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*Rapid 227 will be the first bus route in the San Diego region with dedicated electric buses*

**San Diego** – Continuing its commitment to cleaner air and expanding transit access, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Board of Directors today held a public hearing and approved *Rapid 227 (Iris Rapid)* as part of the region’s growing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network. Service is anticipated to begin as early as this fall.

*Rapid 227* will provide a first-of-its-kind battery-electric operated *Rapid* service in San Diego’s South Bay, linking the Otay Mesa Transit Center to neighborhoods along the Imperial Beach shores. The future route will also connect riders with the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley at the Iris Avenue Transit Center, providing an important link to employment and education centers in downtown San Diego and UTC.

“The beginning of the region’s first electric *Rapid* route is a huge leap forward towards a greener future, environmental justice, sustainability and better air quality,” said Nathan Fletcher, MTS Board Chair and San Diego County Supervisor, District 4. “When *Iris Rapid* is in full operation, MTS will have 25 electric buses operating in its fleet, with hundreds more on the way. This will be a great milestone to reach as we transition to an all-zero emissions bus fleet by 2040.”

“Our binational region will benefit greatly with the addition of *Iris Rapid*,” added Vivian Moreno, MTS Board Member and San Diego City Councilmember, District 8. “In 2021, 2.1 million pedestrians crossed the border northbound at the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. Thousands of those commuters use our bus system daily to get to jobs and education opportunities. *Iris Rapid* will reduce emissions, speed up trips, offer better amenities and provide longer spans of service. This is the type of bus service that both South Bay and Baja residents deserve.”

Powering *Rapid 227* are 12 sixty-foot battery-electric buses provided by New Flyer of America Inc. (“New Flyer”), a subsidiary of NFI Group Inc. New Flyer has supplied more than 600 buses to MTS in the past 30 years. The new battery-electric buses are currently in various stages of production and will soon begin arriving in San Diego.

The new electric buses serving *Rapid 227* will be stationed out of the agency's bus facility in Chula Vista. At this bus division, MTS is finalizing construction of a new \$8.5 million overhead gantry charging system capable of charging 24 battery-electric buses at a time, and will be expandable to add more charging capacity as MTS transitions to an all-electric fleet in the coming years.

The total cost of the *Rapid 227* project is \$37 million to purchase the 12 battery-electric buses and add the necessary infrastructure. Funding came from a mix of California Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program and Low Carbon Transit Operations Program grants, and MTS's Capital Improvement Program.

MTS has made a series of moves to advance its zero-emissions bus program in the last few years, helping the San Diego region meet its climate action plan goals.

- In December 2019, MTS began its zero emissions bus pilot by testing six battery-electric buses, and setting in motion the two-year electric bus pilot program. The buses ranges were tested under various driving characteristics, including weather, topography and more.
- In September 2020, the MTS Board approved a transition plan to convert all of the agency's 750 buses to zero-emission by 2040.
  - MTS committed to purchasing its last gas-powered bus in 2028
  - Transition will cut the agency's greenhouse gas emissions on the bus side by approximately 43% over the next 19 years
- In February 2021, MTS retired the last diesel bus in its fleet.
- In May 2022, MTS broke ground on a \$8.5 million retrofitting project at its South Bay bus division on an overhead charging system for battery-electric buses.
- In October 2022, MTS selected a site to build a new LEED-certified all-electric bus division to primarily park, charge and service its growing zero-emission bus fleet.

For more information about the upcoming Rapid 227 project, visit [www.sdmts.com/rapid227](http://www.sdmts.com/rapid227).

## **About MTS**

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates more than 100 bus routes and three Trolley lines in 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego. MTS is a leader in advancing initiatives to create a greener, cleaner and better-connected transit system in San Diego. Each weekday more than 220,000 passenger trips are taken throughout the MTS system taking people to work, school, health appointments and other essential trips. In FY 2022, MTS served more than 57 million riders. For service schedule updates, news, alerts and more information on how you can use public transportation, go to [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

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