

A blurred train in motion, moving from left to right across the frame. The train is silver and yellow. In the background, there is a brick wall. Overlaid on the image are several teal-colored silhouettes of people running, suggesting a sense of speed and movement. The text 'MARTA HOPE Team Project' is centered over the image.

MARTA HOPE Team Project

Riders' Advisory Council

October 7, 2020

Lyle V. Harris | Senior Director, Customer & Employee Experience



History & Background

- By design, transit infrastructure offers convenience, proximity and mobility
- MARTA/transit often seen as relatively “safe havens” by those seeking shelter
- Unsheltered persons on MARTA generating customer concerns about safety/security
- Metro Atlanta’s lack of affordable housing, fraying social safety net and COVID-19 compounding problems for vulnerable, at-risk populations
- Problems at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport revealed need for better coordination between MARTA and other agencies/institutions

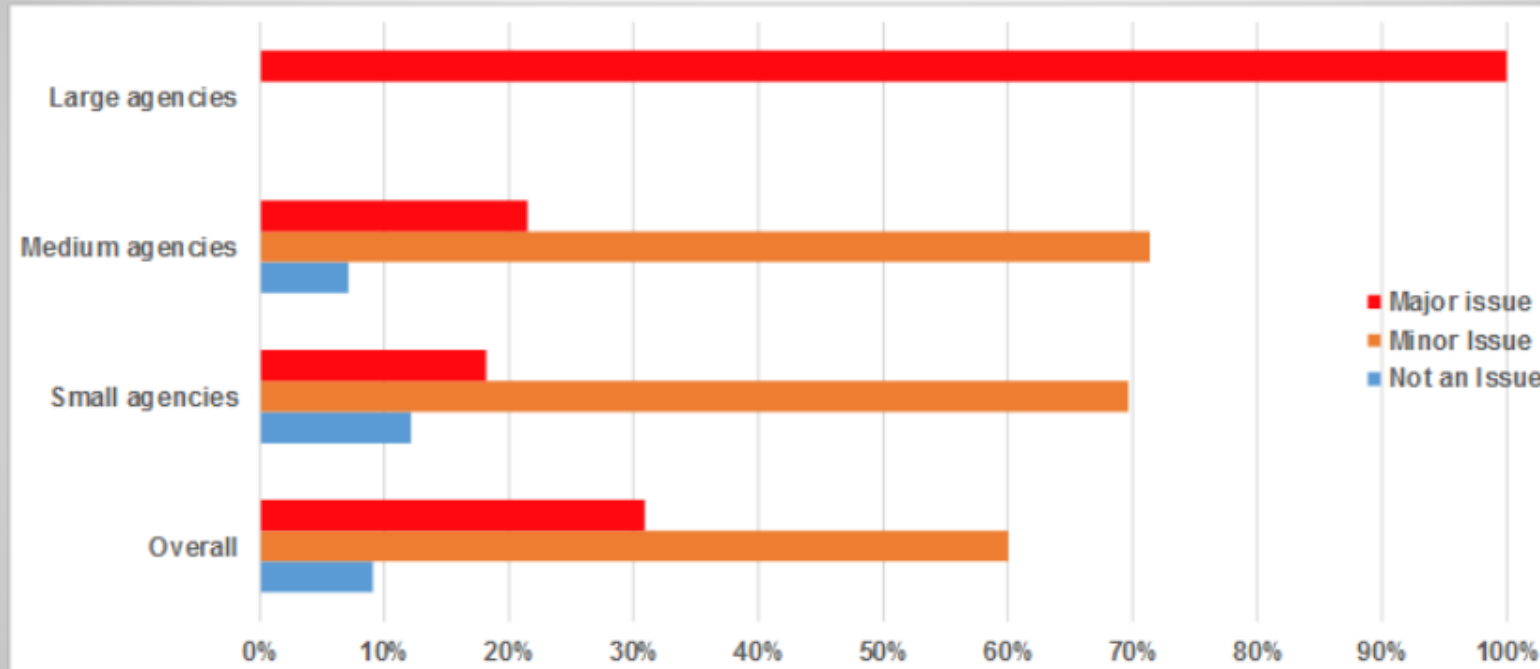
History & Background

- Growing sense of urgency within MARTA's leadership to address the issue
- Chief Administrative Officer, Luz Borrero, had discussions with key social service providers in 2019
- Meeting with MARTA Board Member Alicia Ivey and HJIA officials
- Chief Customer Experience Officer, Rhonda Allen participated in site visit to Houston PD w/ADID, GSU Police, APD to study transit system's homeless outreach program

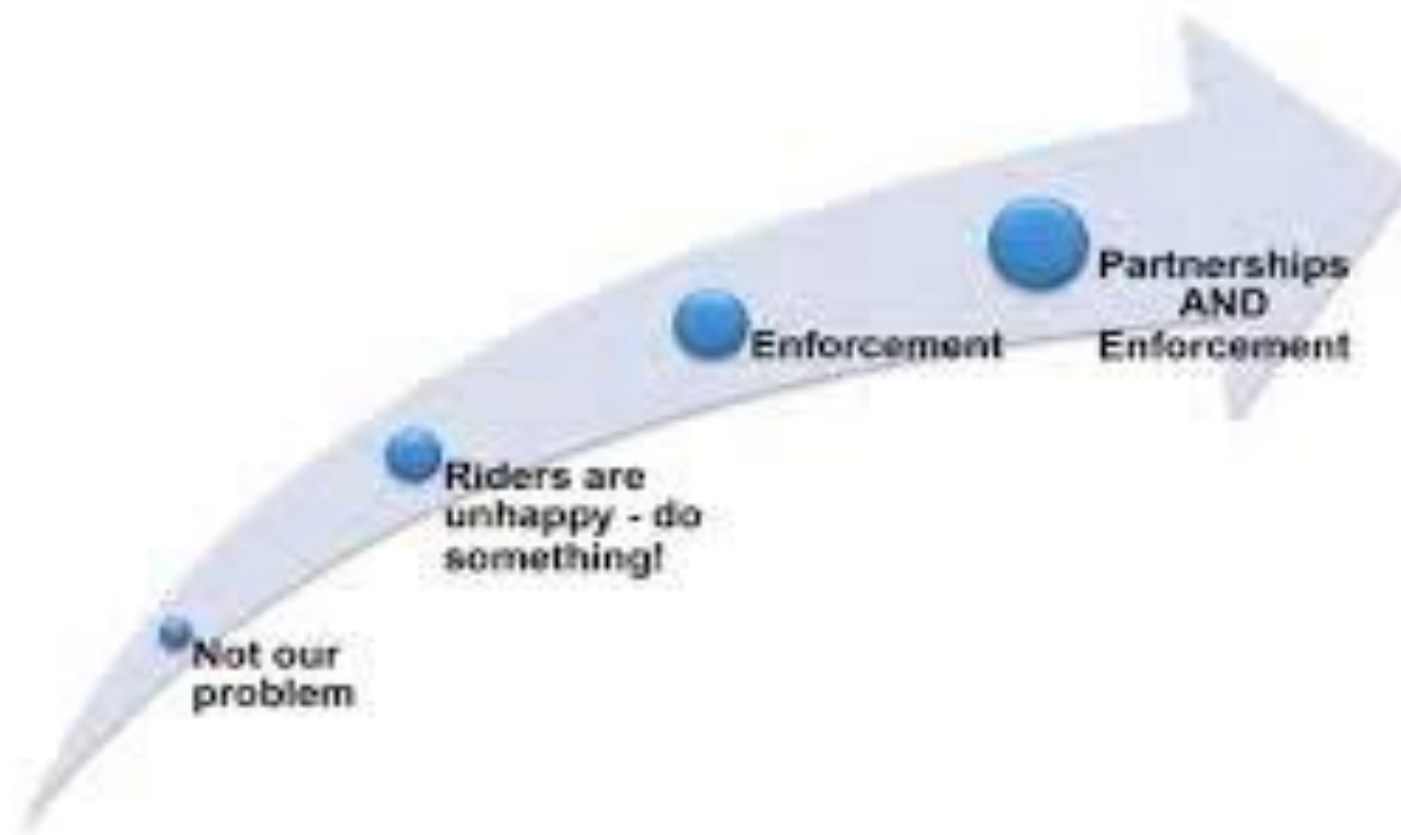


Facing an Industry-wide Challenge

Extent to Which People Who Are Homeless Are an Issue for Transit Agencies by Agency Size

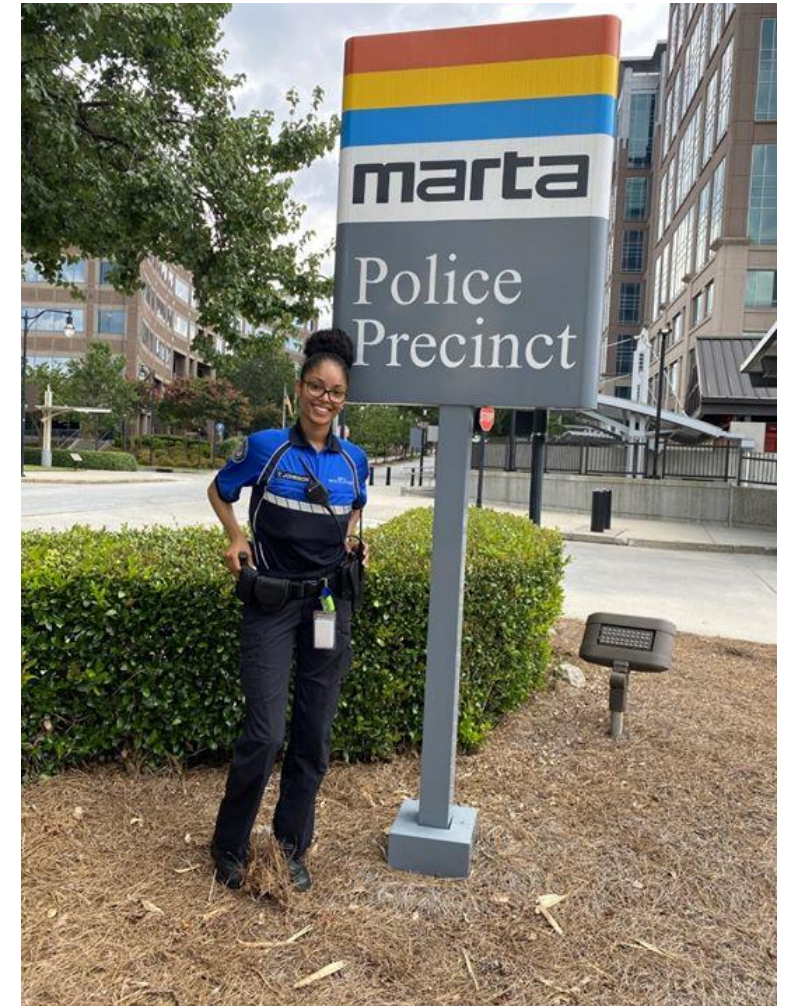


Learning Curve to Better Solutions



Evolution & Collaboration

- Co-developed effective strategy with established organizations serving unsheltered population
- Worked with HOPE Atlanta, Gateway Center and Regional Commission on Homelessness through Chief of Staff /Chief Customer Experience Officer
- Based on best practices, developed one-year pilot program – MARTA HOPE – focused on direct engagement at MARTA locations commonly frequented by unsheltered persons
- MARTA Police Department has assigned two (2) Field Protective Specialists (FPS) who are paired with experienced case managers w/HOPE Atlanta – based on similar program with COA
- Project Goals:
 - Maximize direct assistance provided to unsheltered persons on MARTA property
 - Minimize need to involve MPD in non-criminal activities – “...homelessness is not a crime.”
 - Collaborate with area stakeholders to make homelessness, “...rare, brief, and non-recurring”
 - Improve overall transit experience for MARTA customers

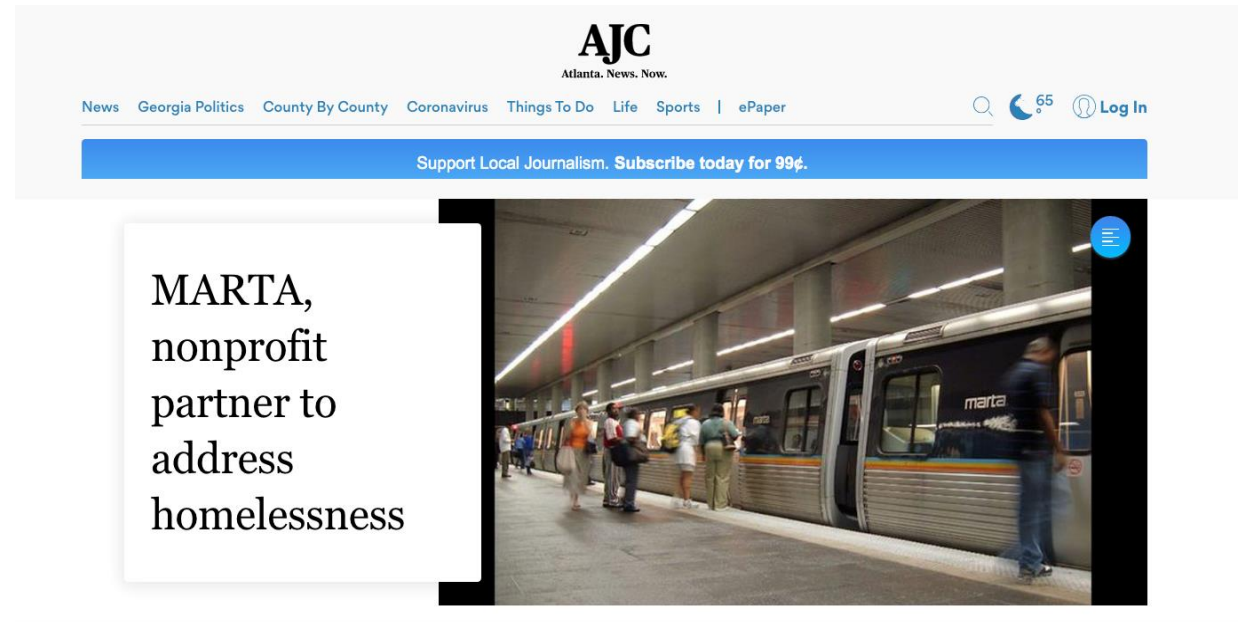


How MARTA HOPE Works

- Working in pairs, the MARTA HOPE Teams are traversing the transit system. They work 40 hours/week (Two days reserved for required administrative work)
- Teams operate in two shifts: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m., and from 6 p.m. – to 2 a.m.
- The uniformed FPS do not carry firearms but are equipped with radios, handcuffs, ASP (telescoping) batons, and OC (pepper) spray. FPS are trained in de-escalation tactics, crisis intervention, interpersonal communication and cultural diversity.
- Initially focusing on rail; bus shelters and stops will also be covered.
- As part of the agreement, the teams expect to conduct a minimum of 100 “unduplicated” engagements monthly.
- Of that number, 80 percent are to be referred for community services based on need. At least 50 individuals are to be provided with housing within one year, pending availability.

Early Progress

- Signed contract with HOPE Atlanta (Effective August 10, 2020) – active outreach underway
- Secured location at Five Points Station for team to conduct client interviews/perform office duties
- Targeting rail station “hot spots” for focused outreach:
 - Airport
 - Doraville
 - Garnett
 - Chamblee
 - Civic Center
 - Indian Creek
- Within first two weeks, 51 engagements, 11 people connected to temporary housing
- Cities of Decatur, Doraville, College Park have requested more frequent presence
- MARTA committed to long-term partnerships, long-term solutions



Unsheltered in Atlanta

HOMELESSNESS

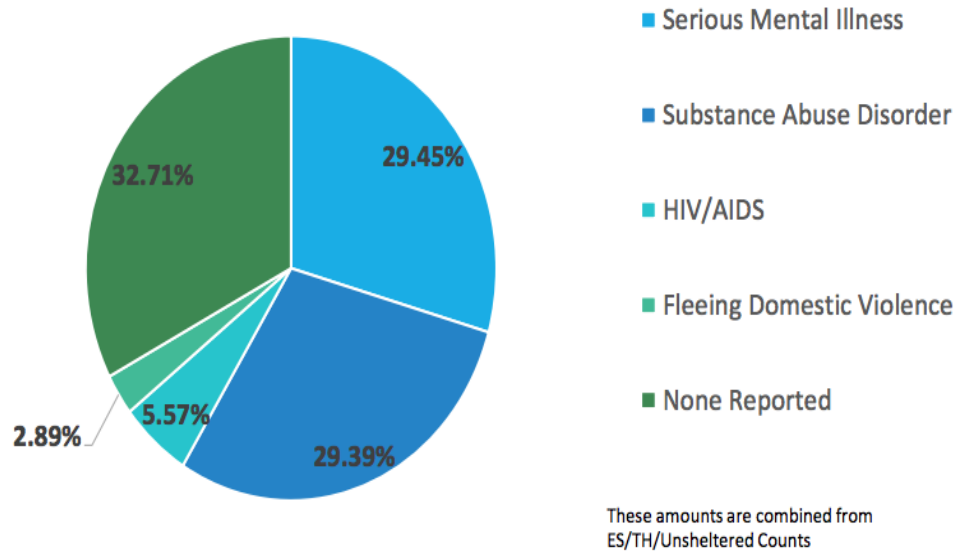
Total Number of Homeless from 2015-2020



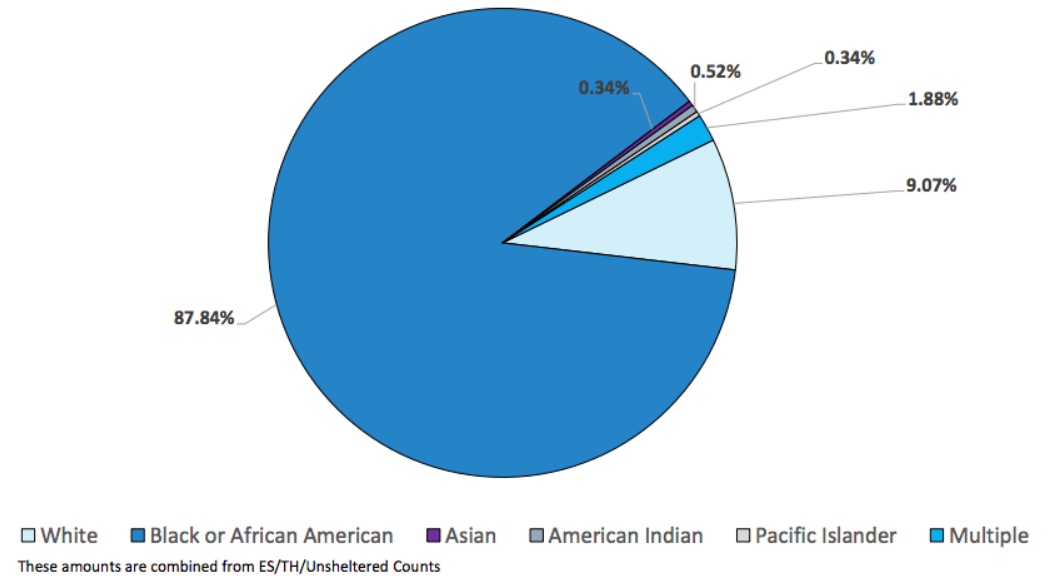
YEAR	SHELTERED	UNSHELTERED	TOTAL
2015	3280	1037	4317
2016	3225	838	4063
2017	2891	681	3572
2018	2336	740	3076
2019	2498	719	3217
2020	2301	939	3240



City of Atlanta Unsheltered Survey – 2020



Causes and Contributing Factors



Demographics

MARTA HOPE Team Next Steps

- Coordinate with local jurisdictions on station-specific action plans.
- Produce training video for use by MPD.
- Create communications collateral to inform and engage customers and employees.
- Cultivate/deepen relationships with local and state service providers, other stakeholders.
- Gather and analyze data to help evaluate project performance; possibility of expansion.



MARTA's Project Partners



PARTNERS FOR
HOME

MARTA HOPE Field Team



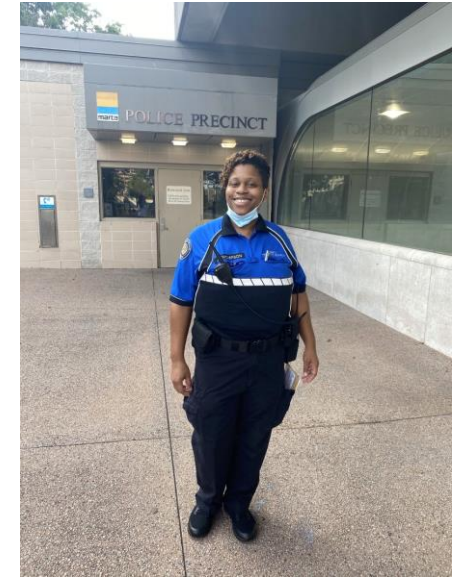
Ms. Gloria Woodard



Mr. Vinson Allen



FPS Alberretta Atkins



FPS Janifer Thompson

Questions/Discussion