

Appendix C:

Regional Service Implementation Plan

Regional Service Implementation Plan Development

The Service Implementation Plans (SIPs) for the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and North County Transit District (NCTD) included in this appendix outline the operational changes each transit operator implemented or plans to implement to balance proposed fiscal year budgets.

Service Changes

Table C.1 summarizes the service changes undertaken by MTS and NCTD in FY 2025.

Table C.1: FY 2025 Transit Service Changes

Route	Service Changes	Date of Service Change
MTS UC San Diego Blue Line	Added 15-minute service after 9:30 p.m. between America Plaza and UTC every day.	January 26, 2025
MTS Orange Line	Weekend: Added 15-minute frequency in the AM hours. Discontinued the 12:18 a.m. trip from El Cajon to downtown and added a new trip from El Cajon to downtown at 4:48 a.m.	January 26, 2025
MTS Green Line	Added 15-minute frequency between Downtown and El Cajon until 11 p.m. every day.	January 26, 2025
MTS Copper Line	Added 15-minute frequency every day.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 3	Schedule adjustments.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 44	Schedule adjustments.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 105	Weekday: Mid-day schedule adjustment.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 227	Service reductions between Iris Avenue Transit Center and Imperial Beach.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 832	Schedule adjustments to improve Copper Line and school bell connections.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 834	Schedule adjustments to improve Copper Line and school bell connections.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 901	Weekday & Saturday: Late night schedule adjustments. Sunday: Improved night frequency.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 905	Resumes regular route via Siempre Viva and De La Fuente Business Park (effective December 5, 2024).	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 906	Weekday and Saturday service discontinued after 1 a.m. Service was replaced by new Route 910. Improved night frequency from 60 to 30 minutes after 10 p.m. Other schedule adjustments.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 907	Weekday and Saturday: Discontinued service after 1 a.m. Service replaced by new Route 910. Improved night frequency from 60 to 30 minutes after 10 p.m. Other schedule adjustments.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 910	New overnight express service with 30-minute frequency between downtown and San Ysidro Transit Center, servicing select transit centers. Operates seven days a week.	January 26, 2025

Route	Service Changes	Date of Service Change
MTS Route 929	Weekday and Saturday: Late night and other schedule adjustments. Improved night frequency to 30 minutes from downtown to Iris Transit Center. Sunday: Improved night frequency.	January 26, 2025
MTS Route 992	Added earlier morning service to San Diego International Airport. Other schedule adjustments	January 26, 2025
NCTD BREEZE (All routes)	Increase off-peak BREEZE frequencies.	FY 2025
NCTD BREEZE (All routes)	Increase BREEZE frequencies from every 30-minutes to 15-minutes on core BREEZE.	FY 2025
NCTD COASTER	Increase COASTER frequencies through FY 2025 with expanded peak and midday trips.	FY 2025

Source: SANDAG, 2025

Regional Service Changes

Zero-Emission Bus Implementation

Effective on October 1, 2019, the California Innovative Clean Transit regulation requires that all public transit agencies transition their bus fleets to zero-emission technologies. The regulation requires gradual increases in the percentage of new bus purchases to be zero-emission buses (ZEBs). The ZEB purchase requirements began in 2023 for large transit agencies. Starting in 2029, 100% of all transit agencies' new bus purchases must be ZEBs, with a goal of complete fleet transition to ZEBs by 2040. Both MTS and NCTD have approved zero-emission bus transition plans and are integrating the new vehicles into their fleets.

Overnight Express Bus Service from San Ysidro to Downtown

On January 26, 2025, MTS began operating route 910, a new overnight bus service between San Ysidro and Downtown San Diego when the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley cannot operate. Route 910 service runs every 30 minutes from approximately 12:30 a.m. to 5 a.m. Stops are San Ysidro, South San Diego, Chula Vista, National City, Barrio Logan and Downtown San Diego, and a standard transit fare applies.

Downtown Stopover

SANDAG is working to provide an off-street downtown location for MTS where bus drivers can park for short periods of time between routes, take breaks, provide light bus maintenance and cleaning, and resync the timing of their continuing routes. The project would improve the regional bus system performance for local and Rapid bus lines, improve security and working conditions for MTS bus drivers, and increase the availability of on-street parking within the neighborhood by reducing the need for buses that currently must be parked on the street. SANDAG, together with MTS, is working to identify options for a temporary layover facility and advancing the acquisition of the remaining properties.

COASTER Downtown Platform

NCTD's Downtown Platform Project will add a new COASTER station in Downtown San Diego parallel to Harbor Drive near the Gaslamp Quarter and the San Diego Convention Center. The Project includes the construction of a new 850-foot station platform with the capacity to accommodate eight passenger cars. The platform will stretch between 1st and 5th Avenues near two existing Trolley stations. In addition to the platform, the Project will reconfigure the existing track used by BNSF Railway, construct a new siding track, and extend railroad signaling and dispatching systems.

COASTER Del Mar Fairgrounds Special Event Platform

SANDAG's San Dieguito Double Track and Special Events Platform project will improve the operation and safety of the rail line in the LOSSAN Corridor between Solana Beach and Del Mar. The project will include double tracking, a bridge replacement, a special events platform at the Del Mar Fairgrounds, and other improvements. The special events platform will provide a safe, reliable, and direct transit option for people attending events at the fairgrounds via Amtrak Pacific Surfliner and NCTD COASTER trains.

Identification of Future Services and Needs

Statewide

One attempt at the policy level to address challenges in transit systems across the state is the result of Senate Bill 125 (Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023). SB 125 requires the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to establish and convene the Transit Transformation Task Force on or before January 1, 2024, and include representatives from the department, various local agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and other partners. The task force is required to solicit and develop a structured, coordinated process for engagement of all parties to develop policy recommendations to grow transit ridership and improve the transit experience for all users of those services. CalSTA, in consultation with the task force, was required to prepare and submit a report of findings and policy recommendations based on the task force's efforts to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature on or before October 31, 2025. As an outcome of this work, additional transit performance monitoring strategies may be recommended. SANDAG will continue to monitor potential changes in policy that result from task force activities.

SANDAG

Long-range transit planning begins with SANDAG's development of the Regional Plan. Each Regional Plan is developed in collaboration with MTS, NCTD, Caltrans, local jurisdictions, and many other organizations. The plan defines projects, programs, and policies that are analyzed and incorporated into a revenue-constrained financial plan with list of programs and projects with estimated costs and reasonably expected revenues.

The SANDAG Board of Directors adopted the 2021 Regional Plan on December 10, 2021, and subsequently adopted an Amendment to the 2021 Regional Plan on [October 13, 2023](#). The 2021 Regional Plan identifies 56 public transit projects across a variety of modes and jurisdictions. These projects include Rapid bus, light rail, regional rail, streetcar, ferry, an airport transit connection, and more. The full list of identified projects is available in [Appendix A](#) of the [2021 Regional Plan](#).

SANDAG released the Draft 2025 Regional Plan for public feedback in spring 2025. The proposed Final 2025 Regional Plan is expected to be adopted by the Board in December 2025. Appendix A of the 2025 Regional Plan, once finalized and approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors, will be posted at [SANDAG.org/2025regionalplan](https://www.sandag.org/2025regionalplan) with the full list of transit and other projects anticipated to be delivered over the next 25 years.

Each regional plan identifies existing, upgraded, and new transit services anticipated to be available in multiple horizon years. Proposals for new and revised transit services, as well as regional and subarea transit planning studies, should be consistent with the Regional Plan and facilitate its implementation.

MTS

MTS is projecting a budget shortfall of over \$100 million as early as 2028. The agency is conducting a Comprehensive Operational Analysis which will evaluate current system performance, analyze travel patterns and demographics in the service area, and review projects that were recommended in the Elevate SD 2020 potential sales tax measure that was ultimately not pursued. More information is included in the MTS SIP.

NCTD

NCTD has established the following key strategic service priorities for the five-year horizon of its SIP:

- Strategically expand first-last mile services through NCTD+ as funding permits
- Conduct a Bus Network Redesign to restructure the BREEZE network of routes under a variety of funding scenarios
- Complete grant-funded construction of two new stations along the COASTER corridor that will serve major regional events
- Advance project activities that will support the future implementation of 15-minute frequencies on SPRINTER

Service Implementation FY 2026



Metropolitan Transit System



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MTS Overview

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates in the central, southern, and eastern parts of San Diego County, with four light rail lines, 99 bus routes, and MTS Access paratransit service.

MTS has almost totally recovered from the COVID impacts, with ridership down about 5% from prior to COVID, which is one of the highest marks of any major transit agency in the country.

However, like many transit agencies throughout the country, MTS is entering a period of uncertainty regarding future funding and is preparing for this uncertain future.

Due to the questions about future funding, Post COVID travel patterns, and recent investments in transit over the last several years (Blue Line Mid-Coast extension, Rapid buses in South Bay, Copper Line in east county to name a few), MTS has initiated a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) in FY 2025 to evaluate and restructure its bus, light rail, and paratransit services. The COA may result in significant restructuring of the transit network in the next several years and is discussed in more detail in the future outlook section.

This document will summarize the changes in transit service over the last fiscal year, forecast the changes in the next fiscal year, and look ahead to FY26 and beyond.

FY 2025 Service Changes

Background

Service adjustments are guided by MTS Policy 42, Transit Service Evaluation and Adjustment. This policy, established by the Board of Directors, was last amended in 2016, to incorporate a vision that called for the development of services that are customer-focused, competitive with other travel options, integrated and sustainable.

Policy 42 establishes a hierarchy of service evaluation that includes system, operator, route category and route criteria. In developing service change proposals, staff assesses services based primarily on the route productivity measures of passengers per revenue hour (customer-focused and competitive criteria), farebox recovery ratio and subsidy per passenger (sustainability criteria); and on the service quality measures of passenger load factor and on-time performance (customer-focused and competitive criteria). The Board of Directors receive quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports of the key performance metrics and a more detailed analysis at the conclusion of each fiscal year.

Beyond Policy 42, Planning and Scheduling staff are constantly analyzing the existing service and analyzing options to improve transit within the operating budget constraints of the agency.

In FY25 the agency operated with a structural budget deficit that was bridged through the use of “one-time funding” such as the conversion of capital funds to operating funds (delayed capital projects), reserves, and COVID relief funding from the State of California. Consequently, the service changes implemented focused on increasing productivity and reliability, without increasing operating costs.

Service Changes

MTS historically changes its service at three separate times throughout the year:

- Early September: fall service period
- Late January: spring service period
- Mid-June: summer service period

A summary of the changes that occurred during those service changes in FY25 are below:

September 2024 Service Changes

The Copper Line made its debut, marking a major change for Trolley service in east county.

It consolidated the Green Line and Orange Line east of El Cajon, serving Arnele Avenue, Gillespie Field, and Santee (in addition to El Cajon). This change isolated the one-mile-long single-track segment between Gillespie Field and Santee, which has improved reliability throughout the system. The development of the Copper Line included construction of a third track at El Cajon, with the Green and Orange Lines providing level transfers with the Copper Line.

The Copper Line was implemented on September 29, 2024, which was four weeks after the bus service change. Normal seasonal service adjustments were made for coastal routes (8 and 9), as well as minor service changes in South Bay and east county.

September 2024 Service Changes

Route	Description of Changes
8	Seasonal reduction of Saturday frequency to every 20 minutes instead of every 15 minutes.
9	Seasonal weekend schedule adjustments.
30	Seasonal weekend schedule adjustments.
856	Schedule adjustments.
904	Coronado's "Free Summer Shuttle" service operates through Labor Day (September 2). Regular fares and schedule (with hourly service) resume on Tuesday, September 3.
905	Schedule adjustments.
906	The Route 906 stop at the Iris Avenue Transit Center is temporarily relocated onto 30th Street, just outside the transit center.
909	Schedule adjustments.
933	The Route 933 stop at the Iris Avenue Transit Center is temporarily relocated onto 30th Street, just outside the transit center.
936	Schedule adjustments.

January 2025 Service Changes

There were two major changes in January 2025:

- 1) **Implementation of Route 910:** The first overnight service, serving several stops from San Ysidro to Downtown San Diego at 30-minute frequencies. The Blue Line cannot operate 24 hours, due to freight restrictions, so the implementation of Route 910 effectively provides 24-hour service along the corridor (the region's busiest).
- 2) **Frequency adjustments on all Trolley lines:** Implemented 15-minute service from the beginning of service in the morning until the end of service on all days. The one exception is the Orange Line at night, which will remain at 30-minute service to allow construction crews enough time on the tracks to complete the Orange Line Improvement Project over the next couple of years.

Several other routes had minor service adjustments.

January 2025 Service Changes

Route	Description of Changes
UC San Diego Blue Line	Added 15-minute service after 9:30 p.m. between America Plaza and UTC every day.
Orange Line	Weekend: Added 15-minute frequency in the AM hours. Discontinued the 12:18 a.m. trip from El Cajon to Downtown and added a new trip from El Cajon to Downtown at 4:48 a.m.
Green Line	Added 15-minute frequency between Downtown and El Cajon until 11:00 p.m. every day.
Copper Line	Added 15-minute frequency every day.
3	Schedule adjustments.
44	Schedule adjustments.
105	Weekday: Mid-day schedule adjustment.
227	Service reductions between Iris Avenue Transit Center and Imperial Beach.
832	Schedule adjustments to improve Copper Line and school bell connections.
834	Schedule adjustments to improve Copper Line and school bell connections.
901	Weekday & Saturday: Late night schedule adjustments. Sunday: Improved night frequency.
905	Resumes regular route via Siempre Viva and De La Fuente Business Park (effective Dec 5, 2024).
906	Weekday & Saturday: Discontinued service after 1:00 a.m. Service replaced by new Route 910. Improved night frequency from 60 to 30 minutes after 10:00 p.m. Other schedule adjustments.
907	Weekday & Saturday: Discontinued service after 1:00 a.m. Service replaced by new Route 910. Improved night frequency from 60 to 30 minutes after 10:00 p.m. Other schedule adjustments.
910	New overnight express service with 30-minute frequency between downtown and San Ysidro Transit Center, servicing select transit centers. Operates 7 days a week.
929	Weekday & Saturday: Late night and other schedule adjustments. Improved night frequency to 30 minutes from Downtown to Iris Transit Center. Sunday: Improved night frequency.
992	Added earlier AM service to San Diego International Airport. Other schedule adjustments.

June 2025 Service Changes

June service changes were comprised of normal seasonal adjustments on coastal routes.

Other changes included adjustments to Route 88 (re-routed away from Fashion Valley Transit Center, but with implementation of Sunday service) and Route 115 (Saturday service discontinued to Grossmont College to align with Sunday service and eliminate long out-of-direction movement for riders).

Route 227 also had frequency reductions between Iris Avenue Transit Center and Imperial Beach due to low ridership.

June 2025 Service Changes

Route	Description of Changes
1	Minor schedule adjustments on all days.
6	Weekday service reduced from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes between 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. One morning trip discontinued in each direction.
8	Saturday summer service increased to every 15 minutes. Minor schedule adjustments to all days.
9	Sunday trips extended to Pacific Beach. Minor schedule adjustments to all days.
11	Service restored to First Ave. and G St. Minor schedule adjustments all days.
30	Saturday and Sunday summer schedule adjustments.
60	Minor schedule adjustments all days.
88	Service to Fashion Valley Transit Center discontinued. Schedule adjustments to add Sunday Service.
115	Saturday service to Grossmont College discontinued. Minor Saturday schedule adjustments.
201/202	Minor schedule adjustments to Saturday and Sunday mornings.
204	Minor schedule adjustments.
227	Major schedule adjustments. Service reduced between Iris Avenue Transit Center and Imperial Beach on all days.
904	Additional summer service in Coronado beginning July 1, 2025.
910	Minor schedule adjustments on all days.
928	Major schedule adjustments on Saturday.
929	Minor schedule adjustments on all days.

Outlook for FY26 (And Beyond)

In the near-term, September 2025 service changes are anticipated to include:

- Adjustment of Route 9 service to Sea World
- Adjustment of Rapid Premium Express (Routes 280/290) stop in downtown San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
- Minor re-routing of Route 815 in El Cajon
- Later start time for Route 894 service, due to later opening hours of Tecate border crossing
- Adjustment to Route 992 service in conjunction with the opening of San Diego International Airport's new Terminal 1

Longer term, the outlook is a little less focused. MTS currently operates with a \$448 million budget and serves more than 75 million passengers annually, and that budget has partially been covered with “one-time funds” identified in the introduction.

However, a projected budget shortfall of over \$100 million (which will not be covered with one-time funds) is expected to occur as early as FY28 and necessitates a reevaluation of existing services to ensure continued alignment with the region's mobility needs and financial realities. To address this, MTS is exploring the feasibility of generating additional revenue through various sources, working with SANDAG and NCTD on possible fare adjustments, and completing the comprehensive operational analysis (COA).

The COA will include an evaluation of current system performance, a detailed review of existing conditions in the region (including changing travel patterns and demographics) and a review of projects that were recommended in the Elevate SD 2020 effort (potential sales tax measure in 2020).

The study is inclusive of all bus, light rail, and paratransit service within the MTS service area. To ensure regional coordination and consistency between services, NCTD services and facilities will be considered when developing the service concepts and proposed transit networks. Ultimately, two scenarios will be developed:

- **Scenario 1:** Funding for existing needs secured; plus additional funding for transit service improvements
- **Scenario 2:** No increase in regional transit funding secured (Budget shortfall of \$100-plus million annually)

An inclusion of feedback from MTS passengers and the general public will be essential to the success of the COA. MTS Marketing & Planning staff are currently heavily involved in a public participation effort – branded as “On Track” – to gather feedback from passengers and non-passengers on what the future of MTS service should look like.

Ultimately, the COA will serve as the strategic foundation for MTS's service planning efforts through the end of the decade. Under Scenario 1, MTS will aim to improve service frequencies, span, and network efficiency to meet current and projected regional travel demands. Enhancements will draw from prior planning initiatives such as Elevate SD 2020 and align with SANDAG's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

Should additional funding not be identified, MTS may need to implement significant service reductions. These reductions (Scenario 2) will be developed to minimize adverse impacts on mobility while maintaining core service coverage.

The project started in May 2025 and is scheduled to conclude by the end of 2026. By project completion, more clarity should be available regarding the future funding levels. The implementation of the recommended changes will begin as early as January 2027.

While the COA will be a major focus of MTS over the next couple fiscal years, many other service planning projects are underway:

- **Otay Mesa Transit Study:** MTS successfully applied for grant funding through the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program for a study of Otay Mesa transit services. The project will include an in-depth analysis of current strengths, opportunities, and challenges of serving the quickly-expanding Otay Mesa community.
- **Transit Amenities Plan:** MTS is currently undergoing a stop inventory of its 4,000-plus bus stops. The inventory includes information about each bus stop, including amenities (such as benches, shelters, and signage), condition of those amenities, and the ability to add amenities based on the surrounding infrastructure. That information will be used to develop a Transit Amenities Plan (which would be adopted by the Board of Directors), to evaluate and recommend amenity placement and identify best practices by other transit agencies. The latter part of this effort is dependent on funding.
- **12th & Imperial and Kearny Mesa Transit Center redevelopment:** MTS is currently undergoing studies to enhance the transit centers at both 12th & Imperial and Kearny Mesa. Improvements at the transit centers will help improve passenger transfers as well as increase capacity at those key locations.

- **San Ysidro Mobility Hub:** MTS is currently working with SANDAG on enhancing the San Ysidro Transit Center. A third track would be provided to improve capacity. The tracks may also be elevated to improve the mobility of vehicles and pedestrians. The current effort will be to bring the project to 30% design.
- **SANDAG Studies:** Over the long term, MTS is collaborating with SANDAG on a variety of projects:
 - **Rapid NextGen:** five Rapid bus lines in MTS Service Area.
 - **South Bay Rail Study:** future study to evaluate and improve rail service between downtown and San Ysidro
 - **Downtown Layover:** Development of a full-block in downtown San Diego for a bus layover facility, which will remove idling buses from many downtown curb fronts
 - **On the Move:** Short-term improvements to Broadway to enhance bus service along the busiest corridor in MTS's service area
 - **Urban Core Connections:** Longer-term improvements in the urban core, which could include bus priority measures and the ability for four-car Trolleys to travel through the downtown core.
 - **Airport Transit Connection:** Evaluation of improving transit access to San Diego International Airport, which includes Trolley, bus, and automated people mover concepts.

NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT

SAN DIEGO RAILROAD



Service Implementation Plan

FY 2026

Presented June 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Service Implementation Plan (SIP) outlines North County Transit District – San Diego Railroad’s (NCTD, District) plans to provide multimodal transit services over the next five (5) years. The SIP is a requirement under the Master Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and is used to inform NCTD’s annual operating budget.

The SIP development process consists of the compilation and review of historic service levels, ridership, and studies that outline capital and operating investments for the District. Planning coordinates with Finance, Bus Operations, and Rail Operations to review and develop the assumptions. Finance staff calculates the cost associated with the proposed services. The costs are then included in the proposed NCTD annual operating budget for Board approval.

Key Assumptions

NCTD uses conservative estimates to forecast ridership. The conservative projection is consistent with Board Policy No. 17 - Budget Development, which requires staff to conservatively estimate revenues and expenses. The conservative forecast allows NCTD to stress test and confirm that the budget for the upcoming fiscal year will be balanced under the assumed worst-case scenario.

Ridership estimates for the FY2026 SIP are based on observed mode-specific ridership trends. Both year-over-year (YOY) ridership changes and anticipated service levels for each mode factor into projections. Miles and hours projections are based primarily on scheduled daily service, while service statistics for on-demand modes, such as LIFT and NCTD+, are based on projected ridership. Absolute work windows, holidays, and special events are also considered in both service and ridership projections. Other factors—such as uncertain funding projections, changing travel patterns, station redevelopment efforts, and evolving land use and development patterns—influence the phasing of proposed service changes.

Strategic Priorities

Uncertain funding projections at all levels of government, coupled with decreasing sales tax revenues, pose significant challenges in projecting future service levels. Should the current forecast continue without the introduction of a new funding source, NCTD will likely need to reduce service levels in future years. This service reduction may impact all NCTD modes. With this uncertainty in mind, the FY2026 Service Implementation Plan has been developed to support strategic investments that can be implemented over a five-year period that aim to increase ridership and address capital priority needs while being mindful of a constrained resource environment. Key strategic service priorities that are relevant to the five-year horizon of the Service Implementation Plan include:



- Strategically expand first-last mile services through NCTD+ as funding permits
- Conduct a Bus Network Redesign to restructure the BREEZE network of routes under a variety of funding scenarios
- Complete grant-funded construction of two new stations along the COASTER corridor that will serve major regional events
- Advance project activities that will support the future implementation of 15-minute frequencies on SPRINTER

In January 2025, NCTD submitted a Caltrans Planning Grant application to conduct a Bus Network Redesign. At the time of the development of the Service Implementation Plan, NCTD is awaiting the results of the grant application. The Bus Network Redesign is a comprehensive study that will assess opportunities to restructure the BREEZE bus network to increase ridership. The study will include three key scenarios, including a reduced funding scenario, maintenance of funding scenario, and increased funding scenario. Service scenarios and cost estimates would be developed as part of the study and incorporated in future Service Implementation Plans upon final adoption of the plan and appropriate financial outlook.

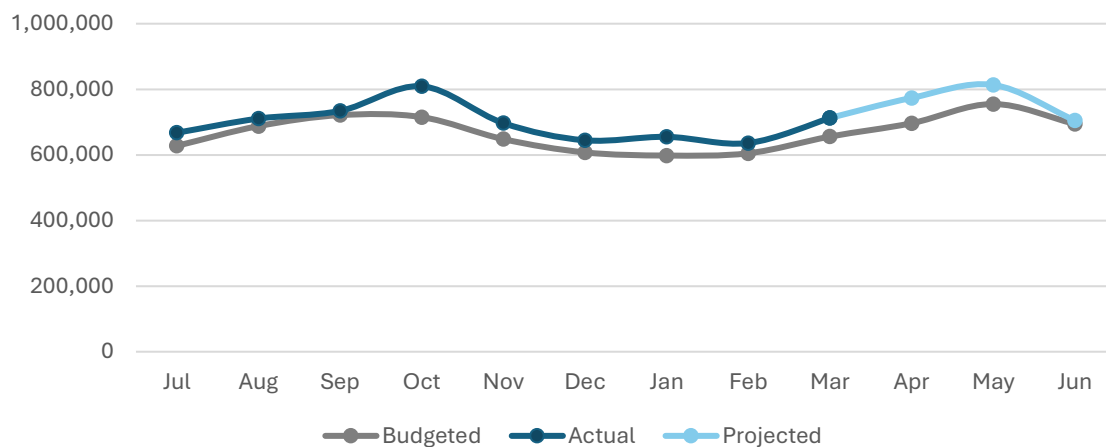
FY2026 SERVICE STATISTICS & RIDERSHIP



System Summary

Service statistics and ridership projections are reviewed each budget cycle to reflect actual performance and to assess the accuracy of previous forecasts. The FY2025 Service Implementation Plan (SIP), developed in spring 2024, incorporated ridership and service data from July 2023 to February 2024. NCTD projected a 4% increase in ridership by the end of FY2025, aiming to reach 77.1% of pre-pandemic levels. Forecasts were based on service restoration and additional service increases on high-performing BREEZE routes, the introduction of new NCTD+ microtransit zones, and the continued ridership benefits of COASTER special event service and the Youth Opportunity Pass program. As shown in Figure 1, monthly systemwide ridership in FY2025 has surpassed budgeted figures and is projected to continue to for the remainder of the year.

Figure 1. Systemwide Monthly Ridership, FY2025



NCTD is implementing significant changes in the upcoming fiscal year that are expected to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction. Most notably, the agency will be transitioning to in-house bus operations in FY2026. The change will impact BREEZE, FLEX, LIFT, and NCTD+, and the transition is expected to improve service reliability and reduce operator turnover. FY2026 service levels and ridership forecasts by mode are summarized in Table 1. Systemwide ridership is projected to increase 4.9% in FY2026 to almost nine million boardings or 86.4% of pre-pandemic levels. NCTD continues to explore and advance additional customer-focused initiatives to attract new riders.

Table 1. Projected Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY2026

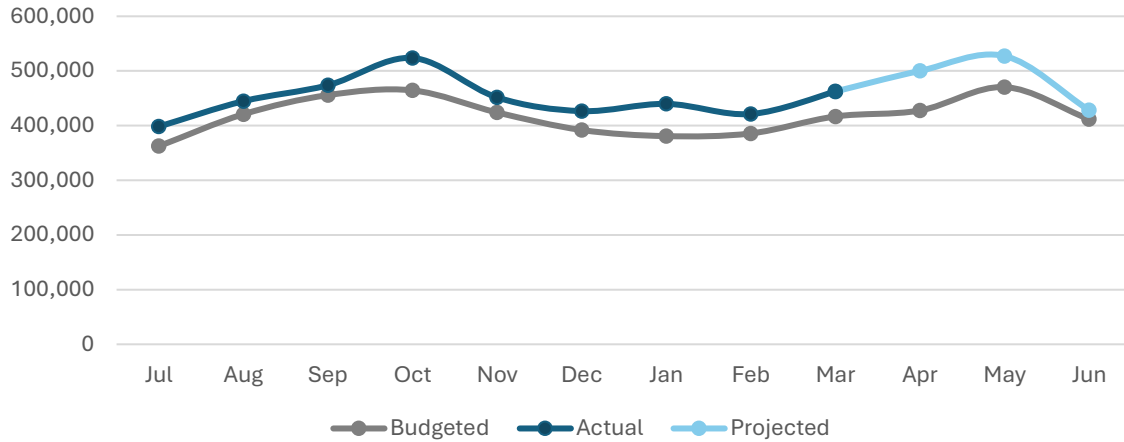
Mode/Metric	Ridership	Revenue Miles	Total Miles	Revenue Hours	Total Hours
BREEZE	5,735,171	5,062,584	5,759,795	429,066	465,347
SPRINTER	1,998,260	518,850	521,083	23,585	23,738
COASTER	919,746	401,139	426,825	12,302	13,708
LIFT	118,861	1,186,922	1,282,687	66,037	78,884
FLEX	130,517	373,196	466,507	26,542	30,772
NCTD+	77,514	230,635	312,883	23,546	31,464
System Total	8,980,069	7,773,326	8,769,780	581,078	643,913

BREEZE

BREEZE service changes outlined in the FY2025 SIP included the restoration of service levels on remaining BREEZE routes that had been reduced due the COVID-19 operator shortage, the reintroduction of BREEZE 408 special event service, and FY2025 Q3 frequency increases on four of NCTD’s highest-performing BREEZE routes. The FY2025 SIP projected a 7.4% increase in ridership by the end of FY2025 and annual ridership 77.1% of pre-pandemic levels.

Restoration of BREEZE service levels were completed in June 2024. Further BREEZE frequency increases have been postponed and two low-performing routes are set to be discontinued during the May 2025 service change. Despite these changes, BREEZE ridership in FY2025 has benefited from more accurate reporting due to the Federal Transit Administration’s certification of its bus fleet’s automated passenger counters on May 23, 2024. As shown in Figure 2, BREEZE monthly ridership in FY2025 has exceeded all budgeted projections and total year-to-date (YTD) boardings are 8.9% above expectations.

Figure 2. BREEZE Monthly Ridership, FY2025



The only change to BREEZE service planned in FY2026 is the reintroduction of BREEZE 408 special event service in the fourth quarter. As shown in Figure 3 and detailed in Table 2, ridership is anticipated to increase 4.3%—from an estimated 5.5 million boardings in FY2025 to roughly 5.7 million in FY2026.

Figure 3. BREEZE Actual & Projected Ridership, FY24-FY26

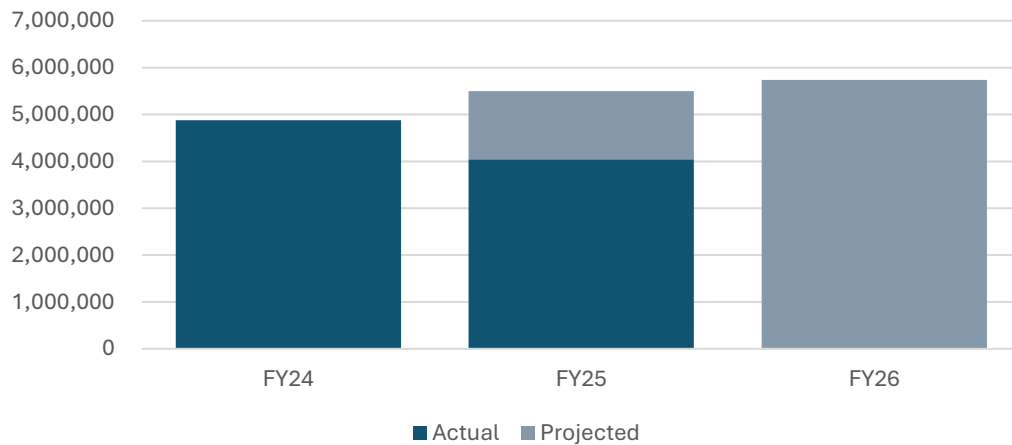


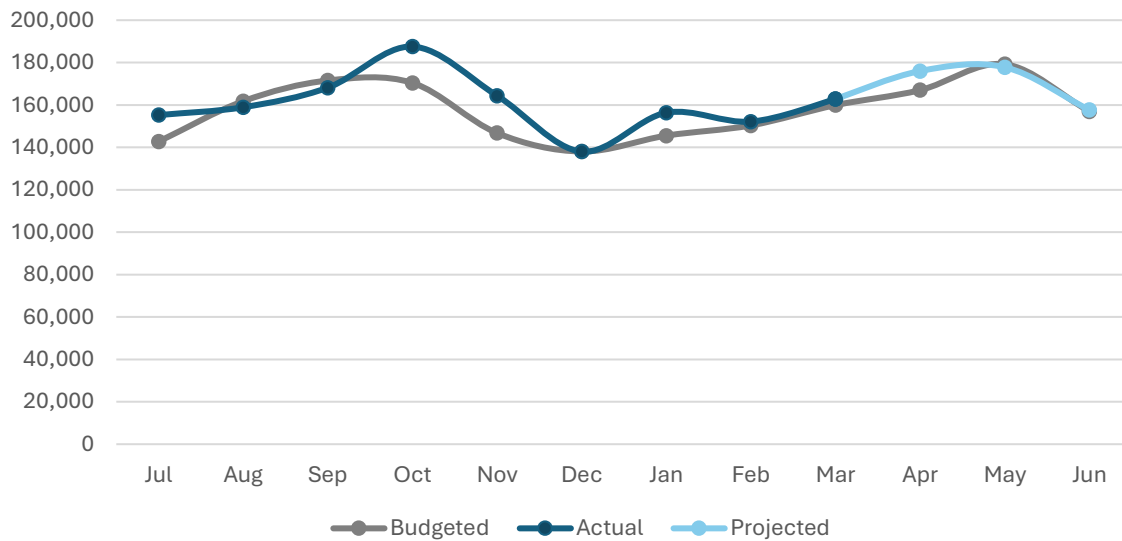
Table 2. BREEZE Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY24-FY26

BREEZE	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Actuals & Projected	FY26 Proposed	Change from FY24 to FY26	Change from FY25 to FY26
Total Ridership	4,876,019	5,497,704	5,735,171	17.6%	4.3%
Total Revenue Miles	4,892,488	5,068,291	5,062,584	3.5%	-0.1%
Total Miles	5,608,830	5,877,533	5,759,795	2.7%	-2.0%
Total Revenue Hours	411,851	429,154	429,066	4.2%	0.0%
Total Hours	441,144	463,297	465,347	5.5%	0.4%

SPRINTER

The FY2025 SIP projected SPRINTER ridership would increase 2.8% in FY2025 to just under 1.9 million. As illustrated in Figure 4, monthly ridership has largely exceeded budgeted goals with YTD ridership surpassing expectations by 4.1% and total boardings having increased 4.6% over the same period last year.

Figure 4. SPRINTER Monthly Ridership, FY2025



As illustrated in Figure 5, SPRINTER is expected to continue its growth trend, increasing by 4% to nearly two million boardings in FY2026. In addition, there are no SPRINTER service changes proposed in FY2026 and any changes in operating statistics shown in Table 3 reflect minor variations in the share of weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays between each fiscal year.

Figure 5. SPRINTER Actual & Projected Ridership, FY24-FY26

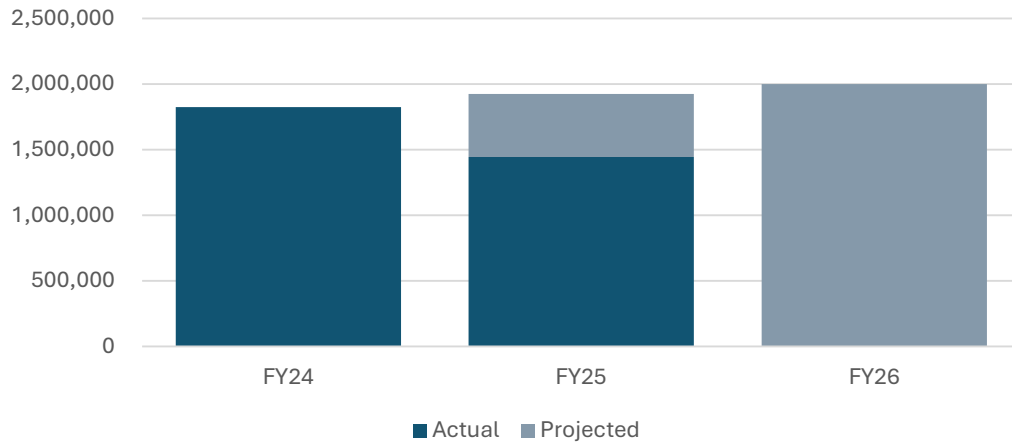


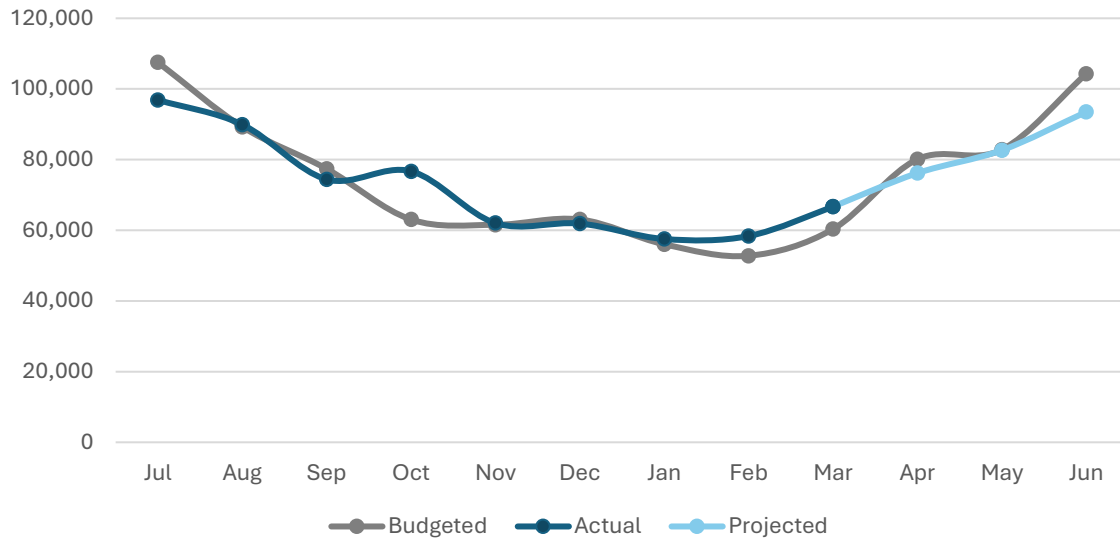
Table 3. SPRINTER Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY24-FY26

SPRINTER	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Actuals & Projected	FY26 Proposed	Change from FY24 to FY26	Change from FY25 to FY26
Total Ridership	1,822,849	1,922,174	1,998,260	9.6%	4.0%
Total Revenue Miles	512,781	503,962	518,850	1.2%	3.0%
Total Miles	516,671	506,892	521,083	0.9%	2.8%
Total Revenue Hours	23,296	22,911	23,585	1.2%	2.9%
Total Hours	23,497	23,081	23,738	1.0%	2.8%

COASTER

Year-to-date ridership on COASTER has increased 5.3% compared to the previous fiscal year—higher than the 3.3% increase projected in the FY2025 SIP. However, as shown in Figure 6, COASTER monthly ridership compared to budgeted goals has been varied. July 2024 ridership, for example, was almost 10% below budgeted while the Padres’ post-season appearance helped October 2024 ridership surpass the budgeted goal by 21.7%.

Figure 6. COASTER Monthly Ridership, FY2025



As illustrated in Figure 7, over 900,000 COASTER boardings are projected in FY2026—a 2.6% increase over current year. Like SPRINTER, no service expansions are planned in FY2026 and the slight changes in operating statistics detailed in Table 4 largely reflect variations in the number of weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Figure 7. COASTER Actual & Projected Ridership, FY24-FY26

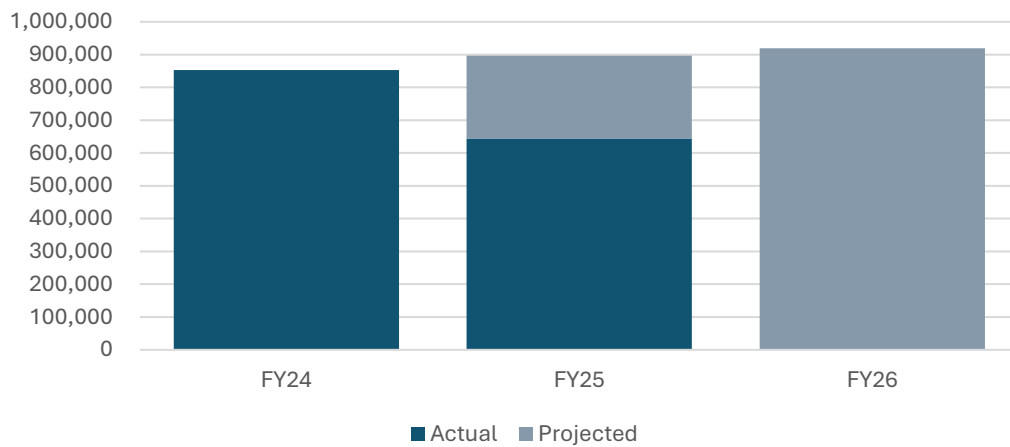


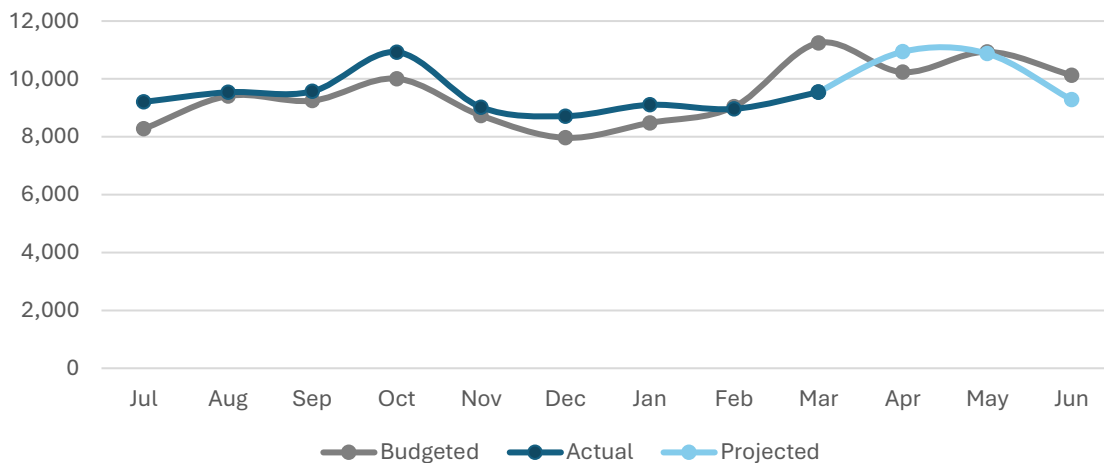
Table 4. COASTER Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY24-FY26

COASTER	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Actuals & Projected	FY26 Proposed	Change from FY24 to FY26	Change from FY25 to FY26
Total Ridership	852,993	896,810	919,746	7.8%	2.6%
Total Revenue Miles	399,691	401,289	401,139	0.4%	0.0%
Total Miles	425,396	426,959	426,825	0.3%	0.0%
Total Revenue Hours	12,274	12,320	12,302	0.2%	-0.1%
Total Hours	13,673	13,727	13,708	0.3%	-0.1%

LIFT

As shown in Figure 8, LIFT ridership has largely outperformed monthly budgeted goals in FY 2025—exceeding the budgeted goal for seven of the past nine months of actual data. Overall YTD ridership in FY2025 has exceeded budget by 2.7% and is projected to exceed the annual budgeted goal by 1.7%

Figure 8. LIFT Monthly Ridership, FY2025



As illustrated in Figure 9, LIFT ridership is projected to increase to close to 120,000 boardings in FY2026. Table 5 shows that this 2.7% increase in ridership is expected result in a 22.7% increase in revenue miles and a 17.4% increase in revenue hours.

Figure 9. LIFT Actual & Projected Ridership, FY24-FY26

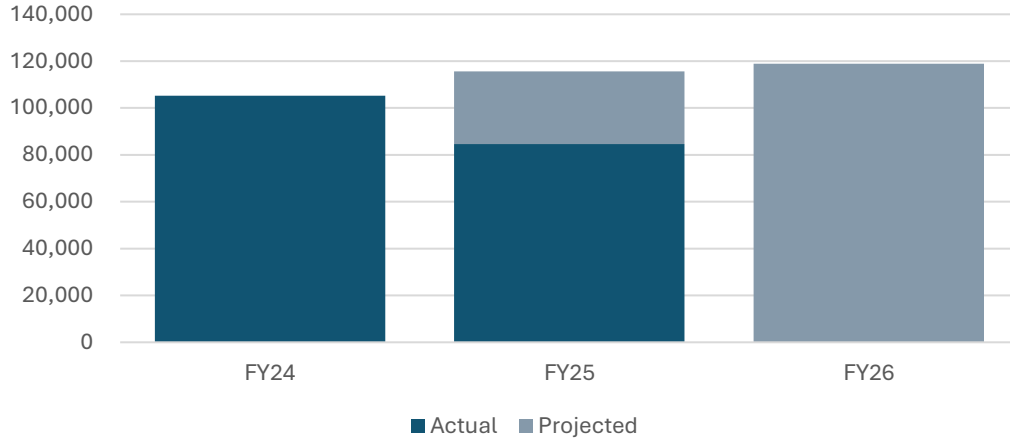


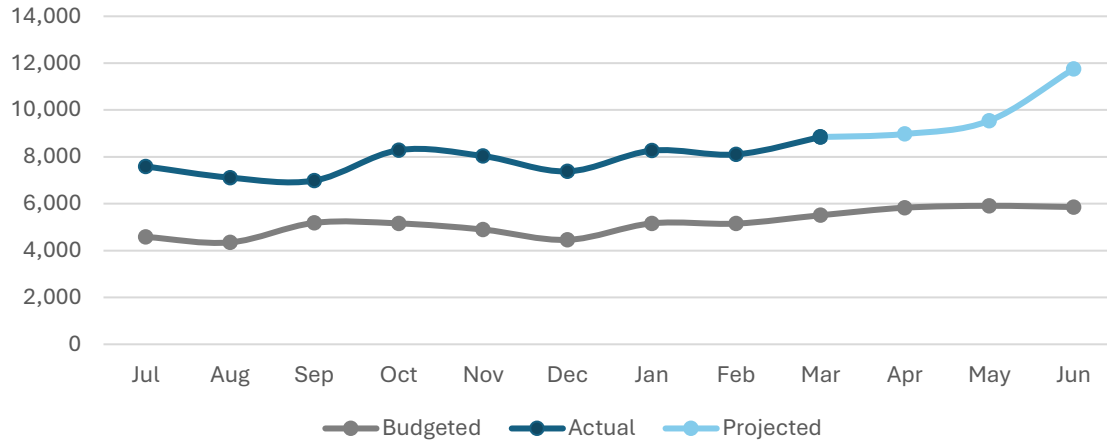
Table 5. LIFT Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY24-FY26

LIFT	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Actuals & Projected	FY26 Proposed	Change from FY24 to FY26	Change from FY25 to FY26
Total Ridership	105,244	115,683	118,861	12.9%	2.7%
Total Revenue Miles	903,563	967,296	1,186,922	31.4%	22.7%
Total Miles	995,221	1,045,379	1,282,687	28.9%	22.7%
Total Revenue Hours	53,654	56,259	66,037	23.1%	17.4%
Total Hours	61,515	64,288	78,884	28.2%	22.7%

FLEX

Strong, sustained growth on the original FLEX routes and the introduction of COASTER Connection service in late FY2024 have contributed to the monthly overperformance illustrated in Figure 10. Year-to-date FLEX ridership has surpassed projections by 58.9% and total boardings have increased 105.8% year-over-year.

Figure 10. FLEX Monthly Ridership, FY2025



As illustrated in Figure 11, FLEX ridership is anticipated to continue to increase in FY2026. The inclusion of COASTER and FLEX services into the U-Pass program for UC San Diego’s students is expected to further improve ridership on COASTER Connection services. Table 6 shows annual ridership is projected to increase by 29.4% in FY2026.

Figure 11. FLEX Actual & Projected Ridership, FY24-FY26

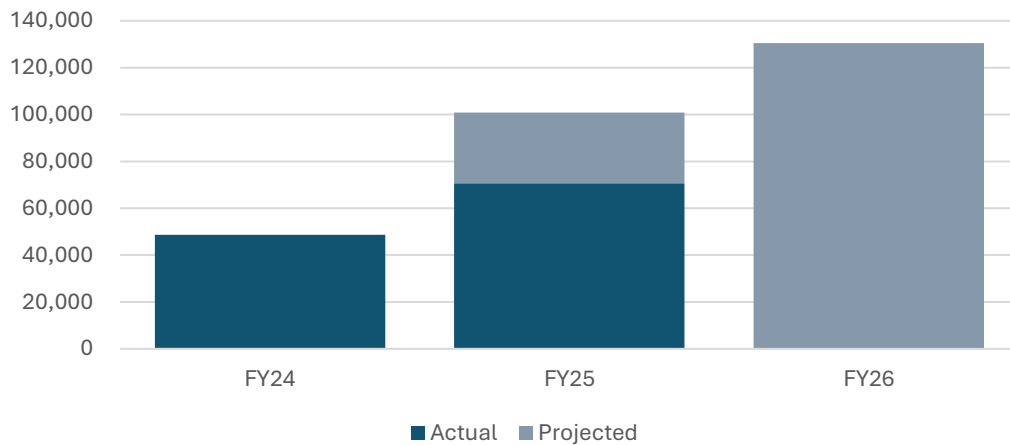


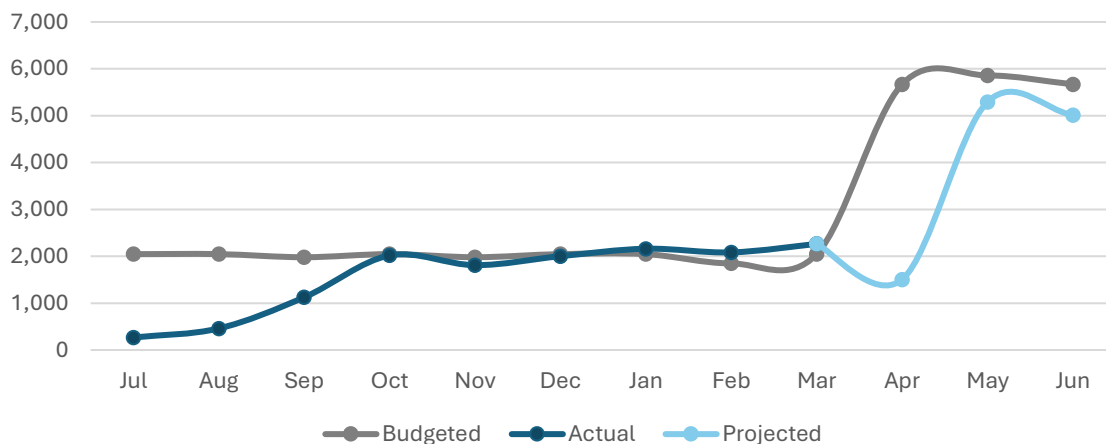
Table 6. FLEX Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY24-FY26

FLEX	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Actuals & Projected	FY26 Proposed	Change from FY24 to FY26	Change from FY25 to FY26
Total Ridership	48,663	100,882	130,517	168.2%	29.4%
Total Revenue Miles	320,948	392,137	373,196	16.3%	-4.8%
Total Miles	337,743	481,484	466,507	38.1%	-3.1%
Total Revenue Hours	17,414	25,948	26,542	52.4%	2.3%
Total Hours	18,472	33,146	30,772	66.6%	-7.2%

NCTD+

In late FY2024, NCTD introduced its on-demand microtransit service, NCTD+, as a pilot in San Marcos. As illustrated in Figure 12, the service ramped up quickly and started reaching its ridership targets after only four months of service. The District anticipates continued ridership growth with the launch of the Vista NCTD+ pilot zone and the continuation of regular service in San Marcos.

Figure 12. NCTD+ Monthly Ridership, FY2025



As shown in Figure 13, NCTD+ ridership is anticipated to increase significantly in FY2026 with a full year of microtransit service in Vista and San Marcos. Additionally, NCTD intends to pursue Flexible Fleets funding through the San Diego Association of Governments to support the launch of a third pilot zone in Fallbrook and Pala. As a result, Table 7 shows annual ridership is projected to increase by 198.1% in FY2026.

Figure 13. NCTD+ Actual & Projected Ridership, FY24-FY26

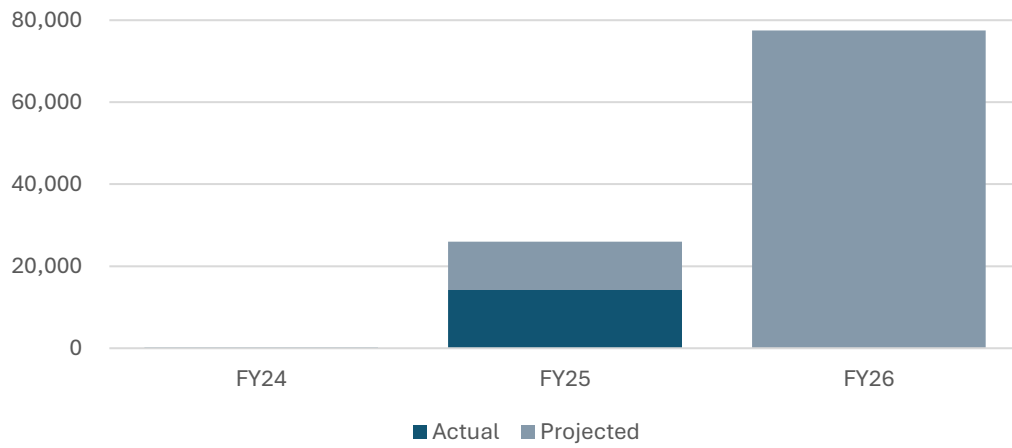


Table 7. NCTD+ Ridership & Operating Statistics, FY24-FY26

NCTD+	FY24 Actuals	FY25 Actuals & Projected	FY26 Proposed	Change from FY24 to FY26	Change from FY25 to FY26
Total Ridership	146	26,002	77,514	52,991.8%	198.1%
Total Revenue Miles	562	84,968	230,635	40,969.7%	171.4%
Total Miles	3,523	127,584	312,883	8,780.5%	145.2%
Total Revenue Hours	113	8,319	23,546	20,726.1%	183.0%
Total Hours	711	12,366	31,464	4,322.7%	154.4%

Five-Year Outlook



The Service Implementation Plan includes a five-year outlook that is updated annually with each budget cycle. This planning horizon allows the District to align major capital and operations projects with future operating projections. The FY2026 Service Implementation Plan was developed within the context of an uncertain funding outlook. The SIP's objectives are outlined in Figure 14.

Figure 14. SIP Objectives

Strengthen network foundations

- **BREEZE:** Restructure the BREEZE bus network through a comprehensive Bus Network Redesign
- **SPRINTER:** Modernize the fleet and improve service reliability, laying the groundwork for future service expansions
- **COASTER:** Complete new station construction and provide direct connections to key landmarks, such as the San Diego Convention Center, Petco Park, and the Del Mar Fair Grounds
- **COASTER:** Restructure service to reflect changing return-to-work patterns and leisure-based travel trends.

Complement network with on-demand service

- **NCTD+:** Transition existing pilot zones to regular service
- **NCTD+:** Strategically pilot on-demand zones to expand coverage and facilitate first-last mile connections to high-frequency corridors
- **LIFT:** Maintain quality LIFT service to meet increased demand associated with changing demographics

Figure 15 charts current and project ridership and service levels from FY2024 through FY2030. As existing services are improved and coverage is expanded, NCTD estimates ridership will increase 10.7% to over 9.4 million boardings in FY2030. Table 8 to Table 13 detail projected modal ridership and operating statistics from FY2026 to FY2030.

Figure 15. Systemwide Actual & Projected Ridership and Service Levels, FY24-FY34

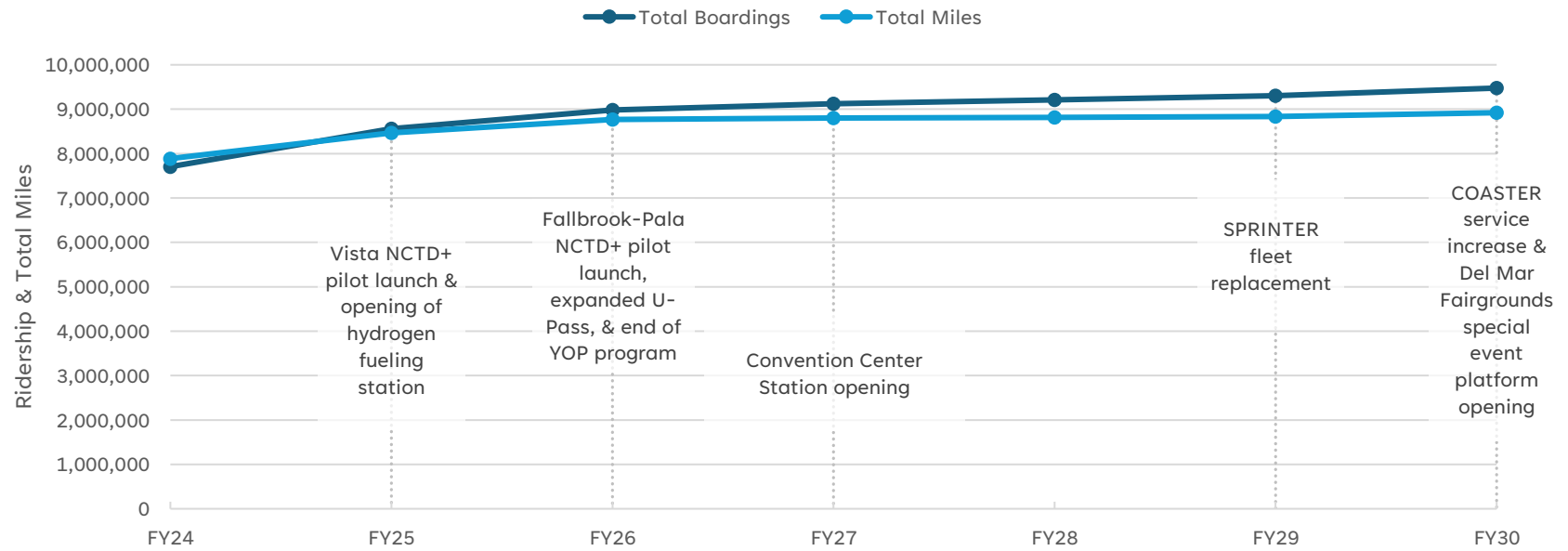


Table 8. BREEZE Ridership & Service Forecast, FY26-FY30

BREEZE	FY2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY2029	FY2030
Total Ridership	5,735,171	5,826,574	5,884,840	5,943,688	6,003,125
Total Revenue Miles	5,062,584	5,062,584	5,062,584	5,062,584	5,062,584
Total Miles	5,759,795	5,759,795	5,759,795	5,759,795	5,759,795
Total Revenue Hours	429,066	429,066	429,066	429,066	429,066
Total Hours	465,347	465,347	465,347	465,347	465,347

Table 9. SPRINTER Ridership & Service Forecast, FY26-FY30

SPRINTER	FY2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY2029	FY2030
Total Ridership	1,998,260	2,018,243	2,038,425	2,058,809	2,079,397
Total Revenue Miles	518,850	518,850	518,850	518,850	518,850
Total Miles	521,083	521,083	521,083	521,083	521,083
Total Revenue Hours	23,585	23,585	23,585	23,585	23,585
Total Hours	23,738	23,738	23,738	23,738	23,738

Table 10. COASTER Ridership & Service Forecast, FY26-FY30

COASTER	FY2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY2029	FY2030
Total Ridership	919,746	941,964	951,384	960,898	1,049,596
Total Revenue Miles	401,139	412,384	412,384	412,384	479,596
Total Miles	426,825	438,790	438,790	438,790	510,306
Total Revenue Hours	12,302	12,647	12,647	12,647	14,708
Total Hours	13,708	14,092	14,092	14,092	16,389

Table 11. LIFT Ridership & Service Forecast, FY26-FY30

LIFT	FY2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY2029	FY2030
Total Ridership	118,861	120,335	121,538	122,753	123,981
Total Revenue Miles	1,186,922	1,201,641	1,213,654	1,225,787	1,238,049
Total Miles	1,282,687	1,298,594	1,311,576	1,324,687	1,337,939
Total Revenue Hours	66,037	66,853	67,521	68,196	68,878
Total Hours	78,884	79,862	80,661	81,467	82,282

Table 12. FLEX Ridership & Service Forecast, FY26-FY30

FLEX	FY2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY2029	FY2030
Total Ridership	130,517	134,469	136,505	137,870	139,249
Total Revenue Miles	373,196	373,196	373,196	373,196	373,196
Total Miles	466,507	466,507	466,507	466,507	466,507
Total Revenue Hours	26,542	26,542	26,542	26,542	26,542
Total Hours	30,772	30,772	30,772	30,772	30,772

Table 13. NCTD+ Ridership & Service Forecast, FY26-FY30

NCTD+	FY2026	FY2027	FY 2028	FY2029	FY2030
Total Ridership	77,514	78,289	79,072	79,863	80,662
Total Revenue Miles	230,635	232,941	235,271	237,624	240,002
Total Miles	312,883	316,011	319,172	322,365	325,590
Total Revenue Hours	23,546	23,781	24,019	24,260	24,502
Total Hours	31,464	31,779	32,096	32,417	32,742