

## MINUTES

### MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM

#### ACCESSIBLE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

December 04, 2025

[Clerk's note: Except where noted, public, staff and Committee member comments are paraphrased. The full comment can be heard by reviewing the recording at the [MTS website](#).]

#### 1. Roll Call

Chair Gastil called the Accessible Services Advisory Committee (ASAC) meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A roll call sheet listing ASAC member attendance is attached as Attachment A.

#### 2. Public Comments

Peter Zschiesche – Provided a verbal statement to the Committee during the meeting. Peter announced that United Taxi Workers of San Diego received a grant to implement MTS Taxicab Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy to ensure MTS taxis are serving people with disabilities.

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

Committee Member Tim Garrett moved to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2025 MTS ASAC meeting. Committee Member Rene Rodriguez seconded the motion, and the vote was 10 to 0 in favor with David Merino, Tarrence Lewis, Irene Santiesteban, Letty Zuno, and Monique Ball absent.

#### DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### 4. Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Performance Monitoring Report (Beverly Neff and Matthew Grace)

Beverly Neff, Manager of Planning and Reporting, and Matthew Grace, Transit Services Data Analyst, presented on the 2025 Annual Performance Monitoring Report. They provided details on: Board Policy 42, Board Policy 42 evaluation criteria, total ridership by month, total ridership by quarter, change by mode, ridership distribution by mode, passengers per revenue hour, on-time performance, financial metrics, major changes in FY25, Copper Line, expected benefit of Copper Line, Route 910 Blue Line Overnight Express, total passengers, ridership recovery compared to national trends, ridership by metro area, farebox recovery, subsidy per passenger, financial stats by bus route category, and financial statistics compared to national trends.

##### Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

##### Committee Comment

Committee Member Rodriguez commented how impressive that MTS is in the top 40 of all transit agencies. He stated his concern about difficulty taking the trolley on weekends from the Convention Center.

Committee Member Lordson asked if it was possible to separate total senior/disability/Medicare (SDM) and total adult fare. Mr. Grace responded yes, through an internal system called cash pass revenue analysis.

Chair Gastil asked if the post pandemic recovery was from the occasional riders returning to the system and what kind of riders were lost during the pandemic and what kind of riders were coming back. Ms. Neff responded, stating that they were seeing trends comparing pre-Covid

Monday through Friday peak travel days to different trends now. She explained that some trends were higher ridership on weekends and lower on weekdays, and more night activity. She continued to say trends were changing post Covid which was due to a combination of casual riders and effects of different industries that stayed remote. Chair Gastil stated that ridership could possibly be affected by a cultural shift where people are using the trolley more for optional services rather than to work. Ms. Neff responded, saying yes, special events ridership was high but to still recognize regular business commuters. She explained that many people cross the border every day to go to their jobs and that ridership at the border was not as impacted as the rest of the system during Covid.

Committee Member Lordson commented that some businesses are not focusing on office space so people were working remotely. A building is expensive so it might have been cheaper to allow work from home which might have contributed to the trends MTS has seen.

Chair Gastil commented that there might be a ridership trend because of safety. MTS has invested in improving safety and making safety measures more visible.

Committee Member Garrett asked for clarification on MTS Access including taxis and if that meant MTS Access rides were contracted to taxis if MTS Access is not available. Mr. Grace answered yes, all subcontractors were included in the annual performance monitoring report, but MTS does break this out in the quarterly reports where MTS Access and taxi were separate.

#### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### **5. Fixed Route and Trolley Update (Keith Vann and Aaron Pitt)**

Keith Van, MTS Manager of Service Operations, presented on Fixed Route updates. He outlined: fixed route overview, special events including December Nights, detour and staff for this event, and Santa Fe Depot construction impact to route 215, 225, 235 with temporary stop relocation.

Aaron Pitt, Manager of Special Operations, presented the following: Summary of service 2025, ridership impacted by major San Diego events, Park Blvd to Harbor Dr. project, and the Orange Line Improvement Project.

#### **Public Comment**

There were no Public Comments.

#### **Committee Comment**

Committee Member Rodriguez asked if there were estimated numbers of the trolley ridership at the soccer playoffs. Mr. Pitt answered yes, those numbers were put in the slides. Mr. Rodriguez asked if the Aztecs were among the events, and Mr. Pitt answered no.

#### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

#### **6. Same Day Paratransit Report (Britany Bardales)**

Britany Bardales, Transdev Assistant General Manager, presented FY25 MTS Access statistics compared to FY24, same-day paratransit pilot update, and evaluation metrics on same day service.

### **Public Comment**

There were no Public Comments.

### **Committee Comment**

Committee Member Garrett asked if there was information on the financial effects of same day service. He suggested that providing rides with higher rates would be good for the agency since they can provide more rides without increasing their costs. He continued to ask if there was information on this yet. Ms. Bardales answered that November was not included and this information was not available. Mr. Garrett then asked if this was going to be re-evaluated after a year and what was the plan for same day service. Ms. Bardales answered that she was not sure when the evaluation would happen but there was more to come.

Committee Member Rodriguez asked if same day was a one-day ticket or could it be purchased as a year-fare. Ms. Bardales answered that it was a one-way fare and costs \$10.00 per one way trip or two \$5.00 MTS Access tickets could be used as equivalent to this.

Committee Member Merino asked if there were any statistics on calls requested versus rides able to be scheduled for same day service. Ms. Bardales answered not at this time, but she could gather that information. Mr. Merino stated that statistics in transportation focus on service availability and effectiveness. Mr. Merino then requested statistics on this to help evaluate the program.

### **Action Taken**

Informational item only. No action taken.

## **7. San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Access Update and Medical Transportation Management (MTM) Report (Vassilena Hycz)**

Vassilena Hycz, MTS Manager of Paratransit and Minibus, presented MTS Access overview and statistics, Do Not Leave Alone Policy discontinued January 1, 2026, same-day paratransit pilot update, eligibility evaluation metrics, functional assessment center, and announcement of new electric vehicles for paratransit services.

### **Public Comment**

There were no Public Comments.

### **Committee Comment**

Committee Member Merino asked if there was a new scheduling system for MTS Access that has been implemented. Ms. Hycz answered no, but that the Trapeze software was recently upgraded to the newest version. She asked if this question came from seeing a message on the EZ Access application of the system being down. Mr. Merino answered no but there were scheduling difficulties that caused the drivers to tell other passengers and him that it was due to the new scheduling system. He asked for clarification if this was an entirely new system that everyone had to be trained in or was this a simple change. Ms. Hycz answered that they were still within the Trapeze system and this was just an upgrade to the newest version. She asked if he had any problems recently and he answered yes, today. Mr. Merino asked if there was a complaints and compliments structure in place for passengers to use and if this could be publicized so that riders could know when and how to do so. Ms. Hycz answered yes, a compliment or complaint can be left on the MTS website or called into the MTS Customer Service Department. She mentioned that when she receives emails regarding complaints, she

always forwards these to the MTS Customer Service Department so they could be entered into the system for tracking purposes.

Chair Gastil commented that functional assessments vary across all transit agencies. He asked what balance is seen between trying to save resources by identifying the cases that are permanent disability versus possibly saving money by making sure people who can use fixed route do so. Ms. Hycz answered this is not a test. The aim is to gain better understanding of someone's abilities, which gives the mobility assessment evaluators a clearer indication of someone's abilities compared to what information they could get from an application in an interview. She continued to say these in-person assessments assist to identify the correct eligibility. Ms. Hycz offered a presentation of assessments at the next meeting to bring details of what has been learned through this process.

Committee Member Garrett asked if the functional assessment center had the same type of environment that can be used for travel training and teaching people how to use fixed route transit. He stated whether people were able bodied or not, some people have never ridden a bus or trolley, do not know how to get on or off a vehicle, or do not know how to pull the cord. He stated this space could be used for travel training. Ms. Hycz answered yes, having a functional assessment was always a goal and that MTS and MTM were waiting on space. She continued to say that using this space for travel training was something she could investigate, but that MTS used to have a travel training program many years ago. She stated that the functional assessment was not fully done yet but it is tailored to San Diego elements and weather.

Committee Member Merino commented that he was pleased to see the assessment center functioning but mentioned he heard riders say they take Uber and asked why they would be allowed to ride MTS Access if they can take an Uber. He also stated that most medical plans are required to provide medical transportation to medical appointments, and he seen a lot of riders that take MTS Access to medical appointments. He asked if there could be an offset in terms of having them use the transportation for their medical plans and asked if this could be publicized. He mentioned giving the applicants notice during the interview to inform of medical transportation through personal insurance plans. Ms. Hycz responded that there was a change several years ago in how MCPs (Managed Care Providers) provide transportation to medical appointments and MTS did notify the clients to inform them of this service, but feedback was given from clients that MTS Access rides were more reliable. She continued to say that people were more willing to pay \$5.00 to ride MTS Access to their medical appointments. MTS tried to encourage clients to reach out to their providers for rides and save the money they would have spent on MTS Access, but it was difficult.

Committee Member Lordson commented that San Diego Regional Center (SDRC) funds a brokerage service to provide rideshare service for people who cannot ride MTS Access to their job due to being outside the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile rule. He stated that a lot of people could ride Uber but cannot navigate a transfer, they cannot read the bus numbers or read the system or have enough knowledge to pull the cord which is why they provide this rideshare service. Mr. Lordson asked if an applicant that has submitted Part A and B, but is working with an agency like SDRC, could this information be submitted as well. Ms. Hycz answered yes and said if someone also appeals their determination, they could provide as much supporting documentation as they feel is necessary.

Committee Member Garrett asked if the same day service rides were included in the MTS Access ridership statistics that were presented during this item. Ms. Hycz answered yes it was and that for the next meeting she could provide details on a breakdown of regular ridership versus same day trips. Mr. Garrett asked about on-time performance with same day service and

if these trips were still scheduled at a specific time. Ms. Hycz said if it fits within the schedule then yes, that trip would have the same standards as all other trips.

Committee Member Lordson asked if anyone noticed same day trips being requested more during certain hours than other times. Ms. Bardales answered that there was a pattern during the high peaks in the morning between 6 and 8, which made it more difficult to get a same day ride. She stated if someone cancelled and the slot opened, then whoever called in for same day service could schedule a trip, but generally these were sporadic rides.

Committee Member Marshall asked what outreach has been done about the discontinuation of Do Not Leave Alone policy. Ms. Hycz answered that letters had been sent out multiple times and MTS reached out to anyone who needed an explanation. She also stated that she provided FACTs (Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation) information and if someone wanted to know what FACT provided, they could visit their website at [www.FACT.SD.ORG](http://www.FACT.SD.ORG). She stated that FACT provides service to people with disabilities and seniors and that FACT would go beyond  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile rule which would be a good resource for trips that MTS did not service.

Chair Gastil commented that the concept was not that people who are currently riding with somebody would be alone but that that they would be riding with a caretaker or a companion that is going to the same place they are going. Ms. Hycz stated that it is important to note that when someone was being picked up or dropped off to have someone there waiting for them, which was part of the issue. She stated that if they are not there, that is when MTS cannot leave the client alone. She added that it was very important for passengers to have that person ready to be able to take the individual, so that they were not left stranded.

## OTHER ITEMS

### 8. Committee Member Communications

Chair Gastil announced that he attended the 20<sup>th</sup> FACT anniversary and that several committee members were there including MTS amongst the speakers.

Committee Member Garrett announced that SANDAG was completing two plans; one was the proposed final 2025 Coordinated Plan being available for public review on their website. He invited everyone to review the plan and submit comments to the project team through email, voicemail, or to him personally. He stated this was done every four (4) years and looked specifically at the transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes and how to address those transportation needs. He explained that some recommended outcomes were policy changes and funding priorities for the Specialized Transportation Grant program, which was a grant program that SANDAG administers to a lot of transportation providers and nonprofits. He stated they identified in the plan what they want the funding priorities to be for the next four (4) years and it is informed by the analysis and outreach they did over the last year and a half. He said they will be presenting a summary of the plan tomorrow, at 1:00 PM at the Transportation Committee at SANDAG. He also stated that at that time, the Transportation Committee will hold a public hearing to solicit additional feedback, and then they would ask to approve the Plan. Mr. Garrett announced the second plan was the 2025 Regional Plan, which SANDAG released in May 2025 along with the draft Environmental Impact Report on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Both will be available on their website tomorrow at [www.sandag.org/2025RegionalPlan](http://www.sandag.org/2025RegionalPlan). He continued stating on December 12, 2025, the SANDAG Board of Directors would be asked to adopt the plan and certify the final Environmental Impact Report for the 2025 Regional Plan. He added that any comments could be submitted online or in person for the Board of directors' consideration. Chair Gastil asked if this was at the SANDAG Transportation Committee meeting. Mr. Garrett answered that the SANDAG Transportation

Committee is the Coordinated Plan and the Board of Directors is the body that will be deciding on the Regional Plan next Friday, which starts at 9:00 AM.

Committee Member Rodville announced that NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) had an upcoming smart advocacy training as seen on the flyers provided. One of those trainings was where you learn to tell your story in 2 minutes or less, the purpose being decision makers have limited time and it is learning how to condense your story to reach policy makers quickly. She stated the second training is to learn how to contact your policy maker and have a discussion with them as it relates to decision making. She announced all these training sessions were free and a way to get your voice out to the decision makers and learn how to talk to them.

Committee Member Hernandez announced that FACT was awarded the Cycle 2 Access for All Grant. He stated that they were going to try to implement that in the next couple of weeks and its focus is on-demand same day wheelchair accessible rides. He said they were going to try to mimic a little bit of what MTS was doing with the limited scheduling hours and to access this through the website at [www.FACT.SD.ORG](http://www.FACT.SD.ORG) where the exact start date will be posted.

Committee Member Ahn announced that Caltrans is working on the district transit plan that would identify and prioritize transit infrastructure needs on the state transportation network and position district specific needs for funding and implementation. She stated that some of the goals for the plans included reliability and service access, customer experience, resilience and sustainability and equity. She stated that the results of these ongoing efforts would include the Caltrans District Club and transit plan, the statewide summary report and statewide story map and that this would be completed by fall or winter of 2026.

**9. Next Meeting Date**

The next ASAC meeting is to be determined.

\*Clerk's note: the next meeting was subsequently scheduled for March 19, 2026 at 1:00PM.

**10. Adjournment**

Chair Gastil adjourned the meeting at 1:15pm.

/S/Ceasar Fernandez  
Chairperson, ASAC  
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/S/Diana Hernandez  
Committee Clerk  
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachment: A. Roll Call Sheet

SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM  
ACCESSIBLE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC) MEETING

ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE): December 4, 2025

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 1:00PM

ADJOURN: 2:15PM

COMMITTEE MEMBER		ALTERNATE		ORGANIZATION	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Voting Committee Members						
George Gastil (Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	ASAC Chair	1:00PM	2:15PM
Letty Zuno	<input type="checkbox"/>	VACANT	<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to Independence	ABSENT	ABSENT
Christian Hernandez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arun Prem	<input type="checkbox"/>	FACT (CTSA)	1:00PM	2:15PM
Debbie Marshall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VACANT	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Council on Developmental Disabilities	1:00PM	2:15PM
Todd Lordson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shane Hughes	<input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Regional Center	1:00PM	2:15PM
Marianela Camarillo	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kimberly Taylor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Center for the Blind	1:00PM	2:15PM
Tim Garrett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Benjamin Gembler	<input type="checkbox"/>	SANDAG	1:00PM	2:15PM
Alyssa Ahn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandra Vazquez	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caltrans	1:00PM	2:15PM
Melissa Hernandez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jacob Carson	<input type="checkbox"/>	County of San Diego AIS	1:00PM	2:15PM
Irene Santiesteban	<input type="checkbox"/>	Christine Moore	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paratransit Consumer	ABSENT	ABSENT
David Merino	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eugenia Kainz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paratransit Consumer	1:18PM	2:15PM
Rose Napoleon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rene Rodriguez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Route Consumer	1:00PM	2:15PM
Tarrence Lewis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walter Castillo	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Route Consumer	ABSENT	ABSENT
Monique Ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wendy Merritt	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deaf Community Services	ABSENT	ABSENT
Kacie Rodvill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Betsy Knight	<input type="checkbox"/>	County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services	1:00PM	2:15PM

COMMITTEE CLERK: /s/ Diana Hernandez