

# FTA Listening Session: Operational Considerations for Reopening Transit

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## Listening Session Transcript

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>> HENRIKA BUCHANAN: Good afternoon, I'm Henrika Buchanan, FTA's Chief Safety Officer. Before we begin, I'd like to make it clear that this call is for the public transportation industry stakeholders and not for the media. It is considered off the record. Thank you everyone for joining us in today's listening session. We appreciate that you have scheduled time for this important discussion. We are all well aware that your priorities during this unprecedented time must be focused around being a part of your local area recovery. Let me start by introducing FTA Acting Administrator Jane Williams. As the Acting Administrator since 2017, she's focused on the Secretary's priorities of safety, infrastructure, and innovation, and works closely with many of you to implement those priorities. She manages some of the largest formulaic competitive grant programs in the Department, including the Department's latest and largest grant program for transit, the CARES Act program. Her background has been incredibly valuable as FTA works to provide rapid relief for the transit industry. Many of you may recall that Jane started her time at FTA literally as Hurricane Harvey hit Houston soon to be followed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. She has led the industry through numerous natural disasters since then and is uniquely prepared to lead the FTA through this unprecedented time for our country and our industry. Now I'll turn the session over to Acting Administrator Jane Williams.

>> JANE WILLIAMS: Thank you, Henrika, and thank you, everyone, for joining us today. I want to start with a note of appreciation. During this public health emergency, the transit industry continues to provide essential transportation services for health care personnel and other workers who are critical to the COVID-19 response and our nation's economic recovery. While transit ridership has decreased sharply because of the public health emergency, transit agencies across the country are continuing to provide approximately five million trips a day to lifeline services. I'm certainly aware many at your agencies have undergone tremendous personal challenges and sacrifices as a result of COVID-19, and I want to thank you and your front-line workers for all they are doing to keep America moving and to remind you that FTA is behind you. I know that the current environment has been unpredictable and difficult, but I'm confident that our collective efforts will help us forge a path forward. Over the past several weeks, FTA has awarded 191 grants under the CARES Act totaling \$8.8 billion and there are hundreds of grants on the way. FTA staff have been working around the clock to make this money available to you as quickly as possible, and that brings me to the task before us today. As the country begins to shift toward the reopening of local economies, we wanted to make this opportunity to

connect with all of you. Since the President's unveiling of the Guidelines for Opening up America Again on April 16th, dozens of states have begun to enact phased reopening plans. Everyone on this call knows it will be difficult, if not impossible, to fully reopen the economy, whether it be individual cities, states or regions, without transit. In the nation's major transit markets, up to 30 percent of community trips occur on transit and public transportation plays a broad and important role in small urban and rural areas across the country, too. FTA wants to hear from you, and for you all to hear from each other to help inform your decision-making as you consider or prepare to phase in increased service levels needed to support your communities. Today, we will hear from eight transit CEOs about their experiences, their considerations, and their approaches to reopening. When you registered for the listening session, you provided responses to several poll questions related to how operational decisions are being made in real-time. You may also share additional thoughts and comments in the chat box on your screen. We will provide a summary of the comments received after today's session. And in a few minutes, we will turn the floor over to your peers to discuss their experiences, plans, and how the federal government can be supportive. But before that, FTA Executive Director Matt Welbes will summarize the results of our poll. Safety is our top priority at the US Department of Transportation and for Secretary Elaine Chao, and we will continue to face this national emergency together. Again, thank you for all you are doing in our communities during these unprecedented times. Please thank your front-line workers on my behalf as they continue to keep America and Americans moving under these challenging circumstances. Now, let me turn it over to our best Executive Director in USDOT, Matt Welbes.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Thank you, Jane. Good afternoon, everyone. Let me add my thanks for joining us today. I'd like to share what we've learned from the poll questions you responded to when you registered for today's session. We received 75 responses from 37 transit agencies and three associations and thank you to everyone who responded. We asked seven questions to help inform today's discussion, and here's what we learned. First, when asked whether your transit agency participated in state or regional planning for reopening activities, 24 percent responded your agency is playing a central role. 62 percent of you responded that, yes, your agency is engaged and 14 percent, or five respondents, indicated their organization is not involved in state or regional decision-making. Please keep in mind that representatives from three associations were among the respondents. We also asked if your agency has had to adjust service to accommodate changing travel patterns during this public health emergency. Virtually all of you answered yes to this question. Similarly, close to 100 percent of respondents indicated they were adjusting agency boarding protocols to ensure the safety of boarders and passengers. We also asked whether your agency has been communicating with service area employers regarding their plans to reopen and what in-person jobs will be filled soon. 70 percent of respondents said yes, your agency has been in communication with area employers and 22 percent responded no. Eight percent of the respondents said this wasn't applicable to their organization. We asked whether your transit agency has changed fare payment protocols to address safety. 84 percent said yes while 16 percent said no. Then we provided several possible responses to the question about whether your agency requires face coverings for riders. And here's the breakdown of responses to that question: 54 percent said that face coverings for riders are voluntary, but encouraged. 27 percent reported that your local jurisdiction or state required face coverings. 13 percent said that their agency requires face coverings on the systems. And three percent of you say they are not required with another three percent saying this question

wasn't applicable to them. And then the last question concerned whether your agency has started to consider how to encourage rider confidence in the system, in the safety of your system, and the clear majority of you answered yes, 97 percent of the respondents. I want to thank everyone for responding. The results clearly demonstrate the proactive measures being taken, and they provide a basis for our discussion today. So now we'll begin the speaker presentations starting with our first speaker, Nuria Fernandez. Nuria is the General Manager and CEO of Valley Transportation Authority providing service in the San Jose region. Nuria is the Chair of APTA and a former Acting Administrator of FTA. Nuria, I'm turning the session over to you.

>> NURIA FERNANDEZ: Good afternoon and thanks very much, Matt, for that introduction. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Acting Administrator Jane Williams for her leadership and for the passion to ensure that public transit in America can successfully serve the communities that depend on us. I want to get right to the point of what I believe must happen properly serve those for whom our transit service is a lifeline. Even as the economy begins to open up, we know that decision-making is going to be at the forefront. It needs to be agile and flexible and we also know that collaboration and cooperation is going to be paramount. At the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, we serve a population of 2 million people. It's Silicon Valley after all, the high-tech capital of the world. Because our area is such a critical part of the American economy, we know that decisions we make about how to get people to jobs, schools, and other essential places must be done in collaboration with multiple partners. We are coordinating very closely with the County of Santa Clara which was the first county in the nation to order a shelter in place. With our local public health orders and coordinating also with the 15 cities. The public health order was amended last week to require face coverings on board our trains and our buses. And we're going one step further. We're building protective barriers for our operators as well. Last week, the State of California through Governor Newsome issued guidance to transit operators and we're currently reviewing those steps to determine how we may need change what we've already put in place for physical distancing on our vehicles and facilities. We know that public transit was not designed for physical distancing and for the 6 foot that is currently being used for social distancing. So it's going to be very challenging, but yet we have to not only comply, but we have to ensure that we take these steps because it's important to us and it's important to our riders. I have been invited to join the Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable, which brings close to 60 other corporate government sectors together with academic leaders in the region so that we can plan for the long-term restoration of our everyday lives, for businesses, schools, and civil service. We need to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community are included in the recovery process as well and that the small businesses can survive coming out of the more than two-month shutdown that we have experienced. In terms of planning for what our transit service will look like as we emerge from this crisis, we're going to need to know not only when various segments of the economy will open, but how employees will be working. I am reaching out to all employers in Silicon Valley to get a better sense of what their decision-making is going to be based on our current shelter in place with employees working from home and telecommuting because that's going to have an effect on the service that I provide. I know that things are not going to be similar to where they were pre-COVID, but certainly in the ramping up of our service, we need to be able to gauge how much service we need to put out there and if, in fact, there's going to be a change, how we pivot and be flexible and adjust. We will be working with the employers. We'll also continue working with the county and with the cities. Our operations and service planning teams are pouring over all the plans that

we'll need to have in place so that we can meet the demands and can meet them in the short term, midterm and long term, and then adjust for schedules to reflect the reduced traffic congestion. Now, keeping our customers informed about all these changes that we make will help build and instill confidence that our system is safe, that it's reliable, and that we are ready to welcome them back. Communication is going to be critical on all platforms, whether through traditional news media, social media, print. We also know that things are going to be a bit different in the first few months after we reopen. Communicating with our employees is also important. We are putting in place protocols so we can welcome back -- it's like onboarding. We have a majority of our employees working from home and some are telecommuting. Therefore it's going to be important that as we tell them that it's time to come back to our facilities that we demonstrate that we have not only enhanced in the cleaning and sanitizing, but that we have all of the requisite postings so that there is adequate social distancing and all the appropriate behaviors following the guidelines that CDC has issued. As we head into yet another additional uncharted waters of the recovery from this crisis, we know that we cannot get through this on our own, and that's why it's so important not only to connect through the broader network of transit systems and working closely with the Federal Transit Administration, but then also looking at some of the best practices that some of the other industries that are being served through our communities are adopting. In Santa Clara County, residents have a long history of supporting public transportation and infrastructure with their tax dollars, but let me tell you a little bit about those tax dollars. Given our current condition, they're not predictable. The forecast that we're hearing, they're not encouraging. So there's going to be a significant blow to our economy. We know pulling ourselves up from the bootstraps is not going to be enough. We truly appreciate the Federal funding that we have received through the CARES Act, and thank you very much, Madame Administrator for all your support. We are very fortunate for the partnership and that you understand and respond to the needs that have been exist and have been extremely supportive an advocate for transit, but there's going to be need for more dollars. And we're talking billions of dollars so that we can keep America moving. I am very optimistic and I have good reason to be optimistic. The transit industry is resilient. Our nation is resilient. And we know that when we're all in this together and we act together, we can pull through it together. Thank you very much.

>> Next speaker is Doug Kelsey. Doug is the General Manager and CEO of TriMet in Portland, Oregon. Doug, I'm now turning the session over to you. Thank you.

>> DOUG KELSEY: Thank you very much. And thank you Administrator Jane Williams to all of you at FTA for all you're doing to help all of us here. I'm going to take a slightly different tack. I'm going to respond to a few comments on each of the seven questions that were asked, but I'm going to reserve some of the limited time for a couple key areas as it pertains to the future. For the coordination with state and local authorities, I think probably most of us, for agencies of these sizes, we have to be closely integrated with our counties, our cities and clearly at the state level. Just this week, I spent an hour with the Governor directly going through our plans, our approaches, as we develop --literally new guidelines came out from the Governor's orders this morning. Part of that was moving us as an example from a 6-foot spacing requirement to a 3-foot spacing requirement. Part of that, we will be committing to touching at minimum four hours all vehicles throughout the system and doing full disinfectants on the whole fleet vehicles and our train stations each night. Yes, that's going to cost us, but I'll get to the benefit for the long-term

future as a regional service, I believe as an industry. So we will also be providing masks to customers. We will be the direct supplier of masks to customers on our system who cannot get them. Like Nuria spoke about, I've got 50 percent of my bus fleet already converted with bus barriers. The other 50 percent will be done. This is not a replacement for a mask. It's a supplement for a mask. We will also have hand sanitizers on all buses and all trains on a regular basis, not just for this virus, but a new way of doing business. The end of it, we need to be -- we see ourselves as a place where you go to be safe. Not that you come and hope that you're safe. So we are doubling down on the public confidence that transit and what we provide is pristine by its very nature. If not, I'm of the belief, particularly as tracing expands, I do not want to be caught at the intersection of where the tracing leads to where public transit is that intersection because if we do, I'm concerned we may not see riders come back for a whole generation. In terms of the service planning, we are using our smart card data, we call it HOP here. A lot of agencies have their own. We're using that data extensively for our planning, but we are managing this with, as Nuria and most others I expect will talk about, the severe financial drop-off that we are all facing. And thank you to the CARES Act again for giving us that lifeline for a period of time, but that is only a period of time until hopefully the economy recovers. We are also in the field surveying more than we ever have before. I think it's very important to create listening posts, I refer to them my own team as. Not relying on just one instrument because each one can have different pluses and minuses. We're using different types of listening posts with our customers right now to make sure we're providing service in the right ways. Part of that, establishing service, is I'm just issuing of the next day or two, a whole list of criteria of how we will make our service decisions in this region as we scale down, as we stabilize, and then as we have to cut further, how that will be considered, let alone how we ramp it back up. I've shared it with my board of directors a multi-page document knowing we're balancing that against the financial capacity of our organization, as I suspect we all are. Coming from the private sector with Shell and Starbucks Coffee and Olympics and others, cash is king. And we need to manage cash and cash flow, which as an industry, typically hasn't done as much. We're balancing that against our ability to implement under two foundations. One is service preservation and the second one for me is job preservation. Those are all underpinned by safety. Those are really the corner posts of my pyramid of how I'm approaching our decisions. As we get to staffing, I'm layering in the decision-making process cutting off consultants, which were exploratory or developmental in nature. So we've pulled back on our consulting significantly. Discretion on state of good and other capital projects. We've put on hold our base bus expansion. Currently the agency was going through its largest expansion in its history actually. But part of the underpinnings for future decisions will all be based on the primary, as Director Williams outlined, of safety, but also for where selective investments are made that focus on the long-term expansion of needing to manage climate change and GHG reductions. So those will be some of the corner posts of our decision-making. I have implemented salary and hiring freezes. We are synergizing positions, and I think, not only for ourselves but the world, is going probably to revisit what remote working looks like, which I think is going to have a strategic impact on the fundamental base of our demand side of our business. This industry is very good on understanding the operational culture and the supply side. I think we need to move very quickly to become far more sophisticated -- and I say this having been in other industries -- on understanding the demand side of where our customers are. Because I think we're going to have to fight harder than ever before, not just for the essential workers regardless of what percentage that is -- if it's 30 percent of New York or 20 and ten in others, I think the discretionary traveler is -- we are going to have

to become far more sophisticated using things like not just demographics but psychographics and things I've experienced in other industries. In terms of the vehicles, infrastructure, facilities, let me just jump to the end of that kind of comment. It's very hard to anticipate everything, but in terms of the safety measures, I've spoken about bus barriers here. We have implemented on all-fleet every night, we're using we call foggers for all of our buses. We were doing hydrogen peroxide to get to the 99.9 percent disinfectant for the whole fleet every night. We are testing some UV lights and wands and potentially rechargeable ones that you can do in transit centers and such to even help the operator disinfect at the transit center and layover areas as well. We're looking at different technologies as well, but we're also trying to reframe ourselves. In terms of some of our available staff and vehicles that are, particularly on the paratransit side, where demand is down about 85 percent. We're trying to move ourselves to connect with the community, and part of this is brand re-positioning for the longer term. The first one is to move the mindset from a transit partner to a community partner and not just transit service. Our laid off paratransit workers are now doing all the regional Meals on Wheels every day and every night. Second, for our locked in at home paratransit customers, we reframe from taking you from A to where you want to go B, we are doing their grocery shopping and delivering to their homes. Moving us from a transit service of people, to reframing to a re-service of getting the products to the people. As well, we're also leading recycling where recycling depots have shut down, where we're the conduit now, as opposed to a people carrier, we're actually acting as a goods carrier to reframe and bring value to the community where they most desperately need it. In terms of communication and public information, clearly, I believe, at a national level -- and I will get to this in a second because I think there's an intersection role with this industry and the partnership with the FTA. I believe we need to reestablish that we are safe and a place to go to that can be trusted. I think a recent survey that came out that 75 percent of the public did not feel comfortable on public transit from the virus perspective. So, I think there's a national theme here, not just -- whether it be in Missouri, or Illinois, Poplar Bluff, Missouri, or Skagit Valley, other places, or larger centers like us today. I think this is a national framing and a re-branding effort that's going to be needed and I think there is a significant role for ourselves and partnership with the FTA in this rebranding and this reestablishing strategic confidence with the communities we all serve and as a fundamental industry. We have been, as part of the branding, we've been laying out early communications around "we miss you" themes to our riders. Stay in touch, all those -- keeping it light during dark times. Getting ready to reestablish and welcoming people back. The future, I am very optimistic about our future, even in challenging and dark times. I do think we need to think differently about our public-private partnerships. Having been in the retail industry, I see us as rolling retail. And I think we are going to have to look at ourselves very differently. So people feel not only confident in the system in phase one, but secondly we are going to have to cross-merchandise with partners. We're going to have to move from an operations communication kind of culture as an industry to a marketing and the whole cross-merchandising promotional side. That sophistication is going to be harder because I believe getting the riders back is going to be harder than it has been in the past. I build and they will come, I think those days are gone. Particularly with working from home. There is a different value proposition I believe we are fundamentally going to have to redo. We are going to have to compete for that rider and that trip like never before. And I'm not sure we -- we do need capital, we do need to operate, but I don't think those alone will solve the empty vehicles we've already got of base infrastructure. Part of this is cultural, I believe, for our industry as well. And I think part of this, if you look at other industries, removing the frictions for the customer will help our resiliency in

attracting them back in many fronts. Things like I think the FTA can help us on. Why is it that each of our smart card systems don't talk to each other? For that traveler when the airlines open back up, these cards need to be receptive whether it be in Portland to Seattle to Salt Lake to New York to others. The more cohesive we can make, and seamless, that segment of the traveling public will use. They'll follow where there's least resistance for the network national experience. So, in the short term, I believe there is an important national media and rebranding emphasis for safety that we -- and reestablish the brand of trusted and essential. And also thanking our front-line workers in the medium to longer term. I think we need to re-evaluate the cost of our administrative relationship between agencies and the FTA. I've been through this in large other multi-national industries like Shell and others years ago in crises where we re-evaluate all the scar tissue or potential red tape where what was there for the right reason ten years ago may not be needed today because the elimination of those administrative barriers can reduce an immense amount of cost burden and yet we can still ensure our relevancy for the long term. The last item I've got is, really, the FTA's help and the industry's coordinated help to really help develop what could a new value proposition be beyond basic operations while we reestablish. So part of this is cultural in nature. At the end, thank you very much for inviting me to participate. I do believe -- amongst the fog of this virus war we are currently in, I really do see many opportunities to invest and also reinvent ourselves for our future relevancy both on the service level as well as our cost level. Thank you, Administrator Jane Williams.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Thank you very much, Doug. Earlier, I think our audio may have been off when I thanked Nuria. We truly do appreciate each one of you sharing time with us and with your peers today. Our next speaker is Pat Foye. Pat is the Chairman and CEO of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City. Pat, I'm now turning the session over to you.

>> PAT FOYE: Matt, thank you. I want to thank the FTA and Administrator Williams for these calls. They've been extraordinary helpful and timely. I also want to thank the FTA for expedited treatment of the CARES funding. I want to give a shout out to Steve Goodman of Region 2. We received our first installment of CARES earlier this week and that's extraordinarily important. I'd like to cover three things. One is steps we have taken during the pandemic, since the very beginning of the pandemic to protect the health of our customers and employees. Second, what we see the future may be. I saw that one of the listeners asked for information on that, so I'm going to speak to that briefly. And, if we have a minute, is the communication, actually marketing of transit post-pandemic. Since March 1st which is when the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in New York, the MTA has been aggressive and active in steps to protect employees and customers. We began disinfecting every station, every subway car, every bus, every Metro-North and Long Island Railroad commuter rail, as well as crew areas and all of our paratransit vehicles on March 3rd. Since March 1st, date of the first confirmed case, we've distributed to our employees 4.3 million pairs of gloves and nearly 2 million masks, including 1.1 million N-95 and KN95s, as well as about 800,000 surgical masks. We installed I think a first in the nation temperature brigade, and at this point have taken temperatures of about 150,000 of our employees. The fever rate is surprisingly low, and the taking of employee temperatures every day before every shift is something that we will be doing going forward. We've eliminated cash transactions on subways, buses, Metro-North and Long Island Railroad two months ago in March. Implemented rear door boarding two months ago. About ten days ago began for the first

time in the 116-year history of the subway nighttime closures from 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. with a robust bus service to handle the about 11,000 essential employees who travel in that time period. First time in the 116-year history. We did that to allow the disinfecting of every station and every piece of subway rolling stock, but also to allow the city, the NYPD, and the Department of Homeless Services to provide services to those without shelter. That nighttime closure I think has been executed flawlessly by Sarah Finberg and her team. Masks are mandatory. Have been for some time for our employees and customers as well. That will clearly be a feature of the future. We clearly have the widest testing in the nation for our employees, both diagnostic testing and antibody testing and we'll continue that until every employee has been tested. Going forward, I believe we're looking at a world where masks will be mandatory for employees and customers as far as the eye can see. We will continue the disinfecting regime, which is obviously expensive and time-consuming, but we're taking it to the next level. We will be looking at ultraviolet installations. It's a proven technology in hospital and emergency room settings, but we're also looking at microbial application solutions and electrostatic applicators. We believe there will be good news in the short-term about the virus eradication features of some of these microbials and their ability to eradicate viruses, not only for days and weeks, but perhaps months longer. Every employee's temperature will be taken every day. We will be metering the number of customers on subway cars and buses, mezzanines and platforms, et cetera. We're considering reservations. No decision has been made on that. We have installed barriers between customers and employees throughout, especially on buses to minimize contact between bus operators and our employees. I think an important part of this plan going forward is transparency with the public and providing the public with data. I also want to note that we've eliminated cash on Metro-North, Long Island Railroad, subways, and buses. Cash is clearly a thing of the past in America generally and that will increasingly be true on transit. Lastly, the most critical issue is social distance on public transit. It's an issue that our counterparts around the world -- Asia, North America, and Europe -- are grappling with. Six feet of social distance does not work in transit. And one of the things that I would appeal for -- and this is beyond the USDOT, but helping the CDC advance providing guidance on social distance on transit informed obviously by industry participation and input, I think, is extraordinarily important. National guidance on that issue would give us all the comfort that the steps that we are taking have been blessed by the appropriate federal agency as opposed to each of us doing it on a local, state, or regional basis. That doesn't make a lot of sense to me. The last point I would make is the following. I think we have the marketing challenge of the century at public transit. To succeed, we are going to have to convince millions of our customers in New York and tens of thousands of our employees and tens of thousands of employers that it is safe to ride the New York City transit, subways, buses, commuter rails, et cetera. I believe we that can do that. That is going to require an extraordinarily sophisticated and truthful communication process, but the messaging around the minimization of health risk to our customers and employees is going to be fundamental and pivotal to the successful restoration of job creation and economic growth in each of our regions. With that, I'll conclude and thank Administrator Williams and her colleagues for convening these.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Thank you very much, Pat. Our next speaker is Paul Wiedefeld. Paul is the General Manager and CEO of the Washington, DC WMATA, Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and he is providing service here in the National Capital Region. Paul, I'm turning the session over to you.



>> PAUL WIEDEFELD: Thank you, Matt, and thank you Jane and the entire team at FTA. We're very grateful for the support you have provided during this difficult period in our country's history. First, our top priority has been and will continue to be the safety of our employees and customers. We are particularly vigilant to reducing the risk for our front-line employees because in the Washington, DC metropolitan region, those areas with the highest number of COVID-19 cases are the communities where a large portion of our workforce reside. Currently we're utilizing about half of our front-line workforce daily. This is partially driven by the limited availability of the workforce as employees self-quarantine, nurse sick relatives, and provide childcare and home schooling. It also was a result of partnering with our union leaders to consider the health risk of employees based on their responsibilities. Most of our front-line employees report to work on alternative days. This has allowed us to minimize the risk of spreading any COVID cases to larger pool of our workforce. For those front-line employees that cannot work on alternative days, we've instituted other strict operational measures to maximize their protection from this deadly virus. For example, in our Rail Operations Control Center, which has a limited number of very specialized skilled workers who work in proximity, we're utilizing our emergency backup control center so that work shifts always remain separate. We do this by having each shift only report to one of the locations with the same coworkers to minimize the risk of the entire unit becoming exposed to the virus. Further, the operation of the rail system is transferred between the primary and the backup control centers every work shift so we can do a deep cleaning and disinfect the temporarily closed control center to further protect our employees. For our administrative and back office functions, like accounting and human resources, we have developed an extensive telework program to protect them and maintain critical work functions. To address the understandable fear our employees and customers have concerning COVID cases at Metro, we have established a portal on our public website that documents each confirmed COVID-19 case at Metro. It lists the employee's position, work location, health status, contact tracing information and status of cleaning and disinfecting of the individual's work location. This transparent monitoring of the COVID-19 cases will stay in the public until full recovery. As a result of these many and other efforts we have 81 confirmed COVID-19 cases within a workforce of 12,000 employees which is statistically very low, but still 81 more than we would like to see. Just like our peer agencies, Metro ridership on both bus and rail has plummeted to historic lows and that's a good thing, for now, but as we all know this is not sustainable nor does it meet our core mission to serve the mobility needs of the Washington region. Earlier this week Metro released details of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan outlining a 12-month flexible blueprint for ramping up service while protecting customers and employees. The recovery plan focuses on our three goals which are first and foremost to protect our employees, secondly to protect our customers by providing service that enables social distancing, and three, stay ahead of the demand until vaccine or herd immunity makes social distancing unnecessary. The recovery plan is based on ridership and economic projections by analyzing several regional models of COVID-19 peaks, testing availability, supply chains for cleaning products and protective equipment, and other variables, as you know, many of which are beyond Metro's control. The plan complies with CDC guidance and guidelines from the regional leaders in the jurisdictions. The plan was also informed by recently conducted Metro rider surveys and focus groups to understand customer concerns and to anticipate changes to travel behavior. Some of the customer feedback includes: riders perceive Metro to be a higher risk than going to the grocery store, particularly given the limited space for social distancing, they want frequent and highly visible cleaning and disinfection of vehicles,

stations, and facilities, and expect all passengers to wear facial coverings and to practice social distancing. And while Metro's plan is closely aligned with customer expectations and the steps planned by local governments and employers, including the federal government, our largest employer, its success depends on sustained downward trajectory in infections and a gradual ramp up in service and ridership. There are three phases to the plan. Phase one is stabilization. Phase two is managed reentry and the third is full recovery. They coincide with the relaxing of the stay-at-home policies and the widespread availability of testing, treatment, and a vaccine among other variables. During the stabilization phase, as stay-at-home orders are expected to be lifted this summer, Metro will continue to ask customers to use the system only for essential trips and to protect themselves and others through social distancing and wearing required face coverings when using the Metro system. Also during the stabilization period this summer, Metro will take advantage of low ridership to reduce impacts on customers from critical state of good repair and construction projects. Basically, we'll be shutting down a number of stations and do quite a bit of rail work. During the managed reentry period, as regional businesses and governments scale back teleworking and schools reopen, Metro will aim to ramp up service ahead of demand to allow for proper social distancing for those who need to travel. In this stage, all Metro rail stations currently closed as part of the COVID-19 response will reopen. All Metro buses will operate with some service limitation such as express routes being eliminated. The tentative managed reentry plan is late this summer when schools open and we see it lasting through the winter into the new year, if not the spring. In the recovery stage, which we believe is when a treatment and when a vaccine is readily available, Metro will continue to ramp up to meet service demand as economic activities increase and the system will return to post-pandemic hours of service, although we do not believe it will return to pre-pandemic ridership. Let me just wrap up. Again, I greatly appreciate the FTA's ongoing efforts and support and the timely implementation of the CARES Act. The CARES Act funding has enabled Metro to continue to provide service to the nation's capital. But given the loss of ridership and revenues from our funding partners, we are hopeful that Congress will provide additional funding. Flexibility and use of funding and financial support for operations is also critical going forward. And finally, I want to thank the FTA and ask them to continue the message of emphasizing that transit is an essential service that is required to support our communities and this nation's economy. Thank you again for the opportunity to present today.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Thank you, Paul. Our next speaker is Gary Thomas, President and Executive Director of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit agency. Gary, I'm turning the session over to you. Thank you.

>> GARY THOMAS: Thank you, Matt. I appreciate the opportunity. And thank you Acting Administrator Williams. I certainly appreciate your leadership at this time. I'd also like to thank and congratulate Gail Lyssy, our new Region Six Administrator. I'm going to start off with a headline that was in one of Wednesday's media outlets here in Dallas after our board meeting on Tuesday. The headline was "DART Board gets First Look at Brutal COVID-19 Budget Blow." Within that article, there was a quote that the DART President/Executive Director admitted to the board that he doesn't know how long or deep a recession we are entering. So I'm going to acknowledge to this group, too, that I'm admitting that I don't know what we're facing. I don't think any of us do, and all of us are trying to make the best decisions we can with the information that we have available. DART, like many of the organizations around the country,

are doing a very similar thing as it relates to protecting our staff and protecting our customers. We're cleaning vehicles on a regular basis. Our light rail trains get cleaned at the end of the line. So that's either 60 or 90 minutes depending on the line you're on. Deep cleaning every night and then on the weekends we're using the foggers much like Doug Kelsey is in Portland. Buses get cleaned on the weekends thoroughly, but then also throughout the day and in the evenings as well as on a daily basis. One of the challenges that we've talked about is some of our buses go out in the morning and they don't come back until late at night. And so we're looking at how we rotate buses as the operator shifts are rotated as well. Of course that also depends on equipment available, but we are looking at that to make sure we pull those buses out as we change operators and clean those between operators. We're working very closely with the local officials. Every week I have a conference call with the county judge, the head of the county hospital, the head of the school district, and the Dallas City Manager to make sure that we're all on the same page, we're all working toward the same goal. And three times a week, I have a conference call with Houston Metro, San Antonio Via, Dallas, and Austin Capital Metro to make sure we're all taking advantage of the best practices that each of us are thinking of in implementing throughout the course of that week. From a staffing point, again, similar information. Three-quarters of our staff cannot work from home. They're out there every day. And about one-quarter of our staff are working from home. As many of you may have read, Texas has already reopened for the most part on May 4th. The governor reopened many of the restaurants, shopping malls, and places like that, although he did say they were limited to 25 percent of their capacity. On the 11th of May, he reopened barbershops, beauty salons and gyms, but not bars. No, I can't explain that. And then on the 18th, this coming Monday, all the office buildings will be reopened in the State of Texas. So as you might imagine, we've seen our ridership that was in the neighborhood of 60 to 70% down bounce back up to the neighborhood of 50-55 percent down from where it was pre-pandemic. So, again, like everybody else, we've implemented rear door boarding. We've gone to a modified Saturday service. We have put our stand behind line six feet back from the operator. We have barriers on all of our buses that shield our operators. We've actually put barriers on the buses so you could not go forward of that line, but we're starting to run into a crowding problem. Our goal is to keep the passenger count on our buses at 20 and no higher. We're starting to run into challenges as the state starts to open back up. So we're considering front door boarding effective June 1st and taking that physical barrier off, but of course maintaining the barrier between our operator and the customers. As we look at the budget and, not unlike other agencies, we're sales tax based for the most part. We anticipate a significant decline in our sales tax. So as we look at our long-range financial plan, and as some of you know, we do a 20-year financial plan, we have to identify the priorities. And of course as was heard earlier, the safety of our employees and the safety of our customers is first, and the state of good repair. We've got a pretty incredible infrastructure in the ground and we need to make sure we maintain that infrastructure and then the service levels. So as we look at our budget and we look at service, we have to balance our ridership, our revenue, and where we actually put that service. None of us really know what's going to happen as we look to the future, what car ownership is going to do. Is it going to go up? Obviously the car manufacturers and dealerships hope it's going to. They're offering incredible deals right now. Gas prices are down. Are people really going to go back to the office and go into the office? It's a new way of doing business. Many of us have learned that we actually can work from home now, and so how does that look from a ridership perspective. So I think as many of you have heard me say before, mobility as a service is going to be really critical as we look to the future. Having a platform that allows customers to choose between

buses, trains, and other mobility modes and then the transit agency, of course, controlling that platform on how people get around, how they move from point to point and making sure that, again, the transit agencies are really steering that to make sure that we have the equity throughout our regions that we really - that we really need. From a communication standpoint, we continue to push messaging out. We started several weeks ago on how we are cleaning our fleet and we are constantly seeing good and positive media stories on the cleaning efforts. And I think that will lead, as we look to the future, that will also lead to that confidence building that we're all doing. I mentioned as we start the reentry of our at-home workforce now, we've actually developed a return-to-work playbook. That return-to-work playbook identifies a timeline and identifies protocols in the workplace. It identifies what we expect to see that our customers will experience, and then what additional resources we'll need as we move through that. I'll end with a quote out of our playbook by Robert Kennedy. So it was a minute or two ago. But it said "All of us might wish at times we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't. As our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity." So this is a time of opportunity and we need to be prepared, as was said earlier, I think by Doug. We need to be prepared to seize this moment and pivot our service and our industry to take advantage of it and to move forward in a positive manner. Again, thank you to the FTA. I certainly appreciate all that you're doing. Thanks.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Gary, thank you for your insights. Our next speaker is Ed Benning. Ed is the General Manager and CEO of Mass Transportation Authority providing service in Flint, Michigan. Ed, I'm now turning the session over to you.

>> ED BENNING: Thank you, Matt, and thank you to Administrator Williams and the entire staff at the FTA for allowing me to be a part of this today and for all the work that you're doing. We're extremely thankful for the CARES Act funds - what that will mean to our organization and the community. In our State of Michigan, we're still under a stay-at-home order, some parts of the business sector have opened up, but most still remain closed. We're operating within a city that we have curfews, 9:00 at night. And many other things that are happening that make it difficult for us to operate. At the same time, we were one of the areas with increasing spread of the virus and our ridership obviously was down 50 to 60 percent. So we have been joining on a daily basis with the Michigan Department of Transportation and all of our partners in the state that join these efforts daily. We are online each night from Tuesday through Thursday of each week. We're sharing what we're doing, brainstorming on what we can do during these times and it's been very beneficial. Also, within the city, the mayor has established a Blue Ribbon Committee and I think that's especially helpful as we look at businesses and how they will go about opening their businesses and some of the things that they'll be dealing with in that regard. So we have this ongoing discussion that's taken place not only within the city but because we're a county authority, we're interacting and interfacing with 31 jurisdictions throughout the county and we receive a lot of input. And I think that from that, we're able to reach out and provide some services that are not within the norm. And those would be many of the social service agencies such as the food banks, Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, school students that were part of the lunch program, and we are filling that gap and we are doing an awful lot of work in that regard. And we're making sure that we do it in a way that is safe for our employees and safe for the passengers that are involved. And so coordination is extremely important. It's going on daily. On the planning side, we are reaching out to the community and we're asking for a needs

assessment and in that regard, we're talking to the businesses, the Chambers, the local planning agency. Again, we're holding those discussions with the Department of Transportation. Many of our partners, the most recent conversation is surrounding the COVID-19 testing and what role will transit have in providing rides to the testing sites and that was discussed thoroughly in our call yesterday with the Blue Ribbon Committee and the ramp-up for testing is now well under way. We recognize that there will be many things about our service that will be different in the days ahead, and we realize that people are concerned about riding on a bus and perhaps social distancing and some of the other issues that may come. So in that regard, one of the things that we're looking at is creating some new opportunities, specialized services that will create flexible routing that will take us outside of our normal routes and provide some services that are better tailored to those that are going to work and those that need transportation. We feel this might be a great time for us to demonstrate our ability to provide even more specialized services. With staffing, we have had majority of our staffers work remotely, and it seems to be working well. The staff, many of which will be coming back to work next week. Some will remain working out of their homes. I think that we're learning an awful lot in that regard, but as we scale up services, it's recognized that we will need to have staff available and we have set up protocols on working within our facilities and how best to make sure we protect everyone. It also includes we're limiting the access of the public coming into our facilities. I think one of the greatest assets that has come out of this in our decision-making and staffing was to create town hall information meetings. We hold those weekly with our employees, with our staff, and even the directors have started holding those type of meetings. And we make our employees aware in advance that we're going to hold these meetings and they can submit questions that we'll answer in a listening-only session. Those, I think, have been paramount to people feeling comfortable about what we're doing and where we're going, what our future looks like, and what their role will be. We've offered reassignments where possible. We've assigned staff to address urgent community needs. We've even put staff out at the Meals on Wheels program, packaging the meals and delivering them, and many other areas that are not in the norm of what we would be doing in the community that seems to be working extremely well. There's been a number of our employees that understand that their safety and the safety of the passengers is so important, and they have agreed to step in and, in that regard, we're providing recognition pay to the individuals that have stepped up during this time. We've had some individuals that really want to stay home, but we've had many that want to come in. They're using the personal protection equipment. They're following the protocols and we've provided them with some recognition pay and we recognize they're our front-line, everyday heroes. We just did a major recall for the next scale-up of service. And I must say that I was impressed by the number of employees that are prepared to come back to work. I think much of that surrounds the town hall meetings we've been holding and their understanding that we are making every effort to make sure they have safe working conditions. When the pandemic started, we took some very quick action to make sure that we were sanitizing and disinfecting our facilities. We hired outside companies to come in and to do that work and also went through all of our vehicles. In addition, we have prepared and installed barriers on all our vehicles. We operate today a fleet of about 160 cars. And so we have a driver with passengers in the backseat of the car, and we recognize we need to find a way to continue that, especially considering the strong Rides to Wellness program that we're operating. We have put up a hermetically sealed plastic barrier between the driver in the front seat and the backseat and we're providing service and it's working extremely well. We require passengers to wear a mask or a scarf. If they don't have one, we'll provide it. Our drivers are wearing masks and can

also utilize a shield. We have that in our large buses, our fixed route buses. We recognize we're not able to buy the assault barriers or something of that nature, so we've developed our own. So we have a barrier around the driver that protects the driver. And we have rear door loading that is taking place at this time. But on June 1st, we anticipate we will go back to front-door loading and we feel we will be able to do that in a very safe, responsible manner. All of our facilities are disinfected and sanitized on a daily basis. In our transfer center where we normally have about 20,000 people go through there a day, we have a team that works in the building that cleans every bus that comes through. At least once an hour, every vehicle coming through is being sanitized and disinfected. We've hired medical tech positions, medical techs that check our drivers' temperatures when they arrive for work. That's done daily. That's done for all employees, including staffs. We'll soon be adding self-testing kiosks that will do the same thing and send the information to our supervisors and to our HR department. And we are screening our riders before we pick them up, those on our paratransit. And we're screening them to make sure there's no conditions that are taking place. We have created signage to put onto our large buses, to the fixed route buses that talks about social distancing, stay away from the driver, wear your mask or your scarf - it isn't mandatory now. We have bought foggers for our vehicles and we're adding ultraviolet lights. Lastly in the communication area, we've created promos understanding that people are reluctant to ride on public transit to demonstrate all the cleaning we're doing. These promos - the public gets to see the extensive cleaning taking place and reassure them that we're making every effort to make sure that the services are safe for them, safe for the drivers. We have had very positive feedback. We have digital billboards that are out in the community that talk about wear a mask or a scarf when you're utilizing public transit. We're utilizing Facebook, press releases, signage at all of our facilities to further make sure people are following the rules regarding safety. And we're putting out PSAs on a regular basis about transit and the fact that transit is safe. There's many positive things happening in that regard. And we feel that as we continue to ramp up service, scaling it up, perhaps not to the level it was in the past, but bringing back portions of the service a piece at a time, if you will, we think that people will return. I think one advantage we may have is we've created so many special services in the community that people want those services back and they see that we've taken steps to make sure that safety is not compromised. So I certainly appreciate the opportunity today to talk about what's happening in our community, and I'd just like to thank Administrator Williams, Matt and the staff at the FTA. Thank you.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Thank you for your remarks. We have two speakers. We'll probably wrap up around 4:45. Our next speaker is Phil Washington. Phil is the CEO of the Los Angeles Metro providing service in the L.A. region. Phil, I'm turning the session over to you. Thank you.

>> PHIL WASHINGTON: Thank you, Matt. Let me thank Administrator Williams as well and all of my colleagues on this call. I'm honored to be here with you. We're doing quite a few things out in Los Angeles, as you can imagine. First of all, L.A. County is the most populous county in America - 10 plus million people. And we provide service county-wide. I'm also honored to be a part of the National Recovery and Restoration Task Force for Transit and the mission of that task force is twofold. First, developing a path forward for public transportation, preserving its core functions and financial stability. And second, exploring new methods, tools, and approaches to reinvent the industry's essential role in this post-pandemic mobility world. We also have set up a local task force here at LA Metro and we're also part of the Reopen Los Angeles task force. So

thank you for hosting this event. We believe it's very, very important, not just for transit, but for the entire U.S. economy. Like everyone on this call, our ridership is down as well. Bus down about 75 percent. Rail about 80 percent. We are still carrying about 400,000 people a day, though, even in the midst of this pandemic. We are seeing significant declines in our sales tax revenue as has been reported by others on this call, and of course fair box revenue and express toll revenue. We are responsible for our express lane projects and of course those declines in sales tax revenue impact our capital program where we're building projects, making sure people are jobs and that sort of thing. So it's impacting the delivery and the construction of many of our projects out here as well. The most important thing, we believe we have to do is restore public confidence. We heard that from many of the speakers. Marketing our services and getting people back is going to be difficult. We must communicate what steps we're taking to keep the public safe and that includes cleaning regimens and efforts related to housing the unhoused and the homeless and moving them off the system. I was talking to our group today and I was saying that regardless of how much we strengthen our cleaning protocols and our additional cleaning, if we do not take care of the unhoused on our systems, then people will yet believe that our system is not clean. And so this is something that we are taking a very, very aggressive approach to do. We are requiring face coverings on our system. We're concerned about the enforcement of that. I do not want to put our bus operators in positions to enforce. And we will see how that goes even though we've required face coverings, the enforcement piece of that is a work in progress. A big part of restoring that public confidence is of course involving our vehicles, our infrastructure, and our facilities. Like many of you, our buses and trains are cleaned on a daily basis. Our facilities are cleaned on a daily basis - PPE for all front-line employees, requiring bus operators to use safety barriers. We got a head start on bus operator barriers. We began installing barriers about four years ago of course to address the assault on bus operators. So 100 percent of our fleet is equipped with bus operator barriers. And that is helping to provide protection from - for our bus operators. We have implemented rear-door boarding. Our service planning, when it comes to service planning, we're monitoring several data sources to try and stay ahead of each phase of reopening. I've gotten a call this sort of quick strike service planning based on on-street realities, and we have been doing that pretty successfully. In terms of coordination with state and local authorities, we have a solid relationship with our state and local partners. We have fully activated our emergency operations center. I've stood up an incident command structure where we meet every morning at 8:00 a.m. and talk about that day's activities and the number of cases that we have here in L.A. County. Federal coordination - the question what do we need from FTA, the short answer is money - money and flexibility. Money because, like most transit agencies around the nation, we've seen our resources and our revenue collapse leaving us with big holes in our budget. And I mentioned sales tax and state funding or tolls, so the need for federal support is universal. And also flexibility. No one agency is exactly alike. Some may need to use federal funds to meet construction timelines on new starts projects given the decline of locally sales tax dollars. Others may need to use federal funds to purchase cleaning tools like UV light to build commuter confidence to return to buses and trains. Flexibility becomes key as we move forward. We want to commend the work of FTA. Once the President signed the CARES Act on March 27th, the FTA, under the leadership of Acting Administrator Williams was on the ball working with us and all transit agencies to ensure that we knew how the funding would be apportioned. So we appreciate that and we understand the complexity of that work. Finally, let me say that we believe that the future is bright. We know that these are uncharted waters, but we are moving not from a position of fear, but a position of planning and a position of safety. We know there's a lot

of doom and gloom out there, but we believe that our mission is a righteous mission and the value of public transportation is just as strongly today as ever, even though we have to build back that confidence. So thank you for having us and thank you for setting up this call and we appreciate the work that Ms. Williams and Mr. Welbes and Ms. Buchanan are doing.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Hello, this is Matt Welbes. I think we had some technical difficulty. Phil, can you hear me? Phil, I do want to thank you for your remarks today. Our final speaker is Peter Rogoff and Peter is the CEO of Sound Transit providing service in the Seattle area and as most of you know, a former FTA Administrator. Peter, I'm turning the session over to you right now. I want to let everyone know that we may have lost some of our participants due to a technical issue. And Peter may be on the line or he may join us shortly. So I thank you for your patience right now. Hello, so I understand that Peter should be back on the line now. If you are, Peter, please proceed with your remarks. Thank you. Okay. Peter is going to join us shortly. Appreciate everyone's patience.

>> PETER ROGOFF: Hello. This is Peter Rogoff, if anyone is still there.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Peter, we are still here. Thank you for dialing back in. We had a technical glitch. We do have the participants on the line. If you're ready to proceed with your remarks, please do.

>> PETER ROGOFF: I will. And I'm going to be brief. I'm batting cleanup and obviously a lot of what we are facing here a lot of people have given voice to. So I'm just going to take a couple of minutes to talk about some differences and some unique things that we're wrestling with here. They say misery loves company, and it is good to hear from so many of our colleagues wrestling with the same things. I do really appreciate Jane, Henrika, and Matt for organizing this. We have a lot of blessings and challenges here at Sound Transit. Especially in this current environment, we see both rather starkly. We've been very blessed sort of similar to what Nuria has with a huge intensity of tech employers and they've been extraordinarily supportive of us. They also are on the cutting edge of telecommuting and expanding telecommuting in the face of this in a way that we expect to be more permanent than not among large chunks of their workforce. Companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook, Google, the tech employers around here, have already signaled employees will be free to telecommute through the end of the calendar year. I'm sure as Nuria knows, Twitter has announced their employees will be free to telecommute forever. So a big question we're trying to wrestle with here is what does the new ridership pattern look like? We have already seen it, and I will credit the media with this. They have done some analysis from our data and that from King County metro and others is in this pandemic period when the governor encouraged everyone to stay home, who is still riding? What is the ridership on each of these different routes? You can pretty much do an overlay of that map with an overlay of income groups and recognize that lower income transit dependent individuals are still riding while choice riders are not. What we're trying to figure out is, is that the new normal for us? Because wholly separate from issues of Title VI compliance, just showing you're not disproportionately impacting communities of color or the environmental justice focus on disproportionality impacting low income communities, the question is who are we to serve and who still wants our service for the remainder of 2020 and into 2021? So Gary talked about the fact that they have reached out and he's talking to his fellow transit agencies in Texas three times a week. We have a



three times a week call of just the transit agencies in the Puget Sound region, of which there are ten, and we all try to co-conspire on things like how we're going to do rear-door boarding, face coverings, reintroduction of fares and those issues. We are actually, having suspended fares on both bus and rail, we are going to be the first mover here and we're going to restart fares on rail June 1st, but we're also going to - for the folks using their ORCA cards, which is more than half of our ridership, and it's worth pointing out more than half of our ridership has their fares paid for by a lot of those big employers I already cited - while we're going to let people tap their ORCA card and pay full fare, we're going to introduce temporarily for the month of June, a \$1 fare on Link, our light rail service, and a \$2 fare on commuter rail. Why? We think it's absolutely imperative with so many people laid off all of a sudden to show some concern for the financial straits people are in. So by providing this \$1 fare or \$2 fare depending on which service you're using, you can do that by using a ticket vending machine or mobile app, we are able to show that concern while simultaneously trying to sign people up for what we call the ORCA LIFT program, which is a subsidized low income program for all these people who are newly unemployed. Just as Phil Washington spoke to the challenge of the unhoused gravitating to our system, we have had a huge problem with that. And part of our reintroduction of fares on rail is to address that - to get fare enforcement back in place and make sure that the people who are riding our rail service are really taking essential trips. We run rail service right from the airport, but all the way up to the University of Washington at present where there's a huge medical facility and a huge number of COVID patients and a huge number of medical professionals who are taking light rail to get there, and we want to make sure they have a safe trip that they're comfortable in. You know, we are ridiculously dependent on sales tax here, just like Gary is. But it's in part because we have no income tax and many of us get little or no money from the state at all. So we have a partner agency here in King County metro where over 80 percent of their operating budget is derived from sales tax. That is a rough thing to live through. So we're all talking together about if we have to reduce service next year and just the overall transit footprint of the region is smaller for lack of operating funds, who are we serving and are we making sure we're serving the people who need it the most? I will also just say as a major constructor, we, like Phil, have a very large construction program. We've had to spend a lot of time working with the state about restarting construction in a safe manner. We have basically forged partnerships like we've never had before between our construction contractors and our labor partners to make sure that we have a new safe operating plan on the construction site, that we're doing oversight of it. We have already shut down and allowed to restart, after considerable inspection and work, one of our major contractors on a federal project, where we did not see them showing the requisite safety of their construction workforce in enforcing social distancing and things of that kind. It's a real new world order when it comes to ensuring safety on construction, and we've spent quite a lot of time on that. I'm just going to conclude by talking a little bit about a lot of people have obviously and rightly thanked the FTA for the work they did on the CARES Act. We are truly hopeful, as I suspect Phil Washington is, of a stimulus program in the future that really addresses capital stimulus. Our entire capital program, is only 16 percent federal, but in order for us to deliver the projects that we hope to deliver on time, both federal and non-federal, we are going to need to try and get a larger chunk of that program through either the state, which is highly unlikely, or a federal stimulus program. So I'm not going to say that the only thing FTA can do is deliver money. I would actually like them to take on an issue that Pat Foye spoke to and that is how do we equitably go cashless. I really commend Pat for having been able to bite that off. We have a rich debate here about if you go cashless, you are disadvantaging people who are lower

income who still live and work with cash, the unbanked and such. We need to be able to solve that problem, because if we're going to be able to, you know, restore and comfortably get passengers on our buses and also having operators comfortable on our buses, having passengers dwell - still depositing dollars and coins into the cash box - has got to become a thing of the past. I would love FTA to help us think through how we equitably move away from cash. I will just close with this. I was thrilled to hear Gary do a shout-out to Gail Lyssy, a very well-deserved promotion. Gail's daughter graduated today from graduate school. My son today is going to graduate from undergraduate school. I think we are approaching the last day of federal service for Dave Longo who served a great many administrators over the years as the head civilian for communications for the FTA. He has served many, many years and has battled cancer multiple times during that time. I think a number of us thought at times that Dave was not going to be able to retire from the FTA. So I am so thrilled for him that he is. And so sorry for the agency that he is. So I just want to wish best wishes to Gail and to Dave and thank you for putting together this opportunity to chat with one another.

>> MATTHEW WELBES: Peter, thank you for your remarks and thank you for your shout-out to Gail and to Dave. And for each one of you, thank you for taking the time today to share your experience and your plans with us. As you know, we have been very hard at work here at FTA to support you. And the insights you're sharing with us, I've been taking a lot of notes, are going to help us continue our work together and make our response effort that much stronger. Now I'm going to close out and turn it over to our Acting Administrator Jane Williams.

>> JANE WILLIAMS: Thank you, Matt. And let me echo your comments about Dave Longo. He will be absolutely missed by me and all of FTA. And thank you for your shout-outs to Gail as well as Steve and all the RAs. I often refer to them as our face of FTA across the nation and our boots on the ground. So they are all standouts. I appreciate their very, very hard work. And thank you to everyone who joined us today especially all of the eight of you General Managers who took time out of your very, very busy schedule to present and be a participant in our discussion today. It's incredibly helpful to hear your on-the-ground information of how we can be more helpful and what we can do between FTA and the transit industry. You know, our partnership could never be more important than it is right now. And we are facing some of the biggest challenges in our lifetime, but I know we're going to get through this together because we're stronger when we work together. As I mentioned earlier, this session is being recorded and we will provide a summary of the comments we received after today's session. So please take care. Stay safe, and thanks again for all you're doing to keep America moving. We appreciate it. Have a good day.