



Plan 2040 Neighborhood Forum

Rockdale County, March 22, 2011

On March 22, 2011, The Civic League for Regional Atlanta hosted a Neighborhood Forum on the future of regional transportation at the J.P. Carr Community Services Center in Conyers, which is located in Rockdale County. 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 the citizens of the Atlanta region to vote on a 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 its transportation recommendations, as this topic has prompted significantly more questions and concerns during previous public meetings.

Thirty-four people participated in the forum. Of the 31 who turned in completed demographic forms, 84 percent were residents of Rockdale County, with others coming from Newton, Henry, Butts, DeKalb and Fulton. Fifty-eight percent were male and 42 percent female. Sixty-eight percent were white and 16 percent African-American. One participant was Hispanic and two identified themselves as “other”. Ten percent of participants were between ages 25 and 39, with the remainder being age 40 or older (40-54, 16 percent; 55-65, 48 percent and over 65, 26 percent).

The participants were grouped into six discussion circles, and following each of the ARC staff member’s presentations, the forum facilitator asked participants to address several questions within their groups and record their answers 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. Cont. employment
2. Better informed
3. Homeowners’ association president – to be informed
4. Make Rockdale a better place
5. SPLOST chair and transportation
6. To listen before making a decision

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. Where is the population expected to grow?
2. What jobs are expected?

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

1. I-20 and 138
2. Increase capacity on I-20

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

1. Do not spend all the money on the “rich” areas. Spend some to promote jobs in other areas.

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

1. Sigman Road 4-lane -20 -20
2. Flat Shoals 4-Lane to Newton
3. Non-access bridge
4. Local intersection improvements

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

[No responses recorded.]

GROUP 2

A. Briefly share your motivations for attending this forum.

1. Learn more
2. Learn more about Salem Road work
3. Progress
4. News
5. Transportation – planning and density
6. Projection of seniors and recreation

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. What are your views on social resources?
2. Where does the \$59 billion come from; with or without T-Tax?
3. Decline in opportunity to use transit unreliable
4. Why is MARTA specifically mentioned and not the other means in Atlanta? GRTA, etc.
5. Are the changes planned and included in the projections in the next 40 years?

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

1. If Federal and State eliminate requirements for cities and counties to plan – How does this affect the plan?
2. Plan is not specific on the local level

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

1. Design better livable center nodes and connections
2. Driver training back in schools
3. Extend train routes through Conyers
4. Reduce need for trans.
5. Improved grid alternatives

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

1. 138 – 4 lanes from I-75 -> I20
2. I-20 and Hwy 20/138 interchange
3. I-20 and Salem Interchange 8 miles into Newton
4. Additional overpasses
5. Extending HOV into Newton I-20
6. Where does money come from for security for new roads, trails, etc.?
7. Extend rail along I-20 to Horse Park
8. I-20 Sigman to 4-lane Salem

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. Planning commission (3 members in this group)
2. Interested citizen
3. Community involvement and input
4. Planning for the future

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. Where are the funds from?
2. Why is it all (almost) about transportation?

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

[No responses recorded.]

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

1. Focus on the village concept and scale; golf carts, ped, short trips
2. Bring light rail to Athens-316 corridor. Increase ridership to ATL. It's an economically appealing solution or at least fund a study.
3. Concern: collaboration of freight train companies
4. At-grade rail crossings for vehicles, pedestrians in Rockdale: North/South barrier (I-20 also a problem)
5. Storm water management on roads
6. Cater to every generation.

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

1. Salem Road widening
2. Hwy 138 interchange @ I-20
3. Additional connections
4. N-S over I-20 & railroad
5. Hwy 20 S
6. Hwy 138 N
7. Albrion Road (Newton) interchange
8. Paved multi-use paths, sidewalks, shoulders
9. Connection Stonecrest – Sigman & Iris
10. Transit
11. Light commuter rail

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. Transportation plan – impact
2. Get first-hand information from public concerning 2040 plan
3. Provide input and receive comments/input
4. Receive input/provide comments
5. Concerned about future of community

B. Please list any questions you have.

1. MARTA operate in black and not in the red?
2. Expanding other roadways other than 138 and 20?
3. Re-synchronize traffic signals to move traffic efficiently?
4. Better materials for maintaining existing roads?
5. Can Rockdale opt out of transportation tax?
6. Can Rockdale get a better return on sales tax investment?

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

1. Bike paths and multi use trails
2. Recreation
3. Light rail

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

1. No increase in sales tax
2. Find ways to reduce construction cost to build transportation system
3. Pay for transit if you use it
4. Make tough choices to conserve transportation resources
5. Develop a true regional transportation system

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

1. Hwy 138/Covington Hwy underpass to be completed
2. Four lane Sigman Road from GA 20 to Salem Road
3. 4-lane Salem Road from I-20 to Broad Bridge Road
4. 4-lane GA 20 S from Honey Creek Road to GA Hwy 212
5. I-20/138 interchange
6. New I-20 overpass (limited access) @ Walmart
7. New interchange in Newton County to I-20

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

1. Everyone else's