

THE REGIONAL PLAN



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT FOR ADOPTION

JANUARY 2015



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

COVER PHOTO: CHALKBOARD FROM OPEN HOUSE, JANUARY 2014

PHOTO OPPOSITE: FATHER AND SONS SIGN IN AT POP-UP OPEN HOUSE, JANUARY 2014

CREDIT: ARC



Program Purpose and Introduction

The Atlanta Regional Commission's purpose is to serve the citizens of the Atlanta region, local governments and the broader regional community by providing services, support and leadership on issues that cross jurisdictional lines and require comprehensive regional solutions. As part of this overarching goal, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) serves as the Georgia Department of Community Affairs designated regional planning agency for a ten county area and the US Department of Transportation designated metropolitan planning organization for a 19 county area. ARC also staffs the Metropolitan North Georgia Water District (15 counties) and serves as the local administrative agency for the seven county Workforce Board. Given these mandated roles, ARC is a regional leader in identifying values, developing policies and executing plans that matter to residents and communities, and ensure competitive advantage and long term sustainability and livability. Its mission is to demonstrate professional and forward-looking leadership to ensure sustainable growth, livability and competitive advantage by focusing and balancing environmental responsibility, economic growth and social needs.

This Stakeholder Engagement Program supports ARC's most comprehensive and interdisciplinary plan: The Regional Plan. This comprehensive plan is being developed for adoption in 2015/2016. The plan includes a vision for how the Atlanta region can develop policies and projects that ensure a high quality of life for all residents over the next 25 years. The Regional Plan includes elements of transportation, land use, water quality, workforce development, aging and health resources, arts and culture and more. ARC seeks to ensure that The Regional Plan reflects the full range of regional values and desires by involving a diverse spectrum of Stakeholders in development of its contents. The program outlined below meets the requirements of both the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for the development and sharing of the Regional Agenda and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and is designed in support of the agency-wide community engagement policy.

There are several guiding principles to this plan. They are:

- Strong cooperation and mutual accountability with public, private and non-profit partners
- Transparency of decision-making process
- Growing relationships and capacity with residents of the Atlanta Region
- Inclusiveness that reflects the region in its full diversity with equitable outcomes
- Early involvement in processes
- Quality process design and implementation of stakeholder events
- Continuous improvement

Ever working towards inclusive, creative, meaningful and relevant community engagement, this plan strives to:

- Increase the number of people participating in the process with representation of both geographic and demographic diversity reflective of the region
- Increase the number of opportunities to participate
- Increase the understanding of the inter-relatedness of transportation, land use, community and other planning
- Evaluate the effectiveness of participation processes

The Regional Plan Stakeholders

In a planning region that encompasses much of northern Georgia, including 19 counties and approximately 5.2 million people in the metropolitan planning boundary, there are bound to be immensely diverse opinions and perspectives. The myriad viewpoints, visions and goals can be a challenge for developing regional consensus on key issues, but this same diversity is a valuable asset and a hallmark of our region.

Metro residents uphold with most importance their individual community needs and place a high premium on options for personal lifestyle and community choices. It can be challenging to see the interconnections between these local communities and issues of regional importance. In response to this challenge, ARC articulated in its strategic plan an emphasis on Regional Impact | Local Relevance. Regional planning must have a core understanding of community input and proposed solutions should reflect back what the community wants and needs. Community engagement must therefore leverage work done in local settings and tie those together for collective solutions.

The Regional Plan participation process will involve anyone expressing interest in its activities and outcomes. For planning purposes, **three broad audiences** are identified within the jurisdictions served by the Atlanta Regional Commission. These are:

- Policy-making elected/appointed officials from local, regional and state jurisdictions; as well as public planning partner staffs who prepare jurisdictional plans, provide background information and advise other public officials;
- State and local private sector leadership and interested people within special interest groups that consistently engage in issues addressed within The Regional Plan; and
- Individuals or groups that participate in ARC activities based on short-term, issue-driven concerns.



EQUITABLE TARGET AREAS, SEPTEMBER 2014/ CREDIT: ARC

To better define appropriate activities for these three broad audiences' engagement in The Regional Plan, the following is a more targeted list of Stakeholders who need to have a voice in plan development:

ARC Board and Committees: The ARC Board(s) and Committees represent ARC's decision-makers. To this end, they direct staff in both planning and implementation activities.

Local governments: County and city governments, including local planning commissions, economic development and public works departments that are located in the Atlanta Regional Commission boundaries for purposes of connecting a variety of planning activities on a local level.

State legislators: Lawmakers that represent the districts covered by the ARC planning areas.

Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations: Chambers of Commerce stakeholders will include the individual county chambers as well as umbrella, ethnic, regional and state chambers, land trusts, real estate, trade and other economic development organizations.

Targeted private/public professional organizations: Working with these organizations will target workforce, energy concerns, health, housing, public safety and environmental issues.

Citizens groups: These groups have mission statements, concerns, and activities that intersect ARC planning goals.

Civic: Leadership and other community groups serving youth, geographic and senior categories.



REGIONAL PLAN ONLINE SURVEY AT A COMMUNITY EVENT, SEPTEMBER 2014 / CREDIT: ARC

Neighborhoods: Homeowners associations as well as other community, activity or service-based organizations.

Population-focused: Representatives from social equity, seniors, youth, disability, limited English proficiency (LEP), ethnic, minorities and low-income groups.

Advocacy: Persons and organizations whose issue areas might include social equity, environment, housing, sustainability, conservation, historic preservation, greenspace, transportation modes, parks and recreation, health, energy and the needs of the older adult population.

Religious: Umbrella religious groups as well as other ecumenical councils.

Educational institutions: K-12 school leadership/parent organizations, university leadership and students, trade school leadership and students.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) interested parties: Public transit user's representatives, public transit employee's representatives, providers of freight transit services, private providers of transit, and freight shippers are included.

General Public: This group represents the "public," a broad definition for all residents of the Atlanta Region.

By cross-cutting the region's population into these segments, it becomes possible to tailor outreach and engagement activities to meet the different expectations of different groups. This process of planning for engagement is based on a seven-point checklist that helps to ensure continuous and inclusive engagement. The checklist includes:

1. Partner with other organizations and agencies to maximize participation, with an emphasis on reaching groups that are typically underrepresented in planning processes;
2. Design a community engagement strategy that incorporates a complementary mix of smaller, community-based forums, large-scale public forums and online opportunities for engagement;
3. Encourage participants to remain involved in the full continuum of Regional Plan public input opportunities;
4. Ensure that online content is easy to understand, regularly updated and readily available;
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of activities, modifying the plan as necessary to achieve desired outcomes;
6. Be accountable to participants by reporting back to them at regular intervals, and provide a means for all interested individuals to stay informed and involved with The Regional Plan; and
7. Be highly visible in efforts to engage the public to participate and in sharing the results of the project with planners, policymakers and elected officials.

Stakeholder Engagement Program

Below is an overview of the regional plan engagement strategies for each of the constituent groups and actions:

The ARC Board/Board Committees: The ARC Board and Policy Committees are a central constituency for development of The Regional Plan. The Board will be brought into dialogue about direction and policy for The Regional Plan at their annual retreats and monthly meetings in 2014 and 2015. In addition, briefings on the development of The Regional Plan, including vision, goals, strategies, activities and outcomes of broader Stakeholder involvement will be shared throughout the plan development process, prior to key decision milestones. This timely engagement ensures that their input is guiding The Regional Plan throughout its development. In addition, Board and committee members, including citizen members, will be invited to reach out to their constituents for virtual input and to participate in local meetings.

Local Government Dialogue: Meetings of various types will occur between counties, both local government staff and elected officials, and ARC staff. These meetings will seek to help local governments understand ARC's role, present issues identified in The Regional Plan as well as to work together with local governments to identify strategies or projects that are supported by both local and regional policy. Discussions will also include the region's cities, through interactions at local municipal association meetings. This outreach will occur through ARC's on-going work as well as the newly developed Government Outreach Teams (GO Teams). Strong communication and coordination with local governments is central to ARC's mission.

State Legislators Dialogue: State legislators are a key partner for ARC, and ARC's Government Affairs Manager works closely with Board members and local governments to ensure that there is a unified regional voice on important issues, such as The Regional Plan. As The Regional Plan identifies important policy issues, additional topics for discussion with state legislators become clear.

Chambers of Commerce/Business Organizations: ARC partners often with the Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations, and is presently leading development and implementation of a regional economic competitiveness strategy to guide The Regional Plan.

Targeted Professional Organizations: ARC will identify and solicit the involvement of public and professional organizations that are interested The Regional Plan. Meetings will occur throughout The Regional Plan development process. The groups will be asked to review and assist with issues identified in the plan. They will also be asked for input on strategies that can be undertaken by their organizations as well as local governments and ARC to implement The Regional Plan.

Citizens Groups: These groups are diverse and numerous, including ARC's New Voices program and its focus on foreign-born populations, as well as ARC's new Millennial Advisory Committee for younger residents of the region. All groups are welcome to participate to the fullest extent, particularly if they have mission statements, concerns, and activities that intersect ARC planning goals.

Civic Groups: Leadership of other community groups serving geographic areas and senior interests are an important bridge to their focus groups and are welcome to participate in virtual engagement opportunities, local meetings or to request briefings by ARC staff.

Neighborhoods: Homeowners associations as well as other community, activity or service-based organizations are welcome to participate in virtual engagement opportunities, local meetings or to request briefings by ARC staff.

Population-focused: Representatives from social equity, seniors, youth, disability, limited English proficiency (LEP), ethnic, minorities and low-income groups are also welcome to participate in the same manner as neighborhoods. ARC will identify and solicit the involvement of stakeholders who are traditionally underrepresented in the planning process, including individuals protected under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, “Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs” and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The purpose of this dialogue is to help low-income and minority communities and their planning representatives better understand and more effectively engage across a wide range of urban issues, as well as for ARC to achieve sound solutions when addressing social equity concerns relating to land use and transportation issues. ARC will partner with religious and/or advocacy groups to reach these individuals.

Educational Institutions: K-12 school leadership/parent organizations, university leadership and students, trade school leadership and students are especially important to engage in long range planning because they represent the changing future. ARC will share information about The Regional Plan through university networks and local school districts.

MPO Interested Parties: Public transit users’ representatives, public transit employees’ representatives, providers of freight transit services, private providers of transit, and freight shippers have a focused interest in transportation and distinct knowledge that is important to gather during plan development.

General Public : Broad involvement and support from the general public in development of The Regional Plan will be sought. ARC will identify and solicit the involvement of the general public through community and advocacy organizations, diverse media outlets, speaking engagements, surveys and internet communications. Local pop-up meetings will be held along key transportation corridors to allow the public an opportunity to comment on work underway. Specific webpages for The Regional Plan are established to provide up-to-date process, document, mapping resources and input linkages for any interested resident or group.



POP-UP OPEN HOUSE, JANUARY 2014 / CREDIT: ARC

Stakeholder Engagement Techniques

The participation techniques proposed for The Regional Plan seek to represent a broad range of methods that can match up with the diversity of people and interests in the region. The range of techniques varies from the use of direct conversation to on-line surveys to large group meetings. The goal of these techniques is to have meaningful two-way dialogue on issues and potential solutions on a continuous basis throughout the planning time frame.

ARC Board Mini-Retreats: These half-day to full-day retreats will be held to engage the ARC Board at various milestones in the planning process.

Local Government Meetings: Meetings will be held with local government officials and staff (especially targeting non-ARC Board local officials) throughout 2014/2015/2016, through ARC's Local Government Outreach Teams (GO Teams). The Regional Plan will be an identified topic that all GO Teams solicit information about. Following each round of meetings, ARC staff will review comments that have been received regarding identified issues and opportunities as well as proposed strategies, policy areas or programs related to The Regional Plan. ARC staff will review the existing programs, projects and actions underway by ARC and local governments to assess whether additional activities, new policies, projects or programs are needed.

In mid-2015, ARC will work in partnership with local governments throughout the region to conduct a series of pop-up open houses throughout ARC's planning area. These open houses will focus upon details of The Regional Plan as well as policy areas related to ARC's planning responsibilities.

Poverty, Equity and Opportunity Workshops: ARC will host four equity-oriented workshops to develop an updated Equitable Target Area (ETA) Index, planning checklist and outreach plan for under-represented citizens. These quarterly meetings will be used to provide information about the planning process to participating stakeholders and to solicit specific input on The Regional Plan and policy recommendations related to ARC's planning emphasis areas. Additional outreach to share The Regional Plan updates with traditionally under-engaged groups and to gather their input will be conducted through the New Voices: Global Atlanta project, as well as the Equitable Transit Oriented Development Collaborative and the Millennials Task Force.

The Regional Plan Pop-Up Open Houses: This series of meetings will be held at a variety of locations throughout the region. Each meeting will be planned in partnership with local governments and will provide an opportunity to get input at critical times in the planning process. The information included at the open houses will include draft planning documents, information on proposed projects and plans as well as opportunities to engage in open dialogue.

Official Public Review and Comment: There will be a 30-day public review and comment period before completion/adoption of The Regional Plan.

Formal Public Hearings: These hearings will be held before the Regional Agenda vote and Regional Transportation Plan vote at a monthly ARC Board or appropriate Policy Committee meeting.

Stakeholder Group Discussions: These targeted discussion groups endeavor to have specific conversations on issues and concerns leading up to the plan milestone points. Included in these discussions will be representatives from local governments, public/private organizations and advocacy groups.

Online Surveys: A series of three online surveys will be conducted. These online surveys will be used to get feedback on draft Regional Planning Aspirations, proposed alternative futures that may impact regional residents, as well as proposed options for implementing recommendations of The Regional Plan. These results will also be used to guide discussions in a series of open houses held in sub-corridors of the region during 2015. Effort will be made to reach as many regional citizens as possible using online as well as face-to-face promotions.

Telephone Poll: ARC conducts Metro Atlanta Speaks, an annual telephone survey, to gauge public perception towards regional quality of life. This statistically significant data about public perceptions as well as, information gathered from the online surveys will be used to help inform The Regional Plan.

Student Programs: ARC will engage the youth in ongoing programs on topics pertaining to The Regional Plan and inform the process with their results. Examples will include: Clark Atlanta Transportation Summer Institute, the Model ARC program (MARC) and the Millennials Task Force.

Speakers Bureau: Leadership within the standing committees and within ARC will provide community with online updates and discussion of planning products.



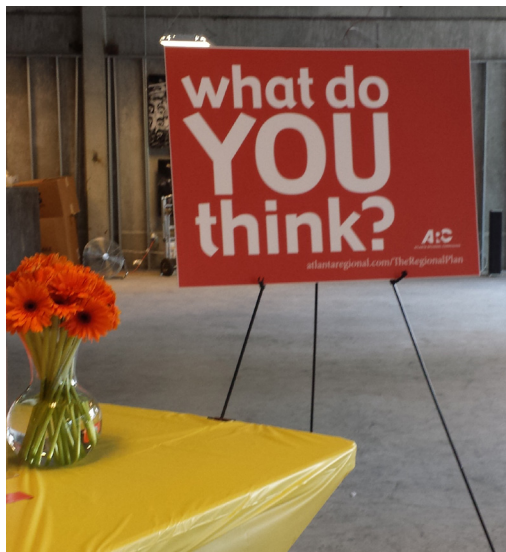
POP-UP OPEN HOUSE, JANUARY 2014 / CREDIT: ARC

The Regional Plan Web Page – information distribution

- The Regional Plan Website:
 - Plan schedule and summaries of planning activities
 - Maps of planning areas and activities
 - “Get Involved” section with contact information, calendar, survey and comment archives
 - “What Do You Think” solicitation for responses to online survey
 - Connection to ARC Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages
 - Documentation section for regulatory materials
 - Links and glossary information
- Media Outreach: use milestones, forecasts and statistics to pique interest of media through series of press releases and advisories. In addition, the following will be specific to the reporter and editorial board as needed:
 - Hold “desk side” meetings with reporters and editors from key media outlets
 - Target key outlets and “personalize” message to their audience
- The Regional Plan Presentations: These presentations will be tailored to speaking engagements and online geared to general audience. These can be used to present to civic groups at their request. These could be video presentations rather than slide presentations. A copy could be sent on DVD to each local government.

Plan Development/Participation Schedule

REGIONAL PLAN ONLINE SURVEY AT COMMUNITY EVENT, JUNE 2014/ CREDIT: ARC



The process for Stakeholder Involvement began in 2014 in order to provide preliminary input into the Regional Assessment and satisfy transportation planning requirements for metropolitan planning organizations. Because of this, some of the following activities have already taken place. The activities intended for 2014-2016 are shown by quarter as an initial determination of when they would be most effective. As the process goes forward, the schedule is subject to change through addition, deletion, or restructure of the activity. The following is the intent of the program:

Spring/Summer, 2014 (accomplished):

- ARC Board Retreat to discuss vision and goals
- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions

- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions - Transportation & Air Quality Committee (TAQC); Community Resources Committee (CRC); Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC)
- Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- The Regional Plan Online Survey #1
- Initial forecast discussions about economics in region
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Collaborative community outreach
- Launch of New Voices: Global Atlanta
- Development of Regional Plan website
- Living Beyond Expectations tactical urbanism project
- ARC internal staff Stakeholder Outreach Tactics workshop
- Development of Equitable Target Areas Advisory working group

Fall, 2014 (accomplished):

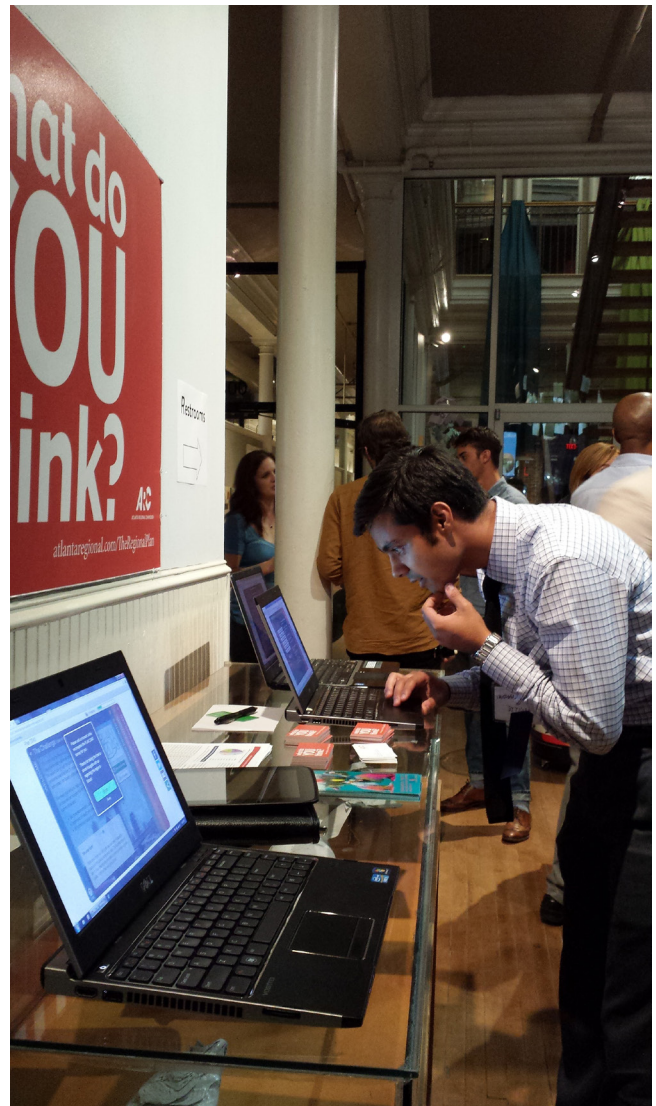
- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions (TAQC/CRC/TCC)
- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions
- ETA quarterly workshop #1
- The Regional Plan Online Survey #1
- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- Metro Atlanta Speaks regional telephone poll
- Model Atlanta Regional Commission
- TOD Collaborative community outreach
- Launch of GO Teams
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Living Beyond Expectations Community Conversations to support Strategic Plan for AAA
- Development of Millennials Advisory Committee
- Speaking engagements

Winter, 2015:

- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions (TAQC/CRC/TCC)
- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions
- Quarterly joint committee meetings emphasizing Regional Plan
- Building Opportunity: A Conversation on Poverty and Regional Transportation in Metro Atlanta (ETA quarterly workshop #2)
- The Regional Plan Online Survey #2
- Model Atlanta Regional Commission
- Millennials Advisory Committee Meeting #1
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- Living Beyond Expectations Community Conversations and Summit
- TOD Collaborative community outreach
- Speaking engagements
- Discussion forum with Basin Advisory Council

Spring, 2015:

- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions (TAQC/CRC/TCC)
- Quarterly joint committee meetings emphasizing The Regional Plan
- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- ETA quarterly workshop #3
- The Regional Plan Online Survey #3
- Aging and Health Resources Strategic Plan Capstone Event



REGIONAL PLAN ONLINE SURVEY AT COMMUNITY EVENT, SEPTEMBER 2014 / CREDIT: ARC

- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions
- TOD Collaborative community outreach
- Urban Land Institute Market Discussion
- Mobility/HST summit
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Speaking engagements
- Discussion forum held in partnership with community organizations like Center for Pan Asian Services, Latin American Association, Partnership for Social Equity and others
- Series of pop-up open houses throughout region

Summer, 2015:

- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions (TAQC/CRC/TCC)
- Quarterly joint committee meetings emphasizing The Regional Plan
- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions
- TOD Collaborative community outreach
- Speaking engagements
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Discussion forum held in partnership with community organizations like Center for Pan Asian Services, Latin American Association, Partnership for Social Equity and others
- Series of pop-up open houses throughout region
- ETA quarterly workshop #4
- Millennials Advisory Committee

Fall, 2015:

- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions (TAQC/CRC/TCC)
- Quarterly joint committee meetings emphasizing The Regional Plan
- Local government and staff outreach

- City/County Manager Meetings
- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- TOD Collaborative community outreach
- Speaking engagements
- Millennials Advisory Committee

Winter, 2016:

- ARC Policy and Technical Committee discussions (TAQC/CRC/TCC)
- Quarterly joint committee meetings emphasizing The Regional Plan
- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- ARC internal multi-disciplinary staff discussions
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Speaking engagements
- Millennials Advisory Committee

Spring, 2016:

- Local government and staff outreach
- City/County Manager Meetings
- Formal public review and comment period
- MNGWPD Basin Advisory Committee input for water supply, management and treatment plans
- Speaking engagements
- Regional Transportation Plan public hearing
- Regional Agenda public hearing
- Adoption of The Regional Plan

Evaluation of Engagement Techniques

To ensure the success of the stakeholder engagement program, ARC will continually monitor the effectiveness of various engagement techniques. In addition to qualitative assessment of each individual event or technique, ARC staff will evaluate the program in terms of how well it meets five goals. The goals are to:

- Maximize the number of participants by reaching new audiences, with a focus on ensuring geographic and demographic diversity reflective of the region.
- Increase the Return on Investment – less cost per participant
- Gain insight into public opinion with quality input
- Increase consensus for plan priorities
- Produce actionable information from quantifiable data

The Challenge How would you plan for the region's future?

WELCOME

The Atlanta Region is one of the most dynamic metropolitan areas in the world. We have been growing rapidly for decades and are likely to continue this pace over the next 25 years, with an addition of nearly 3 million new residents.

Our region is a great place to live, but we cannot afford to take our quality of life for granted. We need you to help us determine how we can grow and develop, maintain what we love about our communities and. . . .

- Be more economically competitive?
- Improve our health and protect the environment?
- Enhance our housing and transportation choices?

PLAN 2040
PLAN 2040 is the region's current plan to ensure growth, prosperity and a high quality of life for the next 25 years. The vision you help develop now will guide the plans for our region's future.

PLAN 2040

Click here to begin

2 PRIORITIES

3 CHOOSE SOLUTIONS

4 STAY INVOLVED

help

ONLINE REGIONAL PLAN SURVEY/ CREDIT: ARC



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