

For Immediate Release
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TARTA Announces Participation in Nationwide Public Transportation Industry “Health and Safety Commitments” Program

TARTA joins over 100 public transit agencies participating in the national program

(TOLEDO, Sept. 22, 2020) – The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) 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 TARTA. Since the beginning of the pandemic, TARTA 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, TARTA 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

TARTA 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 TARTA relies on riders to protect themselves and other customers.

“Participating in this program is a testament to TARTA’s commitment to safety for its employees and community members. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, TARTA has consistently been an industry leader in proactively combating the spread of the virus. Earning the APTA’s Health and Safety Commitment (HSC) seal acknowledges our current efforts and solidifies our mission to provide the safest

and most efficient form of public transportation in our region,” said Kimberly A. Dunham, TARTA General Manager.

TARTA is committed to continually addressing and implementing pillars of the Program. Current safety guidelines include:

- Following state and local health guidance from Governor Mike DeWine, the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department.
- Suspending fare collection.
- Encouraging social distancing onboard vehicles by limiting passenger capacities and utilizing shadow buses for overflow.
- Disinfecting vehicles daily and providing complimentary facial coverings for riders who do not have one prior to boarding.
- Installing protective plastic barriers on all fixed-route, paratransit and on-demand service vehicles.

“This program is a commitment that this industry is making to all those we serve now and to those who we look forward to serving,” said Nuria I. Fernandez, APTA Chair, and General Manager and CEO of Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. “Public transportation is and will be vital to the social and economic recovery of our nation. But getting there requires us to win back our ridership and encourage new riders to view public transit as a preferred mobility choice. We believe this commitment program will help do this.”

“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.”

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About TARTA

The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) provides a vital link in the Toledo metro area to jobs, education, health care and other destinations. It enables everyone in our community to have access to transportation regardless of their age, race, physical ability or economic background. TARTA is underway with exploring and introducing new initiatives and service options that will enhance convenience and customer experience while moving Toledo into the future of public transit.