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### **Metro Public Transportation Service Changes Effective Thursday, April 2**

Kalamazoo, MI - As a follow-up to recent service reductions designed to mitigate the spread of coronavirus during this time of national emergency, total ridership aboard Metro fixed-route buses has declined substantially but remains higher than recommended to meet social-distancing guidelines, as prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). To ensure successful containment efforts, as recommended by the CDC, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, and state and local public health experts, Metro will temporarily suspend regular bus-route service effective Thursday, April 2 through at least Monday, April 13. Instead, Metro will offer Metro Connect demand-response service for the community's most vulnerable populations as well as its essential workforce.

Trips for essential workforce, medically necessary trips, and grocery and pharmacy will be verified during scheduling. Rides using Metro Connect can be scheduled by calling (269) 350-2970 seven days a week from 8 am to 5 pm. Transportation will be provided:

- Monday through Friday: 6 am to midnight, with work and medical trips only after 7 pm
- Saturday: 6 am to 10 pm for work and medical trips only
- Sunday: 8 am to 6 pm for work trips only.

Saturday and Sunday use of Metro Connect will need to be pre-scheduled the day before. During this time, rides with Metro Connect will be fare-free. Detailed information on scheduling is available at [kmetro.com](http://kmetro.com) or by calling (269) 337-8222.

"In order for Metro to continue to provide vital transportation to those needing to get to essential employment and medical care as well as groceries and pharmacy, we are providing service using the Metro Connect demand response system instead of the fixed route system," stated Sean McBride, Executive Director of Metro.

Apple Bus, based out of Cleveland, MO, provides Metro Connect service in Kalamazoo County as a contractor for Metro. They have been providing demand response service in the community for ten years and were recently awarded a new three-year contract with Metro in January 2020.

McBride continued, "Metro's partnership with Apple Bus will allow public transportation to continue during this time. We are thankful for their willingness to address this vital need as we temporarily suspend fixed bus route service."

Ridership on Metro's system has been monitored over the past several weeks with service reduced to 10 pm on Wednesday, March 25 for the fixed-route system. Measures to sanitize buses and the closure of the Kalamazoo Transportation Center have taken place to minimize exposure of COVID-19 to the community and employees. Even with these changes, Metro is continuing to see volumes of riders that present a risk to the community. The suspension of regular bus routes is intended to assist with efforts to slow the spread of illness throughout Kalamazoo County.

The Kalamazoo Transportation Center at 459 North Burdick and the Administration Office at 530 North Rose Street is closed to the public. Questions regarding the service can be directed to Metro at (269) 337-8222. Updates on Metro's service to Kalamazoo County is available at [www.kmetro.com](http://www.kmetro.com) and on Facebook: Metro Transit.