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Footnotes Issue #55: March 5th, 2012

## Transportation at a Crossroads

Since we last updated you on transportation issues after the all of the regional lists were finalized, the more things change, the more they stay the same. It looks not at all likely that the T-SPLOST referendum will be pushed back to general election in November, so voters need to decide whether they are for or against it on July 31st. One lingering question about the T-SPLOST is around transit governance, i.e. who will administer the share of the money dedicated for transit projects? A pair of bills has been introduced to address this question, and unfortunately, they give the power to the state, which has yet to pony up and provide ongoing operating funds for transit. A pair of MARTA bills attempt to remove the 50/50 split that MARTA is bound to spend on capital/operating, but in exchange for removing those restrictions, they find new ways to hamstring the agency.

- **TAKE THE SURVEY: Metro Atlantans, Tell us what you think about the T-SPLOST**

Organizations around the Atlanta metro are beginning to weigh in on the regional transportation sales tax, which goes before voters on July 31. The Georgia Chapter has not taken a position yet, and our leaders need to hear from you. Please help inform our decision-making by taking a short [survey](#). Opinions of dues-paying members matter the most, but even if you haven't paid your dues, we are still interested in knowing your opinion. Been meaning to join? Sign up [here](#).

- **Transit Governance: state seeks too much control**

The transit governance bills, SB 474 and HB 1199, would create a council of local officials; several council seats would be held by appointees and nominees of the Governor. Operations would be led by a director nominated by the Governor. Both the council and the director would be subject to veto by a state-appointed board of directors, the majority of which would be appointed by the Governor.

You get the picture. While our region is moving towards proportional representation on regional transit, the state wants the to sit at the head of the table even as it pushes the expenses onto the region. We need to remind them that we want governance that respects who pays and how much. Tell your elected officials that the state needs to pay to play and that you urge them to vote NO on this pair of transit governance bills.

- ***Legislators still want to experiment with MARTA***

HB 1052 moves a voting seat on the MARTA Board from GDOT to GRTA, the agency responsible for Xpress commuter buses. Perhaps after the state or a county joins Fulton and DeKalb in paying for MARTA, we can reconstitute the Board to reflect financial contributions, but first the legislature would need to untie the hands of citizens in non-MARTA, metro counties--something this bill does not do.

Read more in [SaportaReport](#) last week and tell your elected officials how you feel by clicking here.

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## Quick Links



Atlantans - You have the chance to vote for the MOST on Tuesday, March 6th. [The Municipal Option Sales Tax](#) is a 1-cent tax that applies to most goods purchased in the City of Atlanta. These funds allow visitors and business people who use the City's water and sewer infrastructure but do not pay City water/sewer bills to help pay for upgrading and maintenance of the infrastructure. This is NOT a new tax; it is the reauthorization of an existing tax.

## Sierra Club Meetings

**Smart Energy Team Meeting**, Monday, March 12, 7:00 p.m., Mike Walls - Chair, [mwalls@ellijay.com](mailto:mwalls@ellijay.com)

**Beyond Factory Farming**, Monday, March 12 7:00 p.m., Leah Garces - Chair, [Leah.Garces@ciwf.org](mailto:Leah.Garces@ciwf.org)

**Wildlands and Wildlife Committee Meeting**, Tuesday, March 20, 7:00 p.m., Mike Murdock - Chair, [murdock1@mindspring.com](mailto:murdock1@mindspring.com)

**Fundraising Committee Meeting**, Wednesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m., Clay Tucker - Chair, [tuckerwf12@aol.com](mailto:tuckerwf12@aol.com)

**RAIL**, Monday, March 26, 7:00 p.m., David Emory - Chair, [david.emory@gmail.com](mailto:david.emory@gmail.com)

**Atlanta Inner City Outings (ICO)**, Tuesday, March 27, 7:30 p.m., Naomi Bock, [atlantaico@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaico@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Events

### Cobb EMC Owners Association Candidate Endorsements - March 6-13

The Cobb EMC Owners Association (CEOA) will begin their final series of vetting sessions to select the CEOA endorsed candidates for EMC Service Areas 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9. All Cobb EMC customer and members are eligible to vote for every Area, regardless of which one you live in. The vetting sessions will all be conducted at Butch Thompson's office at 2131 Moon Station Drive, Kennesaw on Tuesday 3/6, Thursday 3/8 and Tuesday 3/13. Bring your photo ID and your power bill. [Sign up with Sierra Club](#) to let us know you will be there supporting our green energy candidates.



### Greenprints Conference March 7-8



Now in its 15th year, [Greenprints](#) is a high-level forum for the sustainability-driven conversations that define our times. A gathering place for regionally and nationally renowned building science and design experts, as well as building industry professionals, Greenprints facilitates conversations between researchers and on-the-ground practitioners.

### Park Pride Annual Conference - March 26

Park Pride's 11th Annual [Parks and Greenspace Conference](#) promises to be the most ground breaking yet. Across the country, long-forgotten transportation corridors are being re-imagined as greenspaces. While The Atlanta BeltLine is the most notable local example of gray infrastructure becoming a green amenity, there are many success stories of communities looking to re-purpose neglected or even active highway corridors into park-like networks of trails and wildlife corridors.





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