

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY
November 19, 2020

The Board of Directors External Relations Committee meeting was called to order, at 11:50 a.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2020, via WebEx, Atlanta, Georgia.

Board Members Present

Roberta Abdul-Salaam
Jim Durrett
William Floyd
Roderick Frierson
Jerry Griffin
Freda Hardage
Alicia Ivey
Rita Scott (**Vice Chair**)
Christopher Tomlinson*

Staff Members Present

Jeffrey Parker
Rhonda Allen
Luz Borrero
Collie Greenwood
Kevin Hurley
Melissa Mullinax
Elizabeth O'Neill
Franklin Rucker
David Springstead

Other staff members in attendance: LaShanda Dawkins, Steven McClure, Jonathan Hunt, Colleen Kiernan, Stephany Fisher, Erica Pines, Sean Thomas, Paula Nash, Kirk Talbott, Tyrene Huff and Marie Peters

1. **Approval of September 17, 2020, External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by Mr. Frierson seconded by Mrs. Hardage, the minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 8 to 0 with 9* members present.

2. **Briefing – 2021 Legislative Agenda**

The Board received an update on the following:

- 2020 MARTA Federal legislative review
 - MARTA emphasized relationship building with DeKalb, Fulton, Clayton Counties and the City of Atlanta
 - Educated communities on the state of the good repair program
 - Executed and communicated MARTA 2040 Expansion in Clayton County and City of Atlanta

*Christopher Tomlinson is the Executive Director of Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and is therefore, a non-voting member of the MARTA Board of Directors.

- Supported Fulton and DeKalb County in identifying funding for expansion plans
- MARTA received COVID-19 relief from CARES Act
- FAST Act – Continuing Resolution extended until September 9, 2021
- House and Senate have shown initiatives they will prioritize
- The House passed the Transit Act, which will be suitable for MARTA and other transit organizations
- Future COVID-19 relief – transit systems are seeking an additional thirty-two billion dollars (\$32B) for COVID-19 relief
- Biden Administration – showed interest in climate change and economic recovery through investments in transit and infrastructure

- 2020 election results – highlights
 - GA House and Senate – did not have any significant changes
 - MARTOC Chair – a new Chair will be appointed
 - Transportation Chair – a new chair will be appointed
 - Gwinnett Referendum – failed by a slim margin

- Contract lobbyists
 - MARTA is proposing to decrease the number of firms working on the Authority's behalf
 - Federal contract is with Holland and Knight along with two sub-consultants under Holland and Knight

- 2021 MARTA legislative agenda
 - Advocate for state funding for MARTA priorities
 - Starting in COA, advance local bus lane legislation
 - Re-pass TNC excise fee to make it subject to new Constitutional Amendment dedicating fees
 - Issue Education

3. Briefing – Public Engagement Update

The Board received an update on the following:

- Engagement
 - Enhanced strategies and tactics
 - Placement of color-coded signs – signs are larger and easier to read
 - Improved outreach through the distribution of bus and door hangers and literature drops to inform residents of the work scheduled in their community
 - Social media messages intended to reach MARTA riders, stakeholders, local businesses and communities
 - MARTA pop-up breeze stores – provided MARTA customers in the City of Atlanta, Clayton, DeKalb, and Fulton Counties with easier

- access to breeze store services
- Virtual public meetings
 - One (1) – COVID-19 employee town hall
 - One (1) – FY 21 budget hearing
 - Seven (7) – MARTA 2040 capital projects meetings
 - Fifty-six (56) – key stakeholder engagement meetings to discuss projects across jurisdictions
- Board meetings go virtual
 - Meetings are promoted via social media channels to encourage participation
 - Pre-meeting public comments are compiled by customer service and read live during the virtual meetings
 - Post-meeting comments from emails, voicemails, and YouTube are compiled by customer service and distributed for response and follow-up
- MARTA launched next-door – the platform provides access and allows residents in the City of Atlanta, Dekalb, Clayton, and Fulton Counties to communicate to over five hundred and eighty thousand (580,000) users.
- Collaboration
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Active participant in MARTA Accessibility Committee (MAC)
 - Boosted relations with multicultural organization and advocacy groups
 - Community and advocacy groups
 - Established onsite activation protocols for community groups and advocacy organizations utilizing MARTA stations
 - Partnered with key organizations to advance large-scale efforts for the 2020 census and November elections
 - MARTA 2040 roadshows
 - Hosted two (2) virtual public meetings for Clayton County residents and customers to receive project updates
 - Used a data-driven approach to support a targeted outreach effort along Clayton County's busiest routes
 - More than four hundred (400) people participated online for the two-day event asking questions and making comments
- On the horizon
 - Station renaming – evaluated five (5) stations for possible renaming
 - Launching engagement strategy to obtain feedback from community, customers, and stakeholders
 - MARTA 2040 website
 - Central location that provides updates on MARTA projects
 - Maintain transparency and public trust in program delivery

4. **Briefing - Media Impressions Update**

The Board received an update on the following:

- July
 - MARTA used state-of-the-art technology to make vehicle and facility cleaning easier and faster
 - MARTA takes additional safety measures to protect customers and employees as pandemic concerns persist
 - MARTA was involved in four hundred and seventy-five (475) news stories
 - General Manager/CEO Jeffrey Parker provided an op-ed in the Atlanta Business Chronicle where he spoke on racial inequality

- August
 - MARTA circulator route provided essential transit service to frontline workers in south Fulton County
 - MARTA partnered with HOPE Atlanta to address homelessness
 - MARTA will install air purification systems at all air-conditioned facilities to further protect the health of employees
 - Department of Safety and Quality Assurance achieved prestigious certification
 - MARTA was involved in three hundred and fifty (350) news stories

- September
 - MARTA invested in bus safety features, resumed front door boarding and onboard fare collection
 - MARTA hosts virtual meetings to provide updates on Clayton County projects
 - MARTA selects artist for an art installation at the airport station
 - MARTA was involved in four hundred and eight-six (486) news stories

- October
 - MARTA launched pilot program with Uber
 - GDOT approved MARTA Board approved updated safety plan
 - MARTA expanded efforts to encourage voter participation
 - MARTA was involved in three hundred and seventy-five (375) news stories

5. **Other Matters**

None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 p.m.