



VOLUME IV

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Vision

ONE great REGION



Atlanta Regional Commission

229 Peachtree Street, NE
Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Mission

Foster thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments

Goals



Healthy, safe, livable communities in the Atlanta Metro area.



Strategic investments in people, infrastructure, mobility, and preserving natural resources.



Regional services delivered with **operational excellence** and **efficiency**.



Diverse stakeholders engage and take a regional approach to solve local issues.



A competitive economy that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient.

Values

Excellence - A commitment to doing our best and going above and beyond in every facet of our work allowing for innovative practices and actions to be created while ensuring our agency's and our colleague's success.

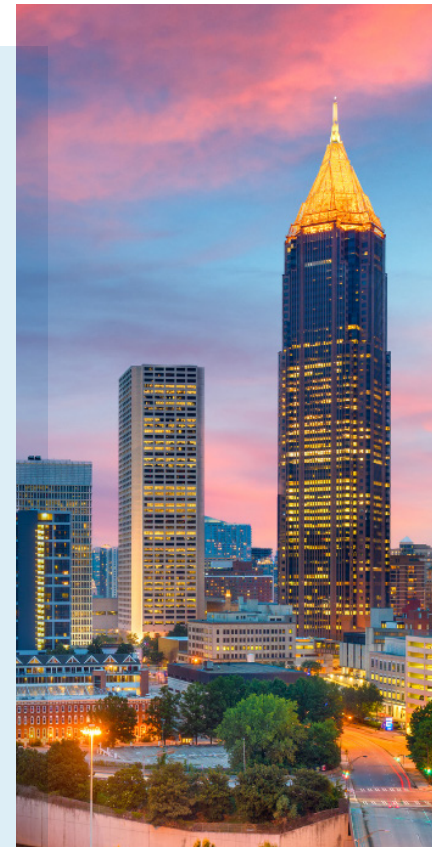
Integrity - In our conduct, communication, and collaboration with each other and the region's residents, we will act with consistency, honesty, transparency, fairness and accountability within and across each of our responsibilities and functions.

Equity - We represent a belief that there are some things which people should have, that there are basic needs that should be fulfilled, that burdens and rewards should not be spread too divergently across the community, and that policy should be directed with impartiality, fairness and

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination by federal-aid recipients on the basis of race, color and national origin. Other federal and state authorities provide protection from discrimination based upon sex, age, disability, income and family status. As a federal funding recipient, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) takes its civil rights responsibilities seriously and will not exclude from participation in, deny benefits to or subject anyone to discrimination based on membership in any of the above classifications. Moreover, ARC regularly reviews its policies, plans and programs to ensure they are both free from discrimination and promote equitable distribution of MPO services.

If any person believes they have been discriminated against regarding the receipt of benefits or services because of race, color, or national origin, they have the right to file a complaint with ARC. More information is available on our website at atlantaregional.org/titlevi or by contacting the Title VI Officer, Brittany Zwald at bzwald@atlantaregional.org. Individuals with a hearing impairment may also contact ARC at **800.255.0056**.

The contents of this plan reflect the views of the persons preparing the document and those individuals are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and other transportation planning, implementation and/or service delivery agencies. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.



AMENDMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION HISTORY

PARTICIPATION PLAN

Refer to the Participation Plan for more information on the types of changes which are made under each process and the procedures which ARC follows in conducting them.

Federal law requires that the MTP and TIP be comprehensively updated at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas. This plan was most recently updated in February 2024. As time passes, incremental changes will need to be made as project scopes, schedules and budgets are refined.

These changes can be made between major updates either through administrative modifications, which are relatively minor in nature, or through amendments, which are more significant and require a more formal process. Administrative modifications are made on a quarterly basis, while amendments are typically conducted only once or twice a year.



ACTION

MAJOR MTP/TIP UPDATE



DATE

FEBRUARY 2024



CONTENTS

VOLUME 4: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Regulatory Context	3
Public Participation Highlights	12
Survey Results	35
Equity Considerations	51

Appendices

- 1 - Public Comments and Responses
- 2 - QMTP/TIP Participation Plan
- 3 - ARC Board / TAQC Work Session Survey Results
- 4 - Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Survey Results
- 5 - Metro Atlanta Speaks Final Report





INTRODUCTION

Federal law requires that a Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Transportation Improvement Program (MTP/TIP) be comprehensively updated at least once every four years. Agency and stakeholder participation is essential to the plan development process, as is public participation.

This volume of the 2050 MTP/TIP Update includes a summary of public participation for the MTP/TIP that was conducted during the period of 2020 to 2023. It details the participation activities and outcomes that have helped shape the MTP/TIP and presents the comments and responses from the official MTP public review and comment period.

The first section of this volume identifies the regulatory framework that governs public participation for transportation planning. In the second section, Public Participation Highlights, there is gives an overview of engagement activities undertaken between 2020 and 2023. Plan integration of local plans and specialized regional plans was considered for this MTP/TIP to a greater degree than ever, as were educational opportunities and virtual public involvement.

Section 3, Survey Results, presents the findings of three separate survey efforts. In 2023, ARC staff relied on survey participation as a primary means to inform the 2050 MTP/TIP Update of public opinion, issues, and concerns.

Equity is considered in Section 4. Equity is also featured in the 2050 MTP/TIP Update process, mostly because new federal direction and tools are available.

Community outreach and virtual public involvement were used to promote and enhance the public hearing process. Public comments and responses collected during the official public review/comment period are contained in [Appendix 1](#).

The MTP/TIP Public Participation Plan is attached as [Appendix 2](#).

Three distinct surveys were used to inform the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. Survey results for the ARC Board/TAQC Metropolitan Transportation Plan Work Session Interactive Survey are included as [Appendix 3](#). The Metropolitan Transportation Plan Survey results are attached as [Appendix 4](#). The final report for ARC's signature annual survey, Metro Atlanta Speaks, is attached as [Appendix 5](#).



VOLUME IV | REGULATORY CONTEXT

CONTENTS

2050 MTP/TIP Update Public Participation Plan	4
Federal Transportaion Laws, Rules and Regulations	5
State Law	9
ARC Policies and Procedures for Participation	10





2050 MTP/TIP UPDATE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Participation of the general public and partner agencies is expected and welcomed in all aspects of ARC's transportation planning and is a regulatory requirement for the MTP/TIP. This section outlines the basic requirements for participation, including specific information on the Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations that govern participation in transportation planning. In addition to this regulatory framework, ARC has policies and plans that govern how, when, and where participation is expected and considered prior to policy decisions being made. ARC's commitment to participation is reflected in the Participation Plan prepared for the 2050 MTP/TIP Update.

Opportunities for participation were impacted by passage of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA) and the COVID-19 pandemic, which ushered in a number of societal changes, including public expectations for civic engagement and enhanced tools for virtual public involvement.

The participation plan was designed to integrate community engagement activities conducted for some of the specialized regional plans that informed the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. At the same time, the plan was intended to be a living document, capable of responding to participation expectations and opportunities as they arose. The Public Participation Plan is included in [Appendix 2](#).

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) into law. IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is the largest long-term investment in our infrastructure and economy in the Nation's history. It provides \$550 billion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new Federal investment in infrastructure, including roads, bridges, mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband internet. In addition, it broadens the authorizing legislation to include more discretionary funding programs and provides an opportunity for local governments to apply for discretionary grants directly. This direct connection between federal transportation funding and local governments does not directly affect public participation procedures, except to add projects for the MTP/TIP Amendment process.

MPO Planning and Public Involvement Regulations

Federal regulations governing public involvement for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are included in the federal register. In accordance with [23 CFR 450.316](#), which was last amended in 2011, a MPO is required to engage in a metropolitan planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation throughout the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). To meet this requirement, MPOs must allow for:

- Adequate public notice of public participation activities;
- Review and comment at key decision points in the development of the MTP/TIP; and
- Multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person.

The MPO should also complete a collaborative and comprehensive Public Participation Plan, in full collaboration with the public and stakeholder communities, to be used in the development of the MTP/TIP, as well as to frame the strategies for public and stakeholder communication and collaboration in all phases of the planning process. The Public Participation Plan itself must be prepared by the MPO with a 45-day public review and comment period.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

Civil rights and environmental justice requirements are directly related to the practice of providing meaningful participation in the transportation planning process.

[Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) requires that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Public agencies must enforce the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and take positive and realistic affirmative steps to ensure the protection of rights and opportunities for all persons affected by its programs, services, and activities.

Executive Order 12898 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”

[Executive Order 12898](#) (February 1994) directs each Federal Agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations,” including tribal populations.



Executive Order 14008 “On Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad”

[Executive Order 14008](#) (January 2021) amended Executive Order 12898 to secure environmental justice and spur economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized and overburdened by pollution and underinvestment in housing, transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure, and health care. Section 223 of EO 14008 established the Justice40 Initiative.

Justice40 Initiative

The [Justice40 Initiative](#), as directed in EO 14008, directs 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments to flow to disadvantaged communities. A White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council is overseeing the initiative, ensuring that each federal agency develop and implement their own programs and policies for implementing Justice40.

In January 2022, USDOT published their [Equity Action Plan](#). The plan represents a shift in how transportation programs are viewed and delivered.

The Equity Action Plan section on Power of Community highlights actions that USDOT will take to ensure that meaningful public participation happens in historically disadvantaged communities. This includes promoting the inclusion of quantitative equity screening criteria and meaningful public participation in TIPs, issuing guidance and training to support funding recipients to conduct meaningful public participation under existing requirements, and establishing department wide monitoring of USDOT funding recipient compliance with their meaningful public participation obligations.

JUSTICE40

A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

“We’ll create good jobs for millions of Americans...and we’ll do it all to withstand the devastating effects of climate change and promote environmental justice.”

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN, 2022 STATE OF THE UNION



Executive Order 13985 “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government”

Designed to foster a whole-of-government equity agenda, [Executive Order 13985](#) directs federal departments and agencies to review and redress systemic inequities in their policies and programs that serve as barriers to equal opportunity. While EO 13985 does not have a direct link to public involvement, the Federal Government’s goal in advancing equity is to provide everyone with the opportunity to reach their full potential. Consistent with these aims, federal agencies are directed to assess whether, and to what extent, its programs and policies perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits for people of color and other underserved groups. Such assessments will better equip agencies to develop policies and programs that deliver resources and benefits equitably to all.

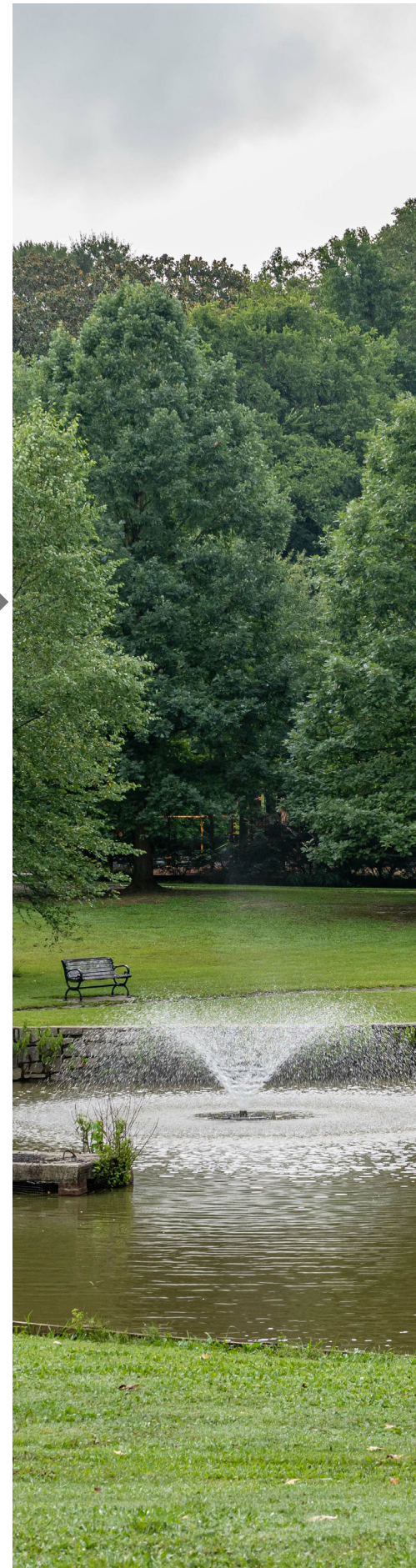
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504)

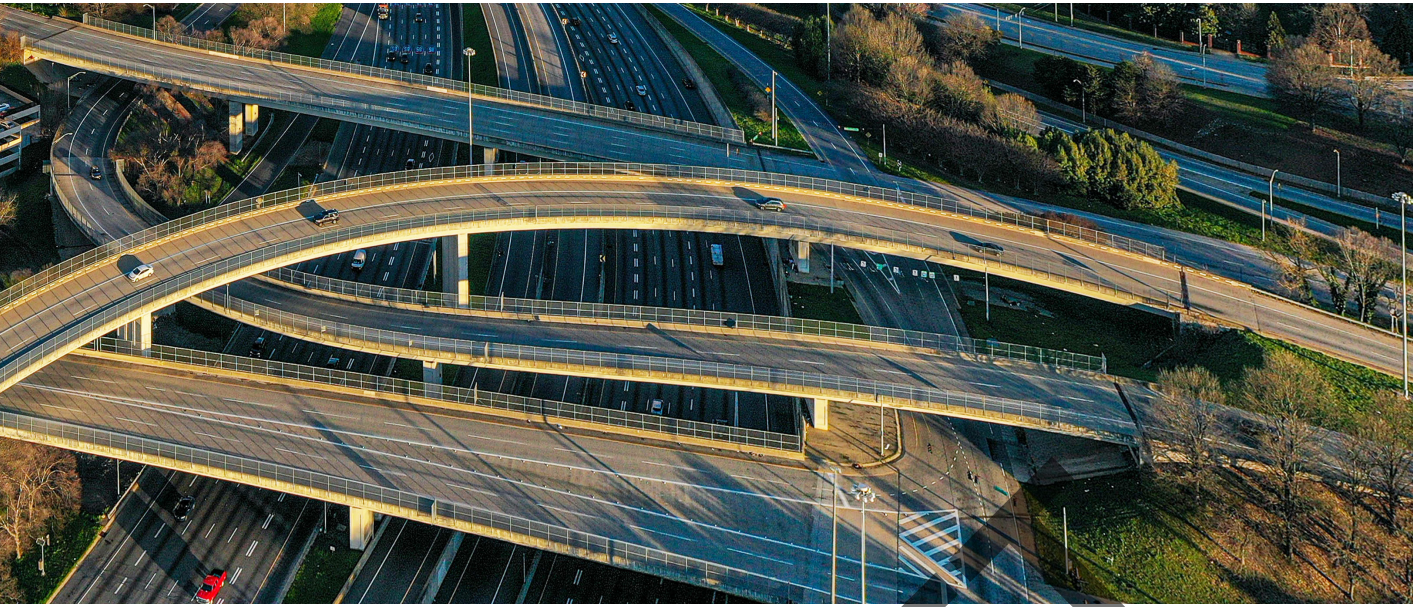
The [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) was passed by Congress in 1990. It was amended by Congress in 2008. This law prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. The ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability just as other civil rights laws prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. The ADA guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to enjoy employment opportunities, purchase goods and services, and participate in state and local government programs.

FHWA’s regulatory responsibilities under Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 include oversight of State and local entities and recipients of Federal funds that are responsible for roadways and pedestrian facilities to ensure that they do not discriminate based on disability in any highway transportation program, activity, service or benefit they provide to the public.

Key FHWA oversight activities include:

- Ensuring that public entities, recipients, and sub-recipients are informed of their responsibilities to provide accessibility in their transportation programs, activities, and facilities;
- Ensuring that public entities, recipients, and subrecipients are applying accessibility standards to all transportation facilities; and
- Ensuring that all complaints filed under the ADA and/or Section 504 are processed in accordance with established complaint procedures.





Executive Order 13116 - Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Executive Order 13166 (August 2000) requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. It is expected that agency plans will provide for such meaningful access consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency. The Executive Order also requires that the federal agencies work to ensure that recipients of federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries.

To assist federal agencies in carrying out these responsibilities, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a Policy Guidance Document (LEP Guidance). The USDOT then issued Policy Guidance Concerning Recipient's Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons, which is modeled after DOJ's guidance.

As described in the guidance, DOT recipients are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.

These steps include four factors that recipients should apply to the various kinds of contacts they have with the public to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps they should take to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people's lives; and
4. The resources available to the recipient and costs.

STATE LAW

In addition to the federal direction highlighted above, the Georgia Open Meetings Act is clear about the need for all governing bodies to meet in person and to notify the public of the meeting and provide opportunities for public review of meeting proceedings.

Georgia Open Meetings Act

The [Georgia Open Meetings Act of 2012](#) pertains to the ARC Board and ARC's Transportation Air Quality Committee (TAQC), which is the MPO Governing Board. The law requires that government meetings be open to the public. The law also requires governmental bodies to provide reasonable notice of all meetings and to make summary notes of public meetings available for public review. Specifically, when there is a gathering of a quorum of any governing body:

- The meeting needs to be open to the public;
- Information about the time, place and dates of regular meetings shall be posted at least one week in advance of the meeting and posted in a conspicuous place;
- An agenda of all matters expected to come before the agency or committee at such a meeting shall be made available as far in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible, sometime within the two-week period immediately prior to the meeting; and
- A summary of the subjects acted on and members present at a meeting shall be written and made available to the public within two business days of the adjournment of the meeting.



ARC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PARTICIPATION

ARC, including the Transportation Planning Department, has adopted strong participation guidelines and protocols to meet and exceed the expectations of federal and state agencies.

ARC's Strategic Framework

ARC has a vision of [One Great Region](#), and that vision flows into the agency's overarching goals. One of these goals directly pertains to public participation. It states, "Diverse stakeholders engage and take a regional approach to solve local issues." This goal is supported by ARC's core values: integrity, excellence, and equity.

ARC's Public Comment Policy

ARC has a policy that is used to guide the process of including public comments at board and committee meetings. The policy requires speakers to sign up for public comment in the 30 minutes before the meeting. It then allocates a window of time for public comment and limits each comment to two minutes. The policy also directs that a summary of the comment and response, if offered, be added to the meeting summary. For MTP/TIP public hearings, the advance sign-up and two-minute guideline are also enforced.

ARC Transportation Participation Plan

ARC, as part of its MPO duties, has a collaborative and comprehensive [Public Participation Plan](#). This plan is one of the MPO's core deliverables. It outlines the procedural aspects of participation to be used in the development of the MTP/TIP, and frames preferred strategies for public and stakeholder communication and collaboration in all phases of the planning process. The Public Participation Plan, prepared with input from both agency and public stakeholders, was adopted in 2019. Key policies and procedures governing public involvement are summarized in this "quick view" from the Public Participation Plan.

Quick View

Implementation of procedures related to these guidelines for ARC's planning and participation processes in accordance with policies, include:

- Public notice of review and comment period through a legal organ, the ARC website, media advisories, and extensive mailing list;
- Reasonable opportunity for review and comment inclusive of a 10 to 30-day review and comment period, depending upon the nature of the amendment and comment period;
- Comment documentation and distribution to policy makers and the general public;
- Opportunities for citizens to participate through focus groups, listening sessions, task forces, and planning teams;
- A formal ARC committee structure for approvals and recommendations; Transportation Coordinating Committee, Transportation and Air Quality Committee, and ARC Board;
- Opportunities for oral and written comment by email, survey responses, fax, phone calls, regular mail, telephone conversation, public hearings, or face-to-face conversations; and,
- A participation evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of public



VOLUME IV | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
HIGHLIGHTS

CONTENTS

Introduction	12
Plan Integration	14
Direct Participation	21
Educational Opportunities	30





INTRODUCTION

Highlights of the 2050 MTP/TIP participation process reflect the 2050 MTP/TIP theme of resetting the baseline for participation in long range transportation planning in metro Atlanta.

Activities are categorized into three areas.

- Plan integration for the MTP/TIP, which equates to indirect MTP/TIP participation;
- Direct public participation for the MTP/TIP; and
- Educational activities to support engagement.

The first area is focused on integrating ARC's programmatic strategies and plans, all of which include participation activities and outcomes that help create priorities for mobility investments. This engagement has a profound, if seemingly indirect, influence on the policies and projects included in the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. The need for an amplified degree of coordination and for integration of specialized plan/participation is also needed for coordination of the influx of new planning programs and local discretionary grant programs under IIJA.

The second area focuses on direct participation for the 2050 MTP/TIP Update, including modified approaches to communications and outreach because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. There was a singular focus on virtual engagement activities throughout 2020-2021 and a gradual return to in-person engagements in 2022. It was not until 2023 that in-person activities were anything that resembled a pre-pandemic norm. The following table, Timeframe of Participation Activities, shows the types of engagement activities and timeline of occurrence.

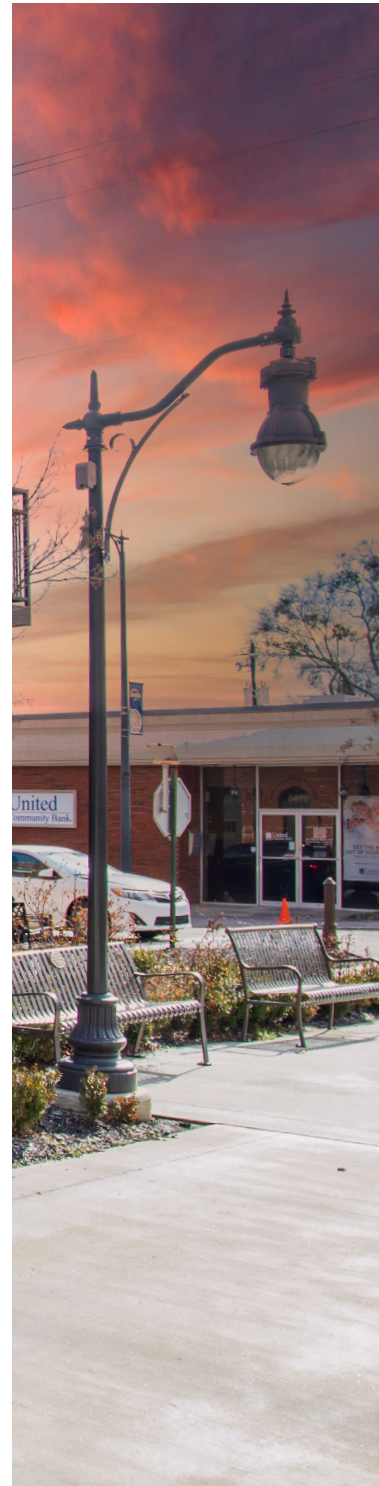
A third aspect and area for stakeholder engagement was the provision of information and education to support informed participation in the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. A webinar series was employed during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep the transportation stakeholder community engaged in ARC's work. In addition, following the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, ARC undertook an initiative to educate and inform elected officials, planning staff and others about opportunities related to the new law. Both virtual public involvement endeavors served and continue to serve as important means for stakeholders to learn more and, therefore, participate more effectively in activities like the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. Input received in connection with informational programs influences the MTP as well, albeit indirectly.



Engagement activities were also considered in terms of reach. To highlight the breadth of reach for each described initiative, a common metric was established. Public participation takes different forms, but each activity requires interaction with a person. Interactions were quantified across plans and initiatives. Since there were different types of interactions across plans, initiatives and activities, we identified public touchpoints as the measure unifying the work.

TIMEFRAME OF PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

MTP/TIP PARTICIPATION HIGHLIGHTS	2020	2021	2022	2023
Studies/Participation Activities integrated in MTP/TIP				
Community Transportation Plans (CTP) Program	•	•	•	
Regional Safety Strategy	•	•	•	
Transportation Demand Management Plan		•	•	•
Live Beyond Expectations Plan	•	•	•	•
Participation Activities directly for MTP/TIP				
MTP/TIP Amendments (Public Comments and Hearings)	•	•	•	•
ARC Board/TAQC Work Session and Interactive Survey				•
Local Government Briefings				•
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Survey (self-selected participation)				•
Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey (statistically valid results)				•
Community Outreach, Meetings and Public Hearings				•
Public Review and Comment Period				•
Educational Opportunities				
Webinar Series	•	•		
IJA Opportunities Database, Webinars, and Newsletters			•	•





Summary of Participation Touchpoints from Integrated Plans

ARC estimates that approximately 70,000 public touchpoints, defined as unique participation interactions, took place in plans, studies, surveys, and initiatives that were integrated into the MTP. This participation provided information and input that informed the MTP. A summary of public touchpoints is presented here with more detail provided in the following sections.

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION TOUCHPOINTS RELATED TO PLAN INTEGRATION

PLANS AND INITIATIVES	TOUCHPOINTS
Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Program	43,788
Regional Safety Strategy*	163*
Transportation Demand Management Plan	4,480
Live Beyond Expectations Plan	1,187
MTP Survey	3,664
MAS Survey	4,852
Virtual Webinar Series	6,257
IIJA Database, Webinar and Newsletter	6,926
Total Touchpoints	71,317

**Very narrowly defined engagement approach that focused on people who were directly engaged in decision-making that affects transportation safety*





CTP OUTREACH

ARC's CTP program generated over 43,000 touchpoints or interaction points, with residents. The largest number of people (28,000) were engaged through surveys, followed by people engaged in public meetings (8,400) that were accessible online.

PLAN INTEGRATION – BRINGING PARTICIPATION FORWARD INTO THE MTP UPDATE

Highlights of the participation brought forward to the MTP/TIP Update from other plans is presented here.

Comprehensive Transportation Plans

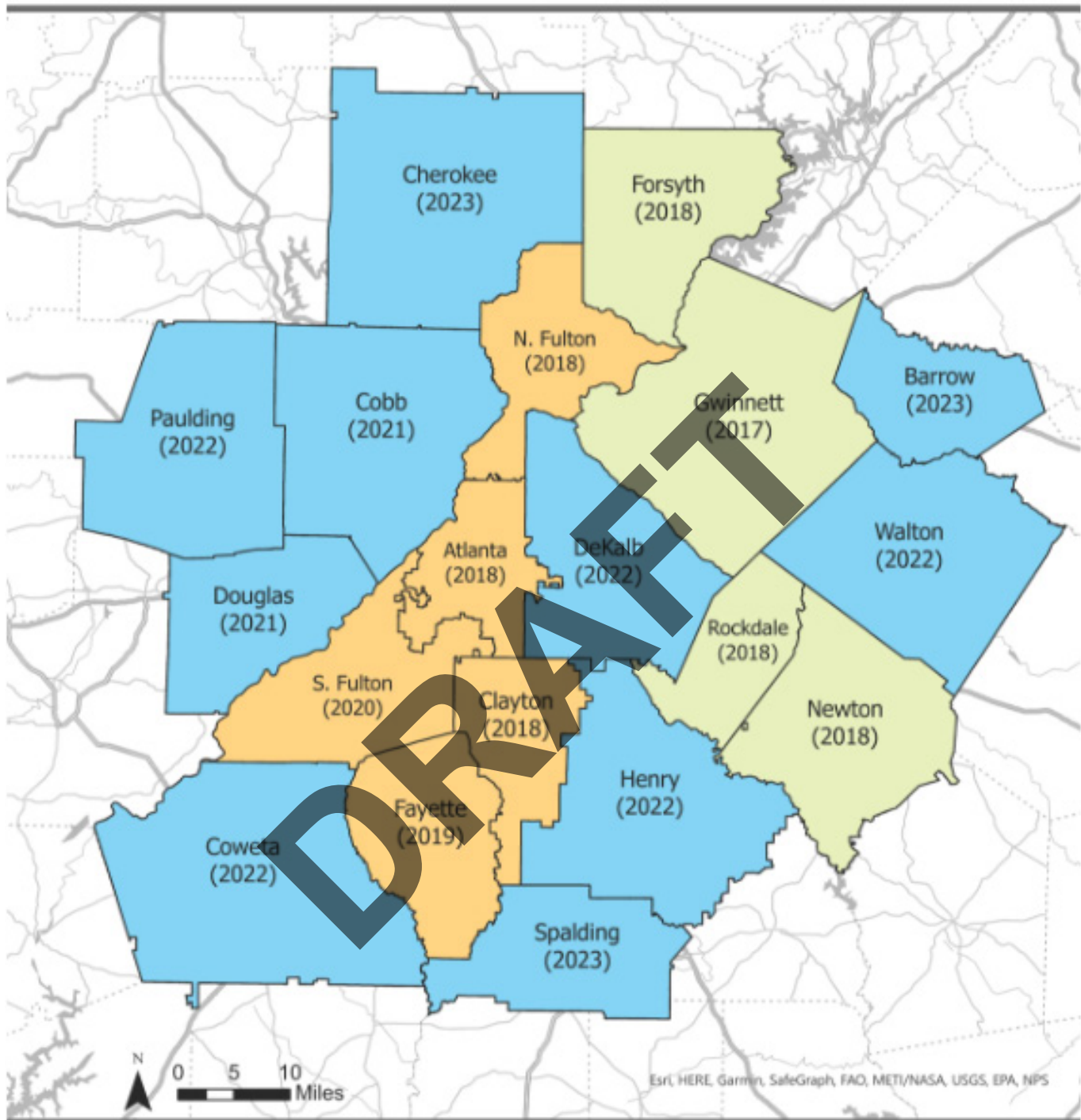
ARC makes federal funding available to assist counties and cities in developing joint long-range transportation plans. These plans serve as the foundational building blocks of regional transportation planning efforts, forming a critical planning pipeline between local priorities and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Projects from the [Comprehensive Transportation Plans \(CTP\) program](#) typically advance into the MTP, using either local, state or federal funds. CTPs are updated on a rotating cycle.

Following completion of a CTP, Counties submit to ARC a prioritized list of transportation investments. These recommendations have typically been vetted through a robust community engagement process. Recommendations from CTPs can knit together previous plans and projects identified at the community level through other planning

processes, such as Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) studies, Community Improvement District (CID) work programs, county or city Capital Improvement Programs (CIP), corridor studies, and other initiatives. In this way, plan integration is also happening at the local level and public input can flow from one plan to the next, scaling from local planning to regional input in the MTP.

To support development of the 2050 MTP/TIP Update, nineteen CTPs were reviewed. The graphic below shows the year they were last updated and shows the ones that were underway or scheduled to get started in 2023. Seven (7) plans were underway or scheduled. The other 12 have been updated within the last 5 years.

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROGRAM

**Legend**

- No update actively underway or pending
 - Update underway
 - Potential update in 2024 or 2025 (tentative)
- (xxxx) Approval date of most recent CTP

Note: Reflects information as of January 2024.

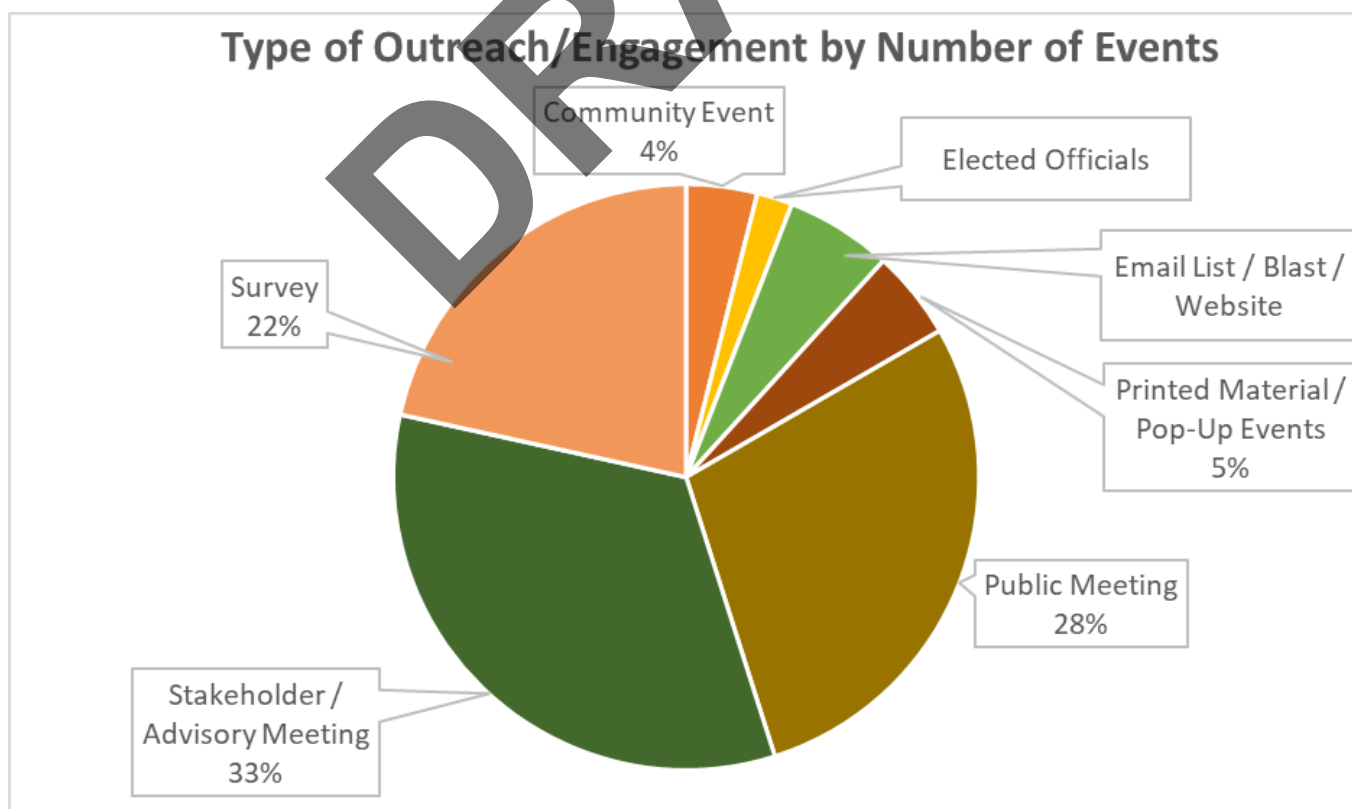
Public engagement for CTPs by county was assessed by counting the number of public engagement touchpoints in each plan. This quantification of public engagement work is summarized in the following table. When taken together, ARC's CTP program generated over 43,000 touchpoints or interaction points, with residents.

The type of outreach conducted and number of touchpoints by type was also quantified to assess what techniques were reaching the most people. The largest number of people (28,000) were engaged through surveys, followed by people engaged in public meetings (8,400) that were accessible to attend and/or watch through an online platform such as the county website or YouTube. It is also very interesting to note that 80% of the CTPs included some sort of survey, indicating that surveys were being used as a preferred technique for public participation.

CTP PUBLIC TOUCHPOINTS SUMMARY BY CITY/COUNTY

COUNTY/CITY	TOUCHPOINTS	COUNTY/CITY	TOUCHPOINTS
Atlanta (City)	4,500	Fulton (North)	2,837
Barrow	45	Fulton (South)	6,337
Cobb	10,594	Gwinnett	7,571
Cherokee	248	Henry	169
Clayton	760	Newton	402
Coweta	2,176	Paulding	475
DeKalb	1,595	Rockdale	79
Douglas	288	Spalding	753
Fayette	2,393	Walton	1,237
Forsyth	1,329	TOTAL	43,788

CTP PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES BY TYPE





REGIONAL SAFETY STRATEGY PUBLIC TOUCHPOINTS SUMMARY BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY

ACTIVITIES	TOUCHPOINTS
Presentations (RSTF, TCC, TAQC)	On-going dialogue throughout development of regional safety strategy
Stakeholder Surveys	42
Transportation Safety Workshop	75
Stakeholder Interviews	16
Citizen Focus Groups	30
TOTAL	163*

**Total does not include committee participation by Regional Safety Task Force (RSTF), Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC), or Transportation Air Quality Committee (TAQC)*

Another predominant engagement activity was the participation of local officials and key stakeholders. 85% of CTPs included key stakeholders and elected officials via briefings, interviews, work sessions, focus groups, and/or advisory committees. This form of outreach, which targets participation activities to match defined audiences was a priority of the CTP participation strategies.

Specialized Plans and Regional Studies

ARC conducts special topical, sub-regional and corridor plans, and studies. The recommendations from these plans and studies also flow into the MTP. Recommendations are developed with extensive stakeholder and public participation, which is highlighted below for three large-scale planning efforts conducted during the MTP development timeframe (2020-2023).

Regional Safety Strategy

ARC's [Regional Safety Strategy](#) plan development included stakeholder and public engagement activities that were designed to bring insight into the safety issues, needs and challenges of the region. What made this participation particularly impactful for the MTP was its focus on policy makers, including planners and stakeholders with the ability to influence safety planning and policy decisions.

A strong base of stakeholders interested in transportation safety, including public and private practitioners, elected officials, advocacy groups, CIDs and citizens participated in virtual public involvement opportunities. This public engagement effort was summarized by counting the number of public engagement touchpoints for each type of outreach activity. When taken together, stakeholder and public engagement activities generated nearly 200 touchpoints, yielding opinions and comments from key stakeholders and the public.

The key themes heard during these activities informed the development of regional safety strategy and countermeasures.

Transportation Demand Management Plan

ARC's [2023 Transportation Demand Management \(TDM\) Plan](#) was designed to reinforce the core services of ARC's Mobility Services Department, expand the impact of community partnerships, and identify future regional emphasis areas for TDM strategies. Input into all these areas was provided during a robust public engagement program implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The public engagement effort was summarized by counting the number of public engagement touchpoints for each type of outreach activity. When taken together, stakeholder and public engagement activities generated approximately 4,500 touchpoints with key stakeholders and the public.

The key themes heard during these activities were instrumental to understanding the features of TDM and informing the plan's recommendations.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC TOUCHPOINTS SUMMARY BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY

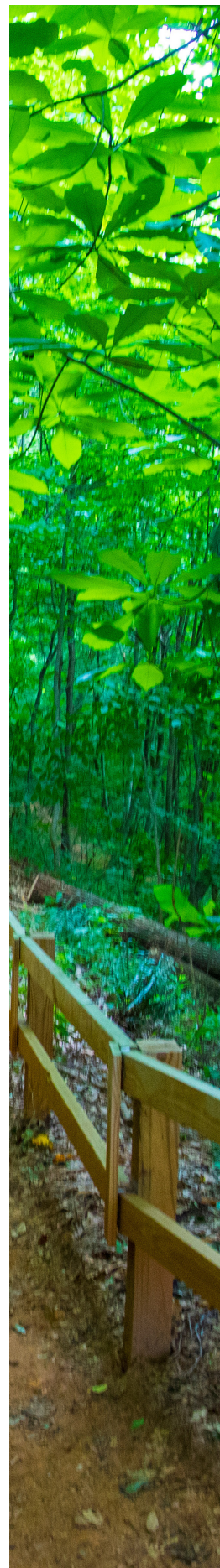
ACTIVITIES	TOUCHPOINTS
Presentations (TDMCC, TCC, TAQC, ARC Board)*	60
Survey 1	3,252
Survey 2	1,090
Stakeholder Forum	12
ESO Interviews	19
Focus Groups	25
Strategy and ESO Group Discussions	22
Total	4,480

*TCC, TAQC and ARC Board participation not quantified.

Live Beyond Expectations Regional Strategic Plan (2020-2025)

The Area Agency on Aging, housed at ARC as the Aging and Independence Services Department, has made identifying and addressing the inequities that create disparities in life expectancy a central focus of the [Live Beyond Expectations \(LBE\) Regional Strategic Plan](#).

To this end, ARC staff designed a 10-county community engagement process to obtain qualitative data about issues that people regarded as affecting their quality of life. Focus groups, conducted in communities where life expectancy discrepancies would be expected, were designed to identify the issues. A subsequent activity at community outreach events asked people which of the identified issues were their top priority. Then, listening sessions were held with local stakeholders to move the discussion from issues and priorities to strategies for addressing them.



For seven of the ten counties in which community engagement was conducted, access to public transportation or increased transportation options was ranked as one of the top issues affecting quality of life. This public input about the need for transportation options, such as public transit, was incorporated into the MTP.

LIVE BEYOND EXPECTATIONS PLAN PARTICIPATION

TECHNIQUE	PEOPLE/ TOUCHPOINTS
Focus groups (identify issues)	100
Voting exercise (clarify priorities)	887
Listening sessions (develop strategies)	200
Total	1,187



DIRECT PARTICIPATION TO SUPPORT THE 2050 MTP/TIP UPDATE

Introduction

Direct participation to support the 2050 MTP/TIP included the MTP/TIP Amendment process and specific activities designed to gather information about public concerns, opinions and comments related to the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. Most direct participation activities, with the exception of the MTP/TIP Amendment comment periods and public hearings, took place in 2023.



ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

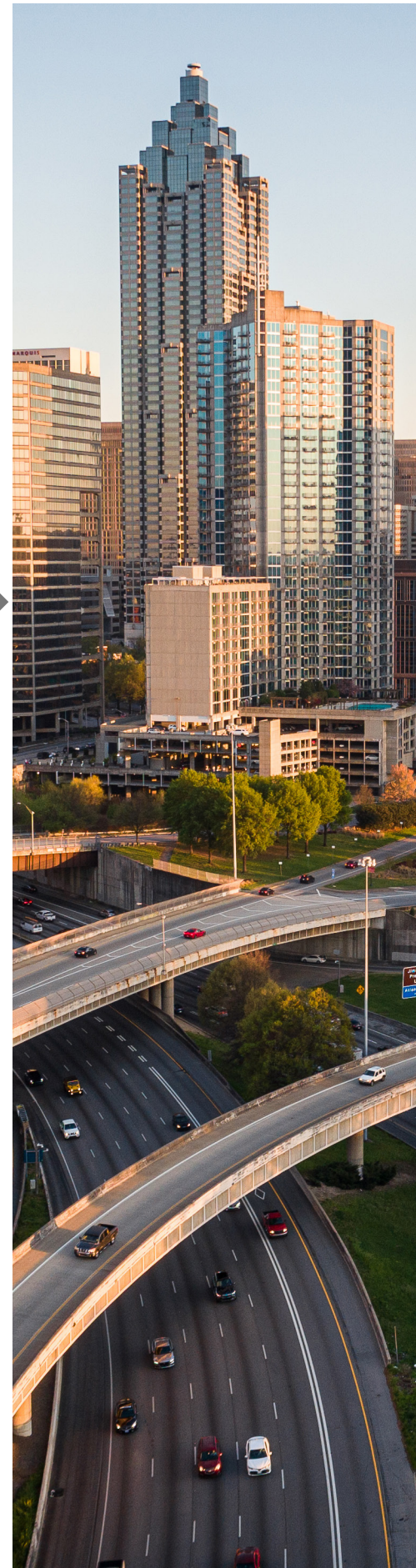
ARC kept the public engaged throughout the MTP planning process by communicating through news releases, blog posts, and social media content. Between January 2022 and December 2023, social media activity resulted in nearly 2,000 public touchpoints.

MTP/TIP Amendment Highlights

Since [The Atlanta Region's Plan 2020](#) update was adopted in February 2020, a total of eight TIP amendments were conducted. The pandemic brought changes to the way [TIP Amendment](#) public comment periods were conducted and introduced the use of virtual public hearings. ARC continued to accept comments electronically via email as it had done in the past. However, the opportunity for the public to come before an ARC committee in person was not feasible during 2020 and 2021.

During the period of March 2020 to February 2022, ARC conducted virtual public hearings for amendments 1 through 4. When ARC resumed in-office operations, in person public hearings resumed with Amendment 5 in May 2022. Since Amendment 5, ARC has maintained in person public hearings while still offering comment submittals via email. The announcement and legal ad posting of Amendments 1 through 8 remained unchanged from 2020 to 2023.

There appeared to be no differences with the volume of verbal comments received due to the pandemic. On average, at least one verbal comment was received regardless of whether the public hearing was virtual or an in-person session. Written comments appeared to be standard and the most popular method for the public. Amendment 5 received ten comments which was the most among all eight amendments.



MTP/TIP AMENDMENT PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS

AMENDMENT	PUBLIC COMMENT DATES	CONFORMITY AMENDMENT?	PUBLIC HEARING TYPE	Comments Received	
				VERBAL	WRITTEN
1	July 31 to August 19, 2020	Yes	Virtual	0	0
2	January 14 to February 11, 2021	No	Virtual	1	2
3	August 5 to 19, 2021	Yes	Virtual	0	0
4	January 24 to February 11, 2022	No	Virtual	1	7
5	May 5 to 18, 2022	No	In-Person	1	10
6	November 4 to 18, 2022	Yes	In-Person	0	1
7	March 16 to April 14, 2023	No	In-Person	0	2
8	June 29 to 28, 2023	No	In-Person	0	0

In addition to required formal notification of MTP/TIP Updates and Amendments, ARC staff in the Office of External Affairs maintain a steady flow of outgoing information and public announcements to support participation in the MTP/TIP process. This communication takes several forms, most notably, news releases, blog posts and social media posts.

ARC NEW RELEASES AND BLOG POST PUBLISHED AS PART OF THE MTP/TIP UPDATE PROCESS

DATE	NEWS RELEASE
11/07/23	Public Notice: Review and Comment Period Open for Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan and FY 2024-27 Transportation Improvement Program
10/26/23	Metro Atlanta Residents Sound Off on Transportation Priorities
10/20/23	Talk to us About Transportation Planning at Atlanta Streets Alive. We Want to Hear From You!
10/07/23	ARC Taking Public Comment on \$168 Billion Metropolitan Transportation Plan
08/09/23	ARC Board Approves Amendment to Transportation Improvement Program
06/27/23	Share Your Views on Transportation and Help Shape the Region's Future
05/10/23	ARC Board Approves Update to Regional Transportation Demand Management Plan
05/03/23	ARC Launches Survey to Gather Input for Long-Range Transportation Plan Update

DATE	NEWS RELEASE
03/21/23	ARC Accepting Public Comment on Transportation Improvement Plan Amendment
12/14/22	ARC Allocates \$235 Million in Federal Funds for Transportation Projects across Metro Atlanta
11/02/22	ARC Accepting Public Comment on Amendment to Region's Transportation Improvement Plan
05/05/22	ARC Seeks Public Comment on Plan to Allocate \$45M in Federal Transportation Funding from New U.S. Infrastructure Law
03/09/23	ARC Board Approves Update to Regional Transportation Improvement Program
01/24/22	ARC Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Update to Regional Transportation Improvement Program
12/01/21	ARC Approves Update to Transportation Improvement Plan
08/12/21	ARC Accepting Public Comment on Update to Transportation Improvement Plan
03/10/21	ARC Board Approves Amendment to Regional Transportation Improvement Plan
01/27/21	ARC Seeks Public Input on Update to Regional Transportation Improvement Plan
09/23/20	BLOG: What the Latest Round of Federal Transportation Funds Means for Metro ATL

Social media posts were used to make announcements and highlight MTP/TIP topics and content. In this representative list of ARC's postings, total engagement, or touchpoints, is quantified as the number of clicks on the post. Between January 2022 and December 2023, social media activity resulted in nearly 2,000 public touchpoints.

ARC SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AS PART OF THE MTP/TIP UPDATE PROCESS

PLATFORM	POST DATE	TOPIC	TOTAL TOUCHPOINTS
Facebook	1/25/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	26
Facebook	1/28/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	33
Facebook	3/30/2022	TIP Amendment Blog	118
Facebook	4/3/2022	TIP Amendment Blog	171
Facebook	5/9/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	14
Facebook	12/19/2022	TIP Amendment Approval Press Release	29
Twitter	5/9/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	40
Twitter	2/6/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	24
Twitter	3/29/2023	TIP Public Input Press Release	20

PLATFORM	POST DATE	TOPIC	TOTAL TOUCHPOINTS
Twitter	6/9/2022	TIP Approval Press Release	15
Twitter	1/28/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	15
Twitter	1/25/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	13
Twitter	4/11/2023	TIP Public Input Press Release	10
LinkedIn	3/30/2022	TIP Amendment Blog	182
LinkedIn	6/9/2022	TIP Approval Press Release	95
LinkedIn	1/25/2022	TIP Public Input Press Release	57
LinkedIn	4/3/2022	TIP Amendment Blog	54
LinkedIn	4/11/2023	TIP Public Input Press Release	26
LinkedIn	8/11/2023	TIP Approval Press Release	92
Twitter	8/11/2023	TIP Approval Press Release	18
Facebook	8/11/2023	TIP Approval Press Release	6
LinkedIn	8/28/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	47
Twitter	8/28/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	27
Facebook	8/28/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	10
LinkedIn	9/6/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	15
Facebook	9/6/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	5
Twitter	9/6/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	2
LinkedIn	10/21/2023	MTP Public Input Event Announcement	55
Twitter	10/21/2023	MTP Public Input Event Announcement	27
Instagram	10/21/2023	MTP Public Input Event Announcement	27
Facebook	10/21/2023	MTP Public Input Event Announcement	0
LinkedIn	10/26/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	32
Instagram	10/26/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	31
Twitter	10/26/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	6
Facebook	10/26/2023	MTP Public Input Blog	11

PLATFORM	POST DATE	TOPIC	TOTAL TOUCHPOINTS
Instagram	11/6/2023	MTP Public Hearing Announcement	70
Instagram	11/6/2023	MTP Public Comment Period Announcement	48
Twitter	11/6/2023	MTP Public Comment Period Announcement	11
Facebook	11/6/2023	MTP Public Comment Period Announcement	4
Twitter	11/8/2023	MTP Public Hearing Announcement	151
LinkedIn	11/8/2023	MTP Public Hearing Announcement	97
Instagram	11/8/2023	MTP Public Hearing Announcement	85
Facebook	11/8/2023	MTP Public Hearing Announcement	19
LinkedIn	11/15/2023	MTP Virtual Public Hearing Announcement	50
Twitter	11/15/2023	MTP Virtual Public Hearing Announcement	35
Instagram	11/15/2023	MTP Virtual Public Hearing Announcement	19
Facebook	11/15/2023	MTP Virtual Public Hearing Announcement	2
TOTAL			1944

ARC Board/Transportation Air Quality Committee Work Session and interactive survey

A central pillar of ARC's direct participation strategy was a work session with the MPO Policy Board. The ARC Board and Transportation Air Quality Committee met on April 12, 2023 for a work session entitled "Policymaker Direction on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update and Future ARC Planning Focus Areas". The meeting included presentations on updated population and employment forecasts for the region. Additional presentations and in-depth discussion included the following:

1. Understanding the change in travel and impacts to the MTP – This topic specifically explored attitudes about remote work and its impact on local communities, decreased number of transit users, and traffic congestion.
2. Regional land use growth trends and scenario planning – This topic focused on observed changes in land development pattern (in the time period since the great recession), housing affordability, decreased office and retail development, and an increase in industrial development – specifically distribution and manufacturing facilities.
3. Building the Plan: Federal Priorities, Financial and Project Planning – Discussion about changes in federal emphasis areas (climate and resilience, workforce development, equity and Justice40) and the impact of these changes on ARC and local government planning. An overview of IJJA program flexibility was also brought forward.

Participation was facilitated using Mentimeter, a real-time polling technology, which led to good discussion, initial insights about priority policy directions for the MTP, and the basis for a more broadly distributed survey instrument.

Results of the ARC Board/TAQC survey exercise are presented in Chapter 3 – Survey Results.





Local Government Outreach

Local elected officials were a primary focus of ARC’s direct participation for the 2050 MTP/ TIP Update. To reach the local government officials, the ARC Executive Director/CEO, supported by other members of the ARC Leadership Team, conducted MTP Briefings at local commission/council meetings throughout the MPO area. These presentations were followed by questions and answers about local transportation priorities and the MTP process. The briefings included distribution of the MTP survey instrument. The local government outreach schedule is shown to the right.

MTP/TIP UPDATE BRIEFINGS

COUNTY	DATE
City of Atlanta Transportation Committee	7/12/23
Cherokee County	7/18/23
Clayton County	6/13/23
Cobb County	5/23/23
Coweta County	8/22/23
DeKalb County	6/20/23
Douglas County	7/31/23
Fayette County	6/8/23
Forsyth County	7/25/23
Fulton County	5/3/23
Gwinnett County	5/2/23
Henry County	3/9/23
Newton County	postponed
Rockdale County	8/1/23

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Public Survey

A communications campaign to promote the MTP Survey was initiated following the ARC Board/TAQC Work Session.

The same questions, presented to the ARC Board/TAQC were tailored for the general public and were used to gauge public opinion about key MTP policy direction. The MTP survey was promoted through a variety of communication techniques, including a news release, ARC website, blog post and social media. Postcards with the survey QR code were distributed at local government meetings and other venues. The survey was actively promoted from April – August 2023 and was officially closed on September 30, 2023.

As of September 25, 2023, 3,664 people had responded to the survey. In general, the response rate was strong in the core counties with lower participation in the outlying counties, as well as the southern crescent of Clayton, Henry and Rockdale counties.

The results of the MTP survey are presented in the **Survey Results** chapter.



Help Shape Metro Atlanta's Future

The Atlanta Regional Commission is reviewing and updating the Atlanta region's long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

This plan allocates more than **\$173 billion** in federal, state, and local transportation funds **through 2050** throughout metro Atlanta. The funds will help:

- Foster the development of **healthy, safe, livable communities**
- **Strategically invest in infrastructure** to provide an equitable, accessible, and safe transportation network and improve the region's resiliency.
- Build a **competitive economy** that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient, with a highly educated and skilled workforce able to meet the needs of present and future employers.
- Ensure the plan is informed by robust **stakeholder participation** to meet community needs.



Take Our Survey!
We Need Your Input

A:R:C
Atlanta Regional Commission

Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey

Since 2013, ARC has conducted the [Metro Atlanta Speaks](#) (MAS) public opinion survey to take the pulse of metro Atlanta residents and help guide the region's planning and decision-making. The 11-county survey offers a snapshot of residents' views on a range of critical issues such as transportation, the economy, housing, and neighborhood quality of life.

The 2023 survey, conducted by Kennesaw State University's A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research, was a hybrid phone and online instrument. It asked 21 questions of 4,852 people across 11 counties about key quality-of-life issues in August 2023. While this area is smaller than the MPO areas, results are representative of 85% of the MPO population. The 11-county population is 4.9 million, which is 85% of the MPO population of 5.7 million.

Survey results are statistically significant—at the top line—for each of the 11 counties in the ARC Region and for the city of Atlanta. The margins of error are plus or minus 1.5% for the 11-county region, and plus or minus 3.8% to 5% for the individual jurisdictions.

The results of the MAS survey are presented in the [Survey Results](#) chapter.



INNOVATIVE MTP SURVEY

ARC developed a survey to gauge public opinion about key MTP policy issues. The survey was promoted by the agency's communications team, and postcards with a survey QR code were distributed at local government meetings. In all, 3,664 people responded to the survey.

Community Outreach, Meetings, and Public Hearings

Additional community outreach efforts were used to kick off the MTP Public Comment Period.

During the Atlanta Streets Alive event on October 22, 2023, ARC staff engaged actively with people from all over the region walking, cycling, rolling, and dancing on Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta. Atlanta Streets Alive, initiated in 2010 and now operated by the City of Atlanta's Department of Transportation, features open street events in the Spring and Fall. For the October event, the city closed Peachtree Street to vehicular traffic over three miles, inviting the public to take over the lanes usually filled with cars. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about the plan, ask questions, and share their transportation priorities. According to attendance estimates by Midtown Alliance using Placer data, 9,675 people attended in Midtown and 3,749 were in Downtown Atlanta for the event. ARC had a booth on Peachtree Street and interacted with attendees all day.

ARC staff also spoke at/participated in several professional association meetings, including the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) on 6/9, Advance ATL on 6/29, and Georgia Planning Association (GPA) on 9/14. These events were used to promote the MTP survey.



Two public hearings were held during the official public comment period for the MTP. A traditional public hearing was held on November 8, 2023. Attendance was limited and no public comment was offered.

The second public hearing was conducted as part of a pilot program for Virtual Public Involvement (VPI). It was held on the evening of November 15, 2023. 59 people (not including ARC staff) attended this event and stayed online for an average of 62 minutes each. The event consisted of two presentations of MTP highlights (one at 5PM and one at 6 PM). People were invited to submit formal comments via a community engagement platform or via the chat feature of zoom meetings. These comments elicited real-time responses from a panel of ARC staff. Attendees offered appreciatory remarks, thanking ARC for their thoughtful and open-minded responses to comments received. Representatives from GDOT and FHWA also attended the event.

Public Review and Comment Period

The Draft 2050 MTP/TIP Update documentation was released for public review on October 27, 2023. The public comment period was open from October 27 – December 8, 2023.

Notification of the public review and comment period occurred via publication of public notices and legal ads in the official legal organ for the ARC region, as well as via a press release issued by ARC's Office of External Affairs. The ARC website and social media channels amplified the announcement.

Public comments and responses are grouped by topic and theme and shown, along with an overview of ARC's response, in the **Survey Results** chapter. Each individual comment and response is contained in **Appendix 1 - Public Comments and Responses**.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

ARC's Webinar Series

ARC embraced virtual public engagement early in the COVID-19 Pandemic, creating a webinar series that included 30 events and 6,300 participants. Topics for the webinars reflected the full spectrum of ARC's operations, including, but not limited to, transportation, economy, community, participation, and equity. This series provided timely information about ARC's work through the COVID-19 pandemic.

An overview of the series is presented in the following table.

ARC WEBINAR SERIES (2020-2021)

DATE	WEBINAR TITLE	# OF ATTENDEES	# YOUTUBE VIEWS
18-May-21	Government Support for Small-Business	79	N/A
20-Apr-21	Connecting Trails, Connecting Communities*	162	338
30-Mar-21	How COVID-19 Vaccines could Boost ATL's Economy	75	N/A
16-Mar-21	The Importance of COVID-19 Data	88	23
15-Dec-20	Equity in Arts Funding	163	234
8-Dec-20	Metro Atlanta Speaks Results 2020*	153	83
1-Dec-20	Community-led Storytelling and Engagement*	124	109
10-Nov-20	Accessible Engagement Tools*	108	37
29-Oct-20	People, Parks, Paths, and the Pandemic*	75	93
20-Oct-20	Pursuing Equity in the American South*	129	36
13-Oct-20	Worksource Metro Atlanta: A Regional Approach	63	15
6-Oct-20	Breaking Barriers to Local Food Access	110	43
22-Sep-20	What We Know (or Don't Know) about the Economic Impact of COVID-19	226	57



DATE	WEBINAR TITLE	# OF ATTENDEES	# YOUTUBE VIEWS
17-Sep-20	Supporting Dementia at Home	213	107
25-Aug-20	Chattahoochee Riverlands: A Vision to Transform the River into a Regional Focal Point*	273	137
11-Aug-20	How the Aging Network Shifted to Meet the Needs of Older Persons	175	66
28-Jul-20	Priming your Community for Place-Based Economic Development	138	48
21-Jul-20	What We Know (Or Think We Know) About the Economic Impact of COVID-19	340	N/A
14-Jul-20	Going Back to School in the Midst of COVID-19	404	?
23-Jun-20	How ARC is Serving the Region's Older Residents during COVID-19	132	34
16-Jun-20	Regional Philanthropic Response to the COVID-19 Crisis	41	15
2-Jun-20	Adapting Municipal Budgets in Response to COVID-19	124	6
26-May-20	Supporting Local Businesses during COVID-19	78	11
19-May-20	Federal Funding for Capital and Planning Projects to Address Impacts of COVID-19	199	11
12-May-20	Inclusive Community Engagement during COVID-19 and Beyond*	217	24
28-Apr-20	COVID-19 Economic Impacts on Metro Atlanta	229	23
21-Apr-20	ARC Training - Resources for Local Governments	156	12
9-Apr-20	ARC Training - Resources for Meetings and Public Engagement*	251	15
6-Apr-20	Helping Local Governments Analyze COVID-19 Data	138	8
17-Mar-20	Working Remotely for Local Governments	Unknown	9
TOTAL		4663	1594

*Transportation related

IIJA OPPORTUNITIES DATABASE, WEBINAR, AND NEWSLETTER

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Background

Another indirect input to the 2050 MTP/TIP Update was the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Opportunities Database, Webinar and Newsletter.

In November 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) into law. Also commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), it is the largest long-term investment in infrastructure and the economy in our nation's history. IIJA provides \$1.3 trillion over fiscal years 2022 through 2026 in new Federal investment in infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and mass transit, water supply, resilience, and broadband. Roughly half this amount is dedicated specifically to transportation.

IIJA presents the region with tremendous opportunity, but also poses significant implementation challenges due to its multidisciplinary nature. A wide array of traditional and new federal transportation planning programs will now be implemented within an interrelated funding structure that includes water quality, broadband internet service, clean energy, cybersecurity and other types of infrastructure. This has forced a reexamination of how ARC's role as an MPO relates to its other functional areas, as well as whether the agency's mission should expand into additional disciplines. The accelerated adoption of clean energy technologies in the transportation sector, in particular, will have major implications on planning and infrastructure investment priorities.

Outreach

As is typical, anytime new federal transportation legislation is enacted, ARC staff ensured that planning partners and elected officials were made aware of the various programs, funding levels, and process requirements through traditional committee briefings. However, IIJA necessitated a more focused and long-term approach due to the law's multidisciplinary complexity and significant emphasis on competitive discretionary programs.

Discretionary programs, where an applicant (most notably, a local government) can request funding directly from a federal agency rather than receiving dedicated formula-based funding, became a notable component of the transportation planning process with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009, in response to the Great Recession. Available funding amounts were typically modest, averaging less than \$1 billion annually. But IIJA changed the landscape, with hundreds of billions of dollars of federal funding available through dozens of programs over its five-year timeframe. The need to ensure that regional implementation agencies and decision-makers were aware of these opportunities as they became available was obvious.



In response to this challenge, ARC developed the [Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act Resource Database](#), an online searchable database of IIJA programs. The database includes both formula and discretionary programs across all the elements of the law, not just those under the jurisdiction of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). Users can filter the 400+ programs based on the category of infrastructure, the type of funding, and eligible recipients. By default, the database automatically filters out programs which are not of direct relevance to the Atlanta region, such as those dedicated to Native American tribal lands, coastal communities, or the Bureau of Land Management. But a simple toggle will show all programs, expanding the database's relevance to the entire state and nation.

In the example screenshot below, the results have been filtered to show only discretionary transportation programs open to county governments. Links within the search results take visitors to pages with additional information on the programs, or to the specific page where they can apply for funding if the application window is currently active.

ARC'S IIJA RESOURCE DATABASE

Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act Resource Database

☒ Metro Atlanta Opportunities
 ☐ All Opportunities

FILTER PROGRAMS BY:
 Category / Sub Category
Funding Type
Eligible Recipients

OR, SEARCH BY NAME: SEARCH

[ARC Home](#) / [Infrastructure and Investments Job Act](#) / Resource Database

PROGRAMS FILTERED BY:
 Transportation
Counties
Competitive

35 RESULTS UPDATED OCTOBER 30
 EMAIL PAGE
PRINT PAGE
COPY PAGE LINK


PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	AGENCY / BUREAU	FUNDING	ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS	APPLY
Bridge Investment Program	The Bridge Investment Program will support projects to improve bridge and culvert condition, safety, efficiency, and reliability. ¹	Transportation Roads, Bridges and Major Projects	Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration	\$15,465,000,000 ¹	Cities, Counties, Federal Agencies, MPOs, States/Territories, Transit Agencies, Tribes, Other Entities ¹	Apply Now ¹
FTA 5337 Program - Rail Vehicle Replacement Grants	Capital projects for the replacement of rail rolling stock. Not more than three new competitive awards to eligible projects may be announced each fiscal year. FTA may select projects for multi-year awards. ¹	Transportation Public Transportation	Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration	\$1,500,000,000 ¹	States/Territories, Counties, Cities, Transit Agencies	Apply Now ¹

For the most recent 12-month reporting period, the database had 6,226 unique views. Nearly one-half of visitors arrived at the page via a Google search. About 10% came from clicking on the link within a monthly newsletter which is distributed to roughly 700 email addresses. The newsletter highlights important IIJA related announcements from ARC and federal agencies, provides a summary of currently open funding opportunities, indicates which programs are likely to become open for applications soon, and provides links to a wide array of technical resource for potential applicants. The October 2023 newsletter was opened by 45% of recipients and roughly one in seven recipients clicked on one or more links.

IIJA PROGRAM COORDINATION PUBLIC TOUCHPOINTS BY COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY	TOUCHPOINTS
Website unique views (past 12 months)	6,226
Newsletter sign-up	700
TOTAL	6,926

EXAMPLES THE ARC'S MONTHLY IIJA NEWSLETTER



Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE ATLANTA REGION

Educate, Communicate, Prepare & Advise

News, Announcements, Resources, Funding Opportunities from the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act

atlantaregional.org/iija

November, 2023

Let ARC help you find the funding opportunities most relevant to the Atlanta region.

[SEARCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES](#)

Announcements

Do you want the region to be more successful in securing federal discretionary projects? Here's how you can help ARC achieve that goal.

In the coming weeks, ARC is embarking on an analysis of federal IIJA program awards in an effort to discern some of the themes that are common to successful project applications. To inform parts of this analysis, we would like to gather application examples from regional, city, and county partners.

Please find below a list of eight federal programs that we will focus the initial phase of this analysis on:

- National Infrastructure Project Assistance - MEGA
- Nationally Significant Freight & Highway Projects - INFRA
- Advanced Transportation Technologies and Innovative Mobility Deployment - ATTIMD / ATTAIN
- Railroad Crossing Elimination Program

Funding Opportunities Key Regional Programs

CURRENTLY OPEN

Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator (NEVI Setaside)

Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration
Application Due Date: November 13, 2023

Purpose: Strategically deploy electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and establish an interconnected network to facilitate data collection, access, and reliability. Sets aside 10% of funding for discretionary grants to State and local governments that require additional assistance to strategically deploy EV charging infrastructure.

Details: Although NEVI is a formula program, the law sets aside 10% of overall funding for grants to State and local governments that require additional assistance to strategically deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure. An initial \$100M of FY 2022 and FY 2023 funding will focus on replacing broken or non-operational EV chargers to improve the reliability of existing EV charging infrastructure. Eligibility is limited to those listed as "Temporarily Unavailable" in the Alternative Fuels Station Locator, which is managed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). A final list of eligible chargers was published on the application website on October 11. Applications are due November 13, 2023. A 20% match is required.

[Read more...](#)

Bridge Investment Program (Large Bridge Component)

Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration
Application Due Date: November 27, 2023

Purpose: The Bridge Investment Program will support projects to improve bridge and culvert condition, safety, efficiency, and reliability.

Details: Applications for up to \$545 million of FY 2023 and 2024 funding for the Large Bridge Project component of the program are due November 27, 2023. The same NOFO will be used for future years, with rolling dates also established for FY 2025 and 2026 funds. The project must have total eligible costs greater than \$100 million to qualify for the program. Award amounts will be a minimum of \$50 million, but no more than 50% of the eligible costs.

[Read more...](#)

NEW

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program

Environmental Protection Agency
Application Due Date: April 1, 2024

Purpose: The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program provides \$4.6 billion in grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement ambitious plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. This program is funded under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Details: Applications for \$4.6 billion of implementation grants are due April 1, 2024. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply is not required, but due February 1, 2024. The competition is open to cities, counties, regions, states, and others to implement measures included in a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) under phase 1 of the CPRG program in Georgia. Phase 1 PCAPs are being produced by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the State of

Noteworthy IIJA Related Press Releases, Guidance and Other News

WEBINARS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

NEW - Thriving Communities Program Webinars (Recorded)

[Webinar on Utilizing DOT Data and Mapping Tools for Stronger Grant Applications \(Recorded\)](#)

[Webinar on Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator \(Recorded\)](#)

Transportation Coordinating Committee Meetings (November 3 and 17)

IIJA FUNDING AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW: Safe Streets and Roads for All

On October 27, USDOT announced that 236 communities will receive a total of \$82 million for planning and demonstration projects. This is the first of two FY 2023 announcements for the SSRA program. A second announcement is expected in December and will include additional planning and demonstration grants, as well as implementation grants. Six awards were made to the Atlanta region: Douglas County (\$400,000); Henry County (\$200,000); Newton County (\$400,000); City of Chamblee (\$240,000); City of Clarkston (\$1,000,000); City of Union City (\$240,000).

NEW: Regional Infrastructure Accelerators (RIA) Program

On September 13, USDOT announced \$24 million of funding awards to 24 recipients under the RIA program. This program accelerates project delivery and clears barriers for credit-worthy projects by funding and encouraging best practices in project planning, studies and analysis, preliminary engineering, and design. In the Atlanta region, MARTA received \$1.75 million.

IIJA Implementation Dashboard (USDOT)

IIJA Funding Locations Mapping Tool (General Services Administration)

USDOT Discretionary Grants Dashboard

Tracking Federal Investments in Local Infrastructure Projects (National League of Cities)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ADDITIONAL IIJA RESOURCES

NEW: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Federal Requirements - Guidance for Local & Tribal Agencies (FHWA)

[ARC IIJA Resource Site and Searchable Database of Funding Programs](#)

[ARC IIJA Resource Site and Searchable Database of Funding Programs](#)



VOLUME IV | SURVEY RESULTS

CONTENTS

Overview	36
ARC Board / TAQC Interactive Survey	38
Metropolitan Transportation Survey	39
Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey	44
Comparative Look at Survey Findings	49
Next Steps	50



OVERVIEW

ARC obtained public input directly for the 2050 MTP/TIP Update through three distinct but inter-related survey efforts. These surveys were designed to have overlapping questions that would facilitate a multi-faceted audience profile.

The surveys included:

1. The ARC Board/ Transportation Air Quality Committee (TAQC) Interactive Survey – An all-day work session was held on April 8, 2023. The purpose of the event was to garner policy level input to inform the MTP. The discussion was guided by a real-time interactive survey. The format was for staff to present information as background and context for survey questions. Then Mentimeter, an interactive polling program, was used to gather responses. Survey results for each question were then shown on the screens in the room. Background context and data plus survey results formed a basis for subsequent policy maker discussion. Discussion was used as input to help shape the MTP.

The ARC Board/Transportation Air Quality Committee work session was attended by 23 participants, who were characterized as eight elected officials, twelve citizen and agency representatives, two appointed members and one other respondent. Approximately half of the attendees were new to their roles, having served less than two years in their capacity as an ARC board member.

2. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Survey (May 1 – August 31, 2023) The interactive board survey was then modified for public use. The MTP survey was designed as a comprehensive inquiry into several planning topics relevant to long-range planning for transportation. As a result, ARC received public input covering a broad spectrum of topics about transportation and community, mobility and investment allocation preferences, best locations for development, and other topics, such as climate change and interest in electric vehicles.

The MTP survey was taken by 3,664 people. The survey was available on the ARC website and was actively promoted through ARC communication channels and social media. The survey was also promoted during local government briefings to county commissions within the Metropolitan Planning Organization jurisdiction.

3. Metro Atlanta Speaks (August 2022) – The annual Metro Atlanta Speaks survey, which began in 2013, is the largest of its kind in the Atlanta region. It offers a snapshot of residents' views on a range of critical issues such as transportation, the economy, housing, and neighborhood quality of life. In 2023, Metro Atlanta Speaks covered a 11-county region and is statistically significant to the county level, as well as for the City of Atlanta. The margins of error are plus or minus 1.5% for the 11-county region, and plus or minus 3.8% to 5% for the individual jurisdictions.

The 2023 survey, conducted by Kennesaw State University's A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research, was a hybrid phone and online instrument. It asked 21 questions of 4,852 people. Survey results are statistically significant at the top line for each of the 11 counties in the core ARC region and for the City of Atlanta. In addition to questions that have been asked over time, the 2023 Metro Atlanta Speaks survey included several new questions designed to supplement information received from the MTP survey. These questions were related to sentiment about the future, mobility, and investment allocation preferences, best locations for development, and other topics, such as climate change and interest in electric vehicles.



Key TakeAways from Survey Results

ARC staff identified themes that were woven through all survey responses. The themes provide background context and insight into board member priorities and public opinion, which informed the MTP about issues of concern, preferences, and priorities. The themes are described for each survey. They are:

1. The future is uncertain. Post-pandemic changes in social and economic conditions have left people feeling uncertain about the future.
2. Transportation priorities represent the diversity of the region. Transportation investment allocation preferences are shaped by local experience.
3. New development direction. There are different ideas about the best locations to handle new development with most respondents favoring existing centers and transportation corridors as the location for growth.

The following sections contain highlights from each survey. Survey results are included in **Appendices 3, 4, and 5**.





ARC BOARD/TRANSPORTATION AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE INTERACTIVE SURVEY

ARC's current board/committee membership is characterized by elected officials and citizens who are new to their positions on the board. At the time of the survey, 50% of board members present had been in their position for less than two years.

The Future is Uncertain

When asked to name the top three issues facing residents in metro Atlanta, transportation topped the list, followed by crime and public education. While this is not surprising, uncertainty became evident in a question about optimism for the future. Eighty percent of respondents stated their belief that living conditions in metro Atlanta will be the same or worse in three to four years.

Transportation Priorities

Responses about transportation funding priorities ranked road maintenance and operations slightly above transit and road expansion. Top categories for funding strategic investments were somewhat evenly dispersed among roadway operations/expansion, transit expansion and bicycle/pedestrian improvements. Electric vehicles and electrification infrastructure were noted to have potential to be very impactful to the future of transportation. When asked what items should be emphasized in 2050 MTP/TIP Update, transit expansion and connectivity was cited most often.

New Development Direction

Board members responded that new development and future growth should primarily be directed toward existing town centers, near transit stations, or along existing transportation corridors. While some suggested that future growth should occur in undeveloped areas on the periphery of the region, this was a minority position.

For further discussion

The board offered opinion about several other important policy topics, such as housing affordability, climate change as a federal priority, remote work, and the emergence of metro Atlanta as a national manufacturing and distribution hub. These topics were flagged for continued discussion.

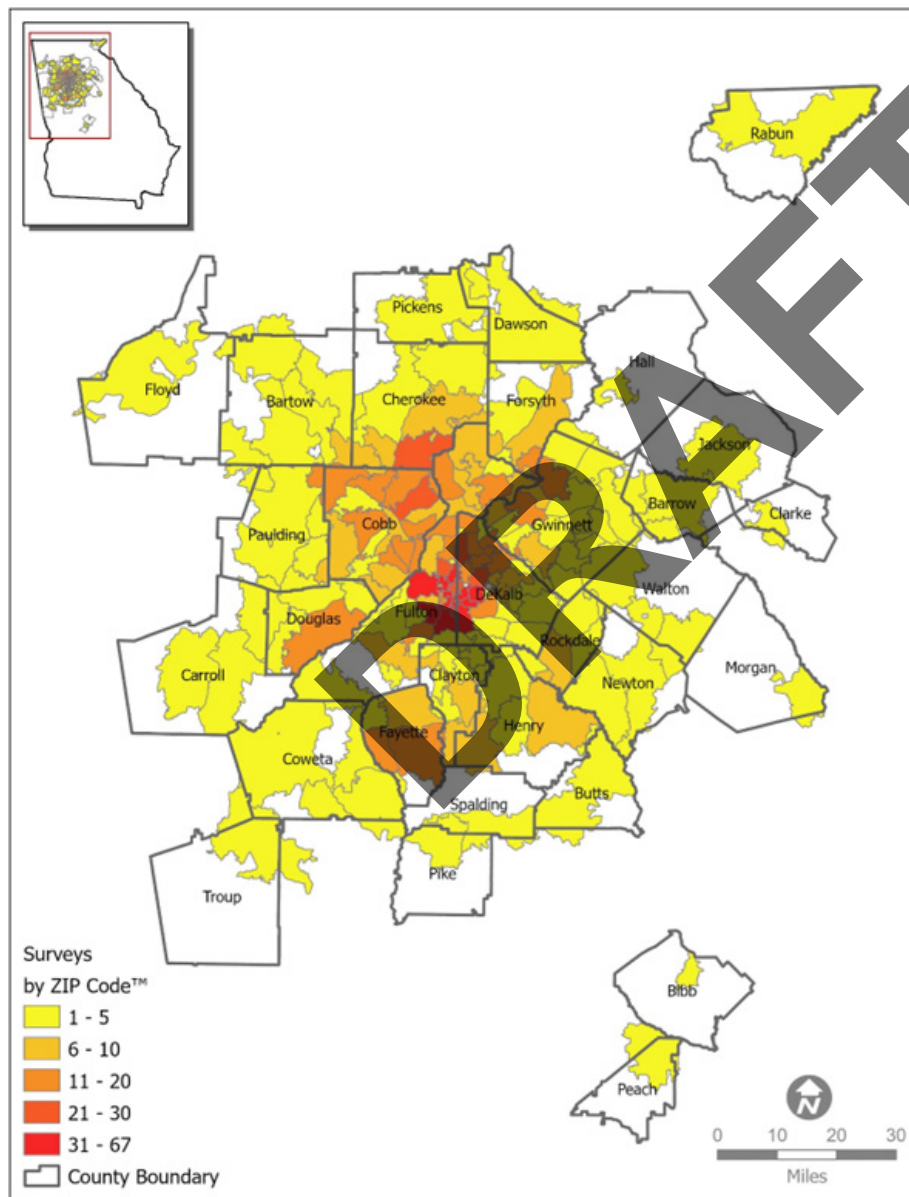
The survey results can be found in [Appendix 3](#).



METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN SURVEY

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan Survey (MTP Survey) was designed to parallel the board member survey. It was completed by 3,664 people. The geographic location of these respondents was heavily skewed toward core MPO jurisdictions (City of Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Cobb Counties). The map below shows the distribution of survey respondents.

MTP SURVEY: DISTRIBUTION OF MTP SURVEY RESPONDENTS



The MTP survey allowed responses to any and all questions and did not require the participant to complete the entire survey. For this reason, the total number of responses for the MTP survey vary by question. Highlights of the survey follow.

The Future is Uncertain

When asked about the top three issues facing residents in metro Atlanta, respondents stated that transportation was top issue, followed by crime and public education. Uncertainty about the future became more evident when respondents were asked about future living conditions in metro Atlanta. Of the total responses, 30% thought it would be about the same. Only 15% thought they would be better than today. And nearly 50% of respondents stated that living conditions in three to four years would be worse or much worse than today. The remaining 7% weren't sure.

Transportation Priorities

MTP survey respondents were asked to identify the most serious issue related to roads in metro Atlanta. Results indicated that traffic congestion remains a top priority.

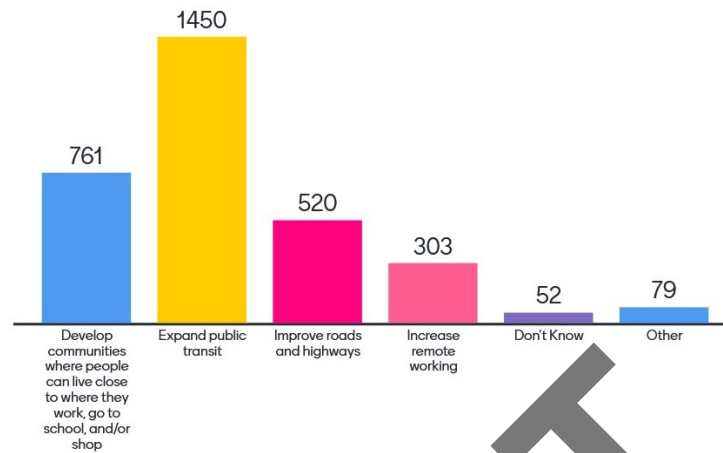
Respondents were asked a parallel question about public transportation. The need to expand the transit system was identified as the most serious issue.

Respondents were also asked a more general question about what they thought would be the best long-term solution to traffic congestion. Here, a strong majority of responses were directed away from roads and highways. Forty-five percent highlighted transit system expansion and 24% said that developing communities where people can live close to where they work, go to school and/or shop would be the best solution. An additional 10% would increase remote working.



MTP SURVEY QUESTION

Which of the following would be the best long-term solution to the traffic problems in the Metro Atlanta area?

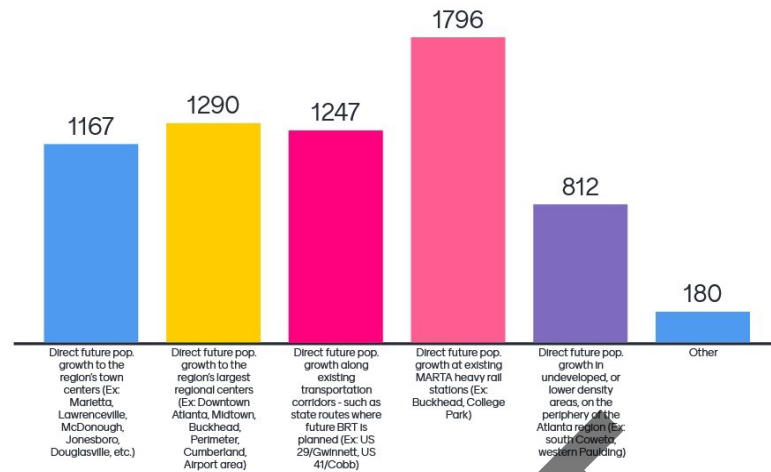


When asked to allocate investment for transportation funding, responses show funding was split between transit, road, and alternative transportation options. In aggregate, respondents would allocate 24% of funding for improving existing transit service, 10% for transit maintenance, and 37% for investment to the road system, including maintenance, operational improvements, and expansion. Twenty-two percent would be allocated to the bike/ped and trail system and 8% to other programs that reduce vehicle trips, such as work-from-home programs and transit fare reductions.

Strategic Infrastructure Investment



Responding to Expected Future Growth.



New Development Direction

The public was also asked about where they thought new growth and development should be located. A slight plurality of respondents pointed to existing town centers where ARC's Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) Program and local investment have seen success. The overall preference distribution was roughly equal across options which included, "add housing near transit stations" and "provide incentives to build affordable housing." These responses can be combined with feedback from elected officials and other outreach efforts to determine how the LCI program should evolve.

For Further Discussion

The MTP survey asked several open-ended questions about housing affordability (3,324 responses), climate change (2,691 responses) and future growth/development patterns (2,059 responses). These topics have been flagged for further discussion in 2024.

The MTP survey results can be found in [Appendix 4](#).



METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS SURVEY

The [Metro Atlanta Speaks](#) (MAS) survey has been conducted annually since 2013. The 2023 survey included several new questions related to housing affordability, automation/artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, and climate change. It also revisited transportation priorities and land use preferences of residents, asking the questions in a way that provides comparison with MTP survey results.

The 2023 MAS survey was completed by 4,852 people in the ARC region. The sample size allows for statistically valid public opinion results for the ARC region. Results are also statistically significant at the county level. The ARC region encompasses 11 of the 20 counties of the MPO area.

The Future is Uncertain

When asked about the top three issues facing residents in metro Atlanta, respondents (26.5%) most frequently cited crime as the biggest problem. This response was followed closely by the economy (24.4%). Transportation (10.9%) and human services (10.8%) were lower down on the list.

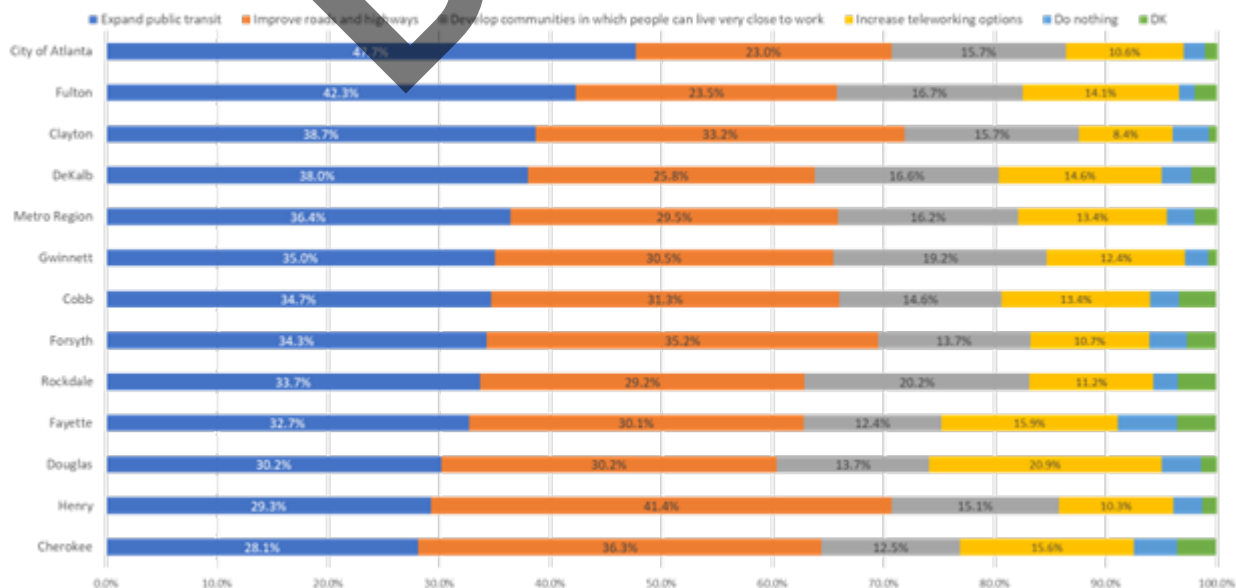
The survey also found that residents are more pessimistic about the future than they have been since ARC began administering MAS in 2013. When asked what living conditions would be like in three to four years 36.5% said it would be worse and 35% said about the same. Only 25% said it would be better, which was down from 32% in August 2020 when the pandemic was in full swing.

Support for public transit is strong. About 90% of respondents feel an improved public transit system is either “very important” or “somewhat important” to the future of metro Atlanta. However, there is a caveat. Less than half said they would pay more taxes to fund transit improvements.

Respondents were also asked a general question about what they thought would be the best long-term solution to traffic congestion. There was a plurality of responses to this question, with 36% choosing “expand public transit,” 29% choosing “improve roads and highways,” and 31% choosing either “development of communities where people can live and work in close proximity” or “increases in telecommuting.”

Transportation Priorities

METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE THE BEST LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO THE TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN THE METRO ATLANTA AREA?



Rather than asking about transportation investment allocation, the MAS survey inquired about willingness to pay more in taxes to fund expansion of regional public transit. At the 11-county regional level, 41% agree or strongly agree about paying more in taxes to fund regional public transit. At the same time, 51% either disagree or strongly disagree. They are not willing to pay more in taxes to fund expanded public transit that includes buses and rail. Results vary by county, with City of Atlanta and Fulton County showing most survey respondents are in agreement. In the case of DeKalb, Cobb and Gwinnett, there is a slight majority of respondents unwilling to pay more. Other counties are shown in the following chart.

Results also vary by age, with 50 to 60% of younger people (44 and younger) in favor of additional tax to fund expanded transit and 35 to 45% of older people (45 and older) not in favor.



METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS: SKEPTICISM ABOUT TRANSIT

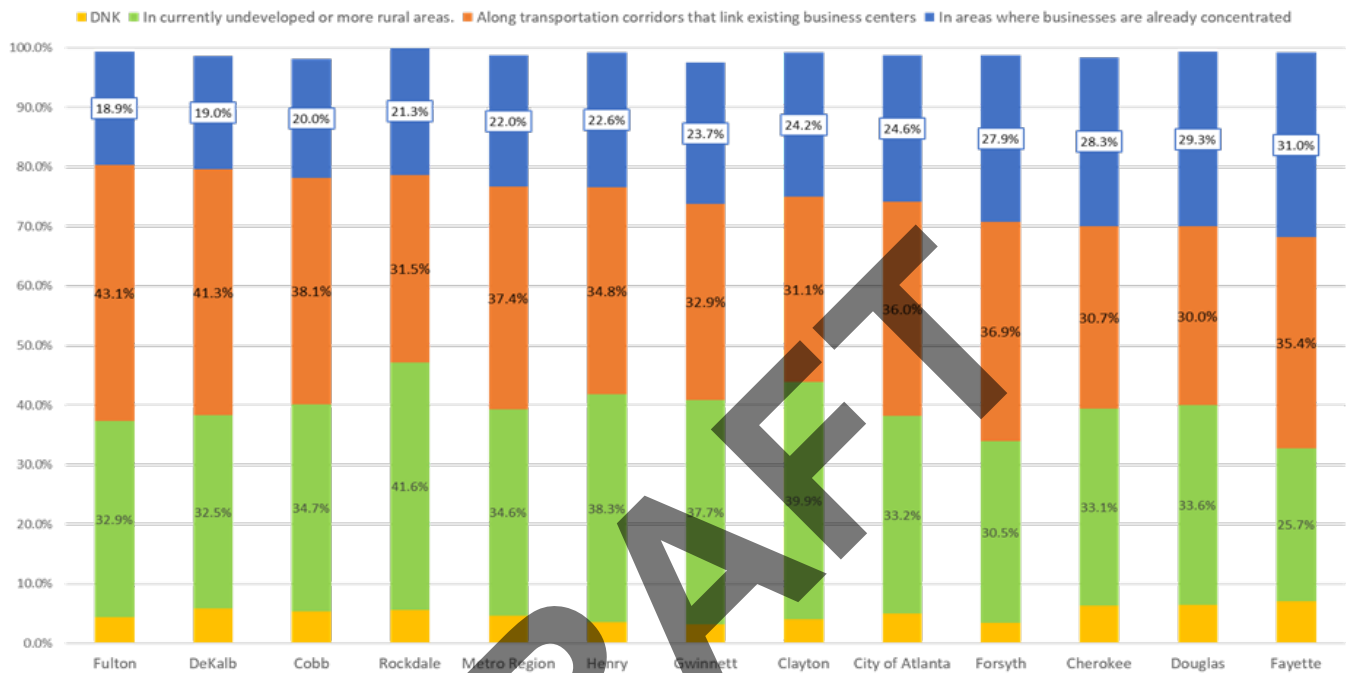
A Lot of Skepticism About Expanding Transit...



New Development Direction

MAS also asked about the best location for growth. Here, there is a plurality of responses. Twenty-two percent say that future development should be in areas where businesses are already located, 37% say growth should be focused along transportation corridors that link to business centers, and 35% say future growth should be in undeveloped or rural areas. Responses vary by county.

METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS: FUTURE GROWTH IN THE METRO AREA SHOULD BE FOCUSED....



For further discussion

The Metro Atlanta Speaks survey contains the seeds for further policy discussion with the ARC Board and its committees, various regional stakeholders, and the general public. Identified issues mirror the concerns heard during the ARC Board/TAQC work session and as part of the MTP Survey responses. Specific topics for further discussion are:

- Housing affordability is a challenge for many: Six of 10 respondents said they could not afford to move to another house or apartment in their current neighborhood. Nearly as many said they could not afford to move anywhere in the metro Atlanta area.
- Residents are concerned about the impact of technology in workplace and beyond: More than 75% of respondents believe “too many” workers will lose their jobs to automation or artificial intelligence.
- Mixed views on climate change: Nearly half of respondents believe that climate change is a “major threat” to our region, while a third feel it will be a “minor threat.” Those figures rise when respondents are asked about the threat climate change poses globally.
- Environmental concerns sparked interest in electric vehicles (EVs): Nearly one out of three respondents said they plan to buy an EV in the next five years. About half cited the environment as the primary reason doing so. Of the respondents who said they did not plan to purchase an EV in the next five years, 28% said cost was the most important reason, followed by inconvenience of charging the vehicle (25%) and reliability (15.5%).

The Metro Atlanta Speaks final report of results can be found in [Appendix 5](#).



COMPARATIVE LOOK AT SURVEY FINDINGS

Five key themes evident in each of the different survey results can be summarized as follows:

- There is a sense of uncertainty about the future, resulting in a downturn of people's optimism about the future. Post-pandemic concerns, including various topics such as housing affordability, crime, and the threat of climate change, have impacted perceptions of well-being about the future.
- Transportation priorities also appear to have been impacted by post-pandemic uncertainty and the recent downturn in transit ridership. There is still strong support for expanding transit systems as a long-term solution for traffic and preferences for walkable communities where people can live and work is also strong (especially for MTP survey respondents). However, there is also a clear segment of people who perceive road and highway improvements as the top priority for transportation planning. Much of the variability of ideas about the best future course for solving traffic problems is correlated with county of residence.
- Investment allocation preferences for transportation also reflect a plurality of perceptions and opinions. The MTP survey indicates that expansion of public transit is the top priority. However, when the MAS survey asks about willingness to pay additional taxes for transit expansion, only the City of Atlanta and Fulton County samples show a majority of respondents who would willingly do that.
- Ideas about the best way to handle new growth also show a plurality of response with geographic variability evident between counties. Opinions documented in the MTP survey (with the sample skewed toward the more urban counties) are distinctly different than the MAS survey response, which is more indicative of the 11-county ARC region.
- Housing affordability, development direction for future growth, emerging technology and its impact on workplace, and climate change were all targeted for additional policy exploration and discussion.



NEXT STEPS

Given this rich foundation of survey data, ARC and partners should be encouraged to continue public discussion in support of metropolitan transportation planning. This might include engaging with stakeholders and the public in a comprehensive visioning exercise during the early phases of the next MTP Update.

Further discussion is particularly encouraged so that staff can better understand the plurality of survey responses. While diversity of opinion is quite characteristic of the 20-county MPO area, geographic differences in MTP/TIP survey responses suggest that it may be prudent to consider sub-regional transportation character areas as an organizing framework for further engagement. For example, discussion could explore what kinds of road improvements are best within different sub-areas of the region, better maintenance plans, more bike and pedestrian infrastructure, safer road way designs, technology investments, and/or traditional road expansions. This deeper dive into sub-regional geographic differences could bring new focus to regional discussions.





VOLUME IV | EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

CONTENTS

Environmental Justice	52
Transportation Equity Advisory Group	53
Reconnecting the Region Coordination Initiative	54



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice has been a cornerstone of ARC transportation planning since 1994. Federal guidance, such as Executive Order 12898 (1994) for Environmental Justice, and Title VI, serves to protect specific populations, while requiring planning organizations to address disproportionately high health or environmental burdens affecting these communities. In 2021, Executive Order 13985 for Environmental Justice was signed, instructing federal agencies to act more assertively and to find ways to direct, as applicable, 40% of agencies' benefits to historically disadvantaged communities. This directive is known as the Justice40 Initiative.

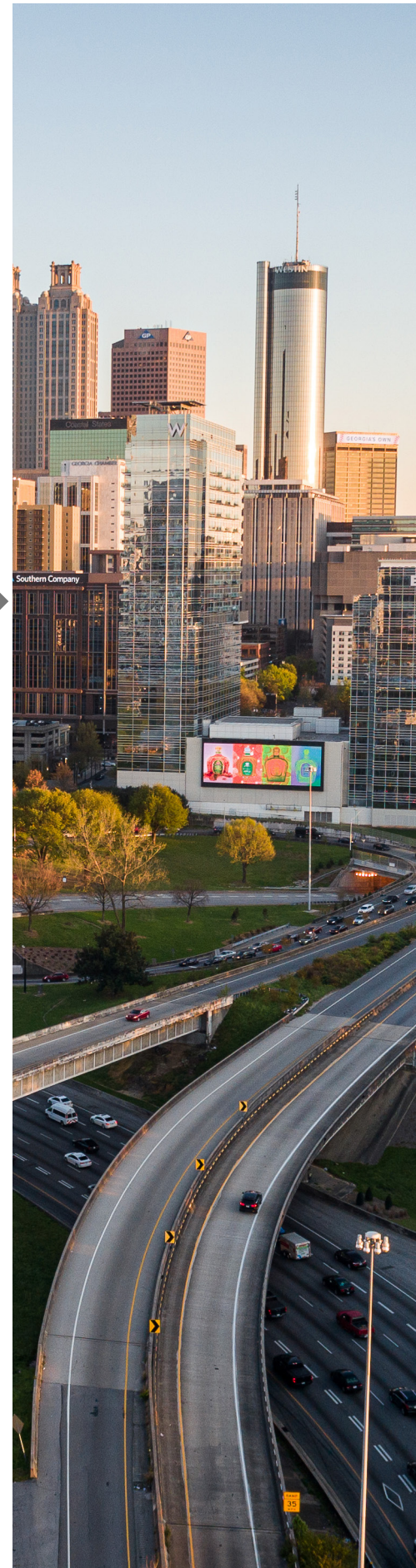
As a first step in equity planning, federal guidance has always outlined the need to identify where specific populations live. ARC has been a leader in developing innovative analytic methods, most recently in 2019, to understand where there are concentrations of various populations in the region and to measure the impact of transportation planning decisions on their well-being. These analyses were conducted using the American Community Survey (ACS) data. This quantitative approach has been one tool, used in tandem with qualitative knowledge and Transportation Equity Advisory Group (TEAG) input, to guide policy and funding decisions in transportation.

Since the introduction of the Justice40 Initiative, ARC has been closely following the USDOT's guidance and direction about advancing equity in transportation. Staff have begun evaluating new quantitative methodologies and approaches for qualitative data collection, and should reach some significant milestones with this work in 2024. However, for the purposes of the 2050 MTP/TIP Update, ARC's 2019 methodology, including equity and inclusion models and methods from pre-2021, were used to advance equity considerations.

Rather than being a complete synopsis of equity considerations related to the 2050 MTP/TIP Update, this chapter offers a high-level description of ARC's Transportation Equity Advisory Group and its role in the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. This chapter also marks an early step in ARC's next generation of transportation and equity planning. It represents a preview of the actions ARC is taking and will be taking to further advance equity.

Two specific equity-focused efforts are highlighted below:

- An overview of the 2050 MTP/TIP Update participation from ARC's Transportation Equity Advisory Group (TEAG), who actively participated in regular meetings from 2020-2022; and
- An outline of ARC's draft strategic framework for identification of regional projects that can further the objective of directing transportation benefits to historically disadvantaged communities. This strategic framework offers the means for strong Justice40 focus in project evaluation, competitive IIJA grant funding and the next MTP/TIP Update.





TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ADVISORY GROUP

The evolution of environmental justice and equity in ARC's transportation planning work resulted in the creation of a [Transportation Equity Advisory Group](#) (TEAG) in 2018. The group membership was designed to be open and inclusive, with the intent of including representation of local expertise around equity, key socioeconomic inputs, such as poverty, aging, disability and race/ethnicity, and knowledge about both transportation and environment. This focus on expertise was in the spirit of bringing together an advisory body that could guide ARC staff on technical matters related to equity.

In addition to traditional areas of expertise, ARC also welcomed transportation advocates who brought forward the lived experience of various community members. TEAG's open door policy also welcomes advocates and allies from transportation nonprofits and community-based organizations.

The group's charter was designed to be action-oriented with specific short-term and long-term objectives. This direction was used following adoption of the original 2050 MTP/TIP in 2020.

In February 2020, TEAG members were invited to collaborate with ARC staff on updating project evaluation criteria used for MTP/TIP project selection. During the COVID-19 pandemic, TEAG held monthly virtual meetings focused on using both quantitative and qualitative metrics to integrate equity more effectively into the transportation planning process. The outcome of this work was a new "TIP Cookbook," a document that outlines how projects are evaluated in the MTP/TIP Amendment process with a revised methodology that gives local and regional planners a better recipe for "baking" equity into transportation projects.

Participation in TEAG ebbed and flowed through this period and before, with approximately 30 influential equity groups participating during the process. Participation naturally waned as the TIP Cookbook wrapped up and people began returning to office work and other activities following the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2022, the group took a hiatus from monthly meetings until another actionable task presents itself.

In 2023, a small gathering of TEAG members met for a briefing and work session about climate change planning and its integration into the 2050 MTP/TIP Update. TEAG members (SELC, NRDC, and Sierra Club) also submitted climate change comments as part of the ARC's formal public review and comment period. ARC will primarily use this input in 2024 as federal planning requirements for climate change and resilience are implemented.

The next actionable tasks for TEAG are related to this climate planning work (that will feed into the next MTP Update) and to the update of the MPO Participation Plan, which will also be conducted in 2024. The MPO Participation Plan will outline an equity action component with regional objectives that are informed by the USDOT Equity Action Plan.



RECONNECTING THE REGION COORDINATION INITIATIVE

When the route of I-20 through the City of Atlanta was being contemplated in the 1950s, political leaders publicly acknowledged that it was being planned as a way to physically separate predominantly White communities to the north from Black communities to the south. This approach to infrastructure planning in urban areas was not unusual at the time and resulted in decisions that frequently limited economic opportunities by constructing facilities that presented formidable access and mobility barriers. In many cases, entire communities were permanently erased from the map and displaced residents were never fairly compensated for their losses.

While the racial composition of neighborhoods along the route of I-20 through the City of Atlanta may not be as stark today as during the 1950s, the concept of the highway serving as the metaphorical dividing line between White Atlanta and Black Atlanta remains powerful to this very day. And as the region grew exponentially in size over the decades, this approach of mentally categorizing the northern half as more desirable gained traction even beyond the city limits. It has shaped demographic and socioeconomic patterns that remain easily identifiable, whether the metric is racial composition, income levels, home ownership rates, access to good-paying jobs, educational attainment levels, health outcomes, transportation options, and many others. The patterns are clear and undeniable. But although the challenges of addressing the issue are formidable, they are not insurmountable.

While additional transportation investment is but one of many strategies which can (and must) be employed, increased mobility has the potential to improve outcomes and reduce geographical disparities in many ways. The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in 2021 and the Inflation Reduce Act (IRA) in 2022 provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change our region for the better. As discussed in the [Legal Context](#) chapter of **Volume I: 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan**, these laws provide an unprecedented amount of funding, both in terms of guaranteed formula-based programs and also competitive discretionary programs. We cannot let this opportunity pass by without taking focused and collaborative action.



IIJA, IRA and the current administration place great emphasis on the concept of leveraging federal funds to mitigate historical decisions which resulted in transportation facilities severing communities and serving as barriers to economic opportunities. Billions of dollars are being made available through various programs explicitly branded as “Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods”, while billions more are available under other programs where that objective is clearly encouraged within the context of the overall program outcomes. ARC proposes to embrace this concept and build upon it to guide our approach for implementing IIJA and IRA programs across the entire region. Reconnecting a community or a neighborhood is certainly a worthy outcome at a local level, but we believe that Reconnecting the Region has the potential to provide a better future for the entire region and all of its residents.

Under this principle, ARC will actively seek partnerships with the state DOT, transit operators, local governments, the private sector and the public to prioritize transportation investments which contribute to mitigating the most harmful aspects of the I-20 Divide. In addition to serving as a foundational concept for traditional transportation funding decision making processes, it will serve as a common and unifying theme which runs through all discretionary program applications which we choose to lead or support. In this way, we hope to communicate this broader challenge to federal agencies so that funding applications are not viewed as stand-alone or “one-off” requests, but as integral elements of a thoughtful, methodical and long-range approach. By telling our story more effectively and consistently, ARC believes this will be a winning strategy for the entire region and we look forward to building a coalition around this approach.

