

# MARTA Sustainability Newsletter: Earth Day Edition

Transit-Related Articles on Sustainability & Resilience



## History of Earth Day

The first Earth Day celebration took place on April 22nd, 1970, when a U.S. senator from Wisconsin organized a national demonstration to raise awareness about environmental issues. Rallies and protests took place across the country, and by the end of the year, the U.S. government had created the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Today, over a billion people in more than 190 countries around the globe celebrate Earth Day by taking part in activities designed to protect the planet from pollution, deforestation, and other negative environmental impacts.



Earth Day is an important reminder to protect and improve the environment for future generations, but our actions to live more sustainably should be a daily part of our lives so that every day is Earth Day! You can take part by picking up litter, planting trees, recycling regularly, or starting a petition for something you would like to see changed!

MARTA is proud to publish its  
first Sustainability Newsletter!



“Every day is Earth Day at MARTA,” said MARTA General Manager and CEO, Collie Greenwood. “While using transit itself, is a climate solution, we continue to lower our carbon footprint by switching to a zero-emission fleet, ensuring our facilities are energy-efficient, and providing healthy community amenities such as fresh markets, neighborhood gardens, and soccer pitches.”



## Every day is Earth Day at MARTA



MARTA currently has six electric buses on the streets, with 31 more on the way, and has committed to using electric buses on all its bus rapid transit (BRT) routes. The remaining bus fleet is made up mostly of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses that reduce emissions equivalent to keeping more than 370,000 cars off the road or powering almost 300,000 homes for one year.



MARTA offers free electric vehicle charging stations at six rail stations (North Springs, Edgewood/Candler Park, College Park, Lindbergh, H.E. Holmes, and Doraville), the Woodward Parkway Park & Ride, and the Laredo Bus Garage employee parking lot. MARTA is in the process of transitioning to electric for its non-revenue vehicles, with a goal of at least a 10 percent increase in electric non-revenue vehicles every year moving forward. And

a reminder that all MARTA's trains and the streetcar run on electricity, meaning no tailpipe emissions.



MARTA strives to be a strong community partner, implementing programs that encourage healthy habits such as MARTA Markets that bring fresh produce to rail stations in food “deserts,” partnering with Global Growers to establish a farm near Indian Creek Station for local farmers from Burundi, and building soccer pitches at rail stations for a citywide youth soccer league.



MARTA's transit-oriented development (TOD) program transforms under-utilized MARTA surface parking lots into mixed-use developments with an affordable housing component to ensure senior and low-income residents have convenient access to transit.

## Every day is Earth Day at MARTA

(continued)

### MARTA Elevator and Escalator Rehabilitation Program

In 2017, MARTA began rehabilitation of 111 elevators and 116 escalators in 38 stations. The purpose of this extensive project is to reduce downtime of equipment, increased energy efficiency, resiliency, and improved safety features, making MARTA more accessible for all riders. Since the inception of this project, 84 of MARTA's 111 elevators and 68 of the 116 escalators are modernized. MARTA is committed to modernizing the remaining vertical transportation equipment by fiscal year 2027.

### ESCO Contract and Upgrades

MARTA has been engaged in an Energy Service Company (or ESCO contract) with Schneider Electric since 2017. ESCOs develop, design, build, and arrange financing for projects that save energy, reduce energy costs, and decrease operations and maintenance costs at their customers' facilities. Through the contract, a series of planned energy conservation measures are guaranteed to avoid \$55M in costs over 17 years. These measures include various energy efficiency upgrades such as LED lighting replacements and HVAC upgrades. As of spring 2022, savings were above the guaranteed projection by more than \$2M.

## MARTA Sustainability Training

One of our key priorities at MARTA is raising employee awareness about our commitment to sustainability in the public transit industry. As part of this commitment, we've created an employee **Sustainability Training** that is now available in [MARTALearn](#).

In this course you will learn basic sustainability and Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) terminology and principles, review what drives sustainability and ESG at MARTA, discover how MARTA incorporates sustainability into policy and programming, and identify how **you** can contribute to sustainability at MARTA.

Please take a moment to register and complete this 30-minute course, and reach out to our Sustainability Director, Richard Thomas, at [rthomas5@itsmarta.com](mailto:rthomas5@itsmarta.com) with any questions or feedback.

Check  
out our new  
**Sustainability  
Dashboard!**



## MARTA launched the new **Breeze Mobile 2.0** app, an updated way to pay for

your ride with your smartphone on April 17, 2023. This new app was designed to address customer feedback during the testing of Breeze Mobile 1.0 and delivers new features to make paying fares easier. Customers may still use other Breeze fare media, including Breeze cards and tickets.

*"One of the most common customer requests is a way to conveniently pay for each ride as you go, rather than having to load a card or stand in line to buy a ticket at the ticket machines,"* said MARTA Chief Customer Experience Officer Rhonda Allen. *"This updated **Breeze Mobile 2.0** app lets you pay-as-you-go. Just scan your phone on the bus or at the faregate and you're on your way."*

In addition to purchasing tickets and products on the updated app, MARTA riders can load stored value to their **Breeze Mobile 2.0** account, allowing the app to work just like a Breeze card.

In recognition of Earth Day and to promote transit ridership, a sustainable way to travel, the first 10,000 customers who downloaded and registered their account received one free trip.



# Suggestions for Everyday Sustainable Living

Individual efforts to live more sustainably may seem like a tiny contribution to the huge problem of climate change, but every action makes a difference. Collectively, we have the power to make a positive impact on our planet!

Here are some sustainable product swaps to try:

## Reusable plastic-free food storage

Ditch the clingfilm and the plastic bags! Try beeswax wrap and reusable storage bags instead. Beeswax wraps are compostable and biodegradable, and last up to a year with proper care and regular usage. Silicone bags are better for the environment because they are reusable which prevents unnecessary waste!

## Replace light bulbs with energy efficient LEDs

LED light bulbs use at least 75% less energy, and last up to 25 times longer, than incandescent lighting. We've been doing this at MARTA for years and have converted nearly all of our lighting!

## Switch to sustainable dental floss

Most traditional dental floss is made from non-recyclable and non-biodegradable materials, like nylon, that contribute to harmful plastic waste in landfills and the ocean. Try switching to floss made of bamboo, corn, or recycled polyester. Bonus points if the floss packaging is recyclable or compostable!

You can also try implementing one or two of the following practices at home:

- Walk, bike, or take MARTA whenever possible
- Reduce food waste by making a weekly meal plan & shopping list
- Practice correct food disposal and composting
- Recycle properly
- Buy locally sourced products



If you have a sustainable project idea you'd like to submit, please do so at [sustainability@itsmarta.com](mailto:sustainability@itsmarta.com) OR call MARTA's Office of Sustainability Hotline at 404-848-4434.

When adopting sustainable habits be sure to **start small!** Build up good practices over time and you'll make a big impact on the planet, your community, and your home.

## Fun Projects for Earth Day and beyond



### Start an at-home composting practice

Composting is an effective way to keep organic waste out of landfills. If you are interested in backyard composting, check out these websites for guidance on how to get started:

- [Georgia Backyard Composting](#)
- [Georgia EPD: Compost at Home](#)

Or you can drop off organic waste and food scraps at local community gardens or schedule at-home pickups! Check out the following resources to learn more:

- [Wylde Center](#)
- [Compostia](#)
- [Awesome Possum Composting](#)



### Plant a native species garden at home or in your community

Filling your gardens with native plant species supports local pollinators, like birds, bees and butterflies, and promotes biodiversity, which is important for a healthy ecosystem. Check out [Georgia's Native Plant Society](#) to learn about plants that are native to Georgia.

"Every Day is  
Earth Day"  
challenge!