MEETING NOTICE
AND AGENDA

MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT WORKING GROUP
The Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Working Group may take action on any item appearing on this agenda.

Wednesday, October 6, 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

- OVERVIEW OF NEPA/CEQA PROCESS
- UPDATE ON ALIGNMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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ITEM #                  RECOMMENDATION

+1. SUMMARY OF THE JULY 14, 2010, MEETING                      APPROVE

Review and approve the meeting summary from the July 14, 2010, meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT                                                COMMENT

Members of the public who would like to address the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Working Group (PWG) on a topic not on the agenda should do so at this time. Speakers are limited to three minutes each.

3. APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT WORKING GROUP MEMBERS                  APPROVE

Three PWG members are not continuing. The selection committee has recommended replacements and the PWG will be asked to vote on this recommendation.

4. UPDATE ON JULY 23 BOARD ACTION/FTA APPLICATION                INFORMATION

Staff will provide a report on the SANDAG Board of Directors’ action to reconfirm the previously selected Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the PWG. Staff will also provide a status update on the application to Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which is needed for the project to enter Preliminary Engineering.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE NEPA/CEQA PROCESS                             INFORMATION

Staff has begun work on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Draft SEIS/SEIR) for the PWG. The PWG will receive an overview of the process for environmental analysis for the PWG under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) law.

6. UPDATE ON ALIGNMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES                INFORMATION

Staff will update the PWG on alignment and environmental studies underway.
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<td><strong>7.</strong> UPCOMING AGENDA AND NEXT MEETING</td>
<td>Staff will solicit input on future agenda topics. The next meeting is anticipated to be held in January 2011.</td>
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<td><strong>8.</strong> ADJOURN</td>
<td>+ next to an item indicates an attachment</td>
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SUMMARY OF THE JULY 14, 2010, MEETING

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
Brian Gregory, UCSD
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation
Joe LaCava, La Jolla Community Planning Group
Evan McLaughlin, San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council/La Jolla resident
Barbara Obrazut, La Jolla resident
Janay Kruger, University City Planning Group
Brooke Peterson, Clairemont Community Planning Group
Andrew Poat, San Diego Regional EDC
David Potter, Clairemont resident
Ann Van Leer, Land Conservation Brokerage, Inc.

Others in Attendance:
Susanne Bankhead, MJE Marketing
Kristen Byrne, MJE Marketing
Paul Jablonski, MTS
Dennis Henderson, Parsons Brinckerhoff

SANDAG Staff in Attendance:
Leslie Blanda
Greg Gastelum
Anne Steinberger
John Kirk
Jim Linthicum

Chairman Ron Roberts called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m. Mr. Roberts reviewed the agenda items for the meeting, which included making a recommendation on a preferred alternative, making a recommendation on the alternatives to bring forward into the environmental analysis, approving the Final Public Involvement Plan, and discussing the next steps for the PWG. He explained that the SANDAG Transportation Committee and Board of Directors will take action later in the month with the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Working Group’s (PWG’s) actions in mind.
When the PWG was formed, the group discussed meeting monthly until 2011, with the understanding that there may be times when it will not be necessary to meet so frequently. At this point, staff is proposing that the PWG consider moving to quarterly meetings during the environmental analysis, which is anticipated to be completed by summer 2011. Staff will gauge the willingness of the PWG members to accept that proposal. Anne Steinberger, Marketing Manager SANDAG, will poll the PWG members by e-mail after the meeting. Mr. Roberts also suggested a change to the agenda to combine agenda items #3 and #4 for the sake of efficiency.

1. SUMMARY OF MAY 5, 2010, MEETING

David Potter, Clairemont resident, made a motion to approve the May 5, 2010, meeting summary. Anette Blatt, Scripps Health, seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (This item was heard after item #4 below.)

3. MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT FINAL COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES REPORT

Leslie Blanda, SANDAG Mid-Coast Corridor Director, provided an overview of the scoping period and a summary of the scoping comments received. She also shared staff’s recommendation on alternatives to move forward into the environmental analysis.

Scoping Period
A 30-day scoping period was held for the project in May 2010. Comments from the public were received on three Light Rail Transit (LRT) alternatives, LRT 1 (combination of 1, 4, and 5), LRT 3, and LRT 6. In order to notice the public of the scoping period for the project, SANDAG:

- Distributed Notices of Preparation to 130 agencies of interest and tribal organizations;
- Notified the PWG;
- Published advertisements in general circulation and community newspapers;
- Sent a direct mail piece to 25,000 businesses/residences along the various routes; and
- Held five open house scoping meetings in locations throughout the Corridor.

Scoping Comment Analysis
There was a good response to the scoping meetings; 215 people total attended the five scoping meetings. Staff received a total of 244 comments during the scoping period, via phone, e-mail, court reporter, and comment cards at scoping meetings. There were cases where one comment received contained several different comments embedded within. Treating each of those comments individually, there were a total of 740 comments received overall. Each of the comments were logged into a database and categorized into six major categories: General Comment, Comments Related to Purpose and Need, Comments Related to Alternatives, Costs and Funding, Comments Related to Environmental Impacts Analyses, and Comments Related to Evaluation.

The most frequent comment received was a statement of opposition against LRT 3. This comment was submitted by 107 commenters, stating concerns about impacts to Rose Canyon, noise, and other community impacts.
The second most frequent comment received was a statement of support for LRT 1. There were 109 comments received in support for LRT 1. It is important to note that during scoping, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Board of Directors voted unanimously to support LRT 1.

Of the LRT alternatives, LRT 1 received the strongest support, LRT 3 has the strongest opposition due to environmental impacts to Rose Canyon, and LRT 6 performed similarly to LRT 1, but with concerns from MTS about the sharp curves and maintenance needed as a result of those curves.

Three comments were submitted stating support for BRT; however, staff concluded that the four Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives studied during scoping were less effective in meeting the goals and objectives of the project.

Four comments proposed revised alternatives. All of these revised alternatives were analyzed and none satisfied the goals and objectives of the project or were any more effective than the other alternatives under consideration.

A few comments were submitted proposing additional stations at State Route 52, Gilman Drive, and Jutland Drive. These stations were previously considered in prior environmental analysis and eliminated or were analyzed and deemed to be infeasible.

Comments were provided regarding a station at the VA Hospital, which was not previously considered. Staff is recommending that this be included and studied further in the environmental analysis. The PWG agreed to hear the staff presentations on Items 3 and 4 and then consider both recommendations in one action.

4. MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Ms. Steinberger presented the Final Public Involvement Plan for the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project. She explained that the Plan was released for public comment in May 2009 and revisions were made to the Plan based on the public input received, including input from the PWG. As a result of the public feedback, staff created a public involvement brochure on the project, made revisions to the document for clarity, and revised the stakeholders and media list for the Plan. All comments received and the responses to date have been catalogued in Appendix E. Staff is requesting a recommendation from the PWG to approve the Plan to use in the public involvement process, to take on to the Transportation Committee and the Board of Directors on July 16 and July 23 respectively.

Ms. Blanda then summarized the next steps for the Project. The staff report and recommendation will be reviewed by the Transportation Committee on July 16. SANDAG’s Transportation Committee will consider the PWG recommendation and any comments received from the Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee, and then the item will go to the Board of Directors on July 23. Should the Board adopt a Locally Approved Alternative (LPA) on July 23; staff will begin working on the Preliminary Engineering application to submit to the Federal Transit Administration in fall 2010.
Should the Board adopt LRT 1 and the No Build Alternative for review in the environmental document, the document is anticipated to be available for public review and comment in summer 2011.

Staff is recommending that the PWG:

- Reconfirm the previously adopted LPA, as refined to include direct service to UCSD and University Town Centre, by selecting LRT 1 as the LPA;
- Request that the Transportation Committee recommend to the Board of Directors approval of moving LRT 1 and the No Build Alternative forward for evaluation in the environmental document; and
- Approve the final Public Involvement Plan.

Joe LaCava, La Jolla Community Planning Association, asked for clarification of the “refinements” referenced to the LPA. Ms. Blanda explained that since the adoption of the LPA in 2003, there have been several changed conditions in the Corridor that needed further analysis, such as the wider footprint for Interstate 5. Mr. LaCava wanted confirmation that there were no refinements made to the alternative, since it was last presented to the PWG. Ms. Blanda confirmed that there were no changes in what the PWG had previously reviewed.

Evan McLaughlin, San Diego-Imperial County Labor Councils, asked for clarification of the Transportation Committee’s decision to recommend LRT 1 as opposed to LRT 6. Mr. Roberts clarified that the Transportation Committee was provided a presentation in early July, but will not make a recommendation until July 16. The PWG’s input will aid the Transportation Committee in making a recommendation.

Anette Blatt, Scripps Health, asked whether the station names were set in stone. Ms. Blanda confirmed that the station names were only used for planning purposes and are not set at this point.

Ann Van Leer, Land Conservation Brokerage, asked how SANDAG will be coordinating with existing transit riders on lost routes due to the trolley extension. Ms. Steinberger confirmed that SANDAG is working with MTS to reach out to the transit riding community about any future changes to the system. MTS is working closely with SANDAG to ensure that bus service will connect with the project once completed. Staff will ensure that the Transportation Committee and the Board of Directors are aware that transit riders are informed about the process moving forward. Paul Jablonski, MTS, confirmed that MTS has several different strategies they plan to utilize to communicate with their customers and alert them of changes in service.

Mr. Roberts noted that there was one request for public comment and suggested the PWG move to that item.

Debbie Knight, Friends of Rose Canyon, was pleased to see the elimination of LRT 3, as it posed a threat to Rose Canyon. She is still concerned with the potential impacts of LRT 1, specifically to Rose Canyon, Marian Bear Park, and lower Rose Creek. She stressed the importance of addressing the magnitude of those impacts in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/ Subsequent Environmental Impact Report and is looking forward to working with SANDAG to develop and design the project to avoid impacts.
Rob Hutsel, San Diego River Park Foundation, applauded the Public Involvement Plan and the changes made. He suggested a few corrections to the plan including correcting the name of his organization to “San Diego River Park Foundation,” adding Mission Valley to the list of stakeholders and communities for outreach, adding Mission Valley News & Views to the media list, and adding Mission Valley Preserve to the list of environmental organizations.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested that UCSD Guardian be added to the media list.

Janay Kruger, University City Planning Group, thanked SANDAG and the PWG for selecting an alternative that the community and the planning group have been waiting on for years. The concerns moving forward will be visual impacts of above grade structures, vibration, noise, the VA Hospital station, and shared UCSD/Scripps station naming. With that, Ms. Kruger made a motion that the PWG approve the staff recommendation to:

- Reconfirm the previously adopted LPA, as refined to include direct service to UCSD and University Town Centre, by selecting LRT 1 as the LPA;
- Request that the Transportation Committee recommend to the Board of Directors approval of moving LRT 1 and the No Build Alternative forward for evaluation in the environmental document; and
- Approve the final Public Involvement Plan with the changes mentioned today.

David Potter seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

5. NEXT STEPS FOR PROJECT WORKING GROUP

Ms. Steinberger will follow up with each PWG member after the meeting to determine their willingness to continue as a PWG member and holding quarterly meetings in September 2010, January 2011, and April 2011.

6. ADJOURN

Mr. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 4:13 p.m.