New COTA Essential Service to Start April 27

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Starting Monday, April 27, the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) will begin running new service to better meet the current essential travel needs of customers while reducing demands on employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Service will be consistent seven days a week, running from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. With overall COTA ridership down 65% since early March, frequency will be reduced on some lines but maintained on those experiencing higher ridership. All schedule changes can be found at COTA.com or by calling COTA Customer Care at (614) 228-1776.

“We are doing everything we can to provide vital transit service to our Central Ohio community while protecting the health and safety of customers and our operators, who heroically provide this essential service during this critical time,” said Joanna M. Pinkerton, COTA President and CEO. “Based on current ridership and our daily data analysis, we are confident this level of service in tandem with Dynamic Service, can meet customer travel needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to require all passengers to wear secure personal protection masks, and ask that they practice social distancing while riding COTA transit vehicles.”

These service changes will be in effect as long as they meet the current state of demand. COTA will continue to work closely with community partners, city, state and federal leaders to evaluate service and ridership needs on a daily basis.

Since early March, COTA has taken multiple steps to combat the spread of the coronavirus:

- **April 16** – COTA began doubling the cleaning/disinfecting of 118 transit shelters
- **April 15** – COTA requires passengers to wear secure personal protection masks covering their faces.
- **April 8** – COTA began distributing masks to all COTA employees.
- **April 3** – COTA announced its Essential Travel Only Policy, for which buses are to be used by customers only for access to food, health care, travel to and from work, and caring for others.
- **April 1** – COTA began mandatory temperature checks for all employees entering COTA facilities.
• **March 19** – COTA suspended fares and instructed riders to board buses from the rear doors to keep separated from drivers.

• **March 16** – COTA’s initial focused service changes reduced the number of bus routes and consolidated service in some areas.

• **March 1** – COTA implemented the Stop the Spread Campaign, which provided tips on how to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

• COTA limits the number of riders on each bus to 20 and continues to ask riders to observe social distancing.

• All buses are sanitized multiple times daily, and COTA also cleans those buses every 12 hours with sanitizing solutions the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have approved.

• All COTA vehicles are equipped with hand sanitizing dispensers, stocked daily and located at the front of the vehicle.

COTA continues evaluating all aspects of its service and operations to keep employees safe, and is working with the Transport Workers Union of America to ensure COTA’s operators have all they need to continue their work safely and effectively.

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*COTA is the recipient of the 2018 American Public Transportation Association’s Outstanding Public Transportation Award and provides nearly 19 million passenger trips in Central Ohio each year. As the region’s mobility systems integrator, COTA is driven each day to solve the mobility needs of the community by utilizing technology, establishing community partnerships and applying sustainability principles that provide equitable access to jobs, healthcare and education.*

cota.com

To request this information in an alternative format, call (614) 228-1776.