

**2022 ADA
Participation Group
Forum Meeting Dates**



Please join us for the ADA Participation Group Forum! Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month, **5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

The next ADA forum is:

- January 12, 2022
- March 9, 2022
- May 11, 2022
- July 13, 2022
- September 13, 2022
- November 9, 2022

Please note: Due to COVID-19, until further notice all ADA forums will only take place with the health and safety of our passengers and staff in mind. The next ADA forum will be held virtually. To obtain the link to join the meeting or for more information including accommodation requests, please visit our website at www.hartfordtransit.org, or contact Pat Williams by email: pwilliams@ghtd.org or phone: (860) 380-2011. Please provide notice prior to the meeting if you would like to share your input with the rest of the attendees. If time allows, all participants will have the opportunity to share their comments and concerns with the group. Looking forward to seeing you at the next ADA forum!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Did you know that if you have a question, compliment and/or concern about your ADA Paratransit trip we would like to hear from you?

Who do I contact? You may contact the Customer Service Department by calling (860) 724-5340 extension 9, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (For the hearing impaired, please dial Relay of Connecticut at 1-800-833-8134.) You may also contact Customer Service by sending an email to Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com, fax (860) 936-3750 or write:

**Customer Service Department c/o First Transit
148 Roberts Street, East Hartford, CT 06108**

How soon should I call? Please contact the Customer Service Department as soon as possible when you wish to report an incident (ideally within 48 hours of the incident).

What information will I need to provide? Please be certain to have the day of the week, date, location, and time of all incidents that you would like to report. Any additional details you can provide will be helpful.

When will I receive a response? Any communication with the Customer Service Department will be addressed in a timely manner.

ADA RIDER TIP: Passengers may cancel trips afterhours from midnight to 4:30 a.m. by calling (860) 724-5340 and selecting "0".



To obtain a copy of this newsletter in an accessible format or if information is needed in another language please contact us at:
(860) 247-5329 x 3011
Si necesita información en otro idioma, llame al **860-247-5329, extensión 3011.**

CONTACT US AT: (860) 724-5340

- Reserve/Cancel/Confirm.....Select 1**
- Dispatch Department.....Select 2**
- ADA Application Request.....Select 4**
- SpanishSelect 5**
- Subscription Service.....Select 6**
- Service UpdatesSelect 8**
- Customer Service Select 9**

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Greater
Hartford
Transit District



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THE S.T.A.R.

(Safe, Timely, Accessible, Reliable)

ADA Paratransit Newsletter

Winter 2022



CT AIRA PILOT PROGRAM

NEW SERVICE PROVIDES ACCESS AND INDEPENDENCE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION



Governor Ned Lamont announced that the State of Connecticut is launching an 18-month pilot program offering Aira at no cost for individuals who are blind or have low vision. Aira is a service that enables persons who are blind or have low vision to connect with highly trained, live agents in real-time for assistance using the public transportation system and other essential services.

The Aira service uses a smartphone's camera to stream live video to an agent who provides the subscriber with instant access to visual information about their surroundings. The Aira agents use the live video to narrate and interpret what they see for the user. This can include how to use the ticket vending machine, navigate one of Connecticut's busy public transportation hubs, or access connecting services.

The Aira pilot program is a collaboration between the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services. This pilot is being administered by the Connecticut Transportation Institute at the University of Connecticut and is being funded through federal research funding, making it possible to offer an 18-month subscription at no cost to the user. The pilot program's goal is to evaluate the Aira service and its effectiveness in providing travel assistance when using public transportation in Connecticut, as well as access to essential services. A complete report and evaluation of the service will be available at the end of the pilot program.



Federal Mask Mandate Extended

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced a federal mask requirement for transit systems to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 based on President Joseph R. Biden's Executive Order 13998, issued January 21, 2021. The Transportation Security Administration soon followed with a security directive implementing the CDC order.

Requiring masks will protect America's transit workers and passengers and help control the transmission of COVID-19. TSA has extended the face mask requirement for all transportation networks, including public transportation, through March 18, 2022. While this announcement extends the date of enforcement, all other aspects of the requirement remain unchanged, including exemptions and civil penalties.

For more information go to: [Federal Mask Requirement for Transit | FTA \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fta.dot.gov/federal-mask-requirement)

CT AIRA PILOT PROGRAM

NEW SERVICE PROVIDES ACCESS AND INDEPENDENCE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION

(Continued from Cover Page...) Riders that use ADA Paratransit that are blind or have low vision are eligible to use this program. The Aira service connects users to people that are trained and certified by Aira to provide immediate information. Aira agents sign a non-disclosure agreement that requires them to maintain confidentiality about their engagement with each user. Users would need to have a smartphone in order to download the Aira app. The Aira service will help you navigate your surroundings when using public transportation such as Paratransit, during healthcare and related services, while shopping, or engaging in other essential services. You can see the full list of included essential services and related activities that the CT Aira Pilot Program will cover by going to: <https://ctrides.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Aira-Pilot-Program-Essential-Services-101421.pdf>.

The Aira agents will use your phone's camera to get a view of your surroundings. The agents are available 24/7 and Spanish operators are available as well. There is also a customer service team available 7 days a week from 9am to 9pm Eastern Time by calling 1-800-835-1934.



For more information how Aira agents can work with people that are blind or have low vision, and to find out how to sign up for this program, please visit <https://ctrides.com/aira-en/> or go to Aira's new website at aira.io. You may also email support@aira.io or call 1-800-835-1934 if you have questions or need additional information about this exciting new pilot program.

The full press release regarding the Aira pilot program can be found on: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/10-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-Pilot-Program-Offering-Virtual-Mobility-Assistance>.



ENCOMPASS UPDATE

TRANSPORTATION FOR PEOPLE OVER AGE 60 AND THE DISABLED



The Greater Hartford Transit District (the "District") has partnered with Connecticut's largest taxi service M7 to launch Encompass, an on-demand transportation program for people over age 60 and the disabled, many of whom already use the ADA Paratransit service.

Each trip costs riders just \$5 for the first eight miles travelled and \$2 per mile after that. Trips can be booked online or through the phone and are paid for in advance. People can call (860) 444-4444 or visit <https://encompass.m7ride.com/> to register or to book a ride.

Individuals who are 60 and older or disabled who live in the following towns qualify to use Encompass: Avon, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bristol, Cromwell, East Hartford, Ellington, Farmington, Glastonbury, Hartford, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks. The service is also expanding to Tolland in February 2022.

Multiple people of any age can take a single Encompass ride together, as long as one of them is an Encompass member. M7 has a fleet of over 200 vehicles including 100 that are wheelchair-accessible. The company also boasts 30-plus years of experience providing non-medical emergency transportation, along with transportation for special educational and behavioral health services.

Encompass is an exciting program that many people may still not yet know exists. Since COVID is still continuing, having a private and affordable form of transportation



is a great option for the senior and disabled community. This program is filling a large gap when it comes to meeting the needs of seniors that would not qualify for ADA Paratransit because they are in excellent health. Encompass helps provide seniors and people with disabilities with more opportunities to travel when they want, where they want, using affordable, private transportation.



Señor Pepe's Pointers for Winter

Winter is here! Señor Pepe's friend "Rex" is helping Pepe out by clearing his driveway of snow and ice. Pepe has a disability and so is unable to shovel snow himself, but he knows it is essential to clear his front pathways before his ADA trip on a snowy day.

Pepe says, "Any entrance pathways such as sidewalks, driveways, ramps, and steps leading up to your place of residence must be free of snow and ice. Failure to comply with this request might result in the ADA driver not being able to provide transportation for you until the pathway is cleared."

If you have questions about our Winter snow policies please contact our Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 x 9 or email Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com.

