

## TOP 10 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MARTA TRANSIT SALES TAX

### 1. What is the MARTA sales tax?

In addition to fare collections, MARTA is funded by a 1% sales tax in Fulton (including City of Atlanta), Clayton, and DeKalb counties along with federal money. The recently passed Senate Bill 369 authorizes the City of Atlanta to levy up to an additional .5% MARTA sales tax.

### 2. When can the tax be implemented?

Following authorization of a referendum by the Atlanta City Council and approval by the voters in November 2016, anticipated collection will begin in 2017.

### 3. Is there a maximum tax rate?

Under SB 369, the City can raise its local sales tax no higher than 9%.

### 4. How long will the additional MARTA sales tax last?

The additional tax will last the lifespan of the current 1% MARTA sales tax, which is currently set to expire in 2057.

### 5. How much money will be raised with an additional half penny?

Assuming the max rate of 0.5% is leveraged for the life of the current MARTA sales tax, the City of Atlanta could generate approximately \$2.5 to \$3.5 Billion, not including possible federal matching dollars. The Georgia Department of Revenue and Georgia State University Fiscal Research Center are reviewing exemptions and refining projections.

### 6. How does a referendum get called?

The City Council must adopt a resolution or ordinance calling for a referendum (vote) on the collection of the additional half penny by June 30, 2016. All laws governing the holding of elections by the City shall apply.

### 7. How can the money be spent?

The funds can be spent on rapid transit projects, as already defined (and not changed) by the MARTA Act of 1965:

*(i) Rapid Transit System and Project. A transportation system the primary function of which is to provide a mass transportation service principally by the use of high speed vehicles traveling on rights of way fully protected from other vehicular and pedestrian traffic, a secondary function of which is to provide a feeder-type mass transportation service therefor, and an incidental function of which is to provide facilities for the comfort, safety, and convenience of its passengers. A rapid transit project is any transportation project which may contribute to the development or operation of a rapid transit system.*

**8. Does the law address the project selection process?**

Yes. MARTA will supply a preliminary list of projects to the City of Atlanta by May 31, 2016. That preliminary list was presented on **May 19, 2016**. The legislation requires MARTA to provide a final list no later than July 31, 2016. Agreement on a final list will be tied to the June MARTA Board meeting and June 20, 2016 Full City Council meeting. The final project list will be incorporated into the current rapid transit contract that exists under the MARTA Act.

**9. What would the ballot question look like in the City of Atlanta?**

Shall an additional sales tax of 0.5 percent be collected in the City of Atlanta for the purpose of significantly expanding and enhancing MARTA transit service in Atlanta?

**10. Is there a **proposed** timeline?**

- May 25 – June 2: Public Meetings
- June 6: Resolution introduced in Full Council
- June 7: City Council Work Session, 2-4pm
- June 15: Transportation Committee discussion of final project list
- June 20: Full Council final vote on resolution
- November 8: Referendum Vote
- November – December: Amendment to RTCAA (assuming positive ref vote)