

# Moving Ahead

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## Expanding Role, Expanding Impact

**W**hen GRTA was first created it was envisioned as an authority with two major roles. The first role was as a planning authority. GRTA would conduct studies, review plans and serve as a regional clearinghouse for planning activities. An early accomplishment of GRTA in its planning role was the reinstatement of certain federal transportation funds, which had been withheld due to the region's being declared in non-conformity with the federal Clean Air Act standards.

The second role was as an implementing

*On October 1st we inaugurated the first bus system to begin operation in our region in over 12 years.*

authority. GRTA not only would plan what needed to be done, but would also implement some of the solutions called for in those plans. Over the last few months, GRTA has moved fully into its role as an implementing authority.

The first achievement of GRTA as an implementing authority is C-Tran, the Clayton County Transportation System. On October 1st we inaugurated the first bus system to begin operation in our region in



*Dr. Catherine L. Ross  
Executive Director*

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State and local officials from Clayton County, GRTA Board members and staff gather for the Oct. 1, 2001, ribbon-cutting to roll out C-Tran, the first Metro Atlanta bus service in 12 years.

## Value Pricing— Another Tool for Congestion Relief

In October, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), GRTA, and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) sponsored a one-day regional forum on value pricing, an innovative approach that applies market pricing concepts to traffic congestion problems. The forum brought together local, regional and national experts and leaders to share strategies and formulas for using value pricing as a tool for regulating transportation demand during peak hours. While there are no cookie-cutter formulas, value pricing can be applied to parking, transit passes, under-utilized HOV lanes – even car insurance – wherever demand exceeds supply. The same concept is used routinely from theater tickets to telephone calls.

Following the forum, an Advisory Task Force was convened, bringing together community and transportation leaders to discuss value pricing initiatives in the Metro Atlanta region. State Senator Gloria Butler and Terry Lawler, president of Georgians for Better Transportation, co-chair the task force. Members are currently investigating congestion in Atlanta and how pricing and other market-based solutions can help reduce traffic regionally. The ultimate goal of the Task Force is to make recommendations. ■

## Expanding Role, Expanding Impact

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over 12 years. More than 800 people rode C-Tran buses that day – nearly three times what we expected. That number started growing steadily, and six weeks later we had more than 1,400 people/day riding the buses. So far, C-Tran has been a tremendous success and we expect that success to continue.

The next implementing achievement is Quicklink, our upscale commuter bus service serving the Macon to Atlanta corridor. A unique public-private partnership with Greyhound, Quicklink provides four buses per day, bringing commuters from Macon, Forsyth, McDonough and Locust Grove to Atlanta.

Partnerships like this one are an important tool for GRTA's work. By leveraging Greyhound's experience and resources we were able to start service much more quickly and efficiently than if we had started from scratch. I'm looking forward to more partnerships with the private sector as part of GRTA's efforts to create a seamless transportation system for our region.

We're also working closely with the Buckhead Area Transportation Management Association (BATMA) to

create an electric shuttle service connecting the two MARTA rail stations in Buckhead with offices, shopping centers and entertainment in Buckhead. That service should be up and running in 2002. And the first phase of a more than 250 mile expansion of our region's HOV network is also coming soon. Now that GRTA is operating fully in both of its envisioned roles, we will be making even better progress toward our goals of improving the region's air quality and reducing its traffic congestion.

*A unique public-private partnership with Greyhound, Quicklink provides four buses per day, bringing commuters from Macon, Forsyth, McDonough and Locust Grove to Atlanta.*

Many of these accomplishments will come as a result of implementing the Statewide Transportation Choices Initiative. This \$8.3 billion initiative accelerates programs into the next five to seven years that

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## The Wheels Are in Motion For C-Tran

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, Clayton County and MARTA, joined together on October 1st for the successful launch of Clayton County's new public bus system, C-Tran. The first public transportation system to be launched in the Metro Atlanta area in 12 years, C-Tran is touted by GRTA Executive Director Catherine L. Ross

as the "vanguard of a new regional transportation system."

Heavy pre-event media coverage in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* alerted many potential riders about the launch, which was held outside of the Forest Park City Hall. The 150-person crowd included a mix of media, federal and state officials, and local citizens, many of whom rode

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# Quicklink, Commuter Bus Service Begins Between Macon and Atlanta

**A**n innovative private/public partnership between the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and Greyhound Lines, Inc. has produced Quicklink, commuter bus service that runs between Macon and Atlanta. The system provides four buses with eight week-day travel options, giving Georgians an alternative to their long commutes.

The service was unveiled on November 1, and included ceremonies in Macon and Atlanta. In Macon, Mayor Jack Ellis and State Senator Robert Brown joined Dr. Catherine Ross and President and CEO of Greyhound Lines Craig Lentzsch to announce the service. The event drew more than 50 attendees and

was covered by all three Macon broadcast news stations and the *Macon Telegraph*. Proceeding to Atlanta, the group was joined by Lt. Governor Mark Taylor and Locust Grove Mayor Lorene Lindsey for another presentation, which was covered by three Atlanta broadcast news stations, Associated Press and Georgia Public Radio.

Buses began rolling on November 12, 2001, providing riders safety, reliability, and long-term savings. The comfortable Greyhound buses have been upgraded to include added legroom, seat trays, and cup holders. Riders receive complimentary newspapers and all buses are wheelchair accessible.

In addition to convenience for commuters, the buses will help improve air

C-Tran to the event or planned to ride it home. Media teams from Atlanta's four major broadcasters covered the event.

Key players in the creation and implementation of the transportation plan addressed the crowd at the opening of the ceremony. The speakers were led by Dr. Ross, followed by C. Crandall Bray, Chairman of the Clayton County Board of Commissioners,

Senator Terrell Starr, State Representative Valencia Seay, Kirby Glaze, Chairman of the Clayton County Chamber of Commerce, and Jimmy Benefield from the MARTA Board of Directors. The speakers all shared their enthusiasm and high expectations for C-Tran.

The initial C-Tran fleet includes 12 ADA-compliant, 43-passenger buses. These vehicles will



Georgia's Lt. Governor Mark Taylor admires a replica Quicklink bus at the November 1st announcement. Looking on are Greyhound Lines, Inc. President and CEO Craig Lentzsch, on right, and Jim Croy, executive director of the State Road and Tollway Authority, on left.



quality in Metro Atlanta. For each fully loaded bus, more than 31 passenger vehicles will be taken off the road. A car is almost four times more detrimental per mile than a bus at emitting carbon dioxide and 180

times more harmful with respect to hydrocarbons.

Join us in supporting this fantastic new service. For more information call 1-877-464-6863 or visit the web site at [www.grta.org](http://www.grta.org). ■



travel along two regular routes covering the cities of Riverdale, Forest Park,

Clayton College and State University, Southlake Mall, the Southern Regional

*The initial C-Tran fleet includes 12 ADA-compliant, 43 passenger buses.*

Jonesboro, Morrow, Lake City, and portions of College Park, and will serve activity centers including

Medical Center, and Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport. Over the next three

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## 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.)

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were planned for implementation over the next 25 years and provides the funding sources to make sure they get done. More HOV lanes, highway and arterial road improvements, regional and commuter express buses, activity center circulator systems, vanpools, conventional and light rail are all coming.

Most importantly, that \$8.3 billion investment is going to have a significant economic impact on our region and our state. An early initial analysis reveals that the construction projects created by the Transportation Choices Initiative alone will create more than 23,000 jobs and increase total regional income by more than \$1.4 billion. Accelerating these projects into the next five to seven years concentrates and thus makes more effective the economic stimulus created by the initiative.

Becoming an implementation as well as a planning authority adds another dimension of challenge to the work of GRTA. But it is a challenge that we welcome as we continue our work to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and improve the quality of life for the Atlanta region and all of Georgia. ■



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*C-Tran*

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years the fleet will grow to 36 buses and 3 additional routes will be added.

Since the launch, ridership has exceeded all expectations. In the first morning of operation, 830 passengers boarded the buses at Hartsfield Airport. By early November, ridership had increased to more than 1,400 per weekday.

“Our initial ridership is well ahead of what we expected for a bus services that was built from the ground up in 14 months,” said Dr. Ross. “We are thrilled to see this kind of support even before we are able to build our ridership by word-of-mouth.” ■

**GRTA Board of  
Directors meetings**

**First Quarter  
of 2002**

(at 1:00 p.m. in the  
GRTA offices)

**January 9**

**February 13**

**March 13**

**April 10**

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

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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.*