



Plan 2040 Neighborhood Forum

DeKalb County, March 31, 2011

On March 31, 2011, The Civic League for Regional Atlanta hosted a Neighborhood Forum on the future of regional transportation at DeKalb County's Manuel J. Maloof Auditorium in downtown Decatur. A staff member from the Atlanta Regional Commission gave two presentations, the first on Plan 2040, which is the regional plan for accommodating economic and population growth sustainably over the next 30 years, and the second on the Transportation Investment Act, which was passed by the state legislature in 2010 and will allow citizens to vote on a regional penny sales tax to fund transportation improvements over a 10-year period. Though Plan 2040 addresses both land use and transportation, the presenter focused on the plan's transportation recommendations, as they have raised far more questions and concerns during previous public meetings.

Thirty people participated in the forum. Of the 24 who turned in completed demographic forms, 10 were residents of communities in DeKalb County, 11 were residents of the City of Atlanta (Fulton County), one was from Gwinnett, one from Cobb and one from Henry County. Fifteen participants were male and nine female. Thirteen were white, eight were African-American, two Hispanic and one Asian. More than half were between ages 40 and 65, five were between 25 and 39, and three each were between 18 and 24 and over age 65.

Participants were grouped into several discussion circles, and following each of the ARC staff member's presentations, the forum facilitator asked each group to work together to address several questions, recording their responses on flipcharts. The following notes were transcribed from those flipchart pages. For clarity, we have:

1. Inserted the discussion questions posed by the facilitator above their respective answers.
2. Noted where groups did not record answers to certain questions.
3. Numbered questions and answers for easy reference (i.e. Group 1, Question A, Answer 3).
4. Corrected obvious spelling and punctuation errors.
5. Written out obvious abbreviations (i.e. "Rd.") but left alone ambiguous ones (i.e. "trans" might mean "transportation" or "transit").

In some cases, groups recorded notes that did not clearly correspond to any of the discussion questions. Those notes are identified by the heading "Other".

GROUP 1

A. Briefly share your motivations for attending this forum.

1. Community interest
2. Keep track of transportation
3. Walking, biking and transit
4. Health and transportation
5. Other views and information

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. Why is there a 20-year delay? (except streetcar)
2. How will the money be distributed and used?
3. Managed lanes – carpool/HOV – equitable?
4. Who and how is the location of the transit being decided?
5. What happens if we do not use the projected amount of money?
6. What can we do to reduce the % towards maintaining what we have?
7. Is human health being considered?

C. What excites you about the recommendations for maximizing transportation resources in our region?

1. Alternate transportation is on the table
2. Emphasis on maintenance
3. Attempt at regional inclusiveness
4. Trying to get transportation and land use coordinated

D. What changes would you make to the regional recommendations to further maximize limited resources?

1. Quit encouraging sprawl, encourage density instead – no new roads in suburbs
2. Ensure transportation HUB is completed – multi modal station
3. Include costs of accidents/pollution/externalities
4. Plan needs to include land use/zoning/increase density in town/nodes
5. More effective communication

E. Which transportation projects must be on the list and considered for funding?

1. All transit, cycling, walking
2. Monetary incentives for using alternate transportation – MARTA, carpool, subsidize shower facilities for cyclists
3. Multimodal passenger terminal

F. Which transportation projects should be excluded from the list?

1. All road expansion except for bus rapid transit
2. No rail transit on expressways because freeway right of way prevents transit-oriented development directly adjacent to station

GROUP 2

A. Briefly share your motivations for attending this forum.

1. Black angel monument (1st) and on MARTA route

2. NPU-V, Atlanta advisory board member- on transportation
3. Civil engineer – waste water/environmental engineer – commuting/mass transit concerns
4. ARC – forecasting
5. Architect – infrastructure and commuting

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. Corridors: state control (money from) or to system?
2. Mass transit/Beltline – 3 million additional people, where will they be located? Environmental impacts?
3. Coordination of mass transit systems?
4. Extension of existing metropolitan transit systems? (MARTA)
5. Will there be: high-speed/light rail, environmental impact, walk, brownfield, friendly?
6. Who pays? Funding?
7. Coordination of MARTA to expressways?

C & D. Recommendations/Likes/ Dislikes:

1. Include transit-oriented developments, mixed-use communities? Environmental impacts?
2. Futurists – out of box recommendations?
3. Public safety items/considerations?
4. Efficient mobility?
5. Incorporate “future trends”, modes, etc.?
6. Housing type considerations?
7. Expansion of public transit? Outer perimeter/monorail (light rail)?
8. What accounts for “new” population?
9. MARTOC_involvement? (MARTOC = state legislature’s Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Overview Committee)

LIKES: effort spent and community input!!!!

E. Which transportation projects must be on the list and considered for funding?

1. Hold elected officials accountable
2. Separate budgets for public transportation and highways
3. Interchange/merges improvement at GA 400 and I-85
4. Add express and local lanes (and transit)
5. Double-deck major highways
6. Transparency of fund collection and use
7. Use only for specific purposes
8. Traffic communication/avoidance systems to airport “580”
9. Education of public on public transit

F. Which transportation projects should be excluded from the list?

[No responses recorded.]

GROUP 3

A. Briefly share your motivations for attending this forum.

1. Student in urban planning interested in urban development
2. User of mass transit, interested in comprehensive mass transit system
3. To see how regional plans mesh with local plans. How are Plan 2040 and Transportation Investment Act coordinated?
4. What road plans are in progress?
5. Wanted to know what is planned
6. Attend last November forum and wanted to see next steps

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. What is balance between improved transportation and coordinated lane use?
2. How to manage cost over runs?

C & D. Likes and Dislikes

1. Move 3rd item-> provide more travel options up in priority
2. Revenue sources should shift to multi modal
3. Don't overlook aging infrastructure. How does it come into play? Is there a plan?
4. Regional plan should make all counties fiscally responsible.
5. The new 3 million people – where will they live?
6. Promote CIDs in the areas – Stonecrest, Perimeter Center as models
7. Can transportation investments be used to drive growth in a new direction?

E. Which transportation projects must be on the list and considered for funding?

1. Regional transit projects rail/bus expansion
2. Actual use of mass transit “incentivize”
3. Dynamic traffic controls – driver control (Memorial Drive example)
4. Commuter rail connecting ARC region to other regions
5. Sidewalks on all state highways
6. Concentrated economic development

F. Which transportation projects should be excluded from the list?

[No responses recorded.]

GROUP 4

A. Briefly share your motivations for attending this forum.

1. What's the point?
2. Learn more about the funding and Plan 2040 and hopefully contribute ideas
3. Help the region be more environmentally and family friendly. Also unhappy with the perception that public transportation is for the poor.
4. Environmental protection and transit advocacy
5. Find out about the role of mass transit in Plan 2040
6. Find out how non-automobile transit is going to overtake automobile transit

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. Why is "preserve and optimize" not bundled with "complete streets"?
2. Why is mass transit not until 2030-2040?
3. How does Plan 2040 work with city-level development plans (CDP)?
4. How will those who can't afford to live close to jobs afford managed lanes? How is that an inclusive or equitable plan?

C. What excites you about the recommendations for maximizing transportation resources in our region?

1. Less cars/roads, in favor of transit
2. Build transit first then build roads accordingly
3. Plan 2040 should be focused on encouraging planned growth instead of being reactionary to sprawl
4. Building an ADA-compliant system creates a smooth running system

D. What changes would you make to the regional recommendations to further maximize limited resources?

1. Interchange improvement and additions

E. Which transportation projects must be on the list and considered for funding?

1. If MARTA expands we need express trains
2. MARTA needs to stop at places people actually go
3. Street cars across the region
4. Beltline
5. Guidelines revamped to +70% for transit, 5% cars/roads, 25% for everything else
6. Public transit to Stone Mountain Park linked to the regional transit

F. Which transportation projects should be excluded from the list?

1. Everyone else's