



ROCHESTER
public transit

Media Contact: Jenna Bowman
Communications & Engagement Manager
Direct: 507-328-2229 | E-mail: jbowman@rochestermn.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Rochester Announces Additional Changes to Parking, Transit, Buildings and Meetings

March 17, 2020 - ROCHESTER, MINN. – The health and safety of our Rochester community continues to be the City of Rochester’s top priority. Following the social distancing guidelines of the Minnesota Department of Public Health, the City of Rochester is taking the following actions:

- All City of Rochester facilities will be closed to the public at the start of business on March 18, 2020
- The City will continue to provide service by focusing on virtual, telephone, and electronic communication.
- Additional details regarding the modifications to service, in the various areas, will be provided shortly.
- The City’s current intent is to cancel the March 23, March 30, and April 6, 2020 Study Sessions. A final decision will be made by the preceding Friday of each meeting date.
- Adjusting the number of Rochester Public Transit (RPT) routes and increasing buses to allow for social distancing;
- Suspending some on-street parking restrictions in an effort to encourage single passenger transportation; and
- Lifting seasonal parking restrictions, ending the alternate side parking rules for the season.

Transit Changes

Effective Friday, March 20, regular transit service is being reduced, with RPT operating Routes 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26, seven days per week.

Monday through Friday, Routes 21-26 will operate every 30 minutes from 5:30 AM to 10:30 PM. On weekends, those routes will follow the regular posted schedule from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Routes	Weekdays 5:30 AM – 10:30 PM	Weekends/Holidays 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Neighborhood routes 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	30 min frequency	60 min frequency
Park & Ride routes 1D, 3D, 4D, 6D, 15D 18D	Peak schedule + 30 minute off-peak	No service

Park & Ride Routes 1D, 3D, 4D, 6D, 15D and 18D will be in operation according to their current weekday peak schedule. Midday service to Park & Rides will be provided on those same direct routes with a 30 minute frequency.

RPT’s paratransit service, Zumbro Independent Passenger Service (ZIPS) will continue to operate regular dial-a-ride service for persons with disabilities.

Detailed bus schedules will be posted to RPT’s website rpride.com by 3:00 PM on Thursday. Efforts to update the DoubleMap mobile app are also underway. For questions regarding these changes, contact Rochester Public Transit at 507-328-7433.

By reducing the number of routes, RPT is making more buses available to serve the busiest routes to allow for social distancing as recommended by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Specifically, riders are asked to keep one seat between them and others at all times. That means riders should not sit next to another passenger in any row of seats and begin filling the bus from back to front skipping every other row whenever possible. Standees are asked to observe a 6 foot distance between themselves and other passengers.

Drivers are being instructed to depart stops once their buses are 50% full—or about 20 passengers. Please understand that the drivers’ actions in following this policy are for the safety of all on board. RPT is adding additional buses to minimize the potential of leaving riders at the stop.

Parking Changes

The City of Rochester is implementing temporary changes to on-street parking policies to allow for increased commuter traffic resulting from the effort to reduce the occupancy aboard buses. We ask for patience from those that may encounter traffic delays due to the potential increase in peak traffic volumes and encourage people to build this into their commute times.

Effective March 18, the following changes will be in effect:

- Commuters to downtown Rochester will be allowed to park in any surface lot at Soldiers Field Memorial Park and along George Gibbs Dr SW at no charge
- Seasonal parking restrictions are lifted, ending the alternate side parking rules for the season
- The city is suspending enforcement of residential permit-only parking areas through the end of March.

Other parking ordinances remain in effect including parking meter enforcement, no parking zones (including driveways, fire hydrants, and mailboxes), and overnight parking restrictions. Please observe all posted signs in the downtown area.

We understand the impact this change may have in residential permit parking areas and we appeal to residents' sense of civic duty to support the healthcare system in this extraordinary time. Of the changes, Rene Halasy, Executive Director of RNeighbors, states "Neighborhood parking is a challenge in the best of times, and there will be core neighborhoods where this change is inconvenient. Please keep in mind this is a temporary situation that will allow health care workers the social distancing safety to continue doing their extremely important jobs to get our community through this time."

The City also maintains six parking ramps and a series of surface lots for daily parking. Daily parking rates still apply in these locations.

Questions regarding parking can be directed to City of Rochester Public Works at 507-328-2400, but we ask the public to understand that our team has a number of other critical items to address during this period. We request that you refrain from making on-street parking complaints unless it's a matter of public safety or other emergency.

Reminders for Transit Riders

These and other measures are being taken because the health and safety of RPT employees and customers is our top priority. RPT continues to monitor the situation closely and work with our governmental partners to review our response plan and implement effective programs to prioritize public health.

To date, RPT has implemented new and enhanced cleaning procedures for our vehicles and facilities, disinfecting high-touch surfaces and operator compartments on every vehicle each night. Operators are also conducting multiple mid-day wipe-downs as the schedule allows.

ZIPS paratransit operators are wearing personal protective gear such as disposable gloves when providing services. This is due to the close proximity and personal contact which at times is required to serve persons with disabilities.

For the safety of other passengers and the operator, persons showing signs of illness and those who have had close contact with persons who are ill should not use public transit. Customers are also encouraged to limit non-essential trips, and travel during non-peak times when possible, to reduce occupancy on buses.

Please continue to follow Minnesota Department of Health recommendations to stay healthy: wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue into the trash; clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces; and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

The latest City news and information regarding COVID-19 can be found by visiting the [City webpage](#).

###