MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT WORKING GROUP

Wednesday, April 7, 2010
3:30 to 5 p.m.

SANDAG Board Room, 7th Floor
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA  92101-4231

Staff Contact:  Anne Steinberger
(619) 699-1937
ast@sandag.org

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

• MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT – ALTERNATIVES FOR SCOPING

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## MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT WORKING GROUP (PWG)

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ITEM #</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
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<td>SUMMARY OF MARCH 17, 2010, MEETING</td>
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<td>APPROVE</td>
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<td>Review and approve the meeting summary from the March 17, 2010, meeting.</td>
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<td>PUBLIC COMMENT</td>
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<td>COMMENT</td>
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<td>Members of the public who would like to address the PWG on a topic not on the agenda should do so at this time. Speakers are limited to three minutes each.</td>
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<td>SELECTION OF PROJECT WORKING GROUP MEMBER(S)</td>
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<td>APPROVE</td>
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<td>A PWG member(s) has resigned. The selection committee has recommended a replacement(s) and the PWG will be asked to vote on this recommendation(s).</td>
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<td>MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT – ALTERNATIVES FOR SCOPING</td>
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<td>RECOMMEND</td>
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<td>Staff will further discuss and answer questions on the findings of the Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report. The report has been prepared as an initial step in developing the alternatives and issues to be addressed in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report. The PWG will be asked to recommend to the Transportation Committee three light rail transit alternatives be carried through to scoping.</td>
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<td>NEXT MEETING</td>
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<td>The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5, 2010. A Scoping Meeting is recommended to be held following this meeting.</td>
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<td>ADJOURN</td>
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+ next to an item indicates an attachment
SUMMARY OF MARCH 17, 2010, MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT WORKING GROUP (PWG)

Members in Attendance:

Ron Roberts, Supervisor, County of San Diego (Chairman)
Robert Emery, Retired MTS Board Member and Poway Councilmember (Vice-Chairman)
Anette Blatt, Scripps Health
Greg Fitchitt, Westfield Corporation
William Beck, University City Planning Group
Brian Gregory, UCSD Assistant Vice Chancellor
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Joe LaCava, La Jolla Community Planning Group
Charles Lungenerhausen, SANDAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee
Lani Lutar, San Diego County Taxpayers Association
Reed Vickerman, Amylin Pharmaceuticals
Barbara Obrzut, La Jolla resident
Brooke Peterson, Clairemont Community Planning Group
Carmen Sandoval, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
Ann Van Leer, Land Conservation Brokerage, Inc.
Chris Westling, UCSD student
Evan McLaughlin, San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council/La Jolla resident
Andrew Poat, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation

Others in Attendance:

Susanne Bankhead, MJE Marketing
Dennis Henderson, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Paul Jablonski, Metropolitan Transportation Systems
Elyse Lowe, Move San Diego
Sam Greening, UCPG
Nate Stein, Jewish Community Center
Elizabeth Elman, UCSD
Lynn Parrish, Citizen
Deborah Knight, Friends of Rose Canyon
Kevin Worth, La Jolla Country Day School
David Kunugi
AGENDA ITEM #1: SUMMARY OF DECEMBER 2, 2009, MEETING

PWG Chairman Ron Roberts called the meeting to order at 3:39 p.m. Brooke Peterson, Clairemont Community Planning Group, made a motion to approve the December 2, 2009, meeting summary. Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation, seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM #2: PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public were given the opportunity to address the PWG on any topic not on the agenda. No public comment given.

AGENDA ITEM #3: MID-COAST TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT DRAFT COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES REPORT

Leslie Blanda, SANDAG Mid-Coast Corridor Director, and Dennis Henderson, Parsons Brinckerhoff, provided an overview of the SANDAG Mid-Coast project and its funding sources. The project has received priority for implementation under TransNet, which specifies that the project relies on the receipt of funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts program as well. FTA New Starts is a discretionary funding program, with very high competition for funding. Staff believes that the Mid-Coast project will compete very well for funding, since TransNet provides a 50 percent match in capital funds, as well as operational funding through 2048. SANDAG and FTA are jointly preparing the environmental documents (Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report). The environmental documents will build on prior plans and environmental approvals for the project.

Staff has completed the Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report, which identifies the purpose and need for the project, examines changed conditions within the Mid-Coast Corridor, and identifies alternatives to bring forward to the scoping period for the project.

Mr. Henderson explained that the project team evaluated several alternatives in the report:

- No-Build Alternative
- Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative
- Build Alternatives (Light Rail Transit, Bus Rapid Transit, Commuter Rail)

Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternatives:

The current Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) adopted by the SANDAG Board of Directors, would extend LRT from the Old Town Transit Center to University City, with service to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and University Towne Centre (UTC). Seven different
LRT alternatives were studied and all would provide for an extension of the San Diego Trolley Blue Line, allowing a direct transit line from San Ysidro to UTC. These alternatives were developed to respond to some of the changed conditions in the Corridor, such as a wider I-5 footprint and proposed addition of Direct Access Ramps at Voigt Drive.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternatives:

Four BRT alternatives were developed to determine the effectiveness of the BRT in serving the Corridor. The BRT alternatives range from exclusive guideway through the Corridor, which would have the highest capital costs to exclusive guideway only in the most congested areas, which would have lower capital costs, but provide minimal improvement over the TSM baseline alternative.

Commuter Rail (CR) Alternative:

The CR alternative would utilize existing San Diego-Los Angeles-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor (LOSSAN) heavy rail tracks and construct a tunnel from the LOSSAN right-of-way under Genesee Avenue to UTC and construct an underground station at UTC.

FTA Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI):

Mr. Henderson reviewed a summary of the FTA CEI, which is a ratio calculated by dividing an alternative's incremental cost, measured as the total capital costs plus operating and maintenance costs, by the alternative's user benefits. The alternatives with the lowest CEI are considered to be most cost-effective in the FTA New Starts rating system. The alternatives were evaluated for their cost effectiveness using the FTA’s CEI and yielded the following results:

- TSM Alternative: $16.49
- LRT Alternatives: Ranged from $23.90-$26.60, depending on the alternative
- BRT Alternatives: Ranged from $184.50-$371.80 depending on the alternative
- CR Alternative: $135.20

The TSM and all of the LRT alternatives were found to be cost-effective. The LRT alternatives all have a high number of benefit hours, significantly higher than BRT. The benefit hours are higher for the LRT alternatives since they would extend the Blue Line, providing a direct service from the border or downtown to University City. The direct service provided by the LRT alternatives is highly reliable and would not require the transfers necessary with BRT.

Effectiveness in Meeting Project Goals and Objectives:

Each alternative’s effectiveness was measured against the goals and objectives of the project and other considerations, such as traffic impacts, environmental impacts, and financial feasibility. A rating was assigned to the alternatives for each item, ranging from “more effective” to “less effective.” This analysis demonstrated that LRT alternatives are much more effective than other alternatives in meeting the project’s goals and objectives.
Staff Recommendation:

Mr. Henderson stated that after conducting the analysis outlined in the Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report, staff is recommending that three LRT alternatives be carried forward into the scoping period. These three alternatives all:

- Effectively meet the goals of the project;
- Improve regional mobility;
- Are cost-effective or most cost-effective; and
- Are competitive for FTA New Starts funding.

The LRT alternatives recommended for scoping are:

1) LRT Alternative 1 (combination of alternatives 1, 4, and 5);
2) LRT Alternative 3; and
3) LRT Alternative 6.

Mr. Henderson and Ms. Blanda then previewed aerial simulations of the alignments of the recommended alternatives for scoping from Old Town Transit Center to the University City area.

Ms. Blanda reviewed the schedule of meetings that will be conducted prior to scoping:

- PWG meeting: March 17, 2010
- SANDAG Transportation Committee: March 19, 2010
- SANDAG Board: March 26, 2010
- PWG: April 7, 2010 (recommendation on alternatives to carry forward to scoping)
- SANDAG ITOC: April 14, 2010
- SANDAG Transportation Committee: April 16, 2010 (recommendation on alternatives to carry forward to scoping)
- SANDAG Board of Directors: April 23, 2010 (recommendation on alternatives to carry forward to scoping)

The project will go through a 30-day scoping period. Once the scoping period is complete, staff will finalize the Completed Evaluation of Alternatives Report, which will include a summary of scoping comments and responses to the comments received.

Ms. Blanda asked whether the PWG had questions. Questions and comments included:

Chair Roberts clarified that the PWG is not being asked to take a position today, but to digest the information and pose questions or comments. He asked staff to provide an overview of the scoping process and schedule. Ms. Steinberger stated that the recommended scoping period will begin on May 3, 2010, and end on June 1, 2010. Staff is in the process of identifying scoping meeting locations in downtown San Diego, at Caltrans, University City, Clairemont, and UCSD. More details will be provided on those meetings at the April PWG meeting. Staff will request the PWG’s assistance in spreading the word about these meetings.
William Beck, University City Planning Group, asked if all three of the LRT alternatives make stops at the same locations or if they are different for each. Ms. Blanda replied that there are different stations proposed in each of those alternatives. In LRT Alternative 1, the East Campus Station would be at a different location depending on the alignment. LRT Alternative 3 would not contain a station at Executive Drive because the station at UTC would serve that area.

Ann Van Leer, Land Conservation Brokerage, Inc., requested further explanation of the cost table and ridership model, specifically the difference in cost effectiveness between LRT and BRT. Mr. Henderson explained that the analysis for all the alternatives was developed based on the same land use plan and the same trip table. Staff forecasted the number of trips based on the mode and this is contained in the Travel Forecasting Report, which will be part of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Ms. Van Leer explained that for those PWG members representing larger groups and organizations, it will be important to understand the methodology in order to explain to their larger groups why the LRT alternatives work and why BRT does not. Mr. Henderson explained that the model can only evaluate travel time differences between the various modes. Anytime there is a transfer within the mode, a penalty in terms of delay to travel time is assigned because users perceive a transfer to be a negative. Total travel time for BRT is much higher because of the number of transfers. With the LRT alternatives, because there are fewer or no transfers, there are minor penalties. Overall, the transfer access time is lower with LRT than with BRT.

Mr. Hutsel thanked staff for the presentation and asked how several adjacent projects/issues were being addressed by staff as part of the Mid-Coast project: Interstate 5 (I-5) widening, High-Speed Rail, conflict of traffic vs. rail at Rosecrans, and future plans for a State Park in Old Town. Mr. Henderson responded that the I-5 widening is accounted for in the alternatives. The High-Speed Rail project is not approved yet, but would be addressed in the Mid-Coast EIR, but not during scoping. Improvements at Taylor Street would have to be examined in more detail.

Joe LaCava, La Jolla Community Planning Group, inquired about the New Starts funding for the project. Ms. Blanda stated that staff expects the project to be very competitive for the FTA funding. Mr. LaCava asked what would happen if the project was not able to secure New Starts funding. Ms. Blanda replied that staff would regroup and pursue alternative sources of funding for the project. Mr. LaCava asked how riders would access stations south of State Route (SR) 52, whether by car and bus. Mr. Henderson confirmed that riders would get to those stations by car and bus. All three stations south of SR 52 would include parking and would utilize bus service. Mr. LaCava noticed that the LRT alignments are very close to the single-family homes east of I-5 and asked whether there would be consideration given to moving that alignment over across I-5 sooner to avoid any impacts to that housing. Mr. Henderson confirmed that the overall route location is more important right now; the actual crossing location will be considered as part of the environmental analysis.

Lani Lutar, San Diego County Taxpayers’ Association, questioned whether staff will rely solely on FTA’s cost effectiveness criteria in their analysis of the alternatives, or if other criteria would be examined as well. Ms. Blanda explained that FTA’s measures are very comprehensive and are broader than just cost effectiveness. The different criteria are outlined in detail in the report and are based on regional goals outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan.
Reed Vickerman, Amylin Pharmaceuticals, inquired about availability of empirical data that would demonstrate that UCSD students would use this extension. Mr. Henderson explained that the trips table in the report is broken down into different types of trips, one of those being “home to college” trips. UCSD also has forecasted that students would utilize this line.

Chair Roberts noted that there was one request to speak from Elizabeth Hellman, UCSD Student Sustainability Center. Ms. Hellman stated that she is very excited about this project, but has concerns about preserving Rose Canyon. She appreciates staff presenting alternatives in the report that would avoid impacts to Rose Canyon. She then distributed copies of her comments on the project.

Greg Fitchett, Westfield Corporation, stated that currently it is not anticipated to have on-site parking for the transit station at UTC. Ms. Blanda replied that staff will continue to work with Westfield on this issue.

Evan McLaughlin, San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council/La Jolla resident, referenced Table S3 on page 20, the Summary Evaluation of Alternatives. He asked whether pedestrian accessibility was part of the criteria in evaluating the alternatives. Mr. Henderson explained that pedestrian accessibility is included under user benefits because the model takes into account the distance to stations, and other walking factors. Ms. Blanda added that the station locations have been selected with pedestrian access in mind in order to create more walkable areas.

Ms. Van Leer requested staff put the simulations on the Mid-Coast Web site. Ms. Steinberger agreed to do so.

Brian Gregory, UCSD Assistant Vice Chancellor, expressed his excitement about the possibility of LRT on the UCSD campus. He understands that these three alternatives are all viable and looks forward to working with SANDAG. UCSD is working with SANDAG on hosting one of the five scoping meetings in May and plans to submit formal comments during the scoping period.

Ms. Peterson asked whether specific feeder bus routes serving the beach-area stations will be part of this project. Mr. Henderson explained that the bus routes will be considered, but not as part of scoping.

Chris Westling, UCSD student, requested more information on how environmental impacts are calculated. Mr. Henderson replied that there is a table in the report outlining potential environmental impacts, such as biological resources, water resources, displacement, or relocation of property. Each of the alternatives was assigned a qualitative rating depending on its individual potential environmental impacts.

Mr. Beck referenced LRT projects on the East Coast, where the transit runs down the middle of the freeway and inquired whether an alternative like that has been considered for Mid-Coast. Chair Roberts confirmed such an alternative is possible, but is likely not financially feasible given the amount of structure required.
Andrew Poat, San Diego Regional EDC, requested clarification of the PWG’s role in the project. Ms. Steinberger explained that at the April meeting, the group will have another discussion of the alternatives report and hopefully reach consensus on preferred alternative to recommend to the Transportation Committee and the Board. Chair Roberts added that the goal for the PWG is to review the information and prepare for an extensive discussion on the three alternatives at the April meeting. Then, hopefully the group can reach consensus and make a recommendation.

Mr. Beck confirmed that the scoping period will run from May 3 - June 1, which will provide an opportunity for the public to provide comment. Since many of the PWG members represent larger organizations or community groups, he is concerned that there will not be enough time for the PWG members to go back to those groups and provide comments at the April meeting. Ms. Steinberger explained that the PWG is being asked to recommend which of the alternatives should be moved forward into the scoping period. Then, at the conclusion of the scoping period in June, a decision would be made as to which alternative(s) would be studied further in the environmental document. Mr. Beck asked if the PWG chose one specific alternative, would the other alternatives be disregarded. Ms. Steinberger confirmed that the PWG recommendation will not eliminate alternatives from the environmental analysis; ultimately, the Board will make the decision.

For clarification purposes, Mr. Poat laid out a potential draft motion for the PWG, if they were to take action on this item today. A sample motion would recommend bringing forward LRT alternatives 1, 3, and 6 to the scoping period. Chair Roberts added that staff has reviewed the alternatives in detail and narrowed them down. At the end of this process, it would be helpful to have a preferred alternative, since that helps with FTA funding for the project.

Mr. Vickerman complimented staff on the animation and asked whether the animations could be enhanced to illustrate the bus network around stations, as well as how users would access the stations and the parking. Ms. Blanda confirmed that staff can add in the stations with proposed parking, but she was not sure about the bus connections.

Mr. Hutsel asked which alternatives will be included in the environmental analysis. Ms. Blanda stated that at a minimum, the no-build, TSM, and the preferred alternatives would be included in the environmental analysis, but there could be more alternatives. She added that the purpose of the scoping period is to confirm these are the right alternatives to move forward.

Mr. Poat clarified the potential action for the PWG at the next meeting, to essentially accept staff’s recommendation to combine LRT alternatives 1, 4, and 5, drop LRT alternative 2 and 7, as well as the BRT and CR alternatives.

Mr. LaCava stated he was surprised to hear the lack of interest from Westfield on the parking structure at UTC. He recommended staff look into that further. Ms. Blanda agreed to continue to work with Westfield on that issue.

Ms. Lutar stated that TransNet stipulates that the project will be funded subject to federal dollars being confirmed. She asked whether the Board places more value on cost effectiveness or federal funding. Ms. Blanda replied that FTA uses cost effectiveness to measure how well projects will compete for funding. It is based on previous investments in transit services to determine whether for the money spent, there is a good return. Ms. Lutar referenced the assumptions made in the
analysis and the importance of understanding how those assumptions are made, in order to take a position. She would like to ensure that federal and local taxpayer dollars are being used effectively and confirm that the Board feels the same. Chair Roberts replied that the goal of this project is to do the right thing by the taxpayers and suggested that if there are specific questions about the methodology used, those should be brought forward.

Mr. Vickerman suggested that staff show the equivalents of trips taken off freeways/roads as a result of this project. Ms. Blanda noted that this information is included in the report. Mr. Vickerman suggested highlighting the information.

**AGENDA ITEM #4: PUBLIC OUTREACH AND SCOPING MEETINGS**

This information was covered by Ms. Steinberger in the previous item.

**AGENDA ITEM #5: NEXT MEETING**

Chair Roberts explained that at the next meeting, the PWG will have a thorough discussion on the project, in an attempt to reach consensus on the alternatives to recommend for the scoping period.

**AGENDA ITEM #6: ADJOURN**

Chair Roberts adjourned the meeting at 5:16 p.m.
Action Requested: RECOMMEND

MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT –
ALTERNATIVES FOR SCOPING

File Number 1041501

Introduction

At the March 17, 2010, meeting, the Project Working Group (PWG) received a presentation on the Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report. Staff presented an overview of the report and its findings, answered PWG questions, and identified next steps for the working group.

On March 29, 2010, an information meeting was held to provide PWG members the opportunity to ask additional questions from the staff and technical team.

Recommendation

The PWG is asked to recommend to the Transportation Committee three light rail transit (LRT) alternatives be carried through to scoping: LRT 1 (combines alternatives 1, 4, and 5), LRT 3, and LRT 6.

Discussion

Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report

The Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report defines, evaluates, and recommends preliminary conceptual alternatives for consideration during the scoping period. The conceptual alternatives include the No-Build Alternative, based on the capital and operating improvements in the SANDAG 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP): Pathways for the Future, and the Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative, based on the highest level of bus service improvement that can be achieved in the corridor with limited capital investment. The Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report defines and evaluates seven LRT alternatives, four bus rapid transit alternatives (BRT), and one commuter rail (CR) alternative. The LRT alternatives include the locally preferred alternative (LPA), and its alignment option, approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors as refined to respond to changed conditions in the Mid-Coast Corridor. Two of the LRT alternatives are similar to the refined LPA and vary only as aligned on, or immediately south of, Voigt Drive. Two of the LRT alternatives avoid the Voigt Drive alignment, and the remaining LRT alternative remains on the east side of Interstate 5 and does not serve the University of California, San Diego West Campus.
The BRT alternatives were developed to determine the effectiveness of BRT in serving the Mid-Coast Corridor. BRT alternatives had not been considered in the prior environmental documents. The BRT alternatives range from an alternative that provides exclusive guideway throughout the majority of the corridor to provide the fastest travel times and highest reliability, to a less capital intensive alternative that provides exclusive guideway only in the most congested areas. The CR alternative utilizes the existing Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Corridor heavy rail tracks and double tracking included in the RTP to provide service from downtown San Diego to the University City area. This alternative includes a tunnel from the LOSSAN right-of-way to a deep underground station at UTC via a tunnel under Genesee Avenue.

**Recommended Alternatives for Scoping**

The Draft Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report recommends that five of the seven LRT alternatives described above be carried forward for consideration at scoping. The five LRT alternatives effectively meet project goals, improve regional mobility, are cost-effective or near cost-effective, and are anticipated to be competitive for FTA New Starts funding. The recommended LRT alternatives include the LPA, as refined to respond to changed conditions, and the two alternatives that are similar to the refined LPA and vary only as aligned on, or immediately south of, Voigt Drive.

The draft report further recommends that these three alternatives be combined into one alternative with alignment options as these share similar routes and effectiveness. The recommended alternatives also include the two LRT alternatives that avoid Voigt Drive. A total of three LRT alternatives are thus recommended for consideration at scoping LRT 1 (combines alternatives 1, 4, and 5), LRT 3, and LRT 6.

Attachment: 1. Maps of Light Rail Transit Alternatives

Key Staff Contact: Leslie Blanda, (619) 699-6907, lbl@sandag.org
Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project: Recommended LRT Alignments North of SR 52
March 2010

- **LRT 1** (Combines 1, 4 and 5)
- **LRT 3**
- **LRT 6**

- **Transit Center**
- **Transit Station**

*UCSD East Station location differs by alignment*

Stations are for illustrative purposes; locations are not exact

Map not to scale.
Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project: Recommended LRT Alignments South of SR 52
March 2010

LRT 1 (Combines 1, 4 and 5)
LRT 3
LRT 6

Transit Center
Transit Station

Stations are for illustrative purposes; locations are not exact
Map not to scale.

* UCSD East Station location differs by alignment