

# FTA

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

## **COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session #3: Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe**

August 20, 2020



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's New COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session Forum

- FTA has launched a COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session Forum.
- This discussion forum provides a platform for peer-to-peer exchange of transit ideas, practices, and other information during and after FTA's COVID-19 Recovery Listening Sessions.



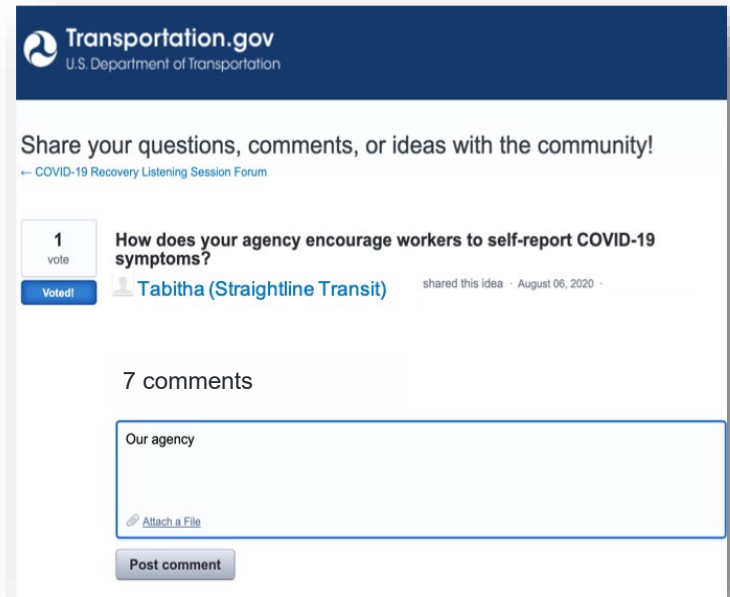
The screenshot shows the top of the forum page. At the top left is the Transportation.gov logo and "U.S. Department of Transportation". The main heading is "Welcome to FTA's COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session Forum" with an icon of three people. Below this is a paragraph describing the forum's purpose: "This forum offers a platform for peer-to-peer exchange of transit ideas and practices during recovery from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency. It also provides an opportunity for you to ask questions and request and share resources with the transit community during FTA's COVID-19 Recovery Listening Sessions." A disclaimer follows: "This forum is provided for peer-to-peer exchange only. Commercial posts are strictly prohibited and will be removed. Please direct all questions for FTA to FTA's Safety Stakeholder email (FTASafetyStakeholder@dot.gov)." Under "How it works:" there are three bullet points: "Post a question, comment, or idea, or offer or request a resource.", "Check out questions, comments, or ideas others have suggested and vote on your favorites.", and "Please include one question, comment, or suggestion per post to help us keep the forum organized." Below that is "Thanks for joining our community." and "Share your questions, comments, or ideas with the community!" with a text input field labeled "Enter your idea".

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

Additional information can be found in the handout available for download on the left-hand side of this screen.

# Using the COVID-19 Recovery Listening Session Forum

- Participants can post a question, comment, resource, or idea, or view and respond to other participants' posts.
- This forum is provided for peer-to-peer exchange **only**. Commercial posts are prohibited.
- Submit your questions for FTA to your FTA Regional POCs, listed here: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/safety/fta-regional-pocs-covid-19-questions>



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

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## Poll Question Results (1 of 2)

- Nearly 60% of respondents indicated that their agency has not furloughed or laid off any employees since the COVID-19 public health emergency began.
- Of those responding agencies that have experienced furloughs or layoffs:
  - Approximately 13% furloughed or laid off **no more than 10%** of their workforce.
  - Nearly the same amount (12%) furloughed or laid off **between 11% and 40%** of their workforce.
  - Only 7% of respondents indicated that their agency had furloughed or laid off **over 40%** of their workforce.
- Over half (52%) of respondents reported that their agency does not offer COVID-19 testing for workers.
  - About 30% of responding agencies offer COVID-19 testing with other entities, while just 8% offer testing at their own agency.

## Poll Question Results (2 of 2)

- Respondents who reported that their agency is taking measures to protect workers often cited measures such as:
  - Providing workers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and requiring passengers to wear masks,
  - Installing physical barriers to protect drivers from exposure to COVID-19,
  - Reducing vehicle capacities,
  - Conducting worker health screenings and temperature checks, and
  - Increasing frequency of cleaning services and installing hand sanitizer on transit vehicles.
- Approximately 39% of respondents indicated that their agency has included labor unions in at least some COVID-19-related decisions that directly impact worker safety.
  - Approximately 12% of respondents said that their agency has not included labor unions in these decisions.





**Kendra Sue McGeady**

Director of Transit  
Pelivan Transit/Northeast  
Tribal Transit Consortium  
Big Cabin, Oklahoma

Since March 2016, Kendra Sue McGeady has served as Director of Transit for Pelivan Transit, a department of Grand Gateway Economic Development Association (Council of Government) providing demand-response and commuter route service to seven counties in northeast Oklahoma. Pelivan Transit is the lead agency for Veterans Ride Connect, was recently awarded an FTA Integrated Mobility Innovation grant to create a regional on-demand transportation system, and is the 2019 Community Transportation Association of America Rural System of the Year.

Kendra serves as the Chairwoman of the Cherokee Nation Editorial Board of Directors, Secretary of the Southwest Transit Association Board of Directors and 5311 Representative of the Oklahoma Transit Association Board of Directors.

Kendra is a proud member of Cherokee Nation and resides in Vinita, Oklahoma.

# Agency Characteristics and Services

- Pelivan Transit provides rural and tribal transit services across 4,466 square miles in northeast Oklahoma including Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Northern Tulsa, Nowata, Ottawa, and Rogers counties.
- Pelivan serves tribal jurisdictional areas for the Cherokee Nation, and the Northeast Tribal Transit Consortium which includes Eastern Shawnee, Miami, Modoc, Ottawa, Peoria, Quapaw, Seneca-Cayuga, Shawnee, and Wyandotte Tribes of Oklahoma.
- Demand-response and commuter route services are provided in all areas, and on-demand service will be implemented in 2021.
- Pelivan serves as lead agency for the Veterans Ride Connect, a consortium of six rural and tribal transit agencies offering discounted trips to veterans covering more than one third of the state of Oklahoma.
- Pelivan is the lead agency for PICK Transportation, a project awarded an FTA IMI Grant, creating a regional on-demand transit service area covering 21,000 square miles and including four transit agencies.



# Impacts of COVID-19

- Loss of Farebox Revenue
- Decrease in Ridership
- Loss of Contractual Service
- Staffing Shortages
- Re-establishing Operations

## Total Trips, Jan 1 thru July 31

2019	90,662	
2020	53,517	<b>-41%</b>



# Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe

- Limited Seating
- Disinfecting Buses, PPE
- Trip Prioritization
- Mask Requirement
- Cashless Fare Payment System
- On-Demand
- Mobile Interview Unit
- Protective Barriers for Vehicles



*RMPay New Riders for 2020*

2020	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
<b>CRAIG</b>	9	9	13	1	7	14	53
<b>DELAWARE</b>	21	8	11	4	16	15	75
<b>MAYES</b>	21	14	15	2	37	14	103
<b>NOWATA</b>	0	0	1	4	9	1	15
<b>OTTAWA</b>	29	14	14	10	13	24	104
<b>ROGERS</b>	15	19	17	5	13	31	100
<b>TULSA</b>	6	6	6	0	4	12	34
<b>GLMH/DOCS</b>	57	80	51	17	32	48	285
							769



**Sheldon Shaw**

Director of Safety and Security  
Utah Transit Authority  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Sheldon is the Director of Safety and Security for the Utah Transit Authority (UTA). His responsibilities include managing all aspects of design, construction and system safety as well as compliance with federal, state and local safety and health regulations.

Under his leadership, UTA obtained and has maintained the OSHAS 18001 Safety Management System (SMS) certification. Prior to assuming this role, Sheldon worked in Commuter Rail Operations as a Dispatcher, Field Supervisor and Trainer.

He came to UTA after a serving a twenty-year career as an officer in the United States Navy. Sheldon has a BS in Finance and an MBA from the University of Utah. He is a Certified Safety Specialist (CSS) by the World Safety Organization and holds a Transit Safety and Security Program certificate. He currently serves on the Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force and is on the Board of Directors for Utah Operation Lifesaver.

# Agency Characteristics and Services

- Service Area
  - Population: 3 million
  - 80% along the Wasatch Front
  - 85 municipalities
  - Annual ridership: 46 million
  - 2,700 employees
- System
  - 140 rail miles
  - 70 rail stations
  - 120 bus routes
  - 6,500 bus stops
  - 160 at-grade crossings



# Impacts of COVID-19

Mode	% Decline in Ridership
Fixed Route Bus	61
Paratransit	66
Light rail	73
UVX	74
Commuter Rail	78

Year	Total YTD Ridership
2019	21.57 million
2020	14.02 million

Revenue Sources	YTD Budget	YTD Actual
Sales Tax	\$134.4m	\$134.2
Fare Revenue	\$27.5m	\$19.2m
CARES Act Funding: \$187m		

## Additional Impacts

- 51 employee positives – all recovered, one waiting for medical clearance
- Employee absence – all departments within historical norms
- Telecommuting is possible and has some upside
- System incidents are down

# Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe

- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting (electrostatic backpack)
- Providing masks, gloves and hand cleaning supplies
- Social distancing between operators and riders
- Eliminated paper handling
- Strongly encouraging social distancing and requiring mask use
- Rear-door boarding on buses
- Masks are available to riders
- Working to install operator barriers on all buses
- Working to install hand sanitizer dispensers on all vehicles
- Adding service to allow for social distancing

[www.rideuta.com/recovery](http://www.rideuta.com/recovery)

[www.rideuta.com/health](http://www.rideuta.com/health)





## **David Bagley**

System Safety Manager  
Metropolitan Transit System  
San Diego, California

David Bagley is the Safety Manager for the Rail Division of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and has 25 years of experience in the light rail industry.

David manages MTS rail programs to ensure compliance with applicable local, state and federal codes and regulations.

He concurrently serves as the Safety & Security Manager for the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project of San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), a 10.9 mile extension of the light rail system due to open in November 2021.

During David's tenure, MTS Rail was awarded APTA's top safety award in 2018 for the successful "Anticipate - Recognize - Take Action! (ART)" campaign.

# MTS System Overview

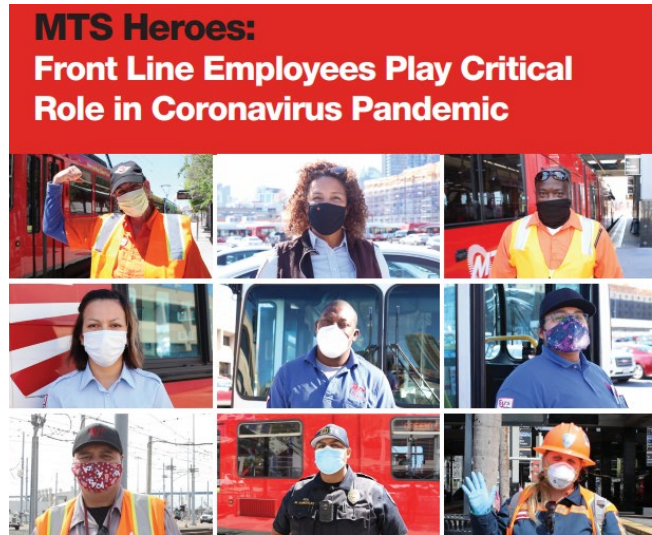
- Transit provider for Central, Southern, and Eastern San Diego County
- Trolley – Light Rail Vehicles (LRV)
  - Three Line Segments
  - 54 Stations; 53 Miles of Tracks
  - 176 Vehicles
- Bus
  - 96 Routes
  - 800-plus Buses
- 85 Million Annual Passengers (283k weekday) in FY19



# COVID-19 Impacts

Mode	% Decrease in Ridership
Rail	55
Bus	64

- Service Levels returned to normal; ridership slowly returning
- Accelerated procurement of PPE and Cleaning Products
- Tracking Employees and Contractors testing positive
- Installation of germ-free barriers on buses for operators and at all check-in locations for employees
- Monitor Employee Temperatures
- Use of Guidance Tools: CDC USEPA, NCHRP Report 769, etc.
- Education and Information: APTA and FTA Webinars

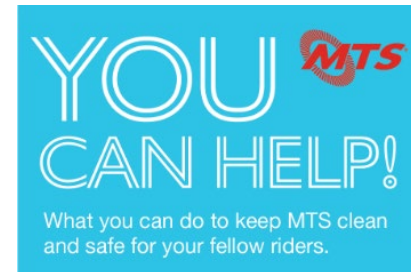


# Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe

## Clean Ride Campaign

- Safety Protocols
- Passenger and Employee Safety
- Face Coverings
- Social Distancing
- Germ Barriers and Rear-Door Boarding
- No-Contact Fares
- Hand Washing Stations and Hand Sanitizer

- Employee Communication
- Maintain Essential Service to the Community
- Participation in Scripps Health – Detect Study



# Presentation References

## **MTS “Clean Ride” Campaign:**

<https://www.sdmts.com/schedules-real-time/covid-19-updates>

## **Learn more about the “Detect Study” Research:**

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landig/article/PIIS2589-7500\(19\)30222-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landig/article/PIIS2589-7500(19)30222-5/fulltext)

## **Participate in the “Detect Study”:**

<https://detectstudy.org/>



**LaShanda R. Dawkins**  
Assistant General Manager,  
Human Resources  
Metropolitan Atlanta  
Rapid Transit Authority  
Atlanta, Georgia

LaShanda leads the strategic development and implementation of comprehensive human resource programs through the offices of Human Resources, Labor & Employee Relations, and Learning & Development.

LaShanda holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and a Doctor of Jurisprudence and is a member of the State Bars of Texas, Florida, and Georgia.

LaShanda is a 2015 Graduate of Leadership APTA and serves as Chair of APTA's Labor and Employee Relations Subcommittee.

# Agency Characteristics and Services

- 11<sup>th</sup> Largest U.S. Public Transit System
- 550+ Buses; 101 Bus Routes; 9,953 Bus Stops
- 338 Rail Cars; 39 Rail Stations; 104 Miles of Track
- ADA Complementary Paratransit Service (MARTA Mobility)
- 2.7 Mile Loop Light Rail Service (Atlanta Streetcar)
- 8 Maintenance Facilities
- Named 2019 Public Transit Agency of the Year by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO)
- Recognized by Forbes Magazine in 2019 as one of America's Best Midsize Employers



# Impacts of COVID-19

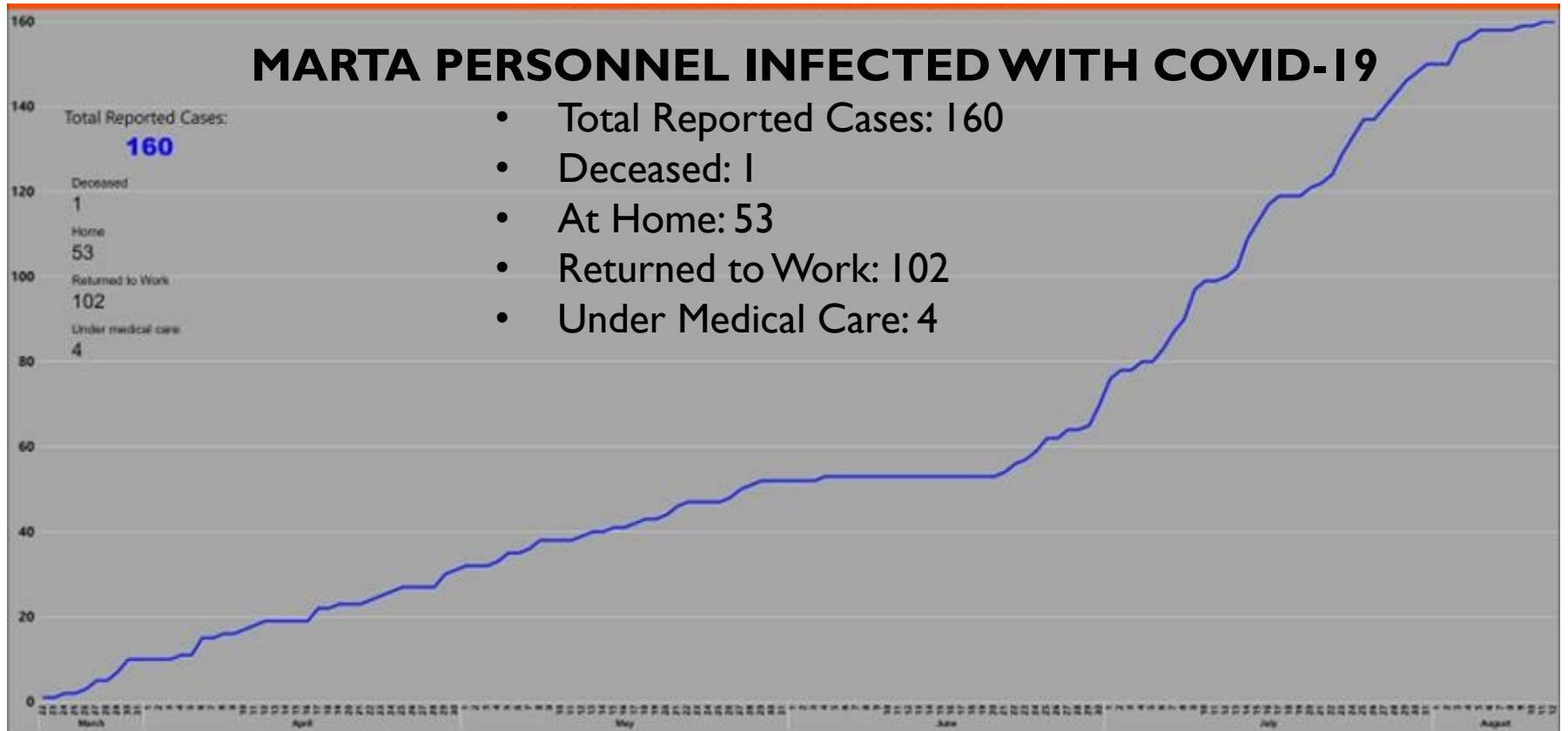
- Initial Decline in Ridership:
  - 75% Rail
  - 55% Bus
- Budgetarily, MARTA is experiencing:
  - The loss of ridership from sheltering in place orders.
  - The loss of farebox revenue from instituting rear door onboarding measures (excluding patrons utilizing mobility devices).
  - The loss of sales tax revenue from a decrease in commercial transactions throughout the state of Georgia.



*These losses are consistent with those felt by transit services and businesses throughout the country.*



# Impacts of COVID-19



# Hero Pay

- \$500.00 Hero Payment
- Extended to both represented and non-represented MARTA frontline personnel (i.e. Bus Operators, Rail Operators, MPD, and DSQA Safety Officers)
  - Total # of Employees: 3781
  - Total Sum of Payment: \$1,890,500.00



# The MARTA Army

- Independent grassroots action group, committed to enhancing the ridership experience on public transit in Metro Atlanta.
- Past/Present Initiatives: Operation Bus Stop Census, MARTA Army Book Club, Operation Clean Stop, First-Time Rider Support (during I-85 bridge collapse).
  - The MARTA Army worked directly with MARTA to sign up volunteers to assist in handing out hundreds of protective masks to patrons at key rail stations and bus loops.
  - The MARTA Army delivered 14,000 free meals to MARTA Bus Operators and employees as a show of support during the public health emergency.



# Maintaining Healthy Operations and Keeping Transit Workers Safe

- Case Management
  - Intake forms, contact tracing, exposure/risk assessments
- Social Distancing
  - Barrier installations, rear-boarding of buses, seat markers
  - Rearranged/removed office and breakroom furniture
- Personal Protective Equipment
  - Mandatory masks/face coverings, gloves, face shields
- Service Changes
  - Reduced bus routes, operated rail on weekend schedule
  - Monitored buses and trains to ensure capacity did not prohibit social distancing
- Disinfection
  - Hand sanitizer/sanitizing wipes, electrostatic sprayers
  - Increased frequency of high-touch surface disinfections and electrostatic disinfections



# Audience Questions

# Thank You!

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