

# Moving Ahead

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## 11 Counties Join Express Bus Program

**M**ore transportation choices are in the works for the Atlanta metropolitan area. On March 29th, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) received confirmations from 10 of the 13 counties in the nonattainment area that they were ready to join GRTA's regional express bus system proposed in the Transportation Choices Initiative. Fulton County made it 11 counties when it approved its contract on April 9th.

Beginning in October 2001, GRTA representatives visited officials in the 13 counties with a proposal for creating the program. In exchange for a one-time payment toward the operating costs of the express buses, the counties will receive approximately 10 times that cost in arterial road improvements. Depending on the size and level of service, each county will provide between \$850,000 and \$3.6 million towards the operating costs for the first three years of the service. The counties were also asked to provide prioritized lists of arterial road improvement projects for their counties.

After the counties submitted their lists of projects, GRTA worked with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to identify the projects from the lists that could be expected to be completed. With that informa-



Clayton County was the first to sign on for the regional express bus program.

tion, GRTA returned to the counties and continued discussions regarding the program. Those discussions resulted in projects being added and deleted from the priority lists as the counties, GRTA and its planning partners worked together to create a program that ensures that much-needed arterial road improvements are

*\$263.5 million for road improvements included in program.*

completed and that the people in each county have an additional choice for their daily commutes.

Clayton County was the first to indicate it was ready to participate. Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale counties followed.

The buses will begin running in late summer 2003. Work on the arterial road construction projects will begin in late fall of this year.

The contracts will be in effect for five years or until the arterial road improvements are operational, whichever is longer. ■

**C-Tran celebrates six-month anniversary having transported more than 200,000 passengers in Clayton County.**



*Dr. Catherine L. Ross  
Executive Director*

# Metro Atlanta Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

*Sometimes I think builders of the Transcontinental Railroad never had it so good.*

All they had to do was wait out the Civil War, cross miles and miles of hostile territory carrying the necessary equipment and materials and get new immigrants and former enemies to work together on a common mission.

But they could not have been successful without a vision as to what that transit line could mean. No individual community along the line would really benefit unless they were part of the whole. Building Greater Atlanta a regional, multi-modal transportation system providing environmentally

friendly choices that enable residents and visitors to pursue their freedom of mobility should be no more difficult. Our region, after all, is greater than simply the sum of all its parts.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and Governor Roy Barnes have provided the blueprint and the tools to remake Greater Atlanta. They are in the \$4.7 billion Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) approved by the ARC and GRTA late last fall. This program contains an array of improvements, grounded in large part by a new state bond-financing program. In addition to new highways and interchange upgrades, you will also see miles of new pedestrian and bicycle paths; a

new northwest transit line from downtown Atlanta to Cumberland, Marietta and Town Center; and passenger rail. A new downtown transportation terminal station may well be the anchor for the region that the old Terminal Station and Union Station were.

The key to this new era will be the response of our citizens and leaders. There is a new vigor for community values in America. We need to direct some of that energy into regional stewardship by applying what I call a “360-degree field of vision” to our greater Atlanta community. We simply cannot make the improvements to mobility and the environment without commitment to regional stewardship, from Decatur to Austell, Lawrenceville to Fayetteville.

We are not building the Transcontinental Railroad, but we are building a regional community that is greater than the sum of its parts and is our promise for a prosperous future. ■

*Dr. Catherine L. Ross is executive director of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.*





ARC and GRTA board members enjoy meeting as a group for the first time.

## ARC and GRTA Hold Historic Retreat

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) have worked cooperatively on a number of key issues since GRTA was created in June 1999 — most notably winning federal approval of the Transportation Improvement Program in 2000 that restored full federal transportation funding for the region.

However, the respective boards of directors of the two agencies had never met informally or formally as a group — until this year. That missing personal aspect of the relationship was fully addressed Feb. 7–8, when the boards met in a joint

retreat at Jekyll Island. Newly elected Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin, in her role as an ARC board member, and members of the State members of the State Transportation board also attended a series of formal information sessions and informal get-togethers. GRTA also held its first monthly board meeting outside Atlanta on Feb. 7th.

At this historic meeting of metropolitan Atlanta's key regional planning and transportation agencies, the GRTA and ARC forged a strong set of principles on how they will work together more closely in the future on issues critical to the region.

“The priorities of both of our agencies are focused

on providing solutions to mobility and air quality challenges,” said Clayton County Commission Chairman, Crandle Bray, who is chairman of the ARC. “By coming together at this first joint working session, we are now stronger and more unified in our goals than ever before.”

“Our joint energies today helped us turn a new page on Atlanta's regional transportation story,” said Sonny Deriso, GRTA chairman. “Now more than ever, we are shoulder to shoulder on an agenda of new transportation choices for the Atlanta region.”

The boards agreed to: Hold annual joint retreats of ARC, GRTA and

the Georgia Department of Transportation boards;

Develop a Memorandum of Agreement between ARC and GRTA to clarify and underscore individual and joint roles;

Hold regular meetings of agency chairs and executive directors (at least twice annually);

Explore ways to build cross representation on the agencies' respective committees;

Invite the Governor of Georgia to next joint retreat; and

Mount a joint public awareness campaign on critical regional transportation issues and clarify agency roles in solution building. ■



## Your chance to be heard...

Citizens are encouraged to attend the monthly GRTA Board of Directors and committee meetings. The Board is happy to hear from citizens and sets aside time at the beginning of their monthly meetings for citizen comments. (Limited to three minutes per person or group.)

## Ritchey Joins GRTA as Deputy Director

**J**im Ritchey, former general manager and chief executive officer of the Triangle Transportation Authority (TTA) in Research Triangle Park, NC, has joined GRTA as deputy director.

“Mr. Ritchey brings a national reputation in transportation planning, specializing in public transportation,” said Dr. Catherine Ross, GRTA executive director. “He has already proven himself as a strong member of the GRTA team.”

Ritchey began his transportation career as a part time bus driver while a student at the University of Virginia. He holds a bachelor of arts in history from there, and a masters in management science from North Carolina State University. In addition to his work with TTA,



he was general manager of the Winston Salem Transportation Authority and urban program manager with the Public Transportation Division of the North Carolina Department of Transportation. ■



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### GRTA Board of Directors meetings

### Second Quarter of 2002

#### May 2

GRPP/PMT 1:30 p.m.

#### May 8

DRI Committee 9:30 a.m.

Planning & Projects Committee 10:30 a.m.

Operations & Finance Committee 11:30 a.m.

Board Meeting 1:00 p.m..

#### June 6

GRPP/PMT 1:30 p.m.

#### June 12

DRI Committee 9:30 a.m.

Planning & Projects Committee 10:30 a.m.

Operations & Finance Committee 11:30 a.m.

Board Meeting 1:00 p.m.

#### July 11

DRI Committee 9:30 a.m.

GRTA Board meetings are webcast live at the GRTA website—[www.grta.org](http://www.grta.org)

## Contact Us!

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*It is the mission of GRTA to provide the citizens of Georgia with transportation choices, improved air quality, and better land use in order to enhance their quality of life and promote growth that can be sustained by future generations.*