



COVID-19 PANDEMIC: IMMEDIATE REACTIONS & LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ATLANTA REGION

Anna Cullen & Aileen M. Daney

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Introductions



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About the ATL

The ATL in Brief

- ▶ The ATL is a **regional planning and funding** authority created to provide a seamless transit experience across 13-counties
- ▶ The ATL Board is comprised of 16 members representing a wide range of perspectives but **unified around a common goal of increasing mobility options**

ATL Key Functions & Activities



Coordinate
Regional
Partners



Deliver
Innovative and
Best Practice
Technology



Strengthen
Regional Transit
Planning and
Performance

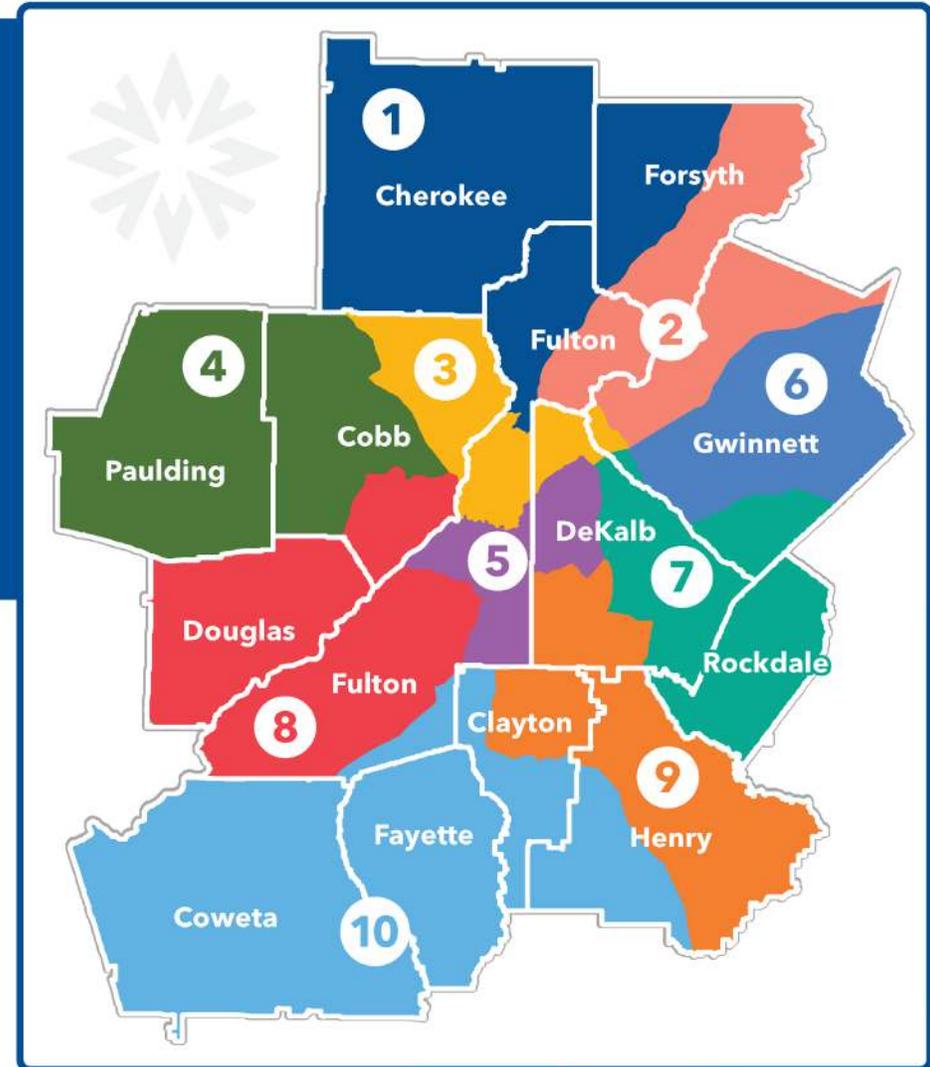


Advance
Strategic
Transit
Investments



Enhance
Customer
Experience

ATL Districts



About the ATL



Local or Operator Transit Plans or Projects

ATL Regional Transit Plan (ARTP)

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Reflects the needs and wants of the current and future transit system at the local level
- Includes meaningful and accessible public input from diverse viewpoints

- Synthesizes transit projects from the 13-county ATL region
- Evaluates projects seeking state or federal discretionary funding
- ARTP project list feeds local referendum lists and the state bond list

- Long-range plan (20+ years) for all modes of transportation in the 21-county ARC region
- Fiscally constrained plan that must demonstrate projects can feasibly be funded, implemented, and maintained
- Updated every four years by ARC

- Short-range project implementation plan (4+ years) for all modes in the 21-county ARC region
- TIP projects are considered RTP priorities
- Must demonstrate fiscal constraint
- Updated by ARC



TODAY'S AGENDA

- > Introduction to the ATL's *Annual Report and Audit (ARA)*

- > Key Findings from the ARA
 - > Ridership
 - > Safety Protocols
 - > Essential Workers

- > Summary of Stimulus Funding

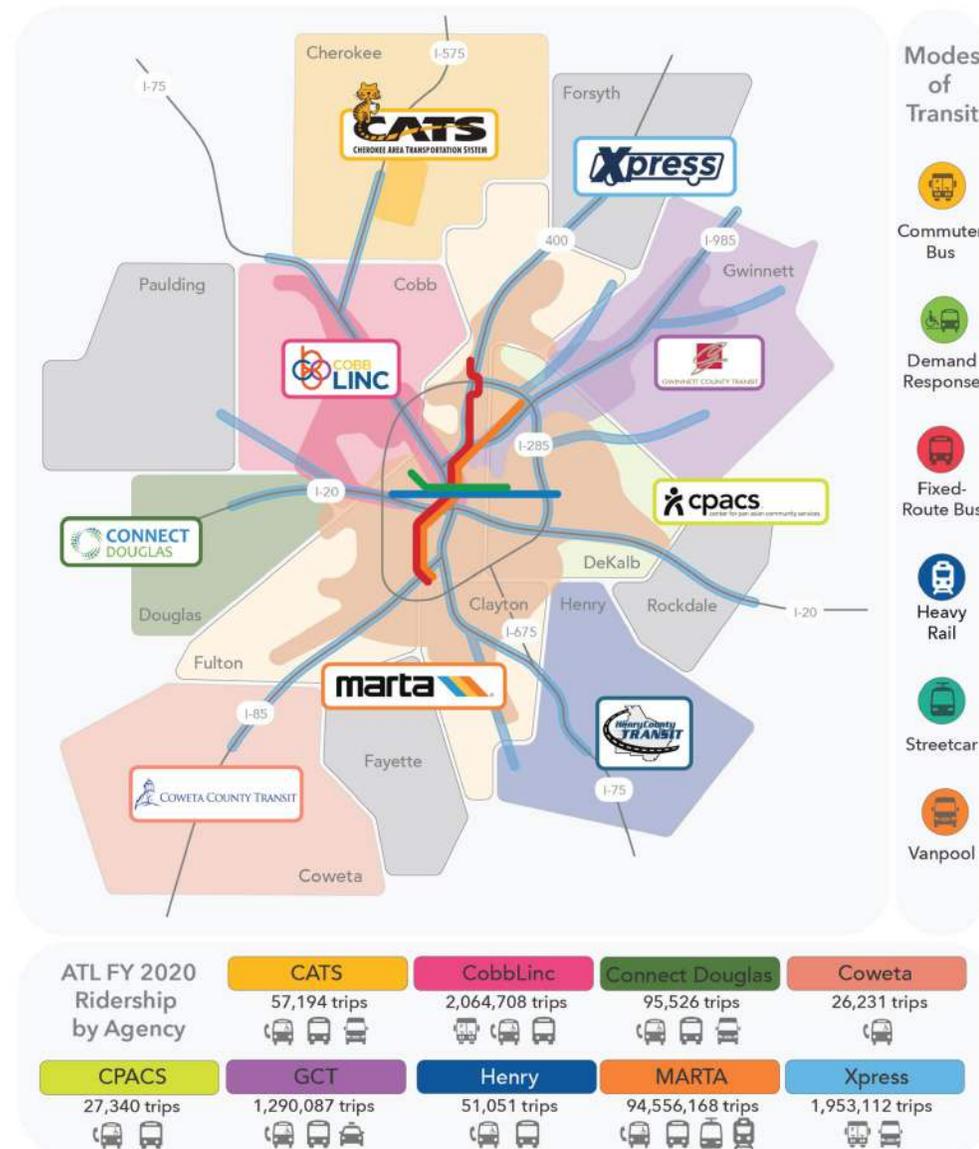
- > Recovery + Looking Forward





WHAT IS THE ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDIT?

- > Report covers **transit performance, funding, and operations trends for 9 transit providers** within the 13-county ATL region
- > Timeframe: ATL's fiscal year
 - > July 2019 – June 2020
- > **New:** Special performance indicators related to the pandemic





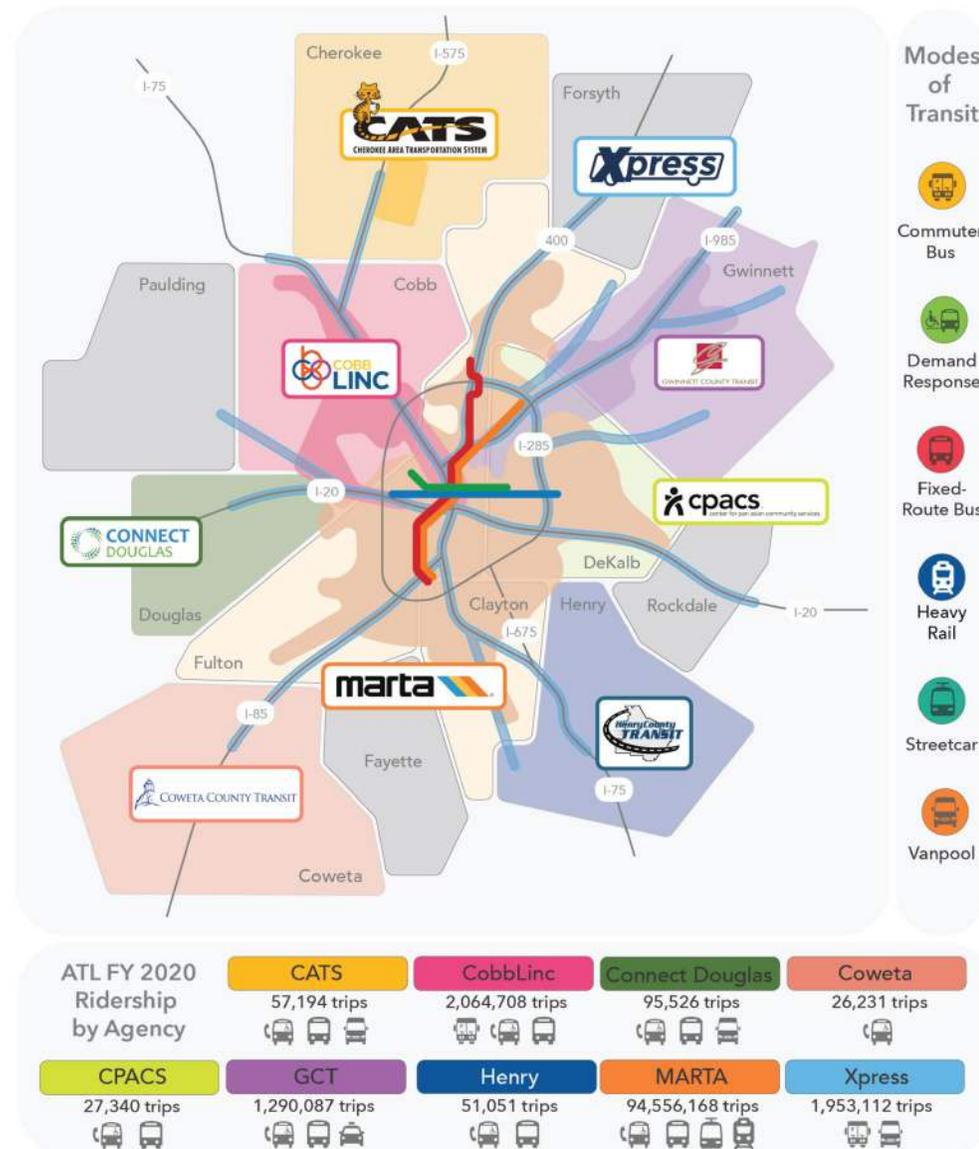
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The ARA helps us combat “data rich and information poor” syndrome

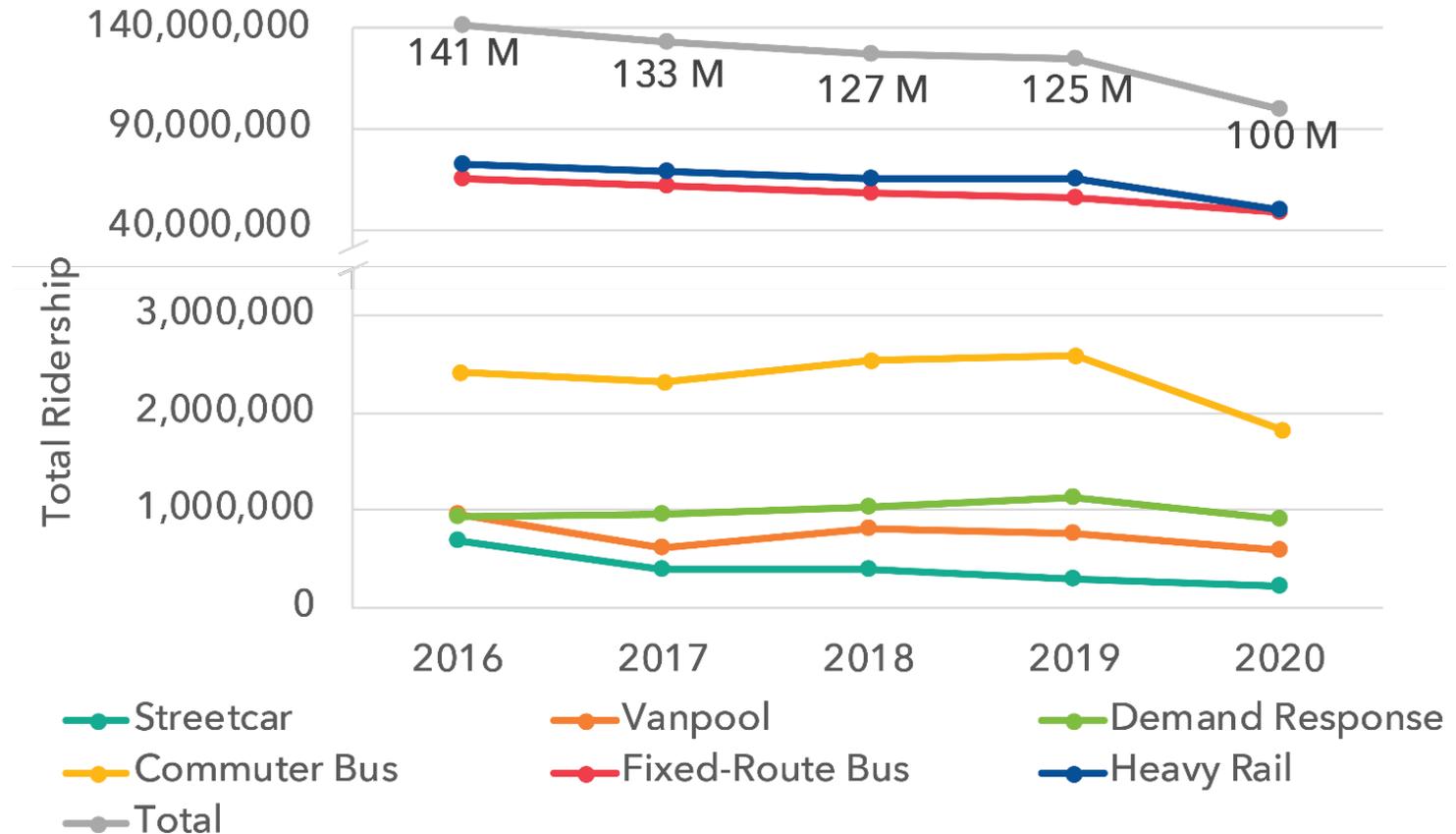
Communicate the importance of transit to elected officials and the general public

Supports ATL's local technical assistance program and informs our DRI and ARTP planning efforts



HOW WAS RIDERSHIP IMPACTED?

- > Total transit **ridership declined 29%** from 2016 – 2020
- > Ridership declined across all modes largely between 2019 and 2020 **due to the pandemic**
- > **Fixed-route bus ridership was the steadiest**, with a decline of only about 13 percent
- > Choice riders or **commuter markets saw the sharpest reduction**



NOTE: COVID REPRESENTS 25% OF REPORT TIME PERIOD

WHAT SAFETY MEASURES WERE IMPLEMENTED?

Agency	Extra Cleaning	Providing PPE	Transporting Goods/ Deliveries	Rear-Door Boarding	Fare Collection Suspension	Social Distancing Practices
CATS	X	X				X
CobbLinc	X	X		X	X	X
Connect Douglas	X	X	X			X
Coweta	X	X				X
CPACS	X	X	X		X	X
GCT	X	X		X	X	X
Henry	X	X	X		X	X
MARTA	X	X		X	X	X
Xpress	X	X			X	X

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HOW WERE ESSENTIAL WORKERS IMPACTED?

- > Transit provides access for workers that must be **physically present** to perform their jobs
- > Many transit commuters perform **essential functions that keep the economy and society going**. Transit continued to provide access for these frontline workers to make sure they can reach their jobs safely, benefitting the public at large.

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- > Many transit commuters perform **essential functions that keep the economy and society going**. Transit continued to provide access for these frontline workers to make sure they can reach their jobs safely, benefitting the public at large.
- > Regardless of how telecommuting plays out in the recovery, **transit continues to serve frontline workers** who need to be physically present to perform their jobs
- > Providing safe and affordable transit access to frontline workers is also a **matter of equity and racial justice**.

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STIMULUS FUNDING FOR THE ATL REGION

- > The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) – April 2020:
 - > Approximately **\$371 million**
- > The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) – January 2021:
 - > Approximately **\$33.5 million**
- > American Rescue Plan (ARP) – March 2021:
 - > Approximately **\$307.4 million**

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**Roughly \$711 million total
in federal stimulus allocated
to the Atlanta region**

HOW IS THIS MONEY BEING USED?

- > **CARES Act (\$371m)** priorities were aimed at operating costs, lost revenue, PPE, and administrative leave due to service reductions.
- > **CRRSAA Act (\$33.5m)** supplemental appropriation for payroll and operational needs.
- > **American Rescue Plan (\$307.4m)** provides funding for capital projects if recipients have not furloughed employees.
 - > ATL can direct funding to regional priority projects

These three stimulus bills offer economic assistance at 100% federal share, meaning no local match is required.

LOOKING AHEAD

- > **Once in a generation** national focus on transportation and infrastructure.
- > Shifting priorities in Congress and from the Biden administration.
 - > Focus on **sustainability** and **equity**
 - > Local influence
- > New major funding & policy vehicles
 - > American Jobs Plan
 - > FAST Act Reauthorization
 - > Reintroduction of earmarks

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The COVID-19 pandemic has shaped the way Congress and the Executive Branch view transit. Tools like the ARA can give decision makers the information they need to craft policy that will not just return transit to the status quo of 2019 but move all of us forward.

Questions | Comments



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