Transit Visioning in Atlanta: Focus on a Regional Vision Plan and its Impacts

John Crocker
Rail-Volution
Boston, MA
October 31, 2009
(Happy Halloween)
Transit Planning Board – why?

• In 2004 – the MPO (Atlanta Regional Commission) realized it was programming projects that the region’s institutional structure could not deliver:

• Created a public joint Venture of:

ARC

GRTA

MARTA
TPB Charged Three Requirements

Robust, Sustainable, Equitable, Successful Regional Transit System

New Regional Transit Funding Source

Regional Transit Plan

Regional Transit Governance
Transit Vision Plan Purpose

Develop a regional transit vision plan that:

- Serves commuters, people without autos & visitors
- Provides mobility choice, travel time certainty/reliability &
- Connects local communities with the region through a seamless service network
Concept Development Process

1. **Review of Previous Regional Studies**
   - MARTA System Plan
   - RTIA
   - RTAP
   - RDP
   - Envision6 & Mobility 2030

2. **TPB Project Assessment**
   - 63 transit projects
   - Ridership
   - Land use/density
   - Congestion mitigation
   - Cost & cost-benefit

3. **Stakeholder Interviews**
   - 18 interviews conducted
   - Regional system
   - All areas need transit
   - Transit appropriate for area

4. **Regional Coordination**
   - TPB staff collaboration (TPB, ARC, MARTA, GRTA & GDOT)
   - Technical Committee input
   - Counties, Operators, and Stakeholders
Concept Development Process

5 System Characteristics
- Activity Center focus
- Regional mobility & congestion mitigation
- Cost effective & cost-benefit requirements
- Customer focus
- Land use synergy

6 Framework System
- Initial scenarios
- Major corridors & needs
- Critical regional links

7 Board Priorities
- August 07 work session
- September 07 retreat
- October 07 Revision

8 System Concepts
- November 07 Concept 3 for Public Engagement
- Funding
- Governance
Regional Travel Demand

- Travel demand:
  - Varies by corridor
  - Varies within corridors

- Demand signals appropriate service levels & transit modes for corridors
Concept Development Process

• System Development
  – Two concepts presented at September 2007 retreat
  – Board directed staff to develop and further refined system
• Concept 3 result of close work with Board and partners
• November 2007: Board authorized staff to release Concept 3 for public comment and review

• Goal was to educate and inform regarding transit and receive feedback on Concept 3
• 12-town hall meetings = 569 individuals – including voting machines for direct feedback
• Special Events – Lenox Mall, Geranium Festival
• Stakeholders Briefing = over 1,500 individuals
• Public Opinion Survey (Online and phone)
  – 4,123 on phone
  – 889 online
Results

• Received feedback on Concept 3
  – Over 1,400 comments
• Contacted directly over 7,500 individuals over a 7 month period
• Several Changes to the Initial Concept 3 Network
• Adoption of Amended Concept 3
Fall 2008 – Adoption of 2030 Vision Plan

- Network of Rail and Bus Expansion
- $12 Billion Capital Expansion
- $26B in O&M for existing system
- $16B for O&M of New Projects
- Total: $54B Order of Magnitude est.
What was the impact?

• To estimate the impact – examined three sketch scenarios:
  – Existing projected population and Employment distribution
  – 10% shift in population and employment towards transit investments
  – 20% shift in population and employment towards transit investments
What were range of estimated measurable impacts?

- Daily estimated boardings ranged from 827,000 - 1,750,000
- Annual Passenger Miles (Millions) 1,490 – 3,200
- Increase in Estimated Workers within 30-minutes for major employment centers
- Reduction in Congestion on some parts of regional freeway and arterial network
Est. Workers within 30-min Walk to Transit

- **Downtown**
- **Midtown**
- **Buckhead**
- **Perimeter Center**
- **Cumberland**
- **Airport**
- **Fulton Industrial Boulevard**
- **Southlake**
- **Peachtree Corners**
- **Gwinnett Place**
- **North Point**
- **Town Center**

**Legend:**
- **2008 Model Estimate**
- **2030 Concept 3 - No Pop/Emp Shift**
- **2030 Concept 3 - 10% Pop/Emp Shift**
- **2030 Concept 3 - 20% Pop/Emp Shift**
% of Freeway Vehicle Hours Traveled Under Congested Conditions (PM Peak)

- Urban Areas
- Suburban Areas
- Exurban Areas

- 2030 E6
- 2030 C3, No LU
- 2030 C3 10% LU
- 2030 C3 20% LU
% of Arterial Vehicle Hours Traveled Under Congested Conditions (PM Peak)

- Urban Areas
- Suburban Areas
- Exurban Areas

- 2030 E6
- 2030 C3, No LU
- 2030 C3 10% LU
- 2030 C3 20% LU
Other Benefits

• Estimated Range of Safety Benefits between 15-30 reduced fatalities (based on Passenger Mile estimates and crash rates by mode)
• Economic Impact is highest due to labor force mobility – Georgia Economic Modeling Study (next slide)
### Historic Estimated Economic Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Economic Impact of MARTA (Millions $)</td>
<td>$1,333</td>
<td>$1,563</td>
<td>$1,571</td>
<td>$1,543</td>
<td>$1,589</td>
<td>$1,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Operating Costs for the Atlanta Regional Transit System (Millions $)</td>
<td>$344</td>
<td>$313</td>
<td>$337</td>
<td>$332</td>
<td>$338</td>
<td>$334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Capital Costs for the Atlanta Regional Transit System (Millions $)</td>
<td>$268</td>
<td>$248</td>
<td>$255</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$183</td>
<td>$221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Capital and Operating Costs for the Atlanta Regional Transit System (Millions $)</td>
<td>$612</td>
<td>$561</td>
<td>$592</td>
<td>$552</td>
<td>$521</td>
<td>$555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of Estimated Economic Impact and Total Costs</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


**[2]** Source: NTD 2006 for MARTA, GRTA, CCT, GCT, City of Canton compiled by the Transit Planning Board

**[3]** Source: NTD 2006 for MARTA, GRTA, CCT, GCT, City of Canton compiled by the Transit Planning Board
What did we learn?

• Public Engagement
  – Online is a great complement to existing public engagement techniques – allows a wider audience and more free form comments

• Impact
  – Congestion Impacts vary, but are measurable
  – Greatest impact is on labor force mobility

• Population / Employment shifts (land use) dramatically change the impact of investments
What we learned (ct’d)

• Trust building between members was key to reaching consensus
  – Lunch before meetings provided informal time for discussion
  – Difficult issues – work sessions or smaller groups meeting around a single table facing each other
Thank You!!

Questions?

John Crocker: jtcrocker@itsmarta.com (Technical Work/ Public Involvement)
Cheryl King: cking@itsmarta.com (Leadership effort/ Public Involvement)
Cain Williamson: cwilliamson@atlantaregional.com (Leadership Effort)
Paul Grether: pgrehter@itsmarta.com (Technical Work/ Service Coordination)
   David Emory: demory@atlantaregional.com (Technical Work)
   William Mecke: wmecke@grta.org (Communications)
Michael Halicki: michael@ahmann.com (Public Involvement)
   Michelle Erste: michelle@jjg.com (Public Involvement)
   www.tpb.ga.gov (Historical Archived Website including Final Reports)