

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Citizen Involvement Day Set for March 25

Single Day Offers Four Forums on Critical Issues Facing Atlanta Region

(ATLANTA – March 16, 2006) Atlantans concerned with the region's livability can explore critical transportation and development issues in a single day – Saturday, March 25 – during four public forums within walking distance of each other in downtown Atlanta.

Citizens can choose from one or more of four events; 1) a “future forum” will feature a sneak preview of growth trends in the region; 2) a group of professional organizations will host a public reporting forum for citizens to comment on infill housing and redevelopment issues in their neighborhoods; 3) the BeltLine will unveil its toolkit for community input and 4) transportation questions will be addressed during a town hall meeting.

As the region builds toward a population of six million by 2030, the **Atlanta Regional Commission** will discuss that future growth during a public workshop for **Envision6**, an integrated regional land use and transportation planning initiative. It's the first opportunity in the Envision6 process for the public to discuss growth in metro Atlanta, review current planning scenarios for managing future growth and provide regional planners with advice on the location and type of future development.

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“We want citizen stakeholders to tell our planners what sort of development they want, and where they want it, as the region prepares for the addition of more than two million people and 1.7 million more jobs by 2030,” said Tom Weyandt, ARC’s comprehensive planning director. “Their feedback is critical to envisioning how we accommodate growth while maintaining our quality of life.”

Community input is the theme for the day as a diverse group of professional organizations hosts a public reporting forum for **infill housing and redevelopment** in the City of Atlanta. The forum will be an opportunity for each of Atlanta’s 236 neighborhoods to voice concerns about their specific issues. Neighborhood representatives are encouraged to organize through their **Neighborhood Planning Unit** (NPU) chairperson.

The information collected by the panel will be published and become the frame of reference for the panel’s work to address infill housing, redevelopment and improvements to Atlanta’s zoning ordinance. For this reason, it is crucial that each of Atlanta’s 24 NPUs be represented at the forum. The panel includes architects, builders, remodelers, planners, preservationists, professors, realtors and at-large members. Interested parties may collect or submit information at aiaatlanta.org

“As Atlanta grows, the pressures to redevelop intown properties with more density and with larger homes to meet current market demands will only increase. The City must revise its residential zoning ordinances to address this redevelopment, and who better to help than the professionals that use and work with these ordinances on a daily basis,” said Cooper Pierce, chairperson for the American Institute of Architects Atlanta Chapter’s Infill Redevelopment Committee. “We want to identify and understand the problems and challenges of the various neighborhoods around the City before trying to make any recommendations to revise the zoning, and the community input is the beginning.”

The Citizen Involvement Day continues with the launch of a framework inviting public participation that will help define the workplan for the **BeltLine**, a 22-mile loop of transit, greenspace, housing and development that will connect more than 45 neighborhoods in the urban

core of the City of Atlanta. The Atlanta Development Authority, the City's agent to implement the project, will distribute the **Community Engagement Framework (CEF)** toolkit that is the centerpiece of the initial stages of gathering community input. ADA representatives will also be on hand to answer questions and gather suggestions.

"Our goal with this initiative is to provide a means for residents and interested groups to keep abreast of the complex BeltLine project, and to create a meaningful way to provide input into the project's direction," said Greg Giornelli, president of the Atlanta Development Authority.

"Maintaining community involvement and education with the BeltLine will be key to the long-term viability of the project over the next 25 years. The CEF will give all city residents and interested groups an equal opportunity to participate and provide input."

Also on March 25, **U.S. Rep. John Lewis** will host a **Transportation Town Hall Meeting** to hear concerns and answer questions about public transit in metro Atlanta, the BeltLine and traffic congestion from constituents in the 5th District. The event includes a panel discussion and question-and-answer session with representatives from ARC, City of Atlanta's planning bureau, Center for Quality Growth & Regional Development at Georgia Tech, Georgia Department of Transportation and MARTA.

"Atlantans are in love with the automobile," said Rep. John Lewis. "But as the environmental costs of traffic congestion, frustrating commutes, and polluted air begin to diminish our quality of life, we are beginning to discuss some of the options that can free us from those problems. Change can require sacrifice, but it should be sacrifice that the community as a whole is willing to make. That is why I am hosting this town meeting, so that residents of metro Atlanta have ample opportunity to hear from the experts and share their concerns about current issues and potential transportation impacts."

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Event Details

ENVISION6 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Atlanta Regional Commission, atlantaregional.com

Loudermilk Center

40 Courtland St., NE, Atlanta, GA 30303

INFILL HOUSING 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

American Institute of Architects, aiaatlanta.org

Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center

395 Piedmont Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30308

BELTLINE 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Atlanta Development Authority, atlantada.com

Atlanta City Hall, 2nd floor

New City Council Chambers

55 Trinity Ave., Atlanta, GA 30303

TRANSPORTATION TOWN HALL 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

U.S. Rep. John Lewis, www.house.gov/johnlewis

Atlanta City Hall, 3rd floor

Old City Council Chambers Auditorium

55 Trinity Ave., Atlanta, GA 30303

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