



Thoughtfully address MARTA's homeless ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic

This project is part of Smart Growth America's [Arts & Transportation Rapid Response](#).

Client: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

Background:

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) in Atlanta, Georgia is among the largest transit agencies in the United States providing service to 1.7 million residents of Metro Atlanta. Since opening in 1979, MARTA has made over 5 billion trips carrying passengers by bus and rail. MARTA's busiest stations, based on entries and exits, include Five Points, College Park, the Airport, Peachtree Center, and Lindbergh Center.

MARTA takes its role as a community connector seriously and moves with intention to improve the lives of all metro Atlantans. Artbound is MARTA's public art program, and is envisioned as a component of social infrastructure similarly to its Transit Oriented Development programs which work on affordable housing, Fresh MARTA Markets which provide local organic food at 2-for-1 prices to SNAP/EBT customers, and Station Soccer initiatives among others.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, MARTA has seen a significant increase in individuals riding the trains and using the transportation system as a temporary shelter from heat, rain—and now cold weather—as other public places providing services have shut down or are unavailable to continuous public use. MARTA has recently teamed with HOPE Atlanta, a local non-profit organization committed to ensuring “that homelessness in Atlanta is rare, brief, and non-recurring,” to help address the specific needs of those taking shelter on the trains. HOPE Atlanta and MARTA began a working partnership in August 2020 to address this complex concern.

Project Description:

MARTA seeks to work in close partnership with an artist and HOPE Atlanta to develop a project that thoughtfully addresses MARTA's homeless ridership during the pandemic. MARTA envisions an artist shadowing the HOPE outreach workers to better understand the perspective of both the homeless individuals and transit agency, identify a solution that satisfies the concerns, and then collaborate with HOPE and MARTA staff to develop the solution together.

Project Goals:

- Identify solutions to address homelessness and public health concerns in public transit.
- Provide greater connectivity in addressing the mutual needs of community members and MARTA. partners.
- Improve relations and understanding of community and riders.

Project Timeline:

- Beginning of March – Announcement of selected artist
- March - April
 - Project kickoff
 - Smart Growth America training for the selected artist
 - Artist works with MARTA and partners to develop the project
 - Artist conducts research and community engagement
- May - June



Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities

- Smart Growth America workshop for artist
- Project finalization. Installation or implementation needs to occur by June 30, 2021.

Funding:

Up to \$9,500 is available towards artist fee, materials, and other project expenses.

Additional Artist Assistance:

- Smart Growth America and Forecast Public Art will provide training and assistance to the artist to ensure success throughout the duration of the project.
- Smart Growth America and Forecast Public Art will be available to assist with project troubleshooting as needed.
- MARTA will provide artist with a MARTA transit pass to use for the duration of the project.

Artist Requirements:

- Artist must live in either Clayton, DeKalb, or Fulton County, GA.
- Artist must be familiar with MARTA transit system.
- Artist must be comfortable working in diverse environments.
- Artist portfolio must reflect social practices.

Artist Application:

SGA encourages artists from all artistic disciplines to apply here:

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/arts-culture/arts-transportation-rapid-response-application/artist/>

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience working on projects with a similar scope or scale.
- Compatibility of artistic approach with “Project Goals” listed above.
- The degree to which the artist meets “Artist Requirements” listed above.

The application will ask for the following information:

- **Information about you:** Name, address, website (if applicable), social media handles (if applicable), and a resume or bio.
- **Information about your work:** Provide information on 3 to 5 projects that you've worked on with similar scope and budget. For each project, the application will ask for a brief project description that explains your role in the project, high-level budget information, and a digital image.
- **Your interest in the project:** Briefly describe your interest in the and artistic approach to this project. *Please do not submit a concept or project proposal at this time, rather provide some information about your process in creating public art or public art programming and how that is compatible with this project.*

The deadline for submission is February 12, 2021. Artists will be notified of their status by the beginning of March 2021.