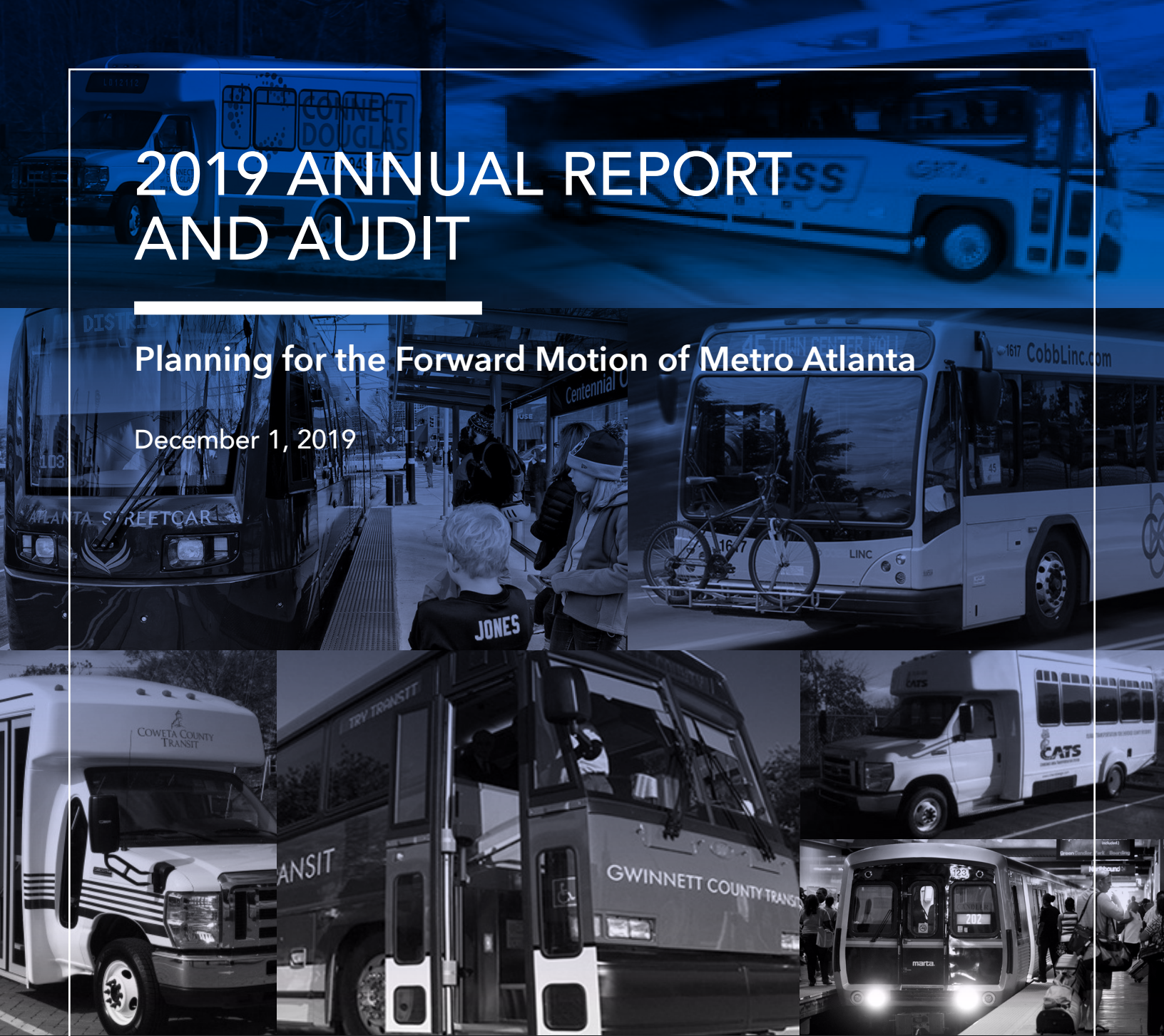


2019 ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDIT

Planning for the Forward Motion of Metro Atlanta

December 1, 2019



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL) Annual Report and Audit (ARA) provides an overview of transit planning, funding, and operations in the 13-county region of Atlanta, as required by the ATL's enabling legislation (House Bill 930). Focusing on the period from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019 (Fiscal Year 2019), the ARA assesses the quality of service and productivity of the region's transit network.

About the Annual Report and Audit

The ARA shows the results of transit performance tracking for all modes of transit, as well as analysis of the economic and societal impacts and benefits of transit, to evaluate how well the region's transit network is serving the existing population and businesses, as well as positioning the region for a high level of economic competitiveness in the future.

The ARA represents a comprehensive regional benchmarking of all transit services from the nine largest transit providers in the region. The ARA:

- > Evaluates performance over time to identify trends and potential areas of improvement.
- > Will inform the ATL's strategic investment decisions based on trends.
- > Enhances transparency and holds the region accountable for effectively meeting the people's mobility needs.

A goal of the ATL is to position the Atlanta region as a prime location for business development and expansion, and a more efficient and unified transit system will help drive economic growth and provide better access to jobs for people across the region.

— Message from Representative Kevin Tanner, Senator Brandon Beach, Authors of House Bill 930

The 2019 Annual Report and Audit can be found online at:
www.atltransit.ga.gov/annualreport



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Benefits of the ATL



Streamline Transit Planning

Planning for better connected systems and a more unified network of mobility options.



Improve Rider Experience

Optimize the transit experience, save riders time, and reduce commuting stress.



Drive Economic Development

Making it easier to access jobs and attract new businesses.

OVERVIEW

The ATL was established to create a more unified and efficient transit system that serves the existing and future population of the Atlanta region. The ATL's work is guided by six governing principles that influence how the authority conducts its business.

Land Use + Economic Development



Create or enhance connectivity and access to job centers, activity centers, and economic centers in line with the region of Atlanta's Unified Growth Policy.

Innovation



Use innovative solutions to improve rider experience, fare collection, cost savings, integration with transit alternatives, and more.

Environmental Sustainability



Offer new or enhanced services as alternatives to SOV travel, and promote the use of alternative fuels to build environmentally sustainable communities.

Equity



Provide new or expanded service to and from low- and moderate-income areas to improve connectivity and focus on investments that better enable people to meet their day-to-day needs.

Return on Investment



Ensure that project financing plans are feasible and promote cost efficient alternatives for new or enhanced service that enable regional economic opportunity and growth.

Mobility + Access



Using cross-jurisdictional services to create regional connectivity for population centers, recreation and employment.

What are the ATL's primary functions?

HB 930 gave the ATL the responsibility of overseeing planning and state and federal funding of transit projects in the Atlanta region to make the region's transit network more streamlined, efficient, and economically competitive.

Planning

- > Oversee the transit plan for the 13-county region
- > Promote collaboration between current and future transit partners
- > Partner with regional stakeholders to think long-term about mobility

Funding

- > Prioritize transit projects to maximize available funding for the region
- > Work with the county governments who choose to expand special-purpose local-option sales taxes
- > Recommend to state leaders transit projects for bond funding

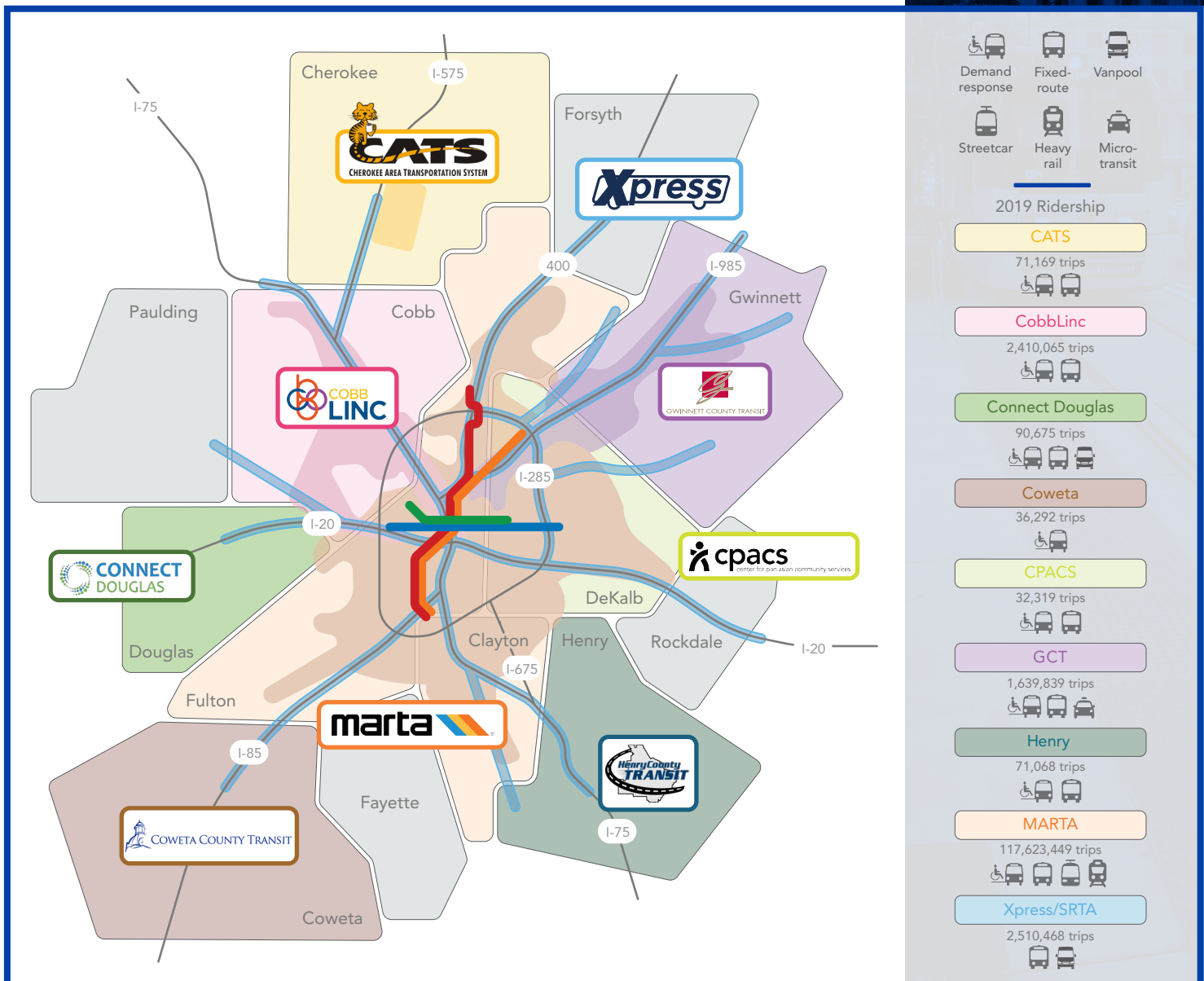
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The region's transit agencies together create a multimodal transit network that offers fixed-route bus, heavy rail, commuter bus, demand response transit, vanpool, and a streetcar.

Together, these **nine** agencies provided

125 million

transit trips in 2019



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How the ATL has evaluated the role of transit in the economy



IDENTIFY SOURCES OF VALUE

How does transit support people and business in the ATL region?

STIMULUS EFFECTS

How do agency expenditures support regional jobs?



TRANSIT COMMUTERS

What industries depend on transit for access to workers?

THE VALUE OF CHOICE

How does transit help individuals and the region avoid costs?

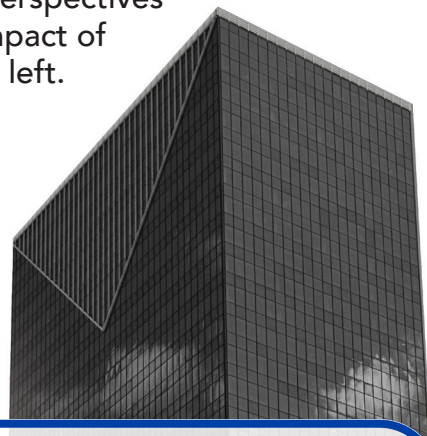


ACCESSIBILITY

How does access by mode compare across the region?

WHAT IS TRANSIT'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE ATLANTA REGION'S ECONOMY?

Transit supports the 13-county ATL region by providing mobility options to individuals, supporting societal goals of equity and sustainability, and enhancing regional economic development. Because there are many ways in which transit benefits the people and businesses of the Atlanta region, answering these questions provides multiple perspectives on the value and impact of transit, as shown at left.



“As businesses look to attract millennials to their work force and create economic mobility for under- and unemployed, they are specifically looking for proximity to transit as a key feature in location decisions.”

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN TRANSIT, METRO ATLANTA CHAMBER AND GEORGIA TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE, 2015



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF TRANSIT

The Atlanta region is growing, and transit is needed to enable its rise and advancement. The following are five key themes related to the social and economic importance of transit in the region.



ADDRESS
POPULATION TRENDS

Between 2010 and 2018, Atlanta had **the fourth-fastest growing population of all metro areas in the United States**. Transit can help the region manage and respond to growth pressures while also meeting the needs of a growing senior population and the preferences of a younger workforce who desire greater modal options.



SUPPORT EQUITY AND
INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Transit is key to supporting equity and inclusive growth. **Persons with disabilities, low-income households, and older adults make up 30 to 40 percent of the region's population** and require an affordable transit option to connect themselves to economic opportunity.



SERVE COMMUTING
NEEDS

Where transit is a competitive option, it provides benefit to both transit users and those in cars by increasing the efficiency of the network. However, challenges remain. Most jobs in Atlanta are accessible only by car, and **Atlanta is ranked seventh in the nation in terms of metro areas with the highest loss in job accessibility due to congestion**.



ENHANCE
SUSTAINABILITY

When investment in transit is integrated with land use planning and policies, **some trips can be shifted from single-occupancy vehicles, thereby lowering the number of vehicle miles traveled in a region**. This, in turn, can help reduce auto emissions and improve the regional air quality.



SUPPORT BUSINESS

Transit supports business by helping to attract and maintain workers who value diverse modal options in their quality of life. **Proximity to MARTA stations was a key factor in location decisions for large Atlanta-based companies like Kaiser Permanente and State Farm**. Parts of the region that are underserved by transit report missing out on economic opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Impacts generated from transit agency operations and expenditures



Activity Directly Supported

Transit agencies employ workers, pay them wages, and invest in equipment and supplies



Supplier Activity (Indirect)

Transit agencies purchase goods and services from companies who in turn employ and pay workers



Spending of Worker Income (Induced)

Transit agency and supplier employees spend their income, generating additional activity within the regional economy



80,785
WORKERS

can get to work because of transit



\$2.9 BILLION in ANNUAL WAGES

brought home by transit commuters



\$9.0 BILLION in ANNUAL SALES

facilitated by transit commuters



4%

Transit commuter share, nationwide

ECONOMIC IMPACTS FINDINGS

Impact of Transit Agency Expenditures

The transit agencies operating in the ATL region create jobs and generate business sales through expenditures on items such as maintenance and capital purchases. The total economic impacts of these expenditures are comprised of three distinct categories – direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

Taken together, the direct, indirect, and induced impact of ongoing agency operations and maintenance expenditures reaches over 11,000 jobs in the region, contributing to \$912 million in value added to the Gross Regional Product and \$1.5 billion in output to the economy. Capital expenditures in FY 2018 supported 1,600 jobs, earning over \$95 million in income, and supporting \$237 million in regional business sales.

Economic impact of transit agency operations and maintenance (O&M) and capital (Cap.) expenditures (FY 2018)

Impacts	Jobs	Income (\$M)	Value Added (\$M)	Output (\$M)
Driven by Operations & Maintenance	11,156	\$689	\$912	\$1,578
Driven by Capital Investment	1,597	\$95	\$141	\$237
Total Impacts	12,753	\$784	\$1,053	\$1,815

Source: Research team analysis using TREDTransit™

Transit Commuters and the Regional Economy

The top five industries with the largest number of transit commuters are: food services and drinking places; educational services; professional, scientific, and technical services; administrative and support services; and public administration (non-military).

Transit commuters have an average annual wage of about \$36,000; however, both high- and low-income workers use and benefit from transit. A 2009-2010 transit survey by the Atlanta Regional Commission found that 50 percent of transit workers in the Atlanta region have an annual household income of less than \$30,000, while about 13 percent have a household income over \$75,000.

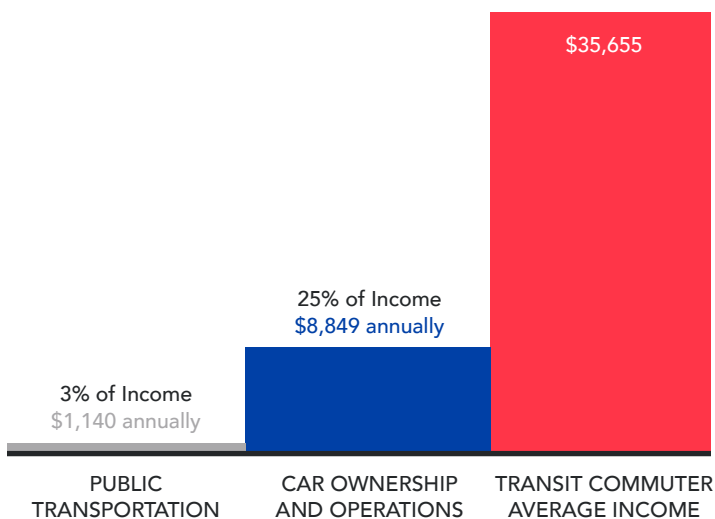
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ECONOMIC IMPACTS FINDINGS

The Value of Choice

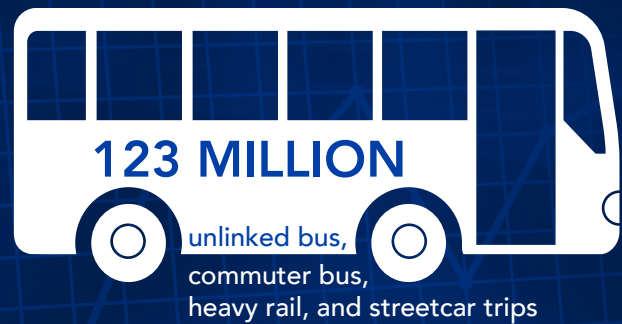
Transit provides value to residents of the Atlanta region by offering them a cost-effective mode choice to meet their travel needs. Transit commands just 3 percent of a transit commuter's average income, while car ownership and operation costs would claim about 25 percent of a transit commuter's average income.

Comparison of annual transit and car ownership costs to average transit commuter income



With transit, the Atlanta region avoids 369 million in vehicle miles traveled annually. This translates to avoided volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), and Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions of 66,800 tons each year.

Estimated avoided vehicular emissions (US Tons) associated with 369 million avoided automobile VMT



If bus and rail service were unavailable in 2019...

14 MILLION
linked trips would not be made

369 MILLION
more vehicle miles on the road
(1 percent increase)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within a
45-minute
commute...

Employers in Downtown



1,771,570

people accessible by driving

307,219

people accessible on transit

Employers in Perimeter



1,570,776

people accessible by driving

136,563

people accessible on transit

Employers at the Airport



1,235,925

people accessible by driving

213,925

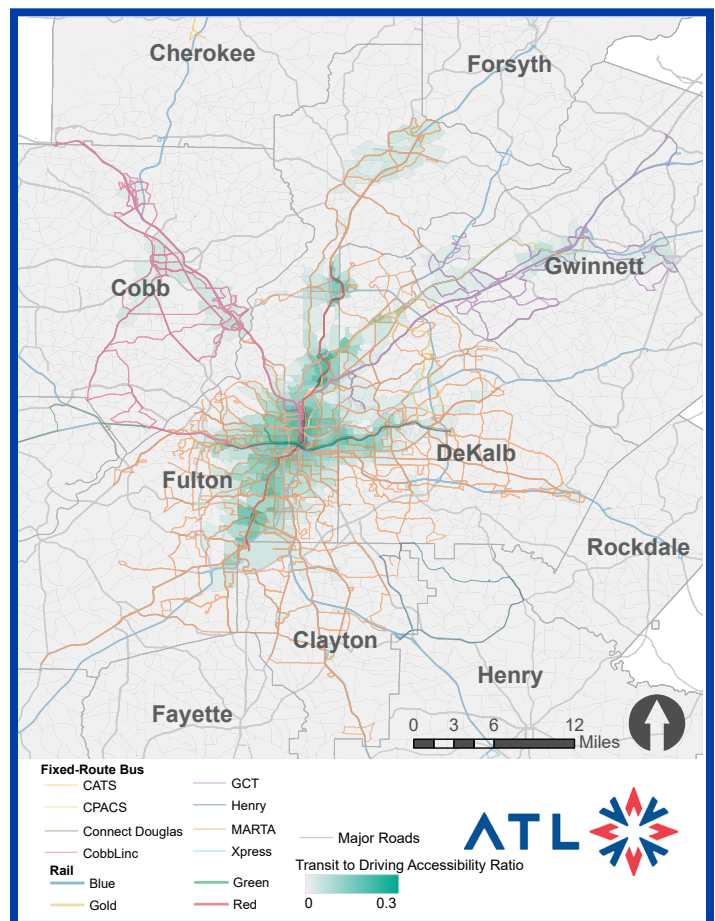
people accessible on transit

TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY COMPARED TO DRIVING

Transit helps connect people to jobs. Transit is most competitive in the core of the region but is not a viable option in the periphery beyond the boundaries of the rail and bus network. **Job access by transit is at most 30 percent of that by car**, meaning only 30 percent of jobs accessible by car within 45 minutes are accessible by transit in 45 minutes. This disparity presents an opportunity for targeted investment in transit to increase job accessibility.

Regional growth trends will shape the geography of future transit needs. The Atlanta Regional Commission estimates the most significant growth over the next twenty years in the northeastern part of the region, which is less accessible by transit compared to other counties in the region.

Comparison of access to jobs within
45 minutes by driving and transit



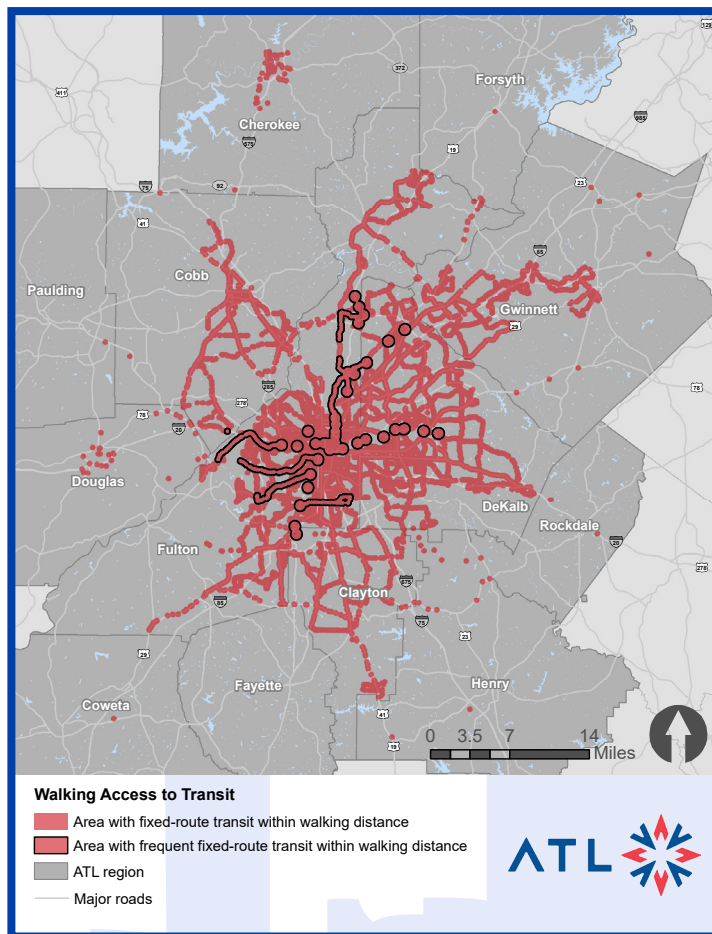
Proactively managing growth through strategic transit investments will be a key consideration for sustaining and supporting Atlanta's regional economic development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

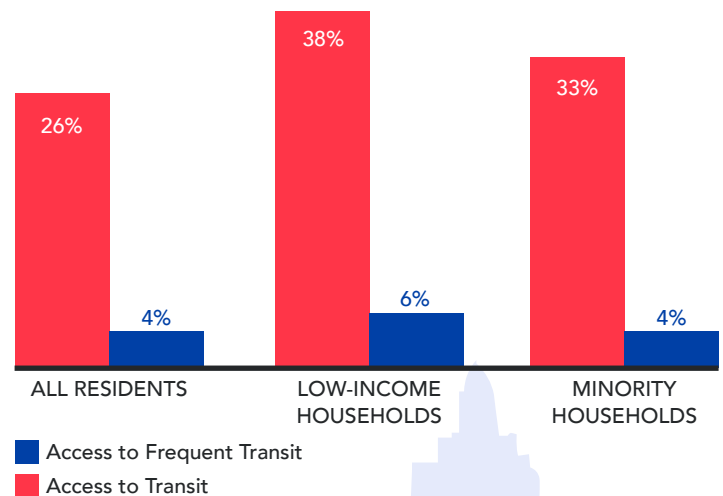
TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY

Access to fixed-route transit has significant implications to mobility and equity, as well as access to opportunity. As shown in the figures below, three-quarters of the Atlanta region's residents do not have access to any fixed-route transit services within walking distance. Even fewer—only about one in 25—of the region's residents have access to frequent fixed-route transit services. While minority and low-income households have slightly greater access to fixed-route and frequent fixed-route transit, the majority still lack this access.

Access to fixed-route transit by walking



Percent of population within walking distance to fixed-route transit



Over 60 percent of low-income households in the Atlanta region do not have access to any fixed-route transit services within walking distance.

Access to transit within walking distance is defined as the population within one-quarter mile of a bus stop or one-half mile of a rail station. Frequent service was defined as a minimum of 15-minute frequency for at least 12 hours a day.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Annual Report and Audit evaluates the region's transit system with respect to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), enabling the development of a baseline for future comparison and evaluation of the impacts of investments. The findings from this analysis will be used by the ATL to inform recommendations for future investments in the region's transit network.

Using KPI-based evaluation allows for more informed policy- and decision-making and helps the ATL work with its partners to set measurable and attainable goals for future transit investment and growth.

The following pages show the results from some of the ARA's key KPI-based analyses. KPIs analyzed in the full ARA address the topics listed below.

Ridership

Level of Transit Investment

On Time Performance

Equity

Level of Service

Operational Productivity

Customer Satisfaction

Financial Productivity

State of Good Repair

Safety

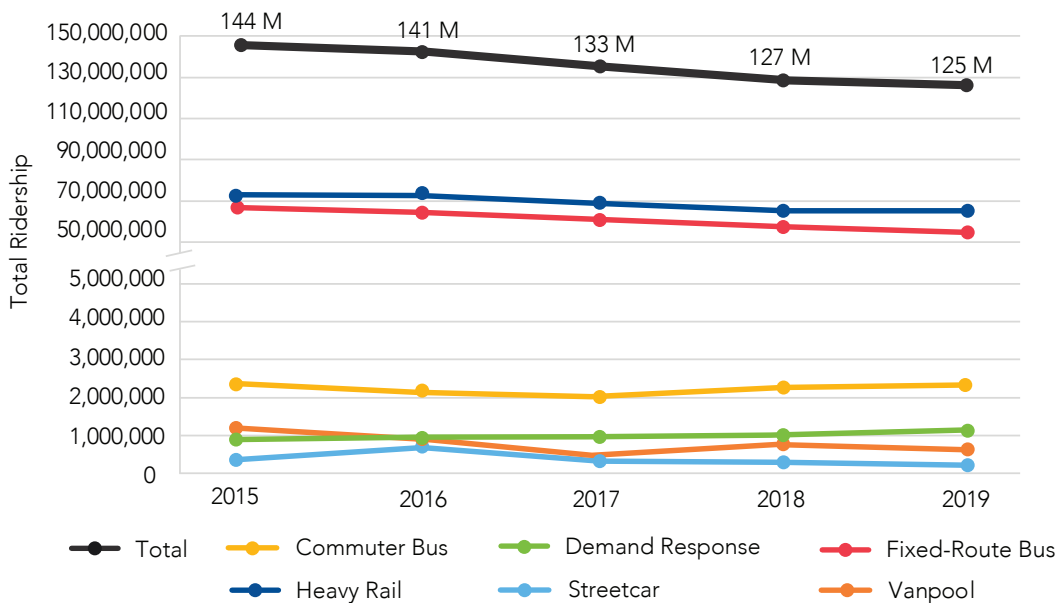
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RIDERSHIP

In 2019, the region's transit network provided over 125 million trips to the region's residents and visitors. Total transit ridership in the region peaked in 2015 with 144 million riders, declining to 125 million riders by 2019. Fixed-route bus and rail ridership comprise nearly 97 percent of all transit trips in the region, so regional ridership trends are heavily tied to ridership on these modes.

While the region has seen declines in both fixed-route bus and rail ridership since 2015, rail ridership increased slightly between 2018 and 2019, indicating that the declining trend is reversing for rail. Other modes saw increases over the five-year period: commuter bus ridership in the region grew by 2 percent between 2015 and 2019, and demand response ridership grew by 29 percent.

Total regional transit ridership by mode



Trends in Nationwide Transit Ridership

Between 2015 and 2019, total transit ridership in the United States decreased by 8 percent.

TNCs and shared micromobility options such as bikeshare and scooters are contributing to declines in transit ridership, but the impacts depend in part on the land use context and the presence of other available transportation options in the area.



Micromobility

There are at least five micromobility providers in Atlanta in 2019. Among Lime scooter users in Atlanta, 40 percent combine their scooter trips with transit. Thirty-seven percent displaced a car trip with a Lime trip.



Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)

TNCs like Uber and Lyft accounted for only 100 million trips nationwide in 2012; however, by 2019, the number of trips provided by TNCs was estimated to have exceeded the total number of trips taken on bus and rail in the U.S.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OPERATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

Operational productivity measures how many passengers are being served relative to the amount of service provided. Transit agencies that maximize operational productivity can serve more passengers within a given amount of resources.

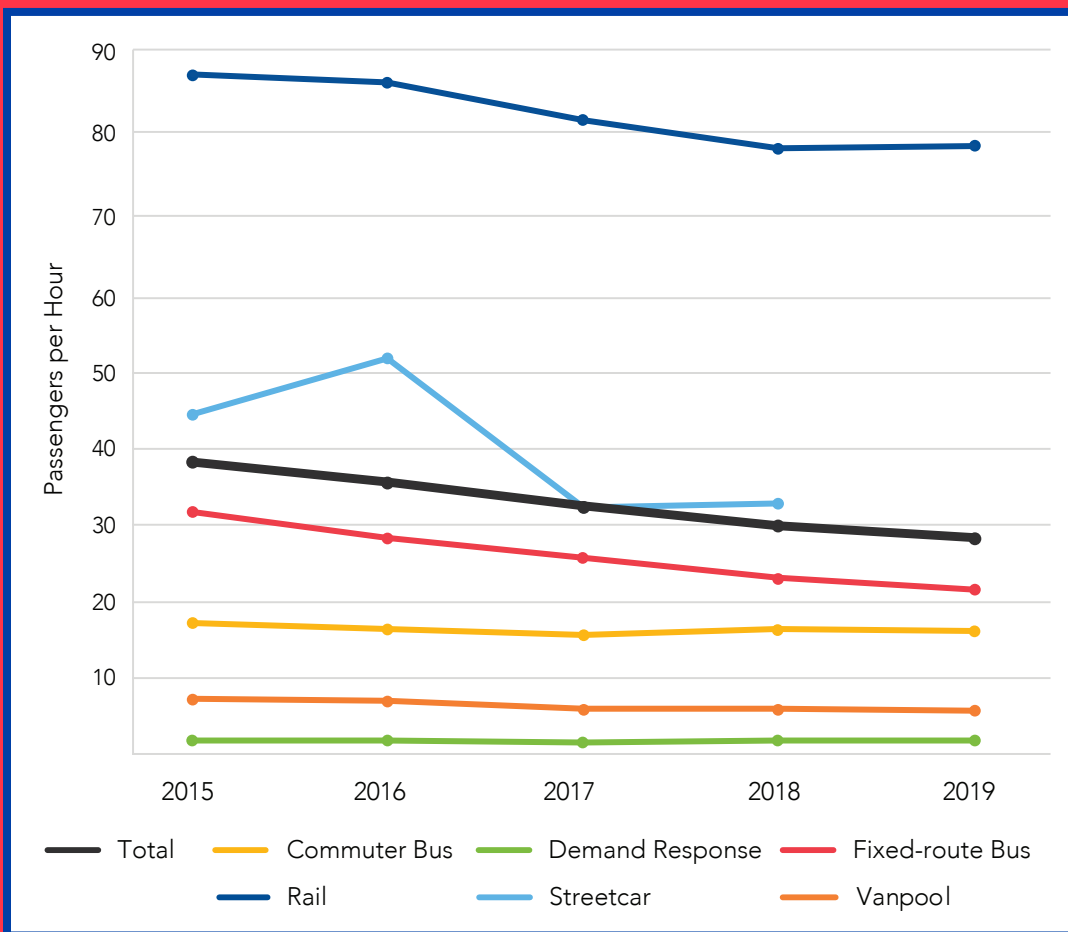
Passengers per Revenue Hour

Passengers per revenue hour, one of many operational productivity metrics, is defined as the number of trips provided per hour of service. Between 2015 and 2019, passengers per revenue hour decreased by 24 percent in the Atlanta region. Passengers per revenue mile followed a similar trend during the same time period.

Revenue Miles per Revenue Hour

Another measure of operational productivity is revenue mile per revenue hour, which approximates average travel speed. In the Atlanta region, average travel speed by mode ranged from 5 revenue miles per revenue hour to 38 revenue miles per revenue hour in 2019. The Atlanta region's heavy rail, fixed-route bus, and vanpool services have equal or greater than average speed than national averages.

Passengers per revenue hour



Despite the declines in passengers per revenue hour over the past five years, both rail and demand response saw increases in passengers per revenue hour between 2018 and 2019, indicating a potential reversal of the trend for those modes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEVEL OF TRANSIT INVESTMENT

Regional operating expenditures for transit totaled \$580 million in 2019. Compared to the national average, in the Atlanta region, there is a **high reliance on sales tax revenues to operate transit and fund transit projects.**

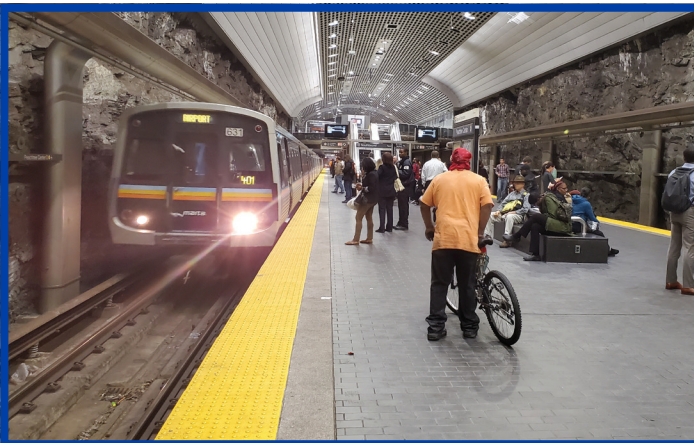
Regional capital expenditures totaled \$276 million in 2018. For MARTA, the region's largest transit operator, nearly 90 percent of capital revenues were from sales taxes.

State funding makes up a smaller proportion of transit expenditures in the Atlanta region compared to national averages. Increasing state funding could expand transit service, which provides an opportunity to stimulate economic activity in the region.

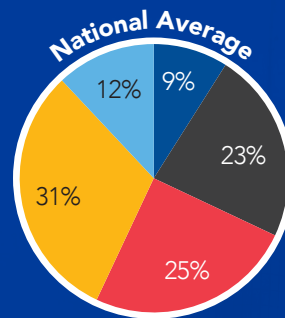
Transit operating expenditures per capita in the Atlanta region have fluctuated year over year, but the average growth in operating expenditures per capita between 2015 and 2019 is below the rate of inflation. By comparison, the average expenditures per capita in metro areas of 2 million or more people was \$137 in 2017. For every one dollar invested in public transportation, approximately four dollars is generated in economic returns.

Operating expenditures per capita

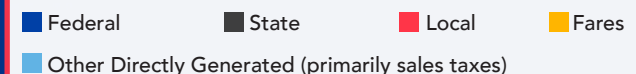
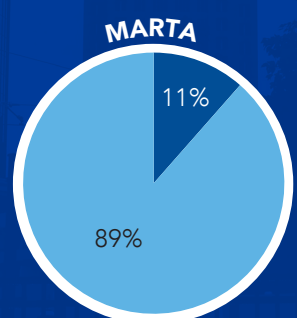
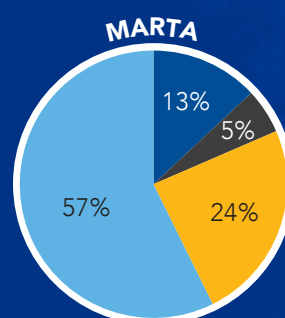
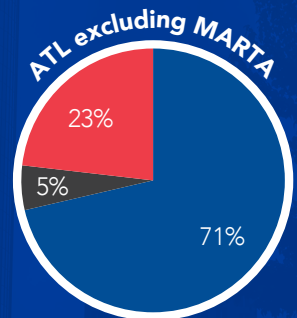
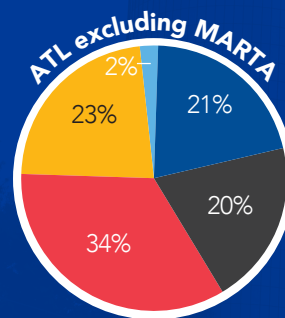
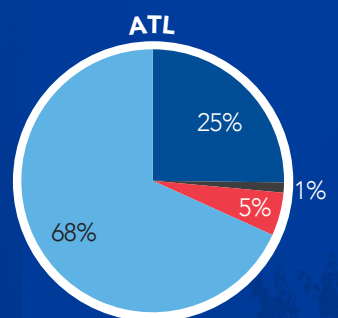
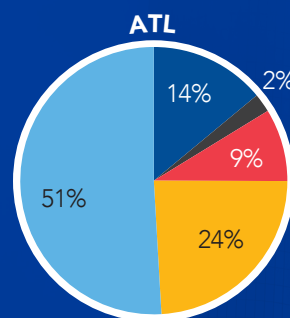
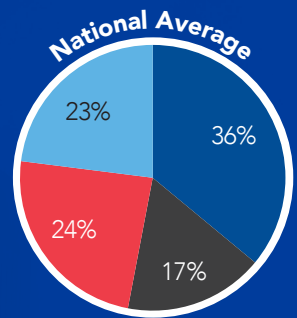
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
\$105.58	\$111.33	\$99.40	\$105.37	\$108.62



Operating Revenue Sources (2017)



Capital Revenue Sources (2017)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

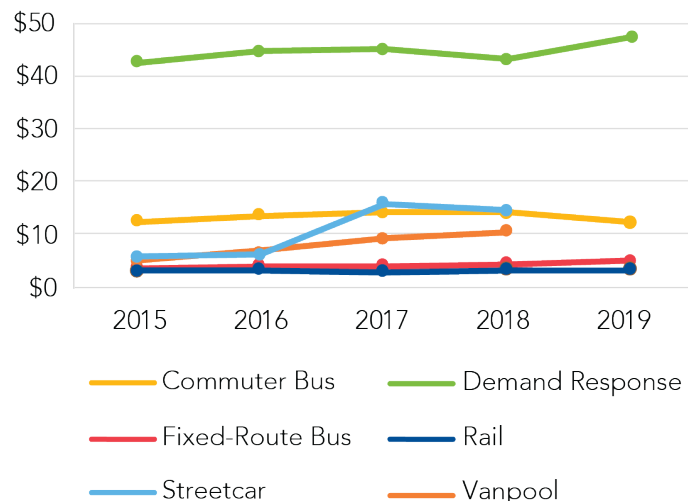
FINANCIAL PRODUCTIVITY

Financial productivity measures indicate how efficiently resources are being used to provide transit service. Services that maximize financial productivity can leverage fare revenues as well as local, state, and federal funds to provide more hours and miles of revenue service.

Operating cost per passenger remained relatively stable between 2015 and 2019 across all modes except for streetcar, which saw its ridership decrease in 2017 after implementing fares. Heavy rail has the lowest cost per passenger of all modes. This is followed closely by fixed-route bus.

Operating cost per revenue hour measures financial productivity relative to the level of transit service offered and can be influenced by operating speed, operator wages, and general expense. In the ATL region, the operating cost per revenue hour was consistently lowest for demand response and fixed-route bus.

Operating cost per passenger trip

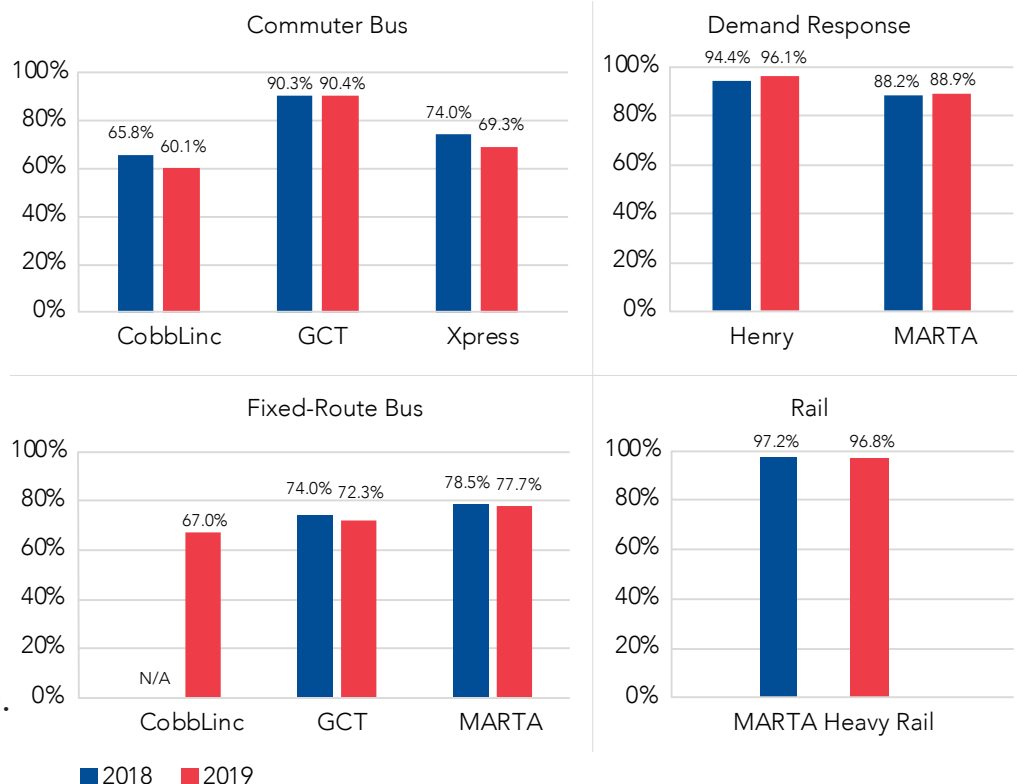


ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

On-time performance (OTP) is one of the most critical metrics from a customer perspective: if transit cannot be relied upon to arrive on time, then travelers will look to other modes of transportation to get to their destinations.

Agencies in the region define on time for fixed-route transit as arriving between the scheduled time and five minutes after the scheduled arrival time.

Between 2018 and 2019, some agencies and modes experienced OTP declines of over 5 percent, likely a result primarily of traffic congestion. MARTA heavy rail has very high OTP of 97 percent.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

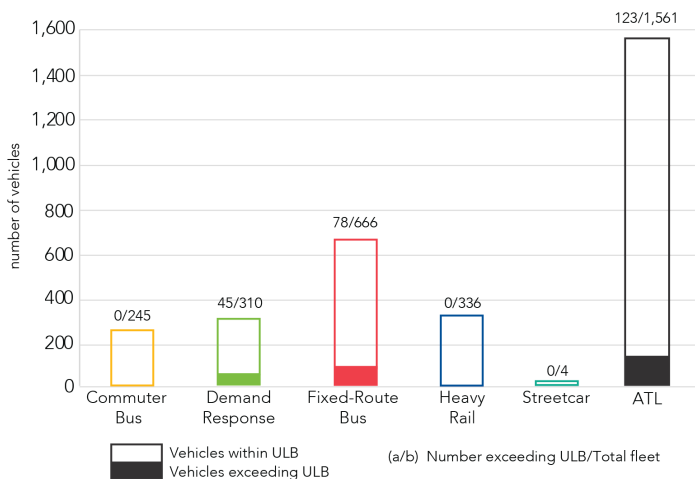
STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

State of good repair measures the condition of an agency's fleet and other assets. There is a strong correlation between the state of an agency's vehicle fleet and its reliability and quality of service. Vehicles in a poor state of repair tend to break down more frequently than vehicles in a good state of repair, and thus offer less reliable and consistent service.

A measure of state of good repair is the share of a fleet past its useful life benchmark (ULB). ULB is the life cycle of a transit asset. ULBs set by ATL agencies range from five to 10 years for a cutaway bus to 30 years for a heavy rail car.

In the ATL region overall, 8 percent of active revenue vehicles exceed their ULB. Despite this relatively high level of state of good repair across all the fleets, some demand-response and fixed-route buses are in need of replacement over the next few years.

Percent of vehicles past ULB by mode (2019)



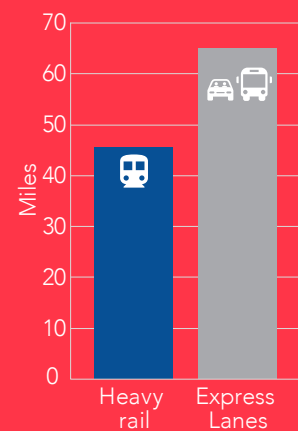
SAFETY AND CRIME

Ensuring the safety of passengers, operators, and other members of the public is a priority for the ATL and its partner agencies. For most ATL agencies who had available data, safety incidents per revenue mile and per trip decreased between 2015 and 2019.

TRANSIT PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Since 2011, the Atlanta region has been implementing a system of tolled managed lanes called "Express Lanes," consisting of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOT) lanes and Express Toll Lanes (ETLs), on Interstate Highways, which now exceed the heavy rail network in length. Currently, the region has 65 miles of Express lanes for high occupancy vehicles—buses, vanpools, and, (in the case of HOT lanes) carpools—which single occupancy vehicles can access by paying a toll. All the region's miles of Express Lanes have been added in the last decade.

Lane miles of transit priority right-of-way



Miles and opening of controlled access lanes on interstates

System	Miles of Lane	Opening Year
I-85	15	2011
I-75 South	10	2017
I-85 Extension	10	2018
Northwest Corridor	30	2018
Total	65	



As the region continues to invest not only in Express Lanes, but in other infrastructure such as dedicated bus lanes and transit signal priority, it can expect on-time performance of transit to improve. Future ARAs will track the region's amount of all types of transit priority infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **192 projects** submitted to the ATL for the Regional Transit Plan included:

- > **50** system/area-wide investments
- > **129** route/asset-specific investments
- > **13** projects not yet associated with specific geographic area, route, or asset type

Of the projects...

- > **30** are state of good repair
- > **58** are enhancements
- > **104** are expansion-related

TRANSIT NEEDS AND PLANNED INVESTMENTS

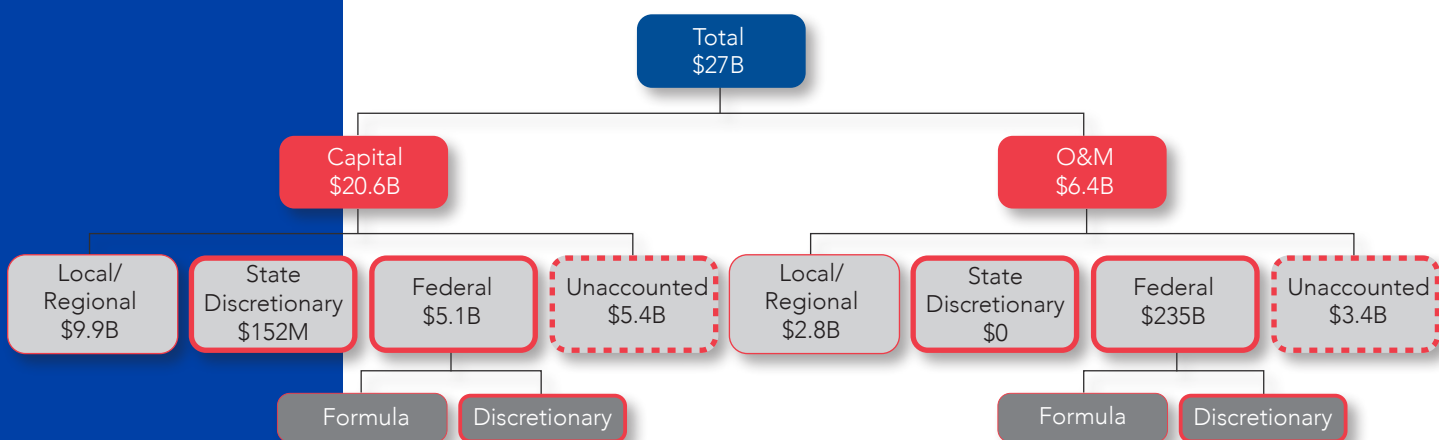
The Atlanta region is projected to grow in the coming decades, with population projected to reach over 8.6 million and employment projected to reach over 4.7 million by 2050. Much of this growth is expected outside the central core of the region.

This expected growth highlights the need for transportation solutions that give residents travel options other than single-occupancy vehicles in order to use the limited roadway space available in the most efficient way possible.

Through the development of the Regional Transit Plan, the ATL, in collaboration with the region's transit service providers, has undertaken the task of estimating the region's transit needs over the next three decades. Meeting the region's transit needs is critical to ensure the Atlanta region remains economically competitive, can attract and retain talent, and can become more livable.

Current transit needs are estimated at \$27 billion over the next 30 years. Of these needs, about one-third are currently unfunded.

Transit funding needs for the Atlanta region (2020-2050)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESULTS FROM OTHER REGIONS' INVESTMENTS IN TRANSIT

Many other cities across the U.S. have invested heavily in transit in recent years; their successes highlight how impactful well-planned transit investment can be on regional populations and economies. These investments have very real implications for the locations they serve in terms of community vitality, economic competitiveness, and access to employment.

Seattle's success is a result of a regional commitment to integrated planning with land use, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and travel demand management strategies. Through voter-approved dedicated funding, the Seattle region expanded commuter rail, redesigned its bus system, invested in bus rapid transit (BRT), and is building a 50-mile light-rail system by 2023. Ridership on the South Line of the Sounder Commuter Rail doubled between 2010 and 2018, BRT ridership has increased 87 percent since launching, and light-rail ridership grew 6.8 percent from 2018 to 2019. **These investments have led to steady growth of jobs without a corresponding growth in personal vehicle trips.**

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, an array of transit investments has led to about \$12 billion dollars in development as well as an addition \$8.2 in planned development along high-frequency transit corridors. Transit investments have increased business sales and resulted in new housing developments (including affordable housing) and new employment sites, investment in green energy, and revitalization of neighborhoods. These economic investments and other successes are a result of a range of transit improvement strategies, including bus-on-shoulder commuter service, arterial BRT, and light rail. Since its implementation in 2016, BRT has seen ridership increases of 30 percent; between 2017 and 2018, light rail ridership grew by 9 percent. Minneapolis-St. Paul are experiencing steady economic and population growth—the Twin Cities are growing faster than other major metro area in the North, Midwest, or Rust Belt.

Key areas for the Atlanta region's consideration in making transit investments include:

- > **Investing in high capacity transit** to meet the region's demand for transit.
- > **Investing in dedicated right-of-way** for transit to **improve on-time performance** and travel speeds.
- > Ensuring the region's **transit network works in a coordinated and seamless way.**
- > Advising on **incentives to encourage various non-single occupancy vehicle travel** options and **data-sharing** to enhance the quality of decision-making.
- > Ensuring that the **existing service** the region delivers **is high quality.**
- > **Evaluating the need for a bus network redesign.**
- > **Enhancing the state of good repair** for the region's transit fleet.
- > **Understanding the impact of fare policy** on ridership.
- > **Integrating land use and transportation planning.**





ATL

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