

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 30, 2020

SunLine Refueled Begins Sunday, January 3rd at a Level 3 Service

SunLine Modifies Launch of the Major Initiative Due to California's Rising COVID-19 Cases

(Thousand Palms) – SunLine Transit Agency is set to launch SunLine Refueled this Sunday, January 3, 2021 as planned, however; the major initiative will be modified due to a continued increase in COVID-19 cases and the state's Regional Stay-at-Home order. While it was initially scheduled for three of the four SunLine Refueled pillars to begin next week, SunLine remains focused on keeping passengers and operators safe and will therefore be introducing only the Consolidated Fixed Route Network at a Level 3 service and the SunRide microtransit service at this time.

"Our team has worked diligently over the last 3 years to develop SunLine Refueled, and a number of efforts have been devoted to gearing up for its launch – such as gathering much-needed community input and finalizing plans in 2020," said Lauren Skiver, CEO/General Manager of SunLine Transit Agency. "And as we are seeing with many other community initiatives, COVID-19 has forced everyone to be flexible in their approach. Launching SunLine Refueled at Level 3 service allows us to deliver exciting additions and changes while maintaining safety at the forefront."

SunLine Refueled incorporates new transportation trends and alternatives, from microtransit to more direct and express service routes.

The four pillars of SunLine Refueled are: a Consolidated Fixed Route Network, SunRide, the 10 Commuter Link and the Route 1X. The 10 Commuter Link regional service will not begin January 3rd as projected, however; it will be up-and-running when SunLine returns to Level 1 Service. The Route 1X, an express route for the main Highway 111 corridor, was slated for May 2021 and that timeline has not been adjusted to date.

SunLine's five-level alert system for the Fixed Route Network was activated in March of 2020 to help communicate alterations to services as health conditions required. Level 3 status, which SunLine Refueled will begin under, means that bus routes are operating under the weekend schedule as part of the new Consolidated Fixed Route Network. This means Route 5 will not be

running, as it is a weekday service, and other routes will have longer intervals. SunLine's 2021 Rider's Guide conveniently lays out the weekend schedule for further explanation.

SunRide – which will begin as scheduled on Monday, January 4, 2021 – is a microtransit service that will be available in four Coachella Valley zones to connect riders to the Consolidated Fixed Route Network. Riders will use this service with a smartphone app, which will alert a SunRide vehicle to pick them up at a destination within the designated zones and bring them to and from bus stops within the same zone.

Riders can be assured that their health and safety continues to be SunLine's first priority, with: (1) the installation of hand sanitizing stations on each bus, (2) rigorous enhanced daily disinfecting procedures for all buses, (3) mandatory face covering requirements for all passengers and bus operators, (4) complimentary face coverings for passengers who have indicated a need, and (5) the myStop® Mobile app that shows the number of riders on any given bus in real time.

In a typical environment for service changes, SunLine does outreach with street teams at bus stops to help riders with questions and information – but for safety reasons, in-person public outreach has been suspended. The Customer Service Department is available to provide support, so for more information, go to SunLine.org, call 760-343-3456 or e-mail refueled@sunline.org.

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About SunLine Transit Agency

SunLine provides public transit services in California's Coachella Valley spanning 1,120 mile-service area and carrying approximately 4.2 million riders. It has pioneered zero-emission bus deployments, particularly for hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (FCEB). In 1993, SunLine's Board adopted a voluntary policy of pursuing alternative fuel solutions that provide the lowest possible emissions, which led to SunLine becoming the first transit agency in the state to convert its entire fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG). SunLine is committed to transitioning its entire bus fleet to zero-emission by 2035. SunLine Refueled is a multi-tiered initiative that will bring exciting new transportation alternatives to the Coachella Valley and regional service to San Bernardino. SunLine Refueled will be delivered to the community in four phases; it will include a Consolidated Fixed Route Network, 10 Commuter Link, SunRide, and Route 1X. To learn more, please visit www.sunlinerefueled.org.