is misguided. The focus should be on how the funding is being spent. The voters weren’t stupid when they rejected the TSPLOST. The proposed projects were misguided then and remain misguided.

ARC Response:

Thanks for your comment. In regards to transit expansion in the future, the Region’s Plan Policy Framework makes no prescriptions on the type of transit technology to prioritize. Regional transit agencies go through a decision-making process as part of project scope development and environmental review to select a preferred alignment and technology. The Region’s Plan Policy Framework sets policies in place to ensure that transit, in all forms, is developed in a way that ensures its successful implementation.

Arterial roadway projects are proposed by local government sponsors. ARC uses models and tools to evaluate and compare proposed projects before allocating federal funds for their construction. Please consider participating in your local transportation planning process to provide public comment on local project priority.

Public Comment #21:

The current draft plan looks and sounds fantastic! I can only hope that this is a plan that can be defined more clearly and actually executed. Atlanta is SERIOUSLY lacking in terms of a comprehensive transportation system. This is the largest detriment to the region and is required to make the Atlanta region competitive on the world stage. Thus far, the will of suburban neighborhoods has prevented growth of a reasonable transportation system, but this must change (hopefully within years and not decades, which would be far too late).

Thank you for your efforts!

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review this document. One of the responsibilities of The Atlanta Regional Commission is to foster coordination with regional partners to implement community priorities and in this role, ARC coordinates long-range transportation planning throughout the 20 county area. Much of this coordination happens at ARC’s public meetings, forums and workshops. Please look for ways to be involved in this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #22:

I'm very impressed with the goals of this Plan. The forethought of this future development is amazing.

The most important issue, in my mind, is the availability of affordable, efficiently run (time in transit is very important to entice users), convenient & easily accessible transportation. How can this be realistically accomplished in an area so wide-spread as metropolitan Atlanta?

Please continue to send me these reviews. I'm forwarding them on to others who are also greatly interested.

ARC Response:

Transit expansion, maintenance and reliability are all major emphasis areas of The Region's Plan goal to ensure a comprehensive transportation system with 21st Century technology. The transit vision will be more specifically addressed within the long-range Regional Transportation Plan, currently being developed by ARC. This plan will aim to connect a large portion of the Atlanta Region with bus and rail with both financially constrained and aspirational components. Please keep in touch with ARC to learn more as this plan is further developed between now and February 2016.

Competitive Economy

Public Comment #23:

How will you insure that all the improvements are spread equally among the counties? Also, how is will the cityhood proposals affect this plan?

ARC Response:

The Region's Plan Policy Framework is intended to provide an overall vision with specific objectives and policies designed to accomplish goals established by ARC's Policy Board. Each policy will then be supported by specific actions included within ARC's divisional plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Development Guide, the Water District Plan and more. The projects and programs supported by ARC's plan are developed through extensive technical analysis, policymaker direction and community input as well as coordination with planning partners throughout the region. Improvements throughout the region are balanced in ARC's work as well as at a State level with agencies as appropriate. Any new cities are additional planning partners for ARC to work alongside and support, though they do not impact the technical analysis for project selections.

Public Comment #24:

I have two categories of observations to share:

Education:

1. Georgia should perform its own research into curriculum changes for public schools that will produce interested and qualified pre-apprentice students to fill the jobs demanded by future employers. We aren't there and we are not even looking in the right places. Anything short of a good program of primary research studies in education and the economy will doom our best guesses to failure. Take a close look at the improvements in schooling achieved in other countries! It's complicated, but the more successful countries have adopted conditions for schooling that the United States public schools are abandoning.
2. Our colleges of education are inconsistent and mostly substandard for preparing teachers to develop students capable of entering careers or trades in job categories that will need to be filled in our economy 10 to 25 years from now. I don't see very much energy or effect from efforts to improve

teacher preparation. We have all seen what happened to Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards. Parents and politicians who don't understand them push back on teachers and administrators, who push back on their leaders and no progress is gained. If teachers were already familiar with the content and pedagogy demanded by these improved standards for learning, they would be quite able to handle such objections and soothe the public's frayed nerves. ARC, beware! Well-intended efforts in public education frequently start by leading the cart before the horse.

Transportation

1. I drive more than 30,000 miles per year in Georgia and have seen several dead bodies – victims of highway accidents. I have also seen stretchers loaded into ambulances once or twice each month. Our highway system is far from adequate and far from being safe for all of us to share. Why not start improving safety and traffic flow through better driver's education in our high schools and through a strong public information campaign on traffic courtesy and highway safety? That seems to be the least expensive way of improving traffic until we decide what modal alternatives and highway system designs will ultimately work best.

Such things as left-lane sitting, turning across more than one lane at a time, use of turn signals, how to look over one's shoulder when changing lanes, etc. are concepts not well delivered – if at all – to our youngest drivers (I know this from my own children's driver's ed experiences). If we don't teach it when they begin driving, how are they likely to gain these understandings as adults? Even our commercial 18-wheeler truck drivers seem oblivious to common courtesies while driving, and they sure are ignorant of our laws.

2. And while considering our laws, are we sure that Georgia's rules of the road are well-aligned with most of the rest of this country? The world? We have seen inconveniences and even disasters due to road signs positioned improperly and ineffectively. We also have some laws that were written for special interests or are archaic and inconsistent with the language of similar laws in other states. How are we to use the term, "world-class," while we make such little effort to standardize on national and international norms?

ARC Response:

Regarding your thoughts on education, we agree that state curriculum standards are best when based on research, expertise and best practices. A high quality teacher in every classroom is absolutely critical to having good schools and well-prepared students. Representatives from schools of education throughout the region convene in a group supported by ARC to discuss and address the region's education system. If you would like to know more about this work, please contact Ashley Rivera at arivera@atlantaregional.com.

Regarding your comments on transportation, ARC works closely with the Georgia Department of Transportation to measure, track and improve safety outcomes on regional roadways. GDOT constantly strives to ensure that highway interchanges are well signed and installs or upgrades signs around the region on a continual basis. They also are exploring more innovative driver information techniques, and have recently painted interstate shields on various lanes of I-75/85 through downtown Atlanta to alert drivers of proper lane positioning well in advance of the Brookwood split and the I-20 interchange. To address a startling increase in fatalities on Georgia's roadways in 2015, GDOT launched [DriveAlert ArriveAlive](#). The goal of this statewide safety campaign is to educate drivers about how making simple

changes in their driving behavior can prevent crashes and save lives. The campaign is a partnership between GDOT, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and the Department of Public Safety.

Public Comment #25:

I love the format! I have several diverse comments listed below:

1. I was surprised in the arena of ""Key Employment Sectors"", that you did not include the arts, specifically the movie and music industries. Clearly that has become a hallmark of Atlanta.

2. Almost all of the Plan focuses on the outward trappings of life - infrastructure, employment opps, physical health, transportation, etc. Virtually nothing is said about negative and destructive aspects of culture that have become part of how people live. For example.

- How can we ensure that people in neighborhoods live in the context of good neighboring, that is, knowing that we are connected to people who live around us in relationships that enhance human flourishing?
- How can we encourage neighborhoods to identify and solve their own problems whenever possible, instead of automatically looking to government resources or impersonal public grants to solve their problems from the outside? That way solutions are more accurately targeted to specific needs instead of being generic, neighbors are actively serving with neighbors which grows relationships, and we all have "skin in the game".
- How can we re-introduce a desire to work in the heart of those who have not seen good roles models and have not had good work options?

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review The Region’s Plan Policy Framework. This framework is intended to provide an overall vision with specific objectives and policies designed to accomplish goals established by ARC’s Policy Board. Each policy will then be supported by specific actions included within ARC’s divisional plans such as the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Development Guide, the Water District Plan and more. The narrative of The Region’s Plan Policy Framework does incorporate the burgeoning film industry. Your additional comments about culture are thoughtful and require both localized change as well as societal additional shifts.

Natural Resources

Public Comment #26:

Have reviewed the information you presented. Would recommend making it "Expand and Protect Water Resources" As long as I've lived in the region (i.e. since January 3, 1980) There has been talk about expanding water sources to support the regions growing economy, and provide for extended resource in times of drought.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on The Region's Plan Policy Framework. You can review the final document at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #27:

Goal: Secured, long term water supply

Of general concern here is that the objectives and policy statements seem to lean further towards protection or water quality than obtaining adequate water quantity. As a policy statement this is fine, except that the goal seeks a secured long term water supply, which, is probably more so a quantity issue. Given the goal, we would have expected to see some stronger policy statements regarding maintenance of adequate water supplies.

Objective 1

Changing the public's perception regarding the value and importance of water is not identified as a policy. If people understand the value of water they will better support efforts to protect it. Suggest adding a policy statement that ARC will engage in supporting the education of the public regarding the importance of plentiful clean water.

Objective 2

Our reading on this is that it is a statement in support of Green Infrastructure. To clarify the County's position that GI is one tool that may be used to create sustainable communities, we'd recommend making the following change to the language in "Objective 2":

Objective 2: Support local jurisdictions in planning for and implementing a flexible, diverse and innovative portfolio of environmentally and economically sustainable solutions for our region's water and other environmental infrastructure.

Adjust the second policy statement as follows: "Where appropriate and environmentally and economically sustainable, plan for and support the implementation of regional green infrastructure."

The probably need to clarify whether "regional green infrastructure" refers to: Implementing green infrastructure throughout the region, or Implementing individual green infrastructure solutions that are larger and mitigate impacts from a large land area (vs an individual residential lot)

Add new Objective:

Encourage the USACOE to incentivize return flows to Lake Lanier with some form of crediting arrangement to the specific returner of flow

Objective 1

Adjust Policy bullet 3 as follows: "Identify opportunities for the expansion development and assessment of regional green infrastructure solutions as one method of networks to fostering improved conservation and recreational spaces."

Goal: Building the region as a globally recognized hub of innovation and prosperity

I don't see anywhere in here where it is the stated policy of ARC to balance the environmental and economic needs of the region. Suggest adding a policy statement along the lines of: "Support strategies that appropriately balance environmental management together with economic development to ensure the sustainability and resiliency of the region." I'm sure you can wordsmith with "planning speak" such a statement better than us, but in considering the push on GI, it really does require a balance between the two.

Let me know if you need anything more.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly review this document. While no hierarchy of policies and objectives was intended, water quantity / supply has been moved ahead of water quality to reflect the overall goal of a Secure, Long-Term Water Supply.

Education is central to all that ARC and the Metro Water District do, language was added to page 11 to provide more context and to highlight education as a central theme.

Objective 2 was revised to the following: "Plan for and implement a diverse approach to sustainable solutions for the region's water and environmental infrastructure". Sustainability is defined on Page 2, and is inclusive of economic, environmental, as well as social sustainability.

Policy 2 under Objective 2, the phrase "plan for" was added.

ARC, Metro Water District, and various stakeholders, as part of the Metro Water District's 2016 Plan update, are currently developing a green infrastructure strategy. This strategy will not only provide definitional context, but also create a framework for planning for an implementing green infrastructure at different scales in a way that is feasible.

Return flow policies are addressed via the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Wastewater Management Plan. ARC will continue to coordinate with and support their efforts.

General Comments

Public Comment #28:

In general, I like the policy framework. Especially the "It is the policy of the ARC to..." lists.

If the lists represent the order of priority within a particular objective, I feel that "3. Encourage start-up opportunities, local business development and expansion by improving access to capital and incentives" should be rated first within the category. Although, in my opinion, it is pretty equally valued with "2. Continue to grow the region as a top market for academic research, innovation, and commercialization".

I do not fully understand the importance of intermodal freight (1. Maintain and improve the economic viability and accessibility of key intermodal freight facilities), but do not see it as more important than the currently ranked #2 and #3 in that category.

Disregard if these numeric assignments do not represent a prioritization within said objective category.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review The Region's Plan Policy Framework. The goals, objectives and policies are not prepared with any emphasis on priority. Any necessary prioritizing will be undertaken during the developed of more specific plans and programs.

Public Comment #29:

On pages 17-22 in the third column, the font used made the column difficult to read.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on The Region's Plan Policy Framework. We have adjusted the font to be more readable.

Public Comment #30:

I like the elements in this plan and hope that leaders in the region can work together to make it a cohesive reality. Thanks for all of the work that has gone into this.

ARC Response:

Thank you for your participation. Please stay in touch with the next steps of this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #31:

Good Morning To All, Simply Put "Outstanding"

ARC Response:

Thank you for your participation. Please stay in touch with the next steps of this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #32:

Very broad and general...

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review this Policy Framework. Specific strategies will be outline in the functional plans that are guided by the policies outlined in The Region's Plan. Please stay in touch with the next steps of this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #33:

As a long term resident of the Atlanta area, the single largest mistake I made was to vote against extending MARTA into Gwinnett county. My concern centered on crime, which came anyway. The resulting lack of transportation infrastructure is now a huge detriment to the area. I would like to see MARTA expanded, electric (no polluting) bus utilization, and any other affordable method of transportation to reduce single occupancy auto traffic.

With regard to the environment, the Atlanta area has made huge strides in cleaning up the Chattahoochee River basin and many other waterways. These efforts should continue and be expanded to provide natural resources, beauty, and recreation for future generations.

Thanks for the work you're doing.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on The Region's Plan Policy Framework. ARC will continue to work with partners to ensure efforts to protect the region's natural resources continue. ARC will also continue to work with regional planning partners and MARTA to expand and improve public transit systems. Please stay in touch with the next steps of this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan. Also, please participate in your local planning process to help make further impact.

Public Comment #34:

Very thorough plan that will serve the metro Atlanta area well when implemented.

ARC Response:

Thank you for your participation. Please stay in touch with the next steps of this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #35:

I think the regional plan looks great—one major thing I want to add. I think one of the long term priorities for the city should be capping the connector. The current highway through the city bisects neighborhoods too dramatically, and the economic prospect of an additional live/work/play possibility there is very enticing.

We also need to focus on people-oriented projects, like the Beltline. Concentrating on these types of things will only increase quality of life and attract business/people.

ARC Response:

Thank you for your participation. Specific strategies will be outline in the functional plans that are guided by the policies outlined in The Region's Plan. Please stay in touch with the next steps of this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #36:

My main concern is the lack of cooperation in the various jurisdictions in the metro area. More and more cities, counties, etc. with the need to come to agreement and the general nonsupport of transit options.

ARC Response:

Thank you for your participation. Specific strategies will be outline in the functional plans that are guided by the policies outlined in The Region’s Plan. One of the responsibilities of The Atlanta Regional Commission is to foster coordination with regional partners to implement community priorities and this is spelled out further in policies included in The Region’s Plan Policy Framework, on page 21. Much of this coordination happens at ARC’s public meetings, forums and workshops. Please look for ways to be involved in this process at www.atlantaregional.com/theregionsplan.

Public Comment #37:

I like this goal listed below, however, either it should read “able to meet the needs of 21st century employers” or “able to meet the needs of the 21st century employer”. (I prefer the former). Also:

“access to parks and greenspace improve air quality” on page 15 should be “improves” not “improve”. The content is good. My statement about “21st employers” is on page 7 and on page 18 no comma before “to boost” and is sage all capitals when referring to “sage and connected routes”?

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on The Region’s Plan Policy Framework. We have addressed your comments as appropriate within the text of the document.

Public Comment #38:

We have got to make both college and/or tech school more affordable for our children. They are finishing school with huge amounts of debt that will take years to pay off. During the downturn in our economy, while the public schools were forced to make major cutbacks, our colleges continued with no change. Then our Board of Regents turns around and gives huge raises to many of the college presidents.

Our colleges have abused the HOPE scholarship by constantly raising tuition. This is very shameful.

ARC Response:

Yes, there is increasing awareness that it is not just important to help students apply to college, but to support them all the way through until they complete that degree. While education is not one of ARC’s direct responsibilities, we regularly convene a group of the region’s education organizations with the purpose of improving student success and community investment in all parts our education system. If you want to learn more about what this group is doing and ARC’s role, please contact arivera@atlantaregional.com.

Public Comment #39:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the ARC policy draft. The principles outlined here strike me as sound, although they are quite broad and I wonder by what mechanism specific priorities/projects will rise to the surface. From my own perspective in Decatur, two things resonate with me in particular:

I worry that Decatur is developing in such a way that only extremely wealthy people will be able to afford to live here in the not-so-distant future (between the rising costs of taxes and the skyrocketing

home prices). I wonder if there is an opportunity for partnership related to creative placemaking that brings together the arts facilities/programs at Agnes Scott and the local/regional civic organizations (ARC or otherwise). I'm not sure what to do with those thoughts other than express them here. That said, I appreciate the work you all are doing in relation to regional planning and I feel enthused about the document.

ARC Response:

Thank you for taking time to review this document. The objectives identified within this policy framework will be addressed through specific actions, including performance measures to track success, within specific programs and plans managed by ARC.

Your comments about Decatur are very thoughtful. We will share these with both the City of Decatur planning staff as well as ARC's Arts & Culture Advisory Committee. The City of Decatur maintains a local blog, [The Decatur Minute](#), which includes information on current initiatives and events. The City's "[Better Together](#)" is a citizen-led initiative addressing inclusion.

Public Comment #40:

Thank you once again for another opportunity to review the draft document and to provide feedback. There are several of the Goals and Objectives that appear to fit well with the overall initiatives and vision within the Gwinnett County 2030 Unified Plan and with what Gwinnett County, in general, wishes to pursue. Below is feedback we wish to provide:

GOAL: BUILDING THE REGION AS A GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED HUB OF INNOVATION AND PROSPERITY

Objective 1: Ensure that our employment centers support innovation and balance job growth and economic development. The narrative highlights Freight, Start Ups, and Film. What about Technology, Health I/T and/or R&D??

1. Fully leverage economic generators [What are these, define better] through planning, partnerships and investments

Objective 2: Maintain the region's current successes in existing and emerging employment sectors

4. Coordinate [We believe Promote is better action word here] efforts to promote Metro Atlanta as a place to live, work, visit and do business

GOAL: ENSURING A COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK, INCORPORATING REGIONAL TRANSIT AND 21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY

Objective 2: Improve transit and non-single occupant vehicle options to boost economic competitiveness and reduce environmental impacts

2. Prioritize transit projects in areas with transit-supportive land use, plans and regulations [Please define transit-supportive]

Objective 4: Provide for a safe and secure transportation system “interconnected autonomous vehicles” is listed in the Narrative [We are not opposed to this, but there seem to be other, more realistic short-term options to focus on, such as phone Apps, etc..]

GOAL: DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL WALKABLE, VIBRANT CENTERS, THAT SUPPORT PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Objective 1: Improve quality of life at the neighborhood, city, county and regional levels

1. Encourage development, redevelopment, and transportation improvements to be sensitive to community impacts on neighborhoods [Please define “sensitive to community impacts”]

3. Promote [We believe Support is better action word here] urban design standards that enhance elements of accessibility and livability

Objective 4: Promote land development that expands the sustainable use of resources

2. Balance investment to promote equitable growth in the region's unique communities [Please define “Balanced investment” and “unique communities”]

GOAL: PROMOTING HEALTH, ARTS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective 1: Improve public health through the built environment

3. Expand [Support] regional green infrastructure networks to foster improved conservation and recreation spaces [Until the project to update the Green Infrastructure sections of the Georgia Stormwater manual is complete, reference to Green Infrastructure should be removed or minimized until the update is complete and all jurisdictions understand the impacts of the update. At a minimum, We believe Support is better action word in place of Expand.]

Objective 4: Foster coordination with regional partners to implement community priorities

1. Improve [prefer Encourage improved] resident participation in the planning process

3. Coordinate [prefer Foster improved coordination....] federal, state and local programs

Also of note, four of the Objectives (two under World Class Infrastructure and two under Healthy Livable Communities) are not included in the narrative of the “Working Draft” and are only included in the table near the end of the document.

ARC Response:

Thank you for submitting such a thorough review of these policies.

In response to comments regarding the Competitive Economy goals, the policy document highlights specific examples of employment sectors including logistics, hospitality, information technology, life sciences, film, start-ups and freight. These policies are meant to be supportive to opportunities throughout the region and not prescriptive, recognizing that there are many regional industry assets to support and foster.

In response to comments regarding the Comprehensive Transportation goals, additional recognition of near-term technology has been added. Transit-supportive land use may be defined differently

depending on the type of transit or land use of the area. It is context-sensitive in nature and will not be exactly the same for all areas.

In response to the comments regarding the Walkable, Vibrant Neighborhoods goal, ARC has addressed some of these concerns and others to provide additional, more specific language for purposes of clarifying the intent of the policies. Please refer to the changes noted at the end of this document.

In response to the comments regarding green infrastructure, ARC has added clarifying language to indicate the intent of the policy to be inclusive of a wide variety of green infrastructure tools. The wording was adjusted to “support” instead of “expand”.

Please refer to the updated policy document, as well as the notes below for all changes. Again, thank you for your review and comments.

Updates to The Region’s Plan Policy Framework – Based on Public & Committee Review

Generally, the policy framework was updated in the following ways:

- Added text about the resiliency of the region. (Based on multiple comments.)
- Changed text on page 5 to highlight that The Region’s Plan supports balanced growth through the region. (Based on a Transportation & Air Quality Subcommittee comment.)
- Re-worded the final paragraph on page 9 to ensure that road projects should support economic competitiveness and multimodal mobility while being sensitive to the needs and culture of the existing community. (Based on multiple comments discussing road expansion.)
- Changed the text and policy on Page 11 to better reflect the intent behind the existing statements and policy. (Based on multiple comments on water supply, water quality and greenspace planning.)
- Changed the text in tables in the Objectives & Policies section, specifically on pages 17, 18, 19 and 21, to properly reflect the above revisions.

Specifically, the following edits were made:

Pg. 9

The Region’s Plan prioritizes the maintenance of our **transportation** system while promoting trip reliability and system resiliency in the future.

Pg. 9

For existing and emerging employment centers, the Region’s Plan policies prioritize transit expansion projects in areas with transit-supportive land use and regulations to ensure implementation of transit in the region.

Pg. 9

When applicable based on a community's unique context, roadway expansions should be implemented as complete streets to accommodate people driving, riding transit, walking and bicycling. The expansion of roadways into rural areas should **emphasize facilities that support economic competitiveness by improving multi-modal connectivity between centers or addressing critical safety needs.**

Pg. 10

Technology has changed the way residents live and travel in the Atlanta region. New technologies provides travelers with real-time data to inform decisions and will continue to shape the way residents move in the future. **The Region's Plan supports the development and further application of existing technologies, such as user friendly smart phone apps, to improve the travel experience. The application of technologies, such as synchronized signal timing and advanced traffic management systems, improve how local governments stay ahead of congestion.**

Looking further into the future, the Region's Plan fosters the implementation of emerging technologies, such as interconnected autonomous vehicles, to ensure the region stays competitive and technologically ahead of the curve.

Pg. 11

This type of integrated water management, **which includes a robust education program**, is a key focus of the Metro Water District's 2016 Plan Update.

Pg. 13

In partnership with local communities, **equitably and strategically** focus resources in areas of need and importance

Invest in **equitable and improved** access to a variety of safe, quality housing, including options for aging in place

Pg. 17

Ensure that our **existing and future** employment centers support innovation and balance job growth and economic development

Pg. 18

Strategically expand the transportation system while supporting local land use plans

2. Direct federal funding for road capacity expansion to the regional strategic transportation system, **including the managed lanes system**

4. Implement a complete streets approach on roadway projects **that is sensitive to the existing community**

Pg. 20

Improve quality of life at the neighborhood, city, county and regional levels

1. Encourage development, redevelopment, and transportation improvements to **consider impacts on neighborhoods and communities**
3. Promote **and support** urban design standards that enhance elements of accessibility and livability

In partnership with local communities, **equitably and strategically** focus resources in areas of need and importance

1. Encourage increased housing, services and **equal** employment opportunities for residents around transit stations
4. **Encourage equitable** access to opportunities and resources for the region's disadvantaged and vulnerable populations

Invest in equitable and improved access to a variety of safe, quality housing, including options for aging in place

2. Encourage local communities to increase housing options near large employment centers, **including equal access to housing options**

Pg. 21

Improve public health through the built environment

3. **Support regional greenspace networks, which may include green infrastructure, to foster improved conservation and recreation spaces-**

Integrate sound environmental management principles that ensure the region's sustainability

Foster coordination with regional partners to implement community priorities

1. **Encourage communities to** improve resident participation in the planning process
3. **Foster improved coordination** for federal, state and local programs