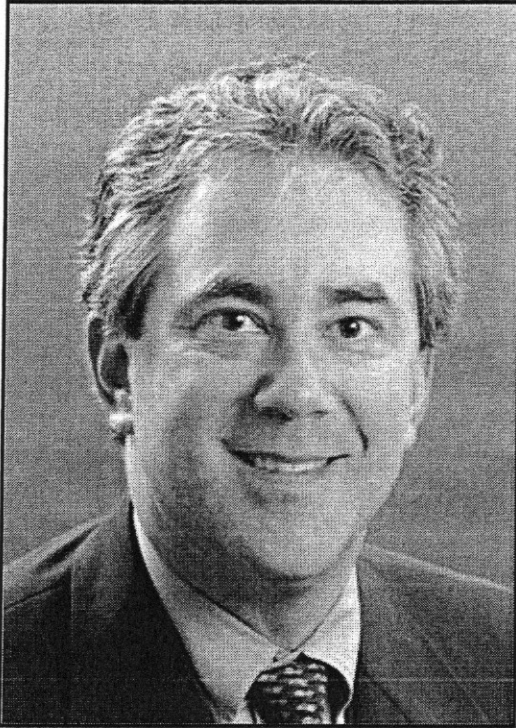


## WIENER: Transportation Investment Act key to future economic development

As of Monday, October 24, 2011



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**#**Recently, elected leaders from throughout metro Atlanta finalized a list of proposed transportation improvements that will greatly influence our economic development future for decades to come.

**#**The Atlanta Regional Transportation Roundtable has approved its final investment list -- a multibillion-dollar selection of projects -- to be funded through the proposed Transportation Investment Act (TIA) coming before voters in July 2012.

**#**The TIA separates the entire state into 12 distinct regions with each region voting on a one-percent sales tax to complete area transportation upgrades. A percentage of revenues will also go directly to local counties for their own specific needs.

**#**There are many significant and worthwhile roadway expansions, interchange improvements and transit options that could be funded through this new regional

approach. Plans are proposed to blend both short- and long-term solutions to accommodate increased capacity for now and in the future.

**#**But the more significant outcome of what is being considered is its impact on job growth and economic recovery going forward. The TIA gives us the opportunity to dramatically increase our standing in the global economic development competition.

**#**On a daily basis, Gwinnett County competes with other states, and even other countries, to attract and retain corporate interests and other businesses seeking to invest and create employment opportunities. Part of the equation for site selectors, current businesses and potential employees is an analysis of the current and future infrastructure. In comparison to other locales, our lack of transit alternatives, places us at a distinct disadvantage.

**#**Denver, Charlotte, Nashville and other communities of all sizes have invested in multi-modal, regional, integrated transportation infrastructure solutions that hold much promise not only for their current work force, but also for the changing priorities of the next generation of young professionals seeking urban-quality options. Now we have the

opportunity to make similar choices with the funding alternatives to reach our goals of not only protecting the economic base we are relying on, but provide a far reaching regional solution that enhances our ability to attract world class companies to Gwinnett County.

#Just last month, media giant Time Warner announced that it will locate a new division and its 500 jobs in Tampa instead of metro Atlanta where the company already has a sizable presence. Missed opportunities like this one could change in our favor as greater transportation investment becomes a reality.

#As the metro area's Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) continue to lead with redevelopment and infrastructure investments, these new transportation projects will greatly augment the planned enhancements already under way.

#If Gwinnett County stands to achieve even greater levels of success, it is in our shared best interests to consider the benefits that could be realized with a new regional approach, with transparent oversight, to transportation and transit planning in the future.

#Leo Wiener is Chairman of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) Board of Directors. He is also a principal and partner with Glenwood Development Company LLC.