



Moving The Nation Through Crisis

Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force Report

OCTOBER 2020



AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



Phillip A. Washington
Task Force Chair

Nuria I. Fernandez
APTA Chair

Paul P. Skoutelas
APTA President and CEO

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Message from APTA President and CEO



The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has a proud history of guiding and supporting the transit industry during challenging times and transformational change. Since 1882, our industry's leaders have come together to innovate,

evolve, and strengthen communities by expanding and modernizing mobility for all.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely tested public transportation and our nation. Despite the immense challenges, transit agencies have continued serving their communities. While APTA secured emergency federal funding and launched new ways to help its members, our local public transit systems have carried heroes to front-line jobs, transported people to life-saving medical treatments, and delivered meals and other essentials to those in need. As it has so many times in history, public transportation stepped up in a time of crisis.

The work of the Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force is one more example of APTA's commitment to transit passengers, employees, and the public. The deliverables described in this report advance our fundamental mission—improving the quality of life through mobility. I commend APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez and Task Force Chair Phillip A. Washington, as well as the contributions made by our dedicated members, on this important initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul P. Skoutelas".

Paul P. Skoutelas
APTA President and CEO

Message from APTA Chair



As our nation deals with an unprecedented convergence of crises in public health, the economy, and racial and social justice, public transportation has an opportunity and obligation to build a better future. Ensuring safe, resilient, and accessible

mobility for all is the first priority. This requires successfully navigating the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and defining new priorities.

With this in mind, I established APTA's Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force to: 1) develop a plan to support public transportation's core functions and financial stability; and 2) explore new methods, tools, and approaches to reposition our industry's essential role in a post-pandemic world. I asked Phillip A. Washington, CEO of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) and former APTA Chair, to lead this effort, drawing upon the experience and expertise of APTA's diverse membership.

This initiative will have a lasting impact on strengthening public confidence, safe-guarding our employees and riders, promoting equity, and investing in a new future for public transportation. I am grateful to those who worked diligently to produce the results described in this report and meet our industry's needs at this pivotal moment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nuria I. Fernandez".

Nuria I. Fernandez
APTA Chair and General Manager and CEO,
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Message from the Task Force Chair



The urgent imperative of the Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force was to support our industry's recovery and prepare for the future. In undertaking this mission, I was privileged to work with many of APTA's most talented and experienced members

and the diverse committees and constituencies they represent.

Among this group of professionals were my co-chairs Joanna M. Pinkerton, Paul Wiedefeld, and Kimberly Slaughter, who worked tirelessly to achieve the Task Force objectives.

The past several months have underscored the importance of public transportation as a lifeline during this crisis. With this report, we now are writing the next chapter of that story by demonstrating transit's role in addressing the health, economic, and societal challenges that are impacted by mobility. We know that public transportation will be one of the most important catalysts for revitalizing large and small communities, and building a vibrant, safe, equitable, flexible, and more accessible post-pandemic society.

It has been said that from crisis comes opportunity. Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of the Task Force members and staff, we are well positioned to shape such an opportunity—to recover, reimagine, and reinvent a different, even more successful future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip A. Washington". The signature is stylized with large, fluid loops.

Phillip A. Washington
Task Force Chair, CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan
Transportation Authority (LA Metro)

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... Public transportation will be one of the most important catalysts for building a vibrant, safe, equitable, flexible, and more accessible post-pandemic society.”

Background

Beginning in March 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States produced profound changes to the American economy, our work life, and how we live our daily lives. Millions of workers lost their jobs or moved to home offices; people learned to live, work, shop, and play without being mobile; and rolling restrictions on public gatherings from community to community limited travel.

Many sectors of the nation's economy have suffered, including airlines, hospitality, education, and restaurants. Public transportation—from transit agencies to manufacturers—was particularly hard hit. Ridership declined as much as 90 percent in some communities. Revenue from local sales tax and fares—the primary funding sources for most transit agencies—dropped to historic levels.

90%

**Decline in
Public Transit
Ridership in Some
Communities**

An APTA survey conducted in July 2020 found that:

- Nearly half of all public transit agencies have already implemented or are planning service reductions, furloughs, and layoffs, and have deferred or cancelled capital projects.
- Nearly 90 percent of our transit-related business members have implemented layoffs and furloughs due to declining sales.
- A third of these businesses are concerned about having to shut down their operations if additional federal emergency aid is not forthcoming soon.

Against this worrisome backdrop of rising unemployment and slowing economic activity, heightened concerns emerged nationwide over racial and social inequities. Protests, homelessness, and unrest in some cities put further strain on public transportation agencies and personnel.

An Industry Response

Throughout the pandemic, public transit agencies continued to provide essential services to essential workers, often with a reduced workforce and under difficult conditions. In many communities, transit employees risked their own health or even their lives to support those in need.

To help offset the costs, APTA led a successful effort in March 2020 to secure \$25 billion in emergency funding for public transit and passenger rail under the CARES Act. This assistance allowed our transit agencies to take a collective, but brief, financial breath.

At the same time, we needed an industry-wide effort to develop and share best practices, discuss new technologies and approaches, and learn from public transportation systems and health experts in the U.S. and throughout the world. While transit agencies differ in size, modes, ridership, and resources, all were facing similar challenges: how to protect their employees and riders during the pandemic; how to regain public confidence in returning to transit once the national recovery began; and how to address the critical needs of the industry after the pandemic.



“

Throughout the pandemic, public transit agencies continued to provide essential services to essential workers.”



Task Force Objectives & Structure

In April 2020, APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez called for the establishment of the Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force. The goals were to develop guidance to support public transportation agencies' efforts to resume core functions and financial stability, and to reposition the industry for an essential role in the nation's economic recovery.

Nuria selected Phillip A. Washington, CEO of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), to chair the Task Force. In light of public transit's urgent needs, the work was to be completed by September 2020.

Members & Advisors

The Task Force's 44 members and advisors included the chairs of the following APTA groups and committees:

- Access Committee
- Bus & Paratransit CEOs Committee
- Business Member Board of Governors
- Commuter Rail CEOs Committee
- Diversity & Inclusion Council
- Leadership APTA Class 2020-2021
- Legislative Committee
- Marketing & Communications Committee
- Mid-Size Operations Committee
- Mobility Management Committee
- Policy, Planning & Program Development Committee
- Procurement & Materials Management Committee
- Public Transportation CEOs Coordinating Council
- Rail Transit CEOs Committee
- Safety Coordinating Council
- Small Operations Committee
- Transit Board Members Committee
- Workforce Development Committee

To ensure a diverse contribution of ideas, knowledge, and experience, additional APTA committees and business members, as well as outside agencies and

partner organizations were invited to participate. Those individuals representing additional APTA committees and other constituencies were charged with seeking broad input from their members and peers.

Workplan

The Task Force began its work by posing the following questions:

- What should public transit agencies be doing now to protect the health and safety of riders and employees, and how can APTA help these agencies achieve that goal?
- How can public transit agencies earn the public's confidence and trust in order to convince riders that it is safe to return to public transit?
- What are the industry's major priorities for the future as we recover from the pandemic, advance our nation's recovery, and prepare for the likelihood of new travel needs, rider preferences, and economic and social challenges?

To answer these questions and produce deliverables for APTA's members, the Task Force divided itself into three subcommittees to focus on Priority Areas, each led by a seasoned public transportation leader:

- **Joanna M. Pinkerton**, President/CEO, Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), led the work to write the *Transit Industry Narrative and Rebuild Public Confidence*;
- **Paul Wiedefeld**, General Manager and CEO, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), led efforts to create and/or assemble a body of best practices, guidelines, and policies to help public transit agencies with the *Recovery and Restoration of Transit Services*; and
- **Kimberly Slaughter**, Senior Vice President, Senior National Practice Consultant, HNTB Corporation, led the research and development of white papers and planning tools to guide *Public Transit Planning and Preparations in the Post-COVID-19 Mobility Landscape*.

In fulfilling its mission, the Task Force was guided by the need for results that would benefit every public

transit agency, regardless of mode, location, size, or resources. This over-arching prerequisite was considered critical to the recovery, restoration, unity, and strength of the public transportation industry.

The work took on a sense of urgency as the pandemic continued to hurt ridership, employees' health and morale, and public transit agencies' finances. Over the course of four months, Task Force members conducted numerous meetings, webinars, and working group discussions, all of which were designed to create deliverables of immediate value for public transit agencies.



Acknowledgements

The Task Force thanks several organizations, institutions, companies, and APTA members for their extraordinary contributions to the work of preparing white papers and infographics, research and the graphics, posters, and charts for this report. This includes: WSP, HNTB, LTK engineering, Sam Schwartz Consulting, Hearts & Minds, Golin Public Relations, and Quigley Design. Special thanks also is extended to Gurumurthy Ramachandran, PhD, of John Hopkins University, who served as health advisor to the Task Force.

Outcomes & Deliverables

1 Deliverable 1 Member Resources: Guidance & Best Practices

APTA has always been the definitive, authoritative source for information about the public transportation industry in North America. To help our members address the evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, APTA needed to become the reliable industry expert on this new and unexpected challenge.

Our goal was to create the world's most comprehensive library of knowledge on public transportation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Task Force collected, assessed, and developed guidance and best practices to aid public transit agencies—in keeping riders and employees safe, encouraging the public to use transit, telling public transit's story to opinion leaders and the media, and planning for the future.

This diverse array of tools, studies, and other information form the **“COVID-19 Resource Hub,”** found on APTA's website at <https://apta.com/covid-19-resource-hub>.

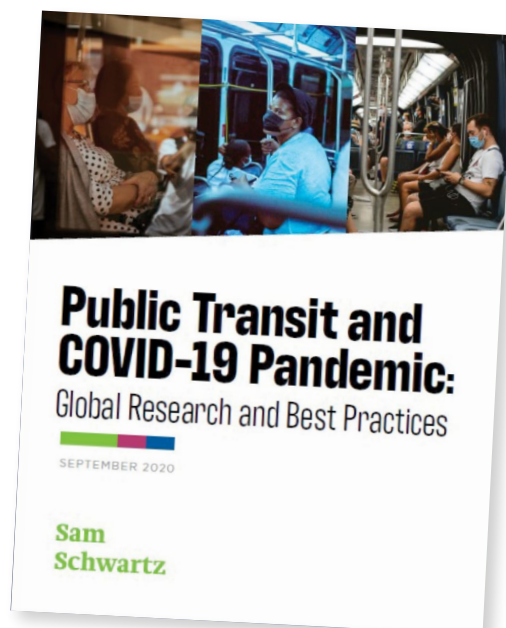
The Hub's content is relevant to any public transit agency and transit-related business or interest group dealing with the impacts of the pandemic. The Task Force encourages members of our industry to use this resource to inform, explore, and adopt the policies and practices that best suit their own systems, organizations, and communities.

Of special note is a report titled “COVID-19 and Public Transportation,” a comprehensive review of U.S. and global research regarding COVID-19 transmission and public transit use. The study, which is based on interviews with public health experts and analyses of various global data sources, concludes that there is no direct correlation between using public transportation and the transmission of the coronavirus.

In addition to the study, the resource hub contains information and guidance on the following COVID-19 related issues:



- **Healthy Public Transit Personnel**
Keeping public transit workers safe and healthy to provide essential service to our communities.
- **Cleaning & Sanitizing**
Cleaning and disinfecting vehicles, stations, and stops regularly.
- **Limited Touchpoints**
Using technology to reduce touchpoints.
- **Face Coverings for Passengers**
Providing the latest guidance on face coverings for riders and operators.
- **Social Distancing**
Creating physical and administrative measures to allow adequate space among riders.
- **Communications & Monitoring**
Delivering accurate and timely service information to riders.
- **Ventilation & Maintenance**
Ensuring properly maintained filtered air management in vehicles, stations, and stops.



Based on analyses of data from U.S. and global transit systems, the *Public Transit and COVID-19 Pandemic* report shows that using public transportation has no direct connection to the spread of the coronavirus.

On an ongoing and timely basis, APTA will continue to add new information to the “COVID-19 Resource Hub” as our industry and the public health community learn more and the public health community gain greater experience in containing the pandemic.

2 Deliverable 2 Health & Safety Commitments Program

One of the goals of the Task Force was to help public transit agencies bring back riders safely. This meant finding ways to address the public’s fears and concerns about the spread of COVID-19 and restoring confidence in public transit.

To understand what riders wanted public transit systems to do to make them feel safe, we asked our customers.

Rider Opinion Research

The Task Force undertook the following original research in June, July, and August 2020:

- **National Survey:**
Designed and conducted a 25-minute, national survey of more than 2,000 public transit users

(who ride public transportation always, frequently, or infrequently) with the ability to analyze the data by regions and urban areas.

- **Online Focus Group Discussions:**
Designed and conducted three consecutive days of online focus group discussions with public transit users in 15 different communities across the U.S. that included large, medium, small bus, rail, and multimodal systems.
- **Existing Local Surveys by Public Transit Agencies:**
Reviewed several local surveys and focus group research that had been conducted recently by various public transit agencies, looking for common messages.

- **Message Campaign:**

Developed and tested ridership campaign messages, which could be used nationally or adapted to the needs of local public transit agencies, all aimed at winning back riders' trust, loyalty, support, and business.

The totality of this work, conducted by two different independent consultancies retained by the Task Force—Heart + Mind Strategies and Golin Public Relations—provided a comprehensive understanding of what needed to be done to get public transit riders back on buses and trains as communities experience different phases of the pandemic.

Research Findings

What did public transit riders tell us? The research found that:

- **Riders understand the immense value of public transportation**, but ridership is down for two reasons: 1) there is no reason to travel because workplaces, restaurants, and stores are closed; and 2) fear of exposure to COVID-19.

- **Public transit users have a real fear of bringing the coronavirus home**, driven by general information (and misinformation) about how the virus is transmitted—not by transit-specific news stories. Sixty-seven percent of riders report being “extremely” or “very” concerned about this possibility.
- **Those who have used public transit during the pandemic report positive experiences.** Depending upon the mode (bus, subway, light rail/commuter rail, paratransit), 88 – 90 percent report a “fair,” “good,” or “excellent” experience.
- **A majority (52 percent) said that their local public transit system is doing an “excellent” or “good” job to reduce the spread of COVID-19.**
- **Resuming previous travel habits on public transit will take time.** A majority of people said they plan to wait to see what happens with the spread of COVID-19.
- **Riders are somewhat optimistic that they will return to public transit again in the coming months**, with the largest gains in bus ridership.

Figure 1: Riders agree that COVID-19 safety is a cooperative effort and having more information empowers them to make the best choices.

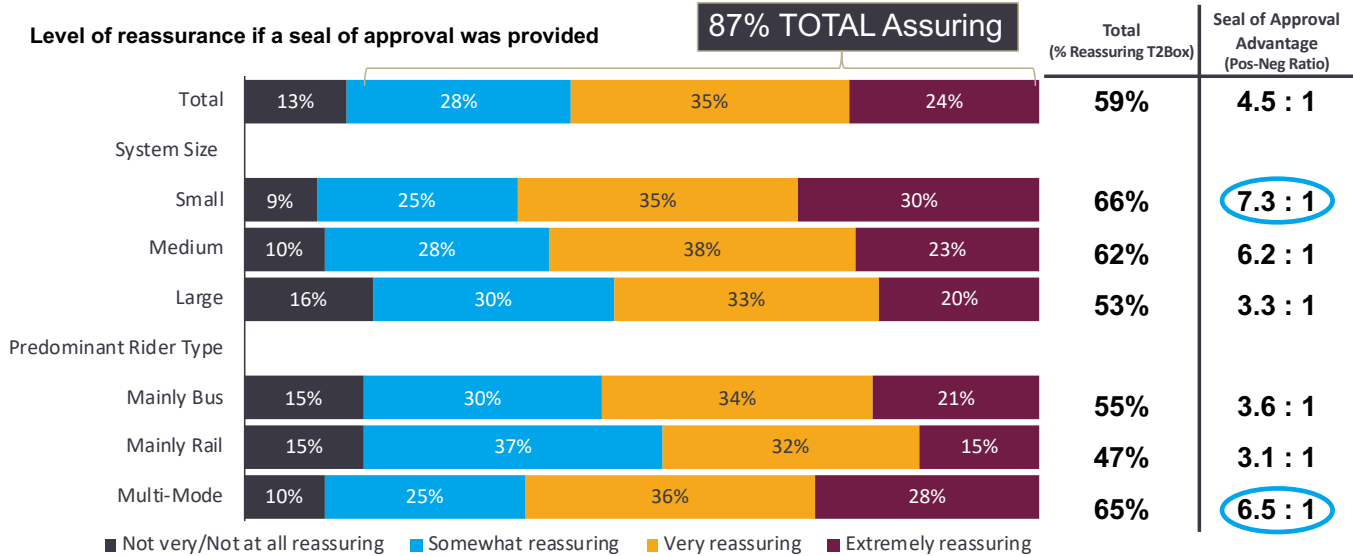
Message Testing

	System Size (% Agree – T2Box)			Predominant Rider Type (% Agree – T2Box)		
	Small	Medium	Large	Mainly Bus	Mainly Rail	Multi-Mode
Safety on public transportation has to be a cooperative effort between systems and riders.	58%	65%	63%	62%	56%	62%
I want to know that public transportation systems are enforcing the COVID-19 related policies they have put in place.	56%	62%	60%	57%	54%	61%
I want to feel empowered to make the safest choices when I ride public transportation.	57%	54%	55%	55%	52%	57%
I feel like I understand what is expected and required of all public transit riders.	52%	56%	51%	50%	39%	56%
I would feel more comfortable riding public transportation if I knew specifically how often vehicles were being cleaned.	52%	56%	50%	50%	42%	54%
I would feel more comfortable riding public transportation if I saw how the vehicles were cleaned.	51%	54%	45%	43%	40%	53%
I want to know what types of cleaning products are being used to sanitize vehicles.	51%	50%	45%	43%	38%	53%
Public transportation can't just tell me what they are doing, I need to see it to feel comfortable.	50%	53%	45%	42%	42%	54%

■ Disagree (B2Box) ■ Swing ■ Agree (T2Box)

BASE: All Respondents (n=2,011), Small System (n=549), Medium System (n=308), Large System (n=1,154), Mainly Bus (n=590), Mainly Rail (n=353), Multi-mode (n=1,214) Q605. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below.

Figure 2: Safety certifications or seal of approval is VERY assuring to riders.



BASE: All Respondents (n=2,011), Small System (n=549), Medium System (n=308), Large System (n=1,154), Mainly Bus (n=590), Mainly Rail (n=353), Multi-mode (n=1,214) Q419. Some transit systems are looking into the concept of safety certifications or seals to show they are following current recommendations and guidelines for safety and cleaning. How reassuring would you find this type of certification or seal?

- **People say they feel safest in environments they can control.** Rides want to be given timely information so that they can feel empowered to make informed choices about where, when, and how to use public transit safely.
- **The top three messages**, as seen in *Figure 1*, were:
 - Safety on public transportation has to be a cooperative effort between systems and riders.
 - I want to know that public transportation systems are enforcing the COVID-19 policies they have put in place.
 - I want to feel empowered to make the safest choices when I ride public transportation.
- Four in five public transit riders (82 percent) have heard or read something about **public transit's actions to keep passengers safe**, however only about half as many non-transit users are as aware.
- There has been sharp improvement in the degree to which **transit users feel safe**. An increasing majority (63 percent) of riders feel safe compared to nearly half (47 percent) of the general public.
- More than half (55 percent) of all riders rate public transit as “excellent” or “good” in serving as a **lifeline for the community** during the pandemic—significantly higher than among the general public.
- A large majority (87 percent) of public transit users reported that a **safety certificate or seal** by a third party would be extremely reassuring. (See *Figure 2*)

National trends show that the public’s favorable view of “transit as a lifeline” continues to improve. When public transit agencies communicate about their safety efforts, public awareness and positive impressions increase.

APTA's Health & Safety Commitments Program

Based on what transit users said they needed to feel safe returning to public transportation, the Task Force identified a set of four key issues that public transit agencies and riders should commit to address:



1. Follow official public health guidelines and industry best practices.



2. Protect each other by cleaning and disinfecting procedures and mandatory face coverings / PPE.



3. Share timely information with riders so that they are empowered to make informed choices.



4. Put health first by asking public transit users and transit employees to stay at home if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or feel ill.

The APTA Health & Safety Commitments (HSC) program is built on these four national commitments that can be implemented through local actions.

Each public transit agency will decide its own local actions that best meet those commitments in their community.

APTA's "COVID-19 Resource Hub" (<https://apta.com/covid-19-resource-hub>) is a valuable resource to help public transit agencies explore the variety of proven policies and practices that they can use to meet the program's commitments.



Since our research underscored the importance of making riders and the public aware of public transit's efforts to keep passengers safe, the Task Force created **a seal and online toolkit** of posters, social graphics, public service announcements, and other communications and media materials. These can be found at: <https://www.apta.com/advocacy-legislation-policy/advocacy/ahscprogram>.

Public transit agencies using these materials sign a pledge to fulfill the commitments in a manner that meets their local needs.

APTA's Health & Safety Commitments Program is our industry's promise to the public that transit systems are taking clear and measurable steps to operate safely and protect riders during the pandemic. To date, more than 200 public transit agencies are participating in the Commitments Program.



The Health & Safety Commitments Program provides transit agencies with a toolkit of customizable signage, messages, and media materials to help show that they are using industry-wide policies and practices to keep riders and employees safe.

3 Deliverable 3 Public Transit's Priorities Post COVID-19

The Task Force focused on how public transportation can emerge from the pandemic stronger, more resilient and equitable, and in the best position to serve our communities.

This work began by drafting a **Vision Statement**:

APTA leads public transportation in a new mobility era, advocating to connect and build stronger communities. Providing public transportation that supports the social and economic recovery and stability of our communities will ensure that our transit landscape is equitable, resilient, sustainable, and adaptable.

Our vision of the transit landscape will use innovation and thought leadership to create a roadmap that embraces partnerships to set the bar for new standards of service. Our customers will trust public transportation to be clean, safe, comfortable, and reliable. North American communities will emerge stronger with access to public transportation that is inclusive of mobility options for all.

To fulfill this vision, four Working Groups were created to focus on the broad issues outlined below. All of this work is summarized in a [PowerPoint presentation](#) that includes a brief video.

1. Funding, Finance and Economics: *Janet Gonzalez Tudor, Working Group Chair; APTA Sustainability Committee; Transportation Operational Resiliency Director, HDR, Chicago, IL*

The working group conducted a survey and a series of one-on-one interviews to identify the biggest challenges and most promising opportunities. Reductions in service, travel prohibitions, deferral of capital projects, and hiring freezes are among the measures that transit agencies have taken in response to current financial pressures.

The working group also created [an infographic](#) that shows the best practices to help transit agencies navigate current economic uncertainties, including recovery strategies, alternative funding sources, new partnerships, and service efficiencies.

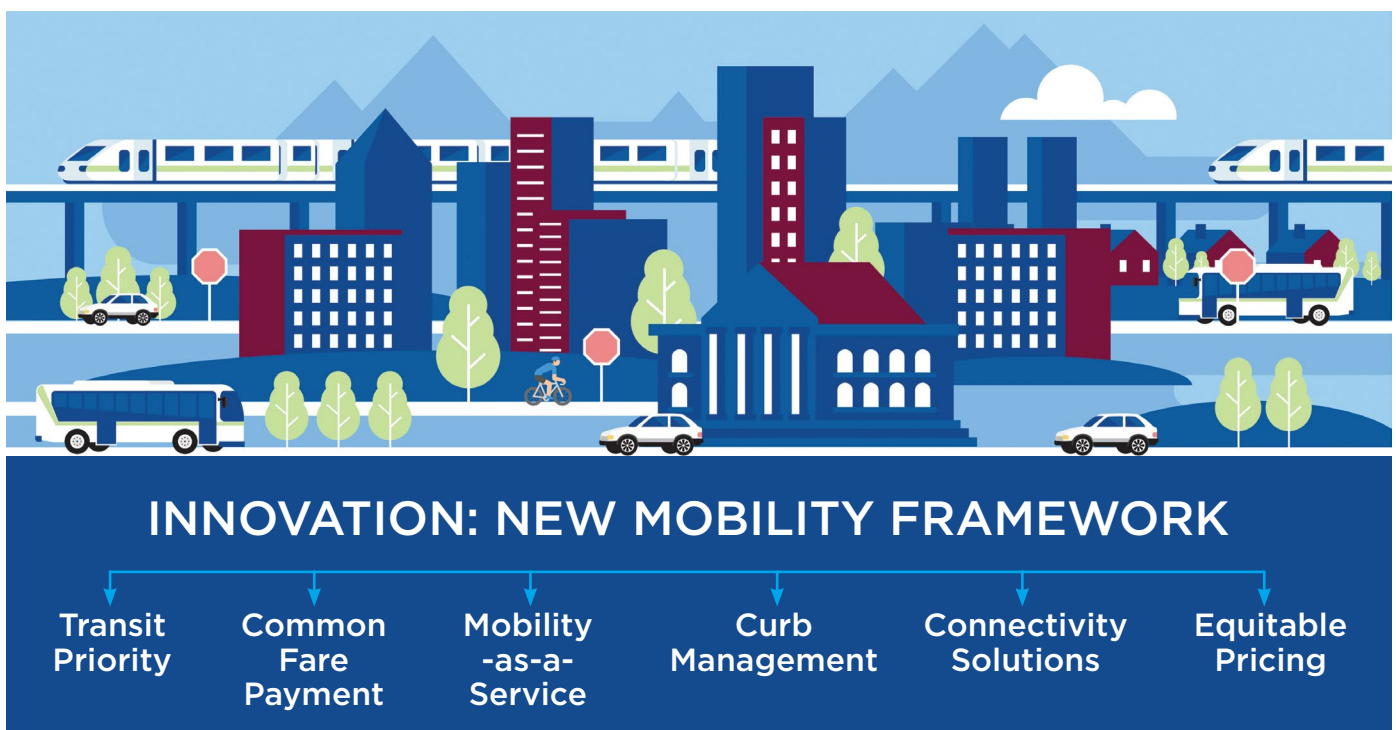
2. Innovation: *Manjit Sooch, Working Group Chair; APTA Research and Technology Committee; Director of Systems and Software Development, Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit), Oakland, CA*

Three surveys revealed that public transportation is in a state of flux as the industry seeks new approaches to customer satisfaction / customer comfort, data-driven operational decisions, multi-modal payment solutions, and contactless payments. The working group also engaged Chief Innovation Officers from transit systems around the country to gain their perspectives on the changing mobility landscape.

The working group developed a comprehensive [Mobility Framework for Urban Centers](#) that looks at the role of public transit agencies through a new lens—one that integrates policy considerations with technological and operational solutions, such as Mobility-as-a-Service—to redefine urban mobility.

3. Research & Thought Leadership: *Joanne Peterson, Working Group Chair; Chief Human Capital and Development Officer, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Los Angeles, CA*

Members of the working group along with the current class of Leadership APTA examined post-pandemic issues dealing with health, safety, rider behaviors, messaging and branding, the public transit workforce, and racial and socioeconomic disparities in our health care, economic, and transportation systems. This work led to the following white papers:



- **[Measures to Promote Safe Mobility.](#)** Public transit designers, architects, and engineers have a responsibility to ensure that proper design measures are implemented to promote the health and safety of transit riders and employees in a post-COVID-19 world. This paper, which includes [an infographic](#) to assess the long-term health and safety of transit operations, describes architectural, ventilation, and air sanitization interventions that advance the safety of public transportation.
- **[Measures to Improve Workforce and Rider Behaviors and Influence Messaging and Branding.](#)** In a post-COVID-19 world, transit agencies have a responsibility to ensure that their facilities are safe—and also perceived to be safe—by passengers and employees. This paper discusses behaviors and compliance among transit users and workers, and strategic messaging, branding, and partnerships for public transit agencies.

The working group also benefited from a [Rapid Equity Assessment Tool](#) that was developed by LA Metro to identify and prioritize equity opportunities.

4. Scenario Planning and Partnerships:

Adelee Le Grand, Working Group Chair; Vice President Strategic Advisory / Client Relations, Transdev North America, Lombard, IL

The working group identified three possible scenarios and a series of questions that public transit agencies will need to address in a post-pandemic world:

Potential Scenarios

- Pandemic continues
- Pandemic ends, but riders are wary
- Pandemic fades and riders return

Questions to Ask Under Each Scenario

- How should the customer experience change?
- What are the most immediate health priorities of transit agencies?
- What are the most important operational adjustments?
- What are the most important partnerships?
- What are the biggest financial concerns?

The working group also produced a [video](#) to facilitate the consideration of alternative future scenarios in a visual context.



Industry Priorities Moving Forward

As a result of the four working groups' efforts, six major post-pandemic priorities were identified for the public transportation industry.

PRIORITY 1

Broadening the funding base for transit agencies through partnerships with businesses, diversifying federal/state/local/farebox funding sources, and finding new markets for transit services.

This is a critical challenge for transit agencies whose funding base was devastated by the economic downturn and stay-at-home orders. While CARES Act funding helped to soften the initial blow, the longer-term financial prospects make it difficult or impossible for many agencies to address both operational and capital needs. The industry must diversify revenue sources by exploring partnerships with businesses and innovative capital funding programs.

PRIORITY 2

Finding approaches to help public transit manage the impact of persons experiencing homelessness.

As transit agencies struggled to provide safe service to the nation's essential workers, their efforts were often undermined by the growing number of riders using



trains, buses, and transit facilities as shelters and places of safe refuge. Public transit leaders, state and local government agencies, and community organizations must develop a more effective, sensitive, and long-term approach to reduce the population of persons experiencing homelessness and to protect the ability of transit agencies to serve their communities' mobility needs. The Task Force also believes there is a need to design effective training programs for transit operators and transit police that better prepare our workforce to help those experiencing homelessness.

PRIORITY 3

Developing new metrics for measuring the value of transit to communities, rather than relying primarily on ridership as the key gauge of transit's success.

Ridership has served as the most commonly used metric for measuring the success and value of public transit. While ridership data continue to be important, there are other valuable benefits generated by public transit. These include providing mobility services to socially and economically disadvantaged communities, reducing congestion and air pollution, improving the quality of life, and facilitating the expansion of new mobility services such as bike and scooter sharing. The industry must create a broader set of metrics that reflects the diverse benefits of public transportation and its critical role in building thriving communities, providing equitable access to jobs, education, health care and opportunity, and serving as the backbone of the mobility network.

PRIORITY 4

Defining transit's role in addressing racial and economic inequities in our communities and identifying ways in which public transit can play a larger role in the solution.

This past year has brought to the fore historic, ingrained challenges and hardships created by social, economic, and racial inequality in the United States. Public transit has always served as a positive force in addressing economic inequality, but much more can and must be done. All Americans should have reasonable access to mobility that enables them to benefit from opportunities for education, employment, and participation in the American dream. The Task Force believes it is important for public transit agencies to reassess their core mission from the perspective of their communities' new challenges.

PRIORITY 5

Seizing the opportunity to come back differently.

The pandemic has accelerated changes throughout the mobility ecosystem. Public transit agencies will function differently as a result, becoming more sustainable, resilient, and equitable by embracing their role as mobility managers with transit as the backbone of multi-modal networks. There are opportunities to deploy resources more efficiently and where they are needed the most, to use new approaches to fill service gaps, and to balance peak-service requirements. We need to move toward integrated and cashless payment systems, work with cities to repurpose streets, make the movement of transit users and pedestrians a priority, and shape policies around technological and operational solutions.

PRIORITY 6

Preparing the transit industry with safeguards and mobility practices in anticipation of any future pandemic.

The public transit industry can apply all that it has learned from the pandemic to prepare for future crises and to anticipate alternative future scenarios.

This includes forming and sustaining partnerships with the health care industry, social service organizations, and educational institutions.

APTA will focus on these six priorities within the framework of its new Strategic Plan and work with its members to address these critical issues in the coming years.

Webinars

To help advance thought leadership in the six priority areas, the following webinars were produced:

- [Transforming the Post-Pandemic Mobility Landscape](#) (August 27)
- [Reinventing the Mobility Ecosystem of the Future with Public Transportation as Backbone](#) (July 23)
- [COVID-19 IT Response—Lessons Learned, Best Practices and Innovation](#) (July 9)
- [Cybersecurity: The Current Environment under COVID-19](#) (June 23)
- [Restoring and Reimagining Transit Service in a Pandemic-Transformed World](#) (June 18)

BOTTOM LINE:

Re-invent mobility and look at urban transportation through a new lens that considers:



The current social equity dialogue (our industry has a huge part to play in this new social discourse)

Resiliency in the face of recurring health and security threats

Mobility as a Service

Intermodal Balance

4

Deliverable 4

Public Transportation's Narrative

When the Task Force began its work, we crafted messages about the vital role of public transportation in good times and in challenging times. We described the essential tasks that public transit performed since the start of the pandemic.

As we learned from our research, the more information that transit agencies share about their efforts to help local communities during the crisis, the more our industry is appreciated and valued by the public.

Key messages that have resonated with the public and across the industry include the following:

Public transit is a lifeline in good times and in crises.	• It is essential for our community to survive and thrive. • We get people to jobs, school, health care, entertainment, sports and the arts, and all of life's necessities and pleasures. • In a crisis, we are on the job and on the front lines, carrying healthcare workers, first responders, law enforcement officers, and grocery and pharmacy employees to essential jobs, seniors and persons with disabilities to life-sustaining services and necessities, such as food, medicines, PPE, and other needed supplies. • Public transit workers are our community's heroes moving heroes.
Public transit took immediate action to help communities.	• During the pandemic, public transit delivered on our two priorities: 1) Continuing to serve communities and critical workers; and 2) Keeping riders and employees safe. • To do this, transit agencies took extraordinary steps to clean and disinfect vehicles and facilities, added and adjusted schedules, increased security, reduced crowding, installed safety equipment on buses and trains, and tested new approaches to enhance safety. • Public transit agencies kept the wheels of the nation in motion.
Public transit—and its riders—are committed to ensuring the safest service.	We are committed to: • Following public health guidelines from official sources. • Protecting each other by cleaning and disinfecting transit vehicles and facilities frequently, and by requiring face coverings and other protection. • Keeping passengers informed and empowered to choose the safest times and routes to ride. • Putting health first by avoiding public transit if one has been exposed to COVID-19 or feels ill.
Public transit is essential to help our communities recover from this pandemic.	• Public transportation will be there. • As people reconnect to what they need, love, and aspire to achieve, transit will continue to adapt to riders' preferences, travel patterns, and post-pandemic needs.

We owe it to the heroes of our industry to remember the sacrifices they make—in some cases, with their lives—to ensure that workers who are essential to the national well-being are able to get to and from their jobs at hospitals, police and fire stations, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other workplaces.

We must ensure these sacrifices help our industry remain strong, even in the face of future pandemics,

by learning critical lessons, building back better, and preparing for future crises and challenges.

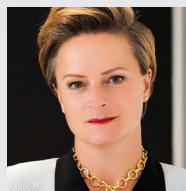
By working together, we have made enormous contributions to our national recovery. By continuing to work together as an industry, our collective future will be bright.

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