



Joint ARC Board and Transportation & Air Quality

Meeting Summary

April 12, 2023

The Evolving Atlanta Region / Forecasts

Mike Carnathan, Managing Director of Research & Analytics, presented on the regional population and employment forecasts, which form the foundation for all of ARC's planning work, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The draft forecast adds about 1.8 million residents and 860,000 jobs by 2050. The forecast is lower than previous forecasts, reflecting lower fertility rates and slowing migration. These are national and even global trends among developed countries.

Key findings include:

- **Aging population:** The Region's Prime Working Age Population – as a Share of Total Population – Is Forecast to Decrease, while the share of residents ages 75 and older is expected to increase, from about 5 percent today to 11 percent in 2050.
- **Increasing diversity:** The forecast shows significant increase in the share of the region's Hispanic and Asian populations. By 2050, more than one in five residents will be Hispanic, according to the forecast, compared to about one in 10 today.
- **Shifting job market:** By 2050, professional, scientific, and tech jobs are forecast to replace healthcare as the region's largest industry.

More information:

- [ARC Presentation](#)

Interactive Policy Survey

Members of the ARC Board and TAQC participated in an interactive survey to gather their views on a range of issues related to transportation, quality of life, and the region's future.

- [Interactive Policy Survey](#)

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development Discussions

ARC staff led the board and committee members through discussions related to the MTP plan update. This included:

- **Understanding the change in travel and impacts to the MTP.** Pre-pandemic travel patterns are likely permanently altered, requiring ARC to respond to the 'new normal.'
 - Transit ridership in the region is 54% below pre-pandemic levels
 - Interstate congestion levels in many corridors are back to pre-pandemic levels. Remote workers now exceed all workers that use transit and carpool, combined.

- However, just 1 in 3 jobs are able to work remotely, and many work in off-peak periods.
- **Regional land use growth trends and scenario planning.** Land development patterns have changed following the Great Recession:
 - Fewer residential units have been built this past decade than in any of the previous five decades.
 - Housing prices have risen across the region. The median sales price in the region increased 52% from January 2019 to January 2023, rising from \$230,000 to \$350,000.
 - The region is seeing fewer office and retail developments, a trend that could be accelerated under current economic conditions.
 - Industrial development, especially distribution, has increased compared to previous decades. Announced new manufacturing developments in more rural areas of North Georgia will impact our economic growth trajectory and land-use pattern change assumptions.
- **Building the plan: Federal priorities, financial, and project planning.** The biggest change in over 30 years of federal transportation policy is the new emphasis on climate change:
 - To be competitive for discretionary federal grants, the Atlanta region must emphasize climate change moving forward in the MTP.
 - International agreements and commitments are in place to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – most particularly from the transportation sector – which is the largest single source of GHG. The United States has committed to “net zero” greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
 - The latest forecasts of climate change released in March 2023 indicate that the Atlanta region will be significantly impacted by higher temperatures and increased rainfall. The federal government in the IIJA and the IRA has created adaptation programs that allow communities to adjust to future climate changes such as the PROTECT and RAISE programs.
 - The IIJA also provides significant funding for mitigation programs that make the impacts of climate change less severe by preventing or reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.
 - ARC is now regulatorily required to respond to climate change in regional planning and must do so to be competitive for discretionary federal funds.

More information:

- [ARC Presentation](#)