Regional Transit Committee
Proposed 2014-2016 Work Program & Budget
August 15, 2013

Background

In 2005, ARC completed the Regional Transit Institutional Analysis (RTIA) which examined how the region should be organized to plan, build, fund, and operate public transit service in a way that is seamless and convenient for the customer. Out of the RTIA, the Transit Planning Board (TPB) was formed in 2006 to develop a vision for an integrated transit system and then transitioned into the Transit Implementation Board (TIB) in 2009 to guide the implementation of the regional transit vision, Concept 3. In 2010, the region asked ARC to take on the functions of and build upon the work of TPB and TIB and the Regional Transit Committee (RTC) became a committee of the ARC Board.

The RTC was intended to be a short-term, temporary solution to the region's need for more coordinated multi-jurisdictional transit governance. The organizational goal for the RTC was that the region would work with the Governor and the General Assembly in the 2011 and 2012 sessions to enact legislation that would create a permanent solution to the region's transit governance needs. As the legislature failed to act, a need exists for the RTC to continue in its mission to support transit coordination and planning.

Proposed 2014-2016 Work Program

There are five tasks that compose the proposed 2014-2016 work program. Table 1 below provides estimated costs for each of the proposed tasks. The costs represent a combination of estimated ARC and MARTA staff time, contracted work, and other general expenses.

Table 1: Proposed 2014-2016 Work Program Expenditures	
Task	**Budget**
Task 1 – Regional Transit Planning *Supports continued implementation of the regional transit expansion vision*	$1,000,000
Task 2 – Regional Transit Coordination *Fosters reliable, seamless & cost effective transit service*	$300,000
Task 3 – Regional Transit Data & Analysis *Provides business intelligence & improves service efficiency*	$700,000
Task 4 – Regional Fare Policy & Collection Coordination *To create a seamless system for the customer & efficiently collect revenue*	$750,000
Task 5 – Regional Transit Marketing Analysis & Strategy Development *Expands transit use & farebox returns through coordinated messaging & awareness*	$250,000
TOTAL	**$3,000,000**

Task 1: Regional Transit Planning

RTC staff will continue **coordinating regional transit planning to support implementation of the regional transit vision**, Concept 3, and to ensure that overall transportation planning is consistent with that vision. Key outcomes focus on delivering value-added services to the region's policymakers:
- Undertake a **major update to the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan** to establish a framework for coordination in the Atlanta region to improve mobility for older adults, low income, and disabled populations. This Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan update will identify opportunities to provide services in a well-planned, cost-effective manner.
- Complete a region-wide **Priority Bus Corridors Improvements Study** that will explore opportunities to improve major bus corridors through specific, implementable improvements that are capable of being incorporated into the RTP/TIP. The study outcomes support regional goals to identify lower-cost and high-benefit solutions. The study will develop a framework to objectively define priority bus corridors. This framework will then be applied to identify projects that improve these priority bus corridors using existing service plans, data, and physical constraints. The study will propose, for MPO consideration, a regional funding policy framework that directs federally supported investments to support the identified projects.
- The regional transit vision will require ongoing maintenance to keep it current with the latest transit planning and environmental studies. Staff will participate in and provide input to these studies, updates to PLAN 2040, and in the development of future regional and state transportation plans.

RTC staff will examine **options for the future structure and administration of the Committee** to ensure an effective transit coordination structure. This effort will draw upon the legal review conducted in 2012 of ARC's powers and authorities along with the RTC Concept Regional Transit Governance Legislation that was adopted in 2011.

RTC staff will provide **administrative support to the Committee**. Staff will set meeting agendas, keep the chair informed, prepare meeting summaries, develop necessary resolutions, and maintain communications with RTC members as well as their support staffs.

Task 2: Regional Transit Coordination

The Atlanta region is served by multiple transit operators that offer a wide array of transit modes and services transporting residents and visitors to employment, education, medical, shopping, and recreation. Coordination of and among these operators, modes, and services is critical to seamless and cost-effective operations, potentially yielding operational savings to regional transit operators. RTC staff will continue leading and facilitating **coordination efforts amongst the region's transit operators** to include, but not limited to:
- Develop and deploy a **regional trip planner and real-time information** to provide customers with the information needed to effectively utilize transit. This product will improve customer service to transit riders by increasing knowledge of real-time operational schedules.

- Pursue implementation of the **Unified Bus Stop Signage** designed as part of the 2012 work program. This project coordinates signage for multiple operators serving co-located stops and reduces frustrations of transit patrons by providing more and clearer information on transit serving those stops.
- Coordinate regional **transit asset management** and procurement. Potential cost-efficiencies exist through coordinated asset management and procurement.
- Investigate and pursue a **unified bus stop and bus route numbering** scheme for the region.
- Explore opportunities and facilitate **enhanced coordination of paratransit and HST service delivery** in the region.

Task 3: Regional Transit Data & Analysis

The **collection and analysis of data** is critical to improving and enhancing transit planning and service delivery. Transit data and analysis provides businesses intelligence to regional transit operators, providing the potential for increased cost efficiencies and customer responsiveness. MAP-21 places new emphasis and requirements for performance measurement and performance-based planning. RTC staff will build off of the region-wide transit data collection and standardization efforts initiated as part of the Transit Data Warehouse project in 2011.

- Ongoing hosting and maintenance work will be necessary throughout 2016 to ensure that the warehouse reflects any changes to the region's transit services, performance, and assets.
- Enhancements to these products may also be warranted to improve the performance and asset data components and better incorporate related program elements such as the region's HST and travel demand management programs.

Task 4: Regional Fare Policy & Collection Coordination

Building off of the recommendations from Regional Multi-Modal Public Transit Automated Fare Collection Study that will be completed in December 2013, RTC staff will continue work to **better integrate the fare collection policies, processes, technology, and fare products** across the multiple operators and modes in the region. Successful implementation of this task has the potential to reduce fare evasion and lead to increase farebox returns for transit operators. This will include setting the foundation for increased coordination among transit operators by identifying options to improve regional fare policies and collection:

- Development of a regional fare policy
- Development of a universal fare product
- Further investigation of next generation fare collection technologies
- Renegotiation of transfer agreements
- Any other activities necessary to the smooth function and integration of the region's fare collection system.

Task 5: Regional Transit Marketing Analysis & Strategy Development

Transit in the Atlanta region is not currently well marketed. This task provides the potential for transit operators to increase ridership and improve farebox returns by expanding transit's customer base. RTC staff will undertake a region-wide inventory and analysis of existing transit marketing efforts to include those of individual transit agencies and operators, Transportation Demand Management community, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders. Transit marketing efforts of region's across the country and internationally will be examined in order to understand best practices and benchmark existing efforts in the Atlanta region. Based on the inventory, best practices review, and analysis, a strategy for coordinated regional transit marketing will be developed. The outcome of this strategy will be to **raise the awareness of transit as a viable and necessary mode of transportation** in the Atlanta region and to **improve its overall image**.

Proposed 2014-2016 RTC Dues Structure

The proposed work program will require additional funds from members to match federal funding grants to implement the work program. In past years RTC work programs and budgets have been developed on an annual basis and there has been an annual solicitation for voting membership. This approach has not allowed for multi-year strategic planning for RTC. See Table 2 below for detail on the proposed dues structure.

Table 2: Proposed 2014-2016 RTC Dues Structure		
Member	**Annual Dues Amount**	**3-Year Dues Amount**
County Government / City of Atlanta / Metro Atlanta Mayor's Association / GDOT / GRTA	$5,000	$15,000
MARTA	$150,000 (in-kind services)	$450,000 (in-kind services)