RTA prepares for anticipated increased demand on May 1
- Requires face coverings for all passenger and encourages delayed travel if possible-

NEW ORLEANS – In preparation for increased transit demand, beginning May 1, 2020, RTA will require that all riders using public transit wear face coverings to mitigate further community spread of COVID-19. Per the guidance of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), face coverings should be worn in scenarios where social distancing may be difficult. This precaution is being implemented as an additional safety measure to protect riders and frontline staff as transit continues to operate in the greater New Orleans area. The RTA is asking riders to self-police this protective measure.

To protect our riders and operators, all passengers must wear a mask or face covering that covers the mouth and nose. This requirement does not apply to children under the age of 2 or to individuals who are unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition. Face coverings can be made from cloth material that is easily washable and reusable. For more information on how to make a homemade face covering or to request a donated mask, visit www.sewdat.com. The use of a mask or face covering should not be seen as a substitute for social distancing. Riders should continue to observe protocols regarding appropriate distancing while onboard vehicles.

Additionally, earlier this month, RTA instituted social distancing protocols on all buses, streetcars, and paratransit vehicles to ensure that overcrowding is not occurring. Extensive protocols on vehicles include; Automated Passenger Count (APC) overloading report, operator reported overcrowding, buses staged in the field to boost routes per supervisor and dispatcher instruction. Depending on the vehicle size, 10 – 24 passengers can safely ride with adequate spacing per social distancing regulations.

On Wednesday, April 29th, the RTA held an in-person training with transportation Managers, street Supervisors, and ATU representatives to reiterate the overcrowding policy with all transit Supervisors.

Strategic buses are staged throughout the system to enter a route in real-time to mitigate overcrowding. The RTA relies on bus operators communicating conditions to our dispatchers to ensure that strategic buses can be deployed to alleviate crowding. The relief bus will remain in service for at least one full trip or until the passenger volume subsides.
Riders are encouraged to continue to use public transit for necessary essential travel only. Due to the city’s continued stay at home mandate, the agency maintains the use of public transit for essential activities only. Places like grocery stores, essential workplaces, and healthcare facilities are all deemed necessary. Essential travel to essential destinations will prevent potential overcrowding on vehicles and allow for proper social distancing amongst riders. Passengers who can delay essential travel until after the first few days of the month are encouraged to do so to allow riders who have urgent needs to buy groceries, prescriptions and other critical items.

Riders without mobility limitations are also asked to exit at the rear of the vehicle and adhere to all signage onboard vehicles. This includes not sitting in roped off seats near the operator. All fares continue to be waived until further notice.

Riders should contact Rideline at 504.248.3900 for point-to-point route information for essential travel destinations.

For the latest information and route schedules, visit RTA’s website at www.RTAforward.org.

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