

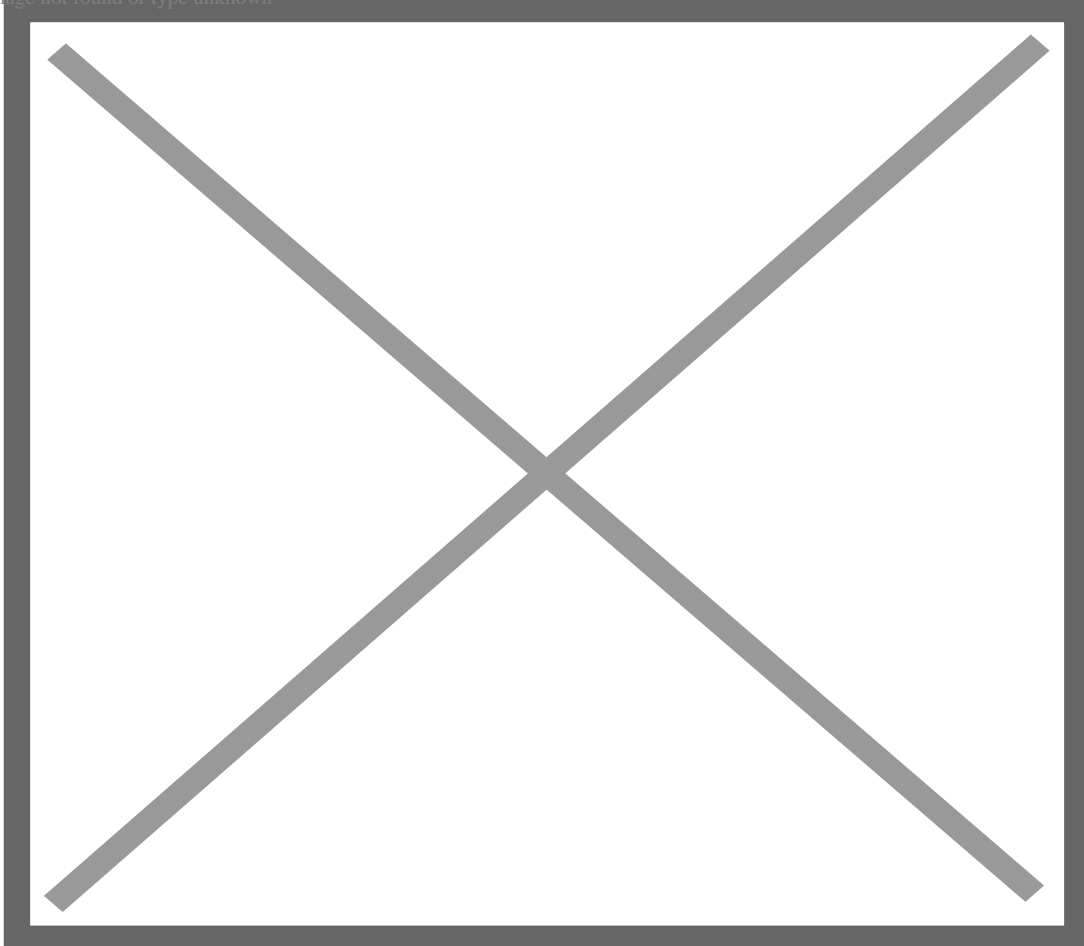


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[Home](#) > Trolley Schedule Changes for the First Time in Six Years

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In conjunction with the upcoming opening of the Courthouse Station on C Street between America Plaza and Civic Center – the Trolley schedule will change significantly for the first time in six years.

The most evident changes will occur on the Orange Line, where both terminals will move (from America Plaza and El Cajon to Courthouse and Arnele Avenue, respectively). Train frequencies will stay the same, but schedules will be adjusted on all three lines.

We checked in with MTS Rail Operations and Scheduling teams to provide more info on what passengers and employees can expect.

Why is the Trolley schedule changing?

“The Trolley schedule has not been adjusted since fall 2012, when the Sycuan Green Line was extended to downtown San Diego,” said Manager of Service Quality Brent Boyd. “The opening of Courthouse Station prompted us to look at the entire network with a clean slate.”

The UC San Diego Blue Line won't stop at the Courthouse Station. Why not?

It all comes down to relieving train congestion and avoiding the ripple effect train conflicts can create on the entire rail network. “Currently, the UC San Diego Blue and Orange Line trains both terminate at America Plaza on parallel tracks.” said Superintendent of Transportation for MTS Rail Operations, Brian Riley. However, in a few years the UC San Diego Blue Line will extend to University Town Center with the Mid-Coast extension, requiring the use of both tracks at America Plaza for bi-directional UC San Diego Blue Line service,” “If the Orange Line continued to terminate at America Plaza, it would block one of the tracks needed for the UC San Diego Blue Line through traffic.”

To keep the flow of trains steady, a third track is being built at the new Courthouse Station. The Orange Line will pull into that third track, stop and pick up passengers, and the UC San Diego Blue Line will bypass the station.

Originally, extra capacity was to be provided at Santa Fe Depot, but an agreement could not be reached between all operators at the station, and forcing the capacity to be added elsewhere. And the idea for the Courthouse Station was born.

Why is the Orange Line being extended to the Arnele Station?

Similar to the need to get out of the way of the UC San Diego Blue Line, the Orange Line and Sycuan Green Line overlap in East County. “Extending the Orange Line to Arnele shortens the layover enough so that the Orange Line can arrive on the eastbound track at Arnele, let the westbound Sycuan Green Line pass by, then depart for downtown San Diego before the next Sycuan Green Line Trolley arrives,” added Special Events/ Operations Coordinator Tom Doogan.

How was the new schedule created?

The new Trolley timetable was developed by employees from the MTS Planning and Scheduling Departments and Trolley Operations.

“We started off with a six-month analysis of actual Trolley running times between stations and timepoints, ridechecks, and an evaluation of dwell times at stations,” said Manager of Scheduling Steve Tomkiel. “Once those were solidified, a base could be established and different options presented.”

The group had to weigh a number of factors, including the available infrastructure and critical transfer connections. There are transfers on the Orange Line at 12th & Imperial, Santa Fe

Depot/America Plaza, and at Grossmont. About 12,000 passengers transfer per day at 12th & Imperial; far more than the other locations. Consequently, those transfers were prioritized.

One challenge the group contended with is the transfer from the Sycuan Green Line to the UC San Diego Blue Line at Santa Fe Depot/America Plaza. During the bulk of the day, passengers will have to wait 10-15 minutes for a transfer, but Rapid 215 and 235 at Santa Fe Depot can provide connections into downtown.

What else will be changing?

“On-time performance is expected to improve from its current 93% rate due to the reduction of train conflicts and adjustments in the running times,” added Boyd. “In addition, Sunday halfhour service on the Sycuan Green Line will be extended to SDSU and the UC San Diego Blue/Orange Line trains will be spaced a little bit further apart downtown.”

Bus schedules were also adjusted to match the new Trolley times. A vast majority of the 90-plus bus routes connect with the Trolley, and a review of all of those connection times was necessary. “Luckily, most of the connections worked well, but we still had to change nearly half of our 93 bus routes to accommodate transfers,” said Associate Scheduler Ivan Lizarraga.

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