MARTA MAC MEETING

March 11, 2025

10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

>> If everybody will mute. Okay. Thank you. Good morning. This is the MAC committee. My name is Robert Smith; I am the chair, and we will go around and get introductions. For those on the team that are MAC members, introduce yourself, and we're going to ask MARTA staff to introduce themselves. Mr. Lossie, can you hear me?

>> (No audible response)

>> Okay. We have Mr. Mark Gasaway. Could you introduce yourself?

>> (No audible response)

>> Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gasaway. And MARTA staff, could you introduce yourself?

>> Good morning. My name is Calisha Davis, director of Mobility Services.

>> Good morning, Ms. Davis.

>> Good morning, I'm Paula Nash.

>> Paula.

>> Good morning. My name is Phillip Samuels, general superintendent for East/West.

>> Okay. Would you repeat that, please.

>> Yes. Good morning. Philip Samuels, general superintendent for East/West.

>> Thank you, sir.

>> Good morning, everyone. Kevin (inaudible), acting director of Rail Services, North/South line.

>> Thank you, sir. Anybody else?

>> Good morning. I'm Mark Gasaway.

>> Good. Mark, thank you?

>> And I represent the deaf/blind.

>> Thank you, sir. We are getting a late start, but we are going to try to go ahead and get to the agenda. And like I said, my name is Robert Smith, I am the chairman of the MAC committee, the MARTA Accessibility Committee, and first up is I don't have any comments for myself, but we're going to hear from our executive director, Ms. Paula Nash. Ms. Nash.

>> Hello, everybody. I just wanted to give an update on the mystery customer program. We have a new vendor, and I think we mentioned that before, it's (inaudible). They have started performing their shops, and I know right now they are looking for mystery shoppers to add to the employee stuff they have. So if anybody is interested in being a mystery shopper, please contact Denise Brown, and she'll give you the information as to how to apply. Actual members of this committee cannot actually be shoppers due to a conflict of interest, but if you know anybody that is interested, please let Denise know. Thank you so much.

>> About the subcommittee report, we didn't have but one, I believe, and that was the no-show and appeals committee. I'm trying to think. I may have to cancel that until the next time we meet because I don't recall the number of people that came before the no-show and appeals committee, the ones that we overturned and the ones that we allowed to stand, but I'll have that report at our next MAC meeting. We'll go right on into our agenda, and the next person up is Ms. Ford.

>> Yes.

>> Okay. Okay, Ms. Ford.

>> Okay.

>> We can't hear, Ms. Ford.

>> I'm just going to do a presentation on MARTA's bus network redesign, and I'll try and keep it brief because we're getting a little bit of a late start, but let's see. Hopefully that comes up okay for everybody. Okay. So good morning again. My name is Andrea Ford, MARTA project manager for the NexGen bus network. I work very closely with Ryan who is over in the planning department, I'm sure many of you know. So what I wanted to do today is kind of do a very high-level background about the project itself, talk about high level of the draft network, the bus network, spend a little time looking at some of the network outcomes, and then talk about the road ahead. So just from a background perspective, won't spend too much time on this slide, but it's really in essence to say we know a lot has changed relative to MARTA and its bus network how it's evolved gradually through different expansions and adjustments over the years, but also recognizing that the MARTA service area from a demographic pattern, things of that nature, has also changed, and so this project really is one of the largest and most comprehensive network plan since the authority's founding. From a timeline perspective about the project, we kicked off the project in 2021 and developed the concept plans. We then took those concept plans out to public outreach in 2022, then in 2023, the MARTA network adopted policy on the NexGen bus network that we'll talk about on another slide. And then last year, we finished that draft network. We started public engagement in December of last year and have spent the first few months of 2025 in our public engagement, so doing a lot of virtual, in-person tabling, different types of events just to get out to the public on the draft network. Then as we moved through the project and the process, we went to take the draft or the final network to the MARTA board for adoption the middle of this year, and late 2025 went to launch the draft network or launch the final network. So in the timeline, I talked about the guiding principles that the MARTA board adopted for this project, and those five include expanding access. And so this project, the first guiding principle is really looking at expanding bus service to increase ridership, to drive economic growth, and enhance environmental benefits. The second guiding principle is equity, so offering quality bus service that really enhances not only access but equity and regional growth. The third guiding principle is future facing. So I talked about how there's a lot of history not only for the bus network as a whole, but this plan is really intended to address and be more future facing as plans for the communities future, not necessarily past travel patterns. Then the fourth guiding principle is balance, so balancing the goals between ridership and coverage effectively. And the fifth guiding principle is challenges. So we'll look at some of the overall kind of improvements of the draft network but obviously recognize that some customers may not experience those same positive outcomes and may object to the proposed changes. From a design principle perspective, this plan is near the top, so it's plans for service level similar to the bus system today regarding revenue hours. It also has a jurisdictional balance. So again, the plan has similar service levels at each part of MARTA's service areas. Clayton County service remains essentially unchanged as bus service in Clayton County will follow existing plans for the county. And then from a ridership and coverage perspective, I talked about just the balance between ridership and coverage goals so this draft plan move the bus network towards a higher ridership network, and, in essence, what that means is basically how you allocate your resources. So you can think of it in a way as it's putting more resources in places that may have a higher density to increase or attract more ridership instead of spreading those same resources across a geographic area for the coverage. And so where the current bus network slides is a 60 percent ridership, 40 percent coverage. The draft network again shifts us to a higher ridership network-78 percent ridership, 25 percent coverage network. So getting into again more of the high level about the draft network. So the big picture is this network will triple the number of residents with access to frequent service, and when we talk about frequent service, it's bus service that runs at least every 15 minutes. So when we get to the numbers, you'll see how that translate to major improvements for minority and low-income communities but also significant improvements in access to jobs, fresh groceries, education, health care, and other opportunities and destinations that we know people want to travel and get to. Some of the key features of the draft network. Again, I talked about the more frequent service, so again, that's services that run at least every 15 minutes. Also key to this draft network, it's simpler to use and more straight forward, so simplifying about the transfers and timely transfer locations. I talked about access, so again, just improving the access to more places in less time. There's consistent seven-day-a-week service, and then new for this draft network is on-demand service. So many are familiar with MARTA's reach program from a few years ago. In essence, the on-demand service will work very similar to the reach program. In essence, you can use an app or call in to Hello Ride in the zones that are part of this draft network. The target wait time is about 30 minutes, but obviously, that would fluctuate just given the demand of the network, and a lot of the features is linked in on demand that's kind of running parallel to this project. So looking at the network, we won't spend too much time on this particular slide, but it's in essence just to kind of convey from a comparison perspective and a high level not necessarily getting into the specific routes but from a representation of frequencies. And so again, the red on the map represent the 15 minute or better, so that's the higher frequency service. And then we start to get into our purple lines, which are the 20-minute frequency service. And I apologize for my voice this morning. Then we start to move into the 30-minute and 40-minute service which is represented by the blue lines, and then 60 minute or limited service on the green line, and then the tan areas on the map represent those on-demand zones that I just talked about. So first we'll take a look at the existing network. So in the existing bus network, we have 113 fixed bus routes. There's frequent service which is again that frequent or that 15-minute or better service that's on five corridors. 20-minute service that we currently have on nine bus routes, and there are five peak hour only routes, and currently, no on-demand zones apart of the existing bus network. Then when we shift to the draft network, we realize one--or we notice that one is smaller, so we go from 113 to 79 fixed bus routes, and we start to see more frequent service, so we do that 15-minute or 20-minute service on more corridors. So 15 minute service on 18 corridors and 20-minute service on 13 routes. Again, this is where you see the introduction of the 12 Honda man zones. There is daily service system-wide, and they are peak only service as part of the draft network. Then starting to get into some of the network outcomes. So this is where more of the numbers come into play. We first started to look at again how many people are near transit, and so when we look at this particular group and looking at it assumes the distance of a quarter mile to transit service, which is about a five-minute walk. And then we notice that there are from an overall people served, there's an increase at 2 percent that will be served by the draft network compared to the existing network, so that's an increase of 12,500 people overall. There's more people who would have access or be near transit service or at frequent service, so an increase of 245 percent near 15-minute frequent service. Again, that's 95,000 more people. And then from a 30-minute or better service, it's an increase of a little over 50 percent near that 30-minute or better service. And then breaking it down a little bit more looking at minority communities, their transit--again, assuming that same quarter-mile distance, you see there are more minority communities that would be near transit, so an increase of 64,000 or just under 65,000 overall is that 15-minute or better service, and then just 88,000 overall minority community who would be near that 30-minute or better service. Then looking at low-income residents, again, we see increases with low income residents and communities near transits with little over 200 percent increase near that frequent service which is that 15-minute or better service and then just under 40 percent increase of low income residents who would be near 30-minute or better service just a little over 32,000 people. Then looking at jobs, we also looked at job access improvements. And so looking at the map which kind of represents--one dot on this map represents about 50 people. So we're kind of thinking about a way we can capture which population and where people are relative to the changes and service and those job access improvements, and so we are showing on this particular map where we have the darker dots and those concentrations of the darker dots which represent more than 80,000 people in accessibility. And then kind of shifting to the end of that spectrum, it's showing more of like a lighter tan and brown dot which show a change in access of less than 80,000. And so what we see is most areas see increases in jobs reachable in 60 minutes are transit, but per the average, we see about 45 minutes there's an increase of 21 percent more jobs reachable. We also see that same percent in 60 minute, and then 90 minutes is about 15 percent more jobs that are reachable with the draft network. Then looking at job access improvements for disadvantaged groups again for that same time frame of 60 minutes. For minority residents overall compared to non-Hispanic white residents, there's a 23 increase in job access improvements. Looking at low-income residents overall, there's a 23 percent increase. And then for households without a car, it's an 18-percent increase in job access improvements within 60 minutes. As I mentioned in the beginning, jobs and people getting to work is not the only way people use or want to use transit, so we also look at educational opportunities, so more colleges and universities, grocery stores, and hospitals. And we also saw improved access in the draft network to those two destinations. So there's a 23 percent increase in access to college and universities, a 26 percent increase in access to more grocery stores, and a 27 percent increase in access to (inaudible) in the draft network. Then there are a couple tools that we have on our website where we encourage as we've gone out to the public for folks to get a better sense of their specific routes of interest and how they move around. So there's a slight comparison map that's on the front of the website, as well as the interactive access viewer, and so we've been encouraging all of our--those who have come out to our public meetings or who we engaged with in our virtual lunch and learn to utilize these tools just again to get familiar with not only their specific area but what's happening system wide or proposed system-wide changes in the draft network. Then to kind of close out with the road ahead, again, we're in public engagement. We have this last week of engagement opportunity, so we are going out this week and in-person meetings and doing some tabling events, as well as some canvassing at our rail stations or at the MARTA stations. So that will wrap up on Sunday, and so we are encouraging people to take the survey. And then following this phase of engagement, we'll do a response to the draft network, so basically, taking all the comments that we heard and trying to incorporate and make some adjustments and modifications to that draft network that we'll then finalize and take to the MARTA board for approval in late spring or early summer and then really began doing extensive preparations for the network following board approval of the final plan. And again, we look to launch that new network spring 2025. And as I mentioned in the beginning, it becomes a series of modifications and adjustments, so reviewing and doing some evaluations of the new network in early 2026 and begin to make any modifications or adjustments or tweaks that may need to be made following implementation. And again, we encourage folks to stay up to date. They can visit our project website at martanexgenbusnetwork.com. There is also a link on Marta's homepage at it'smarta.com. We've encourage people as well to provide feedback via our survey, our online summit card. There are tons of maps and there's other resources. The full report for the draft network is also available on the website. And again, I talked about we've been out through for engagement. Did a soft launch back in December, but, like I said, we really been out and had almost 50 meetings, virtual and in-person, since the middle of January. And then there is a place to sign up on the website to receive (inaudible). And that is the end of my presentation.

>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Ford. Are you open to questions? Are there any MAC members who have questions for Ms. Ford? Okay. Hearing none, I do have a few questions, Ms. Ford. You talked about expansion. Does that mean the existing routes as people move further and further out and neighborhoods are getting further and further out, does that include MARTA expanding not beyond it's operating area, but are you--is that included in the plans?

>> That particular expansion is not included as part of this plan. So this draft network is reallocating existing resources, so it's not an expansion for the bus system or the rail. Not to say that couldn't happen some time in the future, but this is utilizing existing resources. No real expansion as part of this project.

>> What about different types of equipment. We heard of the buses electric buses that soon going to be put into revenue service. Is that included in your plans?

>> Those buses may be utilized. Some of the routes are part of this network, but this is--this particular project is solely looking at bus service specific to routing and operations, not necessarily purchasing new vehicles. But you'll also see there was part of that I mentioned on-demand which is incorporated into this project on the on demand zones, but there is a separate procurement process running parallel to this project that gets into more of the software, the vehicle procurement. And timing wise, ideally, we're targeting to have the on demand up and running before the bus network launches.

>> Okay. The reason why I asked that question is because if you're going to use smaller buses, you could--maybe smaller buses can be used. You were talking about increasing some of the running times because I know what you've already done. What your team has already done is studied the heavily traveled routes to improve the like you say every 15 minutes, 20 minutes you mentioned in some areas where it's necessary. For instance, I'll give you, for instance, the bus 83 that travels up and down the Campbellton corridor, you thought about also smaller buses utilizing those?

>> Yeah. I think, you know, as we get through drafting and making the refinements to this plan and actually get into like those extensive preparations in that phase, we'll continue and probably get into more detailed conversations with types of vehicles when operations definitely starts to get more involved into what the final network looks like. So I think some of those conversations about vehicle type and size and all of that on the route will start to come than where we are in the planning phase.

>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Ford.

>> Thank you.

>> Next on our agenda is our MARTA update. I believe Ms. Angelita Amour.

>> Good morning, everyone.

>> Good morning.

>> Good morning. My name is Angelita Amour, the customer field representative for MARTA Mobility, and I will be reporting out the ADA link customer complaints for January 2025. Okay. Starting with the authority-wide complaints, we have 482. Of the 482, we have 174 ADA link complaints, which is 31.6 percent. Of the 88 ADA link complaints, we have 99 of those that are valid, which is 56.9 percept. Next we have break down by department. Starting with Mobility at 153. We have bus operations at 17. Mobility reservations at 1. I'm sorry, Mobility reservations at 3. Station maintenance at 1. And then we have Mobility maintenance, bus stops, and vertical transportation at 0, which is 174. Next we have top complaint category. Starting with late pickups at 45. No shows at 21. No responses or request assistance and discourteous at 12. Late drop-offs at 11. Tone of voice, 5. Vehicle stopping location, 4. And excessive time on van is 3. Next we have top non-mobility complaints. Starting with won't let board at 4. Refuse to lower lift at 2. And then we have discourteous pass-ups and tone of voice at 1. And last but not least we have accommodations. Starting with authority-wide accommodations at 63, and 26 of those will be Mobility at 41.3 percent. And that concludes my report for the ADA link customer complaints reporting out for January 2025.

>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Armor. Are there any questions from the committee? Hearing none, thank you, Ms. Armor. I want to say it looks like we are trending down the number of complaints.

>> Yes, we had a good month in January.

>> We must be doing something right.

>> Yes. Thank you.

>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Armor.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay. Next up on our agenda is Ms. Calisha Davis to give us our MARTA mobility report. Ms. Davis.

>> Good morning, everyone.

>> Good morning.

>> My name is Calisha Davis, director of Mobility Services, and I will start with the overview of our key performance indicators. This will be a brief presentation as while we have a lot going on, there's not much going on. But again, I'll start with our key performance indicators. Since our last committee meeting in January, we've experienced what I refer to as situational fluctuation ridership; however, we have had some positive on-time performance trends. Going back to the fluctuating ridership, January was possibly the most interesting month of my career, and I'm pretty sure others would agree because we had two snow events during January and that coupled with the holidays, as well as the service that we provided for president Carter's memorial, January was significantly busy. With the ridership--I'm sorry. Our ridership in January, we saw 46,910 trips, which was lower than January 54,000 trips. And in February, we bounced back up with 54,224 trips. And again, January, we had two holidays, two winter events, so we--and during those winter event, we suspended service for a cumulative three-day period. The first snow storm we had or the first snow event we had the week end of January 10th, we suspended right about--just below--I'm sorry, just above a half a day. And then the second snow storm, the week of the 21st, we suspended for basically two whole days. The first day it snowed, we suspended the half day of service, then the next day was the full day, and then we resumed service that Thursday in the afternoon. So we did lose a couple of days, which is what impacted the ridership in January. But noting the ridership in January, we have seen significant and what I would refer to as tremendous progress in our on-time performance trend. And even going back to October, in October, our on-time performance was 86 percent. In November, we progressed to 89 percent. However, in January, we crossed the finish line at 94 percent on-time performance. In January, we did repeat with 96 percent. And in February, we went even higher at 91.3 percent. And the drivers of that improvement is stronger engagement with our contractors to uphold their contractual obligations, as well as improving the service product that is delivered to our customers. We did see somewhat of a leveling off of ridership, particularly coming out of the holidays going into January and now with February with February being a typical shorter month, so our ridership did somewhat level. We also had an increase in scheduling and dispatching efficiencies. If you guys recall in previous months, I think it was the--it had to be the October meeting. Whatever the last meeting of 2024 was, I mentioned that our scheduling and dispatch group had brought in their internal team to kind of do somewhat of an overhaul of scheduling and dispatch group. We're now seeing the fruits of that labor-better scheduling and dispatch efficiencies-and we're continue to engage them to progress even more. Also, all of our contractors, both operations, as well as dispatch, they're doing some aggressive hiring to make sure that we have adequate workforce, and in addition to, additional workforce is also improving their workforce management to ensure that employees are properly trained, the necessary corrective actions are taken when incidents occur, so on and so forth. And the last driver would be more stable technology. There were instances last year where we will have relatively frequent intermittent outages with our system. We've noted that with more attention given to technology that technology is more stable which contributes to a better quality of service that we deliver to you all. So we are rejoicing in the improvements that we have made but not so much we stop striving for even better. Please excuse me. Looking at our call center performance, for ETA in January, we received 28,049 calls. The answer rate was 93.2 percent, and the call wait time 76 seconds or one minute and 16 seconds. For February, we saw a slight decrease--again, February being a shorter month-- with 27,68 calls, and the call answer rate of 94.7 percent, and a call wait time of 62 seconds. Excuse me. In reservations in January, we received 48. I believe that is a typo. I apologize for that. Let me get the correct number. I am correct, that is the wrong number. Yep, that is the wrong number, I apologize, for reservations. In January, we received 28,409 calls, and our call answer rate was 97.4 percept with a call wait time of one minute and 44 seconds. In February, we received 27,722 calls. The call answer rate was 96.6 percept, and the call wait time was two minutes and 19 seconds. So we have seen improvement on one side kind of contributes to improvement on the other side, so with our on-time performance being better, we're seeing better output with our call center stats. So again, we're celebrating that improvement, but we are still working to maintain the improvement that we've experienced while working to improve even more so. Following up on a few items from previous meetings, Mr. Smith, I believe it was your question from one of the earlier meetings regarding notifying customers of vehicle types, particularly those in the blind and low vision community.

>> Yes, that's correct.

>> Pardon me. So efforts are being employed to assign L-vans to customers of the blind and low vision community to reduce the adverse impact on you all trying to figure out what vehicle is coming. We don't want to inflict confusion on customers, where we noticed confusion, we are definitely working to minimize that confusion. So with that we are employing efforts within trapeze system to identify those of the low vision and blind community to assign them L-vans so when you get a MARTA trip, you know it's an L-van. In instances where it's impossible to schedule you to an L-van, perhaps the L-van was in an accident, and in order to salvage the trip, we have to move you to another type of vehicle, notification calls will be placed to make sure that customers are aware of that vehicle assignment change. The next item that was mentioned at the previous is the no-show procedure and whether or not customers are receiving calls prior to no-shows. The no-show procedure does include a phone call to customers prior to the completion of the no show, meaning the operator has waited their five minutes and now they're prepping to leave, they're prepping to depart the location. A call is placed to the number that we have on file, so it's important customers keep those numbers updated. Calls are placed to the numbers on file before the vehicles leave. And also, descriptions are given of the physical location so that there's verification that the bus is in the right place and so on and so forth. I will--excuse me. I will add that those calls are typically placed at places that are not the customers residence. If you're at home, it's not the running protocol to call when you are at home; however, if we transported you somewhere in effort to not strand you, we do place those calls. And I do have our general manager on the call. I'm not sure if he's able to unmute; however, his group is responsible for ensuring those calls are placed to make sure we do our diligence to try to make contact with customer before departing a location for a no show. And I'll also add that even though the call for the no show is a part of the procedure, customers are still essentially required and encouraged to be ready to board when the vehicle arrives so that--and that's in accordance with the rider guide, be ready with the vehicle arrives to reduce the possibility of no show. In a situation where you go to a public place--case in point, a mall. A mall has several entrances, and at most large facilities, we do have designated pickup and drop-off spots, so it's important for customers to uphold being picked up and dropped off-in those designated spots. And if they request to be dropped off somewhere else, it's important that that is communicated to the driver, and the driver will then communicate that to dispatch so that on the return trip those adjustments can be made, but if you're going to say a shopping mall and you request to be dropped off on one entrance, please do due diligence to ensure that you are at the designated pick-up spot if you have not requested in your reservations another pick-up spot because the buses will be routed to the general pick-up spot for that large facility. And the last item I have is what's upcoming. I'm not sure if this group has been made aware, so I'll make you aware. AFC 2.0 automated fare collection 2.0, MARTA is in the early stages of upgrading their fare collection system which will mean that new--well, I don't think they're called Breeze cards, but ultimately, a new type of Breeze card will be issued. More information will be released in the coming months as we move closer to that. I don't have much detail to share, but I did want to share that that is upcoming towards the end of the year in 2026. And that concludes my presentation. Any questions?

>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Davis. Are there any questions from the committee members? Hearing none, Ms. Davis, I have a few. You are correct in that you can toot your own horn about a lot of the improvements that's being made at MARTA Mobility such as the people calling to make reservations, as well as ETA service has improved a whole lot. Now, back to the question that I asked back in October or November or somewhere there about about blind individuals being notified whether or not what type of vehicle is going to come. I wasn't saying that blind people always have to have a MARTA Mobility bus, but it's good to know that that is being looked at. Notification was what I was talking about, and that is being done because I went to a meeting where other blind and visually impaired people meet and ask the question were you receiving a call. Most of them do receive calls. The IVR calls that people get, they are getting it at home. A lot of people say that they have not been getting calls, but for the majority of the people that I talk to, and I talk to a lot of people, they are getting those IVR calls. As a matter of fact, I got one this morning at my home. I and many other people get them, and they just notified me yes, Mr. Smith, you will be in a van, a mini van. There's lots of improvements there. My hat goes off to the hard work being done with all of the vendors. The vendors seem to be happy, and lot of people like to ride in those cars, kind of make it personal. They think they're in their own limousine, but I do tell them from time to time that it is still a shared ride system so just because you're in a car, it's not yours, you have to share that. So they enjoy the mini vans, as well as the car. So I want to thank you for all the improvements that's being done over at MARTA mobile.

>> Thank you, sir. I appreciate those comments. Thank you. I appreciate it.

>> Okay. Okay. Thank you, Ms. Davis. At this time, are there--Paula, do you have anything else you would like to say?

>> No.

>> No. Okay. Well, if there's nothing else to come before this committee, I'm adjourning the committee meeting--well, I call this committee meeting adjourned. That's it.

(End of session)