

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (February 1, 2021) - The Transportation Research Board's Transit Management and Performance Committee and the Transformative Trends in Transit Data Committee on Friday selected Port Authority's Room2Ride tool as the winner of its 2021 Innovations in Transit Performance Measurement Challenge.

Designed and created by Ellie Newman, Port Authority's manager of transit analysis, Room2Ride predicts how full buses will be at scheduled stops by using two weeks of historical trip data to predict future capacity. Room2Ride gives riders who have flexibility in their schedules the opportunity to choose less-crowded trips, creating more opportunities for those who have less flexibility in their schedules.

Newman designed the tool in response to vehicle capacity limits the Authority put in place in April because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Authority launched Room2Ride in June.

Room2Ride competed against finalists from across the country, including Jacksonville Transit Authority in Florida, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Washington, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority in Washington, D.C.

Judges included Frances Fisher, chair of Transportation Research Board Transit Management and Performance Committee and Sr. Transportation Engineer at Bay Area Rapid Transit, Michael Helta, chief innovation officer of Maryland Department of Transit-Maryland Transportation Association, and Christof Spieler, vice president and director of planning at Huitt-Zollars and senior lecturer at Rice University.

Newman joined Port Authority in 2019. She earned her Bachelor's degree in international relations from The College of Wooster in 2010 and her Master's of Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015.

###