



CONTACT:
Jeff Pullin

Public Information Officer
Phone: (614) 275-5938

For Immediate Release
Monday, July 15, 2019

COTA Plus Pilot Provides More Transit Access to Jobs, Health Care in Grove City

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) today launched COTA Plus, an on-demand microtransit that will provide first/last mile service in partnership with Grove City. The mobility option will operate as a one-year pilot and will offer customers with point-to-point service at an affordable fare, and connect COTA riders to fixed route service for free.

COTA Plus is an on-demand, app-based rideshare service that can book multiple passengers heading in the same direction into a shared vehicle. Referred to in the industry as microtransit on-demand, COTA Plus operates either as a point-to-point rideshare service or as a connection to or from a COTA bus line. Operators are COTA employees, who receive best-in-class training and are subject to background checks upon hiring.

“There is increased demand for greater mobility options across many of our Central Ohio communities, including Grove City,” said Joanna M. Pinkerton, President/CEO of COTA. “COTA Plus was designed with input from multiple stakeholders, including the city and area businesses, who have identified mobility challenges as a barrier to employment, healthcare, and education. We are proud to pilot this innovative service under the unique COTA Plus brand, and to work with public and private entities in the future to solve mobility challenges.”

Customers can book trips on their smartphone through the COTA Plus app. If they download the app, they must register as a user. After booking a trip, a COTA Plus vehicle will arrive within 15 minutes to take them to their destination. The trip must begin and end [within the defined zone in Grove City](#). Customers can also book COTA Plus trips calling (614) 308-4400.

COTA Plus is a partnership between Grove City and COTA, with the option to expand service in the future, as needed.

“COTA and Grove City have a long history of working together and successfully addressing the ever-changing transportation needs of our growing community,” said Mayor Richard L. “Ike” Stage. “The COTA Plus program is an innovative and welcome pilot for our current mobility challenges, further illustrating the strength of our partnership.”

--more--

Grove City is an ideal location for this pilot project because of its expanding community. The defined zone will connect fixed-route riders to the Southpark Industrial Park, the Mid-Ohio Foodbank and the new Mount Carmel Grove City Hospital.

“For many of our community members, lack of transportation is a major barrier to receiving essential medical care,” said Sean McKibben, president of Mount Carmel Grove City. “We are thankful for this new partnership with COTA and are excited to offer improved access to exceptional healthcare to the Grove City community.”

Customers who book a trip with COTA Plus will not pay additional fare if connecting to fixed-route service (COTA Lines 3 & 61). If a customer books a COTA Plus trip point-to-point without using COTA bus service, they will pay a \$3 fare. All COTA Plus fare must be paid through the app. Cash will not be accepted by the operator.

COTA Plus is powered by Via, the leading provider and developer of on-demand public mobility applications.

“We are thrilled to partner with our innovative partners at COTA to bring Via’s technology to the Columbus area,” said Daniel Ramot, co-founder and CEO of Via. “The COTA Plus service shows how public transportation and technology can work together to make a city smarter. Grove City residents now have a comfortable, convenient, and affordable way to move around. This is truly a great example of a city embracing the future of mobility.”

Additional information about COTA Plus, including service times and frequently asked questions can be found at [COTA.com](https://www.cota.com).

--30--

COTA is the recipient of the 2018 American Public Transportation Association’s Outstanding Public Transportation Award and provides nearly 19 million passenger trips in Central Ohio each year. As the region’s mobility systems integrator, COTA is driven each day to solve the mobility needs of the community by utilizing technology, establishing community partnerships and applying sustainability principles that provide equitable access to jobs, healthcare and education.

cota.com



To request this information in an alternative format, call (614) 228-1776.