



Atlanta Regional Transportation Demand Management:

2020 Annual Report

March 2021



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

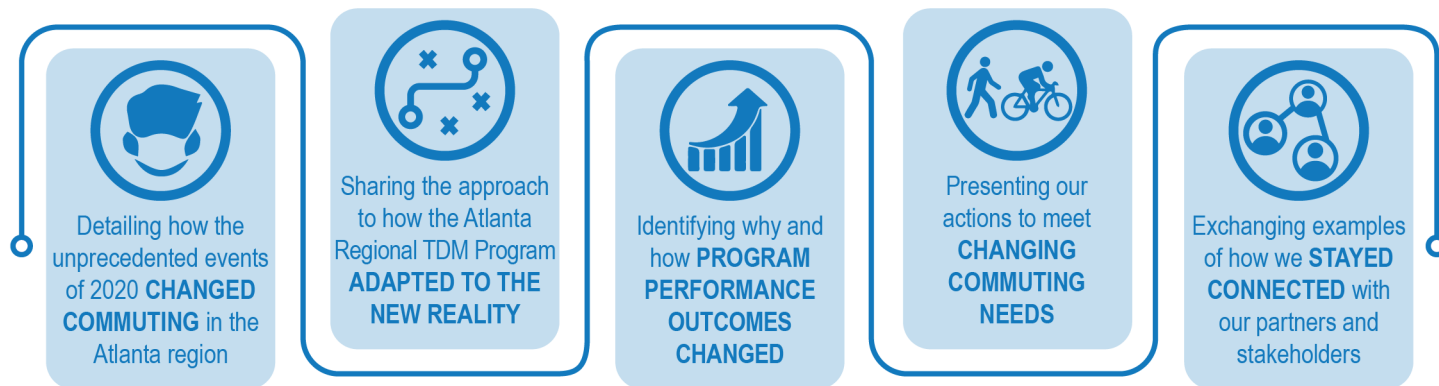
SECTION	PAGE
Introduction	2
2020 Program Overview	3
2020 Program Highlights	4
What Happened in 2020	5
Changes in Commuting	6
Responding to Change	7
What We Learned (Surveys)	8
Addressing Needs (Webinars-Telework-Promotions)	12
Program Outcomes and Measures	15
Regional Program Outcomes	16
Awareness Influence Participation Impact	18
2020 TDM Innovation	22
Looking Forward	23
Atlanta Regional TDM Program Map and More Information	24



INTRODUCTION

The worldwide impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic began being felt in the Atlanta region in March 2020. Shelter-in-place orders and social distancing practices changed how we worked, shopped, went to school, socialized, and made our transportation decisions. As a result, the pandemic fundamentally altered how the Atlanta Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs were designed and delivered.

This 2020 Annual Report tells the story by:



Atlanta Regional TDM Program

The Atlanta Regional TDM Program is managed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) with oversight by The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), with Georgia Commute Options (GCO) serving as the provider of TDM services. In addition, seven local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) operate within specific employment centers in the region, providing customized and targeted TDM services to the employers and commuters who do business there. See page 24 for a map of these territories.

TDM is a set of policies, strategies, and supportive programs that help people change their travel behavior by avoiding a trip entirely, using alternative travel modes, traveling at different times of day, or using different routes. The TDM program within the Atlanta region provides resources, incentives, and services to decrease single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel while encouraging alternative modes.

The program's goals are:

-  **INCREASING the use of ALTERNATIVE MODES to driving alone**
-  **EXPANDING TRAVEL OPTIONS and regional accessibility for everyone**
-  **KEEPING the ATLANTA region ECONOMICALLY COMPETITIVE**



2020 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2020 started with GCO and the TMAs working together to plan for and deliver a diversity of regional TDM promotions, incentives, and programs based on lessons learned from a very successful Atlanta regional TDM program in 2019.

With the growing threat of the pandemic in March and the shelter in place order in April, the program had to quickly pivot, setting up new TDM actions to adapt to the reality of the pandemic. It was a significant challenge that required new surveys, new techniques for working with employers and commuters, new education programs, and unique marketing and outreach activities to help workers navigate through the new virtual landscape.

2020's unique approach to TDM involved four focus areas that enabled GCO and the TMAs to continue to connect and help commuters and employers in new and meaningful ways.

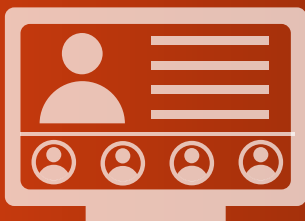
The 2020 experience, while a definite detour for the economic vitality of the region, does not change Metro Atlanta's status as one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic economies in the United States.

Our region remains an ever-evolving place of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes that provides a diverse collection of opportunities for the 5.7 million people currently living here and the expected 2.9 million more people living here by 2040.

TDM remains critical to help manage use of our region's transportation system – without it, the region could face threats to its competitive advantage when attracting or keeping a talented workforce, businesses, and jobs.

Surveys

Connecting with over 10,000 commuters in the region through an ongoing series of surveys supporting the goal of understanding changing behaviors, opinions, and attitudes around work and commuting.

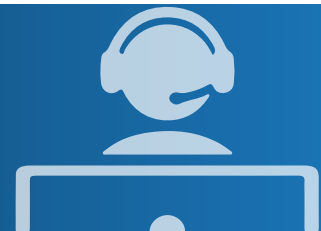


Webinars

Information sharing on best practices for commuters and employers to adapt to the new commuting and work environment, both for those essential workers who continued to commute, and for those working at home.

Telework Outreach

Best-practices, policies, programs, marketing, and implementation assistance for workers and employers to transition to an effective and comfortable work-from-home experience.



Promotions

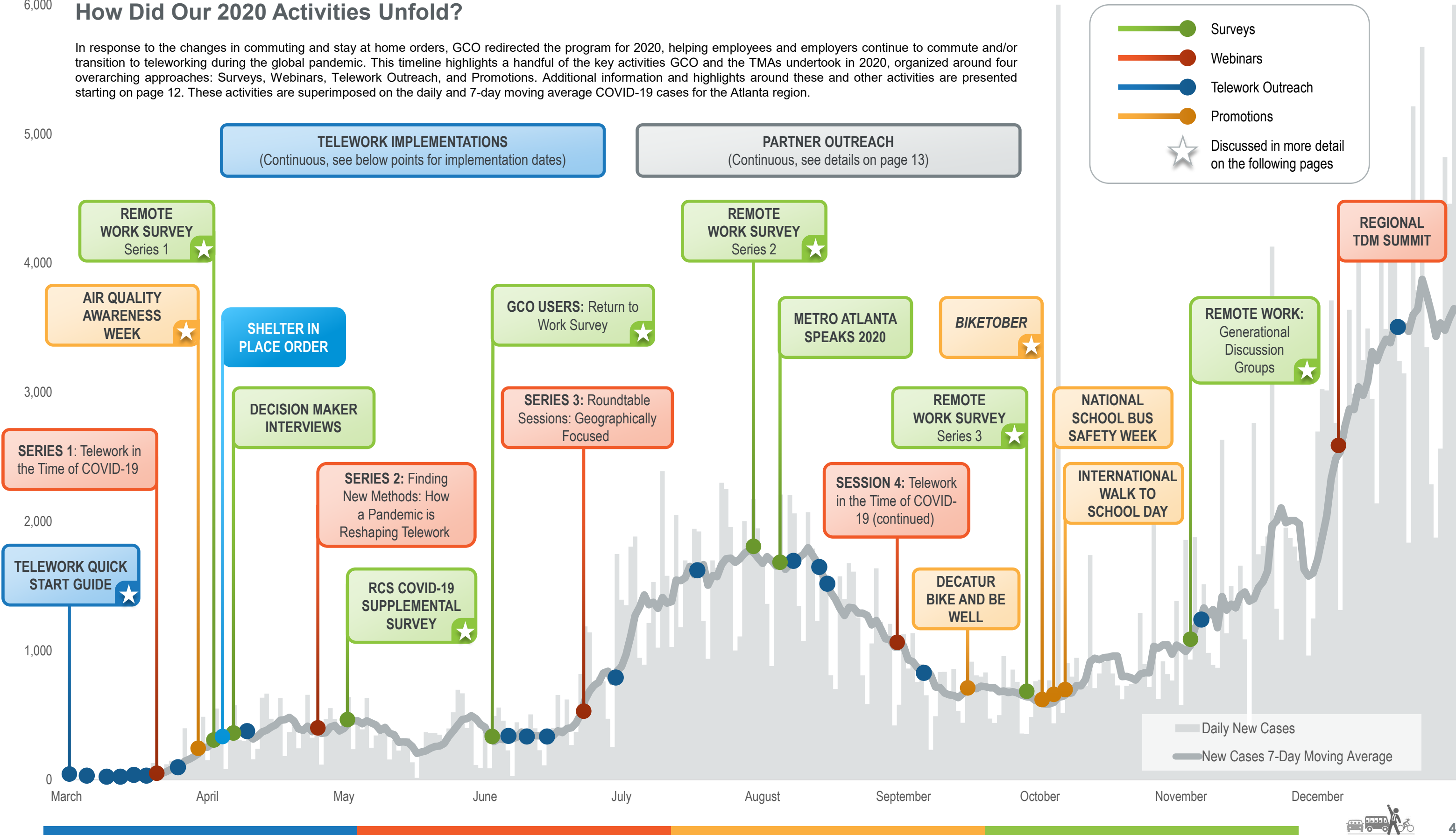
Continued the popular *Biketober* promotion with a greater focus on active lifestyles and delivered other unique programs to stay connected with workers and employers.



2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

How Did Our 2020 Activities Unfold?

In response to the changes in commuting and stay at home orders, GCO redirected the program for 2020, helping employees and employers continue to commute and/or transition to teleworking during the global pandemic. This timeline highlights a handful of the key activities GCO and the TMAs undertook in 2020, organized around four overarching approaches: Surveys, Webinars, Telework Outreach, and Promotions. Additional information and highlights around these and other activities are presented starting on page 12. These activities are superimposed on the daily and 7-day moving average COVID-19 cases for the Atlanta region.

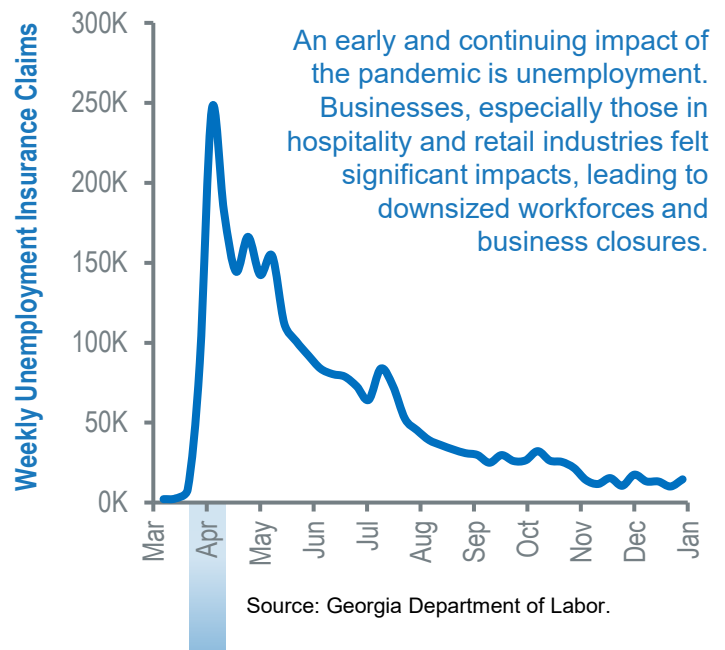
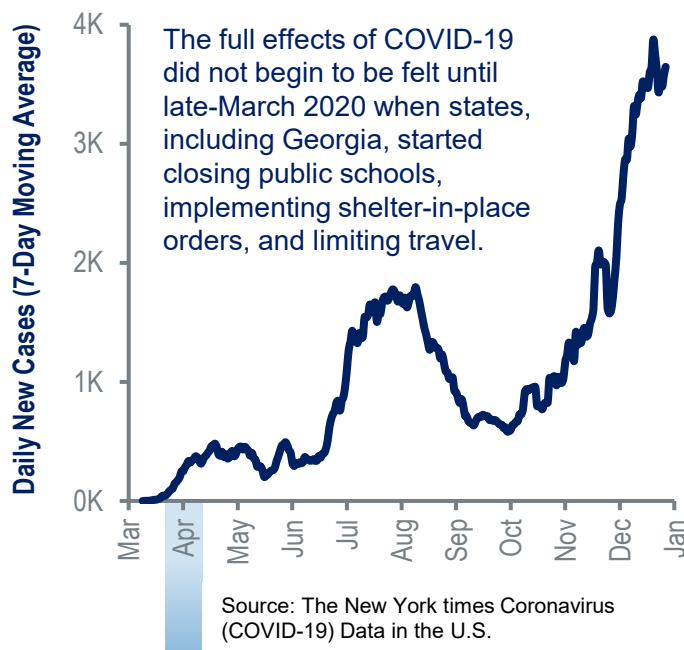


WHAT HAPPENED IN 2020?

The spread of COVID-19 impacted residents and businesses in different ways. Two fundamental aspects of the pandemic that impacted transportation include:

- **COVID-19 cases (which continues to impact policies on social distancing and working-from-home)**
- **Unemployment insurance (UI) claims (which reflects how employers are adapting to the economic impacts of less travel and less demand for certain services)**

By the end of 2020, the Atlanta region had experienced over 342 thousand COVID-19 cases and over **2.5 million total unemployment claims**.



Statewide shelter-in-place order from April 2nd to April 30th

85K



Georgia
has **LOST**
85,000 JOBS
(3% decrease)
over the last year.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

75%



75% of Georgia's
small businesses
experienced a
NEGATIVE IMPACT
according to a
U.S. Census survey.

Source: [Census Bureau Small Business Pulse Survey](#).

700K



In April 2020,
over 700,000 Georgia
residents **SUBMITTED**
UNEMPLOYMENT
CLAIMS.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor.

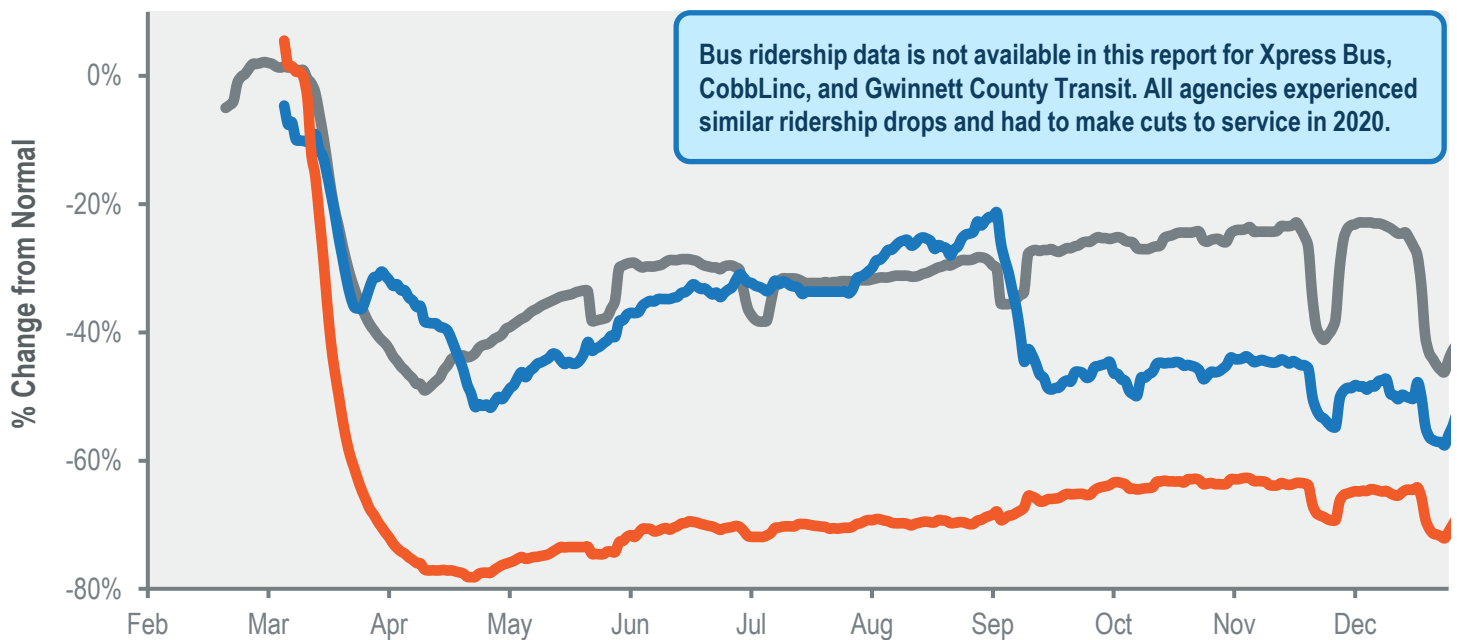
The economic impacts of the pandemic were experienced worldwide and translated to unique outcomes in the Atlanta region. For example, the significant decline in air travel led to reduced business and tourism travel to Atlanta, leading to job losses and business closures especially in the retail and hospitality industry.

CHANGES IN COMMUTING

METRO ATLANTA SPEAKS

For the first time since 2013, something other than **Transportation** was indicated as the biggest problem facing the region.

Metro Atlanta Speaks is the largest ongoing annual survey of Atlanta region residents' perceptions and attitudes about economic, social, and quality of life issues. Typically, transportation, primarily traffic congestion is top of the mind for Atlanta residents. The pandemic (and other events in 2020) changed that – making social justice and business continuity far more pressing issues.



Automobiles

↓ 30%

Workplace mobility steadily decreased until it bottomed out around -50% in late April. It rose steadily until June, where it remained between -20% and -30% for the rest of the year.

This data is from Google's COVID-19 Community Mobility Reports - Workforce Mobility measure.

MARTA Rail

↓ 70%

MARTA rail ridership dropped 80% in March through April. Once the stay-at-home order expired, ridership increased, but only to levels 65% below normal by the end of 2020.

This data is from MARTA's "COVID-19 Personnel and Ridership Impacts" webpage.

MARTA Bus

↓ 50%

MARTA bus ridership dropped in late April to 50% below normal. MARTA implemented service changes (including no fares) leading to ridership coming back to 20% below normal by the end of summer.

This data is from MARTA's "COVID-19 Personnel & Ridership Impacts" webpage.

RESPONDING TO CHANGE

GCO has been the regional leader on remote work programs for years, assisting organizations from small business enterprises to Fortune 500 companies. In more traditional circumstances, shifting to remote work requires substantial coordination between employees and supervisors, necessitating that proper technologies and equipment are accessible to support a productive workspace. However, with the suddenness of the shelter-in-place order, employers and employees throughout the region did not have time to properly set-up a remote work program. Many employees faced pandemic-related challenges such as a lack of designated workspace, necessary technology, and childcare services. **ARC recognizes that COVID-19 sparked the biggest change in transportation and the nature of work from home in a generation.**

Work is a verb.

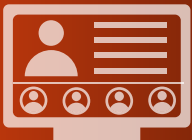
If we just look at what work really is, it's less about a place to go and much more of a thing for us to do.

Surveys



Instead of looking for ways to get back to “normal” life, ARC shifted focus to reimagine opportunities to create a better balance for work. To continue to meet regional TDM program goals, our focus in 2020 was to:

Webinars



Understand how businesses adapted to unprecedented changes caused by COVID-19, and identify benefits and challenges commuters were experiencing (**SURVEYS**).

Telework Outreach



Educate employers and commuters on best practices for working from home and commuting during the pandemic (**WEBINARS**).

Provide resources to help companies and commuters make successful changes to working from home (**TELEWORK OUTREACH**).

Promotions



Maintain meaningful relationships with employers and commuters through unique promotions and incentives (**PROMOTIONS**).



WHAT WE LEARNED

Surveys

COVID-19 disrupted various aspects of “normal” every-day life for everyone. We spent far less time outside of our homes and reduced travel for all purposes, including commuting. Given these circumstances, GCO and the TMAs placed increased importance on conducting virtual outreach with commuters and employers.

In 2020, GCO conducted five surveys to track how commuters’ travel behavior, preferences, and attitudes changed due to the shelter-in-place order and the ongoing pandemic. The survey results highlight how travel changed during the pandemic, forecasts what travel might look like after the pandemic, and provides guidance for how GCO and the TMAs can take a proactive approach to adapting to shifting commuter needs.



April
2020

1st GCO Remote Work Survey

INTENT – to learn more about the remote work experience from the perspective of executive leadership, managers, and employees

Respondents – 2,920



May
2020

RCS COVID-19 Follow-Up Survey

INTENT – to learn about the changes in employment, commuter preferences and benefits/challenges of working from home from participants in the 2019 Regional Commuter Survey (RCS)

Respondents – 1,007



June
2020

GCO Users Return to Work Survey

INTENT – to document the change in commuting behavior during the pandemic and preferences for planned commuting in the future

Respondents – 4,228



August
2020

2nd GCO Remote Work Survey (Group A)

INTENT – re-survey of 50% of the people that took the first GCO Remote Work Survey in April

Respondents – 456



October
2020

2nd GCO Remote Work Survey (Group B)

INTENT – re-survey of the other 50% of the people that took the first GCO Remote Work Survey in April

Respondents – 426

WHAT WE LEARNED



GCO Remote Work Surveys

To better understand the impact of the changing nature of work, GCO partnered with five TMAs to conduct one-on-one executive interviews with major employers in the Atlanta region and a series of electronic surveys targeting the perspective of executive leadership, managers, and employees. The first remote work survey was conducted in April 2020 gathering over 2,900 responses, with follow-up surveys conducted in August and October. These surveys are continuing in 2021, with one follow-up group already surveyed in January, and additional follow-up groups planned in April, July, and October.

EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS



Executive and management respondents estimated that 80% of their workforce were working remotely with most companies expecting that in-office employee populations will be much smaller than pre-pandemic.

Employees are seeing positive benefits of rebalancing working from home, including an increase in productivity and time spent with family and less time spent commuting.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey was promoted through regional and local social media, e-newsletters, e-mails and phone calls distributed to existing and engaged employees, employer partners and economic development organizations. The survey identified that prior to the pandemic, 44% of respondents had never worked remotely with an estimated 71% now working from home five or more days per week. Respondents identified many positive benefits due to a lack of commuting with 73% noting that they saved money and 54% experienced a decrease in stress. As shown in the graph below, the survey indicated sustained interest in telework after the pandemic, which provided GCO a glimpse of commuters' desired future.

AVERAGE WORK FROM HOME DAYS PER WEEK



Survey participants indicating that they worked 3 or more days per week at home increased 74% from before the pandemic to April 2020.

Survey participants indicating that they would want to work at least one day per week at home increased 48% from before the pandemic to the post-pandemic future.

WHAT WE LEARNED



RCS Covid-19 Follow-Up Survey

ARC conducted the Regional Commuter Survey (RCS) – COVID-19 Follow-Up Survey during May 2020 to evaluate the psychological changes and shifts in attitudes towards working from home during the pandemic. The survey was sent to all 2019 RCS respondents who noted interest in participating in future surveys. The survey received 1,007 responses and consisted of four main components (employment status, commute pattern, frequency of working from home, and benefits and challenges of working from home) highlighted below. By using 2019 Regional Commuter Survey respondents, the results from May 2020 can be compared to responses received in spring 2019.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

When looking at employment status in the Atlanta region, job security varied. While most workers (84% of respondents) retained their same job, 11 percent were furloughed or laid off with 2% who stopped working to care for children or other depends. Among workers who continued to be employed, 52% indicated they were deemed essential workers with 34% noting not essential.

South Atlanta
(Clayton, Southeast Atlanta and Southwest Atlanta) saw **more job insecurity** compared to North Atlanta

11% of all workers responded that they were **furloughed or laid off**. For **African American workers, 16%** were furloughed or laid off

COMMUTE PATTERNS

Commuters were asked to identify their primary commute modes in January 2020 (before the pandemic). 76% of respondents identified driving alone, 12% identified transit (bus and rail) and 7% identified that they teleworked. The table shows the changes in primary commute modes as of May 2020. Among reasons for not continuing the use of transit or using it less often included health concerns and sanitation of transit.

Changes in Primary Commute Modes as of May 2020			
Mode	No Change	Stopped or Decreased Use of	Started or Increased Use of
Drive Alone	35%	60%	5%
Taxi and/or Uber, Lyft	80%	19%	1%
Carpool or Vanpool	84%	14%	2%
Public Transit	74%	26%	0%
Walk or Bike	87%	10%	3%
Work from Home	31%	2%	67%

WORK FROM HOME FREQUENCY

During the pandemic **61% of workers work five or more days a week from home**. Post-pandemic, 70% of workers are interested in teleworking some or most of the time.

WORK FROM HOME BENEFITS

In terms of positive benefits of working from home, those related to the **cost savings and stress reduction of not having to commute** were rated the highest by respondents.

More information on the 2019 Regional Commuter Survey and the COVID-19 Follow-Up Survey is available [here](#).

WHAT WE LEARNED

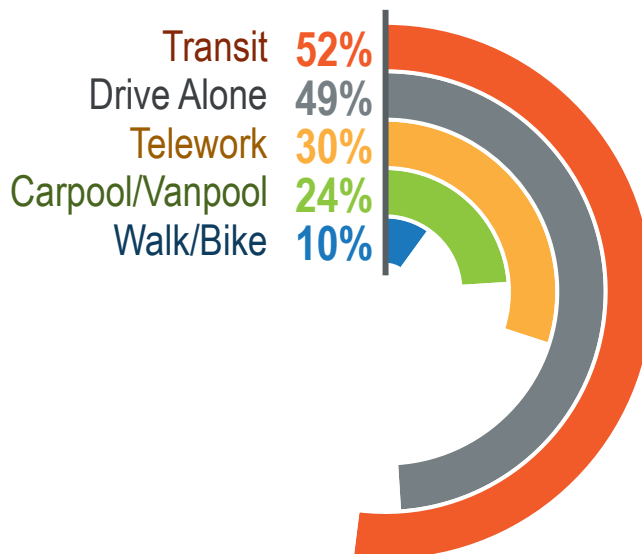


GCO Users Return to Work Survey

The purpose of the GCO Users Return to Work Survey was to obtain information regarding changes in commuting behavior, or planned commuting behavior, of workers using and logging in the myGCO app as offices planned to reopen in the Atlanta region. The survey, conducted in June 2020, asked respondents about their commuting behavior before the pandemic, their changes in commuting due to the pandemic, and their plans for commuting once their place of work reopens.

Out of the total 4,228 total respondents, 4,002 were still working at the same place as they were before the pandemic. Out of the 89% of respondents who reported that they were still employed and had been commuting before the pandemic, 80% began to telework full time as a result of the pandemic and 66% of respondents had no set date of when their place of employment would reopen. The graph below highlights key modes used to commute before the pandemic.

PRE-PANDEMIC MODE USE



POST-PANDEMIC MODE USE

By May 2020, most respondents' organizations did not have a set return date for going back to the office. Over half of the respondents that had been taking transit (bus or train) pre-pandemic indicated that they would either be using transit less or not at all to commute during the pandemic. When asked about their reason for reduced transit usage, 70% of respondents wanted to continue to social distance and 41% were unsure of changes to transit scheduling. A similar pattern followed shared commuting by carpool/vanpool with a 36% decline in using these modes. Declines in shared commuting were mainly due to wanting to remain socially distant, the overall need to commute less frequently, and the transit schedule or schedule of partners carpooling together.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ALL SURVEYS



COVID-19 has caused a significant shift in commuter travel preferences.

The Region's desired future will include increased teleworking, well beyond pre-pandemic levels.



There are noticeable benefits to reduced time spent commuting, including cost savings, stress reduction, and more time with family and friends.



If commuting is required, respondents prefer to continue to socially distance themselves from other commuters.

ADDRESSING NEEDS

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a drastic increase in telework and decrease in peak hour traffic. Also, as evidenced by the results of the surveys conducted in 2020, the pandemic has substantially changed commuter and employer perceptions of commuting. The surveys helped GCO understand the impact the pandemic is having on commuting and helped identified needs so that GCO and other TDM providers can assist commuters and employers better.

As a result of these changes, GCO developed new outreach resources and services to support employers and employees during the pandemic, ranging from telework best practices to guidance on safely working at the office. The following pages highlight key GCO activities during the pandemic in 2020, organized around the various outreach activities.

WEBINARS

In March and April, many employees suddenly transitioned to teleworking for an extended period. While this move was initially assumed for a short term, within a few months, it was viewed as an indefinite change. Seeing the need for significant telework guidance and resources, GCO organized a series of webinars to help employers work, manage, and collaborate remotely.

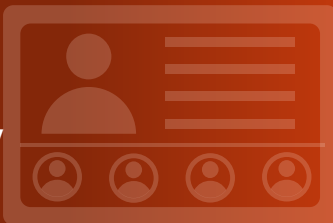
SERIES 1: TELEWORK IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

GCO's first webinar series was comprised of three individual sessions, with 275 total attendees. The first session kicked off on March 18 and focused on managing remote employees, a need that became an overnight reality for many managers. The second session provided guidance on how to develop company guidelines and procedures for establishing a telework program. The final session of the series reviewed various virtual collaboration software options to continue working remotely.

March 18
Managing Remotely

March 24
Creating a Business Environment that is Safe for Teleworking

March 26
Collaborative Technologies for Telework: SaaS Solutions for non-IT Professionals



Organizations around the region are having to adapt to social distancing in the workplace because of COVID-19. Although there might be some urgency in allowing employees to work from home, it is prudent to develop a policy or guidelines that clearly identify the parameters for teleworking and helps your company feel confident about employees working remotely.

In addition to social distancing, employers and employees are seeing value in using teleworking to retain and recruit their workforce and to manage long commutes daily.

Join us for a **three-part webinar series** that will offer practical guidance on how companies can maximize productivity and decrease employee stress in response to COVID-19.

Wednesday, March 18 at 3pm
Managing Remotely

Join Perimeter Connects and ASAP+ in a webinar that will give managers and employees tools for working effectively while working remotely. We will walk through strategies for:

- Managing objectives and deliverables while teleworking
- Collaborating through technology
- Virtual teambuilding
- Supporting good working habits

[Register](#)

Tuesday, March 24 at 1pm
Creating A Business Environment That is Safe For Teleworking

Join Livable Buckhead to learn how to develop guidelines or a policy on keeping your organization safe in a teleworking environment that includes issues such as worker's compensation, liability, safety, and performance from an expert with over 30 years of experience in developing and managing telework programs. The objective of this webinar is to prepare companies with some formality and procedures to get programs up and running quickly.

[Register](#)

Thursday, March 26 at 2pm
Collaborative Technologies for Telework: SaaS Solutions for non-IT Professionals

Join Georgia Commute Options for a review of the solutions that are readily available for collaboration. Everything from Zoom to Teams, Skype, Chat, etc. will be discussed at a non-IT based level so that HR professionals can more clearly understand the IT needs for business continuity. The target audience for this session is small to mid-sized companies without a dedicated IT infrastructure or department.

[Register](#)

LEARN MORE

presented by



[View the Webinars](#)

ADDRESSING NEEDS

TELEWORK OUTREACH

GCO's support for teleworking employees extended beyond the webinar series to customized telework strategies. While the webinars provided a wide range of telework topics and strategies, other outreach efforts assisted employers on implementing telework programs and policies.

TELEWORK QUICK START GUIDE

At the very beginning of the pandemic, when companies, schools, and governments started shifting to working remotely, GCO created a Telework Quick Start Guide. This brochure was directly made available to employer partners, from the GCO website, and advertised through social media. The guide included steps on how to launch a telework program, as well as do's and don'ts for managers and employees. The March 9th release came just in time as ARC, GCO, and other companies started working remotely a week later.

TELEWORK IMPLEMENTATIONS

GCO participated in several virtual speaking engagements with both public agencies and private companies. These sessions provided guidance, an overview of new and updated policies, training for teleworkers and managers, and advice on technology needs and protocols. In 2020, the GCO team facilitated 20 telework implementations and engaged more than 40 organizations who are at varying points along the implementation process.



EMPLOYER AND PROPERTY MANAGER PARTNERS

GCO has continued engaging employers, commuters, local governments, and community partners throughout 2020. These engagements continue GCO's work and goals for reducing single-occupancy vehicle travel now and post-pandemic. The previous activities discussed have been a source for attracting and meeting with employers and provided GCO the opportunity to understand the most pressing issues and needs for employees and companies.

Partners include:

- Private companies
- Local governments
- Community organizations



ADDRESSING NEEDS

PROMOTIONS

While many employees transitioned to working from home, frontline and other essential workers continued commuting to work. GCO sustained its traditional activities and services, providing employees and employers resources to travel to work, other than driving alone. GCO and the TMA partners continued conducting outreach to employees and employers through promotions, including some tailored to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Other promotions seen in previous years, such as *Get on Board and Clear the Deck*, are anticipated to continue post-pandemic once employees start commuting back to the office.

ATLANTA BIKE CHALLENGE BIKETOBER

October 2020 marked the 8th annual **Biketober**, a month-long bicycle challenge, with more participants than ever. Similar to previous years, bicyclists participated by riding and logging their trips, competing to win dozens of prizes, such as bicycle gear and restaurant gift cards. Marketed to encourage people to get out of the house in a safe and socially distanced way, *Biketober* saw an increase in participants and total miles logged along with a drop in overall trips, indicative of the massive shift to remote work during the pandemic.

Total Miles



260,573

297,501

389,971

Total Trips



30,179

35,004

30,926

Registrants

Participants



2,984

1,909

4,477

2,811

4,627

2,493

2018

2019

2020

AIR QUALITY AWARENESS WEEK

Georgia Commute Schools held Air Quality Awareness Week between April 27 to May 1, providing students materials about air quality and the actions that can be taken to reduce air pollution. The goal of the promotion is to educate parents and students, reduce idling, and improve air quality around our schools. Each day marked a specific air quality activity, including ones that could be completed at home or while social distancing.

Virtual Air Quality Awareness Week

APRIL 27 - MAY 1, 2020

Georgia Commute Schools is excited that your school district, school, and family are participating in Air Quality Awareness Week (AQAW). Students will learn about air quality, different types of air pollutants, and actions that can be taken to reduce air pollution in their community and around schools. AQAW encourages drivers to reduce idling during school arrival and dismissal times. Our goal is to educate parents and students, have fewer idling cars, and improve the air quality around our schools.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we've created fun things you could do at home. Take a look at our activities for the week and pick the day(s) you would like to join by signing up here: [Air Quality Awareness Week Sign Up](#).



PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND MEASURES

The TDM evaluation framework reflects the region's process for measuring and tracking progress toward strengthening regional TDM efforts. The framework defines objectives, strategies, and measures to achieve the goals in the Atlanta Region's Plan while supporting our guiding principles.

In 2018 and 2019, ARC and its partners developed a TDM evaluation framework creating a standard set of regional and TMA-specific measures that tell a quantifiable story on program **awareness**, **influence**, **participation**, and **impact**.

The 2018 and 2019 reports communicate the TDM program outcomes and share examples of how GCO and the TMAs helped make those outcomes happen.

While the experience of 2020 did not change our regional goals or guiding principles, it did change our perspective on how to use performance measures to tell stories on the success of the program. The following pages tell the most compelling TDM program performance stories from 2020 and give examples for how GCO and the TMAs adapted to meet the challenges created by the pandemic.

Many of the 2018 and 2019 performance measures do not translate well for communicating the 2020 experience.

The 2020 Annual Report focuses on a limited set of measures that tell a meaningful story and the activities led by GCO and the TMAs to keep the program moving forward.

A AWARENESS

I INFLUENCE

P PARTICIPATION

I IMPACT

What we measured in 2018 and 2019

Commuter awareness of the regional and TMA-specific commute options program through marketing and outreach

Employer and property manager engagement with the regional and TMA-specific commute options programs and incentives

Commuter and employer participation in regional and local promotions that increase awareness and use of alternative modes

Regional progress toward SOV travel reduction and air quality goals

What we measured in 2020

Commuter and employer awareness of existing and new resources (like telework best practices or commuting during COVID support)

Employer support for telework and flexible work schedules, and success of various promotions to maintain connections with program partners and commuters

Participation in promotions limited to *Biketober* and different activities and education associated with telework

Results of surveys associated with telework and return to work preferences, and observed 2020 air quality outcomes

REGIONAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES

While **AWARENESS** remained an important part of the TDM program in 2020, marketing and outreach campaigns focused more on direct responses to the new challenges resulting from the pandemic. **This page explores the changes in GCO's outreach to employer partners and property managers (INFLUENCE) – including information on partner outreach, the total number of partners, and transit passes provided to partner employees.**

Total employer and property manager partners for the entire Atlanta Regional TDM Program remained steady through 2020.

Less employees commuting to the office and social distancing concerns led to nationwide decreases in transit use. This directly impacted the number of transit passes provided by the TMAs, as shown below.

Total Transit Passes Sold

By month



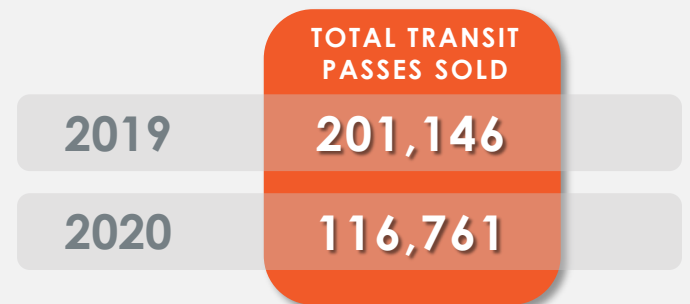
759
EMPLOYER
PARTNERS

Total program partners as of the end of December 2020.

110
PROPERTY
MANAGERS

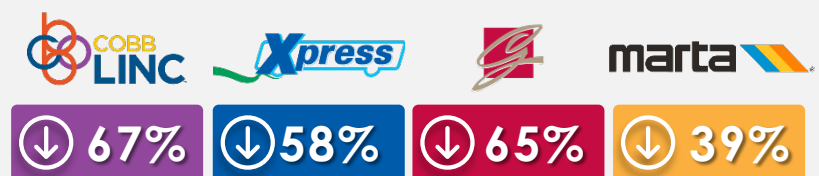
These partnerships were vital for completing telework implementation and other pandemic-related outreach while establishing relationships for the future.

There was a **42 percent decrease** in transit passes sold in 2020, with decreases across all transit providers. This decline started around April, the first full month of the pandemic.



Change in Transit Passes Sold (2020 vs. 2019)

By transit agency



51
NEW
PARTNERS

522
EMPLOYER
MEETINGS

400
COMMUNITY
PARTNER
MEETINGS

79
COMMUTER
EVENTS

GCO led outreach to employers and commuters through telework assistance and other guidance, tools and resources. This outreach also provided GCO the opportunity to conduct surveys to understand employers' plans for telework after the pandemic.

Commuter events shifted to new and creative ways to engage employees. These in-person and virtual events helped boost morale through lunch and learns, virtual fairs, and virtual new hire orientations. Events also included essential employees commuting to work, such as offering commuter care packages as well as continuing all the programs GCO has traditionally offered.

REGIONAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Regional highlights also include characteristics of the individual participants within the program (**PARTICIPATION**). This includes information on the total number of participants within the program and participation in modal promotions, like *Biketober*. Participation in the program is also tracked through “logging”, where program registrants submit information on commute trips.

While total program participants declined, in-part due to less interest in the program resulting from the pandemic, when comparing 2020 and 2019, total clean commute logging increased. This change is two-fold, related to the pandemic (more telework) as well as a new tool for commuters to log their rides. The new tool, which also included access to more prizes, layered with the widespread shift to telework, resulted in more total clean commute logs.

19,646 TOTAL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

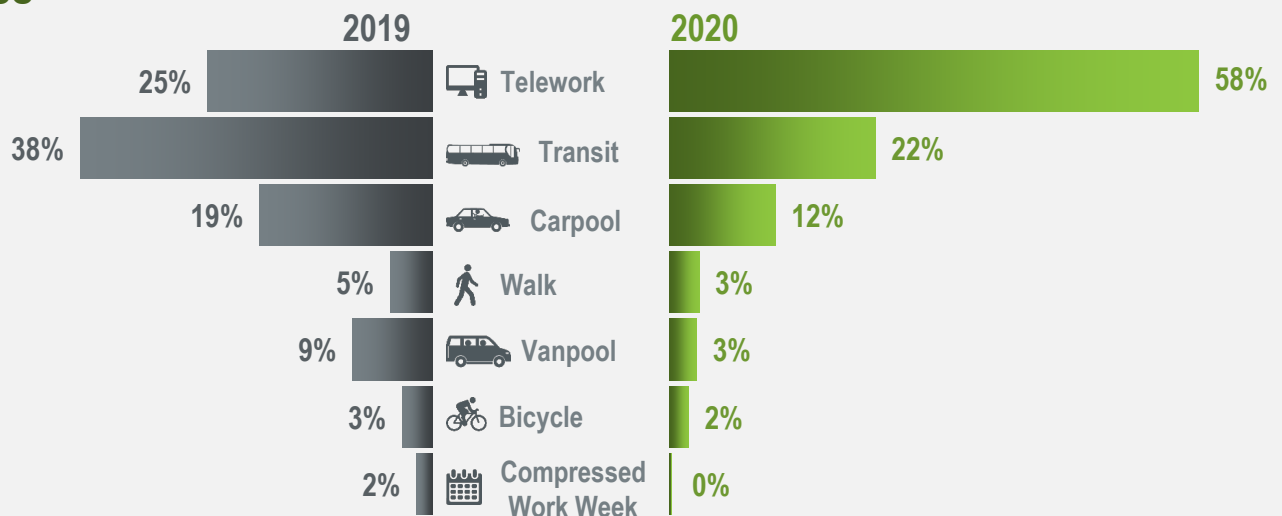
Program participants (users of the commute logging app) declined during 2020. The high-point of 19,646 participants was reached in February. By December, total participants had declined to 16,598.

CLEAN COMMUTE TRIPS LOGGED

1,490,939	1,720,362
2019	2020

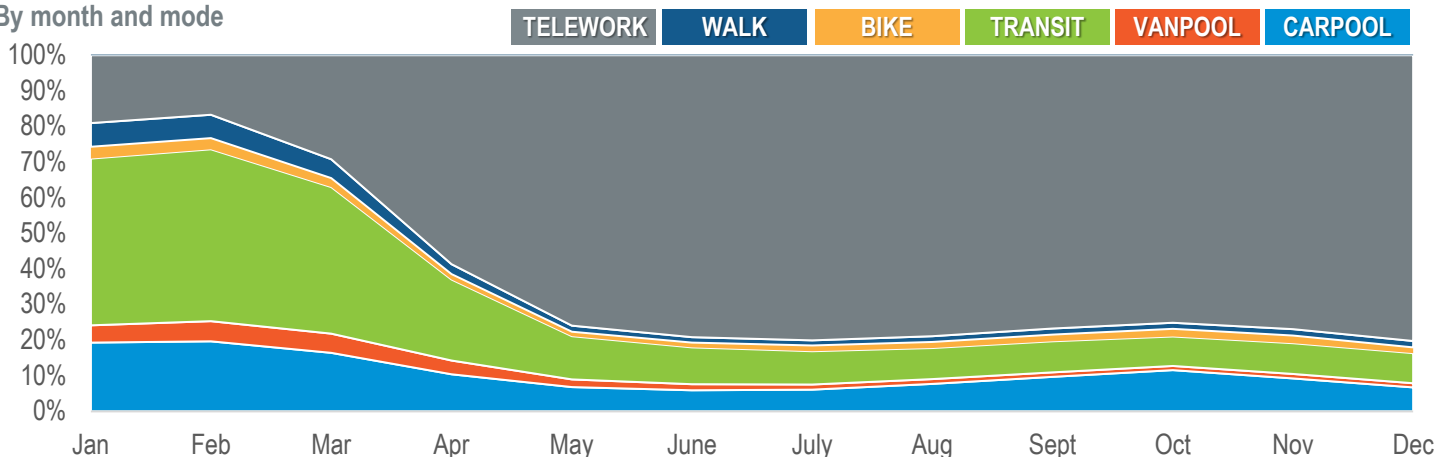
GCO Loggers Mode Share

By year



Clean Commute Distribution

By month and mode



A AWARENESS

Commuter and employer awareness of existing and new commuting during COVID-19 resources

The starting point for driving behavior change is to increase employee and employer awareness of TDM programs and alternative commute opportunities. Awareness occurs through marketing and outreach activities led by GCO and the TMAs. In 2020, there was a strong marketing and outreach focus on telework programs.

GCO and the TMAs continued to focus on brand awareness, with over 430,000 social media followers at the end of 2020, while at the same time providing access to educational materials and opportunities (like webinars) to help commuters and employers navigate the changing commuting landscape resulting from the pandemic.

Finding Balance in Today's Work Environment

Staying Safe.
Proving Flexible.

Employees are working from home now more than ever. Businesses are rethinking the future of the workplace, balancing considerations of health, productivity and cost. Essential workers and others required to work on site are seeking safe and reliable commuting options.

Georgia Commute Options has helped employers optimize FlexWork arrangements for over two decades. This guide explores three interconnected components linked to the changing nature of work, with helpful information and key next steps you can take with Georgia Commute Options' support.

LOCATION

How can we transition from makeshift approaches to clear telework strategies best suited to our business needs and our employees' well-being?

Employers

Over 900 total virtual meetings with employers and community partners during 2020 helped spread the word on best practices for the new work environment. This included active relationships with job placement services and business organizations, who are using our expertise to support their members.

GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS

ABOUT US

COMMUTERS

EMPLOYERS

SCHOOLS

A GUIDE TO COMMUTING DURING COVID-19

We've compiled some tips and resources to help employers and commuters stay healthy as many return to the workplace.

Commuters

The GCO commuter engagement team focused on creative ways to work with employers to boost employee morale and encourage employee interaction – even virtually – the team presented during lunch and learns, participated in virtual fairs, and conducted web-based new hire orientations. Information was also shared through over 350 unique email campaigns.



FULTON COUNTY



Local Government

Local government plays a critical role in GCO outreach efforts. In 2020, the GCO team had 325 meetings with public and community entities (cities, counties, chambers, and CIDs). These meetings provide a platform for GCO presentations, promoting our webinars and survey efforts. They also bring connection to future GCO employer partners in need of assistance.



Schools

Given all that is going on and the stress on schools to shift to digital learning and new school year calendars, the Georgia Commute Schools program is staying well connected to our partner network. In 2020 we recruited 22 new partners and conducted outreach through 337 virtual meetings and events.

I INFLUENCE

Engagement with employers and employees to facilitate a smooth transition and effective work from home environment

Influence primarily occurs directly between the employer and the employee. GCO and the TMAs disseminate information to employers to help facilitate information sharing and programs to encourage alternative mode use. In 2020 employers focused on enabling an efficient work from home environment, in order to maintain productivity and employee morale.



COVID-19 BUSINESS CONTINUITY TELEWORK GUIDANCE

ASAP provided resources to support work from home needs. This included tips to increase productivity, visual guides to improve home workspaces, guidance on achieving work-life balance, and resources to support organization level transition to working remotely.





CREATIVE COVID-19 OUTREACH AND PROMOTIONS


Midtown Transportation led employer roundtables discussing strategies to return to work post-COVID, implemented an incentivized modal promotion to increase telework logging, developed a series of video episodes about biking in Midtown, and filmed an Xpress video for essential worker commuters with NCR and SRTA.



GCO VIRTUAL CARE PACKAGE AND ESSENTIAL WORKER CARE PACKAGE

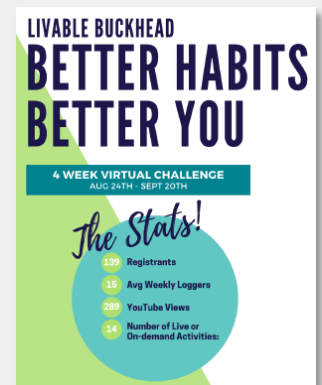
One of the creative commuter engagement solutions commuter care packages for essential employees and digital packages with resources and information that encourage the physical and mental well-being of commuters working from home.





CREATIVE PROMOTIONS FOR A MORE BALANCED WORK FROM HOME EXPERIENCE AND THE STATE OF BUCKHEAD SURVEY

Livable Buckhead partnered with local partners for the **Better Habits, Better You Challenge**. This was a four-week challenge comprised of virtual events that encouraged participants to take healthy breaks throughout their day to create better habits and a more balanced work from home experience during COVID-19.

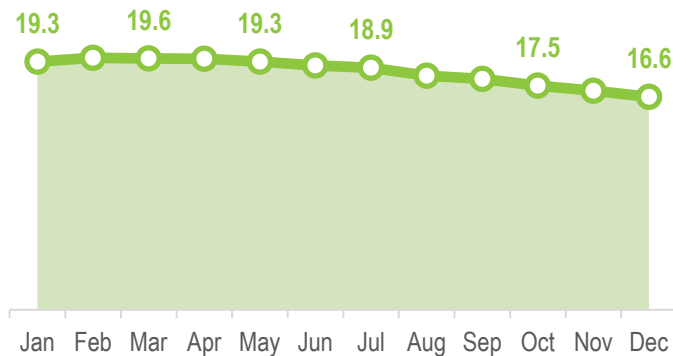


P PARTICIPATION

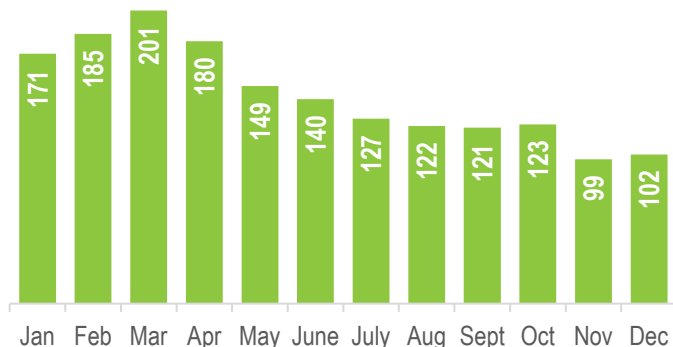
Participation in regional and local promotions that will increase the public awareness and use of alternative modes

Activities led by GCO, the TMAs, and employers to expand awareness and create influence to change behavior help commuters make informed decisions. In participation, it often comes down to incentives, friendly competition, and rewards to help commuters try a new mode, have a positive experience, and change behavior.

Total Program Registrants (in thousands)



Total Clean Commutes Logged (in thousands)



PERIMETER CONNECTS – WFH BASH

Marking most employees working six-months from home, Perimeter Connects hosted the Work from Home (WFH) Bash on October 15th. This free virtual event included entertainment, speed networking, trivia, and prizes for participants. 180 people attended this evening event.



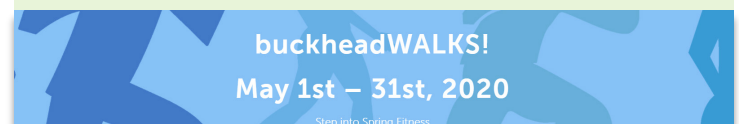
In 2020, TDM partners deployed unique events, promotions, and incentives to help grow participation in the program. **The stories and outcomes focus on the number and diversity of people who participated, how they participated, and how their experience could change their future commuting decisions.**

DOWNTOWN CONNECTS – CLEAN COMMUTE MONTH

For the month of May, Downtown Connects incentivized commuters to log their trips into the GCO app. Prizes included gift cards to local Downtown businesses and donations to local charities (winner's choice). The promotion also served as an opportunity to publicize the various clean commute resources Downtown Connects has to offer. Nearly 43,000 clean commutes were logged from downtown commuters in the month of May.

LIVABLE BUCKHEAD – BUCKHEADWALKS!

Livable Buckhead continued its annual buckheadWALKS! challenge, encouraging Buckhead employees to residents to stay healthy and active. This year's event included virtual activities to boost mental well-being and camaraderie among co-workers, such as online meditations, trivia happy hours, and lunchtime 'tours' of Buckhead. More than 450 active participants walked a total of 153,000 miles.



MIDTOWN ALLIANCE – WALK CHALLENGE

In November, Midtown Alliance hosted the 2020 Midtown Walk Challenge, allowing residents and employees the opportunity to (re)discover Midtown through challenges. Each day, participants could complete challenges and scavenger hunts, earning points for prizes and gift cards from local businesses.



Wonderful, Walkable

Get to know Midtown Atlanta, block by block.

120 block street-grid, offering unparalleled walkability & abundant travel options

84 Midtown's Walkscore, ranking it among Atlanta's most walkable neighborhoods

15 miles of sidewalk enhancements delivered since 2000...and counting

Take a walk. Win prizes.

Midtown Walk Challenge

November 16 - 20
Download the Scavify app to join the official hunt.

I IMPACT

Progress toward SOV travel reduction goals through improved clean commute options and use

The availability of commute services and financial benefits is one of many factors that motivate commuters to change their behaviors. Other factors driving commuting decisions, some of which TDM programs cannot control for, include the cost of fuel, work schedules, or family needs. This was especially true in 2020, with many commuters working from home. While this shift in commuting behavior ultimately impacted the total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and air quality, it isn't all due to the efforts from the GCO program.

According to the 2nd GCO Remote Work Survey, 60% of respondents desire to work from home at least 3 days a week in the future. While the long-term commuting outlook post-pandemic is not yet known, GCO anticipates commuters wanting more commute options and flexibility in work schedules. GCO plans to continue supporting commuters looking for alternative modes of transportation, including outreach, the provision of information, and supporting telework implementation for employers. Ultimately, increasing use of these and other clean commute

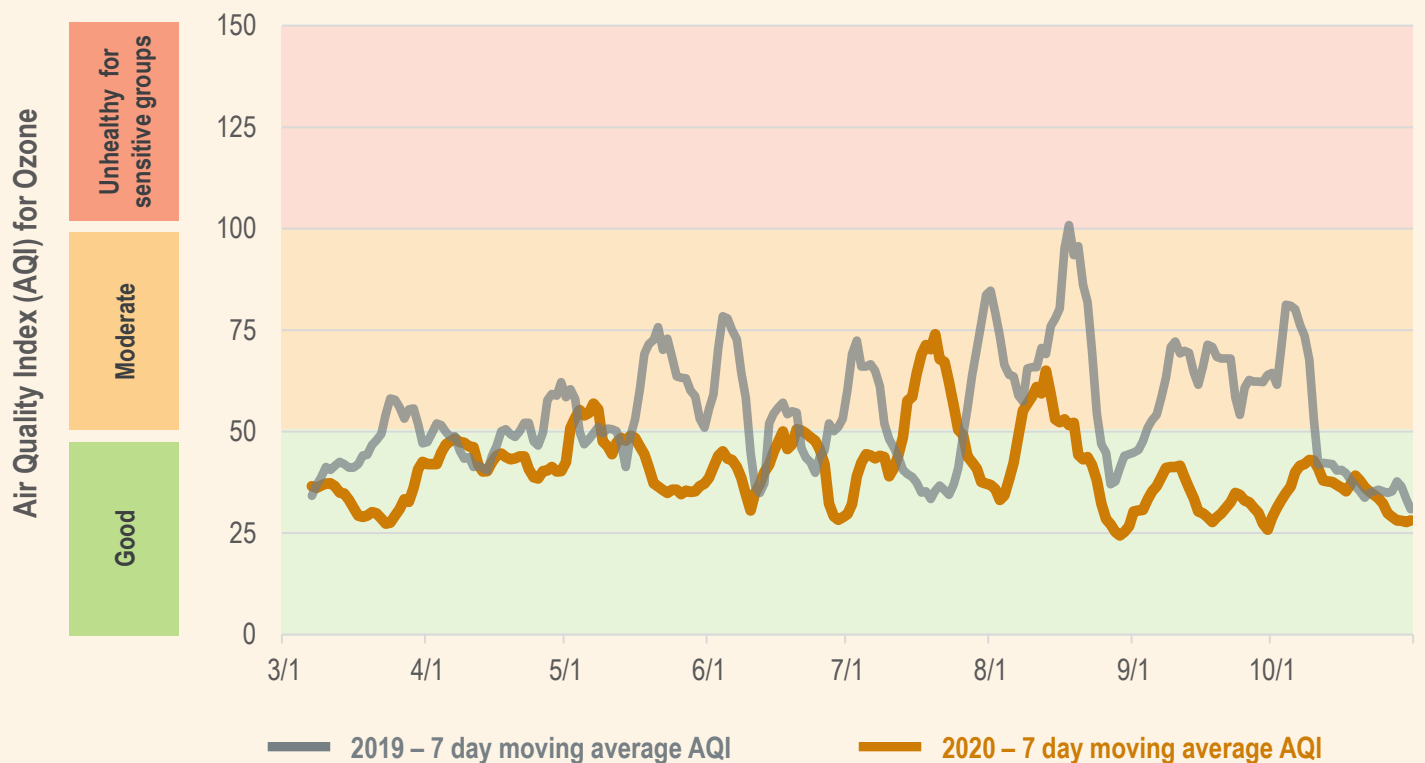
options provides benefits not only to the commuter, but also to the entire region through helping reduce congestion and improve air quality.

The impact to air quality has already been observed in the Atlanta Region. The air quality index (AQI) for 2020 compared to 2019 is overall lower for the entire year.

- **2019 saw 84 DAYS AS MODERATE** (code yellow) and **11 DAYS AS UNHEALTHY** for sensitive groups (code orange)
- **2020 saw 32 DAYS AS MODERATE** (code yellow) and **1 DAY AS UNHEALTHY** for sensitive groups (code orange)

While 2020 represents an extreme example of how air quality can be impacted by changes in commuting behaviors, it does show the potential GCO and other TDM strategies has on the region's air quality.

Air Quality Index (AQI) for Ozone Observations for 2020 and 2019



2020 TDM INNOVATION

GCO and the TMAs continued to expand the scope of TDM through creative strategies in 2020. While the pandemic created some challenges for implementation of these innovative tasks, the TMAs adapted and focused implementation on aspects that could provide the most value in 2020 and setup the TMAs for longer term success once commuting returns to normal.

Bike Ambassadors



CCTMA's Bike Ambassadors program developed a "Biking at Emory" guidebook and paired participants with new employees looking to bike to campus. The program added 20 bike ambassadors, set up an on-campus bike repair station and provided ebike rentals through Helbiz. Together these efforts increased registration for the program by 10% and helped Emory win *Biketober 2020*.



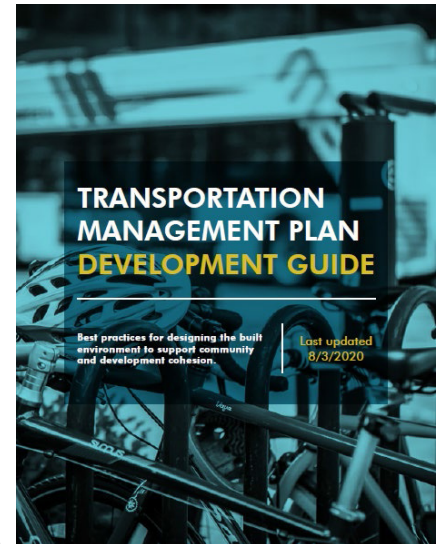
Get Matched with a Bike Champ Ambassador



TDM Policy

Downtown Connects has worked with City of Atlanta to develop and finalize zoning code

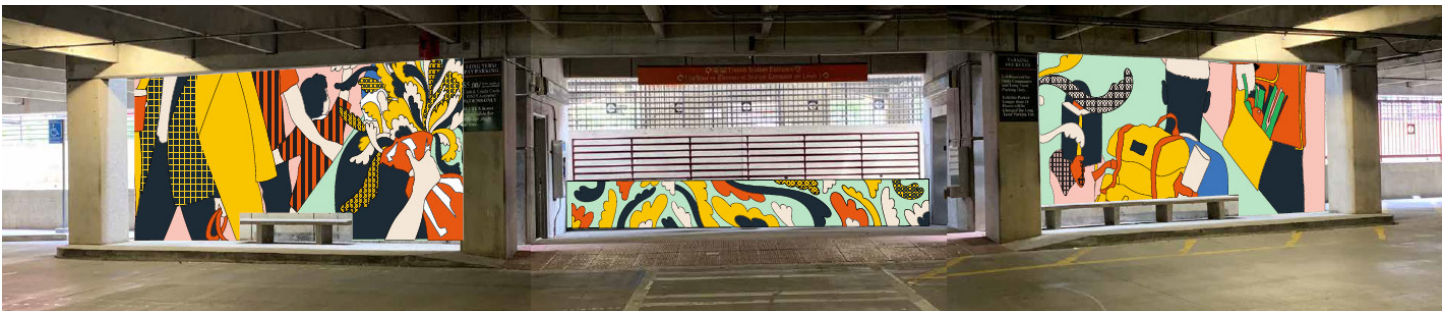
changes, including a Transportation Management Plan development guide and reporting form, preparing the ordinance for review by City Council, and presenting new code to the Neighborhood Planning Units. These efforts also included collaboration with TMA partners and the City to advance a commuter benefits ordinance.



PERIMETER CONNECTS

Sense of Place

Perimeter Connects worked with local partners to explore the use of "tactical" improvements to make transit access easier, more comfortable, and more visible. The 2020 focus was on opportunities to improve the experience for transit riders accessing the Dunwoody Station, including those transferring to employer shuttles. The shuttle depot was re-painted and re-stripped, signage was redesigned, and a unique mural for the station was selected from 24 artist submissions.



LOOKING FORWARD

The 2020 Metro Atlanta Speaks survey offered some fresh insights on the stark effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as insights into the state of race relations in metro Atlanta – a topic that drew heightened attention during this year’s demonstrations. While there is uncertainty in 2021 regarding the pace of vaccinations, economic recovery and return to more normal commuting and social patterns, the lessons learned in 2020 will shape GCO’s path forward in 2021 and beyond.

Return to Work

GCO is developing a regional return to office strategy that will sustain and support employers at all stages of reintegration. The approach is considerate of those who have continued working onsite as well as workplaces that are transitioning to hybrid schedules.



Reshape where:
an inspired evolution of the workplace



Reshape when:
get innovative with time



Reshape how:
advance options to connect with the workplace

Regional TDM Plan

Since the current Regional TDM Plan published in 2013, ARC has developed two new Atlanta Region Plans’ and the region has continued to experience significant population and economic growth at the same time of significant change in regional transportation services and new mobility options. Over the next two years, ARC will lead development of a new Regional TDM Plan that will set a course for the next decade of TDM priorities and actions, and support development of the next Atlanta Region Plan.

Neighborhood Outreach

To build on the equity focus and return to work strategy, GCO plans to work directly with more community organizations, especially those representing EJ populations and areas, to educate workers on commute alternative opportunities as we return to work.

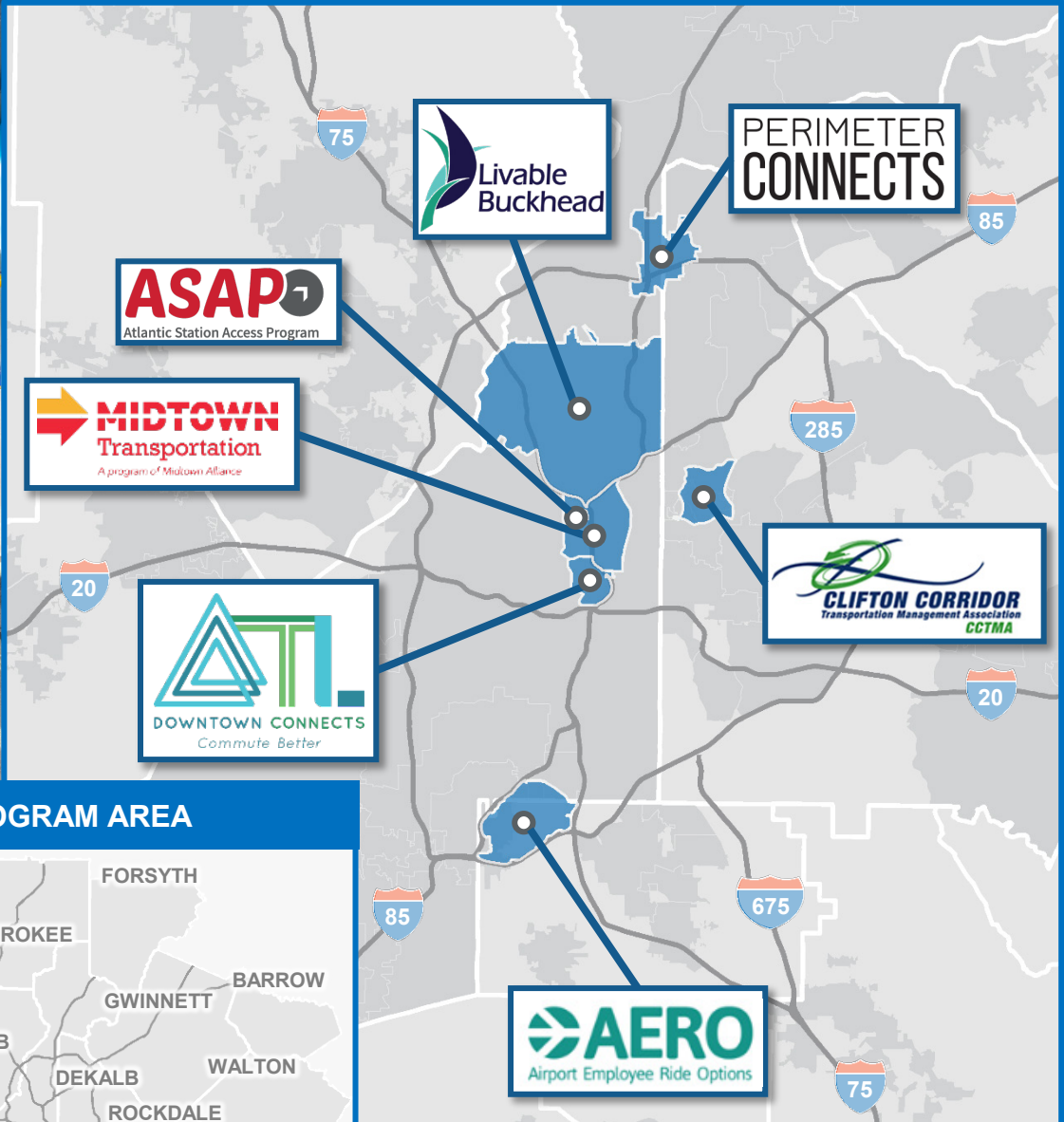


ATLANTA REGIONAL TDM PROGRAM

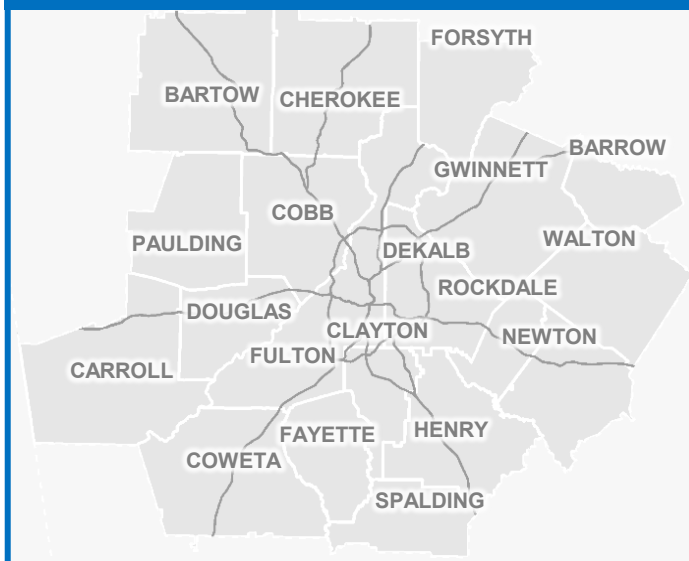
The Atlanta Regional TDM Program serves the 20-county Atlanta region and encompasses a wide range of services and programs offered through Georgia Commute Options, the regional service provider, and the seven TMAs. The program also partners with transit providers to offer information and incentives to commuters.



TMA LOCATIONS



GCO PROGRAM AREA



MORE INFORMATION

atlantaregionsplan.org

LEADING METRO ATLANTA INTO THE FUTURE

The Atlanta Region's Plan is a long-range blueprint that details the investments that will be made over the next 20 years to ensure metro Atlanta's future success and improve the region's quality of life.

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES

Enter your email address

SUBMIT

EXPLORE THE PLAN UPDATE (2020)
ARC is updating regional projects and policies through 2050.

[LEARN MORE](#)

To see what is in the current plan (approved in 2016), explore the links below.

georgiacommuteoptions.com

GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS

ABOUT US COMMUTERS EMPLOYERS SCHOOLS

CUSTOM PROGRAMS FOR YOUR COMPANY
Learn how we can help you develop free plans and services for your business.

DRIVE CHANGE FOR BETTER COMMUTE
Our goal is to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles on our region's roads and improve air quality.

EXPLORE OUR SERVICES

- EMPLOYER SERVICES**
Discover the free services we offer and benefits of working with us.
- COMMUTER SERVICES**
Explore all the ways you can avoid traffic, gain peace of mind and get rewarded.
- WAYS TO GET AROUND**
Find the clean commute alternative that's right for you.
- WAYS TO EARN CASH**
See how you can earn cash and prizes for logging your clean commute.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR
[READ MORE](#)

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Atlanta Regional Commission



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asap-plus.com



atlantadowntown.com



livablebuckhead.com



cctma.org



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CONNECTS**

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