

# TRAVELERS QUARTERLY

**Augusta Regional Transportation Study**  
ARTS Newsletter

Winter **2019**



## Public Outreach at Community Events

By: **Dr. Oliver Page**

The annual Arts in the Heart Festival is the CSRA's largest arts- and culture-themed festival. The 2½-day event showcases artisans, entertainers, visitors and international foods from all over the Southeast and the world. This year's event on September 20-22 attracted more than 80,000 visitors, its largest ever. What's more, the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) participated for the first time.



ARTS staff sharing a booth with other City of Augusta departments interacted with several hundred festival goers. During these interactions, the public were informed about the MPO, how planning works for the benefit of communities and the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update. Passersby were invited to take the 2050 MTP Survey. The survey aimed to capture personal travel experiences and thoughts about the region's transportation. This community engagement initiative was so successful more than 300 surveys were completed.

## Contents

<i>ARTS in the Heart</i> .....	<b>Cover Page - Page 1</b>
<i>A Fresh [Graphic] Start</i> .....	<b>Page 1</b>
<i>2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update</i> .....	<b>Page 2</b>
<i>Transportation Data Conference</i> .....	<b>Page 3</b>
<i>Jessye Norman Boulevard</i> .....	<b>Page 3</b>
<i>Training Roundup</i> .....	<b>Page 3</b>
<i>Opportunity Mapping</i> .....	<b>Page 4</b>
<i>Transit App Launch</i> .....	<b>Page 5</b>
<i>GDOT ARTS Roads Status Update</i> .....	<b>Page 6</b>
<i>SCDOT ARTS Roads Status Update</i> .....	<b>Page 6</b>
<i>Contacts and Upcoming Meetings</i> .....	<b>Back Cover</b>

For many passersby this was the first time they had heard about the ARTS MPO. Through friendly engagement, the answering of questions, distribution of goodie bags and fact sheets, and the general marketing of planning, the overwhelming positive

response to ARTS participation at the 36th Arts in the Heart Festival exceeded expectations. ARTS staffers anticipate sharing the results from the completed 2050 MTP at next year's festival.



## A Fresh [Graphic] Start

By: Erik Engle

ARTS MPO is quickly approaching 50 years of transportation planning services to the Augusta-Aiken region. As a way to move outreach efforts forward, staff felt it was in the best interest of the organization to update and standardize all graphic design components. Along with refreshing the ARTS MPO brand and revamping outreach approaches, the idea of a new logo was addressed. Gaining general consensus from the ARTS Committees, several iterations of a new logo were completed in-house. Those iterations were then voted on by all Committee members via an online survey. Based on the results of the survey, staff chose the final design. It is with great pleasure to introduce the new and much-improved ARTS MPO logo!



## 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

By: Marcus Holland

The 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update process for the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) moved into the fast lane with the hiring of WSP, a global firm with vast experience in regional planning and transportation modeling.

Formerly known as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the MTP is a federally-mandated document that every Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must update every five years. It is designed to be a regional blueprint and policy guide for future transportation infrastructure. The MTP recommends projects to improve, maintain and operate roadways and bridges, sidewalks, multi-use trails and public transit.

WSP has locations on six continents, including over 100 offices throughout the United States. At the regional level, the firm boasts on-call contracts with more than two dozen MPOs throughout the Southeast, including Atlanta, Charlotte, Miami and Nashville. Through their office in Atlanta, project manager Glenn Coyle and deputy project manager Christy Jeon are leading the WSP team's efforts for the ARTS MTP.

The MTP process can be broken into five main parts:

- Inventory existing transportation conditions
- Assess existing and future transportation needs
- Recommend projects to address identified needs
- Prioritize projects using study goals, needs and public input
- Draft short-, medium- and long-term project programs based on available and potential funding

ARTS partners in Aiken, Columbia, Edgefield and Richmond Counties got the ball rolling in early 2019 by compiling baseline socioeconomic data for the Travel Demand Model (TDM), which is an integral part of the MTP. The 2015 baseline data includes population, employment, school enrollment and income information for each of the 1,106 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) in the four counties.

The WSP team, which includes Atlanta-based subcontractor Modern Mobility Partners (MMP), was formally introduced at the ARTS Policy Committee meeting in August. MMP quickly took control of the baseline data and used it to make projections for 2050. These projections of where people will be living, working and going to school during the next 30 years will play a crucial role in transportation planning throughout the region.

Over the next several months, WSP and MMP will continue to work with ARTS, its partners and the general public in putting together the MTP. The opening round of public meetings were held in late September and early October. The first draft of the MTP is due in late February with the second round of public meetings set for March. The final adoption of the MPT is scheduled for September 2020.



## Training Roundup

By: ARTS Staff

ARTS GIS analyst Marcus Holland and planning projects coordinator Mariah Harris attended the Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP) training program hosted by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) in Atlanta on Sept. 12-13. The program focused on how to use the CTPP web site to identify and collect detailed census data related to where people live and work and how they travel to their jobs. The class included MPO representatives from Albany, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, Savannah and Valdosta as well as members of the GDOT staff. The course was sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

ARTS senior planner Erik Engle recently attended the Georgia statewide Historic Preservation Conference in Rome. Topics included preserving African American places and sustainable design. One session in particular spoke to transportation directly. Historic preservation is no doubt tied to both land use and transportation systems alike, and GDOT has been working with a consultant, CALYX, on a statewide railroad context document. The document presents surveys, research findings, maps, and historic imagery on all railroads in Georgia. It is a comprehensive look at Georgia's railroad network from the early 19th century through the present. The document and associated GIS mapping is available to the public and serves as a reference for historians, historic preservationists, planners and engineers alike.

## Transportation Data Training

By: Dr. Oliver Page

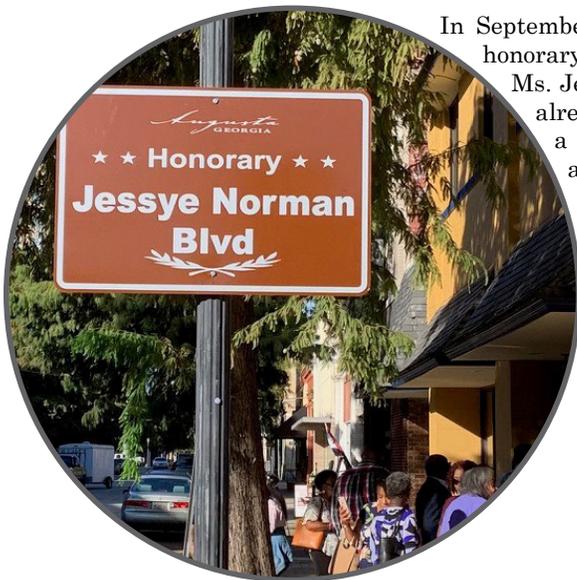
Data drives business. Data drives government. Data drives transportation decision-making. In September 2019, the Transportation Research Board (TRB) sponsored a 4-day conference on Performance and Data in Transportation Decision Making, in Atlanta. The conference aimed to showcase how the purposeful application of data can generate models, tools, processes and options for advancing the state-of-the-practice in transportation decision-making.

Over 300 attendees, including an ARTS staffer, participated in the conference, which consisted of four themes: Track A – Multimodal Planning; Track B – Performance and Data; Track C – Programming and Investment Prioritization; and Track D – Communication and Stakeholder Engagement. Foundational to effective decisions in transportation, for data to be useful or effective it must be easily accessible, usable, and understandable. It must also be accurate, complete, consistent, timely, and compliant. Given the volumes of data that is created daily, fulfilling all these requirements has become a growing challenge.

Participating in the Multi-Objective Decision Analysis Tool (MODAT) workshop was an important benefit of the conference. MODAT is a free multimodal project prioritization tool. MODAT scores and ranks projects according to user input criteria. It is particularly useful in the metropolitan transportation planning process where a community can view the outcomes of its community impact ratings on the ranking of its preferred projects. Application of the MODAT tool seeks to improve transparency and objectivity in project selection.

## Jessye Norman Boulevard

By: Erik Engle



In September, the City of Augusta had the pleasure of designating 8th Street as the honorary Jessye Norman Boulevard in Downtown Augusta. Hailing from Augusta, Ms. Jessye Norman was a world-renowned opera singer who lent her talent to the already rich musical history of the CSRA region. As a philanthropist she started a local non-profit, the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, which provides free after-school arts programs to the under-served youth in Augusta. She had intended to arrive for the unveiling of the street sign outside of the school, but unfortunately passed away shortly before making the trip to Augusta. Her legacy will live on forever. Ms. Norman died at Mount Sinai-St. Luke's Hospital in Manhattan. She was 74 years old.

## Opportunity Mapping

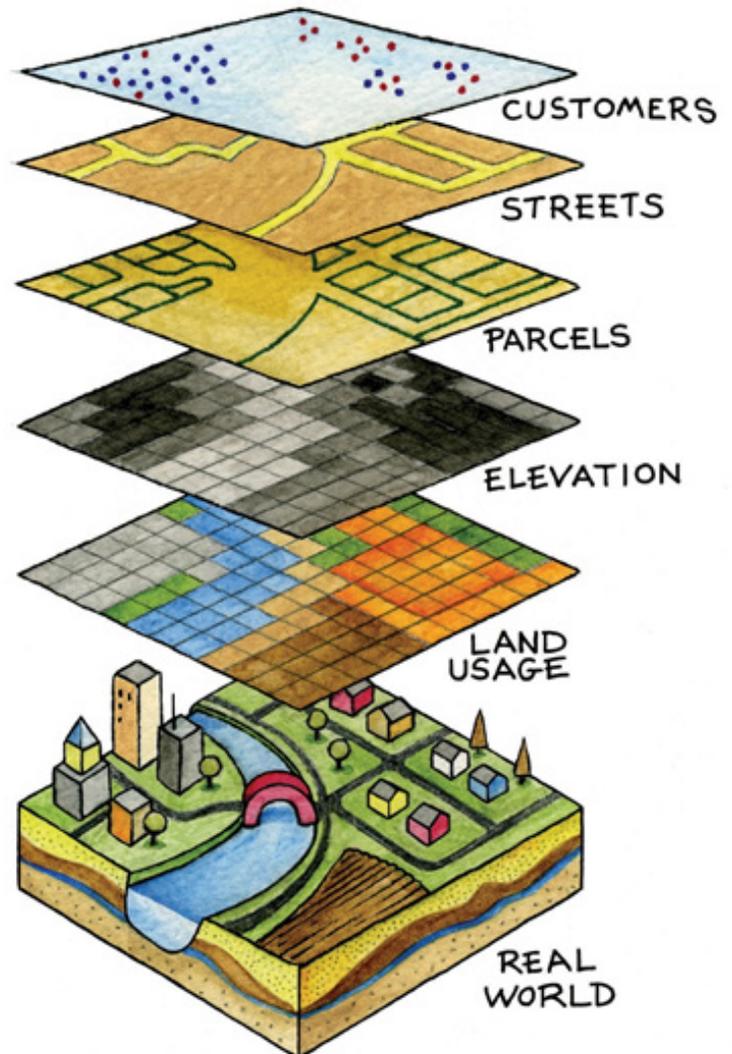
By: Warren Richard

The word opportunity, like the word beautiful, is dependent upon the eye of the beholder. In recent years, it has been used in national, state and local circles by government officials that are targeting local neighborhood development benefits. National government leaders have created “Opportunity Zones” ([www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)) – a robust economic development tax incentive created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. It is designed to encourage long-term private capital investment in low-income communities to support redevelopment projects and business start-ups.

Transportation investments, analyzed holistically and geographically, are needed for neighborhoods that lack access to healthy foods, connections to nearby walking trails, and job centers that pay livable wages. In another setting, “Opportunity Mapping” (The Innovative MPO, Smart Planning, Strong Communities, Transportation for America) as described by metropolitan transportation planners is an approach to identify overlooked neighborhoods through analysis of comprehensive data and geographic mapping.

Mapping is a way to address “spatial inequity” (Opportunity Mapping Issue Brief, Kirwan Institute) that is associated with race and social justice issues. With an “unevenness of opportunity,” there is opportunity to align neighborhoods with geographic tools and analysis to reverse the impact of injustice. By identifying where it exists and does not exist, according to experts, there is opportunity to intentionally improve lives.

Connecting neighborhoods suffering from disinvestment and isolation is crucial to improving the overall economic climate. Added regional multi-modal options are potential solutions. Opportunity mapping provides a visual and equitable strategy for quality of life amenities that create real opportunities for all residents.



## Transit App Launch

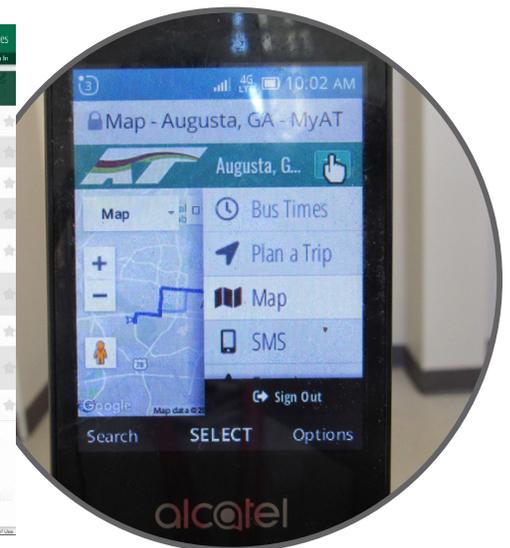
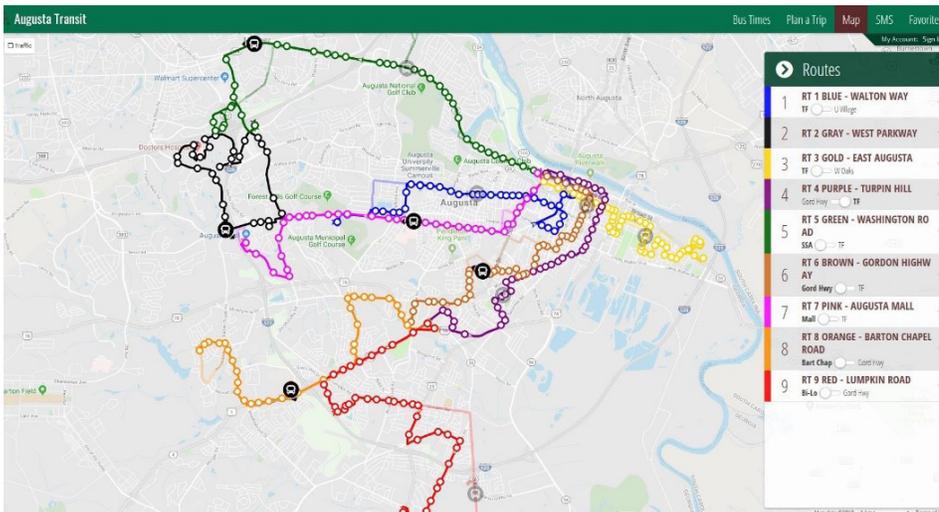
By: Udomekong Udoko

Augusta Transit (AT), with assistance from the Augusta Information Technology Department, has introduced a new application software program that allows transit riders to receive real-time information on the anticipated arrival and departure times of their buses.

The app is called MyAT, which is an abbreviation for My Augusta Transit. MyAT is able to process travel-time information of fixed-route vehicles for use by transit riders. MyAT includes a number of features that transit riders can access in order to receive additional information related to the buses. These program features are:

- A “Map” feature that displays an online map of the existing transit fixed-route services (see image below).
- A “Plan a Trip” function that provides riders with detailed information on how to use AT buses to get from one specific location to another.
- A “Bus Times” feature that gives transit riders up-to-date information about the scheduled arrival times of the buses along a specific fixed route and its bus stops.
- A “Short Message Service” (SMS) that functions to alert transit riders of bus arrival and departure times for any fixed-route stop.
- A “Favorites” selection tool function that allows transit riders the option to search and select information on the bus schedule of their favorite transit stops in real time.

The MyAT app can be viewed online and through a mobile phone with internet connection. The web version is available at <https://MyAT.AugustaGa.gov>. Mobile versions are available for free download in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store by searching “Augusta MyAT.”



**For inquiries and future article submissions, please contact the following:**

Warren Richard Jr., Senior Planner  
Phone: (706) 828-7165  
Email: [wrichard@augustaga.gov](mailto:wrichard@augustaga.gov)

Erik Engle, Senior Planner  
Phone: (706) 821-1160  
Email: [eengle@augustaga.gov](mailto:eengle@augustaga.gov)

## GDOT ARTS Roads Status Update



**Name:** SR 383 from North of I-20 to SR 104  
**ID:** M005753  
**County:** Columbia  
**Status:** Work began in September 2019; completion in March 2020.

**Name:** SR 388 from I-20 to SR 232 - TIA

**ID:** 0008350

**County:** Columbia

**Description:** Widening (1.59 miles).

**Current Budget:** (TIA) Preliminary engineering - \$1,936,726; ROW - \$7,091,790; Utilities - \$39,796; Construction - \$16,437,596; HB170 - \$3,000,000; Program year 2020 construction (HB170) - \$8,163,702

**Status:** ROW acquisition is underway; letting in November 2019.

**Name:** I-20 at Savannah River and Augusta Canal

**ID:** 210327

**County:** Richmond

**Description:** Bridge replacements over Augusta Canal and Savannah River; widening (0.65 miles) in Georgia and South Carolina.

**Current Budget:** (2017) Preliminary engineering - \$3,599,601.25; Construction - \$82,512,606.02

**Status:** Survey, geotechnical and pavement evaluations complete; construction anticipated in Fall 2019.

**Name:** SR 4 from Milledgeville Road to Government Street - TIA

**ID:** 220680

**County:** Richmond

**Description:** Widening (1.59 miles).

**Current Budget:** Preliminary engineering - \$126,754.68 (TIA)(2017); ROW - \$8,516,722; Utilities - \$804,435.99; TIA - \$6,967,096 (Construction); HB170 (\$5,000,000)

**Status:** All ROW purchased; Beams Construction low bidder for contract; construction to begin in next few months.

**Name:** SR 4/US 25 BU at Savannah River at South Carolina Line

**ID:** 0013928

**County:** Richmond

**Description:** Bridge replacement (0.20 miles).

**Cost Estimate:** Preliminary engineering (2019) - \$1,500,000; ROW (2021) - \$250,000; Construction (2025) - \$34,000,000

**Status:** Review package submitted to GDOT chief engineer regarding proposed preferred alternative; additional coordination meeting for GDOT and cities of Augusta and North Augusta in near future; let in April 2022.

## SCDOT ARTS Roads Status Update



### 1. SC 302 (Silver Bluff Road) Corridor Improvement

**ID:** 0034292

**County:** Aiken

**Description:** Widen corridor to 3 lanes; add turn lanes; curb and gutter; signalization of 3 intersections.

**Budget:** \$8,892,716.63 (Preliminary engineering - \$920,000; ROW - \$1,700,000; Utilities - \$73,781; Construction - \$6,198,935.63)

**Status:** Scheduled for completion by Oct. 9, 2019.

### 2. SC 126 (Belvedere-Clearwater Road) Widening

**ID:** 0041446

**County:** Aiken

**Description:** Widen corridor to 5 lanes; upgrade drainage; add 4-foot bike lanes and 5-foot sidewalks on both sides.

**Budget:** \$15,439,600 (Preliminary engineering - \$1,300,000; ROW - \$2,139,600; Construction - \$12,000,000)

**Status:** ROW phase is underway; construction obligation in December 2019; letting in February 2020.

### 3. SC 118 (Hitchcock Parkway) Corridor Improvement

**ID:** 0040695

**County:** Aiken

**Description:** Various intersection improvements along corridor; add shared-use path from Huntsman Drive to SC 302 (Silver Bluff Road).

**Budget:** \$16,996,800 (Preliminary engineering - \$3,300,000; ROW - \$1,496,800; Construction - \$12,200,000)

**Status:** ROW obligated in December 2018; property owner contact began in Q1 of 2019; construction obligation in April 2020; letting in June 2020.

### 4. SC 19 (Whiskey Road) at Eagle Road and S-447 (Old Whiskey Road) Intersection Improvement

**ID:** P037361

**County:** Aiken

**Description:** Signalization of SC 19 (Whiskey Road) at Eagle Road intersection; add left turn lanes along SC 19; change access along S-447 (Old Whiskey Road).

**Budget:** \$2,100,000 (Preliminary engineering - \$450,000; ROW - \$400,000; Construction - \$1,250,000)

**Status:** Design services contract negotiated with Parrish and Partners; public information meeting held in August 2019; public comments and proposed design under review; ROW obligation TBD.

**ARTS MPO**  
535 Telfair Street, Suite 300  
Augusta GA, 30901



## Upcoming MPO Meetings

---

Please call **(706) 821-1796** to verify the time and location.

### **Joint Technical Coordinating Committee**

Meets quarterly; February 12, 2020, 10:30 AM, 535 Telfair Street, Augusta GA 30901, 3rd Floor Room 391

### **Joint Citizens Advisory Committee**

February 12, 2020, 10:30 AM 535 Telfair Street, Augusta GA 30901, 3rd Floor Room 391

### **Policy Committee**

December 5, 2019, 11:00 AM, 535 Telfair Street, Augusta GA 30901, 1st Floor Linda Beazley Room

### **SC ARTS Subcommittee**

Meets quarterly, January 30, 2020, 4:00 PM, 1930 University Pkwy, Aiken, SC 29801, Sandlapper Room

### **Augusta Public Transit Citizen Advisory Committee**

Meets monthly on the 4th Thursday, 4:00 PM, 1535 Fenwick Street, Augusta, GA 30904

## Contacts

---

### **Augusta Planning and Development Department**

535 Telfair Street, Suite 300, Augusta, GA 30901  
Tel: (706) 821-1796

Robert Sherman, Director/ARTS Exec. Director  
rsherman@augustaga.gov  
Carla Delaney, Deputy Director  
cdelaney@augustaga.gov

### **Aiken County Planning and Development Department**

1930 University Parkway | Suite 2800 Aiken, SC 29801  
Tel: (803) 642-1520

Joel Duke, Director  
jduke@aikencountysc.gov  
LJ Peterson, Transportation Planner  
Lpeterson2@aikencountysc.gov

### **Lower Savannah Council of Governments**

2748 Wagener Road, Aiken, SC 29801  
Tel: (803) 649-7981

William Molnar, Ph.D, Director  
wmolnar@lscog.org  
Dana Luttrull, Grant Compliance Manager  
dluttrull@lscog.org