

# Regional Transportation Governance



## Why this legislation is important:

Across Georgia, public modes of transportation vary greatly. The numbers of systems, operators, and scope and types of services within regions are myriad. Access to transportation is confusing, complex and, in some areas, non-existent. This is especially problematic for vulnerable populations such as older adults and persons with disabilities, many of whom have no other way to get around.

Transportation is the

- Most frequently requested service for older adults and persons with disabilities,
- Most often unmet need for transit disadvantaged populations,
- Necessary link to independence for older adults and disabled individuals, and the
- Connection to employment or other vital services.

Georgia's older adult population is projected to grow by over 140 percent in the next 20 years, the 9th highest increase in the U.S. Seniors are 23% of rural human services transportation users, and 62% of such trips are to medical appointments ranging from prevention to acute care (dialysis). Yet nationwide surveys cite regions in Georgia as some of the worst in the country for transportation and transit access for older adults and transportation disadvantaged. Rural and urban transportation services reflect disconnected funding sources and regulations but not the way people want and need to move around.

It is time for Georgia to adopt Regional Transit Governance by establishing Regional Transit Authorities (“RTAs”) to increase critical mobility for older adults, persons with disabilities, and other transit disadvantaged populations across the State.

## What this legislation would do:

- Create governance entities that reflect the unique needs of its local residents including older adults and persons with disabilities.
- Ensure a majority voice for local governments in the structure and decision-making to ensure that RTAs are accountable and responsive to local populations
- Empower RTAs to finance, plan, prioritize services and coordinate and direct federal and state funds.
- Streamline services to make it easier for older adults to access and navigate transportation services and systems.

CO-AGE supports legislation to create appropriate locally-driven regional transit governance through the establishment of RTAs. RTAs can improve transportation services for all Georgians, including the transportation-disadvantaged such as seniors and persons with disabilities. by operating and developing existing transit services to meet the unique local needs of the individual region. Regional transit governance would effectively:

- Increase services and maximize investments
- Streamline access and create efficiencies
- Foster mobility management and coordinate systems and services