

**Transportation and Air Quality Committee**  
***Kerry Armstrong, ARC Chair***

**Wednesday, February 9, 2022**

**10:30AM - Noon**

**Online Meeting Notes**

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
Mr. Kerry Armstrong	Mayor Eric Clarkson
Commissioner Clay Davis	Mayor Andre Dickens
Commissioner Lisa Cupid	Commissioner Marcello Banes
Mr. Jim Durrett	Mr. Rudy Bowen
Mayor Vince Williams	Mr. Greg Cantrell
Ms. Kathy Zahul	Commissioner Dave Carmichael
Ms. Tamara Hayes	Mayor Vince Evans
Mayor Rochelle Robinson	Mayor Eric Dial
Commissioner Harry Johnston	Mr. Tread Davis
Ms. Martha Martin	Commissioner Pat Graham
Mr. Paul Radford	Commissioner Nicole Love Hendrickson
Mayor Rusty Paul	Commissioner Romona Jackson Jones
	Ms. Liane Levetan
	Mayor Mike Mason
	Commissioner Alfred John
	Commissioner Carlotta Harrell
	Commissioner Oz Nesbitt
	Commissioner Paul Poole
	Commissioner David Thompson
	CEO Michael Thurmond
	Commissioner Jeff Turner
	Commissioner Robb Pitts

**Transportation and Air Quality Committee**  
*Mike Mason, Vice-Chair*

**Wednesday, February 9, 2022**

**1. Welcome; Acceptance of November 10, 2021, TAQC Meeting Summary**

Kerry Armstrong, ARC Board chair, called the meeting to order. He greeted the committee and welcomed them to the meeting. Chairman Armstrong said that due to local election changes that TAQC does not currently have a chair, but that a chair is expected to be selected in March. Mike Mason, TAQC Vice-Chair, was unable to attend, and so Chairman Armstrong filled in.

Chairman Armstrong asked for any revisions to the November meeting summary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to accept as submitted. Vince Williams made a motion to accept, and Jim Durrett made a motion to second. The summary was accepted as submitted unanimously.

Chairman Armstrong, asked to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of Jeff Parker, GM and CEO of MARTA; Mike Boyce, former chairman of Cobb County; and Susie Dunn, ARC transportation retiree. He said that they all contributed to the success of our region and will be missed.

Chairmen Armstrong asked John Orr, ARC, for any written public comments. There were none for general meeting comment.

**2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #4 (FIRST READ AND PUBLIC HEARING)**

Chairman Armstrong said that there would be no action on this item today, but that action would be taken by TAQC in March. He then asked John Orr, ARC, to begin the required public hearing. Mr. Orr stated that we are in the public comment period for this TIP amendment. He then recognized Becky Apter to introduce attendees for public comment. Apter said that three people had signed up to speak: Jennifer Brooks, Bob Dallas, and Walter Woods.

Jennifer Brooks spoke about Peachtree Street. She said she is concerned about project AT-379, FY 2022, Last Mile Connectivity, Complete Streets, pedestrian improvements. She said that the complete streets tactical urbanism implementation so far has caused problems due to all modes using the same space and that this has caused problems with MARTA Mobility having adequate curb access. She also said that there are proposals to close Peachtree Street at times on Sundays which creates problems. She asked to have the sidewalks made ADA accessible and for ARC to help Peachtree Street thrive.

Bob Dallas was not in attendance. Walter Woods was also not in attendance.

John Orr said that ARC staff would follow up with Bob Dallas and Walter Woods to document their comments. He then closed the public meeting and introduced Jean Hee Barrett, ARC, to present on TIP Amendment #4. Barrett said that she manages the TIP and that committee members have received the draft resolution for this amendment.

Barrett then handed the presentation over to Amy Goodwin, ARC. Goodwin said that she manages the LCI implementation program. Goodwin began by providing some background on the LCI program, which was originally created in 1999. Current funding is for \$2 million per year for studies and \$20 million per year for transportation infrastructure. The LCI Program has three components: LCI Master Plans, LCI Tactical studies, and LCI Transportation project funding. Program goals focus on increasing density, mix of uses, mobility options, improved access to jobs, services, and retail, and affordable housing.

LCI project implementation is the biggest allocation of LCI funding. This is typically awarded in a competitive process as part of the TIP solicitation, which takes place roughly every two years. However, there was a separate call for infrastructure projects in 2021 before the 2021 TIP solicitation because there was a balance of approximately \$11 million in FY 2022. These funds were available due to delays in some projects that had previously been funded. A total of 17 projects were funded through this application process, and all focused on bike/ped or trail projects. If anyone has questions about LCI Transportation projects, please contact Goodwin at [agoodwin@atlantaregional.org](mailto:agoodwin@atlantaregional.org). Additionally, there is an application open now for additional LCI planning studies, available at <https://atlantaregional.org/callforprojects>.

Barrett then began presenting other parts of the changes for the amendment. One change related to an ARC plan is for AR-062 Regional Transportation System Electrification Plan. This plan is in the ARC UPWP and will be managed by ARC staff.

GDOT requested funding for three studies, including:

- GDOT studies, AR-530, SR 53 study
- CO -483, SR 120 scoping study
- FT-336, SR 120 mobility study

GDOT also asked for changes that include some new infrastructure projects as well as funding, scheduling, or related changes to existing projects.

The comment period for this TIP amendment began on January 24th and will end on February 11th. This TIP Amendment will be an action item at the TCC meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup>, as well as at the TAQC, ARC Board, and GRTA board meetings on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Upon approval, the TIP amendment will be sent to US DOT, which has a schedule of a maximum of 30 days for final approval. Barrett said that ARC expects to have another TIP Amendment later in 2022 related to the TIP solicitation held in late 2021. Barrett finished her presentation and handed the meeting to John Orr. Orr asked if there were any questions.

There was a question from Jennifer Brooks about the local matching funding amount for a project on Peachtree Street. Goodwin stated that there is a 20% match but that wasn't shown on the presentation slide due to space constraints. Goodwin said that this funding was only for PE, but that there is an expectation that there will be interest in further funding for implementation in the future.

### **3. Update on Regional Safety Targets**

Chairman Armstrong stated that US DOT requires MPOs to set performance targets. He then introduced John Orr for this item.

Orr introduced Tejas Kotak, ARC, to give an update on regional safety targets. US DOT requires state DOTs and MPOs to set 5 safety performance measures, which are focused on 5-year rolling averages to smooth out data outlier years. GDOT sends their performance measure targets to FHWA by August 31st each year. ARC must concur with GDOT or set their own targets by February 27th of the next year. ARC has always concurred with GDOT on their targets in the past. TCC, TAQC, and the Regional Safety Task Force have expressed interest in ARC submitting their own targets different from GDOT's targets. This presentation proposes submitting separate ARC targets. These targets assume following current trendlines up for one year, and then a 5% reduction in fatalities and other changes.

Kotak said there is no penalty if ARC does not meet these targets, although state DOTs can have funding impacts if their targets are not met. The ARC targets can be used for self-accountability and to inform further development of the Regional Safety Strategy. This can help to better understand how current projects/programs are affecting safety outcomes.

Kotak concluded his presentation. He handed the meeting over to Chairman Armstrong and said he could answer any questions. Hearing none, Armstrong asked Orr for any comments. Orr said that anyone interested could follow-up with him or Kotak.

#### **4. Regional Safety Strategy Work Activities Update**

Chairman Armstrong introduced Byron Rushing, ARC, to give an update on the ARC Regional Safety Strategy. Rushing said that Frank Gross from VHB, the prime consultant on this plan, will join him in the presentation. Rushing said that they will be back with another presentation next month with more details.

Rushing said that this plan kicked off about a year ago. He said that the Regional Safety Strategy will address the safety of all road users through a data-informed, collaborative, multidisciplinary, and multimodal approach. The project's schedule shows that the consultant team is nearing completion of the data analysis part of the plan and is expected to conclude in July 2022. There are a number of questions that the plan seeks to answer and results from that analysis will be presented later.

Rushing handed over the presentation to Frank Gross from VHB. Gross said that the target setting from the previous presentation is an important part of their work. Simply following the 5-year trend line will result in more deaths and injuries each year, so there should be a focus on changing that to improve safety for everyone.

Options for achieving targets include adjusting targets, increasing spending, and/or increasing efficiency/efficacy of the safety program. When considering efficiency/efficacy, the focus should primarily be on fatal and serious injury crashes rather than all crashes. From there, the focus is on determining the types of crashes that cause the most fatalities and serious injuries, as well as on facility types where these crash types are overrepresented. They also focus on factors that increase the risk of these types of crashes such as area type, roadway ownership, functional class, and number of lanes. The results of this analysis can impact target setting, funding, and project development decisions. Gross concluded his presentation and said he could answer any questions from the committee.

Armstrong asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he said the committee would look forward to more info in a future meeting.

## **5. Updates on the New Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Reauthorization Bill**

Chairman Armstrong said that as attendees likely were aware, a new infrastructure funding law was signed by the President in November 2021. Armstrong then handed the meeting over to John Orr. Orr said that since there was no TAQC meeting in January, that there were some initiatives that were time sensitive that committee members needed to be aware of. More detailed information about the law would also be provided in future meetings.

Orr then introduced David Haynes, ARC, for an update on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Haynes said that this law includes significant funding for things not related to transportation, such as water/wastewater, broadband, clean energy, and more. ARC staff are still working through the details of what is in this new law for transportation due to the significant changes to funding and transportation programs. At a high level, the IIJA includes:

- Significant increases in funding for existing transportation programs
- Large new programs covering a broad range of areas, such as climate change, equity, and complete streets programs. Some are formula programs, but many are competitive discretionary programs

Specific details about individual funding sources are still being released, but in general there are more formula funding available from FHWA and FTA. Haynes presented detailed information of how existing program funding changed from 2021 (FAST Act) and 2022 (IIJA), as well as funding for new programs in 2022 (IIJA). Among other changes, this includes a 23% increase in funding for metropolitan funding for MPOs like ARC. Haynes stressed that while there are new programs and funding, a local match is still needed to use these funds.

New programs focus on areas like bridges, safe streets, charging and refueling, rural surface transportation, resiliency, and a Connecting Communities Pilot Program. A number of different programs focus on emissions and climate change in different ways. Other changes include the Healthy Streets Program, which has funding for tree canopies along streets, a new area for federal funding. There is also a significant increase in capital funding for transit, low or no emission bus grants, and a rail vehicle replacement program.

Haynes said that while there are new programs and funding, this is still federal funding and so the federal process must still be followed. To receive this funding from ARC, proposed projects must be in an adopted plan, must have had public input, must have a local match, and must meet other federal requirements and ARC's TIP application requirements.

There are also new competitive grants from US DOT, so accessing these funds will require additional grant writing from local jurisdictions. Haynes said that there are numerous documents online which provide additional details, and links to three files are in his presentation.

Haynes concluded his presentation and handed the meeting over to John Orr. Orr said that there is significant new funding in this law, and a noticeable change is the amount of funding available through competitive funding grants. Orr said that ARC staff can assist with these, but that local jurisdictions may want to plan ahead to identify staff that can write grant applications for competitive funding grants. Orr then handed the meeting over to Chairman Armstrong

Armstrong asked for ARC staff to continue to give updates in the future and asked if anyone had questions. He added that it may be a challenge if local governments do not have enough funding for local matches. He said that there is some focus with partners in Congress to potentially reduce the required match amount to make this federal funding accessible to all of the region's communities.

Paul Radford, ATL, said that ARPA grants may help to move things around in local budgets and may free up some funding for local match for projects. Armstrong thanked him for the comment.

Orr asked Kathy Zahul, GDOT, if she has any comments on behalf of the Department. Zahul said they were trying to ensure they can make use of all new federal funding available in FY 2022 while still meeting all federal requirements in a short timeframe.

## **6. Other Staff Items**

John Orr thanked Chairman Armstrong for mentioning the passing of ARC retiree Susie Dunn earlier in the meeting.

## **7. Other Committee Introduced Items**

None

## **8. Announcements**

Orr reminded TAQC members that TIP Amendment #4 would be an Action Item in March and asked that TAQC members attend if they can so that there will be a committee quorum.

Sam Shenbaga, ARC, mentioned that the annual call for applications for the LCI study program is now open. It's available on the ARC website. Jared Lombard is the primary contact for this program and can assist with any questions. He can be contacted at [jlombard@atlantaregional.org](mailto:jlombard@atlantaregional.org). The LCI study application deadline is February 28<sup>th</sup>, and the application is available at <https://atlantaregional.org/community-development/livable-centers-initiative>.

Orr then asked Becky Apter to read the TAQC attendance. She read the list of attendees and all members present were included.

Jim Durrett said that he recently attended the symphony written by ARC Executive Director Doug Hooker. He said it was a remarkable experience.

Armstrong added that Anna Roach will be joining ARC staff on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and will become Executive Director on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Doug Hooker will continue to be part of ARC staff through March 31, 2022, to assist with the transition.

Armstrong said that ARC committee chair appointments will be made to the ARC Board at their March meeting.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Armstrong.