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In September 2017, the MTS Board unanimously approved sweeping changes to our bus network through the Transit Optimization Plan. The changes are intended to attract new riders to our system. An additional \$2 million will be invested into operations. The changes will add service to our high-frequency routes, streamline some routes and shorten travel times – which are all qualities ranked as extremely important to our riders.

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“There are going to be 33 TOP-related changes to our bus routes during the January shake-up,” said MTS Manager of Planning Denis Desmond.

To go along with the 33 TOP changes and 22 other bus route schedule changes, MTS is opening the new Courthouse Station in early 2018, which will change timing of the Orange Line by a few minutes. Since many bus routes are timed with Trolley service so riders can meet connections, it will create a ripple effect of timing changes throughout the bus system and add to the complexity of the schedule shift.

“Just about every bus route schedule we have will change by a few minutes when the Courthouse Station begins serving the Orange Line,” added Desmond. The biggest challenge for TOP and Courthouse Station changes will be rider communication. “Bus Operations knows the drill, Steve Tomkiel (MTS Manager of Scheduling) and his team will make it all work, but riders need to be constantly reminded about upcoming changes,” added Desmond.

“Between TOP and the new Courthouse Station, we are auditing all of our materials and making the necessary changes to all of our existing brochures, flyers, maps, kiosk inserts and more,” said MTS Director of Marketing & Communications Rob Schupp. “In addition to changing all the wayfinding and marketing materials, riders will be informed early and often. We are also launching a major new marketing campaign next year.”

**Most of the planned bus route changes in January will be focused on El Cajon and the South Bay. Some of the biggest changes include:**

**Routes 3, 5, 955** – Weekday frequency increased from 15 to 12 minutes.

**Route 11** (SDSU – Skyline Hills) will be split into two routes. The northern segment (a shorter version of what it does now) will still be called Route 11 and operate between SDSU and Downtown San Diego. Route 12 will take the southern half and operate between Skyline Hills

and the City College Transit Center.

**Route 701, 704 and 709** – will have Sunday service added with 60-minute frequency.

**Route 703** (Otay Ranch Town Center – H Street Station; Sunday only) will be entirely replaced with restored Sunday service on Routes 701, 704, and 709.

**Route 838** (new route; East County Square – Viejas/Alpine) will be operated with a minibus out of Copley division hourly every day between approximately 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

**Route 864** (Viejas/Alpine – El Cajon Transit Center) is cut in half and will operate between El Cajon Transit Center and East County Square on all days. Continuing service to Viejas/Alpine is available via a transfer with new Route 838 at East County Square.

**Route 929** (Iris Ave – City College) will be shortened and terminate at the 12th & Imperial Transit Center instead of City College.

**Routes 906/907** (San Ysidro – Iris Ave Loop) Saturday and Sunday service will be increased to a 15-minute frequency

**To share information about all the changes, rider communications will include:**

? A “Take-One” on all buses and Trolleys that lists all the schedule changes

? More specific hand-outs on routes being discontinued

? New schedules and timetables ? New signage for station kiosks

? New onboard vehicle maps/ signage

? A new Regional Transit Map

? MTS Express – the new rider newsletter will mention TOP

? Social media – Facebook and Twitter announcements

? Update the TOP webpage on the MTS website ? News release sent to media prior to January shake-up

? Celebration event to honor start of service at the new Courthouse Station

? Support services will field phone calls and respond to emails from riders with questions

? Change decals on 600 bus blades

**News Category:**

Bus

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