



## **ADA PARTICIPATION GROUP FORUM Wednesday, March 10, 2021**

If you experience an issue with the ADA Paratransit service that requires investigation, please do not hesitate to contact the Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 extension 9, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., email [Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com](mailto:Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com), or fax (860) 936-3750. You may also write to: Customer Service Department c/o First Transit, 148 Roberts St, East Hartford, CT 06108. *If you are able, please file any and all complaints within 48 hours of the incident.*

This forum was held virtually and the following were in attendance:

Riders/Public – Cassandra Brown, Dinah Davis, Lynn Evans, Beverly Jackson, Michelle Johnson, and Peggy Johnson

First Transit (FT) – Ryan Ewing, Angie Glisson, Jacquelyn Spence

Greater Hartford Transit District (the “District”) – Margaret Banker, Valerie Ellis, and Pat Williams

The forum began at 5:00 p.m.

### Operations:

January 2021 passengers’ trips were 20,198, no shows 823 (4%), and cancellations 5,502 (27%).

February 2021 passengers’ trips were 19,186, no shows 1,001 (5%), and cancellations 6,118 (32%).

### Customer Service:

In January 2021, 213 comments were received from passengers and 15% were compliments, 6% driver, dispatch, reservationist, and/or scheduling concerns, 1% late/early arrival, ride length or missed trip concerns, 10% invalid concerns, 0% mechanical and/or related to safety concerns, 1% door-to-door and/or related to wrong drop-off or pick-up concerns, 0% courtesy, 0% no show concerns, 3% unknown, 1% other, and 63% n/a, record only, general information.

In February 2021, 233 comments were received from passengers and 15% were compliments, 4% driver, dispatch, reservationist, and/or scheduling concerns, 0% late/early arrival, ride length or missed trip concerns, 15% invalid concerns, 0% mechanical and/or related to safety concerns, 1% door-to-door and/or related to wrong drop-off or pick-up concerns, 0% courtesy, 0% no-show concerns, 5% unknown, 1% other, and 59% n/a, record only, general information.

### Staff Comments:

Staff discussed with the group that the automated calls reminding passengers to wear a mask while on the paratransit vehicle has been reduced to once a week. Passengers can request to be removed from this call list by contacting our Customer Service Department. The District received feedback regarding passenger mask use on the vehicles. As a result, the following temporary modifications (based on availability of staff and vehicles) were put in place: the District will make every effort to have passengers who are medically excused from wearing a mask not be transported with those who are wearing a mask. At the time of scheduling, reservationists are confirming with passengers (and their personal care attendants and companions) if they will be wearing a mask. This information is then documented on the passenger's trip booking. Drivers do provide complimentary masks to passengers when they do not board with one, and drivers are also socially distancing passengers on the buses.

Ms. Ellis touched on the following points about ADA Recertification: Passengers are recertified every three or five years based on the details pertaining to an individual's disability and ADA eligibility. Recertifications are automatically mailed out to passengers more than one (1) month before their expiration date. All passengers are expected to complete the Recertification application fully, and if the application is not completely filled out, it will be sent back. The passenger is usually not required to have an interview; however, if necessary they may be contacted with additional follow-up questions to complete the Recertification process. It is not required for a doctor to sign or fill out the ADA Recertification application. Passengers may submit an updated passport-type photo if they wish to have one included on their new ADA Recertification ID card. Passenger ID numbers do not change following ADA Recertification. The importance of filling out the ADA Recertification is to ensure that all passengers' personal, health, and disability information is correct and up-to-date. Passengers or their advocates may contact the District's ADA Eligibility Department if they have questions about the ADA Recertification.

Ms. Spence introduced Mr. Howard as the Operations Manager in the dispatch department. Mr. Howard will have oversight of this area. He has already initiated sensitivity training for the dispatchers and is working on improving on-time performance.

### Participant Comments

#### Peggy and Michelle Johnson

Ms. Peggy Johnson stated after many months of corresponding with the District and Department of Transportation she is satisfied that her mask concerns were addressed. Why do passengers have to sign up to receive email notices about the forum? Ms. Michelle Johnson would like to receive email notices about upcoming forums.

#### Staff Response

Ms. Williams will put both Peggy and Michelle Johnson on the Forum update email list so they can receive forum related emails.

#### Beverly Jackson

Ms. Jackson wanted to know why when she addressed the mask concern to the District she received a different response from what has been communicated to the participants at this forum. Ms. Jackson did not appreciate how her mask concern was previously handled by management. Are drivers aware of what to do if a passenger does not have a mask? What happens when a passenger who is medically excused gets on the bus with a passenger who is wearing a mask?

### Staff Response

Ms. Banker acknowledged that there was significant correspondence that took place in regard to mask protocol. She thanked all attendees for their feedback in regard to the matter. Ms. Spence ensured the group that all drivers have been instructed on how to handle passengers who refuse to board the vehicle without a mask. Passengers who are medically excused from wearing a mask will be transported on a separate bus.

### Cassandra Brown

What if the time span is longer than five (5) minutes for a driver to handle concerns regarding passengers who are not wearing a mask? What happens to a vehicle when a passenger who has been on the bus without a mask gets off and then a passenger who has a mask gets on after? Why can't there be dedicated buses to transport passengers who do not wear a mask? She provided feedback about the Encompass program.

### Staff Response

Ms. Banker informed the group the percentage of medically excused passengers is very low and the District will make every effort to have them transported on a separate vehicle. Ms. Banker thanked Ms. Brown for the Encompass program feedback. In addition, Ms. Spence communicated to the group that all drivers are equipped with cleansing wipes and hand sanitizer stations are installed on all vehicles. If drivers have a break they can bring their vehicle back to base for additional cleaning.

### Lynn Evans

Ms. Evans discussed her concern regarding a late trip on March 9, 2021.

### Staff response

Customer Service Department will review and respond directly to Ms. Evans.

### Dinah Davis

Drivers are not wearing their masks correctly. Drivers are not waiting the required five (5) minutes and are not getting out of their vehicles. Why are some passengers treated differently? The vehicles are dirty and she is very disappointed with the service.

### Staff response

Ms. Spence reiterated that drivers are provided with masks along with cleaning products. Drivers are reminded on how masks should be worn. It is a company policy for all drivers to wear their masks over their mouth and nose. The service will continue to be vigilant about maintaining a clean and healthy traveling environment for all passengers. If able, dispatch may provide a courtesy call to a passenger to inform them their vehicle has arrived.

The next ADA Participation Group forum will be a virtual meeting on Wednesday May 12, 2021. Details will be posted on all vehicles or you may call Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 extension 9. Please remember to give everyone a chance to participate; forum attendees need to keep initial questions and/or comments to five (5) minutes. Follow-up comments should also be kept to five (5) minutes. This information is available in an accessible format upon request.

**If information is needed in another language, contact 860-247-5329 x3011**

**French**

Si des renseignements sont nécessaires dans une autre langue, composez le 860-247-5329, poste 3011.

**Serbo Croatian**

Ako su vam potrebne informacije na drugom jeziku, nazovite 860-247-5329 x3011

**Portuguese**

Se precisar de informações em outro idioma, ligue para 860-247-5329, ramal 3011.

**Italian**

Se avete bisogno di informazioni in un'altra lingua, telefonate al numero 860-247-5329 int. 3011.

**Polish**

Jeżeli istnieje zapotrzebowanie na te informacje w innym języku, prosimy o kontakt na numer telefonu 860-247-5329 wewn. 3011.

**Russian**

Если Вам необходима информация на другом языке, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по номеру телефона 860-247-5329, доб. 3011.

**Spanish**

Si necesita información en otro idioma, llame al 860-247-5329, extensión 3011.

**Chinese**

如需其他语言的信息 · 请致电 860-247-5329 x3011

**Vietnamese**

Nếu cần thông tin bằng ngôn ngữ khác, hãy gọi 860-247-5329 x3011

**Korean**

다른 언어로 기재된 정보가 필요하신 경우, 860-247-5329 x3011로 연락해 주시기 바랍니다.

**Hindi**

यदि जानकारी अन्य भाषा में चाहिये, 860-247-5329 x3011 संपर्क करें

**Arabic**

3011 داخلي، 860-247-5329 رقم على الاتصال يرجى، أخرى بلغة للمعلومات الاحتياج حالة في

**Gujarati**

જો બીજી ભાષામાં માહિતી લેવાની જરૂર હોય, તો 860-247-5329 x3011 પર સંપર્ક કરો.