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Jeffrey Tumlin, Director of Transportation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 25, 2020

Contact: Kristen Holland

kristen.holland@sfmta.com

****Press Release****

Muni Buses to Serve All Rail Lines Starting Today

For several weeks, the Muni Metro will remain closed to allow for overhead line repair and appropriate COVID-19 quarantine for Transportation Management Center staff

San Francisco—The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which operates the Municipal Railway (Muni), announced that starting today, all Muni Metro rail lines, the J Church, K Ingleside, L Taraval, M Ocean View, N Judah and T Third, will return to bus service for several weeks due to two unfortunate and simultaneous occurrences: a positive COVID-19 case in its Transportation Management Center (i.e., control center) and an immediate need to repair key components of the overhead electrical lines that power Muni light rail vehicles.

First, yesterday evening the SFMTA learned that one of the employees who works on the real-time deployment of Muni trains and buses has tested positive for COVID-19. The SFMTA's contact tracing and human resources support team are coordinating with that employee and their colleagues.

Second, a critical component of the overhead infrastructure has failed twice in the last few days and a fix has been identified that we must implement before bringing the Metro back fully again.

"Rail service was rocky over the weekend and unacceptable on Monday; I apologize to our customers. On day three of our rail system restart, we discovered two major problems that will force us to retrench. We do not make this decision lightly," said Director of Transportation Jeffrey Tumlin. "To our colleague who has tested positive, our hearts are with you and all of our SFMTA family members who are fighting this illness. I applaud our crews who have been working tirelessly for months to deliver service to San Francisco during this crisis. This failure of new overhead equipment takes attention away from all the amazing work they have been doing to improve the system overall."

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With the revelation that an employee in the SFMTA's Transportation Management Center – the nerve center of the city's transit system – tested positive for COVID-19, along with the related quarantining required based on contact tracing, the agency determined that it does not have sufficient staff resources to effectively manage rail service. Rail is more sensitive to staffing fluctuations because small groups of employees work in highly specialized and mission critical roles. The risk of this possible outcome contributed to the agency decision to shut down rail in April. Shutting down the subway for quarantine will allow for the replacement of the equipment.

The SFMTA gathers reporting on cases from our employees and conducts contact tracing on those cases. The SFMTA has had 54 cases out of nearly 6,000 employees, similar to the city in general. Through contact tracing, we have not identified any staff to staff transmission.

The SFMTA transit team has worked all night to rebuild the transit system and its schedules for the third time since April. Starting up rail service on the Muni Metro lines freed enough buses for Muni to restore all or most of the 7 Haight/Noriega, 37 Corbett, 45 Union/Stockton, 48 Quintara/24th Street and 67 Bernal Heights routes and improve capacity on others.

Muni staff are working hard to minimize bus frequency impacts while allocating buses to all the former rail lines as follows:

- J Church: Balboa to Church and Market streets approximately every 12 minutes
- K Ingleside: Balboa to Embarcadero approximately every 15 minutes
- L Taraval (all buses): Zoo to Embarcadero approximately every 15 minutes
- N Judah: Ocean Beach to 4th and King approximately every 10 minutes
- T Third and M Ocean View (interlined): Sunnydale to Balboa Park approximately every 12 minutes

Muni has been hit especially hard by COVID-19. The immediate health and financial impacts have lost the agency 30-40% of Muni service hours and about 80% of capacity. It's also put a \$200M hole in the SFMTA's operating budget.

Muni carries about 150,000 essential workers every day. Despite the tragedies they're facing, SFMTA staff are working hard to make the best, most efficient use of every available service hour in order to get them to work.

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