

# Thoughts from the General Manager



With the financial assistance of the federal government, a significant amount of transit service continues to be provided with prioritization given to routes relied upon by our essential workers and students. As a result, ridership steadily grew throughout the second year of the global pandemic as people returned to work, and schools resumed in-person learning.

The pandemic has confirmed that many individuals, families, educational institutions and local businesses rely on MTD to conduct their daily activities. With the landmark transit investments included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Federal government is stepping up to acknowledge the importance of transit to our communities. With the immediate financial crisis temporarily mitigated, MTD will continue to aggressively pursue funding opportunities to keep our assets in a state of good repair and recruit qualified individuals to join our team.

It is not uncommon for industries to contract and consolidate as a consequence of disruptive events and the ensuing economic consequences. The actions taken in response to such events can create a foundation from which organizations can grow and prosper. Contraction of MTD services is entering its third year and the aftermath of the pandemic requires MTD to carefully consider how much service can be sustained, while also evaluating a request to consolidate commuter service between North and South Santa Barbara County into its operations. By addressing contraction and consolidation with an open mind, MTD has the opportunity to reestablish a strong foundation from which to flourish. With the commitment of our workforce, and support of the community the future is bright for MTD.

**Jerry Estrada**  
MTD General Manager

**Board of Directors**

Dave Davis, Chair      Arjun Sarkar  
David Tabor, Vice Chair      Chuck McQuary  
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## The Mission of MTD

is to enhance the mobility of South Coast residents, commuters, and visitors by offering safe, appealing, equitable, environmentally responsible, and fiscally sound transit service.

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 @santabarbaramtd

# REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

January 2022





# Welcoming Riders Back, Safely

Throughout the pandemic, MTD has consistently made rider and employee health and safety our number one priority. Rigorous cleaning and disinfection protocols coupled with a mask requirement on board buses and in our facilities remain in place to keep our MTD community safe.

Federal assistance in the form of 3 different pandemic relief packages brought needed financial help to MTD and other transit agencies in the United States. This assistance is helping to patch fiscal holes left by dramatic drops in ridership and the 14 months of no fare collection.

As vaccines became available in early 2021, MTD employees stepped up and reached an impressive 89% vaccination rate. To further protect bus operators, top-of-the-line barrier doors were installed between the operator cabin and the boarding public. With COVID-19 case rates declining and vaccination rates increasing, MTD restarted fare collection in May and officially opened the renovated Transit Center to the public.

In the second half of 2021, ridership saw an impressive rebound after earlier lows. With the return of K-12, SBCC, and UCSB students to campus, 3 routes were restored and riders came back in higher than expected numbers—October 2021 saw a 114% ridership increase over the prior October.



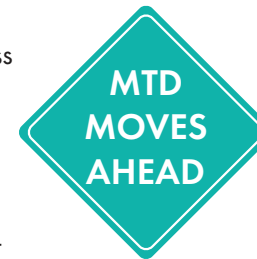
## Tap to Ride Opens Payment Possibilities



In July 2021 MTD launched a pilot of open-loop, contactless fare payment on board 18 buses in the fleet. This Tap to Ride system allows riders to tap the bank card or smartphone they already have in their pocket to pay for their bus fare. Only the third transit agency in the state to launch this form of payment, MTD is participating as a partner with Caltrans' California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) to demonstrate how travel across California can be as easy as buying a cup of coffee.

## MTD Moves Ahead with Future Planning

What do the next five years look like for MTD service? October 2021 saw the kickoff of MTD Moves Ahead—a community process to develop a new Short Range Transit Plan that will guide bus service development, infrastructure investment, and capital needs for MTD's bus system over the next five years. A community survey, virtual listening session, and existing conditions analysis all provided vital input to inform the development of strategies and approaches to improve the system. In the spring, South Coast residents will be asked to weigh in on these proposals and help prioritize plans for the near future.



# Electrification Momentum Builds

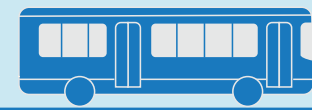
January will see the start of a new capital project—installing 14 heavy-duty electric vehicle chargers with the help of Southern California Edison's Charge Ready Grant Program. These 14 chargers will be ready when MTD welcomes its first 9 40 foot battery-electric buses from New Flyer Industries in the fall of 2022. These buses will mark a major milestone for MTD, bringing the zero-emission percentage of our fleet up to over 20%.

In August 2021, MTD was awarded a planning grant from the California Energy Commission's Blueprints for Medium- and Heavy-Duty Zero-Emission Infrastructure program. This grant will fund a joint effort among MTD, CALSTART, and the City of Santa Barbara to develop a blueprint for MTD's zero-emission expansion and the design of a resilient energy microgrid.

Since installing 14 light-duty EV chargers and replacing aging gasoline engine vehicles with all-electric Chevy Bolts in 2020, MTD has saved \$21,600 in annual fueling and maintenance costs.

In late 2021, 3 new battery-electric Ford Transit Vans destined for MTD's microtransit pilot were delivered. These vehicles will operate flexible, on-demand, curb-to-curb service within a specified area of Goleta as the microtransit pilot begins later in 2022.

## District Stats



**112**  
VEHICLES IN FLEET



**7,506**  
DAILY WEEKDAY PASSENGERS

**172,903**  
REVENUE HOURS

**2,378,588**  
YEARLY PASSENGERS

**2,099,366**  
MILES DRIVEN ANNUALLY

Fiscal Year 2020-21 Statistics



Battery-electric Ford Transit Vans

40 foot battery-electric buses

