



Office of Communications & Engagement  
245 Peachtree Center Avenue, Suite 2200 • Atlanta, GA 30303

Ericka B. Bayonne  
Chief Communications Officer  
404-893-3004 office  
404-226-9339 cell  
[ebayonne@srta.ga.gov](mailto:ebayonne@srta.ga.gov)

Tiffany L. McCall  
Communications & Media Director  
404-893-3025 office  
470-249-7531 cell  
[tmccall@srta.ga.gov](mailto:tmccall@srta.ga.gov)

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## **Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (ATL) Launches Georgia's First Regional Transit Trip-Planning App**

### **ATL RIDES Enables Customers to Plan Trips Across Metro Atlanta**

ATLANTA – Today, the Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (ATL) announced the launch of ATL RIDES – the region's first regional transit trip planning app – following the completion of successful Beta testing. The new technology enables customers to seamlessly plan transit trips using just one app for travel across 13 counties via six transit agencies – Xpress, MARTA, Ride Gwinnett, CobbLinc, Connect Douglas and Cherokee Area Transit System (CATS).

"The development of ATL RIDES is the culmination of the strong partnership between these six transit agencies in the metro Atlanta area," said Jannine Miller, Executive Director of the ATL. "Creating and launching this new app is a result of a new level of coordination across the region's transit agencies."

With the app, travelers will now have a "digital" one-stop-shop to plan a transit trip between origins and destinations served by different transit operators, for example, from Buckhead to the Battery, or Mableton to Midtown, or Austell to the Airport, or South Cobb to Stone Mountain. These are cross-county/cross-agency trips that in the past had route and schedule options that were challenging for customers to understand. The total fare cost from start to finish was also confusing. ATL Rides cuts through that confusion.

“ATL RIDES, along with MARTA’s new Breeze Mobile 2.0 fare payment app, work together to take some of the guesswork out of taking a trip on transit, making it more accessible for all,” said MARTA General Manager and CEO Collie Greenwood.

Unlike other navigation apps currently available such as Google Maps, ATL RIDES provides the most up-to-date route information directly from the transit agencies. One of the most helpful features is the real-time vehicle arrival information that ATL RIDES offers to the app’s users, enabling riders to see when their next bus or train will reach their location. Travelers with disabilities can also select a setting for wheelchair-accessible routes. Future plans call for the addition of micro-mobility, such as scooter share and bike share, and on-demand services such as paratransit.

Ride Gwinnett, which serves the most diverse population in Georgia, saw that the many benefits and features of the app could enhance its customers’ riding experience and has been a strong supporter of ATL RIDES. “Gwinnett County is excited to partner with the ATL to improve mobility across the region,” said Nicole Love Hendrickson, Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners Chairwoman. “Ride Gwinnett’s inclusion in the ATL Rides app advances our mission to provide superior services for all of our residents.”

While technological advancements have made planning trips on transit, by walking, or riding a bike more accessible, having access to consistent and accurate data for planning a trip has proven to be a greater challenge. Many suburban and rural transit agencies lack the capacity, staffing, and infrastructure to create and maintain the technology. These challenges have a direct impact on the amount of information available to transit customers and the quality of their trips presenting a roadblock to the convenience of using public transportation. ATL RIDES will help to remove those barriers for growing counties like Cobb County.

“Cobb County’s attractions continue to grow, and the number of people commuting to work in this county is also on the upswing,” says Cobb County Board Commissioner Chairwoman Lisa Cupid. “This app will allow them to more easily use transit options to get to where they need to go, either to work or play.”

ATL RIDES was funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) \$20.3 million Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) program awarded to the ATL in 2020. The state provided nearly \$200,000 in matching funds from the Georgia Department of Transportation as well as other local sources. The FTA IMI program supports projects that use innovative technologies and processes to improve access to public transportation, increase public transportation efficiency, and enhance the overall rider experience. The Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (ATL) was one of 25 recipients selected out of 104 eligible project proposals totaling approximately \$107 million in requested funding. Funding from the FTA’s IMI Program is being used to advance mobility through creative partnerships and emerging technologies, combining public and private transportation assets and strategies that will greatly increase access to mobility for everyone.

Fast-growing Cherokee County, which saw a 5.5% population increase during the pandemic, sees the need for ATL RIDES to help it prepare for future growth. “Cherokee County has strong regional partners, and it’s important to work together to provide the best service to our residents in Cherokee County. The new ATL RIDES app provides our residents who commute for employment outside the County via Xpress real-time information on routes, making their commute more efficient,” said Cherokee Communications Director Erika Neldner. “We appreciate our regional partners providing better technology to serve our Cherokee County residents.”

Since 2019, ATL has been working on the solution to remove the barrier between transit users and the information they are able to access by creating its own open-source trip planning platform. Starting in Spring 2023, ATL RIDES entered its Beta mode, inviting a limited number of users to test and give their feedback on improving the platform to ensure a successful launch. The ATL RIDES app is another example of the Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (ATL), fulfilling its mission to bring about a more seamless customer experience for transit users in metro Atlanta and transit leaders in Cherokee County agree.

### **About the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority**

*The ATL was created by the Georgia General Assembly during the 2018 legislative session to provide coordinated transit planning and funding for the metro Atlanta region. The ATL is responsible for developing the ATL Regional Transit Plan, as well as identifying and prioritizing the projects and initiatives required to develop region-wide transit. The ATL is also charged with creating a unified regional transit system brand. Effective July 1, 2020, the ATL was legislatively authorized to oversee the state’s Xpress regional commuter transit system and the Atlanta region’s vanpool system. The population of metro Atlanta is growing rapidly and projected to add an additional 2.5 million residents by 2040. The ATL is a critical step towards more efficient and effective transit and mobility in the region. For more information on Xpress and the ATL, visit <https://atltransit.ga.gov/> and follow us on X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook.*

### **Contact Information for Our Partner Agencies**

Deb Tuff  
Media Relations Manager  
Gwinnett County Government  
770-822-7135  
[Deb.Tuff@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:Deb.Tuff@GwinnettCounty.com)



Stephany Fisher  
Sr. Director of Communications  
MARTA  
470-419-9216  
[media@itsmarta.com](mailto:media@itsmarta.com)



Ross Cavitt  
Communications Director  
Cobb County Government  
770-528-2485  
[Ross.Cavitt@CobbCounty.org](mailto:Ross.Cavitt@CobbCounty.org)



Erika Neldner  
Communications Director  
Cherokee County  
678-493-6015  
[ebneldner@cherokeega.com](mailto:ebneldner@cherokeega.com)

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