



Ridership Declines Prompt MCT To Reduce Service

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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PONTOON BEACH - The Madison County Transit plans to reduce its fixed-route service to the normal modified "Saturday service level" starting Sunday, March 29, because of sharp declines in ridership with the coronavirus outbreak.

The service reduction has been prompted by sharp declines in ridership due to the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). MCT's fixed-route service had been increasing in recent months, but starting last week experienced a 37 percent system-wide drop in daily ridership. The MCT Express trips to Downtown St. Louis have seen a ridership drop of 58 percent compared to March 2019. The details of the reduced service are listed below:

All MCT fixed-routes in Madison County will operate on their Saturday schedule, seven days a week.

MCT will temporarily discontinue all MCT Express service to Downtown St. Louis, including the #1X Riverbend Express, #5 Tri-City Regional trips to St. Louis, #14X Highland Express, #16X Edwardsville-Glen Carbon Express as well as the #13X Highland-SIUE Express from Highland to SIUE.

The #13 Troy-Glen Carbon which doesn't operate on Saturdays will operate on its weekday schedule.

The #20X Gateway Commerce Center Express will operate on its weekday schedule.

To ensure the health and safety of drivers and passengers during this period of reduced service, and to keep the entire driver workforce employed, MCT will be utilizing drivers to serve as "assistants" helping to clean the bus mid-route as passengers get on and off. MCT asks that passengers limit their trips to essential travel only, avoid touching commonly used surfaces, and follow social distancing protocols on the bus and at bus stops.

"We know that thousands of individuals depend on MCT each day to get to work, to medical appointments or to shop, so making the decision to reduce service has been difficult for all of us," said MCT Interim Managing Director SJ Morrison. "But continuing to maintain Saturday-level service will provide transportation throughout the day for those who need it the most."

In an emergency meeting on Wednesday, the MCT Board of Trustees approved a temporary suspension of all fares on its fixed-route and paratransit services to eliminate the passing of cash, transfers and tickets, and to reduce driver-passenger contact. MCT also closed its Base of Operations and Transfer Stations to the public until further notice. Additional efforts have also been made to increase cleaning of surfaces.

"Our team's commitment to serve the people of Madison County during this situation has really been encouraging," said Morrison. "I've never been more proud to work with this group of people."

The regularly scheduled MCT Board meeting this Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. will be held exclusively via teleconference with no in-person meeting place. For more information on the MCT Board Meeting, to view MCT schedules, or learn more about MCT's response to the COVID-19 situation, visit www.mct.org, call (618) 797-INFO (4636), or e-mail info@mct.org.