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**San Diego, Calif.** – The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) will boost the agency's bus system by allocating an additional \$2 million to provide more efficient and effective service. Changes to approximately 60 bus routes were approved by the MTS Board of Directors at its meeting on September 21, 2017.

The increase in service was based on the agency's Transit Optimization Plan (TOP), which it launched in fall 2016. TOP was an evaluation of MTS' current network of services to ensure it meets the region's travel needs. TOP changes will be implemented throughout 2018.

"One of MTS' goals is to maximize the level of service for our customers," said Paul Jablonski, MTS chief executive officer. "After extensive outreach and surveys, we heard that frequency and speed of routes were the most important qualities for current and potential riders. The TOP service plan answers that call by substantially adding to our high frequency network and by streamlining routes to reduce travel times."

The public can view all changes online at [sdmts.com/TOP](http://sdmts.com/TOP). Key changes to some of the busiest routes in the MTS bus system include:

- Route 3 (Hillcrest, Mission Hills, Balboa Park, Cortez Hill, Gaslamp Quarter, Lincoln Park): Weekday frequency increased from 15 to 12 minutes, and Sunday frequency increased from 60 to 30 minutes
- Route 5 (Downtown, Sherman Heights, Stockton, Mt. Hope, Chollas View, Euclid): Weekday frequency increased from 15 to 12 minutes
- Route 11 (Skyline Hills, Valencia Park, Southcrest, Logan Heights, Downtown, Hillcrest, University Heights, Normal Heights, SDSU): Split into two routes to improve reliability and on-time performance
- Route 13 (Grantville, Allied Gardens, City Heights, Lincoln Park, National City): Weekday afternoon frequency will increase from 15 to 12 minutes
- Route 44 (Clairemont, Kearny Mesa, Linda Vista, Old Town): Will be restructured to serve the Kearny Mesa Transit Center on the north end
- Rapid 235 (Downtown San Diego, Kearny Mesa, Miramar, Rancho Bernardo, Escondido): Weekday midday service increased to a 15-minute frequency
- Route 906/907 (San Ysidro, Otay Mesa West): Saturday and Sunday service increased to a 15-minute frequency
- Route 955 (SDSU, Talmadge, Oak Park, Southcrest, National City): Weekday service increased to a 12-minute frequency

## Why Change the Bus Routes?

TOP is an update of the 2004-2006 Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) that resulted in major changes to the system's bus and Trolley services. In the 10 years since COA implementation, MTS experienced increased ridership, fare revenue and operational efficiencies for nine years straight.

However, after record-breaking ridership in FY2015, ridership dipped in FY2016, and again in FY2017. Certain routes and geographical areas have experienced large gains, while others have experienced significant decline. The TOP process included MTS collecting nearly 6,000 surveys and attending over 50 outreach events across the region. Using rider input in conjunction with system performance data and ridership patterns, proposals were made for adjustments to approximately 2/3rds of MTS' bus services. The MTS Board of Directors held a public hearing on July 20, 2017 to obtain public testimony on the proposals. The Board considered the input of 49 speakers and more than 200 comments received via email, mail and voicemails. Board members provided feedback and direction to staff on the various proposals.

MTS staff adjusted the plan and returned to the Board with recommendations for changes to approximately 60 routes. Changes approved by the MTS Board as part of TOP will be implemented throughout 2018.

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 2017, MTS served more than 88 million riders. 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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