




ATLANTA CITY COUNCIL

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members of Council

FROM: Felicia A. Moore, President 

DATE: October 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Quarterly Update – Atlanta Regional Commission

This update provides an overview of Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) activities since last quarterly update in July 2020.

Meetings

ARC monthly meetings are still conducted remotely due to COVID-19. The following meetings were attended: July 22, 2020; August 26, 2020; September 23, 2020. Archived documents for these meetings can be accessed [here](#).

Key Issues

The following key issues have been discussed during this quarter:

- *Impacts of the COVID-19 Economic Shutdown on Local and State Transportation Revenues.*
 - SPLOST and TSPLOST revenues, of which 50% are dedicated to transportation projects, are down 14.5% for April 2020, compared to April 2019.
 - State transportation revenues are down more than 29% for May of this year compared to May 2019.
 - Estimated vehicle miles traveled fell from about 275 million per day in March 2020 to about 75 million in April 2020 before rising to about 150 million per day in May 2020.

- *Chattahoochee RiverLands Study Provides New Vision for the River*

This is a collaborative effort that included ARC, the Trust for Public Land, Cobb County, and the City of Atlanta. The project covers 100 miles of the river through metro Atlanta and seeks to provide a safe, connective corridor; common ground for all, an ecological refuge for the region, and a living legacy for future generations. The ARC Board gave

final approval to the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study and its new vision for the river in the Atlanta region.

- *Annual Population Estimates*

The Atlanta Regional Commission annually produces population estimates for major jurisdictions in the Atlanta Region. These estimates are the basis for assessing dues for the following year. Under the law establishing the Atlanta Regional Commission, the estimates and dues calculation must be adopted by the Commission before the end of August.

The ARC Board approved the 2020 population estimates for the 10-county region, which showed that metro Atlanta added 63,600 people in the 12 months ending in April 2020. The population growth is down slightly from the year before, reflecting a modest cooling in the local job market. The 1.37% population increase in 2019-20 compares to 1.59% in 2018-19. This year's growth was a little better than average over the past decade. Overall, the 10-county region added 585,000 people in the past decade – the equivalent of all of metro Chattanooga.

- *Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #1*

TIP Amendment #1 was developed to: 1. Include the programming of new funding recommendations from the 2019 TIP solicitation 2. Update programming and financial details for projects in the Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP) 3. Address project cost estimate and programmatic changes that are of a time sensitive nature or cannot be handled administratively 4. Incorporate changes to the travel demand model coding.

2019 TIP Solicitation Highlights:

- AT-320 – Atlanta Traffic Enhancement Signal Program – Phase 1 (Sponsor – City of Atlanta; GDOT PI# TBD)
- FS-280 – Global Gateway Connector (Sponsor - City of College Park; GDOT PI #0015080/0012882)
- GW-423 – Route 50 Vehicle Expansion (Sponsor – Gwinnett County; GDOT PI# TBD)
- DO-220A – Lee Road Segment 2 Widening from SR 92 (Fairburn Road) to Monier Avenue (Sponsor - Douglas County; GDOT PI#004428)
- M-AR-452 – Clayton County Bus Route 197 (I-675 and Clayton/Henry Line) and Route 198 (South Lake Mall) (Sponsor – MARTA; GDOT PI# TBD) The TIP

- *Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO)*

Since the early 1990s, the Atlanta region has been at the forefront of implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) initiatives with groundbreaking deployments like the Georgia NaviGator System (including HERO service patrols), and the Regional Traffic Operations Program (RTOP), a nationally recognized arterial management program. These two strategies alone, have had a tremendous impact on travel time reliability and safety, as the region continued to grow rapidly.

Transportation technology has recently undergone a significant transformation and is expected to continue to evolve very rapidly. The region must be more prepared for the proliferation of connected infrastructure, availability of real-time travel data, and private sector innovation that will fundamentally change the way people and goods move. This transformation is changing the expectations and behavior of travelers, freight, businesses, and public agencies. Today, there is a real need to imagine the collective future in light of the new opportunities and real uncertainties posed by this transformation.

The Regional TSMO Vision and ITS Architecture Update establishes this by having achieved the following objectives:

- Facilitate rigorous stakeholder engagement around a forward-thinking vision for TSMO and strengthen relationship between planning and operations professionals.
- Assess and compare the region's TSMO/ITS inventory and identify gaps.
- Modernize and expand the Regional ITS Architecture.
- Identify interoperable approaches to TSMO and ITS innovation.
- Identify enterprise-level data environments for TSMO
- Identify a strategic roadmap for regional deployment with a focus on early success.

- *Progress on Implementation of Board Engagement*

The Board adopted the recommendations of the Board Engagement Task Force, and ARC staff has been creating a plan for implementation of these new recommendations, with practices set to begin in 2021.

Highlights of the plan:

- Implementation will be divided into the following workstreams:
 - o Revise matters of practice
 - o Enhance communications
 - o Coordinate agendas and calendars for boards and committees
 - o Restructure board and committees

The Board and committees will move to bimonthly and quarterly meetings beginning in 2021. The final schedule is forthcoming. Bylaw revisions will also better align ARC's governance with agency operations. Next steps for the plan of implementation is to examine the committee structure and work out the bylaw revisions, with early 2021 as the goal for full implementation.

- *ARC Pension Plan/Retirement Benefits Studied for Updates*

The effort is a proactive one, as the agency's program is healthy and well-funded, but could prove to be unsustainable in the long run. Recommendations were adopted by the Pension Board on August 26. The process began in March 2019 with a review of coverage, analysis of cost sustainability, and led to shifting risk to newer employees, while keeping programming for legacy employees largely intact.