

## FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



As we present you with our annual Report to the Community, I continue to be proud to be associated with MTD.

MTD is not immune to the difficult economy: as budgets shrink ever smaller, we have eliminated non-critical spending; we have left positions unfilled and there have been no wage or salary increases in several years. Although we have had to cut service somewhat, our cuts so far have been much less drastic than those in many other parts of the country and we have not increased fares since January 2009.

As the national economy continues to be weak however, we may be faced with the need to make additional service cuts and we, as a community, must make difficult choices: How should we balance the competing goals of broad transit coverage and maximizing ridership?

UCSB and SBCC student ridership has grown phenomenally in recent years and often outstrips our ability to serve the demand. These students are to be commended for their commitment to using alternative transportation, but should MTD reduce or eliminate service to needy-but-low-ridership neighborhoods so we can allocate more buses to serving the campuses?

These decisions about how to balance social versus patronage goals must be made carefully and consciously as we plan how best to use the resources we have. Similarly, we attempt to balance speed and frequency with safety, on-time performance, and connections between routes.

MTD employees work hard to provide the safest, most-efficient, and most equitable transit system possible for this community. We always welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can improve.

Sherrie Fisher  
MTD General Manager



All photos by Kate Schwab and other MTD staff.

The screenshot shows the Google Transit Trip Planner interface. At the top is the Google logo and 'Transit'. Below it is the 'Google Maps Transit Trip Planner' header. There are input fields for 'Start' (with an example 'e.g. UCSB'), 'End' (with an example 'e.g. 33 E Canon Perdido St, Santa Barbara, CA'), 'Date' (01/31/2012), and 'Time' (5:05). A dropdown menu is set to 'PM'. Below these is a 'Plan by:' section with a dropdown set to 'Departure Time' and a 'Plan it!' button.

Plan your trip on MTD with our Google Trip Planner at [www.sbmtd.gov](http://www.sbmtd.gov)!

Simply enter your starting place, your destination, and the date & time you wish to travel. Google will return your routing options, even including walking directions to the bus stop!

*"Like" Ride Santa Barbara MTD on Facebook!*

We'll post news and rider alerts, share items of interest to our passengers, photos of our community outreach activities, updates from our Board of Directors, and much, much more.



*Follow MTD on Twitter:  
@SantaBarbaraMTD!*

You'll get up-to-the-minute information about bus delays, detours, and the like.



*Calculate your savings using the Commute Calculator on our website under Passenger Information!*

Compare the cost of riding the bus to the costs of driving, maintaining, and insuring a car.

# REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



# MTD Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District  
550 Olive Street • Santa Barbara, California 93101  
805.963.3364 • [www.sbmtd.gov](http://www.sbmtd.gov)

# MTD BOARD OF DIRECTORS



MTD Board, from left: Director Chuck McQuary, Secretary Olivia Rodriguez, Director John Britton, Chair Dave Davis, Director Richard Weinberg, Vice Chair Roger Aceves, Director Brian Fahnestock.

# FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

In FY 2011, the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) provided more than 7.7 million passenger trips on buses serving destinations throughout the South Coast of Santa Barbara County.

MTD is proud to be one of only 14 out of nearly 300 Urbanized Areas (UZAs) with populations between 200,000 and 999,999 in the United States that exceeded all six of the Federal Transit Administration's performance measures for small, transit-intensive cities for FY 2011. This ranks us in the top 5% of transit agencies for comparably-sized communities nationwide. In fact, although the population of our service area is barely over 200,000, MTD provides more than twice as many trips per capita and operates twice as many miles per capita as the average for these UZAs. In short, we ROCK transit here on the South Coast!

I think we are justified in being proud of the service we provide, but that doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. While State & Federal operating funds have become scarce, we have secured some grants for capital projects including a long-awaited Automatic Vehicle Locating system, which will allow us to track buses via GPS. With this data, we'll be able to schedule routes with even more precision and provide up-to-the-minute passenger information as well.

MTD takes its mission of providing excellent transit service to the South Coast very seriously and we will continue to do so even with the budgetary challenges ahead.

See you on the bus,

Dave Davis  
MTD Board Chair

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The South Coast's senior population is growing and MTD is preparing for a future when many independent seniors will rely on the bus as their primary transportation. All of MTD's buses 'kneel' and have ramps to make boarding easier for those with limited mobility. MTD actively participates in Santa Barbara Village and Senior Expo, and supports

other senior services as well as conducting our own outreach in



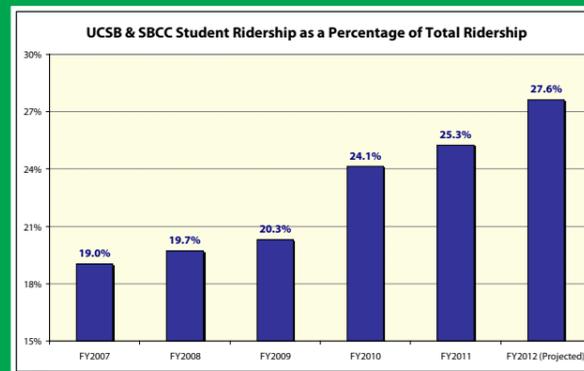
the community. Upon request, we send a bus with a staff member and a driver to demonstrate just how easy it is to ride the bus and allow participants to practice boarding and paying their fare so they'll feel comfortable trying it on their own.

MTD's staff also participates in Earth Day, Bike From Work Day, Safety Town, large employer benefit fairs, and many other local events throughout the year.

# STUDENT RIDERSHIP

While MTD's ridership has retreated somewhat from its peak during the gas price spike a few years ago, student ridership has continued to soar. In FY 2011, combined UCSB & SBCC student ridership was up more than 40% from 5 years ago. In FY 2012, we anticipate carrying more than 2 million student passengers!

While MTD applauds the students for their commitment to using public transit, the increasing demand has put a strain on the system - particularly on the express routes between Isla Vista/UCSB and SBCC/Downtown Santa Barbara. Revenue generated from MTD's transit



pass agreements with the students is based on a fixed-fee multiplied by the number of enrolled students. As a result, higher patronage by students does not result in additional revenue for public transit.

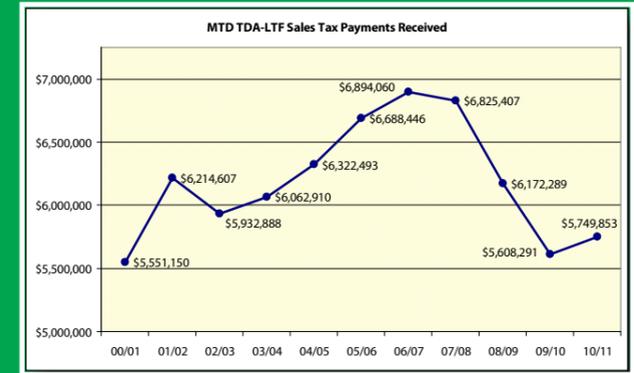
In an attempt to address the lack of capacity on some of the impacted routes without increasing costs, MTD will trial a 60-foot articulated bus on Line 15x this Spring. If the trial is deemed a success, and there is community support for the new bus, MTD will begin discussions with

student representatives about what it would take to make the articulated bus a viable option for solving the capacity issues plaguing the Line 15x and other routes.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

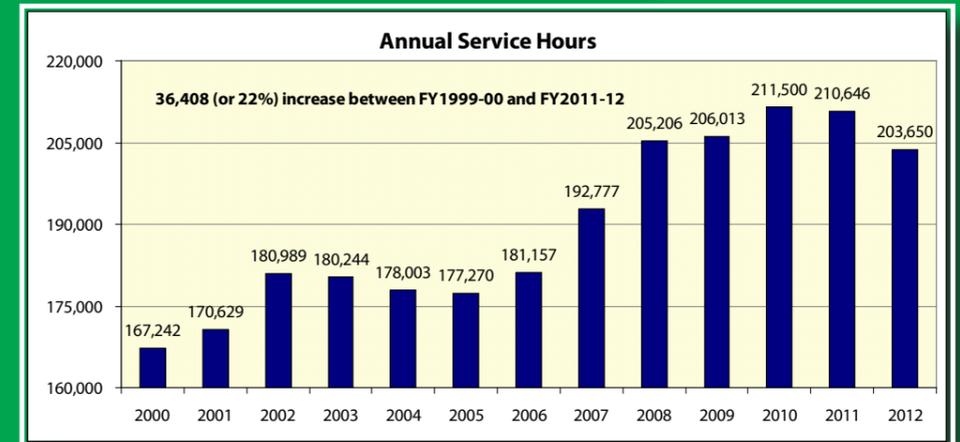
MTD has weathered the challenges of the "Great Recession" better than many transit agencies around the U.S., where fare increases of 10-50% and service cuts of 25% or more have become common in recent years.

As illustrated in the chart below, MTD has experienced a sharp decline in its primary source of operating funding, Transportation Development Act - Local Transportation Fund (TDA-LTF) sales tax revenue, over the past few years. Despite this decline in revenue, MTD's fiscal year 2010-11 operating activities did not result in the need to dip into cash reserves. However, a governmental accounting requirement to book the projected cost of actuarial-derived retiree



health insurance benefits resulted in a decrease of over \$800,000 in Unrestricted Net Assets.

In spite of these fiscal challenges, MTD has managed to retain most of the service increases implemented over the last ten years and has only recently had to resort to reducing service by 6% from peak levels in fiscal year 2009-10 to



balance its operating budget. Some vacant staff positions have gone unfilled, but fortunately, normal employee attrition rates have prevented the need for any lay-offs.

Ridership numbers continue to grow and the strong demand for public transit in the South Coast region makes our service area one

of the Federal Transit Administration's "Transit Intensive Communities", which means we receive a larger amount of federal operating assistance. MTD will be closely monitoring the federal budget process as future transportation funds may be at risk.

The pie chart at right provides a glimpse of where MTD's operating revenue is currently derived.

