

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES



Atlanta Regional Commission
2016 State of the Region
Annual Report

ARC





2016 Atlanta Regional Commission Board

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What a journey it's been.

From its humble beginnings as a railroad outpost, metro Atlanta has grown to become one of the nation's largest, most dynamic regions and a major player on the global stage.

How did we get here? It took careful planning, bold leadership and an ability to work together to tackle our greatest challenges.

In 2016, metro Atlanta continued its upward trajectory. Our population grew at the fastest rate since the financial crisis, and the unemployment rate steadily dropped as people re-entered the workforce.

In the past year, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) undertook a number of initiatives that promise to shape our region for years to come. Most notably, the ARC board adopted the Atlanta Region's Plan, a long-range blueprint to enhance the region's future.

ARC also adopted an extensive update to its bicycle-pedestrian plan that aims to transform the region by investing in better sidewalks, more bike lanes and expanded trail networks. And in June, the ARC board approved a regional freight plan that will improve the movement of goods throughout the region, keeping our economy competitive.

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, which is staffed by ARC, continued its successful efforts to achieve substantial water conservation and is developing a water

resource management plan that integrates water supply, wastewater and watershed planning.

ARC also offered a range of new and improved services for the region's fast-growing population of older adults, with a focus on expanding transportation options. Meanwhile, the region's five workforce boards are re-tooling to meet the demands of a changing workforce. They're collaborating to build a truly regional system and are working to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers.

Finally, tremendous progress was made on several of our region's collaborative efforts. The Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance developed a blueprint to boost economic development around Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. And the Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy continued its innovative work, including a regional "cradle to career" education initiative to help children get the skills and training they need to graduate high school and enter the workforce.

These are just a few examples of the ambitious efforts taking place at ARC and around metro Atlanta to secure our region's future. Indeed, a region's journey never ends. We must constantly evolve and adapt to a fast-changing world, anticipate new challenges and take advantage of opportunities that arise. Other regions aren't standing still, and neither can we.

Kerry Armstrong
Chairman

Doug Hooker
Executive Director



THE ATLANTA REGION

Metro Atlanta is a dynamic region that boasts a diverse population, world-class universities, Fortune 500 companies and a lively arts and culture scene.

The region and its economy are growing faster than they have since the Great Recession ended. Metro Atlanta added more than 69,000 people in the past year, a growth rate of 1.6 percent – up from 1.4 percent in 2015 and 1.2 percent in 2014. Metro Atlanta’s 10-county population now stands at more than 4.4 million.

The Atlanta suburbs continue to drive growth, with Gwinnett County adding more residents than any other county during the past year. But the City of Atlanta continued its strong growth, adding nearly 8,000 people in the past year.

Meanwhile, metro Atlanta is becoming an increasingly diverse place. A majority of the population – nearly 60 percent – is now made up of racial and ethnic minority groups, a figure that is expected to increase over time.

The region is also home to a rapidly growing population of older adults. Since 2000, the number of residents age 65 and older has increased by nearly a third. Today, about 10 percent of the population is 65 or older, compared to 7 percent in 2000.

The region’s population growth is being driven by a strengthening economy. The 29-county Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area added 71,000 jobs in the past year. Meanwhile, the region’s unemployment rate continued to drop and now stands at about five percent, compared to six percent a year ago.

The Journey

1959

Atlanta region reaches 1 million population.

1984

Atlanta region reaches 2 million population.

1978

Atlanta region reaches 1 million jobs.

1996

Atlanta region reaches 3 million population.

69,200

Increase in 10-county metro Atlanta's population in the past year

5%

Unemployment rate in metro Atlanta, down from 10% in 2010

23%

... of the 10-county region's population is forecast to be Hispanic in 2040

METRO ATLANTA
2016 SPEAKS Survey

65%

... of those surveyed said they were very involved or somewhat involved in their community

66%

... of those surveyed rated the metro Atlanta area as an "excellent" or "good" place to live

ARC forecast provides fascinating glimpse of metro Atlanta's future

What will the Atlanta region look like in 2040?

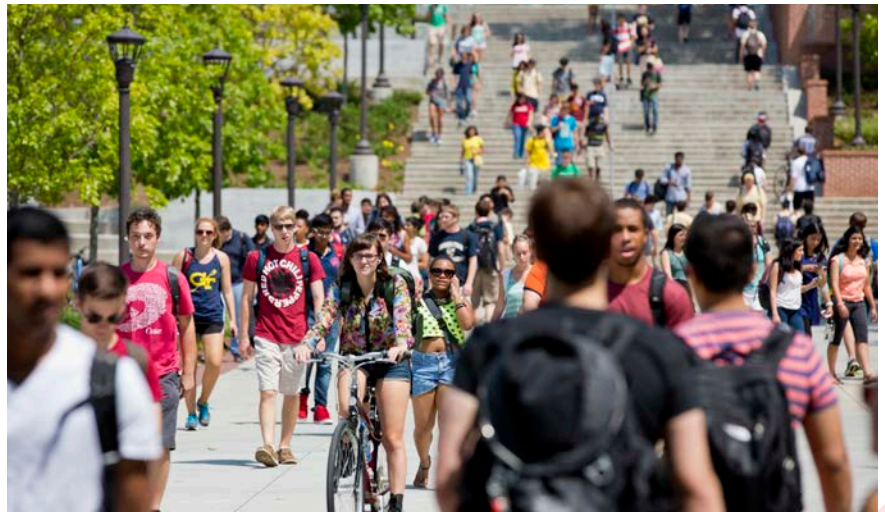
According to ARC's 2040 forecast, more people and jobs are on the way. ARC expects the 20-county region to add 2.5 million people in the next 25 years, bringing the total population to 8 million. The region will also add 1 million jobs, for a total of about 3.9 million.

Meanwhile, the 20-county Atlanta region will become much more diverse, driven by a large increase in the Hispanic population. The number of Hispanics in the region is forecast to grow from 694,000 in 2015 to 1.75 million in 2040 - constituting more than 20 percent of the region's total population.

The region's population of older adults is expected to increase significantly during the next 25 years. By 2040, about one in five residents will be age 65 or older, compared to about one in 10 today.

If current trends hold, Gwinnett County will claim the top population among metro counties. ARC expects Gwinnett to add nearly a half million people by 2040 and have a population of 1.35 million, just above Fulton's projected 1.26 million.

While the region's core counties of Gwinnett, Fulton, Cobb and DeKalb will add the most people, metro Atlanta's outlying counties will grow at the fastest rates. Forsyth County's population will more than double, reaching 430,000.



2006

Atlanta region reaches 2.5 million jobs.

2015

Atlanta region reaches 2.9 million jobs.

Atlanta region's population reaches 4.4 million.

The Journey Continues

ARC forecasts the Atlanta region's population will be 8 million in 2040, while the number of jobs will reach 4 million.



MOBILITY

Mobility is critical to metro Atlanta's economic future and quality of life. The challenge of maintaining and expanding our region's transportation system is greater than ever, as metro Atlanta's population is expected to increase by 2.5 million before 2040.

This year, in preparation for that growth, the ARC board adopted the **Atlanta Region's Plan**, a blueprint for metro Atlanta's future that features an \$85 billion investment in transportation infrastructure through 2040. Key elements include: a network of highway toll lanes that promise reliable rides; expanded transit options; and improved arterial roads and highway interchanges.

Meanwhile, ARC's updated **bicycle-pedestrian plan** aims to increase walking and biking options by expanding and improving the region's network of sidewalks and trails. In June, the ARC board adopted a **freight mobility plan** that recommends

improvements to roads and intersections that are critical for the efficient movement of goods.

Significant progress was also made on transportation funding. New state legislation allowed local sales tax votes to fund a range of transportation projects, including transit. Fulton County and the City of Atlanta were the first two jurisdictions to take advantage, placing sales tax votes on their 2016 ballots.

Also in 2016, Gov. Nathan Deal unveiled a plan to accelerate road and bridge construction throughout metro Atlanta, utilizing additional funding made available through **Georgia's Transportation Funding Act**. Major projects getting "fast tracked" include managed toll lanes on Ga. 400 and the top end of I-285, as well as rebuilt interchanges at I-285 and I-20 on both the east and west sides.

1952

The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) recommends the development of a transit system. "Up Ahead," the region's first comprehensive development plan, calls for contained growth within a beltway (I-285).

1969

I-285 is completed.

1979

First MARTA rail line, the East Line, opens between Five Points and Avondale stations.

1993

Georgia 400 tollway opens, extending the highway south of I-285.

1962

The Atlanta Regional Metropolitan Planning Commission, a successor to MPC, adopts a new Regional Development Plan and a Plan for Rapid Transit.

1971

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) referendum passes in Fulton and DeKalb counties, setting the stage for a rapid rail and expanded bus system.

1987

Construction completed on Tom Moreland Interchange, or "Spaghetti Junction" (I-85/I-285 interchange).

73

Miles of managed toll lanes currently operational or under construction in the region

30.8 million

Reduction in miles traveled in single-occupancy vehicles by participants in Georgia Commute Options program

42%

... of metro Atlanta residents live within a 5-minute bike ride of an existing trail

METRO ATLANTA
2016 SPEAKS Survey

92%

... of those surveyed said improving public transit is very important or somewhat important to metro Atlanta's future

43%

... of respondents said expanding public transit is the best long-term solution to the region's traffic problems; 32% said improving roads and highways is best

'Walk. Bike. Thrive!' Plan Strives to Make Region a Better Place for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

How do you get people out of their vehicles and traveling more on bikes or on foot?

The key, according to "Walk. Bike. Thrive!," ARC's updated bicycle and pedestrian plan, is offering residents safe, comfortable and convenient places to walk and bike. The plan, adopted by the ARC board in May, provides a recipe for a healthier, more competitive region that provides equitable access to active transportation for everyone. Highlights include:

- » Improving sidewalk and trail networks to connect neighborhoods to popular destinations, such as schools, parks and transit stops.
- » Connecting existing trails – such as the Silver Comet Trail and Atlanta BeltLine – to create a regional network. We're closer than it may seem to having one of the most comprehensive trail networks in the nation.
- » Increasing safety by building bike lanes and multi-use trails and installing traffic calming measures.
- » Allocating \$1 billion in federal, state and local funds over the next 25 years to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the Atlanta region.

There's enormous potential: Just 5 percent of trips in the Atlanta region are made on bicycle or by foot. That number could increase sharply with carefully targeted investments that improve connectivity and safety.



1996

MARTA North Line is completed.

2012

BeltLine East Side Trail opens

2014

Clayton residents vote to join MARTA.

1994

First HOV lanes open (along I-20).

1999

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) is created by state law.

2011

First managed toll lanes open (on I-85 in Gwinnett).

The Journey Continues

The Atlanta Region's Plan includes \$85 billion of local, state and federal funding through 2040 to maintain and expand the region's transportation network, including managed toll lanes, expanded transit options and improved roads and highway interchanges



NATURAL RESOURCES

The Atlanta region continued to make significant progress on water conservation and stewardship in 2016.

The **Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District** (Metro Water District), which is staffed by ARC, devoted much of the year to a comprehensive update of its **Water Resource Management Plan**, set to be adopted in 2017. For the first time, water supply and conservation, wastewater and watershed planning will be brought together in a single, integrated document.

The Metro Water District celebrated its 15th anniversary with an event that recognized the region's most outstanding water projects and highlighted successful conservation efforts. Since 2001, total water use has dropped by more than 10 percent, despite a population increase of more than 1 million.

The region's local utilities achieved these results through aggressive conservation measures, such as conservation pricing and toilet rebate programs that replace older,

inefficient models. In March, the Metro Water District received Southface's inaugural Fulcrum Award in recognition of the region's progress on water conservation.

In January, Rockdale County and the City of Peachtree Corners became the latest jurisdictions to earn certification through ARC's **Green Communities** program, which recognizes leadership on sustainability issues. In April, ARC launched the **Sustainable Connections Internship Program**, which connects talented college students with local governments in need of sustainability planning assistance.

Also in 2016, ARC, with assistance from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, launched an interactive digital map that depicts air quality at the neighborhood level. This tool, the **Atlanta Roadside Emissions Exposure Study**, or AREES, will help local governments make decisions about where to locate sensitive facilities, such as schools and parks.

1950

Construction begins on Buford Dam on the Chattahoochee River to create Lake Lanier.

1972

Chattahoochee Corridor Study is completed.

2001

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is created.

1969

Regional water and sewer plan is completed.

1973

The Metropolitan River Protection Act is passed by the Georgia General Assembly.

1 billion

Number of gallons of water saved each year by the Metro Water District's toilet rebate program

10%

Reduction in total water use since 2001, despite adding more than 1 million new residents to the region

20

Number of jurisdictions in the 10-county region that have earned certification through ARC's Green Communities program

23,000+

Leaks detected and repaired by utilities across the Metro Water District in the past four years

30%

Reduction in per capita water use since 2001 in Metro Water District

Inaugural STREAM Awards Recognize Outstanding Water Management Efforts

One of the Atlanta region's most successful water treatment projects sits off Noah's Ark Road in south Clayton County. At first glance, it doesn't look like much - a series of shallow ponds containing a mix of native plants.

But this innovative habitat is man-made, built by the **Clayton County Water Authority**. The 532-acre site treats wastewater through a natural process involving plants, soil and naturally occurring bacteria. Over time, wastewater is cleaned and returned to area rivers and streams. This has markedly reduced Clayton's need for additional water storage and withdrawals.

In 2016, this facility was among six projects and programs recognized by the Metro Water District through its inaugural STREAM Awards. Other winners included:

- » **Cobb County Water System** for its Green Cities program, which helps owners of multi-family residential buildings install high-efficiency fixtures
- » **City of Alpharetta** for Rock Mill Park, an environmental center that incorporates "green infrastructure" such as engineered wetlands
- » **City of Atlanta** for a post-development stormwater ordinance that requires green infrastructure to relieve sewers and improve water quality
- » **Henry County** for Cubihatcha Kids, an outdoor education program
- » **Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority, et al.** for the Lake Allatoona/Upper Etowah River Comprehensive Watershed Study, which enabled improved resource protection of the entire watershed



2008

Metro Water District's Toilet Rebate Program begins, replacing old, inefficient toilets with high-efficiency models.

2016

Metro Water District wins EPA WaterSense Award for promoting water efficiency.

2015

Metro Water District's Toilet Rebate Program replaces 100,000th toilet.

The Journey Continues

In 2050, ARC forecasts the Atlanta region will use 862-898 million gallons of water per day - 25% less than was forecast in 2009



AGING & HEALTH

Metro Atlanta's older adult population is growing at the fastest rate in the nation, challenging the region to provide services and adapt systems to enhance livability for all residents.

In 2016, ARC continued its work with local governments to rethink how our communities are designed and make sure that the right mix of services is being provided to the aging and disabled communities. The goal: neighborhoods that better accommodate people of all ages and abilities, and improved services that offer a better quality of life for people as they age.

As the **Area Agency on Aging** for the Atlanta region, ARC allocated \$22 million in federal funds in 2016 to community-based organizations and local governments that provide direct services to older adults, disabled people and their families. These agencies form a coordinated network that provides daily support services to help residents remain in their communities and avoid costly institutionalized care.

Improving transportation options was a focal point of ARC's efforts this year. The agency offered a range of innovative services to boost mobility, including volunteer driver programs, specialized shuttle services, the **SimplyGetThere.org** trip-planning website and a new hands-on training program to help people better use area transit systems.

Meanwhile, the Georgia General Assembly approved nearly \$7 million in new statewide funding for aging services, including home-delivered meals, personal and home care and other services that enable individuals to age in their communities.

ARC also stepped up its efforts to promote healthy living for people of all ages. The agency partnered with Fulton County to increase the amount of physical activity offered in elementary and middle schools. And ARC increased its delivery of **Living Well** workshops to help area residents better manage chronic diseases.

The Journey

1900

Average U.S. life expectancy is 47 years.

1965

Older Americans Act enacted, providing a range of home and community based services.

1991

First Medicaid waiver programs enacted to support older adults within their communities.

2009

Lifelong Communities Initiative created to foster the development of age-friendly communities.

1935

Social Security is established.

1974

ARC is designated as the Area Agency on Aging.

1998

ARC rolls out first state-wide information and referral system for older adults and disabled people and their families.

7-10

The number of years, on average, that Americans outlive their ability to drive

1

Metro Atlanta's rank as the fastest-growing older adult population in the country

8,185

Hours spent on aging information and education by ARC volunteers last year

124,404

Requests for information and referral services handled by the Aging and Disability Resource Center

METRO ATLANTA 2016 SPEAKS Survey

74%

... of older adults plan to stay in the region as they age

33%

... of older adults said they frequently lack the transportation they need

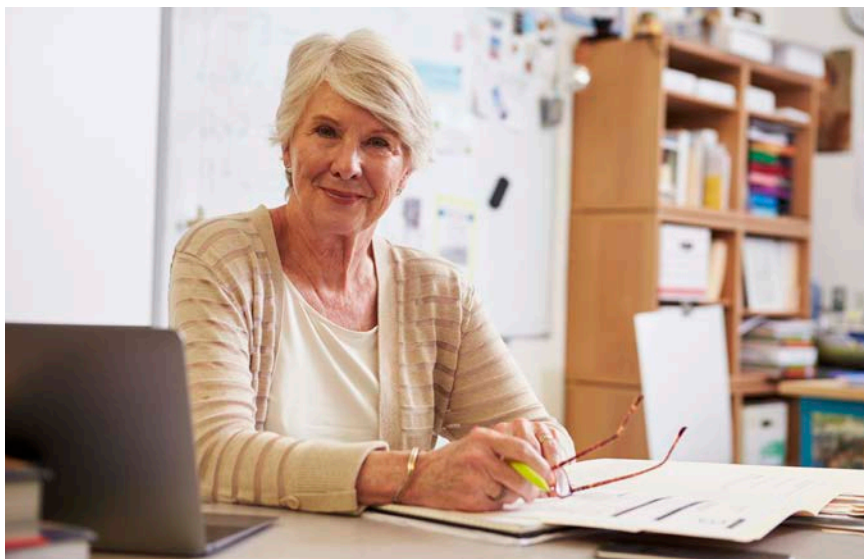
The New Economy of an Aging Population

Conventional wisdom holds that a region's success depends on attracting younger workers, while older adults are a drain on resources. However, a study conducted by ARC offers a stark counterpoint, finding that the contributions of older adults are critical to the success of our regional economy.

According to the study, if 1,000 people age 65 or older move to metro Atlanta each year, the region's economy will grow by \$7.8 billion by 2040, compared to \$2.6 billion for the same number of people aged 18-64. Why? Older adults who are working generally earn higher salaries, and those already retired bring a lifetime of savings to spend in the local economy - not to mention extensive experience and professional connections that boost productivity.

So, how do we attract and retain the older adults we need to stay competitive? That was the question asked at a forum sponsored by ARC during the summer of 2016. Human resources experts joined professionals from the aging field to reimagine a workforce where individuals stay employed longer.

Managers from IBM and Coca-Cola discussed strategies to retain their most experienced employees, such as extending retirement ages, fostering a change in attitudes toward older adults in the workplace and increasing flexibility in hours and location.



2012

The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services contracts with ARC and six hospitals to reduce hospital readmissions.

ARC helps launch ARCHI, a coalition working to improve the region's health through collaboration and collective impact.

2016

Average life expectancy in the U.S. is 79 years.

2015

ARC adopts a strategic aging plan focused on innovation to support longevity as the older adult population in the Atlanta region increases.

The Journey Continues

ARC forecasts the population of older adults (65+) in the 10-county region will reach 1.3 million in 2040 - 22% of the total population.



LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The Atlanta region is a collection of vibrant neighborhoods, historic communities and urban centers. In 2016, ARC and its community partners continued a range of efforts at the local level to make metro Atlanta an even better place to live, work and play.

ARC's popular **Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)** helped communities across the region reinvent themselves as walk-friendly and bike-friendly places. LCI applicants aim to increase mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles and provide improved access to jobs and services. In February, ARC awarded 20 LCI grants totaling \$13 million to help communities conduct planning studies and build transportation projects such as sidewalks and bike lanes.

Public art took center stage in 2016, as work progressed on four projects that received grants through ARC's **Regional Public Art Program**. The projects include a towering, inspirational painting outside the King Center MARTA station, murals in the

City of Decatur and downtown Woodstock and a sculpture marking the City of Hapeville's 125th anniversary.

ARC's **Community Choices** program provided free technical assistance to communities working to achieve their quality-growth visions. In 2016, ARC's efforts included: helping a neighborhood apply for an historic district designation; conducting an inventory of potential redevelopment sites for a city; and assessing another city's housing and redevelopment needs.

ARC also assisted in the creation of the **Peachtree Gateway Partnership**, a public-private effort to make the cities of Brookhaven, Chamblee, Doraville and Dunwoody even better places to live and work. The **South Fulton Parkway Alliance**, meanwhile, is a similar group working to bring quality development to the corridor. The many partners in the **TransFormation Alliance** encourage thriving, mixed-income communities anchored by transit.

1971

Act 5 of Georgia law passes to allow local governments to form ARC.

1999

ARC creates the Livable Centers Initiative, a grant program to spark more livable, walkable communities.

1989

ARC begins reviewing Developments of Regional Impact under state law.

2005

ARC begins Community Choices technical assistance program for local governments.

71

Cities in ARC's 10-county region

5.5 million

People live in the 20-county Atlanta region

112

Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) communities in the region

\$197 million

in LCI grants administered to date

METRO ATLANTA 2016 SPEAKS Survey

79%

... of respondents said their neighborhood was an excellent or good place to live

56%

... of respondents rate public education in their community as excellent or good

ARC helps residents near Turner Field envision community's future

Georgia State University and a team of developers plan to transform Turner Field into a mixed-use community with student housing, a college football stadium and classroom space.

Many details remain to be worked out. But the development team won't be doing it alone.

Input from residents in the surrounding neighborhoods will help shape this new community, thanks to a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study completed in 2016. More than 1,600 residents from surrounding neighborhoods met throughout the year to develop a vision for the Turner Field redevelopment.

The LCI study found that residents want the redeveloped area to include:

- » A vibrant mix of shops, restaurants and other amenities
- » Improved access to transit, such as an extension of the Atlanta Streetcar network to serve the redeveloped stadium area
- » A grocery store offering fresh produce and a wide variety of healthy food options

Artist's renderings depict a leafy public park lined with student housing units and a bustling streetscape featuring wide sidewalks, bike lanes and outdoor cafes.

Georgia State and its development partner will work with the City of Atlanta and the Turner Field development team to incorporate the input received through the LCI study into a master plan that helps bring this vision to life.

More information about the Turner Field LCI vision can be found at www.stadiumneighborhoodslci.org.



2012

ARC board elects to continue funding LCI through the year 2040.

2014

Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance gains legal nonprofit status.

2013

TransFormation Alliance created to encourage thriving, mixed-income communities anchored by transit.

The Journey Continues

\$300 million in LCI grants will be available between now and 2040.



WORKFORCE & ECONOMY

Building and maintaining a skilled workforce is critical for the Atlanta region's economy. The **Atlanta Regional Workforce Development Board** (ARWDB), which is staffed by ARC, underwent a major transformation in 2016 to better meet the needs of both employers and job-seekers.

For the first time, ARWDB and the region's four other workforce boards began coordinating as a regional system. The boards drafted a regional plan recommending a range of initiatives to better prepare the workforce for today's economy, concentrating on the region's most in-demand sectors: healthcare, IT and logistics.

Federal legislation passed in 2015 also allows for more connectivity between workforce development agencies and economic development organizations. The change stems from recognition that a well-prepared workforce helps build a stronger regional economy.

Meanwhile, ARC continued to support a number of regional collaborative efforts that made significant progress in 2016.

The **Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy**, which has engaged hundreds of business, education, government and nonprofit professionals, moved forward on a range of innovative projects designed to strengthen the region's economy. For example, members of the group's Educated subcommittee helped launch **Learn4Life**, a regional initiative that aims to improve workforce readiness and student achievement.

And the **Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance**, led by a group of public, private and nonprofit leaders, developed a blueprint for transforming the area around Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport into a regional economic powerhouse. The Alliance is also working with local partners across political boundaries and business sectors to improve workforce readiness.

1948

Delta Air Lines moves headquarters to Atlanta.

1978

Home Depot is founded.

1990

Announcement that Atlanta will host the Centennial Olympics games is made.

1970

Turner Communications Group is launched.

1982

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is enacted.

1998

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is enacted by Congress.

71,000

Jobs added in the last year in metro Atlanta, fifth-most in the U.S.

7.1%

Increase in median household income in metro Atlanta in 2015, the third-largest increase among the 50 biggest metro areas

METRO ATLANTA 2016 SPEAKS Survey

48%

... of those surveyed said job opportunities in metro Atlanta are excellent or good

12%

... of those surveyed said the economy is the biggest challenge facing the region, down from 24% in 2013

19%

... of respondents said they sometimes skipped meals, or reduced portion size due to lack of money for food

On-the-Job Training Program Helps Workers and Employers

There is an age-old problem in the workplace: workers who want to change jobs, often lack the necessary skills. Meanwhile, employers struggle to fill positions but lack the time or resources to train workers.

ARC's On-the-Job (OJT) training program is designed to bridge these gaps. Consider Whitaker-Taylor, a global human resources company based in metro Atlanta, which turned to ARC for help filling positions during a recent expansion.

Here's how the program works: OJT reimburses a company up to 90 percent of each new hire's salary for a six-month period. During this time, employers provide the training their new employees need.

Whitaker-Taylor has hired nine people through the OJT program, including displaced workers who had requested assistance through the Atlanta Regional Workforce Development Board. Positions included an SAP programmer and lead generation, with starting salaries of at least \$35,000.

"I have achieved many professional goals: speaking at conferences, managing projects, getting certifications and more than doubling my initial salary," said Pablo Stuardo, a Whitaker-Taylor employee hired through the OJT program.

Bento Box Entertainment, an Emmy award-winning animation studio also found talent through the OJT program. In the past four years, 27 employers have hired 98 OJT participants.



2000

2.25 million people are employed in the Atlanta region.

2015

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is enacted by Congress.

2.9 million people are employed in the Atlanta region.

2010

Metro Atlanta unemployment rate is 10%.

2016

Metro Atlanta unemployment rate is 5%.

The Journey Continues

ARC forecasts the 20-county Atlanta region will have 4 million jobs in 2040.



LEADERSHIP

ARC offers a range of leadership programs for residents who want to make a difference in the Atlanta region and to influence the policies that will guide our successful future.

The **Regional Leadership Institute (RLI)** is a comprehensive leadership program designed to better prepare community, government, business and nonprofit leaders to collaboratively address regional issues.

Leadership • Involvement • Networking • Knowledge (**LINKSM**) is a leadership exchange program that takes metro Atlanta leaders to regions throughout North America to learn how other communities are addressing similar issues and challenges. In 2016, LINK celebrated its 20th anniversary by traveling to the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Now in its 18th year, ARC's **Model Atlanta Regional Commission (MARC)** brings together more than 50 outstanding 10th and

11th-grade students from public and private schools across the 10-county region. The six-month learning and leadership program gives teens an opportunity to learn more about the Atlanta region and hone their leadership skills.

Created in 2004, **Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta (ALMA)** provides a forum for corporate and foundation leaders to connect with the cultural community. ALMA provides leaders with access to tools and information, empowering them to become advocates for the metro Atlanta arts and culture community.

ARC's **Millennial Advisory Panel** has brought young leaders to the regional planning table. Panel members in 2016 continued work on a variety of initiatives, including: advocating for regional transit; partnering with Atlanta-based Civic Dinners to foster ongoing community dialogue; and forming the Millennial Mayor speaker series to encourage Millennials to run for public office.

1991

The first class of the Regional Leadership Institute (RLI) is launched.

1998

The first Model Atlanta Regional Commission (MARC) is held.

2004

First class of Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta (ALMA) is hosted by Metro Atlanta Arts & Culture Coalition.

1997

The first LINK (Leadership • Involvement • Networking • Knowledge) trip visits metropolitan Denver.

2003

The metro Atlanta Mayors Association is founded, inspired by the 2002 LINK trip to Chicago.

1,258

Regional Leadership Institute graduates since 1991

208

Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta graduates since 2013

508

LINK participants since 1997

1,000+

Number of Model Atlanta Regional Commission (MARC) graduates since 1998

135

Members of ARC's Millennial Advisory Panel

17

Number of regions the LINK program has visited

LINKSM Celebrates 20 Years of Broadening Horizons

ARC's LINK program began as a way to build on the remarkable level of regional cooperation that occurred in conjunction with the hosting of the Centennial Olympic Games 20 years ago.

Each year, LINK takes more than 100 regional leaders to another region in North America to learn how other communities tackle similar challenges and opportunities facing metro Atlanta. These trips have also helped the region's leaders get to know each other much better. In many ways, these strengthened relationships are LINK's most lasting legacy.

Along the way, LINK participants have learned about cutting-edge programs and met inspiring leaders working to transform their home regions. The delegation has brought some of these ideas home with them.

For example, the Metro Atlanta Speaks opinion poll, now in its fourth year, was inspired by the LINK visit to Houston in 2013. And the Metro Atlanta Mayors Association was founded after a visit to Chicago in 2002.

The Atlanta Regional Public Art program was inspired by a civic mural project that the LINK delegation learned about during the 2014 LINK trip to Philadelphia. In 2016, our region's own program awarded four grants totaling \$53,000. The first project to be completed was a mural at the King Memorial MARTA rail station in Atlanta's Old Fourth Ward neighborhood. Three other projects are under way in the cities of Decatur, Hapeville and Woodstock.



2014

ARC assumes leadership of the Arts Leadership of Metropolitan Atlanta (ALMA).

2016

The metro Atlanta Public Arts Program awards its first grant. The inspiration for this program occurred during the 2014 LINK trip to Philadelphia.

2013

The first Metro Atlanta Speaks survey is conducted, inspired by the 2012 LINK trip to Houston.

2015

ARC's New Voices program forms the 135-member Millennial Advisory Panel.

The Journey Continues

The next LINK trip will take place in Metro Detroit and ARC will launch the New Voices: Global initiative in 2017.



ABOUT ARC

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county Atlanta region, which includes Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties. ARC helps focus the region's leadership, attention and resources on critical issues of common concern.

On any given day, ARC works with local jurisdictions and various regional partners to plan new transportation options, encourage the development of healthy livable communities, wisely manage precious water resources, provide services for the region's older and disabled residents, improve public safety and help businesses recruit and train workers.

ARC is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and Area Agency on Aging for the Atlanta region. It also serves as the federally-designated Workforce Development Board for Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette,

Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties. In addition, ARC provides staffing to the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and the Urban Area Security Initiative.

The agency serves as a regional convener, bringing diverse stakeholders to the table and facilitating informed, open discussion about important issues facing metro Atlanta. Each year, ARC and its community partners commission the Metro Atlanta Speaks public opinion poll, taking a statistically valid snapshot of what residents think about critical issues.

By state law, the ARC board consists of the county commission chair from each of the 10 member counties, the mayor and a council member from the region's largest city (City of Atlanta), and one mayor from each of the 10 counties. Fulton County is the exception, with one mayor from north Fulton and one from south Fulton serving. The ARC board also includes a representative from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and 15 citizen members selected by the board's elected officials.

The Journey

1947

Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) established to provide coordinated planning for DeKalb and Fulton counties and the City of Atlanta.

1971

Georgia law combines ARMPC with other agencies to form the Atlanta Regional Commission.

2001

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is established, staffed by ARC.

1960

The Atlanta Regional Metropolitan Planning Commission (ARMPC) was formed as successor to MPC.

1974

ARC was designated as the federal Area Agency on Aging.

1983

ARC becomes a federally designated agency for job training.





ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

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