

Georgian Asian Pacific Islander Community Coalition (GAAPICC)
The Pepper Talk Series 2010: July 8, 2010

“PLAN 2040 – be a part of Atlanta’s Regional Planning”

Meeting Summary



6:15 – 6:20	Agenda Overview
6:20 – 6:30	Presentation on PLAN 2040 – setting the context and what has been done so far
6:30 – 6:45	Small Group Discussions on what was heard
6:45 – 7:10	Sharing
7:10 – 7:15	Presentation on PLAN 2040 – next steps and considerations
7:15 – 7:35	Small Group Discussions on Guiding Principles and Evaluation
7:35 – 7:55	Sharing
7:55 – 8:00	Thanks, Next Steps

Attendance: 40 participants divided into 5 discussion groups

Presentation on PLAN 2040 setting the context and what has been done so far:

- *What is PLAN 2040?* Metro Atlanta’s plan to accommodate economic and population growth over the next 30 years organized around a foundation of sustainability.
- *Draft Vision under consideration:* Provide visionary leadership for sustainable growth by balancing environmental responsibility, economic growth and social needs while maximizing benefits to all.
- *Draft Goals under consideration:* What do we want metro Atlanta to be and do for its residents, businesses, and visitors? 1) Lead as the global gateway to the South 2) encourage healthy communities and 3) expand access to community resources.
- *Draft Objectives under consideration:* How will we go about achieving our vision for metro Atlanta? 1) Increase mobility options for people and goods 2) foster a healthy, educated, well-trained 3) safe and secure population; promote places to live with easy access to jobs and services 4) improve energy efficiency while preserving the region’s environmental and 5) identify innovative approaches to economic recovery and long term prosperity.

- Also discussed were results from the Regional Assessment completed in 2009 and reactions to the assessment.

Participant Responses to PLAN 2040 background and context:

Considering what we heard in the presentation, what excites us; what concerns us; and what question would we like to ask ARC?

What excites us?

- Revitalizing the neighborhood: communities closer together
- Having good, solid plans (e.g., rail)
- We have a say in what happens in Atlanta.
- Organization like ARC is looking into the city's growth and they are consulting all groups
- Positive change for future years
- Transportation improvements planned for future
- Opportunity to plan "clean building"
- Concerted effort to improve Atlanta
- ARC interested in our community
- Mixed-use development (working and living closer together)
- Job growth
- Reduction in smog
- ARC doing this work and listening to the community
- Mixed-use communities (e.g., not like Atlantic Station)

What concerns us?

- Money
- Air Quality
- Traffic
- Seniors: who will care for them? How will they deal with transportation? What happens when Social Security benefits run out? What happens with healthcare reform?
- Energy: What will be effect in 2040 (of consumption)?
- Population: How can we deal with job-related problems? Explosion of number of people will create problem of jobs, resources, environment
- Pollution
- Transportation infrastructure
- Population Explosion and Diversity: diminishing resources; majority becomes minority
- Conserving natural resources; the need to educate how to deal with wasteful habits.
- Jobs!
- Transportation effects on health (e.g., mental, economy)
- Implementation of any programs that you might have in mind (funding; Atlanta area is composed of so many counties, cities). How do we integrate everyone? General lack of transportation (75% stat)
- Public transportation: limited and inconvenient; public perception of safety after certain hours.
- Traffic: more proactive changes rather than expanding lane.

What question would we like to ask ARC?

- Will Commission be able to have control over public transportation? Input to Boards that control organizations. (e.g., “Cobb County transportation is terrible; 2 hours to get to work when 15 miles away. Also Clayton County public transportation shutdown) How can ARC help with that?

Response: The Regional Transit Committee was established as a policy committee of the Atlanta Regional Commission in January 2010 to focus on issues of regional transit system planning, funding and governance. The RTC is chaired by the Mayor of the City of Atlanta, Kasim Reed, and many of the counties in the metro area are voting members. To keep track of their deliberations and decisions, connect to the ARC webpage for this committee <http://www.atlantaregional.com/about-us/boards-committees/regional-transit-committee> as well as our transit website:

<http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/transit>. PLAN 2040 is addressing future ridership, availability, funding, and needs, with ARC staff working with all of the transit operators in the region.

- What is the effectiveness of this type of process that ARC is maintaining? What has been the past success (with ARC, for example, for certain problems in consulting in the community)? How will we see the results in the larger community in Atlanta?

Response: The purpose of our stakeholder and community involvement process is to share community challenges and opportunities with decision-makers, stakeholders and the general public, get responses and advice from them and take it back to be analyzed and utilized. The effectiveness we think is in the quality of the discussions – is the information discussed targeted and understandable? Is the advice received usable in the planning process? Does the information and advice received also provide insights on the needs and issues in diverse communities that will enhance ARC’s ongoing and future approach to these communities? In the past, we have asked specific questions related to how we might more effectively maximize input from diverse communities as well as make our resources and data more accessible and useful. ARC’s Social Equity Advisory Committee, for example, was established to assist in identifying important issues, strategies and goals and serve as a primary linkage to the more diverse range of community stakeholders in the region during the planning cycles and beyond. As far as success is concerned – success cannot be measured in on-the-ground-projects in a short amount of time. Sometimes plan implementation takes many years to be realized but the conversations must happen and the results tracked overtime. We evaluate our work (see our website for an evaluation of our last plan update, Envision6 at <http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/public-participation>. In the evaluation, you can see where we felt we succeeded and where we fell short. Our current work is based on that evaluation.

- Given budget constraints, how do we even pay for these plans to appear? Where’s the money going to come from?

Response: The funding will mainly come from federal grants, state fuel tax receipts, and local dollar matches. You can check out more information on this from our website: <http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/financing-transportation>. If the regional sales tax referendum passes in 2012, that will be another funding source. These

sources, however, will not provide enough funding for all of our needs – we will indeed have to make some very tough choices – that is what PLAN 2040 is designed to do.

- What types of public transportation are planned (e.g., light rail, buses, carpool)? What are the strategies? How is that going to be funded? Are you taking into account foreclosed homes in talking about space (e.g., building in vs building out)?

Response: The transit projects to be in PLAN 2040 is currently being discussed. They will most likely come from the regional transit plan called Concept 3. Here is a link to that information, <http://www.transitboard.org/concept3>. PLAN 2040 will have a housing element in it and ARC is currently meeting with local government housing officials, developers, business groups, professional planning groups and housing agencies to gauge what to include. The Regional Assessment concluded in 2009 investigated this situation in depth:

http://www.atlantaregional.com/File%20Library/Transportation/Plan%202040/tp_Plan2040_Exec_Summary.pdf

- What are we going to do about the brownfields (e.g., GM plant in Doraville)? How can we make it more cost effective to have companies relocated to Georgia (e.g., tax incentives)?
Response: One of the common responses we have received in PLAN 2040 outreach is asking how the region can build in incentives to realize the plan's implementation – both by local governments and by the private sector. This certainly will be a part of the conversation going forward.

Presentation on PLAN 2040 next steps and considerations:

Potential Guiding Principles:

1. Focus financial resources and public investments in existing communities
2. Conserve environmentally-sensitive areas and increase the amount and connectivity of greenspace.
3. Promote sustainable, energy-efficient development and transportation investment.
4. Align growth and development with infrastructure investment.
5. Encourage a variety of choices related to housing and transportation.
6. At strategic regional locations, plan and retain industrial and freight land uses.
7. Increase the number and variety of uses around existing and planned transit stations.
8. Assure the preservation, maintenance and operation of the existing transportation system.
9. Incorporate the needs of the region's changing demographics into all aspects of planning

When you consider PLAN 2040's draft Guiding Principles, which 3 are most important to your table and what are the most important evaluation should be used to measure the success of PLAN 2040 using those 3 principles?

Participant Responses to Guiding Principles along with Suggested Evaluation Measures

1. ~~Focus financial resources and public investments in existing communities~~ (no votes)
2. Conserve environmentally-sensitive areas and increase the amount and connectivity of greenspace. (1 vote)

- a. *Conserve for future generations; increase use of green resources (environmental sustainability)*
- 3. Promote sustainable, energy-efficient development and transportation investment. (4 votes)
 - a. *Air quality improvement – change in particular matter and ozone.*
 - b. *Increase use of public transportation and encourage more “walkable” communities – lower gas usage, less # of automobile usage.*
 - c. *How can we increase the use of renewable and easily available resources (instead of nonrenewable)? Although more expensive compared to loss of resources (energy-efficient use)*
 - d. *Strategic planning: Hong Kong did things the right way! – Increase in use of energy efficient/green houses, buildings, public transportation; recycling water and materials.*
- 4. Align growth and development with infrastructure investment. (1 vote)
 - a. *If population grows, then increase investment (they should be a parallel, direct relationship).*
- 5. Encourage a variety of choices related to housing and transportation. (4 votes)
 - a. *Are public policies reflected demographics? Is state policy promoting these principles or hindering transportation principles (HB277)*
 - b. *Increase current public transportation usage; build more multifamily dwellings (rather than single dwelling) to prevent more sprawling out; more bike lanes, sidewalks.*
 - c. *More high rise apartments, walkable communities (sidewalks); mixed-use housing plans; light rails – reduced travel time.*
 - d. *Increase in affordable housing, safety, and security; mixed use housing; energy efficient homes and transportation.*
- ~~6. At strategic regional locations, plan and retain industrial and freight land uses. (no votes)~~
- 7. Increase the number and variety of uses around existing and planned transit stations. (2 votes)
 - a. *Improvements for businesses – compare tax receipts; positive changes in policy would bring more businesses which would bring a larger tax base. Look to see if reduction of people who have access to public transportation.*
 - b. *MARTA – more social services, businesses to increase ridership. Have surrounding areas reflect a more encompassing view of a healthy lifestyle – no longer seeing negative affects (e.g. smog, obesity; increase in biking, walking, public transportation ridership)*
- ~~8. Assure the preservation, maintenance and operation of the existing transportation system. (no votes)~~
- 9. Incorporate the needs of the region's changing demographics into all aspects of planning (4 votes)
 - a. *Not just include our community in planning stage, but also include in implementation stage(s). e.g. Asian population: Are we putting in an elevator lift for wheelchairs? MARTA signs different languages for LEP (Limited English Proficiency)? – employees, contractors, constituents reflect our community in payrolls, usage, and access.*
 - b. *Ask around community; satisfaction levels and how much they use transportation. (If not using, what can be addressed to better this?)*
 - c. *How we can incorporate community people about services received, used, and implemented – direct assistance to community: How are they doing? What are their problems? Financial resources are an important measure. Where is money coming from (increase tax?) Again, parallel relationship: We will be main source of dollars; if we increase tax, it will be an increase to us.*
 - d. *Town hall meetings like tonight beneficial for ARC and us, now and for followup.*