

SAFE(R) TRANSIT DURING COVID-19

REPORT BY TRANSPORTATION RIDERS UNITED



September 2020

**This report was produced by Transportation Riders United,
Detroit's public transit advocate.**

TRU believes everyone should be able to get where they need to go, regardless of whether they drive. TRU educates, advocates, and mobilizes for improved public transit and other sustainable mobility options.

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The following is an updated version of our July preliminary report, incorporating feedback from transit riders, advocates, and service providers.

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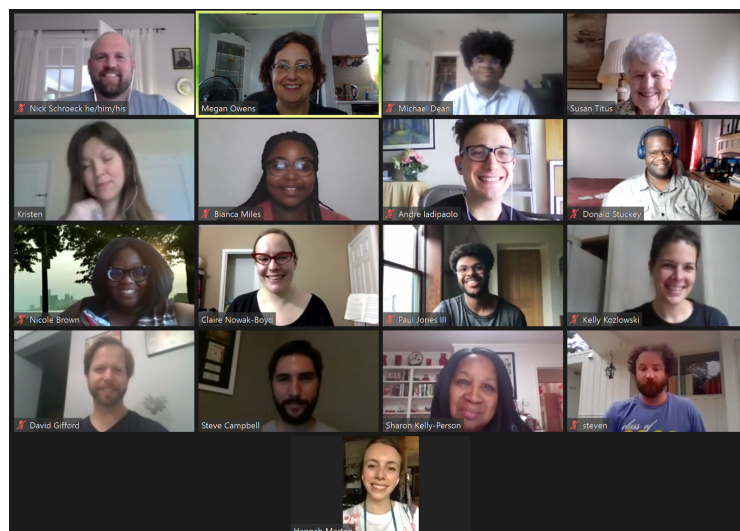
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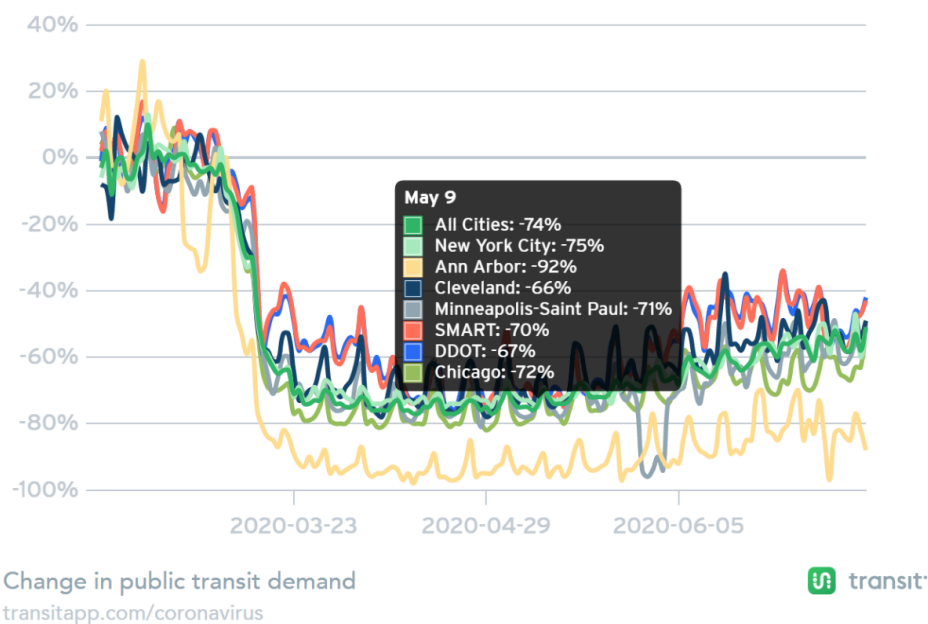


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public transit has long been the most efficient way to move lots of people. Yet in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic required people to avoid crowds and stay at home as much as possible. Many people rightly did just that.

Transit ridership across the United States dropped roughly 75% during mid-March. Commuter services into downtown business districts dropped 90% or more, as did service in college towns like Ann Arbor. DDOT and SMART bus services saw their ridership drop around 70%. The QLINE and Detroit People Mover stopped operating all together.

Despite that, **bus services kept operating, because they must.** Census records show at least 36% of transit riders work in essential industries - they're the nurses, janitors, grocery clerks, and pharmacy techs that keep our society functioning. A national survey found that 92% of people still using transit rode it to work. Of those, 20% worked in healthcare and 20% in food service.



Unfortunately, transit workers were among the front-line workers hit hard by COVID-19 early on, before safety practices became common. Detroit bus driver Jason Hargrove tragically passed away from coronavirus in late March, shortly after complaining of a rider coughing without covering her mouth.

During the spring, transit systems both globally and locally figured out the critical steps to minimize transmission risk:

- **Requiring masks**, handing them out when possible
- **Separate drivers** by directing passengers to use the rear doors, not charging fares, and installing plexiglass barriers
- **Enabling maximum airflow** with open windows when possible
- **Extra sanitation**, like cleaning buses at the end of each run
- **Avoid crowding** and provide passengers as much space as possible.

DDOT and SMART implementing most of these best practices. In fact, SMART was among the first in the nation to provide no-fare rear-door boarding upon recommendation from staff. DDOT has handed out more than 500,000 masks to passengers who need them. Riders report that the buses are cleaner than they had ever been before.

However when COVID-19 struck, many bus drivers were unable to work themselves. Agencies cut back on the amount of bus service they operated. SMART dropped to 60% of normal service, then to 30%, then increased as demand increased.

DDOT has struggled to provide enough service. Despite a goal of no more than 15 riders per bus, infrequent service has meant either risking overcrowded buses or leaving residents stranded without a ride. DDOT leadership recognizes this problem and are working to address it. For the safety of riders and our broader community, DDOT must ensure everyone can get where they need to go safely.



These safety measures proved to be effective. There has been no evidence across the globe of public transit being a major source of COVID-19 transmission. Studies in Paris, Tokyo, Austria, and other places with extensive contact tracing found no infection clusters tied to public transit, despite active transit systems.



While nothing is 100% safe, when agencies can provide frequent enough bus service and everyone is consistent in wearing masks and washing hands, **public transit can be a low-risk way for Detroiters to get where they need to go.**

This is critically important. Our nation and our region are facing an economic crisis too. Reliable bus service can be a lifeline for the unemployed struggling with the costs of cars and insurance, allowing Detroit families the access they need to weather this storm.

Transit can help metro Detroit and the nation build back better.

COVID-19 TURNED DETROIT AND AMERICAN SOCIETY ON ITS HEAD

It transformed work, schools, grocery shopping, restaurants, funerals, and every other way people come together.

Public transit has long been the most efficient way to move large numbers of people; in fact most large cities couldn't function without it. Yet in March 2020, government and health experts started urging, and even requiring, people to stay home and avoid being within six feet of people outside their household. Suddenly the very factor that made public transit efficient appeared to be a threat to people's health and their very lives.

Transit agencies and the cities that manage them faced a harsh predicament. At least one third of transit riders are **essential workers** - the nurses, janitors, grocery clerks, and pharmacy techs that keep our society functioning. So how could transit agencies **ensure the affordable mobility these workers** need while **minimizing the risk** of transmitting COVID-19? That is what this report seeks to reveal.

“Lockdowns and social distancing have been tricky for transit agencies. On one hand, **transit agencies provide a vital service**, particularly during the pandemic. But on the other, in light of COVID-19, low ridership and increased safety methods are **straining transit agency budgets**.”

- Sharon Feigon, executive director of the Shared-Use Mobility Center



02 ESSENTIAL WORKERS CONTINUED RIDING

When government officials urged and required people to stay home, most who could did. Schools were closed to keep kids home, non-essential stores shut down, and many companies shifted to working-from-home. Yet other people, including many Detroiters, *could not* stay home.

The census estimates that **36 percent of transit riders work in these essential industries**. The governor recognized this and included public transit workers on that list, so all the other workers could get where they needed to be.

Transit App surveyed 25,000 people nationwide still utilizing their service to help find and track their transit rides. While app usage dropped 77% during March, they wanted to understand more about the 23% of remaining riders, “to show how public transit was being used during COVID-19.” While not Detroit specific, these national findings are telling:

- Pre-crisis, Transit had a 50/50 gender split. In this survey, 56% of riders were female.
- Among whites, public transit ridership has dropped by half. **Black and Latino riders made up the majority** of Transit’s users during the peak of the COVID crisis
- The **bulk of people still using public transit** — 92% — were **using it to commute to work**. Of those riders, 20% worked in healthcare as “practitioners, technicians, or support” and almost 20% worked in “food prep,” including groceries and take out.
- Only 9% of Transit riders had a car, while another 6% had access to one if they need to drive. For the remaining 85%, public transit was their go-to method of transportation.

“*The people left using our app Transit are, by and large, essential workers. They’re the folks keeping the lights of society on, but many of them don’t see themselves as heroes at all.*”

- Transit App report, April 2020

TRAGIC DEATHS OF TRANSIT WORKERS

Transit workers were among the front-line workers hit hard by COVID-19. Detroit bus driver Jason Hargrove tragically passed away from coronavirus in late March, a week after complaining on video of a rider coughing without covering her mouth. More than a hundred employees of New York City’s MTA died from coronavirus in the first months, a huge loss even in an agency of more than 70,000 workers. Workers pointed to a lack of widespread mask-wearing and social distancing early in the pandemic. Working conditions have improved since then.

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DID MEDIA OVERSTATE TRANSIT DANGER?



Those tragic and well publicized transit deaths spurred public fears of transit as deadly. **Media has stigmatized transit**, using a narrative crafted from hasty research of questionable value.

“As America’s densest city became the epicenter of a national pandemic in March, New York’s **subway system** ... **emerged as the villain** from central casting... an MIT economics professor, concluded that New York’s subway system was “a major disseminator—if not the principal transmission vehicle” in the city’s COVID-19 outbreak...

“Subways, trains and buses are sitting empty around the world,” a Washington Post headline intoned in a May headline, adding, “It’s not clear if riders will return.”

- The Atlantic

A May 28 feature in the Detroit News played up this fear as well, with a title “Detroit bus riders choose between lives, livelihoods amid COVID-19 pandemic.” Instead of just reporting the facts of challenges that many essential workers face riding the bus, the Detroit News stoked fear with overly negative language:

“Every morning Smith is one of 17,000 people who roll the dice, schlepping to a bus stop in Detroit and clambering aboard an enclosed box populated with the poor and infirm. And they hope today isn’t the day they catch the novel coronavirus. . . . Riding a Detroit bus was a joyless affair long before it began carrying a whiff of death. . . Pathogens could be lurking on the seats, poles, pull cords. They could be in the air.”

- Detroit News, May 28

YET DESPITE FEAR, THE RISK TO RIDERS HAS NOT BEEN BORNE OUT.



Tonika Williams from Detroit

While fear is understandable, **no evidence** has been found of public transit being a major source of COVID transmission for riders.

One of the nation's top transit experts, Janette Sadik-Khan, explained it well in her article, "Fear of Public Transit Got Ahead of the Evidence":

“

*"A recent study in Paris found that **none of 150 identified coronavirus infection clusters from May originated on the city's transit systems**. A similar study in Austria found that not one of 355 case clusters in April and May was traceable to riding transit. . . ."*

"Many of the highest-profile outbreaks occurred far from the nation's buses and subways. . . . Hot spots appeared in March following a funeral in Albany, Georgia, and after a choir practice in Mount Vernon, Washington. In Nebraska, at least 3,000 meatpacking workers have tested positive for the virus. . . ."

*"**Hard-hit cities such as Milan that have reopened their transit systems have not seen subsequent infection spikes**. Japan, which has some of the world's busiest rail networks, had very few infections at all—only about 17,000, less than 1 percent of that of the U.S.—and no reported upticks in Tokyo since Japan began reopening its economy."*

- The Atlantic, June 2020

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Tri-State Transportation Campaign analyzed this issue closely in their June 10, 2020 report “Back on Board: A guide to safe(r) transit in the era of COVID”:

“Much has been made of whether major cities’ reliance on transit, or their density, acted as catalysts for the coronavirus’s spread, much like accelerants to a fire. The reality is both more complex and more intractable: dense, transit-oriented cities like Singapore, Tokyo, and Seoul have mediated or escaped large outbreaks, while highly rural, transit-poor areas like the Navajo Nation or exurban prisons and meatpacking facilities have seen alarmingly high rates of per-capita transmission. **It appears that density and transit are poorly correlated with COVID outbreaks.** Instead, governmental policies, workplace standards, and—perhaps above all—socioeconomic status have proven to be far more determinative factors in both your likelihood of contracting COVID19 and becoming seriously ill from it.”



TRANSIT SAFETY WAS LEFT TO LOCAL TRANSIT AGENCIES

Despite the breadth of this pandemic across the US, transit agencies received slow, inconsistent guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and state health departments. Either on their own or through loose networks, transit agencies developed their own methods to ensure the safety of their riders and workers.

Unfortunately, not all transit agencies answered the challenge, instead opting to fully shut down operations. Windsor and Flint largely shut down their services, as did the Detroit People Mover and QLINE.

Agencies who have successfully maintained service took adaptive measures in policy and planning. The following section describes **best practices for minimizing rider risk** surveyed from transit agencies around the country.

Sanitation, safe riding, and communication are at the core of public transit responses to COVID-19.



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SANITATION

To ensure a safe environment for riders, a vast majority of transit agencies sanitize transit cars more frequently and thoroughly, some even multiple times per day, using anti-viral cleaners recommended by the CDC. Along with these new standard procedures, some transit agencies have stood out by piloting new cleaning methods.

- **Electrostatic Disinfection:** Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Indianapolis Public Transit Corporation (IndyGo) are among the agencies using this misting transit vehicles with an electrostatically-charged spray which covers all surfaces. The Electrostatic spray gives a negative charge to the disinfecting solution allowing the solution to stick to surfaces.



- **Ultraviolet Lights:** New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) uses ultraviolet lights by exposing subway cars to the UV light, which can kill the virus and other germs. According to The Verge, "UVC [the type of UV ray emitted by the lamps] is particularly good at killing organic material – whether in humans or viral and some experts believe it can be effective in destroying the novel coronavirus."



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SAFE RIDING

Across the board, transit agencies have shown careful safety considerations. These safety measures can be broken into two defined groups: mask wearing and social distancing.

- **Mask Wearing:** Almost all transit agencies recommend that all riders wear masks when on public transit. While a majority of agencies have not mandated masks for passengers, agencies have mandated them for transit operators. Along with providing them face coverings, BART has provided operators with a payroll increase to fund PPE purchases.
- **Social Distancing:** Transit agencies also established socially-distanced seating. Typically there is one passenger per bench or row, leaving transit cars less populated. Transit agencies are also back-loading buses to maintain social distancing, especially for drivers.



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COMMUNICATION

Transit agencies use both modern and traditional means to communicate with riders during COVID-19. Signage in busses and at bus stops that encourage social distancing behaviors have become popular installations.

Alongside website content to communicate with riders, some agencies make effective use of social media. For example, when Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) published “BART’S 15-Step Plan to Welcome Riders Back” on their website, they also posted an accompanying Twitter thread that summarized the steps of the plan.

While useful, social media channels should be a supplement to transit agency websites, rather than the first mode of communication, as it doesn't reach all riders.

SERVICE CHANGES

Most transit agencies cut bus service, reducing routes and operation hours. While some measures like socially distant cars are self-evident in intent, **tactics like service reduction** are **counter-productive and negligent to riders** during COVID-19.

Some agencies have reasoned that service reductions were implemented with the intent of discouraging occasional or “choice riders” from frequenting and crowding lines needed by essential workers. Agencies such as Denver Area Regional Transit (DART) and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) have cited reduced service hours as the result of lower ridership on their original schedules.

On the contrary, TRU believes transit agencies should minimize service reduction, to avoid overcrowded buses and long waits. TRU advocates for **restoring public transportation services incrementally and safely, but also equitably** and with respect to serviced communities.

LOCAL BUS AGENCIES RESPONDED QUICKLY

In mid-March, the Detroit area bus agencies instituted key COVID-19 safety measures, before many other US cities. SMART began rear door boarding and went fare free early, for the safety of bus drivers. They sectioned off several front rows of seats using a yellow chain, to provide social distance for drivers.

Many DDOT drivers refused to work on Tuesday March 17 due to concern that they did not have adequate protective gear, wouldn't have bathroom facilities with restaurants closed, and their concerns weren't being heard. After that one day stoppage and intense negotiations with Mayor Duggan, those problems were resolved and service was restored. DDOT promptly instituted rear door boarding and went fare free, leaving the front rows of seats open to give the driver a buffer. The City even negotiated bathroom access or provided porta-potties for drivers at the end of their runs.



Rear-Door Boarding



All other
customers



ONLY customers who require
ADA ramp or bus-kneeling

Bus rides are FREE | Essential travel only

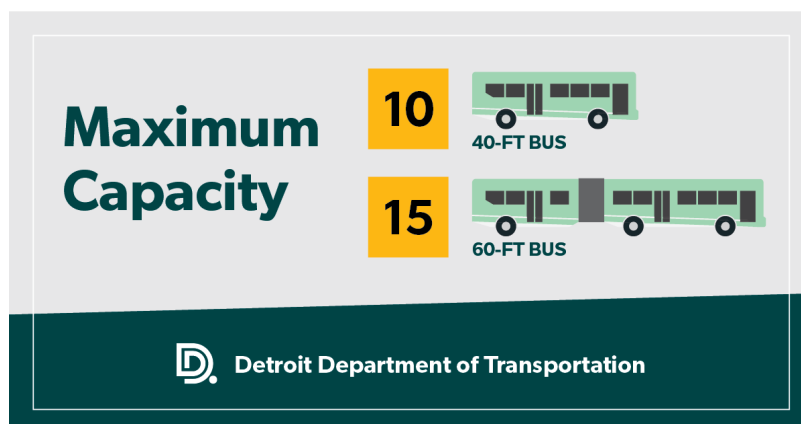
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DDOT'S ACTIONS



DDOT's ridership dropped 78% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Early on, Detroit was hit hard with high rates of infection, affecting riders, bus drivers, and other DDOT workers alike. In addition to the decline of available DDOT employees due to infections, quarantine, childcare arrangements, and other challenges, predictability in staffing became an issue. DDOT had to figure out how to flexibly pivot in response to changing attendance on a given day, as well as how to recruit more operators.

- **Service Changes:** Given the huge drop in ridership and staffing challenges, DDOT cut back on service to about 30%. Initially they scaled back to offering Saturday service from Monday through Saturday, and Sunday service on Sundays. Express routes were also eliminated. As of August 2020, DDOT has begun working to offer more service on busy routes. This remains subject to driver availability, which is highly variable.
- **Ridership Caps:** DDOT tried capping the number of riders on a bus, limiting boarding to ten people per standard 40-foot bus and 15 people per 60' articulated bus. Yet this led to passengers being passed up at stops or the rule being ignored. **Some buses are full, even standing room only.**
- **Safe Riding:** Masks are required for boarding DDOT buses. DDOT has supplied masks, despite the challenge of high demand and people occasionally taking extras. Buses have a box of masks every time they leave the terminal, but the box does not always last and some are quickly emptied. DDOT has given out nearly 500,000 masks to passengers who needed them, thanks to community partners.



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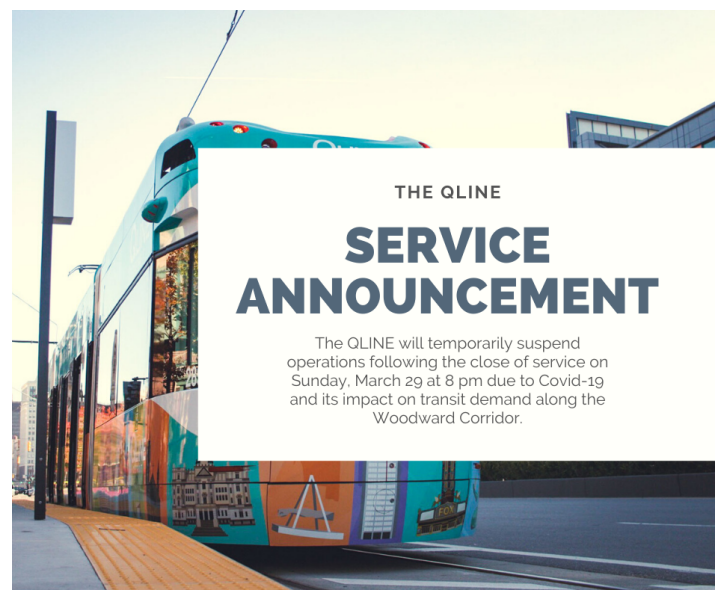
- **Sanitation:** DDOT buses are cleaned at the end of the day in terminals, always. They also receive ten minute cleanings at the ends of routes at busy transfer points, such as Fairgrounds, Fairlane, Northland Drive, and St. John's Hospital. Sanitizing staff clean seats, handles, and anything else that is regularly touched. Finding cleaners to work has sometimes been an issue, especially on weekends. Additionally, DDOT uses a long-lasting spray to sanitize buses.
- **Communication:** DDOT's communication methods have included social media posts, signage on buses and at the Rosa Parks Transit Center, and alerts in the Transit App. The pandemic hit at a challenging time because DDOT was in the process of revamping its app, so there was not a way to get real time data about bus locations. However, the Transit App is now providing real time information. DDOT is currently asking riders to complete their survey to gather info on how things are going.

Overall, **we applaud DDOT for their strong efforts** to maintain service and maximize safety during these unprecedented circumstances. **We urge them to do more to restore frequency of bus service** to avoid potentially dangerous overcrowding.

OTHER AGENCIES

Some transit systems in the area dealt with COVID-19 by ceasing operations temporarily. In Detroit, these included **the People Mover** and **the QLINE**, both of which have yet to restart as of this writing.

The **Flint MTA** and **Windsor Transit** also completely shut down service. Flint MTA shut down gradually, in response to COVID infections within the transit system, and maintained a dial-a-ride service. They have since begun restarting bus service. Transit Windsor was shut down by the mayor, and even Handi-Transit was shuttered. Pressure from activists and City Council **caused limited service to restart** in Windsor.





SMART'S ACTIONS

Similar to DDOT, SMART saw a sharp decrease in ridership when COVID-19 struck, and responded accordingly.

- **Service Changes:** SMART started by running their Saturday schedule daily, plus extra trips at peak times. Commuter routes were halted entirely, offering on-request shuttles as an alternative. SMART has scaled up service over time, but as of August 2020, have not yet returned to full service.
- **Safe Riding:** As previously mentioned, SMART was among the first to separate riders from drivers with **fare free, rear door boarding**. They are adding automated wheelchair restraints to further reduce interactions between drivers and riders. Plastic seats and “sneeze guards” (protective barriers for drivers) will be installed. SMART also screens all workers and visitors daily on location.
- **Sanitation:** SMART has added additional sanitizing services and on road-cleanings of fixed route buses. They apply an electrostatic coating spray every five days to the interiors of buses (The manufacturer’s recommendation is to reapply every seven days). They have also done electrostatic cleaning of terminals and offices.
- **Communication:** Internal communication has been a priority for SMART during this time. There have been weekly webinar updates for staff during the pandemic. They released a COVID-19 playbook outlining safety protocol for staff and the riding public. SMART continues to provide updates on their website and social media.



RIDER ALERT UPDATE!

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

- *All riders must wear masks or a face covering while riding the bus.*
- *Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and include: bandannas, handkerchiefs or scarves.*



(866) 962-5515 M-F: 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sat: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

smartbus.org



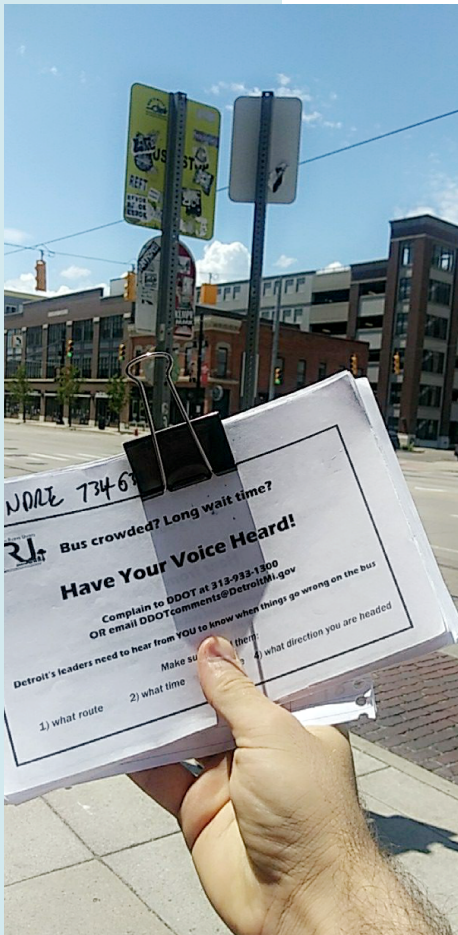


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DETROIT RIDERS FEEL THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

As the March lockdown went into effect, travel was restricted to essential business only.

Essential errands like grocery shopping and picking up medications are easy tasks for people who drive to complete. Yet for Detroiters who choose public transportation, the **COVID-19 pandemic presents unique experiences and challenges**. TRU staff canvassed multiple Detroit bus stops for this report, talking to riders and hearing what riding during COVID-19 is like. Rider comments highlight **a transit system mostly adapting to pandemic needs**, albeit with some inherent difficulties.



“I’ve been riding for years...I am on my way to the supermarket.”
- One senior rider, Midtown

People still need transit. Once COVID-19 hit, regional transit agencies cut service hours and routes. While economically efficient, these cuts meant Detroit riders now had to adjust their commutes. For these riders, the bus is as essential as local nurses and doctors, and limiting service made daily life harder.

“March...April, it was terrible. I was standing there, waiting for 20+ minutes”
- Jerrod, Midtown

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Service cuts also lead to bus overcrowding, now a major concern for bus riders and advocates alike. Overcrowded buses minimizes social distancing, and puts riders at greater risk for contracting COVID-19. Rider comments collected by Motor City Freedom Riders indicate overcrowding is most prominent on main bus lines like the Woodward.

“The problem could be similarly bad on other main lines...and there is really no solution to this other than...increasing service. Sadly, our transit agencies have mostly done the exact opposite”
- Mason Herson-Hord, Motor City Freedom Riders

While many are concerned with cuts and overcrowding, a handful of riders told TRU COVID-19 has not caused them much inconvenience. “I’ve been riding since the pandemic began, it has been fine. Just follow the rules, wear a mask, and you will be fine” one male rider offers. Indifference is not a majority opinion though, with many riders anxiously awaiting service restoration.

COMMUNITY RESPONSES

TRU confirms that DDOT and SMART have made great efforts to properly sanitize their buses and install necessary rider/driver protections. These efforts are appreciated, yet simultaneously create more accessibility challenges. One rider reports “there are only 15 people on a bus at a time, to protect the driver.” This makes catching a ride even harder, with riders fighting for capacity.



When it comes to bus sanitation, DDOT and SMART receive higher marks. Every rider surveyed agreed buses are clean, perhaps even cleaner than before COVID-19. Yet others remain unimpressed.

“It shouldn’t take a virus to wash a window”
- Oneita Jackson, Detroit satirist & columnist

MASK WEARING IS COMMON

Wearing a mask in public spaces like the bus remains one of the most critical safety measures during COVID-19. Fortunately, every rider interviewed for this report was sporting a facial mask, and only a small handful were seen without. Still, not every rider wears a mask, and the difficulty of maintaining social distance on the bus presents risk. **“Every time you ride, you take the chance [of infection],”** says one female rider. TRU thus recommends a mandatory mask policy for both SMART and DDOT.

RUN BUSES BUT MINIMIZE RISK

All in all, DDOT and SMART have done a good job managing conflicting needs under COVID-19: **keep enough buses running AND minimize health risks.** TRU applauds of DDOT and SMART’s adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially around masks, driver safety, and bus sanitation.

However, **DDOT must do better to increase their service frequency to mitigate overcrowding.**



SAFE(R) TRANSIT DURING COVID VIRTUAL TOWNHALL

In TRU's role as an educator and convener, on Wednesday, July 8th, TRU proudly hosted its' first in a series of virtual town hall events, "**Safe(r) Transit during COVID-19**".

The town hall conversation explored challenges and agency actions and connected transit riders and advocates with service provider executives.

Panelists included **SMART Deputy General Manager Robert Cramer** and newly-appointed **Detroit Executive Director of Transit Mikel Oglesby**

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL: SAFE(R) TRANSIT DURING COVID

July 8, 2020, 7pm.



WORKING TOWARDS SAFETY

During the hour & a half conversation, Cramer and Oglesby outlined the safety measures taken by their respective agencies. Both executives also gave service updates and provided answers to numerous participant questions.

Cramer emphasized SMART's adaptability during COVID, and described the many safety features the agency is working on.



“SMART aims to bring comfort to the riding public. We do contact tracing and all staff are required to wear masks at all times.... SMART is looking at short and long term solutions”
- Robert Cramer, SMART Deputy General Manager



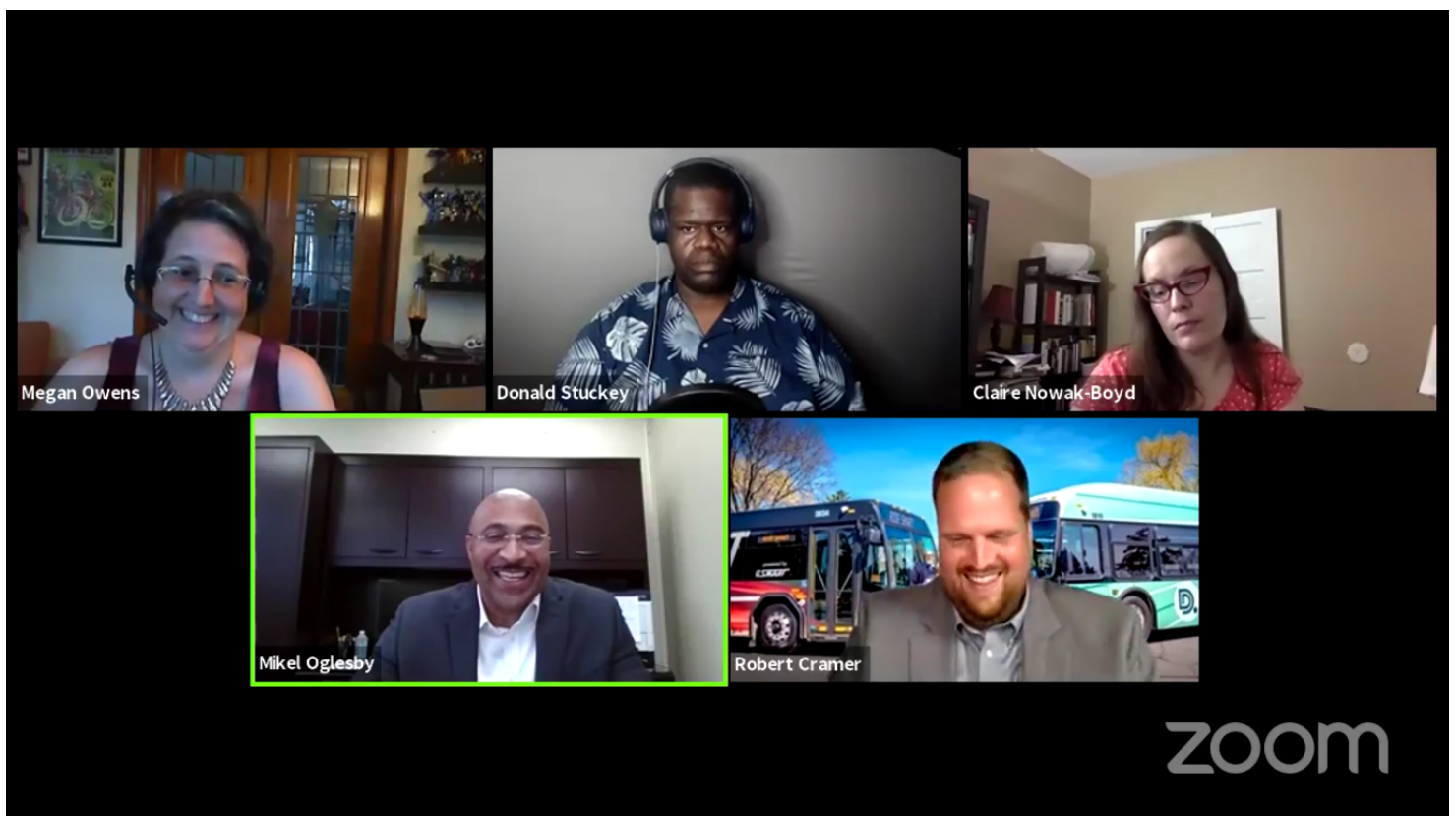
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"TOUGH CHOICES HAD TO BE MADE"

New to his position, Oglesby spoke considerably on Detroit transit. He sought to validate rider difficulties, yet did not over-promise solutions. In particular, **Oglesby addressed bus overcrowding**, describing service cuts as a "tough choice" to which he did not have a concrete solution.

Both leaders assured concerned participants that fare-free service remains in-place, will remain for some time, and that fares would not be reinstated without proper notice of "more than weeks."

Both panelists yielded numerous audience questions, and generally embraced accountability for their agencies. The Town Hall successfully connect riders & advocates with transit leadership, making it a pragmatic and timely event.



In reviewing local and national responses and practices, we come to a few conclusions:

- Transit remains **critically essential** for riders and for our community.
- Risks of COVID-19 transmission can **be kept low** if agencies and riders take necessary steps.



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TRANSIT REMAINS ESSENTIAL

This pandemic reminds us just how much our society depends on the people who depend on transit, given that 36 percent of transit riders work in “essential” industries.

Every one of us who gets groceries or prescriptions, everyone who depends on clean water and parks, everyone who wants confidence that the hospital nurse or firefighter will be there if we need them - **we all depend on people who depend on transit.**

Some have speculated the demise of transit, since most people feel safer driving their own cars rather than sharing space on a bus. However, not everyone can or wants to drive. As our nation faces an economic downturn and unemployment levels remain at record levels, and the costs of cars and insurance are and will become increasingly unaffordable to many. Reliable affordable transit will become an increasingly essential lifeline for many people.

Our cities also couldn't handle it if all transit riders were able to drive. Some global cities have already seen traffic levels rebound to or even surpass pre-COVID levels, creating painful gridlock and pollution.

A survey of east coast riders found that most expect to return to transit:

“

In what agencies should see as a positive sign, riders clearly expect to return to public transit: 92% of riders responded with policies that transit agencies can implement to help them feel comfortable returning.”

“The clear implication of these findings is that, **with the right precautions taken to reduce risk** and a corollary public awareness campaign from transit agencies and elected officials to educate riders as to the preventative measures agencies have taken and the steps riders can take themselves, **riders will come back to public transit** in numbers comparable to pre-shutdown ridership.”

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RISK OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION ON TRANSIT CAN BE KEPT LOW

Transit agencies need to maintain steps they have taken and do more to minimize risk and make rising transit as safe and comfortable for riders as possible.

- Agencies need to **continue their thorough sanitation procedures**, and need to communicate to riders and the broader public the important measures they're undertaking to ensure safety.
- Agencies should **continue to require proper face coverings** for everyone on the bus and provide masks for those who need them.
- Agencies should also **maximize air flow through buses** where possible, as experts have found that to be another key to minimizing transmission.
- And **agencies need to minimize crowding**. Putting limits on the number of riders per bus and urging riders to spread out are insufficient actions.



THIS IS A COLLECTIVE EFFORT THAT WE CAN WIN

While transit agencies play a critical role, bus safety depends on collective efforts. Maintaining frequent well-sanitized buses depends on funding. Congress addressed the immediate need through the CARES Act to address increased costs transit agencies are facing. However that funding may not be sufficient as this crisis continues on. **Federal, state, and local governments must ensure sufficient funding now and into the coming years.** That also means state and local governments can't look to the CARES Act funding as an excuse to cut their contributions to transit - funding is needed from every level to ensure safe, quality service.

Riders must also do their part.

- Riders need to wear face masks consistently and encourage other riders to do the same.
- Riders should remain six feet apart when and where that's possible.
- And riders should follow other hygiene recommendations, including washing hands regularly and thoroughly and avoiding touching their faces.

Together, we can maintain the access essential workers need - the people we all depend on. We can minimize risks to riders, drivers, and our community. With investment in frequent service, transit can be an affordable lifeline and help our cities rebuild better.