

Background Information:

- 2. Approve the extension of COVID-19 related service changes and waive fares until conditions warrant resumption of regular transit services. Authorize the Executive Director to make all transit service modifications as necessary to respond to changing conditions and the need for community mitigation measures aimed at reducing transmission of COVID-19.**

Public Transit is considered an essential service. As such, through March 20, 2020 we have continued to provide regular services to the public with certain restrictions from Storer on those exhibiting COVID 19 symptoms and social distancing on buses. Given the Governors “Stay at Home” on March 19, 2020, we began implementing a limitation on travel for essential activities only such as:

- To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (including, but not limited to, pets), such as, by way of example only and without limitation, obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a health care professional, or obtaining supplies they need to work from home.
- To obtain necessary services or supplies for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver those services or supplies to others, such as, by way of example only and without limitation, canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.
- To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with Social Distancing Requirements as defined in this Section, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, or running.
- To perform work providing essential products and services at an Essential Business or to otherwise carry out activities specifically permitted in this Order, including Minimum Basic Operations.
- To care for a family member or pet in another household.
- For trips to work for or obtain services at any "Healthcare Operations" including hospitals, clinics, dentists, pharmacies, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, home healthcare services providers, mental health providers, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. "Healthcare Operations" also includes veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals. This exemption shall be construed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of healthcare, broadly defined.
- For trips to provide any services or perform any work necessary to the operations and maintenance of Essential Infrastructure.
- For first responders, emergency management personnel, emergency dispatchers, court personnel, and law enforcement personnel, and others who need to perform essential services performing or accessing "Essential Governmental Functions," as determined by the governmental entity performing those functions. Each governmental entity shall identify and designate appropriate employees or contractors to continue providing and carrying out any Essential Governmental Functions.

After implementing the “essential travel only” policy, ridership declined to about 30% of our normal numbers.

As you know, about 60% of our riders fall into the category of “vulnerable population”. Transit employees have been reporting to work but have expressed concerns about being exposed to the virus and bringing it home to vulnerable family members. While we have been enforcing a 6-foot social distancing rule, we were concerned that additional measures were needed to protect employees.

On Monday, March 23, 2020, we eliminated fixed routes services and converted to a General Public Dial a Ride service. Riders will need to reserve trips by calling into the dispatch center at 532-0404. We put enough buses out to handle the relatively low ridership levels for essential activities and maintain social distancing on the buses. This will also allow us to operate with fewer drivers and relieve employees with health exposure concerns.

Given the financial crisis many of our riders are experiencing and concerns from employees about handling cash, we are waiving fares next week. We are working with the state to allow us to offset revenue losses with other funds as we have done before.

Cathy Salcedo has posted the above service changes on our buses and issued a press release. This information has also been posted on our website. We have maintained about 85 riders per day with the General Public Dial a Ride Service. We have not denied service to a single ride request.

Meals On Wheels

As you may know, the Senior Center has closed, but is still providing meals on wheels delivery. We understand demand for meal delivery has grown substantially and the programs’ delivery capacity is nearing its limit. We have learned that during this crisis, transit buses in other regions have been used to support the meals on wheels program. Caltrans has said it is an allowable use of the buses and a reimbursable cost. We are requesting the TCTA authorize using public transit to support the Meals on Wheels program if needed.

Federal Funding

As of today, we expect legislation to be enacted that will provide funding through the Care Act. The bill, which provides \$25 billion in relief for urban and rural transit systems. This is part of the \$2 trillion relief legislation known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act.

It is estimated that \$22.9 billion will go to urban transit systems under the 5307 program. It is also estimated that \$2.1 billion will be apportioned to rural transit agencies and tribal transit under the 5311 program. FTA will use these funds to reimburse 100 percent of Covid-19 related operating expenses accrued by urbanized transit systems, California’s rural transit systems, and tribal nations’ transit systems. These funds are available until expended or until an emergency declaration by the president has been lifted.

"[Funds] provided under this heading are available for the operating expenses of transit agencies related to the response to a coronavirus public health emergency as described in section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, including, beginning on January 20, 2020, reimbursement for

operating costs to maintain service and lost revenue due to the coronavirus public health emergency, including the purchase of personal protective equipment, and paying for administrative leave of operations personnel due to reductions in service."

Preliminary estimates indicate the funding we receive will be enough to cover COVID-19 costs as well as expected revenue declines due to the downturn in the economy.

Recommended Action:

Approve the extension of COVID-19 related service changes until conditions warrant resumption of regular transit services. Authorize the Executive Director to make all transit service modifications as necessary to respond to changing conditions and the need for community mitigation measures aimed at reducing transmission of COVID-19.