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### *Changes expected to increase fare revenue for the transit system*

**San Diego** – The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Board of Directors today approved important modifications to the agency's Fare Enforcement Diversion Program. The program changes will be phased in over the next three months, starting with educating riders about the new rules. Beginning Feb. 1, 2025, riders caught without a valid fare during MTS Security inspections will be issued a citation immediately. MTS Security will no longer offer a chance to buy a fare or validate fares on-the-spot. While the policy changes will be system-wide, the vast majority of this change will impact Trolley riders.

Once the change takes effect early next year, riders will automatically receive a citation if they don't have a valid fare while riding the Trolley. A citation will result in a \$25 fine if cleared through the MTS Diversion Program. If the citation is not cleared within 120 days, it may result in an estimated \$192 fine or more in traffic court. Riders with no previous citations will have the opportunity to have their first citation dismissed when they appeal through the Diversion Program. Riders also have the ability to appeal the citation directly to MTS in other select cases.

In addition, the agency will introduce convenient online and phone payment options for citations, enhancing the ease of compliance for riders. Currently, payment methods include checks mailed to the agency or in-person payments at the MTS Transit Store. The new online and phone payment options aim to streamline the process.

A recent analysis of agency fare collection estimates that MTS experienced a loss of \$17 million to \$23 million in fare revenue due to fare evasion from May 2022 to July 2024. The analysis also revealed that more than 57,000 riders per month are not paying their fare unless an on-the-spot payment is taken by an MTS Security officer while the rider is already on board. Since MTS Security officers are not inspecting the fares of every rider on every trip, this has been costing MTS approximately \$1,000,000 per month in unpaid fares. MTS depends on recovering that lost revenue to keep service levels high and fares low for everyone.

### **About MTS**

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates 92 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 238,000 passenger trips are taken throughout the MTS system taking people to work, school, health appointments and other essential trips. In FY 2023, MTS served more than 68 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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