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**GEORGIA PASSENGER GROUP CITES NEW STUDY,  
CALLS FOR QUICK ACTION ON COMMUTER RAIL**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A passenger rail advocacy group says a new report released by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce should be a wake-up call for Georgia.

The report, compiled by R.L. Banks and Associates, studied seven proposed commuter rail lines between Atlanta and Macon, Athens, Gainesville, Canton, Bremen, Senoia and Madison, and concluded that "the ridership is there" to support all seven lines.

The Georgia Association of Railroad Passengers (GARP) is a longtime supporter of Atlanta-area commuter rail service.

The Banks report estimated that an Atlanta-area commuter rail network would carry thousands of passengers daily, averaging between 255 and 362 riders on each train.

"This report compared Atlanta with four 'peer' regions that have developed successful commuter rail operations in recent years: Los Angeles, South Florida, Northern Virginia and Dallas-Ft. Worth," said GARP President Steve Vogel. "The report concluded that passenger loads on Atlanta-area commuter trains would be comparable to the initial passenger loads on those successful systems."

Vogel said the study should be a "wake-up call" for state officials who have been "dragging their feet" on commuter rail for more than a decade.

"The real ridership numbers will likely be even higher," he said, noting that the Banks report did not consider student ridership on the Atlanta-Athens line and did not consider the ridership that will be produced by transit-oriented development around train stations.

He also noted that under current State Transportation Board plans, any new expressway lanes in the Atlanta-area will be toll lanes, high occupancy vehicle lanes or truck lanes.

"That will make commuter rail even more attractive as an alternative," he predicted.

The complete report and a PowerPoint™ summary may be found on the Press Room page of GARP's website [www.garprail.org](http://www.garprail.org).

The Georgia Association of Railroad Passengers is a 28 year-old statewide organization that advocates passenger rail as part of a balanced transportation system for Georgia.

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