How METRO Has Responded to the COVID-19 Outbreak

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 (including health care jobs in the Texas Medical Center), grocery stores, pharmacies and doctors’ offices. Also, METROLIFT, our paratransit service, gives about 2,000 rides every weekday to people with disabilities. In this context, during normal times METRO provides 280,000 rides every weekday and 7,000 rides every weekday on METROLIFT.

METRO’s number one priority is always the health and safety of our customers, our employees, and our community. Thus, in early March, 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:

• Staying in frequent contact with transit agencies all over the country to share our own initiatives.
• Coordinating closely with the county, city, and other government entities on measures to flatten the curve of COVID-19. The measures currently in effect are synopsized in the fact sheet below, and include:

• Making public announcements to 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.
• Working with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, METROLift drivers have made thousands of grocery deliveries to those in need. METRO has also been a full partner in community relief efforts. For example, 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 health care jobs in the Texas Medical Center), grocery stores, pharmacies and doctors’ offices. Also, METROLIFT, our paratransit service, gives about 2,000 rides every weekday to people with disabilities. In this context, during normal times METRO provides 280,000 rides every weekday and 7,000 rides every weekday on METROLIFT.

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.

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

Sincerely,

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CARRIN F. PATMAN
METRO Chair
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

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

Focus 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

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 service
- 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

RIDEMETRO.ORG

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