



Metropolitan
Transit
System

2026 Legislative Program



System Summary

Creation

The Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) was created in 1975 by the passage of California Senate Bill 101 and came into existence on January 1, 1976. In 1984, the Governor signed Senate Bill 1736, which expanded the MTDB governing board from eight to 15 members. In 2002, Senate Bill 1703 merged MTDB's long-range planning, financial programming, project development and construction functions into the regional metropolitan planning organization, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). In 2005, MTDB changed its name to the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS).

Board of Directors

15-member Board generally meets once per month. Members are appointed as follows:

- One member of the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors appointed by the Board of Supervisors.
- Four members of the City Council of the City of San Diego, one of whom shall be the Mayor, appointed by the City Council.
- One member of each City Council appointed individually by the City Councils of the Cities of Coronado, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Poway, and Santee.
- Two members of the City Council of the City of Chula Vista, one of whom shall be the Mayor, appointed by the City Council.
- The Chairperson of the Board shall be selected from the Board membership by a two-thirds vote of the Board, a quorum being present. The Chairperson shall serve for a term of two years, except that he or she is subject to removal at any time by a two-thirds vote of the Board, a quorum being present.

Subsidiary Corporations

MTS owns assets of: San Diego Trolley, Inc. (SDTI); San Diego Transit Corporation (SDTC); and the San Diego & Arizona Eastern (SD&AE) Railway Company, which owns 108 miles of track and right-of-way.

Areas of Jurisdiction

Approximately 570 square miles of the urbanized areas of San Diego County as well as the rural parts of East County, 3,240 total square miles, serving approximately 3 million people in San Diego County.

Provision of Services

MTS provides bus and rail services directly or by contract with private operators. MTS coordinates all its services and determines the routing, stops, frequencies and hours of operation.

Light Rail

Light rail service is operated by SDTI on five lines (the UC San Diego Blue Line, Orange Line, Green Line, Copper Line, and Silver Line) with a total of 62 stations and 65 miles of rail.

Bus

Almost 100 fixed bus routes and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service (MTS Access). Fixed route bus services include local, urban, express, premium express and rural routes.

Freight

MTS contracts with the San Diego & Imperial Valley (SD&IV) Railroad to provide freight service to San Diego shippers over SD&AE right-of-way. SD&IV shares certain tracks with SDTI, operating during non-service Trolley hours.

Operating Budget

Approximately \$473 million annual operating budget.

Ridership

In Fiscal Year 2025, MTS generated approximately 81.2 million annual passenger trips. MTS is continuing to grow its ridership from the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on its ridership recovery action plan. To handle ridership demand, the agency schedules 7,000 trips each weekday, and has 160+ Trolley cars and 750+ buses in its fleet.

Planning and Scheduling

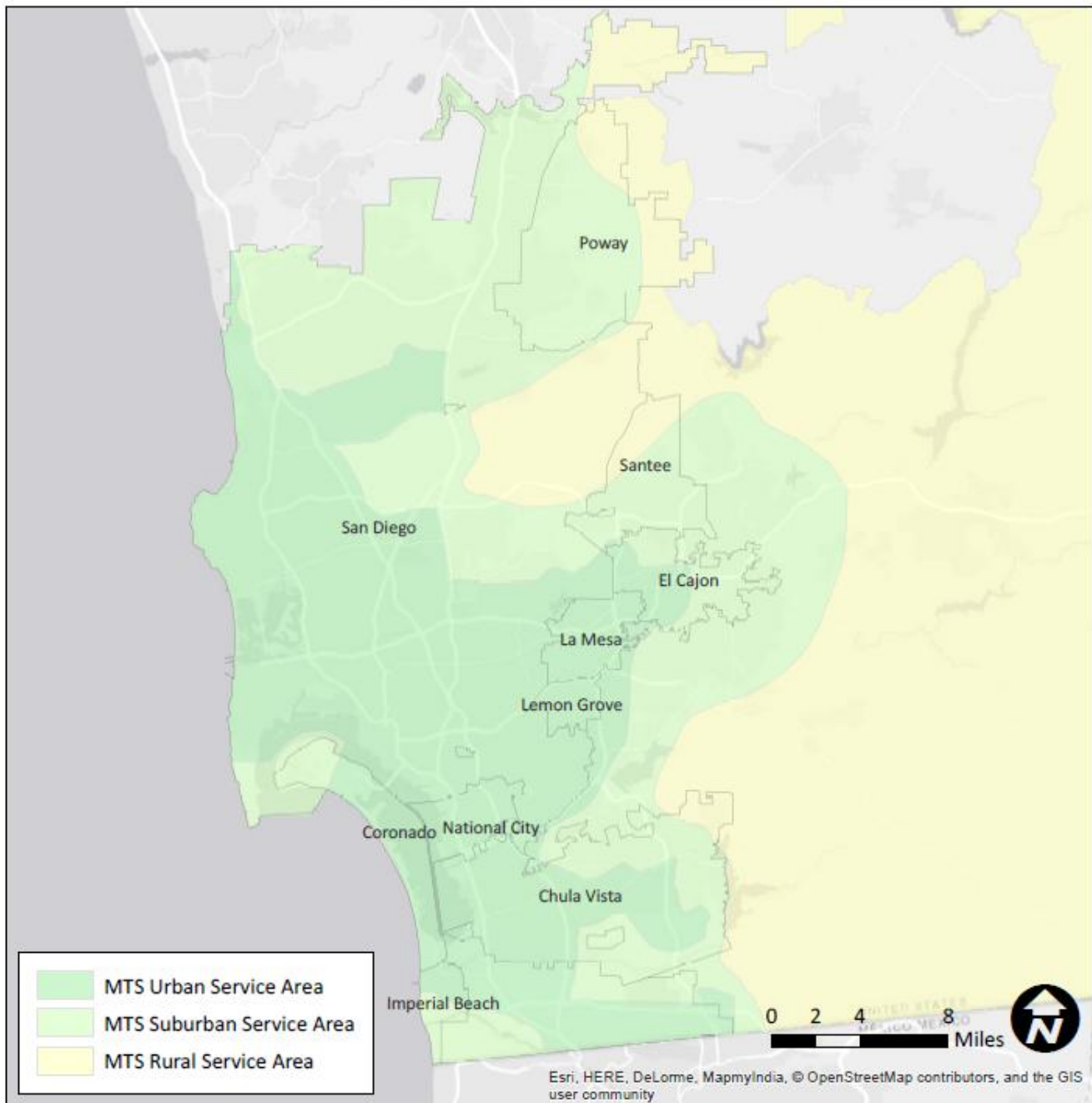
MTS is responsible for the service planning, scheduling, and performance monitoring of all MTS transit services. Service adjustments occur three times per year and as needed to improve efficiency and customer service.

Funding

MTS receives funding from various federal, state, and local sources. The primary sources are the California Transportation Development Act (TDA), California State Transit Assistance (STA), Federal Transit Administration (Sections 5307, 5311, 5337 and 5339), TransNet funds (local sales tax) and fares.

For-Hire Vehicle Administration

MTS licenses and regulates taxicabs, jitneys, and other private for-hire passenger transportation services by contract with the Cities of San Diego, Chula Vista, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, and Santee.



San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
Area of Jurisdiction
June 2026



2026 Legislative Program

Local (L) State (S) Federal (F)		Subject Area
Transit Funding		
S, F	1.	Support legislation that would generate new revenue for transit projects and operating costs.
F	2.	Support legislation that would generate an increase in appropriation levels for existing transit operating and capital funding programs.
F	3.	Support new long-term Surface Transportation Reauthorization legislation that provides increased levels of funding and favorable policies for transportation programs.
L, S, F	4.	Seek additional funding from regional, state, federal, and/or other sources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other funding may include legislation to expand revenue options through tourism, luxury vehicles or options other than a sales tax.
S, F	5.	Oppose legislation that would reduce direct funding to transit agencies.
S, F	6.	Seek disaster relief funding to reimburse costs incurred due to the January 2024 storm.
S	7.	Oppose legislation that would expand the use of TDA funds to non-transit purposes not currently covered by statute.
S, F	8.	Support legislation that would eliminate the requirement or need of transit agencies to have a farebox recovery and replace with state and/or federal funding, providing a sustainable mechanism to allow for free public transit.
S, F	9.	Support legislation that incentivizes increased transit ridership.
S, F	10.	Support legislation that would help offset the impact on transit budgets caused by increases in fuel and energy costs.
S	11.	Support favorable electric rate setting to incentivize deployment of zero emission bus technology.
S, F	12.	Seek funding to offset the costs associated with implementation and deployment of zero emission bus technologies.
F	13.	Support legislation to bring funding to railroad corridors and seek funding for railroad bridge and infrastructure rehabilitation.
S, F	14.	In partnership with interested cities, seek funding dedicated to grade-separation projects.
S	15.	Support legislation to exempt transit agencies from state sales tax.
S	16.	Support favorable programmatic guidelines for Cap-and-Invest Program-related funding sources and seek awards under all relevant programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support member agency applications for all relevant programs funded by Cap-and-Invest auctions.
S	17.	Oppose attempts to legislate local fare programs or to remove fare setting decisions from transit agencies.
L, S, F	18.	Seek subsidies for specialized fare programs supported by the MTS Board of Directors.

L, S, F	19.	Support the San Diego Association of Governments in seeking funding to continue Youth Opportunity Passes in San Diego.
S, F	20.	Seek opportunities for funding or policies to help improve system infrastructure as a means to increase the safety of transit riders.
S, F	21.	Seek direct funding for the operation of public restrooms and support cost-recovery measures for public restroom access.
F	22.	Oppose attempts to discontinue federal funding for school paratransit services or for nonemergency medical transport.
S, F	23.	Seek funding for the following capital projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kearny Mesa Transit Center ○ Zero Emission Buses and Electrification Infrastructure ○ MTS Bus Replacement Vehicles ○ Bus Stop Improvements ○ Light Rail Vehicle Replacements ○ Traction Power Substation Replacements ○ Grade Separation Projects ○ Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance Building Expansion ○ Blue to Green Line Double Tracking
Homelessness		
L, S, F	24.	Seek funding and resources to help persons experiencing homelessness throughout the MTS system.
Climate Change		
S, F	25.	Support state, federal, and other governmental agency efforts that help address issues of climate change.
Transit-Oriented Development		
S, F	26.	Support legislation that provides funding incentives for mixed-use projects and transit-oriented development.
S	27.	Support legislation that aids transit operators' efforts to create high density transit-oriented development.
Public Safety		
F	28.	Oppose attempts to create duplicative rail safety regulatory agencies.
S, F	29.	Oppose legislation or regulations that would have an adverse impact on transit agencies' ability to provide safe transportation to their customers.
S, F	30.	Support legislation which provides funding to public transit agencies for safety and security operations.
Regulatory Matters		
S, F	31.	Support legislation that would facilitate expedited delivery of transit capital projects.
S, F	32.	Oppose unfunded mandates that negatively impact transit operators. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seek dedicated funding for all newly mandated programs.

S, F	33.	Oppose legislation that adversely limits the use of eminent domain for public transportation projects.
F	34.	Support efforts to increase competition in the fuel market.
S	35.	Support legislation that ensures electricity is prioritized for transit agencies.
S	36.	Oppose legislation that would limit MTS's use of current personal identifiable information data standards to provide better service to customers.
S	37.	Oppose efforts to eliminate or restrict transit exemption provisions in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
S	38.	Support efforts in researching mechanisms to require Medi-Cal managed care plans to partially reimburse public transit agencies for Medi-Cal eligible paratransit trips.
F	39.	Support efforts in researching mechanisms to allow for public transit agencies to seek partial reimbursement for Medicaid eligible paratransit trips.
S, F	40.	Monitor and respond to legislation in the areas of finance, employment, and safety that could affect agency governance or operations, including issues related to contractors.
F	41.	Oppose efforts to broaden paratransit service eligibility classifications of individuals that could effectively be served through fixed route services.
F	42.	Support limitations on the interpretation of the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to service animals.
F	43.	Monitor and respond to attempts to alter Access Guidelines in a way that would financially burden transit operators without providing funding.
S	44.	In coordination with the California Transit Association, engage with stakeholders and potentially pursue changes to axle weight limits to reflect the shift to zero-emission buses.
S	45.	Support legislation that provides cities and/or counties with local control over autonomous vehicle deployment.
Labor Relations		
S	46.	Monitor and respond to legislation relating to personnel matters.
S	47.	Support legislation that protects the integrity of collective bargaining agreements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oppose efforts to mandate benefits or working conditions.
S	48.	Monitor and respond to legislation designed to clarify provisions of the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013.
F	49.	Seek positive closure to the Department of Labor's case regarding the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013.
S	50.	In coordination with the California Transit Association, pursue changes to SB 616 (Chapter 309, Statutes of 2023) to specify in law the number of sick days a transit employee may use before facing possible disciplinary action.
Administration		
L, S	51.	Support mechanisms to provide post-conviction relief to individuals with records of MTS violations.
S	52.	Seek legislation that would clarify election procedures applicable to a qualified voter initiative on behalf of MTS.

S	53.	Seek legislation that would exempt MTS from the county's combined rate limitation on imposed transaction and use taxes.
Support Legislative Programs of Other Agencies or Organizations		
L	54.	Support the legislative programs of other agencies, such as the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and North County Transit District (NCTD), where consistent with the MTS legislative program.
S, F	55.	Support provisions in the legislative programs of other organizations, such as the California Transit Association (CTA) and American Public Transportation Association (APTA), where consistent with the MTS legislative program.