



CEO Letter to All APTA Members

September 2, 2020

Dear APTA Members,

As we prepare to celebrate Labor Day, I know we are all grateful to the men and women who continue to make public transportation an essential service. Please take a moment to remember those transit workers who have sacrificed so much during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those we lost.

Beginning this month, my CEO Letter will include both COVID-related and non-COVID issues of importance. We are expecting a busy autumn for advocacy and meetings.

Advocacy

As you know, soon after enactment of the CARES Act in March, APTA quickly recognized that the \$25 billion of emergency funding for public transit agencies would be insufficient to address the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Since April, we have been aggressively pushing for additional funding to sustain our industry. There has been some progress, such as the U.S. House of Representatives passing The HEROES Act, which included \$15.75 billion for public transit. However, congressional leaders and the White House have been unable, as yet, to reach a bipartisan agreement on additional emergency funding.

September is a critical month. With laser-like focus, APTA is forcefully advocating for: 1) additional emergency COVID-19 assistance for public transit agencies; 2) passage of our annual appropriations bill; and 3) reauthorization of the FAST Act which, like our appropriations, expires on September 30.

Our efforts include the following:

- A [statement released today](#) to all members of Congress, stressing the dire needs of public transit systems and calling on Congress and the Administration to provide at least \$32 billion in emergency COVID19 funding.
- A letter, which is being coordinated by APTA, the Transportation Construction Coalition, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – and which will be signed by dozens of surface transportation associations next week – calling on Congress and the Administration to quickly approve additional COVID19 funding, reauthorize the surface transportation act, and ensure the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.
- A high profile appeal by several public transit leaders for COVID19 funding during a major APTA-sponsored press event on September 9 to launch a national “Health & Safety Commitments Program” designed to increase ridership during and after the pandemic.

- A multitude of media calls by APTA's transit agencies and business members, scheduled to begin September 15 and continuing throughout the month.
- A steady stream of grassroots emails – to date, totaling 5,424 to 499 members of Congress – generated by APTA's Voices for Public Transit.
- Digital ads to appear in *The Washington Post* and in key congressional districts, as well as social media posts targeting key members of Congress.

I urge our public transit agencies and business members to contact your Senators and Representatives to tell your organization's story about why additional COVID-19 emergency funding is urgently needed. It's important that all APTA members get involved in this effort.

Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force

Having achieved its major objectives as defined by APTA Chair Nuria Fernandez, the Task Force will hold its final meeting tomorrow, September 3. The group's accomplishments include creating a new COVID-19 resource hub on APTA.com, guidance for transit leaders and operators, and the APTA Health & Safety Commitments Program, which will be launched next week. (See the next item.)

The Task Force is comprised of more than 40 members and chaired by LA Metro CEO Phil Washington with co-chairs Joanna M. Pinkerton, President / CEO of COTA; Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO of WMATA; and Kim Slaughter, Senior National Practice Consultant at HNTB. A final report summarizing the Task Force's work will be available later this month.

National Launch of the Health & Safety Commitments Program

On Wednesday, September 9, at 2:30 p.m. ET, APTA will officially announce the "Health & Safety Commitments Program," our industry's overarching pledge to protect the health and safety of our employees and passengers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commitments program was developed by the Mobility Recovery & Restoration Task Force.

Open to all transit agencies, the program describes commitments that agencies and their riders are encouraged to meet to keep transit safe. Ready-to-use materials, signage, and messages, as well as a Seal of Commitment that can be displayed on vehicles and in stations, are available to participating agencies. To learn more about this nationwide initiative, please register for the September 9 launch event [here](#).

APTA's Virtual Conferences

APTAtch, September 9 - 10

APTAtch is less than a week away. Explore how transit agencies and the public can benefit from innovative technologies, such as new fare payment systems, connected and autonomous vehicles, cybersecurity advances, the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data. Also to be discussed are the newly emerging challenges related to COVID-19.

[Learn more and register today!](#)

- **TRANScend, October 21 - 22**

This new event explores perspectives on the major issues for the year ahead. Topics will include the long-term impacts of COVID-19, effective ways to bring riders back, social equity as a transit priority, the changing landscape of cities, policing in a new era, and more. Don't miss this opportunity to hear from thought leaders, exchange ideas, and connect with peers. Learn more at [TRANScend](#).

- **REWIND: 2020 Sustainability & Multimodal Planning Workshop**

Missed the live broadcast of our successful 2020 Sustainability & Multimodal Planning Workshop? You can access all the content on-demand – on your schedule. Sessions included equity in transit planning and delivery, sustainable capital programming, clean bus technologies, and route design for enhanced mobility. Plus, earn up to 11 AICPA CM planning credits. Get started [here](#).

Other Events

- I provided a briefing on the State of the Public Transit Industry to several hundred employees of HDR on August 27. My thanks to Executive Committee member Tom Waldron, HDR's Senior Vice President and Global Transit Director, for the invitation and for organizing the virtual event.
- Today, I participated in my first meeting as a member of the board of the Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI). TTCI, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Association of American Railroads, was established to support innovative technologies that increase safety, reliability and the efficiency in the railroad industry. I was joined by fellow board member and colleague Jim Derwinski, CEO / Executive Director of Metra (Chicago).
- APTA's safety and security staff made presentations on a National Safety Council (NSC) webinar titled "Public Transportation, COVID-19 Response and Technology," and at a TCRP meeting titled "Public Transportation Responses to Homelessness."

Remembering Former APTA Chair Joe Alexander

Joseph Alexander, 90, a much-loved and respected long-time APTA member, passed away on August 30. He served as APTA Chair from 1983-84 and was active on numerous committees including Business Members; Emerging Leaders; Leadership APTA; and many more. Inducted into the APTA Hall of Fame in 2008, Joe's expertise, wise counsel, and political savvy were invaluable assets to our association. He will be deeply missed by the APTA family. Our condolences to his loved ones, especially his wife Davie, who nearly always accompanied him to APTA events.

With best wishes,



Paul P. Skoutelas
President and CEO