ARC Board Meeting

IIJA Strategy & Governance

September 14, 2022



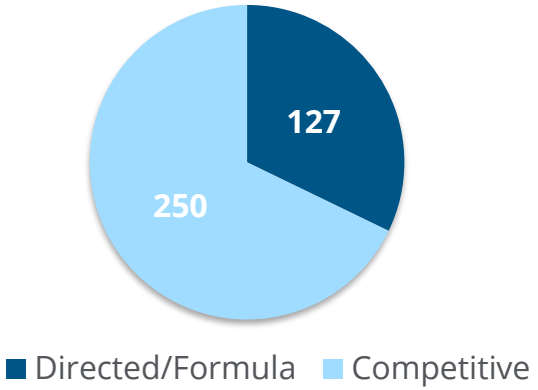
AGENDA

1. IIJA: Unprecedented Scope & Opportunity
2. Challenges with the Region's current approach
3. ARC as a Catalyst for Regional Success
4. ARC's Win Plan
5. What we need from you

IIJA: Unprecedented Scope & Opportunity

IIJA includes an **unprecedented $850B of infrastructure funding** split between directed, formula and competitive grants over 5 years

Number of IIJA Grants By Type



Important IIJA Characteristics

- Funding for more than 350 new & existing programs.
- Most IIJA programs are competitive, with annual Notices of Funding Opportunity.
- Funding is administered by multiple federal agencies.
- IIJA emphasis on workforce development, equity, climate, and resilience.

Implications for Local Governments

- Many new programs with new objectives, technical specifications and reporting requirements.
- Analyzing and understanding the full breadth of opportunities will require significant resources.
- Quick turn-around times between NOFOs and applications challenges a reactive planning approach.
- Competition for funding will require projects to align closely to grant criteria and demonstrate compelling benefits.

Local agencies can mitigate some of these challenges by coordinating on a regional basis and leveraging technical support to identify and pursue priority grant opportunities.

Challenges With the Status Quo

TCC staff input indicates major need for regional coordination

"We are swamped with all the NOFOs that are being released. Elected officials want to pursue opportunities, but we are starting to see that not all our local priorities are the best fits for the new IIJA programs."

"The availability to secure matching funds is going to be an issue. The source of our local match is the SPLOST. There is only limited ability to use these funds for projects not on the approved project list." "We are going to need to be strategic on what we apply for. It has budget impacts, including on existing programs."

"ARC needs to help inform and educate officials on the programs so that we can focus on what is priority when applying for discretionary grants." "There are so many NOFOs being released, we are constantly reacting."

"Staffing capacity is a big issue when evaluating whether to pursue discretionary grants. Our staff vacancy rate is 30-40%." "There is just not enough time to read every NOFO as quickly as I would like and this can be overwhelming." "For a RAISE grant application, it can cost $20,000 to hire a consultant to help prepare the grant."

ARC's Regional Role

"Demonstrate professional and forward-looking leadership to ensure sustainable growth, livability, and competitive advantage by focusing and balancing environmental responsibility, economic growth, and social needs"



Regional Planning

- Proactively plan investments needed to ensure metro Atlanta's future success and improve the region's quality of life.

Regional Convening

- Bring diverse stakeholders to the table to address the most important issues facing metro Atlanta.

Regional Services

- Support healthy living and healthy aging throughout metro Atlanta by offering a range of services designed to ensure a high quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.

Source: ARC Bylaws; https://atlantaregional.org/about-arc/

ARC as a Catalyst for Regional Success

The nature of IIJA's competitive programs lends itself to a regional coordination model facilitated by ARC

ARC can add value by sharing information on strategic IIJA grant opportunities, assisting with project sourcing, providing technical input, assisting with grant writing, and supporting raising capital for match funding

Catalyst

- ARC is uniquely placed to lead the region on a complex, time-bound prioritization effort for grant programs within all aspects of IIJA

Subject Matter Expert

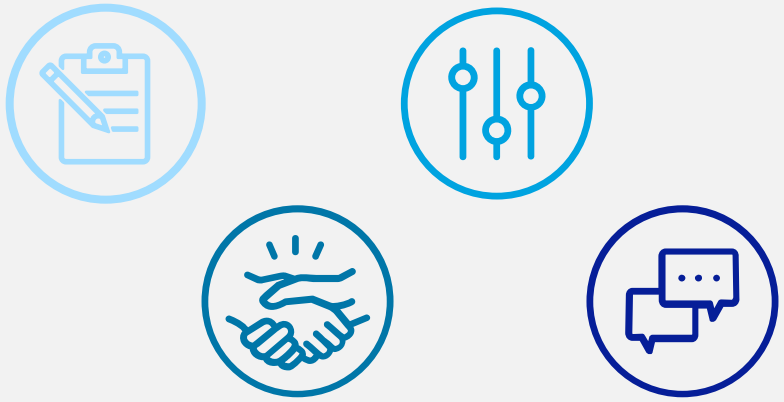
- ARC has the organizational structure and technical expertise to decipher IIJA complexities, create an objective prioritization process, and support applications.

Convener

- ARC has the power and platform to:
  - Convene local jurisdictions and federal partners
  - Foster collaboration
  - Coordinate and evaluate proposed projects

ARC's Proposed Win Plan

Four important moves that could position the region for IIJA success



EXPERTISE

Establish an Infrastructure Consortium that leverages agency expertise across the major IIJA priority areas to assess, prioritize, **and recommend projects** for competitive IIJA grant programs.

GOVERNANCE

Establish an Infrastructure Caucus of elected members of the ARC Board **to guide staff and approve recommendations** from the Infrastructure Consortium.

APPLICATION SUPPORT

Provide the region and local jurisdictions with a clear process, **technical assistance**, research, **grant writing** and raising capital for match funding.

Advocacy

Convene a monthly meeting of Georgia's federal Delegation, and present recommended projects **to build support for the region's approach**

What's at Stake?

Failing to coordinate regionaly led may lead to undesirable outcomes & prove to be less effective

Threat to Success

- Concern that multi-sponsors could submit projects along the same corridors. This would make us all look very bad to federal agencies and potentially impact future successes.
- Federal agencies need to understand that we have regional coordination

Coordinated Projects are More Competitive

- Having multiple partners on a project demonstrates to federal staff strong local support.
- Assists in demonstrating the project is addressing a regional need.
- New programs (broadband, energy) lend themselves to multi-jurisdictional projects

Missed Opportunity for Synergy

- Many of the region's most competitive projects are often multi-jurisdictional
- Local governments could pool resources and more efficiently pursue discretionary grants.

Discussion

Your Guidance on a Path Forward

1. What is your role as a Regional Commission in ensuring success?

2. What would be the key elements of a framework designed to make to region more competitive?



Next Steps

Gather ARC Board feedback



Finalize proposed ARC/regional direction on IIJA



Develop implementation approach



Review plan with ARC Board