



Building Opportunity: A Conversation on Poverty and Transportation Access in Metro Atlanta

#OpportunityATL

Wednesday January 21, 2015

Presentation Highlights: Rebecca Burns, Deputy Editor, Atlanta Magazine

- Atlanta is:
 - Number 1 for urbanized-area sprawl
 - Number 3 for lack of social mobility
 - See the video about income inequality in 2 miles and a 5 minute drive down Ivan Allen Drive/Joseph E. Boone:
<http://www.atlantamagazine.com/article/video-atlantas-income-inequality-in-less-than-2-miles-and-5-minutes/>
 - Number 4 for sprawl
 - Number 4 for growth in suburban poverty
- It costs more in Georgia than in any other state to own a car
- The poverty rate here for a family of 4 is \$23,850
- 500,000 metropolitan Atlanta residents live in food deserts.

Panelists:

- Rebecca Burns, Deputy Editor, Atlanta Magazine
- Keith Parker CEO & General Manager, MARTA
- Dr. Michael Rich, Executive Director, Emory Center for Community Partnerships
- Nathaniel Smith CEO & Founder, Partnership for Southern Equity

Panel Discussion Highlights:

KP: A Quality of Life study in Charlotte showed a correlation between improved transit and lowered rates of teenage pregnancy. Here, MARTA is currently providing 25,000 jobs statewide.

NS: Transportation is a moral issue and an efficiency issue, we have a big mismatch in talent and jobs.

MR: In Atlanta, we have no natural barriers to keep us in, hence why we have such a low density. 76% of jobs are close to a rail station, but only 50% of low-income residents in Fulton and DeKalb counties live within a ¼ mile of rail.

RB: Elected officials need to have a direct experience to poverty. Let's give them a "day in the life" scavenger hunt exercise. I.e. given \$5, can you take transit into the city core and buy lunch? This is similar to how many people have a connection to the gay community and a recent surge in the gay rights movement.



MR: A good example is Chicago's New Communities program, we need a comprehensive quality of life plan for revitalization that is all-encompassing.

KP: The state is undergoing a new transportation plan. TODs (transit-oriented developments) utilize public/private partnerships through ground easements. They ensure that the development complements the overarching vision. The MLK station will have 20% mixed-income affordable housing. We need to educate the public on the realities of taxes (in Charlotte, drivers are spending 11 cents on gas tax that goes towards transit). MARTA will soon undergo a comprehensive routes analysis. Atlanta Magazine's article "Where it All Went Wrong" about suburban counties not joining MARTA explains a lot of the city's current transit issues.

Upcoming: April 9th is National Infrastructure Day, be on the look-out for events.

###