



## Georgia Chapter

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### MARTA Increases Service, Expansion Ahead

The last decade has been a tough one for supporters of public transportation, largely characterized by funding and service cuts, missed opportunities to get commuter rail going and general treatment as a political punching bag. However, it now seems as though we have turned a corner, and the future of public transit in Georgia continues to grow brighter, with the Atlanta Streetcar nearing completion, the Atlanta BeltLine continuing to make progress and support building for it around the region as people flock to the Eastside trail. MARTA's new CEO, Keith Parker, has made great strides in his first year to put MARTA's house in order. Last week MARTA announced the system will be restoring some of the rail and bus service cut in recent years, which will decrease waiting and help draw more customers as using the service becomes a faster and more convenient alternative.



Even more exciting is the potential expansion of MARTA into Clayton County. Four long years have passed since the county ended its C-Tran bus service in 2010, and the county's economy suffered as a direct result. With no transit available, many people had to move elsewhere to be closer to work or school. This resulted in high residential vacancy rates, and reduced property values.

A bill passed in the 2014 legislature allows the Clayton County Commission to call for a vote on joining MARTA, but time is running out. MARTA will only appear on the ballot in November if Clayton Commissioners take action by July 1st. If approved by voters in November, the referendum would provide the county with a MARTA sales tax that could raise \$49 million a year to fund service if implemented at a full one percent. This would provide not only enough funding to restore and enhance bus service that was provided by C-Tran, but also get the commuter rail line that has been studied for over a decade up and running. Not only would Clayton residents save gas and get out of traffic, the county could build walkable communities around rail stations that attract people and businesses to the area.

Public attitudes are shifting as the benefits of having sustainable, alternative transportation options become clearer. The demand for improved service and expansion are evidence of this transition, and the RAIL Committee of the Georgia Sierra Club will continue leading the charge!

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### 2014 John Muir Outings Series



On most Saturdays in April, let's get outdoors together for the 2014 John Muir Outings Series. On these unique outings, you can learn about our current conservation campaigns and how you can help protect Georgia's environment. We've got trips planned to hike through Georgia's wilderness areas, as well as a paddle down the Savannah River to fight pollution. Join us, along with our special guests, as we share our environmental visions of how to enable a grand and sustainable Georgia, one of which our founder would be proud. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

## Sierra Club Meetings

**Wildlands Committee Meeting**, Monday, April 21, 7:00 p.m.

Mike Murdock - Chair, [murdock1@mindspring.com](mailto:murdock1@mindspring.com)

**Fundraising Committee Meeting**, Thursday, April 24, 6:00 p.m.

Colleen Kiernan, [colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org](mailto:colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org)

**RAIL Committee Meeting**, Monday, April 28, 7:00 p.m.

David Emory - Chair, [david.emory@gmail.com](mailto:david.emory@gmail.com)

**Smart Energy Committee Meeting**, Monday, May 5, 7:00 p.m.

Cecilia Harris, [ceciliaharris@gmail.com](mailto:ceciliaharris@gmail.com)

## Other Events

**April 22 - WRN Earth Day Lunch and Learn & Tour** - Weather Ready Nation presents a unique opportunity to learn first hand from forecasters, scientists and experts on how they protect Atlanta on a daily basis from severe and extreme weather using the latest technology, science and research. The event will include a unique behind the scenes look at their high tech facility, and will offer an opportunity to have conversation with Keith Stellman, Chief Meteorologist-in-charge for the Atlanta region. For more info and to register, [click here](#).



**April 24 - 19th Annual EarthShare of Georgia Earth Day**

**Party** - EarthShare of Georgia's 19th Annual Earth Day Party will be held at The Defoor Center from 7:00pm-10:00pm. Attendees will enjoy music, dancing and locally sourced organic foods. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on the Eco-silent auction stocked

with deals on Eco-products, trips, jewelry and more. Proceeds for the evening benefit EarthShare of Georgia, Georgia's only dedicated environmental fund. [Register here!](#)

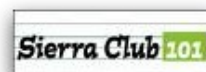
**April 24 - Act on Climate Tour** - Climate change affects people, not just polar bears -- and communities of color bear a disproportionate share of that burden. Our friends at the Hip Hop Caucus are on a national tour right now to talk about how communities of color are affected by both climate change and fossil fuel pollution, and how people can take action. The next stop is next Thursday at Clark Atlanta University! For more details, [click here](#).



**May 2 - Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable** - This month, the Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable will focus on Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) as they are increasingly important for placemaking and walkable, sustainable urbanization. Join

Southface for a conversation with Cumberland CID Chairman Tad Leithead as he discusses the Cumberland CID's successes, as well as plans for transit, continued urbanization, and, of course, the new Braves stadium. [Click here](#) to register.

**May 3 - Sierra Club 101** - You joined the Sierra Club to help protect the environment -- now what? Come learn about the Sierra Club and how to get involved in our local efforts. Open to members and non-members alike--bring a friend! Please [register here](#) so we can bring enough refreshments for everyone!





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