

Gwinnett Transit Public Comment Research Highlights

11/20/19 TRC Meeting

- **Data sources** consulted for public comments:
 - News articles:
 - Gwinnett Daily Post
 - SaportaReport
 - Atlanta Progressive News
 - Streetsblog
 - Curbed
 - Social media:
 - Connect Gwinnett Facebook Page
 - No MARTA Facebook Page
 - Go Gwinnett
 - Phone Survey
 - Question 17 Responses

- **Highlights** that emerged from research:
 - **Environment:**
 - Most comments related to the environment are about controlling emissions and improving air quality
 - For this reason, people tend to agree that rail is better than buses
 - Buses increase pollution
 - **Key takeaway:** Rail > bus for the environment
 - **Economic Development:**
 - Expanded transit will help bring in more people that will spend more money and help the economy
 - Easier for people to get to schools, jobs, and recreation
 - Gwinnett doesn't need more development

- Don't want more people coming in and bringing "riff raff"
 - **Key takeaway:** more transit to help the economy v. limiting development
- **Congestion Relief:**
 - Congestion relief desperately needed
 - I-85
 - Doraville Park and Ride
 - Conflicting views on whether transit reduces traffic congestion
 - Some think other measures to reduce congestion should be taken instead of increasing transit
 - Traffic controls
 - More roads
 - Infrastructure improvements
 - **Key takeaway:** People want congestion relief but don't know the best way to achieve it
 - Most talking about congestion relief in terms of sustainability
- **Equity:**
 - Important for senior, disabled, and low-income mobility
 - Still need considerations and amenities to make it easier for disadvantaged groups to use (i.e. decreasing distance between bus stops)
 - Increased tax will only hurt low-income families
 - The people who can afford it won't/don't want to pay for it and won't use it
 - Interesting because the phone survey says otherwise

- **Key takeaway:** People generally agree that public transit is important for disadvantaged groups but if they're not the ones using it, they don't want to pay for it
- **Productivity and Efficiency:**
 - Should focus on existing programs with no new taxes
 - People want transit but don't want to pay and would rather expand existing programs
 - Gwinnett isn't dense enough to support it
 - People afraid that it won't be implemented it efficiently
 - **Key takeaway:** Some people feel that it's not the most efficient use of tax dollars
 - Most talking about productivity and efficiency in terms of stewardship
- **System Maintenance:**
 - Importance of road/infrastructure maintenance to support transit
 - Bus upgrades
 - Handicap accessible
 - Equipped with technology/wifi
 - Worry that public transit will become obsolete with increasing technology (i.e. Uber, Lyft, autonomous, etc.)
 - **Key takeaway:** System maintenance is important, but will transit investment be worth it in the long-run?
- **Coverage and Connectivity:**
 - Transit should encompass more areas of the County
 - Areas barely served will vote no
 - Buses needed for easy access

- Extend transit to higher-income neighborhoods
 - Should extend to:
 - Jimmy Carter
 - Snellville
 - Mall of Georgia
 - Airport
 - Better connections needed
 - Neighboring Counties
 - Interconnected trail system
 - Need more connections to the existing system/Atlanta
 - **Key takeaway:** People generally want a more extensive, better connected transit network
 - Most talking about coverage and connectivity in terms of service quality
 - Interesting that not many claim they want transit but when it comes to coverage and connectivity they have a lot to say about it and want coverage and connectivity
- **Travel Time Reduction:**
 - Travel time is a concern but generally talked about in terms of congestion relief
 - Rail will help reduce travel time
 - Transit doesn't provide a competitive travel time
 - **Key takeaway:** Conflicting views on if transit will help reduce travel time
- **Reliability:**
 - Better app technology needed to make service more predictable/reliable
 - Service hours and routes need to be extended

- **Key takeaway:** People generally do not find transit service reliable, especially MARTA

- **Additional goals and priorities:**
 - **Safety**
 - Crime
 - Public transit attracts crime/will bring crime to higher-income neighborhoods
 - **Land Use**
 - Planning/Zoning and Policies
 - Need Comp Plan/better planning
 - Most of this research was on materials prior to 2040 Unified Plan adoption
 - Better zoning to control development
 - Should focus more on traffic/carpool regulations instead of public transit
 - Need better bike lanes, sidewalks, infrastructure, etc.
 - **Transparency and Education**
 - Voter Education
 - People confused about the referendum in general
 - What is being proposed?
 - How is it being funded?
 - Need to address the stigma that transit is only for the elderly, disabled, and poor
 - Trust
 - Mistrust of MARTA and County government

- Think they're plotting against them and MARTA just needs the County's funding
 - Don't see the benefit of the tax or expanding transit
 - Those that pay won't be able to use it because of the length of tax
 - Felt the referendum was not transparent
- **Referendum/Overall**
 - Note that more people were against it than for it in our review of comments
 - Some people are more interested in improved roads/infrastructure than expanding transit service
 - For those who want transit/aren't completely against it, they don't want to pay for it, especially if it won't benefit them personally
 - Focus on benefit of the greater good (i.e. pollution, traffic congestion, etc.)