

## ARC Board Work Session Summary

April 18-19, 2018

### An Inside Look at the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority

Chris Tomlinson, Executive Director of the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), led a presentation about the Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority, or The ATL. The ATL is the new transit governance and funding structure approved by the Georgia General Assembly during this spring's legislative session.

Tomlinson said the goal of The ATL is to improve coordination, integration, and efficiency of transit in metro Atlanta. Simply put, The ATL provides an opportunity to do a better job of getting commuters from one doorstep to another. He provided an overview about how The ATL will work, while stressing the legislation is complicated and some details remain uncertain.

- **Regional governance** -- A 16-member board must be named by December 1, 2018, with members serving 4-year terms. The board includes 10 citizen members representing 10 districts within a 13-county region. These members will be appointed by the state legislators, county commission chairs and mayors who represent each district. In addition, two appointees will be made by the Speaker of the house, two by the Lt. Governor, and the Governor will name a chairperson. The Georgia DOT commissioner will hold a non-voting seat.
- **Regional Transit Planning** – The ATL Board is charged with developing a short-range (6 year) and long-range (20 year) transit plan for the 13-county area, developed in consultation with the region's MPO, which is the Atlanta Regional Commission. Regional stakeholders, including local governments, may request additions and amendments to the plans, based on changing needs.
- **Regional Transit Funding** – The new legislation enables counties to hold a referendum to raise an additional sales tax of up to 1% for up to 30 years. After Jan. 20, 2019, transit projects included in a referendum must be part of the Regional Transit Plan and approved by The ATL Board. There are special provisions for Gwinnett, Cobb, and Fulton:
  - **Gwinnett County** will be able to hold a referendum on joining the MARTA system in November 2018, if it chooses. After that date, the county could hold a transit sales tax referendum through The ATL.
  - **Cobb County** can create a special district within Cobb, hold a TSPLOST referendum, and enter into a contract with MARTA to provide transit services within such special district at any time up to Dec. 1, 2019.

- **Fulton** County can hold a referendum for additional 0.2% sales tax for transit.
- **Interaction with Existing Transit Operators** – Current providers—particularly MARTA—will have their current operational and funding autonomy preserved. MARTA, GRTA, and SRTA still exist and continue to exist. The ATL is administratively attached to GRTA.
- **Regional Unified Branding** – The intent is to create a seamless customer experience. The Regional Transit Plan must include a plan for the creation of a unified brand to encompass all transit service providers in the 13-county region. As of January 1, 2019, any new MARTA asset worth more than \$250,000 must display The ATL logo and brand, prominently featuring the acronym “ATL.” As of January 1, 2023, the ATL logo and brand must be used on any and all MARTA property.

## **ARC: A Key Player in Passage of Transportation Legislation**

Chairman Charlotte Nash and Scott Haggard, ARC Manager of Government Affairs, discussed the ways in which ARC was a crucial partner in making this legislation happen, both in the days and weeks before the legislation passed, and in the planning and development of key relationships with lawmakers years in advance.

## **Update on Board Task Forces**

ARC Director of Community Services John Hammond gave an update on two board task forces that came out of the strategic five-year plan:

- **Ensuring equity in agency allocation of resources across our region** – This taskforce, led by Gwinnett Chairman Charlotte Nash, assessed whether ARC is providing balanced points of view and support for both urban and suburban communities. Preliminary findings indicate little or no bias in how the agency distributes resources. Next steps include completing the review of data, facilitating dialogue among taskforce members, and making recommendations and a full presentation to the board.
- **Board Engagement Taskforce** – This taskforce, led by Tyrone Mayor Eric Dial, is working to ensure that all ARC committees get the energy, attention, and attendance they require for success. Some members said meeting frequency is too high, especially for those serving on multiple committee assignments. And with some exceptions, members said it is unclear when board action results in a change or establishment of policy.

To improve board attendance and strategic engagement, the taskforce’s proposed solution is to align board governance with Region’s Plan objectives, maximize regional impact by enabling broader engagement among regional stakeholders, and sequence quarterly/annual agenda setting in order to achieve greater effectiveness.

Board members asked about other ways to increase attendance, including the possibility of holding meetings as “field trips” at board members’ jurisdictions. Chairman Armstrong responded that ARC wishes to think out of the box when considering solutions. It’s a big challenge, and an important one, to ensure that each meeting is completely worth everyone’s while. A citizen board member said he’d be interested in more opportunities to learn about new projects the ARC is involved in, such as The ATL.

## **Augusta: A Hub for Cyber Security in Georgia**

A panel discussion touched on how three sectors in Augusta — military, education, and business — have grown the cybersecurity sector for the economic betterment of the region. Augusta is located in the heart of the [Fort Gordon Cyber District](#), which represents a two-state, seven-county regional initiative that supports defense and private sector technology, innovation, and growth. In recent years, the cyber-security specialization has rippled throughout Augusta’s private and education sectors as well, causing the city to become a world-recognized center of cyber-security.

The discussion included cyberattack prevention, a hot topic in light of the recent incident with the City of Atlanta. Government entities should conduct a full assessment as soon as possible. Prevention is the preferred approach to ensure protection. Smaller governments which lack the resources to fund such measures might consider reaching out to universities for help with an assessment.

## **Legislative Update**

Scott Haggard, Manager of Government Affairs, gave an update on the 2018 legislative session. See attached report for details.

## **Update on ARC Projects**

ARC is focused on a number of projects this year. Here’s a summary:

- **Transportation & Mobility:** ARC is supporting the Fulton County Master transit plan, ramping up the DeKalb County Master Plan, and providing technical support to city of Atlanta as it creates its long-term transit plan. In addition, the second-annual [ConnectATL](#) Summit is planned for August 2018.
- **Community engagement**
  - [CATLYST](#): ARC's economic competitiveness strategy will officially launch its taskforce efforts in June.
  - [Civic Dinners](#): This unique civic engagement project designed to bring people together for informal, planned conversations about issues important to our region, rolls ahead, with increasing participation from around the region.
  - **What's Next ATL**: ARC has created an integrated portfolio of external-facing coverage of metro Atlanta's top issues activities. Expect more on this in the months to come.
- **Corporate engagement:** ARC has created a **comprehensive corporate engagement** program that's being rolled out in 2018.
- **Enhancing Operations:** ARC has developed **new travel, purchase, and personnel policies**, and is requiring extensive mandatory staff training. And ARC is in the midst of a **classification and compensation study** to ensure that the number and classification of job positions at ARC make reasonable sense.

#### Announcements and References

- Annual LINK trip is May 9-12, 2018 in San Diego
- ARC Annual State of the Region Breakfast is Friday, **Nov. 2, 2018** at the Georgia World Congress Center, 7:30 a.m.
- Next Commission Meeting: **Wednesday, May 23, 2018** at 1 p.m. - CANCELLED