

Transit Riders' Vision for Regional Transit in Atlanta: A Plan from the Perspective of Dependent Transit Riders

**The Atlanta Transit
Riders' Union**

*a project of Atlanta
Jobs with Justice*



April 2008



3 • List of Figures

4 • Introduction

- 5 • Overcoming the Past: Moving Regional Transit Forward**
- 6 • Why a Transit Riders' Plan is Necessary?*
- 7 • History of Unequal Access and Transit in Atlanta*
- 7 • Transportation Planning and Important Agencies and Acronyms*

8 • Part I: Current Conditions

- 8 • Existing Transit**
- 9 • Transit Service*
- 10 • Cross Region Trips*
- 11 • Transit Riders in Atlanta**
- 11 • Income: Separate but Equal?*
- 12 • Race and Class: Environmental Justice Analysis*
- 13 • Age and Ability: People Who Cannot and Should Not Drive*
- 14 • Transit Accessible Land Area**
- 14 • Existing Paratransit Services*
- 15 • Fixed Route*
- 16 • Job Access*
- 18 • Transit and Affordable Housing**
- 18 • Reverse White Flight*
- 20 • The Quasi-Transit Dependent*
- 21 • Evaluation of Current Transit Plans**
- 21 • Dependent Transit Riders' Evaluation Criteria*
- 22 • Envision6 Transit Projects*
- 23 • Ten Billion Dollars for What?*
- 24 • Transit Planning Board*
- 25 • Part I Conclusion**

26 • Part II: The Transit Riders' Vision

- 27 • Accountability: Democratic and Transparent Decision-Making**
- 27 • Current Situation*
- 28 • TRU Recommendations*
- 29 • Keep Public Transit Public*
- 30 • Affordability: Equitable Funding and Fare Structure**
- 30 • Current Situation*
- 32 • TRU Recommendations*
- 35 • Accessibility: Access for All to Anywhere**
- 35 • Future Vision*
- 35 • Service Improvements*
- 36 • Marketing and Information*
- 37 • Accessibility and Transportation for People with Disabilities*
- 38 • Bus Stops*
- 39 • Bicycles on Transit*
- 40 • Transit and Housing*
- 40 • Environment*
- 41 • Transit Jobs and Working Conditions*
- 42 • Conclusion**
- 43 • Appendix A: Timeline of Transit in Atlanta**
- 47 • Appendix B: Transit Frequencies by Route**
- 49 • Appendix C: Analysis of Envision6 Transit Projects**
- 51 • Appendix D: TRU Recommendations**
- 53 • Appendix E: Research Methodology**
- 55 • Appendix F: Sources**

List of Figures

- 8 • Figure 1: Existing Transit at Peak Hours
- 9 • Figure 2: 2007 Average In Service Bus Frequencies
- 9 • Figure 3: Existing Transit on Sunday
- 10 • Figure 4: AM Peak Cross Region Trips
- 11 • Figure 5: 2006 Income of Xpress Riders
- 11 • Figure 6: 2006 Income of MARTA Riders
- 12 • Figure 7: Transit Service and Environmental Justice Populations
- 13 • Figure 8: Density of Older Population by 2000 Census Tract
- 14 • Figure 9: Paratransit Service Area
- 15 • Figure 10: Fixed Route Peak Hour Accessible Destinations
- 16 • Figure 11: 2003 Job Density
- 17 • Figure 12: Projected 2010 Job Density
- 17 • Figure 13: Projected 2030 Job Density
- 18 • Figure 14: Percentage People of Color by County
- 19 • Figure 15: 2000 Density of Households with Income under \$20,000
- 19 • Figure 16: 2030 Projected Density of Households with Income under \$20,000
- 20 • Figure 17: Percent of Income by Commuting Distance
- 21 • Figure 18: Envision6 Transit Expansion
- 23 • Figure 19: TIP Funding by Project Type
- 23 • Figure 20: Increased Accessibility from Envision6 Transit Projects
- 24 • Figure 21: TPB 2030 Transit Vision
- 31 • Figure 22: Increases in MARTA Fares and Gas Taxes
- 33 • Figure 23: Funding Types by Regression level
- 34 • Figure 24: Possible Local and State Funding Sources
- 47 • Figure 25: Peak Hour Weekday Frequencies
- 47 • Figure 26: Off-Peak Hour Weekday Frequencies
- 48 • Figure 27: Saturday Frequencies
- 48 • Figure 28: Sunday Frequencies

Introduction

Preserving the Public Sector

Transit systems, hospitals, schools, libraries, police and fire departments, water, sanitation, streets... these are all part of the public sector. No one asks whether the fire department made money last year or whether the sales have gone up at the local branch library. The public sector should provide all citizens the services they have a right to receive in order to maintain basic human dignity.

The public sector in the major cities of the United States is a base for employment, resources, and political power. In the South, the public sector started to open up to African Americans as a result of the struggle for civil rights and challenges to segregation. As advances were made that began to level the playing field, U.S. global capitalism began to eat away at the public sector's edges. In addition, as global markets became more and more saturated, capital pursued the public sector as an untapped source of profit to exploit.

Corporations and neo-liberal conservatives constructed a media message and a political and economic program to attack government and the public sector. Through institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, they started to force privatization of public services all over the world. Privatization transfers public assets to businesses and individuals in the private sector, replacing public participation and institutional accountability with a profit motive. Increasingly the public sector in US cities, including Atlanta, has come under this attack.

Atlanta Jobs with Justice and its allies believe that the profit motive -with its inherent injustice- has no place in government or the public sector. We cannot trust private companies, driven to make a profit, with the provision of services guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We see the interconnections between the struggles over privatization at Grady Hospital, funding and control of regional transit, and the destruction of public housing in Atlanta. Many of the same people (often poor and people of color) use all of these services. This public sector power grab is a concerted effort by Atlanta business interests and politicians to revitalize the city in their own image, making it clear that the poor are not welcome here.

We believe that all people have a right to the city and the responsibility to protect this right. The people most impacted by civic decisions should have the strongest voice at the decision-making table. As part of building a movement to protect Atlanta's public sector, Atlanta Jobs with Justice is working with impacted communities to articulate the people's vision for the city. This document outlines the vision of dependent transit riders and workers for regional transit in Atlanta, but it is intimately connected to a vision for affordable housing, quality public schools, adequate health care, and just working conditions.

Overcoming the Past: Moving Regional Transit Forward in Atlanta

The creation of regional transit in Atlanta is threatened by a history of distrust and lack of cooperation between various transit agencies and local governments. In order for regional transit to truly be successful, decision-makers and the public have to understand and remedy the underlying problems. The creation of the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) over 30 years ago, illustrates the underpinning of race and class inequality in Metro Atlanta. Much has been written on how these inequalities have impacted the planning, building, and funding of transit in Atlanta, resulting in the current balkanized transit system. This plan starts with an understanding of the history of inequality and attempts to move the process forward by bringing the voice of those most impacted to the planning table.

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), MARTA, local city and county governments, the Transit Planning Board (TPB), developers, and the Chamber of Commerce, are all talking about the need for regional transit in Atlanta. Where are the voices and experience of the dependent transit riders and transit workers in the discussion? Whether by age, income, or ability to drive, over a hundred thousand metro Atlantans are dependent on transit (and carpooling, walking, and bicycling) on a daily basis.¹ What would a regional transit system look like if it were planned by the people who rely on it and operate it everyday?

This document is the result of two years of work by the Atlanta Transit Riders' Union (TRU), a coalition of dependent transit riders and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 732.² The first part examines existing transit systems, the demographics of transit riders, and transit proposals in Atlanta through the eyes of people without cars. The second part outlines the transit riders' and workers' vision of an accessible, affordable, and accountable regional transit system. This plan uses the ten counties represented on the Atlanta Transit Planning Board (Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale) as its area of study.³

Atlanta cannot create an integrated regional transit system without adequately addressing the reasons it was not created in the first place.



Source: Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission, Special Report, November 1967

¹ According to the 2000 Census 96,823 households in the ten Transit Planning Board counties have no vehicles.

² See Appendix D for discussion of the methodology.

³ The ten counties on the TPB at the beginning of the project; Spalding County was added after the data was collected.

Why a Transit Riders' Plan is Necessary?

There are many reasons used to justify public transit systems:

- Reducing greenhouse gas and harmful emissions from vehicles
- Reducing energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels and foreign oil
- Reducing traffic congestion
- Providing travel options
- Encouraging collective behavior and social interactions
- Economic development benefits from transit projects

The Atlanta Transit Riders' Union supports other reasons but specifically views the issue of public transit through the framework that **accessibility is a human right**. This framework argues that public transit is necessary to ensure that people who cannot own or drive cars (whether by choice or otherwise) have the ability to access all types of destinations. TRU also maintains that the experiences and knowledge of transit dependent people and transit workers are critical to the planning and decision-making of a transit system. While some transit planners and decision-makers do use the transit system in Atlanta, few understand what it really means to be dependent on it.

While most transit planning processes include a public involvement portion, this does not ensure that the voice and experience of the dependent transit rider will influence the final plan and ultimately the system. Transit dependent communities are often not involved and when they do participate their voices are not always heard.

- Meetings are often held during working hours, do not have childcare available, or are held in inconvenient locations.¹
- Meetings are often facilitated in ways that are not accessible to people with disabilities.²
- The planning process is not widely advertised to people outside the planning realm and assumes prior knowledge of the process and language.
- Due to the history of inequality and inaction, members of disenfranchised groups do not trust public involvement processes.
- Despite progress made by struggles for civil rights, the legacy of inequality in transportation continues.
- Public agencies use decision-making processes that are inequitable.³

This plan was created to ensure that the voice of transit dependent communities and the framework of accessibility as a human right is part of the discussion as Atlanta attempts to create a regional transit system.

¹ ARC, MARTA, and TPB all hold their board meetings, and the ARC holds public hearings, in the middle of weekdays.

² For example, the MARTA board hands out printed agendas and records their votes on a visual electronic board; members of the audience who are blind do not know the outcome of votes or even what resolution is being voted on.

³ This report will highlight the Governor's Congestion Mitigation Taskforce as an example of this.

History of Unequal Access and Transit in Atlanta

This plan provides analysis and recommendations on current and future transit projects; however, it is based on an understanding of the history of transit inequality in Atlanta. Accounts of how race and class influenced the creation of MARTA can be read elsewhere. Instead, in order to get a longer and more comprehensive view, see Appendix A for a timeline of the history of transit in Atlanta. The timeline shows how racism and unequal access to transit existed long before struggles over the creation of MARTA and how the issues continue.

Transportation Planning and Important Agencies and Acronyms

Transportation planning in urban areas in the US is the responsibility of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the MPO for Atlanta and every three years it produces a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP assesses current and future transportation needs and lists transportation projects to be considered for funding. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is updated annually, lists the projects that will be funded in the next six years. The latest RTP and TIP for Atlanta, called Envision6, was adopted by the ARC in September of 2007. In order for a transportation project to be funded it must be in the RTP and TIP. After a project is funded, it is implemented by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), a local government, or transit agency.

ARC: Atlanta Regional Commission, regional transportation planning agency

ATU: Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 732 represents workers at MARTA, CCT, GCT, and C-TRAN

CCT: Cobb Community Transit, transit provider for Cobb County

C-TRAN: Clayton Transit, transit provider for Clayton County

GCT: Gwinnett County Transit, transit provider for Gwinnett County

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation, state transportation agency

GRTA: Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, regional agency overseeing Atlanta's nonattainment area for the Clean Air Act

MARTA: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, transit provider for Fulton and DeKalb counties and the City of Atlanta

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization, federally designated agency to oversee federal transportation funds

TIP: Transportation Improvement Program, short range transportation plan and budget

RTP: Regional Transportation Plan, long range transportation plan, currently Envision6 in Atlanta

TPB: Transit Planning Board, ten county effort to plan regional transit in Atlanta

TRU: Transit Riders' Union, advocacy group for dependent transit riders in Atlanta

Part I: Current Conditions

Existing Transit

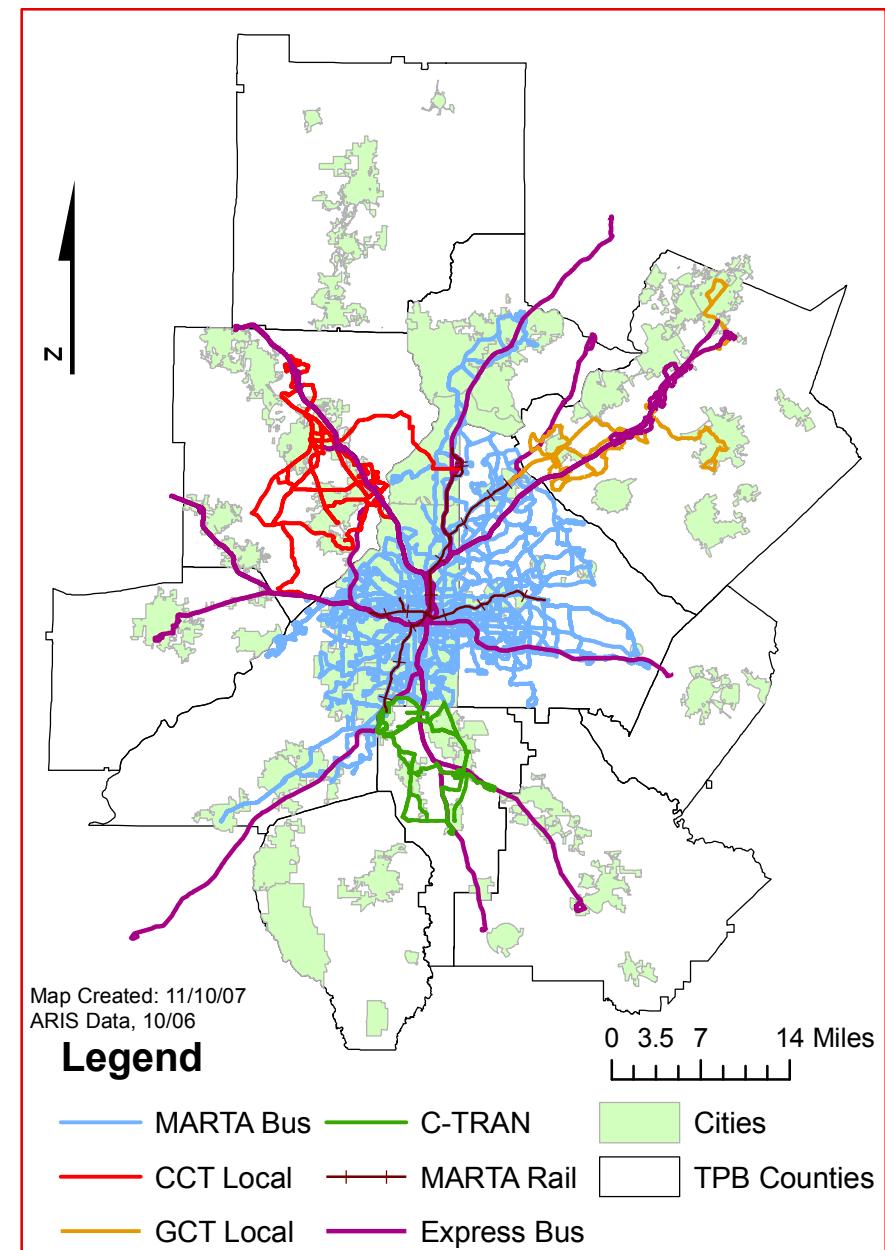
Operating since 1972, the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) provides bus, heavy rail, and paratransit transit in Fulton and DeKalb counties. Average weekday boardings in 2006 were 451,064. MARTA has 120 bus routes that cover 22.23 million miles annually and 48 miles of rail track with 38 stations (MARTA[1] 5).

The Cobb Community Transit (CCT) system started operations in 1989. CCT operates paratransit services and 13 local and seven express bus routes with average weekday boardings of approximately 15,000 people (Cobb).

The Gwinnett County Transit (GCT) started in 2000 and operates five express and six local bus routes and paratransit services (Gwinnett). Weekday boarding averaged 7,730 in 2005 (ARC[1] 9).

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) was established by the Georgia Legislature in 1999 in an attempt to end Atlanta's noncompliance with the Clean Air Act. In 2004 GRTA started operating the Xpress bus system. Like its name implies, Xpress is exclusively express bus routes from outlying counties to Downtown and Midtown Atlanta. Currently there are 22 Xpress bus routes, although three are operated by GCT and three by CCT. Ridership on each route varies from between 114 and 594 boardings a day, overall average weekday boardings in 2005 were 1,197 (GRTA; ARC[1] 9).

Figure 1: Existing Transit at Peak Hours



The Clayton County Transit (C-TRAN) system started operations in 2001 and currently has five local bus routes and paratransit services (Clayton). Average weekday boardings were 5,032 in 2005 (ARC[1] 9).

The City of Canton operates two bus routes and a trolley with free fares (Canton). Figure 1 shows the MARTA, GCT, CCT, C-TRAN, and Xpress routes, but is missing the Canton routes due to a lack of data.

Transit Service

Transit service is limited by frequency and reliability of service. Figure 2 gives the average frequencies for bus service by time of day and day of the week. **During peak hours a bus rider has to wait on average 30 minutes between buses.** See Appendix B for maps showing service frequency by route. The availability of service is also limited on off-peak and weekend hours, especially on the suburban systems. Figure 3 shows the existing transit on Sundays, the day with the least transit service.

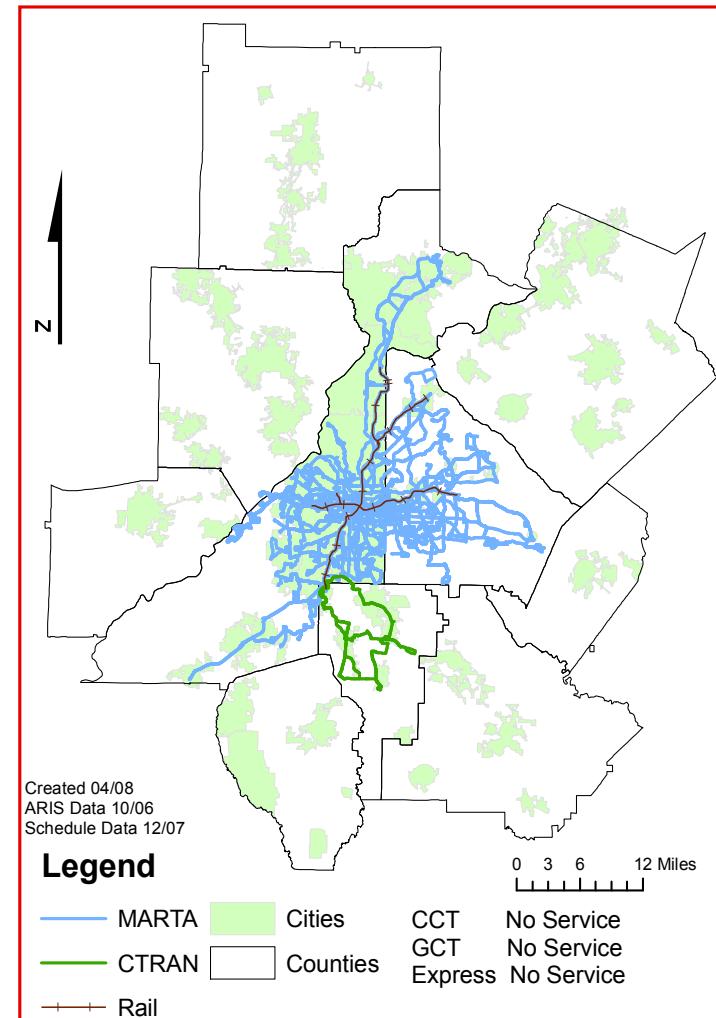
The reliability of transit service depends on maintenance of vehicles, weather and traffic conditions, and vehicle operators. Seasoned transit riders allow half an hour or more extra travel time to allow for system unreliability.

Figure 2: 2007 Average In Service Bus Frequencies

	Peak		Off-Peak		Saturday		Sunday	
	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
All	30	30	40	40	40	44	45	45
MARTA	25	28	36	38	40	42	45	44
CCT	30	37	60	54	60	62	No Service	No Service
GCT	30	36	30	42	30	42	No Service	No Service
C-TRAN	30	30	60	60	60	60	60	60
Canton	60	60	60	60	60	60	No Service	No Service

Source: MARTA[3], CCT, GCT, C-TRAN, Canton

Figure 3: Existing Transit on Sunday



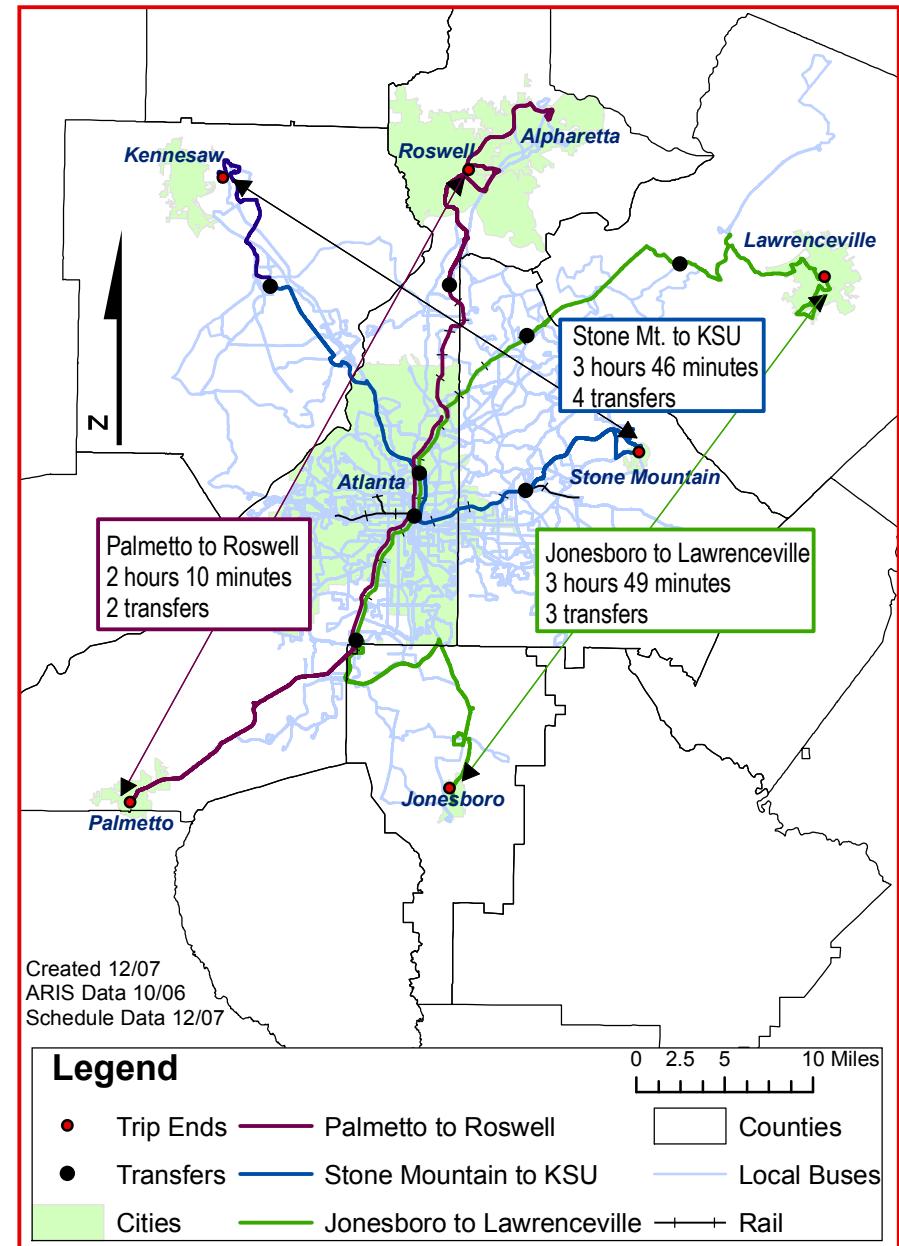
Cross Region Trips

Trips across the region, especially when transfers between operators are required, are especially time consuming. As seen in Figure 4, if someone left the Jonesboro Courthouse in Clayton County at 7:23 am on a weekday headed for the Gwinnett Justice Center she would arrive at 11:12 am. This assumes that she did not miss three transfers, all of which are less than five minutes. **Someone else could get from Atlanta to Montgomery, Alabama on Greyhound in this same amount of time.**

Similarly a trip from downtown Stone Mountain to Kennesaw State University would take 3 hours and 26 minutes and require four transfers. A trip from Palmetto to Roswell Town Center would take two hours and ten minutes and require 2 transfers.

Cross region trips on paratransit, demand responsive service for people with disabilities, are also excessively long with high uncertainty in arrival times. Trips from Jonesboro to Atlanta can take over three hours and require reservations on both C-TRAN and MARTA.

Figure 4: AM Peak Cross Region Trips



Transit Riders in Atlanta

Income: Separate but Equal?

People use transit for any number of reasons, but a large number of transit riders have no other options. At the time of the 2000 Census, 96,823 households in the ten county area did not have a vehicle at all (ARC[1] 8).

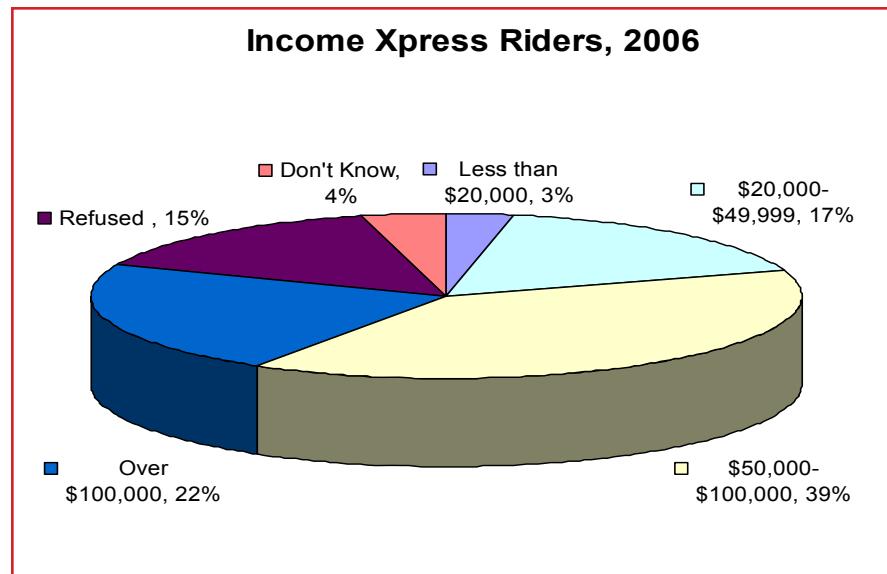
In 2006, 50 percent of MARTA riders had incomes under \$20,000 and 80 percent had incomes under \$30,000. In response to why they are using MARTA, 57 percent responded that no car is available for their trip and 18 percent stated that it is due to high gas prices (MARTA[2]).

The demographic data for the Cobb County system is dramatically split between local and express bus riders. Fifty-two percent of riders on local buses own no vehicles while 70 percent of express bus riders own two or more vehicles. The majority of local bus riders earn less than \$35,000 a year while the majority of express bus riders earn more than \$35,000 a year (URS 2-5).

Seventy-five percent of express bus riders (GRTA, CCT, GCT) would drive to replace their express bus trip; only six percent of riders report that they take Xpress because they do not have a car or cannot drive. Forty percent of riders have their fare paid in part by their employers (ILIUM 2-4). For GCT the local taxpayer subsidy for each express bus trip is \$3.23 and the local bus subsidy is only \$1.60 (GCTAB). Express bus riders get free transfers to MARTA.

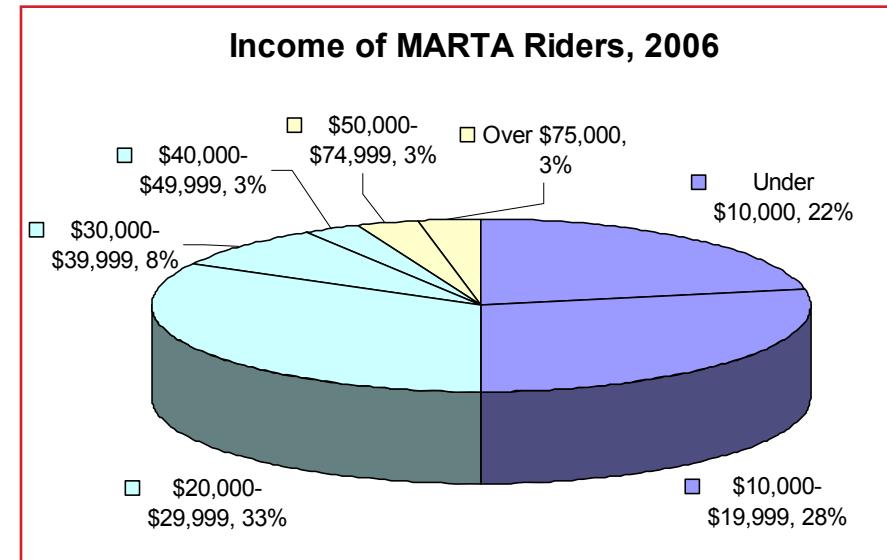
As shown in Figures 5 and 6, Atlanta's transit systems are segregated by class. **The large coach express buses serve high income riders with cars from the suburbs while regular local buses serve low income riders in urban areas without cars.**

Figure 5: 2006 Income of Xpress Riders



Source: ILIUM

Figure 6: 2006 Income of MARTA Riders



Source: MARTA[2]

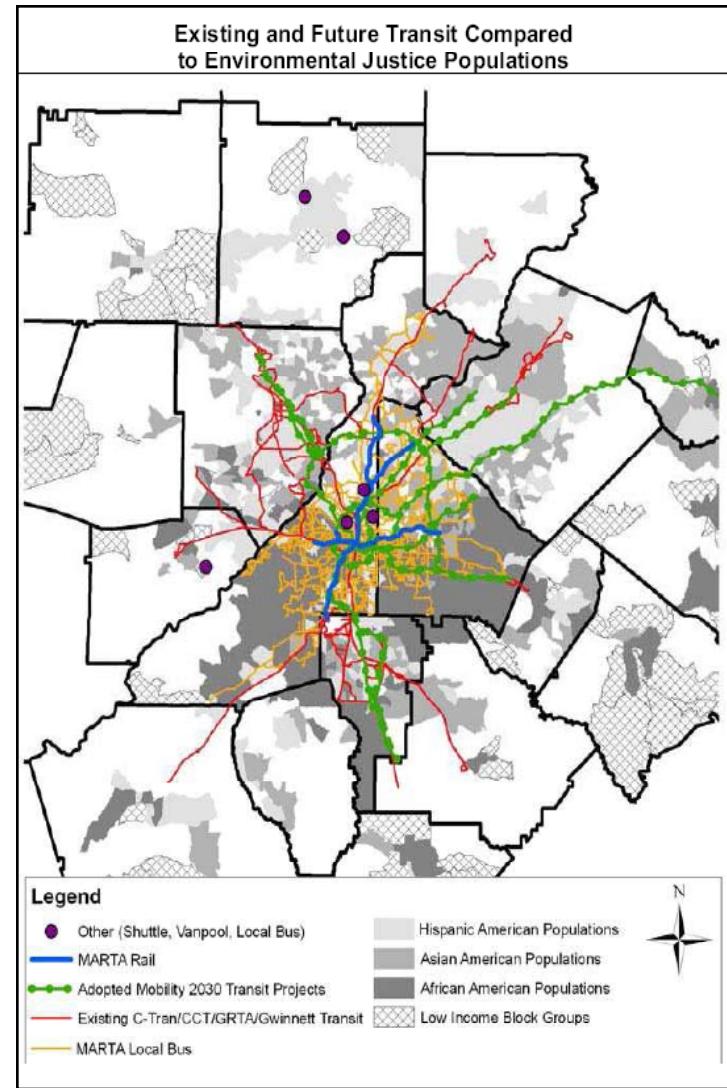
Race and Class: Environmental Justice Analysis

When looking at the issue of transit dependency in Atlanta it is necessary to recognize the interactions of race and class. Due to a history of systemic racism in the US, income is highly correlated with race; there are large disparities in poverty levels between Whites and people of color. Nationally in urban areas Blacks and Latinos make up 54 percent of public transit users; in Atlanta 76 percent of MARTA riders are Black (Sanchez et al viii; MARTA [2]). Seven percent of White households nationally do not own a vehicle compared to 24 percent of Black households (Sanchez et al vii).

The Atlanta Regional Commission identified areas with environmental justice populations not currently served by transit (ARC[2] 3-28). As seen in Figure 7 there are large areas with low-income and people of color populations that are not served by transit currently. Despite this the ARC Environmental Justice Committee seems to have no autonomy and only meets to be briefed on ARC plans.

Local transportation decision-makers are mandated to ensure that there is no discrimination in transportation funding. Title VI bars disparate impact discrimination and the President's Executive Order on Environmental Justice strengthens the role of the federal government by stating that each Federal agency must make environmental justice part of its mission and address disproportionate effects of its programs on minority and low-income populations (US DOT).

Figure 7: Transit Service and Environmental Justice Populations



Source: ARC[2] 3-28

Title VI of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground 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."

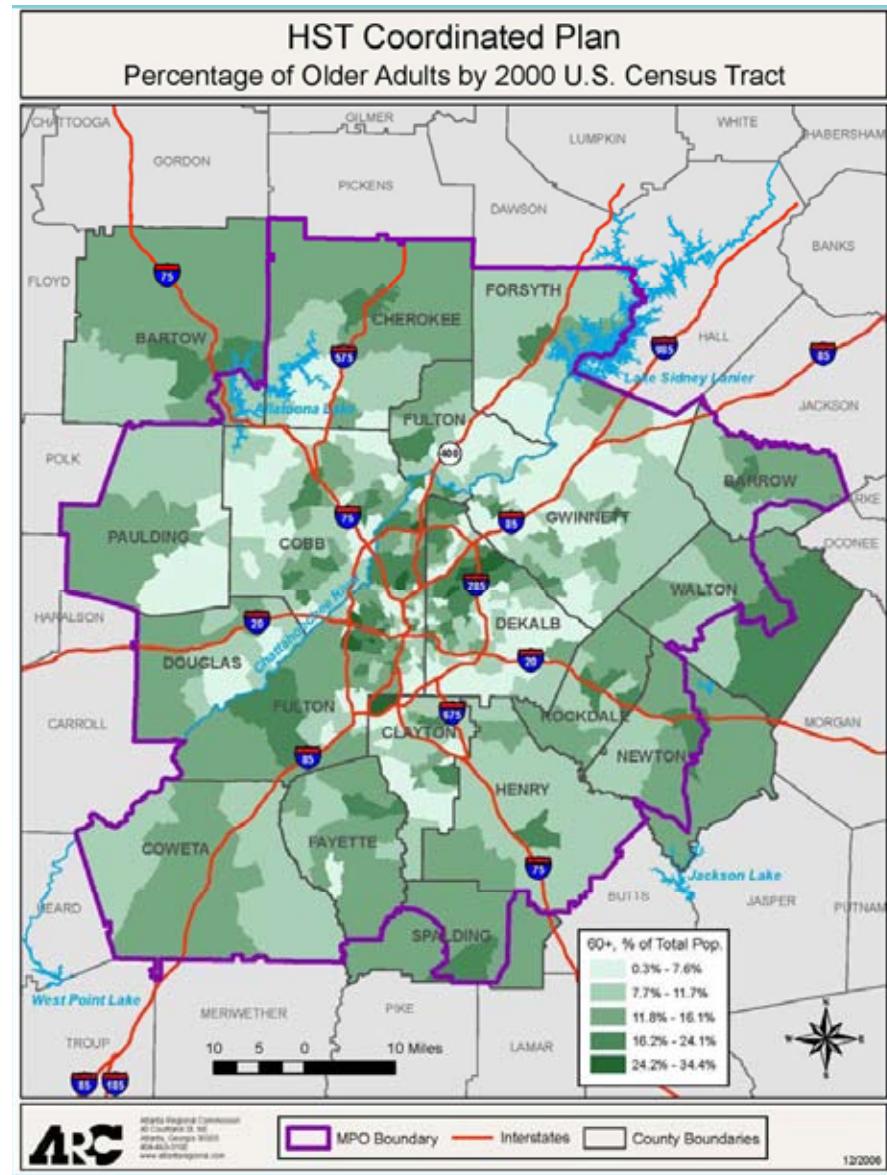
Age and Ability: People Who Cannot and Should Not Drive

The elderly and people with disabilities are likely to be transit dependent for both reasons of income and the physical inability to drive. Their numbers are expected to grow due to population growth and the aging of the baby boomers. In 2000, the number of people in the ten county study area over the age of 65 was 249,467. The ARC forecasts the population of people over 60 will triple in Atlanta over the next 20 years. While not everyone with a disability is unable to drive, in 2000 there were 896,736 people with a reported disability in the ten county study area (ARC[1] 6-7).

Regardless of race or income, everyone ages and could possibly develop a disability that impairs the ability to drive. In a 2007 survey 15 percent of adults over 55 in the Atlanta region reported having problems getting where they needed to go. **When they can no longer drive, 57 percent plan on being driven by others and 21 percent do not know how they will get around (ARC[3] 12).** Clearly a more reliable option is needed.

The growth in older population is taking place in the suburbs, not the transit accessible center city. Between 1990-2000, the suburbs of Atlanta grew by 54.6 percent in the 55-64 age category and 40 percent in the 65 years and over category. See Figure 8 for map of concentrations of older population. This is a national trend, with the growth rate of older Americans in suburbs higher than the rate for central cities (Frey 8,13).

Figure 8: Density of Older Population by 2000 Census Tract



Source: ARC[1] 18

Transit Accessible Land Area

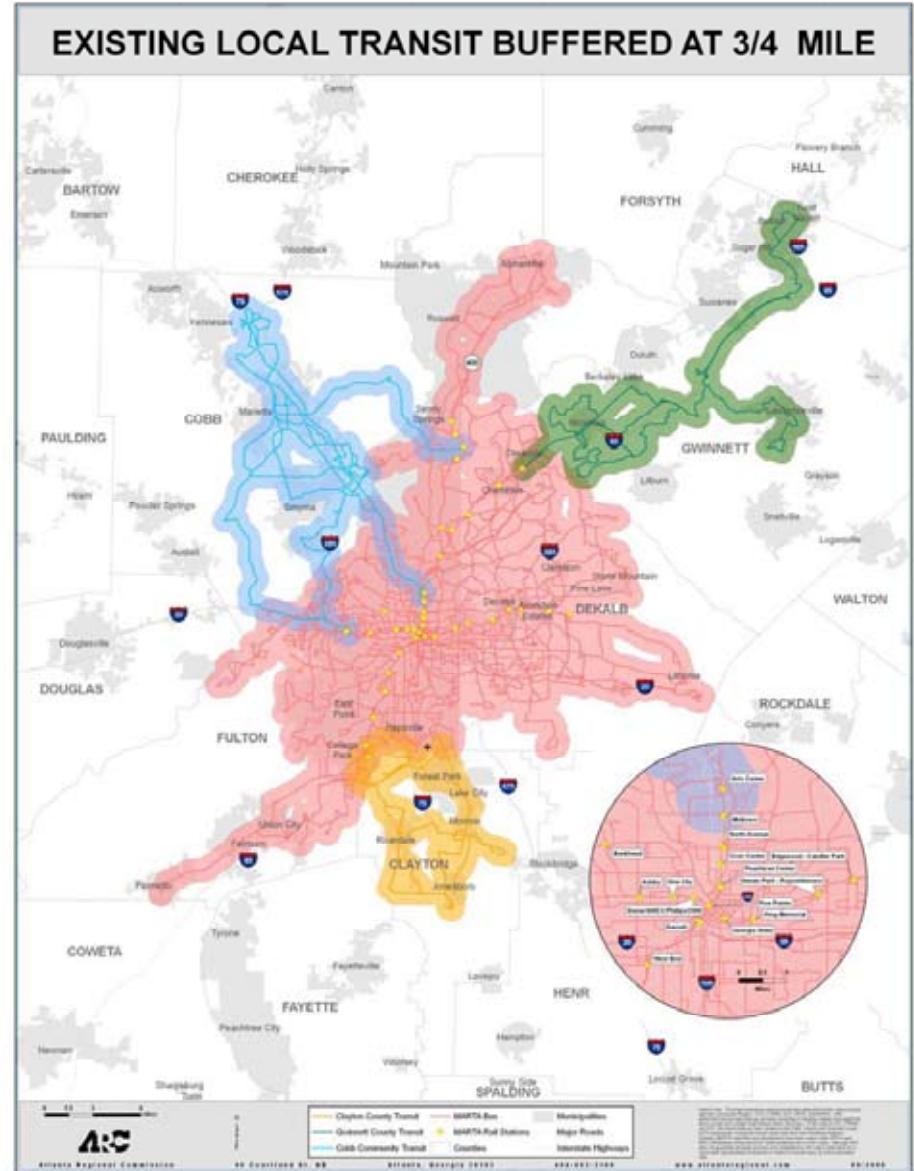
Existing Paratransit Services

Paratransit services are available to people with a proven disability to destinations within three-quarters of a mile of a fixed route transit line as shown in Figure 9 (ARC[1] 9). Paratransit services provide door to door service but have to be scheduled in advance.

Outside the service area mandated from the transit providers, individual counties run their own on-call transportation programs for the elderly and people with disabilities (ARC[1] 10). There are 62 federal programs that fund human service transportation programs and multiple service providers in the Atlanta area (2).¹ This actually complicates the process and makes it very unclear which areas are accessible outside the limited core paratransit service area.

Paratransit and other demand responsive services are necessary for people who cannot use fixed route transit, however, they should not be the transportation solution for the growing elderly and disabled population. These services are more expensive to run and segregate people with disabilities and the elderly from the rest of the population. Reliable and accessible fixed route transit is a better alternative.

Figure 9: Paratransit Service Area



¹ In order to be eligible for federal money to serve these communities, the ARC is currently developing a coordinated human service transportation plan for the 18 county Atlanta region. The draft plan looks at both the web of funding and service providers for people with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals and future transportation needs for these populations.

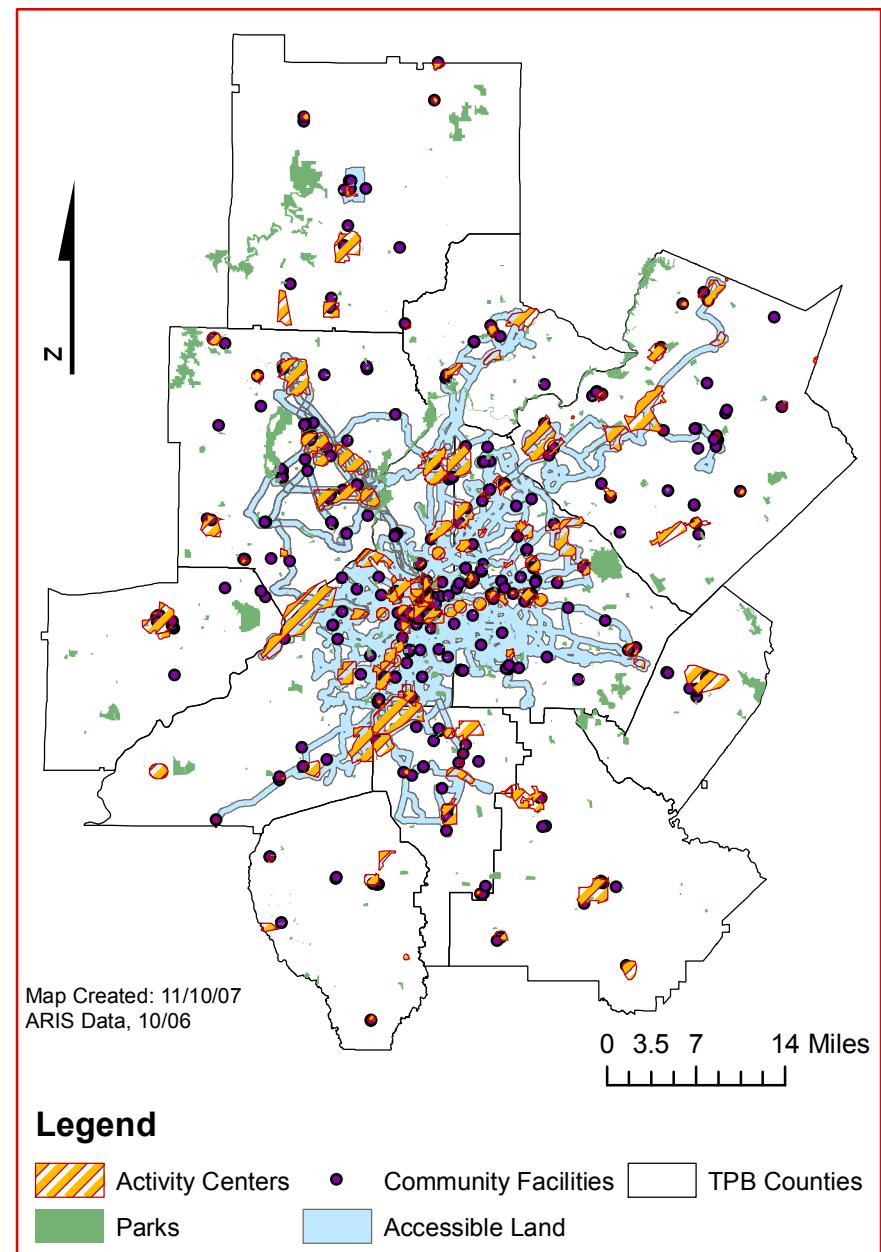
Fixed Route

People who are dependent on transit still need and want to get to all the same sorts of places as people with cars. Of the ten counties represented in the current Transit Planning Board process, 18 percent of their land area is accessible by transit.¹ Of the five core counties originally proposed to make up MARTA (Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett, and Fulton) 32 percent is accessible by transit.

Not all land is equally populated with trip destinations. **In 2005 in all of metro Atlanta, less than 30 percent of households and 35 percent of jobs were in walking distance to transit (ARC[2] 85).** Figure 10 shows that many regional destinations are outside the peak hour transit accessible area.

Transit accessibility is a relative term. Even if there is a bus stop within a quarter mile does not mean it is easy to get there. This does not take into account transit frequency, multiple transfers, and walking conditions from transit stops to actual destinations.

Figure 10: Fixed Route Peak Hour Accessible Destinations



¹ In this study, area is defined as transit accessible if it is within a quarter mile in linear distance from a local bus line or rail station. Express bus routes are not included since they have limited stops and often originate in locations with limited pedestrian infrastructure. A quarter mile was chosen as the buffer distance since walking distances are longer than linear distances and a portion of the transit dependent community (elderly and people with disabilities) have difficulty walking long distances. The area accessible by transit in the City of Canton is estimated, toward the high side, due to the lack of data for their bus routes.

Job Access

Express buses help non-transit dependent commuters get to jobs in down and midtown Atlanta; but limited and lengthy transit options exist for transit dependent populations commuting to the job dense suburbs.

In 2000 the Brookings Institute projected that **if transit is not expanded in Atlanta the percent of the low-income job market that is transit accessible will decrease from 43 percent to 31 percent by 2025** (Brookings).

As Figure 11 shows the majority of the job dense census tracts have some transit service. Service is lacking in parts of Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton counties. In areas with service, anyone traveling from another county will likely have to transfer several times.

As shown in Figures 12 and 13, the ARC projects job density to continue to grow in Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton counties, with a few job centers in outlying counties. Many of these areas do not have current transit service.

In order to serve these job areas, future transit will need to increase local service (both frequency and areas served) in Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties, and cross regional trips, including suburb to suburb commuting. In part, these solutions depend on where transit dependent people can afford to live. Job density is growing in the north of the region while concentrations of low income residents are growing in the south (Oakley).

Figure 11: 2003 Job Density

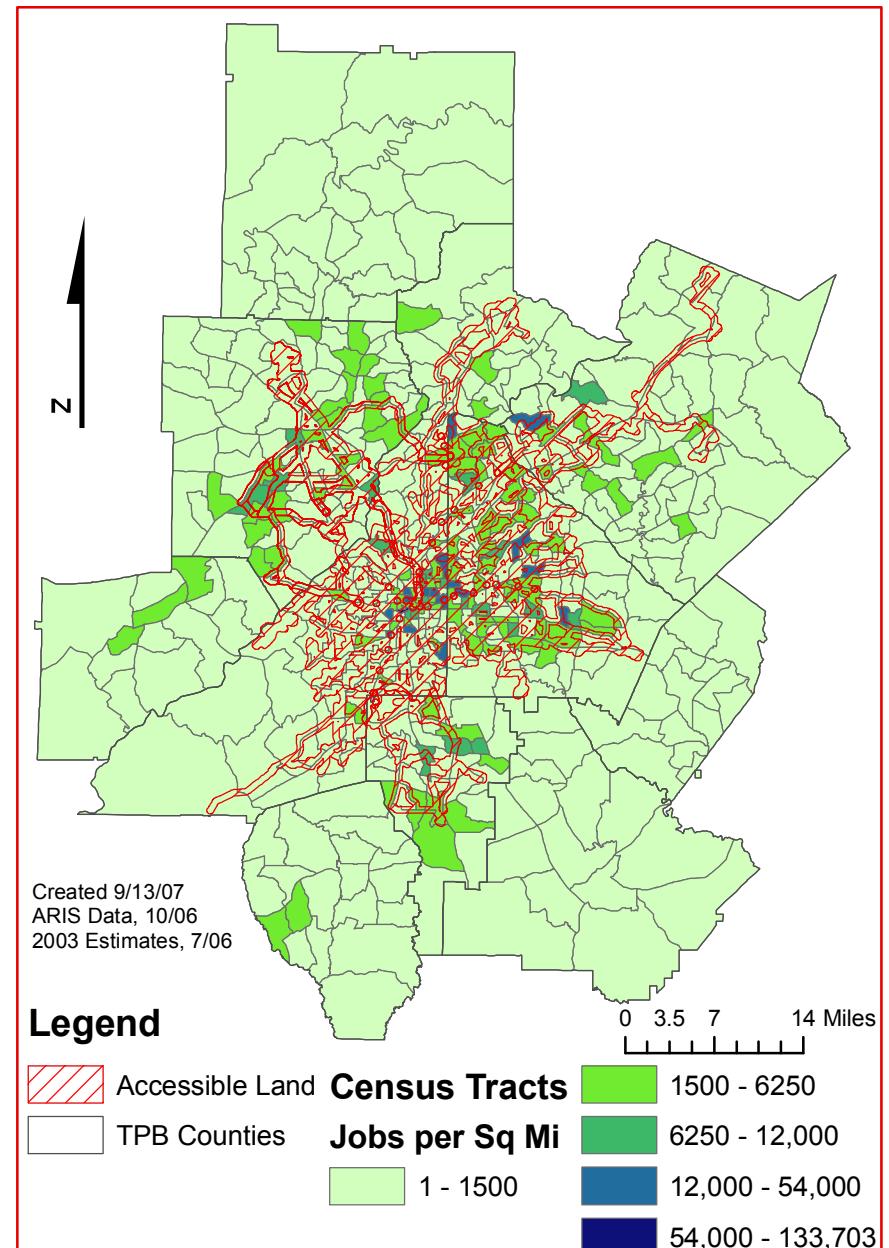


Figure 12: Projected 2010 Job Density

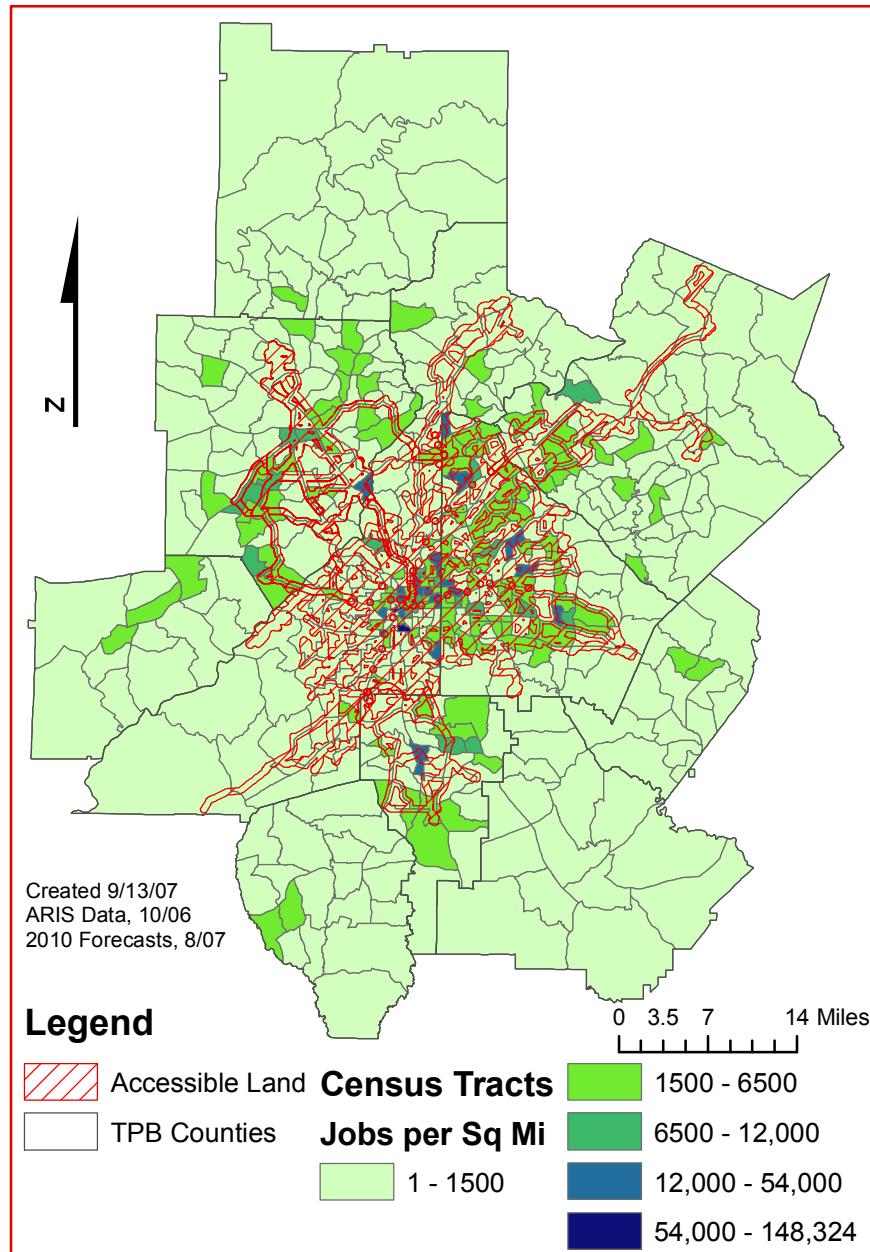
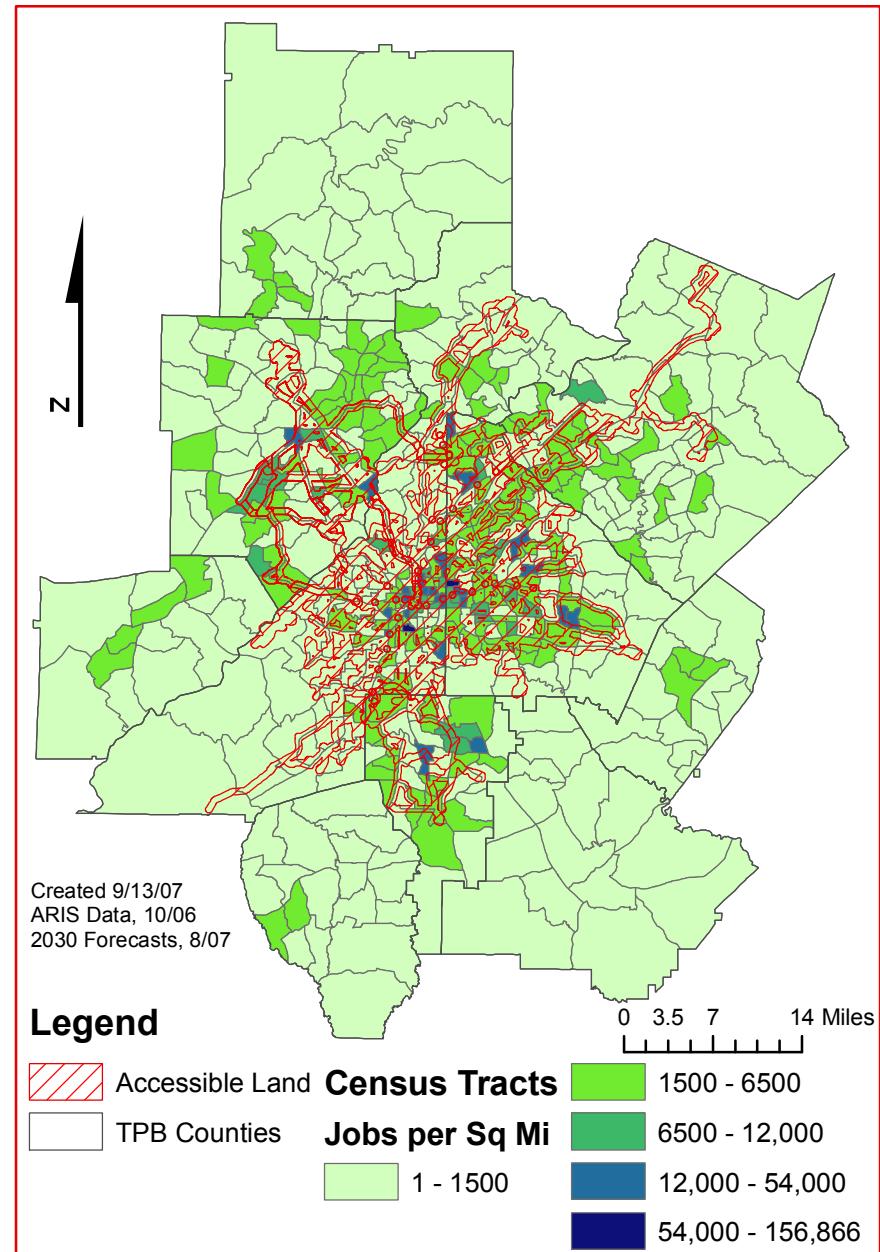


Figure 13: Projected 2030 Job Density



Transit and Affordable Housing

Reverse White Flight

Historically in Atlanta low-income and Black communities were concentrated in the southern and western sections of the City of Atlanta and Fulton and DeKalb counties. This is in part due to racism in housing lending and deliberate attempts to maintain segregation, such as building Interstate 20 to divide White and Black neighborhoods (Kruse 14-16, 86). As desegregation allowed more access to public spaces and neighborhoods for Atlanta's Black population, Atlanta's White population began moving out. A great race and wealth divide existed (and still exists) between majority Black areas and majority White areas. The racism that drove this segregation also contributed to the creation of MARTA only in Fulton and DeKalb counties. This resulted in a transit system that served the area already home to transit dependent communities (while limiting their ability to easily leave these areas) and whose operation funding primarily came from these two counties.

The color of the Atlanta landscape is changing (see Figure 14). A growing immigrant population is settling in Gwinnett and northern DeKalb counties and Blacks are moving into Clayton and Cobb counties. Whites in some cases are moving out of these first ring suburbs.¹ While not all people of color are low-income or transit dependent, low income populations are moving into areas not served by MARTA in search of affordable housing.

The City of Atlanta is experiencing reverse White Flight; people of middle and high incomes are moving back into intown neighborhoods. **Throughout the 1990's in the City of Atlanta, rents increased, and the White homeownership rate increased while the Black homeownership rate stayed the same, and Latino homeownership rate dropped** (Brookings 2003). The White share of population in City of Atlanta rose between the late 1990's and 2006 (ARC 2006[2] 11). Previously low income neighborhoods in City of Atlanta are gentrifying and affordable housing is moving outward to areas that are less transit accessible. The Atlanta Regional Commission has projected where households will live by census tract for four income categories for 2010 and 2030 (ARC[5]).² Figure 15 shows current and Figure 16 shows 2030 forecast home locations of the lowest income group and the existing transit. By 2030 without improvements, some areas with concentrations of low income households will not be served. Obviously the presence of transit is a major limiting factor in where low income households can locate.

Figure 14: Percentage People of Color by County

County	1980	1990	2000	2006
Clayton	9.1	27.9	62.1	67.8
Cobb	6.2	12.7	27.6	31.4
DeKalb	29.8	47.0	64.2	67.2
Fulton	53.1	53.2	51.9	53.1
Gwinnett	4.1	9.2	27.3	30.4
City of ATL	68.1	69.6	66.8	66.7

Source: ARC[4] 12

¹ Clayton County lost 45,640 White residents between 1990 and 2006 (ARC 2006[4] 11).

² Given the changing nature of Atlanta's housing market, it is hard to have faith in 30 year projections; however, they are useful for seeing whether the ARC's own plans for transit are internally consistent for where it thinks transit dependent populations will be living.

Figure 15: 2000 Density of Households with Income under \$20,000

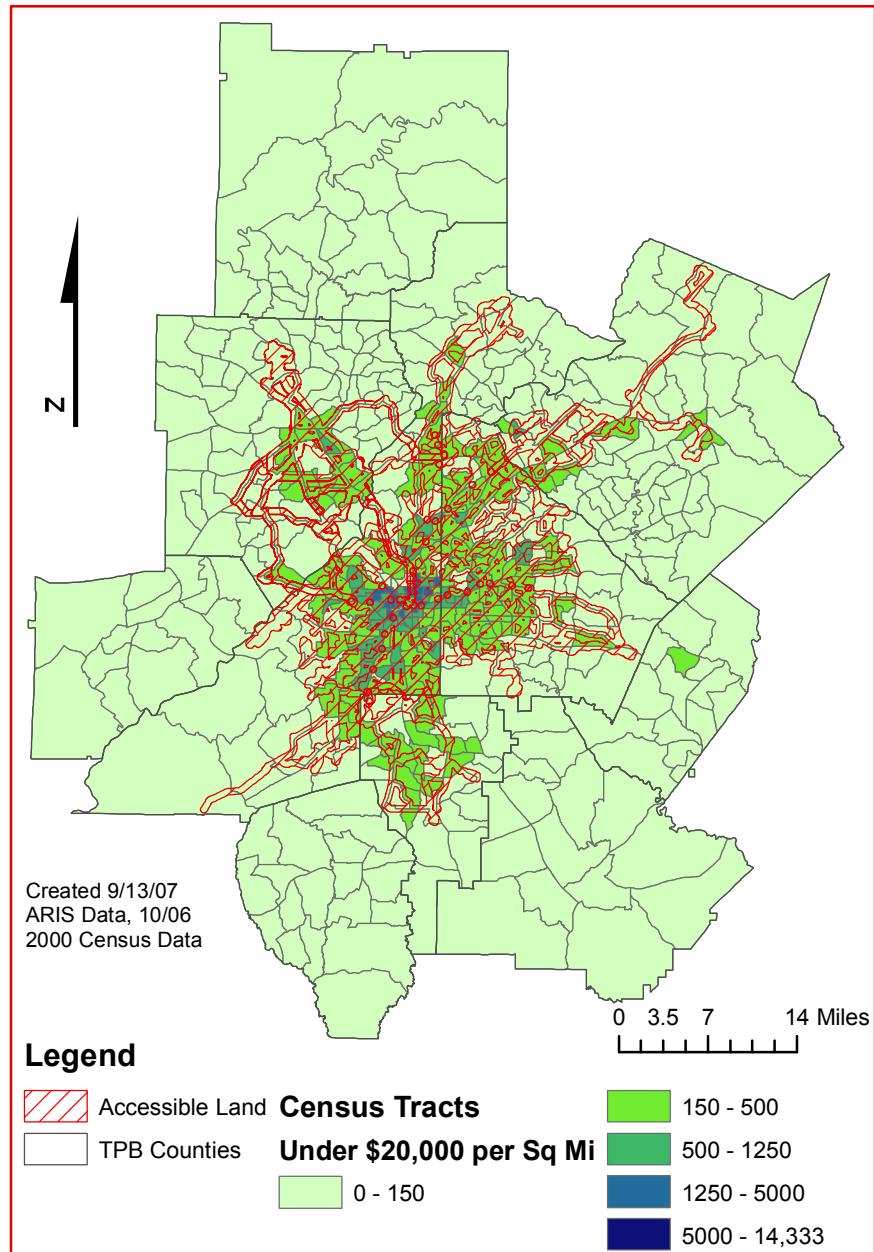
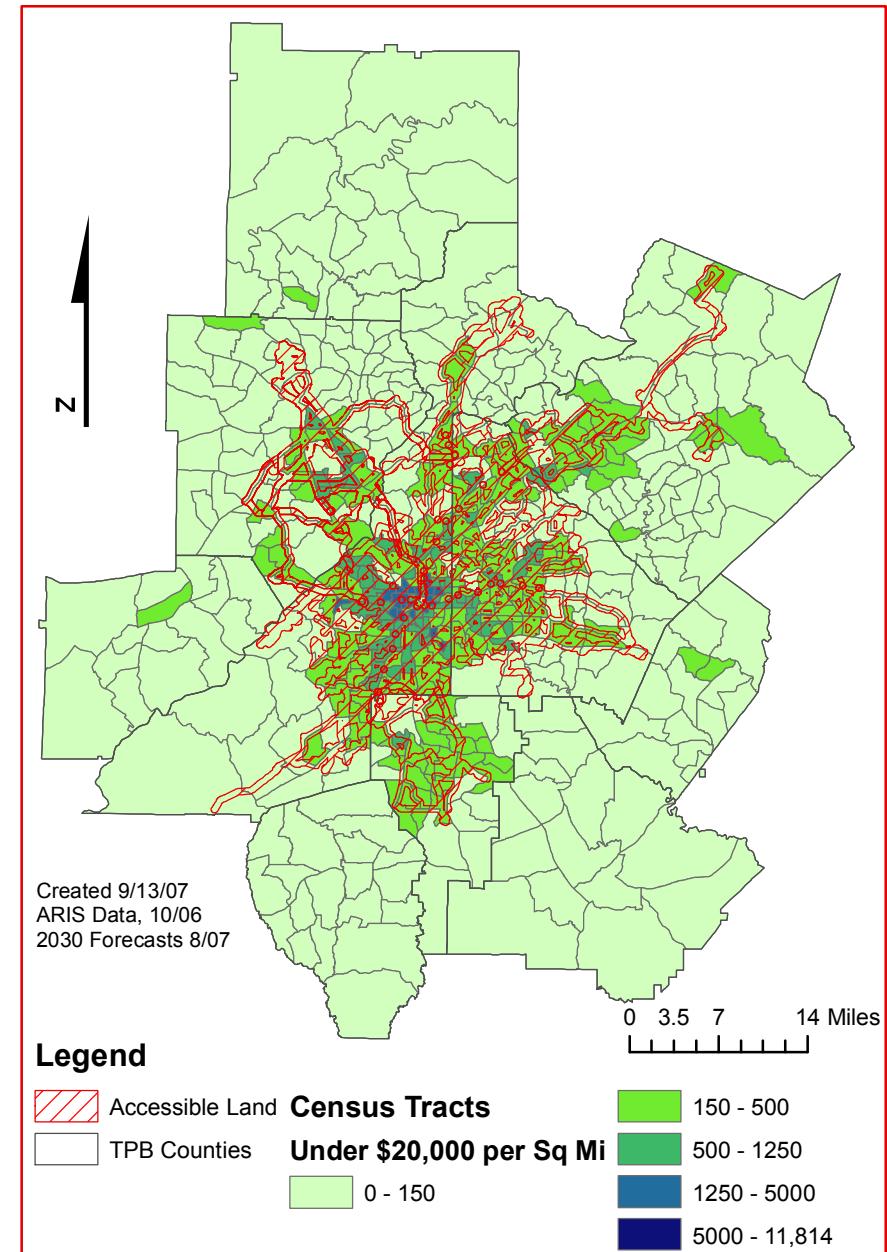


Figure 16: 2030 Projected Density of Households with Income under \$20,000



The Quasi-Transit Dependent

As evidenced so far, it is hard to survive in Atlanta without a car, especially for a working family juggling jobs, childcare, school, and all the other necessary trips. Many low-income households in Atlanta are forced into having a car but that does not mean they can really afford it. Some members of these households are often dependent on transit as well.

Housing and transportation are the largest expenses for most households and hit low-income households the hardest. In a 2006 study of 28 metropolitan areas in the US by the Center for Housing Policy, housing and transportation costs make up 47.6 percent of all households' budgets. For working families with incomes between \$20,000-\$50,000, a similar percentage of their income is spent on housing but the percent spent on transportation is 30 percent, increasing the total to 57 percent of their total income. As seen in Figure 17, long commutes can lower housing costs but tend to increase transportation costs, leading to a greater total percent of income (Lipman 1,5).

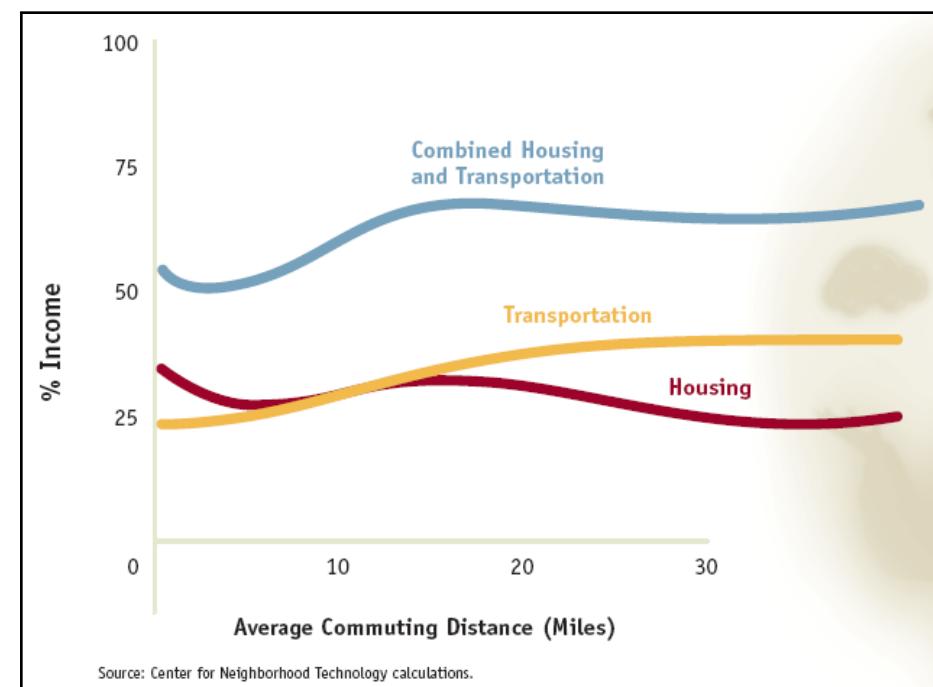
Of the 28 major metropolitan areas studied, Atlanta had the second highest combined percentage of income on housing and transportation. **Sixty-one percent of working families' income is spent on transportation and housing in Atlanta.** The average annual transportation cost for households with income between \$20,000 and \$50,000 in the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area is \$10,890 (Lipman 2,4).

In order to ease the transportation and housing burden on working families, any new transit plans for Atlanta need to ensure affordable housing near transit at the same time.

Quasi-Transit Dependent, noun:

1. Individual with car who cannot get to work without it but cannot afford it;
2. Household with car because cannot function without one but cannot afford it.

Figure 17: Percent of Income by Commuting Distance



Source: Lipman

Evaluation of Current Transit Plans

It is clear that increased transit service is needed to serve the transit dependent in Atlanta. Some of the main transit needs identified are improved existing local service, expanded local service outside of MARTA area, suburb to suburb trips, and improved cross metro trips.

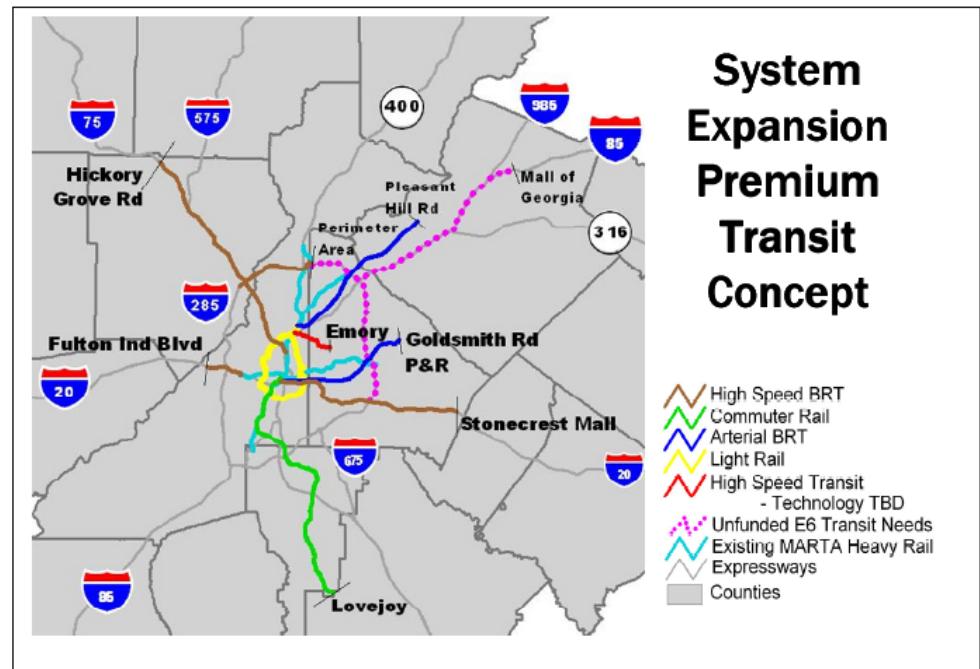
There are numerous transit proposals for Atlanta: the Beltline, the C-Loop, the Braintrain, Commuter rail to Lovejoy, the Peachtree Streetcar, Bus Rapid Transit (on I-75 North, I-20, Buford Hwy, and Memorial Drive), and an extension of MARTA rail (north from North Springs and into Gwinnett and Cobb). Will these proposals serve the needs of the transit dependent? Since many of these proposals are still in the conceptual stage, only the plans included in the current Regional Transportation Plan, Envision6, will be evaluated. These projects can be seen in Figure 18.

Dependent Transit Riders' Evaluation Criteria

- Serves areas where transit dependent communities will live, work, and make other trips, considering the availability of affordable housing
- System is easily accessible without a car and by everyone, regardless of physical ability
- Highest priority to areas not already served by transit
- Serves non-work trips and non-peak hour trips, instead of focus on peak hour congestion relief

The transit dependent need their own criteria for transportation projects because the measures being used by the ARC do not address their needs. In 2006, the ARC (and other regional transportation agencies) accepted the proposal by Governor Sonny Perdue's Congestion Mitigation Task Force to weight congestion relief as 70 percent in the project selection process. This means that when projects are considered for inclusion in the RTP, and more importantly for funding in the TIP, their ability to relieve congestion is 70 percent of the consideration. **Congestion relief does very little for the transit dependent; they are not driving on congested roads and their transportation needs exist outside of peak-hours and off the peak roadways.** The transit dependent often make work trips not at peak hours.

Figure 18: Envision6 Transit Expansion



Source: ARC[8] 61

Envision6 Transit Projects

The Envision6 transit projects fall into two categories: modernization and improvements to existing service and proposed new service. The proposed new service include: the Beltline, Bus Rapid Transit on freeways and interstates, new Express Bus service and Park and Ride lots, Commuter Rail, and high speed transit to the Emory and Centers for Disease Control area. See Appendix C for an assessment of all the transit projects in Envision6.

As seen in the sidebar, the ARC clearly states that its goal is to provide options to those with cars, not to provide access for the transit dependent.

The **Beltline** will provide transit service to areas already served by transit and does not serve high density residential or employment locations (Beltline Transit Panel, 6). In addition, there is evidence that the Beltline project is increasing house prices within a quarter mile of the Beltline Tax Allocation District in previously lower income neighborhoods on the southwest side of the city (Immergluck, ii).

Similarly, the **Peachtree Streetcar** serves a corridor that already has the best transit accessibility of anywhere in the region.

Express Bus service without corresponding local and reverse commute service does not serve dependent transit riders. It does not serve non-work trips or non-peak hour trips. The demographic data indicates that express bus service currently serves people with cars and high incomes.

In order for **Bus Rapid Transit** to serve transit dependent riders it has to be coordinated with local service and to be on corridors between affordable housing, entry level job sites, and other trip destinations. It also has to operate frequently in non-peak hours to serve non-work trips and non-peak hour work trips.

Commuter Rail is geared to serve peak hours and is usually designed for riders to drive to the suburban stations.

ARC Envision6 Factsheets

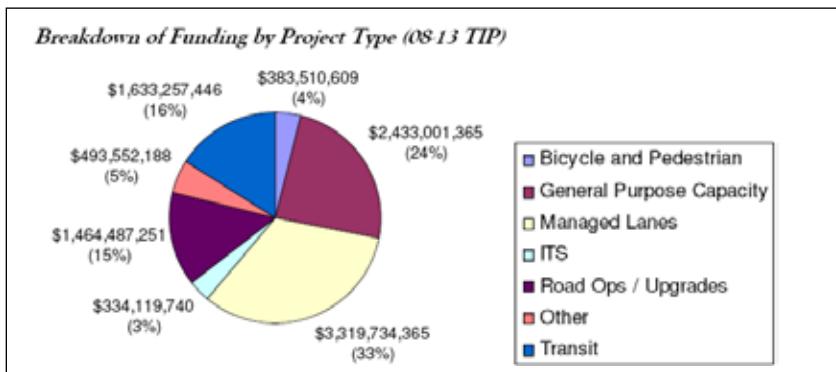
"New Transit Options – For those willing to forego their automobile occasionally, several new services will be provided which will allow them to avoid roadway congestion."

"Providing Travel Options – Segments of the population do not have access to transit and must use automobiles to travel." (ARC[6])

Ten Billion Dollars for What?

The TIP for years 2008-2013 approved as part of Envision6 allocates just over 10 billion dollars in transportation funding (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: TIP Funding by Project Type



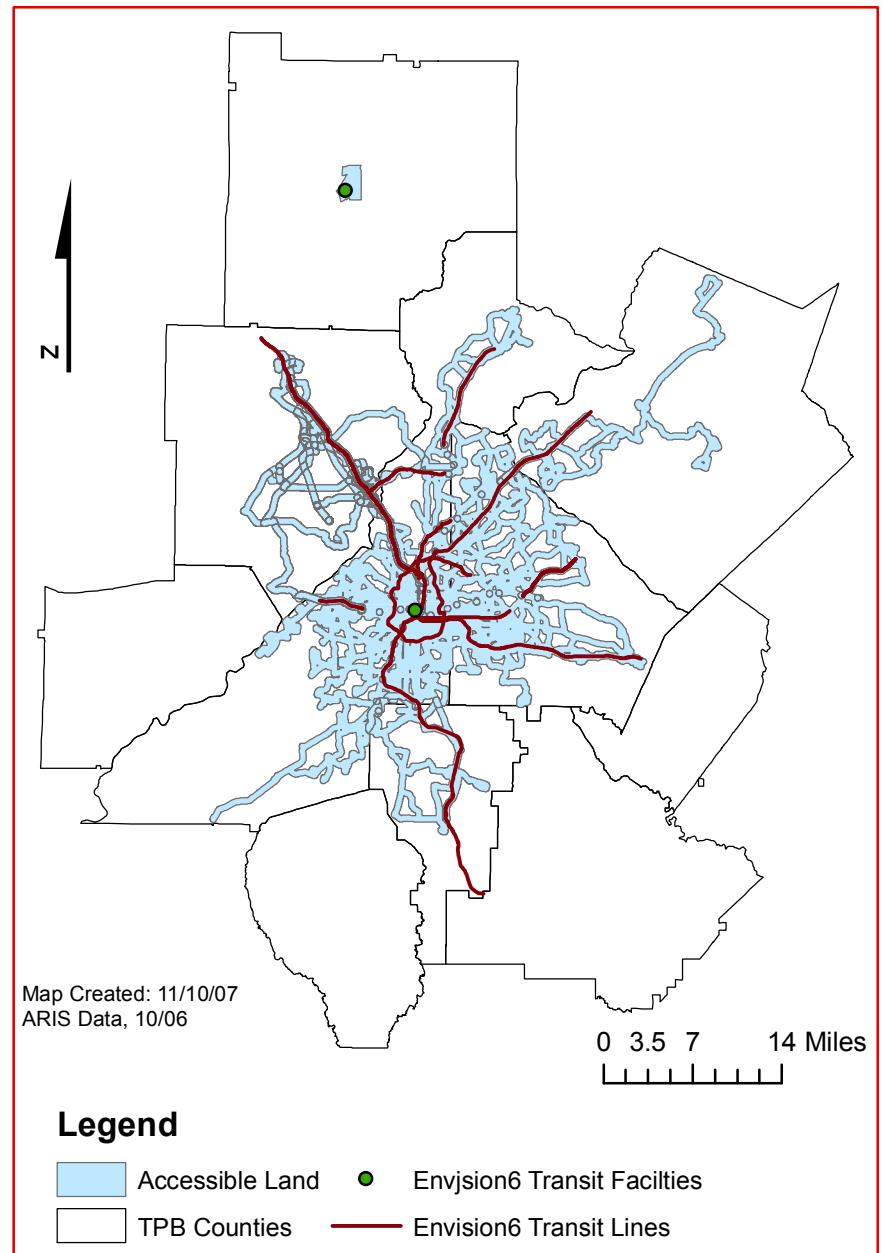
Source: ARC[6]

The TIP funds transit projects designed to relieve peak hour congestion on major arterials and interstates. As can be seen in Figure 20, the new funded projects do very little to expand the area in metro Atlanta accessible by transit.¹ **Benefits to the transit dependent from this \$10 billion investment are limited to the service improvements from new transit projects and bicycle and pedestrian projects (only 4% of the budget).**

Clearly new local bus service is also needed which, like the projects in Envision6, requires a source of operating funding that the TIP cannot provide.

¹ Since the transit lines outside the currently accessible area are commuter rail and bus rapid transit without station locations the new accessible area cannot be estimated. It is safe to say that it will be limited.

Figure 20: Increased Accessibility from Envision6 Transit Projects



Transit Planning Board

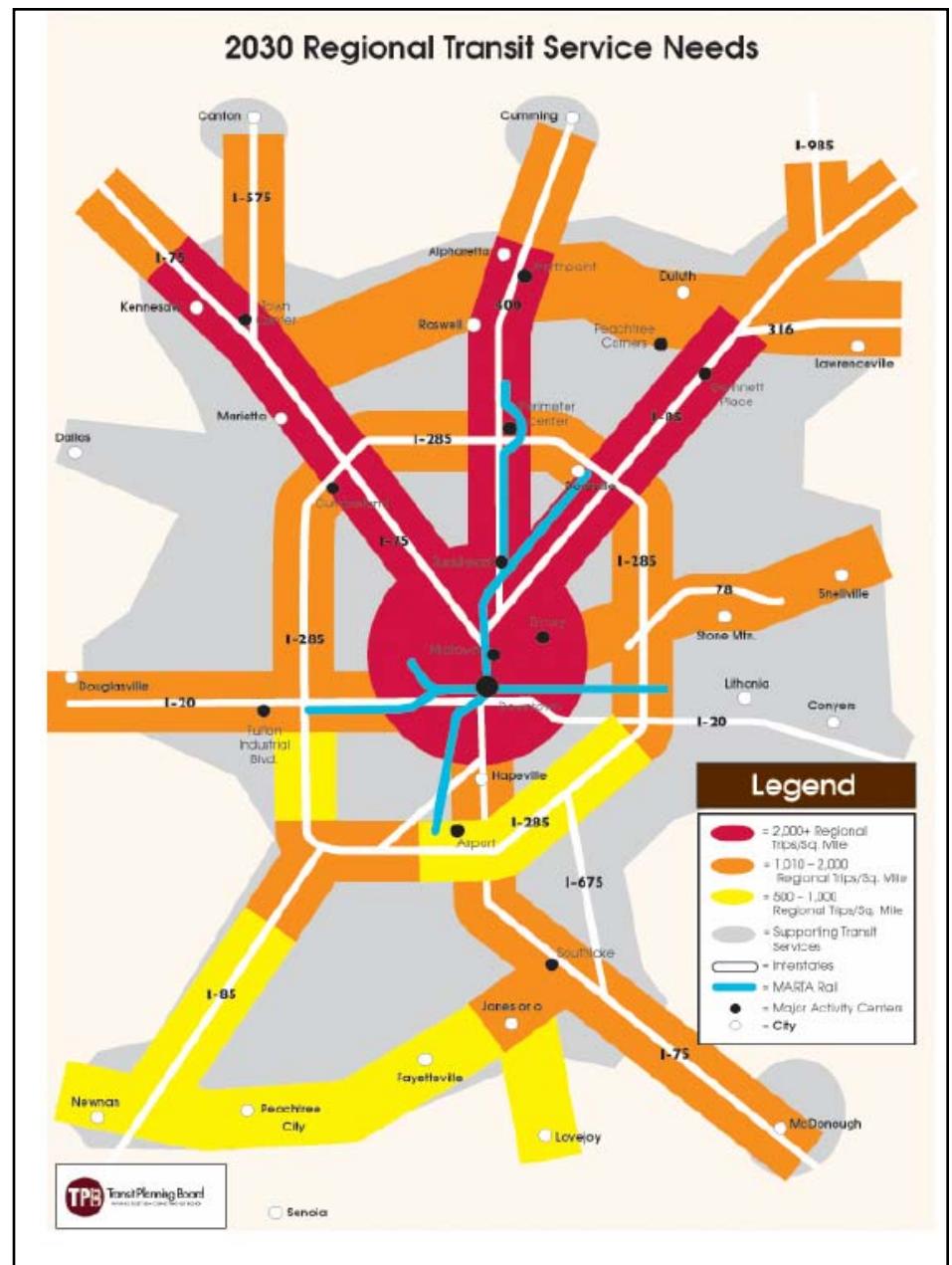
The Transit Planning Board (TPB) acknowledges that increased coordination and local service is necessary (see Figure 21). It is creating plans for a regional transit system including operations, funding, and decision-making. However, their current process includes very limited public participation and their board is unequally skewed toward the suburban counties.

The TPB has 18 members: a county commission chair from each of the ten counties, the mayor of the City of Atlanta, three governor appointees, the chairs of GDOT, GRTA, and MARTA, and the General Manager of MARTA. Each board member has one vote and a simple majority is needed for an item to pass, except a new funding mechanism, which requires 60 percent (TPB [1]).

This means **the representative from Rockdale County has the same voting power as the representative from Fulton County, which in 2000 had 11.64 times the population**. A new funding mechanism could pass without the votes of representatives representing over 78 percent of the region's population and MARTA, which carried 95 percent of 2005 regional transit trips (NTD, Census Bureau). Clearly this is not democratic.

The Director of the TPB explained that its public outreach strategy involved going to festivals and community events (King). This strategy is aimed at choice riders and not the transit dependent. In addition, TPB meetings are open to the public but they occur every other month on the fourth Thursdays at 12:30 pm. The Transit Riders' Union fears, based on past experience, when the TPB finally holds public hearings, the plan will already be made. Most of the major decisions will have been decided, without dependent riders' input.

Figure 21: TPB 2030 Transit Vision



Source: TBP[3] 26

Part I Conclusion

Current and proposed transit projects are not meeting, and will not meet, the needs of the growing transit dependent population. Limited parts of the Atlanta metropolitan area are adequately served by transit; even areas with transit have infrequent and unreliable service. Atlanta is changing: affordable housing and jobs are increasing in the suburbs. Regional transit is a necessity. Unfortunately, the transit projects in Envision6, in part due to the emphasis on congestion mitigation, do very little to increase transit accessibility. **Even if Envision6 manages to reduce congestion, low-income households, a majority of which are people of color, the elderly, and people with disabilities, will continue to face considerable transportation challenges.** It remains in doubt if the ARC and GRTA are fulfilling their obligations under Title VI and the Executive Order on Environmental Justice to prevent disparate impact discrimination.

Regional transit needs to be planned and operated with the transit dependent in mind. The agencies and boards working on regional transit do not have democratic or accountable decision-making structures and lack input from dependent riders. Part II of this plan provides the Transit Riders' Union proposal of how to overcome the transit inequities in both the process and outcome.

Part II: The Transit Riders' Vision

The Transit Riders' Union envisions a city and region where all people, regardless of income, race, physical ability, or primary language, have access to health care, education, quality housing, jobs, and recreational and social opportunities. In order to achieve this goal, Atlanta must have a public sector that guarantees basic human rights. A key component must be a transit system that is accessible, accountable, and affordable.

This plan addresses how current attempts to create regional transit should combat the structural inequities of transit, in both transit service and decision-making structure. The goal is to inform the debate about investment in regional transit in Atlanta in order to ensure that the dependent transit riders' perspective is central. Dependent transit riders have learned that they have to advocate for themselves; they cannot trust government officials, business leaders, or transit agency management to look out for their interests. Atlanta Transit Riders' Union (TRU) members recognize that they need to learn how transportation funding and decision-making happens and be involved in the process.

The second part of this plan outlines TRU's recommendations for regional transit in Atlanta. The recommendations are divided into three areas: accountability, affordability, and accessibility. Each section first outlines how the current system is lacking in these areas and then provides solutions. A condensed version of the recommendations can be found in Appendix D.

Transit Riders' Unions in the US

The Atlanta Transit Riders' Union has been influenced by the work of the LA Bus Riders' Union. The Bus Riders' Union successfully sued the LA MTA in 1996 for violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Their court and grassroots victories led to improvements in bus service, lower fares, and more clean fuel buses.

Some of the recommendations in this plan are drawn from a similar plan created by the LA BRU in 2005 (Bus Riders Union).

Other cities around the US, including Boston, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh have transit riders' unions representing the transit dependent and working to accomplish similar goals.

Accountability: Democratic and Transparent Decision-Making

Current Situation

The transit and transportation decision-making structures in Atlanta are not equitable or accountable to the people who pay for or use the system. One-third of the members of MARTA's board of directors represent governments that offer little or no financial support to MARTA: State of Georgia , Clayton County, and Gwinnett County.¹ All of the board members are appointed by their local government and have little direct connection to riders or taxpayers.

The Atlanta Regional Commission, which approves the Regional Transportation Plan, has a 39 member board. The board is made up of elected officials from each county in the ten county region: a mayor from each county, Mayor and Council member from the City of Atlanta, one state representative and 15 members at large selected by the public officials. For transportation plans, a member of the Board of County Commissioners from each of the additional counties in the transportation planning area is added (ARC [7] 6-7). This Board structure does not ensure population based weighting in the voting. The ARC website does not explain how a citizen can apply to be a board member and citizen members have no direct accountability to the districts they represent. As currently configured, the Transit Planning Board has the same issue.

In 2006 the Brookings Institute released a report on MPO governance stating that the voting structure of MPO boards underpresent urbanized areas and racial minorities (Sanchez 7). “Given the massive decentralization of white metropolitan residents in recent decades, a one-jurisdiction/one-vote structure may systematically disempower people of color (6).” For the Atlanta Regional Commission the report found 26 percent of the MPO votes represent urban areas and 74 percent suburbs. Using population weighting the votes would be 47 percent urban and 53 percent suburban. In terms of race, in 2004, the ARC board was 87 percent white and only 30 percent of people of color in the region were represented by people of color. A number of MPOs do use population based weighting; however the practice is rare (10-13).

As previously discussed, the current project criteria weighting that the ARC uses to determine projects to include in the Regional Transportation Plan is biased against dependent transit riders.

¹ The State of Georgia contributed 0.5 percent of the 2006 capital budget and none of the operating budget (MARTA[1], 9).

TRU Recommendations

Decision-making in Transit Agencies

- The board of directors should be elected with either equally weighted districts or use proportional voting and only include representatives from jurisdictions that fund the system. All campaign contributions from contractors obtaining or seeking contacts from the agency should be banned. In addition, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the Elderly and Disabled Access Advisory Committee (EDAAC), and a new Dependent Riders' Committee should elect one board member each with full voting rights.
- Board members should be required to attend all public hearings.
- Board members should be required to use the system on a weekly basis. The new Breeze card system can be used to monitor board members ridership habits.
- Board meetings and public hearings should be held on weekday evenings or weekends and have childcare available for parents who wish to attend. All board meetings and public hearings should be televised on the televisions on transit vehicles.
- All board meeting and public hearing materials should be published in English, Spanish, any other requested language, large print, and Braille or audio versions. Sign language, Spanish, and any other requested language translators should be present at all meetings. Public hearing time limits should not include time for translation.

Decision-Making Criteria

Project criteria weighting system must value person trips, not car trips. Congestion relief weighting must be reduced and a measure of increased accessibility and mobility for transit dependent added. TRU's evaluation criteria for transit projects should be incorporated into the evaluation of all transit projects.

Fully Public Regional Agency

In order to ensure the highest level of accountability and service, public transit should be owned and operated by public agencies. Service should not be contracted out to private companies, who by their very nature sacrifice quality, safety, and worker's wages for profit. Given that MARTA was intended to be regional transit, it is TRU's position that MARTA should be the sole planner and provider of regional transit. However, the MARTA structure needs to incorporate the above changes to be accountable to the public and riders.

Keep Public Transit Public

Like public housing, health care, and education, public transit is designed to provide basic human rights and quality of life to all people. All of these services are provided as part of the Public Sector and owned and operated in the public interest. In order to maintain public accountability, high quality service, and decent working conditions, public transit should not be privatized or contracted out to private for-profit companies. **Privatization is a transfer of resources from the public and workers to private companies.**

The argument is often made that contracting to the private sector can improve efficiency and save money. The studies on the results of contracting on efficiency and cost savings are mixed but the impact on working conditions, quality of service, and safety are clear (Scholl). A survey of transit managers found 40 percent saw declines in service quality as a downside of contracting, other studies have found an increase in collisions by 76 percent and higher turnover of drivers. Private operators offer fewer paid days off (by a factor of 3), 34-38 percent lower wages, and slower promotions and raises (Scholl). Working for a private operator or a public agency can be the difference between a living wage and barely making ends meet. Private drivers earn \$10-\$11 an hour (2005 dollars) and public drivers \$16-\$18 per hour (Scholl).

In Atlanta currently the Cobb County and Gwinnett County transit systems are operated by a private contractor, Veolia Transportation, Inc. Veolia Transportation is a multi-national corporation based in Paris, France (US headquarters in Illinois) and the largest private transportation provider (Veolia). Any profits from local tax dollars leave the region.

The Privatization of Transit: The Gwinnett County Experience

In May of 2006 Gwinnett County contracted with Veolia Transportation to manage their transit operations. Concerns have been raised that Veolia is making profit at the expense of adequate maintenance of buses. In the past two years GCT buses have had a series of mechanical failures while in service. Most notably in December of 2006 a bus caught fire during rush hour on I-85, from a failure in a hydraulic line (Sweat). Drivers have reported that on some days not enough buses have been in service to run all of the routes, leaving local riders waiting twice as long.

Gwinnett County is currently proposing to raise local and express bus fares in part to pay for a scheduled increase in their service contract with Veolia (GCTAB). The fare increase will particularly impact families, part of the proposal is to eliminate discounts for youth 5-18 and free fares for children under 5.

Affordability: Equitable Funding and Fare Structure

Current Situation

Current Fares

	Local (One-Way)*	Weekly	Monthly	Express (One-Way)	Express Monthly
MARTA	\$1.75	\$13	\$52.50		
CCT	\$1.50	\$13.50 (10 ride)	\$55	\$3	\$90
Xpress	\$1.50 Reverse Commute		\$40 Reverse Commute	\$3	\$80
GCT	\$1.75	\$14 (10 ride)	\$55	\$3	\$100
C-TRAN	\$1.50	\$26 (20 ride)	\$52.50		

*A one-way fare includes a transfer on all of the systems. MARTA routes that travel out of district cost an additional 75 cents.

Paratransit, Half-Fare, and Students

	Half-Fare	Student	Paratransit
MARTA	Available to seniors, people with disabilities, and MediCare recipients – only for one-way trips, not weekly or monthly passes	University: \$40 monthly pass K-12 Students: \$10.50 weekly	\$3.50 One-way, no half fare \$105 Monthly unlimited pass Transfers to MARTA fixed route but not from fixed route
CCT	Same as MARTA	\$1 One-way, under 18 No Express bus discount	\$3 One-way \$100 31 Day
Xpress	Available only during off-peak hours	None	None
GCT	Same as MARTA	\$.85 One-way (ages 5-18)	\$3.50 One-way \$35 10 Ride Ticket
C-TRAN	Same as MARTA	None	\$3 One-Way \$52 20 Trips

(Sources: MARTA[3], CCT, GRTA, GCT, C-Tran)

Transfers

MARTA has transfer agreements with CCT, GRTA, GCT, and C-TRAN. They allow riders to transfer from suburban systems to MARTA without paying again. CCT and C-TRAN have lower fares so it is actually cheaper to get on a CCT local bus and transfer to MARTA or to get on MARTA and transfer to Xpress. The transfer agreements outline how the fares are divided between operators; however, each system does not have equal costs and these agreements should be examined for equity concerns.

The current one-way MARTA fare is \$1.75 if one has a Breeze card or ticket. Breeze cards add a one time fee of \$5; Breeze tickets are 50 cents each and can be used for up to 90 days, if one buys the exact same fare type each time. The Breeze card system disadvantages bus riders since Breeze cards and tickets cannot be purchased on a bus. If someone gets on a bus without a Breeze card or ticket, technically he or she has to pay on the bus and again at the train station, for a total of \$4 (counting a Breeze ticket).¹

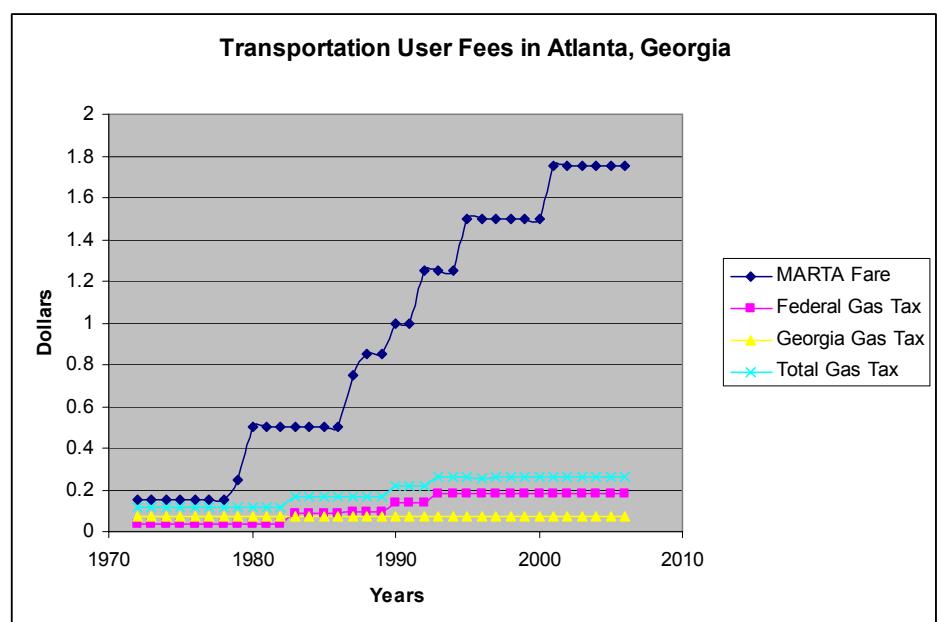
Fare Increases

MARTA attempted to raise the fare in 2005 but was forced to back down after public pressure from the Transit Riders' Union and others. **MARTA fares have increased 1066.7 percent from the 15 cent fare when MARTA was created in 1972.** As Figure 22 indicates, in that same time Georgia's state gasoline tax for vehicle owners has not increased at all and the federal gas tax has increased to just over 18 cents per gallon.

Funding

The 2006 MARTA ridership survey reports that 17 percent of riders live outside Fulton and DeKalb counties - the only counties with the one cent MARTA sales tax. MARTA is the largest transit system in the U.S. that does not receive state funding (MARTA[4]). Public transit benefits the entire region and an equitable regional funding system is needed.

Figure 22: Increases in MARTA Fares and Gas Taxes



¹ Many bus drivers are still allowing passengers unfamiliar with Breeze to pay at the train station and avoid the double fare.

TRU Recommendations

Fare structure

The Breeze card fare collection system and regional coordination allows for a more complicated fare system. TRU recognizes that distance based fares can improve equity, but TRU wants to ensure that low income riders are not negatively effected. For example, increasing the fare to the airport makes sense since higher fares will still compete with airport parking costs and it is generally a long trip; however, this should not be done at the expense of the thousands of low wage workers who commute to the airport on MARTA. Unlimited ride passes are the only way to ensure affordability for the transit dependent. Considering that many transit dependent riders are living paycheck to paycheck weekly, in addition to monthly, passes are necessary. The prices of monthly and weekly passes should not increase.

Any distance pricing scheme should lower the current \$1.75 fare for shorter rides and keep bus transfers free. Express bus fares should remain higher than local bus fares, with a separate express bus monthly pass.

In addition to regular unlimited ride passes, student and half fare monthly passes should also be available at a discount. Currently half fare cards for seniors and people with disabilities are only valid for one-way fare. Someone with a half fare card making more than 62 one way trips in a month (just over two trips a day) is spending more than a regular monthly pass. Considering that half fare cards are available to assist people on fixed low-incomes, who are often transit dependent, half price monthly unlimited fare cards should be available. Discounted student passes should be available to all K-12 and college students in the region.

In the spring of 2007, TRU, the Concerned Paratransit Riders, and other disability civil rights organizations successfully stopped the MARTA board from eliminating the unlimited monthly paratransit pass. Paratransit riders want to keep the unlimited pass for reasons of equity and affordability. If regional transit moves toward a distance pricing system, regional paratransit should have a similar distance based pricing system with a flat unlimited ride pass and a lowering of the fare for shorter rides.

Funding System

Any new regional funding system needs to start with acknowledgment of the resources MARTA brings to the table. MARTA owns the vast majority of the transit assets in the region. These transit assets were built and maintained by the people of Fulton and DeKalb counties who have been paying the one cent sales tax for 35 years. This tax money currently funds half of the region's total operations and 80 percent of the region's capital contributions (TPB[2]).

State Funding

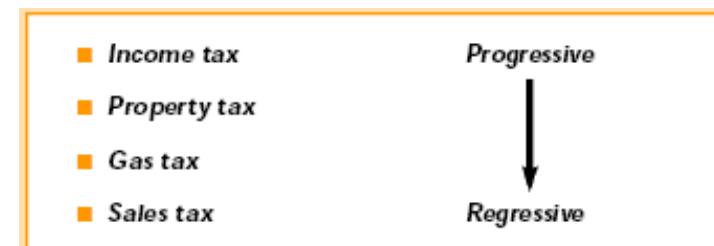
According to the Transit Planning Board in a study of peer transit agencies on average 22 percent of operating revenue comes from state governments compared to 20 percent from local governments. States contribute on average 13 percent of capital spending for a total of 19 percent of the transit agencies' total revenue. Local sources average 20 percent (TPB[2]). **The state of Georgia stands alone in its refusal to fund transit.** Transit clearly brings economic benefits to the entire state.¹ State funding for transit does not have to be an Atlanta versus the rest of the state issue; there are over 100 transit agencies or county transit departments in Georgia and all of them would benefit from state funding (APTA). The State of Georgia needs to change its constitution to allow funding of transit from state gas tax revenues and increase the gas tax, which has not been increased in over 30 years.

Figure 23: Funding Types by Regression level

Local Funding

The Transit Planning Board appears to be exploring sales tax as a primary funding source for new transit projects along with motor vehicle excise tax, flat annual vehicle tag tax, and gas tax (TPB[2] 16-24).

TRU wants to ensure that new transit funding does not consist entirely of regressive taxes that have disproportional effect on low-income households (see Figure 23). While nearly two-thirds of all local and state transit tax funding is from sale tax, other funding mechanisms exist and should be studied (see Figure 24). **TRU supports taxes to fund transit but maintains that they should be equitable.**



Source: Cairns, et al 9

Private Transit Systems

Atlanta has numerous private transit and shuttle systems: Emory, Buckhead, Atlantic Station, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, and other private developments. Each system is funded and operated separately. The funding used to run these private, and often concurrent, services should be consolidated into the public transit system in exchange for delivering the same level of service currently offered.

¹ MARTA, like Grady Hospital, provides great benefits to the entire region and state but is primarily funded by Fulton and DeKalb counties. Without MARTA or Grady, the Atlanta region would not be attracting the conventions, businesses, and residents it currently does or have won the 1996 Olympic bid.

Figure 24: Possible Local and State Funding Sources

Funding Mechanism	Explanation	Regions using this Funding Type for Transit
Employer/Payroll Taxes	Can be percentage of income or per employee	Portland, Oregon
General Property Taxes	Based on millage rate	Minneapolis, MN
Benefit Assessments	Pay for capital costs that enhance value of property	San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA
Impact Fees	One-time assessment on a development	San Francisco
Parking Fees	Revenues from public parking	Aspen, Colorado
Commercial Parking Taxes	Taxes on private parking operators within transit service area	Vancouver, BC
Parking Licensing	Property owners pay a license fee for all parking spaces	Perth, Australia
Rental Car Taxes	Percent tax for rental cars	Washington State (Sound Transit)
Hotel Room Tax	Either per night or percent of room rate	New Orleans, LA
Lottery fund	Amount of lottery proceeds dedicated to transit	Pennsylvania DOT transit for seniors, Arizona
Gasoline Taxes and Vehicle Registration Fees	Part of user fees for driving used to fund transit	Numerous states and the federal government use part of the gas tax revenue to fund transit
Airport Landing Fees	Fee per passenger or per plane	JFK in New York City

Source: Ubbels, et al, 55-136

The authors of *Unfair Solutions* examine different local earmarked taxes for transit. They classify funding mechanisms into three categories: Beneficiary Pays, Polluter Pays, and Spreading the Burden. Beneficiary Pays tax the people who benefit from the increased access transit systems provide, including landowners and employers. Polluter Pays taxes simultaneously raise funds for transit while raising the costs of driving, in part to address the environmental externalities of driving (45-46). All three of these tax types should be considered.

Accessibility: Access for All to Anywhere

Part I of this plan details how Atlanta is not an accessible region for people without cars. This section will outline specific proposals TRU has for improving both the accessibility of the region and the accessibility of the transit system, now and in the future.

Future Vision

The Transit Riders' Union envisions a network of high speed cross region service, arterial connectors, and local bus service.

- All high speed regional service, whether bus rapid transit on freeways with dedicated lanes or commuter rail, will be connected to arterial and local service at each station and operate at non-peak hours.
- Arterial connectors, whether bus rapid transit or streetcars, should operate with signal prioritization.
- Local bus service should incorporate elements of demand responsive service, use small buses, and provide frequent service to limit transfer waiting time.

In terms of vehicle type, TRU supports the most cost effective, flexible, and environmentally sustainable technology.

Future transit has to serve the needs of transit dependent communities. Considering that Atlanta is undergoing gentrification in the core and expanding at the edges, it is difficult to predict in 2008 where transit dependent communities will be living, working, and playing in the future. Instead of picking specific corridors for specific service levels, **TRU proposes Transit Service Standards to ensure quality service to areas with affordable housing, entry level jobs, and community facilities**, like schools, medical centers, government buildings, and recreational areas. These standards would require service to follow new concentrations of affordable housing and activity centers as they are created. Linking transportation planning to land use planning will help to ensure new growth makes transit sense.

Service Improvements

Before any new transit is build considerable improvements are needed to the existing system. **New investment for choice riders should not be made at the expense of adequate service levels for dependent riders.**

Proposed Improvements

- Increase the number of local buses operating to provide average peak hour frequencies of 7-10 minutes and off peak of 10-15 minutes
- Extend hours of operation on the weekends and nights including 24 hour service on major routes
- Improve maintenance and acquire additional vehicles to increase reliability
- Determine bus routes based on destinations, instead of forcing transfers at rail stations
- Design bus routes for the transit dependent, not just for visitors (like the Tourist Loop)
- Involve transit dependent riders and workers in route planning
- Improve coordination between systems and modes; bus and rail schedules should be coordinated to limit wait times

Marketing and Information

Transit dependent riders still need information on how to most effectively use the system; improvements to transit information and marketing can benefit both dependent and choice riders.

Improvements needed include:

- Utilize the televisions installed on MARTA buses and trains to effectively communicate information to riders and provide for public access programming
- A 24 hour phone information line
- Updated website that is accessible to people using reading software
- Up to date information in all stations and on buses
- Bus route number on the rear of buses
- Printed materials available in Spanish, large print, and Braille
- Accurate elevator outage notices
- Provide a real time customer feedback system that allows riders to report problems by email, text message, photo message, or phone.
- Enforce a policy to respond to all customer feedback in 48 business hours.



The Tourist Loop

MARTA developed television spots, maps, bus stop signs, and even wrapped buses to promote the Tourist Loop. Despite this effort and expense, the Tourist Loops, routes 100 and 101, were discontinued due to lack of ridership December 2007.

In the future, bus routes should be marketed to both regular and choice riders. In addition, increased frequency is likely to improve ridership.

Accessibility and Transportation for People with Disabilities

People with disabilities that impair their ability to drive are the most dependent transit riders. In addition, people with disabilities are chronically unemployed (35 percent report employment) and often live on low fixed incomes (26 percent live in households with income below \$15,000). Inadequate transportation affects 31 percent of people with disabilities and impacts their ability to work in addition to obtaining basic quality of life (NOD).

TRU believes that fixed route transit systems should be the primary means of transportation for everyone. People with disabilities should not be segregated from the rest of the population and paratransit service is more costly. Many improvements are necessary to improve the accessibility of the existing fixed routes systems including:

- All staff should be trained in sensitivity and assisting people with disabilities, trainers should include people with disabilities
- Ensure all elevators are working, both train doors open, audio and visual announcements are correct and working
- All bus stops should be accessible to wheelchairs; all signage at stops and stations should be in Braille

New systems should be designed using principles of universal design. People with disabilities should be involved in the planning and design process.

Paratransit will still be necessary for individuals who cannot use fixed route. The existing paratransit service needs serious improvements. Paratransit riders tell horror stories of three hours or more on transit vehicles, 45 minutes on hold for a reservation, never being picked up, and broken radios, lifts, and other equipment on the vans.

Improvements are needed to:

- Reliability, including on-time pick-ups, decreased time on the vans, and more vans in service
- Customer service, including more efficient reservation systems, better dispatch system, and an non-911 emergency policy
- Cleanliness and maintenance of vehicles and communication equipment
- Working conditions and wages of drivers, including paying drivers at equal rates to fixed route bus drivers

Regional transit means regional paratransit without transfers between systems. TRU would also like to see the service area for regional paratransit extended from the three-quarters of a mile off fixed route limits.

Bus Stops

Bad



This stop is on the side of a major high speed four lane arterial. Besides being extremely unsafe and inaccessible, it lacks any sort of information about which buses stop there.

Better



This bus stop is better. It has a shelter, bench, trash can, and a sign with route schedules and system information. This stop can be accessed on a sidewalk with curbcuts at the intersection.

Major bus stops (more than 50 boardings per weekday and transfer points between bus routes) should have a shelter with a bench, trash can, schedule and system information, and 'next bus' signs that provide real time information.

Minor bus stops should have signs indicating which buses use the stop and their hours of operation. These signs must be updated when transit routes change.

All bus stops should be accessible. A major concern for transit riders, especially the elderly and people with disabilities, is just being able to get to the transit stop safely. Serious improvement to Atlanta's sidewalk network is needed to make transit truly accessible, including sidewalks free from impediments, textured curb cuts, crosswalks, and audible and protected pedestrian signals. Investment in transit must be matched with investment in pedestrian infrastructure.

Bicycles on Transit

The combination of bicycles and transit can increase the amount of area accessible and speed of travel. Depending on the person, the addition of a bicycle can add anywhere from one mile to ten miles on both ends of a transit trip. In addition, bicycle use can eliminate transfers and lower the total trip time.

Existing System Improvements

- Bicycle lockers should be installed at rail stations for secure and covered parking.
- Improved signage to indicate bicycles should use wider fare gates, elevators, and luggage/wheelchair area on train cars.
- Ensure all train doors open on both sides, bus bicycle racks are in working order, and elevators are working.

New Transit Systems

All new transit vehicles, whether bus rapid transit, light rail, or new heavy rail cars, should incorporate bicycle space on board. Possibilities include hanging bicycle racks as shown at right or special cars with extra bicycle space. Either way, bicycles should not compete with wheelchairs for space on the car.

New stations should have safe bicycle access from surrounding surface streets. Station planning should be integrated with bicycle and pedestrian planning to ensure safe access.

All new transit stations should have bicycle lockers or another secure and covered parking alternative. Shelters at bus or street car stops can accommodate bicycle racks also, as shown at right.

Hanging Bicycle Space on Portland Light Rail



Source: Land Transport NZ

Sheltered Bicycle Racks at Bus Stops



Source: Staten Island Bicycle Parking at Transit

Transit and Housing

As discussed in Part I, affordable housing near transit is crucial for an accessible city. Housing and transportation are the two largest costs for working families in Atlanta. New transit should serve these families and not increase their housing costs in the process.

Affordable Housing near Transit

Transit oriented development projects at existing and new transit stations should match the income levels of residents of the region. **Half of the housing units built should be pricing for households making the median income or less.** All new housing should be accessible to people with disabilities with zero step entries, 32 inch wide doors, and a bathroom on the first floor.

Transit near Affordable Housing

As mentioned earlier, Transit Service Standards should be in place to ensure that service is added to any new concentrations of affordable housing.

Environment

Dependent transit riders are concerned about Atlanta's air quality and environment. The public health affects of pollution affect low income households, including high rates of childhood asthma. TRU believes that the best way to reduce car trips and emissions is to provide reliable transit serving the places the people who are most likely to ride transit need to go.

- All new transit vehicles should use clean fuel and the most current emissions reduction technology
- Transit systems should be designed to encourage walk to transit trips not drive to transit trips

Transit Jobs and Working Conditions

TRU is a coalition of dependent transit riders and the ATU Local 732. Local 732 currently represents the transit workers at MARTA, CCT, GCT, and C-TRAN. Local 732 first represented the Street and Electric Railway workers working for Georgia Power. The union struck for recognition in September of 1916 (McLennan).

The leadership of ATU provided the following input on a regional transit system from the experience of transit workers.

- ATU should have one contract with the transit agency, instead of the five ATU currently negotiates.
- Operators should participate in scheduling. Bus operators trying to keep to their schedules currently have no time for breaks, restroom use, or other necessities.
- All jobs should be full time with benefits. Part-time jobs set up a two-tier wage and benefit structure for the same work.
- Money should be invested in new buses and rail cars and maintenance of present equipment.
- Safety should be improved with better equipment, maintenance, and personnel.
- Working conditions should be improved, in particular a fair attendance policy. Workers should be allowed time off for personal and family sickness and emergencies.



"The Amalgamated Transit Union is the largest labor organization representing transit workers in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1892, the ATU today is comprised of over 180,000 members in 267 local unions spread across 46 states and nine provinces. Composed of bus drivers, light rail operators, maintenance and clerical personnel and other transit and municipal employees, the ATU works to promote transit issues and fights for the interests of its hard-working members."

(ATU)

Conclusion

Atlanta is a tale of two cities: the Atlantans who complain about traffic and the Atlantans who complain about MARTA. Many of those sitting in traffic wish there was a transit system that was convenient for them and many of those dependent on MARTA are doing all they can for the convenience of a car. Those with cars cannot comprehend the idea of living without one and those without one are desperately trying to get one.¹

As Atlanta tackles the creation of regional transit, it must be careful not to turn into a tale of two transit systems with segregated transit that continues its segregated land use. The current transit planning is leading toward comfortable express buses and commuter rail for the choice riders and infrequent and limited local buses for the dependent riders. Atlanta can build transit that matches its low density land use and limited pedestrian infrastructure, and requires the use of a car. Or, Atlanta can build transit and pedestrian infrastructure that serves everyone, and encourages higher density land use and less car use. Even if Atlanta chooses the latter, certain steps are necessary to ensure that the system is accountable, affordable, and accessible to everyone.

The Transit Riders' Union envisions a transit system that serves the needs of dependent transit riders, is adequately funded but not at the expense of low-income people, and is accountable to the riders, workers, and people who pay for the system. TRU's recommendations in this plan are aimed at accomplishing this goal. However, the creation of this plan is just the first step. TRU will distribute this plan to regional decision-makers, continue to organize dependent transit riders to advocate for themselves, and make sure that the voices of transit riders and workers are heard in the process of creating regional transit in Atlanta.

While this plan stands alone, it should not be seen outside the context of the struggle for control over the entire public sector in Atlanta. Transportation is the means to accessing homes, jobs, schools, hospitals, and recreation. A quality transit system will mean nothing if there are not people who need it and places they need to go. This plan is the first in a series outlining the vision of the city from the perspective of communities most impacted by threats to the public sector.

¹ The buses and trains are full of ads for used cars.

Appendix A: Timeline of Transit in Atlanta

1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
1871: First animal powered street railway		1894: Atlanta Consolidated had 54 miles of transit lines: 44 were electrified		1915: First jitney service in Atlanta	1924: Beeler Report: City needs plan for transit, streetcar network in Atlanta has 220 miles of single track miles, suggests adding buses to extend trolley lines	
	1889: First electric trolley line from downtown Atlanta to Inman Park		1901: Atlanta Rapid Transit owned 31 miles of track and Atlanta Railway owned 102 miles of track		1924: Jitney service reaches peak and is banned in 1925	1937: Trackless trolley start taking over from streetcars, in part due to pressure from the Highway Department. Road widening efforts, seen as an "improvement program"
		1894: One mile length in a Black part of town still used mules; the system operated to meet the commuting needs of white collar workers		1916: Drawn out transit strike over the issue of union recognition		

Timeline of Transit in Atlanta: Civil Rights Movement

						1964: Federal Civil Rights Act passes
			1955-1956: Montgomery Bus Boycott			
			November 1956: Supreme Court strikes down segregation on buses and other modes of public transportation			
			1957: White segregationists urge Whites not to ride the bus; ATS ridership drops 7 percent by May and 13 percent by November			
1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	
		1943: Atlanta mayor and city government adopt a resolution urging Georgia Power to convert all remaining streetcar lines to trackless or gasoline buses as a step toward modernization and a solution for congested traffic problems	1954: Atlanta Transit Company changes name to Atlanta Transit Systems (ATS) and integrates suburban and urban services	1960: ATS proposes rapid rail system		
		1949: Last streetcar run			1963: Trackless trolleys all replaced by diesel buses	
		1950: Atlanta Transit Company formed after Georgia Power forced to divest; their assets considered one of the best urban transit systems in the US				
		1946: At least three instances where Black passengers are shot by White streetcar conductors with no judicial consequences	June 1956: Group of Black ministers sit at the front of a bus	January 1959: Supreme Court strikes down Georgia's transit segregation law		
			January 1957: Orchestrated arrest of black ministers on a bus for the purpose of a test challenge to Georgia's segregation law, however, little changes about Black and White seating on buses	1960: Survey of bus usage finds that while Blacks made up one-third of the population of the city they made up 59 percent of bus riders during peak hours		

Timeline of Transit in Atlanta: Creation of MARTA

1971: MARTA referendum passes in City of Atlanta, Fulton, and DeKalb with black support due to promises of Perry Homes line, minority business contracts, and low fares, but not in Gwinnett and Clayton in large part to racial fears	1984: Federal transit policy changed to encourage privatization of public transit service	1990s: Perry Homes line fails to make the next round of MARTA extensions despite the original promise
1965: MARTA Act passed Georgia General Assembly 205-12, authorizing legislation passes in City of Atlanta, Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett and Clayton but not Cobb		

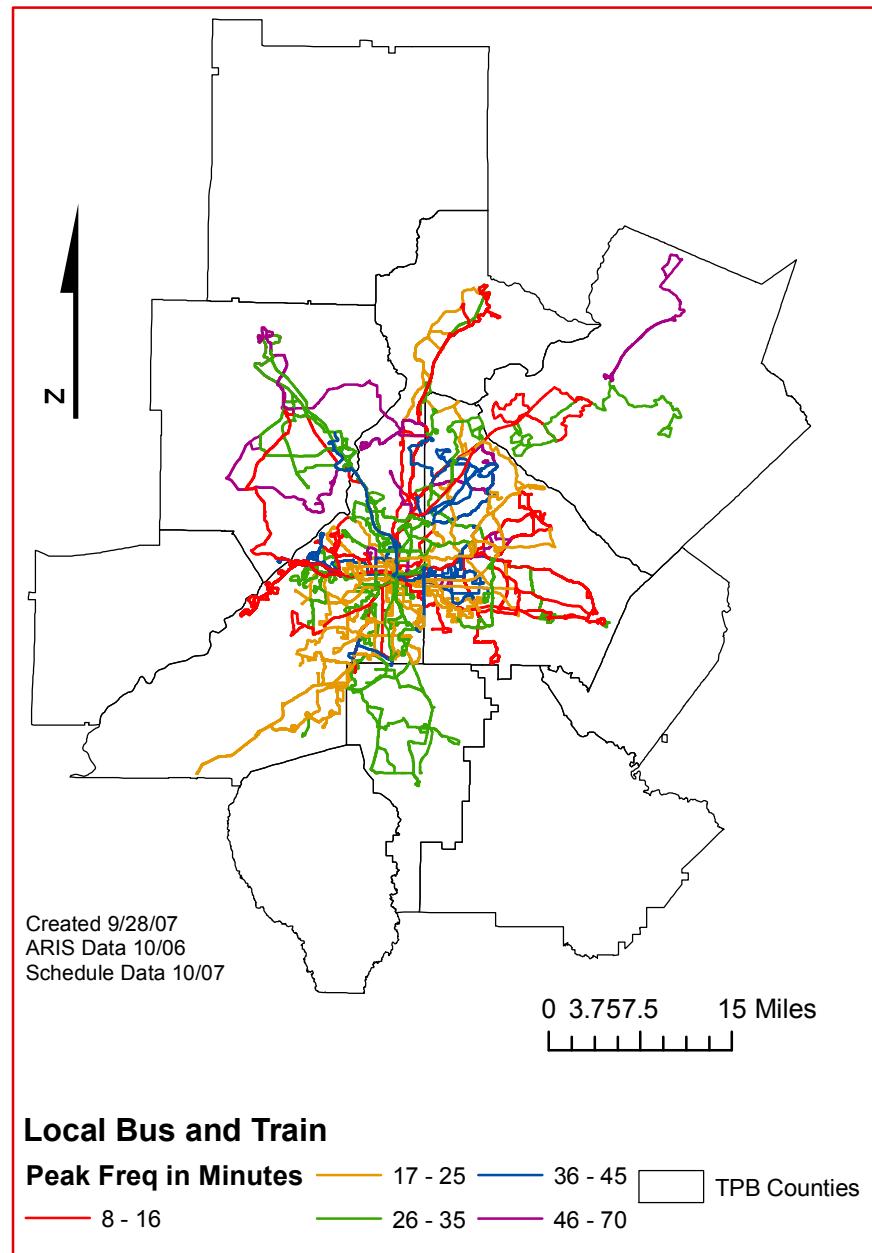
1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
		1972: MARTA starts bus operations with 15 cent fare			1989: Cobb County starts own transit service: Cobb Community Transit
		1971: MARTA buys ATS for \$12.9 million	1979: MARTA heavy rail service starts		
		1968: First MARTA funding referendum defeated, White downtown business elites failed to get Black or suburban support			1987: David Chestnut, White MARTA board chair, says 90 percent of opposition to public transit has been a racial issue

Timeline of Transit in Atlanta: Move Toward Regional Transit

1990s: Build up to Olympics jump starts gentrification in intown neighborhoods	November 2001: Disability Law and Policy Center files ADA civil action suit against MARTA	2005: Atlanta Transit Riders' Union starts in opposition to proposed fare increase and to restore bus service to Bowen Homes public housing project
1996: Olympics in Atlanta	1999: GRTA formed	2005: ARC conducts Regional Transit Institutional Analysis
	2001: Clayton County starts transit system	
1990	1995	2000
1990: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed into federal law; requirement for paratransit service	2000: Gwinnett County Transit starts	2005: Xpress Bus service starts
1999: Perry Homes torn down before transit line ever built	2000: MATEC files complaint against MARTA for discrimination against minorities and people with disabilities under Title VI of US Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ADA	2006: Transit Planning Board formed
	October 2002: Preliminary injunction against MARTA in ADA suit and mediation completed in Title VI complaint	2007: Atlanta Transit Riders' Union and Concerned Paratransit Riders pressure MARTA board to back off proposal to limit the number of rides on an unlimited monthly paratransit pass

Appendix B: Transit Frequencies By Route

Figure 25: Peak Hour Weekday Frequencies



City of Canton buses run every hour and the trolley every 20 minutes from 9 am to 4 pm on weekdays.

Figure 26: Off-Peak Hour Weekday Frequencies

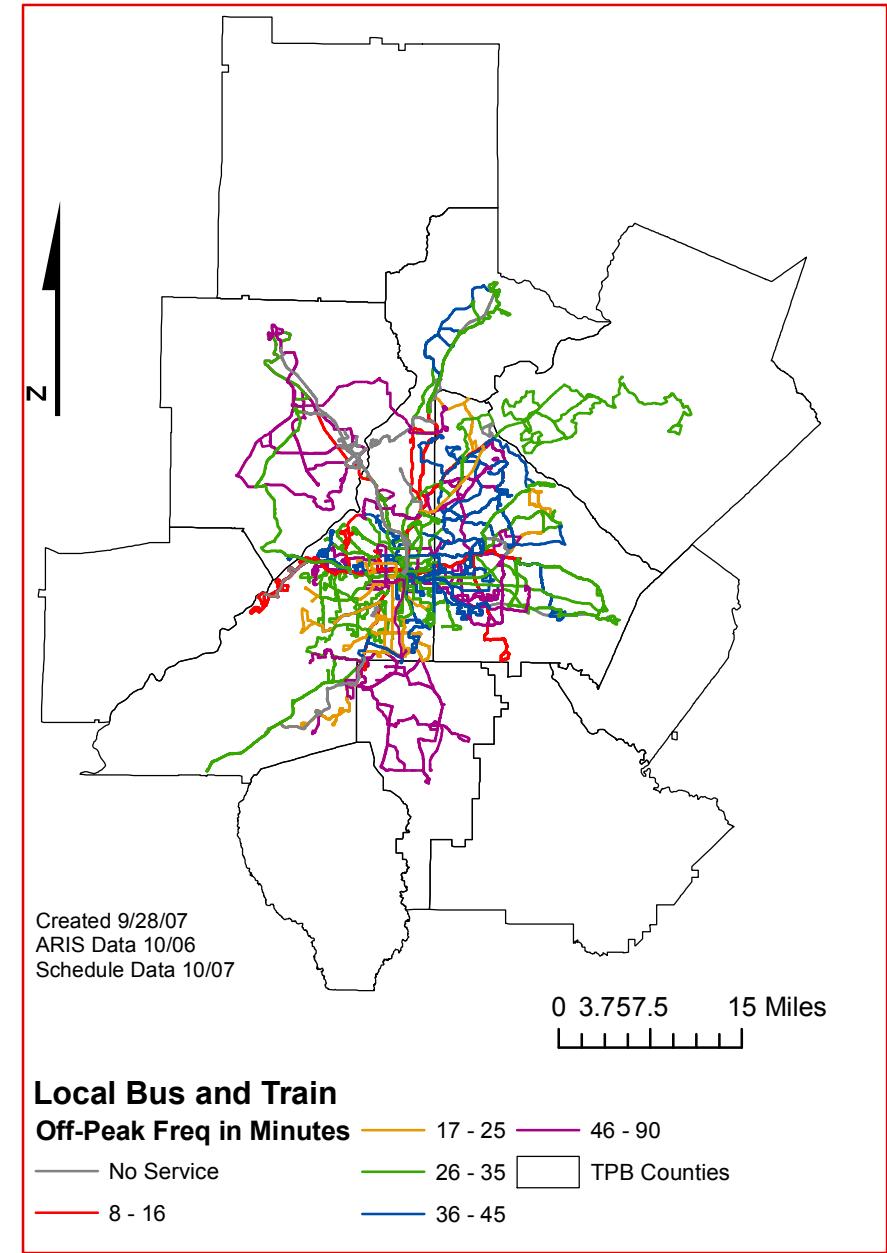


Figure 27: Saturday Frequencies

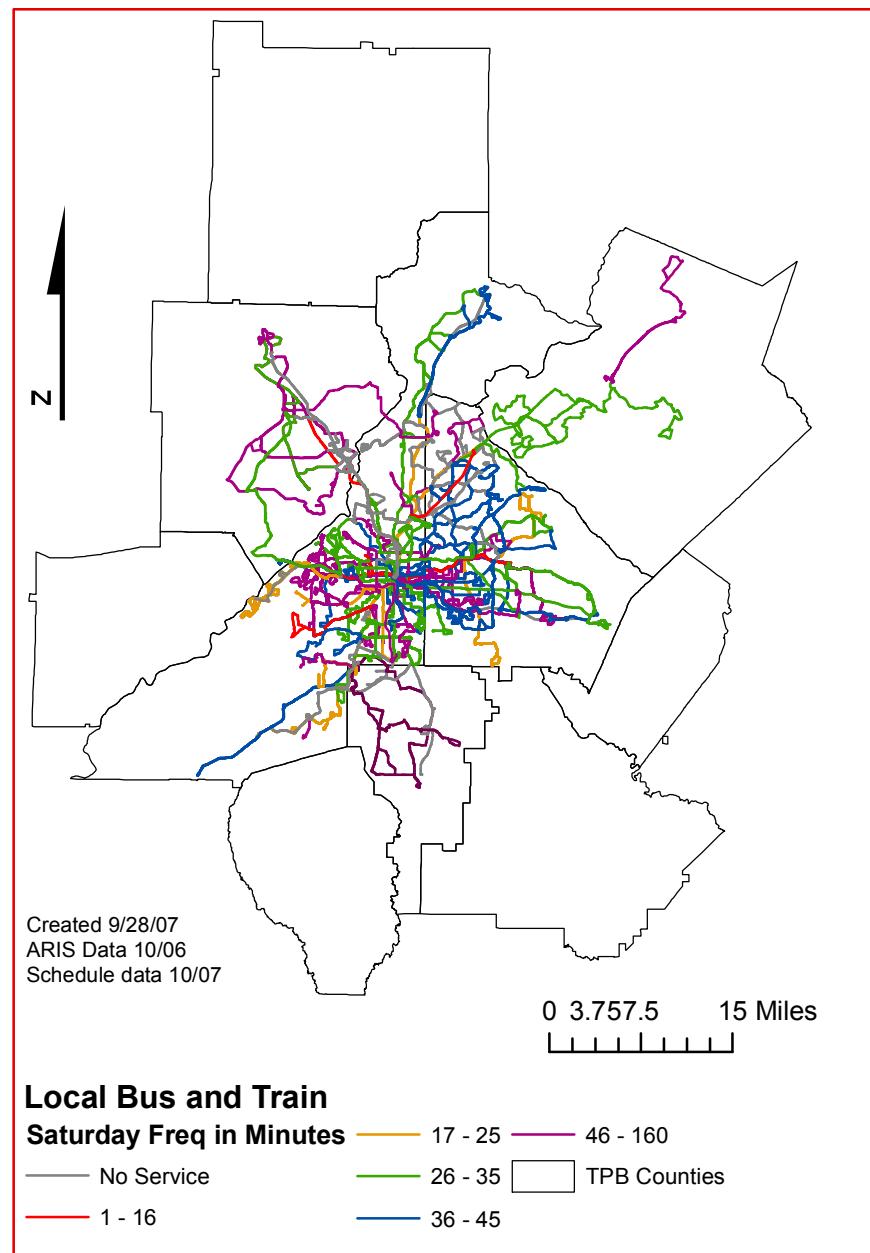
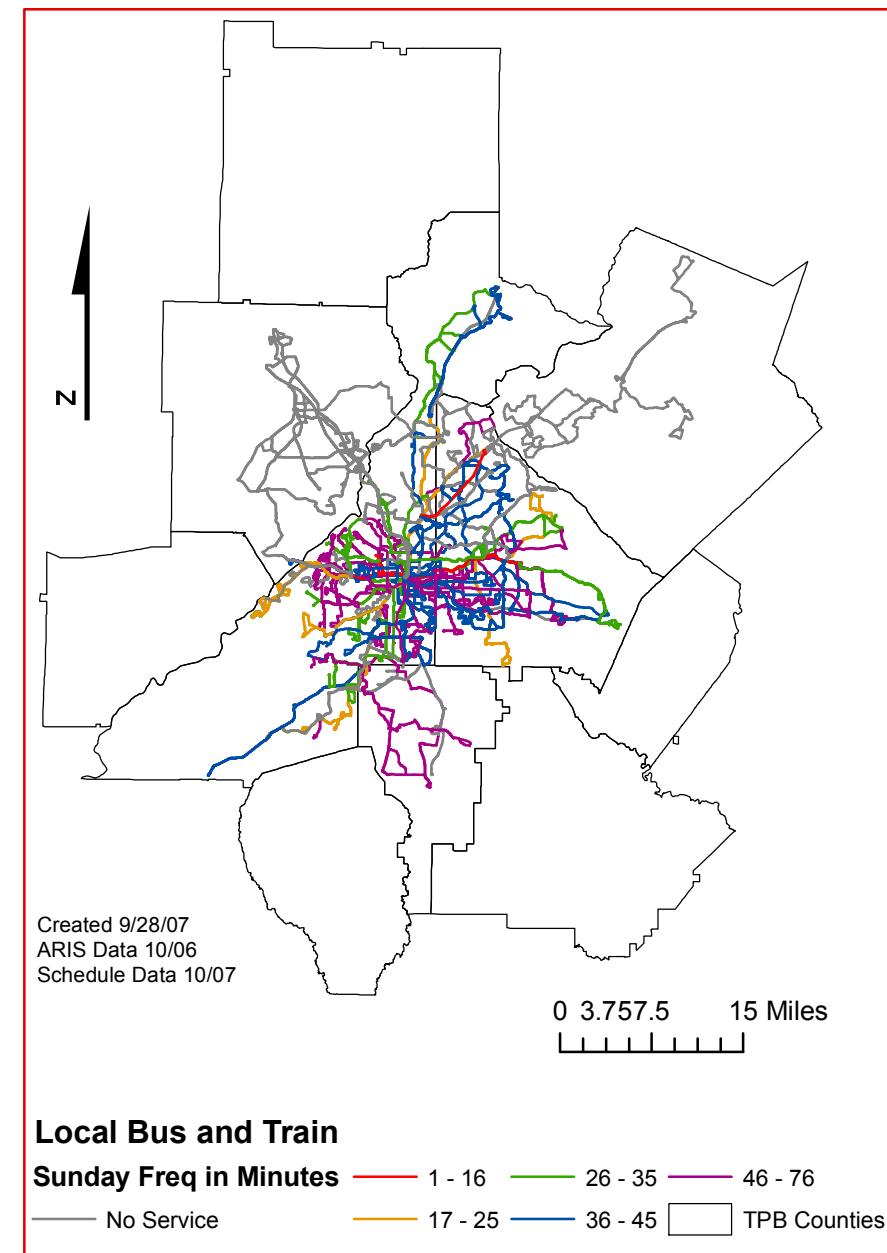


Figure 28: Sunday Frequencies



Appendix C: Analysis of Envision6 Transit Projects

Name of Project	Location	TRU Score (1-5 scale)	Considerations for Improvement	Budget Amount	Programmed or Long Range
Multimodal Passenger Terminal	Downtown Atlanta	4	Connections to frequent local bus service	\$4,525,233	P
Commuter Rail Stations and P&R	Atlanta to Lovejoy	2	Ensure affordable and connections to local bus service	\$9,090,000	P
Commuter Rail	Program Management	2	Ensure affordable and connections to local bus service	\$46,000,000	P through 2013
New Xpress Buses	Regional	2	Connections to frequent local bus service	\$91,774,600	P
Beltline	Intown Atlanta	2.5	Affordable housing surrounding stations and convenient connections to MARTA buses and rail	\$838,000,000	P and LR
Peachtree Street Car	Brookwood to Downtown to Fort McPherson	2.5	Affordable housing surrounding stations and convenient connections to MARTA buses and rail	\$555,172,300	Phase 1 P Phase 2 LR
FTA Section Funds	Regional	NA	Depends on how they are spent	\$2,130,056,065	P through 2013
GRTA Bus/Facilities	Regional	2	Different than Xpress?	\$2,784,375	P
Rail Modernization	MARTA and Regional	4	Why does CCT get the same as MARTA when they do not have rail?	\$901,009,921	P through 2013
Transit for Elderly/Disabled	Regional	5	Depends on how implemented; ensure users involved in the process	\$25,109,901	P through 2013
Non-urbanized Transit Formula	Rural areas	NA	Depends on how they are spent	\$24,091,680	P through 2013
Job Access and Reverse Commute	Regional	5	Depends on how implemented, ensure users involved in the process	\$52,065,003	P through 2013
New Freedom	Regional	5	Depends on how implemented, ensure users involved in the process	\$32,693,979	P through 2013
Park & Ride lots for Express	Outer Suburbs	1	Needs local bus service and sidewalks	\$42,900,000	P

Projects are ranked on a 1-5 scale (5 highest) using the Transit Riders' Evaluation Criteria.

Name of Project	Location	TRU Score (1-5 scale)	Considerations for Improvement	Budget Amount	Programmed or Long Range
I-285 North BRT	Cumberland to Perimeter	3	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$277,000,000	LR
I-20 East BRT Phase 1	Atlanta to Candler Rd	3	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$324,000,000	LR
I-20 East BRT Phase 2	Candler Rd to Stonecrest Mall	3	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$305,000,000	LR
SR 13 BRT	Gwinnett to Lindbergh	3	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$28,050,000	LR
Memorial Drive BRT	Avondale Mall to Gannett Station	3.5	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$22,500,000	LR
I-75/I-575 Northwest BRT	Art Center to Hickory Grove in Cobb	3	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$734,144,002	P
Canton Intermodal Facility	Canton, Cherokee	4	Needs local and regional connections	\$425,000	P
Mableton Park and Ride	Cobb County	1	Needs local bus service and sidewalks	\$320,000	P
Galleria Park and Ride lots	Cobb County	1	Needs local bus service and sidewalks	\$20,000,000	P
CCT Smart Card/Bus Facility Improvements	Cobb County	4	If for local bus, not just express	\$553,850	P
Clifton Corridor Transit Study	Emory/CDC area	4	If involves transit dependent in process to ensure their need will be met	\$990,000	P
MARTA Rail Modernization	MARTA service area	5	Sounds like a great idea	\$231,528,000	P
MARTA Clean Bus	MARTA service area	5	Sounds like a great idea	\$36,984,750	P
MARTA Breeze	MARTA service area	4	As long as fare structure changes are equitable and transit dependent are involved	\$553,850	P
Memorial Drive BRT and operating assistance	Goldsmith Rd to Kensington	3.5	Needs connections to frequent local bus service and off peak service	\$6,250,000	P
MARTA Hamilton Garage CNG	MARTA southern area	5	About time	\$2,500,000	P
MARTA Northline Extension Study	Northern Fulton	2.5	Only if considers connections to job centers and affordable housing near rail stations	\$2,000,000	P

Appendix D: TRU Recommendations

Accountable				
<i>Board of Directors</i>	Directly elected by jurisdictions that pay and constituency groups	Equally weighted districts or proportional voting	Required to attend all public hearings	Required to use the system weekly
<i>Board Meetings and Public Hearings</i>	Weekends or evenings in accessible location	Childcare available	Translators by request; translation time not included in public hearing time limits	Show all meetings and hearings on the televisions onboard transit vehicles
<i>Decision-Making Criteria</i>	Project weighting should value person trips, not car trips	Reduce congestion relief weight	Increase weight for measure of mobility and accessibility for all	Use the Transit Riders' criteria to evaluate transit projects
<i>Transit Agency</i>	A public and fully accountable MARTA that fulfills its original intent as a regional transit provider			
Affordability: Fares				
<i>Unlimited Passes</i>	Regular Weekly and Monthly Passes at same price	Half-fare unlimited ride passes at half price	Reduced student passes (K-12 and University)	Unlimited ride paratransit passes
<i>Distance Pricing</i>	Lower base fare for short distances	Local bus transfers free	Higher fares for express buses except for reverse commute	Distance pricing for paratransit, with lower base fare but keep flat monthly pass
Affordability: Funding	Consideration for Fulton and DeKalb's past payments	State funding including gas tax for transit	Equitable taxes, not disproportionately from low-income people	Consolidate private systems into one public system
Accessibility: System and Region				
<i>New Transit System</i>	Three tier structure of regional express buses, arterial connectors, and local bus service	Designed using Universal Design Principles	Service Standards to follow new housing and activity centers	Workers and riders involved in planning
<i>Service Improvements</i>	Increase frequency of buses to an average of 7 minutes in peak and 10-15 minutes in off peak	Extend hours of operation on weekends and nights, offer 24 hour service	Route buses to serve destinations not just train stations	Improve coordination between modes and systems and reliability

<i>Information and Marketing</i>	24 hour phone information hotline; fully accessible website; up to date system information on vehicles	Utilize TVs on vehicles to inform passengers about system changes and have public access programming	Accurate elevator outage notices; real time customer feedback system	Have all printed material available in Spanish, large print, and Braille
<i>Bus Stops</i>	Shelters, benches, trash cans, and schedule signs at bus stops with either 50 boardings per weekday or bus transfer point; install 'next bus' time signs			Up-to-date signs indicating which bus stops there and hours of operation at every stop
<i>Access to Transit Stops and Stations</i>	Textured curb cuts and sidewalk access to all stops, safe crosswalks with audible signals; Major improvements to pedestrian infrastructure necessary throughout entire region			
<i>Bicycles on Transit</i>	Bicycle lockers and covered parking at stations	Dedicated space for bicycles on transit vehicles	Safe bike access to transit stations	
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	Require affordable housing in all developments near stations, all housing accessible			Service standards to ensure transit in areas with affordable housing
<i>Environment</i>	All transit vehicles should use clean fuels			Encourage walk to transit trips over drive to transit
<i>Accessibility for People with Disabilities on Existing Fixed Route</i>	Ensure all elevators, train doors, and all announcements (audio and visual) are working	All staff should be trained in sensitivity and assisting people with disabilities	Make all bus stops accessible; improve accessibility of stations	
<i>Accessibility on New Transit</i>	Universal design of all new transit systems	Riders with disabilities involved in developing new system	Multiple elevators at major stations; all signs in Braille	
<i>Paratransit: Existing Problems</i>	Improve reliability: on-time pick-ups, less time on vans, more vans on the road	Improve customer service: reservation system and dispatch, emergency policy	Cleanliness, maintenance of vehicles, and communication equipment	Improve working conditions and wages for drivers
<i>Regional Paratransit</i>	One system without transfers at the county line	Distance pricing and lower base fares for paratransit; unlimited passes	Increase service area from $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed route	
<i>Transit Workers</i>	All represented by ATU under one contract with full-time jobs	Workers involved in route scheduling	Improve safety with new equipment and money for better maintenance	Fair attendance policy: allow time off for family emergencies

Appendix E: Research Methodology

This plan was developed by the Atlanta Transit Riders' Union and Laurel Paget-Seekins as a masters' project at the Georgia Institute of Technology. As a transit rider (and member of TRU) and transportation student Laurel was in a unique position to gather data on transit from the point of view of dependent riders. Principles of participant observation and community based research were used to develop this plan. The goal of this project was not only to develop a plan but to leave transit riders with the knowledge and tools to more effectively advocate for themselves in the transportation planning process.

The recommendations and analysis in this plan are drawn from one and half years of discussions and work by the Atlanta Transit Riders' Union. This includes countless TRU meetings, attendance at dozens of MARTA, ARC, and TPB board meetings and public hearings, and the collective experience of being dependent on transit in Atlanta since 1973.

The Atlanta Transit Riders' Union was formed as a subgroup of Atlanta Jobs with Justice, in the spring of 2005. The group is composed of fixed route and paratransit transit riders, ATU members, faith leaders, and students. In its two year history TRU has had a number of victories.

- June 2005: Stopped proposed fare increase.
- October 2005: Restored bus service to Bowen Homes public housing project
- Fall 2005: Supported ATU in contract negotiations
- April 2006: Improved service on route 22 to Terry Mills public housing project
- June 2007: Stopped proposed elimination of unlimited rides on monthly paratransit pass

This project is the beginning of TRU's attempt to move beyond reactive service restoration one bus route at a time to a proactive strategy to improve transit in the entire region.



TRU does have members with disabilities who ride both fixed route and paratransit. However, in order to get more input from people with disabilities, TRU worked with the Concerned Paratransit Riders. Individuals with both visual and physical disabilities were interviewed for their input on a regional paratransit system.

Members of ATU, Local 732 also added the perspective of transit workers on the development of regional transit in Atlanta.

Individual Interviews with Transit Riders

Flora Tommie, former member of Metropolitan Atlanta Transportation Equity Coalition, July 13, 2007.

Chioke Perry, Co-Chair Transit Riders' Union, November 9, 2007.

Sandra Owen, Co-Chair Concerned Paratransit Riders, November 13, 2007.

Barbara Olds, Paratransit Rider, November 14, 2007.

Betty Hasan-Amin, Paratransit Rider, November 14, 2007.

Derrick Roberts, Paratransit Rider, November 16, 2007.

Rita Harrison, Paratransit Rider, November 23, 2007.

Methodology Sources

Brydon-Miller, Mary; Maguire, Patricia; and McIntyre, Alice, eds. *Traveling Companions: Feminism, Teaching, and Action Research*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2004.

Fals-Borda, Orlando and Mohammad Anisur Rahman, eds. *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research*, New York: The Apex Press, 1991.

Marullo, Sam and Kerry Stand, eds. *Community-based Research*, Washington DC: American Sociological Association, 2004.

McKenzie, George, Jackie Powell, and Usher, Robin, eds. *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice*, Washington DC: Falmer Press, 1997.

Miller-Brydon, Mary, Maguire, Patricia, and McIntyre, Alice, eds. *Traveling Companions: Feminism, Teaching, and Social Research*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2004.

Park, Peter, Miller-Brydon, Mary, Hall, Budd, and Ted Jackson, eds. *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*, Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 1993.

Ristock, Janice and Joan Pennell. *Community Research as Empowerment*, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Smith, Susan, Willms, Dennis, and Johnson, Nancy, eds. *Nurtured by Knowledge: Learning to Do Participatory Action-Research*, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, 1997.

Appendix F: Sources

Works Cited

APTA. "Georgia Transit Links," accessed November 17, 2007 <http://www.apta.com/links/state_local/ga.cfm>.

ARC[1], "Draft Regional Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan," February 2007.

ARC[2], "Envision6 Needs Assessment Report", 2006.

ARC[3], "Older Adults in the Atlanta Region: Preferences, Practices and Potential of the 55+ Population," 2007.

ARC[4]. "2006 Population and Housing in the Atlanta Region," November 2006.

ARC[5] "Population and Employment Estimates for 2003 and 2005," July 2006, "Population and Employment Forecasts for 2010 and 2030," August 2007.

ARC[6], "Envision 6 Factsheets," 2007.

ARC[7], "The Bylaws of the Atlanta Regional Commission," adopted September 10, 1971 amended through February 23, 2005.

ARC[8]. *Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan, Volume I*, August 31, 2007.

ATU, accessed November 18, 2007 <<http://www.atu.org/>>.

Beltline Transit Panel. "The Atlanta BeltLine: Transit Feasibility White Paper," prepared for Atlanta Development Authority, September 2005.

Brookings Institute. *Moving Beyond Sprawl: The Challenge for Metropolitan Atlanta*, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2000.

Bus Riders Union, Los Angeles. "BRU Five-Year Plan for Countywide New Bus Service," January 14, 2005.

Cairns, Shannon, Jessica Greig, and Martin Wachs. *Environmental Justice and Transportation: A Citizen's Handbook*, Institute of Transportation Studies at UC Berkeley, 2003.

CCT, accessed August 30, 2007 <<http://www.cobbdot.org/cct.htm>>.

City of Canton, accessed October 28, 2007 <<http://www.canton-georgia.com/>>.

Clayton County Transit, accessed August 30, 2007 <<http://web.co.clayton.ga.us/ctran/index.htm>>.

Frey, William, *Boomers and Seniors in the Suburbs: Aging Patterns in the Census 2000*, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003.

GCT, accessed August 30, 2007 <<http://www.gwinnettcounty.com/cgi-bin/gwincty/egov/ep/gcbrowse.do?channelId=-12797&channelPage=%2Fep%2Fchannel%2Fdefault.jsp&pageTypeId=536880236>>.

Gwinnett County Transit Advisory Board (GCTAB), "Proposed Route Changes, Service Reductions and Fare Adjustments," Presentation to Public Meeting, February 7, 2008.

GRTA, accessed August 30, 2007 <<http://www.xpresssga.com/default.asp>>.

ILIUM, "Atlanta Region Xpress Bus Rider Survey," Prepared for GRTA, 2006.

Immergluck, Dan. "The Beltline and Rising Home Prices: Residential Appreciation Near the Beltline Tax Allocation District and Policy Recommendations to Minimize Displacement," prepared for Georgia Stand-Up, 2007.

King, Cheryl. Personal Interview., Executive Director of Transit Planning Board, June 7, 2007.

Kruse, Kevin. *White Flight*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Lipman, Barbara. *A Heavy Load: The Combined Housing and Transportation Burdens of Working Families*, Center for Housing Policy, Washington DC, October 2006.

MARTA[1], "Fiscal Year 2006, Annual Report," 2006.

MARTA [2], "Demographic Information, 2006," sent to author by Carol Smith, Director of Research & Analysis at MARTA.

MARTA[3], accessed November 7, 2007 <<http://www.itsmarta.com>>.

MARTA[4]. "Archived News and Announcements." http://www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/news_archive.htm, retrieved Nov 1, 2007.

McLennan, Paul. "History and Leadership in ATU," unpublished article, 1999.

National Organization on DisAbility. Assessed November 18, 2007 <<http://www.nod.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=1430&nодеID=1&FeatureID=1422&redirected=1&CFID=28578335&CFTOKEN=78848685>>

National Transit Database. 2005 Summary Sheets for MARTA, GRTA, GCT, CCT, City of Canton, accessed August 30, 2007 <<http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/>>.

Oakley, Deirdre, and Erin Ruel. "Where's the Voucher Housing in Atlanta?," Georgia State University, 2008.

Sanchez, Thomas. *An Inherent Bias? Geographic and Racial-Ethnic Patterns of Metropolitan Planning Organization Boards*, The Brookings Institute Series on Transportation Reform, January 2006.

Sanchez, Thomas, Rich Stoltz, and Jacinta Ma. "Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities," Center for Community Change and The Civil Rights Project of Harvard University, 2003.

Scholl, Lynn. "Privatization of Public Transit: A Review of the Research on Contracting of Bus Services in the United States," *Berkeley Planning Journal*, Volume 19, 2006.

Sweat, Laura. "Three Gwinnett county bus fires prompt acceleration of preventive maintenance," *GSU Signal*, September 19, 2007.

TBP[1]. "Bylaws," Approved April 20, 2006.

TPB [2]. "Regional Transit Funding: Presentation to the Working Committee on Funding of the Transit Planning Board," Atlanta, GA, July 20, 2007.

TPB[3]. "Regional Transit System Characteristics and Frameworks," TPB Board Working Session, August 30, 2007.

Ubbels, Barry, et al. *Unfare Solutions: Local Earmarked Charges to Fund Public Transport*, New York: Spon Press, 2004.

URS. "Cobb County Transit Planning Study, Executive Summary," May 31, 2006.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census data, <<http://www.census.gov>>.

U.S. DOT, "Implementing Title VI Requirements in Metropolitan and Statewide Planning," October 7, 1999.

Veolia Transportation, accessed February 15, 2008 <<http://www.veoliatransportation.com/>>.

Data for GIS Maps

U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data

ARC ARIS Data, October 2006

ARC 2007 Forecasts for 2010 and 2030, 2006 Estimates for 2003 and 2005

MARTA, CCT, GCT, C-TRAN Clayton schedule information, October 2007

Timeline Sources

Bullard, Robert. *Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism and New Routes to Equity*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2004.

Carson, O.E. *The Trolley Titans*. Glendale, CA: Interurban Press, 1981.

Kruse, Kevin. *White Flight*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Martin, Jean. *From Mule to MARTA, Volume I*. Atlanta Historical Society, 1975.

Works Consulted

Brookings Institute, 2003. "Atlanta in Focus: A Profile from Census 2000," Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.

Bullard, Robert, et al. *Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism and New Routes to Equity*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2004.

Bullard, Robert, et al. *Just Transportation: Dismantling Race & Class Barriers to Mobility*, Gabriola Island, BC Canada: New Society Publishers, 1997.

Center for Neighborhood Technology. *Driven to Spend: Pumping Dollars out of Our Households and Communities*, June 2005.

Keating, Larry. Atlanta: *Race, Class and Urban Expansion*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001

Mann, Eric, et al. "An Environmental Justice Strategy for Urban Transportation in Atlanta: Lessons and Observations from Los Angeles," The Labor/Community Strategy Center, March 2001.



**For more information on the Public Sector Coalition
or the Atlanta Transit Riders' Union contact Atlanta
Jobs with Justice**

Atlanta Jobs with Justice
542 Moreland Ave. SE
Atlanta, Ga. 30316
404-622-4800
terencecourtney@yahoo.com
www.atljwj.org



For specific questions regarding this plan contact Laurel at laurel@gatech.edu