

May 2022 Volume 1 Issue 2

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

And the Winner is...

Congratulations to Mobility Customer Valerie Heard for winning the Newsletter naming contest. Ms. Heard recommended several names from which the Selection Committee (The Mobility Management Team) could choose. The original recommendation was 'Mobility Moves'. The selection committee chose that name; however, a slight modification was added. This revised name was presented to Ms. Heard and she love it. The Mobility Newsletter's new name is 'Mobility: On-the-Move'. Thank you Ms. Heard for you enthusiastic participation. Ms. Heard has won 2 future roundtrips on MARTA Mobility.

Message from the Director

My fellow Family Members, Friends and Stakeholders, as we all know, these past two years have been extremely challenging, as all of us have been dealing with a national pandemic, in some form or fashion. Many of us have lost treasured family and friends and we are tasked with the emotional burden of moving on with our lives through these difficult times. With my first message to you, I want you to know, that MARTA Mobility will always stand with you. Not only do we understand the challenges that we are currently facing, but more importantly, our intent is to face those challenges for this year and the next, together. We will embrace what comes hard, together. We will support and enrich our lives, together. We will serve and continue to help the less fortunate, together.

I want to thank you for your continued support and together, MARTA Mobility is looking forward to providing and delivering the excellent service you so richly deserve.

Thank you.

Page 1

Employee Spotlight- Cherie Newton

In September 2021, MARTA Mobility reintroduced a pilot program to enhance the ADA sensitivity training provided to its paratransit operators. In support of this initiative, Mobility specifically solicited the services of one (1) of its longest tenured team members- Ms. Cherie Newton. Cherie developed and delivers a session which incorporates her unique experience as an individual with a visual disability as well as her first-hand knowledge as a current Mobility customer. Cherie has previously led ADA sensitivity training for MARTA and she also serves on the Accessibility Advisory Board for Cobb Linc.

MARTA's Mobility service is outsource to two (2) service providers- Gresham Transportation Services (GTS) and First Transit. As such, all onboarding of new hires and in-service training of operators is performed by the service providers in accordance with federal guidelines, their respective contracts, and in coordination with Mobility's Oversight Team. As a result of Cherie's participation in their respective training, operators are able to have interactive and open dialogue that dispels myths and provides them with a clearer understanding of how to interact with an individual with a disability.

Due to her stellar performance and the impact that the training is having on trainees, Cherie was recently recognized by MARTA and received an award for being a Customer Service Star.

Congratulations Cherie!

Fun Transit Facts: Featuring MARTA

Since the service began in 1979, it has carried more than 5 billion riders.

It's the 8th largest system in the country.

The buses: Nearly 550 MARTA buses serve 101 routes along 1,439 miles of road. In addition, MARTA secured a \$2.6M grant for the purchase of 6 New Flyer Xcelsior battery-electric buses to reduce fleet emissions.

The trains: Rail lines span 48.1 miles and carry 338 rail cars through 38 stations.

MARTA REACH: An On-Demand Rideshare Service

With the first official 30-days of service behind us, MARTA Reach has shown great strides. During the month of March, the service delivered 226 trips. There has been a total of 72 accounts served and we are delivering and servicing customers with a minimum wait time of 8 minutes and 53 seconds.

The general purpose of MARTA Reach is to bridge the gap between the first and the last mile for our customers. We are achieving connectivity for passengers, who previously had to walk a mile or two, to the nearest bus or rail stations.

The goal of this project will continue to make public transportation for the Atlanta Region, faster and more effective for its residents. The underserved communities, will always be in the forefront of MARTA's plans for effective service.

Over the coming months, there are plans for possible expansion within the current zones and the possibility of adding a fourth- Northern Zone. MARTA will continue to seek out and learn how on-demand service can work to supplement and expand the reach of our fixed route and rail services.

If you see a MARTA Reach van in your neighborhood- smile. MARTA Reach is one way of connecting Atlanta communities to MARTA's other (faster and more far reaching) modes of public transportation.

Reservation Bookings and Call Center Best Practices

Noted author, Stephen R. Covey once said about planning, "to begin with the end in mind." With that stated, here are a few things that you should keep in mind when planning your next Mobility trip to ensure that it starts and ends as you have planned.

- Mobility Reservations operates from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. During the weekday, customers can book trips for the next day and up to 7-days in advance. However, on Saturday, Sunday and holidays, trips are only booked for the next day. It is important to note that call volume usually increases between the hours of 2:30 PM and 5:00 PM and hold times are longer. We suggest that you call as soon as you are aware that you will need a trip and call earlier in the day to avoid a long wait.
- Before calling Reservations take a little time to prepare, such as having all of the addresses on-hand for the places you want to travel. The Reservationist will not be able to look up addresses for you. If you wait until you are on the phone, it could cause a delay in the booking process and increase the hold time for other customers. It is also a good idea to be in a relatively quiet place when you call. This will cut down on distractions, minimize errors associated with unclear communications and allow the Reservationist to focus on the task at hand. The slightest error in the booking process could be the difference in you being on time for that long-awaited appointment or ending up at a wrong location and missing the appointment altogether.
- If you have consistent-reoccurring trips (typically on the same days of the week, at the same time, and to the same location), Mobility offers subscription service. This means that you can have future trips setup to automatically generate. This saves you time, lowers the overall call volume, and reduces the hold time for all customers. Ask your Reservationist for more information regarding subscription service.

The Reservations Team is here to serve your needs as a MARTA customer. It is our aim to not only book your trips with care and accuracy, but to also be friendly and informative. “The best advertising [we] can have is a loyal customer spreading the word about how incredible [our] business is” – Shep Hyken.

MARTA's No Show Policy- Part 2: You Have the Right to...Dispute and to Appeal

During our last issue of the Newsletter (Volume 1, Issue 1), we shared general information regarding MARTA's No Show policy. As a recap, the purpose of the No Show Policy is "to encourage responsible trip scheduling and to provide a more efficient paratransit service for all customers."

The impact to you, as a customer, for having excessive no-shows could result in temporary suspension of your ability to ride MARTA Mobility for 7-14 days (7-days for the first suspension and 2 weeks for the second and any subsequent suspension during the calendar year).

However, the intent of this article is to highlight, that prior to the suspension, you do have the right to dispute any no-show infractions that are charged to your riding history and to appeal an upcoming suspension.

In general, the no-show accrual, notification and suspension process consist of the following steps over the course of a three (3) month period:

MONTH 1: When the infractions begin to occur

- A 'Warning Letter' is sent to the customer after the occurrence of 3 or more No-Show infractions
- Customer has the right to dispute any of the infractions (call the No-Show Dispute line: 404-848-4000 after receipt of the notification)
- Disputed infractions are reviewed and investigated
- Infractions beyond the customer's control are removed
- Infraction deemed to be within the customer's control will remain on the list

MONTH 2: Notification of suspension, period for dispute and appeal

- Last month's infractions are totaled, if above the threshold (typically 5 or more), then a 'Suspension Notice' (to occur in Month 3) is mailed to customer
- Customer has the right to dispute any of the infractions
- Disputed infractions are reviewed and investigated
- Infractions beyond the customer's control are removed

- Infractions deemed to be within the customer's control will remain on the list
- Customer has the right to appeal the pending suspension
- The Suspension Panel review occurs during 4th week of current month
- If disputed infractions are overturned by the Panel, the customer does not serve the pending suspension, however,
- If the disputed infractions are upheld by the Panel, the customer will serve the suspension term- scheduled for the following month

MONTH 3: Month when the suspension term is served

- The customer will serve the suspension term that has been upheld by the Suspension Panel.

Please note that to successfully dispute a no-show infraction, you must demonstrate that the infraction was beyond your control. As an example, you can provide a copy of a medical discharge form, covering 1 or more of the dates for which you have accrued a no-show infraction, etc.

To avoid no-show occurrences, advance cancellations can be made one (1) to seven (7) days in advance of the scheduled trip by calling the automated system at 404-848-4212, or you may speak with an Agent by calling 404-848-5826. Also, cancellations can be made no less than 2-hours prior to your pick-up time by calling 404-848-4212. If you are unable to speak with a live Agent, please follow the prompts and utilize the automated process.

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 and 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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Page 7