



# HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

Hampton Roads Transit Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

## REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Virtual Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Room

509 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, Va.

Virtual Attendees via Zoom

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Work Session – Noon to 1:00

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 “Mute” your device
- ☑ 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

**Please note that prior to the start of the official meeting, there will be a reading of the 12/14/2022 minutes for anyone needing to hear them from 12:15 PM – 12:30 PM.**

- 1. Call to order – Welcome, introductions, and virtual guidelines**
- 2. Approval of December Minutes**
- 3. Public Comment**
- 4. Chairman’s Report – Mr. Troy Bowser**

## **5. Service Updates**

- **HRT service delivery review & updates**
- **Via Update**

## **6. Subcommittees' Reports**

- **Service Quality – Ms. Janice Taylor**
- **Policy – Ms. Rene` Rogers**
- **Membership – Mr. Paul Atkinson Jr.**
- **Training – TBD**
- **Outreach – Ms. Janice Taylor**

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

## **8. Old Business**

- **Transit Service updates taking effect 05/14/2023.**

## **9. New Business**

**The next Paratransit Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 12, at 1:00 PM. Our next meeting is currently scheduled for HRT's Second Floor Board Room at 3400 Victoria Blvd, Hampton, Va. and/or virtual format.  
(Actual location and format are subject to change)**

## **Adjournment**



# HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

## Paratransit Advisory Committee

December 14, 2022

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

### **Call to Order.**

A quorum was reached and Committee Chair, Troy Bowser called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm.

Introductions were made.

### **Committee Members in Attendance**

Alicia Griffin, Vice-Chair, Newport News Consumer  
Denise Wilkins, Hampton Consumer (Zoom)  
Janice Taylor, Virginia Beach Consumer (Zoom)  
Keith Ferguson, Consumer, Hampton Extra member (Zoom)  
Paul Atkinson, Jr., Chesapeake Provider (Zoom)  
Renee Rodgers, Norfolk Consumer  
Sandra Hunter, Portsmouth Consumer (Zoom)  
Troy Bowser, Chair, Virginia Beach Provider

### **HRT Staff in Attendance**

Amy Braziel, Director of Contracted Services and Operational Analytics  
Cheryl Watson, Administrative Coordinator  
Christina Malcom, Human Resources Compliance Manager (Zoom)  
John Powell, Technology Telecommunications Specialist  
Keith Johnson, Paratransit Services Contract Administrator  
Malika Blume, Director of Internal Audit (Zoom)  
Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer  
Tammara Askew, Administrative Support Technician

### **Others in Attendance**

Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond, Commission Liaison, TDCHR (Zoom)  
Charity Smith, VIA  
Denice Johnson, TRAC Chair  
Eric Oberman, VIA (Zoom)  
Ina Kreps, Portsmouth Consumer  
Kyle Snyder, VIA (Zoom)  
Mary Pharris, VIA  
Michael Ortiz, VIA  
Michael Hutchison, VIA (Zoom)  
Trevor Hunter, Coastal Cab (Zoom)  
Tyrell Mullen, Hampton, Consumer & PCA



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The December Paratransit Committee meeting package was distributed electronically to committee members in advance of the meeting. The meeting package consisted of:

- Agenda
- Committee Roster
- Minutes from the Previous Meeting
- Paratransit Advisory Committee Guidelines

## **Approval of Minutes**

Troy Bowser inquired about corrections to the October 2022 meeting minutes. A clarifying discussion commenced. With corrections that Janice Taylor will submit subsequently, the chair introduced the motion which was approved by a unanimous vote. Minutes with corrections that were read aloud were approved.

## **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **Chairman's Report**

Mr. Troy Bowser stated that he attended the Transportation District Commission meeting on December 08, 2022. Public remarks included a statement from Judy Swystun of HRTI, manager of Coastal Ride taxis services. The remark concerned a previously supported HRT wheelchair accessibility program for on-demand taxis service. Mr. Bower stated that her company is presently requesting assistance with replacing their aging wheelchair accessible vehicles for future on-demand service. Mr. Bowser stated that Ms. Swystun's statement included a request from HRT's CEO William Harrell, in the form of a letter, for more information as well as a future meeting.

Mr. Bowser stated the meeting included a discussion of the Transit Strategic Plan (TSP). TSP will provide updates every 6 months regarding the strategy for implementing the next phase of the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The plan will incorporate public outreach regarding safety and expansion of Light rail into different communities.

Mr. Bowser stated that he presented a report on the last paratransit meeting that was held in October. The report contained issues regarding pick-ups, late pick-up, and abandon riders. Mr. Bower stated that Commissioner Ross-Hammond commented that she was unaware of the described situations. Mr. Bowser stated that he formally invited Commissioner Ross-Hammond to the Paratransit Commission meeting that would be held on December 14, 2022, at 1:00 pm. Mr. Bowser stated that attending will provide her both with a better understanding of the issues as well as to hear from Paratransit users. Mr. Bowser stated that the other Commissioners displayed concern about the expressed problems. Mr. Bowser stated that he was informed that Via is working to address the problems. Mr. Browser stated that clients have stated to him that they haven't seen any changes. Mr. Browser stated that he informed the Commission that people with disabilities will continue to advocate for change in



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transportation. Mr. Bower stated that significant change has materialized but there is still more work ahead.

Mr. Bowser stated that he thanked the Commissioners for having people with disabilities represented at the commission meeting.

## **Legislative News & Updates**

Ms. Noelle Pinkard supplied the Federal and State updates for funding for the next 6-years continuing earmarks to replace paratransit vehicles.

The Capital investment program includes:

- Funding –State Legislative: Ms. Pinkard stated that HRT wants to protect funding. She thanked Ms. Janice Taylor for advocacy efforts in that area. Ms. Pinkard stated that Ms. Taylor was instrumental in protecting the funding allotted to the paratransit department.
- Innovation, focusing on transforming the paratransit fleet to electric vehicles was discussed.
- Ms. Pinkard discussed operator shortages across the country in public transit. Ms. Pinkard advocates for encouraging Congress to address some of the operator shortfalls by creating a Task Force.
- General Assembly will meet on January 11, 2023. Ms. Pickard will keep everyone informed as it related to paratransit transportation.
- Inserts were enclosed in the meeting packages and emailed to Advisory members.

## **VIA Service Update**

Mr. Michael Ortiz provided an update on overall performance, ridership, service updates. New procedure created, and driver refresher training as enclosed in the meeting package.

Mr. Ortiz reviewed procedures with Coastal Cab which includes: a reminder of required 5-minute wait time for riders, coordination between Coastal drivers and Via operations team for no-shows, as well as crediting riders who were over charged due to testing of future on-demand trips. Riders were contacted and credited for overcharges.

Trevor Hunter with Coastal Cab stated all drivers were retrained on the window rule for the riders, and the situation was rectified.

Kyle Snyder stated that there was an incident that involved a client's trip being canceled in error by the dispatcher. Mr. Snyder stated that the situation was realized quickly, and the rider was rescheduled and picked up.

**ACTION ITEM: Keith Johnson asked Mr. Bowser to follow up with client to see if that client was contacted.**



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Mr. Browser stated he is getting calls from riders with complaints. Ms. Amy Braziel stated all complaints for paratransit riders should be directed to the Hampton Roads Transit Customer Service Department at 757-222-6100 to ensure complaints are properly investigated. Ms. Braziel added if it's an immediate issue they need to contact reservations for assistance to get the issue resolved right away by calling 757-455-8010

Mr. Ortiz stated there will be 20 new vehicles added to HRT's fleet. The vehicles are ADA accessible minivans.

Mr. Paul Atkinson asked both when will the previously mentioned vehicles will arrive as well as when will larger vehicles, capable of accommodating more than one wheelchair, become available? Mr. Johnson stated the twenty vehicles should arrive early March of 2023. Mr. Johnson stated that those vehicles were purchased due to being the only ones that were readily available. The larger vehicles will be two years waiting time to arrive once ordered. Mr. Ortiz added we will make sure all drivers are properly trained on the new type of vehicle.

Ms. Charity Smith gave a training outline of classroom training and on the grand training. Ms. Smith stated that one hundred plus drivers attended. Ms. Smith thanked the two PAC members that participated in the sensitivity training; Rene Rogers and Travis Webb.

There was discussion regarding ensuring PAC members are notified of training early enough to plan for attendance.

Mr. Eric Oberman reviewed the survey results as enclosed in the meeting package. Mr. Oberman stated that the survey links are still active and available.

Ms. Denise Johnson, Chair of Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC), stated that she has spoken to 32 clients in the past 3 weeks. Ms. Johnson stated that this was due to visiting several facilities and asking clients about the service. Ms. Johnson stated that only 2 out of 32 clients had negative feedback to provide about the service. Ms. Johnson wanted to emphasize not all feedback is negative. Ms. Johnson stated that there is a lot of positive feedback as well.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **Service Quality – Committee**

There was no new service quality reported.

### **Policy – Mr. Travis Webb**

There was no report regarding policy.



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## **Membership- – Mr. Paul Atkinson Jr.**

Mr. Atkinson reported openings in the following cities, Mr. Atkinsons term expires February 2023. Janice Taylors consumer term expires December 2022.

- 2 Chesapeake, Consumer
- 1 Norfolk, Consumer
- 1 Portsmouth, Provider
- 1 Virginia Beach, Provider
- 1 Hampton, Provider

## **Training – Ms. Patricia Brown**

There was no new report regarding training.

## **Outreach -Janice Taylor**

Ms. Taylor thanked HRT for the free rides to the polls on election day. Mr. Johnson stated paratransit provided 1080 rides to the polls on election day. Ms. Taylor also informed the committee that other organizations also offered free rides to the polls.

The American Heart Association and American Stroke association outreach took place on November 12, 2022. Ms. Taylor commended Mr. Johnson for providing documentation on paratransit service information packages.

Mr. Troy Brower appointed Renee Rogers as Chair on the Policy Subcommittee, Mr. Bowser suggested Janice Taylor as Chair on the Service Quality, with her term expiring in December 2022 further discussion is required.

## **Paratransit Operations & Certifications Report**

Keith Johnson reported on paratransit operations as enclosed in the meeting package.

## **Old Business**

Janice Taylor suggested a different format for minutes. There was discussion regarding meeting minutes and keeping the PAC Meeting Minutes aligned with other committees and the Commission.

## **New Business**

Mr. Bowser revisited his Chairmans Report regarding Ms. Swystun's effort to garner support for getting additional ADA accessible taxi cabs. Mr. Bowser called on the committee to provide support for that effort and drafted a letter that was read aloud with that support.



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Ms. Braziel stated that discussions are being held between HRT Executives and Ms. Swystun. Ms. Braziel recommended holding off until all of the details are gathered and shared with the Commission and a clear path forward is provided.

Kyle Snyder thanked the PAC members for continued partnership to make the service improvements.

Dr. Ross-Hammond commented on the advocacy of the committee and the in-depth work of service provided. Dr. Ross Hammond agrees with the service and different accessibility and now bringing in the Taxi's services. Dr. Ross-Hammond suggests that we inform Mr. Harrell of our advocacy regarding the efforts of Ms. Swystun and allow him to take the lead. Dr. Ross-Hammond will be representing Hampton Roads Transit on City Council.

Mr. Troy Bowser made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was properly seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.

The next Paratransit Advisory meeting will be held on Wednesday February 08, 2023, at 1:00 pm at 509 E 18<sup>th</sup> Street 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Boardroom.



## Service Overview

### Cities Served:

Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk, Chesapeake, VA Beach, Portsmouth, and a very small area of Suffolk

### Locations:

Pickup and Drop-off locations must be within 3/4 miles radius of HRT fixed route services. This distance is currently calculated in Via's software by Google maps using the addresses requested.

### Time of Service Availability:

Pickup and Drop-off times must match the fixed route services provided within the 3/4-mile radius of the requested trip

### Origin to Destination:

Paratransit Services will pick up clients at the scheduled pickup address and drop them off at the scheduled drop off address. Other than a cancellation of the trip, changes cannot be made on the day of the scheduled trip.

## Service Requirements

### Passenger Assistance:

Drivers must exit the vehicle to assist riders at all pickup and drop offs. If requested, the driver shall assist a client to/from the door. Drivers are not allowed to enter any buildings/residences to find or assist riders. Drivers are not required to assist in the operation of motorized mobility devices at any time or act as a customer's personal care attendant. Each certified rider is limited to two (2) grocery bags or similar sized carry-on packages. Drivers are not required to carry packages for anyone.

### Shared Ride Service:

Like fixed route services, Paratransit is a shared ride service. Clients need to understand during their trip other clients will be picked up and/or dropped off.

## Service Requirements (cont.)

### **Reservations:**

Can be made up to 7 days in advance but must be made by 5:00 PM the day prior to the requested trip. HRT strongly encourages clients to schedule trips by arrival time when scheduling for an appointment or the start of a scheduled workday.

### **Pick-up Window:**

Is a 30-minute window, or time period, 15 minutes prior and after your scheduled trip pickup time that a driver may arrive. The driver will not arrive at an exact time, but rather arrive within that 30-minute window time. Riders need to be prepared to travel anytime within their pickup window. Drivers can only wait on location 5 minutes for the rider to board within the pickup window before moving on to the next customer.

### **Trip Ride Time:**

It is HRT's goal to limit a passenger's travel time to 90 minutes or less. However, traffic, weather, ridership demands, vehicle and driver availability, may cause some trips to exceed 90 minutes. ADA guidelines require that paratransit trip times be comparable to those of fixed route services. HRT does review a random sampling of trips monthly, comparing Paratransit travel times to the Google estimated comparable fixed route trip. In 2022 for the 8,308 trips sampled, the average Paratransit ride time was 24.9 minutes, the comparable trip durations on fixed route were 65.9 minutes. Only 3% of the trips sampled exceeded fixed route times by more than 5 minutes.

## Using the Service

- Clients who are pre-approved, may bring along one Personal Care Attendant (PCA). PCA's do not pay a fare.
- Clients may also bring along one companion (who also pays a fare), children accompanying a client ride for free as they do on fixed route. Additional riders on a trip must be scheduled at the time of booking and will be scheduled based on space availability.
- All approved service animals are allowed. Known clients with service animals will only be transported in a van as the sedans may not offer sufficient space.
- A client must use a seatbelt in the front seat of a Sedan and are strongly encouraged to use a seatbelt anytime they are on a vehicle. However, HRT can not force a client to wear a seatbelt since this is not a requirement on fixed bus route services.



## Using the Service (cont.)

### **Rider Technology:**

Clients receive automated courtesy trip reminder via texts/phone calls the day before, 5 to 15 minutes prior to vehicle arrival, and upon vehicle arrival. These courtesy reminders should not take the place of the established pickup window set up when the trip was originally scheduled.

### **Ride is early:**

Riders are not required to travel prior to their scheduled pickup window. Should the ride arrive early, the driver must wait 5 minutes into the rider's pickup window before moving on to the next customer

### **Ride is late:**

A trip is considered late 1 minute past the pickup window. Clients can choose to not take the trip without being charged with a late cancellation violation at that time.

## Current Paratransit Service Vehicles





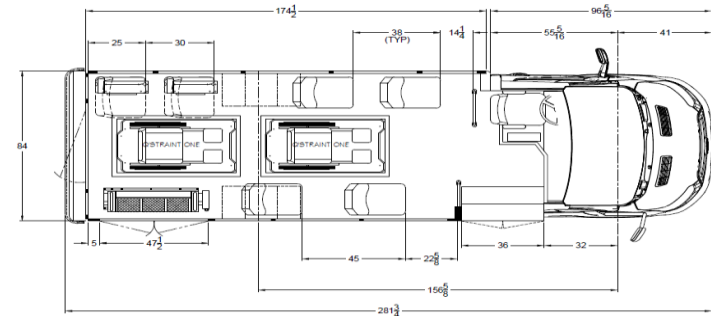
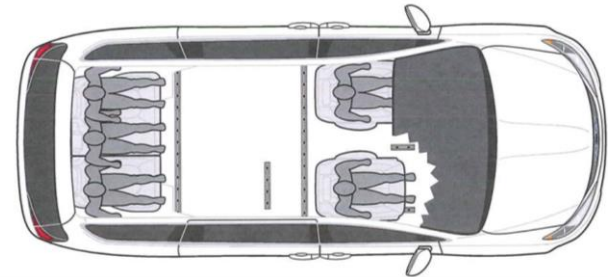
## New Paratransit Service Vehicles

Introducing the **New Commercial Side-Entry**  
Built on the **Chrysler Voyager**



Floor Plan (Standard) . (5) Passenger Seating with (1) WC Position and Cargo

Seating Positions



# QUESTIONS

?????





# Hampton Roads Transit

## PAC meeting

February 8, 2023



## Agenda for today's discussion



- **Introduction of Mary Pharris, Director of Paratransit**
- **Service Review - Michael Ortiz**
- **Addressing Concerns - Michael Ortiz**
- **Driver Training /Townhall - Javier Rodriguez**
- **Job Fair - Charity Smith**



# **Welcome**

## **Mary Pharris**

### **Our New Director!**

## Here are some fun facts about our 2022!

We completed **338,181 rides**

We drove a total of **4,175,750 miles!!!**  
For context that's the same distance as going to moon  
and back almost **9 times** or around the earth  
**168 times!!**



## Overall Performance December + January

**~52k**

**Trips completed in  
December and January**

Trip counts held steady from the last reporting period, somewhat lower due to holidays. We anticipate to see continued growth in to Q1 2023.

**90/94%**

**Pickup/Dropoff  
On-Time-Performance**

OTP continues to be strong and consistent into the new year.

**~25 mins**

**Average trip duration**

This past two-month period saw consistent trip durations month-over-month

**1.31**

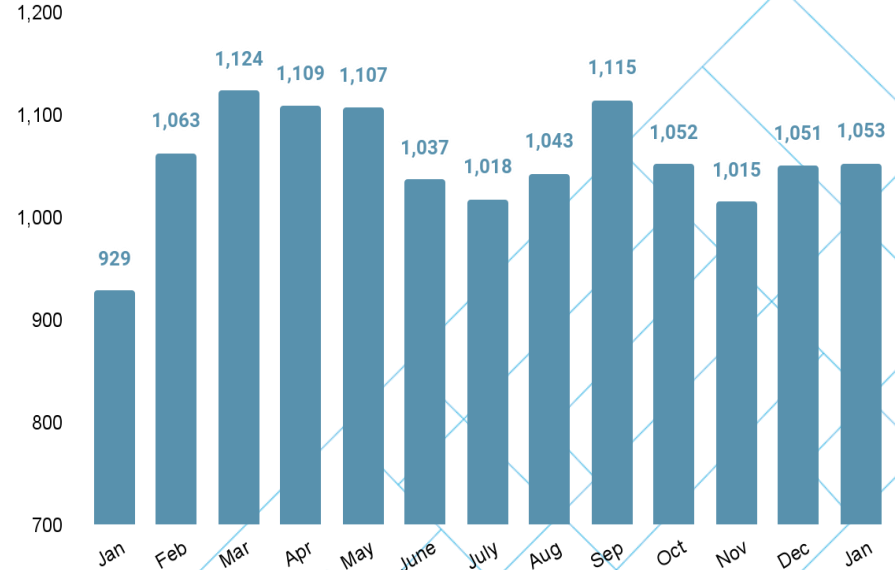
**Avg. Trips per hour per  
vehicle**

Holidays had a continued effect on overall utilization, but trends in January showcase this number climbing back to its standard.

# Ridership has recovered after a slow holiday season and continues to remain strong going into the start of a new year!

- We saw anticipated lows over the holidays and fully expect demand to return back to normal over the next few months similar to 2022
- We are staffing up early to enter the next few months when demand is the highest (Mar, Apr, and May).
- Very proud of the year over year growth!

Average monthly demand





## Addressing Concerns

- Thank you for voicing your concerns in a professional and courteous manner
- We are always looking for ways to improve and educate and/or retrain drivers to ensure we are meeting expectations
- We understand the holidays are difficult for transportation but some great takeaways we had:
  - Still maintained a +90% OTP
  - Identified key staffing needs
  - Working with booking and customer service on communication to riders
- Focus on the the little things and fundamentals

**Driver feedback strengthens overall engagement and improves experiences for both drivers and riders.**

- **Our drivers have spoken and we have listened!**
- **Drivers had the chance to help us improve our service with some very noteworthy feedback that we will present to our tech teams**
  - **Updated pick-up windows so drivers know when a rider is expected to be picked up**
  - **Appropriate vehicle assignment for passengers requiring specific accommodations (over-size wheelchairs, walkers)**
  - **Giving drivers the exact location (store, entrance/exit, or bldg number) for certain pickups.**





Going above and beyond with finding the right talent!



## ● Our Mission and Focus -

- To find top tier talent in and around Hampton Road to join our team and serve the amazing riders that use our service!

## ● What we are looking for (both inside and outside of the depot)

- Up to 15 new drivers
- 3 new TOSs

## ● Transit Operation Specialist Staffing-

- Job fair February 16th, 2023
- Actively doing interviews for office staff members and drivers!
- We trust our riders and their suggestions, so if you know anyone who might be a good fit please send them our way!



# Thank you!



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## Paratransit Certification Report 02/08/2023 December & January

<b>2 Month Totals</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>
<b>Applications Processed - 179</b>	90 (-30.8%)	156	89 (-33.6%)	141
<b>New Certifications 146</b>	71	70	75	8
<b>Re-Certifications 28</b>	17	92	11	61
<b>Denials 5</b>	2	8	3	15
<b>Number of Eligible Clients</b>	6,349 (15.8%)	5,482	6,418 (16.9%)	5,490
<b>Number of Clients Using the Service</b>	2,012 (11.8%)	1,800	1,919 (1.4%)	1,893
<b>Number of eligible clients who did not recertify – 10</b>	4	147	6	124
<b>Sanction Notifications Sent</b>	0	0	313 (+75.0%)	179
<b>Eligibility Appeals</b>				
	Filed – 5 Amended – 2 Overturned by Panel – 2 Upheld by Panel – 1			
<b>4th Quarter Client Suspensions Sent 1/31/2023 313 Pending</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Sanction Appeals (284 notices sent 10/18/2022)</b>			<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. Sanctions Served</b>
136 – 7 day 82 – 14 day 35 – 21 day 60 – 30 day	Filed – 91 Amended – 87 Overturned by Panel – 1 Upheld by Panel – 3			93 – 7 day 47 – 14 day 22 – 21 day 33 – 30 day



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## Paratransit Call Center Performance Report 02/08/2023 December & January

	December	Prior Year	January	Prior Year
<b>Total Incoming Calls</b>	16,843 (3.1%)	16,335	17,172 (28.0%)	13,416
<b>Calls Handled</b>	14,273 (7.4%)	13,285	14,792 (27.1%)	11,642 (3 days of no service, weather related)
<b>Calls Abandoned (after 15 seconds)</b>	1,000 (-37.2%)	1,593	842 (147.0%)	341
<b>% of Incoming Calls Successful</b>	86.34%	83.1%	87.39%	89.0%
<b>Average Speed to Answer Reservations (Goal 90 seconds)</b>	42.35 seconds  Daily averages ranged from 17 to 93 seconds (12/19 & 12/21 >90 second target)	65.31 seconds  Daily averages ranged from 12 to 356 seconds (12/7/2021 due to AWS outage)	37.15 seconds  Daily averages ranged from 19 to 70 seconds	24.60 seconds  Daily averages ranged from 15 to 64 seconds



# HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT

## Paratransit Operations Performance Report 02/08/2023 December & January

	December	Prior Year	January	Prior Year
<b>Pickup OTP (Goal 95%)</b>	90.4%	91.1%	89.4%	94.0%
<b>Drop-Off OTP (Goal 95%)</b>	94.1%	95.7%	93.3%	96.7%
<b>Trips Requested</b>	35,184 (+10.7%)	31,791	35,622 (+21.8%)	29,257
<b>Trips Performed</b>	25,493 (+10.0%)	23,177	26,911 (+35.2%)	19,909 (3 "Weather Days")
<b>Trips Cancelled in Advance</b>	7,557 (25.2%)	7,018 (22.1%)	6,641 (18.6%)	7,686 (26.3%)
<b>Customer Trip Violations (NS/CD/LC)</b>	1,876 (6.9%)	1,596 (6.4%)	1,787 (6.2%)	1,491 (6.5%)
<b>Trips Cancelled For Cause</b>	258 (0.94%)	216 (0.93%)	283 (0.99%)	95 (0.47%)
<b>Average Customer Trip Travel Time</b>	24.94 minutes	24.43 minutes	25.13 minutes	23.13 minutes
<b>Peak # of Vehicles Scheduled</b>	89 61 Fleet 2 Taxi 26 TNC	91 69 Fleet 3 Taxi 19 TNC	89 60 Fleet 2 Taxi 27 TNC	86 64 Fleet 2 Taxi 20 TNC
<b>Number of Paratransit trips taken on Fixed Route</b>	8,615 (+14.2%)	7,541 (+2.7%)	8,791 (+54.0%)	5,710 (-14.5%)



## Draft Service Plan

Effective: May 14, 2023

- Route 15 Military Highway - Run time adjustments
- Route 22 Haygood Road - Improve run time for deadhead between Newtown Station and JEB (11:49 am trip departing Newtown Station)
- Review deadheads that need additional time
- Route 27 Northampton Boulevard - Modify frequency to operate 60-minute service.
- Route 35 Bayfront – The frequency will be modified to operate every 60-minutes.
- Route 114 Mercury Boulevard - Implement 15-minute service during peak periods Monday through Friday. Improve weekday span to 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. and weekend span to 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.
- Route 960 Norfolk/Virginia Beach - Add additional bus to improve run time for the summer season.
- Route 961 Norfolk/Hampton/Newport News – Restore 30-minute service Monday through Saturday.
- Implement Seasonal Service – May 14, 2023: Routes 30, 31, 34 & 35