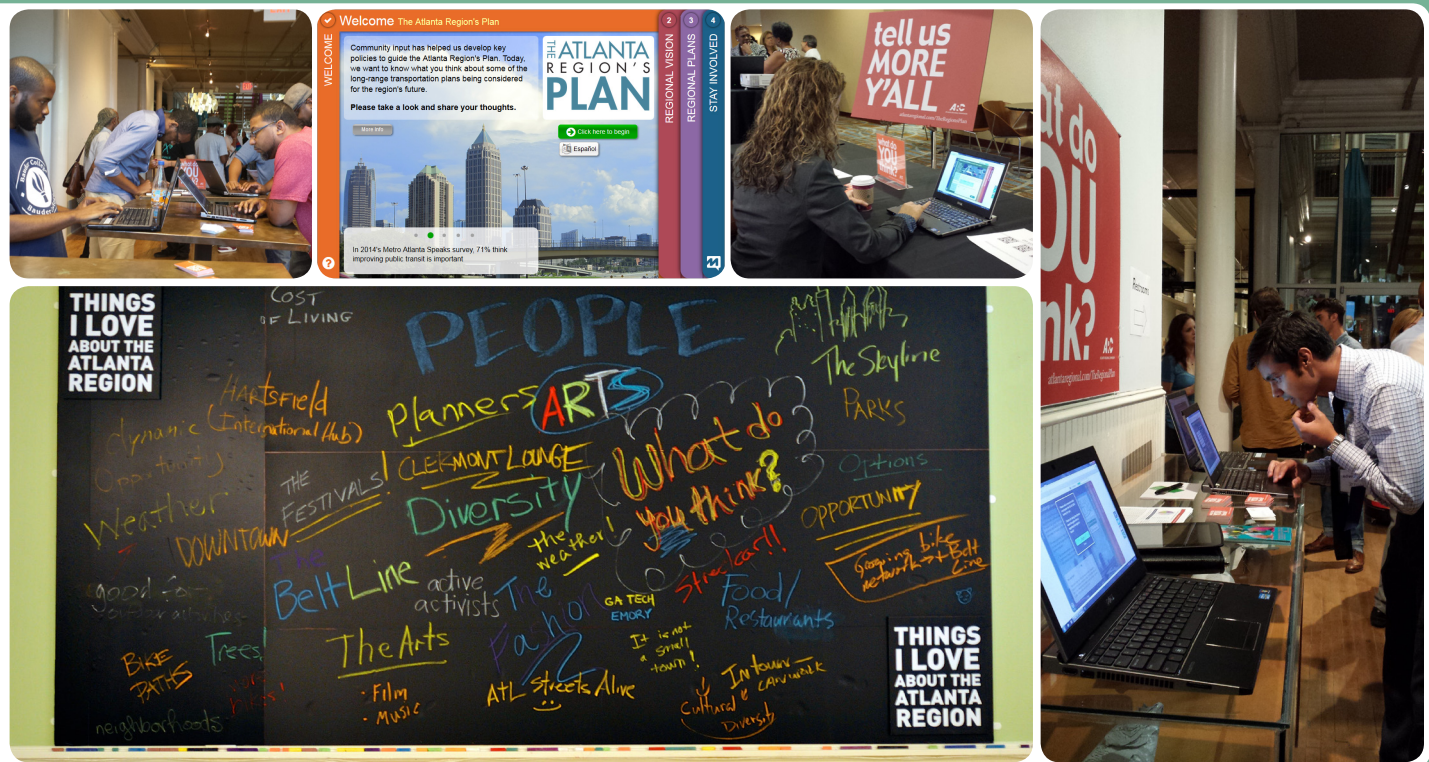# THE ATLANTA REGION'S PLAN

OUTREACH EVALUATION

August 2016

ARC
ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

The Atlanta Region's Plan
An Evaluation of the Community Participation Process

Introduction

The Atlanta Region's Plan process to develop an update to the Regional Transportation Plan was conducted from June 2014 through February 2016. This process continued to build upon the community outreach and technical work conducted in the development of PLAN 2040 in prior years.

The resulting Regional Transportation Plan employed a variety of community outreach activities throughout its development. The following evaluation of these activities has several objectives:

- Document what happened during the process
- Assess their effectiveness
- Recommend strategies for the future

What is the regulatory basis for public engagement?

Federal Guidance

The U.S. Department of Transportation offers the following guidelines for effective public involvement: provide for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and transportation decision-makers:

> "The overall objective of an agency's public involvement process is that it be proactive, provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions and opportunities for each and continuing involvement."

> "It also provides mechanisms for the agency to solicit public comments and ideas, identify circumstances and impacts that may not have been known or anticipated by public agencies and, by doing so, to build support among the public who are stakeholders in transportation investments which impact their communities."

Regional Community Engagement Plan Goals

The current participation plan was updated in 2012 and involved extensive consultation with representatives from environmental justice communities. An additional limited update to the procedural appendices of the document was conducted in 2014. Public participation plans for planning studies, comprehensive transportation plans, and Livable Centers Initiatives planning activities use the updated Regional Community Engagement Plan as a document of reference.

A primary goal of the Regional Community Engagement Plan is to enhance the impact of public participation on transportation decision-making. To accomplish this goal, ARC strives to:
- Increase the number of people participating in the process
- Increase the number of opportunities to participate
- Increase the understanding of transportation planning
- Evaluation the effectiveness of participation processes.

ARC will increase the coordination of participation activities between ARC, local jurisdictions and transportation agencies in the Atlanta Region to more effectively provide outreach mechanisms for:

- Sharing activities and results
- Implementing shared agendas
- Communicating coordination results.

The Atlanta Region's Plan Stakeholder Program Commitment

To ensure that The Atlanta Region's Plan reflects the full range of regional values and desires by involving a diverse spectrum of Stakeholders in development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

What outreach activities occurred during The Atlanta Region's Plan development?

Stakeholder Outreach
- Local government with a targeted emphasis on continuous interaction with local elected officials.

Youth Outreach
- This included high school and university age participants, particularly through the Clark Atlanta Summer Transportation Institute and ARC's MARC (Model ARC) leadership program.
- Millennials were targeted through a series of discussion groups as part of ARC's New Voices project.

Public Surveys
- Three online surveys were conducted to gather feedback on draft planning goals and strategies. The results were also used to guide other community discussions throughout 2015 and 2016. Effort was made to reach as many citizens as possible using online as well as face-to-face promotions.
- ARC continued to conduct Metro Atlanta Speaks for a second and third year, a statistically-significant regional perception poll that accesses resident opinions. In the future, this public perception poll will be compared to success attributes measured through various regional indicators.

Online Tools
- The Atlanta Region's Plan website resources were available throughout the year with retooled web presence containing multiple resources and process results developed in an ongoing manner.

Equitable Target Areas
- In September 2014, 60+ civic & non-profit leaders, equity stakeholders and locally elected officials, including previous Social Equity Committee members as well as members of the Poverty Equity Opportunity Committee, convened to share specific policy suggestions and feedback on the Equitable Target Area Index methodology and maps. The Equitable Target Areas (ETA) index is a tool used by ARC to better understand complexities in communities of concern – high percentage of people living in poverty or high minority population – and how to make wise decisions regarding investments.

Public Open Houses
- ARC hosted a series of public open houses to offer people opportunities to weigh in on key issues to the RTP development as well as review of plan materials.

Community Conversations
- More than 105 individuals from community groups that advocate on behalf of ethnic minorities; public safety; bicycle and pedestrian needs; and aging services participated in a series of community discussions during April and May 2015. In these discussions, ARC shared details on regional policy development and listened to needs and concerns highlighted by the groups.

Other Community Engagement Efforts
- ARC has an agency-wide approach to community outreach. With respect to transportation planning, the Community Engagement Manager in the Center for Strategic Relationships, reporting to the Director's Office, provides support agency-wide in the areas of community engagement, environmental justice, social equity.
- ARC's Transportation Access & Mobility Division and the Aging Services Advisory Committee are working together to incorporate the transportation needs of older adults and disabled populations in the transportation planning process. ARC serves on several aging planning committees in the community that look at transportation issues.
- ARC developed an agency-wide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan to provide meaningful access to LEP Persons. The LEP plan includes elements that ensure that where substantial numbers of residents of the Atlanta region live who do not speak or read English proficiently, these LEP individuals have access to the planning process and published information. And, that the production of multilingual publications and documents and/or interpretation at meetings/events will be provided to the degree that funding permits. ARC completed an update to the plan in 2012.

Which audiences and stakeholders were engaged?

- **Local elected officials** included the ARC Board, the additional ten counties of the MPO, and city mayors/county administrators not serving on the ARC Board. Also included was outreach with the Metropolitan Atlanta Mayors Association, Georgia Municipal Association and Association County Commissioners Georgia.

- **Local government planners** specializing in transportation, transit, land use, sustainability, the environment, housing, and services to population groups.
- **Local planning community**: consultants in architecture, community participation, city planning, professional organizations, nonprofit organizations around selected sites in region specializing in housing, development, transportation demand management associations, financing, maintenance and operations for roadways, services for community.
- **Federal and State planning partners** included members of the State Legislature and State Departments of Transportation, Community Affairs, and Natural Resources. Federal partners included the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- **Business community** included chambers of commerce, business coalitions, professional groups, local business leadership groups, banking community, developers, insurers, community improvement districts, freight organizations.
- **Special interest groups** and advocacy organizations includes environmental and energy organizations, land conservation, bicycle/pedestrians, and transit.
- **Civic leadership and community groups** included The Partnership for Southern Equity that worked as a Regional Partner for major outreach activities.
- **Neighborhood and homeowners associations** through individual meetings, interaction via the internet.
- **Faith organizations** including umbrella groups and partnership groups for community action.
- **Youth** included universities programs and ARC leadership programs for school age youth.
- **Individuals or groups** that participate in ARC activities based on short-term, issue-driven concerns through online public meetings and neighborhood forums.

Minority and Disadvantaged Populations

- **Community Leaders** of diverse groups representing community organizations, advocacy groups, coalitions, environmental justice groups, local governments and the ARC Board provide advice and leadership throughout the process.
- **Partnership for Southern Equity** provided assistance and advice throughout the process.
- **Transit Advisory Boards** were provided The Atlanta Region's Plan speaking engagements and discussions throughout the region as well as the Transit Operators Subcommittee and the Human Services Transportation Advisory Committee.
- **Social and leadership organizations** for minorities, disabilities, transit riders, housing, job training, services for low income individuals, refugees, youth, seniors, older drivers task force.

What community engagement tactics were employed?

Face-to-Face Discussions

Committee Framework: Existing committee structure at the Atlanta Regional Commission was utilized extensively on a recurring basis. Membership included ARC staff, planning partners and subject experts and members of the public.

- Standing Committees: ARC Board committees of Transportation and Air Quality Committee, Regional Transit Committee, Community Resources Committee, Aging and

Health Resources Committee, Strategic Relations Committee and their technical committees: Transportation Coordinating Committee, Land Use Coordinating Committee, Aging Advisory Committee as well as the Atlanta Regional Workforce Board,

- Standing Subcommittees: ARC Committees included the Transit Operators Subcommittee, Aging Services Advisory Committee, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Freight Advisory Task Force, Model Users Group, TIP/RTP Project Delivery Group, the Human Services Transportation Advisory Committee and the Poverty Equity Opportunity Committee.

Stakeholder Briefings: At strategic times during the process, groups were gathered to talk together, across interests and geographies. These briefings provided a chance for planning staff to share their work to date, get input and reaction to use in the next phase of work.

Localized Outreach: In addition to hosting meetings, workshops and discussion sessions at ARC offices, staff also reached out to local communities by attending meetings, participating in task forces and community groups, as well as outreach booths at festivals and neighborhood events. Outreach and promotions for online activities were also customized to ensure reach throughout the region.

Workshops: Workshops were scheduled periodically between technical planning staffs for land use and transportation planners. These workshops were extended meetings of several hours and could be attended by anyone interested. Planning products shared, next steps were debated and formulated.

Speaking Engagements: ARC senior staff and planners were regularly invited to speak about The Atlanta Region's Plan and engage audiences in a question and answer discussion. The audiences ranged from professional organizations to lunch and learns to conference sessions.

Online and Interactive

The Atlanta Region's Plan Online Surveys: ARC hosted a series of three online interactive surveys to gather feedback on draft planning goals and strategies. These surveys also directed people to a revamped project website in support of The Atlanta Region's Plan: www.atlantaregionsplan.com where detailed information was available about the RTP plans, projects and documentation.

The Atlanta Region's Plan Maps: The Atlanta Region's Plan website provided regional growth and system maps to help illustrate foundations of the planning process and the resulting projects derived from this process.

Electronic Invitations: The Atlanta Region's Plan surveys, public meetings, public hearings and other associated events were distributed through a Campaigner listserv. The invitations went out to thousands on the ARC contacts lists – which was tailored to targeted distributions.

Newsletters: The Atlanta Region's Plan information was regularly provided in Regional Planning Newsbriefs as well as various agency online newsletters. The Community Engagement Network received a weekly email that updated planning partners and stakeholders about The Atlanta Region's Plan progress and other regional planning efforts. In addition, a monthly publication, Regional Snapshots, compiles the latest data to explore important regional issues.

Facebook/Twitter: ARC has an agency account in these social media platforms and posts to Facebook and Twitter on a daily basis. When The Atlanta Region's Plan outreach activities were available, these outlets were utilized. ARC's Facebook information goes to almost 4,000 recipients, the agency's Twitter account has over 6,000 followers, and has nearly 2,200 connections on LinkedIn.

The Atlanta Region's Plan outreach process results

HOW DID COMMUNITY VOICES IMPACT

THE ATLANTA REGION'S PLAN ?

Community feedback led to:

Inclusion of equitable principles throughout The Atlanta Regions' Plan Policy Framework

Equitable Target Areas Index map was adjusted

Identification of future questions to explore throughout planning process

Throughout these activities, ARC learned that community engagement should occur continuously, not just around a planning process. In this way, relationships are built over time and knowledge is current and useful to all concerned. This practice helps lead to:

- Dynamic, in-depth dialogue on issues
- Identification of future outreach goals
- Identification of planning aspirations to better address community needs

Plans for future engagement

- Expand audience, with attention to balancing participation across all demographic groups
- Strengthen relationships with community-based organizations
- Improve outreach in low-income communities
- Strengthen outreach with Hispanic populations

THE **ATLANTA** REGION'S **PLAN**

WORLD CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE · HEALTHY LIVABLE COMMUNITIES · COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

WINNING THE FUTURE

What do you think ARC should do to strengthen community engagement efforts?

Community Assessment of Results – Based upon an online survey conducted in Summer 2016 (450 Responses)

After the completion of The Atlanta Region's Plan and to inform future regional planning efforts, ARC asked regional citizens to offer feedback specific to their participation in plan development and outreach activities. An invitation to participate in an online survey was sent to all those who had been part of The Atlanta Region's Plan engagement events, surveys, and the Millennials Advisory Panel (4,147 unique participants). More than 450 people answered the survey in whole or in part. The survey was open from June 30th through July 12th, 2016.

The survey was designed in four parts. The first three sections asked about respondent experiences with and opinions of The Atlanta Region's Plan surveys, public meetings, and Millennials Advisory Panel or Civic Dinners, respectively. The final section contained questions about people's preferences for engagement activities, notifications, and their overall satisfaction with the ARC's engagement processes.

Results were very encouraging. When asked about their satisfaction with the way ARC conducts community engagement, 84.9% of respondents said they were satisfied. The different components of the engagement process were also rated highly. 89.6% of those who took the survey said it helped them learn about The Atlanta Region's Plan and 89.3% said they thought the survey was a good use of their time. 95.7% of those who attended a The Atlanta Region's Plan workshop or public meeting said they enjoyed it and that it was a valuable experience for them. While too few Millennials Advisory Panel or Civic Dinner participants answered this survey to offer a detailed view of their experiences, the majority of those responses were also positive.

Though the purpose of this survey was to evaluate the public outreach done during The Atlanta Region's Plan process, the preferences of respondents from this survey follow similar themes as in the Metro Atlanta Community Engagement Survey conducted in 2013. As the two questionnaires were structured differently, responses cannot be directly compared, but in both cases, online options like email, surveys, and social media are broadly popular and public meetings of different types (centralized, open house, recurring) tend to vary in popularity.

These responses support the outreach work that ARC is already doing. In this most recent survey, online surveys are by far the most popular engagement method, with 87.7% of respondents saying they are likely to participate. Public meetings and open houses are the next most popular, with 39.8% and 36.9%, respectively. Workshops, focused more on learning around particular issues, had 32.5% likelihood of participation and regular, recurring group meetings had 10.6%. As ARC offers all of these types of engagement activities, most of the demand revealed by this survey is being met.

Interesting to note, however, is that 35.9% of survey respondents said they would like to participate in online or social media-driven discussions and engagement with ARC. This makes new online options nearly as popular as public meetings and open houses, and is consistent with the results of the 2013 survey. Support for this type of engagement may have a lot to do with the flexibility of timing and location. Respondents reported timing (64.9%) and location (62.5%) as the main reasons they may

choose not to participate in ARC events. Lack of sufficient prior notice and transportation were also mentioned as specific potential obstacles to participation.

When asked if ARC's outreach and engagement are inclusive for all the region's communities, approximately three quarters of respondents said they are. Concerns were raised, however, about a lack of geographic diversity in event and meeting planning, as well as outreach being targeted to certain groups such as the young or those with internet access. Access issues came up here as well, related to transportation to meetings or other events which may have been difficult to reach for those without cars, with driving restrictions, or due to timing. Comments also included requests to increase efforts to reach out to and incorporate immigrant communities in the engagement work as it is being done.

Future Takeaways

In addition to the broadly positive reactions to The Atlanta Region's Plan engagement process, the survey respondents also offered guidance for how the ARC can improve future outreach. Responses and additional comments emphasize some consistent gaps in knowledge and context for the planning process and ARC's role and also underline the need for a comprehensive and structured outreach process. The main takeaways for future engagement are:

- a need for better information about the regional planning process for the average citizen
- stronger links between different engagement tools and events to encourage ongoing participation
- evaluations throughout the engagement process to allow for changes that participants may request

In both this survey and in 2013, respondents expressed interest in receiving more information about how the engagement process functions at ARC and more broadly. Several main questions can be drawn from these answers:

1. What were the results of the survey or conclusions from the meetings?
2. How are my answers or feedback being used?
3. Who makes the final decisions about these plans/projects and where are my opinions included in this process?
4. What does ARC control in planning compared to local, city, or county agencies?

The current re-write of the Transportation 101 presentation and information materials will go a long way towards answering these questions for citizens. In future, these materials should also be available on the ARC's public engagement website, as well as in a dedicated link in all online engagement tools, including surveys, visualization games, and newsletters. Improved access to clear and concise answers about the regional transportation planning process will help satisfy the participants who have these questions and will help improve the depth and efficacy of the feedback ARC receives from them.

Of the 440 respondents who said they had completed a The Atlanta Region's Plan survey, only 66, or 15%, reported also attending a meeting or workshop related to the plan. 64.3% of survey takers, however, said they researched more about The Atlanta Region's Plan and transportation issues in Atlanta after taking the survey. In this case it seems like surveys functioned as a kind of gateway to the engagement process, grabbing the attention of many and inspiring a few to take further steps. The ARC should work to connect to the half of survey takers who were interested in learning more but who did not attend one of the public meetings that were offered.

Based on the other survey responses, it is likely that meeting timing, location, or lack of awareness of the meeting itself are major contributors to the lower attendance rate compared to the survey participation rate. Capitalizing on online and social media options should help the ARC reach out to these interested but not active participants. A process could be designed to incorporate surveys and meetings together. Knowing, for example, that meetings will be coming up on a particular issue, a survey targeted to that issue could be conducted in advance and respondents advised that the survey results will be presented at the meeting. Meeting presentations, notes, and, if possible, a recording could be uploaded to the ARC website and a direct link emailed to all survey participants. This would be especially effective if the website offered a way for these survey participants to provide meeting input online as well.

Such a system is more responsive to the demands of participants who may want more flexible ways to be involved. It can also allow them to select the ways in which they would like to be involved, helping to prevent overwhelming those who are satisfied with only surveys or meetings. Existing tools, like Salesforce, can be used to organize participants into targeted groups for outreach and communication efforts.

Creating connections between these different engagement tools and activities builds on the ARC's current work. It demonstrates that ARC's outreach is an ongoing process rather than a set of one-off events and will help citizens feel like they are more integral to the work that is being done. It is also inclusive of more of the region's population, especially those who are unable to travel to meetings in person. Further thought would be needed to figure out how to include those without good internet access, perhaps through partnerships with libraries or schools.

Finally, the success of this evaluation survey shows that there is a willingness among the engagement participants to share their experiences and ideas for improvement, in addition to their opinions on the plans discussed. These responses can be even more useful as part of an ongoing engagement process, as changes can be made at the time to increase participant satisfaction. Many respondents mentioned that they would have preferred to answer this type of survey closer to their time of participation in an event or other engagement activity. The relatively high response rate, considering that this was an online survey and, in some cases, that it came more than a year after an event, is encouraging for participation levels in more directed evaluation. The region's citizens are interested in being a part of local decision making and in improving the systems for doing so.

APPENDIX -- Question by Question Results

<u>ONLINE SURVEYS</u>

Did you Take an Online Survey:

   Yes – 440
   No -- 41

Avg. responses per question (5 questions): 384

1. Was the survey easy to understand and complete?
   Yes – 96.6%
   No – 3.36%

   Comments:

   Bias/Neutrality:

   "Asked the wrong questions like you already had YOUR plans set in stone. Seems
     phony!"

   "Some of the questions had a bias built in. Questions should be dead neutral."

   Content:

   "Maybe explain more up front the mapping interaction options of pointing out
     places/intersections of concern."

   Several variations on "too long ago"

2. Do you feel like completing the survey helped you learn about the Atlanta Region's Plan?
   Yes – 89.6%
   No – 10.3%

3. After the survey, did you research more about The Atlanta Region's Plan and transportation
   issues in Atlanta?
   Yes – 64.3%
   No – 35.7%

4. After the survey, were you notified about the survey results and how the survey responses were
   used?
   Yes – 64.1%
   No – 35.9%

5. Do you consider the survey to be a good use of your time?

Yes – 89.3%
No – 10.7%

Comments:

Not relevant to me:
"Being on the outskirts of the Atlanta Region, I don't think all of my needs were taken into consideration"

Context too much/little:
"too much reading, keep it short and to the point"

"I don't know that I got my "money's worth" for the time I spent. Part of the issue was grounding myself with the facts. If not routinely participating in or following the issues/subjects, it's difficult to get up to speed in order to give the survey its due."

Don't know how survey was used:

"I really dont know if this was a good use of my time as I dont know the impact of information I provide."

"Well, I don't mean to say it was a BAD use of my time, but in the end, I felt irrelevant to the process; I didn't see much of my views reflected in any subsequent plans or discussion"

"if i knew how it impacted the planning that would help. :)"

Did not impact planning:

"The survey seemed cast to teach me a predetermined decision by the writers, not to solicit my opinions"

"Everything I pointed out is still not included in the plan, which is disheartening. The plan seems to continue supporting ARC's existing programs, rather than push the envelope for innovative ways to engage the region's people in climate action, social justice and economic and food security."

6. Additional Comments: themes
   - Overall good experience, felt involved, learned about process
   - Would like to see results and more follow-up involvement
   - Leading questions or lack of ability to disagree/present alternate suggestions
   - Not sure how this plan fits in with others (local/county/region/GDOT)

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Yes, I attended -- 73

No, I did not -- 344

Avg. responses per question (5 questions): 68

1. Was the information shared in the meeting or workshop easy to understand and relevant?
   Yes – 97.1%
   No – 2.9%

2. Did your participation in the workshop or meeting help you learn more about The Atlanta Region's Plan?
   Yes – 95.7%
   No – 4.4%

3. Was your involvement in the workshop or discussion a good use of your time?
   Respected: 97.1%
   Enjoyed: 95.7%
   Feedback valued: 92.8%
   Valuable experience: 95.7%

4. Do you think the meeting was the appropriate mix of presentation and interaction?
   Just right: 72.7%
   Too little discussion: 19.7%
   Too little context/info: 7.9%

5. Did the following aspects of the workshop or meeting work for you?
   Timing convenient: 93.9%
   Location convenient: 92.4%
   Length appropriate: 92.4%

6. Additional comments: themes
   - Daytime meetings
   - Public transit access to meetings

MILLENNIALS ADVISORY PANEL

18 participated

390 did not

Average responses per question (6 questions): 17

1. Was the information provided about The Atlanta Region's Plan easy to understand and relevant?

Yes – 17 responses

No – 1 response (Comment: "I live in Hall County and it did not do enough for that area")

2. Did your participation in the Millennials Advisory Panel or Civic Dinner help you learn more about The Atlanta Region's Plan?

Yes – 14 responses

No – 4 responses

3. How was involvement in the Millenials Advisory Panel or Civic Dinner useful for you?

Leadership development – 7 responses

Networking – 13 responses

Opportunity to make impact in the community – 11 responses

4. Do you think the Panel events were an appropriate mix of discussion and action?

Just right – 12 responses

Too little discussion – 1 response

Too little focus on action – 3 responses

5. Did the following aspects of the Millennials Advisory Panel process work for you?

Meetings were convenient – 15 yes, 1 no

Participation was convenient – 15 yes, 1 no

Length of engagement was appropriate – 14 yes, 2 no

6. Did you participate consistently throughout the Millennial Advisory Panel process?

Yes – 10 responses

Sometimes – 2 responses

No – 4 responses

6a. (If chose No or Sometimes above:) What prevented you from ongoing action and involvement with the Millennials Advisory Panel?

Time commitment was too extensive – 1 response

I wasn't informed in advance of participation opportunities – 4 responses

It was difficult to participate – 1 response

Other: "Only did a civic dinner"

7. Additional Comment:

"Again, I was disappointed by the little discussion on climate action and heavy focus on new technologies. I appreciated the important discussions about public transportation, though, and am glad to see momentum in that sector. For the Advisory Panel, I missed

one meeting in the summer when I was abroad. I found it very difficult to become meaningfully engaged with the thematic group after I returned. I had to mesh in with what they had already produced. Sadly, our group collectively was not able to give as much time and attention to our presentation as we would have liked because we were all so busy with other commitments."

FINAL SECTION – GENERAL QUESTIONS

Average number of responses (6 questions): 375

1. What types of community engagement activities are you most likely to participate in? (top 3)
    Online surveys – 87.7%
    Formal public meetings – 39.8%
    Informal or open house public meetings – 36.9%
    Workshops – 32.5%
    Regular group meetings – 10.6%
    Social Media or online discussion – 35.9%

    Additional comments:

    NPU or neighborhood association meetings

    Need more information about upcoming meetings in news media and longer advance notice

    "Videos of workshops or community meetings for later review"

2. Do you feel like the public engagement opportunities that the ARC offers are inclusive for all communities in the region?
    Yes – 74.3%
    No – 25.7%

    Additional Comments:
    Bias to certain areas of the region:
    "The northern half of the city is disproportionately favored."

    "I live in Rockdale County and we are always included in requirements but none of the benefits"

    "The South Metro Area (Mainly Coweta County) is always left out however, we are just as close to the City Center as other areas that are more focused on."

    Difficult to reach populations:

"They are still biased toward those already looking for ways to be engaged and that have technology. This is a barrier all community engagement efforts have to address, so this is not a criticism of the ARC. The time and other resources required to seek out input from those who do not already voluntarily provide it, I imagine is beyond the ARC's capacity."

"Not sure, not everyone has a computer to take surveys, especially older citizens"

"Under served communities are not represented or are not invited"

"I am answering in the negative - not from a knowledge base, but because I have not seen any opportunities for the Latino population to have a voice in the process. If I am in error, my apologies."

"Better engagement of people who are transit dependent, lack computer skills or don't speak English is needed. Meet people where they are."

"Include more persons with disabilities"

Too much attention to favored groups:

"Too much emphasis on "millennials." From a public perception, ARC seems to value thee input of this group more than others. Needs to be more balanced."

"Yes, but only certain types of folks go to public meetings...anger or another agenda is what shows up. Productive citizens usually don't have the time."

Lack of awareness:

"Do not know anything about meetings being held"

"I have not heard of any meetings being held in the south fulton area."

"Some of what was mentioned here was my first time knowing about them."

"Never made aware of Any meetings even after surveys"

"I am not aware of any public engagement opportunities"

"I don't feel they are well publicized"

"I rarely hear about them. When I do, there's little warning and the time/venue isn't convenient"

Lack of access:

"Most things seem to be at your downtown Atlanta site which is a helluva drive."

"Provide transportation for seasoned citizens."

"Limited geographic range often difficult for people who work traditional hours"

"Because the Atlanta Region is so large, the public meetings should be held subregionally instead of centrally for convenience and to ensure engagement throughout the region."

"Meetings were not transit accessible"

3. What are your primary reasons for participating in community engagement activities like public meetings or surveys?

To share my opinions on important plans and make my voice heard – 72.6%
To share my ideas for new plans or projects – 33.2%
To learn more about the plans being made for my community – 85.5%
To learn more about the planning process – 36.2%
To meet and get to know other people interested in planning, transportation, and community engagement – 26.1%

Additional comments:

"Represent my neighborhood"

"To influence decision making."

"To share what I learn with my community and local woman's club"

"Find out how to fight the ARC"

4. Based on your past experiences, what are the main reasons you may choose NOT to participate in an engagement activity in the future? (top 3)

Participation requires too much of my time – 24.3%
Location is inconvenient – 62.5%
Timing is inconvenient – 64.9%
I do not know anyone else involved – 9.5%
I do not think my feedback and input will be considered – 22.2%
I am not interested in a particular issue or topic – 13.2%

Additional comments:
Timing:

"My commute time and work schedule do not allow me time to participate."

"As a busy teacher, it helps to have a number of choices of days and times so I can fit one of the activities into my schedule, or have an online response option."

Access:

"I do not own a car and attending a meeting is difficult because of it."

"I no longer drive, and that limits my participation in many activities."

Process/Content:

"Concern that I am not getting enough detail …. too much high-level strategy without going into the detail of the involved people/companies."

"I may not see the immediate affect the engagement activity will have on me or my community."

"Guided discussions are feel good for guiders but not productive in reality."

Notice:

"Activity might not be publicized well or far enough in advance."

"I need to have enough notice and a reminder"

"Lack of notification for participation in engagement activities"

"Did not know when/where they occurred"

"Never saw information regarding engagement activity"

5. What is the best way to inform you about public events, surveys, or other opportunities for you to get involved? (top 3)

        Email newsletter – 93.7%
        Social media – 39.1%
        Ads in local news (TV, radio, papers) – 33%
        ARC website – 25.9%

        Additional Comments:
            Email notice (shorter than newsletter, targeted to event/purpose)
            Ads in public transit vehicles or stations
            Paper mail
            Free newspapers
            Ads with other area organizations (GA Commute Options)

6. Overall, are you satisfied with the way the ARC conducts community involvement?

        Yes – 84.9%

        No 15.1%

        Additional Comments:

            Process:

            "I am leaning more toward yes because the ARC tries much more than other governing and insittutional bodies to seek varied input. As mentioned, though, it was not apparent that voices of the less privileged without access to technology, time and transportation to go to meetings, and inclusion in invitations were meaningfully sought, much less integrated. Also, many of my questions/criticisms of the plan may have been addressed in other ARC plans, but how and if the plans integrate with other ARC and local government initiatives is still very vague to me. This makes me think that many important issues are not being addressed, when in fact they may be but just in a fragmented way by other ARC plans or government/civil actors. Mapping ARC's work together with other local plans would be extremely helpful."

            "Good on projects that are going forward. Much quieter on projects that are not going forward and why they are not."

            Groups involved:

            "IF you get small business owners involved and then homeowners association, the community civic association leaders involved you might be more productive in actually changing behavior."

            "Again, ARC limits access for underserved communities"

            "Difficulty in attending live events skews the type of people who participate. Online surveys are usually found out about through social media, also skewing participation."

            Engagement:

            "Just asking me to participate in surveys feels insignificant"

            Awareness:

            "Survey was great. But was never made aware of any public meeting ever"

            "I did not hear about many of the meetings asked about in this survey. While that is OK for me, it indicates that groups of people were probably left out of the opportunity to participate."