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[Home](#) > MTS Board Approves \$4.7 million service changes; Advances Fare Proposal to SANDAG

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SANDAG public hearings scheduled for April 15 and 17

To close a budget gap created by the elimination of \$14.4 million in State Transit Assistance funding, the MTS Board of Directors approved Thursday \$4.7 million in service adjustments and also voted to advance a proposal to SANDAG increase monthly pass prices to \$72 for adults, \$36 for youth and \$18 for seniors/disabled/medicare passengers. Premium Express riders would also see an increase to \$100 a month for their pass.

Service changes will be effective June 14 and fare increases, if approved by SANDAG would begin July 1. Most of these changes are minor adjustments designed to have minimal impact on the rider and save money at the same time.

"We never want to reduce service or raise fares but we were left with no choice after the state decided to eliminate all State Transit Assistance funding," said Paul Jablonski, chief executive officer of MTS. "We have worked very hard to ensure that the changes we made leave everyone with choices to continue to ride MTS services."

The largest changes to the system are the following:

- Route 86, which serves University City, will be replaced by the Super Loop service.
- Routes 14 in Mission Valley-La Mesa-Allied Gardens, 84 in Point Loma and the 871/872 in El Cajon are being discontinued on the weekends – except for the Hotel Circle portion of Route 14 and the southern portion of route 871/872.
- The frequency of Express Route 20 will be reduced to 60 minutes north of Mira Mesa on Saturdays and north of Kearny Mesa on Sundays.
- Premium Express service will be discontinued the Friday after Thanksgiving and from Christmas Eve through January 2. Commuters can take MTS Local/Urban bus service that runs in their area to their workplace on those days.
- On the Blue Line Trolley, train lengths will be reduced when possible and Saturday night "Owl" service will be discontinued, with the last trip from Old Town into downtown San Diego at 12:15 a.m.

The fare increase is estimated to add a subsidy of \$2.2 million annually to the MTS operating budget. The public process for the proposed fare increase will be through the San Diego Association of Governments, which sets fares for the region. SANDAG is holding two public hearings, the first on April 15 at 9 a.m. in the NCTD Boardroom at 810 Mission in Oceanside and the second on April 17 at 9 a.m. at the SANDAG 7th Floor Boardroom, 401 B Street San Diego. For more information on all of the changes, please visit www.sdmts.com.

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