MARTA MAC MEETING

05/09/2023

10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

>> Good morning, everyone. The MAC meeting is now being called to order. Today's date is May 9th, 2023. And we are going to go around and let our MAC members introduce themselves so we will know who is on the phone. Starting with the MAC members, my name is Robert Smith. I am the chair of the MARTA Accessibility Committee. Other members will introduce themselves.   
>> I'm Bob Lossie, a member of the MAC committee, and I ride all three of the MARTA transit systems, and represent people in wheelchairs.   
>> Okay.   
>> Hi, this is Jordan Hall. I also ride all three business of MARTA, and I'm just representing persons with disabilities statewide.   
>> Okay.   
>> That was Jordan. Lee?   
>> Anybody else?   
>> This is Lee Rogers. I am representing the Blind and Low Vision organization agency.   
>> Okay.   
>> That's all I see in the call right now.   
>> Okay. We're going to ask MARTA staff that's here to introduce themselves.   
>> Hi, this is Paula Nash, I'm the executive director of Diversity and Inclusion here at MARTA. Good morning.   
>> Good morning.   
>> Good morning. My name is Rick Gonzalez. I am the director of Mobility Services, and this is my first meeting at (audio distortion).   
>> Good morning, Mr. Gonzalez. Thank you. Anybody else?   
>> Hi, everyone. I'm Chris (indiscernible). I am the director of Customer Insights in the Department of Customer Experience here at MARTA.   
>> Good morning, everyone. This is Toni Thornton with the Department of External Affairs and your public engagement offices. Thank you.   
>> And I'm Denise Brown. I'm the equity administrator in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.   
>> Thank you all. First, we'll get to our committee reports. I don't have any remarks no more than I always try to make sure that all of our members are attending the meeting, and some more than others, but we'll talk about that for another time. But right now, we're going to get back down to our reports. We have a committee report. Customer focus did not meet, but Mark Gasaway was interviewed for the deaf Awareness Month, and they did an interview with him and Autism Awareness Month. So it was recorded Station Announcement with young adults. And something from ASD, I think if you would pay attention to your agenda, and no‑show and appeals met on April 27th, and we had 1 overturned and 1 reschedule due to patron illness. And Accessibility did not meet, and Eligibility did not meet either. So we'll go back to Diversity and Inclusion, the executive director, Ms. Paula Nash. Ms. Paula Nash? Hello?   
>> Paula, you're muted.   
>> Sorry about that. Was on mute, I'm sorry.   
>> All right.   
>> Just a quick announcement, and I guess it doesn't affect the meetings right now because we are and we have been for a minute doing them virtually, but I did want to let everybody know that some of MARTA's departments and offices and one of those which will be diversity and inclusion will be moving across the street from our headquarters building, what was formerly the AT&T building, we will be moving our office along with several other departments will be moving over into that building. Looks like it will probably happen around September or October. But I did want to make everyone aware of that. I know we get a lot of visitors here to Diversity and Inclusion, the Diversity and Inclusion office, and so I wanted to as early as possible let you all know that, you know, in the fall we do plan to be moving across the street, but we will keep you all updated and informed on exactly what that happens.   
>> Okay.   
>> That is all I have.   
>> Thank you, Ms. Nash for that information. Are there any questions for Ms. Nash at this time? Okay. Hearing none. Paula, you know, Diversity and Inclusion just moving and other departments are moving over to the one that is occupied by AT&T; is that correct?

>> That is correct, yes.   
>> Okay. And this will happen sometime in September. Now, I was just thinking will we be able to have in‑person meeting when everything gets settled down over there?   
>> I see no reason why we will not. That‑‑the facility over there has‑‑we can still use of course the MARTA building. MARTA will still occupy this building. What's openly happening is we're closing the annex building that we have, and those people will be moving into MARTA headquarters, and and of the people in MARTA headquarters will be moving into what was formerly the AT&T building across the street, but we will still be able to have in‑person meetings, whether we have them in the headquarters building, or whether we have them in the building that's across the street. Between those two buildings, yes, we will be able to have in‑person meetings.   
>> Okay. Well, thank you. That's good. That's good news. Good news. At this time, since there are no more questions, thank you, Ms. Nash for that report. And following our agenda, we will get down to our next agenda item, and MARTA updates. Do we‑‑  
>> Alec, Chris? Are you guys?   
>> Okay, MARTA updates.   
>> Yeah, Jimmy were you calling for us?   
>> Denise, this is Chris. Is this where we should begin our I'm not sure where we are on the agenda?   
>> Yes, this is where you can begin Chris. I'm not sure what happened to Denise.   
>> Hi, everyone. My name is Chris (indiscernible). I'm the director of Customer Insights here at MARTA. In the customer experience department. Keeping it short, in the customer experience department, our mission is to put the customer first in all the decisions that are made within the authority. And to that end, I have two colleagues with me ‑ Alec Biehl and Eric Chow ‑ from the research and analysis department. What we've been working on for the last few months is a kind of innovative way to understand our riders. Again, we're trying to put our customers first as we make decisions in the authority. And so what Alec will present here shortly will be an approach to doing that called a persona approach which he'll get into. Just brief introduction, Alec whose going to be presenting joined MARTA just in January of '23. He has a PhD from Northwestern University, and he's also worked for three years as a post‑op in Oakridge National Laboratory. And his research is very much focused on processes of behavior change in people's mobility choices. So this project as you'll see is pretty much‑‑  
>> There we are. Now I can hear.   
>> Who do we have?   
>> Chris and Alec. Sorry about that you guys. I happened to look and overhear. I'm at headquarters, so my internet dropped off.   
>> No problem. We're just into the introduction, Denise, so I'll just finish up and Alec will begin the presentation. And Eric did his undergraduate degree in bioinformatics at Pittsburgh University and has a masters degree in bioinformatics here from Emory University here locally in Atlanta. He works as a data quality analysis and research analyst. Having joined MARTA about a year ago, we're close to his one year anniversary. So with that, I want to turn the presentation over to Alec who will take us through the presentation. And one thing I just want to point out is we very much want your input on what he's presenting, so as you listen, please try to formulate questions around what he's saying because part of the presentation here is for us to get your feedback on what we're doing. So without further ado, Alec.   
>> All right. Thank you very much, Chris. Can everyone hear me okay?   
>> Yes.   
>> Beautiful. I will go ahead and share my screen now. You should be seeing a PowerPoint presentation. Now a slide view; is that correct?   
>> Yes.   
>> Yes.   
>> Perfect. All right. Good morning, everyone. As Chris said my name is Alec, I joined MARTA back in January, so I'm a very much a baby in the organization. I use he and his pronouns. Today I am working from home. You can see possibly in the back I have my two bookshelves to help my home office feel really cozy, and today I will be presenting the work that three of us have been very much digging into for the past several months on creating these personas. So I want to start off by having everyone take a few moments and thinking about those questions which I will read off. As an individual, what do you think people first notice about you? What part of your identity are you most proud of? What causes are you passionate about? What groups do you participate in? Thinking of yourself as a transit rider, how would you describe your usage of MARTA? What is the most important transit service feature? How do you discuss MARTA with others? What is one mobility need that is currently not being met in your daily routines? When you think about these questions, and not looking for answers right now, but I want to give you ideas of types of questions that would be asked in personas research. And the main idea behind personas is to create these fictitious people describing to core users or customers of a business or organization that would typically have a name, a picture associated with that persona and details about them whether their characteristics, behaviors, or attitudes. And so the questions I have on the introductory slide would be used to create these types of fictitious people based on the real answers of MARTA customers, for instance. And on the screen, you may notice that there's a variety of gender, skin tone, and even each of those individuals, the skin tones are actually sort of divided in half to show that a persona is used to represent a whole bunch of different people but that are similar enough that have similar needs and concerns to create a persona that will be used to help decision makers in the organization better meet the needs of their constituents. And so why did we choose to use a persona approach to better understand transit riders in Atlanta? Well, first, this is not necessarily a new field, it's been used in marketing product design and health information systems for since the beginning of the millennium, but now transportation researchers are looking to this type of approach as a way to humanize transit riders and to better understand how to put on your empathy caps and make decisions from a human perspective rather than completely objective financial perspective for instance. And this type of approach has been shown to stipulate thinking within organizations especially when considering getting people across departments across expertise to work on projects. It also help to communicate information to stakeholders, whether they are riders like on this call or people who are heads of departments and organizations, and say hey, this is what you should be thinking about within your department, now what can we do to help integrate these personas into your decision‑making processes. This is just a brief outline of the presentation. I won't go into too many details here, but I provide a little bit of background on what's going on in the transportation field when it come to these personas. We'll touch a little bit on the data we used and the methods we employed to create the groups that represent the personas here. We'll touch on the results, arguably the most important, you know, what are we proposing to be used within MARTA, and then we'll wrap things up which will include time to get feedback from everyone, and we'll use that to help finalize the results before we take it to the executives at MARTA presenting our results. And if you have questions, generally, I would prefer to wait until the end, but if you feel like you would want an answer on a specific slide, I guess there might be a hand raising feature or something. If someone on the call, maybe Chris, will just point out if someone is trying to get my attention, that would be great. So now moving‑‑I'm sorry, what was that?   
>> No, I was going to ask any of the MAC members if they had questions.   
>> He was getting ready to continue the presentation. He's not finished.   
>> Okay. I didn't understand (audio distortion) he was asking if those who had questions, okay.   
>> Yes. We'll have a lot of time to have question and answer session at the end, but if there is a pressing question on a particular slide, I'm happy to have someone interject.   
>> We'll wait until the end.   
>> Sounds good. So now moving into details about how we classify transit ridership at MARTA. So a bit of a problem history. The C team express an interest in understanding how to bolster empathy in their decision‑making process, and by empathy, that means how to emotionally identify with an individual or groups of individuals. How will different customers be impacted by a new transit investment or a policy that impacts the way that a service is provided or a different type of service to be provided. It also can these impacts be districted equitably across different groups of riders. And the approach that excited the most seeing what other transit agencies are starting to do across the nation is the idea of persona profile, this human centered approach to classifying ridership. And in our case specifically, we're using something that is data driven and what that means is that we're going to use a source or a variety of different data sources that has these numerical aspects and interpret them in a way that is easy to understand, you know, regardless of your background and create basically human representations of those numbers. And this data‑driven approach helps reduce the bias that we all would carry in to try and classify users ourselves based on our life experiences, we are using statistics to say okay, this is how we see the best way to differentiate groups of riders. And this idea of personas is rooted in the tradition of marketing research, have a segment population and there are four attributes that are generally considered in this type of work, first considering the geographic features of riders, you know, whether they live in urban, suburban or rural areas, whether there is a bus stop or rail station close to where they live, or is it further away which maybe makes it less accessible. Also considering demographics. There's a lot of racial and ethnic history in this country in terms of difference in accessibility, so understanding the history of race and ethnicity and how that might impact decision making in a mobility context how men, women, non‑binary individuals, may view their needs differently in terms of how they get around for work, for leisure, and so on. Also considering specific behaviors. Is transit use primarily for work commutes, is it for shopping, is it for medical reasons and so on. And people who tend to use gravitate towards one use or another will probably have different opinions over what should be done to improve the system for instance. And then finally, thinking about the psychology of users. What are your beliefs in terms of climate change or equity and how that views how you view a transit system. What we want to do is use these features and use them to classify people in different groups, not just looking specifically at urban versus rural because that would be too simple, there's a lot of differences in that group, men versus women. Not all men think alike, not all women think alike, so having these attributes give us a clear picture of individuals and allow us to be smart how we identify riders. I want to give a quick example how this was done specifically by a consulting firm that was looking at how should transit agencies be thinking about a post‑pandemic future, and they did a survey of three big transit systems across the world, one did New York City and Singapore, and they were able to identify four different groups of riders using this type of information, the demographic, the geographic, the behavioral, and the psychology, and they came up with four different personas, which on this screen up here, are shown with their names and their percentage of the sample for the survey that they did. So really quickly, I'll mention one of them is the "resigned user" which is I haven't really used transit in a long time, and we don't envision ever using transit now given circumstances. There are the "reliance users" which is I am required to use transit for one reason or another, but I still have concerns because of the fact that the pandemic might expose me to other people and will increase my risk for infection; however, public transit offers a potential space for reflecting on their own well‑being. Then we have the "resilience users" which is I basically these people love public transportation, they find it as an opportunity to maybe decompress after work, or they find it easy to not have to drive but be able to do a leisure activity on their commutes. And then there are the "reflective people" that basically use transit for everything, and they don't envision not using transit even though there was a major pandemic which was potentially a health risk during that time, they no longer see it as a health risk as the pandemic subsided. And so that's just an idea of we gathered a whole bunch of information and we found there are four different groups we need to consider in decision‑making process. And so we're going to do something similar here. And specifically, the data that we used was the 2019 Transit Onboard survey that was conducted by MARTA and the Atlanta Regional Commission together. And there was over 140,000 surveys total distributed amongst riders in an intercept format, and what that basically means is the survey interviews near bus stops, near train stations, or however they could get access to riders on a specific transit service said hey, do you have so and so amount of minutes to be able to complete this survey. And in this case, all six transit systems in the 20 county ARC study area were included. And as you might see on the screen, there are all of the questions that were asked of the riders, and there was a lot of sociodemographic information provided: You know, what is your education level, what is your age, what's your race and ethnicity, gender, household income, and so on. And then specifically about the trip they were intercepted on, how did you pay for the trip, did you use a Breeze card, do you have a specific discount available. What other mode would you use if transit wasn't available and including a response that the individual would not make the trip if transit wasn't available, which is an important thing to capture. And so all of this information was used to build a model, and part of the modeling process was to be able to determine which variables were indicated as being significant for formulating the groups. So basically, we used statistical tools to rule out variables that were not important. And so we have a table here of the different variables that ended up being important, as well as how these variables were coded or represented. So for instance, age ended up being important, and we considered four different age groups which is 24 years old and younger, 25 to 44, 45 to 64, and 65 and over. We also considered trip purpose which is trips to the airport for educational purposes such as attending universities, medical purposes going to a medical appointment, for work, and then a varied other category which includes recreation, shopping, dining, and so on. Whether the rider was a student or not. Household income was also important, and this also had four different categories: 30,000 and under per year, 30 to 50,000; 50 to 75,000; and 75,000 and over. Whether the respondent had access to a vehicle as well as a driver's license to make them legal to drive. And then as well as just general transit usage frequency, whether this was maybe their first time or if they're frequent users, which we labeled as riding at least two days per week. I will say even though not all variables are shown here from the survey, we can still look at how, you know, for instance, gender or race and ethnicity is districted among these different personas, they just ended up not being important for determining the number of personas that are being able to optimally distinguish amongst transit riders. So now getting into the results which is how many classes, how many groups of personas did we create, and what do these personas look like. So in total, we ended up with nine personas or classes, and the rest of the presentation, the word class and persona, is synonymous. Right on this slide, I show a breakdown how this looks across both the survey sample itself, which is shown in the left here which you can see that not every persona is the same size and that's okay. We don't need them all to be the same size, it's just a reflection of there's a larger group and there's smaller groups, but they're equally important in decision making. And I have decision breakdown in a pie chart on it right. You can see the largest group ended up being 22% and the lowest two and a half percent. The next few slides, I'm going to go over what these look like. So there are three broad classes, and I will go over how the personas fit into these broad classes. So the first is the group of commuter classes. And you can see here on the slide that there are four different personas in this commuter class. So the first one here is what we label as the "millennial choice commuters," and these individuals tend to be quite frequent users with vehicle access and that vehicle access makes them a choice commuter, they're not dependent on transit necessarily. And they're millennial because that describes the age range that these people tend to fall in. They tend to be of mixed income but gravitate more towards a lower income. They're not‑‑their primary purpose of course is work being the commuter choice, and they tend to be majority black or African American riders. And then we also have what we call the "millennial and ride‑hailing." So they're very similar to this other group except their alternate mode tends to be using ride hailing rather than using their own vehicle and that's because they tend to be split fairly evenly between having a vehicle or not. Their household income tends to be a bit higher than millennial choice commuters, and they are also majority black or African American. Then we have a group that we labeled as lower income and more transit dependent, and this group right here are also frequent users but they tend to not have access to a vehicle. They tend to be a bit older than the two previous groups, more like the gen‑X millennial age. Like I said, very low income, but they are employed. Also majority black or African American, and they are transit dependent which means they don't really have another mode to use for the specific trip. And then finally we have "high income users" that are also choice users. So they are not‑‑they are not constrained just by whether transit is available to them or not, they are using it to get around by choice, and they are frequent users. And they tend to be older so we're thinking more the 65 plus users. And also the higher income, thinking 75,000 and above in this case. They tend to be employed and fairly balanced mix between whites and black users. And their alternative mode would be to drive alone if transit was not available. So those are our four commuter classes, and if you look, the boxes corresponding to those personas match the distribution pie chart on the right. These constitute a fairly large majority of riders, but again just because they're bigger doesn't mean their are more or less important. So the second set of personas are gravitating towards the youth or younger generation, and these have two personas within them. The first one is being a low income and transit dependent group amongst the youth. And these younger people here tend to be very frequent users of transit. They do not have vehicle access. They have low income and they are mostly employed, so these are more maybe young professionals that fall into this group. They are also majority black or African American, and tend to use transit services for things not only work‑related but in our other categories, so that's the shopping, and leisure, and dining, and so on. And these folks generally tend to be transit dependent, but if they do have to use something else, it would be a ride hailing mode and ride hailing is Uber and lift. Sorry, I did not classify that earlier. And the second class of use is what we're referring to as the socioeconomically diverse students, so as you might imagine the primary trip is for education and also for work because not every student ‑‑ you know, they might be part‑time workers on top of being a student. These folks tend to have have access to their own cars and not be as transit dependent as the former group. This group shows the highest levels of Hispanic individuals, as well as people of other racial and ethnic identities which include Asian, native Pacific indigenous folk, native Alaskans, and so on. These users also tend to be pretty mixed in terms of their income. And then, like I said, this is the highest level of student representation amongst the personas. And then finally we have this other group of personas that aren't tied necessarily by a connecting thing like commuters or youth but are also important. And so going over these first we have the transit dependent and socioeconomically vulnerable class. It's here we see these folks again are frequent transit users but tend to not have access to a vehicle and therefore tend to not be able to make a trip if a transit service is not available to them. They tend to be older with fairly low income, and part of the reason is because the majority is that they're unemployed or retired, and they tend to use this for medical purposes or for the other reasons: shopping, and leisure, and so on. We also have higher income group that tends to use transit services to get to the airport and other leisure reasons throughout the region, and these folks here we might call them infrequent users because they're only going to go the airport every now and then or use it when they want to go to a bar and getting back to their home safe ‑ Friday nights, for instance. These folks tend to be older and also tend to be higher income than the rest of the personas and they also have the next highest rates of being retired. And this is the only group that is clearly majority whites or Caucasian in terms of their racial identity, and they also tend to use ride hailing in the case that transit is not available. Finally, we have what we call our "transit dabblers." So these are the most infrequent users of MARTA products. They tend to be mixed in terms of having access to a vehicle but more so yes, they have vehicle access versus not. They tend to be middle age and also in the middle income groups, and most of these folks are employed, but there are also some students, and there's also the best racial and ethnic balance in this group. So yeah, that goes through our entire set of personas, there are nine of them, and I'm going to show this chart on the screen here that summarizes all of these aspects. And I would be more than happy to send either this slide or the full presentation to all attendees here so that way you can take time to think about what these personas are and if you don't have feedback after this presentation you can think about this for a few days and write to us with your thoughts. But the point I want to stress here is that we have these nine groups, and just the fact that we have nine we believe is enough to represent a diverse set of MARTA riders without overwhelming people without having to think about so many view points that it would become useless in a decision‑making process because you can't think so many when you put on your empathy hat. But I will also note here that we are also working on creating subgroups within each of these that may be beneficial for certain purposes like marketing for instance, where they wouldn't be able to maybe target more groups. And I want to give an example here how we would be able to communicate this information visually. And so here on the slide I am visualizing how each of the personas are broken down by the next travel mode if transit wasn't available, and I'll give just to highlight two examples. If we look at the first class, which is the millennial choice commuters, you can see there's a fairly even mix amongst a shared ride being available or driving alone would not make the trip versus class number 8 which is the high income choice commuters which is 90% of people saying yes, I would use my own vehicle within a very small proportion saying I would get a ride from another family member or a friend. And so this visualization is just another way to communicate this information and make sense of numbers that may be a bit overwhelming. And so, if upon request, we'd be happy to show more visualizations for people that are interested in that. And so to summarize these efforts, there are three main takeaways. The initial goal here was to identify distinct groups of MARTA users and usage patterns to be able to create personas to help decision makers at MARTA be more empathetic with all the decisions related to infrastructure, policy, services, are going to impact different groups and to be able to specifically say how those decisions will impact groups 1 through 9 in this case because the methods that we use that nine groups is the best way to represent MARTA riders. And after getting feedback from everyone in this presentation, we are going to finalize how we view these personas, how we write up these personas, then we're going to present this later within the next month to the executives of MARTA and make this a case for decision making tool. Just to point out, whenever analysis is done nothing is going to be completely perfect so the first thing this survey was not designed with this particular exercise in mind this was the particular data set available. Part of that we didn't have access to questions thinking about the psychology of users, thinking about beliefs and attitudes towards transit and towards things that would impact people's choices around something like how environmentally conscious are you. And also the questions were related specifically to that trip being taken when they were intercepted by the survey interviewer. And then also this was done before COVID, so we don't know how different this composition would look if we were to do another survey. And so that ends the presentation. And so I have a set of questions that I would like to ask both the MAC members that are riders as well as MARTA‑‑  
>> Alec?   
>> You have questions that you want to ask them now?   
>> Yes. So I have a list of questions that I prompt people with, but I'm happy to have any questions that people might have.   
>> I think the preference right now would be to see if we can forward them the questions and give them a chance to think about it and respond. Is that possible?   
>> Certainly. After this presentation, we can ‑‑ this final slide, I have six questions they can think about and they can send us. Chris has‑‑I don't remember the platform name but basically it's a way to access through like a link or QR code where they can go in and have either fill out themselves or have someone assist them fill out responses to all the questions. But certainly we can take questions now people might have especially if it's to classify something or if they feel hey, this is great, but I think we should have this other type of persona as well.   
>> That was quite a bit. That was quite a bit of information. And it will take some time, so if we could get back with you at some time because we are limited to how much time we got now. We got other presenters as well, but I want to thank you for all that information. Like I said, it's quite a bit. Some of it I heard before, and I guess the main focus of all of this and gathering all this data and information is to improve ridership on public transportation because a lot of this I have heard of over and it's very similar. But I want to thank you and your colleague for your presentation at this time, and we are going to hold off the questions because we have more people to present at this time, and you can get together with your coordinator Ms. Denise L. Brown, and she will contact the MAC committee as well.   
>> Yes. While we transition, I can send the presentation to her via email.   
>> If I could say something quickly, it's Bob. If we could plan a Zoom call of just the Marta MAC members to have a discussion, I think that would be good.   
>> Yeah, that's what I was suggesting.   
>> With you, I'm sorry Alec.   
>> Yeah. I guess Chris would be the person to determine whether we can do that or not. Am I open, sure, but I guess we'll see what we can pull together. Chris, would you like to comment?   
>> Yeah, we certainly appreciate any feedback, and if you feel that a focus group type of approach, which it sounds like you're describing, would be useful to you, we'd be more than happy to make ourselves available to do that.   
>> Alec, this is Denise.   
>> Okay. Great.   
>> We have to move on. Next is external affairs, Ms. Toni Thornton.   
>> Good morning, everyone. I am here today, I am going to make a quick announcement. I want to share information about our upcoming MARTA budget hearings. We'll be up within next week. The first hearing and this is for our proposed fiscal year 2024 operating and capital budgets. And so we are going to extend these meetings to the public so that they can review the budget and provide any feedback. And the first meeting will be Tuesday, May 16th, and the meeting will start at 7 p.m. sharp, but preceding the meeting we have a community exchange at 6 p.m. where people can come out and talk to finance staff or talk to someone if they have any questions, and that first meeting is going to be at DeKalb County library, the Decatur branch, and that's located at 215 Sycamore Street in Decatur, and if you're riding MARTA, that's going to be the blue line to the Decatur Station. And the routes that feed that station to service that station include route 15, route 19, 36, the 123, and the 823. And again, there is a community exchange just before the public hearing start at 6 p.m., and the hearing itself will start at 7 p.m. Also, an overview of the capital and operating budget will be available at headquarters. We'll leave information there at the front desk if anyone would like to pick that up between 8:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Now, the second meeting is going to occur, so they'll be another opportunity Thursday, May 18th, and same as the first meeting the community exchange is at 6 p.m. and the budget hearing will start at 7 p.m. sharp. Now, the difference with this one, I should have mentioned the first meeting is in‑person, and this meeting on the 18th is both in‑person, and it will be live streamed. So it will be at MARTA headquarters, and that's located at 2424 Piedmont Road, and that's Atlanta Georgia. So if anyone wants to come in person, the community exchange starts at 6 p.m. following the hearing at 7 p.m. If someone wants to call in and listen to the meeting they may do so by calling 646‑931‑3860. And those for you that may be trying to take this information down, Denise have the information, she's going to send it to all of you, but I just want to share it with you, but this all will be sent out to to you. There's a webinar ID of 86528311573, and then the use access code of 597493. And if you would like to attend the meeting at headquarters on May 18th, if you're riding MARTA, you may do so by jumping on the red or gold line to Lindbergh Center station. And the bus routes that service that station include route 5, 6, 30, 39, and the 809. So again, those hearings will be Tuesday, May 16th at DeKalb Decatur branch library, and Thursday May 18th at MARTA headquarters. Now we will be accepting comments and feedback no later than May 19th, so if you'd like to get a jump reviewing the proposed budget that will be posted on our website where it's available on our website or there will be an overview that will be left at the front security desk at MARTA headquarters. So you can leave comments by calling 404‑848‑5299, or you can send comment to attention MARTA's Office of External Affairs. You can mail it in, and that's 2424 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30324, or email. You can email to publichearinginfo@itsmarta.com. So I know I gave you all of the specific information, but again, what I am providing today will be followed up with a flyer and and information so you'll have all of this information at your fingertips. So if there's any questions, I am open if there's any questions. And if not, I hope you all have a fabulous day.   
>> Questions?   
>> I don't see any hands, Robert.   
>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Thornton. Appreciate it.   
>> Thank you so much. Bye‑bye.   
>> And we'll go to infrastructure, now rail operations. Who is going to present that to us today?   
>> Keith Chambers is here.   
>> Okay. Mr. Chambers?   
>> Good morning. Keith Chambers, director of vertical transportation. I'd like to welcome Mr. Gonzalez to MARTA and the MAC mobility as mobility is a large compliment to vertical transportation to patients that require elevators to move through the system. Eric and Kalesha have been extremely helpful, and I know that it will be seamless with them handling this, but at some point, I'd like to meet with you and discuss some of the needs in detail and give you a background, a little history.   
>> Thanks, Mr. Chambers. Please reach out to me and let's set up a meeting date. And thank you for your kind words concerning Ms. Davis and Eric. I'm very lucky to be a part of that team.   
>> Absolutely. I'll reach out to you very soon. The project started yesterday on North Springs elevator No. 1, and mobility shuttle is in place to that in Sandy Springs. This is the last elevator requiring the mobility shuttle as the project for elevators are winding down. This elevator is scheduled to be completed by July 14th or before. The project team has been doing an excellent job finishing projects ahead of schedule, so I anticipate that not to be any different. So Medical Center No. 1 on the northbound side, northbound platform will be completed by the end of this week, and they will move next week to No. 2 on the southbound platform side. When they're done with Medical Center, I believe the last elevators in the stations to be completed are Sandy Springs, which there are two elevators for each platform, so there will be no disruption there. And I can tell you, this project has been trying for a long time. It's going on its seventh year now, and the difference in when it started and where it's at the last few years is amazing. They are really rocking on these things, and they're turning them over and they're operating very well. So I'm thrilled to get this project done with, and that will be 111 total elevators in the last eight years when they're completed, which is a pretty big job. They're over 90% complete, and then after Sandy Springs, the only ones left are going to be parking garages, head quarter and a couple maintenance facilities. So definitely winding down maybe in the next year and a half. One other project I want to talk about though is the airport renovation project. They are in the process of doing renovation at the airport which consists of building a glass elevator shaft and installing an elevator where there wasn't one. So if you go to the airport, there's going to be a huge barricade around it, and this glass shaft is going to be built from the concourse up through the platform floor and up to the ceiling there, so it will be completely glass and exposed. The construction will begin on the existing elevator because the construction for this one will go until ‑‑ I think the shaft is to be completed around October ‑‑ September/October and then the elevator company will go in and install the elevator around November. It will be completed around February. Once that's turned over and complete and in operation, they will begin construction on the existing elevator shaft and changing that over to glass, and then the elevator company will come back in after that and install the replacement for the existing elevator. So and that will probably take a year for the construction of the shaft, installation of the elevator, and all of the, you know, closeouts and everything. And when we're done, we'll have two glass elevators there, and it's a long process, but when completed, we'll make sure that people could see where the elevator is and see where the availability is. So hopefully people will use the elevators more often than they do now because it's hidden behind a facade. So this will hopefully limit a lot of the people taking the escalators with luggage which is not safe and produces a lot of unnecessary injuries. That is the worst facility that we have where people getting injured on escalators because they even look over at the elevator and they continue to take the escalator where they fall. We had one a week ago that was told because of the amount of luggage they had to please take the elevator and they refused, took the escalator and fell and had to be transported. So it's going to be a big job when they're done with that airport station, it's going to have a whole new look. They are beginning the escalators here in a few months, so before they even start construction on the elevator itself, the escalators would have been replaced. It's going to be a whole new look and big change to that station, so looking forward to it. Chairman, I believe that's all I got for updates today.   
>> Thank you, Mr. Chambers. We'll ask if any of your presenters have any questions about your presentation.   
>> This is Bob Lossie, and I do have a question.   
>> Okay. Go ahead, Bob.   
>> First of all, just very fast comment about the Atlanta airport and so quickly evolving to be an international on global scale. Are the Atlanta airport is the only airport in the United States that has just opened an adult diaper changing room. That's a big deal for those who have those needs. But other European countries have that. We're not the first in the world, we're the only one in the United States. So Atlanta is far above the scale of the the rest of the country. That being said, I'm on numerous committees around Atlanta dealing with different things, and like you know, the wheeled vehicle lanes for bicycles and wheelchair commutes. The new trains that are coming in 2025 are going to have bicycle racks with charging stations on them. So there's going to be an evolution over the next few years. And to get ahead of that, Mr. Chambers, are you familiar with a bicycle gutter that is used for on stairways for bicycles?   
>> I am. I did a presentation on this. It's probably been a couple of years ago in the riders advisory counsel.   
>> Okay. And because the bicycles either use the stairs dangerously‑‑well, I mean, do they have that in Atlanta at the train stations?   
>> They do not.   
>> Okay. So bicyclist will use the elevators with the wheelchairs or they use the escalators which, you know, if they had the option in the future of having the bicycle gutter that could‑‑I know there are a number of ways they're installed, I like them being installed on the wall a few inches above the stair so people don't trip on them or lose easy access to the railing. But that would be great if they could get ahead of the game and do that as Atlanta transitions more to a bikeable city.   
>> You know, that's a good point. I approached this a few years ago, and the problem that we have especially with the airport station, is the egress ability. So for escalators, you're not allowed to use those as a point of egress or list them as a building egress for emergencies if they are not running. So with only one running down ‑‑ and typically you're going to look at the egress coming from the platform. So coming down, there's limited space and limited stair accessibility. So when you go and do something like the bike, whether it's a bike assist or a bike gutter, it takes up some of that space so that may be a long time before we get that sort of option there, but there are definitely opportunities in other stations to be able to do that with plenty egress capabilities. So I think they're a good idea. I looked at them around the world and some places rely on them a lot more than others. Not a whole lot of feedback on it on how efficient they are, sometimes they're a novelty, but I do think some time in the near future we will be looking at those and possibly implementing them on station changes when we do new stairways and new access to the station, but I don't think we'll have that any time real soon.   
>> Well, I wasn't even thinking of doing it this year, just having it in the plans for the future as you just said you did. And it was more about the stations, not the airport. And it's just I think Atlanta's going to transition to more of a European lifestyle.   
>> I hate to interrupt you Bob, but we really have to move on. We have to move on because we're running out of time. Thank you for your comment.   
>> Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chambers.   
>> Yes, sir.   
>> Okay.   
>> Angelita Amour is going to get the customer service report real quickly.   
>> Okay. What about bus and rail.   
>> They didn't have anything on the agenda today. No, they did not.   
>> All right. Customer focus.   
>> Customer service.   
>> I mean, customer service. Angelita.   
>> Angelita Amour. Good morning, everyone.   
>> Good morning.   
>> How are you all? My name is Angelita Amour, I am the customer service care field representative for MARTA mobility. And I will be presenting the ADA link customer complaints dating out for February 2023. So starting with the authority‑wide complaints, we have 481. Of the 481, we have 145 ADA link complaints, which is 30.1%. Of the 145, we have 90 ADA valid complaints, which is 62.1%. The next area is the broken down by department. We'll start with Mobility which is 139. Mobility reservations is 2. Mobility maintenance is 1. Bus operations is 3. Vertical transportation and police services is 0 which is a total of 145. Next we have top complaints. And top complaints in all categories starting with late pick‑ups, we have 40. Late drop‑offs, we have 22. No‑shows at 19. The change or cancel pick‑up notice at 10. Discourteous at 6. Didn't offer assistance and tone of voice at 5. And then we have vehicle stopping location at 4. And last but not least we have accommodations with authority‑wide accommodations at 58. And of the 58, we have 26 of those are mobility which is 44.8%. And that concludes the ADA link customer complaints dating out for February 2023. Is there any questions?   
>> I see no hands, Robert.   
>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Armor.   
>> You're welcome. Thank you all.   
>> Thank you so much. Okay. All right. We'll move on since we're almost about to run out of time for our mobile report.   
>> Mr. Gonzalez is on the line.   
>> Okay. Mr. Gonzalez?   
>> There we go. My apologies. I have never been more embarrassed. I don't know what I should be bringing to the table at this time. As I said this is my very first meeting, I was invited yesterday. After this meeting, if someone could reach out to me and let me know or outline the expectations, and I programs you this will be much better‑‑I will be much better prepared next time. And I do once again apologize and thank you for your patient.   
>> Mr. Gonzalez, can you tell us a little bit about yourself.   
>> There you go. I can do that. Thank you for giving me something. My name is Rick Gonzalez. I have been in the transit agency‑‑  
>> Can you speak up a little bit.   
>> You're breaking up too.   
>> Am I breaking up? Holy cow. Is this better? Better, same?   
>> Better.   
>> It's still bad but it was much better when you were first speaking. I don't know if you changed something after that.   
>> I apologize. This might be my system. I can barely hear anything.   
>> This is much better. We can hear you much better.   
>> I have no idea what I did. Okay. My name is Rick. I have been in the transit industry for over 20 years now. I started in Palm Beach County at Palm Tran, the transit agency for that county in south Florida. I started off what was called a service coordinator in mobility management, and basically, it was a multitool jack of all trades job, and it was the best thing for me because I learned the ins and outs of mobility management. We ‑‑ matter of fact, I started in this industry so long ago that the software we used was DOS based for reservations. From there I‑‑I was there ten years, and I worked for First Transit. After First Transit, I worked with the Miami Dade International Airport running the shuttle service. I worked at various start ups for even Cobb County, First Transit took over Cobb County, and after five years of First Transit, I went over to (indiscernible) Rapid Transit where I participated in the establishment of the Go Link which is their transit on-demand system. I also did ‑‑ worked at (indiscernible) for quite some time. And Herold Humphrey, who was the deputy chief of bus, he invited me to come over and work at MARTA, which I'm extremely proud to be here. MARTA has an excellent representation throughout the transit industry of providing a innovative service. A lot of stuff going on at MARTA that's in the work, a lot of technology improvements, so I was very lucky to be invited here to be apart of this team. Ms. Kalesha Davis and Eric Knowles, those are amazing people that have been working closely with me. And you guys have been very welcoming, and I enjoyed listening to the meeting, and I learned a lot. So and I promise you at the next meeting my presentation will be more than just about me. So thank you all very much.   
>> Great. Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez. Is there any questions of Mr. Gonzalez? I'm pretty sure we will be meeting again. Glad to have you on board, Mr. Gonzalez. I look forward as the chair of the MAC committee in discussing some things with you about the MARTA mobility, but at this time, are there any other members of the committee who would like to ask Mr. Gonzalez a question because he gave us a little history about his self?   
>> This is Jordan Hall. Forgive me, Mr. Gonzalez. But you are the new director of MARTA mobility, right?   
>> Yes, ma'am. I am the new director of Mobility Services, yes, ma'am..   
>> And the only other thing I put it in the chat is would you mind providing your email in the chat?   
>> Sure thing. Right away.   
>> Any other questions?   
>> You don't see any hands Denise?   
>> I don't see any hands, I don't.   
>> Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez. I look forward to meeting with you. Whenever you can have some time. Since there are no hands, Denise when is our next MAC meeting date, please?   
>> July the 11th.   
>> July the 11th. And perhaps we won't have a real long agenda at that time and we can get to more about Mr. Gonzalez and MARTA mobility. So at this time, since there's nothing else to come before this committee, I call this meeting adjourned.   
>> Thank you, everyone, for participating.   
(End of meeting).