



# A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region



**Atlanta Regional Commission  
2012/2013 Limited Update**



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## **Key Acronyms Used in this Document**

<b>AAA</b>	Area Agency on Aging
<b>ADA</b>	American with Disabilities Act
<b>AFDC</b>	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
<b>ARC</b>	Atlanta Regional Commission
<b>CCT</b>	Cobb Community Transit
<b>CCRTA</b>	Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority
<b>CSS</b>	Cobb Senior Services
<b>CTC</b>	Community Transportation Coordinator
<b>CTP</b>	Comprehensive Transportation Plan
<b>C-TRAN</b>	Clayton County Transit
<b>DFCS</b>	Division of Family and Children Services
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Human Services
<b>DOT</b>	Department of Transportation
<b>EA</b>	Emergency Assistance Program
<b>ESP</b>	Enhanced Services Program
<b>FTA</b>	Federal Transit Administration
<b>GCT</b>	Gwinnett County Transit
<b>GDOL</b>	Georgia Department of Labor
<b>GDOT</b>	Georgia Department of Transportation
<b>GRTA</b>	Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
<b>GSU</b>	Georgia State University
<b>HST</b>	Human Services Transportation
<b>JARC</b>	Job Access and Reverse Commute
<b>JOBS</b>	Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program
<b>LCI</b>	Livable Communities Initiative
<b>MARTA</b>	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization
<b>NF</b>	New Freedom
<b>RTIA</b>	Regional Transit Institutional Analysis
<b>RTC</b>	Regional Transit Committee
<b>RTP</b>	Regional Transportation Plan
<b>SAFETEA-LU</b>	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

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<b>SANDAG</b>	San Diego Association of Governments
<b>TANF</b>	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
<b>TDM</b>	Transportation Demand Management
<b>TEA-21</b>	Transportation Equity Act of the Twenty First Century
<b>TIP</b>	Transportation Improvement Plan
<b>TPB</b>	Transit Planning Board
<b>TMCC</b>	Transportation Management Call Center
<b>TOS</b>	Transit Operators Subcommittee
<b>VCTC</b>	Ventura County Transportation Commission
<b>VR</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation
<b>VR&amp;E</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
<b>USDOT</b>	United States Department of Transportation
<b>UZA</b>	Urbanized Area



## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction and Background**

Human Services Transportation (HST) is defined as mobility services provided for the benefit of transportation disadvantaged populations, including persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with lower incomes. This includes services provided by public transit operators, human service agencies, private providers, and private nonprofit agencies.

HST groups often have unique and different needs that require a variety of transportation services to ensure quality of life. Planning and Coordinating HST helps to improve the efficiency of limited transportation resources, reduce duplication of services, and improve customer satisfaction.

Since the Atlanta region's Coordinated Human Services Transportation (HST) was developed and adopted in April of 2010, the region has also adopted a 20+ year Long Range Transportation Plan known as PLAN 2040 for the Atlanta metropolitan planning area. As part of the long range planning process, HST populations were considered and strategies and solutions to address their mobility needs were identified and incorporated into PLAN 2040. Other initiatives that have a significant impact on HST planning in the region have also taken place since the adoption of the 2010 coordinated plan, including: the unsuccessful referendum for the Transportation Investment Act, an update of the statewide Coordinated HST Plan 2.0, and the creation of a Georgia Coordination Council for Rural and Human Services Transportation. As a result of PLAN 2040 and other major initiatives, there is a need to conduct a limited technical update to the region's Coordinated HST Plan to ensure the findings and recommendations of these initiatives are in sync with and included into the region's HST vision.

This limited technical update will also document the final FY 2012 Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom "Call for Projects", for the Atlanta region, governed under the previous transportation bill known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). A copy of the FY 2012 application package can be found in Appendix E.

### **Plan Development Process**

The methodology used to conduct and develop the plan update included the following steps:

#### **Conduct Demographic Profile and Assess Needs**

A demographic profile of persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low income was prepared using census data, American Community Survey data, and other relevant

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planning documents. A demographic profile of the existing public transit and ADA complementary paratransit networks were also compiled. The information served as a platform to gain a better understanding of the regional characteristics of the study area. The needs assessment provides a foundation for identifying where and how transportation services for HST groups needs to be enhanced and improved. This information is reported in Chapter 2.

### PLAN 2040 Findings

This step included a review of the key goals, objectives, principles, analysis, and findings from PLAN 2040 that directly impacted HST populations including the Equitable Target Analysis tool. This information is reported in Chapter 1.

### Document Existing Services

This step involved documenting the range of known public transportation services that currently exist in the Atlanta region. These services include public fixed route, ADA complementary paratransit, demand response, and other transportation services provided by human service agencies. Information about public transit and paratransit was obtained from existing ARC and other regional resources. Information pertaining to transportation services provided by human service agencies were collected the Department of Human Services and the AAA. This information is reported in Chapter 2.

### Conduct Literature Review and Review Best Practices

A review of existing peer coordinated HST plans was completed to observe and gain perspective on how other peer regions have approached the HST planning process. Second, a review was conducted of existing regional plans and other local county studies, which have examined transportation needs in the Atlanta region, particularly those of the HST demographic groups and other transportation disadvantaged. Lastly, a peer review was completed of other coordination efforts and HST practices occurring across the nation. This information is reported in Chapter 3.

### Identify Coordination Barriers

Along with identifying the transportation needs of HST group was a need to identify the barriers to regional coordination. Regional stakeholders including transit providers, human services providers, transportation planners, disability advocates, and other HST users identified barriers to coordination. This information is reported at the conclusion of Chapter 3.

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## **Identify Strategies and Solutions**

Strategies and solutions to enhance coordination, address needs, gaps, and barriers, and maximize HST services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low-income where identified with a number of key regional stakeholders. These strategies and solutions outline a more comprehensive regional approach to improving HST with implications beyond JARC and New Freedom funding. This information is reported in Chapter 4.

## **Implementation Suggestions**

In light of existing fiscal constraints and resources at the national, state, regional, and local levels, this section identifies feasible implementation suggestions to accomplish easy wins in the region and improve the operation and delivery of HST services. This information is reported at the end of Chapter 4.

## **Key Findings**

Key findings emerging from the study are identified below.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

#### ***Persons with Disabilities:***

Approximately 478,132 persons with disabilities live in the Atlanta region, which accounts for 9.1% of the region's population. There are many areas in the Atlanta region where persons with disabilities have no access to ADA complementary paratransit services. Persons with disabilities reported a lack of transportation options as one of the major barriers to being able to live inclusive within their communities.

#### ***Older Adults:***

Today, roughly nine percent of the Atlanta region's population is 65 and older. By the year 2040, the share will grow to 20 percent, with 1.6 million older adults in the Atlanta region. The 65 and older population is growing faster than any other demographic group in most counties in the region.

#### ***Persons with Low Income:***

The Atlanta region is currently home to about 800,000 people living at or below the poverty line, with another 500,000 within 150% of this line. The total of both represents over 24% of the region's total population. It was found that areas where persons with low income live vary greatly from where they work, which often causes significant transportation challenges and costs to those earning the least.

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## **Coordination Gaps and Barriers**

Aside from funding, seven common variables were identified as being fundamental gaps or barriers to coordination in the region:

- Geographical boundaries / large and multi-jurisdictional region
- Individual agency and organizational restrictions
- Little or no incentive to coordinate
- Political vs. technical feasibility
- Lack of adequate infrastructure
- Lack of state coordination and support
- Other regional priorities (e.g., congestion)

## **Goals and Objectives**

The plan development process resulted in four primary goals and several supporting objectives.

### **Atlanta Region HST Goals**

- Improve accessibility and mobility for the transportation disadvantaged.
- Improve customer services for HST users and providers.
- Improve cost effectiveness.
- Improve coordination.

### **Atlanta Region HST Objectives**

- Education of HST services and coordination
- Coordination of HST programs throughout the region
- Increase quantity and quality of Human Services Transportation
- Marketing of coordinated HST services
- Utilization of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to better coordinate HST programs
- Provision of a range of mobility and cost options to users for HST services
- Movement of HST users efficiently

## **Solutions and Strategies**

A wide range of systemwide recommendations are identified, many of which are longer term in nature. They are organized into four groups:

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- Building partnerships
- Launching pilots / creating successful models
- Highlighting and duplicating successful models in the region
- Creating policy and building plans that lead to mobility

In addition, supplemental recommendations were made for each of the three HST population groups.

### **Short-Term Action Plan**

In light of current fiscal realities, an action plan for the region should focus on improving efficiencies in our current systems and operations while ensuring that information and motivation exist to work on a longer-term expansion of options as economic conditions improve over time. The region should focus on easy wins, while doing everything possible to quickly position the overall program for more substantive improvements as opportunities arise in the coming months and years.

- Update HST provider inventory.
- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of coordinating HST services in order to demonstrate the value of such services within the context of regional funding priorities.
- Host a second HST Summit to share the action plan and regain momentum lost during the recent economic downturn.
- Assist in building local coordination frameworks to encourage additional micro-level success stories.
- Integrate supplemental data available from the Regional Needs Assessment more fully into the HST process.
- Begin regional data collection efforts specifically targeting HST demographic groups.
- Update the JARC and New Freedom call for projects process to reflect the recommendations and priorities of this plan.
- Update the scope of work requirements for LCI and CTP efforts to better reflect the issues identified in this plan. Continue ARC support for these programs, as well as Lifelong Communities.
- Synthesize the findings and recommendations of this plan into Plan 2040.
- Encourage local mobility management programs and monitor their success for possible adaption at the regional level.
- Identify a “leader” to implement the regional TMCC Concept of Operations on an incremental basis once funding can be identified.
- Monitor state and federal legislative initiatives related to HST and ensure that local and regional programs adapt accordingly to reflect any new policy guidance and are positioned to take advantage of potential funding opportunities.



### **Chapter 1 - Planning Context of Human Services Transportation**

Human Services Transportation (HST) is defined as mobility services provided for the benefit of transportation disadvantaged populations, including persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with lower incomes. This includes services provided by public transit operators, human service agencies, private providers, and private nonprofit agencies.

HST groups often have unique and different needs that require a variety of transportation services to ensure quality of life. Planning and Coordinating HST helps to improve the efficiency of limited transportation resources, reduce duplication of services, and improve customer satisfaction.

#### **Why HST is Important to the Atlanta Region**

Metro Atlanta continues to be one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country. During the last decade, the Atlanta region has added over one million people. It is expected that 8.3 million people will call the Atlanta region home by the year 2040, an increase of roughly three million people from today.



A significant amount of the region's growth has occurred, and will continue to occur, in areas inaccessible by any mode other than a personal vehicle, a mobility option often not available to the disabled, elderly and impoverished. For these citizens, HST services represent a lifeline to basic services such as medical care, jobs, government services and the grocery store. And without additional connections to social and recreational

opportunities, these individuals can easily become marginalized by society and experience a degraded quality of life.

Expanding travel options for our region's transportation disadvantaged residents is essential and should be a priority, even for those who are currently young, healthy and self-reliant. We all age and, in time, our faculties will decline to the point that driving poses great risk to ourselves and others. While many people may desire to live out their golden years in their current residence, this will not be a realistic goal if economical and sustainable travel options are not made more widely available in our region.



### **Definition of Coordination**

Coordination often times can mean different things to different people and organizations based upon the context and environment they operate and work in. Coordination is not a “one time” event or process. Rather, it involves sharing power, responsibility, and funding, which ultimately will result in shared benefits. For the purposes of this HST plan, coordination is defined as the collaborative efforts of two or more organizations in identifying techniques that allow for better resource management and the process of implementing those strategies within or among those organizations to achieve greater cost effectiveness in service delivery, and improving customer satisfaction.

### **Benefits of Coordination**

Service coordination brings citizens, regional partners, transportation providers, human service agencies, and other stakeholders together, resulting in increased mobility and improved lives for everyone in the region. Through the process used in development of this plan, ARC has identified five key outcomes of successful HST coordination:

- Improved efficiencies in existing transportation operations and systems
- Lower costs for the customer, provider, and human service agencies
- Expanded service areas and hours of operation to increase access and meet customer needs
- A seamless regional transit system that connects individuals with where they need to go and enhances quality of life in the region
- Improved customer satisfaction

### **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)**

Prior to MAP-21, the provision of human services transportation was spread across 62 federal programs and innumerable state, local, and private initiatives.

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law a new two-year transportation authorization, entitled Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The new law authorizes \$10.6 billion in FY 2013 and \$10.7 billion in FY 2014 for a variety of public transportation programs. MAP-21 furthers several important goals, including safety, state of good repair, performance, and program efficiency. MAP-21 gives the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) significant new authority to strengthen the safety of public transportation systems throughout the United States.

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MAP - 21 also focuses on improving the efficiency of grant program operations by consolidating certain programs and repealing other programs. As a result, several HST programs were impacted, including the Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program and Section 5317 New Freedom program, which expired



on September 30, 2012. There will be no additional funding apportioned for these programs beyond fiscal year 2012, however any unobligated funds appropriated or authorized for JARC and New Freedom in FY 2012 and prior years remain available for obligation (for the established period of availability when appropriated or allocated) and expenditure. Any use of these unobligated funds must follow program-specific requirements previously established under SAFETEA-LU and prior authorizations.

Although the JARC and New Freedom programs expired on September 30, 2012, the spirit of these programs was not completely lost. Under MAP-21, activities eligible under the former JARC program, which focused on providing services to low-income individuals to access jobs, are now eligible under the Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula program and Section 5311 Rural Area Formula grants. This includes operating assistance with a 50 percent local match for job access and reverse commute activities. In addition, the urbanized area formula and rural area formula for distributing funds now includes the number of low-income individuals as a factor. There is no floor or ceiling on the amount of funds that can be spent on job access and reverse commute activities under these two programs.

MAP-21 also consolidated the former New Freedom program with the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program. This program provides formula funding to increase the mobility of seniors and persons with disabilities. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of the targeted populations and are now apportioned to both States (for all areas under 200,000 population) and large urbanized areas (over 200,000 population). The New Freedom program provided grants for services for individuals with disabilities that went above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Activities that were eligible under New Freedom are now eligible under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program.

Projects selected for funding must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan; and the competitive selection process, which was



required under the former New Freedom program, is now optional. At least 55 percent of program funds must be spent on the types of capital projects eligible under the former section 5310 -- public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. The remaining 45 percent may be used for: public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA; public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit; or, alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities. Using these funds for operating expenses requires a 50 percent local match while using these funds for capital expenses (including acquisition of public transportation services) requires a 20 percent local match.

At the time of this update, there was minimal federal guidance on HST programs; therefore this document does not include in detail new planning requirements for FTA programs under MAP - 21. As mentioned above, prior to MAP-21 becoming law, SAFETEA-LU was the previous law that governed federal transportation funding and program. Additional information regarding SAFETEA-LU HST programs and planning requirements is discussed in the next section.

### **SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements and Programs**

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which provided \$286.4 billion for federal surface transportation programs over a five-year period through fiscal year 2009. Of the \$286.4 billion authorized under SAFETEA-LU, \$52.6 billion was set aside to be used for public transportation programs. This was a significant increase approximately 46 percent more than authorized under the previous law (TEA-21).

SAFETEA-LU established that, beginning in fiscal year 2007, a Coordinated Public Transit / Human Services Transportation Plan must be developed locally to help guide three Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Programs:

- Section 5310 - Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program
- Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)
- Section 5317 - New Freedom Program

Any projects receiving funding from these three programs must be competitively selected and derived from the coordinated plan. According to FTA guidance, a coordinated plan should be developed in cooperation with representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, as well as members of the public. The guidance also identifies four elements that must be incorporated in the plan:

- Inventory of available services
- Needs assessment, including gaps and barriers
- Possible strategies and solutions
- Prioritization of proposed strategies

### Federal Transit Administration HST Programs

As described above, under SAFETEA-LU there were three primary FTA grant programs that brought federal funds from FY 2005-212 to the Atlanta region that assisted with the delivery of HST services. While these three programs have a tightly defined focus on HST services, they are in no way an exhaustive list of the 63 federal transportation funds that can be used to provide transportation services to disabled, elderly and low income population groups. Included below is a description of the three primary and other grant programs that provided resources for the provision of HST under SAFETEA-LU.

#### *Section 5310 - Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program*

The goal of the Section 5310 program, originally established under TEA-21, is to improve mobility for older adults and persons with disabilities. Under SAFETEA-LU, the Section 5310 program provides funds for capital costs associated with providing transportation services to older adults and persons with disabilities including vehicle purchases for nonprofits organizations and public entities in urbanized, small urban and rural areas. Funds for this program are apportioned to states on a formula basis depending upon the state's elderly and disabled populations.



In the state of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) is the designated recipient for Section 5310 funds. The DHS publishes an annual Georgia State Management Plan and Application Package for the Transportation of Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities. This plan describes DHS's role as the Designated Recipient and establishes the policies and procedures for administering the program and the competitive selection process for selecting projects. Currently this process is incorporated into the coordinated plan by reference only. A copy of the state's management plan can be found in Appendix (D).

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DHS has instituted a policy that all federal and state funds used in the delivery of transportation services in this program will be applied in the purchase of services rather than in capital expenditures. No program funds will be used to purchase vehicles or related equipment. States have the option to designate the use of funds to meet the transportation needs of the target population. Within the state of Georgia, a coordinated transportation system has been developed to increase efficiency of transportation efforts and resources. The use of Section 5310 funds within a coordinated effort is considered a high priority objective by the agency. Where applicable, and in the best interests of the client population served, Section 5310 funds are used solely for purchase of service agreements.

Eligible applicants include private non-profit organizations which provide or which desire to provide transportation services to elderly and/or disabled persons. While the assistance is intended primarily for private non-profit organizations, public bodies approved by the state to coordinate services for the elderly and disabled, or any public body that certifies to the satisfaction of the state that private non-profit organizations in the area are not readily available to carry out the services, may be eligible to receive Section 5310 funds through the state. Complete information on the state's certification requirements can be found in Appendix (D) under Section D of the State's Management Plan.

The following types of transportation services are eligible:

- Trips dedicated to the special needs of elderly and disabled citizens
- Regular community-wide fixed route / fixed schedule service
- Community-wide demand responsive or route deviation service as required, to satisfy individual trip needs and to maximize economies of operation
- Contract or subscription service to maximize revenue and provide a community service
- Public transit passes

DHS requests state appropriations in an amount sufficient to provide the required minimum 20% match. Applicants are encouraged to provide additional local match to maximize the availability of funds across the state.

### ***Section 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program***

The goal of the JARC program is to improve access to transportation services to and from employment and employment related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals. JARC also aims to transport residents of urbanized areas and nonurbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. JARC funds are currently apportioned to states on a formula basis depending upon a state's low-income population. Prior to SAFETEA-LU, JARC

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funds were distributed to states on a discretionary basis through earmarks or congressional appropriations. JARC funds can be used for capital, planning, and operating expenses with a 50/50 match requirement for operating and 80/20 match for capital.



ARC and MARTA are joint designated recipients for the FTA Section 5316 JARC and Section 5317 New Freedom Programs for the Atlanta Urbanized Area. As joint designated recipients, ARC and MARTA are responsible for conducting the competitive selection process for JARC and New Freedom projects in the 18-county region. Appendix (C) contains a copy of the designated recipient letter from Governor Perdue.

Eligible JARC projects may include, but are not limited to capital, planning, and operating assistance to support activities such as:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home service
- Shuttle service
- Expanding fixed-route public transit routes
- Demand-responsive van service
- Ridesharing and carpooling activities
- Transit related aspects of bicycling (adding bicycle racks to vehicles to support individuals that bicycle a portion of their commute or providing bicycle storage at transit stations)
- Local car loan programs that assist individuals in purchasing and maintaining vehicles for shared rides
- Promotion of the use of transit by workers with non-traditional work schedules
- Supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs
- Applying Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools
- Implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), including customer trip information technology
- Integrating automated regional public transit and human service transportation information, scheduling, and dispatch functions
- Deploying vehicle position-monitoring systems
- Establishing regional mobility managers or transportation brokerage activities

### Section 5317 – New Freedom Program

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities who desire integration into the work force and full participation in society. The New Freedom program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities



beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. New Freedom funds are also apportioned on a formula basis depending upon a state's disability and elderly population. New Freedom funds can be used for both capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services and/or alternatives that go beyond ADA requirements. The match requirements for New Freedom funds are 50/50 for operation and 80/20 for capital expenses.

Eligible New Freedom projects may include, but are not limited to capital, planning, and operating assistance to support activities such as:

- **New Public Transportation Services Beyond the ADA.** The following activities are examples of eligible projects meeting the definition of new public transportation.
  - Enhancing public transportation services beyond minimum requirements of the ADA
    - Expansion of paratransit service parameters beyond the mandated minimum  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile buffer around fixed route transit services
    - Expansion of current hours of operation for paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed route services
    - The provision of same day service
    - Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders through the door of their destination
    - Acquisition of vehicles and equipment designed to accommodate mobility aids that exceed the dimensions and weight ratings established for common wheelchairs under the ADA and labor costs of aides to help drivers assist passengers with over-sized wheelchairs
    - Installation of additional secure locations in public buses beyond what is required by the ADA



- Feeder Services
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations
- Travel Training
- **New Public Transportation Alternatives Beyond the ADA.** The following activities are examples of projects that are eligible as new public transportation alternatives beyond the ADA under the New Freedom program:
  - Purchasing vehicles to support new accessible taxi, ride sharing, and/or vanpooling programs.
  - Supporting the administration and expenses related to new voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers. Vouchers are an operational expense which requires a 50/50 (federal/local) match.
  - Supporting new volunteer driver and aide programs.
  - Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation.

### History of HST Planning in the Atlanta Region

Prior to the enactment of SAFETEA-LU, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Board passed a resolution on May 25, 2005 requiring that the transportation needs of older adults in the Atlanta region be identified and addressed through the regional planning process. This resolution required ARC staff, working in cooperation with the local aging and transportation networks, to research and integrate the needs of older adults into ongoing transportation and land-use planning processes. This initiative gave ARC a unique opportunity to look at the growing needs of the older adult population and to make recommendations on how to improve the system and expand the range of options available to this demographic group.

After SAFETEA-LU was signed into law in 2005, ARC established a Steering Committee in the Fall of 2006 to help guide and develop a coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Also, in early 2007, in response to the need for coordinated HST planning, ARC applied for a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to plan, design, and provide implementation details for a deployment-ready, replicable, and scalable Transportation Management Coordination Center (TMCC).

The purpose of the project was to create a TMCC that would serve as a central point of reference and efficiency for regional HST customers, human services agencies, and transportation providers. A TMCC would allow HST stakeholders in the region to share

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information, coordinate transportation services, and integrate vehicle and service delivery activities, thus allowing for an enhanced experience for HST customers. If implemented, the TMCC would elevate the region's ability to streamline, integrate, and coordinate human service transportation to meet the needs of HST agencies, customers, and providers. The TMCC could also serve as a national model for those interested in using ITS technologies to improve coordination of HST services.



In June 2007, ARC hosted a Human Services Transportation Summit to serve as a “kickoff” for the HST coordinated planning process for the region. The event was attended by over 200 stakeholders. During the summit, attendees identified and discussed needs, gaps, and barriers, in the region's current HST system. Attendees also identified and discussed current coordination efforts that were underway and gave recommendations on additional

efforts needed to improve HST for the user, providers, and administrators throughout the region. Information gathered on needs, gaps, barriers, and potential next steps from the summit was used to develop the Atlanta region's interim HST Coordination Plan.

Following the summit and development of the interim plan, ARC continued its HST planning efforts on the USDOT grant, which focused on identifying ways that Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) could be used to improve HST coordination and delivery of services. These efforts continued through the summer of 2008. Although regional stakeholders agreed on the need for the TMCC and a conceptual operational framework was agreed upon, ARC chose not to apply for Phase II of the grant implementation funds because the region was unable to identify a champion that would agree to pilot the TMCC project. See Appendix (A) for a copy of the final report resulting from this planning effort.

In December 2008, the HST Steering Committee was reconvened as the HST Advisory Committee to assist ARC staff in establishing goals and objectives for an HST Coordinated Plan update, identifying stakeholders and guiding the coordinated planning process. The Advisory Committee represents a cross-section of HST stakeholders, including transportation planning and implementation agencies, public transit operators, state and local health and human service agencies, workforce boards, charities, for-profit transportation providers, and advocates. A complete list of stakeholders participating in the HST Advisory Committee can be found in Appendix (B). Since the adoption of the 2010 coordinated plan update, the HST Advisory Committee has met on a monthly or ad hoc basis to continue this important dialogue

## A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region

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and monitor HST needs, coordination efforts, and JARC and New Freedom programs implemented in the region. The HST Advisory Committee also worked diligently to ensure the voice and needs of HST populations were considered in the region's overall long range transportation planning process.

### JARC and New Freedom Grant Process

Since the enactment of SAFETEA-LU, ARC has overseen and managed five JARC and New Freedom "calls for projects", using the evaluation criteria and guidelines initially established through the interim coordinated plan. As described earlier, ARC and MARTA are the joint



designated recipients for JARC and New Freedom funds for the Atlanta region. However, since MARTA also competes for these same funds, ARC is responsible for conducting the entire competitive selection process.

The evaluation criteria and guidelines for JARC and New Freedom grant funding is the result of the finalized goals for HST in the Atlanta region. Although the evaluation criterion primarily has remained the same through each call, there

have been some minor modifications to the guidelines based on guidance from the HST Advisory Committee. The current criteria are:

- **Improve accessibility and mobility for the transportation disadvantaged.** Ideal projects or programs would achieve one or more of the following:
  - Increase transportation options
  - Improve mobility for HST groups
  - Simplify the use of HST services
  - Fill gaps in existing transportation infrastructure
  - Utilize technology such as ITS
  - Increase ridership



- **Improve customer services for HST users and providers.** Ideal projects or programs would achieve one or more of the following:
  - Utilize technology such as ITS
  - Include services delivery and reporting
  - Provide amenities and planning tools
  - Provide information on other HST options
  - Institute seamless fares and transfers
  - Include program monitoring
  - Provide service that is affordable, useable, safe, clean, and comfortable
  - Respond to the travel patterns of local citizens
  
- **Improve coordination among HST programs.** Ideal projects or programs would achieve one or more of the following:
  - Serve cross-jurisdictional trips
  - One-call scheduling of inter-agency trips
  - Interface with existing transportation systems Utilize existing fixed-route transit systems
  - Reduce barriers to coordinated service delivery (geographic, political, funding, etc.)
  - Maximize planning, service delivery and reporting
  - Establish or expand programmatic relationships with other HST providers
  - Partner with other local and federal agencies and the private sector to promote policies, programs, and activities
  
- **Maximize project cost effectiveness.** Ideal projects or programs would achieve one or more of the following:
  - Maximize use and operating efficiency of existing vehicles
  - Eliminate duplicative services (either intra- or inter-agency)
  - Maximize financial resources available through good coordination
  - Establish or expand financial relationships with other HST providers
  - Share vehicles during off-peak times
  - Increase number of riders per trip

- **Organizational capacity.** Applicants must demonstrate all of the following:
  - Ability to service target population
  - Define measures of effectiveness to monitor project or program
  - Potential for establishing or expanding relationships with other HST providers
  - Fiscal and managerial capability
  - Sustainability
  - Agency's program implementation experience
- **Project budget.** Applicants were required to outline specific project expenses by task.

A full description of the JARC and New Freedom evaluation criteria and the competitive selection process can be found in Appendix (E).

### Other Programs That Fund and Provide HST

In addition to the three FTA programs (Section 5310, Section 5316 and Section 5317) profiled in the previous section, numerous other federal and state programs also provide transportation services for the target populations. This section highlights a select few of these programs.

#### Medicaid

The Medicaid Program provides medical benefits to groups of low-income people, some who may have no medical insurance or inadequate medical insurance. Medicaid is the largest program providing medical and health related services to low-income individuals and families. Although the Federal government establishes general guidelines for the program, individual eligibility requirements and program guidelines are established by each State. According to the U.S. Department of Accountability, the Medicaid program provides the largest amount of funding for specialized transportation. Each year, the Medicaid program spends nearly \$1 billion nationwide on transportation services.



Georgia began administering their Medicaid Program in 1968 as a result of a 1965 amendment to the Social Security Act. Initially, Medicaid expenditures for the state of Georgia were approximately \$28 million. Now, Georgia Medicaid serves 1.5 million members with \$5.9 billion in state and federal funds. Georgia administers this program under their federally approved

state management plan. Georgia's Medicaid program currently receives \$1.63 in federal funds for every \$1 of state funds. Medicaid reimburses health care providers for services to eligible members.

The objectives of the Georgia Medicaid program are to:

- Provide broad health care coverage to certain lower income populations
- Offer special community-based coverage for certain disabled and elder populations
- Extend supplemental coverage to lower income Medicare beneficiaries
- Offset the high costs of institutional care for lower and moderate income Georgians

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Under the welfare reform legislation of 1996, officially titled the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, the TANF program was established to replace the welfare programs known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program, and the Emergency Assistance (EA) program. The law ended federal entitlement to assistance and instead created TANF as a block grant that provides states, territories and tribes federal funds each year. These funds cover benefits, administrative expenses, and services targeted to needy families. TANF became effective July 1, 1997, and was reauthorized in February 2006 under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

The goal of the TANF program is to transition needy families from welfare to self-sufficiency. Two of the main objectives of TANF are to end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



TANF program funds provide cash assistance, work opportunities, and other necessary support services for families in need. Under this program, states have considerable flexibility in how TANF funds can be utilized, including income assistance, child care, transportation, wage supplements, education and job training. In order for states to be eligible to receive TANF funds, they must make a commitment to spend some of their own state dollars on programs to assist needy families. States can choose to spend a portion of TANF funds on transportation to purchase and/or operate vehicles, as well as to reimburse the cost of transportation.

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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In Georgia, the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) administers the TANF program. The DFCS will provide the support necessary for TANF families to achieve economic self-sufficiency by obtaining and retaining employment.

### Vocational Rehabilitation Grants

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) oversees both formula and discretionary grant programs that help individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment and live more independently through the provision of such supports as counseling, medical and psychological services, job training and other individualized services. RSA's major Title I formula grant program provides funds to state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies to provide employment-related services for individuals with disabilities, giving priority to individuals who are significantly disabled. Transportation services that enable individuals to participate in VR programs and services are an allowable expense for VR grant funds. Other allowable transportation expenditures may include, but are not limited to, costs of purchased services from public and private vendors, school transportation, travel training, service coordination, and private vehicle purchase.



In the state of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) operates and administers the state's Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. The GDOL operates five integrated and interdependent programs that share a primary goal: to help people with disabilities to become fully productive members of society by achieving independence and meaningful employment. The largest of the programs are the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Disability Adjudication Services, and the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation. Two other unique programs serve consumers with visual impairments: the Business Enterprise Program and Georgia Industries for the Blind.

There are 940,000 Georgians with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64. In each of the last five fiscal years, approximately 4,500 Georgians with disabilities were successfully rehabilitated and employed in meaningful jobs at competitive wages. The VR program serves nearly 35,000 Georgians annually, and has working relationships with more than 3,200 businesses.

### Veterans Benefits Program

Veterans of military service may be eligible for a wide range of medical services and other vocational rehabilitation and employment services. Under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Veterans Health Administration is the direct provider of primary medical care, specialized care, and other medical and social support services to veterans. The VA will provide



reimbursement to eligible veterans for some transportation to medical care. In addition to providing reimbursements to qualified veterans, VA Medical Centers may contract directly with transportation providers or work with volunteer networks to provide transportation services for veterans.

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program, frequently referred to as the Chapter 31 program based on its location in the

U.S. Code, helps veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Transportation is an allowable expense under the VR&E program. Funds can be used to connect veterans with jobs and job related activities such as training. There are over 700,000 veterans residing in Georgia.

The VA especially recognizes the problems veterans who are visually impaired, elderly, or immobilized due to disease or disability, particularly those living in remote and rural areas, face in traveling to access VA health care. To work toward providing these veterans with the most convenient and timely access to transportation services, the VA's vision is to explore the establishment of a network of community transportation service providers that could include Veteran Service Organizations (VSO's); community and commercial transportation providers; federal, state and local government transportation services as well as non-profits, such as United We Ride, operating within each VISN or even local facility.

This initiative will not replace current activities, but will rather supplement existing benefits and programs to improve access to VA health care. This program is currently enabled at 46 sites, and will be implemented at remaining locations by 2014. The Atlanta VA Medical Center is one of the VA's chosen for this new program and will be piloted in the next couple of months. The Atlanta VTS will provide transportation for Veterans with special needs and veterans who don't have transportation to and from their outpatient appointments.

### Incorporating HST Into PLAN 2040

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) recognizes that regional needs related to transportation, land use, environment, economy, housing, and human services are all interrelated. PLAN 2040 is ARC's innovative effort to tackle these cross-cutting planning challenges in one guiding document. PLAN 2040 serves as both the regional transportation plan and regional comprehensive plan. It defines both transportation and land use policies and investment strategies to address regional needs across these multiple planning emphasis areas. Through a collaborative effort among local, state and federal planning partners, PLAN 2040 guides regional growth through its specific investment strategies and programs for metro Atlanta through the year 2040.



PLAN 2040 includes a purpose statement, three core values, and six principles of livability for sustainable communities.

These principles mirror those of the federal government's Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation, and U.S. Environmental Protection. The purpose statement is visionary leadership for sustainable growth by balancing environmental responsibility, economic growth and social needs while maximizing benefits to all.

The plan's focus on sustainable growth and balancing social needs will help to address many of the issues that affect HST groups throughout the region.

### Core Values

The three core values of PLAN 2040 are as follows:

- Lead as the Global Gateway to the South
- Encourage Healthy Communities
- Expand Access to Community Resources

The second and third values are very important for HST populations because they will increase opportunities for individuals to live more independent and inclusive in their communities and provide affordable access to jobs, education, healthcare, and more.



### Guiding Principles

- Provide more transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our dependence on oil, improve air quality and promote public health.
- Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- Improve economic competitiveness of neighborhoods by giving people reliable access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs.
- Target federal funding toward existing communities - through transit-oriented development and land recycling – to revitalize communities, reduce public works costs, and safeguard rural landscapes.
- Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the effectiveness of programs to plan for future growth.
- Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods whether rural, urban or suburban.

The PLAN 2040 guiding principles will make the Atlanta region a more livable and sustainable place for everyone, including persons with disabilities, older adults, and low income individuals. PLAN 2040 is important to the HST planning process because it specifically looks at the needs of individuals living throughout the region who are transportation disadvantaged and provides strategies and solutions on how to address those needs going forward. With the older adult and low income populations rapidly growing, identifying ways to meet the transportation demand and mobility needs of HST groups is crucial. There are three elements of PLAN 2040 that provide significant input on HST populations, including: 1) the Equitable Target Analysis, 2) the On Board Transit Survey, and 3) Mobility Management. These elements will all be discussed further below.

### Equitable Target Analysis Index

Throughout the PLAN 2040 development process, ARC considered the needs of the transportation disadvantaged and Environmental Justice (EJ) communities in every step of the regional planning process. Environmental Justice public policy seeks to ensure that harmful human health or environmental effects of government activities do not fall disproportionately upon those with low income and minority populations living and working within the community. It's important to note that Environmental Justice groups overlap with HST populations, including persons with disabilities, older adults, low income individuals, Limited English Proficiency groups, and zero car households.



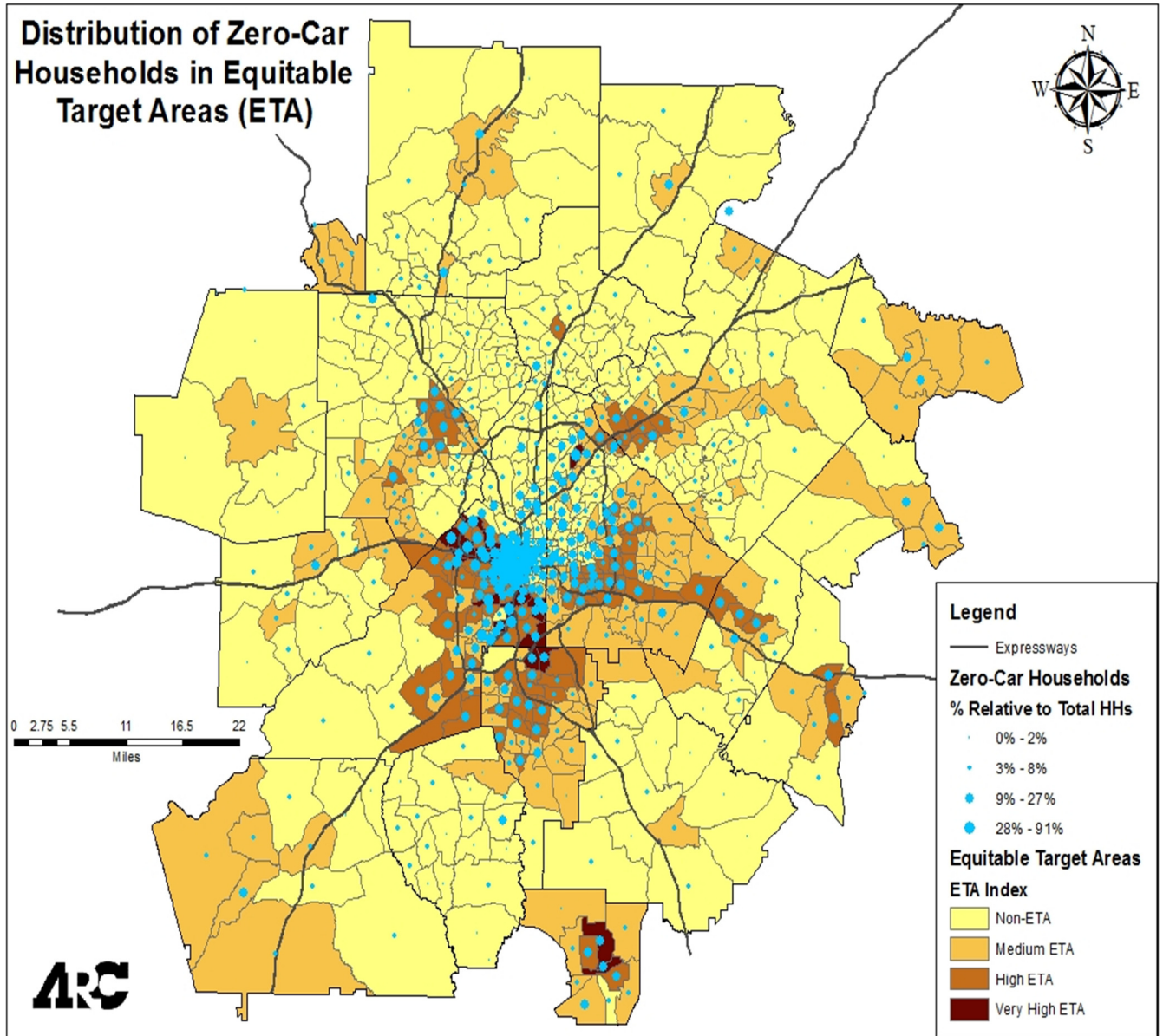
During the development of PLAN 2040, ARC utilized a broad range of outreach strategies and technical tools to assess the needs and concerns of disadvantaged populations in the region, including minority and low-income residents. The Equitable Target Analysis Index (ETA Index) tool created a lens to measure the impacts that future transportation investments, or the lack thereof, would have on disadvantaged populations in the region. The ETA Index not only helped to reflect the vision of ETA communities in the Regional Transportation Plan, but it will assist in minimizing adverse community impacts during the planning and construction of future transportation programs and projects. The ETA Index is based on five parameters:

- **Age** - The Age Parameter helps identify the elderly population in the Atlanta region, specifically the population 65 years old and over.
- **Education** - This parameter identifies areas where education attainment is low. This will ultimately help identify and link populations to job attainment and accessibility to different jobs and industries.
- **Median Household Value** - Housing values were analyzed to identify areas where there has been disinvestment, creating a link to poverty and ETA.
- **Poverty** - The poverty rate is a key indicator that helps identify concentrations of disadvantaged populations, and serves as the income statistic in the development of the composite index.
- **Race** - The race parameter serves to identify non-white minority populations in the Atlanta region, as per EJ policies.

For purposes of the limited technical update, a series of ETA/HST charts and maps were created. Utilizing the ETA Index as a way to determine or measure the benefits of transportation investments within ETA communities also provides insight for HST populations and will strengthen the consideration of these groups during the project development and selection process. There are many persons living in the region who don't own a car and may not have access to another affordable mobility option. This can be a major barrier to accessing job opportunities, education, healthcare, social services, and other vital resources in the region.



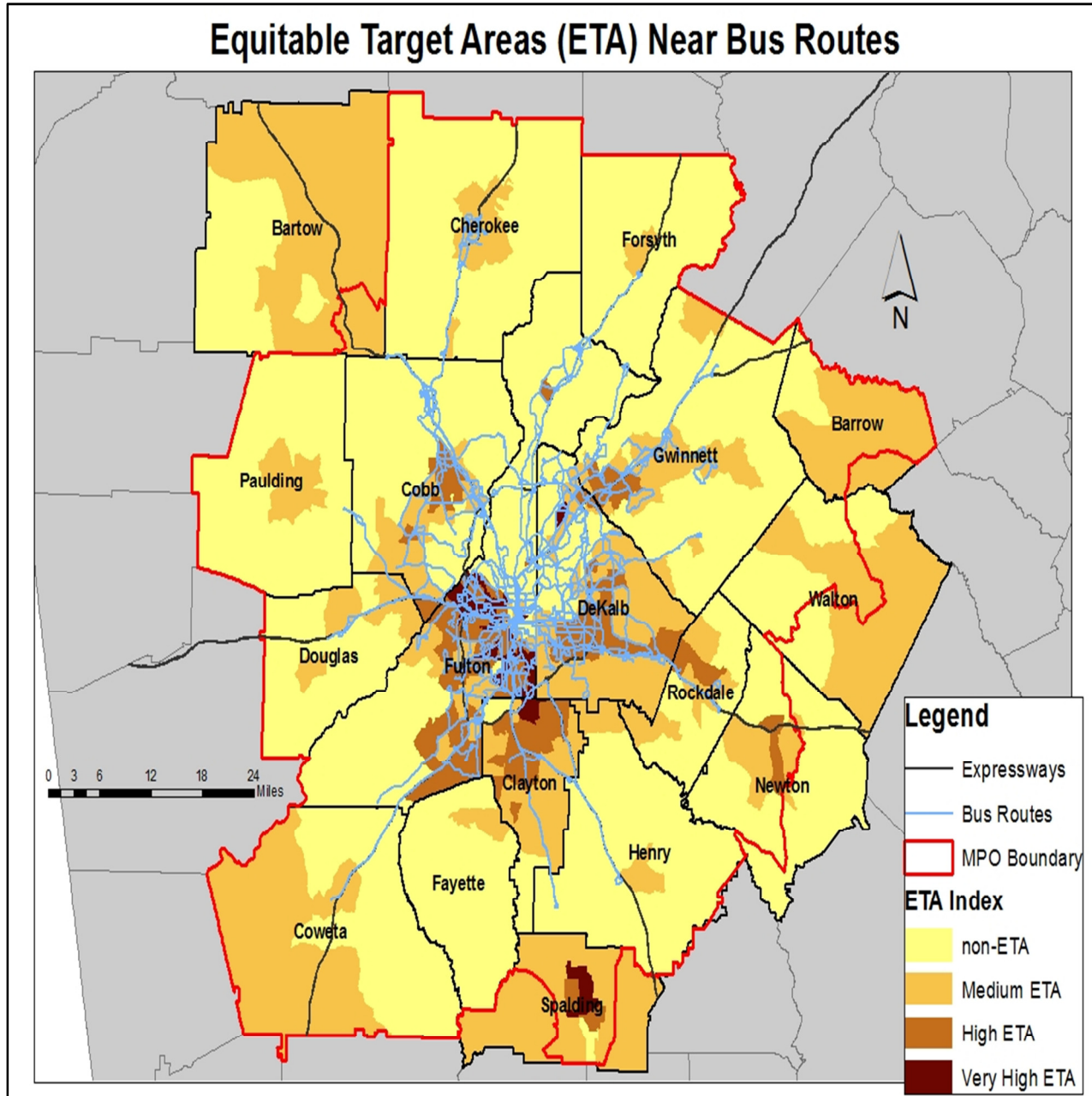
Figure 1-1: ETA Zero Car Household Map



Although there is adequate public transportation located inside the region’s inner core, this map demonstrates there are many medium and high ETA areas throughout the region that have no access or connectivity to public transportation systems.

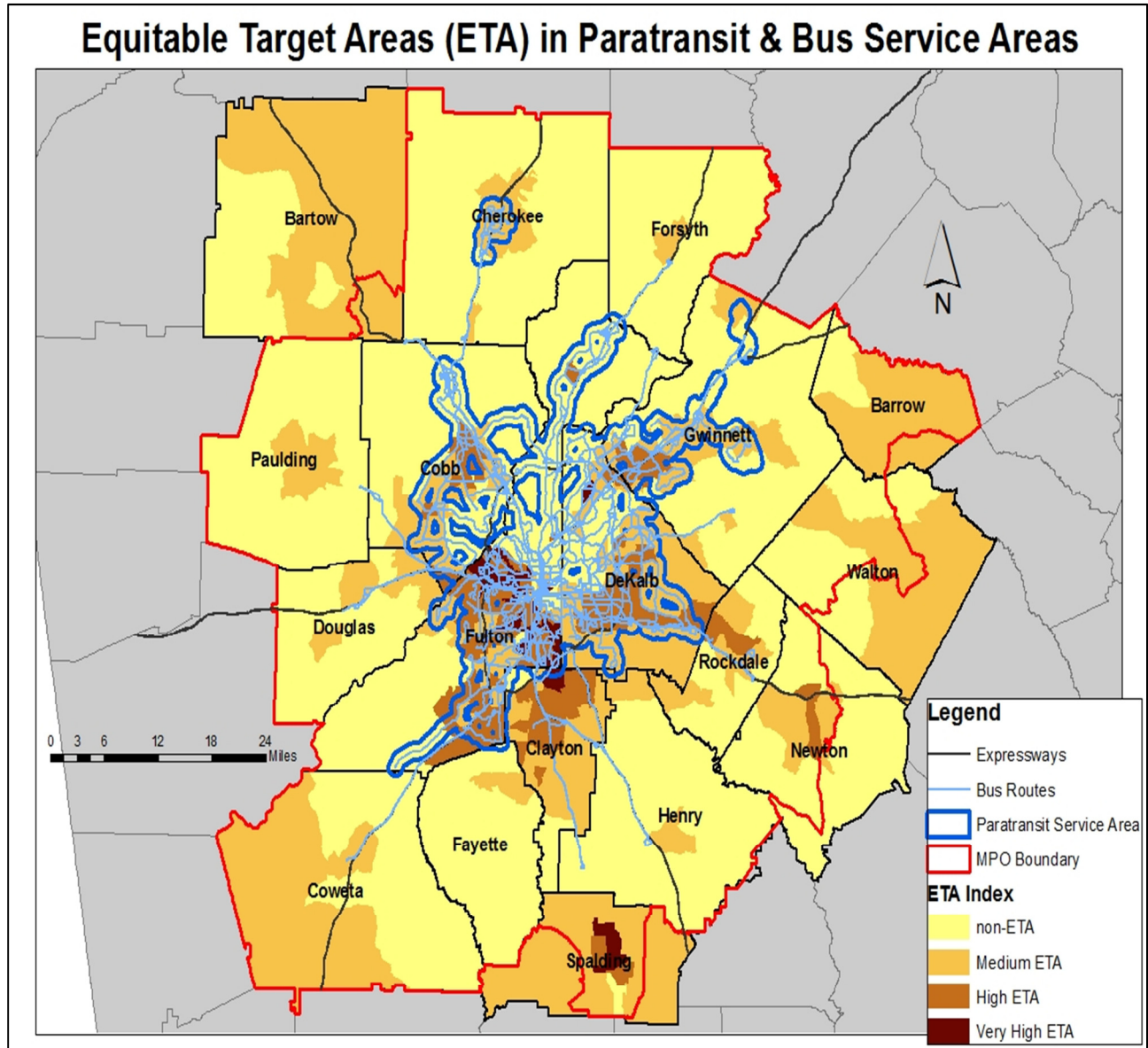


Figure 1-2: ETA Bus Routes Map



Access to public transit and other affordable mobility options is vital to Atlanta residents who don't own a car. For many zero car households, public transit is their only affordable option and is critical to accessing employment, education, medical, and community resources.

Figure 1-3: ETA Fixed-Route Paratransit Transit and Bus Routes Map



There are several areas identified throughout the region with medium, high, and very high ETA areas that are without fixed route bus, rail, or ADA paratransit services. Many persons with disabilities and older adults have difficulty navigating within their own communities and are isolated because of a lack of available transportation options. While the ETA gives insight on HST needs from a regional “macro” level, Chapter 2 provides more detail on the HST needs at a more local “micro” level.



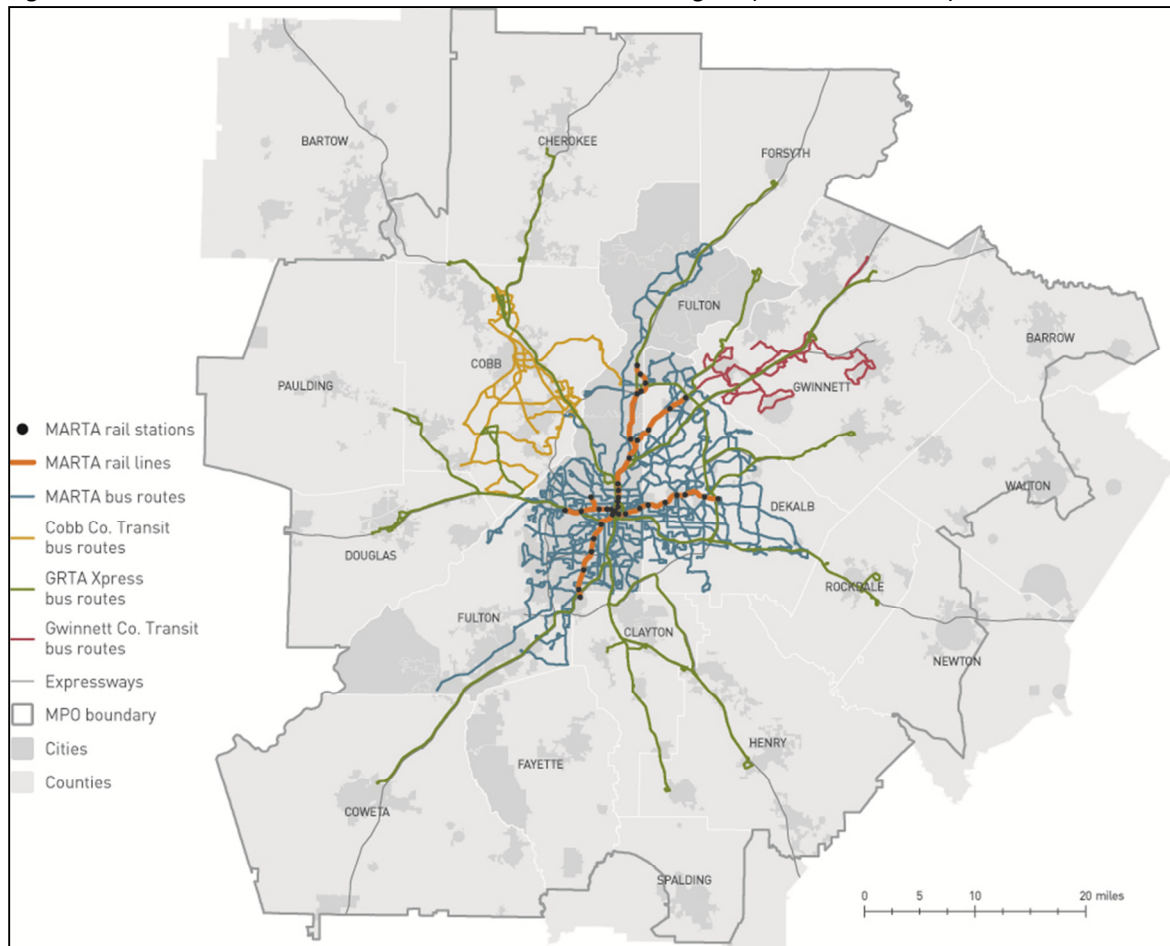
## Chapter 2 – Needs Assessment

In order to enhance and propel HST coordination forward in the Atlanta region, we must first have a clear picture of our existing conditions, including knowing where our HST populations are located and where they need to go. Looking at our existing conditions and knowing what services are currently available is critical to identifying HST needs, gaps, and barriers.

### Inventory of Available Services - Fixed Route Transit

Ten years ago, transit in the metro Atlanta region was limited to just three counties: MARTA in Fulton and DeKalb Counties and CCT in Cobb County. Today, transit service is more reflective of the region as a whole, with transit service being offered in 12 metro counties, as shown in Figure 2-1.

*Figure 2-1: Transit Providers and Routes in the Atlanta Region (November 2011)*



Source: ARC 2009 Transportation Fact Book

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As of the time this plan was updated, five public transportation providers form the backbone of the regional transit system serving the Atlanta region. The largest operator is MARTA, which provides bus and rail service in Fulton and DeKalb counties. In addition, four other public operators provide bus service to the region: Cherokee Area Transportation Services (CATS), Cobb Community Transit (CCT), Gwinnett County Transit (GCT) and GRTA Xpress. Transfers between MARTA and the remaining providers are seamless when patrons use the regional electronic fare media known as Breeze.

The vehicles and major facilities maintained by the public sector providers are generally accessible to riders with disabilities. All 38 MARTA stations, many of which also serve as transfer points for the suburban providers, are fully wheelchair accessible. MARTA trains include designated spaces for wheelchairs in each railcar, and feature level-platform boarding at all doors. The bus fleets for all of the public-sector providers are fully wheelchair-accessible, and the majority of the local fleets consist of low-floor buses.

The level of accommodations at bus stops, including wheelchair accessibility, varies widely throughout the region. Bus stops range from a simple pole in the ground to more substantial sheltered waiting areas. The overall accessibility of the bus system is highly dependent upon the availability of properly maintained sidewalks and ADA-compliant ramps in the areas surrounding bus stops. The lack of such accommodations in many areas is one of the major obstacles to use of the fixed-route bus system by riders with disabilities.

### **Inventory of Available Services - Paratransit Services**

Paratransit services are defined by Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The transportation provisions of the ADA apply to any public or private entity that provides public transportation, including private entities that are not primarily engaged in the business of transporting people, but operate a demand responsive or fixed route system (e.g., a campus bus service). The requirements apply regardless of whether or not an entity receives federal financial assistance.

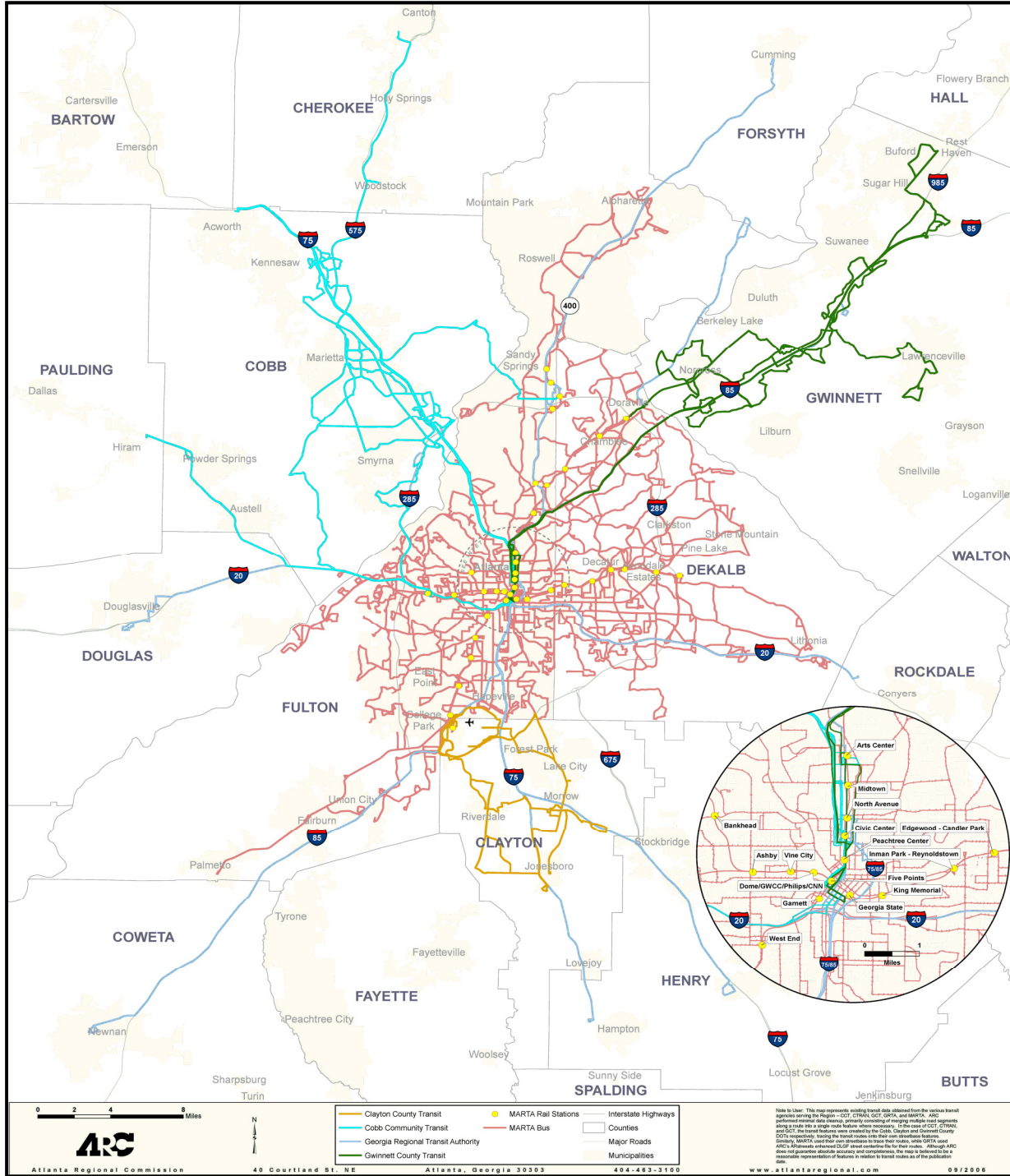
One legal requirement is that complementary paratransit service be provided to eligible persons with disabilities that are comparable to the fixed-route service, as depicted in Figure 2-2. ADA paratransit service is not required for commuter bus, commuter rail, or intercity rail services, however. Commuter bus service means fixed route bus service, characterized by:

- Service predominantly in one direction during peak periods
- Limited stop
- Use of multi-ride tickets
- Routes of extended length (e.g., central business district and outlying suburbs)

# A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region



Figure 2-2: Fixed Route Bus Services Subject to Paratransit Requirements (March 2010)





The specific requirements for complementary paratransit service are:

- **Service Types** - Must be provided from origin to destination.
- **Service Area** - Must be provided within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of all bus routes and rail stations.
- **Span of Service** - The hours and days that complementary paratransit service is provided must be the same as bus and rail service.
- **Response Time** - Service must be provided the day after it is requested by an ADA eligible client.
- **Service Eligibility** - The requirements and provisions for ADA complementary paratransit service need only apply to those paratransit clients who are eligible under the Act as determined by the transportation provider.
- **Capacity Constraints** - The transit provider must not deny service or otherwise engage in any pattern or practice that significantly limits the availability of service to ADA eligible clients.

Passengers unable to either use or access the fixed-route system due to a disability may be eligible to use complementary paratransit services. The ADA regulations recognize three categories of eligibility:

- **Category 1** - Persons who for reasons of a disability are unable to use the fixed-route system without the assistance of another person
- **Category 2** - Persons who for reasons of a disability are unable to use the fixed-route system without the aid of mobility devices (e.g., wheelchair lifts or low-floor bus ramps)
- **Category 3** - Persons who for reasons of a disability are unable to travel to or from a fixed-route bus stop or rail station. Factors such as environmental conditions (e.g., rain, snow, or ice) and architectural barriers not under the public entity's control are considered on a trip-by-trip basis

As of the time this plan was prepared, paratransit services are provided within metro Atlanta by:

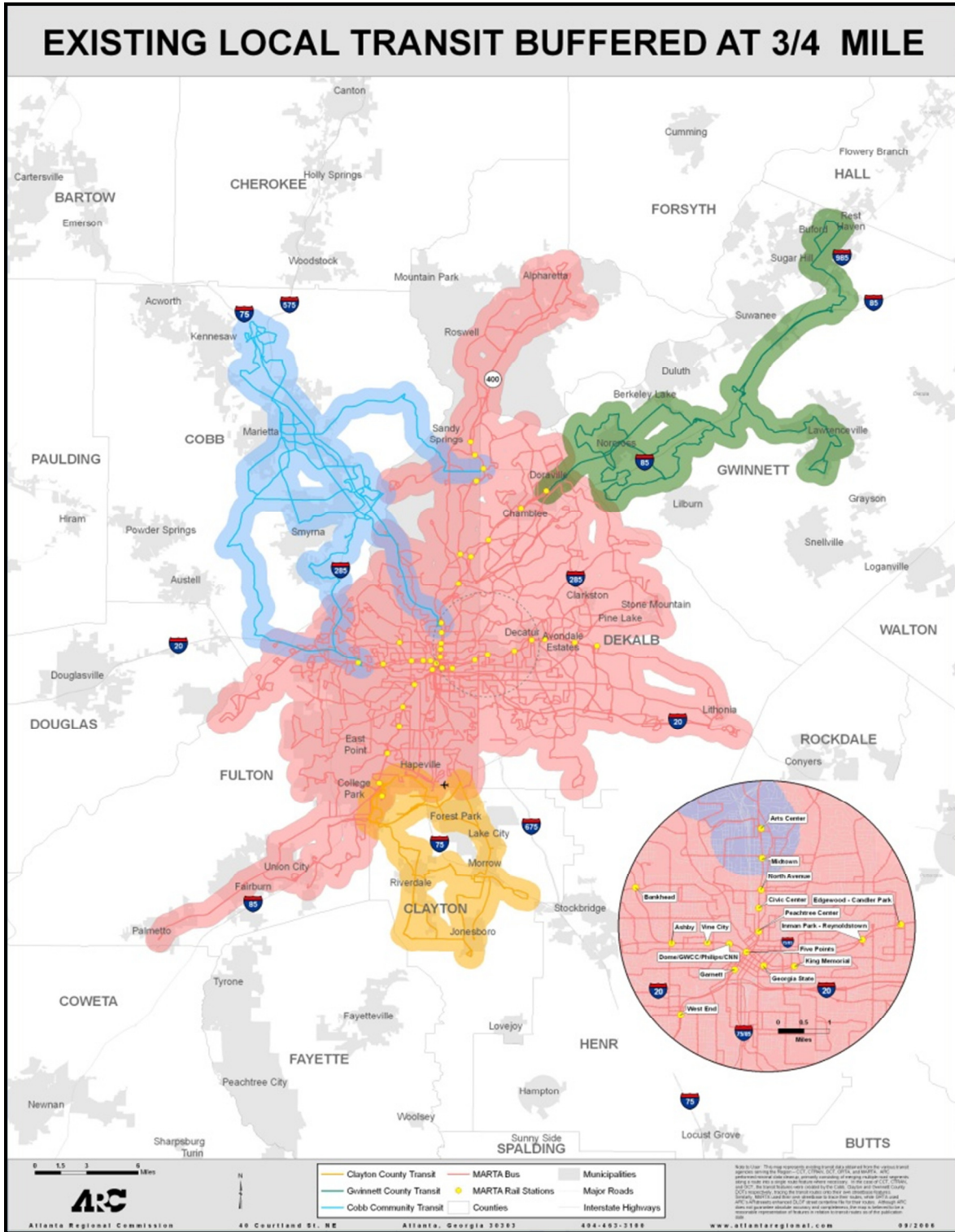
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (DeKalb and Fulton Counties)
- Cobb Community Transit (Cobb County)
- Gwinnett County Transit (Gwinnett County)
- C-TRAN (Clayton County) – *Note: terminated services on March 31, 2010*

Current paratransit service coverage in the region is shown in Figure 2-3.

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Figure 2-3: Paratransit Service Coverage (March 2010)



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GRTA does not provide Paratransit services since its services are defined as commuter bus services. The shuttle services of the BUC, Georgia Tech, Emory University, Atlanta University Center, and GSU are covered by MARTA's paratransit coverage. Table 2-1 provides an overview of some the service statistics on paratransit services for the Atlanta region for the most recent years available.

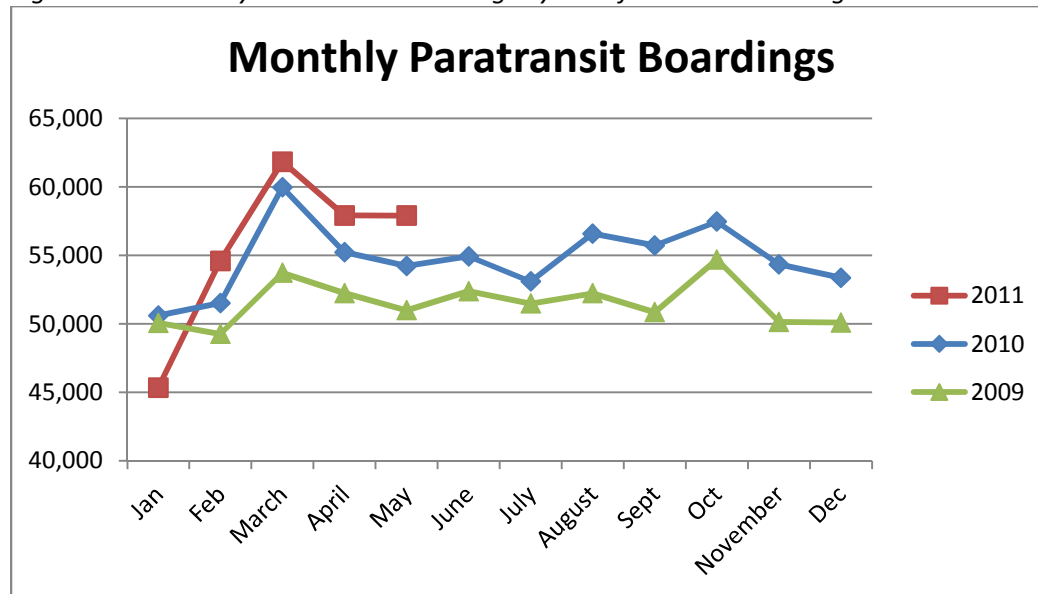
Table 2-1: Paratransit Service Statistics (2010 and 2011)

System	Vehicles operated in Nov 10	Vehicles Operated in Nov 11	Monthly Trips Nov 10	Monthly Trips Nov 11	FY 10 Total Annual Trips	FY 11 Total Annual Trips
CCT	25	25	6,737	6,548	80,843	78,578
GCT	6	6	1,589	1,411	17,035	18,372
MARTA	135	145	43,158	46,720	522,726	568,893
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>51,484</b>	<b>54,679</b>	<b>620,604</b>	<b>665,843</b>

Source: National Transit Database

Figure 2-4 gives a month-by-month overview of total paratransit trips from January 2009 through May 2011.

Figure 2-4: Monthly Paratransit Boardings by Year for the Atlanta Region

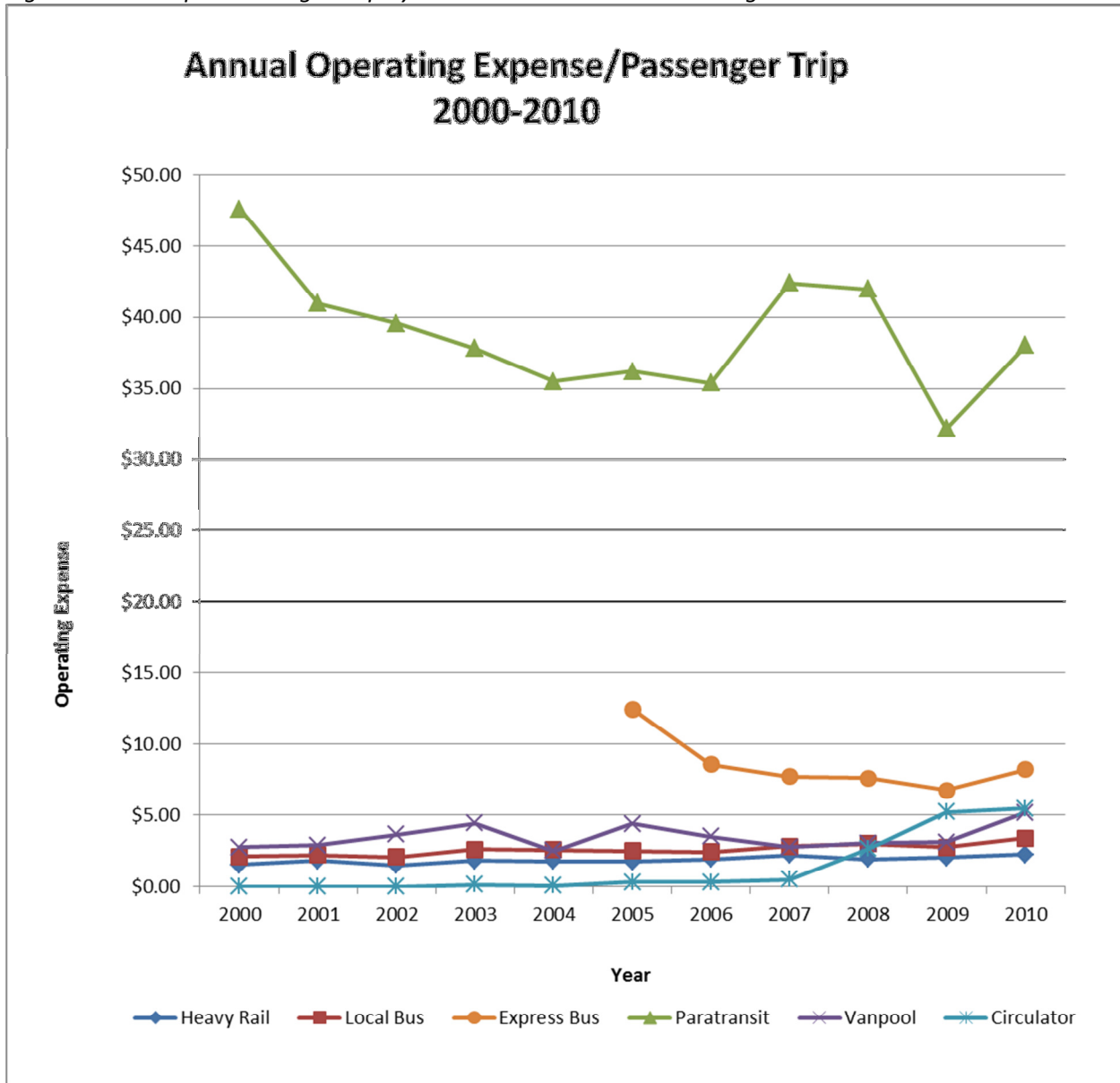


Source: National Transit Database: Includes Hall County Transit (HATS)

Figure 2-4 reveals that there is consistent and continuing growth in paratransit trips in the Atlanta region, while Figure 2-5 illustrates the disproportionately high cost of paratransit trips compared with other types of transit trips provided in the region.



Figure 2-5: Cost per Passenger Trip by Transit Mode in the Atlanta Region

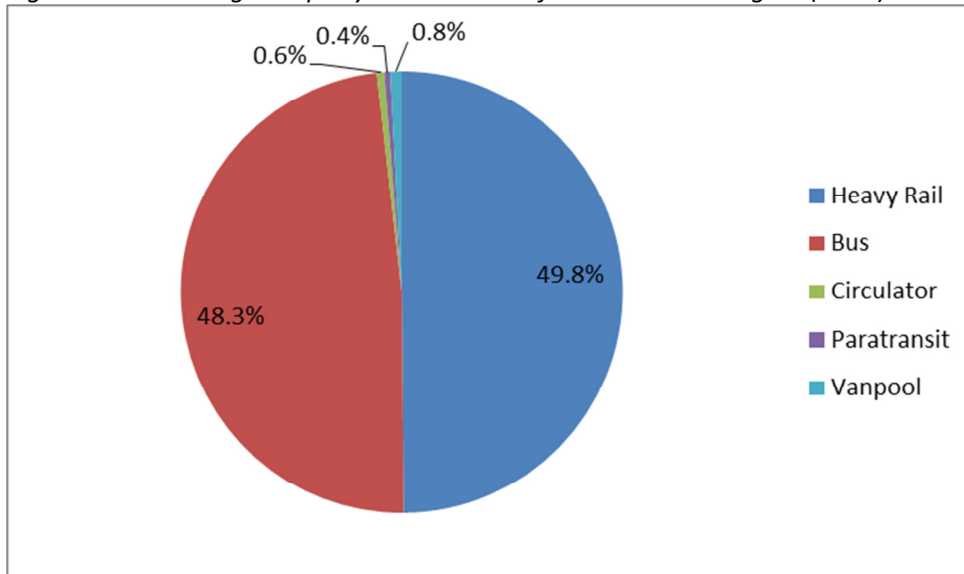


Source: ARC Regional Transit Data Warehouse

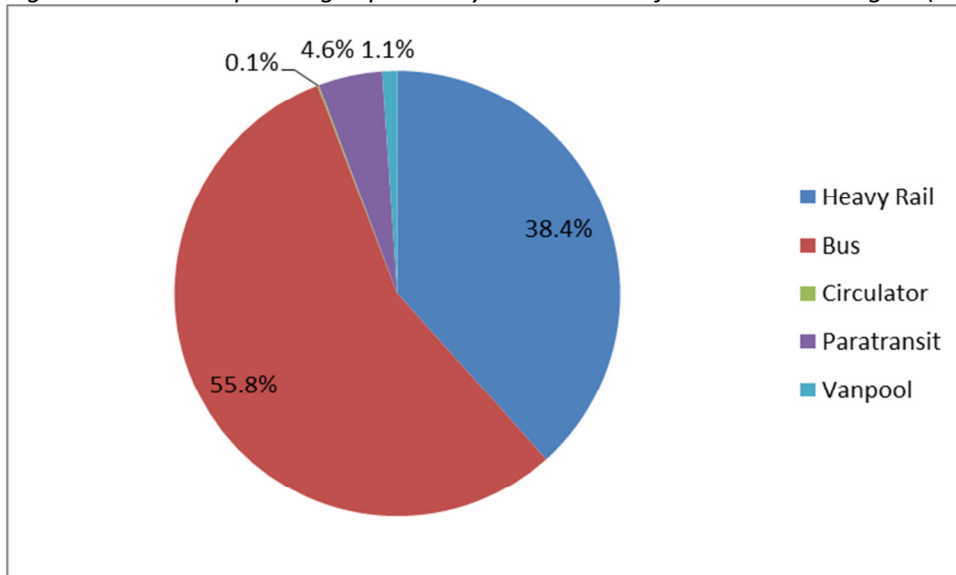
Figures 2-6 and 2-7 on the following page reveal that operation of paratransit services represent a significant operating expense for the Atlanta region’s transit providers. While paratransit trips only account for about 0.4% of all trips made on the system, they accounted for 4.6% of the total operating cost.



*Figure 2-6: Passenger Trips by Transit Mode for the Atlanta Region (2010)*



*Figure 2-7: Total Operating Expenses by Transit Mode for the Atlanta Region (2010)*



Source: ARC Regional Transit Data Warehouse

The historical growth in paratransit trips and the projected changing demographics of the region suggest that demand for paratransit services will increase. Consequently, a corresponding increase in operating expenses incurred by transit operators will result. The potential consequences of these increases in operating expenses could be a reduction in the amount of fixed route services that can be provided. With a corresponding reduction in the areas served by paratransit due to the elimination of fixed route service, trips previously made on paratransit



services will shift to other providers. The region experienced its first example of paratransit trip demand being shifted to other human services transportation providers with the termination of C-TRAN fixed route services on March 31, 2010.

The implication is that all human service transportation providers have an interest in ensuring a reliable transportation funding source is available for fixed routes services in order to adequately meet the demands for human services transportation.

### **Inventory of Available Services – Other Services**

A wide variety of public and private agencies provide transportation services within the Atlanta region for one or more of the target demographic groups. With the exception of state and county services targeting the needs of older adults, described in additional detail later in this section, most agencies have specialized niche markets they serve. These markets are typically defined by geography, serve only a specific subset of a particular group, and/or are ancillary to a program and are not necessarily the core mission of the agency.

ARC initiated a survey of human service agency providers in conjunction with the HST Summit in June 2007 to collect information on services available around the region. This information was used in developing the interim HST plan, as well as understanding existing service gaps necessary to make recommendations in this plan. Because this information can rapidly become dated, particularly in light of funding cutbacks due to the recent economic downturn, a thorough reassessment of the data collected is a critical first step in implementation of this plan. A copy of the survey is presented for informational purposes in Appendix (F).



### **Demographic Profile - Persons with Disabilities**

Accessible transportation is critical for people with disabilities to have the freedom to travel where, when, and how they choose. For many persons with disabilities, access to safe and affordable transportation is a major barrier to employment, higher education, and community activities. According to the 2009-2011 ACS, there are approximately 478,132 persons with disabilities living in the Atlanta region, many of them unable to operate or drive a vehicle of their own. Persons with disabilities comprise 9.1% of the region's population and although there is significant paratransit services in Fulton and DeKalb Counties and moderate coverage in Cobb and Gwinnett Counties, there are many areas in the region where persons with disabilities have no access to paratransit services.

Detailed data on the disabled population is difficult to obtain, but Figures 8 and 9 provide a general idea of where these individuals are concentrated within the region, as well as the relationship of those residences to paratransit service.

### **Transportation Needs of Persons with Disabilities**

Because there are many different types of physical, cognitive, sensory, and temporary disabilities, the transportation needs of persons with disabilities can vary greatly. Access to transportation can be vital to a person with disabilities' independence. Below is a list of some common transportation needs of persons with disabilities who live within the Atlanta region.

- Safe, affordable, and accessible transportation options for persons with any type of disability
- Trip destinations for not only medical appointments, but also education, employment, shopping, recreation, entertainment, faith based institutions, and other social events
- Easy access to information about available transportation options, including service hours, cost and scheduling
- Door "through" door service
- Late and weekend service hours
- Seamless cross-jurisdictional trips
- Improved access to transportation facilities including: sidewalks, pedestrian signals, intersection design, curb cuts, and elevators
- Better service efficiency (pick-up on time, shorter travel time)
- Better customer service by improving driver training, awareness, and sensitivity
- Same day service



Figure 2-8: Density of Persons with Disabilities in the Atlanta Region (2005-2008 ACS Update)

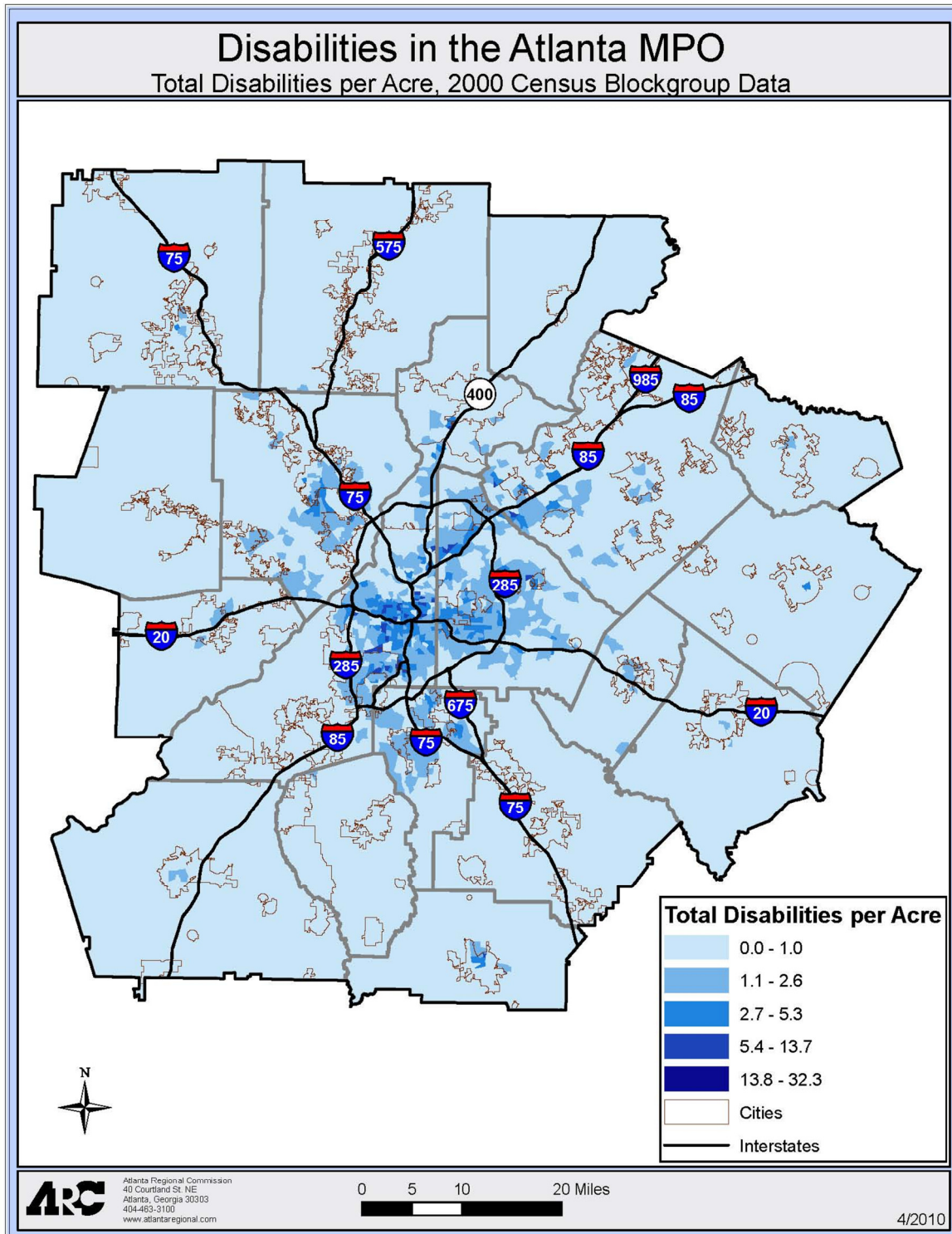
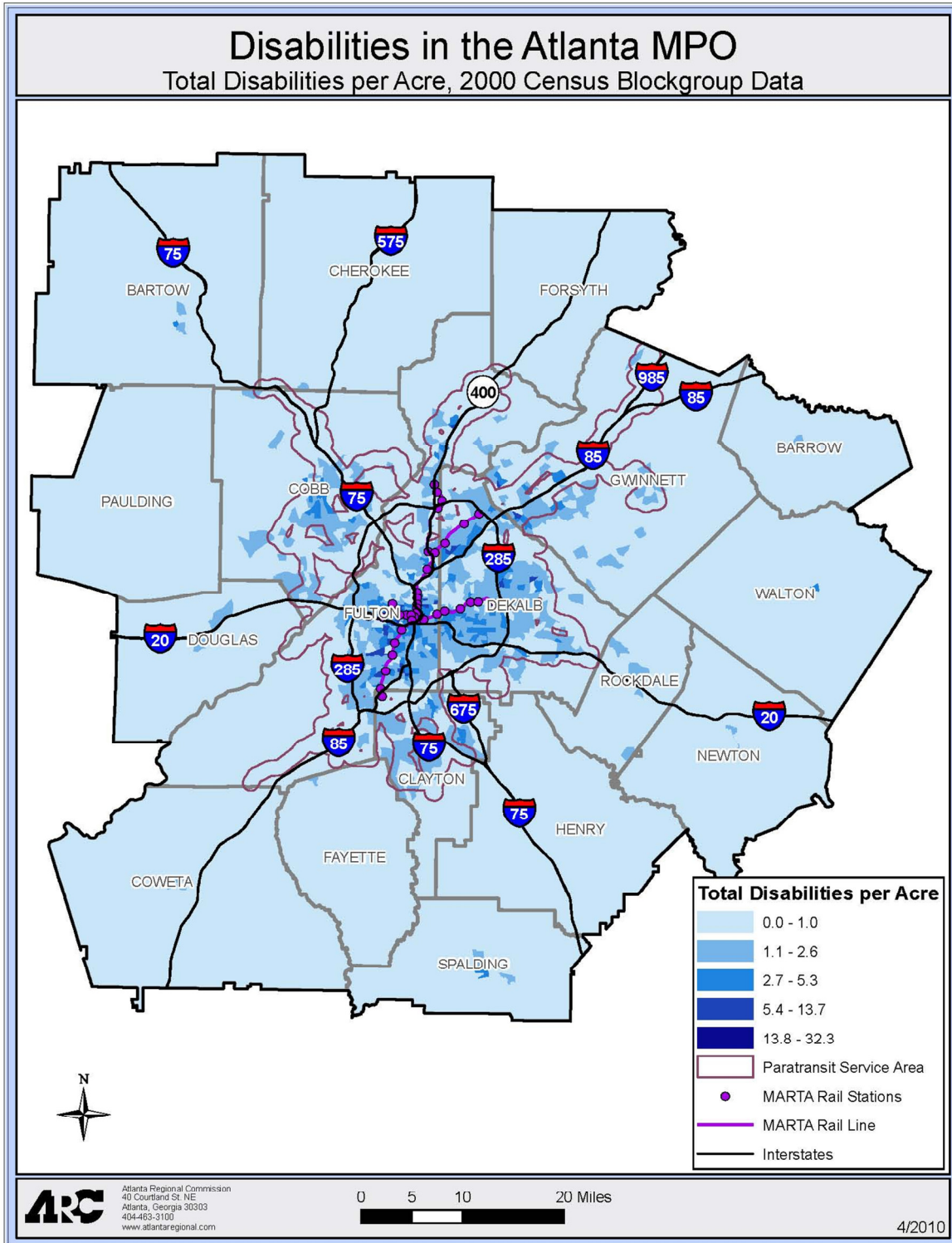




Figure 2-9: Density of Persons with Disabilities Compared to Paratransit Service Coverage





### Existing Transportation Services for Persons with Disabilities

Currently MARTA provides ADA paratransit services in Fulton and DeKalb Counties as well as the City of Atlanta. Cobb Community Transit provides similar services in Cobb County and Gwinnett Transit likewise provides services in Gwinnett County. C-TRAN also operated paratransit services in Clayton County, but terminated services on March 31, 2010. Clayton County is attempting to fill the gap created with county human service agencies, but it will still leave many of persons with disabilities living in the county without any transportation options. Cherokee, Coweta, and Henry counties also provide demand response services for persons with disabilities.

### **Demographic Profile - Older Adults**

The Atlanta region, like the rest of the state and country, is experiencing a dramatic shift in the aging population. Between 2000 and 2015, the aging population is estimated to double. By 2030, 1.2 million older adults will call the Atlanta region home. In a majority of the region's counties, the 65 and older population is growing faster than any other group in the region and this trend is expected to continue. In 2000, eight percent of the 20-county Atlanta region's population was 65 and older. By 2040, ARC forecasts that 20 percent of the population will be 65 and older. Figures 10 and 11 demonstrate where older adults live within the region and their access to paratransit service.

The growth in the region's older population is from both in-migration and aging in place. There has been an increase in the number of older adults moving to the region and as the region's once-young residents have aged, they are continuing to call Atlanta home. In a 2007 report conducted by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute entitled *Survey of Older Adults: Preferences, Practices, and Potential*, 84% own their homes in which they have lived in for 18 years or longer. Consistent with national surveys, the majority of older adults in the region continue to express a strong desire to remain in their homes as they age. The average number of years residents 55+ have lived in the region is 37 years.

The older adult population is growing in because people are living longer. Life expectancy has increased dramatically over the last century. From 1900 to 2003, life expectancy at birth rose from 48 to 75 for men and from 51 to 80 for women. For older adults who reach the age of 65, men are likely to live to age 82 and women are likely to live to age 85. More and more Americans will retire and can expect to live another 20 to 30 years. ARC forecasts show the older adult population 85+ will continue to grow at one of the fastest rates of any age group.

Figure 2-10: Density of Older Adults in the Atlanta Region

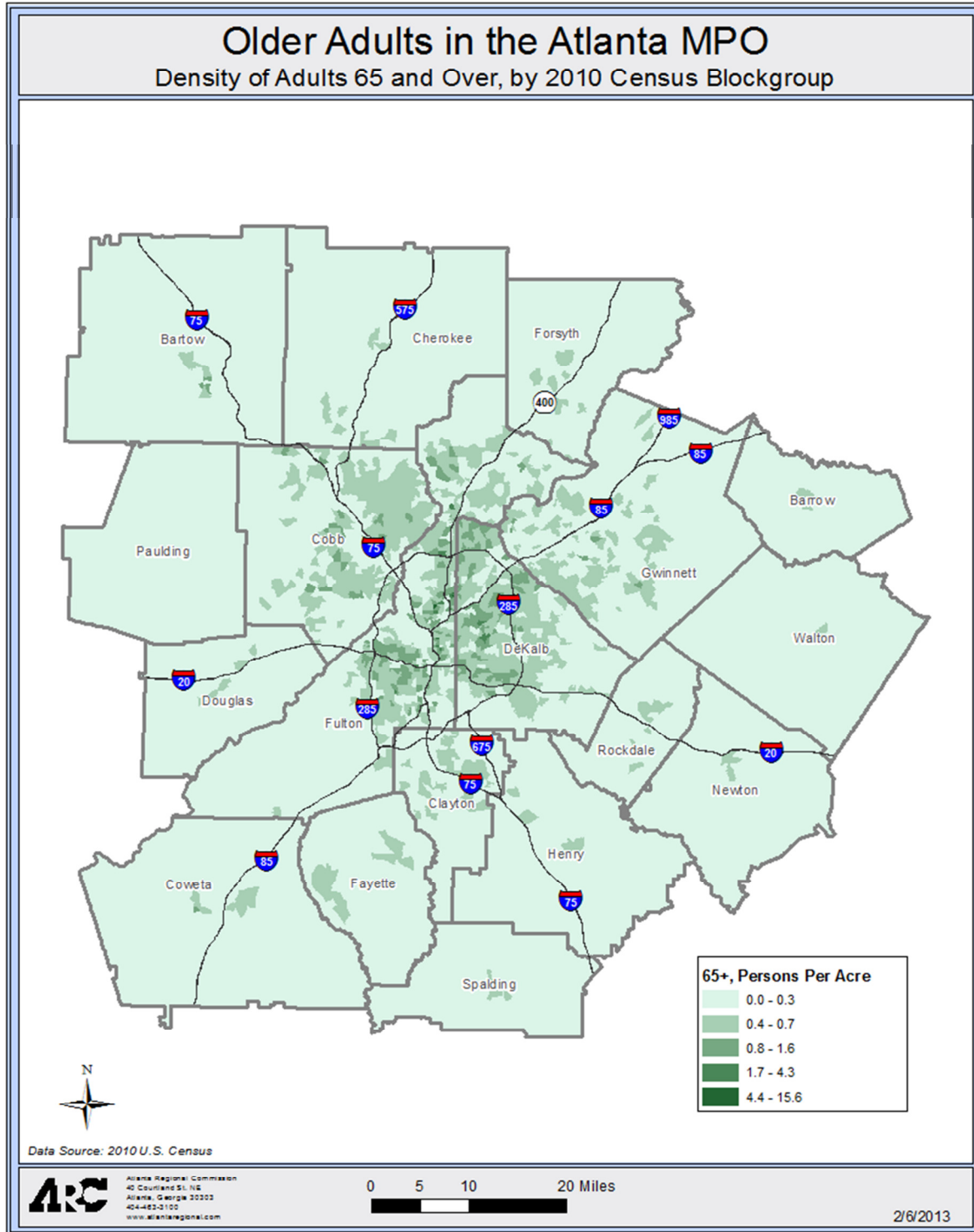
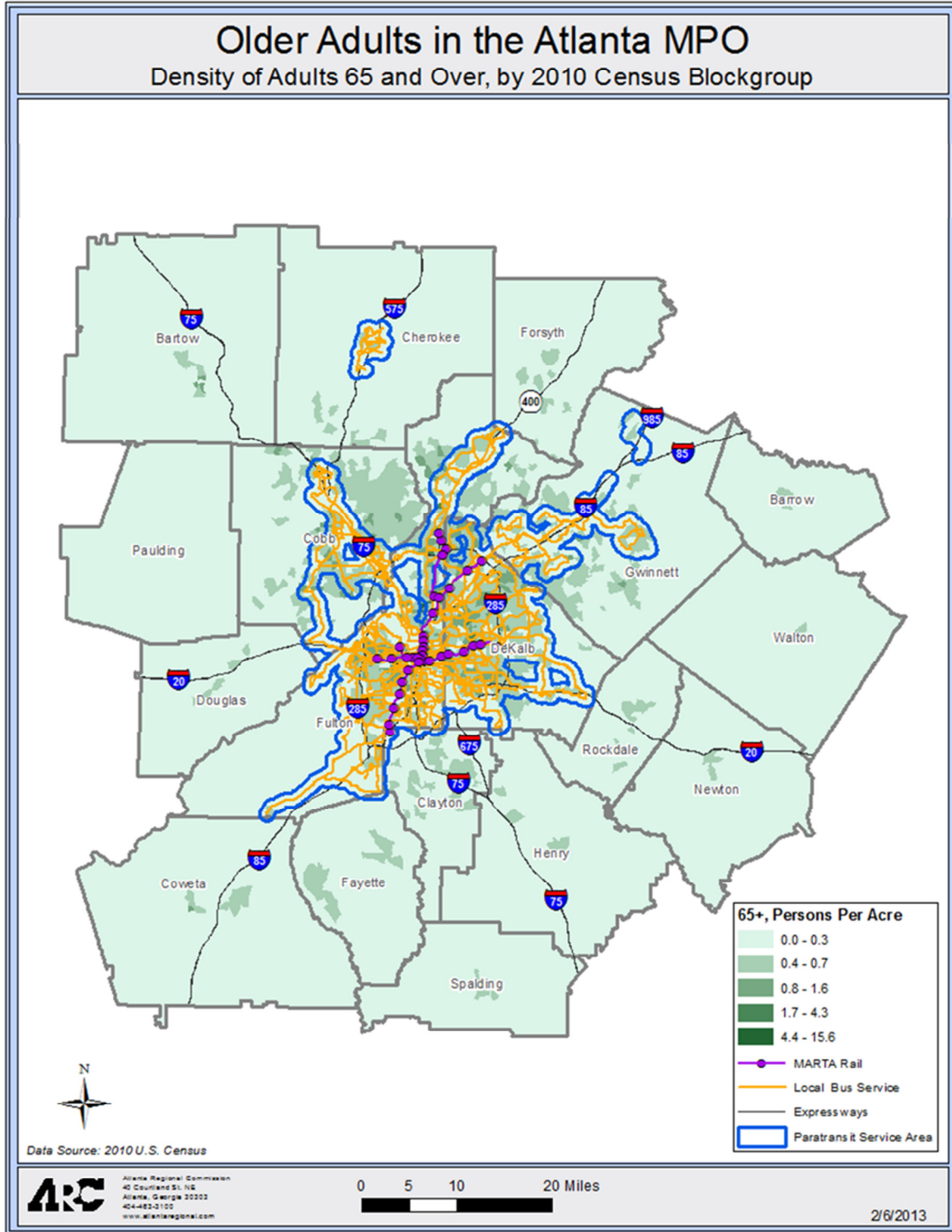




Figure 2-11: Density of Older Adults Compared to Local Bus and Paratransit Service Coverage



# A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region



Figure 2-12 demonstrates the rapidity of this increase for the 20 county forecast area, while Figure 2-13 provides similar information for each county within the 10 counties for which ARC is the state-designated regional commission.

Figure 2-12: Percent Change in Population by Age Group for 20 County Forecast Area (2005 to 2040)

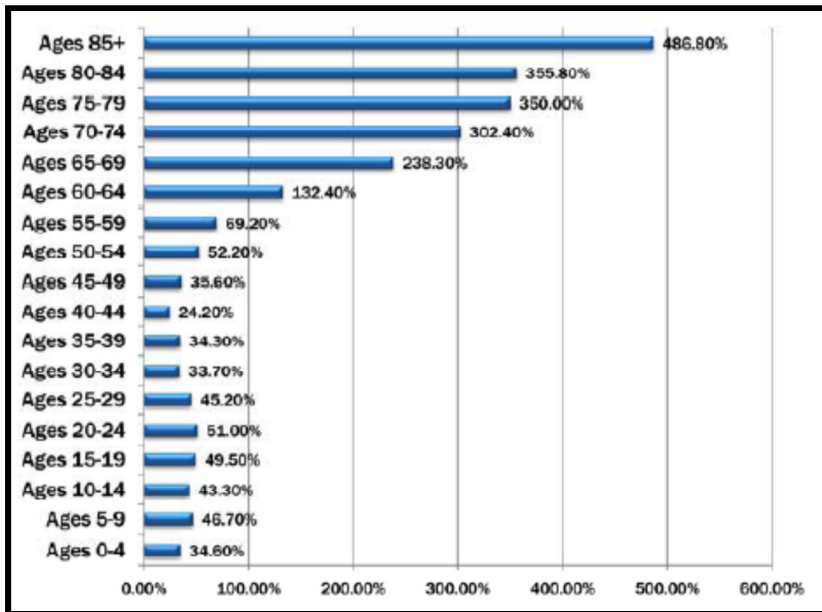
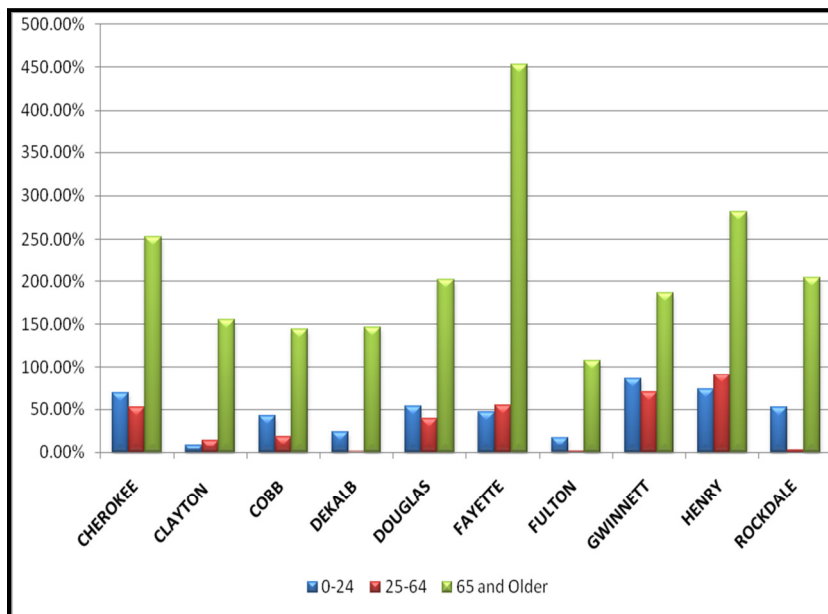


Figure 2-13: Percent Change in Population by Age Group for ARC Counties (2009-2040)



Source: Figures 12 & 13 ARC 2009

# A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region



One-third of residents in the region over age 55 are employed and more than half reported that they plan to continue working in some capacity after retiring from their current jobs. However, many older adults that work live in areas that are not accessible or served by transit and jobs in the region that cater to older adults are much dispersed. The lack of public transit can make getting to a job difficult for an older adult who does not drive, even if it is only a short distance away. Figures 2-14 and 2-15 depict the spatial disconnect between where older workers live and where they work, demonstrating that the types and numbers of jobs meeting the skills of this segment of the workforce are widely dispersed.

Figure 2-14: Where Older Workers Live

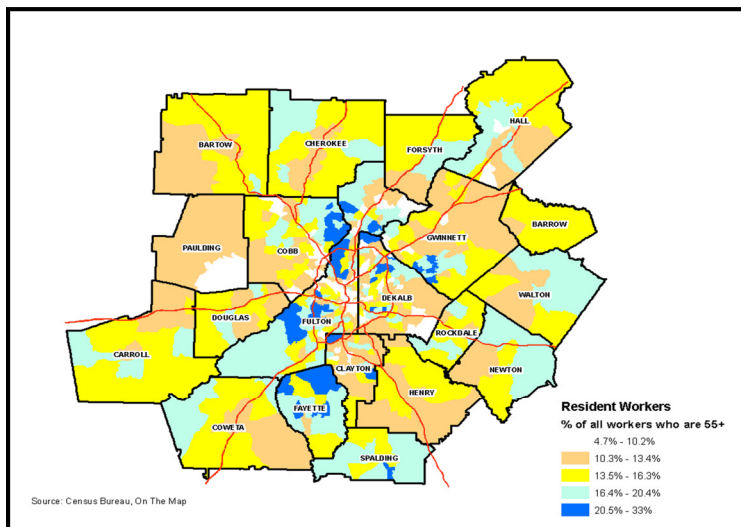
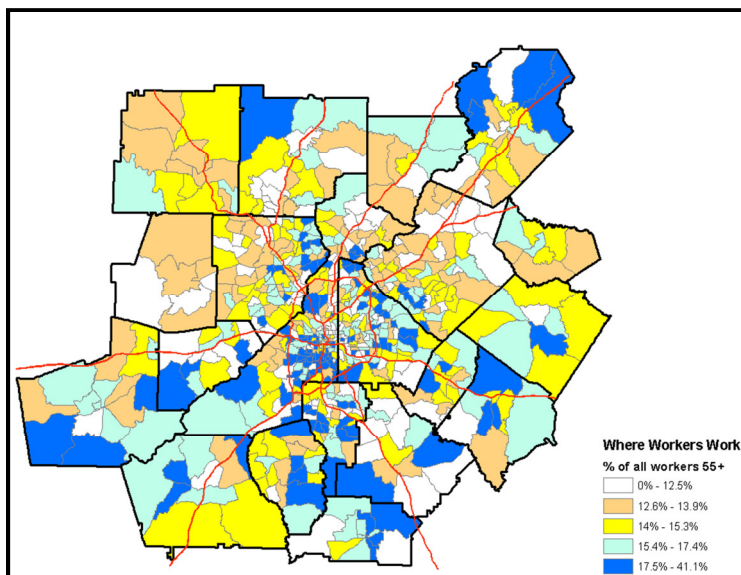


Figure 2-15: Where Older Workers Work



Source: Figures 14 & 15 Census Bureau, On The Map, 2006



### Transportation Needs of Older Adults

The Carl Vinson Institute study found that 88% of the region's older adults, aged 55 and over, currently use their own vehicle as their primary mode of transportation while 12% are not driving at all and less than 4% use public transportation. These numbers vary across the region, age groups and income levels. Throughout the region, the survey indicated that in the future almost 57% of older adults expect to be driven by others when they can no longer drive, nearly 13% plan to take public transportation as their primary mode of transportation and over 20% do not know how they will expect to get around.

Although a high percentage of older adults 55 years and older drive their own vehicle, many in the region do not drive either due to personal preference, no access to a car, self-regulating out of concern for their safety or others, or can't drive due to cognitive, physical or other impairment. In 2004, it was estimated that 32% of older adults 65 and over did not have a personal vehicle. The number of older adults who depend on transportation options other than the personal vehicle is increasing as the older population increases, especially the fast growing 85+ population.

For those older adults who do not have access to a personal vehicle, a significant number are living alone, are low income, have a disability, and lack resources. In addition, a significant number of older adults are grandparents raising grandchildren, adding another level of need for transportation options. Transportation for older adults is about mobility, but more important, it determines connections to the community, quality of life, health and independence. Older adults are more likely to experience increased isolation and deteriorating and physical and mental health when they can no longer drive or do not have reliable or affordable transportation options.

### Existing Transportation Services for Older Adults

ARC is the 10-county Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the Atlanta region. As the AAA, ARC plans and provides a comprehensive array of services to address the needs of the region's older population, including transportation services. Four other AAAs covers the remainder of the 20 county MPO for aging services. Through the Older Americans Act Title III funds, AAAs contract with their counties to provide transportation for congregate meals to senior centers, non-emergency medical trips and grocery and other services. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Department of Human Services (DHS) coordinate transportation for both the public and for DHS clients in rural and urban counties, using FTA 5310 and 5311 funds. The Department of Community Health uses a brokerage system to deliver Medicaid transportation, through an array of providers, including public transit, to eligible Medicaid participants. Medicaid transportation providers may not always provide cross-jurisdictional

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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trips for Medicaid members and this is a major barrier for many older adults without other options for accessing medical care. Table 1 in Appendix (G) depicts the Human Services Transportation Systems participating in a coordinated brokerage system.

Public transit includes MARTA rail, fixed route and complimentary paratransit service for residents living in DeKalb, Fulton and the City of Atlanta. Cobb and Gwinnett Counties offer public fixed route transit and paratransit service but large areas of both counties are not served by transit. Other counties in the region offer public demand response and limited fixed route service and several of the counties in the 10-county region do not have any public transit.

A lack of public transit and alternative transportation options throughout the Atlanta region places significant strain on County Senior Services to provide transportation for older adults to senior centers for congregate meals and necessary medical and grocery shopping trips. The significant increase in the region's older adult population will continue to place great demands on local governments and non-profits to deliver adequate services unless the built environment and infrastructure is designed to support independent living and more efficient and affordable mobility options. Table 2 in Appendix (G) depicts the transportation services for older adults provided by the 10 counties included in the Atlanta Area Agency on Aging.

### **Demographic Profile - Persons with Low Income**

Transportation is also a major barrier for persons with low income who live in the Atlanta region. Many low income persons may not own or can afford a personal vehicle to travel to and from where they need to go and therefore are dependent on public transportation and other transportation alternatives. The Atlanta region is currently home to about 800,000 people living at or below the poverty line, with another 500,000 within 150% of this line. The total of both represents over 24% of the region's total population. Note that the low income population demographics includes students, an older adult or a person with disabilities; therefore, the transportation needs of low income persons are often similar to other disadvantaged demographic groups. Figures 2-16 and 2-17 demonstrate where low income individuals live within the region and their access to fixed route transit service.

As was the case with the spatial disconnect between where older workers reside and where they work, low income workers face a similar challenge. Figure 2-18 shows that workers who earn less than \$1,200 per month are heavily concentrated south of I-20 in southwest Atlanta, southern Fulton County, southeast DeKalb County and northern Clayton County. However, as shown in Figure 2-19, jobs that pay less than \$1,200 are scattered throughout the region, a spatial pattern that presents considerable transportation challenges and costs to those earning the least. Many minimum wage and entry-level jobs are located in areas that inaccessible or not served by public transit.

Figure 2-16: Percent of Low Income Persons in the Atlanta Region

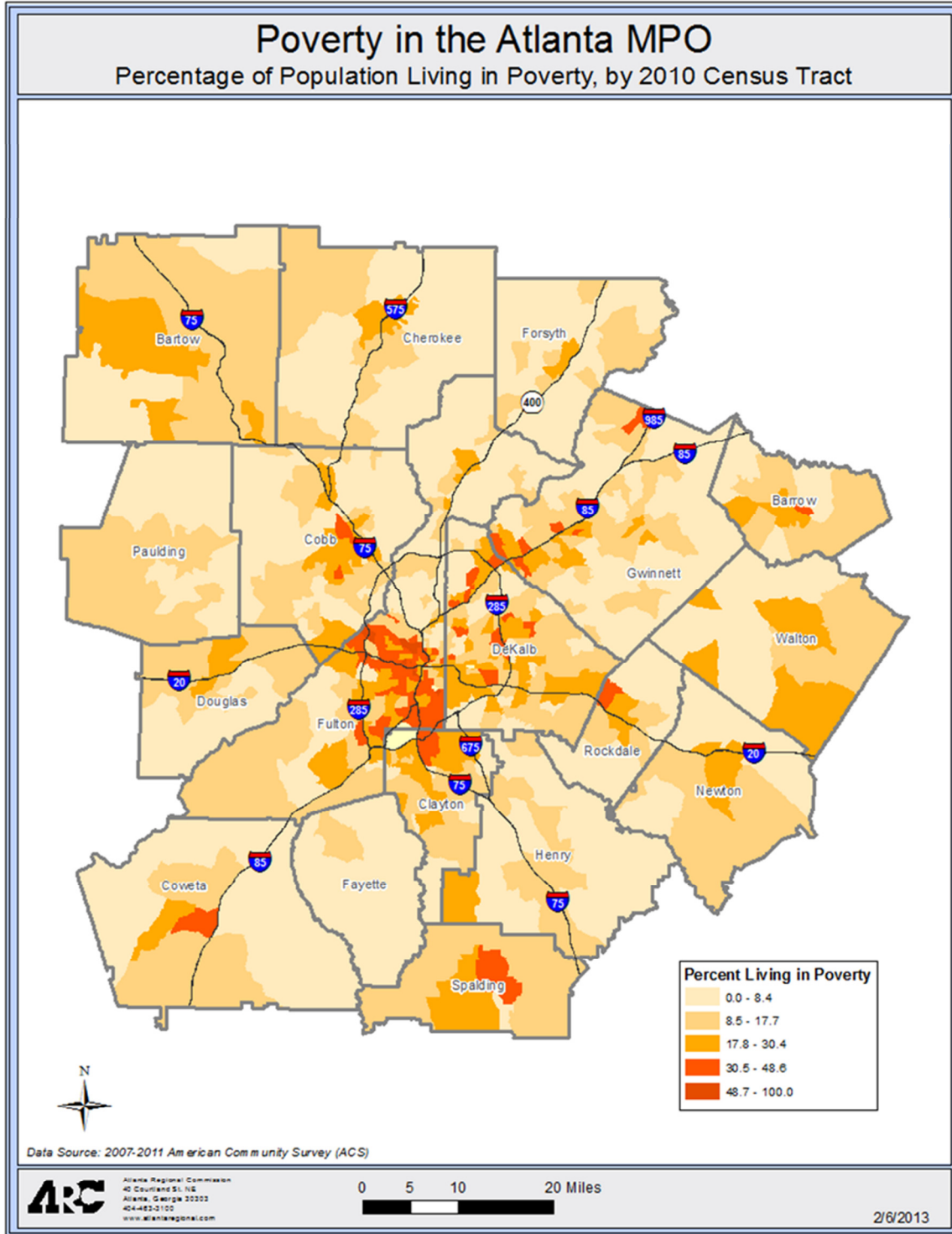
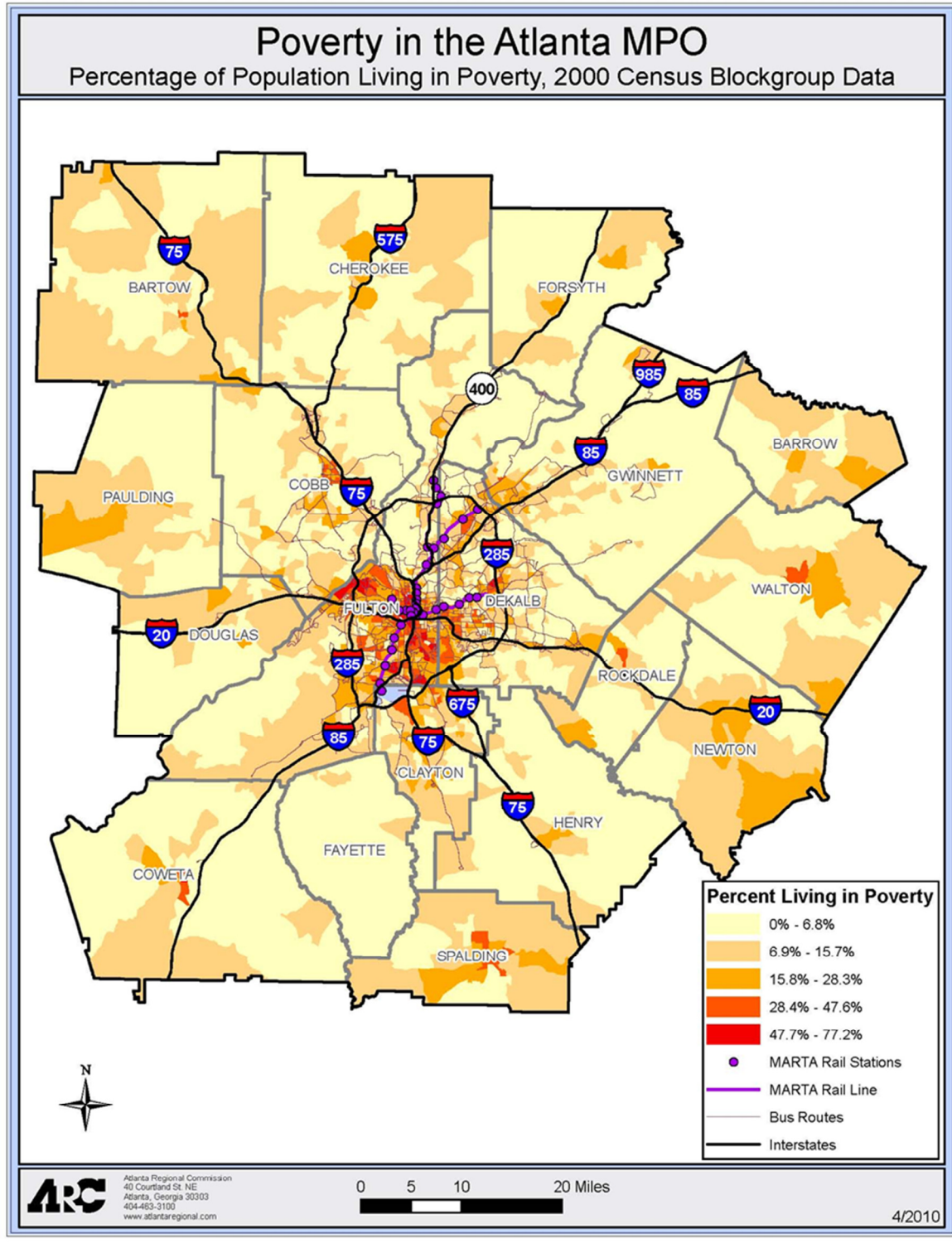


Figure 2-17: Percent of Low Income Persons Compared to Fixed Route Service Coverage





### Transportation Needs of Persons with Low Income

Many low income households are often single parent households that require different travel patterns from other demographic groups to meet their daily needs. A single parent household that uses public transportation may need to make multiple stops before reaching their final destination. For example, a single mother in the morning may need to drop off a small child at the daycare before proceeding to work and would need a bus route that ran frequent enough to allow her to make it to work on time after dropping off her child. Also in the evening, this same single mother on her way home may need to stop by the grocery store and pick up her child from the daycare before the last bus stops running. Below is a list of some common transportation needs of low income individuals who live within the Atlanta region.

- Safe, affordable, and accessible public transportation options and alternatives
- Easy access to information on available options and resources
- Access to public transportation outside traditional peak service periods, including late nights and weekends, to accommodate part time jobs and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift jobs
- Public transportation with sufficient headways and frequency
- Transportation infrastructure including sidewalks, bicycle paths / lanes, and pedestrian signals to facilitate access to transit services
- Adequate and accessible transit facilities including bus stops and bus shelters;
- Transportation to get to job training, job fairs, GED classes, learning institutions, and shopping centers;
- Transportation to community centers, health clinics, human service agencies, faith based facilities, and other social services; and
- Real time information about bus routes or rail service to minimize wasted time and ensure they can get to a job on time.

### Existing Transportation Services for Persons with Low Income

Currently MARTA provides JARC routes and other public transportation, both fixed-route bus and rail services, in Fulton and DeKalb Counties as well as the City of Atlanta. Cobb Community Transit provides JARC routes and other public transportation, both fixed-route bus and express bus services, in Cobb County. Gwinnett Community Transit provides both fixed-route bus and express bus services in Gwinnett County. C-TRAN operated JARC routes and other public transportation, both fixed-route and express bus services, in Clayton County until services were terminated on March 31, 2010. However, GRTA will continue to run existing Xpress commuter bus service in the area. This will leave many low income individuals in Clayton County without access to non-peak transit services required for many of the job classifications they hold. Douglas Rideshare Program operates a rideshare and vanpool program within Douglas County. Cherokee, Coweta, and Henry Counties also provide demand response services.

Figure 2-18: Where Low Income Workers Live

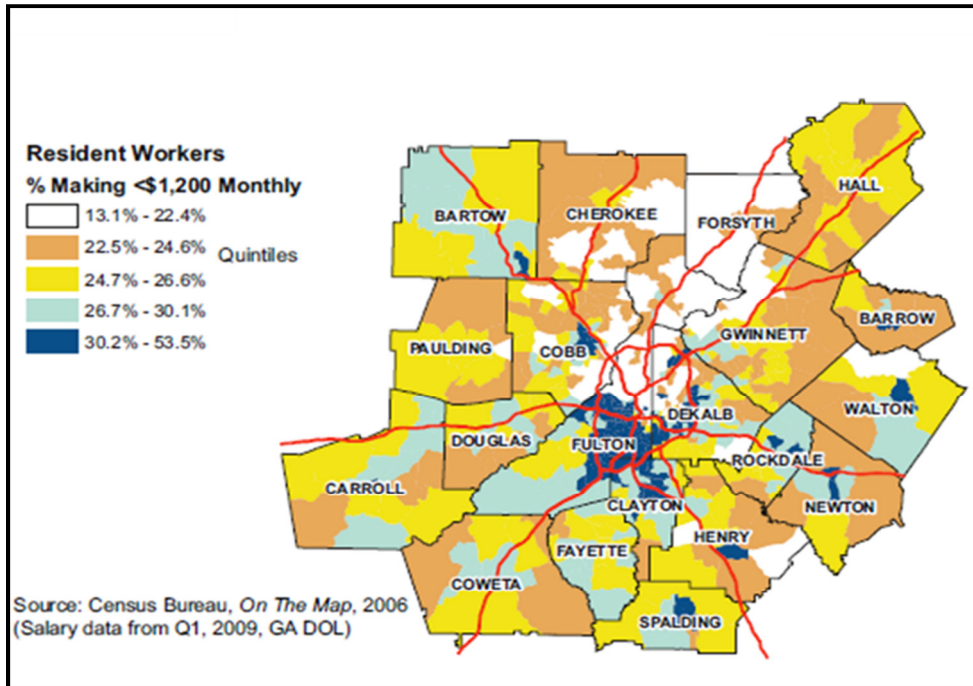
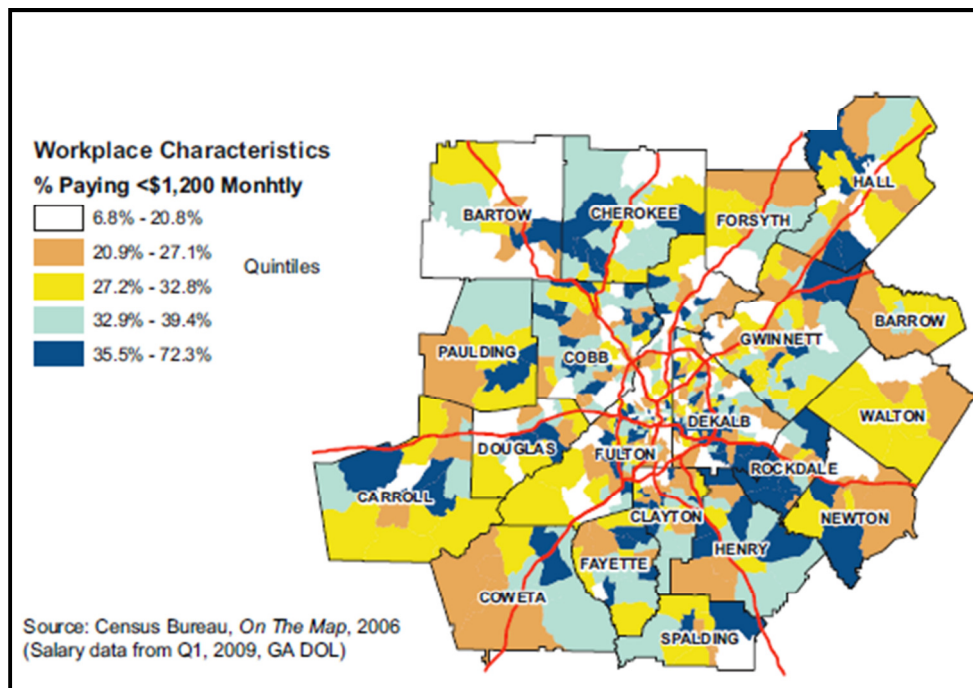


Figure 2-19: Where Low Income Workers Work





### **Other Demographic Profiles**

Identified above are the three largest HST populations in the region; however, this is not an exhaustive list of individuals or groups who are considered to be transportation disadvantaged. It's important to acknowledge that other groups including young adults (non-driving students), school age children, and individuals with Limited English Proficiency, also often use HST and public transportation as their primary mobility option. Although young adults, school age children, and LEP individuals are all considered HST populations, at this time the plan update does not address their needs in detail. Instead, the transportation needs, existing options, and recommendations for these HST populations will be furthered explored and addressed in a subsequent update to the plan.

### **Coordination Gaps and Barriers**

In summary, funding is just one variable that hinders coordination and implementation of HST initiatives in the region. There are several other important factors to consider. Through ARC's 2007 HST Summit and the Technology Feasibility Study, as well the HST Advisory Committee and HST public involvement process, there were seven common variables besides funding that were identified as being fundamental gaps or barriers to coordination in the region:

- Geographical boundaries / large and multi-jurisdictional region
- Individual agency and organizational restrictions
- Little or no incentive to coordinate
- Political vs. technical feasibility
- Lack of adequate infrastructure
- Lack of state coordination and support
- Other regional priorities (e.g., congestion)



### **Chapter 3 – Plan Development Process**

In April 2010, ARC adopted the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Atlanta region, in cooperation with regional partners and stakeholders. This plan not only documented the history of HST and the planning process, but also identified the needs of HST users and discussed the gaps and barriers to coordination. This plan also established HST goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria for the JARC and New Freedom competitive selection process. The competitive selection process for FY 2007-2009 JARC and New Freedom funding is also documented in the plan.

In an effort to streamline the overall long range transportation planning process in the region with the HST planning process and other coordination efforts, ARC is performing a limited technical update to the 2010 Coordinated plan to be in sync with the region's adopted 20+ year transportation plan known as PLAN 2040. In updating the 2010 Coordinated Plan, ARC did not start from scratch. Instead, ARC chose to update only portions of the plan including incorporating 2010 census data, principles, values, and recommendations of PLAN 2040, recommendations from the statewide Georgia HST Plan 2.0, key findings from the RHST Committee Report, and provided Implementation suggestions based on lessons learned and best practices. The HST Advisory Committee, described in Section 1 of this plan, was instrumental in identifying needs and deliberating potential recommendations. An HST peer plan review and literature review were also conducted to assist with plan update. Public involvement activities included focus groups, presentations, and an HST section of ARC's website. More information on the public involvement process can be found in Appendix (H).

#### **HST Goals and Objectives**

ARC utilized the original objectives and goals established by the HST Steering Committee during the development process of the interim plan. First, the committee established objectives designed to address the identified needs, gaps and barriers and make improvements to the existing HST system. Second, the committee created a mission statement, "Maximize the resources available for regional Human Services Transportation through coordination in planning, service delivery, and reporting." Finally, out of the mission statement evolved the region's four main HST goals and supporting objectives. These goals and objectives have been reviewed and affirmed by the existing HST Advisory Committee and remain the current goals and objectives for this HST plan update.

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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### *Atlanta Region HST Goals*

- Improve accessibility and mobility for the transportation disadvantaged.
- Improve customer services for HST users and providers.
- Improve cost effectiveness.
- Improve coordination.

### *Atlanta Region HST Objectives*

- Education of HST services and coordination
- Coordination of HST programs throughout the region
- Increase quantity and quality of Human Services Transportation
- Marketing of coordinated HST services
- Utilization of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to better coordinate HST programs by:
  - On board vehicle communication equipment
  - Electronic fare collection (smart card technology)
  - Customer service center/support
  - Electronic bus routes/schedules
  - Automated routing and scheduling system (GIS based)
  - Real-time vehicle tracking (AVL)
  - Wireless communication system
  - Real-time traveler information
  - Automated reservation management
  - Vehicle arrival notifications system
  - Web-based and telephone based travel planners
  - Coordination among transit providers
- Provision of a range of mobility and cost options to users for HST services
- Movement of HST users efficiently

### **HST Peer Plan Review**

An HST peer plan review was conducted to look at how other MPOs and JARC and New Freedom Designated Recipients are addressing the HST planning process and to learn about some of their best practices. Some of the identified best practices for HST will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

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Eight plans were chosen and reviewed:

- Hillsborough County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan
- Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Action Plan for Los Angeles County
- Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region Governments
- Regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for New Jersey
- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Long Island, New York
- Improving Access to Opportunities in the Delaware Valley Region Plan
- Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Seattle, Washington

Common approaches among the eight HST peer plans were the formation of HST advisory committees or councils to help guide the planning process, to establish HST goals and objectives, and to establish JARC and New Freedom project priorities. Other common approaches included utilizing workshops, interviews, and focus group to help identify the needs, gaps, and barriers of HST groups. In addition, most of the peer plans incorporated an action plan in order to improve HST coordination and implement projects.

A fact sheet was prepared summarizing what was learned from the review of each of the above plans. These fact sheets, contained in Appendix (I), include the name of the agency responsible for preparing the HST plan, its website address, background information on the agency's organizational structure and its relevance as a peer to the Atlanta region, and a short list of the plan development process, key findings and recommendations.

### **Literature Review**

A key starting point for updating the interim plan was looking at and assessing existing conditions in the region. By reviewing existing plans and studies, it was possible to ascertain the past and current environment of HST in the region. This section highlights a few relevant regional studies, plans, and initiatives reviewed during this process.

#### **Georgia's Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) initiated the Georgia Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 in 2010 to build upon concepts identified in the 2007 plan. The purpose was to identify opportunities to enhance statewide, regional, and local opportunities to coordinate the delivery of human services transportation for the benefit of all transportation

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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providers, and most importantly, consumers of rural and human services transportation (RHST) delivery in Georgia.

Beginning in spring 2010 and continuing through March 2012, the Georgia Department of Transportation worked with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Community Health (DCH) to update the State's Coordinated Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) Plan. This effort involved assessing the current extent of coordinated RHST efforts within Georgia and identifying ways to serve more trips across the state by improving efficiency, reducing redundancy, and leveraging new funding opportunities. Throughout the course of these activities, Georgia DOT has worked with the 12 regional commissions, including the ARC. A case study to document the HST needs and coordination efforts in the Atlanta region is included in the statewide Plan 2.0.

The goals of the Georgia Human Services Transportation Plan 2.0 were established early in the study process and include the following:

- Assess current coordinated RHST efforts within Georgia
- Identify ways to improve transportation coordination for persons with special mobility needs
- Learn from best practices and model programs across the country
- Develop and evaluate regional RHST model alternatives
- Identify pilot projects to test coordination strategies

As part of this 2.0 update, Georgia DOT also conducted a series of workshops to determine the existing RHST services, as well as RHST needs, for each region. As a result of the workshops, Georgia DOT identified three areas of key opportunities to address the HST needs throughout the state. These opportunities include:

- Service Delivery
  - Centralizing scheduling and technologies
  - Incorporating a Mobility Management program
  - Sharing resources to increase efficiency
- Administration
  - Streamlined reporting and procedures
  - Standardization of maintenance requirements
  - Simplification of vehicle purchase/procurement process
  - Development of a cost allocation model

## A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region

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- Funding
  - Standardize eligibility determination at the state level
  - Pool capital funding sources across regions
  - Leverage dollars for maximum benefit to providers and users

As a result of the statewide HST needs assessment, regional workshops, and coordination with the RHST committee, the 2.0 plan update recommends the implementation of Mobility Management at both the state and regional levels. The state defines mobility management as a strategic approach that designates a dedicated resource (Mobility Manager) to focus on identifying and implementing coordination principals and strategies that enhance and improve efficiency and levels of service. GDOT has also launched three mobility management pilot projects across the state partnering with three regional commissions, including Middle Georgia Regional Commission, River Valley Regional Commission, and Three Rivers Regional Commission.

*Additional information:*

<http://www.dot.state.ga.us/localgovernment/intermodalprograms/transit/Pages/RHST.aspx>

### Georgia Coordinating Council for Rural and Human Services Transportation

In 2010 the General Assembly tasked the Governor's Development Council (GDC) with evaluating the existing conditions of Rural and Human Service Transportation (RHST) coordination in Georgia and making annual recommendations on ways to improve coordination practices. The annual report will identify methods to increase cost-effectiveness of HST service delivery statewide, while maintaining or improving levels of service. The annual report is developed with assistance from the RHST Advisory Subcommittee and is delivered to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the General Assembly. The RHST Committee is required to report on the following eight areas.

- RHST funding programs (costs & overlap)
- Methods to share, combine, & consolidate resources/programs in order to reduce costs
- Current state of coordination
- Technology deployment (route scheduling)
- Federal funding limitations
- HST program interaction w/public transit
- Cost sharing opportunities
- Additional ways to reduce costs (e.g., privatization)



### 2012 Annual Report Key Findings

- The number of Georgians who rely upon RHST services is expected to grow three times faster than the general population.
- If no cost efficiency improvements are made, a 63% increase in funding will be needed by 2030 to satisfy the expected increase in demand.
- The Big 3 agencies have successfully coordinated services at the local level in parts of the State, yet additional coordination is possible as separate delivery systems exist.
- Cost efficiencies are greater in more coordinated areas, including Florida, North Carolina and Southwest Georgia.
- Cost efficiencies are possible through "resource bundling" - directing some or most funds to a coordinating entity.
- Georgia has room for additional resource bundling.
- Currently there is no single entity/person responsible for implementing recommendations.

### 2012 Report Key Recommendations

- Pursue resource bundling to streamline delivery and increase cost efficiencies while maintaining provider competition.
  - *Option 1: Statewide bundling via a single state entity*
    - Greatest potential for cost efficiencies, most difficult to implement
  - *Option 2: Local bundling via a county or regional coordinator*
    - Maintain funding at each of Big 3, work together via MOU
    - Bundling occurs in select pilot counties or regions
    - Fewer cost efficiencies likely, easier to implement
  - *Option 3: Incremental bundling at state or local level*
    - Bundle two of the Big 3 at state or local level
    - Fewer cost efficiencies likely, easier to implement
  - *Option 4: Policies/planning initiatives to encourage bundling*
    - Least cost efficiencies likely, easiest to implement



- Improve data reporting & analysis to better manage the system.
  - Establish uniform statewide data reporting
  - Collect critical additional data (e.g., miles, extent of bundling) that allow effective evaluation of the system
  
- Establish state mobility manager.
  - To implement recommendations (e.g. bundling, data)
  - To oversee additional coordination projects
  - To provide coordination expertise critical to evaluating current and future coordination

*Additional information:* <http://www.grta.org/rhst1.php>

### Regional On-Board Transit Survey (2009-2010)

ARC and its partners completed the 2009-2010 Regional On-Board Transit Survey in January 2010. With 50,000 respondents (approximately 10 percent of the region's transit ridership), it is the largest survey of its kind in the United States. The survey evaluated the travel patterns and demographics of riders living in 20 different counties and riding at various times of day on the region's seven transit operators:

- Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)
- Cobb Community Transit (CCT)
- Clayton County Transit (C-TRAN, no longer in service)
- Gwinnett County Transit (GCT)
- GRTA Xpress Bus
- Hall Area Transit (HAT)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

The regional transit system provides residents, commuters, and visitors with alternative travel options. For many disadvantaged populations in the region, public transit is their only accessible and affordable mobility option. Transit also plays a major role in alleviating congestion, improving the region's air quality, providing access to jobs, social resources, and other quality of life trips. Over \$100 million is included in the FY 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Plan to begin transit expansion, including design and purchasing right of way for the Atlanta Multimodal Passenger Terminal.

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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Beginning in fall 2009 through the first quarter of 2010, the ARC, in partnership with GDOT, GRTA, and MARTA, conducted a regional On Board Transit Survey. The purpose of this \$2,000,000 initiative was to obtain a statistically valid sample of transit riders in the 20-county metro Atlanta area in order to update the region's travel demand model and to satisfy FTA's New Starts program requirements.

The established goal for the regional On Board Transit Survey was to collect 10% of completed surveys from the region's total transit boardings. This goal was accomplished. Six transit operators were surveyed, including MARTA, CCT, GRTA, CAT, HAT, Emory, and C-Tran (which is no longer operating service in the region). The results of the survey showed that public transit is vital not only to Atlanta's mobility, economy, and global competitiveness, but also is essential to successfully building a sustainable region. The survey also validates the need to further expand public transportation throughout the region to create a more seamless system that will provide more mobility options and connect people with where they need and want to go.

Key findings emerging from the On Board Transit Survey are identified below.

- Over 40% of riders reported they did not own or have access to a car. These individuals are considered transit dependent.
- Three out of four riders reported being employed and use transit to get to work.
- Ten percent of transit riders reported being age 55 or older. As the 65 and older population in the Atlanta region continues to rapidly grow, providing affordable and accessible mobility options for older adults who no longer can drive or choose not to drive will be important.
- 70% of transit riders reported having an annual household income of less than \$40,000.
- Three out of four persons reported walking to transit.
- Over 30% of transit riders are students.
- Approximately 71% of transit riders are African American and 7% are Hispanic.
- 29% of transit riders reported not having a driver's license.

*Additional information:*

<http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/travel-demand-model/on-board-transit-survey>

### PLAN 2040

Plan 2040 is the metro Atlanta area's long range plan for land use development and transportation needs. It guides the growth for metro Atlanta through the year 2040 and addresses not only land use and transportation issues, but environmental, economic, housing and human services challenges as well. The goals, principles, and objectives of Plan 2040 have

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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been discussed in detail earlier in this document. One of the main recommendations of Plan 2040 for HST is for the region to implement mobility management strategies. Mobility Management is discussed in more detail below.

*Additional information:* <http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/plan-2040>

### **TMCC Concept of Operations and Implementation Plan**

In response to the need for coordinated HST planning, ARC applied for a grant from USDOT to plan, design, and provide implementation details for a Transportation Management Coordination Center (TMCC). In 2007, ARC became one of eight recipients in the United States to be selected to participate in the U.S. DOT Federal Transit Administration’s grant program entitled “Demonstration of Enhanced Human Service Transportation Models: Phase 1 System Development and Design.” This grant, for the first time, brought together two national initiatives: Mobility Services for All Americans and United We Ride. ARC received \$400,000 in grant funds, for which a \$100,000 match was required.

The purpose of this grant was to look at ways technology could be utilized to improve HST coordination and service delivery and provide the U.S. DOT with a deployment-ready replicable and scalable model. This model TMCC, when implemented, would elevate the region’s ability to streamline, integrate, and coordinate human service transportation to meet the needs of users and providers. Through this process, an inventory of HST services and providers was conducted, as well as a regional needs assessment.

The purpose of the Atlanta region’s TMCC concept is to provide a “one stop shop” for regional HST users, human services agencies, and transportation providers. The TMCC would allow HST stakeholders to share information, to coordinate transportation services, and to integrate vehicle and service delivery activities, thus allowing for an enhanced experience for the HST users. ARC, along with the Technical Advisory Committee and other HST stakeholders, identified and translated the regional HST needs into five core goals for the TMCC model:

- Increase Access to Information for Users
- Streamline Customer Referral to Service Providers
- Enhance Quality of Customer’s Experience
- Improve Cost-Effectiveness and Increase Efficiency
- Increase Capacity and Coverage to Meet Future Demands for Ridership

A schematic of the recommended TMCC concept resulting from this initiative can be found on page 3-18 of the document contained in Appendix (A).

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During the development of the TMCC concept, ARC determined that a full-scale TMCC design to meet all the goals and objectives was not feasible at this time. The barriers to full scale deployment in the short term included financial constraints, programmatic barriers, and HST system fragmentation. Therefore, ARC developed a short-term feasible Concept of Operations.

The feasible TMCC concept included three subsystems: 1) the creation of a central repository of transportation service information, customer data, and service provider information; 2) a technology to support coordinated ADA paratransit services; and 3) a single card fare payment for all ADA paratransit providers. With this 3-tiered TMCC concept model, a number of benefits would be realized. Customers would have access to HST service information and would be able to make trip requests. The participating agencies and providers would have electronic access to the transportation subsystems. The TMCC also would track customer, provider, and program eligibility in order to provide trip cost and payment allocations and track provider performance metrics so that system efficiency could be determined and problems addressed.

A variety of benefits associated with the TMCC Concept is documented in the TMCC final report in Appendix (A). The expected benefits include improved customer service and ease of access to important and accurate information. In addition, the TMCC would improve the trip request process for both clients and providers, and would increase availability of data on trips for providers to conduct planning and schedule/route improvements. Finally, it would provide a foundational platform for additional coordination activities as they become implementable.

Additional benefits that would be obtained from the TMCC in a mid-range timeframe include: 1) the creation of a central repository of transportation service information, customer data, and service provider information; 2) a technology to support coordinated ADA paratransit services; and 3) single-card fare payment for all ADA paratransit providers. Customers would have access to HST service information and would be able to make trip requests. The participating agencies and providers would have electronic access to the transportation subsystems. The TMCC also would track customer, provider, and program eligibility in order to provide trip cost and payment allocations and track provider performance metrics so that system efficiency could be determined and problems addressed.

Ultimately, the TMCC would provide further benefits, such as: 1) improving multijurisdictional coordination; 2) improving communications and information sharing among agencies; 3) disseminating real-time travel information, including real-time vehicle tracking; 4) improving cost-effectiveness of HST; and 5) greatly improving customer service.



### Concept 3 Transit Vision

In 2004 and 2005, ARC conducted the Regional Transit Institutional Analysis (RTIA). The key purpose of the study was to examine how to organize the Atlanta region to plan, build, fund, and operate transit service and to recommend strategies to provide a more cohesive regional transit system. Several key challenges that were noted included:

- Lack of service coordination
- Lack of standard fare and schedule
- Lack of funding from all levels of government

A key RTIA recommendation was to establish an entity to move the Atlanta region towards a seamless regional transit system by bringing all constituents and key decision-makers to the table. Through joint partnership with the transit agencies, cities, and counties in the region, the Transit Planning Board (TPB) was formed to accomplish the following initial goals:

- Advocate for additional regional transit funding
- Oversee an integration of fares, marketing, and customer information
- Improve regional service coordination
- Develop and evaluate a regional transit plan
- Begin to measure system performance
- Perform the necessary planning, financial analysis, and public outreach to begin seeking additional funding sources.

The TPB was established in 2006 with the goal to create and maintain a seamless, regional transit system for the metro Atlanta region. Concept 3 is the result of the planning work of the TPB and is the adopted conceptual regional transit plan and vision for the Atlanta region. Concept 3 proposes the following mix of transit services:

- MARTA heavy rail extensions
- Light Rail Transit (LRT) and/or streetcar lines
- Commuter rail lines
- High capacity (freeway) BRT lines
- Arterial rapid transit service
- Express and intercity regional service
- Expanded local and activity center service

*Additional information:* <http://www.transitboard.org/concept3>

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Concept 3 provides choices for all lifestyles, from all parts of the regions, and in all densities. It documents that the Atlanta region has struggled for over fifty years with the role of transit and during this time the region has grown significantly in population and employment. The initiative also reports that despite good planning, transit remains an underutilized and underinvested part of the region's mobility picture. The implementation of Concept 3 is one of the key factors in establishing adequate infrastructure to build a truly regional transit system that will take people where they need and want to go.

The work of implementing the vision developed by TPB has since passed on to the Regional Transit Committee (RTC), a standing policy committee of ARC.

### **ARC's Area Plan on Aging**

As the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) plans and provides comprehensive services to address the needs of the region's older population. The Atlanta region's Area Plan on Aging is carried out through contracts with 10 county-based aging programs and 11 specialized agencies to provide a continuum of home and community-based services. Older citizens and their families are provided many options, including information and referral services, case management, transportation, home-delivered meals, senior centers, legal services and more through this network of care. Recognizing that funding for the Area Plan services will not keep pace with demand, Atlanta's Area Agency on Aging is promoting human services transportation coordination along with other Lifelong Communities goals to ensure that the region is a place where individuals can live independently, for as long as possible, no matter their age or ability.

*Additional information:* <http://www.atlantaregional.com/aging-resources/programs>

### **National Best Practices**

There is much that can be learned from reviewing other successful programs from around the nation. While they may not be directly transferable to any particular jurisdiction or program in our region or state, valuable insight can be gained into how HST challenges are being creatively addressed elsewhere.

### **Florida's Coordinated Community Transportation Program**

Florida state law requires coordination, establishes an independent commission to oversee the coordination process, and provides funding. Transportation coordination in Florida began back in 1979. Florida's program provides for substantial local discretion and latitude, with extensive state and local planning and oversight. Federal, state, and local transportation funds are

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funneled through a Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) in each of Florida's 67 counties. State law authorizes the CTC to provide transportation directly, to contract for services with one or multiple providers, or to dispatch and broker services of other organizations.

*Additional Information:* [www.cfrpc.org/prtda.html](http://www.cfrpc.org/prtda.html) and [www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd/](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/ctd/)

### **Pennsylvania's Free Transit and Shared-Ride Programs for Seniors**

Pennsylvania coordinates transportation at the state level through cooperative efforts and communication between state agencies and by generating and providing substantial state funding for specialized transportation. Local public transit authorities and other agencies offer trips. Pennsylvania's combination of funding, coordination, and local control exceeds that found in most states.

The state pays for two special transportation programs for older citizens: 1) the Free Transit Program for Seniors and, 2) the Shared-Ride Program for Seniors. Established in 1973 and 1980, both programs are funded through the Pennsylvania State Lottery. Together, these two programs fund transportation for older persons through the public transportation system in the state's 67 counties. These programs involve substantial coordination between the state Department of Transportation, the Department of Aging, seven other state agencies, local governments, and local public transportation operators. Working together, these entities have minimized duplication, overlap, and have maximized the cost-effectiveness of specialized transportation services.

*Additional information:* [www.dot.state.pa.us/](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/)

### **Central New York Regional Transportation Authority**

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority in Syracuse, New York operates a one-stop mobility management center that offers individualized trip planning and referral to transit bus pass programs and car repair and procurement programs.

*Additional information:* [www.centro.org](http://www.centro.org)

### **San Diego Association of Governments**

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) manages an interactive website that offers comprehensive information on public and private specialized transportation services available to older adults and persons with disabilities.

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*Additional information:* [www.sandag.org](http://www.sandag.org)

### Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority

Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA), in Cape Cod, Massachusetts has provided both fixed-route and general public dial-a-ride service since the late 1970s. About a third of Cape Cod's population is older adults. In 1980, CCRTA was one of the first transit systems to deploy a computer-assisted scheduling and dispatching and has since upgraded its hardware and software platforms with additional ITS components such as AVL and GIS. Since 1999, both their fixed-route and paratransit data communications have used the same infrastructure.

CCRTA coordinates transportation services using a mobility management model. All rides are assigned by the operations center using the custom-built CCRTA routing and scheduling software. CCRTA has been successful in moving the majority of their Medicaid trips from single-ride taxis to less expensive shared-ride public paratransit trips by using its scheduling software to analyze the location of origins and destinations of their client's trips.

*Additional information:* [www.capecodtransit.org](http://www.capecodtransit.org)

### Ventura County Transportation Commission

The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), in Ventura, California administers a multimodal, multipurpose transportation program. VCTC is both a brokerage and a transit agency. In its role as a brokerage, VCTC coordinates with both public and private local area transportation services of all modes, including bus, rail, air, and even bicycle. VCTC also coordinates with other organizations that broker activities such as rideshare programs.

In its role as a transit agency, VCTC operates VISTA, an intercity system consisting of twenty fixed-route buses, which connect cities in three counties. VCTC also operates thirteen vans, which are used to provide general public dial-a-ride service to rural areas and low-income communities. VCTC coordinates with five municipal transit providers operating 113 buses in the county. All vehicles are wheelchair-accessible, and paratransit dial-a-ride service exists within each city. VCTC also has travel planner software that can be accessed by telephone or over the internet. Individuals are able to plan a trip from beginning to end through the travel planner and receive a personalized trip itinerary.

*Additional information:* [www.goventura.org](http://www.goventura.org)



### Regional Best Practices

There are also numerous efforts already in place within the Atlanta region that could offer insight across jurisdictions and agencies on how to better manage the transportation needs of HST populations.

#### *Voucher Programs*

Currently there are several successful voucher programs operated throughout the Atlanta region that assist older adults and persons with disabilities in obtaining transportation services including Fayette Senior Services, disABILITY Link, Cobb Senior Voucher Program, Fayette Senior Services, Rockdale County, Gwinnett Senior Services, DeKalb Senior Voucher Program and the City of East Point's TREP Program. Voucher programs empower the individual to make their own choice about the mode of transportation they will use.

*More information:* [www.fayss.org](http://www.fayss.org), [www.disabilitylink.org](http://www.disabilitylink.org), <http://seniors.cobbcountyga.gov>, [www.co.dekalb.ga.us/humanserv/hs-senior-services.html](http://www.co.dekalb.ga.us/humanserv/hs-senior-services.html), and [www.eastpointcity.org](http://www.eastpointcity.org)

#### *Mobility Management*

Mobility Management (MM) was a key PLAN 2040 strategy identified to enhance mobility options for persons with disabilities, older adults, and low income individuals living in the region. Mobility Management is a concept and best practice being used throughout the United States and can be defined in several different ways. In the Atlanta region, mobility management can be best described as a strategic systematic approach to managing transportation demand based on the individual customer's need. Innovative mobility management strategies can be implemented and carried out in a variety of ways and can be tailored to meet any community's needs.

PLAN 2040 includes funding to conduct a regional study to examine the feasibility of implementing a mobility management call center strategy. Regional stakeholders indicated this action would help improve the delivery of services to the region's transportation disadvantaged. Depending on the results of this study, additional funding may be allocated in future RTPs and TIPs to support this objective.

PLAN 2040 also includes the following as the region's main objectives for mobility management:

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- Improve transportation options for the public, particularly low-income, elderly and disabled populations.
- Reduce confusion about what transportation options are available by consolidating transportation information in one centralized location.
- Improve coordination among all transportation service providers, enhancing commitments to delivering service.
- Through coordination, provide cost-effective delivery of service, benefiting both customers and transportation providers.

Since the 2008 Feasibility Study, ARC has continued regional conversations about the need to centralize HST information, referral, scheduling, dispatching, and trip planning through the HST Advisory Committee and Regional Transit Committee (RTC). Early in 2012, ARC internal staff across divisions collaborated to develop a need, problem, and vision statement for regional mobility management, all of which was vetted through the region's HST Advisory Committee. ARC, with support from members of the HST Advisory Committee, has also hired a regional mobility manager. This is a 2-year position funded with FY 2011 New Freedom grant funding. The need, problem, and vision statements for regional mobility management are as follows:

- **Need Statement** - Individuals in the region need safe, affordable and reliable transportation to access jobs, education, healthcare, and other quality of life activities, especially persons with disabilities, older adults, those with limited income and individuals without a car.
- **Problem Statement** - The Atlanta Urbanized Area (UZA) lacks the multimodal infrastructure and coordinated delivery system to provide adequate transportation services and options to all residents in a cost efficient manner.
- **Vision statement** - To enhance the mobility of all residents and visitors in the region by helping people navigate the array of transportation services in the region offered by public, private, and non-profit providers.

More information: <http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/mobility-management>

Cobb County has successfully hired a Mobility Manager in response to recommendations from their Senior Services Ten-Year Master Plan and Senior Transportation Study. Using mobility management concepts, the county has engaged in several coordination efforts across state, county, and local agencies and have implemented initiatives such as a Transit Provider Directory, Customer Information Brochure and a Guaranteed Paratransit Transfer Program.

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More information: <http://seniors.cobbcountyga.gov/>

### *Travel Training*

Travel Training can be a successful tool to reduce the demand on paratransit services. Depending upon a person's ability, they may be capable of utilizing regular fixed-route services. Often, persons with disabilities and older adults do not use regular fixed-route services because they do not know how to navigate the system. disABILITY LINK currently runs a successful travel-training program, as does the Center for the Visually Impaired. Cobb County has also successfully implemented a travel training program known as "Get on the Bus Gus" and MARTA has recently completed phase I development of their travel training program utilizing New Freedom grant funds.

More information: [www.disabilitylink.org](http://www.disabilitylink.org) and [www.cviga.org](http://www.cviga.org) and <http://dot.cobbcountyga.gov/cct/how.htm>

### *Information and Referral*

Both the Atlanta region's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the United Way operate successful coordinated information and referral systems. The AAA's system is a 24/7 operations and assist older adults and persons with disabilities within their 10-County region. The United Way's system is also 24/7 and assists all persons in need.

ARC, as the AAA for the 10-county Atlanta region, created the ESP (Enhanced Services Program) database in 1996. ESP is Georgia's first and only statewide comprehensive database of aging and long-term care services for older adults and persons with disabilities. The database contains detailed information on more than 23,000 services and programs. The database includes fee-for-service options, public benefits and nonprofit agency resources. The system lists 194 categories including transportation services and licensed providers.

The database is the backbone of Georgia's Gateway Information and Referral Network and is available free of charge to all AAA's in Georgia. Subscribers include local hospitals; Medicare managed care plans and several nonprofit agencies. Currently, more than 31 organizations have access to this database. It is updated on a regular basis by 15 specialists throughout the state to provide consumers with the most current information.

More information: [www.georgiaservicesforseniors.org](http://www.georgiaservicesforseniors.org) and [www.unitedwayatlanta.org](http://www.unitedwayatlanta.org)



### *Cobb County Senior Transportation Study*

In September 2007, Cobb County completed a senior transportation study that focused on the senior transportation needs and mobility options for Cobb County. It is estimated that by 2015, residents over age 55 are anticipated to reach nearly 93,000, representing 11 percent of the Cobb County's population. It is also estimated that by year 2030, the senior adult population in Cobb County is anticipated to double, representing 20 percent of the total population of the County.

There are two primary transit providers in Cobb County: Cobb Community Transit (CCT) and Cobb Senior Services (CSS). The Department of Transportation operates CCT, a system of 20 fixed-routes, including four express routes that link communities in Cobb with the larger public transportation network of services in the greater Atlanta region. CSS transportation operates thirty-nine cutaway-center isle vehicles and provides both fixed-route and demand response services that offer access to senior and neighborhood centers, as well as medical and some shopping trips. CSS also provides door-through-door service, which is a necessity for seniors with disabilities. CSS transportation is funded from a variety of sources, including Title 3, Social Service Block Grants, County Based Service Grants, Cobb County resources and farebox revenue.

Cobb Senior Services also completed a ten-year master plan that addresses the aging services and needs in Cobb County, including transportation. This plan documents that transportation is the most requested service through their information and referral line, and states that this need continues to grow every year. In 2005, CSS provided 74,727 one-way trips, an increase of 28% over the number of one-way trips provided in 2002. Also in 2005, a waiting list for demand/response transportation was put into effect because of the growing demand. Currently, appointments for CSS transportation must be scheduled an average three weeks in advance. The plan emphasizes that the lack of available transportation causes a severe hardship for seniors who cannot afford private transport for essential services such as medical treatment. Finally, the plan documents that a senior's inability to move around in the community increases their isolation from the mainstream of life.

### *DeKalb County Self-Assessment*

DeKalb County Office of Senior Affairs completed a self-assessment in late 2009 and early 2010 by developing a white paper on Senior Transportation Services in DeKalb County. The purpose of this effort was fourfold:

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- To review agency responsibilities and liabilities for transporting DeKalb seniors who are eligible to receive subsidized transportation in safe, reliable, comfortable vehicles.
- To produce a comprehensive document presenting background data and current issues in the area of transportation that affect the quality of life of DeKalb County seniors.
- To recommend possible strategies to maintain a fleet of safe, comfortable, state-owned vehicles used to transport DeKalb County residents.
- To promote the planning and coordination of flexible mixed modes of transportation in the County (i.e. roads, transit and airport).

The best solution reported in the self-assessment is for the County to identify a source of replacement vehicles that will not place additional burdens on the senior transportation budget. Doing so would allow the County to avoid the drawbacks outlined above. The most efficient and effective way for the County to fulfill its responsibilities as CBA/NSP would be to seek used vehicles that are available through donation or administrative transfer from another transit agency. An effort by the Office of Senior Affairs to acquire surplus buses through donation or administrative transfer would yield many benefits to the County and its senior population.



### **Chapter 4 - Strategies and Solutions**

This section synthesizes information on demographic data, service issues, existing providers and best practices into a set of recommendations for the Atlanta region.

#### **Coordination Opportunities**

Despite the numerous gaps and barriers listed above, there are several coordinated HST efforts going throughout the region by different organizations and groups. Although HST efforts are fragmented, this duplication of efforts is an opportunity to reach out to other organizations and groups to consolidate initiatives or simply gain new knowledge and perspectives. Some current opportunities to coordinate in the region are listed below.

##### *Transportation Investment Act of 2010*

Signed into law in 2010 by Governor Purdum, this legislation provided a legal mechanism for the 12 regions throughout the state of Georgia the ability to impose a 1% sales tax to fund needed transportation improvements within each region. On July 31, 2012, residents across the 10-county Atlanta region including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties, as well as the City of Atlanta had the opportunity to vote on a referendum that would have funded \$8.5 billion in transportation improvements through a regional one percent sales tax. The referendum did not pass in the Atlanta region. It is important to note that the final Investment List for the Atlanta Region included an HST project: TIA-AR-044. This project would have created a Regional Mobility Call Center and Enhanced Transportation Services Program for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities. If the referendum had passed, it would have provided \$17 million of funding for the region to create and implement a fully integrated Mobility Management Call Center and innovative programs and services to fill gaps and meet the needs of HST populations throughout the region. Although the referendum failed, the synergy and momentum created in the region around transportation issues as a result of this effort has not been lost.

##### *Veterans Transportation Community Living Initiative*

ARC is the recipient of two FTA Veterans Community Living Grant Initiatives. The first grant will be used to develop software that will lay the foundation to support for a regional one-click/one-call center to link older adults, persons with disabilities and persons of limited income with more mobility options in the region. Once the software is developed it will be piloted with four partner sites including the Department of Veterans Affairs Transportation Services, Goodwill of North Georgia, disability Link, and Cobb Community Transit. The second grant will be used for outreach and training to raise awareness of the initial software project and its

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purpose. This project will increase the number of trained public users of the one-click software and establish a trained corps of volunteers to host training sessions on the Regional Mobility Management One-Click Software throughout the 18 county metro area.

### *TMCC Concept of Operations*

The TMMC Concept of Operations is the result of consensus from the 2007-2008 HST Technical Advisory Committee and user focus groups established to help guide the USDOT grant managed by ARC. This concept has a long-range 2030 vision that has been broken down into three subsystems for feasible implementation.

### *Service Coordination Council*

This committee was originally created under the TPB (now known as the RTC) and brings together transportation providers in the region to discuss service delivery and maintenance issues, as well as identify opportunities to coordinate services between providers. Under this committee, the MARTA and CCT 10/12 service agreement was established.

### *Breeze Regional Task Force*

This committee was formed to help guide the implementation process of the Breeze card technology onto transit providers systems throughout the region. This committee was also established a regional maintenance agreement and discusses other issues including regional Breeze vending machines, regional fare products, regional data collection, and regional paratransit eligibility.

### *Regional Transit Committee*

With completion of Concept 3, the region now has a long-term vision for public transit services. The task of implementing this vision is now vested with a standing policy committee housed within ARC.

### *JARC and New Freedom Grant Programs*

It is anticipated that programs designed to directly address gaps and barriers identified through this planning process, or that will implement a specific recommendation, will receive priority consideration in future calls.



### Systemwide Strategies and Solutions

Providing for the transportation needs of persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low-income in the region is going to require a variety of strategies, techniques, and initiatives. Each demographic group has unique needs with some overlap across groups. Each county or jurisdiction has different transportation services available and services and programs must work within the framework of each county's environment. Following are strategies and solutions that the region should consider to help address needs and remove gaps and barriers to coordinate human service transportation services across all user groups. Some of these can be early "wins", while others may require a longer-term commitment. Specific action items to undertake in the short-term are detailed in a later section.

- Building Partnerships (State/Local, Public/Private, Cost/Vehicle Sharing)
  - Through the ARC planning process, begin working with respective governments and jurisdictions, HST users, human service agencies, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, and public and private transportation providers to establish an HST coordination framework within each county / jurisdiction.
  - The HST Advisory Committee should begin an initiative to establish and create a regional HST provider directory, using the information collected from the survey conducted in 2007 as a foundation. The committee should assist with creating and strengthening relationships with HST groups, community organizations, nonprofit organizations, and transportation providers.
  - The Service Coordination Council and Breeze Regional Taskforce should discuss and make recommendations for a regional fare system and regional eligibility for ADA Paratransit Services.
  - ARC's Transit Operators Subcommittee (TOS) should discuss utilizing a portion of the region's 5307/5340 allocation to create regional multi-modal facilities as a regional project.
  - Transit providers and human service agencies should explore the benefits of vehicle and cost sharing.
- Launching Pilots / Creating Successful Models (One-Stop Call Center, Mobility Management, Volunteer Programs)
  - ARC should continue to identify national HST best practices and implement those practices where feasible, recognizing that there is no "one-size fits all" model.



- ARC should identify a champion to pilot the TMCC Concept of Operations, with a staff knowledgeable of all existing transportation options and trained to deal with the specific needs and issues of the three HST population groups.
- ARC, in cooperation with transportation providers and human service agencies, should develop a model for a regional HST same-day-service program.
- ARC, in cooperation with transportation providers and human service agencies, should develop a model for a volunteer driver program.
  
- Highlighting and Duplicating Successful Models in the Region
  - ARC, through the JARC and New Freedom programs, should track success, promote, and duplicate successful projects on a regional level. Voucher, mobility management, and travel training programs have been identified as successful programs and best practices.
  - ARC should also continue to promote and fund LCI and Lifelong Communities projects and initiatives, both of which will foster neighborhoods that HST populations will find attractive due to the reduced reliance on an auto for basic mobility needs.
  - ARC should maximize capabilities of rideshare software used by its Transportation Demand Management (TDM) division and explore ways to duplicate this model to specifically target the needs of HST groups.
  - ARC should maximize capabilities of the database maintained by its Aging Services division and duplicate this model to incorporate all HST groups.
  
- Creating Policy and Building Plans That Lead to Mobility
  - ARC, through the PLAN 2040 process, should identify HST planning as a regional priority and continue to develop policies that will require the integration of land use and transportation planning. Also through this process, ARC should make recommendation through the regional needs assessment on how to address needs and close gaps in the region's systems and infrastructure.
  - ARC, through its County Transportation Plan (CTP) program, should require that plans include demographic data on HST groups, identify the transportation needs of those groups, and provide strategies to address those needs.
  - The RTC should assess the feasibility of public / private partnerships for transportation projects.
  - The RTC should conduct a cost / benefit analysis for a regional fare system.



### **Additional Recommendations for Individual Population Groups**

In addition to the systemwide recommendations in the previous section, there are a variety of more specific initiatives that would be of particular benefit to a single HST population group. Following are brief list of proposed activities and desired outcomes, divided by group.

#### **Persons with Disabilities**

- Undertake infrastructure improvements
  - ADA accessible transit facilities, including entry and exit designs
  - ADA sidewalks and curb cuts
  - Enhanced pedestrian signals, including countdown and auditory warnings
- Expand paratransit service
  - Door “through” door service
  - Nontraditional and weekend service
  - Dedicated driver/vehicles for same-day service
  - Coordinated cross-jurisdictional trips
  - Coordinated service with human service agencies
- Increase transportation alternatives
  - Volunteer driver/escort program where transit is not an option
  - Accessible taxi program
  - Voucher programs tailored to needs of disabled individuals
- Implement seamless regional system
  - Regional paratransit eligibility
  - Regional fare system
- Reduce demand on paratransit system
  - Bus buddy travel training programs
  - LCI and Lifelong Communities designed with disabled individuals in mind
- Increase customer satisfaction
  - Driver sensitivity training
  - Reduced transfer times
  - Reduced total trip times
  - Real time information



### Older Adults

- Enhance public transit to better serve older adults
  - Flex routes during off peak hours
  - Transit stops to shield patrons from inclement weather
  - Provide discounts to older adult riders on fixed incomes
  - Technology which can alert riders to approximate arrival times for trains and buses
- Make services less intimidating to novice users
  - Driver sensitivity training
  - Large print and easily understood route maps and publications
  - Bus buddy travel training programs
- Encourage development of Lifelong Communities throughout the region that permit “aging in place” and do not require an auto or transit services to access basic needs
- Develop “complete streets” that consider the reduced auditory, visual and agility functions of many older adults, thus making walking a more realistic option for accessing basic needs
- Include senior centers, medical facilities, and large housing developments on transit routes
- Raise awareness of and improve existing social service transportation systems
- Provide transportation voucher and volunteer drive programs where transit is not an option

### Low Income Persons

- Support and maintain existing JARC routes
  - Updated JARC Plan to expand and create new JARC routes
- Extend service hours
  - Late shift, weekend and holiday workers
  - Part-time workers
- Establish feeder service to connect individuals without access to existing transportation options
- Encourage and establish employment shuttle programs
- Encourage and establish carpool and vanpool programs specific to low income individuals
- Establish down-payment loan car programs to assist low-income persons in purchasing a car
  - Option when there is no public transportation or it is not feasible
  - Also creates independence and expands opportunities



### **Implementation Suggestions**

The region's transportation needs assessment for HST groups clearly identifies the need to establish more safe, affordable, and efficient transportation options for persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low income. The region has many assets and agencies already in place to provide a solid foundation upon which to build. However, much room still exists for improving services for these disadvantaged population groups.

In light of current fiscal realities, the region should focus on improving efficiencies in our current systems and operations while ensuring that information and motivation exist to work on a longer-term expansion of options as economic conditions improve over time. While it is natural to want to pursue an aggressive implementation strategy, such an approach would not prove effective at this time. Rather, the region should focus on easy wins, while doing everything possible to quickly position the overall system for more substantive improvements as opportunities arise in the coming months and years. Identified below in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 are implementation suggestions that are considered low hanging fruit, which the region could pursue to help improve the efficiency and operations of the existing HST system.

The three implementation suggestions included in Table 4-1 are easy wins for the region and could be easily accomplished through continued dialogue and collaboration between the listed regional partners. At this time, the criteria for ADA Paratransit eligibility for both CCT and MARTA are basically the same, while there is a minor difference in the qualifying criteria for GCT. Establishing a regional transfer agreement and fare media product for ADA paratransit patrons would not only improve the coordination and efficiency of cross-jurisdictional trips for both the provider and customer, but also increase customer satisfaction.

The four implementation suggestions included in Table 4-2 are also easy and feasible wins for the region. It is important to note that the implementation suggestions shown in Table 4-2 are already in progress. As mentioned above, ARC has utilized FY 2011 funds to create and fill a 2-year regional mobility management position. ARC is also the recipient of two VTCLI grants to develop and deploy a regional mobility management software platform; both of these initiatives are currently underway. Through the state's RHST Committee efforts over the last two years, HST coordination has improved at both the state and regional levels, with the deployment of three mobility management pilot programs. Travel training programs in the region have also improved and increased the annual JARC and New Freedom "Call for Projects". As mentioned above, disability Link, CCT, and MARTA all have implemented Travel Training Programs. Also DeKalb County Senior Services and Gwinnett County Senior Services both have travel training as one element of their mobility management programs funding through New Freedom grant funds.

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Table 4-1: Implementation Suggestions for improving ADA Paratransit Services

Proposed Solution	Gaps/Needs Addressed	Implementation Issues	Necessary Partners
Regional ADA Paratransit Eligibility	Patrons once qualified for ADA services on one regional system will automatically be qualified for ADA services on all systems within the region. Cross-jurisdictional trips.	Consensus on appropriate criteria to meet the need of all systems. Consensus on length on eligibility for services. Consensus to establish one entity to administer the eligibility process for all systems.	CCT, GCT, MARTA, TOS, RTC
Regional Reciprocal Fare Agreements	Patrons traveling across systems will potentially have to pay one fare or an established base transfer fee. Patrons would be able to travel across ADA and Fixed-route systems seamlessly.	Consensus on equitable transfer fee, if any. Consensus on equitable cost share for cross jurisdictional trips. Consensus on process for collection and payment.	CCT, GCT, MARTA, RTC, TOS, Breeze Policy Group
Regional Fare Media Product	Patrons would only have to purchase one fare product that could be used to travel on any regional system. Seamless cross-jurisdictional trips.	Consensus on fare cost for a regional media product. Consensus on expiration of fare media product. Consensus on equitable cost share. Consensus on entity to administer back-office and process for collection and payment.	CCT, GCT, MARTA, RTC, TOS, Breeze Policy Group

## A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region



Table 4-2: Implementation Suggestions for Mobility Management Strategies

Proposed Solution	Gap/ Need Addressed	Implementation Issues	Necessary Partners
Regional Mobility Management Program	Customer centered and focused assistance. Identification of alternative transportation options. Local Mobility Managers. Community Education and Awareness. Innovative Partnerships.	Sustainable funding source. Buy-in and support from elected officials. Coordination and collaboration with state and local Human Services, and nonprofit agencies. Coordination and participation from public transportation providers.	ARC, Local Human Services Agencies, Local Governments, CCT, GCT, GRТА, MARTA, Workforce Development, United Way, Senior Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, Employers, TDM, Veterans Administration, etc.
One/Click/One Call Mobility Management Transportation Center	Reduce confusion on whom or where to call. Reduce confusion about transportation options available and cost. Centralize scheduling and dispatching. Centralize billing, collection, and payments.	Consolidating multiple databases and technology platforms. Keeping up to date information and data. Creating a user-friendly platform. Collaboration and participation from Human Service agencies, transportation providers, and nonprofits.	ARC, GDOT (511), Human Services Agencies, United Way (211), CCT, GCT, GRТА, MARTA, Local Governments
HST Coordination	Reduce waiting list for transportation services. Consolidate reporting for Human Service agencies. Vehicle sharing. Reduce insurance cost. Reduce cost of vehicle and equipment purchase.	Buy-in and participation from multiple human services agencies, transportation providers, and other local agencies and nonprofits that provide or assist with services. Insurance cost.	Human Services Agencies, ARC, HST providers, nonprofit agencies.
Travel Training	Reduce fear of utilizing public transportation systems. Familiarity and understanding how to navigate public transportation systems. Choice and Independence.	Coordination of training for each regional system. Identifying entity (s) to administer regional training. Understanding process and procedures for each system.	RTC, CCT, GCT, GRТА, MARTA

## ***A Coordinated Plan for the Atlanta Region***

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As the region continues to take steps in the right direction and celebrate some small successes, the region also recognizes that there is still more work to do. In order to meet the growing transportation demand and provide a good quality of life for HST populations, the region must continue to plan, innovate, and collaborate to improve and increase safe, accessible, and affordable mobility options. As transportation resources steadily decline in the region, there is a great challenge ahead, as the region must think outside of the box to develop new approaches to providing more transportation services with less money.

### **Future Evolution of this Plan**

As stated earlier in this document, this iteration is a limited technical update to address the findings from the region's long rang transportation plan and other regional initiatives. However, there will be a subsequent update to the Coordinated HST Plan to incorporate the planning requirements of MAP-21, since at this time there is only minimum guidance from FTA. This future update will also include any major changes from the 2013 update to PLAN 2040, 2010 Census data, and the region's Limited English Proficiency planning efforts.



# **Appendix (A)**

## **Concept of Operations for an Atlanta Regional Transportation Management Coordination Center**



# **Appendix (B)**

## **HST Advisory Committee Members**



# **Appendix (C)**

## **Designated Recipient Letter for FTA Section 5316 and 5317 Programs**



# **Appendix (D)**

## **Georgia State Management Plan and Application Package for FTA Section 5310 Program**



# **Appendix (E)**

## **Application Package for FTA Section 5316 and 5317 Programs**



# **Appendix (F)**

## **HST Provider Survey**



# **Appendix (G)**

## **HST Coordinated System Provider Inventory**



# **Appendix (H)**

## **Public Involvement Information**



# **Appendix (I)**

## **Peer Review Fact Sheets**