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Island Transit Joins National Health & Safety Commitments Program

Coupeville, WA –With concern over rising COVID-19 cases this winter and new state restrictions to stop the spread of the virus, Island Transit has joined the American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) “Health & Safety Commitments Program”, making a pledge to passengers that public transit is taking all the necessary measures to operate safely during the pandemic.

“We’ve taken the health and safety of our passengers and employees very seriously since the outbreak of COVID-19,” says Todd Morrow, Executive Director of Island Transit. “By joining other public transit agencies nationwide in the Health & Safety Commitments Program, we’re further cementing that pledge and asking others to join with us in honoring these commitments to help keep each other protected from this deadly virus. We are all in this together.”

By signing on to the APTA Health & Safety Commitments Program with more than 100 public transit systems, Island Transit and the public transit industry are actively working to instill confidence in riders that it’s committed to protecting their health and safety.

The program was developed after asking transit users from across the country what measures would make them feel more confident riding public transportation amid concerns about COVID-19. From this research, the industry identified four key areas that transit systems need to address to earn riders’ confidence:

1. Following public health guidelines from official sources.
2. Cleaning and disinfecting transit vehicles frequently and requiring face coverings and other protections.
3. Keeping passengers informed and empowered to choose the safest times and routes to ride.
4. Putting health first by requiring riders and employees to avoid public transit if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or feel ill.

“Island Transit has pledged to meet these commitments by creating specific policies that are effective for our system, our riders, and our community,” says Morrow, adding that a key component of the Health & Safety Commitments Program is the shared responsibility of the transit system and its riders to follow the guidelines.

Island Transit serves Whidbey and Camano Islands in Island County. The mission of Island Transit is to provide safe, accessible, convenient, and friendly public transportation services which enhance our Island quality of life.
“Riders rely on us to follow these commitments, and we rely on riders to protect themselves and other customers,” says Morrow. “With another wave of cases expected this winter, these commitments to each other are critically important to the health of our community.”

Island Transit is committed to continually addressing and implementing new health and safety measures as information evolves on how to best protect each other from the virus. Currently, the agency:

- Requires face covering of all passengers and operators on the bus and at our facilities.
- Provides face coverings for those who need them.
- Provides hand sanitizer on all two-door buses and currently installing dispensers on other buses.
- Sanitizes buses daily using an electrostatic sprayer to thoroughly cover all surfaces of the bus interior with a bio-chemical disinfectant proven to kill COVID-19.
- Requires employees to conduct daily temperature and health checks before they come to work.
- Limits the number of passengers on a bus to provide opportunity for social distancing.
- Installed MERV 8 air filters in all buses to trap COVID-19 droplets and prevent the virus from moving through the HVAC system.
- Advises customers follow health and safety guidelines and not to ride the bus if ill.

New bus decals and posters with the four commitments are going up on the buses to remind passengers of these shared responsibilities. For more information on Island Transit’s Health & Safety Commitment’s Program, go to www.islandtransit.org/Commitment

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