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The Rapid Announces Participation in Nationwide Public Transportation Industry “Health and Safety Commitments” Program

The Rapid joins more than 100 public transit agencies across the country in signing on to the program

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – The Rapid announced Tuesday that it has joined the American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) “Health and Safety Commitments Program,” the public transportation industry’s overarching pledge to passengers that public transit systems are taking all the necessary measures to operate safely as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The health and safety of passengers and operators is the most important priority for The Rapid. Since the beginning of the pandemic, The Rapid has worked tirelessly to keep riders safe from infection from the coronavirus. By signing on to the APTA Health and Safety Commitments Program with more than 100 public transit systems, The Rapid and the public transit industry are actively working to instill confidence in riders that it’s committed to protecting their health and safety.

The Program was developed after asking transit users from across the country what measures would make them feel more confident riding public transportation amid concerns about COVID-19. From this research, the industry identified four key areas that transit systems need to address to earn riders’ confidence:

- Following public health guidelines from official sources
- Cleaning and disinfecting transit vehicles frequently and requiring face coverings and other protections
- Keeping passengers informed and empowered to choose the safest times and routes to ride
- Putting health first by requiring riders and employees to avoid public transit if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or feel ill

The Rapid has pledged to meet these commitments by creating specific policies that are effective for our system, our riders, and our community. A key component of the Health and Safety Commitments Program is the shared responsibility of our system *and* our riders to follow the guidelines. Riders rely on us to follow these commitments, and The Rapid relies on riders to protect themselves and other customers.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, The Rapid has remained a lifeline to accessing jobs, food, and medical appointments throughout the community. Our participation in this program is a testament to The Rapid’s commitment to the safety of our customers and employees,” said Steve Schipper, Interim Chief Operating Officer at The Rapid.

The Rapid’s current safety measures include:

- Following state and local health guidance from Governor Gretchen Whitmer, the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Kent County Health Department

- Requiring riders and bus operators to wear masks
- Cleaning and disinfection of vehicles every night
- Disinfection of high-contact areas on all vehicles during peak travel times at main transit hubs
- Signage, audio announcements and social media communicating health and safety messages
- Requiring daily employee and visitor self-assessment for temperature, symptoms and exposure
- Distribution of more than 10,000 masks to riders

“The program being launched today is the public transportation industry’s pledge to promote sensible policies and practices designed to keep transit users and transit employees safe during the COVID-19 crisis,” said APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. “It is a logical extension of the innovation and commitment we have been demonstrating for the past several months – and it makes the need for at least \$32 billion in additional emergency funding that much more urgent and critical.”

The Rapid continues to enhance its safety and cleaning measures to meet the needs of customers and employees. Stay informed about COVID-19 updates at ridetherapid.org/coronavirus.

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About The Rapid: *The Rapid was established in 2000 and provides public transportation services for the Grand Rapids metro area and beyond. In 2019, The Rapid provided 10.5 million rides. Beyond its fixed routes, The Rapid also operates demand-response services for people with disabilities, rideshare programs, and other programs that keep West Michigan moving forward. Stay informed by following The Rapid at ridetherapid.org, facebook.com/therapid, twitter.com/therapid, and Instagram.com/ridetherapid.*