



 R M T D

2 0 2 0   A N N U A L   R E P O R T

**At Rockford Mass Transit District, we believe in mobility for all people.** We give our best to that mission every day. Since the very beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, we've worked hard to keep our passengers safe and healthy - from methodical multiple daily cleanings - to social distancing - to offering free rides for all when needed. We've put in the work and never let our community down.



Dear Friends,

When the history books are updated to include their examinations of 2020, a year that will no doubt live in infamy, the chapter's treatments will be grim. We've weathered a global pandemic beyond anything imaginable with economic repercussions that will leave no government, and few businesses, big or small, untouched. As citizens, many of us felt isolated with nowhere to go and no one to go there with - navigating an onslaught of lock downs, mitigations, enforced (and necessary) social distancing and mask wearing. No; 2020 will not be remembered as a good year.

The irony of all this is that at RMTD, we were poised to have a very good year in 2020, following a very good year in 2019. Taking COVID out of the equation would reveal that RMTD's ridership was on a modest but steady upward trajectory. We were in the process of rebranding our business (you've no doubt seen our new logo and hard-to-miss periwinkle blue buses) in an effort to promote our core purpose: mobility for all. The previously planned purchase of (5) hybrid electric buses provided an exciting and unique canvas on which to unveil the cheerful new brand identity.

The reality though, is that despite the many positive things happening at RMTD, COVID forced us to become more agile and responsive in our commitment to mobility for all in ways we could never have imagined. Social distancing measures required us to rethink on an ongoing basis how we provide our core service to those who need us most. Ensuring passenger and operator safety lead to a review of our operations and the temporary elimination of fare collection and how we instruct passengers to board our vehicles. Incredibly, this happened immediately on heels of our introduction of a new, safer, touchless fare-collection app which we will revisit in the better days ahead. The hiring of additional staff to insure stringent daily cleanings of vehicles and public areas demonstrated our renewed commitment to safety

above all else. These measures and a myriad of other requirements and details, big and small, have impacted our day-to-day operations. To say all this change and crisis management has been challenging would be an understatement. Yet, despite it all, despite all of the bumps in our proverbial road, one thing has not changed; our commitment to our customers and the community at large. COVID has proven yet again what an essential service mass transit really is. We have been there through it all. We have persevered together and I applaud the dedication and loyalty of our team who made this happen, day in and day out.

There's a line in our current commercial that reminds us that: The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. At RMTD, we will keep planning for the future - and we will never stop pursuing our dream of mobility for all.

**At RMTD, the future looks promising.** We will forge on. We will kick off 2021 by celebrating our 50th anniversary of service to Rockford as a transit district. We will redouble our efforts to commit to our core mission of mobility for all and we will continue to invite our community to join us along for the ride.

Sincerely,



Michael Stubbe  
*Executive Director*

In the beginning, it looked like 2020 was going to be a remarkably good year for RMTD. It was a new year with a new calendar and RMTD was off to a fresh, exciting start. We had made the decision it was time for a new corporate identity to celebrate years of hard work and growth and our progressive new agenda.

After months of research, conceptualizing, designing, analyzing, redesigning and consensus building, it was finally time to usher out the old logo and introduce a fresh, sleek and purposeful new brand identity for the District.

Wikipedia explains that a logo is a graphic mark, emblem, or symbol used to aid and promote public identification and recognition. The new, modern RMTD logo, clearly and boldly identifies RMTD as a forward-thinking, energetic organization. **The “R” icon suggests the many routes, stakeholders, methods and energies that combine to power our progress.**

The bold, contrasting colors make an unmistakably positive statement - particularly when applied to our growing fleet of sleek new hybrid electric bus. We could not have been off to a more periwinkle start.

For many decades, RMTD has faithfully and skillfully provided reliable public transportation to those in need in the Rockford Region. As the world has changed - dramatically - around us, we have adapted and remained resolute in our pursuit of Mobility For All.

Mobility, of course, is many things to many people. For some, it revolves around reliable fixed route transit service. For others, it is the security of knowing para-transit will take you where you need to go - regardless of the nature of your disability or why you’re unable to use fixed routes. Bike paths and bike racks extend the service area making first mile/last mile commutes easier and safer for cyclists seeking to minimize their reliance on automobiles. And, future investments in technologies make having multiple transit options such as ride share and mobility-on-demand concepts achievable for those who require or choose a more personalized transit experience.





1901

RMTD.ORG

R  
RMTD

ROCKFORD MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

JOIN US ON THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

BATTERY  
DISCONNECT



**Our new buses  
are cleaner,  
quieter,  
greener,  
and more  
periwinkle  
blue.**

## **71 RMTD Sustainability Statement**

The Rockford Mass Transit District is committed to the environment and enhancing the quality of life in our community. We therefore will work toward implementing environmentally sustainable practices whenever financially feasible. These include, but are not limited to the adoption of alternative fuel technology vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase energy efficiencies with our fleet, our facilities, our operations and our staff.

In January of 2020, RMTD introduced 5 hybrid electric buses to its fleet and our community. The buses, purchased from Gillig Corporation, an American company based in Hayward, Ca, are the first steps toward replacing some of RMTD's aging fleet with environmentally friendly vehicles.

**The hybrid buses should reduce fuel consumption by 25% and reduce emissions by 90%.** They are cleaner and quieter and are the perfect canvas for the new logo and periwinkle and slate color scheme. Additionally, using geo-fencing technology, the new bus can be programmed to enter full-electric mode when entering carbon noise-sensitive areas such as downtown or narrow neighborhood roadways.

RMTD put the first 5 hybrid vehicles into circulation in early 2020. Despite all the trials and tribulations of 2020, RMTD was able to place an order for 5 additional vehicles which started arriving in Rockford at the end of the year. These buses are also currently in circulation. Our fleet is becoming greener with each periwinkle bus.”

10% of  
previous  
emissions



cleaner  
air and a  
healthier  
Rockford  
Region.

Our new hybrid electric  
buses also report a

90%

**EMISSIONS  
REDUCTION**

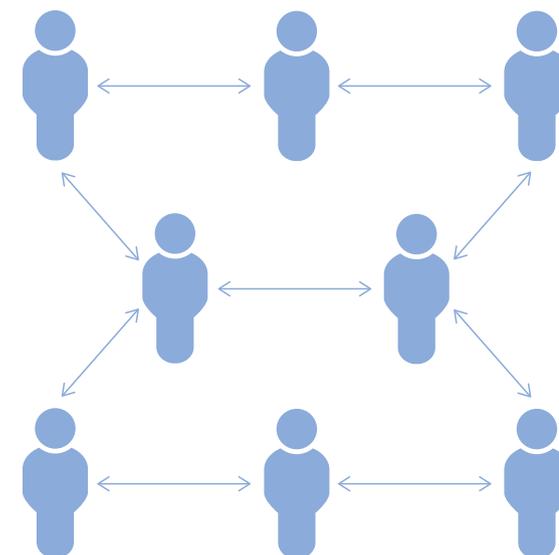


## 71 COVID CREATED A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

On March 20th, everyday life in Northern Illinois came to a crashing halt. The Governor of Illinois issued an Executive Order basically shutting down the State except for essential services due to the rapidly spreading, deadly Coronavirus.

For the first time ever, RMTD began encouraging riders to NOT ride the bus unless they absolutely had to. Essential rides only.

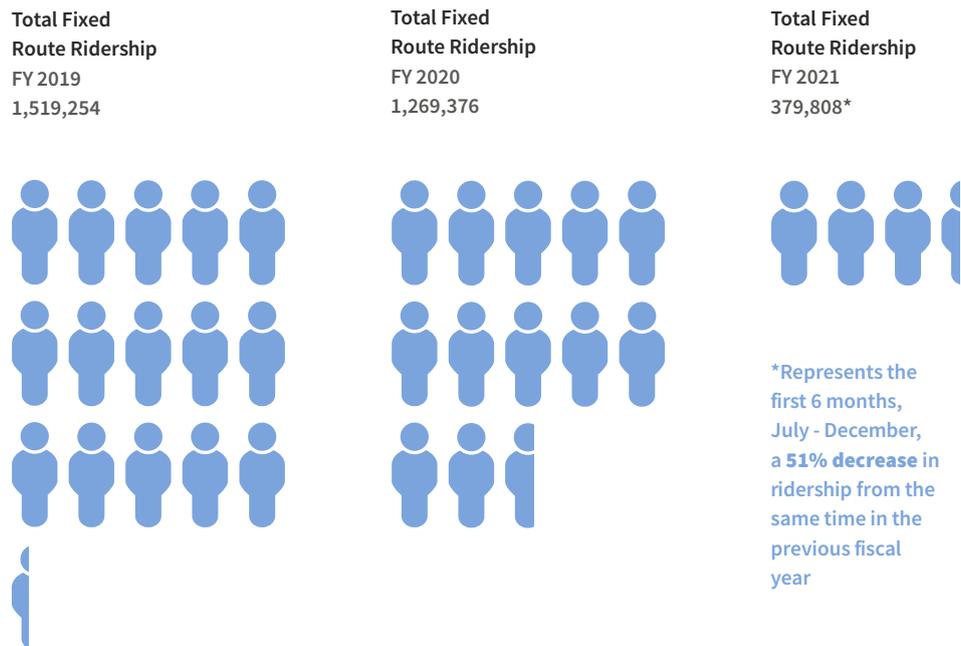
**Social distancing** - maintaining a minimum six feet between persons - was a new concept introduced to the public and enforced by RMTD. To ensure social distancing was maintained on our vehicles, RMTD had to reduce its weekday service. From April to August, instead of the 18 daily fixed routes, RMTD ran its 5 night routes during the day along with shuttle buses to insure those that absolutely need to ride had a means to do so. Night service was also originally suspended but was eventually brought back in July to the relief of many of our riders. The loops and a few other core routes were added back, but the cuts were significant. **These service cuts, coupled with the stay-at-home order, had an almost catastrophic impact on ridership.** Ridership, which was actually showing signs of increasing going into March 2020, dropped by well over 50% and continues to stay at that low level.



Throughout the summer, RMTD closely monitored ridership and service levels while the virus showed no signs of easing. In August, RMTD did bring back service to its pre-COVID levels only to cut back again in November when the virus started to surge in Northern Illinois and social distancing needed to be strictly enforced once again.

**Throughout most of this time, RMTD did not charge fares.** Once again, the impact of lost revenues and the trickle-down effect were staggering. Revenues lost from the fare box overall equate to revenues lost from the State. RMTD could have been in dire financial straits were it not for the Federal CARES Act.

Each day throughout much of the Spring and Summer of 2020 brought forth new lingo, new directives on how to run your business, and a whole host of unplanned and unforeseen consequences. The following pages outline how RMTD addressed the pandemic and the impacts it had on our ability to serve our riders.



Each icon = 100,000 riders

## RMTD COVID-19 2020 TIMELINE

### MARCH



- **March 5, 2020** RMTD begins awareness campaign, posting notices on vehicles and in our facilities on how to stop the spread of the disease.
- **March 10, 2020** RMTD started having our building maintenance staff do additional spot cleanings of hard surfaces throughout the day.
- **March 10, 2020** RMTD starts supplying our operators with hand sanitizer and gloves.
- **March 18, 2020** RMTD waived fares for all services and began rear door boardings in an effort to minimize hard surface contact between rider and passenger.



- **March 20, 2020** Governor Pritzker issues an Executive Order for citizens to stay at home and only make essential trips when necessary.
- **March 20, 2020** Social distancing measures were implemented and passengers were encouraged to stay home and not ride, in keeping with the March 20th Executive Order mandating essential rides only.



- **March 20, 2020** RMTD closes both the downtown and East Side Transfer Center facility to passenger waiting.
- **March 27, 2020** The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, is a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 116th U.S. Congress and signed into law by the President in response to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

### LEGEND

- Notifications
- Cleaning
- Personal Equipment & Safety Measures
- Social Distancing
- Fares & Financial Impacts
- Governor Directive
- Service Reductions & Impacts

## APRIL, MAY, JUNE

- **April 3, 2020** Coach USA/Van Galder suspends service from the RMTD East Side Transfer Center
- **April 20, 2020** RMTD suspends night service and reduces 18 weekday routes down to 8, with service hours being limited to 6 am to 6 pm.
- **Week of April 20, 2020** RMTD began taking temperatures of Operations staff
- **RMTD restricts the number of riders on any given vehicle to 10, insuring social distance requirements are met**
- RMTD institutes a No Mask, No Ride requirement
- RMTD begins providing masks to any staff member or rider who request or needs one
- RMTD hires outside service to clean facilities
- RMTD purchases equipment and begins disinfectant fogging of vehicles
- RMTD maintenance staff begin the practice of midday wipe downs and cleanings of all fixed route vehicles in service that day and of RMTD public facilities
- RMTD para-transit vehicles were limited to only one rider at a time and drivers were required to bring their vehicles in to be fogged with disinfectant after pick ups at designated “hot spots”
- **May 30, 2020** Governor’s Executive Order expires
- **June 1, 2020** Burlington Trailways suspends service from the RMTD Transfer Center indefinitely
- **June 15, 2020** RMTD starts reinstating service, although full service is still not fully restored



## AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER

- **August 3, 2020** RMTD restores service back to pre-COVID levels. Mask requirement is still in effect and **vehicle capacity is increased to seated passengers only**
- **RMTD provides shuttle buses for any passenger not able to board the fixed route bus due to social distancing**
- RMTD increases the number of security officers on property to assist with enforcing mask requirement
- **August 10, 2020** RMTD restores front door boarding
- **August 17, 2020** RMTD introduces Token Transit, a mobile ticketing app which passengers can use to minimize hard surface contact at the fare box
- **September 9, 2020** All RMTD employees must have their temperature checked at the start of their shift
- RMTD completes the installation of plexiglass barriers around the driver area protecting the drivers from passenger contact
- RMTD signs on to the American Public Transportation Association Health and Safety Commitment program
- **October 22, 2020** Mask requirement to be announced over RMTD bus radio system at least 4 x per day
- **October 29, 2020** RMTD extends offer once again to drivers to be fitted for N95 masks
- **November 8, 2020** RMTD suspended its regular daily fixed route service, Monday through Saturday and introduced reduced route service once again
- RMTD waive fares once again in conjunction with the 11.8.2020 service reductions
- **In addition to the service changes, effective November 8th, RMTD is also capping ridership capacity to 14 on its fixed route vehicles**





71 **This small particle brought our world at RMTD and the US economy to its knees. A single corona virus particle size ranges from 70–90 nanometers. Just how small is “nano?” In the International System of Units, the prefix “nano” means one-billionth; therefore one nanometer is one-billionth of a meter. It’s difficult to imagine just how small that is, but a human hair is approximately 80,000-100,000 nanometers wide.**



71 BUDGET IMPACTS, REVENUE LOSSES & THE CARES ACT

Revenues for FY 2020

		FY 2019	FY 2021
Passenger fares:	\$ 1,133,889*	\$1,551,076	\$ 143,872**
State of Illinois:	\$ 10,721,924		
Federal:	\$ 2,294,580		
City of Rockford:	\$ 1,462,197		
Other Municipalities:	\$ 1,704,971		
Other revenues:	\$ 321,955		
<b>Total Revenues:</b>	<b>\$ 17,639,516</b>		

Expenses for FY 2020

Transportation:	\$ 10,632,209
Maintenance:	\$ 3,164,295
General Administration:	\$ 3,843,012
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ 17,639,516</b>

\*These costs are reflective of the loss in revenue due to COVID

\*\* This is a 71% loss of revenue compared to the same time period in the previous fiscal year.

71 The CARES Act provides emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and provide emergency appropriations to support Executive Branch agency operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The FTA is allocating \$25 billion to recipients of urbanized area and rural area formula funds, with \$22.7 billion to large and small urban areas and \$2.2 billion to rural areas. Funding will be provided at a 100-percent federal share, with no local match required, and will be available to support capital, operating, and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

71 OUR INVESTMENT IN FIGHTING THE SPREAD OF COVID

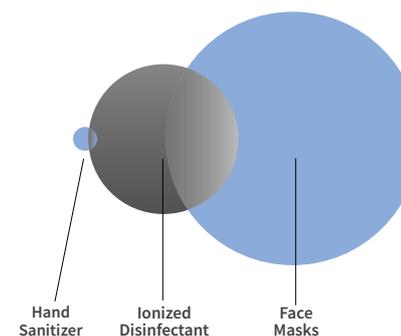
Over the course of 2020, RMTD has spent over \$300,000.00 on unbudgeted personal protective equipment to ensure the safety of its staff. **Our commitment to the safety of our staff, our riders and our community was the #1 priority during the pandemic.**

Since the very beginning of Coronavirus mitigations, RMTD required both riders and drivers to wear masks. Masks of varying styles and materials were provided to drivers every day for their own personal use and to distribute to those riders who did not have a mask. Our policy of “no mask, no ride” was strictly enforced.

In addition to masks, RMTD installed plexiglass barriers around the driver’s area and limited ridership to ten at a time. As time went on, the number of riders per bus was extended to 14, but social distancing was and still is being encouraged. Shuttle buses were also engaged when, on certain routes, capacity restrictions were met but passengers still needed to get to their destinations.

RMTD also distributed gloves and sanitizer to any staff member requesting such equipment. Employee daily temperature checks are now the norm and any employee wishing to have an N95 mask is encouraged to contact our HR department to schedule a fitting at no cost to the employee.

Extra staff was hired in our maintenance area to assist with cleaning and disinfecting each vehicle during the day and then again at the end of each day. Hand sanitizer stations were installed on all of our vehicles and RMTD recently invested in ionization disinfection systems for all of our 40 fixed route buses in our fleet.



Since March 2020, RMTD has used 25 gallons of hand sanitizer, 600 gallons of ionized disinfectant and distributed 27,000 face masks to our employees and riders.



## 71 RMTD REMAINS STRONG, RESOLUTE

Despite the fact the COVID 19 virus demanded so much time and effort, RMTD was still able to meet other goals set for 2020.

Over the years, RMTD passengers have been telling us they really would like us to introduce an all-day pass to allow them to be more efficient in their planning and more cost-effective for their budgeting. In December 2019 RMTD introduced the long awaited 1-Day Pass. The early success of 1-Day Pass sales surprised even RMTD officials.

### December 2019

Full Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 3,361      Half Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 369

### January 2020

Full Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 11,400      Half Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 954

### February 2020

Full Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 13,064      Half Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 1,354

### March 2020\*

Full Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 7,323      Half Fare 1-Day Pass riders – 761

\*COVID mitigations started March 2020

Another goal for 2020 was to introduce a mobile fare app for our passengers. Perhaps the only positive thing that could be said about COVID 19 was that it encouraged RMTD staff to move forward sooner toward introducing our contactless fare system. Again, the initial results showed the app was long overdue. Our passengers enthusiastically embraced the Token Transfer app. When the virus is long gone, the success of these two passenger-driven amenities will continue to be a convenience that encourages ridership for all for years to come.

**It was also refreshing, in the midst of all the chaos, to look back and**

**see that some parts of our business remained “business as usual.”** The

State of Illinois continued to make available paratransit vehicles and RMTD took possession of 7 new vehicles in late autumn. The need for paratransit service will always remain strong and will continue to grow once the Pandemic is over. RMTD is better-prepared than ever to meet that need head on.





## 71 OUR ROUTE STUDY & THE WAY FORWARD

If 2019 were to be defined as the year of analysis, 2020 was to be the year of implementation. Our expansive, comprehensive Mobility Study was entering into its last phase: Implementation. Through interviews, surveys and conversations, **RMTD learned that access to major employment destinations is critical to meeting the ongoing needs of our riders and to sustain the economic health of our community.** As a result of that analysis, the early days of 2020 already saw RMTD serving MercyHealth on Riverside and the expanded distribution hubs by our flourishing airport facility. A committee of drivers and administrative staff had also begun reviewing and reconfiguring our existing route structure to be more efficient and to provide more connectivity. Once RMTD is back to its standard operating schedule, we hope to be able to implement more changes in our ongoing effort to be more efficient and more responsive to our riders' needs.

## 71 PROJECTIONS FOR 2021

As 2020 wrapped up, it is important to note that the Coronavirus does not define us - any of us. **RMTD is strong.** Like so many businesses, we are using this collective pause in "normal service" to regroup and plan for the future.

As we work our way through 2021, RMTD and its loyal supporters will have much to celebrate. On February 17, 2021, RMTD will **celebrate 50 years of serving Rockford** as a transit district. Throughout this time, one thing that has never faltered is RMTD's commitment to getting people where they need to go. Despite bad weather, hard times and even a deadly pandemic, RMTD has not missed a day of service to the community during our 50 years of service. We intend to continue this legacy for the next 50 years. Transit may look different in the days ahead. New concepts such as mobility on demand and new technologies such as AVL and battery-electric buses may redefine how service is delivered, but the need for public transportation will always be there and RMTD will redefine itself to meet these needs in our ongoing pursuit of Mobility for All.

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams and face adversity head-on. We will never stop pursuing our dream of mobility for all. **Please join us on the road to a cleaner, safer future.**

RMTD BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHAIRMAN  
Pastor Herbert Johnson  
[HJohnson@rmtd.org](mailto:HJohnson@rmtd.org)



VICE CHAIRMAN  
Stephen Ernst  
[SErnst@rmtd.org](mailto:SErnst@rmtd.org)



SECRETARY | TREASURER  
David Sidney  
[DSidney@rmtd.org](mailto:DSidney@rmtd.org)



520 Mulberry Rockford, IL 61101 815-961-9000

[rmtd.org](http://rmtd.org) →