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President's Column

By: Craig Rempp



Thank you for your support and membership in the Minnesota Public Transit Association. I know that transit systems in Minnesota have a strong bond among all of the systems and our association is where we can turn when we need to touch base and get information we need. Thanks for sharing what you're going through with your colleagues – we all need to help each other out!

MPTA continues to work to speak out for transit systems in Minnesota during this challenging time. We have been communicating with legislative leaders, with the governor's office, with MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council and with our Minnesota Congressional delegation as well as national transit associations. We all want to find out about the latest decisions and actions impacting transit while letting decision makers know about the challenges we're facing while trying to keep service on the street along with maintaining a healthy and strong staff.

We have been communicating more often as developments occur and we have a host of resources for you on our [MPTA web site](#).

Whether it's information on funding for transit, best practices or tips from other systems, we're working to keep up and keep you up to date. Thank you for sharing your stories and information about your system. On our web site you will find a link to a Buyers Guide developed by CTAA with input from Minnesota transit systems. It includes information on companies supplying cleaning products and other needed equipment.

Now more than ever, we need advocates to stand up and speak out about the importance of transit service in our communities. The legislature is expected to return in June for a special session and they need to hear from us about the need for transit capital dollars in a strong bonding bill as well as incentives in the tax bill to support our volunteer drivers.

Unfortunately, we won't be able to get together for our Bus Roadeo in July. I want to give a shout out to Nick Lemmer and Shawn Pierce along with the Roadeo planning committee for the work they did to plan for this event. We're disappointed that safety concerns prevent an in-person event this summer. We're still planning to have our MPTA Annual Meeting and statewide transit conference October 5th to 7th, and with any luck we'll be able to get together in Rochester and see the great work that is being done to provide new transit service in the city.

We're here to be a resource for you. Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, suggestions or input on how MPTA can serve you. Hopefully we'll see each other soon, and in the meantime, we will continue to work on your behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Rempp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Rempp
President

Legislative Report

By: Margaret Donahoe

The 2020 Legislative Session came to end with a strange anti-climactic whimper. After a month of getting ready for the real action, COVID-19 came along and inserted an intermission into the legislative session as the state enacted a stay-at-home order and legislators took a break from mid-March to mid-April.

At the start of the session, the expectation was that passage of a capital bonding bill would be the main focus of the session. There was also a lot of discussion about passage of a tax bill with additional tax breaks as the legislature contemplated dealing with a forecasted budget surplus of \$1.5 billion in the general fund.

As travel decreased dramatically, the transportation system saw dramatic changes. From transit ridership falling off of a cliff to speeders taking over almost deserted highways to lonely truck drivers trying to keep goods moving, the system seemed to change overnight.

With all of the economic uncertainty, legislators realized that the February budget forecast was no longer relevant and they could not operate with a forecast of a \$1.5 billion surplus. Minnesota Management and Budget released an updated Budget Projection for the current biennium only (FY'20-21) that projected a \$4 billion swing from a surplus to a budget deficit of approximately \$2.4 billion in the state's general fund.

For transportation revenue, MnDOT developed a new transportation funds forecast estimating the loss of revenue from less fuel tax being paid, fewer vehicles being sold, less tax collected on rented and leased

vehicles and a smaller amount of registration fees as new cars sales dropped off. Since MVST is largest share of the budget for both Metropolitan Area transit and Greater Minnesota transit, the drop in MVST as well as the sales tax on leased motor vehicles (MVLST) will have a big impact. In addition, we know that a major deficit in the general fund will put all general fund appropriations at risk.

For transportation funding, the capital bonding bill should provide an important opportunity to address some critical projects, especially as we see the dedicated revenue sources decline. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation put the brakes on passage of the bonding bill for now.

With a supermajority required to pass a capital bonding bill (41 votes in the Senate, 80 votes in the House) the majority parties cannot pass a bill without some votes from the minority party. In the House, the GOP minority announced that the caucus would not provide any votes for a bonding bill as long as the governor maintained emergency peacetime powers. The current extension of the emergency peacetime powers granted to the governor expires on June 12th.

Transit capital has traditionally been funded in the bonding bill. The proposals this year included some funding for transit, however, the Senate bonding proposal contained nothing for transit.

Legislative Report

	Governor's Recs	House Bill HF2529	Senate SF3463
MnDOT			
Safe Routes to School	\$4,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$2,000,000
Passenger Rail program	\$30,000,000	\$15,000,000	
Northstar Commuter Rail		Cash - \$1,000,000	
NLX - Third Main		\$24,000,000	
NLX - Grassy Point Bridge		\$8,750,000	
Greater MN Transit	\$15,000,000	\$10,000,000	
Northfield Regional Transit Hub	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	
Metropolitan Council			
Bus Rapid Transitways	\$55,000,000	\$55,000,000	
Apple Valley Transit Station		\$2,625,000	

The House took its version of the bonding bill up on the House floor on Saturday, May 16th but with no GOP votes, the bill failed to pass. The Senate took up its bonding bill on Sunday, May 17th, but it too failed to pass.

Of note, language in the Senate bonding bill requires MnDOT to develop criteria and rank projects for funding from the rail grade separation program; greater Minnesota transit capital program; state airport development program; safety improvements on crude oil corridors; facilities capital improvement program; Minnesota rail service improvement program; port development assistance program; and passenger rail program.

A small transportation policy bill was passed that requires MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council to report to the committees with jurisdiction over transportation on the use of federal funds provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many issues were simply left on the table. Transit safety in the metropolitan area received much more attention this session and a number of bills were introduced. The Metropolitan Council was looking to create a Transit Riders Investment Program (TRIP) with TRIP personnel who would monitor and respond to passenger activity on public transit vehicles in the seven-county metropolitan area. A \$1 million appropriation from the general fund was provided for FY2020. The bill passed out of the transportation committee as well as the public safety and criminal justice reform committee but was not included in any legislation that passed.

A provision providing some tax relief to volunteer drivers was included in the House tax bill but ultimately, no tax bill was passed during the regular session.

Legislative Report

A special session is widely expected on or around June 12th when the current extension of emergency peacetime powers granted to the governor expires. The hope is that agreement can be reached on a capital bonding bill, a tax bill, a bill distributing federal funds provided under the CARES Act and potentially some other issues and that those bills could be passed in June.

CARES Act/HEROES Act

The federal government has taken important action to assist transit systems. In April, Congress provided to help mitigate the economic damage from the pandemic by passing a number of relief packages including the CARES Act which included funding for states as well as \$25 billion in funding for transit systems around the country.

For Minnesota, federal funding of approximately \$2 billion was provided to offset additional costs related to COVID-19. For transit systems, Minnesota was allocated:

CARES Act

Transit System	Funding
Tribal Transit	\$1,582,809
Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council	\$367,532
Fond du Lac Reservation	\$391,657
Grand Portage Reservation Tribal Council	\$91,467
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	\$112,433
Red Lake Band of Chippewa	\$108,162
White Earth Band of Chippewa	\$511,558
Minneapolis-St. Paul	\$226,481,413
5307 Greater Minnesota	\$27,288,086
Duluth Transit Authority	\$6,366,509
Fargo – ND, MN	\$2,503,844
Grand Forks – ND, MN	\$527,329
La Crosse – WI, MN	\$322,515
Mankato Area Transit	\$2,737,439
Rochester Area Transit	\$7,241,881
St. Cloud Metro Bus	\$7,588,569
5311 Minnesota	\$54,432,229
Rural Operating Assistance	\$40,824,172
Intercity Bus Operations	\$8,164,835
State Program Administration	\$5,443,222

Legislative Report

In May, the US House passed another relief package known as the HEROES Act. This \$3 trillion package of funding also included additional transit funding. A supplemental appropriation of \$15.75 billion to the Federal Transit Administration for coronavirus relief was included. Out of that sum, \$11.75 billion would be allocated through a formula mechanism to transit agencies in the country's 14 largest urbanized areas. The remaining \$4 billion appropriated to FTA would be for a program of competitive emergency relief grants to help the successful applicants overcome revenue losses or increased operating costs they've experienced on account of the pandemic.

The White House and Senate are not supportive of the HEROES Act but additional legislation at the federal level is anticipated at some point and it has become clear that the funding provided in the CARES Act will not be enough for many transit systems around the country.



Photo courtesy of SouthWest Transit.

More information regarding the CARES Act, APTA and CTAA guidelines and more are available at www.mpta-transit.org.

We're Here to Help.



**Stay up-to-date
and stay prepared.
Keep up with
everything Transit.**

- **Learn** from new FAQs.
- **See** APTA's Report on Transit Funding.
- **Gather** information on PPE with CTAA COVID-19 Buyer's Guide.
- **Read** CTAA's Best Practices for cleaning vehicles and wheelchair securement.
- **View** COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Instructions.
- **And So Much More.**

Visit Our Website.

New documents and information are posted as they are made available to the public.

- ▶ www.mpta-transit.org
- ▶ Click on the tab "Meeting Information/ Reports"

Keeping Transit Safe in MN

By Katie Leibel
MPTA

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot has changed in transit. Ridership is down 80% in some parts, contracts with universities and other agencies have been cancelled, and yet transit systems have found ways to adapt.

It has become clear now more than ever before how important transit is to our communities, which is why it is so important that transit systems all across the state have learned to adapt, delivering meals, helping the homeless, and also staying clean to help those who need it.

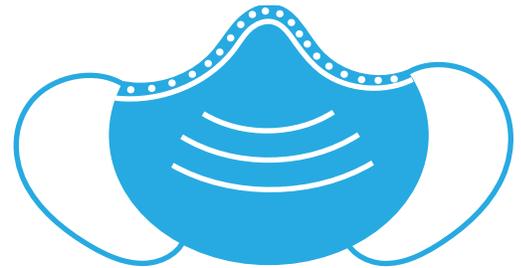
Most transit groups have created preparedness and disinfecting plans by now to aid in this fight against the virus, and although each transit system has their own plan, they may look very similar.

Face-Coverings Required

As of Monday, May 18 Metro Transit, SouthWest Transit and many other systems throughout the state have begun requiring riders to wear face coverings.

“Now, More than ever ... We need YOU to do your part;” read a post on SouthWest Transit’s [Facebook page](#), “Wear. A. Face. Mask.”

SouthWest Transit informed riders that those without masks could ask the driver or check with a customer service representative and one would be provided.



Some riders on other systems were annoyed with this rule, pointing out that not everyone has access to the PPE and not all systems are handing out masks similar to SouthWest Transit. Metro Transit and some other groups have come up with a solution to this conundrum. Their rules require a face covering, not a mask. That way riders can use bandanas, scarves, old shirts, etc. to help protect themselves and others. This helps to stop the spread of droplets from a sneeze or cough, but also ensures that even those without access to masks can use the transit system as needed.

Although some were not happy with this regulation, the rule was expected and even welcomed by many. Stores, local businesses and more are requiring customers to wear face coverings in order to enter, and public transportation in Minnesota was simply following in the footsteps of many larger transportation systems. Some Metro Transit customers applauded the addition of this rule as many had already been following it to begin with.

Keeping Transit Safe in MN

Installation of Safety Barriers and Changing the Way We Board

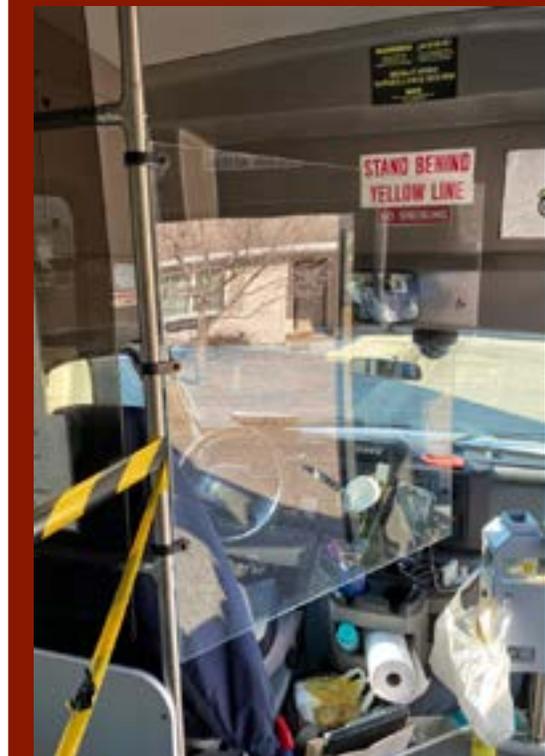
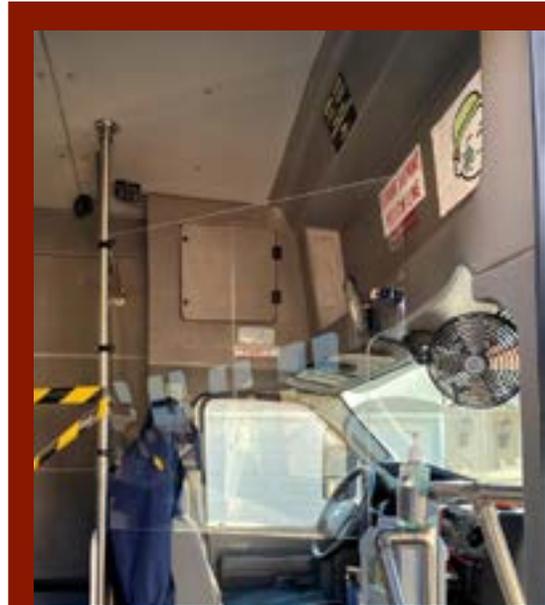
Post offices, grocery stores and more have all started installing safety barriers to keep people apart and slow the spread of the virus. Transit has followed suit with many systems working with local businesses and auto glass groups to create safety barriers for their drivers.

Paul Bunyan Transit, Rainbow Rider, and SMART Transit are among some of the systems that have already installed said barriers to ensure the safety of both drivers and riders.

According to a [Facebook post](#) created by Paul Bunyan Transit their goal is to ensure the safety of everyone as they travel throughout the community.

Over in Wadena, Friendly Rider has taken a bit of a different approach, utilizing businesses in the community to help transport food and people throughout the region. According to the Wadena Pioneer Journal and Transit Director, Randy Jahnke, a local body shop, hardware store, and laser company all helped Friendly Rider to create partitions for their busses to safely transport riders to and from their destinations while limiting contact. The body shop made a template for friendly rider out of cardboard. Friendly Rider then bought some plexiglass from their local hardware store, and then the laser company stepped in and cut the plexiglass to create smooth corners and the finished product. This is one of many examples of businesses, innovators and inventors banding together to create a positive change amid the pandemic.

Some transit agencies have come up with other ways to keep passengers and workers apart.



Photos courtesy of Paul Bunyan Transit Facebook Page showcase their new barriers.

Keeping Transit Safe in MN

Transit groups have implemented social distancing both on their buses and at their stations. Some seats have been completely blocked from being used, while others allow riders to social distance for themselves. The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority has closed the seats directly behind the driver compartment to passengers and encourage social distancing on their buses. Some stations, including those of SouthWest Transit, have markers labeled on the ground to encourage proper social distancing.

Regardless of their approach, all have agreed that sanitizing and disinfecting their buses is of the utmost importance and have begun implementing disinfecting practices between routes and rides.

This includes wiping/ spraying down seats, handrails, and any other commonly touched objects on the bus. Some have even banded together to help one another obtain cleaning products to keep buses safe. Keeping transit as clean and safe as possible has become a priority for systems statewide, if not nationwide.

Adapting to New Community Needs

In the last In Transit, it was noted that many transit systems had begun to help deliver meals for food shelves and other food programs. This has not slowed in the slightest as many systems have followed suit.

Anoka County Transit, SMART Transit and Transit Link are among the many assisting those in need. [Anoka County Transit's Facebook page](#) includes information on how to sign up for those interested in the community, and [SMART Transit's social media](#) is filled with photos



Photo courtesy of SMART Transit displays food donated and delivered to those in need.

of food deliveries and thank you messages to volunteers helping to deliver the much-needed meals.

According to Kirk Kuchera, the Transit Manager of SMART Transit, "Since mid-March, SMART Transit has delivered over 30,000 meals to individuals with food insecurity. In Austin, we are delivering and/or handling the logistics of 950 meals per day on seven buses (and some volunteer drivers); in Albert Lea we are delivery over 50 meals a day on two buses; and in Owatonna we delivered over 1,000 meals two weeks ago on three buses."

Keeping Transit Safe in MN

In Austin, they have partnered with Hormel Foods and they are purchasing 250 meals per day from local restaurants, which SMART Transit's buses then pick-up and deliver. The 1,000+ meals delivered in Owatonna were shelf-stable meals that the individuals can use if needed

With less residents in these areas requiring rides, the systems have adapted to help the community where and when it needs it most.

Some Systems Begin to Expand Services, Again.

While some communities have not seen as much of a need for public transportation, others are beginning to expand and reopen routes again. Rochester Public Transit has been receiving increased commuter demand and started increasing service to a couple of popular park & ride facilities.

This increased demand in service may be attributed to the many healthcare workers and other essential workers both at the Mayo Clinic and other essential businesses utilizing Rochester Public Transit. Policies to protect the safety of riders and workers remain in place for RPT.



The group has been increasing the number of buses they send out while also disinfecting the buses daily with frequent wipe-downs. The group has also lowered its maximum occupancy to assist with social distancing.

Despite the challenges many are facing during this time, with adaptations and a continued need for transit, things may be looking up for some struggling systems. With food deliveries, proper sanitation, social distancing and an increased need for the essential services, transit systems are doing their best to serve their communities in this time.

Article Sources:

[MVTA website](#)

[Metro Transit website](#)

[Rochester Website](#)

[SW Transit Facebook Page](#)

[DTA Facebook Page](#)

[Paul Bunyan Transit Facebook page](#)

[Anoka County Transit Facebook Page](#)

[SMART Transit](#)

[Wadena Pioneer Journal](#)

What is Sound The Horn?

Don't miss out on awesome news and events like this! Follow MPTA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to stay up-to-date on transit news and information.

[@MNPublicTransit](#)

Sound the Horn was a success! What was it you ask?

Transportation and Transit workers, both on the front lines and behind the scenes, have been working tirelessly during the COVID-19 outbreak to provide help and hope to the communities they serve. Many systems have waived fares completely, helped to deliver meals and food program donations to those in need, worked to obtain PPE and sanitizing equipment to properly take care of both riders and drivers and much more.

On Thursday, April 26th at 2 p.m., transit systems nationwide “sounded their horns,” in support of transportation workers as well as all essential employees who have made sacrifices, put in long hours and worked to help us during this time of need. On the hour, drivers all across the country sounded their horns two times for one second each and encouraged others to do the same. This honor was similar to how some cities throughout the United States would spend time cheering, banging together pots and pans, howling and making noise to celebrate healthcare workers, essential workers and more. And what better way to celebrate transportation workers than by sounding car, bus and truck horns?

The event was so successful that on Thursday, May 21 at 2 p.m. another one was held to honor workers again.

St. Cloud Metro Bus, Metro Transit and SouthWest Transit were among some of the transit systems in Minnesota to “Sound the Horn,” in support of transportation workers. They tweeted in

support of the movement and encouraged their drivers and those on the roads to honk their horns in support. #SoundTheHorn #InThisTogether and #HeroesMovingHeroes were all either trending or very near to it leading up to the event.

MPTA would like to thank everyone who sounded the horn in support of transportation workers, but more importantly would like to thank all transportation workers for everything they have done to continue to support our communities.

Want to make sure you or your transit system/ organization don't miss out on the next event honoring transportation employees? Follow us on Twitter at [@MNPublicTransit](#) to get all of the latest news on transit happenings and events. You can also like us on [Facebook](#) at Minnesota Public Transit Association or [@MNPublicTransit](#) to get more in-depth news and information.



File Photo: 2017 Roadeo

MATBUS delivering food during COVID-19 pandemic



By: Taaren Haak

**Assistant
Transit Planner
& Marketing
Specialist**

MATBUS

During the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, some MATBUS drivers have shifted from transporting people to transporting essential meals. On Monday, March 30, select drivers began supporting Moorhead Meals on Wheels with their home deliveries. In April, MATBUS also launched a grocery delivery service.

Social distancing recommendations had created openings in Meals on Wheels delivery routes, due to increased demand and lower availability of volunteers. MATBUS had also discontinued bus routes that ran during the academic year once on-campus classes were canceled at Minnesota State University Moorhead and North Dakota State University. This left a number of drivers without their normal routes and schedules.

“We’re committed to ensuring our drivers keep getting a paycheck, even if we reduce our bus service,” said Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager. “So having them drive for this important community service is a win-win.” MATBUS drivers are employees of First Transit.

MATBUS designated three vehicles for the Meals on Wheels service – two Dodge Caravans and one Dodge Journey. These vehicles had previously been used for administrative staff and driver shift changes.

Three to five days a week (Monday to Friday), MATBUS drivers arrive at the dining center of Concordia College in Moorhead, where the meals are prepared. Each driver is assigned a route and given insulated bags filled with hot



MATBUS driver delivers groceries. Photo courtesy of MATBUS.

meal trays and bags with accompanying dry goods. Drivers ensure no-contact delivery at each drop-off location, which is especially important for the seniors receiving the meals.

There is an average of two drivers participating each day. They record mileage and number of meals delivered during each shift for reporting to MnDOT. As of May 20, 2020, MATBUS drivers have delivered 1,531 meals to Moorhead seniors. Meals on Wheels has scheduled MATBUS drivers through the end of June, thus far.

This service is approved by MnDOT as a relevant use within MATBUS’s demand-response service. MATBUS will likely continue to support Meals on Wheels as long as there is driver availability. MATBUS was featured in a [Minnesota Public Radio article](#) for our work with Meals on Wheels. The MATBUS system has also added a grocery delivery service for approved riders. MAT Paratransit, a door-to-door service for persons with disabilities, is jointly operated by the Cities

MATBUS delivering food during COVID-19 pandemic



MATBUS drivers deliver Meals-on-Wheels. Photo courtesy of MATBUS.

of Moorhead, MN and Fargo, ND. After the closing of many businesses, scheduled rides on the system dropped significantly. Many of those Paratransit riders were also among those most vulnerable to COVID-19. So starting April 22, Paratransit drivers and vehicles began use for grocery delivery.

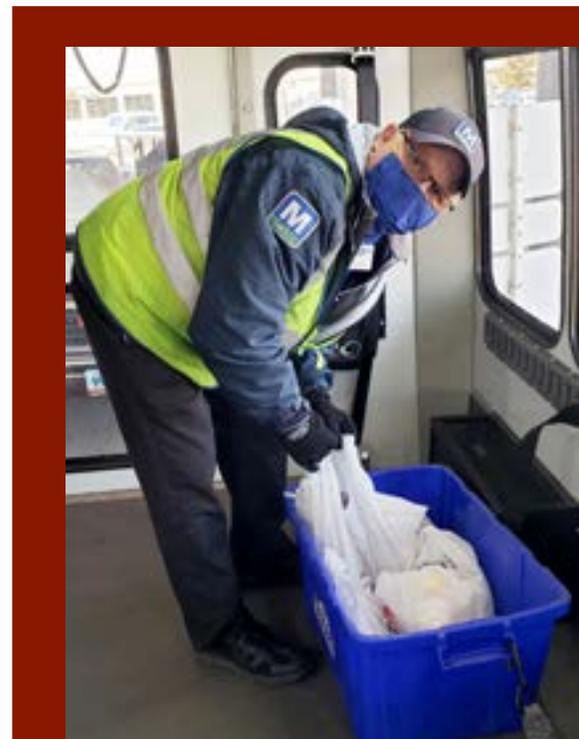
The service was originally available only to MAT Paratransit eligible riders. Riders must be approved through an application process that includes physician verification of disability. Availability was later extended to seniors age 60 and older, which didn't require an application.

Grocery delivery is available from Target, Walmart and Cash Wise Foods, for a total of six stores in Moorhead and Dilworth, MN, and Fargo and West Fargo, ND. Those using the service can shop and pay online with each store. They are asked to use the service for essential purchases only, including groceries and personal care products. Then, during the checkout process, they designate Paratransit as the pick-up person. After the store gives them a pick-up time, they call MAT Paratransit dispatch to schedule the pickup.

Interested persons can find full instructions on the MATBUS website. The service has also been promoted on MATBUS's Facebook and Twitter profiles, encouraging followers to share the information with friends and family who could benefit. This grocery delivery service will be considered for continuation in the future, even beyond its current use for pandemic needs.

MATBUS is grateful to be able to provide these essential services to the community during this especially difficult time.

For more information about these services and other MATBUS news, visit MATBUS.com, or follow MATBUS on Facebook and Twitter.



MATBUS driver delivers groceries. Photo courtesy of MATBUS.

SouthWest Serving the Community

By: John Haggemiller of SouthWest Transit

In April, SouthWest Transit began partnerships with two food shelves in our community: PROP Foods in Eden Prairie and Bountiful Basket in Chaska. Together we are working to deliver hunger relief to those who cannot currently access the food-shelf sites. The food assistance program is being implemented at no cost to recipients and is expected to last until further notice.

Food products like soup, vegetables, fruit, beans, pasta, cereal, sauce, canned meat, boxed meals, rice, and peanut butter, will be boxed and delivered to individuals in the Carver, Chanhassen, Chaska, Victoria & Eden Prairie areas at least once a month.

SouthWest Transit is proud to be a part of the communities we serve, and we are happy to be associated with organizations such as PROP & Bountiful Basket.



Pictured above is a SouthWest Transit vehicle transporting food for a local food shelf. Photo courtesy of SouthWest Transit.

FTA issues grants to fund tribal transit and innovation.

Information in this article is courtesy of two FTA press releases. See sources section for more info and links to original releases.

On May 28 The Federal Transit Administration created grant funds for tribal transit and innovation that transit groups throughout the nation can apply for.

These funds are broken down into two groups: one for transit services for American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages in rural/ less-populated areas and the other to support the development of “innovative technologies and designs” to better the state of repair for transit agencies.

Tribal Transit Grants

\$5 million in fiscal year 2020 competitive grant funding is available for federally recognized Native American tribes and Alaska Native villages, groups or communities. This money is also meant to help meet the needs of the elderly, people with disabilities and the youth.

The purpose of these grants is to support planning, capital and operating assistance for tribal public transit services. It can help with anything from filling in gaps in service, helping to serve a growing ridership and more.

The FTA will hold a webinar on June 25, 2020 at 3pm EDT to provide details on the FY 2020 funding opportunity. Registration is now open for the event on the FTA’s website.

The application period for tribal transit grants closes August 24. Proposals must be submitted electronically through grants.gov by midnight EDT.

To find out how applications will be evaluated, interested parties can view information on the grants [here](#).

Innovation Grants:

The FTA is also making \$1.25 million available through NOFO funding to help transit agencies monitor deficiencies related to infrastructure and equipment and evaluate solutions.

This is meant to help transit agencies track and monitor and infrastructure issues and also the best way to address them.

Proposals for these grants must also be submitted online at the grants.gov website, and are due July 17, 2020. Eligible applicants for the NOFO grants are providers of public transportation. More information is available online [here](#).

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<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/applying/notices-funding/public-transportation-indian-reservations-program-fy-2020-notice>

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/news/us-department-transportation-announces-125-million-funding-available-real-time-transit>

<https://aashtojournal.org/2020/05/29/fta-issues-grants-to-fund-tribal-transit-innovation-efforts/>

Featured Industry Members

Ecolane: Transit On-Demand. Scheduling and dispatching software for the future of mobility.



Ecolane creates modern, web-based transit scheduling software. Their platform supplies its users with easy-to-use demand-response with customizable reporting capabilities. This group's products help transit providers to increase productivity, make their system more efficient, and grow customer satisfaction.

As a lead innovator in their field, they strive to maintain their position and drive transit to the next level. One way they do that is by building strong partnerships with their customers. Ecolane builds a strong relationship with each customer by creating a foundation of trust and accountability with every group they work with.

According to their website, "Ecolane's products are solid, reliable, and field proven, but the solution benefits can be attributed to more than just the software. Offering a comprehensive support package and a dedicated team of experts, Ecolane ensures that the transition to our platform is smooth, effective, and delivers the intended results."

<https://www.ecolane.com/about-ecolane>

Kelderman Celebrates 50 Years.

This year Kelderman celebrates 50 years in business. Now known for their air suspension, their original products were a bit different. In 1970, Gary Kelderman started this manufacturing company to create innovative agricultural products. He became an inventor, and a well-known one at that for his work with rubber track systems, corn harvesting attachments, hay racking equipment and more.



It wasn't until 1990 that Kelderman began work with air suspensions. Kelderman had bought a truck, but didn't care for the way it rode. He began to look for a solution and that is when he designed and created the Kelderman 2-Stage Rear Air Suspension. The rest is history.

According to their website Kelderman Manufacturing has an innovative background with a commitment to build the best products right in the heart of the Midwest.

<https://kelderman.com/about/>

Gary is still the president of the organization, and with his son the Vice President, they have been family-owned and operated for 50 years.

Thank you to our vendor members!

APTA Urges Lawmakers to Provide Additional COVID-19 Emergency Response and Recovery Funding

APTA press release. View the [release here](#).

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 7, 2020) – Today, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) urged Congress and the Administration to provide \$23.8 billion in additional emergency funding to help public transit agencies across the country continue to provide essential services and support the economic recovery of our communities and the nation. This COVID-19 funding will enable agencies to continue to provide a critical lifeline to essential workers and help our communities rebuild the economy.

The public transportation industry has significantly increased costs and experienced dramatic revenue losses because of COVID-19. An independent, economic analysis by EBP US, Inc. determined a \$23.8 billion funding shortfall through the end of 2021, in addition to the \$25 billion allocated for public transportation in the CARES Act.

“The \$25 billion that was provided by the CARES Act was a lifesaver for public transit services but we now have a more complete picture of the extraordinary and devastating impact,” said APTA President & CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. “These additional funds are critical to continue serving essential workers and make sure that we can help get our country back to work and to other activities that are so important for our economic recovery.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased public transit operating costs and slashed state and local sources of transit funding, including agency farebox, parking, and other

revenue; dedicated sales tax, gas tax, and other state and local tax revenues; and state and local funding. For instance, with stay-at-home orders and fare-free services for essential riders, transit fare revenue has dropped 86 percent over the past month.

The EBP US, Inc. economic report also showed that decreased investment in public transit doesn’t just impact systems, but would also cost the country 37,000 construction jobs in 2020 and 34,000 construction jobs in 2021.

In addition to this immediate need for emergency funding, APTA urges Congress and the Administration to continue to press forward on the Surface Transportation Authorization bill. APTA believes a long-term authorization bill is critical to jumpstart construction of public transit projects and help our communities and nation recover from the economic fallout of the pandemic.



Your daily commute will never be the same

By: Emily Sohn

Article courtesy of National Geographic

Original article [available here.](#)

It's time to go to work. The COVID-19 pandemic is behind us, and—in this vision of the future—trains and buses are running again. But things look different than they used to. You pay your fare without touching anything. Seats are spaced farther apart on divider-filled vehicles, while drivers sit in ventilated compartments, isolated from passengers.

Smartphone apps may help decongest trains and buses. And with more people choosing to bike, walk, or work from home, packed train cars have become part of the pre-pandemic lore.

While it's impossible to predict the future, interviews with transportation and public-health experts suggest that the pandemic offers an opportunity to reshape transit systems and revive cities, with the potential to ward off infectious disease and even some chronic illnesses. And while lockdowns have put public transport in a state of crisis for the moment, strategic investment, creative thinking, and new technologies could eventually make people feel safe enough to ride again, says Yingling Fan, an urban planner at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. "There's certainly a lot of challenge, but also there's a lot of opportunity," she says.

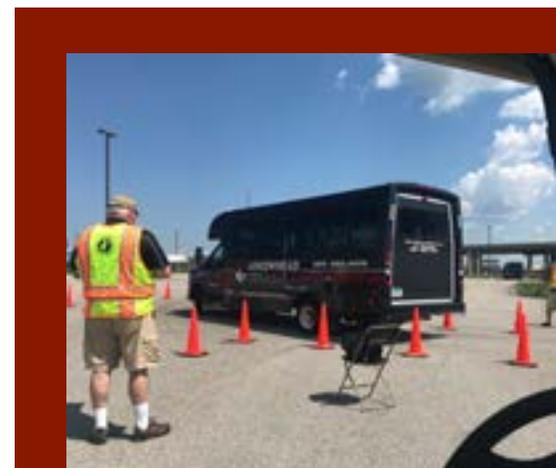
The pandemic might also open up possibilities for making transit systems more inviting.

"Transportation history is full of stories where something that was done temporarily turned out to be permanent, because people didn't want to go back," says Jarrett Walker, an international transit consultant and author of *Human Transit: How Clearer Thinking about Public Transit Can Enrich Our Communities and Our Lives*.

Cars Don't Equate Healthy

The whole purpose of mass transit is to move heaps of people, and this crowding increases the chances of spreading infectious diseases. In a study of dozens of people during the 2008-2009 influenza season, researchers in the United Kingdom found that those who rode buses or trams were nearly six times as likely as non-riders to seek health care for an acute respiratory illness.

The natural reaction might be to take a car instead, but that ups the risk for chronic illnesses, says Lawrence Frank, a transportation and public health expert at the University of British Columbia. In 2004, he and his colleagues found that every extra hour that people spend in a car each day increases their risk for obesity by 6 percent. Obesity, in turn, is a predictor of diabetes and heart disease—which both increase a person's vulnerability to COVID-19 complications.



File Photo: 2018 Roadeo

Your daily commute will never be the same

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“We want fewer people to have those preconditions, so that if a pandemic hits, if they get exposed to it, they will survive it,” he says. “The real question is: How do you build a future that addresses both chronic and infectious disease?”

Urban density is unlikely to disappear, Frank says, nor should it. His research has linked dense neighborhoods, walkability, proximity of shops, and access to public transportation with lower rates of diabetes, heart disease, and stress, as well as with reduced health-care costs.

His group is now investigating how chronic disease and infectious disease vary with neighborhood walkability, transit use, car dependence, and the ability of people to engage in active modes of transportation, like walking and biking. Preliminary results suggest that people who live in more walkable neighborhoods and those with less exposure to air pollution are less likely to have chronic conditions and may be less vulnerable to dying from COVID-19.

Preserving both public transit and encouraging active transportation is important for keeping air pollution down, he adds, and that has health implications, too.

“The most vulnerable society is the one that becomes the most sedentary and the most car dependent, and that’s the worst possible case when a pandemic comes,” Frank says.

Infection-proofing public transit

The COVID-conscious commute may begin before you leave home, Fan says.

In some cities in China, such as Shenzhen and Guangzhou, pre-booking a seat is already common on city buses and trains. She suspects that adding the option of pre-paying for fares online or via smartphones could reduce the number of people who need to touch a grimy kiosk.

It’s also possible to disperse people in ways beyond limiting transit capacity, which plenty of places have done during the pandemic, Walker says.

Cities can use existing automatic vehicle-location and passenger-flow monitors to quickly reroute buses when demand changes. Automated passenger-counters and weight sensors—currently in use in Australia, the U.K., and elsewhere—can provide information about train-car capacity through smartphones or display screens at stations, so riders can spread out by picking the least crowded car.

Last year, Google started using crowdsourcing and traffic information in more than 200 cities worldwide to give users a heads-up about how full they should expect buses and trains to be. Integrated with smartphone apps, all this information could reduce congestion by allowing passengers to avoid crowded platforms and vehicles. So far, this type of data has not been used by officials to enforce crowd spacing on public transport, Fan says, but applying the idea is conceivable, as China already uses similar technology to restrict road traffic.

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