

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, July 25, 2019

**COUNCILMEMBER WARD CALLS FOR MTS TO REVIEW SECURITY POLICIES
AND INVEST IN OUTREACH FOR HOMELESS TRANSIT RIDERS**

SAN DIEGO, CA – San Diego Councilmember Chris Ward (District Three) and Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Board Member issued the following statement after a board discussion on MTS' security role.

“Ensuring customers are paying transit fares is important, but ensuring MTS enforcement is helping, not exacerbating homelessness is just as critical,” said Councilmember Ward.

“Ongoing reports of aggressive and intimidating behavior by MTS security towards riders, especially the homeless, is extremely concerning.

“Transportation remains one of the biggest daily challenges for homeless individuals who often do not have the means to afford standard transit fare, leading to fines which cannot be paid and escalating into major legal and financial obstacles for overcoming homelessness. This has led me to call for the review of MTS Ordinance 2 *“Requiring Proof of Fare Payment by Passengers Using the San Diego Trolley”*.

“Unfair and aggressive enforcement practices are counterproductive to our public safety goals and can compromise basic rights or unfairly target venerable populations that choose to use transit. Transit agencies around the country are working to decriminalize fare evasion providing MTS with model policies to discuss and emulate.”

For more information or to interview Councilmember Ward please contact Ansermio Jake Estrada at (619) 227-0421 or at EstradaAJ@SanDiego.Gov.

Councilmember Chris Ward represents San Diego's Third Council District including communities of Downtown, Little Italy, Bankers Hill, Mission Hills, Middletown, Hillcrest, University Heights, North Park, Normal Heights, Old Town, South Park, and Golden Hill.

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