

APTA AGENCY OF THE YEAR SUBMISSION - QUALITATIVE
June 28, 2024

INTRODUCTION

With apologies to Charles Dickens, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity.” Nothing better describes MARTA’s recent years. We have emerged from the lowest low in January 2022 when our then-GM/CEO Jeff Parker took his life by suicide, to an agency with a renewed sense of purpose under the leadership of Collie Greenwood.

We are in the middle of the agency’s largest capital expansion since our creation 45 years ago. We have launched award winning programs in every key area of the agency as will be detailed in the following sections. APTA annually recognizes our innovations and customer-focused initiatives with awards in safety, security, marketing, sustainability, and communications.

The COVID pandemic fundamentally altered transit agency operations and the expectations of our employees and the riding public. MARTA rose to meet that challenge head on. We did not lay off a single employee during those challenging years and we have steadily re-gained ridership and the trust throughout the Atlanta region.

As you will see in the following categories, MARTA has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing transportation services in the Atlanta metropolitan area through its achievements in infrastructure development, technology and innovation, sustainability, equity, customer service and community engagement. By improving our transit system and prioritizing the needs of passengers, MARTA continues to play a vital role in connecting communities and promoting economic development in the Atlanta region.

SAFETY & SECURITY

MARTA’S Enhanced Safety Measures fall under four Safety Management Systems (SMS) pillars: Safety Policy, Safety Risk Management, Safety Assurance, and Safety Promotion. With executive leadership support and improved collaboration with the State Safety Oversight Agency, MARTA’s Safety Program has experienced significant gains over the previous three years.

MARTA enhanced the safety risk management of its Operations and Maintenance and Capital Improvement Projects by adding new offices, business units, leadership and staff positions within the Department of Safety and Quality Assurance (DSQA). DSQA went from a headcount of 65 in 2020 to 86 in 2023.

The new team members and reorganized structure significantly improved MARTA’s capacity to perform safety risk management activities. From 2018 to 2021, a significant number of backlogged rail safety event investigations existed. Since 2021, a total of 485 rail investigations have been closed out, which includes the backlog. MARTA’s 2019 Triennial Safety Audit yielded 113 CAPS, 97 remained open in 2021. In September 2022, MARTA received another Triennial Audit which resulted in only 40 CAPs. Since 2021, MARTA has closed all 137 CAPs.

DSQA proudly boasts certified ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 Quality and Environmental Management Systems. These systems have improved MARTA’s compliance with local, state, and federal requirements.

Implementing and monitoring approved corrective actions from safety risk management efforts have resulted in a three-year low in reportable Rail Safety Events from 2021 (151), 2022 (66) to 2023 (24), an 84% decline.

In 2022, DSQA implemented an incentivized safety reporting campaign, encouraging Bus Operators to proactively report hazards. DSQA recently launched a Bus Collision Reduction Safety Initiative which includes six areas of focus: Marketing, Recognition and Rewards, Technology, Procedure Enhancement and Maintenance, Rules Compliance, Auditing, Stakeholder Engagement.

Employees are required to complete trainings on the Agency Safety Plan, SMS, and Safety 1st. Monthly toolbox meetings held with frontline employees at bus garages and rail facilities are another example of safety promotion. These Enhanced Safety Measures have resulted in national recognition from APTA and established MARTA as an industry leader in transit safety.

On the police side, MARTA is among the safest properties in the country. We were awarded the APTA 2023 Rail Security Gold Award for our outstanding security programs, specifically the Joint Bike Patrol Team partnership with the Atlanta Police Department. The Joint Bike Patrol Team (JBPT) was created in 2021, and the increased visibility and accessibility of officers has resulted in a 17 percent overall decrease in crime and a 22 percent increase in ridership and revenue due to increased feelings of safety and security among passengers.

In 2022, we launched an Unmanned Aircraft System Program that creates a secure transit environment for employees and passengers by providing timely, high-quality video of locations that may be difficult to access during special events. The high-quality video feed is accessible from the MARTA Emergency Operations Center and have been utilized during events such as the Taylor Swift concert, Southeastern Conference (SEC) football championship game, Dragon Con parade, Peachtree Road Race, full-scale exercises and rail station construction.

OPERATIONS

The Operations Division has implemented several changes and processes of significance to demonstrate its commitment to delivering on its organizational priorities. MARTA's first and third organizational priorities, *Consistently Provides Excellence in Customer Service and Strengthen the MARTA brand* are being exemplified through a Station Management process implemented at our rail stations. Through the component parts of the process: *Eyes-on, Hands-on, and Game-on* MARTA's ensures its customers experience cleaner and better maintained stations and amenities.

In addition, during the pandemic, MARTA recognized it needed to demonstratively acknowledge the increased sensitivity towards the cleanliness and upkeep of its rail stations. It was with this realization that the Operations Division implemented a cost neutral organizational change that resulted in the creation of two new business units that established an increased focus on providing cleaner and better maintained rail stations. These new business units operate under the mantra that MARTA moves people versus trains or buses, and our patrons' experience while waiting for a train or bus at a rail station is as important as the riders' experience on the vehicle. Our commitment to this matter was manifested with a multiyear, \$37 million contract let in 2022. This contract augments in-house cleaning and has significantly improved the cleanliness of our rail stations.

The second effort of significance involved improving standard operating procedure (SOP) controls and adherence within operations. In 2021, a business unit called Operations Planning and Controls administered by an Analysis and Procedures Officer (APO) was created to lead this effort. The group's mandate was to review, update, and catalogue over three hundred SOPs. After this initial refresh of SOPs, the APO has

routinely completed thirty-five random compliance checks of selected SOPs every six months. This cadence of randomly selected SOP compliance checks will continue until the biennial review of all SOPs compliance recommences in July of 2025.

The State Safety Oversight (SSO) Office at Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) conducted its 2019 Triennial Audit yielding 113 findings requiring corrective action plan (CAP) submissions versus the 2022 Triennial Audit that yielded 40 findings, a 65% decrease. The purpose of the Triennial Audits is to assess MARTA's compliance to its SOPs. The enhanced creditability, goodwill, and safety compliance rigor established by the above effort and improved collaboration between MARTA Safety, MARTA Operations, and the SSO has been recognized by the industry. The return-on-investment for this effort has been notable and can be attributed, largely in part, to the decisions and efforts made by the Operations Division to ensure its customers and employees realize predictable outcomes that come with structure and consistency.

To close, there are other improvements and enhancements that have been realized in Operations, for example there are numerous opportunities within the Operations Division to contribute to the improved fiscal health of the Authority, while continuing to improve service quality and reliability. To this end, we are increasing our engagements with operations improvement consulting firms where improved results are expected.

MAINTENANCE

MARTA's commitment to maintenance is demonstrated through programs engineered to improve reliability and enhance the customer experience.

MARTA is investing \$748M to replace our railcar fleet with 224 new railcars currently under construction by Stadler. The first two sets of new cars are scheduled for delivery to Atlanta in November 2024. Concurrently, we continue to invest in the current fleet through preventative and predictive reliability programs. The \$97M fleet life extension program on our 1980s railcars resulted in a 50% improvement in mean distance between failure between 2020 and 2024. The Life Cycle Asset and Reliability Enhancement program, driven in-house by MARTA staff, continuously improves our fleet throughout its life cycle and includes four major components: predictive replacement of components prior to failure; an enhanced 120,000 mile inspection; statistical analysis of data to drive decisions on maintenance activities; and retirement of vehicles based on depreciated value. Our four (4) streetcar vehicles are similarly undergoing a component-level overhaul to ensure continued reliability and performance. These programs are a testament to proactive maintenance designed to maximize fleet life usefulness, as demonstrated by our late-1970s and 1980s cars still used in regular service.

Bus Maintenance is undergoing a systematic improvement initiative with enhanced focus on quality assurance and reliability. MARTA engaged ARGO-EFESO to develop and implement comprehensive time standards and productivity benchmarks within bus maintenance, which are tied to our asset management software. This allows our managers to target productivity improvements and process enhancements. Additionally, MARTA bus maintenance is revamping its quality assurance and engineering program, utilizing the Institute of Asset Management's Subject Specific Guidelines as a foundation to improve our bus reliability and availability. Additionally, MARTA continues our commitment to growing our zero-emission fleet with six (6) electric buses in service now, an additional six (6) electric BRT-vehicles scheduled for delivery this calendar year, and additional electric buses purchased as our charging infrastructure is installed in our facilities.

MARTA recently completed the fourth phase of our track renovation improvement project, which replaced critical rail interlockings and rail tie fasteners to improve ride quality and safety. The \$125M train control and

SCADA upgrade program was completed in late-2023, which delivered an upgraded rail control center, train control software, and field equipment. Benefits include enhanced reliability and accurate customer-facing information within our automatic train control system. Additionally, MARTA continues to invest in our electrical infrastructure, with \$65M being invested into replacing ten (10) traction power substations, \$58M being invested into upgrading ten (10) auxiliary power rooms, and smaller targeted sustainability projects that ensure reliable power delivery to our heavy rail system.

Our Vertical Transportation group is nearing completion of a major rehabilitation program of our elevator and escalator equipment. This 10-year, \$150M project began in 2017 and provides critical upgrades to nearly all MARTA elevators and 75% of our escalators. To date, 102 out of 111 elevators have been rehabilitated and upgraded (116 in system), along with 84 out of 116 escalators (150 in system), providing customers with reliable, accessible transportation in our stations.

ACCESS/MOBILITY

MARTA Mobility has adopted the mantra of “The Future is Accessible.” To that end, Mobility’s Travel Training team works closely with customers and community stakeholders to provide 1-on-1 and group training, and community outreach initiatives that engage current and future fixed route and Mobility riders. Most training initiatives take place in MARTA’s Travel Training Center (TTC), designed to facilitate individual and group learning for those seeking to become independent riders on fixed routes. Over the past two years Mobility has facilitated 14 on-site program training initiatives in the TTC, and 12 outreach programs with community stakeholders. These initiatives have touched over 130 trainees, and over 24 service animals.

During 2023, Mobility piloted a new initiative for our assessment certification process, termed ‘Mobility-on-the-Road.’ Mobility partnered with community stakeholders to streamline its certification process and to provide hands-on service orientation in the field rather than at MARTA headquarters. Events have been held in locations across the 3 counties in MARTA’s service area generating positive community feedback and media coverage.

MARTA knows that engagement and the voice of the disabled community is vital to our business. The MARTA Accessibility Committee (MAC) was established to advise MARTA on how to best provide service to the communities of seniors and individuals with disabilities within our service areas. This includes gathering and providing feedback to MARTA to ensure that decisions, activities, programs, and services are equitable and do not adversely impact current or potential riders who are seniors or individuals with a disability. Below are just a few projects where the MAC members provided advice and feedback:

- Audio Visual Information System – in all rail stations
- Breeze Vending Machines
- Elevator/Escalator Renovation Project
- Customer Experience – Persona Profiles
- CQ400 Train Replacement Project – two MAC Members, including one wheelchair-bound member, joined MARTA staff for a facility tour and design charette at the Stadler manufacturing plant to improve accessibility features on our new rail cars.

MARTA created Accessible Services Videos which are informational videos aimed at educating all customers on the accessible transportation options at MARTA. These videos are posted on MARTA’s website.

Further, MARTA holds regular Mobility-specific town halls, transit enhancement meetings and public hearings involving the community to hear concerns about service equity issues. Partnerships have been developed with community organizations, including Disability:IN, Bobby Dodd Institute, Georgia Diversity

Council, Statewide Independent Living Council of GA, and SHOWAbility. In conjunction with these community organizations, MARTA organized and participated in over 15 events including Lakewood Library Autism Awareness, Annual ADA Celebration, Tools for Independent Living, and Livability-Age-Friendly Communities seminar.

In 2023 and 2024 MARTA worked with the Autism Transit Project whose purpose is to spread acceptance and awareness for neurodivergent individuals. Through this collaboration, rail station announcements were recorded by children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The announcements were broadcast on the platforms at MARTA's 38 rail stations throughout April to mark Autism Acceptance Month. MARTA was an early adopter of this partnership, among the first 4 agencies to partner.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) are more than just aspirational words at MARTA. We ensure that all decisions, activities, programs, and services are equitable for all stakeholders.

In the area of workforce engagement, MARTA has opened our doors wide to recruit a diverse workforce and we embrace and support our employees through newly launched employee resource groups. Setting the tone from the top, women hold 40% of the ranks of our Executive Management Team and racial diversity is prioritized with 60% people of color in leadership.

Celebrating cultural awareness and recognizing the contributions of specific communities is one way that MARTA supports its diverse workforce. MARTA highlights over 20 cultural occasions annually, which include Hispanic Heritage Month, Women's History Month, Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Black History Month, Juneteenth, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and Pride Month.

In 2022, we launched employee resource groups to give employees a sense of belonging, enhance professional development and provide diverse input into business policies. MARTA has launched five ERGs: MARTA Young Professionals Group (MYPG), Black Excellence at MARTA (BEAM), Empowering Women at MARTA, MARTA Veteran Professionals (MVPs), and Pride with MARTA. Programs of the ERGs include educational seminars as well as cultural, social and community service events. Hundreds of MARTA employees regularly engage with these groups inside and outside the workplace.

The Atlanta region is blessed by the legacy of Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, who insisted that the economic vitality and opportunity of the region be available to minority-owned firms. MARTA plays a significant role in upholding and expanding that legacy. Our DBE Program ensures MARTA's contract dollars go to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses. MARTA regularly exceeds our annual DBE goals. Our current goal is 24% and current DBE achievement based on capital program spend is 29%. MARTA attained a DBE spending level amounting to over \$125M in the last three years.

The DBE Certification Team conducts community outreach events every quarter to encourage firms to apply for DBE certifications, receive mentoring, and build capacity to compete for opportunities at MARTA and other government entities. As a result, 445 new DBE & ACDBE firms were certified from 2021-2023.

Wanting our prime contractors to do more than just meet a percentage goal, MARTA launched "Inclusion Matters", a 2-day seminar led by award-winning diversity expert Al Vivian, son of the late civil rights icon Reverend C.T. Vivian. The leadership of our largest vendors are educated on the business case for supplier diversity and inclusive leadership. Since 2021, 17 firms have participated.

MARTA holds regular Small Business Roundtable meetings with Authority leadership and DBE subcontractors to discuss their current projects, challenges and opportunities for improvement.

In 2021, MARTA was named “Government Partner of the Year” by the Georgia Hispanic Construction Association (GHCA). Partners since 2016, MARTA supports the GHCA and its membership in a variety of ways, including posting construction job opportunities and other materials in Spanish and hosting Spanish-only workshops on MARTA property.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MARTA always looks for innovative ways to better serve our customers. As part of that ongoing effort, MARTA established its Riders’ Advisory Council (RAC) to deepen public understanding of transit operations, gather feedback, and improve the customer experience. Twenty-five individuals across MARTA’s geographic jurisdictions are chosen for a two-year cohort through a public application process. Members hear presentations on topic including governance, finance, transit planning, capital projects, arts and cultural initiatives, sustainability and much more. In addition to open discussions and tours of transit operating facilities, RAC members submit ideas to improve MARTA. One idea--the installation of a signalized, raised crosswalk at a downtown station--made its way through design and into the Facilities Program plan.

In 2022, RAC members provided direct feedback on the design of MARTA’s new rail cars when they visited the car manufacturer’s facility with MARTA staff. Their comments on ADA accessibility, seating, passenger information screens, and spaces for luggage and bicycles were incorporated into design. They used virtual reality systems to simulate the operation and maintenance of rail vehicles, contributing to an even greater appreciation for the work of transit employees. As advocates for the Authority, RAC members also participate as transit ambassadors alongside MARTA staff assisting customers during special events.

To better support the rising number unsheltered people who travel on MARTA’s buses and trains, MARTA sought out a local non-profit to create a transit-specific outreach team. In 2020, we launched MARTA HOPE (Homeless Outreach and Proactive Engagement). Investing over \$1 million during the last three years, MARTA HOPE has impacted the lives of those in need by conducting 28,644 total engagements with riders, connecting 1,306 people to temporary shelter, helping 101 people find permanent housing, reuniting 69 people with their families, and referring others to employment services, 81 of whom were hired for jobs.

In 2023, the Office of Customer Technology was established in response to an increasing number of customer complaints regarding the accuracy of our bus and rail schedules on our digital platforms. This new office has begun to deliver improvements by deploying an enhanced data feed to the real-time arrival displays at all 38 rail stations.

MARTA continues to deliver on its commitment to provide amenities for our bus riders by installing more than 600 shelters and benches in the last three years. The installations were in direct response to the hundreds of customer concerns logged by the Customer Care Center.

Another customer-focused program branded MARTAConnect was established to leverage the benefits of ride-hailing technology to help our customers minimize impact to their trips during service interruptions. This program proved to be a popular option when early morning bus schedules were curtailed due to a shortage of operators. MARTAConnect provides a limited, non-cash rideshare subsidy to customers needing assistance. During 2021, a total of 388 rides were taken; 27,993 rides taken in 2022 and 73,378 rides taken

in 2023. As MARTA stabilizes its operational workforce, we continue to transform our services to meet the needs of our customers.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The MARTA Finance Department has celebrated many successes over the last few years. MARTA's Office of Treasury Services has worked hard to enhance MARTA's credit rating to lower debt service costs and has obtained AAA bond ratings. In addition, Treasury has saved over \$57.1M in bond refunding transactions, produced investment earnings of \$42.8M, developed a COVID Relief Federal funds drawdown strategy that built a large sales tax reserve exceeding \$800M, implemented a new banking services contract with reduced fees, improved organizational efficiencies and reduced cash balance requirements, and established a renewable natural gas revenue sharing program that has earned \$2.3M while promoting the use of renewable natural gas.

The Office of Procurement improved governance through a re-write of MARTA's Purchase Card Policy, updated the Procurement Manual to reduce errors and improve federal compliance and digitized 445,000 contract document pages into an electronic repository. MARTA Stores and Materials increased inventory accuracy to 98.25%, which is 3% above the goal. The group also reconciled over \$30M of encumbrances to support expenditure payments and more rigorous project accounting, and it established an interim electronic contract repository to house contract information pending a conversion to Oracle Cloud.

The Office of Revenue Operations onboarded 100+ companies to participate in MARTA's partnership program, upgraded all Breeze Ticket Vending Machines to Windows 10, awarded a contract for the replacement of obsolete parking revenue equipment with state-of-the-art systems allowing for a 60% reduction in staff, implemented a Family Dependent Pass, produced customized Breeze Cards, and applied new technology by using Radio Frequency Identification stickers and wristbands for special events. MARTA rolled out Breeze Mobile 2.0, a major update to the previous Breeze Mobile application with improved features.

The Office of Budgets and Grants led the efforts that resulted in MARTA receiving over \$100M in competitive federal grants in 2023-2024 and obtained and agreed upon the procedures statement for the financials section of the National Transit Database report with no findings. The group has facilitated balanced operating and capital budgets that present a manageable soft-landing approach to recovery from the COVID Pandemic by bringing revenue and expenditures back into alignment by fiscal year 2027.

The Office of Accounting has achieved unqualified audit opinions of its financial statements with no findings for the last several years, obtained an unqualified audit opinion for the Single Audit with no findings (to include audit of \$300M in federal expenditures), and completed the FTA Triennial Review with zero outstanding action items while receiving the Government Finance Officers Association Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting for a remarkable 30th consecutive year.

Furthermore, MARTA retirees are in good shape as MARTA's Defined Benefits Pension Programs are well-funded with the Represented Employee Pension currently over 102% funded and the Non-represented Pension being over 82% funded.

SUSTAINABILITY

Over the past three years, MARTA has made advancements in sustainability through the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework. The timeline below highlights MARTA's key achievements towards

decarbonization, climate adaptation and biodiversity. MARTA's achievements in ESG practices reflect our commitment to sustainability principles and underscore our role as leaders in sustainable public transit.

In 2021, MARTA attained APTA Gold Level recognition, underscoring our dedication to sustainability. We issued Green Bonds, raising over \$369 million to fund environmentally sustainable projects. Additionally, MARTA received a \$852,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to maintain and expand MARTA Markets, promoting local food sustainability.

In 2022, MARTA began participating in the Revenue Natural Gas Sharing Program, leveraging the EPA's Renewable Identification Number (RIN) program for biofuels. This initiative generated \$2.34 million in revenue. The RIN program allows refiners to earn tax credits for captured landfill gas that matches compressed natural gas, which our CNG-powered buses provide. Our sustainability efforts were recognized with the "Best Sustainability by a Transportation Company" award by Commissioner Echols at the 2022 Energy Matters Awards.

That same year, MARTA established the Office of Sustainability and placed its first six zero-emission buses in revenue service. In collaboration with Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group, we increased the Atlanta Affordable Housing and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Initiative to \$200 million. We also partnered with the DeKalb County Housing Authority to develop a 250-unit affordable community at Kensington Station.

To enhance community engagement and social sustainability, we installed a Station Soccer pitch at Kensington Station. MARTA supported local agriculture by partnering with the Global Growers Network to establish a half-acre farm near the Indian Creek rail station, which hosts farmers from Burundi, enhancing food security and community resilience.

In 2023, MARTA recycled over 3.5 million gallons of water annually during bus and rail car washes, equivalent to six Olympic-sized swimming pools. Our transit system prevented over 2.3 million metric tons of greenhouse gases from being emitted, comparable to removing over 551,000 cars from the road.

Our waste diversion programs recycled over 9,000 tons of materials, diverting 25-30% of waste from landfills. We secured a \$19.3 million FTA Low- or No-Emissions Grant to purchase 25 additional electric buses and achieved a 21% increase in fuel efficiency for our bus fleet compared to 2012.

MARTA launched a comprehensive sustainability communication program, including ESG training, a dashboard to track utility usage and highlight achievements, and quarterly sustainability newsletters. We submitted our annual Climate Disclosure Project (CDP) Climate Change response and aligned our Sustainability Report with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) standards.

Contributing to biodiversity, MARTA deployed two retired rail cars in the Atlantic Ocean as artificial reef material. This initiative provides stable habitats for marine life, supporting ecosystem resilience and fostering coral and algae growth.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

At MARTA, Workforce training is divided into two areas: Professional Training and Technical Training. The Technical Training programs ensure that MARTA's front line employees and those who maintain the Authority's assets are fully trained so that the bus, rail, streetcar and mobility systems operate without

interruption. Chief among the Technical Training roster of courses is the infrastructure program. Through this program MARTA's heavy rail system operates safely meeting our Federal and State safety standards. We are always looking for ways to train. Recently in our Radio Maintenance Program we adopted a hybrid approach whereby candidates spend two weeks in the classroom and then two weeks on the shop floor. This rotation continues until the required six months elapse. We've seen success through this approach as candidates can test out their classroom instruction without delay. Another program MARTA has begun is our Bus Line Instructor program. 30 bus operators, meeting an established criterion of safety and customer service metrics and certified to a program standard, are available to coach our bus operator candidates. Not only does this aid in the retention of bus operators, this program also serves to train high performing bus operators in people management skills. This affords senior drivers the opportunity to gain valuable experience and ready themselves for promotion to positions in management. This program has proven to be popular and successful since its inception.

Given the competitive landscape to attract, develop and retain transit talent, a key goal is the development of the workforce at MARTA. Upskilling employees has been a concentrated focus. MARTA's Future Ready Workforce Initiative, a career pathway program in partnership with the Technical College System of Georgia and Gwinnett Technical College, offers training for students interested in careers in Rail Car Maintenance, Fare Gate Maintenance and Electrical Power and Distribution. The entire workforce has access to hundreds of online training courses via the MARTALearn system that upskill in the areas of technology, safety, various business skills and wellness. MARTA offers to the workforce the Academies of Learning, including the Professional Development Academy, that develop employees across ten competency areas that are aligned to organizational goals. The Leadership Development Academy is offered to management to build capabilities across 21 competency areas and branded as Leading the MARTA Way. The program anchors on the guiding principles of leading others, leading self, and leading the business. Implemented in 2023, and now with a second graduating class, is MARTA's Women's Development Program. Data showed that there is a 2:1 ratio of men to women in leadership positions. The goal is to develop high-potential women for future management positions. MARTA is actively engaged in offering training provided by transit professional organizations such as Latinos in Transit, Eno Center for Transportation, COMTO and WTS.

ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYEE COSTS

To contain costs and improve absentee rates, MARTA has implemented a variety of strategies over the past three years:

1. **Enhanced Attendance Bonus for Bus Operators:**
 - Set clearly defined attendance expectations and consequences for excessive absenteeism.
 - Revised the latest collective bargaining agreement to encourage more employees to maintain excellent attendance. (The CBA language was recently revised to reward Bus Operators with perfect attendance on a quarterly basis rather than an annual basis. The change to a quarterly bonus incents employees to gradually set a goal to achieve the attendance bonus since it is no longer an all-or-nothing proposition. Additionally, the new incentive is a direct monetary payment of \$250 per quarter, with an opportunity to earn a \$500 bonus at the end of the year if the employee has successfully achieved the attendance standard for all four quarters of the year.)
 - Celebrated the increase of employees achieving the attendance reward standard by approximately 388%.
2. **People First Initiatives:**
 - Hosted employee events that promote employee engagement and boosts morale.

- Fostered a positive workplace culture that values and recognizes employee contributions.
 - Conducted employee surveys to measure satisfaction and address concerns that may contribute to absenteeism.
3. **Wellness Programs:**
 - Promoted employee health and wellness through onsite programs that encourage preventive care, healthy lifestyles, and stress management.
 - Offered incentives for participation in wellness programs, such as prizes and monetary incentives from carriers.
 - Used Employee Assistance Programs to provide assistance with workplace stress and burn-out, as well as personal stresses.
 4. **Effective Leave Management:**
 - Created new roles to manage leave of absences throughout the agency. (MARTA created five (5) Superintendent of Workforce Management roles to manage callouts and various types of leaves for represented employees. Additionally, a Leave Administrator role was added to the HR department in 2023 to assist with the management of absences and FMLA for the non-represented staff.)
 - Ensured employees understand their leave entitlements and the proper procedures for requesting leave.
 5. **Return-to-Work Programs:**
 - Enhanced our return-to-work programs to facilitate a smooth transition for employees returning from extended leave.
 - Offered work accommodations or modified duty positions to help employees integrate back into the workplace.
 6. **Health and Safety Measures:**
 - Created a safe work environment to minimize workplace injuries and illnesses.

These strategies have successfully and effectively enabled MARTA to manage absenteeism, reduce related costs, and create a more engaged and productive workforce.

MARKETING

Retaining and Attracting MARTA Riders through Creative Marketing Campaigns

MARTA has launched innovative marketing campaigns over the past three years to retain and attract riders. These efforts engaged the community, celebrated cultural milestones, and offered incentives to make public transportation more appealing.

50 Years of Hip-Hop

To honor hip-hop's legacy and Atlanta icons over the past 50 years, MARTA organized events and released limited-edition Breeze farecards featuring OutKast, Jermaine Dupri, Killer Mike, Ludacris, and TLC. The celebration included a DJ, dancing, and photo booth, and culminated in a bus unveiling for Jermaine Dupri and SoSo Def's 30th anniversary. The largely social media-focused campaign resulted in 671,306 impressions, 42,824 engagements, and 6,690 clicks. Celebrities such as 21 Savage participated, enhancing MARTA's cool factor and cultural resonance.



MARTALand Holiday Activations

During the holiday season, MARTA offered free rides on holiday-wrapped buses, surprise pop-up events by MARTA “elves” and carolers, and customer appreciation events, as well as designing and selling MARTA “ugly” sweaters. These initiatives enticed new riders and fostered goodwill among existing ones, and the clothing items have become a holiday must-have. The festive atmosphere integrated public transit into the holiday experience, creating a memorable and positive association with MARTA.

[MARTA invites public to enjoy free trips on holiday-themed buses – Decaturish](#)

50th Anniversary of MARTA's Longest-Serving Bus Operator

In 2022 and 2023, MARTA celebrated the 50th anniversary of its longest-serving bus operator, Coy Dumas Jr. The campaign included a custom-wrapped bus and highway billboard featuring Mr. Dumas and a media campaign celebrating MARTA's history and Mr. Dumas's dedication to service and his customers. This personal touch humanized the organization and instilled trust and reliability in the quality and safety of our services. The campaign resulted in 232 news stories published in two years and generated \$3 million in advertising value. [Meet the MARTA bus operator who has been driving for 50 years - Atlanta Magazine](#)

"The Next Movement" Film Series

In collaboration with NEXT Atlanta, MARTA co-hosted "The NEXT Movement" film series and interactive art performances. Launched in 2022, this series featured influential Atlanta artists and activists sharing their stories amid the pandemic and racial reckoning of the time. These intimate performances, similar to NPR's Tiny Desk concerts, were performed on a railcar and aired on local NPR affiliate WABE. The campaign utilized MARTA's assets for unique experiences, creating buzz about MARTA, and reaching close to one million viewers.

[The NEXT Movement rolls into MARTA \(ajc.com\)](#)

"Take the Train to the Plane" Campaign

The "Take the Train to the Plane" campaign promoted MARTA as the best option for travel to the world's busiest airport. This campaign highlighted MARTA's direct service into the terminal and the best way to avoid traffic and parking hassles. The campaign was activated through videos, email, social media, radio, digital displays, app banners, and the website. It successfully positioned MARTA as the most efficient travel choice, generating substantial social engagement and video views.

[Take the Train to the Plane - YouTube](#)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

MARTA's Community Relations program is deeply embedded in neighborhoods across our service area. Our 38 rail stations and hundreds of miles of bus and rail lines are more than just lines and dots on a map. We have expanded vital programs to address food deserts and launched new programs to connect with the public to create a more vibrant, livable region.

MARTA Fresh Market & Goodr Mobile Grocery Store

For eight seasons, the MARTA Market program has brought MARTA riders at six rail stations access to healthy, fresh produce with a pop-up farm stand. In 2023, MARTA partnered with food access startup Goodr to build

out a mobile grocery store and host seven free grocery pop-up events, serving over 700 Clayton County households with fresh produce, meats, dairy, and pantry items, enough for over 23,000 meals. MARTA provided additional services at these events, registering over 120 Clayton County seniors and riders with disabilities with Reduced Fare MARTA Breeze cards and sharing information about four Clayton County capital expansion projects.

MARTA Rapid Summerhill - Rapid Response Team

In 2023, MARTA broke ground on the region's first Bus Rapid Transit line, known as MARTA Rapid Summerhill. For the first of multiple planned major regional expansion projects, MARTA launched a place-based and project-based Rapid Response Team to provide BRT mode education, provide regular updates to key community organizations, liaise between the construction contractor and local businesses, and build future ridership. The team held 48 events to date, including monthly updates to neighborhood meetings, quarterly Coffee & Construction breakfast updates, a Bike the Route event in partnership with Atlanta Department of Transportation, and activations at the Atlanta Streets Alive festival. We look forward to adapting the model across future BRT projects and building trusted partnerships throughout the construction process.

New Station Soccer Pitches

Station Soccer is an award-winning community development program whose founder was recently awarded an Order of the British Empire designation for this partnership with MARTA. The vision is to create a network of mini soccer fields and more, anchored by MARTA transit stations in Atlanta. Affordability and transportation hurdles mean many kids in metro Atlanta area do not have access to safe places to play soccer nor the resources required to travel.

MARTA has expanded the world's first and only transit-accessible "League of Stations" with new pitches at our Kensington, Lindbergh, and East Lake stations, allowing kids and adults to help cultivate healthy lifestyles through sport and transit at their home stations and across our system. Today we have six Station Soccer locations. We will have 10 locations by the time the World Cup arrives in Atlanta in 2026.

National Voter Registration Day

For 14 years, MARTA has joined community partners to expand civic engagement opportunities and encourage voter registration and election participation on National Voter Registration Day, the nation's largest non-partisan civic holiday dedicated to helping eligible citizens register to vote. Between 2021-2023, local organizations and Departments of Elections have registered 796 voters at rail stations across the MARTA system.