

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.

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Transportation Plan

At their October 9th board retreat the Atlanta Regional Commission presented detailed information regarding the performance of their Mobility 2030 transportation plan. The plan would spend \$75 billion over the next 27 years to relieve traffic congestion, expand transit and support land use policies.

As compared to the current 2025 transportation plan, Mobility 2030 significantly increases road capacity (105%), transit service (69%), and HOV lanes (83%).

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Significant findings from the plan include:

- The forecasted addition of 2.3 million residents further strains our transportation system.
- Congestion will improve compared to our current transportation plan, but will be worse than today.
- The expanded transit system attracts 200,000 new trips away from driving alone. The transit line running from Midtown to Cobb's Town Center is estimated to attract 50,000 trips.
- The HOV system and other interstate projects will focus resources where most of the congestion exists.
- Parking pricing, road tolls, and growth management can help reduce congestion and increase transit ridership.



Quality Growth

How hard is it for a developer to build a walkable, mixed use development in the Atlanta region? After more than a decade of quality growth plans, development awards, and symposia, you might think every local government has adopted zoning codes and development regulations that

enable the growth industry to build quality growth product. Sadly, this is not the case.

In an effort to get beyond the anecdotes regarding the obstacles to quality growth, the Regional Business Coalition undertook an audit of 26 local government zoning codes and development regulations. The quality growth audit focused on mixed-use development, greenspace residential development, sidewalks, and residential lot and house size. The research uncovered an incredible amount of variation among local governments providing both cause for enthusiasm and frustration.

As it sounds, mixed-use developments help create live, work, shop and play

communities. According to recent market studies in the region, there is significant unmet demand for this neighborhood option. RBC's research found that 10 of 26 local governments had dedicated mixed-use zoning codes. Seven others have Planned Unit Development (PUD) codes that might allow mixed-use development, but these codes involve costly negotiation and uncertainty.

Walkability is a key indicator of quality growth. Since most people in the region will continue to travel alone in their automobile to get from point A to point B, developments must accommodate cars to succeed.

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Transportation Plan

FROM FRONT

Transportation finance is the most challenging issue facing plan development. The plan's \$75 billion price tag is \$25 billion more than the region is expected to have available over the 27 year time period. The ARC board continues to discuss options for closing the gap between needed and available revenues.

RBC recognizes the need for additional funds for transportation investment and that these funds should be permanent, dedicated and substantial.



Air Quality

The gasoline requirements associated with the Atlanta region being reclassified from a "serious" to "severe" air quality nonattainment area will result in more pollution. Analysis by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the Atlanta Regional Commission found that national RFG gasoline will generate 11 more tons of nitrogen oxides per day than the special, low-sulfur gasoline required by Georgia's EPD.

RBC supports legislative relief to waive the national RFG gasoline requirement until 2006 when a new and different national low-sulfur gasoline is phased-in. This different gasoline, versus the national RFG fuel, will help the region clean up its air. RBC urges members of the business community to talk with their congressional representatives about this issue.



Quality Growth

FROM FRONT

Fortunately, developments don't need to be car only or pedestrian only. Through intelligent design, developments can provide convenient and safe access for both means of travel.

Sidewalks are a starting point for making a community more walkable. Our quality growth audit found that 12 of 26 local governments required sidewalks on both sides of the street in residential developments. While sidewalks alone are not a perfect yardstick for walkability, this and related findings, such as building orientation to the street and block size, indicate a need to update zoning codes for better pedestrian accessibility.

Greenspace is a valuable element of this regions quality of life. RBC research found that

seven local governments have a greenspace residential development zoning code (aka conservation subdivision) in place to harness private development to permanently protect greenspace. Using this technique, instead of building 100 half acre lots on a tract of land, as is stipulated in conventional codes, a developer could cluster these same 100 homes on quarter acre lots and permanently save greenspace.

The Regional Business Coalition promotes land use and development that is profitable, environmentally sound, sustainable, and makes efficient use of infrastructure. Mixed-use development, sidewalks, and greenspace residential development are quality growth best practices that can make sense for most communities. Due to market conditions or community norms, not all new development should be expected to match these concepts, but RBC supports local government actions that enable more choices as we accommodate 100,000 people annually.

State of the Region Breakfast

RBC is proud to co-host the annual State of the Region Breakfast on November 21st at the Hyatt Regency Hotel (265 Peachtree Street). The event runs from 7:00-9:00 a.m. and features Jack Guynn, President & CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, and Raymond Christman, President & CEO of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta.

The Developments of Excellence awards, co-sponsored by the Regional Business Coalition and the Atlanta Regional Commission, will be presented to developments that best exemplify the principles of the Regional Development Plan. Also, a regional report card will be unveiled benchmarking our status on issues of transportation, air quality, land use, and education.

Tickets may be purchased for \$40-seat or \$400-table (10 seats). Last year's breakfast sold out, so act quickly to reserve your seat or table.

Available online at: www.atlantaregional.com/stateoftheregionbreakfast or call 404-463-3191.



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