



November 8, 2018

To Our Community:

Ben Franklin Transit received unexpected news on the afternoon of October 30, 2018 that longtime contracted service partner Tri-City Taxi would be closing its doors effective the same day at midnight. This closure caused an unavoidable, immediate suspension of the Taxi Feeder, Night Service, and Sunday Taxi Service that Tri-City Taxi had been providing on behalf of BFT for many years.

Our hearts certainly go out to our partners at Tri-City Taxi, who had to make a very difficult and impactful decision last week after nearly 40 years in business. After receiving the news, our team immediately went to work making as many notifications as possible, including calls to all customers with existing reservations for affected services, local school districts, medical centers, and employers whose shift workers have used these ancillary service options. We also notified the media to ask for their help getting the word out, which they provided. Our most pressing priority was to avoid leaving customers unaware and stranded without notice the next morning and thereafter.

Now, our team is actively exploring all possible solutions for all three affected modes and will continue to seek out suitable alternatives. It is a complicated challenge given the nature of the services and a lack of ready capacity among remaining transportation service providers in the community. We must also remain compliant with the Federal Transit Administration regulations governing our operations, which impose certain restrictions on how we can proceed. We are committed to working through all of this and restoring some level of service as quickly as possible, even if we must use a phased or multi-faceted approach.

In the interim while this effort continues, staff is looking for opportunities to match rider groups with other BFT programs including Vanpool and Community Van. Both operate under a ridesharing model and may be useful for meeting certain travel needs. Displaced riders may also be able to use BFT's fixed route system or other local taxi or ride-hailing services while a long-term solution is worked out. In addition, some Taxi Feeder customers might have existing limited or full Dial-A-Ride eligibility on file with BFT, which would allow them to use it during this time.

We understand and regret that this has impacted people's ability to get to school, work, medical appointments, and other critical connections because of this service disruption. Our priority is to minimize the extent and duration of that impact so that you can more easily get to the important places you need to go. This is a significant unforeseen challenge without an overnight fix, but we are staying focused on finding solutions for our community and will continue to update you as we have new information to share.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Boyce".

Gloria Boyce, General Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Watkins".

Matt Watkins, Board Chair