



Our History

The Atlanta metropolitan region is currently designated as a nonattainment area for ozone under the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAA) of 1990. In 1998, concerned by the withdrawal of federal funds and national publicity about Atlanta's air pollution and traffic problems, many community leaders supported creation of an authority with power to implement public transit and influence land development having a regional impact in the nonattainment area. In April 1999, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA, pronounced gret-a) was created by the State of Georgia.

Our Role

GRTA is charged with the responsibility of planning and implementing regional transportation facilities and services, implementing strategies to improve the region's air quality, reducing traffic congestion and improving the planning process throughout the Atlanta region. Currently, there are thirteen counties in the metropolitan Atlanta nonattainment area: Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale.

Our Mission

It is the mission of GRTA and the Governor's Development Council to provide the citizens of Georgia with transportation choices, improved air quality and better land use in order to enhance their quality of life and promote growth that can be sustained by future generations.

Our Vision

To plan and implement a transportation system that is multimodal, seamless, and accessible to all citizens.

To encourage land use policies that will promote efficient use of infrastructure investments.

To operate within a decision-making framework that values public participation and connects transportation choices, land use and overall quality of life.

To serve the best interests of the region by working in cooperation with other agencies and governments that are involved in planning and transportation.

To measure effectiveness in improving air quality, traffic, accessibility and land use.

2002 Public Open Houses...What We Heard From You

Across the study area, individuals and communities benefited from the open houses because they provided a platform to discuss how, where, when, for whom and at what cost, should public transit be implemented. Nine major messages emerged from these meetings that were voiced by virtually all participants in the public outreach process:

- **Regional Connectivity, Configuration, and Accessibility** - a desire for a regional transit system that encouraged transit use by promoting seamless bus and train connections, regional coverage (gets you anywhere), dependable and integrated service.
- **Congestion** - serious concern about the impacts of traffic congestion, stress and poor air quality on their lives and livelihood.
- **Transit Options** - a vision for public transit in the metropolitan Atlanta region that includes Express Bus, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Expanded Local Bus Service, Heavy Rail, Light Rail, HOV lanes, Rails to Trails, Commuter Rail, Van Pools, and Disincentives for Single Occupancy Vehicles.
- **Land Use and Transportation Partners** - land use and transportation planning must be coordinated, if metropolitan Atlanta is to achieve regionalism, decreased congestion, increased access and mobility and improved quality of life.
- **Marketing** – strong support for a marketing/educational campaign to promote the positive impacts and benefits of public transit. Key marketing areas of focus included improving the image of MARTA, personalizing transit messages to communicate how transit helps not hurts, and dispelling transit myths.
- **Funding/Fare** - the most effective regional transit system would avoid raising fares and include free transfers; a variety of funding sources and strategies to achieve this objective included Sales Tax, Gasoline Tax, Federal Funding, State Funding, Parking fees, [Diverted] Road Funds, Lottery Funds, Convention Tax, Impact Fees, SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), Vehicle Registration Tax, and Property Tax.
- **Public Outreach** - improve the public outreach process through increased advertising, more convenient meeting times and locations, and more agency consideration of public comments in the decision-making process.
- **Operations** – recommendations ranged from improved transit service delivery, amenities and facilities to management, route planning, system safety and cleanliness.
- **Environment** - strongly recommended that RTAP provide for the use of alternative fuels to promote cleaner emissions and reduce dependence on oil.

Stakeholder Interviews



The RTAP stakeholder interviews were a tremendous learning opportunity and solidified the partnership between GRTA and key individuals expected to participate in the regional transit planning process. The candid responses provided insight into the most important aspects of regional public transit. Specifically, stakeholders:

- Demand a higher level of public transit service
- Support increased funding and expansion of MARTA service
- Are committed to public education, transit advocacy and promotion
- Desire livable communities
- Request bicycle and pedestrian plans to support transit systems
- Seek resolution to increased traffic congestion
- Advocate alternative modes of transportation and commute options
- Want increased access to the urban core, suburban employment centers, and rural areas via public transit
- Still consider roadway improvements more vital than transit
- Support implementation of the RTAP Express Bus System
- Are concerned about transportation safety and security
- Are seriously concerned about the negative impacts of congestion and growth have on air quality, public health and business development
- Are generally dissatisfied with the lack of comprehensive planning in the region
- Have increasing concerns about the inability to meet the special needs of the elderly, transit dependent and environmental justice populations

With the stakeholder interviews process complete, progress has been made, opinions have been heard and consensus has emerged. There is still much work to be done. It is essential that GRTA continue to work closely with stakeholders to create a shared vision of transit for the region. The understanding generated by this open dialogue must strengthen and deepen as the next phase of project development unfolds in 2003.