



2017 AMPO Annual Conference – Call for Presentations Submission Form

Upon completion of this form, please email it to Bill Keyrouze at bkeyrouze@ampo.org AND Rachel Roper at rroper@ampo.org by April 14th, 2017.

NAME(s): Shayna Pollock

NAME OF PRESENTER(s) (*if different than above*):

PRESENTER(s)' BRIEF BIO(S) (75 words or less):

Shayna Pollock is a Senior Planner in the Mobility Services Division at the Atlanta Regional Commission. Previously, she worked at Central Atlanta Progress where she focused on the development and promotion of alternative transportation options. She received a BA in Political Science and a BS in Environmental Economics from the University of Georgia. She also holds a joint Master in Planning and Regional Development from Radboud University (Netherlands) and Cardiff University (UK).

ORGANIZATION(s): Atlanta Regional Commission

PHONE(s):



EMAIL(s):



TOPIC/SUBTOPIC AREA(s): Scenario Planning

PRESENTATION TITLE: Winning the Future through Exploratory Scenario Planning

ESTIMATED LENGTH OF PRESENTATION (*Please note: most submissions will be considered for 20-minute presentation slots. If selected, it will be included as part of a panel comprised of various proposals.*): 20 minutes

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL (*This is intended to give a brief overview of your proposal. Please limit your summary to 2-3 sentences.*):

Evolving technology, massive demographic changes, and environmental uncertainties are coalescing into a rapidly changing tomorrow. To help decision-makers prepare for an uncertain future, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) undertook an exploratory scenario planning process. Learn about ARC's innovative approach to scenario planning that focuses on adapting and responding to changing environments through the identification of key drivers of change, the development and modeling of alternate futures, and the use of an online visualization tool to engage stakeholders in the ensuing policy conversations.

SPECIAL NOTES (*Please list any special considerations or notes to the reviewers.*):

FULL DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION IDEA (*Please limit your description to 1,000 words.*):

Rapidly evolving technology, massive demographic changes, and environmental uncertainties are coalescing into an uncertain future rife with potential disruptions. To create resilient communities despite these uncertainties, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) sought to consider and plan for a variety of potential alternate through an exploratory planning process. The exploratory planning process enabled ARC to work towards developing an adaptable plan aimed at keeping up with global challenges and technological changes occurring within weeks and months rather than the decades normally encountered in traditional long range planning processes. Instead of the traditional Regional Transportation Plan development approach of looking at an end-state that relies on specific transportation and land use changes, ARC's exploratory scenario planning process aimed to develop wide-ranging policies to help the region weather changes across a spectrum of possible alternate futures.

The proposed presentation will cover ARC's exploratory scenario planning process by outlining the steps the agency took to develop its own alternate futures. By covering the steps and corresponding lessons learned, session attendees can gain an understanding of the fundamentals and benefits of exploratory scenario planning in long-range transportation and can gain ideas for applying the approach at their own MPOs. ARC's process of scenario development follows:

ARC was awarded a SHRP2 implementation grant through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to apply state-of-the-practice planning approaches to the Atlanta region. A portion of ARC's SHRP2 grant work focused on developing a long-range vision for the future based on the process outlined in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) SHRP2 Capacity Research C08 report, *Linking Community Visioning and Highway Capacity Planning*.

Adapting *Linking Community Visioning and Highway Capacity Planning*, ARC used an exploratory scenario planning approach, a strategic planning method frequently used in the corporate world to better understand future uncertainties, as a bridge between the 2016 and 2020 Atlanta Region's Plans.

Acknowledging that new transportation technologies with far-reaching impacts are evolving at a rapid pace, ARC decided to refine the goals of the 2016 plan by asking: what does it mean to Win the Future in a time of rapid change?

In order to Win the Future, ARC first had to identify potential drivers of change that may impact future outcomes. To identify the factors that are most likely to disrupt the future, ARC implemented a STEEP (social, technology, economy, ecology, policy) framework to sort through the external environment and organize the chaos of influencing factors. Nine key drivers of change for the Atlanta region emerged.

Then, ARC used Impacts 2050, a scenario-analysis modeling tool, representing regional links between population, land use, employment, and transportation, to frame the scenario development. The Impacts 2050 framework created four pre-specified scenarios: Momentum, Gentle Footprint, Tech Triumphs, Global Chaos. In keeping with the model's structure, ARC used these four scenarios as a starting point for developing the Atlanta region's own alternate futures. After altering those four scenarios to fit the Atlanta region's needs and key drivers of change, ARC modeled the new scenarios (Full Steam Ahead, Green Growth, Technology Reigns, and Fierce Headwinds) in Impacts 2050. Desiring to compare modeling results across multiple sectors, ARC also modeled the scenarios in the Regional Strategic Planning Model (RSPM)— a sketch long range transportation and land use planning tool— and the Regional Economic Model, Inc. (REMI).

The findings from the scenario narrative development and modeling exercises allowed planners and decision makers to examine disruptive forces that may change the way our communities develop and fostered an emerging dialogue shaping the policy framework for the next long-range plan.

Throughout scenario development, ARC employed innovative stakeholder engagement processes to engage key parties in a discussion on future disruptors and their impacts on the region's communities. Policy conversations will continue as ARC launches a scenario visualization tool developed through the SHRP2 process. The tool, which mirrors the scenario development process itself, first educates users on the nine drivers of change and then allows users to select the scenario they believe most closely aligns with the future they predict. The tool then moves the conversation forward by allowing users to see the impacts of a few policy alternatives as shown through the RSPM modeling results. As ARC looks ahead to its next major plan update cycle, we anticipate the tool serving as an important foundation for robust policy discussions with the public and officials on how to develop a more resilient, responsive and adaptable transportation plan for our region.

During the session, ARC will also share key modeling lessons and demonstrate the scenario visualization tool (the code for the tool will be available in Q4 2017).

Ultimately, the wide applicability of ARC's exploratory planning exercise will foster learning on:

1. Exploratory scenario planning development as a tool for refining long-range transportation plans through broad stakeholder engagement and facilitated policy discussions.
2. Local and national trends shaping transportation and communities.
3. Facilitating broad stakeholder discussions while focusing on implementable policy solutions.