

**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:

- May 11, 2022
- July 13, 2022
- September 14, 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".



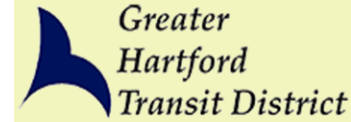
To obtain a copy of this newsletter in an accessible format or if information is needed in another language please contact us at: (860) 380-2011.

Si necesita información en otro idioma, llame al (860) 380-2011.

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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THE S.T.A.R.

(Safe, Timely, Accessible, Reliable)

ADA Paratransit Newsletter

Spring 2022



FREE BUS FARES APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 2022



Pictured left to right: Mark Rolfe, Deputy Commissioner-CT Department of Transportation; Vicki Shotland, Executive Director-Greater Hartford Transit District; and Ned Lamont-CT Governor speak at a press conference at State House Square to announce free bus fares in CT until June 30, 2022.

Bus fares in Connecticut will be suspended for three months! Governor Ned Lamont recently announced that he has signed emergency bipartisan legislation (House Bill 5501) into law. The new legislation was a response to the global rise of fuel prices. The policy includes a three-month waiver of .25 cents to the state's gasoline tax, and a sales tax-free week in mid-April on clothing and shoes under \$100. The legislation also suspends fares on public buses statewide during that same period.

Starting April 1 through June 30, 2022 CTtransit local, express, and CTfastrak routes will all offer fare-free transportation. The ADA Paratransit service will also be fare-free through June 30, 2022.

Governor Lamont participated in a news conference about the new legislation on March 30, 2022 at State House Square in Hartford, CT. Mark Rolfe, Deputy Commissioner of the CT Department of Transportation and Vicki Shotland, Executive Director of Greater Hartford Transit District also spoke at the press conference.

During the press conference, Vicki Shotland stated that the legislation "is going to be a win-win for all of us, and especially for bus transportation riders throughout the state of Connecticut".

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CTDOT Customer Experience Action Plan

The CT Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is developing a Statewide Public Transportation Customer Experience Action Plan that will shape future programs, policies, and investments in public transportation services in ways that deliver positive customer experiences. CTDOT is conducting virtual focus groups to collect feedback from the public, and you are invited to participate. Focus group participants will receive a \$75 Visa gift card for their time. If you are interested in participating in a focus group, you can sign up on Greater Hartford Transit District's website at www.hartfordtransit.org and click on "Notifications and Alerts".

Please note depending on the number of responses received, CTDOT cannot guarantee that everyone will be selected to participate. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Customer Experience Unit at DOT.TransitCX@ct.gov.

FREE BUS FARES

APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 2022

(Continued from Cover Page) Ms. Shotland went on to "personally address the disabled population in particular - those who are eligible to ride on the ADA Paratransit service." She noted that "the \$3.50 cost per trip is a hardship to so many disabled passengers, but providing a three month reprieve in regard to a fare-free service is going to be a tremendous assistance, not only financially but as an emotional boost for those who are struggling in various aspects of their lives." Ms. Shotland also stressed that "this will certainly be a catalyst to bring the old riders back and hopefully encourage new folks to ride public transit."

Governor Lamont agreed that the legislation is "important on a couple of fronts". The free bus service will help families as "inflation is ravaging our country". Saving money on transportation costs will enable people to do more things like get groceries. The Governor said "it's also incredibly important...in terms of maybe getting some more people using public transportation". He concluded that this is "really important for people having a hard time getting by", and that the Governor's office is "just doing everything we can to make it a little bit easier".

You can view the full press conference held at State House Square by going to: <https://www.wfsb.com/2022/03/30/gov-talk-about-suspension-bus-fares/>.

Please note that on-demand bus services operating in Norwalk and Westport as Wheels2U, in Danbury as Rides on Demand, in Stonington as Hop and in the Estuary region as XtraMile, are premium services that are not included in the fare-free promotion. Interstate bus services such as Greyhound and Peter Pan are also not included. For a copy of the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) announcement, please go to [Fare-Free-Buses-through-June-30-News-Release-1.pdf \(hartfordtransit.org\)](#)

If you already purchased an ADA Paratransit ticket book, you can still use it once the bus fare suspension expires on June 30, 2022 because the ADA ticket books do not expire. However, please note that CTtransit will not be able to refund partially used fixed route bus passes. For more information and to find your local bus operator, visit CTrides.com or call 1-877-CTrides (1-877-287-4331).



SPRING IS A GREAT TIME

FOR TRAVEL TRAINING WITH THE KENNEDY CENTER

As Connecticut begins to re-open, the Statewide travel training team at the Kennedy Center is ready to get back on the buses and trains! The Kennedy Center Travel Training is a nationally acclaimed program that teaches people with disabilities and seniors how to properly and safely use the local bus and rail system on a one-to-one basis throughout the state of Connecticut. Since 1991, The Kennedy Center has successfully travel trained more than 3,000 people with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities, aged 16-95, to use local buses and trains to access the community.

Should I participate? Connecticut residents with disabilities and seniors who wish to become more independent should consider participating. Your residence and destination should be on or near a bus or train route. Travel destinations are your choice and can include; work, medical appointments, and leisure activities.

How do I learn to use public transportation? The training process is individualized to meet your personal needs, with an overall emphasis on safety. A qualified mobility instructor will travel with you to your desired locations, at times of your convenience. Your instructor will stay with you, teaching you techniques for safe travel until you are ready to travel on your own.

What other assistance does travel training offer? In addition to teaching skills needed to take the bus/train, The Kennedy Center Travel Training Program addresses such issues as street crossing, interacting with strangers, being prepared for unexpected circumstances, what to do if lost, proper wheelchair securement, and self advocacy.

How long will it take me to learn my route? There is no time limit for training. An instructor will stay with you until you feel comfortable and confident riding the bus or train, and will be available for follow-up services.

What will it cost me? The Kennedy Center is funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, therefore there is no cost for the training program. Each participant, however, is required to pay the bus or train fare while training is taking place.

Other Services: The Kennedy Center is also available to conduct "Train the Trainer" seminars and to consult with agencies interested in starting a Travel Training Program.

For more information on The Kennedy Center Travel Training Program, please contact the statewide travel training phone number directly at **203-365-8522, ext. 2950** or by email at traveltraining@kennedyctr.org



Señor Pepe's Pointers for Spring

Spring is finally here! That means people are shaking off the winter blues and getting back out and about. But don't forget the COVID-19 pandemic is still not over.

Pepe says, "Please be sure to wear your mask on the ADA Paratransit bus to continue keeping all of our passengers and drivers safe! And please don't travel if you are not feeling well".

As a reminder, free at-home COVID-19 tests are still available. Every home in the US is eligible to order 2 sets of 4 free at-home tests. If you need help placing an order, call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489). For more information, go to [COVID.gov/tests](https://www.covid.gov/tests) - Free at-home COVID-19 tests.

Your friend,
Señor Pepe

