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Thursday, June 2, 2016

*Update - 6/2/2016 - First Transit News Release*

## **First Transit Reaches Agreement in San Diego with Teamsters Local 542**

**San Diego** – First Transit has reached an agreement with the Teamsters Local 542 of San Diego. All union workers are scheduled to return to work on Friday, June 3, and full service will resume to all San Diego Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS) paratransit and fixed-routes that First Transit operates.

“First Transit and the union worked through the night to reach an agreement that both parties found acceptable,” said Nick Promponas, senior vice president of First Transit. “We look forward to seeing all the buses and paratransit operations back in service for the residents of San Diego.”

Teamsters Local 542 initiated a strike against First Transit, operator of the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Access bus services and 18 of MTS’s 95 fixed-route bus services on May 25.

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Due to a work stoppage of First Transit employees, MTS Access and some fixed routes are subject to service disruptions beginning Wednesday, May 25, 2016. Most MTS routes and all Trolleys are unaffected. MTS Access riders and riders of affected fixed route services are encouraged to make alternate transportation arrangements (a list of alternate options is provided in the FAQ below). If you need assistance planning a trip using other MTS fixed route services, please call our Information and Trip Planning line at [619.233.3004](tel:619.233.3004).

[Skip to FAQs](#)

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*Update - 5/31/2016*

## **MTS Access and Minibus Service Schedule for Wednesday, June 1**

San Diego - Due to an ongoing strike of employees of First Transit, which operates Metropolitan Transit System’s Access and minibus operations, the following bus routes will not be in service: 14, 18, 83, 84, 870, 944, 945A, and Sorrento Valley COASTER Connection (Routes 972, 973, 978, 979). Service will be running on Routes 25, 88, 833, 851, 945, 964, and 965. First Transit

will continue to fill as many Access and minibus trips as possible with other qualified providers and drivers while the work stoppage is in effect. On Tuesday, First Transit was able to provide service for 98 percent of the MTS Access reservations.

All major MTS bus routes and the Trolley will continue to operate on a normal schedule.

First Transit is asking impacted passengers to continue to make alternative arrangements. For appointment information, passengers should call 888-517-9627 or 800-921-9664, Monday thru Friday 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on most major holidays. Alternative transportation options are also available at [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

MTS operates 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines on 53 miles of double-tracked railway. Every weekday more than 300,000 passenger trips are taken on MTS Bus and Trolley services. For more information on how you can use public transportation and save money, go to [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

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*Update - 5/30/2016 - 8 p.m.*

### **MTS Access and Minibus Service Schedule for Tuesday, May 31**

**San Diego** - There has been no agreement reached between First Transit and the Teamsters Local 542 to operate MTS Access and minibus services. As a result, the Teamsters remain on strike affecting riders who most depend on public transit. First Transit, which operates MTS Access for people who cannot access regular public transportation, will continue to fill as many trips as possible with other providers and management drivers. Last week, First Transit was able to provide 90-95 percent of the MTS Access reservations.

The following bus routes will not be in service due to the strike: 14, 18, 83, 84, 870, 944, 945A, and Sorrento Valley COASTER Connection (Routes 972, 973, 978, 979). Service will be running on Routes 25, 88, 833, 851 (limited), 945, 964, and 965. All major bus routes and the Trolley will operate on a normal schedule.

First Transit is asking impacted passengers to continue to make alternative arrangements. For appointment information, passengers should call 888-517-9627 or 800-921-9664, Monday thru Friday 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on most major holidays. Alternative transportation options are also available at [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

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*Update: 5/27/2016 6pm*

## **Weekend Service**

### **Saturday/Sunday/Monday**

All scheduled service will run.

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*Update: 5/25/2016 1pm*

## **First Transit Press Release - May 25, 2016**

### **First Transit Drivers Initiate Strike in San Diego**

**San Diego** – This morning, members of Teamsters Local 542 initiated a strike against First Transit, operator of the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Access bus services and 18 of MTS's 95 fixed-route bus services.

Despite this work stoppage, First Transit was able to provide 80 percent of all MTS Access trips through the use of third-party providers. MTS Access provides vital service to people who cannot access regular public transportation services to get to hospital or doctor's appointments or care at regional centers. Services for the 18 fixed routes provided by First Transit, however, will be impacted. There were no impacts to the vast majority of MTS routes or Trolley.

First Transit has been in negotiations with Teamsters Local 542 since July 2015, and union members have been working without a contract since that time.

April 27, 2016 -- First Transit and the leaders of Teamsters Local 542 met for negotiations and made an offer which matched the union's proposed economic package. A tentative agreement was made based on that offer.

May 6, 2016 – A ratification vote was held by the union membership. Teamsters Local 542 notified First Transit that the tentative agreement was not ratified by the union.

May 11, 2016 – First Transit and Teamsters Local 542 returned to negotiations.

May 12, 2016 -- After negotiating through the night, on May 12 First Transit made a final offer containing an economic package which met that of the tentative agreement. This offer called included first-year average salary increases of 7% for drivers, 6% for technicians, and 15% for reservationists. Over the agreement's four year term, drivers would receive an average salary increase of 31%, reservationists 28% and technicians 27%. First Transit also offered additional contributions for healthcare costs and improvements to paid-time off for employees.

May 24, 2016 – First Transit was notified by the union that the offer made on May 12 was not ratified.

“Right now, our priority is to provide transportation for as many passengers as we are able focusing on those most vulnerable passengers that need to get to a medical appointment,” said Nick Promponas, senior vice president of First Transit.

“We are pleased that approximately 80% of all scheduled trips are being accommodated and we will continue to partner with First Transit to increase that number,” said Paul Jablonski, chief executive officer of San Diego MTS. “The people who ride this service are the people that need transportation the most and our focus is providing this vital transportation.”

Service will also be impacted on the 18 fixed-route services First Transit operates for MTS. These routes are: 14, 18, 25, 83, 84, 88, 833, 851, 870, 944, 945, 946, 964, 965, 972, 973, 978 and 979.

First Transit is asking for MTS passengers to make alternative arrangements. For appointment information, passengers should call [888-517-9627](tel:888-517-9627) or [800-921-9664](tel:800-921-9664). Alternative transportation options are also available at [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

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## FAQs

**Why are the First Transit employees not working?** The Union agreement is between the Teamsters Local 542 and First Transit. MTS is not a party to the negotiations and does not have information on the details. For questions about the agreement or negotiations, please contact First Transit at [513.362.4600](tel:513.362.4600).

**When will the stoppage start?** The work stoppage began Wednesday, May 25, and will continue until further notice. MTS will continue to work with First Transit to provide our customers with updated information as it becomes available. MTS will have information and updates available on its website, Facebook and Twitter pages.

**What is the relationship between First Transit and MTS?** The employees are not directly employed by MTS. They are employees of its contracted service operator, First Transit. The Union agreement covering their employment is between the Union and First Transit. As such, MTS does not have any authority or involvement in the negotiations.

**What MTS service does this work stoppage impact?** The work stoppage impacts MTS Access service and 18 fixed-routes. However, First Transit is accommodating 90-95% of the Access ridership using alternative transportation options. As more operators cross the picket line, more fixed-route services will come online. In total, the service disruption impacts 6,200 passenger trips each weekday. MTS averages 320,000 trips each weekday, so the work

stoppage impacts about 2 percent of MTS ridership.

**What is MTS Access?** MTS Access service is a paratransit operation. Access is for customers with disabilities who are functionally unable to use the regular MTS fixed-route bus and Trolley system. About 90-95% of MTS Access trips are being served by local taxis or other local transportation service providers during the work stoppage and that number will continue to grow.

**Does the work stoppage impact Trolley service?** No, MTS Trolley service is not impacted.

**What are the affected bus routes?** The work stoppage would impact service on 18 fixed-route services First Transit operates for MTS. These routes are served by mini-buses and carry about 4,300 passengers per day. These routes are: 14, 18, 25, 83, 84, 88, 833, 851, 870, 944, 945, 945A, 964, 965, 972, 973, 978 and 979.

Please check [Alerts](#) for the current operating status of these routes. More routes will come back online as drivers cross the picket line.

**If my bus route is impacted, how can I plan a trip?** Customers can use the [MTS trip planner](#) to find other fixed-route options not affected by the work stoppage.

**What are other transportation options available to passengers?** The following list of providers can possibly assist with transportation:

#### **OTHER TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

- CITYLINK: [619-287-0628](tel:619-287-0628)
- CLOUD 9: [800-974-8885](tel:800-974-8885)
- Yellow Cab: [619-234-6161](tel:619-234-6161)
- FACT: [858-924-3228](tel:858-924-3228)
- Jewish Family Services: [858-637-3210](tel:858-637-3210)
- Additional referral for Disability Related Transportation - <https://211sandiego.communityos.org/zf/taxonomy/detail/id/568543>

**Will there be any bus service during the work stoppage?** Yes, most MTS fixed-route bus services will not be impacted. For MTS Access customers, First Transit is proactively contacting customers to notify them about other methods of pick-up and drop-off. Again, First Transit is accommodating about 90-95% of the Access service level using other transportation methods. That number will continue to grow.

**Will NCTD service be impacted?** Please contact NCTD for inquiries about its service ([www.gonctd.com](http://www.gonctd.com)).

**How long will the work stoppage last?** MTS has no way of knowing how long it will last. MTS will continue to work with First Transit to provide customers with updated information on the status of the work stoppage, as well as service schedules.

**Will you let us when this is resolved?** Yes, MTS will post information on its website to let customers know the latest information. Customers are encouraged to check this page and social media sites for updated information, in addition to following the local news media.

**News Category:**

San Diego

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