A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear friends,

As we navigate through this challenging time, I wanted to share with you the many actions METRO has taken to keep our riders and employees safe, flatten the curve, support community relief efforts, and plan for the gradual reopening of our local economy.

METRO has asked its riders to take only essential trips. Yet during this time, METRO is providing about 100,000 rides every weekday to essential jobs out of the 50,000 rides every weekday on METROLift. Moreover, in addition to the Park & Ride service we have continued to provide to the TMC, on Monday, May 18 we began implementing a series of precautions to prevent or minimize transmission of COVID-19. The measures currently in effect are synopsized in the fact sheet below, and include:

- Coordinating closely with local, county, city, and other governmental entities on measures to flatten the curve of COVID-19.
- Encouraging only essential trips.
- Frequently disinfecting METRO vehicles and operating facilities, including added midday cleaning of vehicles, with emphasis on frequently-touched surfaces such as handrails, handholds and seats.
- Temporarily suspending fares to prevent unnecessary touches and provide financial relief during this challenging time.
- Posting signs on all buses and rail cars asking each rider to follow CDC recommendations, including to: stay home if you're sick; wash your hands for 20 seconds before boarding and after deboarding; cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing or cough or sneeze into your elbow; and avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Continuing COVID-19 communication protocols through signs, social media, website information, and public service announcements on local media.
- Giving all employees temperature checks upon reporting to work.
- Giving all employees washbasins so they can wash their hands.
- Limiting an employee's ability to be too close to one another by marking seats unavailable to ensure social distancing.
- Making buses available to handle overflow from the reduced seating capacity.
- Encouraging riders to wear masks, providing brochures on how to make your own mask, and providing a mask to any rider who lacks one.
- If a bus operator tests positive, immediately disinfecting the bus and being a great community partner. Please let us know if we can help you in any way with your income hearing from you directly at 713-739-4832, or by e-mail at carrin.patron@ridemetro.org or to our CEO Tom Lambert at tom.lambert@ridemetro.org.

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When METRO has asked its riders to take only essential trips. Yet during this time, METRO is providing about 100,000 rides every weekday to essential jobs (including transit care jobs in the Texas Medical Center) grocery stores, pharmacies and doctors’ offices. Also, METRORail, our paratransit service, gives about 2,000 rides every weekday to people with disabilities, and 7,000 rides every weekday on METROLift.

METRO has also been a full partner in community relief efforts. For example, METRO has worked with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, METROLift drivers have made thousands of grocery deliveries to those in need. METRO has also provided a relief bus to the Grammar School for 14 days.

As we move forward, METRO will keep working closely with local public health and other officials to respond appropriately as developments occur, and will keep everyone informed about service and other changes through service alerts, news releases, social media, email blasts and the special coronavirus landing page at RideMETRO.org.

In summary, we remain committed to providing vital transportation services and being a great community partner. Please let us know if we can help you in any way with your income hearing from you directly at 713-739-4832, or by e-mail at carrin.patron@ridemetro.org or to our CEO Tom Lambert at tom.lambert@ridemetro.org.

We look forward to our great region’s emergence from this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Tom Lambert
Chair

CARRIN F. PATMAN
METRO Chair

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SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY

Providing Essential Service for Essential People

METRO is committed to the safety of our customers and employees during this challenging time as we respond to COVID-19.

WHAT WE’RE DOING

Moving People
• Transportation is vital as it relates to essential employees and others who depend on METRO
• Adding buses to our most traveled routes including those in the Texas Medical Center
• Adding a TMC Shuttle route to move essential employees in the Texas Medical Center

Keeping the System Clean
• Continued emphasis on disinfecting surfaces touched by the public
• Ongoing dedication to thorough, daily cleaning of bus and rail vehicles as well as additional midday cleaning
• Frequent cleaning of bus shelters and rail platforms

Encouraging Social Distancing
• Installing seat tags on bus and rail vehicles to encourage social distancing
• Monitoring boardings per vehicle to enable a safe passenger capacity of 50 percent
• Instituting rear boarding to reduce bus operator and customer interaction
• Adding buses to routes with more riders to enable social distancing
• Installing orange mesh barriers to keep more distance between bus operators and customers

Focusing on People
• Encouraging people to wear a face mask, providing information on how to make a face mask, and working to make masks available to people as requested
• Offering free fares to limit unnecessary exposure for customers and employees
• Requiring temperature checks for all employees at METRO facilities
• Providing masks and hand sanitizer to all bus and rail operators

Going the Extra Mile
• Using METROLift vehicles to deliver groceries to those in need in conjunction with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities
• Providing relief buses at testing sites
• Acting as a leader in the industry by sharing best practices and educational materials with other transit agencies
• Working to show ongoing appreciation for frontline employees

Communicating the Message
• Printing and distributing more than 250,000 pieces of educational material on best practices
• Running safety announcements on rail platforms and buses, and including safety messages on bus destination signs
• Providing service alert updates on specific routes and services
• Partnering with media outlets to run METRO Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on radio and television
• Staying in close communication with local authorities to provide service tailored to our regional needs
• Providing ongoing updates with press releases, social media content and email blasts

NEXT STEPS

METRO continues to monitor service needs throughout the region. We remain dedicated to being the transportation provider for our region.