

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting Notes

February 17, 2026: 10am - 11am

Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 AM

Attendance: JD Weidman, Stephen Greenwood, Alex Wong, Ariel Kroll, Wesley Cooksy, Anne Dodge-Schwanz, Chris Summer, Hank Kaplan

In attendance on 2/17: Charlotte Roberts, JD Weidman, Christopher Sumer, Marquel Ward, Anne Dodge-Schwanz, Hank Kaplan, Hannah Bowen, Marissa Jackson, Erika, Ariel Kroll, Wesley Cooksy

Agenda - JD reviewed the agenda:

1. TAC Purpose / Shared Governance Review
2. Approval of January Meeting Minutes
3. Quick Updates: Safe Ride, TDM Plan, Parking/Mobility RFP
4. Presentation from MTS: Fare Change Proposal
5. March Meeting Agenda Items

Meeting Minutes will be posted on the Transportation Services [website](#).

TAC Purpose and Shared Governance Review

JD summarized the committee's role in analyzing transportation programs and recommending equitable solutions. He noted shared governance principles guide stakeholder engagement.

Approval of January Meeting Notes

JD confirmed that the January meeting notes were distributed following the last meeting. The notes were approved by unanimous consent.

Quick Updates

JD provided a Safe Ride Update

TS assumed oversight of Safe Ride from UPD in Fall 2025. Transloc was implemented by UPD in Spring 2025.

From Spring 2025 to Fall 2025, ridership metrics increased by at least 20 percent in every category. Comparing the first three weeks of Spring 2025 to Spring 2026, average daily rides and total rides more than doubled, reflecting an increase of 100 percent or more in each category.

TS has established an internal goal of 25 rides per day. A survey has been distributed to assess potential expansion of program hours and service locations, with approximately 100 responses received to date. The Safe Ride questions will be added to the annual transportation survey to seek a statistically significant response rate.

TDM Plan Update

A presentation to TAC is scheduled for March. The Your Voice Matters survey received 239 responses and generated strong feedback. Focus groups and a town hall have been completed. Qualitative analysis is complete, and quantitative analysis is currently being drafted. Draft one is under review.

MTS Fare Change Proposal Presentation

Ariel Kroll from MTS presented on the agency's projected fiscal shortfall and proposed fare changes.

Recent MTS Momentum

MTS achieved 95 percent of pre-pandemic ridership last year, totaling 81 million trips. Reported crime decreased by 24 percent in 2025. The agency is expanding amenities, including a new solar bus light project and more than 40 new shelters in the downtown core.

Reasons for Fiscal Shortfall

Contributing factors include a competitive job market and resulting wage increases, higher costs of goods and materials, flat sales tax revenue, and local funding that has not kept pace with peer systems. MTS reports that it is outperforming the average transit system in operational efficiency.

Budget Gap

The deficit was originally projected to begin in 2028. There is currently no viable path for a funding measure on the 2026 ballot. Without action, significant cost saving measures may begin by early 2027. The projected shortfall is approximately 121 million dollars. As a state entity, MTS cannot legally operate with a deficit.

MTS is evaluating whether approximately 23 million dollars should be generated through fare changes or service reductions. This amount represents about 26 percent of current fare revenues and is equivalent to maintaining comparable service levels.

Potential service reductions at that scale could include elimination of Saturday bus or trolley service, all weekend bus service, all Blue Line trolley service, and all Green and Orange Line trolley service.

Cost to Ride and Service Levels

Survey results indicate that a majority of respondents prefer maintaining or improving service levels even if fares increase. This preference remains consistent across income segments.

Draft Fare Change Proposals

MTS aims to generate at least 10 million dollars in additional annual revenue. The agency reviewed peer agency fares to ensure comparability. Daily fares are within range, while monthly fares are significantly lower than peers.

Two proposed packages were presented:

- **Package A:** Projected to generate approximately 11 million dollars in additional revenue with an estimated 3 percent ridership decline.
- **Package B:** Projected to generate approximately 16.8 million dollars in additional revenue with an estimated 3.9 percent ridership decline.

The goal is to keep one-way and daily passes as low as possible while preserving a lower SDM pass option.

Discount Pass Impacts

Pronto Partners Plus contracts would not see impacts until fiscal year 2028.

The College Pass Program currently ties semester pass prices to the adult fare rate, resulting in price changes each semester. MTS plans to propose a uniform semester pass price with consistent validity dates beginning Spring 2027.

Timeline

The proposal is expected to be voted on at the April Board of Directors meeting.

If approved, final changes would be announced in Spring 2026, with fare changes taking effect in Fall 2026. Semester pass changes would likely begin in Fall 2027.

Feedback from TAC Members

- JD noted that approximately 19 percent of SDSU students use MTS as their primary mode of transportation. If SDSU's transit ridership drops by 2-3%, it could increase parking demand and traffic congestion.
- JD requested the source of ridership loss estimates associated with fare increases to support SDSU's TDM planning. Ariel stated that SANDAG conducted the modeling and offered to connect JD with the appropriate contact.
- JD emphasized the importance of enhanced fare enforcement on the trolley to improve compliance in conjunction with modest fare increases.
- JD also recommended phasing in smaller incremental increases rather than implementing larger increases at one time.

Public Feedback Opportunities

Ariel shared that in-person feedback opportunities include workshops and transit center pop up events.

Online feedback is available at

<https://participate.sdmts.com/fare-change/mts-proposed-fare-change-packages>

U PASS Survey Questions

JD reviewed two proposed U PASS survey questions.

Survey Question One

Initial question with final edits during meeting:

*Would you support a ~\$65 mandatory student fee to provide unlimited access to MTS bus/trolley services for all students (similar to UCSD's U-PASS)? The fee would be a ~59% reduction compared to the existing, optional semester MTS pass. **NOTE: this is only to gauge interest and is not a referendum.***

Select all that apply:

- Yes
- No
- I would like to attend a brief info session before I respond
- N/A - I do not attend or visit the main campus

Feedback included adding context regarding the current semester pass cost so students can compare pricing and understand potential savings. The group aimed to keep the question concise while clarifying that the proposed fee would represent approximately a 51 percent reduction compared to the existing optional semester MTS pass.

Revised version:

Would you consider supporting a service to provide unlimited, fare free access to MTS buses and trolley services similar to UCSD's U PASS? There would be a mandatory student fee in the

range of 65 to 80 dollars per semester to provide this service. This is only to gauge interest and is not a referendum. This would represent approximately a 51 percent reduction compared to the existing optional semester MTS pass.

Alternative suggested versions were provided by committee members to improve clarity and conciseness.

Survey Question Two with edits during the meeting

For an additional estimated \$35/semester fee (\$100/semester total), would you be more likely to support a universal transit pass (“U-PASS”) if it included one or more for the following? Check all that apply:

- *Zipcar membership for all students*
- *Expanded Safe Ride Hours (example: 12am-3am)*
- *Weekday Campus Circulator Shuttle*
- *Weekend Pacific Beach / Mission Bay Aquatic Center Shuttle*
- *Other services (please specify)*
- *I would not support U-PASS*

The committee discussed whether to include cost in this question and whether to require a ranking. An option indicating lack of support would be included. The group also discussed assessing whether additional benefits could increase support among students who do not regularly use MTS.

It was agreed to proceed without including cost in the second question and to conduct focus groups after initial survey input is received.

The committee also recommended adding Safe Ride related questions and making the second question mandatory.

Next Meeting

The next TAC meeting will be held on March 16, 2025 at 10:00 AM. The primary topic will be the first draft of the TDM Plan.

Subsequent meetings are scheduled for:

April 22, 2026 at 9:00 AM

May 14, 2026 at 9:00 AM

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Zoom Chat Transcript:

Ariel Kroll (SDMTS) 10:03 AM

Ariel Kroll (she/her) - Community Engagement Specialist at MTS

Anne Dodge-Schwanz to Everyone 10:03 AM

Anne Dodge-Schwanz (She/her/hers), Lead IRB Analyst, Division of Research and Innovation

Hank Kaplan | CSU Chancellor's Office to Everyone 10:04 AM

Welcome Hannah!!

Hank Kaplan | CSU Chancellor's Office to Everyone 10:04 AM

Hank Kaplan (he/his), Chancellor's Office, Asst. Director of Energy, Sustainability & Transportation

Marissa Jackson to Everyone 10:04 AM

Marissa Jackson (She/Her) Transportation Student Assistant

Hannah Bowen to Everyone 10:04 AM

Hannah Bowen, Housing Associate Director, She/her

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) to Everyone 10:04 AM

Charlotte Roberts - Associated Students Sustainability Coordinator

You to Everyone 10:05 AM

Marquel Ward (she/her/hers) - Office Support Coordinator for Transportation Services

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) to Everyone 10:07 AM

woohoo!!!

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) to Everyone 10:29 AM

Ariel, could you please show the previous slide again/

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) to Everyone 10:38 AM

Thank you Ariel!

Ariel Kroll (SDMTS) to Everyone 10:43 AM

Link to take the Fare Change Survey: <https://participate.sdmts.com/fare-change/mts-proposed-fare-change-packages>

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) to Everyone 10:44 AM

I just thought of a potential addition to this question

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) to Everyone 10:55 AM (Edited)

"Currently the optional cost for a student semester MTS pass is \$160."

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) 10:58 AM

nevermind, I like what we came up with using the % reduction instead of another \$ sign

JD Weidman, SDSU to Everyone 10:59 AM

Would you consider supporting a mandatory student fee (similar to UCSD's U-PASS) in the range of \$65 to \$80 per semester to provide unlimited, fare-free access to MTS buses and trolley services? **NOTE: this is only to gauge interest and is not a referendum.** This would be a ~51% reduction compared to the existing optional semester MTS pass.

Select all that apply:

- Yes

- No
- I would like to attend a brief info session before I respond
- N/A - I do not attend or visit the main campus

Hank Kaplan | CSU Chancellor's Office to Everyone 10:59 AM

UCSD students voted to approve a mandatory student fee that funds unlimited, fare-free transit. Would you consider supporting a similar fee in the range of \$65 to \$80 per semester to provide unlimited, fare-free MTS trips for SDSU students? *Note: this is only to gauge interest and is not a referendum. This would be a more than 50% reduction compared to the current non-mandatory cost of a semester MTS pass.*

sorry need to jump but always a great meeting and great contributions from the group. thanks!

Ariel Kroll (SDMTS) to Everyone 11:00 AM

I have to hop off. Thank you so much everybody!

Dr. Bruce Appleyard to Everyone 11:02 AM

spell out "included"

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) 11:02 AM

good catch

Anne Dodge-Schwanz to Everyone 11:02 AM

I have to hop off.

Erika to Everyone 11:04 AM

here a brief suggestion for the previous question: "Would you be interested in unlimited transit access (similar to the UCSD U-Pass) in exchange for a mandatory student fee of approximately \$65-\$80 per semester?"

Charlotte Roberts (She/Her) 11:04 AM

this is great

Erika 11:04 AM

Need to hop off, good week everyone!