

From: VTA Board Secretary
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 11:58 AM
To: VTA Board of Directors; VTA Board Secretary
Subject: VTA Offering Reduced Service During Shelter-in-Place Order

VTA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Members:

Beginning Monday, March 30, VTA will offer reduced service during the shelter-in-place order. Please see the blogpost (scroll down) for more information. We ask you to share this with your network and constituents.

Blogpost link: <https://www.vta.org/blog/vta-offering-reduced-service-during-shelter-place-order>
Modified map: <https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/COVID19%20Reduced%20Transit%20Service%20Map.pdf>

Thank you.

VTA Offering Reduced Service During Shelter-in-Place Order

03/25/2020

Ken Blackstone

Significant, Temporary Changes Prioritize Serving Hospitals, Food Banks and Shelters Begin March 30

VTA prides itself on the essential service it provides, especially for those who need public transportation the most. Currently, we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation of balancing how we provide that service amid a health pandemic in which ridership is extremely sparse.

To make the best use of our resources, VTA is modifying bus, light rail and paratransit services during the County's shelter-in-place legal order, while prioritizing access to hospitals, food banks and shelters. VTA is coordinating regional service connections with other Bay Area transit providers who are also operating reduced service due to low ridership.

Beginning Monday, March 30, VTA will operate reduced service seven days a week:

- Light rail service frequency will be reduced; two-car trains running every 30 minutes
- All bus and light rail trips that start after 9 p.m. will be discontinued except for Route 22 which will continue to operate 24/7

- Express 181 will operate to match [BART's reduced service schedule](#) offering some service past 9 p.m. to meet the last BART trains at Warm Springs

VTA leadership, in collaboration with employees, is using this approach after great thought and care and is meeting frequently to analyze data to be able to respond quickly to changing conditions during this health emergency. [Please see this map showing the modified routes](#) and [locations of important services, such as shelters and food pantries](#).

Also, VTA has suspended all in-person customer service at its River Oaks office (3331 N. 1st Street, San Jose) and the Downtown Customer Service Center (55A W. Santa Clara Street, San Jose). All questions and concerns can be addressed by phone/email at (408) 321-2300 or customer.service@vta.org weekdays: 6 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Saturday: 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Under the Shelter-in-Place order from Santa Clara County, VTA is providing essential travel, meaning trips to jobs that provide essential services, such as hospitals and other health care facilities, pharmacies, grocery stores, and other necessary destinations during this time of extraordinary caution.

VTA will continue to provide updates on any other changes to service through our website, social media, printed materials and signage. To receive real-time service alerts, you can [subscribe to your routes in the Transit app](#).

VTA continues to monitor the situation closely and maintains regular contact with local authorities and other transit agencies. For more on what VTA is doing in response to COVID-19, visit <https://www.vta.org/covid-19>.

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From: Baltao, Elaine
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 5:53 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors; VTA Board Secretary
Cc: Fernandez, Nuria; Tran, Evelyn; Srinath, Raj; Lawson, James
Subject: From VTA: Week 3 Update - VTA' Response to COVID-19

VTA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Members:

Here is VTA's COVID-19 response for week #3 – March 27, 2020. Please share with your constituents and network (text below and pdf attached).

Thank you.

COVID-19 Update
March 27, 2020

It is our top priority to ensure the health and safety of VTA employees and customers. This week, we demonstrated that as we learned that two (2) of our own staff tested positive for COVID-19, an office worker and a light rail operator trainee. It was a defining moment in this crisis on VTA's implementation of our emergency operations planning and response. As a result of our preparation, we acted decisively, prudently and appropriately, and I am very pleased with the coordinated response of VTA staff and the leadership of our bargaining units.

We also had some very good news from the Federal government with the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (more specific information later in this memo.) Our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation is ongoing, with regular weekly meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We also hold a check-in meeting on Mondays (partial activation). Our leadership is communicating regularly with each other and with our regional transit agency peers at state transit organizations. Staff is also participating in conference calls and webinars with a variety of local, regional, state and national agencies and organizations.

[Ridership/Service](#)

In response to increasing requests for N95 respirators by bus and light rail operators and other staff in the field, VTA is instituting a Voluntary Use Program as availability allows. Employees are required to review the user instructions and sign a Voluntary Respirator Use form. We are aware, and have shared with employees, that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does *not* recommend the use of face masks by those who are not experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms.

As you may know, late Wednesday evening, following notification that a light rail operator trainee tested positive for COVID-19, light rail service was suspended indefinitely, and we are thoroughly reviewing the extent of impact and exposure. We took this swift action to protect the health and safety of our employees and the public, a message that bears repeating. With light rail ridership down more than 80 percent, this suspension will remain part of our reduced service plan which goes into effect on Monday,

March 30. Light rail operators and rail maintenance staff are sheltering in place awaiting further instructions.

The emphasis of the reduced service plan is to prioritize access to hospitals, food banks and shelters in these modifications. We coordinated regional service connections with other Bay Area transit providers, who are also operating reduced service due to low ridership. The main changes are:

- Light rail service will not operate until further notice
- All bus trips that start after 9 p.m. will be discontinued except for Route 22 which will continue to operate 24/7
- Express Bus service will be suspended except for Express 104 serving Stanford Research Park and Express 181, which will operate to match [BART's reduced service schedule](#) offering some service past 9 p.m. to meet the last BART trains at Warm Springs

A [map showing the modified service routes](#) and locations of important services, such as shelters and food pantries is posted to our website.

Previously announced changes are still in effect, such as rear door boarding on buses, no fare collections, and the cancellation of our school tripper service. We continue to provide regular updates to keep the riding public informed of any changes.

Our latest ridership numbers continue to show a steep decline. Since mid-February, our baseline date, this week's numbers show a 64.2 percent systemwide decline in *average weekday ridership* the past seven weeks (86.4 percent is from light rail ridership). The drop from last week is 10.2 percent.

Human Resources

All employees were notified about the light rail operator trainee contracting COVID-19. In addition, we reissued reporting reminders to all staff emphasizing the importance of immediately notifying one's supervisor if any of the established medical criteria is met:

- Suspected exposure to COVID-19.
- Exhibit COVID-19 related symptoms (severe dry cough, fever/sweats, and shortness of breath).
- Took COVID-19 test and waiting on the result.
- Received a positive test result for COVID-19.

The reminder reiterated the special COVID-19 reporting mechanisms in place, including the designated email address, phone hotline and reporting form. When the criteria are met, employees are directed to stay home and contact their health care provider immediately to determine whether to test or not. Employees will need a medical clearance to be allowed to return to work after self-isolating.

Employees were also reminded of established public health notices to help prevent the virus spread, social distancing measures and information related to availability of cleaning supplies in their work locations.

In addition, all employees were notified of the upcoming reduced service starting on Monday, March 30.

Finance/Procurement

Shortages continue nationwide for sanitizing products (wipes, hand sanitizer, bleach products, etc.) and PPE -Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gloves, etc.). Lead times are running 14 – 21 days or more. VTA is reaching out to other agencies to access their supply chain and discuss opportunities for bulk purchases.

We continue to track COVID-19-related expenditures via our designated Statistical Internal Order (SION). There are no significant changes at this time to the VTA estimates of the monthly financial impact that was provided in last week's report. That report estimated an \$18 million total loss of revenues and additional costs per month due to the COVID-19 impact.

Legislation and Advocacy

Today, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (HR 748) was signed into law after passage by the House and Senate. Included in the Act is an unprecedented allocation for public transit of \$25 billion. Just this past Monday, a joint news release issued from AC Transit, BART, the Contra Costa County Connection, The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District, SamTrans/Caltrain, SFMTA and VTA urged state legislators and local elected leaders to support funding to address the serious financial hardships experienced as a result of the pandemic.

The \$25 billion in public transit funds will be allocated to states by formula using the existing Federal Transit Administration Programs (Urban, Rural) FY2020 apportionment. The State of California is estimated to receive \$3.7 billion. **MTC estimates that \$1.3 billion of that amount will be available to the nine county Bay Area. The distribution of the bay area funds is under discussion currently.**

The federal share under these grant funds is up to 100 percent, at the discretion of the operator.

Funds may only be used, “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 impacts as if they were made available under urbanized area grants (5307) or rural area grants (5311).” They are directed to cover impacts from January to December of 2020.

Public Meetings

There will be no physical location for the April 2 Board of Directors meeting but the public can view the meeting live at the [VTA YouTube Channel](#) and via [Zoom](#). Instructions on how to participate and address the Board of Directors online and via phone are on the [VTA portal](#).

Other Steps Taken This Week

- All light rail vehicles are in the operating division and were thoroughly cleaned, as was the entire operating division. (Several light rail vehicles were sanitized thoroughly previously and set aside for this potential scenario.)
- Suspended all in-person customer service at the River Oaks office and Downtown Customer Service Center. Beginning March 30, Customer Service hours will be reduced to 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. due to reduced staff availability. All customer questions and concerns are being addressed by our customer service staff by phone and email.
- Ongoing news media notification, press releases, responding to media calls and interview requests
- Ongoing operational notices, alerts and messaging for customer notifications

- Ongoing website updates, blog posts, posts to The Hub (Intranet) and social media
- Creation and posting of light rail and bus shelter posters
- Monitoring news media coverage
- Sharing recaps of various webinars, news conferences and conference calls
- Recording internal voice and employee hotline messages

Public messaging continues as listed above and our regularly updated [COVID-19 Information Center page](#) is displayed prominently on the VTA [homepage](#).

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