

# Understanding The ATL and HB 930: Transit Moving in the Right Direction

*ITS Georgia Chapter*  
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# A History Lesson



Credit: Australian cartoonist Michael Leunig

## OK, So We Won't Go That Far Back...

- **1871**: First **streetcars** operate in the City of Atlanta
- **1926**: Peak of streetcar passenger service – **96.7 million trips** (city pop. 250K)
- **1947**: Rail lines from Atlanta to **Marietta** and **Stone Mountain** cease operations
- **1949**: **Final streetcar trip in Atlanta**
- **1961**: ARC report calls for 60 miles of rapid rail costing **\$200 million in 5 counties**
- **1965**: Georgia General Assembly passes act **creating MARTA**
- **1971**: MARTA 1% sales tax referenda pass in **Fulton and DeKalb Counties** only
- **1979**: First MARTA Rail line opens from Georgia State to Avondale
- **1999**: Last MARTA Rail station opens at North Springs

# Post-2012 T-SPLOST Vote, Transit Has Turned a Corner...

- **2014**: MARTA sales tax referendum passes for expansion to **Clayton County** with 74% of the vote; bus service started 2015 and commuter rail to come
- **2015**: Georgia General Assembly includes **\$75 million** for transit projects statewide as part of HB 170 transportation funding deal
- **2016**: General Assembly passes SB 369, allowing the **City of Atlanta** to vote on a ½% sales tax increase for additional MARTA expansion projects
- **2017**: Georgia House creates **Commission on Transit Governance and Funding**, which recommends new regional framework and state investment

***WHILE ANNOUNCEMENTS LIKE THESE CONTINUED...***

# Transit Matters to Economic Development...



Mercedes-Benz



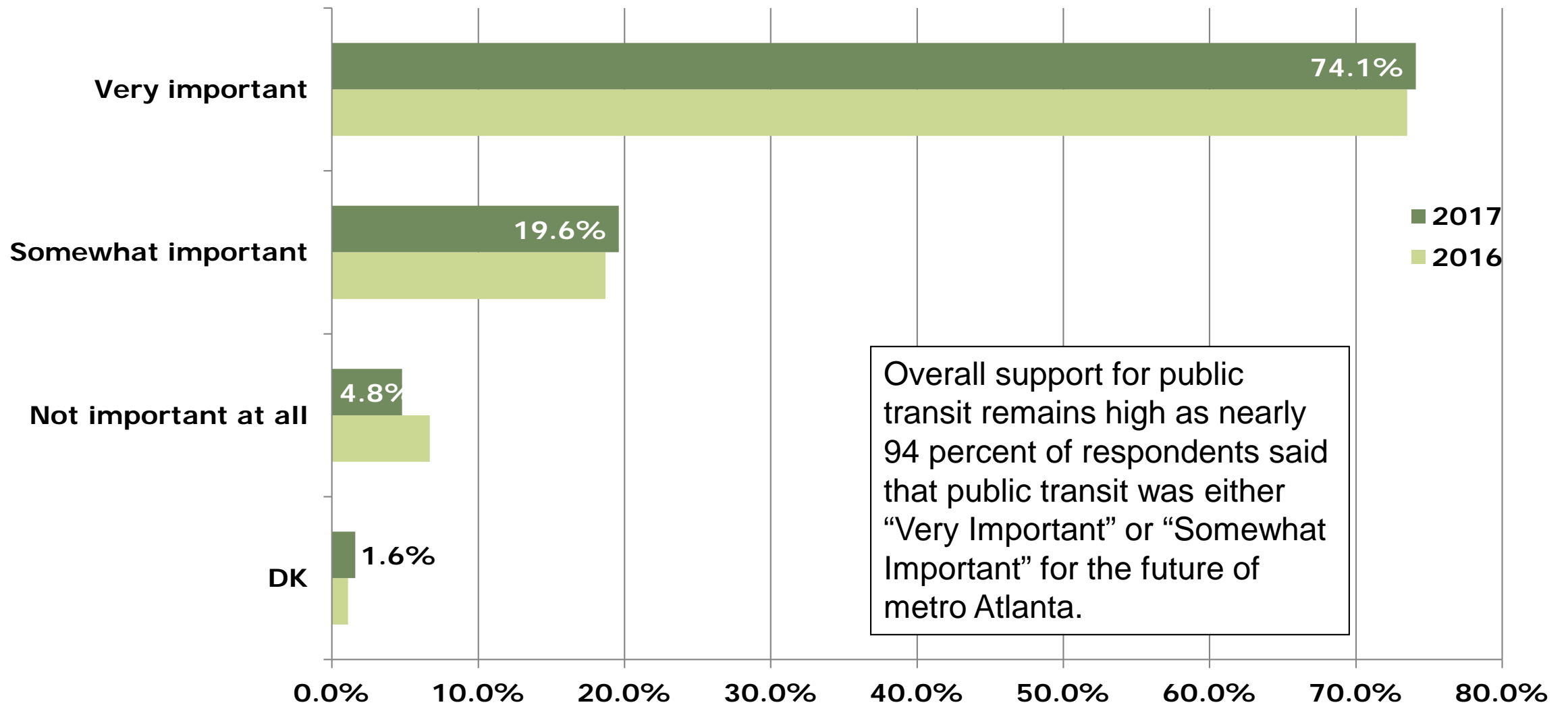
WestRock



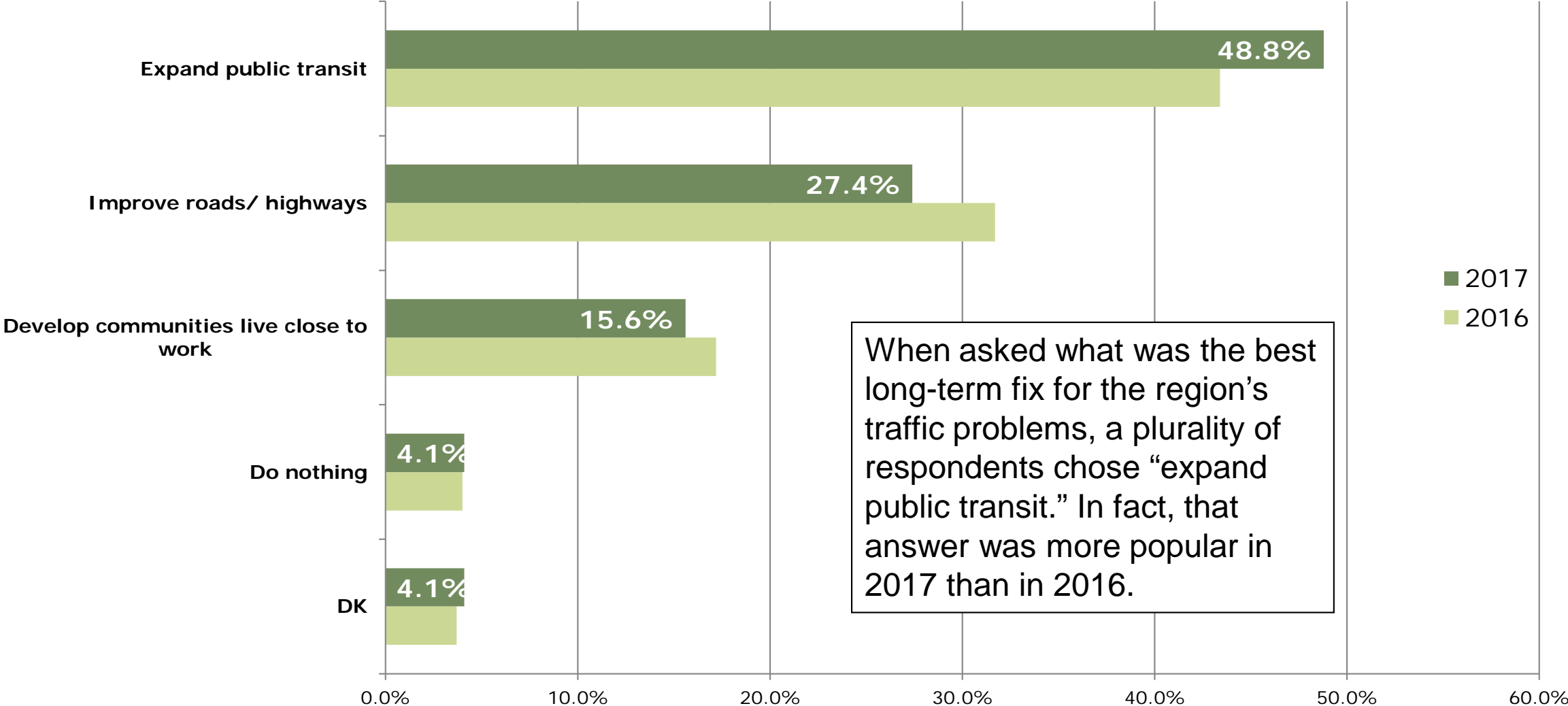
“ Access to MARTA and key transportation hubs will also benefit our employees in the region.”

Steve Vorhees  
WestRock CEO  
February, 2017

# Residents Say Transit is Important to the Future...



# Residents Believe in Transit as a Long-Term Fix...



When asked what was the best long-term fix for the region's traffic problems, a plurality of respondents chose "expand public transit." In fact, that answer was more popular in 2017 than in 2016.

# Pre-HB 930:

**Xpress** **vRide** **marta**

**HENRY COUNTY GA**  
1821

**DOUGLAS COUNTY GEORGIA**  
1870

**COBB LINC**

**CATS**

**FORSYTH COUNTY, GEORGIA**

**COWETA COUNTY TRANSIT**

**10**  
**TRANSIT SYSTEMS**

**+**

**13**  
**COUNTIES**



HB 930: Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (the 'ATL')  
Intends to improve coordination, integration and efficiency of transit in Metro Atlanta

ATL

**HB930 passed the General Assembly on March 29 and Governor Deal signed it into law on May 3, 2018, creating a new regional governance and funding structure called...**



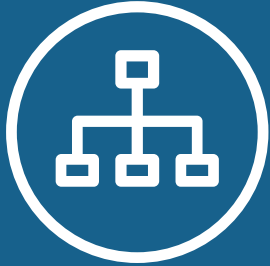
**THE ATLANTA-REGION TRANSIT LINK AUTHORITY**

A unifying entity for the Atlanta region that ensures coordinated transit planning and funding, and increased transparency



# Overview of the ATL

A unifying entity that ensures coordinated planning and funding of transit



**Regional  
Governance**



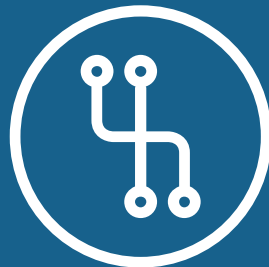
**Regional  
Transit Plan**



**Transit  
Funding**



**Regional  
Unified Branding**



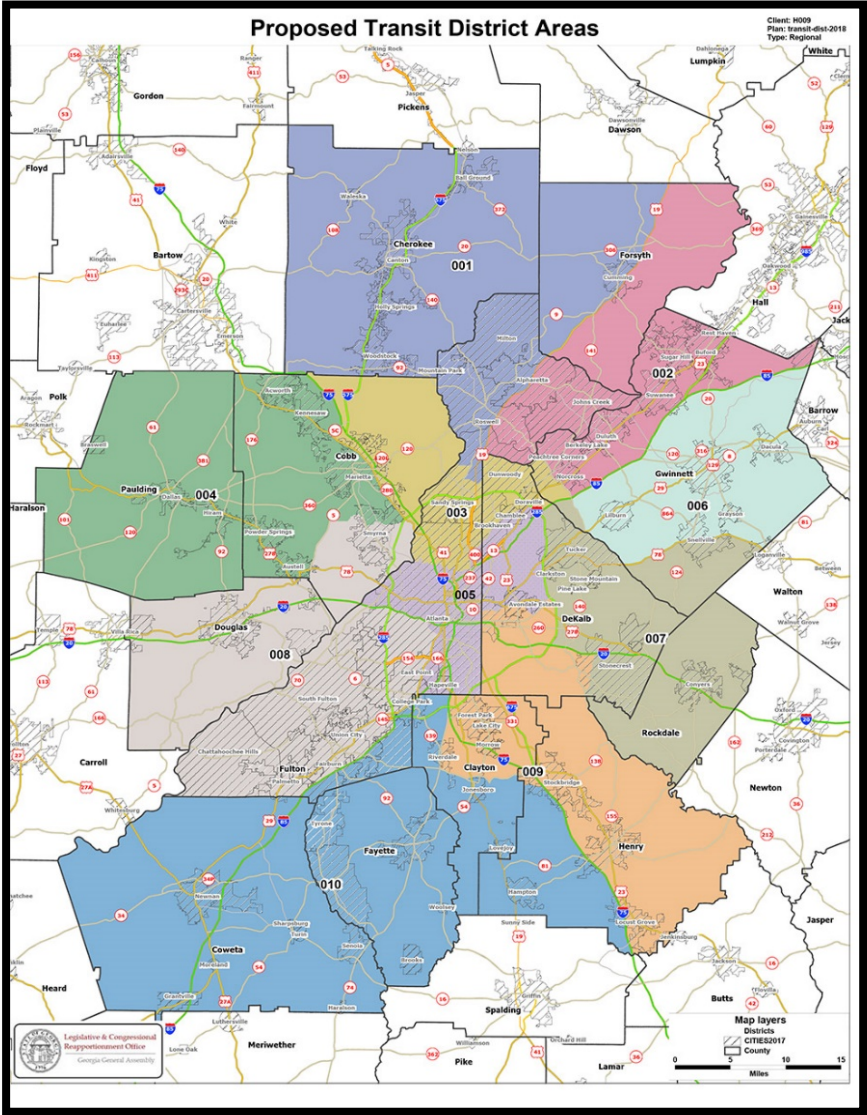
**Interaction with Existing  
Transit Operators**

# Regional Governance/ ATL Board Structure

16 members, 4 year terms – Designed for regional thought & approach



State Level	Appointees
<b>Governor</b>	1 ( <i>Chair</i> )
<b>Lt. Governor</b>	2
<b>Speaker</b>	2
<b>GDOT Commissioner</b>	( <i>Non-voting</i> )*
<b>TOTAL</b>	5* ( <i>one third</i> )
Local Level	Appointees
<b>Caucus of Legislators, County Commission Chairs &amp; Mayors within Districts</b>	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	10 ( <i>two thirds</i> )





## Each ATL board member shall:

- (if district-based) be a resident of the authority district which he or she represents
- Possess significant experience or expertise in a field that would be beneficial to the accomplishment of the function and purpose of The ATL
- Other than GDOT commissioner, no person holding any other “office of profit or trust under the state” shall serve on the board
- Be appointed no later than December 1, 2018





**APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR NATHAN DEAL:**

- ***CHAIR:*** Charlie Sutlive, Director of Corporate Communication, Georgia Power

**APPOINTED BY LT. GOVERNOR CASEY CAGLE:**

- Mark Toro, Founder, North American Properties Atlanta office
- Teddy Russell, President, Russell Landscape Group

**APPOINTED BY SPEAKER DAVID RALSTON:**

- Charlotte J. Nash, Chair, Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners
- Rep. Earl Ehrhart, Cobb County (retiring; effective January 14, 2019)

# Process for Electing District-based ATL Board Members

## 10 Transit Districts within the 13-county Region

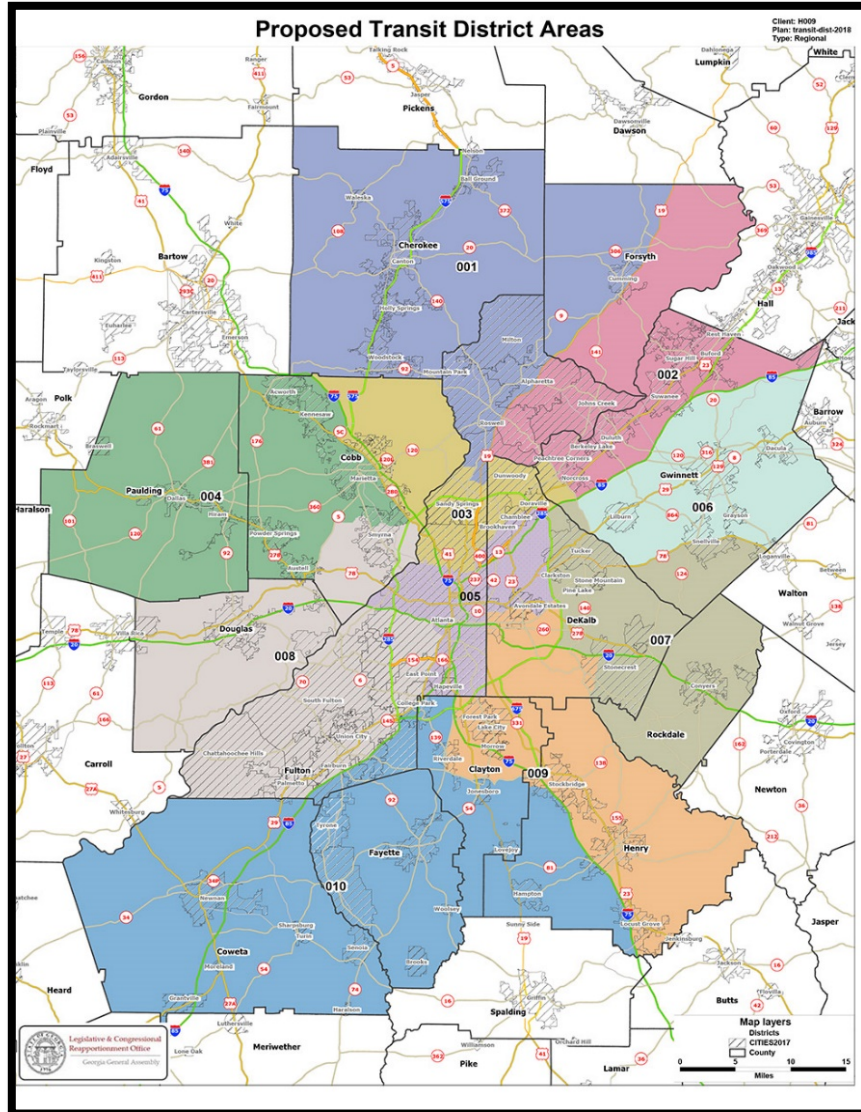


# ATL



# Actual Process for Electing District-based ATL Board Members

## 10 Transit Districts within the 13-county Region



### Two-step process:

1) Mayors in each district meet to select a mayoral representative in the transit district election

2) Transit district election – *called by county chair with largest population in district* – occurs with three subgroups participating:

- State legislators whose districts include any of the transit district
- County commission chairs whose counties are part of the transit district
- Mayor selected in Step 1 (plus Atlanta Mayor if part of district)

# Example Process for Electing ATL District 3 Board Member Covering Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett Counties

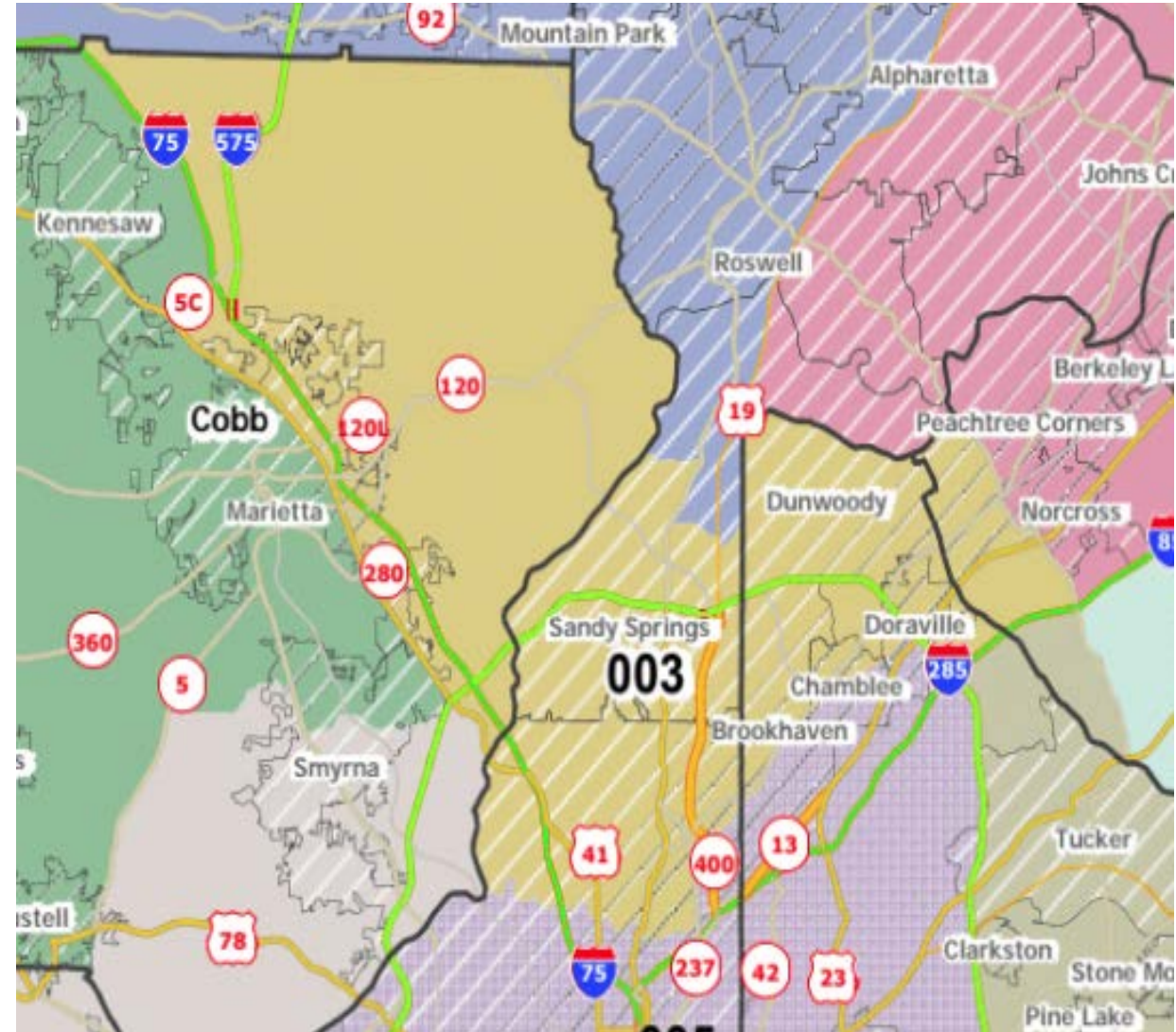


## Step 1 – Mayoral Caucus:

10 mayors met to select a rep for the district 3 election – from Atlanta, Brookhaven, Chamblee, Doraville, Dunwoody, Kennesaw, Marietta, Peachtree Corners, Sandy Springs, Smyrna  
*(Mayor Rusty Paul of Sandy Springs selected)*

## Step 2 – District Election (Oct. 24, 2018):

- *Called by county chair with largest population in district – Cobb in this case*
- 32 Electors total
- 4 County commission chairs
- 2 Mayors (one from Step 1 + Atlanta)
- 9 State Senators
- 17 State Representatives



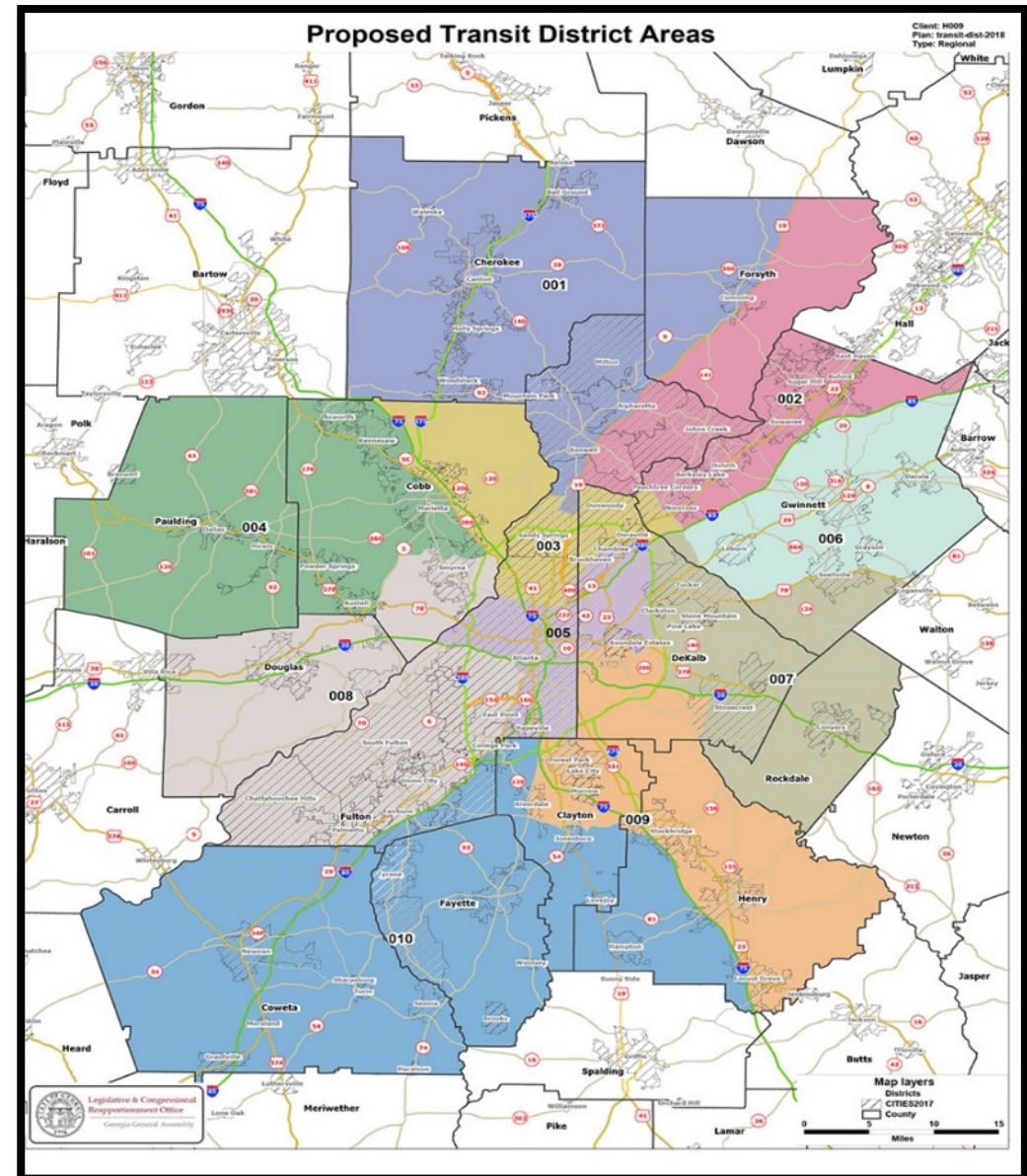


# Mayors Selected in Step 1 Mayoral Caucus

## Meetings Held in Geographic Center of Each District



- **District 1 – Donnie Henriques, Woodstock**
- **District 2 – Phillip Beard, Buford**
- **District 3 – Rusty Paul, Sandy Springs**
- **District 4 – Al Thurman, Powder Springs**
- **District 5 – John Ernst, Brookhaven**
- **District 6 – Jimmy Burnette, Suwanee**
- **District 7 – Pat Wheeler, Stone Mountain**
- **District 8 – Bill Edwards, South Fulton**
- **District 9 – Joy Day, Jonesboro**
- **District 10 – Steve Hutchison, Hampton**



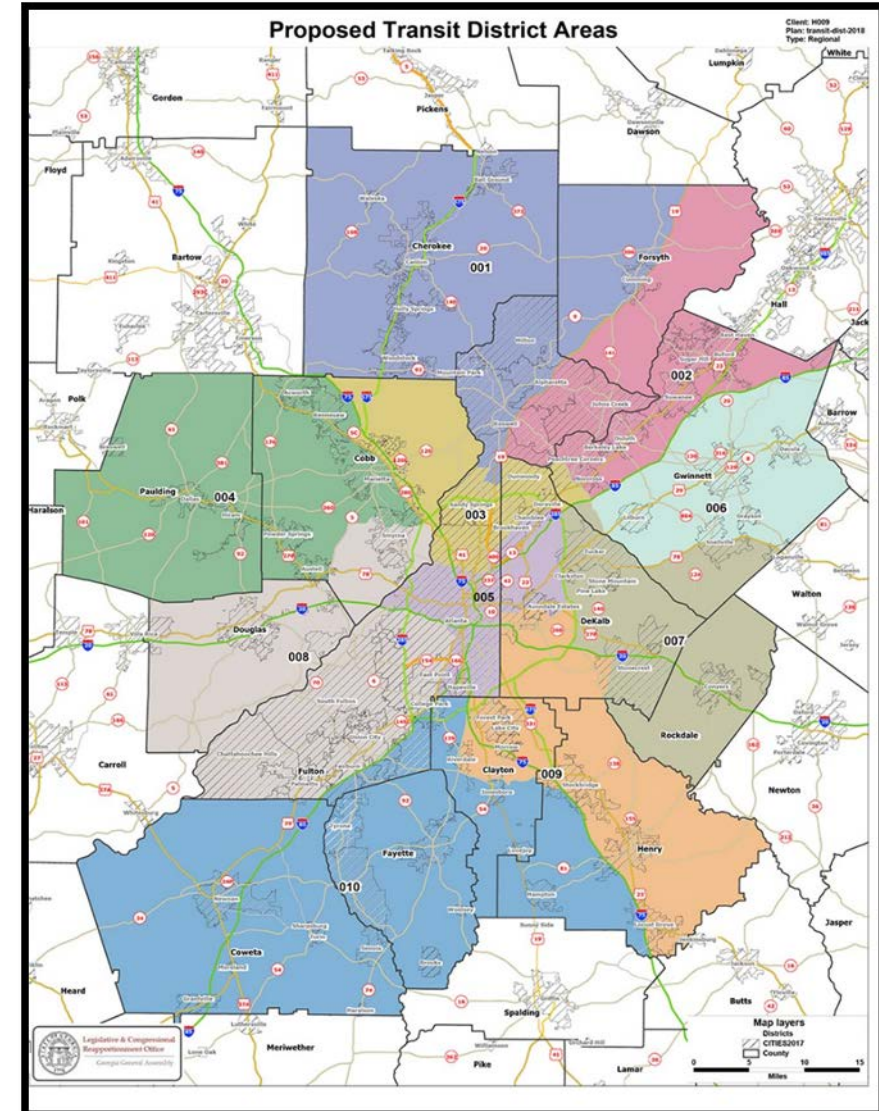


Fulton County has the largest population in two districts (Chairman Pitts calls these meetings):

- *District 5 – w/DeKalb*
- *District 8 – w/ Cobb & Douglas*

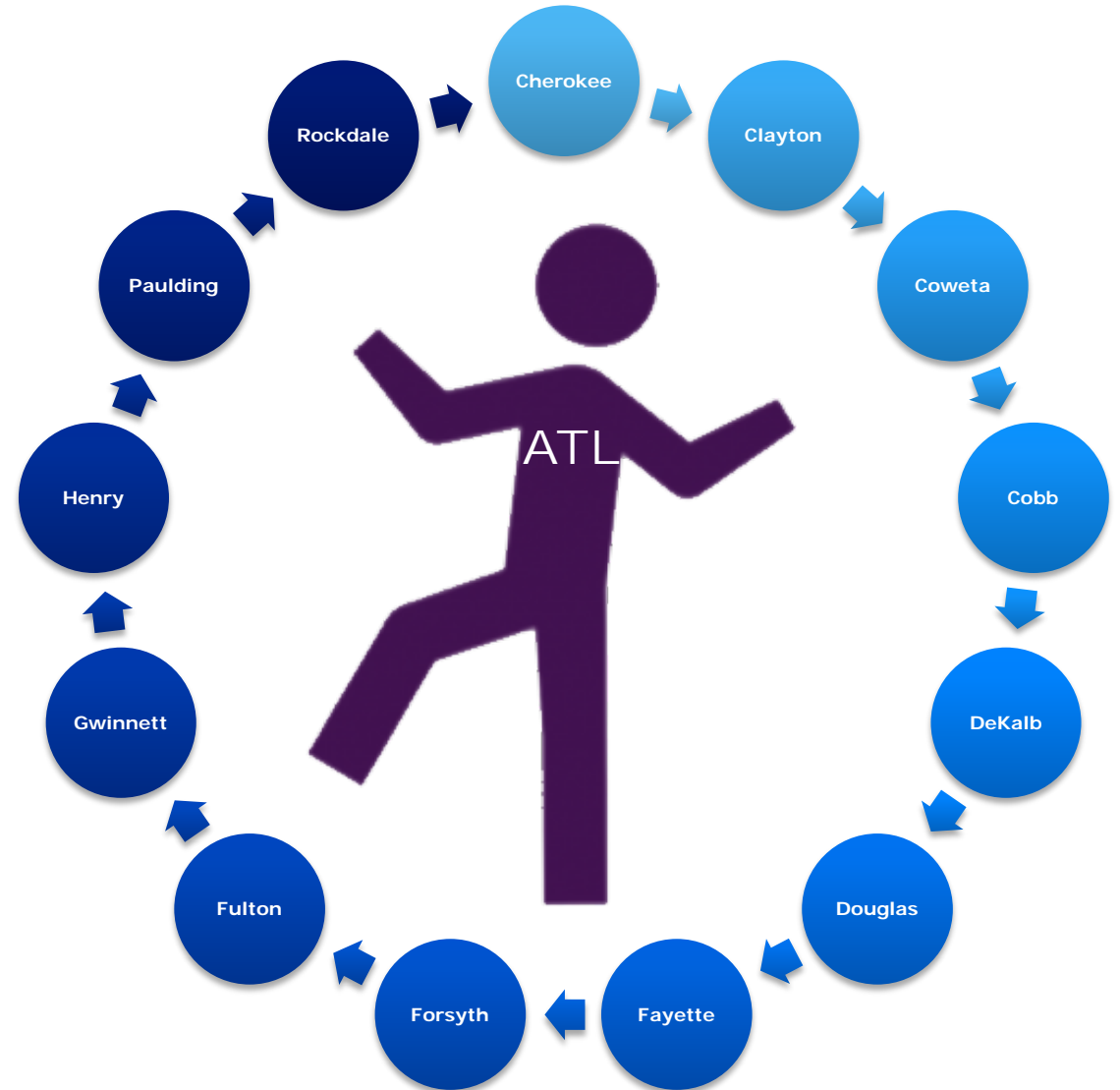
Fulton is also part of 4 other districts:

- *District 1 – w/Cherokee & Forsyth*
- *District 2 – w/Forsyth & Gwinnett*
- *District 3 – w Cobb, DeKalb & Gwinnett*
- *District 10 – w/Clayton, Coweta, Fayette & Henry*





- 6-year and 20-year time horizons
- Developed in consultation with the region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO): ARC
- Coordinate existing and future transit service
- Regional stakeholders, including local governments, may submit requests to the ATL for additions and amendments to the Plan from time to time based on changing conditions
- After 1/1/2019, referendum transit projects must be in RTP & approved by the ATL





- **Designated Recipient Role**
- **ATL's Scope: All Federal & State Transit Funds in region**
- **ATL can issue its own bonds and work with other state agencies to issue bonds**



- **Up to 30 year, Up to 1% transit-specific SPLOST**
- **Projects must be in Regional Transit Plan & approved by the ATL**
- **Counties outside of 13-county region can pair together to use new T-SPLOST authority**



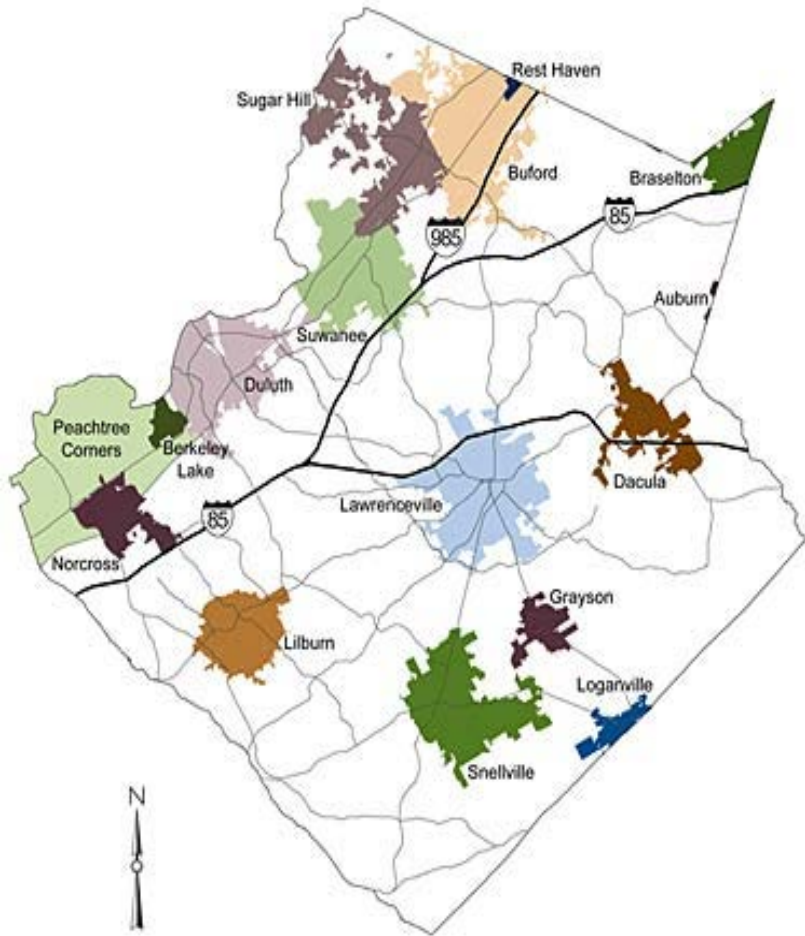


**Fulton County – can hold a referendum for additional 0.2% sales tax for transit, in any increment of .05% for up to 30 years**

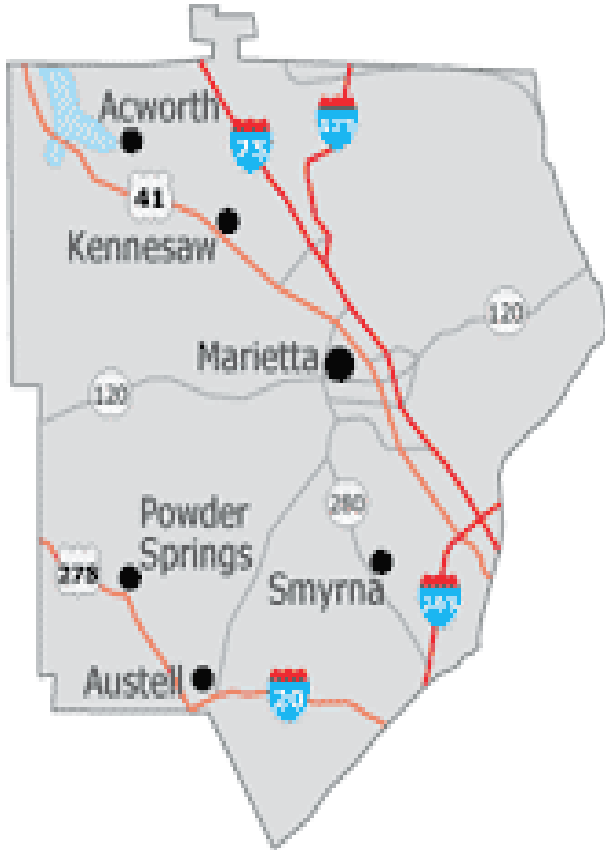
### Restrictions Unique to Fulton County:

- Sales tax proceeds cannot be used to fund heavy rail expansion but can be used for light-rail, bus rapid transit, or other transit services provided by MARTA.
- Local governments will have planning and zoning power over any proposed transit-oriented development.
- Before a referendum can be called, an intergovernmental agreement must be entered into between Fulton County Commissioners and Mayors representing at least 70% of the population of Fulton (outside the City of Atlanta).

*June 19<sup>th</sup>: \$100 million in state bonds dedicated to GA 400 Bus Rapid Transit project*



- **Gwinnett approved service contract with MARTA, scheduled for voter referendum in March 2019; MARTA Board approved Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>**
- **Joining MARTA involves 1% sales tax for length of MARTA Act; alternatively, Transit SPLOST may be up to 1% for up to 30 years**
- **Provision for Gwinnett to have one additional MARTA Board seat (total of 3) if county joins system via HB 930**
- **Transit projects must be included in ATL regional transit plan starting in 2019**



- **Cobb County can create a special taxing district within the county through a committee process**
- **Board of Commissioners and state legislative delegation must come to agreement on boundaries of special district**
- **County may then hold a Transit SPLOST referendum & enter into a contract with MARTA to provide transit services within such special district at any time up to December 1, 2019**
- **Cobb still has same option to join MARTA as existed prior to HB 930**





- Douglas County plans to start a new fixed-route bus system, and has been approved by ARC
- County has operated a vanpool service for many years
- Bus service to begin in 2019, on final county approval









- Henry County has had demand-response transit service since the 1980s
- County launched a fixed route bus service earlier this year and is examining long-term solutions





- Regional Transit Plan must include plan for the creation of a unified brand to encompass all transit service providers in 13-county region
- As of Jan. 1, 2019, any new MARTA asset worth more than \$250,000 must display The ATL logo and brand, prominently featuring the acronym “ATL”
- As of Jan. 1, 2023, the ATL logo and brand must be used on any and all MARTA property
- ATL in process of selecting vendor for branding and communications consulting services

### At Least 10 Public Transit Agency/Operators

- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority 
- Cobb County Department of Transportation 
- Douglas County Rideshare 
- State Road & Tollway Authority 
- Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners 
- Cherokee County Board of Commissioners 
- Henry County Transit 
- Forsyth County Public Transportation Dial A Ride 
- Coweta County Dial A Ride 
- vRide and Enterprise Rideshare 





- MARTA has exclusive authority for operating region's heavy rail system, including any new heavy rail projects
- MARTA retains control over its current local funding & operations
- MARTA's legal contractual obligations unaffected



- The ATL is administratively attached to GRTA
- GRTA and SRTA's roles in regional transit transitions to ATL by 2020/2021
- SRTA's tolling, GTIB, and transportation financing roles remain intact



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

- ARC & ATL work closely together to revise current regional transit process, and to ensure that Regional Transit Plan aligns and integrates with TIP and STP processes and funding

# The ATL: Regional Opportunities...

...Flow from a Regional Outlook



Visit Our New ATL Website:  
[atltransit.ga.gov](http://atltransit.ga.gov)

**THANK YOU!**



**THE ATLANTA-REGION TRANSIT LINK AUTHORITY**

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