

# Atlanta Region Plan 2040 Assessment



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION



# Atlanta Region Plan 2040 Assessment

DRAFT: NOVEMBER 2009



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION



---

# Building on the Past, Planning for the Future

The Atlanta region has achieved a high degree of success during the past decade. What actions can we take now to help the region achieve greater economic progress, more livable communities and an improved environment in the next decade?

As you review this document in preparation for the Plan 2040 retreat on November 12, please keep the following thoughts in mind and consider how current and future policy might exacerbate and/or relieve the problems discussed.

**As part of a comprehensive strategy for economic development and congestion relief, should the region try to focus future growth within the current urbanized area?**

- Even with increased funding, continued expansion of the region will leave us with greater needs than we can afford to meet. The growth of the MPO region this decade from 10 to 18 counties, while real federal funding levels decreased, illustrates the challenge ahead.
- Should the region revisit past regional growth policies regarding urbanized area expansion? While the region plans for growth, past regional policy has shown a reluctance to provide disincentives for urbanized area expansion. This trend impacts the current region and also adversely impacts exurban communities by increasing service demands without providing the necessary funding.

**Economic development and congestion relief depend on developing viable population and employment centers. Are additional policies needed to make these areas more attractive to the implementation of fixed-guideway transit?**

- Should the region revisit stronger policy and programs to quicken the rate of growth in centers? While many programs such as LCI have made a difference, these do not provide the resources to change land use patterns quickly enough to make transit-oriented centers more viable.
- Should we coordinate policies and programs to encourage growth in centers with a regional urbanized area expansion strategy? Programs that incentivize growth in centers must be coordinated with strong regional policies on urbanized area expansion.

**The gap between needs and available funding will widen this decade. The region must have realistic expectations about what can be funded.**

- Unless drastic measures are taken at the national level, federal funding will likely decrease 30 percent in the next RTP. Decreasing federal funds will likely create pressures on local governments to “fill the gap.”
- Evolving federal policy will, in all likelihood, make large-scale expansion of regional highway infrastructure challenging to achieve.

Initial transportation reauthorization bills and climate change legislation is expected to include massive disincentives for projects and programs that increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

---

# The State of the Region

## Population Growth

The Atlanta region has been one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the nation for several decades, reaching a population of four million in the 10-county planning area at the turn of the century.

During the last eight years alone, the Atlanta region added 1.1 million people, making it the second fastest-growing metro in the country, behind only Dallas.

This growth has generated significant economic activity, but also has resulted in numerous challenges related to sustaining the long-term economic, environmental and social health of the region.

ARC's most recent population forecast anticipates that the 20-county Atlanta region will add roughly three million people, for a 2040 population of 8.3 million. Much of this expected population growth can be attributed to the momentum of the Atlanta region, but it is also influenced by larger growth trends. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the Southeastern portion of the United States will experience the largest population change in the country.

**However, the economic recession of 2008 and 2009 is having a dramatic impact on the region's short to mid-term population and employment forecast. While natural population growth and non-employment migration will continue, out migration due to job losses is anticipated to occur in the short term.**

## Employment

Since 2000, the greater 20-county Atlanta region has added more than 100,000 jobs, or slightly fewer than 13,000 jobs per year. In comparison, during the 1990s, the region added approximately 55,000 jobs per year.

Practically all of the job growth between 2006 and 2008 occurred in the "core" 10 counties, reversing a trend seen earlier this decade when some 87 percent of the job growth occurred in the "external" 10 counties. In 2008, the core five counties of the region (Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett) were home to 77 percent of the 20-county region's total jobs. This large share of jobs demonstrates the importance of sustaining a functioning and efficient core.

The Atlanta region is currently in a period of job contraction. In May and June 2009, the Atlanta MSA lost 12,000 jobs. Nationally, construction, retail trade and professional and business services are all experiencing declines in employment. The Atlanta region is certainly not insulated from the national recession.

**Currently the unemployment rate for the 10-county planning area is 8.9 percent, which was a four percent increase from April 2008. With this employment contraction, ARC forecasts that it will take until 2015 for the metro region's employment numbers to reach the levels experienced in 2005. This slow recovery impacts local and state government finances, as well as other important elements of the region, such as housing and commercial property values. Local governments will see a continued stagnation in sales tax receipts, limiting expenditures for parks and recreation, transportation, water and sewer projects and education. It will likely be the middle of the next decade before local governments have their funding capacities return to the levels seen in the mid 2000's.**

---

## Housing

The current market for housing in the Atlanta region, and across the nation is as weak and constrained as it has been in recent memory. The Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller Home Price Indices have shown a steep decline in housing prices in their 10- and 20-city composites since 2006.

Overall, the S&P/Case-Shiller Indices suggest a 14.8 percent decrease in the value of a typical single-family home in the Atlanta region over the past year. While this represents a significant decrease, the region as a whole has weathered this market correction better than most of the other metro areas included in the indices.

Falling prices for existing housing units are not the only force constraining and influencing the housing market in the Atlanta region. The region also has significant numbers of new, unsold units (more than a 12-month supply), an excess inventory of approved buildable lots (more than 150,000 lots, or a 200-month supply), foreclosed and/or abandoned dwellings and new subdivisions in various states of completion. A significant number of builders, housing developers and potential consumers have likely been taken out of the market as financing has become restrictive for all parties.

The 2007 American Community Survey indicates an 11.8 percent vacancy rate for all housing units in the 10-county area, more than double the 2000 vacancy rate of 5.2 percent. Single-family detached housing units represent the primary housing product available to consumers in the region. In 2008, 1.14 million of the 1.68 million housing units in the region were single-family (68 percent).

Foreclosures continue to dampen the Atlanta housing market. At the current pace, 116,905 area properties will have been listed for foreclosure by the end of 2009, up 47 percent from 2008, according to Alpharetta-based Equity Depot. By contrast, in 2000, only 15,253 homes across the entire region were listed in foreclosure.

**The decline in property values and decrease in housing transactions will impact government services well into the next decade. As they do sales taxes, local governments rely on ad valorem property taxes to fund expenditures. Services such as education, police and fire protection and public works rely on property taxes as the primary source of funding.**

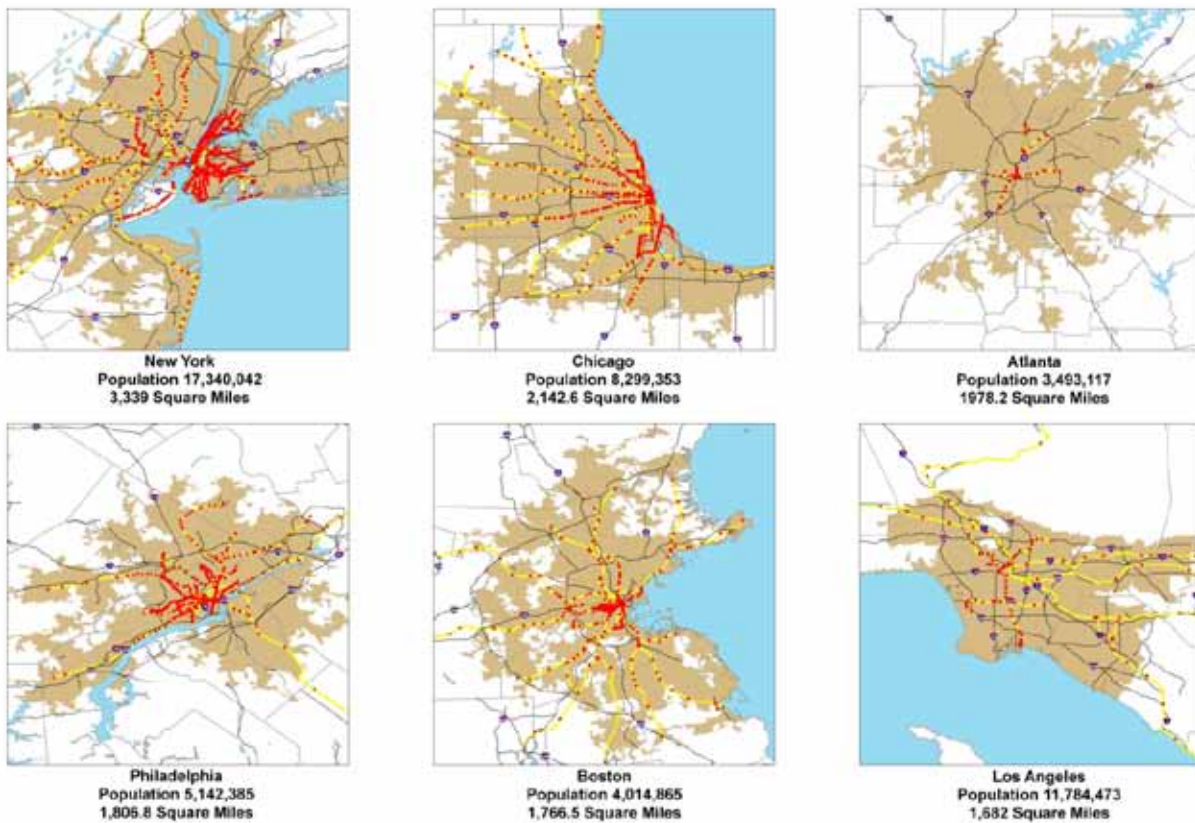


# The Issues

## Land Use and Redevelopment

Metro Atlanta's growth has brought many benefits, propelling the region from a small regional center to a major international economic center. Despite a strong economy and a good quality of life, the pattern of development built to accommodate this growth is already strained -- and may not be sustainable going forward.

The maps below are all drawn at the same scale to demonstrate the relative size of key urban areas in the U.S. The darker portion of each map is the urbanized area of each region as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Core infrastructure in the form of fixed-guideway transit and limited access roadways (as of 2004) are also shown. These images clearly show that the Atlanta region is not keeping up in terms of providing infrastructure consistent with its expanding urban boundary. The comparisons also illustrate that other regions are significantly ahead of metro Atlanta in providing transit infrastructure throughout their regions.



Much of the available land for development in the Atlanta region has been used for low-density residential purposes. While substantial opportunity for redevelopment exists in commercial centers or corridors, the fact is that redevelopment takes longer, requires different strategies and can be more expensive. Many local governments seek to limit the intensity of development, even in areas with available infrastructure, which limits the region's long-term growth potential.



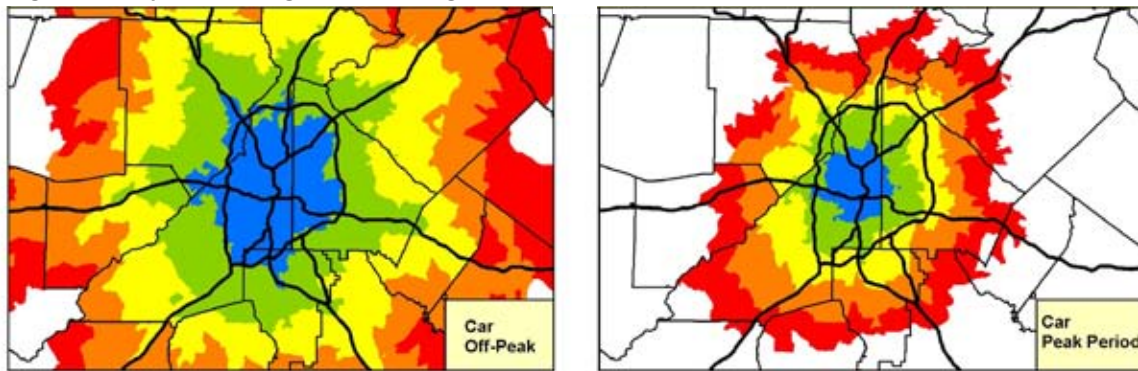
## Congestion Impacting Economic Recovery

Compounding the economic challenges associated with recovery from the current recession, roadway congestion could make it a slower, more painful process. First, as seen after Hurricane Katrina and during the spike in gas prices in 2008, the Atlanta region is susceptible to fluctuations in the price of fuel. This means that our economic health will always be in question during energy shortages.

On another note, some competing regions are asserting that Atlanta's high congestion levels are detrimental to business conditions. They use this as a business and industrial recruitment tool. While many of these regions are not competitive in most other quality of life and business condition measures, it is important that leaders in the Atlanta region recognize the tactics and, in the coming decade, develop strategic transportation solutions that can be implemented within expected funding levels.

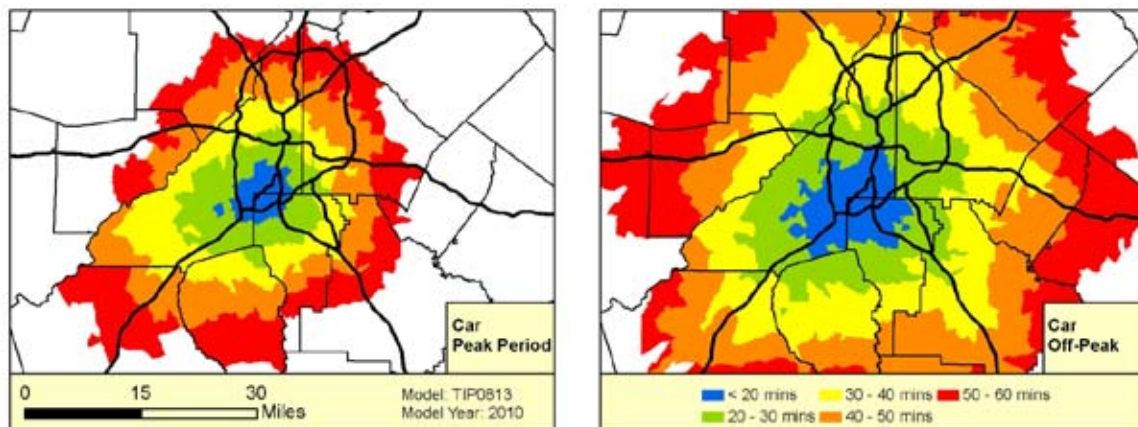
Slow economy aside, we can't discount the adverse impacts of congestion on regional employment travel sheds and accessibility. This impact on the regional economy is illustrated by a comparison of peak to off-peak travel times to the Atlanta Central Business District (CBD) (see Figure 12). More than three million people can access downtown Atlanta in 40 minutes or less during off-peak periods. This decreases to 1.3 million people during peak travel periods. This shrinks the peak period travel shed to that of a medium-sized, regionally-oriented business center, such as Raleigh-Durham, Nashville and Charlotte. Addressing these mobility needs is critical in the development of Plan 2040.

Figure 1: Impact of Congestion on Regional Travel to Downtown Atlanta



The region's key economic asset, Hartsfield-Jackson International, is also impacted by congestion. As illustrated in Figure X, almost 2.1 million people can access downtown Atlanta in 40 minutes or less, via car, during off-peak periods. This decreases to 860,000 people during peak travel periods. Maintaining the region's accessibility to the airport is a critical economic development objective.

Figure2: Impact of Congestion on Regional Travel to Hartsfield-Jackson

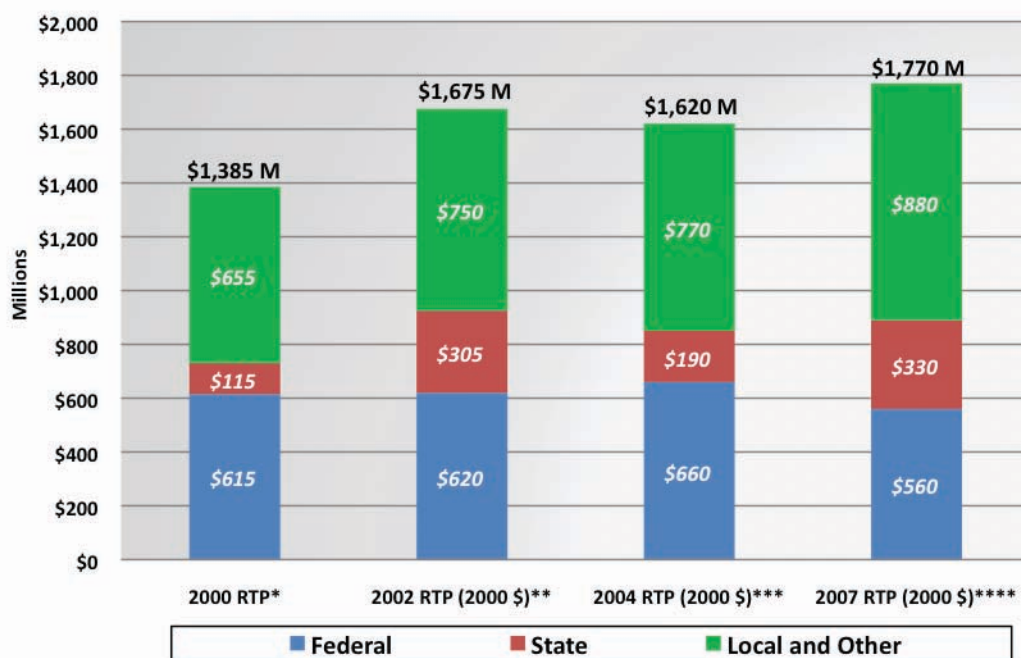


Because the region's population growth is slowing, so is the expansion of its boundaries. Yet, exurban counties are still expected to grow (Bartow, Carroll, etc.) as jobs are added in suburban ARC counties. This creates longer commutes through suburban counties, adversely impacting the capability of all communities to implement needed transportation projects.

The exurban communities often lose their unique character and cannot generate enough funds to provide the necessary infrastructure for the sudden growth. The reason for this is that as rural areas become urbanized, they must provide services for this new growth with increased spending on transportation, parks and recreation, and water/sewer infrastructure. In most communities, the associated growth in the property tax digest does not provide adequate funding to pay for these services. Furthermore, sales tax revenue generated by this new growth is often spent in businesses and shopping centers in other counties.

This growth dynamic, and its impact on regional transportation funding, is illustrated by an analysis of growth and revenue patterns within the Atlanta region over this decade. Past RTPs are compared using the amount of real revenue generated in each RTP (see Figure 3). It's important to note that while the Atlanta region grew from 10 to 18 counties over the decade, real federal revenues dropped from \$615 million per year to \$560 million. While this pot of federal funding shrunk – the region was faced with funding the transportation needs of eight additional counties. This figure is important because the region is expected to continue to expand in the coming decade.

Figure 3: Average Annual Revenues during RTP Periods



\*TEA-21 Transportation Bill  
10 County MPO  
High-level O&M Forecasts  
26 Year RTP (2000-2025)

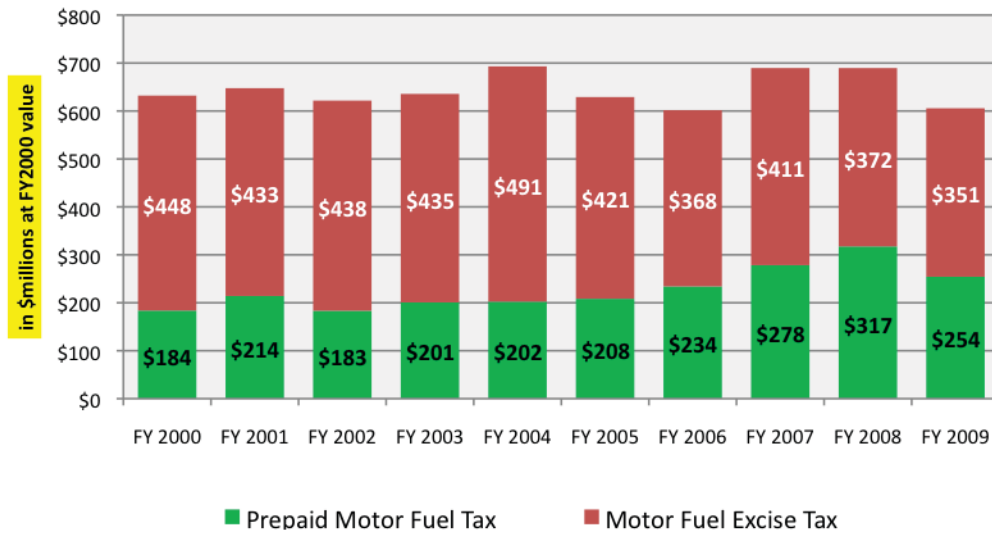
\*\*TEA-21 Transportation Bill  
10 County MPO  
Updated Funding Forecasts  
Gov. Barnes' Transportation  
Choices Initiative Bond Program  
23 Year RTP (2003-2025)

\*\*\*TEA-21 Transportation Bill  
18 County MPO  
Gov. Perdue's Fast  
Forward Bond Program  
26 Year RTP (2005-2030)

\*\*\*\*SAFETEA-LU Transportation Bill  
18 County MPO  
Fast Forward Bond Program  
Emergence of PPP's (I-75/575)  
More Accurate Long-Range  
O&M Forecasts  
23 Year RTP (2008-2030)

While housing has located further away from job centers, fueling a funding disparity, the region's finances have also been hindered by the ongoing economic slowdown and rising unemployment. As the need for transportation investment has increased, the total amount of gasoline used has dropped. This has resulted in a decrease in funding capacity for both state and federal transportation resources that are fed by gasoline taxes. This trend has further reduced the available funding for local governments. Even minor expansion of the region after the 2010 census will adversely impact the region's funding capacity. The financial stress placed on the state and region is illustrated in Figure 4, demonstrating that GDOT currently has less revenue, in real terms, than it had in 2000.

Figure 4: GDOT Motor Fuel Tax Receipts in 2000 \$



The Atlanta region is similar to the entire country in experiencing a significant drop in tax revenue over the last few years. However, compared to other regions in the U.S., the Atlanta region has developed an overall footprint that is not adequately matched with corresponding infrastructure investments. This could be viewed as doing more with less. Realistically, it represents perhaps the region's biggest challenge moving forward.

---

# Potential Solutions

## Livable Centers Initiative

While there are several potential directions the Atlanta region could take in dealing with the issues discussed here, it would be remiss to overlook the success ARC's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program has already enjoyed. Many of the "potential solutions" discussed below could include and/or benefit from the LCI program. More on LCI: [www.atlantaregional.com/arc/html/308.aspx](http://www.atlantaregional.com/arc/html/308.aspx)

Adopted by ARC in 1999, LCI has spurred cities, counties and communities of all sizes to plan for activity centers, town centers, transit stations and transportation corridors, bringing a new level of livability and redevelopment to the region. To date, ARC has allocated close to \$140 million in LCI planning and transportation funds to 102 distinct areas in the Atlanta region.

In June 2008, ARC surveyed the more than 90 communities which have completed LCI studies.

Survey results determined that some 1,148 new development projects have been identified in these existing town centers, activity centers and corridors. Equally importantly, many of the local governments involved in these projects have rewritten ordinances and altered future land use maps in and around LCI areas.

ARC staff has also analyzed the potential travel and emission impacts of LCI plans. Study findings indicate that driving can be reduced by increasing housing and employment options in centers and corridors with supporting transportation infrastructure. This is true even if population and employment within the study areas grow. Of the 10 study areas examined, all but one showed decreased levels of VMT for the residents living within those areas. Balancing jobs and housing within LCI areas, increasing the overall diversity of land uses and improving the multimodal transportation network all work in concert to produce tangible travel and emission benefits.

## LCI By The Numbers

The program has made a tremendous impact on the region this decade, exceeding expectations regarding its effectiveness. LCI communities grew at a rapid rate during the decade, with staggering amounts of construction:

- 84,506 residential units
- 12,329 hotel units
- Over 19 million sq ft of commercial retail space
- Over 38 million sq ft of office space
- 92% of LCI communities have adopted the LCI Study into their comprehensive plan
- 66% have special LCI zoning districts
- 56% of those surveyed reported having policies in their comprehensive plan that focus on building more senior, workforce, or special needs housing
- 83% have design guidelines in place to ensure that new development supports a livable, walkable environment

**Staff recommends that the opportunities, resources and lessons from LCI be expanded to other regional investments. Strategic links between transportation funding and project selection with economic and land use decisions must occur across the region.**

## Expanded Transit Options

When asked how congestion might best be reduced in the Atlanta region, many in the community will answer, “transit.” Certainly, transit is an option, and one that can work if the region makes good use of the planning and funding resources available to it. In fact, progress is being made on this front.

The Transit Planning Board (TPB) was a joint venture between MARTA, ARC, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and other transit agencies. It was established through joint resolution of the governing boards of the three agencies. The TPB was created as a result of the lack of a clear institutional and financing structure to expand transit in the Atlanta region. Its primary mission is the creation of a regional transit plan and, subsequently, a new regional source of funds to implement and operate the system.

The TPB was created as a result of the Regional Transit Institutional Analysis undertaken by ARC. The TPB became the Transit Implementation Board (TIB) in 2009 and continues work to advance transit service in the region.

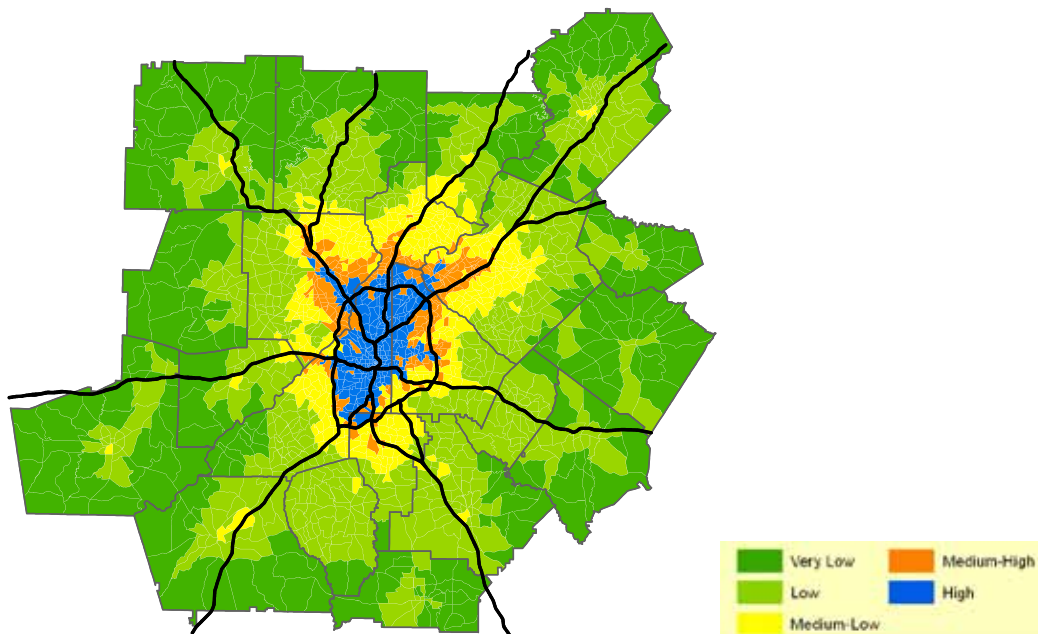
[www.transitboard.org](http://www.transitboard.org)

Currently, TIB is working to coordinate a region-wide fare structure and, eventually, a seamless regional transit operation with one universal payment method, such as MARTA’s Breeze card. This would mean that a rider could swipe their card on a bus leaving from one side of the region and never need a new card or fare money while using other transit services to reach the other side of the region.

Along with these projects in the works, thanks to the TPB, the Atlanta region already has one of the nation’s most ambitious transit concepts, commonly known as “Concept 3.” This transformational concept includes expansion of fixed-guideway transit in many urban and suburban locations in the region. Initial analysis indicates that in spite of the major investments in LCI studies and projects, additional policies are needed to support the establishment of transit centers in the region.

But a major challenge exists in the ability of the region to generate land use patterns to support transit expansion. Figure X illustrates a combination of land use measures and intersection characteristics to form a “multimodal accessibility” measure. Areas in blue and brown are most likely to generate trips to support transit. As illustrated in Figure 5, few areas outside of the core of the urbanized area are expected to have transit supportive land uses by 2040. Addressing this need is critical as Plan 2040 is developed. With current land use patterns, it will be challenging for the region to compete for national transit funding.

Figure 5: Year 2040 Multimodal Accessibility Measures





During the past decade, progress has been made by MARTA, ARC, local governments and others to advance additional development around MARTA transit stations. Development at locations served by high capacity transit is termed Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This development is specifically designed to not only take advantage of the transit service but also to make living near the transit facility more accommodating to the residents or employees.

For decades, ARC has acted to support more TOD. In recent years, the LCI program has provided planning and infrastructure funds to local governments, including areas with MARTA rail stations. The LCI program has provided resources that permitted local governments, citizens and developers to reach consensus and build more TOD. Organizations like the Center for Transit Oriented Development can help provide national resources and examples: [www.reconnectingamerica.org/public/tod](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/public/tod)

Staff recommends that the direction for regional transit underway through the Transit Implementation Board (TIB) be fully implemented and a regional program of implementation begun. This will require further decisions on transit funding and implementation actions. Furthermore, areas with existing transit service must be fully developed to take advantage of the infrastructure in place. This requires growing more in areas with clear location and infrastructure advantages.

## Land Use and Development

As mentioned previously, home values in the Atlanta region have fallen dramatically in recent years. This has led to a different type of housing consumer with different ideas about the American dream.

In the 10-county region, there has been a significant shift in the types of units that are being built. In 2008, more than 50 percent of the permits were for non-single-family dwellings. A majority of households in the Atlanta region already consist of families with two persons or fewer. Due to our aging population and other demographic measures, the decline in the share of households in the Atlanta region that have more than two people is expected to continue over the next 30 years.



In general, the number of residential permits has been on the decline during the past few years, going from a high of 55,405 units permitted in 2004 to only 14,452 units permitted in 2008.

ARC staff recommends that regional and state policymakers revisit regional growth policies. Even assuming the availability of additional funding sources, it is unlikely the region will be in a position to fund needed transportation improvements. Stronger policies, including potential policy disincentives, are needed to slow the physical expansion of the region.

Furthermore, while the region has an ambitious transit expansion vision, the reality is that land use patterns do not support a rapid expansion of commuter rail. Stronger policy incentives are necessary to encourage the public and private sectors to redevelop planned transit centers.

---

## Lifelong Communities

By 2030, one out of every five residents will be over the age of 60, a doubling of the current 60+ population. The **Lifelong Communities Initiative** is a comprehensive effort that involves designing physical environments, the arrangement of land use patterns, buildings and infrastructure, that support both individual activities and the programs, policies and funding that allow people to remain in their homes and communities as long as they desire.

Over the past three years, ARC has facilitated “aging in place” discussions in the region’s 10 counties, and connected partners to implement innovative approaches to meeting the challenges and opportunities of this demographic shift. In 2009, ARC sponsored a **Lifelong Communities Charrette** to explore ideas, challenge assumptions and create consensus around a community vision and plan.

The Lifelong Communities Initiative has three goals, to:

- Promote housing and transportation options
- Encourage healthy lifestyles
- Expand information and access to health and supportive services

A Lifelong Community is one that provides a full range of options insuring a high quality of life for all, no matter what age or ability, including:

- Housing options that are affordable accessible, located close to services and available within existing communities
- Mobility options that ensure as individuals age, they can access basic services and remain independent

The Lifelong Community Charrette brought together design, architecture, planning, aging and health experts to craft six master plans for sites in Cobb, DeKalb and Gwinnett counties and the cities of Atlanta, Conyers and Fayetteville to serve as models for what makes a community “lifelong.”

The charrette resulted in seven core Lifelong Communities Principles:

- Connectivity
- Pedestrian access and transit
- Neighborhood retail and services
- Social interaction
- Mix of dwelling types
- Healthy living
- Consideration for existing residents

In addition to the Lifelong Communities core principles and master site plans, the charrette is producing a comprehensive accessibility code. The goal is to create communities that are comprehensively accessible, from the doorknob to the crosswalk.

ARC’s planning process, including Plan 2040 and programs such as LCI, offers opportunities and resources for planning, related implementation assistance and transportation projects in specific areas. Lifelong community principles relate to the design of new development or retrofits to existing communities, a supporting approach to the region’s Livable Centers Initiative. Lifelong community principles provide a new element to planning, which specifically addresses the anticipated problems of older adults. Integration of the lifelong community principles into the regional planning process will lead to systemic change to meet the needs of older adults within ARC and the region.

**Staff recommends that a continued focus develop to link the needs for Lifelong Communities with core planning strategies underway. Stronger coordination and resources for local governments to create Lifelong Communities will ensure the region is successful.**



---

# Outside Influences

The following subjects may not have a direct impact on land use and transportation policies, but they will help direct planning for future development. Aside from water, these are topics that must be discussed when the future of the Atlanta region is the topic of conversation.

## Green Infrastructure

ARC has been involved in efforts to increase the amount of protected greenspace in the Atlanta region throughout its history. In the 1960s the Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission (previous incarnation of ARC) developed the Nature Preserve Plan that identified sites in a five-county planning area that should be acquired. Among the sites were Sweetwater Creek, Cochran Mill and Kennesaw Mountain. During the past decade, local governments have taken a larger role by utilizing funding opportunities available from the State of Georgia and generating revenue locally for greenspace acquisition.

In 2008, voters in Cherokee, Cobb and Forsyth counties approved measures to purchase and/or protect parks and open space at a total cost of more than \$150 million. These local governments are just the latest in the Atlanta region to put significant local resources into parks and open space, a growing trend around the metro area. Unfortunately, state support for land conservation in the Atlanta region has not been as robust as local efforts. Georgia lags behind other states in funding land conservation.

According to Trust for Public Land, from 1999 to 2004, Georgia spent an average of \$1.81 per capita annually on land conservation, while Florida spent \$24.10 per capita. North Carolina, which has a comparable population to Georgia, dedicated \$206 million between 1999 and 2004 compared to Georgia's \$80 million.

## Education

Education is the primary means through which individuals increase their incomes. The Atlanta region attracts graduates from all over the Southeast to fill jobs. The skills and levels of education of the region's and state's residents impact the types of jobs that the region attracts and the incomes of the region's residents. The EPE Research Center calculates graduation rates using data from the Common Core of Data (CCD), an annual census of public schools and school districts in the United

States conducted by the U.S. Department of Education.

For the 2005-06 school year, Georgia's graduation rate was 55.9 percent. The national average was 69.2 percent. Georgia's rank among states was one of the worst in the nation at 49. The graduation rate improvement from 1996 to 2006 was +0.7. The national average was +2.8.

The Atlanta region is fortunate to be home to 48 universities and technical schools within the region that offer a wide variety of programs and research. More than 220,000 students are enrolled at four-year institutions within the region, making it the seventh in student enrollment among U.S. urban areas. The Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education estimates that these institutions create a \$10.8 billion dollar economic impact and 130,000 jobs within Georgia.

However, even with the large contribution of higher education to the Atlanta region, the region still has issues with developing and maintaining an educated work force. Approximately 13.5 percent of the population has not completed high school or a GED, and even with the large number of universities and technical schools, a large portion of our population does not have a bachelor's degree or advanced degree.

---

## Local and Regional Plan Implementation

ARC's Envision6 planning process resulted in a resolution that was presented to the ARC Board at a retreat on March 31, 2006. During April and May 2006, the LUCC and ELUC committees reviewed and commented on the Envision6 scenario products. A resolution was approved by the ARC Board in May 2006, adopting the Envision6 Regional Development Policies, the Unified Growth Policy Map and the Regional Place and Development Matrix.

An Envision6 Implementation Strategy was developed based on programs and activities that ARC would undertake during the 2006 to 2009 period to coordinate land use, transportation and related planning and forecasting associated with updates of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The staging of activities was determined by resources and programmed in the ARC Annual Work Program. The activities were supported by the ARC Board for implementation of land use components of Envision6. These activities sought to further integrate issues of land use, transportation, water and associated regional and local plans. Update of the Envision6 Implementation Strategy activities and progress was completed in November 2006 and 2007.

Under the Georgia Planning Act, ARC planning documents including the Regional Plan (Plan 2040) are the region's primary means for influencing changes to local comprehensive plans, zoning and public investments. ARC has demonstrated through programs and activities including the LCI program, Community Choices and others that the greatest benefits to growth management will occur through working within the established federal and state planning processes. These include local planning and zoning.

## Global and National Trends

Global and national trends have had a primary impact on metro Atlanta's growth and will continue to do so. During the past few decades the region was built and sustained with a steady supply of federal infrastructure dollars, banks flush with funds to lend, incomes from new jobs, cheap gasoline and low labor costs.

The region is dependent on highway and arterial infrastructure for access to most jobs or services. While other regions of the U.S. have very similar traffic conditions and patterns, new transit services and redevelopment are anticipated to have greater importance for continued growth. Future economic growth in the Atlanta region could be constrained by traffic congestion and the lack of adequate funding for transportation maintenance and improvements. It has never been more important for the Atlanta region to be strategic with the funds that are available for new transportation construction.

Housing, office and retail construction as well as bank lending practices are expected to fall back to more sustainable levels (pre-2000) across the U.S. Metro Atlanta must realign its priorities and strategies of the past into strategies and programs that will yield future economic benefits. The region must make investments for the next generation of new jobs and growth. A close alignment of economic goals with infrastructure projects and land use/development will ensure the region is strategically positioned for the next decade.







ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

---

40 COURTLAND STREET, NE  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303  
[ATLANTAREGIONAL.COM](http://ATLANTAREGIONAL.COM)