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Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

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## **RFTA Board of Directors Decides to Continue Providing Phase 3 Service Reductions; Service to Rifle Suspended**

The RFTA Board of Directors held a continuation of the Special Meeting from last Friday, March 27, to this morning, Friday, April 3, to discuss the immediate future of RFTA services due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in our region. A motion to completely curtail all RFTA services failed to pass by a margin of 2 in favor to 6 opposed, and as a result, RFTA will continue to operate its Phase 3 Service Reductions that are currently in effect.

RFTA's Phase 3 plan continues regional transit services at a bare minimum for essential valley workers and persons traveling for essential purposes. This is with the exception to service to Rifle, Colorado. The Rifle City Council passed a resolution at its meeting last Wednesday to suspend all RFTA Hogback bus services within the City. Effective Saturday, April 4, RFTA will suspend service to Rifle, but continue to serve the towns of New Castle and Silt with the existing Phase 3 Hogback services.

In light of the Governor's "Stay at Home Order," Executive Order D-2020-17, it is anticipated that RFTA ridership will continue to decline. However, Public Health Order 2024 defines public transportation as a Critical Government Function and a Critical Service. Since last Wednesday, RFTA has been conducting a brief SMS text survey for current passengers. Although the responses, to date, are at a minimum, they are providing important information that is being used to assure the RFTA Board of Directors and the public that RFTA services are primarily being used for essential purposes.

Along with the survey, RFTA staff provided the Board with current detailed ridership data that reflected ridership is down 90% since Monday, March 9. As well, RFTA staff presented a plan to help ensure proper social distancing measures on buses. RFTA is currently monitoring ridership to determine what the maximum load factor is on every trip. With this information, RFTA is planning to provide additional back up service to ensure that adequate social distancing space is available for all passengers.

The maximum passenger load per bus that RFTA will attempt to maintain is approximately 10 passengers. RFTA has closed off seats to provide at least a six-foot distance between the driver and passengers. RFTA is also planning to implement a seating plan that will provide adequate separation between passengers. Bus operators will not board additional passengers after reaching the limited number, unless other passengers get off and open up available seats. If a bus is at capacity, it will only stop at requested stops for passengers to exit and may pass by stops that are not requested by passengers onboard. In those cases, an extra bus will be dispatched to pick up passengers at missed stops as quickly as possible. Likewise, if the number of people waiting to board at a particular stop will exceed these ridership limits, some passengers may be asked to wait at the stop for an extra backup bus to arrive. RFTA will strictly adhere to these seating restrictions in an effort to help passengers maintain adequate social distancing.

RFTA will continue to operate paratransit services. If you are an individual in Glenwood Springs, Aspen or Carbondale with a disability and want to discuss your travel options due to the absence of service, please contact RFTA at 970-945-9117.

These are unprecedented times, and RFTA is grateful for both its dedicated bus operators and other employees, and for all of our riders who are doing their part to limit the spread of COVID-19 by following the guidance and recommendations of health professionals. RFTA is working hard to adapt to ever-changing recommendations and requirements necessary for fighting the spread of COVID-19. Follow RFTA updates regarding COVID-19 at [www.rfta.com/covid-19](http://www.rfta.com/covid-19)

Questions, contact RFTA Communications Manager, Jamie Tatsuno at 970-384-4864 or [jtatsuno@rfta.com](mailto:jtatsuno@rfta.com).

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