



# HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

Hampton Roads Transit Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

## REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Zoom Meeting

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

### Webinar Etiquette

- ☒ Use headsets to improve audio clarity
- ☒ Remember to use your telephone OR computer for audio – not both
- ☒ When joining the call by phone, press # without stating your name, especially if meeting has already begun
- ☒ Refrain from placing the call “on hold”; instead, turn on “Mute”
- ☒ Mute your phone/computer mic until you are speaking, then state your name before you begin
- ☒ Be aware that in video-enabled meetings you are always visible to all participants
- ☒ The virtual meetings will be recorded by the Host

**1. Call to order – Welcome, introductions, and virtual guidelines**

**2. Approval of December Minutes**

**3. Public Comment**

**4. Chairman’s Report – Mr. Paul Atkinson**

**5. HRT Report - Internal Audit of Paratransit Services**

- **Shanti Mullen & Nikki Walker**

## **6. Subcommittees' Reports**

- **Service Quality – Ms. Linda Gurley**
- **Policy – – Ms. Linda Gurley**
- **Membership – Mr. Brian Trickler**
- **Training – Ms. Patricia Brown**
- **Outreach – Ms. Janice Taylor**

## **7. Paratransit Operations & Certifications Reports**

## **8. Via Service Updates**

## **9. Old Business**

## **10. New Business**

- **COVID related updates**

**The next Paratransit Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 1:00 PM, location or virtual format to be determined.**

**Adjournment**



## Paratransit Advisory Committee

February 10, 2021

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

### **Call to Order.**

Committee Chair, Paul Atkinson Jr. called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm and introductions were made.

### **Committee Members in Attendance**

Denice Wilkins – Consumer, Newport News

Paul Atkinson, Jr. – Provider, Chesapeake

Janice Taylor – Consumer, Virginia Beach

Travis Webb – Consumer, Norfolk

Brian Tricker – Provider, Virginia Beach

Mary Mathena – Consumer, Virginia Beach

Patricia Brown – Consumer, Hampton

Brad Hunter – TDCHR Commissioner

Linda Gurley – Consumer, Newport News

Alicia Griffin – Consumer, Newport News

### **Others in Attendance**

Keith Johnson – HRT

Ina Kreps – Former Committee Chair, Portsmouth Consumer

Jeff Raliski-HRTPO

Amy Braziel – HRT

Cheryl Watson -HRT

Danielle Hill– HRT

Brian Trickler -Provider, Virginia Beach

Trevor Hunter – Coastal Ride

Yannis Simaiakis- VIA

Gabrielle McCaig- VIA

Jonathan Hofmann – VIA

Parker Fernandez – VIA

Christina Malcom – HRT

Benjamin Simms – HRT

Konstantine Vrazhilov -VIA

Kenia Ozoria- VIA

Annie Asher – Consumer & NFB Chesapeake Bay Chapter

- **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the December meeting were read by Paul Atkinson Jr, motion to approve with corrections to be submitted by Janice Taylor and seconded by Mary Mathena.

- **Public Comment**

Annie Asher's public comment was read by Keith Johnson. Ms. Asher asked if there is a way to include on the drivers manifest the name of the place they are being transported.



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The drivers only have the street address with no additional specifications such as suite number or names of the building.

Yannis Simaiakis stated VIA is working on a solution and will have an update by the next PAC meeting.

- **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Paul Atkinson Jr began by thanking everyone for adapting to the virtual format of the meetings. Mr. Atkinson Jr. stated in the past two months he has corresponded primary with service quality issues, based on feedback, some of the issues have been investigated and addressed, he encourages riders to continue to document and communicate their issues with VIA and HRT for service improvement. VIA has implemented some changes to the rider application, based on feedback from visual impaired customers the time selector for talk back has improved. VIA has also revamped the app for login flow, the update for previous rider app trainee attendees will be forth coming.

This month marks the one year that VIA developed the paratransit contract along with these unprecedented times in which we grappled with the pandemic. Mr. Atkinson thanked everyone for adapting and providing vital transportation service and is optimistic as we work toward a common goal.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

- **Service Quality**

- Mary Mathena said she is still having an issue as stated in Ms. Asher's public comment. Kenia suggested to add the address as a point of interest, she will look at Ms. Mathena's bookings to resolve the matter.
- Alicia Griffin stated she is no longer able to see the vehicle location on her app.
- Jonathan Hofmann stated they have not made any changes and it may be related to her app, he will address after the meeting. Ms. Griffin asked if there was a way to save directions to her home, some of the drivers have difficulty finding her address. Mr. Johnson said he will put the directions in her profile.
- Janice Taylor commended VIA on an incident when she left her cane on the vehicle. The driver along with dispatch worked together to retrieve her cane and return it to her. Mr. Hofmann thanked Ms. Taylor for the positive feedback.
- Patricia Brown stated the drivers are not getting out of the vehicles, Mr. Johnson stated since that incident was reported immediately the driver was brought in for retraining. Ms. Brown asked how someone should schedule when they need to be somewhere by a certain time. Mr. Johnson suggested to schedule by appointment time instead of pick-up time. Ms. Brown added the drivers do not ask if she needs assistance and sometimes there is too much time between drop off for a scheduled appointment, particularly troubling if a facility is not open.
- Ms. Taylor added if drivers are using their personal vehicle, how is a vision impaired person able to identify if its paratransit. Ms. Mathena stated that the description of the vehicle is in the initial call.
- Travis Webb stated he is still having problems with his subscription ride times changing without notification. Mr. Webb added that he is not being picked up within the return window leaving him outside the building after closing. Kenia stated she can look at his bookings to see if there is a solution for him. Mr. Webb added he does not get an ETA alert when a taxicab is dispatched.



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- Mr. Fernandez stated that there are other complaints related to the same topic and working on a solution. Mr. Webb said he had an issue where he was not notified when the vehicle was delayed due to mechanical failure. Mr. Hofmann will investigate why he was not alerted if the vehicle is going to be detained on the date the incident is reported.
- Ms. Taylor asked about social distancing in the vehicles, Mr. Johnson responded it is not always possible to practice social distancing on public transportation, mandating the wearing of masks. Clients were given a warning if they do not wear a mask and may not be permitted to board the vehicle if they are not in compliance. Mr. Johnson explains mask exemption in new business.
- **Membership**  
Brian Trickler – vacancies are the same, 2 consumers for Chesapeake and 1 extra position.
- **Training**  
Patricia Brown– no information on training but many committee members once again offered their assistance to Via for sensitivity training.
- **Outreach**  
Janice Taylor – no information on outreach
- **Paratransit Operations Report**  
Mr. Johnson read the reports on the Call Center, Operations and Certifications as enclosed in the meeting package.
- **VIA Service Update**
  - Mr. Simaiakis thanked everyone for the opportunity to service paratransit for the first year, he is optimistic and looking forward providing better service moving forward.
  - Mr. Vrazhilov covered the driver training updates, the rider app accessibility and product improvements as enclosed meeting package.
  - Mr. Hofmann covered the call center training and supervisor call back updates as provided in the enclosed meeting package.
  - Ms. Ozoria covered the rider outreach efforts provided in the meeting package.
  - Mr. Fernandez covered the new features and updates of the rider app.
- **Old Business** - no information for old business.
- **New Business**- Mr. Johnson stated that paratransit has an exemption form, if a client is unable to wear a mask the form must be completed by applicant's physician and submitted to ADARIDE.

\*A Motion to adjourn was made seconded, meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm.

The next paratransit meeting will be April 14, 2021 location and format TBD.

Submitted by  
Cheryl Watson  
Paratransit Administrative Coordinator



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## Paratransit Call Center Performance Report 04/14/2021 February and March

	February	Prior Year	March	Prior Year
<b>Total Incoming Calls</b>	10,947 (-75.2%)	44,131	14,550 (-44.3%)	26,132
<b>Calls Handled</b>	9,268 (-76.2%)	39,076	11,866 (-52.6%)	25,015
<b>Calls Abandoned (after 15 seconds)</b>	1,231 (-70.3%)	3,980	1,702 (+79.9%) **IVR down 3 days**	946
<b>% of Incoming Calls Successful</b>	88.8%	89.0%	88.3%	96.0%
<b>Average Speed to Answer Reservations (Goal 90 seconds)</b>	44.74 seconds  Daily averages ranged from 21 to 105 seconds	204 to 912 seconds	43.65 seconds  Daily averages ranged from 27 to 77 seconds	66 to 306 seconds
<b>Total Notification Calls</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Notification Calls Completed</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Max # of Daily Customers Using Online Scheduling</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Trips Cancelled using WEB/IVR Services</b>	N/A	11,378 62% of total	N/A	22,884 70.0% of total



# HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

## Paratransit Operations Performance Report 04/14/2021 February and March

	<b>February</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>
<b>Pickup OTP (Goal 95%)</b>	93.3%	88.7%	90.5%	93.0%
<b>Drop-Off OTP (Goal 95%)</b>	95.2%	82.2%	94.2%	92.5%
<b>Trips Requested</b>	23,016 (-40.5%)	38,711	27,059 (-37.3%)	43,198
<b>Trips Performed</b>	17,329 (-34.6%)	26,510	20,984 (-8.0%)	22,806
<b>Trips Cancelled in Advance</b>	5,186 (22.5%)	9,959 (25.7%)	5,485 (20.3%)	18,706 (43.3%)
<b>Customer Trip Violations (NS/CD/LC)</b>	1,168 (6.3%)	2,242 (7.8%)	1,314 (5.9%)	2,406 (9.8%)
<b>Trips Cancelled For Cause</b>	76 (0.33%)	84 (0.32%)	131 (0.48%)	31 (0.14%)
<b>Average Customer Trip Travel Time</b>	25.70 minutes	28.57 minutes	25.85 minutes	24.34 minutes
<b>Peak # of Vehicles Scheduled</b>	68 53 Fleet 6 Taxi 9 TNC	108 88 Fleet 20 Taxi	69 58 Fleet 4 Taxi 7 TNC	97 84 Fleet 13 Taxi
<b>Number of Paratransit trips taken on Fixed Route</b>	5,861 (-55.7%)	13,238 (+12.8%)	7,503 (-39.7%)	12,448 (-12.5%)



# HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

## Paratransit Certification Report 04/14/2021 February and March

<b>2 Month Totals</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>
<b>Applications Processed - 288</b>	131 (-28.4%)	183	157 (-20.7%)	198
<b>New Certifications 121</b>	50	80	71	91
<b>Re-Certifications 152</b>	72	36	80	78
<b>Denials 15</b>	9	36	6	29
<b>Number of Eligible Clients</b>	5,518 (-17.1%)	6,654	5,441 (-17.2%)	6,573
<b>Number of Clients Using the Service</b>	1,744 (-23.5%)	2,275	1,820 (-18.1%)	2,221
<b>Number of eligible clients who did not recertify – 326</b>	154	186	172	172
<b>Sanction Notifications Sent</b>	0	0	0	0
	<b>Eligibility Appeals</b>			
	Filed – 3 Amended – 1 COVID Temporary (1 year) - 2 Overturned by Panel – None Heard Upheld by Panel – None Heard			
<b>4th Quarter Client Suspensions Served</b>	<b>Sanction Appeals (233 notices sent 01/22/2021)</b>			<b>1st Quarter Sanctions (Estimated)</b>
113 – 7 day 49 – 14 day 0 – 21 day 0 – 30 day	Filed - 71 Amended – 71 Overturned by Panel – None heard Upheld by Panel – None heard			138



# HRT INTERNAL AUDIT

## PARATRANSIT SERVICES AUDIT

Obs. No.	Recommendations	Management Response
1	<p><b><u>On-Time Performance Data Is Not Consistently Reported or Periodically Validated</u></b> - <i>HRT's Paratransit personnel and other applicable departments responsible for oversight and/or reporting data should consistently ensure data is monitored and evaluated to further fortify data validity and uniformity needed to confirm data being reported.</i></p>	Concur
	<p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b></p> <p><u>Data Errors</u>  <i>Operations management concurs. One of the errors that was identified was a formula error on the paratransit operations side that did not take the missed but transported number into account. A second error was identified on the technology side in that the TNC number was not being reflected in the Accountability Center. Once corrections were made, Via's on time performance improved over what had been previously been reported.</i></p> <p><u>Reporting Issues</u>  <i>It was found that the data being reflected on HRT's monthly reports to the Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC) is pulled directly from the monthly billing statement and reconciliation processes while the data reflected on the Accountability Center was being pulled several days later which takes into account updates and revisions.</i></p> <p><i>To resolve this issue, Paratransit operations and technology is now using the same source, monthly billing, to report the data. In addition, technology will continue to pull the live feed data for comparisons and auditing purposes. Via is also creating a monthly "manifest" listing all requested and completed trips to support the reconciliation process. HRT will have this additional source to filter and sort individual trip data to verify reported performance. <b>All data and reporting issues have been corrected as of February 17, 2021.</b> The only outstanding item is the final manifest from Via which is still in development and will be used for auditing purposes. Paratransit operations should have the first draft of the manifest by 2/26/2021 and a final product by mid-March. Operations will report back once the manifest portion is complete.</i></p>	

# HRT INTERNAL AUDIT

## PARATRANSIT SERVICES AUDIT

Obs. No.	Recommendations	Management Response
2	<p><b><u>Call-Wait Times Are Not Analyzed to Ensure Accuracy and Validity</u></b> – <i>Internal Audit recommends:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>HRT's Paratransit division:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>increase oversight of the service organization by requesting source/raw data to periodically analyze the data, and</i></li> <li>2. <i>Compare the tabulations against monthly and daily reports provided by the Contractor and reports pulled by HRT's IT department from Tableau to promote and ensure data accuracy, consistency, and validity.</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>• <i>The Contractor (service organization), provide:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Source/raw data to HRT Paratransit and IT division,</i></li> <li>2. <i>the methods/calculations and formula(s) used to tabulate, and</i></li> <li>3. <i>a demonstration on how the calculation/formula is computed.</i></li> </ol> </li> </ul>	Concur
	<p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b> <i>This finding was the reason behind HRT's operations department request for this audit. Paratransit operations was previously getting filtered data from Via that could not be verified. Prior to HRT's audit, the paratransit operations staff only received a monthly accounting of calls that was provided by the contractor. During the course of the audit, several issues were identified and corrected. Via found that they were reporting all calls, both inbound and outbound from reservations, but were only supposed to report inbound calls so hold times could be properly reflected. Via has corrected the issue.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, Via has given HRT access to its TalkDesk report which provides HRT with all inbound calls on a daily report. Automated reports are now delivered to the inbox of HRT staff directly from TalkDesk for daily review. The previous data was reported in a way that HRT could not accurately audit the times that customers were on hold. The new format provides data in a way that it can be properly audited. HRT paratransit operations staff is now conducting spot checking throughout the month to verify hold times in addition to end of the month auditing of same.</i></p> <p><i>It is unknown at this time if the new reporting matrix will have an effect on the overall call wait time report percentages but is something that we will monitor, and report back on at a later date. <b>All issues have been corrected as of February 19, 2021.</b></i></p>	

# HRT INTERNAL AUDIT

## PARATRANSIT SERVICES AUDIT

Obs. No.	Recommendations	Management Response
3	<p><b><u>Policies, Procedures, and Work Instructions Are Not Adequately Implemented for Internal Controls and Management Oversight</u></b> - <i>The Internal Audit department recommends the development of comprehensive internal policies and procedures to include methods of business processes to ensure departmental efficiency and accountability.</i></p>	Concur
	<p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b> <i>The paratransit operations department agrees that the actual processes that are completed are not clearly documented in procedure form. Paratransit operations staff is currently creating work procedures that coincide with our SOPs and other daily work that is necessary for the daily operation of the department to ensure continuity. The initial phase of work process correction has been implemented.</i></p> <p><i>This is an ongoing process that HRT paratransit operations will update annually or as needed.</i></p>	
4	<p><b><u>Recordkeeping Practices Are Not Consistently Documented</u></b> – <i>The Internal Audit department recommends all stakeholders contributing to the functionality of HRT's Paratransit department assess records to ensure inaccuracies and duplications are rectified.</i></p>	Concur
	<p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b> <i>As it relates to customer complaints, a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been drafted (SOP OPS-PARA 106). This SOP clearly identifies the process that HRT and Via staff will follow to ensure CAFs are properly captured, followed-up on, and audited on a weekly and monthly basis. This will be in addition to items addressed in our response to Observation No. 3.</i></p> <p><i>This is an ongoing process that HRT paratransit operations will update annually or as needed.</i></p>	

# HRT INTERNAL AUDIT

## PARATRANSIT SERVICES AUDIT

Obs. No.	<p>Other Issue and Concerns (OIC) –</p> <p>In this section we present issues we consider noteworthy, but not developed into formal observations. Management may wish to consider whether the issues and concerns deserve further action.</p>	Management Response
5 (OIC)	<p><b><u>Mobile Data Terminal Tablet Usage</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b> <i>Operations management agrees with the above statement. As with any device, there are times when a device can malfunction. When technology issues arise, Via conducts research on the missing data and manually enters what occurred. Via is able to identify what transpired during the technology malfunction. HRT and Via work hard to ensure automation of data but with any technology system or device, it will likely never achieve a 100% accurate accounting but is something that we strive for. HRT will work diligently with Via to identify malfunction causes and work to ensure that steps are taken to try to prevent the malfunction in the future. The monthly trip manifest will also assist HRT in identifying these manually reconciled trips for targeted review. This work will be done on a case-by-case basis.</i></p> <p><i>This is an ongoing effort that will continue for the duration of the contract.</i></p>	Agrees
6 (OIC)	<p><b><u>Training</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b> <i>Operations management agrees with the above statement. HRT will continue to review training documentation and ensure proper training is being conducted by periodically spot-checking Via's records. HRT will monitor the complaint tracker and will make sure there is proper training and record of same when warranted. This work will be conducted on a case-by-case basis.</i></p> <p><i>This is an ongoing effort that will continue for the duration of the contract.</i></p>	Agrees

HRT INTERNAL AUDIT  
PARATRANSIT SERVICES AUDIT

Obs. No.	Recommendations	Management Response
7 (OIC)	<p><b><u>Additional Staffing</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Management Complete Response:</u></b> <i>Operations management agrees with the above statement. Following previous audits, the operations department has taken steps to incorporate staff into the paratransit processes to address potential procedure conflicts. Operations is utilizing staff members to audit invoices, approve invoices, conduct peer reviews, assist in the creation of Requests for Proposals (RFP's), and contract oversight which includes attending Paratransit Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and operational update meetings/calls with the contractor. These steps will assist the operations department in retaining the necessary institutional knowledge of the paratransit department.</i></p>	Agrees



# Hampton Roads Transit

## PAC meeting

April, 2021

## Agenda for today's discussion

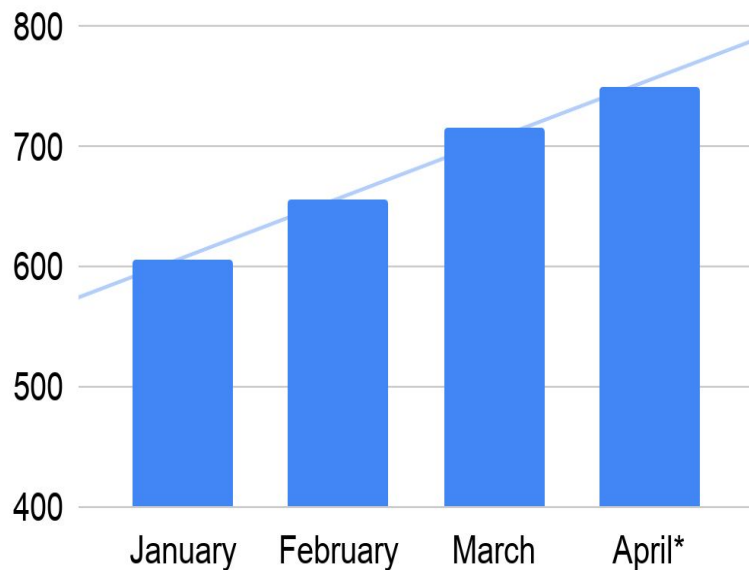
- An update on our service
- Vaccines program introduction
- Community engagement
- Upcoming rider survey
- News from the neighborhood:  
Roanoke service



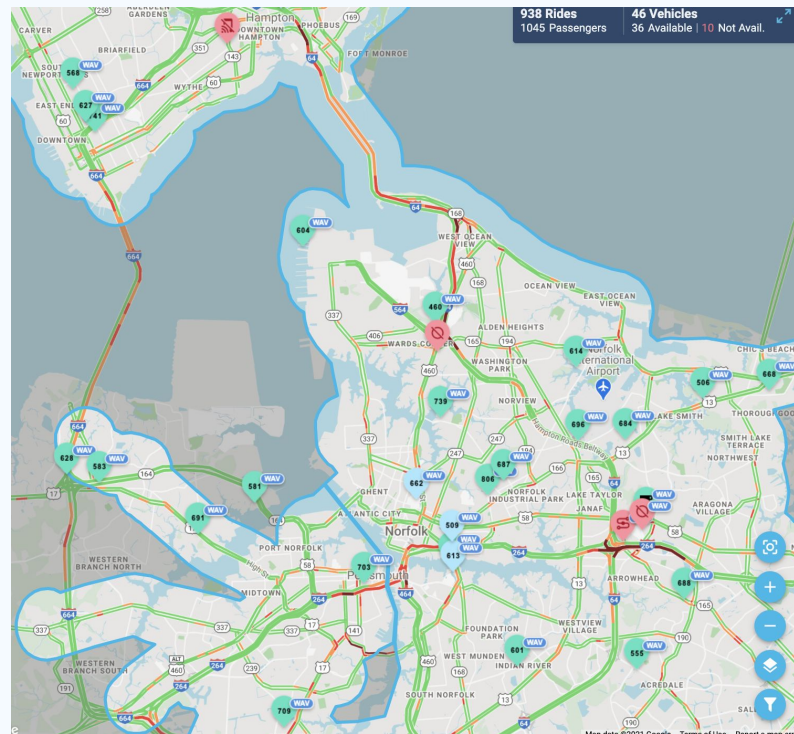
# Service update

Looks like we are getting on the “other side”  
- demand has been rising...

Average daily number of rides



... and unfortunately traffic is also  
increasing:





# How we are responding to this

## Hiring New Drivers

- On track to have **10+** new drivers by the end of April
- All drivers must complete three full weeks of training
- They must also pass several pre-employment checks

## Additional Actions

- Reopening the North Side depot on the weekends
- Modify/extend our drivers' shifts to match demand
- Secure supply from independent providers (taxi, etc)



# Vaccination Access Transportation Program launched on Monday to better serve the HRT community and increase vaccine equity.

## New Program customers traveling to and from vaccination appointments:

- All certified and eligible paratransit riders are eligible for two free round trip rides to and from COVID vaccination sites
- HRT and Via sent out broad communications (email, vehicle fliers, and SMS) to announce the new initiative and build awareness
- Via team moved quickly to implement the service into our product suite in *~2 weeks*
- We are already seeing strong adoption and engagement in the initiative with 60 rides booked or completed!

### HRT Paratransit Services to Offer Free Rides to Vaccination Appointments

HRT is pleased to announce a Vaccination Access Transportation Program to help individuals overcome transportation barriers traveling to and from vaccination appointments.

Beginning on Monday, April 12, 2021, Paratransit customers will be allowed free trips to and from their vaccination appointments. All certified Paratransit customers will be allowed up to four free trips to receive their vaccines. To use this program, please review and follow the steps below.

- Sign up for a free COVID-19 vaccine by calling (877) VAX-IN-VA, that is 1-877-829-4682, or visit [www.vaccinate.virginia.gov](http://www.vaccinate.virginia.gov). Additional vaccine appointments may also be available at local pharmacies through [VaccineFinder.org](http://VaccineFinder.org).

- Once you are registered for a vaccination appointment, call Paratransit reservations at 757-455-8010 and tell the reservationist you are requesting a trip for your COVID vaccination. Under this program, trips will only be scheduled to and from known vaccination locations. Please note; regular scheduling parameters still apply and only PCA's will be allowed to accompany a certified customer on these trips.

- Give the reservationist the name and address of the vaccination location along with your scheduled appointment time. Your trip will be scheduled to have you arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your appointment time.

- Your return trip pickup window will be scheduled to start approximately 30 minutes after your scheduled appointment time, exact times may fluctuate depending on daily service demands.

If you have questions or need additional information on this program, call HRT Paratransit Administration office at 757-222-6087.

For information on fixed-route service and fares, please call HRT customer relations at (757) 222-6100

# Community engagement

## Continued engagement with the local community to deliver trainings to Via staff

- Via joined Beacon House's brain injury awareness month presentation and shared the excellent work Beacon House does across Via
- Planned training with Ms. Mathena on visual impairment disabilities and how drivers/call center operators can serve this clientele better

## Meeting with the Tidewater chapter of the National Federation of the Blind

- Via presented some new app and web portal features designed for visually impaired riders
- We heard from the community about ways to improve the experience which we plan to incorporate in our driver trainings
- Received positive feedback on the call center agents and the independent drivers



# Upcoming rider survey

## Goals:

To foster deep engagement and feedback from the broad HRT paratransit community

## Proposed Channels of Distribution:

- In vehicle paper form that can be taken away and filled out and returned to driver on next trip
- Digital version sent via text message to riders and accessible through a pop up in the Rider App
- Phone call to offer survey to visually impaired riders

## Themes:

- Overall satisfaction with service
- Experience relative to previous provider
- Areas for improvement



# News from our neighborhood: Roanoke

## Paratransit service launch



**4.86/5**

average app rating

**41%**

of riders who have made at least one booking request have used the app to book, cancel, or track rides

**127**

riders have added a credit or debit card to their account

### Overview:

Via replaced a previous service provider in just 60 days to provide pre-scheduled paratransit rides for eligible seniors and disabled riders in Roanoke, VA

- Worked with the city to identify key sub communities, possible barriers for these communities and find creative solutions to servicing unbanked riders in a cashless service including purchasing vouchers at the Roanoke County Treasurer's Office & recommending prepaid cards
- Outbound call campaign before launch to riders who use the existing service and one on one rider education with 75+ riders.



**Geography:**  
Rural



**Use case:**  
Equitable transportation



**Fleet:**  
5 WAV vans



“

It is now 3 months since the change to CORTAN transportation service. I have been extremely impressed with how things have progressed. The drivers display genuine caring and provide excellent customer service that makes me feel comfortable leaving my husband in their care for transportation to his medical appointments. ”

— Brenda, wife of CORTAN rider