



## For Immediate Release

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### Temporary schedule changes for The Bus start Monday

MERCED – Due to the impact of COVID-19, The Bus will move to a weekend schedule starting on Monday, August 17. The weekend service schedule will be operating daily and will apply to all of the fixed-routes throughout the County, except for the UC route which will not change. All fares to ride The Bus continue to be suspended and masks are required to be worn in order to ride.

Dial-a-Ride service will be provided to those who need it during the hours of 6:00-8:00 am and 6:00-8:00 pm Monday-Friday when the fixed-route service will not be operating. To receive assistance with trip planning, including making reservations for Dial-a-Ride, passengers may call customer service at 1-800-345-3111. Paratransit service will continue as normal.

“We are fortunate that we have been able to avoid changes to our service levels for the past five months for our passengers who depend on The Bus to access essential jobs and services,” said Christine Chavez, MCAG Transit Manager. “It has now reached a point where we are seeing significant impacts to The Bus’ operations, maintenance, and ridership levels and we have to respond accordingly.”

The temporary service reduction will be in place until further notice with operational capacity being re-assessed on a weekly basis. The Bus is experiencing a 45 percent decrease in ridership from this time last year.

All bus schedules and hours of operation can be found at [www.mercedthebus.com](http://www.mercedthebus.com) or by calling (209) 723-3100. Real-time information regarding bus locations, services and arrival times can be found at [www.thebuslive.com](http://www.thebuslive.com) or by downloading ‘The Bus Live’ app on your smart phone for free. All fares are currently suspended due to the COVID-19 emergency. Passengers are asked to only use The Bus to provide or receive essential services and to wear a mask while on board as well as comply with social distancing requirements when possible. All buses are equipped with bike racks and are wheelchair accessible.

The Bus is the single public transportation service provider for all of Merced County and is administered by the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County and managed by the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). For more information, please visit [www.mercedthebus.com](http://www.mercedthebus.com) or [www.mcagov.org](http://www.mcagov.org).

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