“We should enforce the phase out of fossil fuel vehicles, gasoline cars, create new options for people on mass transit.”

- ELIZABETH T.

“I think by focusing just on the word “transportation,” it’s problematic, because you really need to take a systemic look at the whole. The way people live and the way people move – it can’t be talked about in isolation.”

- ALLEN R.

“I think making sure the roads are clear of potholes and the bridges are still secure and maintained properly and invest in light rail or connecting transit between counties.”

- JASON
The RTP estimates that total expected revenues from all sources will be $172.6 billion and total expected plan investments will be $172.6 billion. The plan is fiscally constrained.

The RTP is required by law to be fiscally constrained, meaning that there will be enough revenue to cover the expected spending over the life of the plan. Revenue sources include federal funds from the USDOT, state funds collected from the motor fuel tax and other fees, local funds collected primarily from sales taxes, transit fares, private sector property tax assessments, and other sources.

In order to compare the value of revenues and expenses over the 30-year horizon of the plan, the RTP uses a convention called “year of expenditure” (YOE) to express amounts. YOE means that the dollar value shown includes inflation between now and the year that the project is implemented. The average annual inflation rate assumed for this plan is 2.2%. Global economic trends over the past decade, as well as federal monetary policy, indicate a strong likelihood that inflationary pressure will remain weak. The relatively low, but stable inflation rate will increase the likelihood that project costs for projects planned in the outer years of the plan will remain within a reasonable range assumed for plan balancing purposes.

The maximum amount of revenue from all sources which will be available for transportation services, projects and programs through 2050 will be $172.6 billion. Specific investments totaling $71.7 billion have been identified and reflected in the RTP project list (Appendix A: RTP Project List), while another $78.7 billion remains available for commitment to future projects yet to be identified. The overwhelming majority of these future investments are small scale maintenance and modernization projects being advanced by GDOT and local governments and do not have to be individually listed in the RTP. In addition to expenditures on projects, an additional $18 billion of the revenue generated at the state and local levels will be required to staff and operate the various agencies and departments charged with implementing projects.

Because the upper estimate of $172.6 billion of revenue exceeds the $168.4 billion of expenditures for currently identified projects ($71.7 billion), future small scale investments ($78.7 billion) and agency administrative expenses ($18 billion), the plan is fiscally constrained.

Figure 9 on the following page provides a breakdown of the percent of investment by program area and sub-area. See the Recommendations Chapter for a breakdown of the number of projects by program area and sub-area.
Figure 9
PERCENT OF PROJECT COST BY PROGRAM AREA AND PROGRAM SUB-AREA

Legend

**Inner Ring: Program Area**
- **Demand Management**
- **Expansion**
- **Maintenance & Modernization**
- **Other**

**Outer Ring: Program Sub-Area**
- **Walking, Bicycling, and LCI**
- **TDM and Other Programs and Initiatives**
- **Interchange and Highway Capacity**
- **Managed Lanes**
- **Transit Expansion**
- **Transit Operations and Capital Management (All Systems)**
- **Road System Optimization and Safety**
- **Road and Bridge Preservation**
- **Administrative Costs**
- **Unprogrammed Funding**
### ESTIMATED INVESTMENTS THROUGH 2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment Program Areas</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Subtotals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAINTENANCE &amp; MODERNIZATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road and Bridge Preservation</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>$49.5 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road System Optimization and Safety</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>$21.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit Operation and Capital Management (All Systems)</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>$31.7 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAINTENANCE &amp; MODERNIZATION SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>$102.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPANSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Lanes</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>$16.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interchange and Highway Expansion</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>$11.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit Expansion</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>$10.9 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPANSION SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>$38.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEMAND MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking, Bicycling, and LCI</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>$5.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDM and Other Programs and Initiatives</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>$4.6 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEMAND MANAGEMENT SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>$9.8 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER COSTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Costs</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>$18.0 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprogramed Funding</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>$4.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER COSTS SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>$22.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$172.6 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary of Estimated Investments Through 2050
### Table 4: Summary of Estimated Revenues Through 2050

**ESTIMATED REVENUES THROUGH 2050**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Subtotals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEDERAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHWA Formula and Discretionary Funding</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>$35.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTA Formula and Discretionary Funding</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>$10.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEDERAL SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>$45.5 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region’s Share of Motor Fuel Excise Taxes</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>$44.9 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region’s Share of Lodging Fees</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>$4.4 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region’s Share of Heavy Vehicle Impact Fees</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>$0.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region’s Share of Electric Vehicle Registration Fees</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>$0.05 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region’s Share of General Fund Appropriations</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>$0.4 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>$50.0 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLOST Revenues</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>$14.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-SPLOST Revenues</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>$8.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTA Sales Tax Revenues</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>$24.6 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTA Farebox and Other Revenue</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>$7.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and County General Funds</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>$18.0 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-MARTA Transit Agency Revenues</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>$2.8 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCAL SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>$75.1 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIVATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID and Other Revenues</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>$2.0 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIVATE SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>$2.0 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$172.6 Billion</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL TRENDS

Transportation programs and projects in the Atlanta region are funded from a combination of revenue sources. Before getting into the details, a few key recent developments related to transportation finance are worth highlighting.

FEDERAL FUNDING INSTABILITY

The FAST Act was signed into law by President Obama in 2015. After several years of short-term extensions, it provided a stable federal revenue stream for transportation projects, with over $300 billion dedicated for highway, transit, freight, bicycle/pedestrian and other projects. It is set to expire in late 2020 and Congressional debate over its successor is currently in a preliminary stage.

A major complication for the next federal funding act is that the plan’s principal revenue source is from a motor fuel tax which has not increased since 1993. Due to project cost inflation and increased vehicle fuel economy standards, the amount of revenue collected by the tax has not kept pace with federal funding commitments and the gap has been closed by bailouts from the general fund. If this imbalance is not corrected, it could result in up to a 40% drop in funding levels as soon as FY 2021.

CREATION OF THE ATL

In May 2018, Governor Nathan Deal signed HB 930 into law, creating The ATL. The ATL’s jurisdiction covers 13 counties in the Atlanta region: Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale. The ATL is responsible for coordinating transit funding and planning among the various operators serving the region. The new law also allows those counties to raise sales taxes in order to fund transit, if their voters approve. As of this plan update, no jurisdiction has proposed a referendum under this legislation. Fulton County, DeKalb County and Clayton County impose a sales tax dedicated to MARTA which predates HB 930. A vote in Gwinnett County to join MARTA failed in March 2019.

MORE MARTA FUNDING

In November 2016, a referendum passed to increase the MARTA sales tax rate from 1.0% to 1.5% within the City of Atlanta. Over the 40-year timeframe of the More MARTA tax, approximately $2.7 billion will be available to improve and expand transit services within the City. A package of projects was approved in October 2018 and have been incorporated into the RTP. The program includes funding for transit expansion on the Beltline, the Clifton Corridor, and Campbellton Road, among other corridors.
ENSURING THE PLAN IS FISCALLY CONstrained
An RTP is considered financially constrained if projected project costs do not exceed projected revenues that are reasonably expected to be available during the time frame of the plan. Major transportation projects can move forward only if they are included in a plan which meets all federal planning process requirements, including a demonstration that fiscal constraint has been achieved.

REVENUE ASSUMPTIONS
The RTP’s financial assumptions and forecasts are developed in consultation with ARC’s Financial Planning Team. Composed of representatives of federal and state agencies, public transit operators, and other stakeholders, the Financial Planning Team reviews major assumptions regarding the levels of future revenues and cost estimation methodologies. The plan’s financial forecasts reflect this partnership.

Detailed tables demonstrating how federal, state and local revenue forecasts were derived are provided in Appendices E: Federal Financial Forecasts and Demonstration of Fiscal Constraint, F: State Financial Forecasts and G: Local Financial Forecasts, respectively.

ESTIMATING PROJECT COSTS
ARC generally relies on project sponsors for developing, submitting and updating project costs. As a project moves through the development and design process, the scope of the project often changes as various potential designs are identified, evaluated and refined. This frequently results in the cost of the project changing also. Each time the RTP is amended or updated, the most recent project costs must be incorporated and fiscal constraint of the overall plan must be demonstrated again.

YEAR-OF-EXPENDITURE PROJECT COSTS
Costs presented in the project listings in Appendices A: RTP Project List and B: FY 2020-2025 TIP Project List are already inflated within the six-year TIP period. But long-range phases are presented in current year dollars since a precise schedule for implementation has not yet been defined. A phase advanced in the 2031-2040 timeframe, for example, could occur anywhere within that period, resulting in a different cost based on whether the project is undertaken earlier or later in the decade. For this reason, all long range costs are aggregated and inflated to a mid-year point of the timeframe. For the 2031-2040 period, for example, an average YOE assumed is 2035. Appendix D: Year of Expenditure Calculations shows the results of these YOE adjustments for each project.

The one exception to this approach to presenting costs are those projects comprising the MMIP. Figures for those projects are already inflated since they represent actual payments made on the debt issued to implement them.
COMPARISON OF PROJECT COSTS AND REVENUES

Table 4 summarizes federal, state and local financial revenues which will be available through 2050 to fund the recommendations of this plan. The total amount collected is estimated at $172.6 billion, of which approximately $18 billion will be required to fund the administrative functions of the various state and local transportation agencies responsible for designing, building, operating and maintaining the projects and programs recommended in this plan. The net revenue of $154.6 billion is greater than the $150.4 billion cost of the plan’s proposed investments. It is important to note, as discussed in the introduction to this section, that only about $71.7 billion of projects and programs have been individually listed in Appendix A, with the remainder being small-scale projects to be identified at a later date.

FEDERAL FUNDING FORECASTS

Funding on the federal level comes from federal taxes on fuel, heavy-duty trucks, and, to a growing extent, general funds. Taxes are charged for each gallon of fuel purchased (18.4 cents per gallon for gasoline and 24.4 cents per gallon for diesel). Tax revenues are paid into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which is separated into two accounts – a highway account and a mass transit account. The highway account receives about 84% of the proceeds from gasoline fuel taxes, with the remaining 16% is dedicated to the mass transit account.

STATUS OF THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the current trajectory of the HTF is unsustainable. For many years, the trust fund has not collected enough revenue to cover previous financial commitments, resulting in steadily accumulating annual shortfalls. Since 2008, the Congress has avoided bankruptcy of the trust fund by transferring approximately $140 billion from the general fund of the Treasury. According to the CBO, should current levels of spending continue, along with the current taxing regimen in place on motor fuels, the HTF will require an additional $176 billion to remain solvent over the next decade. Currently HTF spending outpaces revenues by approximately $12 billion annually and is expected to gradually widen to $26 billion annually by 2029.
RTP recommendations are based on the assumption that policy action will be taken to maintain the solvency of the HTF. The obligation limits for Georgia are used as the base to forecasting federal funds. Current federal funding levels are then forecast to increase in the future. Based on historical trends a 1.4% annual growth rate was applied to forecast federal funds beyond the timeframe of the FAST Act. Funds from the HTF are apportioned to states through FHWA and FTA.

**FHWA FUNDING ASSUMPTIONS AND ESTIMATES**

Assumptions on the Atlanta region’s share of FHWA formula funds apportioned to Georgia were developed in consultation with federal and state agencies. The region’s share of statewide employment was agreed to as an acceptable method to calculate a regional share of revenues, since economic activity could be considered a more reasonable proxy for transportation mobility needs than just overall population. Accordingly, ARC’s share of statewide FHWA funding is assumed to rise from about 58% currently to nearly 63% by the year 2050.

The available federal highway funds are net principal and interest payments on outstanding and anticipated GARVEE and GRB bonds during the RTP timeframe. The Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission and SRTA provided information on bond debt payment. These debt payment obligations have been accounted for in the level of available funding.

FHWA also has a variety of discretionary programs where funds are awarded to eligible sponsors via a competitive application process. Awards under these programs have been instrumental in implementing portions of the Beltline trail, the initial phase of the streetcar system, and the managed lane network. Since the programs are extremely competitive and funding priorities can shift over time, no assumptions are made in this plan regarding FHWA discretionary programs being available to finance future projects. A small number have already been awarded a total of $261 million of discretionary funds in the past and will be implemented within the TIP period.

In consultation with the Financial Planning Team, baseline estimates are forecast to increase for FHWA sources by 1.4% annually. This rate is less than baseline inflation rate of 2.2%, meaning that growth in revenue will not keep pace with inflation.

Based on these assumptions, ARC forecasts that approximately $34.9 billion of FHWA formula funds will be available to the region between 2020 and 2050. Calculations of FHWA funding forecasts are detailed in Appendix E.
FTA FUNDING ASSUMPTIONS AND ESTIMATES

FTA formula funds are allocated directly to counties using a formula which mimics the national apportionment process and is based on population and transit service operating data. Funds for counties within the MARTA service area are automatically directed to that agency, while funds for other counties may be used to support their local transit agency, redirected to SRTA to support regional Xpress services, accrued for use by a future operator, or returned to the regional pot for distribution. Based on concurrence from the Financial Planning Team, FTA formula funds are forecast to increase at a rate of 1.4% annually. Through 2050, this will yield approximately $5.3 billion.

Due to the costs involved with major transit capacity expansion projects, project sponsors rely upon federal assistance to construct projects, especially from the Federal Transit Administration’s Section 5309 Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. CIG funding is awarded through merit based, discretionary grants issued on an annual basis. All awardees must also match at least 20 percent of the federal grant amount, though the national average for the local share has consistently been over 50 percent in recent years.

Through a recent analysis of previous CIG awards and consultation with regional planning partners, ARC has determined approximately $5.0 billion in discretionary funding could be considered reasonably available over the next 30 years. Approximately $3.6 billion is dedicated to projects identified as priorities from a focused planning process and which have an existing dedicated local revenue source available for match funds. Coupled with an assumed approximate $7.3 billion in locally sourced matching funds, approximately $10.9 billion in total funding will be used to expand the Region’s transit network, with about $1.4 billion of possible federal funding held in reserve for dedication in future plan updates to additional projects as full financial packages are identified.

FTA also periodically awards funds to transit agencies through other nationwide competitive programs. Since these announcements are generally small, typically only a few million dollars or less, and sporadic in nature, no assumptions are made in this plan regarding their availability to finance projects.

Calculations of FTA funding forecasts are detailed in Appendix E.
STATE FUNDING FORECASTS

Passage of the Transportation Funding Act of 2015 (TFA) by the Georgia Legislature had dramatic impacts on the RTP. The new structure is generating a substantial amount of additional statewide revenue and also permits counties to pursue supplemental funding opportunities as well. The current primary sources for state funding for transportation are:

- An excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel, which will be indexed and adjusted yearly based on fuel efficiency of vehicles registered in the state and the Consumer Price Index. For 2019, the gasoline tax rate is 27.5¢ per gallon and the diesel fuel tax rate is 30.8¢ per gallon.
- An annual truck/bus “highway user impact fee” that is collected when a vehicle’s tag is renewed each year. An amount of $50 is assessed for vehicles from 15,500 lbs. to 26,000 lbs. and $100 for those vehicles greater than 26,001 lbs.
- A $5 per night fee on hotel and motel stays.
- An annual $200 user fee on privately owned electric vehicles and an annual $300 user fee for commercial vehicles.
- Limited funds are appropriated from the state general fund each year for transportation, primarily for rural transit match requirements. Only a small percentage is available for use on projects and programs in the Atlanta region.
- Variable rate tolls are collected on the region’s express lane network, based on congestion levels. These funds are generally directly reinvested in the network to support operations and maintenance and are not included in any totals presented in this section. If and when SRTA and GDOT report that excess toll revenues are being generated and can be used to fund other projects and programs, those amounts will be reflected in future RTP updates.

The calculation of the Atlanta region’s share follows the same methodology used to estimate the region’s share of forecasted federal funds. This results in approximately $50.0 billion being available from state sources to support transportation investments in the region through 2050.

Calculations of state revenue forecasts are detailed in Appendix F.
LOCAL FUNDING FORECASTS

In the Atlanta Region, approximately 85% of roadways and 52% of bridges are owned and maintained by a city or county government. Nearly one-half of all miles driven occur on these facilities. Transportation funds generated by local sources, either for a match against federal and state awards, or to advance projects independently of those sources, are an important part of the financing picture.

The RTP assumes that approximately $75.0 billion will be available from existing local revenue sources to support investment in the transportation system. These funds may be used as match against federal and state funds, or they may be used to implement local priority projects. In many cases, these 100% locally financed projects are not considered regionally significant and do not impact the region’s air quality conformity analysis. Therefore, they do not need to be included in the RTP project list. Examples of these projects would include resurfacing of local streets, building sidewalks, installing traffic signals and addressing routine maintenance needs such as mowing, street lighting, and litter collection.

Calculations of local revenue forecasts are detailed in Appendix G.

SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (SPLOST)

A SPLOST is a financing method for funding capital outlay projects in the State of Georgia. It is an optional 1% sales tax levied by a county for the purpose of building parks, schools, roads and other public facilities. The revenue generated cannot be used towards operating expenses or most other maintenance projects, with the exception of roads and bridges.

In the Atlanta region, local governments typically dedicate a portion of SPLOST revenues to fund transportation, with dedicated funds ranging anywhere from 30% to 100% of total SPLOST revenues. Many counties have a long-term history of approving and renewing SPLOST programs. However, SPLOST programs are subject to voter approval and run for a limited period, usually five years, and are therefore not a completely reliable source of transportation funding. For purposes of this plan, though, those counties with a well-established track record passing SPLOSTs were assumed to continue to have this revenue stream available through 2050.

T-SPLOSTs are a variation of traditional SPLOSTs in which 100% of the revenue collected must be dedicated to transportation. This is the mechanism now being utilized by the City of Atlanta and Fulton County to fund local projects. They were expressly permitted under TFA and can also be levied by any other jurisdictions which already have an existing SPLOST, although none have proposed ballot initiatives to impose a T-SPLOST as of 2019.
SPLOSTs and T-SPLOSTs are expected to generate approximately $22.5 billion in revenue for transportation services, projects and programs through 2050.

MARTA REVENUES
In Georgia, as required by the Georgia Constitution, state motor fuel tax revenues cannot support transit or any transportation purpose other than roadways and bridges. Since there is not a dedicated state funding source for transit, the stability of state general funds allocated to transit as well as locally derived transit funds are crucial to the future of Georgia’s transit systems. The U.S. Department of Transportation requires a commitment for operating support from state, regional, and/or local governments before allowing federal funds to be spent on the construction and implementation of transit projects. The majority of transit operating funds must come from state and local funding resources as federal transit operating funds are very limited.

MARTA is the only transit system in the Region supported by a multi-jurisdiction sales tax. Until 2017, a 1% tax was levied on purchases made within Fulton County, DeKalb County and Clayton County. In November 2016, residents of the City of Atlanta voted to increase the rate for transactions within the city to 1.5%. The change became effective in April 2017. The tax rate in the remainder of MARTA’s service area remains at 1%.

MARTA’s other revenue streams include farebox collections, parking fees at selected rail stations, advertising agreements, lease income, title ad valorem tax collections and interest.

Combined, these revenue sources are forecast to generate nearly $31.8 billion for MARTA to maintain and operate its existing services, plus expand the system in the future.

OTHER LOCAL SOURCES
Many jurisdictions dedicate some portion of property tax revenues, permit fees and other local revenue sources to transportation through the general fund budgeting process. A large share of these funds is typically dedicated to the administrative functions of public works, engineering and transportation departments, with SPLOSTs and awards from federal/state sources being more important revenue streams for capital projects and programs. It is estimated that counties will dedicate $5.8 billion of general fund revenues to run these departments through 2050, while cities will contribute $12.2 billion.

Several jurisdictions in the Atlanta Region operate their own transit systems. Funding for these systems also depends on local general fund support, along with some federal assistance, fares collected from passengers and advertising agreements. Collectively, the region’s transit operators (excluding MARTA) are estimated to receive $2.8 billion from all funding sources through 2050.
PRIVATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Transportation infrastructure investment has historically been thought of as exclusively a governmental function, using a combination of taxes and user fees collected from system users. In recent years, however, the private sector has become an increasingly important partner in delivering, maintaining and operating a wide array of transportation projects. Private sector participation in Georgia occurs primarily through GDOT’s Public Private Partnership (P3) program or through CIDs.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

GDOT is responsible for the development and implementation of a statewide program for project delivery through the P3 program. The P3 program may provide alternate delivery methods that could bring much-needed transportation projects to the State that would not be possible through traditional processes and existing funding.

P3 projects leverage limited transportation funds by partnering with the private sector using a variety of innovative delivery methods. Georgia now has a P3 framework that can leverage existing funding and improve project delivery rates through private sector innovation. The end result will be increased mobility and greater choice in travel options for the citizens of the State and the traveling public.

GDOT is required to identify and submit to the State Transportation Board a list of projects on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, or otherwise identified, that should be considered for pursuit as Public Private Partnerships. That list is to be submitted to the State Transportation Board on July 31st of each odd numbered year. The goal is to identify those projects that afford the greatest gains in congestion mitigation or promotion of economic development for Georgia.

Once projects have been identified, they go through a rigorous screening process to determine their viability as a P3 project and identify how they compare to other projects under consideration. This allows for focused project development and effective use of the Department’s limited resources.

The I-75 / I-575 Northwest Corridor managed lanes were delivered via a P3 arrangement and the I-285 at SR 400 interchange reconstruction project is being implemented in a similar manner. Future delivery of the rest of the plan’s managed lane vision will rely on such partnerships as well. In addition, this model is increasingly being explored as a way to deliver major transit expansion projects, although no deals have been announced to date.
To date, direct financial contributions from the private sector have been minimal in the state’s P3 program, with GDOT primarily seeking arrangements that streamline delivery while utilizing bonds backed by existing revenue streams. As individual P3s are negotiated, their financial arrangements are embedded within the costs of the project and reflected in an updated fiscal constraint analysis. The RTP makes no assumptions on large direct influxes of private sector dollars.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS
A CID is a self-taxing district that uses additional property tax dollars to improve its district such as accelerating transportation and infrastructure improvement projects. CIDs are comprised of private commercial properties zoned as Office/Industrial and Retail properties. Residential and multi-family properties are not taxable by a CID.

A CID is created through state enabling legislation and a vote by the majority of the corporate property owners in the defined district. It takes the agreement of a simple majority of the commercial property owners within the district to create a Community Improvement District. In addition, it is required that this simple majority of owners must represent at least 75% of the taxable value of the commercial property located within the proposed CID.

Commercial property owners agree to assess themselves additional ad-valorem real estate taxes in order to address critical issues such as traffic and safety. That money is collected by the Tax Commissioner of the local government and returned to the district by its respective county, and a board of directors then seeks to leverage that money and garner infrastructure improvements for the area. Some examples of how this money might be spent include environmental and engineering feasibility studies, funding new construction projects, upgrades to already funded projects, maintaining existing transportation features, and direct spending (traffic control officers).

CIDs require the recommitment of participating property owners each six years. As of 2019, 29 CIDs are in operation within the five core counties of metro Atlanta. The majority of funding generated by these entities is leveraged to secure federal funding and is therefore counted as local match for fiscal constraint purposes in this plan. Collectively, the existing CIDs are expected to generate about $1.1 billion in revenue through 2050.
MAJOR MOBILITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

In January 2016, Governor Deal unveiled the MMIP, a package of projects around the state to be advanced using additional funds made available under the federal FAST Act and the state’s Transportation Funding Act of 2015. These eleven projects will be financed through direct payments or through public-private partnerships, whereby a private sector partner provides a revenue stream to design and construct the facility in the short term, with repayment being made by the state through a series of regularly scheduled installment payments over a longer period of time. This arrangement allows travelers in Georgia to receive benefits of the new facilities more quickly.

This financing approach presents challenges for how to document the MMIP in The Atlanta Region’s Plan. If all eleven projects were implemented using cash on hand, the total cost would be approximately $11 billion. However, fiscal constraint requirements for a federally required regional transportation plan demand that the cost of debt service be incorporated into those calculations. To do this requires presenting the annual installment payments in year of expenditure dollars, which is different from the way costs are shown in the project lists for all other “pay as you go” projects.

Another challenge is that only seven of the eleven projects are located entirely within the Atlanta region – two others are located partially within the region, and two are located entirely in the Savannah region. Only about 11% of the footprint of the I-85 widening from SR 211 to US 129 is within the MPO area, while about 22% of the I-75 Commercial Vehicle Lanes are. This plan does not need to account for the share of costs outside of our region in its fiscal constraint analysis. For the two projects only partially within the region, costs shown in the project lists in the appendices reflect amounts which have been prorated accordingly. The lists do not include the two projects located on I-16 in the Savannah region at all.

Finally, the financing period for several MMIP projects will stretch beyond the 2050 horizon year of this plan. While the project lists do indicate a lump sum balance remaining to be paid past 2050, those amounts are not considered in the fiscal constraint analysis.