

Mobility: On-the Move, MARTA Mobility's Bi-Monthly Newsletter

"The Future is Accessible"

Message from the Director

By Miles Turpin, Director, Mobility Services, MARTA Mobility

Greetings again to everyone! I hope the Summer season has been treating you well. I would like to take a moment to talk with everyone, about your MARTA Mobility Oversight Team's approach to Customer Service. I think we can all agree that Customer Service is an essential pillar of our commitment to paratransit services. More importantly, Customer Service is a conduit, a delivery process, for helping to create the customer experience. So, we must ask ourselves "What makes a better Customer Service experience?" Often, the problem, sometimes, is that an over-emphasis in customer service, constricts our thinking to acceptable goals. It limits our vision. It focuses on the how, not the why. MARTA Mobility's focus is, how we can make our Customer Service extraordinary. How we enhance teamwork, in delivering superior service. How to create value for our customers and MARTA Stakeholders.

So instead of thinking; "How can I best service Customers at MARTA?", we (the Mobility Oversight Team) ask a different question, "How can we help make our Customers more successful in ways that are important to them?" From our view, this is the "why" behind the how, and we are feverishly working to achieve this goal every day, every hour, every minute, and every second. Thank you all for being a part of this team.

Miles Turpin

Director of Mobility, MARTA

MARTA Reach Pilot Ends

By Erick Knowles | MARTA Reach Project Manager | MARTA Mobility

It's the time that we all dread in a pilot cycle, the end point. Now is the time to gather our data and see what we've learned from our On Demand Ride Share experiment. Our preliminary data suggest that not only were our first three (3) zones successful but also the additional two (2) zones we added during the pilot. The Reach customer surveys further suggest a successful pilot and service that was enjoyed by many.

The pilot ended on August 31st, 2022. However, know that MARTA will analyze all the data from the pilot and make the best decision for the public.

When you least expect it, MARTA Reach, or a version of it, may appear in a neighborhood or Zone near you!

Thank you again for your loyalty to the Reach Pilot and your continued patronage of MARTA as we work together to move this city!

For more insight into MARTA Reach from a customer's perspective, see the attached article (type of copy the link below into your web browser) published online July 25, 2022 in the Atlanta magazine by Rachel Garbus.

<https://www.atlantamagazine.com/news-culture-articles/my-day-using-marta-reach-aka-the-local-uber-of-public-transit/>

Understanding Mobility Ready Time vs Ready Window

By Delton Quarles | Reservations Supervisor | MARTA Mobility

MARTA Mobility's ADA paratransit is an on-demand service that allows customers to request either a time to arrive at a designated location (drop time) or a time to be picked up from a designated location (ready time). When a customer requests a specific time to arrive at a location, the Reservationist (using available times and routes) will determine what is the optimal time for the customer to be picked up from their originating location. This is referred to as drop logic. Depending on the distance travelled and the time of day, the drop logic will estimate a travel time that includes a window of 30 minutes and enough time for other customers to be onboarded or off boarded in route to the drop the customer making the request.

When a customer requests a specific pickup time, the Reservationist will negotiate a time (based on available times and routes) that is not more than 1-hour before or after the requested pickup time. After the negotiated time is agreed upon by the customer, no changes are made to that agreed upon time- unless requested by the customer before the day of service, or if an authorized representative of MARTA Mobility has contacted the customer to renegotiate a revised trip time.

The scheduled pickup time is referred to as the "ready time," which is the time the customer should be expecting the Mobility Lift-Van (LVan) to arrive. Note however, that all ready-times include a 30-minute pickup window. For example, if a customer has a ready time of 9:30 AM, the customer should expect the LVan to arrive no earlier than 9:30 AM, but no later than 10:00 AM (this is the Ready Window). An LVan that arrives earlier than the agreed upon ready time is required to standby for at least 5 minutes after the ready time begins. Which means that the customer is not required to board the LVan prior to 9:30 AM but must board no later than 9:35 AM, or within 5-minutes of the time that the LVan arrives. If the customer fails to board the LVan within 5-minutes of its arrival, the Operator may receive authorization from Mobility's Dispatch to depart without the customer and the customer may be charged with a No-Show infraction. However, any trip that is outside of the 30-minute window (arriving any time after 10:00 AM in this example) is considered to be late. The customer will not be charged with a No-Show infraction in he/she fails to board the LVan.

MARTA employs an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that send imminent arrival messages by voice call or text message to alert customer when their LVan is in route to their pickup location. The IVR notification is programmed to send out a notification 20-minutes before the customer's ready time begins. The IVR system also provides an "estimate" of what time the LVan will arrive. The time given by the IVR is to be treated as an estimation only. Note that traffic conditions may change and cause the LVan to arrive earlier or later than the IVR message indicated. As such, the customer still needs to be prepared to board the LVan once their ready time begins, and at anytime during the ready window.

“Building a good customer experience does not happen by accident. It happens by design.”- Clare Muscutt

Planning for your transit trip

By Jessalyn Smiley Clark | Travel Trainer | MARTA Mobility

“Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.” – Alexander Graham Bell, Inventor

Preparation is the key to a successful transit trip, plan ahead before you travel. Start by thinking about your travel day- What will you be doing? What is the forecasted weather for your travel day? What are you planning to accomplish? Where will you be going? What will you need to bring with you to accomplish all you have planned? As you prepare for your transit trip, asking yourself these types of questions can better ensure that you are prepared with medication, snacks, power cords, a full oxygen tank, Breeze Card, etc.

Additionally, let someone know your travel plans, and if possible, your general route. This will make it easier to reach you should an emergency occur.

Save and label emergency and other contact numbers in your communication device. This will facilitate quick contact if the need should rise.

Double check that all your devices are fully charged and carry all necessary backup batteries and/or charging methods. It is often difficult to find a location to recharge while traveling on public transit.

Finally, make sure you have your personal ID, your communication device, keys, currency, and transit contact numbers. Check the weather and dress appropriately.

Keep needed travel items in a central location and have an easy to see travel item checklist posted. These tips will make getting out of the door with what you need for your day easier and allows you ample time to get to your scheduled transit pickup location, or to ensure that you are prepared to board the Mobility LVan within 5-minutes of its arrival.

Examples of Things to Carry Checklist

- ID
- Medication
- Communication Device(s)- Phone/Tablet
- Breeze Card/Fare
- Keys
- Back up batteries/Charging device
- Snacks
- Jacket/Sweater/Hoodie
- Umbrella/Rain Poncho
- Transit Numbers
- Destination Contact Info
- Info regarding medication and/or medical matter in case of an Emergency

Making the Future More Accessible for Everyone

By Jessalyn Smiley Clark | Travel Trainer | MARTA Mobility

Since 2013, MARTA has operated a 6,100 square foot Travel Training facility within our Annex, located ¼ mile from our Headquarters building on Piedmont Road. The purpose of this facility and the Travel Training program is to provide an environment where individuals with disabilities, specifically those with little or no transit experience, can learn and practice how to travel safely and independently on public transportation. The goal of travel training is to teach individuals to travel independently to a regularly visited destination (for instance, to work, school, medical appointments, shopping, etc.) and back.

The Travel Training facility stimulates what the students will likely encounter on the MARTA system, such as a rail car and station platform, a bus and bus shelter, cross walk with street corners and curb cuts, active faregate and Breeze vending machine, and multiple slopes and terrains.

Travel training students receive an initial assessment, within the facility, to determine their specific traveling goals and how their individual disability may impact their travel on public transit. From there, specific training objectives are set, and the necessary skills are taught based on the students' travel goals. In general, and as a result of the training, most students should be able to demonstrate a number of other skills, including how to:

- Cross streets safely, with and without traffic signals
- Board the correct bus or train
- Recognize and disembark at the correct destination
- Recognize the need for assistance and request help from an appropriate source
- Recognize and avoid dangerous situations and obstacles
- Handle unexpected situations, such as re-routed buses or delayed trains
- Deal appropriately with strangers
- Handle fare media
- Read and understand schedules and system maps, etc.

In addition to providing individual (1-on-1) travel instructions, MARTA's Travel Training facility was designed to host small group training sessions, focused on a specific aspect of traveling on the system, based on their needs. These sessions can be facilitated by MARTA staff, or independently lead by the groups. Recent group sessions include annual training with the Go-Team: Therapy, Crisis, and Airport Dogs, Inc., and 2-sessions with a rehabilitation therapist group from the Shepard Center.

For more information on participation in MARTA's Travel Training program, contact us at

404-848-5193.

Please call 404-848-4037 to request this information in an alternative format or another language.

Key Contacts

Eligibility: 404-848-5389

Reservations: 404-848-5826

Travel Training: 404-848-5193

Estimated Time of Van Arrival (ETA): 404-848-4212

Automated Advanced Trip Cancellation: 404-848-4212 & follow the prompts

Mobility Breeze Card (Lost or Damaged): 404-848-5112

Mobility Breeze Card (Auto-Load of Fare): 404-848-4184

No Show Dispute Line: 404-848-4000

Send comments and suggestions to mobilitycertification@itsmarta.com

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