

Chris Tomlinson

Introduction

- Good afternoon everyone.
- First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for extending the invitation for me to take part in today's [REDACTED]. Thank you for allowing me to join you all to give a brief overview of our work in transportation.
- I'm elated to have the opportunity to discuss the role that the State Road and Tollway Authority, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, and the newly created Atlanta-region Transit Authority play in advancing mobility in the metro Atlanta area and beyond.
- We believe the key to enhancing the effectiveness of the State of Georgia's mobility options is to put our focus on creating multiple mobility options such as toll lanes, transit services, etc.
- Today, I want to share with you some key updates and plans that have been put into motion to ensure that your residents have access to a reliable and accessible transportation network.

Update on the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes

- I can't begin without first sharing our most recent accomplishments have a direct impact on mobility and connectivity.
- An important segment of our duties at SRTA is to manage the collection of tolls on Georgia's Express Lane System, which is accomplished by the use of Peach Pass, our electronic tolling technology.

- As you may know, we recently celebrated the opening of the largest transportation infrastructure project in Georgia history, the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes!
- It was a great time for us as we introduced this massive project, which consists of nearly 30 miles of express lanes, to commuters who travel along the I-75/I-575 corridor.
- The journey to opening day was a long and arduous one, but with collaborative efforts and support from our transportation partners, especially GDOT, we were successful in making it to the finish line.
- As a united front, we worked to tackle the challenges faced with the express lanes by developing innovative solutions that will meet the needs of all travelers.
- We're excited to provide Metro Atlanta residents with even more toll lanes that will get you to your life faster so that you do not miss family time or special events that are important to you.
- I'm very proud to report that the express lanes have been a huge hit during the first few weeks of being accessible to motorists.
- Approximately 11,500 vehicles traveled through the Express Lanes during opening weekend (Sept. 8 and 9) with the first full week of operation seeing a total of 108,850 trips as drivers were able to try out the lanes toll-free.
- The great response of the new Express Lanes has even resulted in an increase in Peach Pass transponder sales! As of this past Monday, we have welcomed over 800,000 new tags to our Peach Pass family.

- I'm looking forward to continuously monitoring the results of the Northwest Corridor as I am confident we will continue to meet even greater goals.

I-85 Express Lanes and I-85 Extension

- The Northwest Corridor Express Lanes aren't the only lanes that are making their debut this year.
- We are also gearing up to open an extension of our most popular express lanes along I-85.
- Over the last 8 years, our I-85 Express Lanes have performed beyond expectations in usage and have evolved into our most frequently used tolling lanes.
- Due to the vast success of our I-85 Express Lanes, we have partnered with GDOT to extend these lanes for 10 miles going north.
- I am happy to announce that after about two years of construction, this project is slated to open later this year.
- The Extension is located entirely within Gwinnett County and extends from the existing express lanes on I-85 at Old Peachtree Road to Hamilton Mill Road.
- In addition to adding new toll lanes, we're adding auxiliary lanes that will help improve the flow of traffic within the most congested areas of the corridor.
- As far as tolling, motorists will experience the same dynamic pricing system as with the existing I-85 Express Lanes – as the demand for use of the lanes increases, the toll amount will increase.

- With this tolling system, we can ensure that travelers will benefit from more reliable trip times and optimal use of the lanes.
- I am confident that this Extension will support our aim to reduce traffic congestion within this area while also giving commuters the ease of being able to keep moving during peak traffic times.

Xpress transit on Georgia Express Lanes

- Because of the overwhelming response to the Georgia Express Lanes, I understand that when you think of SRTA, you may only think of one thing: toll lanes. However, our focus and effort reach beyond tolling.
- In 2017, SRTA joined forces with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and assumed operations for the state's Xpress commuter coach service.
- Currently, Xpress provides regional bus transit services in 12 metro Atlanta counties, that allows workers and students to experience a stress-free commute to and from major employment centers.
- Xpress has been a valuable asset to SRTA and has assisted us in our efforts to make our Georgia Express Lanes safer and more efficient.
- Our transit system offers greater connectivity as well as providing another mode of transportation for those who want to experience the lanes without the hassle of getting behind the wheel.
- To continue our efforts of providing affordable public transportation options, SRTA offers a vanpool program which gives commuters the opportunity to share rides with others who have similar trip origins and destinations.

- Both our Xpress Commuter Service and state-registered vanpools have total access to all the Express Lanes, so all riders can use these transit services without having to pay the tolling costs.
- My SRTA team and I believe that growth is essential in order to better serve the population. Therefore, we are currently planning future transit expansion as we continue to expand our Express Lane system.
- As you can see, SRTA is all about giving Metro Atlanta residents the freedom and flexibility that they desire while traveling!

What is The ATL?

- With the world of transportation rapidly changing and growing by the day, it is essential that we do our part in ensuring that our focus is providing an efficient transportation system.
- In the metro Atlanta area, there's a great deal of responsibility to make sure that the transportation needs are met for more than 5.7 million residents.
- This number is steadily increasing, which requires our industry to be proactive in our mission to mitigate the current drawbacks with transportation. Our transportation system faces the challenge of providing a wide range of options for our commuters.
- To better serve the population of metro Atlanta residents that use the region's various transit services, a new entity is emerging that will focus solely on transit mobility.

- The Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority, created through the passing of HB 930, was brought to life by government officials who had the vision to unify metro Atlanta's transit under one branded hub.
- With a more regional approach to transit, we can not only provide our residents with a more efficient mobility system, but we can also work towards making a positive impact on Georgia's economic development.
- By unifying the region's transit services, we'll now have the opportunity to collaboratively shift the dynamic of public transportation as we know it by further analyzing the current state of transit and strategizing the best methods to keep Atlanta going.
- With the recent appointments to The ATL's Board, I can confidently say that we're making excellent strides to forming a strong Authority.

Conclusion

- In closing, I want to reiterate that the State of Georgia is a fast-growing state with a thriving economy, so our industries must keep the pace.
- I am hopeful that the vision of maximizing the productivity of our transportation network will be fulfilled upon the completion of upcoming projects as well as the buildout of The ATL.
- I look forward to working with my dynamic team at the State Road and Tollway Authority and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority as well as other leaders and stakeholders in the industry to achieve the common goal of meeting the transportation challenges in our state.
- Once again, thank you for having me. It has been a pleasure speaking with you all this afternoon.

- As my Peach Pass team would say, let's keep moving!