



April 29, 2020

Governor's Re-Open Florida Task Force
Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

To Whom it May Concern:

The Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) represents 45 public transit systems in the State of Florida and acts as the “voice” of public transportation in our state. Public transit is an essential service and we have not only continued operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain a vital link to ensuring our state can safely re-open and stimulate Florida’s economy. Public transit will continue to follow the guidance of health care professionals, the scientific community, and our local/regional leaders to ensure everyone, including riders, employees, and the public, remains safe.

The transit industry is ready and willing to work closely with our local leaders and the state to re-open Florida and would like to offer the following recommendations for our industry and the Governor’s Task Force to Re-Open Florida:

- 1) **FOCUS ON SAFETY.** The Governor should encourage use of masks or face coverings for public transit passengers, until such time that the CDC relaxes this recommendation, as health and safety is the top priority.
- 2) **RECOGNIZE AND MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING.** Public transit operators will continue to follow the CDC guidelines and should continue to limit riders per bus/train or at stations/transit terminals to promote social distancing, until such time that the CDC relaxes this recommendation. With social distancing requirements, passengers should expect that operations will be impacted and there will be effects on customer service.
- 3) **RECOGNIZE THAT TRANSIT SYSTEM EMPLOYEES ARE ESSENTIAL WORKERS AND PRIORITIZE TESTING FOR TRANSIT WORKERS.** We are reliant on our employees being healthy and available to serve our

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communities. Transit worker wellness and safety is a high priority for each transit system and should be for the State of Florida. Frontline transit workers should be given a high priority for the acquisition of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and appropriate testing.

- 4) MAXIMIZE FUNDING FOR TRANSIT AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE. State and local tax revenue is in jeopardy for FY 2020 and beyond. More flexibility of funding will be needed to maintain public transit as an essential service and, more importantly, reopen our economy. State agency's that fund transportation services should prioritize overall funding to transit agencies, expand flexibility of existing revenues, extend grant agreements, reduce match requirements, or create other innovative solutions to maximize the use of the dollars.

Public transportation is crucial to keeping the economy moving and the overwhelming majority of riders today are using the system to get to critical essential services, such as hospitals and health care centers, pharmacies, and grocery stores. We connect individuals to jobs and training for all social classes, but most importantly, our services continue to remain available to low and middle-income persons who make up a large proportion of these essential workers. Florida's public transportation industry is proud to have continued to operate before and during the pandemic, and are fully prepared to safely provide services after we re-open our state. Public transportation is an economic driving force and a fundamental component to moving Florida's economy forward.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter. Please feel free to reach out to me at 850.445.8329 or lisabacot@floridatransit.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Bacot', is placed over a light blue rectangular background.

Lisa M. Bacot
Executive Director