



FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session #5:

Innovations in Restoring Passenger Confidence and Managing COVID-19 Operational Considerations

October 29, 2020

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM EDT



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



Welcome



Henrika Buchanan
FTA Associate Administrator for
Transit Safety and Oversight &
Chief Safety Officer

Welcome



K. Jane Williams
FTA Deputy Administrator

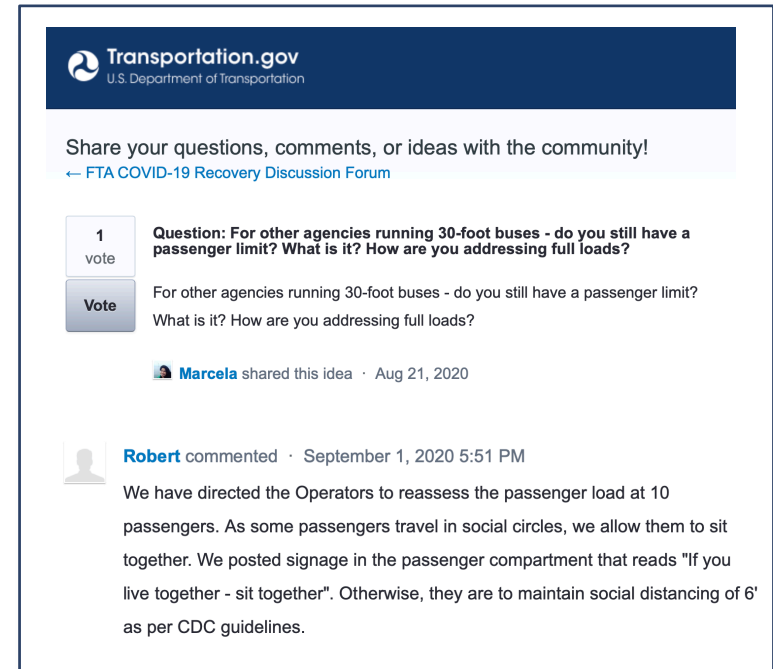
Welcome



Matt Welbes
FTA Executive Director

FTA COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session Forum

- Participants can post a question, comment, resource, or idea, or view and respond to other participants' posts.
- This discussion forum provides a platform to complement Listening Sessions and give transit professionals an additional channel to exchange ideas and best practices. Commercial posts are prohibited.



**Access the forum from FTA's COVID-19 website or at
<https://usdot.uservoice.com/forums/930736-fta-covid-19-recovery-discussion-forum>**

Poll Question Results (1 of 2)

- A majority of respondents (81%) said that their transit agencies have modified their webpages or mobile apps to communicate what riders need to know to stay safe during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
 - An additional 7% of respondents indicated that their transit agencies are in the process of implementing such changes.
- Roughly one-third of respondents (33%) use their agencies' websites or mobile apps to provide information and updates to alert riders to crowding issues before they board.
 - 13% of respondents' agencies are working to develop these updates.
- Approximately one quarter (22%) of respondents reported that their agencies have partnered with a vendor, university, or local agency to pilot a new product or service to support passengers during COVID-19 recovery.

Poll Question Results (2 of 2)

- About one-third (31%) of respondents said that their agencies have conducted outreach to both workers and riders on COVID-19 recovery.
 - An additional 15% of respondents indicated that they have solicited input from workers only, while 2% of respondents said that they have solicited input from riders only.
- 38% of respondents reported that their agencies have implemented worker or rider suggestions for COVID-19 recovery.

Innovative Measures Taken to Recover from COVID-19	% Finding Measure Helpful
Monitoring health of riders	42%
Monitoring compliance with rules and regulations	29%
Managing access to facilities	26%
Automating sanitization on vehicles	19%
Improving ventilation technology	30%
Reducing contact on vehicles and at facilities	63%



Chris Geraci

Assistant Vice President and
Chief Safety Officer

Jacksonville Transportation
Authority (JTA)

Jacksonville, Florida

Chris Geraci is the Assistant Vice President and Chief Safety Officer for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. Chris brings to this role his 10 years of experience in the safety industry – from public transportation to healthcare and the oil and gas sectors.

In addition to his Bachelor's degree in Occupational Safety, Chris holds a number of professional certifications. He is a World Safety Organization Certified Safety and Security Director and holds a Transit Safety and Security Program certificate. From his healthcare background, Chris is a certified paramedic and is certified as a Healthcare Safety Professional.

Agency Characteristics and Services

- JTA provides service to five counties in the Northeast Florida Region
 - Jacksonville is the largest city by land area in the continental US
 - Population of Jacksonville metro area over 1.6 million
 - Annual pre-COVID ridership of over 12 million
- Transportation Services
 - Fixed Route/BRT Bus: fleet of 238 revenue vehicles
 - Skyway: 2.4 miles of fixed guideway monorail system
 - St. Johns River Ferry: capacity of 40 vehicles/206 passengers
 - Regional Services: service to four surrounding counties
 - Paratransit: 100 vehicle on-demand service
 - Autonomous Vehicles
- Capital Projects
 - Numerous roadway improvement projects including road widening, roundabouts, sidewalks and bike paths

Impacts of COVID-19

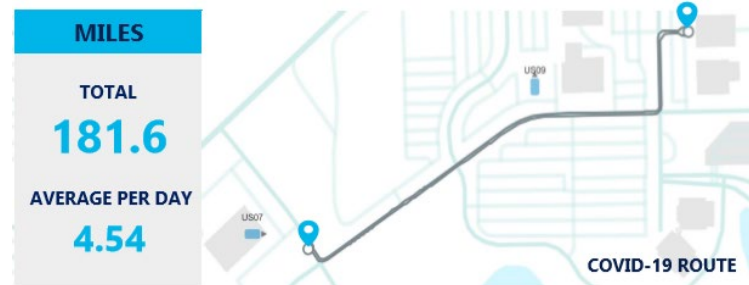
- Ridership declined over 60%
- Over 90 positive cases
- Service impacts:
 - Reduced fixed route service to a modified Saturday schedule
 - Limited capacity to 20 on FR buses, using ‘plug’ buses to supplement routes
 - Suspended Skyway service from March-June
- Financial impacts included reduced farebox recovery, sales tax and gas tax
- Impacts of CARES Act funding:
 - Bridged the gap in revenues for payroll costs
 - Funded hazard pay for bus operators
 - Provided pandemic related supplies (masks, disinfectant, sanitizer, thermal camera system, etc.)
 - Supplied teleworking equipment

Innovations in Restoring Passenger Confidence and Managing COVID-19 Operational Considerations

- Onsite testing for employees and contractors
- Locally-sourced Lexan partitions & sanitizer
- Thermal screening of employees
- Face shields 3D-printed in-house for front-line employees
- Added a second standee line to fixed route buses
- Doubled frequency of HVAC filter replacements on buses
- Antimicrobial electrostatic fogging of revenue vehicles and facilities
- UV light air purification devices installed in air handlers
- Social distancing initiatives on buses and at facilities

Innovations in Restoring Passenger Confidence and Managing COVID-19 Operational Considerations

- Partnered with Mayo Clinic to transport COVID-19 test specimens
 - First Level 4 Autonomous Use Case in the US to move COVID-19 Specimens
 - Approximately 30,000 COVID-19 specimens transported with **zero safety incidents**





Aslyne Rodriguez

Director of Government Affairs

Central Ohio Transit Authority
(COTA)

Columbus, Ohio

Aslyne is the Director of Government Affairs for the Central Ohio Transportation Authority. Prior to this role, Aslyne founded EmpowerBus in 2017 with the mission to provide upward mobility for all by delivering dignified, reliable, and on-time transportation to and from work, education, and healthcare opportunities.

Aslyne previously worked as an educator through Teach For America, an Executive Director for an after-school program for at-risk youth, and served as the COO for a women's leadership development organization.

Aslyne has received recognition in the Association of Commuter Transportation's 40 Under 40 in Transportation, and Business First's 40 Under 40.

Agency Characteristics and Services

- Serve approximately 19.5 million passengers
- Provide over 1.24 million fixed route hours
- Improve the customer experience by adding buses and increasing bus frequency
- Expand COTA/PLUS services by providing approximately 55,000 hours of service
- Serve our Mainstream population by providing an estimated 210,000 of hours of service combined with 28,300 UZURV trips (direct, door-to-door service)
- Prepare the region for the future growth by allocating funds for three corridor developments

Impacts of COVID-19

- While many industries have suffered, few have been hurt as much as transportation – and few are as important to helping communities devastated by COVID-19. Pre-pandemic, our ridership comprised of 67% minority
 - Post-pandemic that number has risen to 77%
- Many urban transit systems are facing dire financial situations, and ridership is down by as much as 70% in some cities thanks to remote work policies and concerns over safety
- CARES Act funding kept service rolling through cutting-edge cleaning solution, protective barriers, suspended fares, a reduction in the demand on operators by providing them with more time off of transit vehicles

Innovations in Restoring Passenger Confidence and Managing COVID-19 Operational Considerations

- Experimented with on-demand services to supplement or replace fixed route service with reduced ridership
- Launched our second COTA//Plus on demand pilot with a third planned for November
- Introduced the first Bus On Demand pilot
- COTA established early industry standards for rapid fleet sanitization and was one of the first transit agencies to use Aegis's antimicrobial solution
- Tackled broadband access challenges by making our transit vehicles WiFi hotspots



Mark Dowd

Chief Innovation Officer

Metropolitan
Transportation Authority
(MTA)

New York, New York

Mark K. Dowd joined MTA in November 2019 as its first Chief Innovation Officer. Mark leads several technology initiatives at MTA and is deeply involved in spearheading innovative approaches to the COVID-19 crisis in New York.

Mark founded a nonprofit providing policy support for cities to share strategies in a challenging funding environment and taught as a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley.

Mark has received awards for his service from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Justice, and the USDOT. He is a graduate of Rutgers College and Seton Hall University School of Law.

Audience Questions

Thank You!

This session has been recorded.
The presentation, recording, and transcript will be
posted on FTA's website.

Access FTA's COVID-19 Recovery Discussion Forum:
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recovery-discussion-forum](https://usdot.uservoice.com/forums/930736-fta-covid-19-recovery-discussion-forum)**