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**San Diego** – No matter how you slice the data, Free Ride Day was a huge success for the San Diego Metropolitan System and the North County Transit District as additional riders by the tens of thousands climbed aboard transit for a day of free rides on Wednesday, Oct 2.

MTS recorded 391,359 trips on its Bus and Trolley network, a 6.7 percent gain from the 366,896 trips carried on the first Free Ride Day on the same date in 2018. When compared to the average weekday ridership of October 2018 (303,423 trips), Free Ride Day generated 87,936 more trips on MTS services.

NCTD services also registered large gains. Its COASTER, SPRINTER, BREEZE and FLEX services generated 47,504 trips, 7.4 percent higher than the 44,227 trips registered on Free Ride Day in 2018. When compared to average weekday ridership in October 2018 (32,394 trips), NCTD recorded 15,110 more trips this year.

Combined, the two agencies tallied 103,046 more trips on Free Ride Day 2019 when compared to the average October weekday ridership in 2018.

“Free Ride Day was a tremendous success,” said MTS Chair Nathan Fletcher. “The goal of Free Ride Day is to get new people to experience transit. Whether it’s to get to work, school, run errands or just out to have fun, Free Ride Day demonstrates that there are a lot of people who can take advantage of transit and all the destinations it serves. The end goal for all of these activities is to show that our region has a viable alternative to the car. We don’t want people to totally give up their cars, but if people can take transit just one or two days a week, our region will take significant strides toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and relieving traffic congestion.”

“The astounding number of additional riders on this year’s Free Ride Day really shows that people are willing to try transit,” said NCTD Board Chair Tony Kranz. “We’re encouraged by the outpouring of support for this event, and we look forward to continuing to grow the relationship with these new riders. The public did the first part by showing up. It’s our job now to keep them coming back and riding the buses and trains as a part of their daily commute.”

The success of the day was due, in part, to the extensive partnerships across the county. All cities, the county, large employers, the Navy and universities worked in concert to encourage ridership. The day was also held in conjunction with California Clean Air Day and the San Diego Association of Government’s Rideshare Week. Lyft and Bird Scooters also joined the day and offered discounts on first and last mile services.

“SANDAG is proud to be a part of the success of Free Ride Day celebrated during our region’s Rideshare Week, which was supported by 100 local employers,” said SANDAG Vice Chair and Encinitas Mayor Catherine Blakespear. “Both events gave commuters the opportunity to align with the SANDAG iCommute mission to get solo drivers out of their cars and into a carpool, a vanpool or on transit.”



**NORTH COUNTY  
TRANSIT DISTRICT**

# FREE RIDE DAY 2019 RIDERSHIP

SERVICE	OCTOBER 2018 Average Workday	OCTOBER 2, 2019	RIDER INCR
<b>MTS</b>			
MTS Bus	182,064	221,301	39,237
MTS Trolley	121,359	170,058	48,699
<b>Total MTS</b>	<b>303,423</b>	<b>391,359</b>	<b>87,936</b>
<b>NCTD</b>			
BREEZE/FLEX	20,419	26,944	6,525
SPRINTER	7,688	11,451	3,763
COASTER	4,287	9,109	4,822
<b>Total NCTD</b>	<b>32,394</b>	<b>47,504</b>	<b>15,110</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>335,817</b>	<b>438,863</b>	<b>103,046</b>

About the Partners

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 in 10 cities and the county. In FY 2019, MTS served approximately 86 million riders. For more information on how you can use public transportation and save money, go to [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

The North County Transit District is a public transportation agency providing over 10 million passenger trips annually throughout North San Diego County and into downtown San Diego. NCTD's system includes BREEZE buses (with FLEX service), COASTER commuter trains, SPRINTER hybrid rail trains and LIFT paratransit service. NCTD's mission is to deliver safe, convenient, reliable and user-friendly public transportation services. For more information visit: [GoNCTD.com](http://GoNCTD.com).

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is the San Diego region's primary public planning, transportation, and research agency, providing the public forum for regional policy decisions about growth, transportation planning and construction, environmental management, housing, open space, energy, public safety, and binational topics. SANDAG is governed by a Board of Directors composed of mayors, council members, and supervisors from each of the region's 18 cities and the county government.

**News Category:**

San Diego

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