BACKGROUND

Organization  The Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) was created in 1975 by the passage of California Senate Bill 101 and came into existence on January 1, 1976. In 1984, the Governor signed Senate Bill 1736, which expanded the MTD Board of Directors from eight to 15 members. In 2002, Senate Bill 1703 merged MTDB's long-range planning, financial programming, project development and construction functions into the regional metropolitan planning organization, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). In 2005, MTDB changed its name to the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS).

Board of Directors  15-member Board generally meets once a month. Members selected as follows:
  • Four appointed from the San Diego City Council
  • One appointed from each city council of Chula Vista, Coronado, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Poway and Santee
  • One appointed from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors
  • One San Diego County resident elected by other Board members to serve as Chairman

Subsidiary  MTS owns assets of: San Diego Trolley, Inc. (SDTI); San Diego Transit Corporation (SDTC); and the San Diego & Arizona Eastern (SD&AE) Railway Company, which owns 108 miles of track and right-of-way. In addition, MTS provides administrative and support services to San Diego Vintage Trolley, Inc., a non-profit corporation established to restore historic Trolley vehicles.

Area of Jurisdiction  About 570 square miles of the urbanized areas of San Diego County as well as the rural parts of East County, 3,240 total square miles, serving approximately 3 million people in San Diego County.

OPERATIONS

Provision of Transit Services  MTS provides bus and rail services directly or by contract with private operators. MTS coordinates all its services and determines the routing, stops, frequencies and hours of operation.

Light Rail  Light rail service is operated by SDTI on four lines (the UC San Diego Blue, Orange, Green and Silver Lines) with a total of 53 stations and 54.3 miles of rail.

Bus  Almost 100 fixed bus routes and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit service (MTS Access). Fixed route bus services include local, urban, express, premium express and rural routes.

Freight  MTS contracts with the San Diego & Imperial Valley (SD&IV) Railroad and the Pacific Imperial Railroad, Inc. (PIR) to provide freight service to San Diego shippers over SD&AE right-of-way. SD&IV shares certain tracks with SDTI, operating during non-service Trolley hours.

Operating Budget  Approximately $256 million annual operating budget; $101 million comes from fares. Fare revenue accounts for 39.5% of annual operating cost, one of the highest fare box recovery ratios among similar transit systems (FY16).

Ridership  MTS generates 92 million annual passenger trips or 310,000 trips each weekday, MTS provides approximately 2.5 million hours of service across 33 million miles each year (FY16).

Planning and Scheduling  Service adjustments occur three times per year, and as needed, to improve efficiency and customer service.

Funding  MTS receives funding from various federal, state and local sources. The primary sources are the California Transportation Development Act (TDA), Federal Transit Administration (sections 5307, 5337 and 5339), TransNet funds (local sales tax) and fares.

Taxicab Administration  MTS licenses and regulates taxicabs, jitneys and other private for-hire passenger transportation services by contract with the cities of San Diego, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Poway and Santee. For more information about the taxicab administration, visit www.sdmts.com.