

## **Jane: Maximizing Transportation Resources**

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Hello, my name is Jane Hayse, Division Chief of Transportation Planning for the Atlanta Regional Commission. I would like to thank you for attending this online public meeting. A critical component of PLAN 2040 is regional transportation mobility by maximizing transportation resources which is the subject of this presentation.

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Here is our region's financial picture for maintaining and expanding the transportation system for the 18 metro Atlanta counties. Our needs through the year 2040: \$169 billion to build, operate and maintain all of the transportation needs we've identified to date (both existing and added transportation capacity). \$56 billion alone is needed to maintain the existing system which is on the ground today. This includes roads, bridges and public transportation operation and maintenance. But our available funding is only approximately \$64 billion from federal, state and local revenue sources.

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These amounts are impacted by several financial challenges. First, at the federal level, we have an uncertain status of USDOT funding; revenue growth is less than the rate of inflation. At the State level, we have large bond debt commitments, the absence of dedicated funding source to implement non-highway projects, and our regional transit providers, such as MARTA, GRTA, and local systems have no reliable source of operating assistance, and face future funding deficits.

There is a new potential funding source out on the horizon. The Transportation Investment Act of 2010, which allows for the public to vote on a regional transportation sales tax. It is set for a referendum vote in the Summer of 2012. Because this is after the anticipated adoption date of PLAN 2040, we cannot account for those projected revenues in our PLAN 2040 calculations. The anticipated amount of revenue from that tax could be between \$6-\$8 billion over a ten year period.

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So we must decide how much the Region spends on maintenance and how much the Region wants to spend on expansion.

Here are some guiding principles that are helping us in our policy and technical evaluations. One, place the highest priority on asset management, that is, preserving what we have. Two, strategically pursue system expansions at a limited rate. Three, support programs leading to sustainable growth patterns, focusing on existing places and activity centers.

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PLAN 2040 recommendations are emerging. For transit, preserving transit assets to stabilize the current transit system is critically important. Existing transit systems must be shored up before the region sees

any transit expansion. It will take most of the funds available for transit in PLAN 2040 just to keep it at status quo. Even so, ARC will continue to refine and prioritize future transit expansion. This prioritized list will not be reflected in the financially constrained PLAN 2040 but it will be reflected in our Aspirations Plan which is our list of projects that we would like to build if funding becomes available.

In order to maintain the status quo, funding transit at its current levels, MARTA will need to have the flexibility to use its own sales tax revenue rather than having it restricted as in current State law. In addition, we must focus more on preventive maintenance and increase the efficiency of our current transit operations.

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A second recommendation is to maintain the most critical roadways in our region. ARC staff has been working very closely with GDOT to have a realistic program to utilize public-private partnerships to build projects such as managed lanes and interstate/interchange bottleneck relief. On the interstates, many high priority bottleneck relief projects are already in the pipeline and ARC is working with GDOT to keep those advancing as much as financial constraints will allow. For example, we must emphasize preservation of interstates and the region's key thoroughfares. This helps focus the use of the region's limited federal transportation funding for increasing capacity by limiting it to regional facilities.

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Another recommendation is to strategically focus on system expansion. For transit, this may mean expansion of cost effective express bus programs that can pay for themselves. For roadways, it may mean focusing on interstate bottleneck relief and managed lane system. It also may mean pursuing lower cost alternative operational strategies such as signal timing or intersection improvements.

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The final recommendation is to encourage sustainable growth patterns by focusing on developing transit-supportive centers and coordinating land use and transportation programs.

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Finally, to summarize the current thinking on PLAN 2040 Transportation Directions: We must focus on asset management, that is, preserving what we have. We must preserve existing transit assets and service levels. Recommendations will focus on system expansion strategies for interstate bottleneck relief and managed lane expansions. Some projects will be changed to provide signal improvements and operational improvements only. And we must focus on delivering projects that are already funded or are in progress.

I would like to thank you for joining me in this presentation. Please check the Resource Section of this online public meeting to see additional information.