Twelve Things to Know About Transportation in The Atlanta Region’s Plan

The cost to implement the transportation vision defined by this plan is estimated at $93.6 billion. This amount is calculated in year-of-expenditure dollars to account for inflation through the year 2040.

Several projects require the commitment of additional funds beyond the 2040 horizon year of the plan, notably several express lane projects and a commercial vehicle lanes project. The amount of additional funds which will need to be set aside in 2041 and later in future plan updates is approximately $10 billion.

The fiscally constrained plan calls for 13 new freeway interchanges and the reconstruction of 22 others by 2040. Another 18 locations are proposed for improvements if additional funding can be identified. Many of these interchange projects are critical for the efficient movement of freight, as well as improving travel time and safety for commuters.

Under the fiscally constrained plan, 185 projects will add 1,035 miles of new lanes to key arterial roadways by 2040. Portions of another 90 roadways have been identified for widening consideration if additional funding can be identified. The possibility that congestion issues along some of these corridors could be mitigated through a combination of innovative short-term, low cost strategies will be investigated in the next planning cycle.

The plan’s vision includes a comprehensive 276 mile network of express lanes on the freeway system to provide a reliable travel option for drivers, carpoolers and bus riders. About 108 miles of the network is either already in place. The fiscally constrained portion of the plan will add another 100 miles to the system by 2040.

The plan defines a 199 mile rail and bus rapid transit network to link job centers and expand economic opportunities for people who cannot or prefer not to drive. Approximately 50 miles exist today, with another 93 miles being planned for implementation by 2040. Maximizing the effectiveness of this investment will require that complementary land use strategies be implemented in the vicinity of existing and future stations.
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The plan envisions a comprehensive regional biking and walking network which links approximately 400 miles of paved paths which already exist, transforming these health and quality of life amenities into practical commuting corridors. Identifying approaches to completing specific gap closure and system expansion projects will be a key planning emphasis over the next few years.

ARC’s $500 million commitment to the Livable Centers Initiative continues. To date, the program has helped 120 local communities define their development, growth and transportation visions, with over $200 million awarded to fund key catalytic transportation projects in many of these areas.

The cost of congestion per person will increase from $1,403 today to $1,916 by the year 2040. The amount of time and gas wasted while sitting in congestion will result in a typical commute that costs almost one-third more than if there were no traffic. This is a hidden tax that we all pay and is money taken directly out of our economy that could be used more productively.

Despite increases in roadway congestion, the combination of expanded managed lane and transit networks means about 1.1 million trips can be made in a consistent amount of time during the evening peak period virtually every day. This ability will help people plan better and make more productive use of their time.

Emissions produced by our transportation system fall below limits that have been established in conjunction with federal and state agencies. Our Region’s air quality has steadily improved over the past 20 years and that trend will continue. As evidence of our progress, the region was designated in attainment for fine particulate matter in 2016 and for ozone in 2017 (although seven counties in the Region were identified as nonattainment under a new and more stringent ozone standard which took effect in 2018).

Much work remains ahead of us. The Atlanta Region’s Plan is intended to be adaptable and responsive to change. Course corrections will be made regularly as needed. New approaches and strategies will be tried. Those which become obsolete will be retired. The plan will undoubtedly evolve considerably in coming years, which is the way the process should and must work if we truly hope to WIN THE FUTURE.