How Regional Transit Adapt Operational Processes to Keep Passengers Safe

The Transportation sector has adjusted its role in responding to the COVID-19 public health pandemic while joining the global efforts in slowing the spread of COVID-19. The regional public transit services have implemented social distancing to protect the bus operators and passengers via the practice of rear-door boarding and temporarily waiving fare payment to reduce contact. Front-door boarding is reserved for passengers with ADA requirements. Other modifications to the bus boarding process includes roping off the first 10 seats and some transit operators have been advised to skip stops if buses are too full. With reduced capacity on buses to keep everyone safe, transit agencies are running extra trips to provide sufficient transit service to stay ahead of demand.

Passengers are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in addition to practicing social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19. DoD Shuttle passengers are required to wear face coverings when traveling to and from DoD installations during the current condition of the pandemic. By following and adapting to these changes during COVID-19, we can all travel safer and protect others.

Automated Pedestrian Crosswalks

Arlington County implemented automatic pedestrian signals at all signalized intersections in its densely populated corridors in response to low traffic volumes and to ensure pedestrians are able to safely move in and around our urban areas without having to press push buttons, a common high-touch surface. At the designated intersections, the walk signal comes up without the press of a button with every red-to-green light cycle, meaning pedestrians will have to wait only between 1 and 2 minutes to cross. Of the County’s 296 signalized intersections, 175 have had automated signal phases implemented. This contact-free measure was put in place to keep us safe during COVID-19.

COVID-19 Transit Mitigations

WMATA is now taking public comments for its meetings over the phone instead of requiring in-person testimony. OmniRide is testing out plastic dividers to shield its drivers while stepping up its cleaning with hospital grade disinfectants. VRE passenger cars are being wiped down twice a day and then again each night at the end of service. DASH is using electrostatic sprayers, to disinfect and clean buses, in record time.