

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 12, 2026

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

1. Roll Call

Chair Whitburn called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. A roll call sheet listing Executive Committee member attendance is attached as Attachment A.

2. Public Comment

David Rodger – Provided a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. David expressed frustration about ongoing issues within the MTS system. He reported that most schedule monitors at Balboa Station were not functioning despite being previously reported. He also expressed frustration with unclear communication and lack of assistance during Orange Line construction, noting that signage and schedules were misleading. He commented on safety concerns at the Fifth Avenue Trolley Station and concluded by suggesting that MTS staff use public transit more frequently to better understand rider experiences.

3. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Goble moved to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2026, MTS Executive Committee meeting. Board Member Elo-Rivera seconded the motion, and the vote was 4 to 0 in favor with Board Member Fernandez, Board Member Dillard and Board Member Moreno absent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Operating Budget Midyear Amendment (Gordon Meyer)

Gordon Meyer, MTS Manager of Financial Planning, presented on Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Operating Budget Midyear Amendment. He discussed: Revenue assumptions for passenger levels, average fare, passenger revenue, and other revenue. Sales tax revenues, State Transit Assistance (STA), Senate Bill (SB) 125 and revenue summary. Expense assumptions overview, expense assumptions for personnel, outside services, purchased transportation, energy, risk management, other and expenses summary. Consolidated revenues less expenses, and staff recommendation.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments

Committee Comment

Vice Chair Goble thanked the Chair and staff for the concise presentation and requested to revisit slide two. He asked for clarification on the recent softening in ridership, specifically whether the decline was occurring in bus or trolley services, and whether changes on the trolley side were due to fewer large events or station-related factors. Gordon Meyer explained that ridership targets were primarily being missed on the trolley side, while bus ridership was performing better than budget expectations. Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer,

(CEO), explained that the decline in ridership reflected broader national trends, particularly in border regions where concerns related to ICE activity had impacted travel behavior. She noted that economic pressures also contributed, as higher household expenses led to fewer discretionary trips. Additionally, she stated that unusual rainy weather had temporarily reduced ridership and that staff would continue monitoring the trend, noting it was consistent across major metropolitan areas. Vice Chair Goble asked whether the observed ridership softness was more pronounced in specific geographic areas, such as the South Bay compared to UCSD, or if the trend was consistent across regions. Ms. Cooney said staff had looked into it and found the drop in ridership was happening across the Trolley system, not just in specific areas.

Vice Chair Goble asked for clarification on slide nine regarding the structural deficit table. He noted the reduction in SB125 allocation from \$10 million to \$3 million and asked if this meant the funding was being spread over future years rather than reduced or lost if it is not used. Mr. Meyer confirmed that the funding was not being lost and was instead being extended into future years.

Vice Chair Goble asked about slide 16, noting the mention of a catch-up payment for two substations that had not yet been built. He questioned whether MTS was being billed for infrastructure that was not yet in use and asked for clarification. Mr. Meyer clarified that MTS was not being billed for unused infrastructure. He explained that the issue involved two substations that had been in use but were not billed for over three years due to a breakdown in communication between MTS and SDG&E during a repair process. Once the issue was identified and resolved, billing resumed, resulting in a one-time catch-up cost of approximately \$1.8 million. Ms. Cooney added that SDG&E was required to recover costs from ratepayers for up to three years, which is why the catch-up amount totaled approximately \$1.8 million.

Vice Chair Goble commented on CNG rates and expressed support for MTS's use of CNG buses, noting they were more cost-effective compared to hydrogen buses. He referenced higher fueling costs experienced by North County Transit and commended the bus team for their foresight.

Board Member Moreno thanked staff for the presentation and noted the information was daunting. She asked for clarification on whether there had been a 6.5% decrease in ridership. After reviewing the budget assumptions, she clarified that the 6.5% reflected projected growth that was not achieved. She then asked whether that projection had been based on prior ridership trends or if it had been overly ambitious. Mr. Meyer clarified that ridership was averaging about 1.3% below the previous year. He explained that projections had been based on continued growth trends seen in prior years, including stronger gains in FY25, with expectations that growth would gradually slow. However, he noted that forecasts did not anticipate ridership flattening in FY26. Board Member Moreno sought confirmation that ridership had declined by approximately 1% compared to the previous year and asked for the specific figures. Mr. Meyer clarified that while ridership this year was slightly below last year, the previous year had experienced significant growth of approximately 6–7% compared to FY24. Board Member Moreno acknowledged the prior year's 7% ridership growth and requested

additional data regarding trends in border regions, asking if comparative information from other large transit systems could be provided.

Board Member Moreno also agreed with comments supporting CNG, noting industry trends shifting toward electrification, and commended staff for diversifying energy strategies. She then asked for clarification on the TDA reserve at the county level and inquired about the amount available. Mike Thompson explained that the TDA reserve was typically around 5% of projected cash receipts, estimating it to be approximately \$20 million. He noted that this amount was shared between MTS and North County Transit and was based on expected revenue requirements. Board Member Moreno acknowledged that the approximately \$20 million TDA reserve was shared between MTS and North County Transit and asked whether those funds could be used if needed. Mr. Thompson explained that MTS could request to use the TDA reserve, but it is generally expected to be replenished and not remain below the 5% threshold for long. He noted that in times of financial strain, the reserve has been used when cash receipts fall short of projections, with a replenishment process reviewed annually by SANDAG and the county. Board Member Moreno stated that, given the structural deficit, MTS may be close to requesting use of the TDA reserve. She asked for confirmation that there was approximately a \$2 million difference between the amended and projected budget and noted difficulty reconciling the figures, requesting a follow-up briefing. She then asked if the item was actionable and expressed willingness to make a motion to approve staff's recommendation. Mr. Meyer confirmed that the approximately \$2 million difference related to the structural deficit was correct.

Board Member Elo-Rivera thanked the Chair and staff for the presentation and asked whether there were any strategies in place to boost ridership or offset the current shortfalls. Ms. Cooney explained that staff were planning several ridership campaigns to launch in the spring, including efforts tied to rising gas prices to highlight transit as a more affordable option. She added that targeted campaigns would also focus on increasing ridership along the Orange Line, particularly in the La Mesa area. Board Member Elo-Rivera asked whether ridership campaigns addressed concerns about safety and rider fears, particularly if those concerns were contributing to lower-than-expected ridership. He inquired about what actions were being taken to reassure riders and improve their sense of safety on the system. Ms. Cooney explained that staff were working with the County on a "Know Your Rights" signage and outreach campaign. She added that transit enforcement presence was being emphasized to help riders feel safe and supported, noting that staff continued to monitor activity across the system to ensure rider safety. Board Member Elo-Rivera expressed concern that, while there may not be formal reports of immigration activity on the system, there had been reports of immigration enforcement activity near transit areas. He noted that these concerns could still impact riders.

Board Member Elo-Rivera then asked staff to explain the difference between freezing positions and eliminating positions, and when discussions would shift from temporary hiring freezes to permanent position eliminations in response to the structural deficit. Mr. Thompson explained that staff planned to continue freezing positions through the ballot measure period, after which decisions would be made on whether to eliminate or reinstate those positions based on funding

outcomes. He noted that frozen positions carried no associated salary costs, providing short-term operating budget savings, while preserving flexibility to restore positions later if needed. Board Member Elo-Rivera asked what impact the hiring freeze would have on existing workers. Mr. Thompson explained that the frozen positions were already vacant, so there was no direct impact on current employees, as the roles were simply not being filled. Board Member Elo-Rivera clarified that he was not referring to job losses but asked whether unfilled positions were placing additional workload on existing employees, potentially stretching staff thinner or impacting time off and breaks. Ms. Cooney explained that in some cases, frozen positions had not increased workload due to operational efficiencies. She cited the revenue department as an example, where reduced cash handling from the PRONTO system allowed staff to eliminate unnecessary tasks, such as weekend cash counting, without overburdening employees. Board Member Elo-Rivera asked whether similar evaluations of workload and efficiency were being conducted across all levels of the organization. Ms. Cooney explained that in some cases, such as a frozen staff attorney position, responsibilities had been redistributed by relying more on outside counsel while existing staff managed remaining workloads as needed.

Board Member Elo-Rivera emphasized the importance of evaluating whether positions continued to serve their original purpose and asked if similar assessments were being conducted across all levels of the organization, including supervisory and management roles, to ensure efficiency. Ms. Cooney stated that staff were carefully evaluating positions and staffing levels across the organization and that she personally reviewed and approved all hiring decisions, particularly on the management and administrative side, to determine whether roles could remain frozen. She noted that no large-scale staff reductions were being proposed at this time.

Action Taken

Board Member Moreno moved to forward a recommendation to the MTS Board of Directors to enact Resolution NO. 26-3 amending FY 2026 operating budget for MTS, San Diego Transit Corporation (SDTC), San Diego Trolley, Inc. (SDTI), MTS Contract Services, and the Coronado Ferry. Chair Whitburn seconded the motion, and the vote was 5 to 0 in favor with Board Member Fernandez and Board Member Dillard, absent.

5. Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Operating Budget (Gordon Meyer)

Gordon Meyer, MTS Manager of Financial Planning, presented on Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Operating Budget. He presented on: Revenue assumptions for passenger revenue and subsidy, service levels, expense assumptions, takeaways and Budget Development calendar.

Public Comment

Ken – Provided a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. Ken expressed frustration with the potential fare increase for FY27, noting that Los Angeles Metro fares were lower despite operating a larger system. He shared a personal example of low-cost travel in Los Angeles and asked why San Diego fares were higher.

Committee Comment

Board Member Elo-Rivera noted that the discussion connected to earlier comments regarding fares and upcoming agenda items. He asked for an update on non-fare efforts, specifically whether there were any emerging opportunities not yet included in the presentation that would bring in revenue in FY27. Mr. Meyer stated that a full forecast for non-fare revenue, including advertising and energy credits, had not yet been completed. He noted that the marketing team is actively exploring additional opportunities, specific details were not yet available but would be included in upcoming budget presentations.

Board Member Elo-Rivera asked for an update on discussions with the San Diego Community Power regarding potential opportunities for revenue generation or cost offsets. Mr. Meyer mentioned that staff had recently met with San Diego Community Power to begin discussions and establish a working relationship. He explained that purchasing service with them would not bring any significant savings to MTS compared to current arrangements with Calpine, but they had identified potential grant opportunities. He added that multiple departments, including finance and the Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) sustainability manager were involved in those discussions. Board Member Elo-Rivera was pleased to hear of the ongoing discussion with San Diego Community Power, noting that while direct energy purchasing may not yield significant savings, other opportunities for revenue generation or cost reduction may arise. He requested continued updates on progress in these areas.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

6. Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) (Mike Thompson)

Mike Thompson, MTS Deputy Financial Officer, Eli Belknap, MTS Senior Project Manager and Mike Wygant, MTS Chief Operating Officer (COO) Bus, presented on Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). They presented on: Financial sustainability, innovative clean transit policy history, ZEB cost summary for transition. CIP open projects for facility and construction, rail infrastructure, capital funding levels proposed FY 2027, and development of the FY 2027 CIP guiding principles. FY 2027-31 CIP unconstrained project list, Capital project summary, FY 2027 CIP project highlights for bus revenue vehicles, and rail revenue vehicles. FY 2027 CIP facility and construction projects, rail infrastructure projects, and other equipment and installation projects. FY 2027 CIP five-year forecast for State of Good Repair (SGR), innovative clean transit, other initiatives, five-year summary and staff recommendation.

Public Comment

Ken – Provided a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. Ken asked if MTS had considered incorporating residential, commercial, or retail development at the Kearny Mesa Transit Center similar to other transit developments. He questioned MTS's approach to generating revenue through property management and raised concerns about higher transit fares in San Diego compared to Los Angeles.

Committee Comment

Board Member Moreno thanked staff for the presentation and asked whether this type of overview was conducted annually. Mr. Thompson explained that staff provided a similar presentation each year starting with the FY 27 CIP, noting that this year's version included additional details such as open projects, board direction highlights, and Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) status. Board Member Moreno again, thanked staff for the presentation, noting it was the most extensive information she had received. She expressed support for making this type of overview a regular practice, given changing conditions and capital priorities.

Board Member Moreno acknowledged the importance of maintaining a State of Good Repair (SGR) tied to funding requirements and asked for a breakdown of the CIP, specifically how much of the funding was allocated to ZEB initiatives. Mr. Thompson responded that of the \$107 million planned for next year, approximately \$5.6 million was allocated to ZEB projects. Board Member Moreno noted that the capital improvement program totaled approximately \$236 million and asked whether the \$72 million identified for preventative maintenance was considered part of the SGR. Mr. Thompson clarified that preventative maintenance is considered part of the SGR, but it is reflected in the operating budget rather than the capital budget. He explained that the federal funds can be used for both capital projects and preventative maintenance, noting that activities like maintaining buses support SGR even though they are not classified as capital projects.

Board Member Moreno suggested that for transparency it would be helpful to identify the members of the Capital Projects Review Committee (CPRC), she noted uncertainty about whether the committee included MTS staff or Board Members. Mr. Thompson clarified that the CPRC is made up of MTS and SANDAG staff. Board Member Moreno asked how the social equity listening study is utilized on the CIP. Sharon Cooney, MTS CEO, explained that there were ongoing projects, such as bus stop lighting program, which were incorporated into the CIP over time. Board Member Moreno suggested that the CPRC should align the recent equity listening tour with capital improvement priorities. She emphasized the importance of maintaining SGR while increasing transparency around the project selection. She requested additional information to better understand how projects were chosen and confirmed whether Attachment B reflected the projects funded by the \$107 million allocation. Mr. Thompson explained that Attachment B included all submissions for the next 5 years and detailed what was considered for funding and Attachment C was a smaller subset showing only the funded items. He also explained that Attachment F includes what projects have already been funded and Attachment D is a 5-year forecast for the CIP, outlining anticipated revenue streams and the project requests over period. Board Member Moreno asked for clarification on attachment D, noting that she may have been reviewing a different attachment than the one Mr. Thompson had just described. Karen Landers, MTS General Counsel, explained that the attachment Board Member Moreno was reviewing was Attachment D to the Title VI Analysis.

Board Member Moreno congratulated staff on securing the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, emphasizing that the award reflected the strength of the organization's work and encouraged continued pursuit of available grant opportunities.

She noted that Phase 2 outreach workshops had been held in several communities but asked for greater focus in District 8, particularly near the Blue Line stations such as San Ysidro and Iris Avenue, given their high ridership and recent declines in trolley use. Board Member Moreno also asked for increased in-person outreach and workshops in San Ysidro and Iris Avenue, citing the digital divide and importance of direct engagement. She also raised concerns about community-based organizations needing resources to support communication efforts and encouraged MTS to expand its direct outreach capacity. Board Member Moreno concluded by appreciating the transparency of the information presented and stating that additional communication and outreach would further benefit the public.

Vice Chair Goble thanked staff for the presentation and asked to revisit slide 5. He noted that the cost estimate had increased to \$833 million from an earlier estimate of approximately \$600 million and, citing uncertainties such as supply chain issues, labor costs, and tariffs, questioned how confident staff were in the current estimate and whether costs could rise further. Mr. Wygant explained that the estimates were correct and that the original \$600 million figure represented the additional cost needed to complete the ICT transition if the agency remained on the CNG alternative fuel path. He mentioned that the figure was developed through a year-long analysis involving consultants, industry input, pilot buses and coordination with San Diego Gas & Electric. Mr. Wygant noted that the numbers were revised late the previous year to \$833 million to account for inflation, unforeseen regulatory impacts, reduced bus suppliers, and significantly increased costs, explaining that inflation had far exceeded original projections.

Vice Chair Goble reference slide 21 and mentioned that it was helpful to know the useful life of CNG and Batter Electric Buses (BEB) was the same. He asked for clarification on the differences in ongoing maintenance costs between BEB and CNG Buses. Mr. Wygant explained that the FTA requires CNG and BEB's to meet the same minimum useful life. He explained that maintenance and operating costs were tracked by sub fleet and that BEB had saved some money overall since 2019, though month to month results have varied. Mr. Wygant noted that savings declines as BEB's aged and came off warranty because battery repairs were more expensive than CNG repairs. He added that low costs were helped by off-peak charging but warned that as the fleet expanded, peak-rates charging would likely increase costs.

Vice Chair Goble noted that some routes required buses with ranges beyond current battery electric limits, preventing full fleet conversion. He asked what portion of the system could realistically use BEB's, and what percent is currently BEB. Mr. Wygant explained that when the fleet transition began, the average daily route length was about 147 miles, with most routes well below that range. He stated that roughly 47% of daily routes could be served by first generation BEB's and that newer models, with increased range of about 180 miles. He noted that technological improvements had progressed unevenly and that remaining limitations included battery density and vehicle weight. Mr. Wygant added that staff is currently working with the state through the regulatory process to secure continued exemption that would allow for buses to operate at a slightly heavier weight for a longer period of time. He stated that approximately 61% are BEB's.

Vice Chair Goble directed staff to slide 22 and referenced the earlier cost discussion noting that expenses appeared to be continually increasing. He questioned whether the flat cost assumptions shown on slides 22 and 24 were realistic over the next four fiscal years or whether additional cost escalation estimates should be included to better reflect anticipated needs. Mr. Thompson explained that the fleet plan includes assumed inflationary costs for bus purchases. He stated that funding levers were intentionally smoothed to avoid spikes in years with more expensive bus replacement, such as 60-foot buses. He added that similar inflation assumptions were built into rail car costs and that the total projected amount was evenly spread across multiple years to maintain stable funding levels.

Action Taken

Chair Whitburn moved to recommend that the MTS Board of Directors 1) Approve the FY 2027 CIP with the estimated federal and nonfederal funding levels. As the federal appropriation figures are finalized and/or other project funding sources become available, allow the CEO to identify and adjust projects for the adjusted funding levels; 2) Recommend that the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors approve the submittal of Federal Section 5307, 5337 and 5339 applications for the MTS FY 2027 CIP; and 3) Recommend that the SANDAG Board of Directors approve amendment number 16 of the 2027 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) in accordance with the FY 2027 CIP recommendations. Vice Chair Goble seconded the motion, and the vote was 5 to 0 in favor with Board Member Fernandez, and Board Member Dillard absent.

7. Senate Bill (SB) 125 Allocation Package Revision (Mike Thompson)

Mike Thompson, MTS Chief Financial Officer, presented on Senate Bill (SB) 125 Allocation Package Revision. He presented on: SB 125 funding update, SB 125 revised allocation package, financial sustainability strategy, and staff recommendation.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments

Committee Comment

There were no Committee Member Comments

Action Taken

Chair Whitburn moved to forward a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve the revised SB 125 allocation package. Chair Whitburn seconded the motion, and the vote was 4 to 0 in favor with Board Member Fernandez, Board Member Dillard and Vice Chair Goble absent.

8. Fare Change Study Update (Mark Olson and Israel Maldonado)

Mark Olson, MTS Director of Marketing and Communications, and Israel Maldonado, MTS Director of Fare Technology and Operations presented on Fare Change Study Update. They presented on: Fare change study background, strategy for filling the gap, what does \$23 Million Mean, Phase I Outreach recap, package development, drafting fare change proposals, fare

change proposals: High Level, Package A, Package B. Phase II engagement goals, Phase II outreach, Phase II online survey results, Phase II outreach and fare change study timeline.

Public Comment

Ken – Provided a verbal statement to the Board during the meeting. Ken stated that the exclusion of Los Angeles from the peer agency comparison was unreasonable and that LA Metro offered far broader coverage at lower fares. He questioned why MTS fares were significantly higher than those in Los Angeles, where fares were around \$1.50 to \$1.75.

Committee Comment

Board Member Elo-Rivera thanked the staff for the presentation and noted the challenge of balancing financial sustainability with rider affordability. He reiterated that fare increases should be the last resort. He asked for clarification on what the Board would be asked to decide in April. Mr. Olson explained that staff planned to return in April with a final fare package containing specific proposed numbers. He stated that the current discussion item was intended to gather Board member feedback, which would then inform a concrete recommendation for fare increases for the Board's consideration and approval. Board Member Elo-Rivera asked if at that time the Board will also be presented with a full assessment of all potential non-fare revenue opportunities. Mr. Olson stated that he does not believe it is currently on the April agenda, but can be added. Ms. Cooney added that the assessment of non-fare revenue opportunities could be included as part of the FY27 budget presentation scheduled in April. Board Member Elo-Rivera mentioned that it was very important to him to ensure that all possible non-fare revenue options were fully explored before asking riders to pay higher fares. He emphasized the need to confirm that other revenue sources had been maximized first. Board Member Elo-Rivera asked how staff was accounting for major upcoming events, such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics, noting that while San Diego is not hosting them, it would likely see increased visitors and transit demand as a result. Ms. Cooney stated that staff had not yet developed budgets for those future events and explained that providing additional service for major events would come with added costs. She noted that service planning depended in part on whether the stadium station at Snapdragon would be permitted to remain open for the Olympic events, adding that there were indications the Olympic Committee might restrict rail access due to safety concerns. Ms. Cooney mentioned that staff had recently learned about this potential limitation, is participating in ongoing discussions, and would account for these factors when developing future budgets.

Board Member Elo-Rivera reiterated the importance of ensuring that all revenue options were fully leveraged before asking riders to pay more. He expressed concern that higher monthly pass costs disproportionately affected lower-income riders who could not afford to pay larger amounts upfront, even if the pass offered better value. Board Member Elo-Rivera warned against policies that effectively penalized people for being poor and asked whether alternatives such as a weekly pass, payment splitting or other options could be provided. He also requested clarification on whether these equity concerns were being addressed through the PRONTO program, emphasizing that he did not want low-income riders to end up paying more simply because they could not afford a \$90 monthly pass all at once. Mr. Maldonado explained that

fare capping was specifically designed to address this concern by ensuring riders were not charged more than the monthly maximum. He explained that riders could load smaller amounts over time, such as \$10 or \$20, and the system would track their spending across the month. Mr. Maldonado added that public feedback indicated fare capping was a well-received and appreciated feature. Board Member Elo-Rivera agreed that fare capping helped equity concerns, noting that many low-income riders consistently paid more because they could not afford large upfront costs. He stressed that before supporting any fare increases, he needed confidence that all non-fare revenue options had been fully maximized, noting that ensuring equity for riders was a key obligation of the Board.

Vice Chair Goble asked for clarification that fare capping applied on a monthly basis, not just daily. He asked whether a senior rider would never pay more than \$90 under the proposed scenario, even if the fare was paid incrementally in smaller amounts over time. Mr. Maldonado explained that fare capping could be confusing but offers significant benefits. Using a senior rider example, he stated that under Package A, once a rider's cumulative payments reached the \$30 monthly cap, even if paid in smaller amounts over time, the system would stop charging additional fares for the rest of the month. Ms. Cooney added that fare capping could also be viewed through the day-pass scenario, explaining that if a senior rider chose to make all trips a single day each week, they would only be charged the daily fare each time and would never reach the \$30 monthly cap. Mr. Maldonado clarified that fare capping worked in two layers: a daily cap and a monthly cap. He explained that once a rider reached the daily cap that amount was added to a running monthly total. When the rider's cumulative payments reached the monthly cap, they would no longer be charged for the remainder of the month.

Vice Chair Goble emphasized that price was only one component of overall value and suggested that fare increases could be offset by improvements in perceived value. He encouraged exploring options such as a loyalty or rewards program to help riders feel appreciated. He acknowledged that the agenda item focused on pricing but urged consideration of value-based strategies alongside any fare increase. Mr. Maldonado responded that staff was working on a customer rewards program designed to integrate with the fare system. He explained that it would function as a loyalty-based, program to incentivize ridership and improve the customer experience and noted that staff was coordinating with executive leadership to advance the effort. Vice Chair Goble supported exploring a rider loyalty program, noting that recognizing frequent users, similar to how Petco Park acknowledged season ticket holders, created a sense of value and appreciation. He emphasized that offering incentives could encourage ridership and help soften the impact of fare increases by giving riders tangible benefits in return.

Board Member Montgomery Steppe thanked staff for the presentation and asked how many people had been engaged overall in the outreach efforts related to fare increase in Package A and Package B. Mr. Olson responded that staff received over 700 responses through the online survey, approximately 80 participants attended in-person workshops, and an estimated 30 to 40 people were engaged at each transit center during outreach efforts. Board Member Montgomery Steppe asked for clarification on what a transit center engagement involved and whether it was

conducted in the same manner as the in-person workshop. Mr. Olson explained that outreach at transit centers was more informal than workshops, since riders were often on the go. He said staff briefly shared information, answered questions, and distributed flyers with QR codes linking to the online survey. Board Member Montgomery Steppe asked whether the engagement numbers from transit center outreach could potentially overlap with the online survey responses, resulting in duplicate counts. Mr. Olson responded that there was a possibility the transit center engagement numbers overlapped with the online surveys responses. Ms. Cooney clarified that Phase One outreach resulted in approximately 5,700 survey responses. Mr. Olson confirmed that Phase One did result in approximately 5,700 survey responses but clarified that Phase One did not include packages A and B.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

OTHER ITEMS

9. Review of Draft March 19, 2026 Board Agenda

Ms. Cooney stated that the SB 125 allocation package revision could be placed on the consent agenda items unless there was a need for a full presentation similar to the one just provided. She added that if a full report was preferred, the item could be moved to a later Board agenda. Ms. Landers stated that the upcoming Board meeting would include two closed-sessions items that would require a quorum, though she did not expect them to be lengthy. She also noted that the COA agenda item was scheduled on the Board discussion agenda. Ms. Cooney stated that the Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget would likely not return to the upcoming Board meeting, noting that it would come back to the committee later for a more detailed review. She added that the fare change study update could also be moved to the April Board agenda. Chair Whitburn recommended keeping the item on the Board agenda while moving SB 125 to the consent calendar.

10. Other Staff and Committee Member Communications

There was no Other Staff Communications and Business discussion.

11. Next Meeting Date

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

/s/ Stephen Whitburn
Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/s/ Lucia Mansour
Clerk of the Board
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE): March 12, 2026 CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 9:09 a.m.
 RECESS: _____ RECONVENE: _____
 CLOSED SESSION: _____ RECONVENE: _____
 PUBLIC HEARING: _____ RECONVENE: _____
 ORDINANCES ADOPTED: _____ ADJOURN: 11:52 a.m.

REPRESENTING	BOARD MEMBER		ALTERNATE		PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Chair	Whitburn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Alternate	<input type="checkbox"/>	9:09 a.m.	11:52 a.m.
City of San Diego	Elo-Rivera	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Whitburn	<input type="checkbox"/>	9:09 a.m.	11:52 a.m.
County of San Diego	Montgomery Steppe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aguirre	<input type="checkbox"/>	9:09 a.m.	11:52 a.m.
East County	Dillard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	ABSENT	ABSENT
SANDAG Transportation Committee	Moreno	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fernandez	<input type="checkbox"/>	9:09 a.m.	11:52 a.m.
South Bay	Fernandez	<input type="checkbox"/>	Downey	<input type="checkbox"/>	ABSENT	ABSENT
Vice Chair	Goble	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Alternate	<input type="checkbox"/>	9:09 a.m.	11:52 a.m.

SIGNED BY THE CLERK OF THE BOARD: /s/ Lucia Mansour