

NGO Meeting Summary: Aging and Human Services Groups – 10.28.2010

Attendees: Center for the Visually Impaired, Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta

Coordination

- There is a need for better coordination between transit operators.
- Difficult for MJCCA to reach out to other counties; Rockdale, Cherokee, and Forsyth as examples.
- ARC RideShare and MJCCA home share have some similarities and are innovative approaches to solving problems.
- ARC starting up a carpool for seniors that can be coordinated with these organizations.

Aging and Human Services Issues

- Center for Visually Impaired's (CVI) goal is to help people keep their independence, transportation is a major issue/hurdle.
- Funding cutbacks have negatively impacted CVIs programs and services.
- Approximately 250,000 Georgians have some type of visual impairment.
- MJCCA has depended on fair amount of government funding (Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, ARC).
- Elevate Human Services Transportation Plan to a major component of PLAN 2040.

Other

- CVI provides training on and off site; i.e. Low Vision Clinic.
- Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta (MJCCA) is one of the largest adult daycare providers in Atlanta.
- MJCCA is beginning a home share program in which older adults are paired with roommates to allow them to continue living in their home, there is a desire to expand this program.
- MJCCA struggles with marketing other services offered.
- Is there an ability to utilize a Zipcar type service for senior transportation?

NGO Meeting Summary: Community Improvement Districts – 10.26.2010

Attendees: South Fulton CID, Gwinnett Village CID, CAP/ADID, Buckhead CID, Georgia DNR, Midtown Alliance

Coordination

- How do priorities of CIDs get manifested in ARC's work program?
- How does PLAN 2040 relate to local comprehensive plans? Gwinnett as an example just completed theirs.
- Need to formalize process to get CIDs more involved.
- Can CIDs be represented on ARC committees?
- CIDs have been a reliable partner; have a history of delivering projects in a timely manner.
- There is an informal CID Alliance that has been intentionally informal.

CID Priorities

- Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village have interchange improvements as one of their top priorities.

NGO/ State Agencies Meeting Summary: Preservation and Conservation Groups – 10.26.2010

Attendees: Georgia Conservancy; Georgia DNR – Wildlife Resources Division; Georgia DNR – State Parks and Recreation; Georgia DNR – Environmental Protection Division; Georgia DNR – Historic Preservation Division; Scenic Georgia; Trust for Public Land

Water

- How is PLAN 2040 addressing long-range water needs?
- Is there a need to address perceptions/ misconceptions about regional water issues to those individuals outside of the region?
- How does environmental contamination originating in the Atlanta area affect downstream areas?
 - *Potential Work Program Activities*
 - Work to create a higher level of awareness about the role of the MNGWPD and other agencies that have a more direct role in resolving long range water issues
 - Continue to reinforce the work of the MNGWPD through long range planning efforts, such as the Regional Resource Plan
 - Create opportunities for dialogue between MNGWPD and regional conservation organizations
 - Promote awareness of multiple ways that groups can be supportive of improving regional water quality, and find opportunities for different groups to focus on specific targets and avoid duplicative efforts , i.e. stormwater management

Funding Opportunities

- Land and Water Conservation Fund – future funding may focus on urban areas, particularly with the goal of improving public health related to obesity, etc
- GEFA's role in funding land acquisition to further green infrastructure goals; improve water quality
- Livable Centers Initiative as a model for targeted master planning studies that could enhance preservation and conservation efforts
 - *Potential Work Program Activities*
 - Identify opportunities to work collaboratively to pursue funding for regional projects
 - Identify specific areas/ issues that need funding and seek out resources to benefit those
 - Work to cultivate better applicants for existing funding mechanisms

Enhance Redevelopment Efforts

- Consider redevelopment opportunities outside of the core of the region, particularly in suburban areas
- Scan of LCI programs and other targeted master planning studies – work to connect the dots between recommendations of master plan studies and larger infrastructure plans (i.e. trails, greenways, transit, etc)
- What are the opportunities for working with non-profit partners to identify opportunities for land acquisition, conservation, connectivity, etc within LCI areas? Work to leverage investments that we have already made and pull together regional partners and resources to help bring plans to fruition
 - *Potential Work Program Activities*
 - Scan LCI studies/ areas to identify conservation/ greenspace opportunities

- Provide a forum for numerous groups to come together to discuss conservation opportunities on a regular basis
- Identify overlap in various programs that could be leveraged to attain regional goals and be more aggressive in connecting program activities to end users – link a variety of regional priorities (i.e. “No Child Left Inside” benefits conservation goals, eco-tourism goals, public health goals, etc)

Need for a Message

- Preservation and conservation initiatives often serve similar ends, and there is opportunity to find common goals and share resources
- Need to develop a consistent vision and message for how conservation and preservation goals are related
 - *Potential Work Program Activities*
 - Provide a forum for groups to come together and discuss their mission and activities and work toward the goal of refining a regional preservation/ conservation message
 - Look at what other groups are doing, i.e. “green table” and “green chamber of commerce” – find good examples without duplicating efforts

Scenic Resources

- Need to preserve areas of scenic beauty, cultural interest, aesthetic quality throughout the region
- Lack of sign control can be a problem for preserving and enhancing aesthetic qualities of the region
 - *Potential Work Program Activities*
 - Work with local governments to develop better sign control measures and debunk myths about sign regulation
 - Develop toolkits about sign regulation in conjunction with Community Choices program
 - Develop toolkits on other areas related to resource conservation, i.e. urban gardening
 - Promote audits of local codes and ordinances to identify potential obstacles to conservation efforts
 - Update existing Community Choices toolkits, as needed, to reflect current regional priorities

NGO Meeting Summary: Economic Development Groups – 10.28.2010

Attendees: DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, Cobb Chamber of Commerce, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

Coordination

- Better connections of core plans to economic development to create synergy. These plans need to communicate how they are connected to economic development
- ARC is an outside, objective party on economic development, land use and other issues.
- ARC should focus on being an outside advocate of policies and policies that support economic development
- ARC should align economic needs with workforce needs
- Have a statement within PLAN 2040 about cooperation in Economic Development
- Make sure that the economic future is in plans.

Regional Economic Issues

- Peer review of other Regional Agencies and their role in economic development
- ARC's role should be policy and research and not to duplicate efforts
- Identify prime industrial zones and work to protect them from unsuited development.
- There is no regional governmental voice about economic development and to keep existing industry here.
- Develop a task force to develop an economic development model for the Atlanta region.

Other

- Develop something the group can respond to

NGO Meeting Summary: General Groups – 10.28.2010

Attendees: Georgia Tech SCARP program; The Civic League; Georgia DNR, Sustainability Division; LCC; Leon Eplan

Coordination in Planning:

- How do you truly coordinate jobs, transportation and land use decisions with the needs of the aging population?
 - In short term, focus on implementation of Human Services Transportation Plan is important.
- UGPM is an important tool. How has the buy-in been with fringe counties who are largely classified as rural and developing rural? What tools or programs can ARC influence or implement to help protect these areas from undesirable development and land use patterns?
- Fifty Forward was an important visioning process --- the results from this initiative should continually be included in the PLAN 2040 discussion.
- How can ARC coordinate better with the state?
- In addition to our regional peers, what could ARC learn from our international peers? Particularly in regard to communities with limited financial resources (i.e. BRT in India)
- Continue to promote opportunities for partnerships and projects with our regional university system.

Economic Development

- What are actionable items as far as job creation goes? How can ARC play a role in this?
- Industrial land availability is going to be a big issue. Someone needs to identify what sites are available for large industrial employers.
- New investments will not come until there is more certainty in our economic future.

Focus on Existing Communities

- How do you retrofit existing subdivisions to make them more livable?
- Future growth does not depend on money. A lot of the needed infrastructure is already in place, but there may need to be change to the regulatory systems that govern development.

Plan 2040 NGO Outreach

Transportation NGO Meeting Summary – October 26, 2010

Meeting Attendees:

Dan Reuter	ARC, Land Use Division Chief
Amy Goodwin	ARC, Land Use Division
Jon Tuley	ARC, Land Use Division
Sally Flocks	PEDS
Liz Coyle	PEDS
Harvey Clark	Center for Visually Impaired
Tom Boland	Cumberland CID
Kevin Green	Clean Air Campaign
Jim Dexter	Sierra Club
Jane Hayse	ARC, Transportation Division Chief

Meeting Summary:

Dan Reuter presented an overview of the Plan 2040 planning process and status. He told the group that the purpose of these meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was to understand their priorities over the next 5 years and to see where they align with the goals and objectives of Plan 2040, and potential work program activities that come out of the plan.

Kevin Green asked what this document will look like – will it identify specific organizations to take specific actions? Mr. Reuter responded that it will list who will carry out certain strategies, but will be an informal document and is not meant to hold NGOs accountable for conducting certain activities. He added that it will let ARC staff know what organizations they should be working with on certain strategies and objectives laid out in Plan 2040.

Sally Flocks stated the priorities for PEDS over the next 5 years:

- Pedestrian access to transit
- Working with local governments to maintain sidewalks
- Encourage walking (e.g. Atlantic Station is only ¾ mile from Ansley Park but no one walks there) and make walking more attractive and safer option in order to impact mode share
- Ongoing trainings for planning and engineering professionals on how to design streets for pedestrians
- If more funding were available, PEDS would add the following to its work program
 - Implement a “Safe Routes for Seniors” program
 - Assist local governments with developing ADA Transition Plans
 - Conduct Safety Audits

Jane Hayse noted that activities can be listed in Plan 2040 without saying where the funding will come from – that can be determined later.

Harvey Clark said that his organization focuses on teaching blind and visually impaired people how to use transportation infrastructure (e.g. boarding MARTA, crossing streets safely), but aren't involved with building it. Another problem for his constituency is the lack of employment opportunities and the discrimination that blind and visually impaired job seekers face. This is one of the reasons the organization is opening a new service center of its own near the North Ave MARTA

station – to employ more blind and visually impaired people. It would be beneficial for the Center to understand how they fit into the transportation planning process.

Mr. Green said that the ARC should let them know where they can add value to the planning process, and how they can support the regional plan. Mr. Reuter responded that ARC will be outlining ideas and a draft work program in the coming weeks and will better define how NGOs fit in and/or help implement.

Mr. Reuter said that he would like to hear back from all the NGOs by November 19th regarding what their work program priorities are for the next 5 years.

Mr. Green commented that people tend to focus on new transit or new roadway infrastructure, but the region needs to focus on maintenance and operations of what we have. Jane Hayse responded that of the \$64 Billion available for transportation projects in Plan 2040, all but \$8 Billion of it will need to go to maintenance and operations. Jim Dexter added that Sierra Club's biggest challenge is finding money – that people think that HB277 (regional transportation sales tax) is the panacea and will solve all problems, but it won't. Ms. Hayse agreed, noting that the tax will only provide \$6 Billion over 10 years.

Mr. Green said that the Plan should focus on what can be done quickly and cheaply that is meaningful to people. Ms. Hayse said that ARC could use help with the messaging. Mr. Green responded that the focus should be leveraging existing infrastructure and helping people make better travel decisions, which is what the Clean Air Campaign does. The priority should be to focus on the demand side, and that it's not realistic to expect a large-scale new highway or transit project in the foreseeable future.

Ms. Flocks pointed out the recent study by the Center for Neighborhood Technology that illustrates the combined cost of housing and transportation and knowing that combined cost may impact decisions people make on where to locate their residence or business. Livable Communities Coalition and the Civic League could also help with the messaging. Mr. Dexter added that managed lanes will also make it clearer to commuters the real cost of a trip, i.e. the cost of building and maintaining roads.

Mr. Dexter said that the top priority for the Sierra Club is building commuter rail. The suburbs need to be a part of the transit system, and buses and BRT are not going to have the impact on mode shift that commuter rail would. The region needs a permanent solution to funding transit.

Ms. Flocks added that any complete streets policies should include retrofitting existing streets, not just new streets since we are not going to be building that many new streets (especially in Atlanta and the urban core).

Tom Boland said that his agency's priority was to bring transit to the northwest corridor, make it safer for pedestrians, and to connect to the trail adjacent to the Chattahoochee River. The CID would like to narrow the roadways (if county or GDOT allowed) and link housing to transit.

Mr. Green said that it was difficult to stay plugged into what the ARC is doing, there are so many meetings and publications to sift through, he'd prefer that staff give him a call if a particular initiative or meeting could benefit from CAC's involvement. Ms. Flocks added that the ARC should consider us allies and we can sometimes do things you can't because of the political or funding structures of governmental agencies and CIDs.

NGO Meeting Summary: Housing and Development Groups – 10.28.2010

Attendees: Atlanta Board of Realtors; Georgia and Atlanta Apartment Association; GAHC; Southface; Council for Quality Growth; GSTAND; PRI; ANDP; AHAND; Atlanta Homebuilders

Coordination

- How does PLAN 2040 fit with local comprehensive plans?
- Is there a political complement to the regional planning you all are undertaking?
- We need to be able to hold our elective officials responsible at the regional level. The problem is that we don't elect regional representatives, so it is hard for them to think regionally when their county holds them responsible for the decisions they make.
- Could ARC consider having NGO representatives on committees, instead of citizenry members? Or is there some way NGOs could have a more formal influence.
- People have approached Southface about establishing a sort of accreditation program elected officials could take to demonstrate their commitment and knowledge about smart and responsible development. A sort of Responsible Growth or Smart Growth accreditation program.
- There needs to be more coordination between economic development and job growth (specifically the increase in low paying jobs in the region) and housing plans. Right now there is a big jobs-housing mismatch.
- There is no forum at the state level that deals with housing issues, and there is no state support.

Regional Housing Issues

- Severe shortage of housing for households that are at 50% or less of AMI.
- Suburbanization of Poverty, and what this means for access to services, employment and transit.
- The only job growth in the region is low paying jobs, yet the housing does not match this. The region is creating more need and no supply.
- TOD with an affordable or workforce component is very important moving forward. All data points that this is the way to go and this sort of development and access can greatly help a low income family by eliminating one of their biggest costs.
- Data shows that rental is what is being demanded now and moving forward, yet people are still very hesitant to allow this. ARC could offer support through the PLAN 2040 framework for rental multifamily.