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October 17, 2018

To: Chair Terry Sinnott, SANDAG Board of Directors; Chair Georgette Gómez, MTS Board of Directors

CC: SANDAG Board of Directors; Transportation Committee Members, Kim Kawada, Interim Executive Director; Charles “Muggs” Stoll, Director of Land Use and Transportation Planning; Coleen Clementson, Principal Regional Planner; Brian Lane, Senior Transit Planner; MTS Board of Directors; Paul Jablonski, Chief Executive Officer; Sharon Cooney, Chief of Staff

From: Circulate San Diego

**RE: Bus and Trolley Transfers in the Regional Transit Fare Study Update**

Chairs Sinnott and Gómez,

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing to urge the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Board of Directors to revise the proposed fare changes to include free or discounted bus transfers and reinstate free transfers for the Trolley.

MTS is one of only two of the twenty largest transit agencies in the United States that does not provide free or reduced-price transfers for bus riders (Attachment A). Adding costs for transfers reduces the utility of the transit network. Accessing transit should be seamless, to make it attractive and affordable.

This inequity disproportionately impacts low income riders, the most transit-dependent of all, who cannot afford the 30-day pass but still ride transit regularly. Instead of working towards finding a way to provide free or reduced bus transfers, like almost all other transit agencies have been able to do, the fare update proposes to instead remove the free Trolley transfers that many riders utilize in addition to no proposed solution to provide bus to bus transfers.

MTS staff previously brought forward a proposal for a new pass, the 3-Hour \$3 Pass, however that was not ultimately included in this update. We ask that the SANDAG and MTS Boards consider incorporating this or a similar transfer system as well as reincorporating the already existing free Trolley to Trolley transfers into the Regional Transit Fare Study Update as a means to allow greater access and ease of use for our region’s transit system.

Sincerely,



Maya Rosas  
Director of Policy

Attachment A—Transfer Policy Comparison - Top 20

**Attachment A – Transfer Policies for Top 20 United States Transit Agencies**

(Ridership Source Data from: <http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Documents/FactBook/2016-APTA-Fact-Book.pdf>.)

Rank	Agency	Largest city served	Yearly Unlinked Passenger Trips (Thousands)	Transfer for Local Bus	Free Transfer for Rail?	Card Name	Bus Transfer Policy	Rail Transfer Policy	Notes
1	<a href="#">MTA<sup>1</sup></a>	<a href="#">New York City</a>	3,861,099	Free	Free	MetroCard	<a href="http://web.mta.info/nyct/bus/howto_bus.htm">http://web.mta.info/nyct/bus/howto_bus.htm</a>	<a href="http://web.mta.info/nyct/bus/howto_bus.htm">http://web.mta.info/nyct/bus/howto_bus.htm</a>	When paying with MetroCard, passengers may transfer free from bus to rail, rail to bus, or bus to bus within two hours.
2	<a href="#">CTA</a>	<a href="#">Chicago</a>	514,217	Discount	Free	Ventra	<a href="http://www.transitchicago.com/fares/">http://www.transitchicago.com/fares/</a>	<a href="http://www.transitchicago.com/fares/">http://www.transitchicago.com/fares/</a>	When paying with Ventra, a transfer is 25c, valid for 2 additional rides within 2 hours.
3	<a href="#">LACMTA</a>	<a href="#">Los Angeles</a>	479,654	Free	Free	TAP (Transit Access Pass)	<a href="https://www.metro.net/riding/fares/">https://www.metro.net/riding/fares/</a>	<a href="https://www.metro.net/riding/fares/">https://www.metro.net/riding/fares/</a>	When paying with TAP card, free transfer for 2 hours, additional charges apply for express buses or metro silver line, 50c transfer available to some non-metro buses.
4	<a href="#">WMATA</a>	<a href="#">Washington, D.C.</a>	411,324	Free	Distance	SmarTrip	<a href="https://www.wmata.com/rider-guide/transfers.cfm">https://www.wmata.com/rider-guide/transfers.cfm</a>	<a href="https://www.wmata.com/rider-guide/transfers.cfm">https://www.wmata.com/rider-guide/transfers.cfm</a>	Rail is paid by number of stops travelled independent of transfers. Rail to bus and bus to rail transfers are discounted. Bus to bus is free for unlimited transfers within 2 hours.
5	<a href="#">MBTA</a>	<a href="#">Boston</a>	409,248	Free	Free	CharlieCard	<a href="http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/subway/">http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/subway/</a>	<a href="http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/subway/">http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/subway/</a>	Must use CharlieCard for transfer. Rail to bus includes one free bus transfer. Bus to bus transfer is free. Bus to rail transfer requires an upgrade to rail fare. Transfers valid for 2

<sup>1</sup> MTA includes MTA New York City Transit, MTA Bus, MTA Long Island Rail Road, MTA Metro-North Railroad, and MTA Staten Island Railway. Calculated by Circulate from dataset.

Rank	Agency	Largest city served	Yearly Unlinked Passenger Trips (Thousands)	Transfer for Local Bus	Free Transfer for Rail?	Card Name	Bus Transfer Policy	Rail Transfer Policy	Notes
									hours.
6	<a href="#">SEPTA</a>	<a href="#">Philadelphia</a>	347,178	Discount	Discount, limited free	SEPTA Key Card	<a href="http://www.septa.org/fares/transit/">http://www.septa.org/fares/transit/</a>	<a href="http://www.septa.org/fares/transit/">http://www.septa.org/fares/transit/</a>	Free rail transfers are only offered at limited locations. Otherwise, transfers are \$1 and must be in the same direction of travel.
7	<a href="#">NJ Transit</a>	<a href="#">New York City</a>	270,958	Discount	Distance	N/A	<a href="http://www.njtransit.com/sf/sf_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=MainTo">http://www.njtransit.com/sf/sf_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=MainTo</a>	<a href="http://www.njtransit.com/sf/sf_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=MainTo">http://www.njtransit.com/sf/sf_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=MainTo</a>	Transfer discounts are available, but discount varies by number of zones travelled.
8	<a href="#">Muni</a>	<a href="#">San Francisco</a>	228,749	Free	Free	Clipper	<a href="https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/transit/fares-passes/single-rides-transfers">https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/transit/fares-passes/single-rides-transfers</a>	<a href="https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/transit/fares-passes/single-rides-transfers">https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/transit/fares-passes/single-rides-transfers</a>	A rider may transfer any number of times within a 90 minute period.
9	<a href="#">MARTA</a>	<a href="#">Atlanta</a>	129,123	Free	Free	Breeze Card	<a href="http://www.atltransit.org/fares/transfers/">http://www.atltransit.org/fares/transfers/</a>	<a href="http://www.atltransit.org/fares/transfers/">http://www.atltransit.org/fares/transfers/</a>	MARTA partners with other agencies. Transfers are free without card MARTA to MARTA. Transfers are free with a card for other agencies, but the trip must start or end with MARTA. Trip up to 3-4 hours and 3-4 transfers depending on agency.
10	<a href="#">BART</a>	<a href="#">San Francisco</a>	228,749	N/A	Distance	Clipper	N/A	<a href="https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/Basics_Guide_ENG_Dec%202014.pdf">https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/Basics_Guide_ENG_Dec%202014.pdf</a>	Fare is calculated by distance regardless of transfer. BART does not operate buses.
11	<a href="#">King County Metro</a>	<a href="#">Seattle</a>	125,340	Free	Free	ORCA Card	<a href="https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/about/board/resolutions/2014/Resolution_R201">https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/about/board/resolutions/2014/Resolution_R201</a>	<a href="https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/about/">https://www.soundtransit.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/about/</a>	Transfer value is stored for two hours on the ORCA card, and is credited in full for

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							4-27.pdf	board/resolutions/2014/Resolution_R2014-27.pdf	transfers. The net result is the rider pays the highest individual fare of the rail or bus ridden.
12	<a href="#">MTA Maryland</a>	<a href="#">Baltimore</a>	113,996	None	None	CharmCard	<a href="https://mta.maryland.gov/regular-fares">https://mta.maryland.gov/regular-fares</a>	<a href="https://mta.maryland.gov/regular-fares">https://mta.maryland.gov/regular-fares</a>	Unclear from website, had to call (410)-539-5000 to confirm no transfers are offered.
13	<a href="#">Miami-Dade Transit</a>	<a href="#">Miami</a>	110,771	Free	Free	EASY Card	<a href="http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/transfers.asp">http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/transfers.asp</a>	<a href="http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/transfers.asp">http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/transfers.asp</a>	Transfers require an EASY card and are free from bus to bus or rail to rail. Bus to rail or rail to bus costs 60c. Transfers must be made within three hours and are not for return trips.
14	<a href="#">RTD</a>	<a href="#">Denver</a>	104,291	Free	Free	MyRide	<a href="http://www.rtd-denver.com/HowToTransfer.shtml">http://www.rtd-denver.com/HowToTransfer.shtml</a>	<a href="http://www.rtd-denver.com/HowToRideLR.shtml">http://www.rtd-denver.com/HowToRideLR.shtml</a>	Transfers are valid for three hours and may not be used in the opposite direction.
15	<a href="#">TriMet</a>	<a href="#">Portland</a>	99,494	Free	Free	n/a	<a href="https://trimet.org/fares/">https://trimet.org/fares/</a>	<a href="https://trimet.org/fares/">https://trimet.org/fares/</a>	One way ticket is a 2 ½ hour pass to ride anywhere on Trimet
16	<a href="#">MTS</a>	<a href="#">San Diego</a>	91,870	None	Free	Compass Card	<a href="https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes">https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes</a>	<a href="https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes">https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes</a>	No transfers involving buses. Rail to rail transfers are free for two hours.
17	<a href="#">METRO</a>	<a href="#">Houston</a>	85,370	Free	Free	METRO Q Card	<a href="http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/Fares.aspx">http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/Fares.aspx</a>	<a href="http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/Fares.aspx">http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/Fares.aspx</a>	Free transfers in any direction for 3 hours.
18	<a href="#">Metro Transit</a>	<a href="#">Minneapolis</a>	84,536	Free	Free	Go-To Card	<a href="https://www.metrotransit.org/transfers">https://www.metrotransit.org/transfers</a>	<a href="https://www.metrotransit.org/transfers">https://www.metrotransit.org/transfers</a>	Free transfer unlimited rides at the same fare level in any direction for up to 2½ hours. Surcharges apply for higher fare levels.
19	<a href="#">PATH</a>	<a href="#">New York City</a>	84,168	N/A	Free	SmartLink	N/A	<a href="https://www.panynj.gov/path/fares.html">https://www.panynj.gov/path/fares.html</a>	PATH does not operate buses. A one way rail ticket is valid for 2 hours from time of purchase.

Rank	Agency	Largest city served	Yearly Unlinked Passenger Trips (Thousands)	Transfer for Local Bus	Free Transfer for Rail?	Card Name	Bus Transfer Policy	Rail Transfer Policy	Notes
20	<a href="#">Metra</a>	<a href="#">Chicago</a>	74,382	N/A	Distance	N/A	N/A	<a href="https://metrarail.com/tickets/ticket-options#One-Way-Ticket">https://metrarail.com/tickets/ticket-options#One-Way-Ticket</a>	Metra is commuter rail only. Fares are paid by distance.