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Regional Business Coalition

The RBC is a recognized leader in identifying and advocating sustainable solutions that foster greater economic vitality by building consensus, shared commitment and the cooperation of chambers of commerce in the Atlanta region.



HOT Lanes



High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes are an innovative concept that is garnering attention nationwide and in the Atlanta region.

As with HOV lanes, buses and vanpools continue to use the lanes for free. People driving alone have the option, however, to pay a variable toll using an electronic payment system like the "cruise card" on GA 400. The toll varies to ensure that the lanes are always congestion free.

A recent study investigated the potential for this concept in Atlanta and seven other major metropolitan areas. In Atlanta, the study found that a complete HOT system could be constructed on all of the region's interstates for \$5 billion with half of the cost recovered from tolls.

>> EVENT
Robert Poole, co-author of the Reason Foundation's HOT Networks report, will be speaking in Atlanta on May 29th from 11:30-1:30p.m. Register for the event online: www.itsga.org (the event costs \$30 for non-ITS GA members).

GRTA's study of the area north of I-285 and bounded by I-75 and I-85 considered the use of HOT lanes as well. While the study did not single out the impact of HOT lanes, the scenario that included this concept estimated that tolls

from people driving alone in these lanes could generate \$20 million per year. Also, the scenario that contained HOT lanes reduced congestion more than the other scenarios.

Due to this concepts' ability to reduce congestion, provide a time-competitive lane for transit, and generate needed transportation investment revenues, HOT lanes are worthy of serious consideration for the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.

This year's LINK trip took over one hundred business, government and civic leaders to the San Francisco Bay Area.

Doug Henton with Collaborative Economics kicked off the visit with a discussion of the Bay area's "habitat". This habitat of well-educated workers, strong institutions of higher education, and high quality of life is fertile ground for innovation generally, not just computer technology and other dot-com related companies. This propensity for innovation enables the area to have high productivity then leading to regional prosperity.

With both Atlanta and San Francisco nationally ranked in the top five for worst congestion, transportation funding was a

prominent topic. State and federal funding comprise only 12% and 12% of San Francisco's 25-year transportation plan. In Atlanta, these sources comprise 18% and 37% respectively. On a per capita basis, San Francisco invests twice as much on transportation infrastructure compared to Atlanta, most of this from local or regional sources.

As is the case with other maturing areas, maintenance, operations, and rehabilitation constitute over 75% of transportation expenditures in San Francisco. This is in an increasingly tough challenge facing Atlanta.

San Francisco has an "aspirations-based" transportation plan that is not financially constrained. This plan projects over \$13 billion in additional needs beyond their adopted \$87 billion plan. [CONTINUED ON BACK](#)

MAY/JUNE
03



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General Assembly Wrap-up

The longest session on record proved productive for RBC's legislative agenda.

The Water District received \$300,000 in the 2003 Supplemental Budget and an additional \$250,000 in the 2004 General Budget. In these tough financial times, the Water District's bipartisan support was critical.

The erosion and sediment control amendments supported by RBC, home-builders, and environmental groups passed early in the session. The changes to the program will decrease compliance

costs, improve enforcement and result in cleaner water.

The unnecessary regulatory hurdles of the state's transferable development rights law were lessened. These changes are critical for the success of south Fulton's development plans and other local governments that wish to utilize this innovative land use tool.

Proposed changes to statewide transportation finance issues passed the Senate, but were stalled in the House. A study committee will evaluate the issues



during the year and bring forth recommendations for the 2004 session.

While not a year of blockbuster regional initiatives, this session passed most of RBC's legislative priorities.



SF
LINK

	ATLANTA	SAN FRANCISCO
Population	4,112,198	7,039,362
Employees	2,092,994	3,495,883
Median HH Income	\$51,948	\$62,024
Median Home Value	\$135,300	\$353,500
Counties	10	9
Cities	62	101
Congestion Rank	3	2

FROM FRONT

Their region has already obtained approval from their legislature to place a 10-cent regional gas tax on a ballot measure for voters to consider. RBC is working with other organizations to develop a new regional plan and explore options for an additional, dedicated and permanent source of transportation funds to reduce congestion, expand transit service, and improve air quality.

Another innovative topic presented to and discussed by participants was the concept of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes (See related article).

Nationally renowned new urbanist, Peter Calthorpe, tied together regional land use, transportation and environmental issues. His work in Chicago, Utah and with numerous developers illustrated the incredible opportunities before the Atlanta region.

The connection between arts and regional prosperity garnered considerable conversation. San Francisco leaders act on the idea that a community rich with arts and culture helps recruit top-notch talent and breeds innovative thinking.

It is also worth noting that Mayors Willie Brown and Jerry Brown provided entertaining and frank commentary on the state of regionalism in the bay area. RBC continues to be a proud partner of the LINK program.

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