March 10 – “The COMET is Working Hard to Keep You Safe on Our Buses”

- Hand sanitizers are installed on all 83 vehicles.
- Signs are inside all restrooms encouraging people to wash their hands.
- Information is posted on the buses from the CDC, encouraging people to take the proper precautions to help keep them safe and to deter transmitting harmful illnesses.
- All buses are being detailed twice a month to ensure extreme cleanliness.
- All buses used in service will go through a thorough cleaning daily, in addition to their twice a month detailing.
- All bus operators will have hand wipes.
- All 83 vehicles are continually going through a routine pest control program to ensure there are no insects, bugs or vermin on the vehicles.
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
A Communications Timeline

Week of March 10 - 17 Community Outreach to Young and Young at Heart
COMET Chat with John Andoh – March 2020

March 15, 2020 | Comments Off

By John C. Andoh
Executive Director/CEO
Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority

Things are full swing at The COMET! Lately our focus has been to keep the riding public safe to fight COVID-19. We transport about 9,000 passenger trips an average weekday and for many of our passengers, The COMET is their only way to accessing a quality of life. Our initiatives include:

- Hand sanitizers are installed on all 83 vehicles.
- Signs are inside all restrooms encouraging people to wash their hands.
- Information is posted on the buses from the CDC, encouraging people to take the proper precautions to help keep them safe and to deter transmitting harmful illnesses.
- All buses are being detailed four times a month to ensure extreme cleanliness.
- All buses used in service will go through a thorough cleaning daily, in addition to their...
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
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March 16 – “The COMET Takes COVID-19 Precautions and Adjusts Services”
- The COMET has increased the frequency of bio-clean disinfection of its fleet to nightly as well as augmented the cleaning of The COMET Central transit center to every 30 minutes.
- The COMET will suspend service of the downtown circular, The Soda Cap Connector buses and trolleys beginning, tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17.
- All service will move from a normal schedule to a Saturday schedule beginning Thursday, March 19.
- DART services will still be available to those individuals needing paratransit limited to only essential travel (i.e., physician visits, pharmacy, grocery, etc.).
- Fixed route service limited to essential travel (work, medical, grocery, etc.), and that any passengers experiencing COVID-19 symptoms refrain from traveling on public transit.
- Those passengers needing bus passes are encouraged to purchase them online or through The COMET app.
March 18 – “The COMET to Operate on a Saturday Schedule Starting Thursday 3/19”

- The COMET will be reducing its service to a Saturday schedule beginning Thursday, March 19 and utilizing the 35-foot and larger vehicles in its fleet that will allow for social distancing as recommended.
- Free fares for essential travel on The COMET fixed routes. DART services will remain unchanged.
- Practicing “Exit Door Boarding” – passengers enter and exit via the door towards the rear of the bus.
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic

A Communications Timeline

March 23 – “The COMET: Why We are Running”

Transporting essential employees, one seat at a time.

WE ARE HERE FOR OUR COMMUNITY | CATCHTHECOMET.ORG | 803.255.7100
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A Communications Timeline

March 23 – “The COMET: Why We are Running”

Making sure they get what they need.
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
A Communications Timeline

March 23 – “The COMET: Why We are Running”

Taking him there so he can help you.
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic

A Communications Timeline

- Closing COMET Central Temporarily
- Rear Door Boarding & Alternate Seating
- No More than 20 passengers/bus
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
Essential Service

April 8 – “The COMET Restores Limited Soda Cap Service”
- Groundswell of Support
- Essential Workers in West Columbia/Cayce
- SCC #1 Route
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic

Essential Workers

March/April 2020 – Social Media #TheCOMETchampions and #HeroesMovingHeroes

Always here, so you can get there.

Thank your driver today

Transit Driver Appreciation Day is observed on March 18 each year, but we are acknowledging our wonderful drivers every day for getting our people where they need to go—whether in crisis or in calm. For this, we thank you.

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The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
Essential Workers

March/April 2020 – Social Media #TheCOMETchampions and #HeroesMovingHeroes
April 9 – “The COMET Receives Funding to Aid Public Transportation amid COVID-19”

- $15.2 million dollar grant from The CARES Act
- For the continuation of the extensive disinfecting and safety measures that The COMET has already implemented.
- Assist in the procurement of protective gear and additional operations costs (including, reinstating furloughed staff, etc.)
April 15—“The COMET Announces Schedule Changes to Enhanced Sunday Service”

• The COMET will operate a Sunday level of service daily on the following routes: 6, 11, 12, 21, 22, 31, 32, 42, 45, 55, 61, 75, 77, 83L, 84, 88, 92X, The 101, The 301, The 501, The 701, The 801 and Soda Cap 1.

• Riders near Routes 46, 47, 57L, 62, 74, 91 or 96L, must call to have pick-up service from their nearest bus stop via a ReFlex bus for transportation to the nearest bus stop in The COMET service area. This on-demand service will be available Monday-Saturday only. Calls must be made one hour in advance to (803) 255-7100, with reservations being accepted from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. The ReFlex bus will pick up within 30 minutes of the requested trip.

• Routes Soda Cap 2, 3, Orbit 4, IWC Shuttle 7, 44X, 53X, 76, 93X and 97, as well as Blue Bike will remain suspended until further notice.

• To observe social distancing, essential travel is limited to 20 passengers on the larger buses and four passengers on the smaller shuttle vehicles. Travel will be one-way with mandatory end of line exits.
April 29—“The COMET Partners with Senior Resources, Others, to Provide Meals to Elderly”

- The partnership will help seniors in Richland County from Gadsden and Hopkins to parts of Irmo and Elgin. Each person served receives five frozen, nutritionally well-balanced meals delivered to their homes.

“Since the pandemic began to spread in the Midlands, the need for home delivered meals has continued to grow. We were looking for a local partner that could help distribute meals and meet the needs of our community. John Andoh and the COMET team were able to make logistics possible to fill a void that we had to ensure seniors are receiving the nutrition they need to stay healthy.”

- Andrew Boozer, Executive Director
  Senior Resources
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
Reimagining Partnerships – Food and Nutritional Resources
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Reimagining Partnerships – Food and Nutritional Resources
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Reimagining Partnerships – Health and Safety
The COMET: Responding to a Pandemic
Reimagining Partnerships – Enhancing Business Support
What’s Next???
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