WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNOR BARNES  
By Georgia Tech President G. Wayne Clough  
SMARTRAQ Smart Growth Conference for Local Government Officials, GCATT, 11/10/99  

I am pleased to join with SMARTRAQ and the Georgia Tech City Planning Program in welcoming all of you to this important meeting. We are especially honored to have Governor Barnes with us this morning, and the fact that he made time in his busy schedule to be here is an indication of how important smart growth is for metro Atlanta and the state of Georgia.

Our traditional mindset has been to separate ourselves from nature, as if we were not a part of it. We pollute the air and water to serve a growing population and economy. We put the garbage out on the street and forget about it. But there is no magic that makes pollution and garbage disappear. If we fail to recognize that the quality of our lives depends on the quality of our natural environment, our decisions will eventually come back to haunt us.

It is true that growth and progress are to blame for metro Atlanta’s transportation and air quality problems. But at Georgia Tech, we believe that progress can also help us solve those problems. Our goal is to craft and use new technology, to develop new processes, and to take new approaches to our problems that will enable us to sustain our present quality of life and at the same time ensure that our children and grandchildren will also have the opportunity to prosper. That, in a nutshell, is what we mean by “smart growth.”

I want to commend Governor Barnes for his courage in taking a head-on approach to the difficult and growing problems of air quality and transportation congestion that are plaguing the metro area. Governor, Georgia Tech is pleased to have the opportunity to be your partner in this effort.

I also want to commend the Governor for his wisdom in recognizing that Georgia Tech can provide the talent he needs. Georgia Tech alumnus Joel Cowan heads the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, and Georgia Tech professor Catherine Ross serves as its executive director. Another of our alumni, Tom Coleman, was recently chosen as the new commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Governor Barnes is also injecting “smart growth” into the bigger statewide economic development picture. And Georgia Tech is proud to join him in that effort as well. The Yamacraw Mission will make Georgia a major center for software engineering and electronic design. And Georgia Tech is ramping up our computer science and engineering programs to get the job done.

In southeast Georgia, the Georgia Tech Regional Engineering Program is up and running with very strong interest. We expected about 50 students to enroll this fall, and we actually have 100.

Here in metro Atlanta, we are educating the high-tech workforce we need to prosper. But “smart growth” also requires that we solve our traffic congestion and air quality problems, and to do that we will have to talk and listen and work across the lines between political jurisdictions, across the lines between organizations and, here at Georgia Tech, across the lines between research disciplines. That is what SMARTRAQ is designed to do.
SMARTRAQ stands for Strategies for Metro Atlanta’s Regional Transportation and Air Quality. And its goal is to provide the research, the knowledge base and the forum for communication that will help to guide the metro area in making wise decisions about transportation, land use and air quality.

Beyond SMARTRAQ itself, Georgia Tech is also contributing its research expertise to the problems of transportation and air quality through our Transportation Research Institute and John Williams Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development.

Georgia Tech’s students, faculty and staff live and work in this city. We drive these highways and breathe this air every day, and we have a vested personal interest in helping to make things better. We are educating our students to be sensitive to environmental considerations in their professions and their personal lives. We are working to create new technology that is both cost-effective and environmentally friendly. We are turning our campus into a living laboratory for environmental sustainability in the middle of downtown Atlanta.

And we look forward to working with Governor Barnes, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority and all of you to make Atlanta a leader in finding smart ways to solve our problems and manage our growth, so that we can maintain our high quality of life and give future generations the same opportunity to prosper as we have had.

At this time I am proud to introduce to you the Governor of the great state of Georgia, the Honorable Roy Barnes.