GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

2010 Legislative Session

HB 277 – Transportation Investment Act of 2010

After several years of debate, the legislature passed a transportation funding bill that will allow voters in regions to decide on a one-percent, 10-year, regional sales tax for all types of transportation improvements. It establishes twelve regional special tax districts that correspond to the regional commission boundaries.

Regional roundtables are created in each special tax district made up of the county chair of each county and one municipal representative from each county elected by a caucus of the cities in the district. In the metro Atlanta region, the mayor of Atlanta would also serve on the roundtable.

The regional roundtables meet twice at the call of the Director of Planning to amend and approve the region's investment criteria and then to approve or reject the draft investment list.

Each regional roundtable elects five (5) members to serve on the executive committee and they would be joined by two house members and one state senator from the region to serve as non-voting members of the executive committee.

The Director of Planning (who is appointed by and reports to the Governor) is charged with facilitating the process in each region and with developing the regional investment criteria.

The executive committee would be responsible for working with the Director of Planning to develop a "draft investment list" for consideration by the regional roundtable.

If the regional roundtable approves the investment list, the list would move to a regional referendum to be held on the primary election date in 2012. If the regional roundtable initially rejects the initial investment list, they may make changes to the list but only from the list of possible investments provided by the Director of Planning and then move forward with the referendum in 2012.

If the voters approve the referendum, every local government within the region will only have to provide a 10-percent match for all future local maintenance and state aid funding from DOT.

If the voters reject the referendum, every local government within the region would only have to provide a 30-percent match for all future local maintenance and state aid funding from DOT.

If the regional roundtable rejects the investment list, then no referendum will be held in the region. However, failure to place the list on the ballot will result in every local government within the region being required to provide a 50-percent match for all future local maintenance and state aid funding from DOT.

In the metro Atlanta area, 15% of the funds raised in the region would be used for local transportation projects and would be allocated to cities and counties based on a formula of 1/5 population and 4/5 center line road miles.

In regions outside of Atlanta, 25% of the funds raised in the region would be used for local transportation projects and would be allocated to cities and counties based on a formula of 1/5 population and 4/5 center line road miles.

The Georgian State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) will serve as the regional trustee and disburse funds to DOT for managing projects.

The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) will manage all metro Atlanta transit projects.

Funding from the regional sales tax can be held in trust in each region for up to twenty years to assist with transit funding.
Five member Citizen Review Panels, appointed by the Speaker and Lieutenant Governor, are created in each region charged with overseeing the governance and administration of projects in the region and issuing annual reports.

Special provisions related to MARTA were also included in the bill.

> First, it reduces the MARTA board from 18 to 11 members and eliminates the voting seats held by Clayton, Cobb and Gwinnett counties.
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> Second, authorizes Clayton County to hold a referendum on whether to levy a one-percent sales tax to join MARTA.
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> Third, suspends the operational expenditure restriction of the existing MARTA sales tax for a three-year period, but prohibits use of the funds for salary and wage increases.
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> Any proceeds of the new sales tax received by MARTA may only pay for maintenance and operational expenses of new capital projects made after January 1, 2011.