

Major Planning Direction, Concepts, Ideas, Strategies Identified to Date in Plan 2040 Process

Leadership Interviews

- Hartsfield-Jackson Airport cannot be replicated elsewhere – It is an irreplaceable resource.
- Small fixes can lead to big impacts.
- Plans should be disciplined and focus on 3 – 4 major ideas and emphasize large, regional projects.
- Need to build in project implementation into the plan.
- Focus on entire corridors and the infrastructure of nodes, activity centers and cities.
- Conservation of less developed landscapes is critical to water, climate change and promotion of more sustainable development patterns.
- Need an initial 5-year set of actions that you can get significant buy-in/commitment to that will set the direction of the plan.
- Leadership divided as to whether the plan should address energy/climate change directly.
- Determine what research is being done at the local research universities (*where are they putting their chips down long term*) that will contribute to the long term economic success in Georgia.
- Expand connection, mediation, and dialogue between state, regional and local jurisdiction officials to encourage cooperation and action.
- Make clear connections between regional plans and local actions.
- Many suburban communities need help as they transition to more intensely developed areas.
- Need to focus on the transportation needs of major centers.
- ARC should provide assistance to local governments to help them reduce congestion through design.
- Communities that are working toward sustainability should be encouraged and rewarded.
- Schools may not be an ARC issue, but they impact many things that ARC directly works on.
- The region may need to address higher education and technical school opportunities.
- ARC should support economic development by joining forces with others to help them succeed, while maintaining focus on key issues (water and transportation) that are also important to the economic vitality of the region.
- The region should focus on retaining students that attend colleges and universities in the area.
- Creating a culture of acceptance and amenities that are attractive to immigrants and international firms is a key economic development opportunity.
- Local values should directly influence regional plans and policies.
- The region needs to build a coalition with other urban areas around the state.
- ARC should host an annual meeting of metro leaders that brings local and state officials together.
- ARC should demonstrate more leadership on regional energy and resource efficiency issues.
- It would be helpful to identify things that have not worked as planned in the past to learn from them in the plan process (without playing the ‘blame game’).
- Too often ARC defaults to others to implement.
- Need to clearly identify projects that are not supported by plan vision/goals early in the process.
- ARC needs to work with exurban counties to determine what services or specific issues they need assistance with.

- Case studies on how successful communities in the region have achieved success would be good for all communities in the region to have access to.

TCC/LUCC Survey

- Local planners have and will continue to advocate for efficient, sustainable growth – It's important to have regional plans and programs that support this.
- Need support for alternatives to low-density suburban development in growing counties – It is increasing clear that it is not sustainable in the long-run.
- Emphasize investments and programs that conserve energy and natural resources, while promoting public health benefits.
- Transportation is a regional issue and should be directed toward projects that can sustain and stimulate economic growth while producing healthy and active communities.
- More and smaller local governments are resulting in inefficient service delivery – ARC must recognize this and determine how plans and projects linking land use and transportation should be conceived and delivered.
- The foundation of Plan 2040 should be the detailed local and sub-regional studies that have been recently completed (LCI plans, CTPs, SRAS, etc.).
- Traffic congestion remains a primary concern – Plan should emphasize efforts to mitigate congestion impacts.
- Housing choice and affordability should be emphasized throughout the region. This is critical to both supporting economic growth but also accommodating the aging population.
- Many local plans are calling for healthier and more active communities – ARC should support these efforts.
- Balancing jobs-housing is needed in many communities.
- The region will face major economic consequences if we do not begin to provide transportation alternatives to commuting on interstates (particularly need rail).
- Region remains unbalanced – This significantly impacts transportation.
- Regional growth policy does not give credit and gives little support to local governments that are fighting inefficient and environmentally irresponsible development patterns.
- The region lacks real coordination measures/actions that can assist with addressing major issues – This may need to be mandated or incentivized through funding or other resources.
- Need to invest in our transportation assets and communities such that they become an attractor for businesses and new employers.
- The region needs to make progress on transit funding and governance issues.
- The region should develop 'environmental improvement targets' that drive plan development, rather than using environmental degradation factors as constraints.
- Plan 2040 should try and look ahead and recognize that the MPO planning area may grow again with the current Census. ARC should be working to establish more coordinated mechanisms to work with neighboring Regional Commission.
- Greater emphasis needs to be placed on regional plans and policies supporting local objectives as identified in local plans.
- ARC needs to follow-up and provided resources to local jurisdictions that are implementing the regional vision and initiatives.
- It is important to provide options to local governments that outline different ways that they can implement regional strategies. Information and tools are more effective than rules and regulations.

- Developing multi-modal centers around the region that can attract industry will improve the regional economy and relieve congestion.

April 2009 Board Retreat

- Plan 2040 should embrace the expectation of ARC being a leader on regional issues.
- The region must remain vibrant in order to be attractive to young people.
- Education is a huge issue – ARC’s role is unknown but we shouldn’t shy away from it.
- Multi-jurisdictional projects should be awarded extra points when they are evaluated.
- Need a ‘dashboard’ program to highlight when implementation is lagging.
- ARC needs to become more aggressive on implementation – Not necessarily rely on others.
- Plan 2040 should advance some broad, major issues (and potentially nest sub-issues underneath)
- Plan should emphasize coordination within this region, but also within the mega-region.
- Major programs and initiatives could be pulled out from single Divisions within ARC and managed agency-wide in order to maximize benefits and resources.

November 2009 Board Retreat

- Plan 2040 needs to communicate issues and strategies beyond the ARC Board, Committees and local governments.
- Need to focus on better connections between outlying centers and the larger employment centers in the region.
- Focus on centers in the next 10 years (coupled with strategies to connect with them).
- Plan 2040 and supporting documentation needs to make a better case for mixed-use communities around the region.
- Cities and/or counties with planned transit expansions need to make a commitment to allowing and encouraging transit supportive densities.
- Development and redevelopment should be focused in areas that have infrastructure, including existing town centers.
- Now is the time to look forward, not continue investments that contribute to the existing development patterns that are creating so many of the region’s issues.
- Need to establish the link between density in one place can help conservation in another.
- Need to explore packages of disincentives that will promote the desired growth pattern (in addition to the existing incentives, e.g. LCI).
- Communities that are willing to become mixed-use/more intensely developed areas need to be agreed upon and identified.
- Need to be proactive in buying ROW for much needed new alignments.
- Should large developments be designed to accommodate transit or other services that may be needed in the future.
- Education is an issue that is important enough to be considered and presented in Plan 2040.
- ARC could perform employer analysis to determine deficiencies in existing workforce and advocate for needed improvements to improve overall regional competitiveness.
- Mechanisms to encourage schools and local governments to work together on school siting and adjacent development issues should be included.
- ARC should be actively looking for sustainability funding opportunities for local governments – there are many federal programs that are out there.

- ARC should not be funding local transportation projects with state or federal funds unless they have a regional impact.
- Some form of revenue sharing should be considered – though this is a tricky issue and should just be among other solutions to existing problems.
- Regional plans should be a tool to drive city-county cooperation.
- Need to cultivate support for density at the local level – Without that buy-in many plan recommendations will not be implemented.
- ARC's strategies must recognize that global issues are likely to greatly increase our cost of living in our current pattern (commodities and fuel increases) – This should spur the need for creating alternatives to that pattern and the automobile as the primary means of travel.
- ARC continues to separate some issues and programs that should be considered together – We can do more to integrate functions on major issues (e.g. aging and transportation).
- ARC needs to help local governments work at the neighborhood scale – They are important to local governments and often do not fully understand regional challenges.
- ARC could have a role in changing the perception of mass transit – This is a major factor in tepid support in some places.
- First 10 years of the plan is critical and should be emphasized. Need to build in some major benchmarks/milestones early in the plan in order to create accountability and successes to build on.
- Plan could identify priority redevelopment sites that have transit or are proposed to receive transit service and work with local governments/others to market these sites to private developers.
- Really need to focus on land use-transportation integration in non-interstate travel corridors.
- More/better connections need to be made between residents on the southside and northside job centers (this benefits both residents by giving them access to work and employment areas by giving them access to more potential employees).
- Final product should be a plan within a plan, including a short-range 5-year component focusing on increased utilization of existing resources.
- Need county-by-county buy-in on the regional vision and strategies – This needs to start with county input being considered (ARC staff can get off target when there isn't early consultation with the Board).
- The airport may be the best asset the region has to recover around – Connecting to the airport to the surrounding area with transit could spur major investments/redevelopment (Ft. McPherson, Ft. Gillem, Clayton State, etc.)
- Major universities need to be considered and emphasized as they draw a lot of educated people that the region should try and retain.
- The needs of older adults should be emphasized in major activity centers, including expanded transit network.
- Need a definition as to what sustainability means to the Atlanta region.
- Plan should focus on short-term congestion relief and long-term investments in transit.
- Need rail transit in all major activity centers and connections between them.
- Need to demonstrate that that the region can implement transit.
- Need to focus on flexible transit options (bus/BRT) in areas without densities to support heavy rail.
- The region needs to identify and invest in a focused number of walkable areas that have a variety of housing options.

- Water has not been as upfront in Plan 2040 as it needs to be – This is critically important and should be considered in as many programs and strategies as possible.

Local Official Outreach

- ARC should track and catalogue county budget issues so as to provide guidance and to help counties work together on budget issues.
- The region needs to focus development in the existing developed parts of the region.
- Light-rail has been a transit investment that counties have wanted for many years and yet we've seen zero implementation. Our lack of transit implementation is going to cost us for decades as the federal programs begin to focus on transit (and we have no case for federal investment).
- Sub-regions around the region have different priorities/expectations in terms of growth. ARC should work with these areas to identify shared interests, priorities and programs.
- ARC should highlight good examples of cities and counties working together (particularly in terms of arrangements that have a positive fiscal impact).
- ARC needs a program that supports local planning in smaller centers/corridors (not direct funding of studies, but support for local planning staff).
- ARC should have programs that emphasize regional investments in major growth areas, while understanding that some parts of counties do not want major growth/investment.
- Local governments need help with state programs like Opportunity Zones.
- Some counties have smaller Development Authorities with limited resources – ARC could have a role in assisting with their efforts.
- ARC comes up with great ideas, but we don't do a great job of 'taking it to the streets' – Message can get lost when going from regional to local.
- Need to focus on information and resources that help local governments buy into a regional policy/program.
- ARC can help elected officials understand how long it takes to make a plan happen – Some local elected officials do not understand that when you finish a plan is only the starting point (need to focus on comp plan, zoning, etc.)
- We shouldn't sell the tools to build great communities – sell the concept of great communities (and then provide the tools).
- Need to provide a good set of tools and resources that help locals fix local problems (while working with them on the 'major' areas).
- ARC should focus on concepts it feels the region should embrace and then work with Commissioners to figure out where those places are (ARC shouldn't necessarily be telling them – that will result in pushback).
- Rail must be a key component of future transportation plans and investments. It absolutely needs to be done for the region to compete in the future.
- ARC needs to play a major role in holding politicians accountable on major issues like water and transportation.
- Need to focus on GDOT reform – LCI projects take entirely too long to get through their process.
- ARC needs to recognize areas with highest sustainable growth potential and put resources in these areas.
- Water supply and management must be the more pressing short-term priority for the region.

- The region needs to work with the Legislature so that they understand the true, immediate needs of the Atlanta region and what actions are required.
- ARC should be working with local governments on emergency preparedness plans.
- The region should become a leader on sustainability issues, particularly in terms of what incentives could be provided.
- ARC needs to continue working on the issues of schools and school siting issues – The current standards do not make sense.
- ARC could potentially have a role in providing training to school board officials.
- ARC should continue to offer low-cost training opportunities for local officials.
- Transportation investments should be focused on existing communities, not as a tool to expand economic opportunities throughout the region.
- Communities that have and support additional density should get more credit, higher transportation project scores.
- BRT may be the best transit technology for many parts of the Atlanta region, but it's unclear if this region will ever embrace riding buses.
- ARC should work with local governments to understand how collections of local comprehensive plans impact the road network and other regional issues.
- Plan 2040 should focus on water – It's just as big of an issue as transportation.
- Any help that ARC can provide local governments in their dealings with GDOT would be appreciated.
- For transit to be successful there must be significant commitment from local governments.
- Existing communities need more assistance with infrastructure to support the renewed interest in in-town communities.
- In order to move toward sustainability, smaller communities need technical support and assistance.
- LCI has been very valuable to help develop local plans, but more help is needed with non-transportation project implementation.
- ARC and region need to start becoming more active in efforts to attract jobs to the region given the current state of the economy.
- Does ARC ever give serious consideration to double-decking major transportation facilities? It may seem like a radical idea, but there are firms around the world that have the technical and engineering expertise to accomplish this.
- Building in short-range expectation is critical, e.g. how to measure success in ten years?
- Region needs to focus on attracting major companies and employers to the region and working to ensure that there is adequate housing proximate to existing and new employment centers.
- We need to identify and remove bureaucratic barriers that prevent a better link between housing and transportation planning and implementation.
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is a major economic asset in the region – Can ARC put resources toward better planning, economic development and redevelopment activities around the airport?

- The economic strength and overall global competitiveness is tied to the five core counties – The region’s investments must recognize the mutual benefit of investing in these areas.
- Transit should be used to link other airports around the region to Hartsfield-Jackson and to each other.
- Need to get the commuter rail with a federal earmark built – Could be a key economic generator and show success for future projects.
- ARC should work with counties to change state law that restricts TADs from crossing county boundaries. This would help county-to-county sub-area planning efforts.
- ARC should regularly report to county Commissioners as an update on critical issues – Perhaps to include an overview of ARC services and where these services might intersect or support local efforts.
- Rockdale needs to be a destination for new light or commuter rail services or at least to Stonecrest Mall.
- Rail would relieve congestion, create jobs, new development and provide an option to I-20.
- ARC should outline the features, benefits and value of rail through an educational campaign and town hall meetings.
- Quality of life is a large issue. Need more recreational facilities.
- Need more senior centers.
- ARC could facilitate more interaction between education, local governments and judicial system.