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Contacts:

Hector Zermeño, MTS

Hector.Zermeno@sdmts.com

619-398-9599

Nicole Yates, Keen Independent Research

nicole.yates@keenindependent.com

303-385-8515

San Diego – The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) hired Keen Independent Research to help the agency develop an Equity Statement and Equity Policy that reflect the agency’s commitment to equitably serving the public.

To complete this work, Keen Independent Research will assess MTS’ current service delivery and collect input from riders, other local residents and employees.

“MTS seeks a unified vision of a fair and balanced transit system that serves all members of the community,” said Sharon Cooney, MTS Chief Executive Officer. “A critical part of this is developing a framework to help ensure our policy decisions and practices are consistent. By developing an equity statement and policy, MTS will solidify its commitment to using public policy as a platform for equity in our decision-making process.”

Public input will be a critical component to the formation of the agency’s equity policy. MTS has a strong history of seeking local input for projects relating to transit services and has relationships with many community-based organizations. In 2019, for example, the agency held public forums and created a Community Advisory Committee to discuss the Elevate SD ballot measure.

Additionally, in 2022, MTS conducted a Social Equity Listening Tour to identify the needs and priorities of hard-to-reach community members. The agency used the information to fund improvements such as new shelters and lighting, better trash cans to help address cleanliness, beautification and more.

Keen Independent Research will build on these efforts to help the agency craft the Equity Statement and Policy. The research firm is joined by local firms SVPR Communications and Yen Tu Consulting. Together, the study team will collect input from the community and MTS staff through interviews, listening sessions and virtual workshops where respondents can anonymously provide their impressions of MTS and how it serves the public.

This outreach will involve community-based organizations, transit advocacy organizations, the MTS Community Advisory Committee, and constituents from historically marginalized groups.

“Our objective for this project’s outreach for is to gather meaningful input by meeting people where they are,” said Dr. Nicole Yates, Keen Independent Senior Consultant. “As a team, we have deep connections to San Diego. We want to continue building trust with communities, especially those that are historically marginalized, and show how participation in our study will directly benefit them.”

For more information, visit keenindependent.com/studies/mtsequity to find upcoming participation opportunities. The study team is available by phone (602-837-5799) or email (mtsequity@keenindependent.com) any time during the study.

Results are scheduled for the end of 2025.

About MTS

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates 92 bus routes and four 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 2024, MTS served more than 75 million riders. For service schedule updates, news, alerts and more information on how you can use public transportation, go to www.sdmts.com.

About Keen Independent Research

Keen Independent Research is an equity research and consulting firm that has performed similar work for transit agencies and other public entities in Southern California and nationwide. Dave Keen, Principal, and Dr. Nicole Yates, Senior Consultant, are directing this assignment.

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