



## **ADA PARTICIPATION GROUP FORUM Wednesday, September 14, 2022**

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 – Lynne Altschuler, Dinah Davis, Beverly Jackson, Suzanne Kunz, Michelle Johnson, Peggy Johnson, Barbara Miller, and Jennifer Warner

First Transit (FT) – Raymond Blethen, Nicole Fincham, Anand Gounder, Allen Harmon, Jaida Ryans-Merritt, Rita Voskanova, and Scheduling

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

The forum began at 5:00 p.m.

### Operations:

July 2022 passenger trips were 33,799, no shows 1,153 (3%), and cancellations 8,049 (24%).

August 2022 passenger trips were 38,522, no shows 1,127 (3%), and cancellations 7,608 (20%).

### Customer Service:

In July 2022, 204 comments were received from passengers and 7% were compliments, 7% driver, dispatch, reservationist, and/or scheduling concerns, 2% late/early arrival, ride length or missed trip concerns, 10% invalid concerns, 0% mechanical and/or related to safety concerns, 3% door-to-door and/or related to wrong drop-off or pick-up concerns, 0% courtesy, 1% no show concerns, 4% unknown, 1% other, and 65% n/a, record only, general information.

In August 2022, 286 comments were received from passengers and 16% were compliments, 8% driver, dispatch, reservationist, and/or scheduling concerns, 3% 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, 2% unknown, 1% other, and 59% n/a, record only, general information.

### Staff Comments:

Ms. Williams informed the group about the likelihood of a change in venue for next ADA Participation Group Forum which will be held on November 9, 2022.

Mr. Gounder introduced First Transit staff present during the forum: Mr. Blethen is the Northeast Director of Operations for First Transit. Ms. Fincham is the Assistant General Manager at First Transit and is also a passenger of the ADA service. Mr. Harmon is the Operations Manager at First Transit and manages the daily operations in the dispatch department. Ms. Ryans-Merritt is the Call Center Manager at First Transit and manages the reservations/customer service departments.

Mr. Gounder noted the following:

- masks for passengers and drivers are recommended not mandated
- when reserving trips provide all relevant information
- a new Ford Transit vehicle has been integrated into the fleet, and feedback is welcome
- continue to be mindful of the “no show policy” as it is enforced
- passenger trips have increased from July to August by 15%
- fare free trips are still in effect through November 30, 2022

Ms. Fincham also provided a friendly reminder to passengers to reserve their trips before 5:00 p.m. up until the day before (including email trips), and be ready to travel on the early side of the thirty-minute window.

Ms. Banker informed the group about the revised ADA Paratransit application which now includes a functional verification form. This form should be filled out by a licensed or certified healthcare provider. The District would like to thank the volunteers who continue to work with the testing of the online booking program, PASS-WEB. There remain some issues that need to be resolved before passengers are able to utilize this program fully. In addition, there will be an Encompass forum for passengers who would like to hear more information about this service and provide feedback. Dates and the venue will be forthcoming.

Ms. Ellis mentioned that “Transit Day” will take place in late October. The Kennedy Center (the state’s provider of travel training) will discuss how to safely travel on the local (fixed) route bus system and offer participants the chance to travel on a CTtransit bus to a popular destination. More information about the event will be available soon.

### Participant Comments

#### Jennifer Werner

Ms. Werner is concerned about how drivers are securing her seatbelt when she uses her wheelchair. She also expressed concern about scheduling her trips efficiently.

Staff Response

Mr. Gounder explained a road supervisor can evaluate how drivers are securing her wheelchair, and her trips will be reviewed for efficiency. Customer service will report back to her directly on these matters.

Beverly Jackson

She does not agree with drivers and passengers not wearing a mask.

Staff Response

Mr. Gounder stated that the federal mandate has been lifted, but many transit services are still recommending masks, but cannot require individuals to wear them.

Peggy and Michelle Johnson

Ms. Johnson commented the ride over the Charter Oak Bridge in Hartford is very bumpy (specifically traveling from Manchester to Newington). Can drivers slow down when travelling over this bridge? A driver arrived at their residence with unacceptable uniform attire. Michelle also experienced not being properly secured in her wheelchair.

Staff Response

Mr. Gounder noted he will have a road supervisor address the bridge concern. Driver's proper uniform attire and seatbelt securement will be discussed at the next First Transit safety meeting. However, drivers are expected to adhere to the internal uniform policy.

Suzanne Kunz

Ms. Kunz is satisfied with the service. She would like to see extended hours in her town of Manchester. She does have on demand taxi service; however, she experienced some concerns with scheduling her trips.

Staff Response

Ms. Banker commented that the taxi program is contracted to provide on demand trips; however, it is helpful to schedule ahead of time. Ms. Banker will discuss Ms. Kunz's concerns further with her directly.

Peggy Johnson also shared her dissatisfaction with the on-demand taxi service. Ms. Banker recommended passengers to attend the Encompass forum so that these concerns can be addressed with the service provider (M7).

Dinah Davis

She would like to see ADA Paratransit continue to require drivers and passengers to wear a mask. She would like to receive a call if the service is running late.

Staff Response

As noted above that the federal mandate has been lifted, but many transit services are still recommending masks, but cannot require individuals to wear them. Customer service will review Ms. Davis's file to ensure she receives the automatic call arrival feature. Mr. Gounder thanked all participants for attending, and to please provide feedback about the new vehicles. The seatbelt issues brought up will be addressed with the safety management team. The next forum will be Wednesday November 9, 2022.



**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.

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

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

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

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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**

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

**Gujarati**

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