



## **Regional Transportation Planning for the Atlanta Region: Achieving Federal, State, Regional and Local Goals by supporting Walkable and Bikeable Communities.**

### **Safe Routes to School 2012 RTP Platform for the Atlanta Region**

#### **Introduction**

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the regional transportation planning and intergovernmental coordination created by local governments in the nine (9) counties and the City of Atlanta for the metro Atlanta region (City of Atlanta, Cherokee, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale Counties). As the second fastest growing city in the nation (1.1 million in the last eight years) it is anticipated that by 2040 metro Atlanta's population will increase by 3 million more people to a total of 8.3 million. This includes a 46.7% increase in children from ages 5 – 9 year's old.<sup>1</sup>

*Envision 6*, developed by ARC in 2006, utilizes a 'bottom-up' inclusive approach introduced in the Georgia Planning Act and integrates a planned development approach for future updates to the Regional Transportation Plan and the Regional Development Plan. Out of this effort grew the concept of PLAN 2040, with fully integrated transportation objectives balancing sustainable social, environmental, and economic outcomes for the region. This provides a unique opportunity for the planning and improving of the walking and bicycling conditions in the region.

Focusing attention on the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly children accessing schools, will help ARC to achieve maximum mobility and accessibility through strategic and fiscally prudent investments in a time of limited resources, address traffic congestion, improve air quality, address public health impacts and reduce health costs, reduce injuries and death, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, support regional centers that attract and maintain families and more. **The co-benefits from walking and bicycling give multiple and outstanding opportunities to all members our communities.**

In summer 2012, voters will decide on a Regional Sales Tax of one percent (1%), with anticipated revenue of up to seven (7) billion dollars to fund local and regional transportation projects. ARC has challenged the Regional Roundtable Executive Committee to comprise an unconstrained projects' list to provide to the Georgia Department of Transportation for their determination of what voters may choose from at the polls.

This platform describes the Georgia Safe Routes to School Network's recommendations.

## **Metro Atlanta Safe Routes to School Regional Network RTP Platform**

### **A. Improved Planning and Policies**

- ❖ SRTS language be incorporated into the PLAN 2040 Framework planning process
- ❖ Ensure that children are included in all modes, specifically pedestrian and bicycle planning for trips to/from school
- ❖ ARC provide funding and support for regional transportation planners for pedestrian and bicycle planning studies to ensure adequate funding to implement and evaluate the activities of PLAN 2040
- ❖ Carefully examine performance measures to determine inequities of the RTP on any group, in this instance considering impacts on modes (pedestrians and bicyclists) and school children (aged 6-18), and public health impacts for future planning
- ❖ Collaborate with Livable Centers Initiative, Lifelong Communities, Complete Streets, Clean Air, Preservation, and any other programs/agencies aligned with our vision and mission

### **B. Education and Promotion**

Ensuring that local jurisdictions, elected officials, and ARC policy committee members are receiving regular updates on active transportation innovative polices and planning opportunities

- ❖ Regional support and encouragement of participation in Bike to Work Day, Walk to School Day, Let's Move National Campaign, and events and conferences such as the annual Ride to the Capital, the Georgia Wellness Summit, and other innovative active transportation outreach opportunities for encouragement.
- ❖ The Safe Routes to School Regional Network will serve as a resource for information, resources, best practices, and products to develop safe walking and bicycling for children

### **C. Increased Investment**

- ❖ Invest a minimum of 10 – 12% in walking and bicycling programs and services
- ❖ We specifically request funding and policies to support:
  - A Safe Routes to School regional source of funding
  - A Complete Streets policy where all roadway projects funded through ARC must have the implementing agency complete a checklist to show how the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians have been evaluated
  - The Livable Centers Initiative and Regional Impact plans addressing school issues like walking/bicycling to school, future school sitings, and joint use opportunities
  - Funding incentives for smaller, community-based schools
  - Requirements and/or incentives for interconnectivity between new schools and adjacent current or future developments

#### **D. Improved Data Collection**

- ❖ Standardized bicycle and pedestrian data collection throughout the region on an annual basis is incorporated into the RTP and adequately staffed and funded
- ❖ Ensure Activity-Based Travel Demand Modeling that addresses all modes, specifically pedestrian and bicycle trips being included as part of the RTP planning, and incorporated into future planning models