



Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton County

Special Edition August 2011

For The Atlanta Region to Grow, We Must Overcome Traffic Gridlock!



The regional traffic gridlock during peak hours is negatively affecting the economic growth of the eleven county Atlanta region. To overcome this most serious problem, the state's Transportation Investment Act has created an Atlanta Regional Transportation Roundtable to select transportation proposals to put before the region's voters for the July 31, 2012 referendum on the 10-year one-penny sales tax. This tax will generate \$7.2 billion with 15% going directly to local governments for discretionary investments, leaving \$6.14 billion for improvements of regional impact. The Regional Transportation Roundtable consists of County Commission Chairmen, a Mayor from each municipality, the CEO of DeKalb County, and the Mayor from the City of Atlanta.

The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation strongly opposes this regional sales tax, in its present form, for the following reasons:

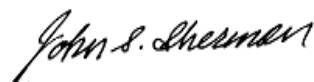
- 1. The Need For A Regional Transit Authority:** While the Transportation Investment Act created a Regional Transportation Roundtable, **it did not create a much-needed Regional Transit Authority of highly qualified transportation planners and engineers that would identify the projects needed and would operate the total transportation system.** A political roundtable is not a professional approach to the problem.
- 2. The Use Of The Regional Sales Tax For City Roads:** Funding of \$658 million for the Atlanta Beltline should not be funded from the regional sales tax. This is not a regional project, but a City Tax Allocation District. **The Taxpayers Foundation is strongly opposed to using regional sales tax for any City Tax Allocation District.**
- 3. The Use of \$500 million For Deferred Maintenance of MARTA:** Since 1972, the residents of Fulton and DeKalb Counties have been paying a one penny sales tax for MARTA which carries only 5% of the metro region's commuters. Now, it is proposed that \$500 million of the regional sales tax will go toward deferred maintenance of MARTA. **The Taxpayers Foundation feels that the use of \$500 million of the regional sales tax is questionable:** during the last ten years, the regional population rose 20%, while the public's use of MARTA's buses dropped 17% and the public's use of MARTA's rail dropped 6%. MARTA lost \$508 million last year and has \$1.2 billion in deferred maintenance. MARTA should be under a professional Regional Transit Authority. ***Why is the MARTA ridership declining and what could be done to increase the ridership and decrease the use of automobiles?***
- 4. Additional Funding:** The Taxpayers Foundation feels that the proposed one penny regional sales tax will not cover the total cost of overcoming traffic gridlock in the region. **An additional funding that should be considered is a "Vehicle Mile Travelled Tax", a road-user tax based on the annual mileage of cars and trucks.**

Conclusion

On August 17th, 2011, the Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation participated in a roundtable discussion, hosted by the AJC, with 7 other taxpayer advocates from the regional counties. **It should be noted that not one person at the roundtable discussion was in favor of the proposed transportation tax! The Metro Area counties are suffering side-by-side with one another, as we try to overcome cronyism, bad planning and a lack of fiscal responsibility.**

The 11-county Atlanta region desperately needs to implement a professional Transportation Plan to relieve the traffic gridlock and eliminate car-central sprawl. However, the choice of the projects must be decided upon by professional planners and engineers, not by a political roundtable, and the funding must be sufficient to cover the region's roads and bridges, buses and rails. **The Taxpayers Foundation supports a one penny regional sales tax to fund regional transportation improvements provided neighboring metropolitan Atlanta counties join Fulton and DeKalb Counties in forming a Regional Transit Authority and funding a Regional Transit System.**

John Sherman, President



Mayor's Resolution In Support of Regional Transportation Sales Tax

WHEREAS, the Georgia legislature has authorized a referendum to allow metropolitan Atlanta to vote on adding on an additional one penny sales tax to fund regional transportation improvements, including highways, rail, buses, bikeways and sidewalks that could significantly shorten commute times and improve quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the citizen of Fulton and DeKalb Counties have for more than 30 years paid a one penny sales tax to build and maintain a regional transportation system, the Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA); and

WHEREAS, MARTA benefits everyone in metropolitan Atlanta by reducing the number of cars on metropolitan Atlanta roads, by reducing air pollution, and by carrying people to work and to school; and

WHEREAS, the legislature expressly excluded funding MARTA's operating cost from the additional one penny sales tax; and

WHEREAS, under the legislature's proposal the citizens of Fulton and DeKalb Counties will have to pay two cents in sales tax for regional transportation, while their neighbors in Cobb, Gwinnett, Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette, Henry, and Rockdale Counties will only have to pay a one penny sales tax for regional transportation:

The undersigned Mayors support a one cent sales tax to fund a regional transportation improvements provided neighboring metropolitan Atlanta counties join Fulton and DeKalb Counties in forming a regional transit system, or in the alternative, the legislature requires them to join Fulton and DeKalb Counties to form and fund a regional transit system.

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Clayton Mayor, Union City
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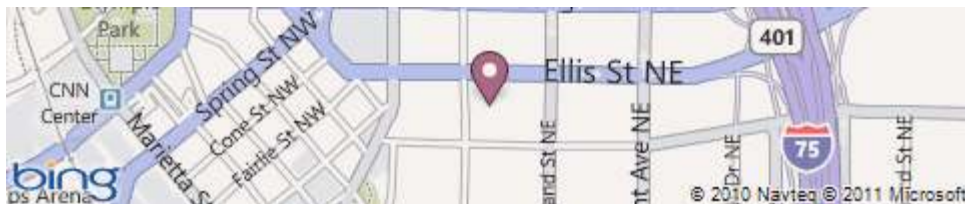
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FREE TO THE PUBLIC!

September 10th, 10am-12pm

Loudermilk Regional Center

40 Courtland Street NE



Atlanta Public Schools is facing the greatest challenge in its history. Our children deserve a quality education. Parents want answers! Come listen to our distinguished panel of Leading Educators share their ideas and answer your questions on the future of APS.

Confirmed Panel of Leading Educators Include:

- Dr. Olivia M. Boggs, Professor of Educational Leadership Mercer University.
- Dr. Gwendolyn Benson, Associate Dean, College of Education, GSU
- Dr. Allison Gilmore, Associate Dean, Tift College of Education, Mercer U
- Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia
- Dr. Sean Warner, Dean, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University

Audience members will have the chance to interact with the panelists. Food and drinks will be provided. Community organizations are welcome to table.

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