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Date: 10/31/2016 11:46:09 AM
Subject: SLC Regional Resource - Commuter Rail

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New SLC Regional Resource
Commuter Rail in the Southern Legislative
Conference States

Commuter Rail in the Southern Legislative Conference States: Recent Trends

Commuter trains, a fixture in many American cities since the late 19th century, started losing prominence in public transportation calculations in the 1940s with the ascent of the personal car, while vast improvements in public bus services also accelerated their decline. However, in the last 30 years or so, particularly in the early years of the 21st century, there has been renewed interest in this form of transportation across the country, including in the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) member states. This renewed interest has been propelled for a variety of reasons: commuters choosing rail over cars for convenience; easing traffic congestion; reducing air pollution; promoting economic development; and boosting property values. Consequently, multiple metropolitan regions in SLC member states continue to operate commuter rail systems and expand their operations, even initiating new networks. Given that these initiatives have emerged in transit-starved areas, this increased momentum to introduce or expand commuter rail systems is a direct response to the demands and expectations of businesses and the workforce. Information on recent efforts in the SLC states to enhance the light rail capacities in their transportation plans, an important cog in any multimodal strategy, is detailed in this SLC ***Regional Resource***.

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Located in Atlanta, Georgia, and established in 1959, the Southern Office of CSG fosters intergovernmental cooperation among its 15 member states, predominantly through the services provided by its **Southern Legislative Conference**. Legislative leadership, members and staff utilize the SLC to identify and produce solutions for the most prevalent and unique state government policy issues facing Southern states.