

PLAN 2040 Stakeholder Briefing on Plan Recommendations

Discussion Notes

Date and Location: March 28, 2011, 9-12:00 noon, Loudermilk Center

Participation: 40 representatives from local, regional and state agencies with missions related to the recommendations of PLAN 2040.

Broad Takeaways from Discussion:

- Implementing PLAN 2040 is inherently a collaborative and connective activity
- People need to be motivated by the opportunities to make transformative changes
- Champions for PLAN 2040 activities must include a partnership of diverse local leadership with both state and global leadership
- Expand visual education for communication and implementation of plan directives
- Interconnectivity and shared purposing of resources create long term efficiencies and promote community use
- A lot of small scale actions add up to powerful results; start now
- Healthy communities is a universal ideal and incorporates all aspirations in PLAN 2040

PLAN 2040 Recommendations by Goal and Table Talk Discussion Notes

Goal 1: Lead as the Global Gateway to the South

Main Points from Presentation by Jane Hayse, Transportation Planning Division

- Atlanta region should be the premier place to work, provides high quality jobs, attracts business from around the world, and leads the South in economic growth and opportunity.
- Trend lines show that the region is currently lagging other metros in per capita income.
- ARC is the Economic Development District for the Atlanta region. It is charged with creating a comprehensive economic development strategy that allows local governments to apply for funding to deliver that strategy.
- Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport area study by local jurisdictions, agencies and authorities to coordinate and leverage opportunities and guide development there.
- Sector strategies that build partnerships of employers, training providers, community organizations and stakeholders around specific industries to address the workforce needs of employers and the training, employment and career advancement needs of workers.

- The Innovation Crescent has emerged as a hub of life science in the Southeast and is supported by leading international companies and top research organizations in the region.
- Georgia Entertainment and Media (GEM) initiative focuses on careers in radio, television, film, digital gaming and music, while aligning education, workforce development and training to support.
- Transportation initiatives to make moving about easier, especially getting to and from our employment centers, attract more businesses into the region and to attract a qualified workforce:
 - Road and transit infrastructure preservation and maintenance
 - A managed lane system to provide more reliable trips around the region
 - Upgrading or building interchanges on our expressways to ease bottlenecks and improve the flow of traffic
 - And to improve freight mobility in and through the region through improvements to intersections, railroad crossings and signal timing.
- At the end of the game, however, it's all about leadership and how our creative minds can look ahead.

Table Talk Highlights: Who are our regional champions who can move this region forward?

- Universities to incubate new industries
- Music and film industry
- Collaboration between financial services sector and local governments
- Economic development idea clearinghouse
- Champions should be visionary, transformational, inspirational and connectors across the region – champion for all the region
- Individuals such as: Kasim Reed, Tad Leithead, Bernie Marcus, Arthur Blank, Tyler Perry, Sam Nunn
- Organizations such as Livable Communities Coalition, community improvement districts, Southface, Beltline, AARP, CDC, chambers of commerce, Federal Reserve, Governor of Georgia's office
- Distinguish between broad spectrum champions and specialized champions
- Champions need to employ visual information and distinguish between what is good and not good in the region

Goal 2: Access to Community Resources

Main Points from Presentation by David Haynes, Transportation Planning Division

- Community resources include critical elements of day-to-day life as well as quality of life places

- Travel to community resources on interstates, on transit and by walking is challenging due to our land use patterns, many of which are low density and single use.
- Access should be available whatever our economic means, physical capabilities, driving options, and provide safe multiple options

PLAN 2040 offers:

- policy recommendations that locate housing, employment, and transportation options together in more dense areas of the region
- strong emphasis on complete streets principles which are complementary investments that make it easier to walk, bike or use transit along the corridor.
 - bicycle and pedestrian program that prioritizes investment along key corridors that link activity centers and within those activity centers where those modes are efficient and are often a better option than a car.
 - Livable Centers Initiative and Lifelong Communities emphasize the interconnectivity between transportation options, land infrastructure, health impacts, energy efficiencies and water supply
 - support for human services transportation programs, which provide direct support for transportation disadvantaged communities such as the disabled, low income and older adults
 - focusing investments in already developed areas (and connecting those areas) versus outlying areas.

Specific transportation recommendations include:

- maintaining existing core transit services for MARTA and other transit systems.
- dedicates additional financial resources that will hopefully prevent additional reductions in routes and schedules.
- funding for light rail along Clifton Corridor from Lindbergh to Emory to Decatur, the I-20 East Corridor from downtown Atlanta to the Stonecrest Mall and the Belt Line.
- supports the ongoing planning efforts of the Regional Transit Committee and envisions a new truly regional structure will soon be in place.
- funds have been dedicated to continue initial concept design and alternatives analysis work for additional light rail projects, particularly those along the US 41 corridor to Cobb and along I-85 into Gwinnett.
- robust programs for first mile/last mile trips. Pedestrian and bike access to transit will play a major role in maximizing the availability of existing services until we can begin to expand those options.
- provides strategic arterial expansions and operations where needed to relieve congestion to provide alternative to using the interstates.

- studies that will look at transportation demand management, roadway strategies, safety and other initiatives that will enable us to use our existing infrastructure more efficiently and minimize the need for costly expansions.

Table Talk Highlights: What other ways can we provide access to community resources other than through providing additional travel options?

- Target needs of the disadvantaged and people with disabilities, using ETA's (Equitable Target Areas). This includes first mile/last mile access
- Target where people want to walk and walkable communities, emphasizing safety
- Manage mobility through policies such as charging travel fees to lighten traffic
- Coordination between shuttle systems
- Economic development encouraged by balanced infrastructure including diverse housing options and green markets
- Complete streets design, connectedness and full service neighborhoods to decrease need to travel
- Set high expectations from project implementation
- Co-location and multipurposes of community resources
- Need more visual education
- Housing trust fund to build homes near jobs and services
- Incentivize and remove barriers to new design
- Pull together and pool resources; partnerships
- Expand communication by technology

Goal 3: Encourage Healthy Communities

Main Points from Presentation by Dan Reuter, Land Use Planning Division

Through encouraging the development of healthy communities, ARC hopes to improve not just the physical health of citizens, but their ability to live a productive and positive life.

Citizens and communities in the region should have options:

- to live near jobs or transit
- walk to shops and restaurants
- travel to work, or a park, on a bike, and have safe bike lanes, greenways or paths to major employment centers in the region.
- grow their own food or maybe buy locally-grown meats and fresh vegetables.
- a place where seniors can live and still have independence long after they have retired

PLAN 2040 addresses:

- how land can be better used in the future.

- regional policy recommendations that seek to locate housing, employment, and transportation options closer together.
- technical and financial assistance to build transit oriented developments.
- PLAN 2040 provides resources to seek protection and enhancement of regional resources including the rural landscape and historic sites that still remain in metro Atlanta.
- Through a continued focus on sustainability, PLAN 2040 seeks to work with local governments and non-governmental partners to create a greener, healthier region.

PLAN 2040 will do this through:

- Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) which funds planning studies that encourage mixed use, mixed income communities.
- Lifelong Communities program which encourages communities to consider design standards to improve access to basic services and preventive healthcare and encourage physical activity. Services should range from basic daily needs to more specialized services.
- Regional Resource Plan will help the region identify, protect, connect and enhance natural, cultural, historical resources;
- Green Communities which encourages local governments to give up business as usual for a more sustainable approach.
- PLAN 2040 incentivizes many of these initiatives by offering funding for new infrastructure or planning, technical assistance, and local performance standards.
- PLAN 2040 will also support the use health impact assessments (HIAs) to determine the impact of plans and policies on people’s health. The Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development is currently conducting an HIA on PLAN 2040 to help determine what health related effects the Plan will have on the region.
- Coordinated with regional partners, documented in the PLAN 2040 Regional Partner Strategies report to implement PLAN 2040
- Equitable Target Area (ETA) analysis using data on the distribution of senior population, population over 25 years of age without a high school diploma and other factors to evaluate the existing programs and investments that support change in these areas.

Table Talk Highlights: What other ways can we create a built environment and services that encourage healthy communities and how can you help?

- Local land use ordinances and regulations that allow a mix of uses, connectivity, etc. are a first step.
- Need incentives for local governments to implement plans
- Need disincentives for bad development practices, excessive parking lots, etc
- Make it legal to create mixed use, walkable, healthy communities
- Incentivize healthy communities, especially in those places that need it the most, ETAs

- Streamline the process for getting these projects approved
- Create a healthy community forum to define healthy communities as a whole, although the LCI, Lifelong Communities, and Green Communities Programs cover aspects of healthy communities.
- Be persuasive within the context of the approved plans and connect with organizations that are capable of implementing these plans.
- Acknowledge the health impacts of living near growth corridors.
- Create a better public realm to change the norm—people in metro Atlanta might not realize what they should expect from a world-class city
- Connect activity nodes for walking/biking trips longer than a typical walk
- Increase access to physical activity and wellness/social interaction for the community
- Encourage local governments to revisit the food cart regulations to give people a reason to walk somewhere
- Artists make the area attractive, but then regulations are needed to allow affordable housing so that arts and culture are not pushed out of gentrifying neighborhoods
- What about grocery delivery trucks for delivery of basics like bread, milk and bananas
- Enforce healthy communities through regional reviews and approvals
- Infrastructure impact healthy communities – quantify
- Provide end of trip facilities for those bikers/walkers who use this mode as their transportation.
- The ETA analysis needs to be marketed as not winners versus losers, but rather focus on improving economic development equitably across the region.
- Business can provide synergies with pedestrian facilities
- Enhance education of healthy communities, so that community engagement in healthy communities continues beyond PLAN 2040 and the TIA.
- It is important to tap into existing social entrepreneurship.