MID-COAST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT:  
REFINED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Introduction

The Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project is a TransNet Early Action project that will extend the Metropolitan Transit System Blue Line Trolley from Santa Fe Depot in downtown San Diego to University Towne Centre (UTC) through the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego) campus.

The review and comment period for the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) closed on July 17, 2013. More than 300 individuals, organizations, and agencies submitted comments. Based on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR and further analysis, refinements are proposed to the Build Alternative. This report presents the proposed refinements to the Build Alternative and requests that the Board approve the Refined Build Alternative as the final project evaluated in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

Discussion

The Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Refined Build Alternative Report (Attachment 1) presents the proposed Refined Build Alternative to be evaluated in the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require that the “preferred alternative” being considered in the Final SEIS be identified without options. The Build Alternative included in the Draft SEIS/SEIR included two options (discussed in more detail below) for initial consideration, which must either be included or excluded from the Build Alternative prior to evaluation of the project in the Final SEIS/SEIR. In addition, several comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR have resulted in recommended changes to the alignment, stations, or other elements of the Build Alternative.

This report presents a brief summary of the proposed refinements detailed in the attached Refined Build Alternative Report.

Recommendation

The Board of Directors is asked to approve the Refined Build Alternative as the project to be evaluated in the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report.
Draft SEIS/SEIR and Comment Period

The FTA and SANDAG recently completed the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Draft SEIS/SEIR. SANDAG serves as the lead agency for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and FTA serves as the lead agency for compliance with the NEPA.

The Draft SEIS/SEIR evaluated a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative. The Build Alternative included two options: the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center Station Option and the Genesee Avenue Design Option. The VA Medical Center Station Option includes an additional station at the VA Medical Center. The Genesee Avenue Design Option uses straddle bents instead of center columns for the aerial alignment along Genesee Avenue in University City.

The Draft SEIS/SEIR was available for a 60-day public review and comment period, which extended from May 17 through June 17, 2013. Approximately 1,420 comments were received from more than 300 individuals, organizations, and agencies. All of the comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR will receive a response in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

Several comments were received on the VA Medical Center Station Option and the Genesee Avenue Design Option that evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Approximately 45 comments expressed strong support for inclusion of the VA Medical Center Station Option into the project; no comments were received against the inclusion of this station. Approximately 10 comments were received expressing opposition to the use of straddle bents on Genesee Avenue.

In addition, several of the other comments received during the comment period have the potential to affect the alignment, stations, traction power substation locations or construction staging areas included in the Build Alternative. These comments are summarized in Section 2.2 of the Refined Build Alternative Report. Each comment with the potential to affect the Build Alternative was analyzed and a refinement to the Build Alternative is proposed where warranted by the further analysis. A detailed response to each of these comments will be provided in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

After the close of the comment period, input was received from the public concerning the Tecolote Station that will be addressed as part of the staff presentation.

Proposed Refinements to the Build Alternative

The proposed refinements to the Build Alternative are described in detail in the Refined Build Alternative Report and summarized below:

- Include the VA Medical Center Station Option
- Eliminate the Genesee Avenue Design Option
- Eliminate straddle bents from the Interstate 5 crossing south of Nobel Drive; shift the crossing slightly to the south
- Realign the viaduct from the north side of Voigt Drive to the south side of Voigt Drive
- Refine the Clairemont Drive Station design to include a bus stop; eliminate the need for pedestrian ramps from Clairemont Drive to Morena Boulevard
• Refine parking structure layout at Nobel Drive Station

• Shift UC San Diego East Station location slightly to the east

• Acquire 260 parking spaces at UTC Station from Westfield in lieu of adding parking

• Refine the design of several traction power substations, eliminate two substations, and shift location of several other substations

• Eliminate four construction staging areas and add two new staging areas

• Eliminate two retaining walls and add two bridges north of La Jolla Colony Drive near the La Paz condominiums

A map of the proposed Refined Build Alternative is provided on pages 31-32 of Attachment 1.

Next Steps

Revisions to the project engineering plan set and environmental analyses will be prepared to support the Refined Build Alternative in the Final SEIS/SEIR document. A response to each comment submission will be included in the Final SEIS/SEIR. The Final SEIS/SEIR will be prepared during late 2013 and early 2014. Publication of the Notice of Availability, after review and approval by FTA, is anticipated in mid-2014. Certification and approval of the project and its environmental document by the Board of Directors would be after the 30-day review period for the Final SEIS/SEIR. FTA project approval with a Record of Decision is expected in fall 2014.

GARY L. GALLEGOS
Executive Director

Attachment: 1. Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Refined Build Alternative Report

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Refined Build Alternative Report

November 6, 2013

Prepared by

SANDAG
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### Abbreviations

The following acronyms, initialisms, and short forms are used in this report.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOA</td>
<td>Homeowners Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
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<td>LOSSAN</td>
<td>Los Angeles—San Diego—San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency</td>
</tr>
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<td>LRT</td>
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<td>MTS</td>
<td>Metropolitan Transit System</td>
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<td>OTTC</td>
<td>Old Town Transit Center</td>
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) recently completed the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR). The Draft SEIS/SEIR was available for review and comment from May 17, 2013 through July 17, 2013. Approximately 1,420 comments were received during the comment period from more than 300 individuals, organizations, and agencies.

The Draft SEIS/SEIR evaluated a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative. The Build Alternative included two options for consideration. One option, the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center Station Option, evaluated an additional station at the VA Medical Center, and the other option, the Genesee Avenue Design Option, proposed straddle bents instead of center columns for the aerial alignment along Genesee Avenue in University City.

Federal regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 771) and FTA procedures for environmental review of transit projects require the Final SEIS/SEIR to identify the “preferred alternative” for evaluation in the environmental document. The regulations do not allow consideration of “options” in the Final SEIS/SEIR. Thus, a decision is required on the options evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. The Final SEIS/SEIR also is required to discuss all substantive comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR and responses to the comments.

Several of the comments received during the comment period warrant consideration prior to finalizing the Build Alternative for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR due to their potential to affect the alignment, stations, or other elements of the Build Alternative. Comments also were received in support of, or in opposition to, the VA Medical Center Station Option and the Genesee Avenue Design Option. Consideration of these comments, coordination with agencies and stakeholders, and the evaluation of the Build Alternative and options in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, provides the basis for refinements to the Build Alternative, or Refined Build Alternative, proposed for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

This report provides a summary of the Draft SEIS/SEIR options and the comments related to proposed project refinements, as well as a description of the proposed refinements to the Build Alternative. The report concludes with a description of the proposed Refined Build Alternative for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR.
2.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFINED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

This chapter describes the development of the Refined Build Alternative proposed for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR. Refinements are proposed to the Build Alternative evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Refinements are based on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, review of analysis in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, coordination with agencies and stakeholders, and further engineering study.

2.1 Review and Comment Period on Draft SEIS/SEIR

The Draft SEIS/SEIR was made available for a 60-day public review and comment period from May 17, 2013 through July 17, 2013. The document was distributed to all interested and concerned parties, including public agencies, elected officials, community groups and organizations, businesses, and individuals. The Draft SEIS/SEIR document and technical reports also were made available for review at area libraries and SANDAG offices, as well as posted on the website for the project (www.sandag.org/midcoast). Notices of the availability of the Draft SEIS/SEIR for review were published in five newspapers; advertisements were published in 17 local newspapers; press releases were distributed; and postcards were mailed to 37,000 residences and businesses within one-quarter mile of the project alignment.

Four public meetings and one public hearing were held during the 60-day comment period. More than 350 people attended the public meetings. Comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR were submitted via mail, e-mail, voice mail, fax, and at each meeting via comment cards or by speaking to a court reporter. Oral comments also were provided by 20 people during the public hearing held before the SANDAG Transportation Committee on June 21, 2013.

In total, 309 comment submissions (e.g., comment cards, e-mails, and letters) were received containing 1,417 individual comments. Table 2-1 lists the number of submissions and comments received by affiliation.

### Table 2-1. Number of Submissions and Comments by Affiliation

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<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Agency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Agency</td>
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<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Agency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Official</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups/Organizations</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>402</td>
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<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>309</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,417</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Note: The term “submission” refers to a comment card, e-mail, or letter containing comments. The term “comments” refers to individual comments within a submission.
The comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR addressed a variety of topics. Some included general statements of support or opposition to the project, or the options evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Other comments offered suggestions on how to improve the project through refinements, as well as requests for changes, clarification, and new or additional analysis and mitigation to the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Additionally, other comments expressed concern over environmental impacts and funding/cost-effectiveness issues in regard to the project.

The dominant themes of comments received related to the following:

- Project alternatives or features (e.g., alignment, stations, traction power substations (TPSSs), construction staging areas)
- Impacts related to biological resources, noise, and visual changes
- Impacts related to construction
- Station area circulation
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to stations
- Parking

All of the comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR will be responded to in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

### 2.2 Comments on the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR

The comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR were reviewed and those with the potential to result in refinements to the Build Alternative were identified. These comments can be categorized as follows:

- Comments on station locations and impacts
- Comments on alignment location and impacts
- Comments on TPSS locations and impacts
- Comments on construction staging areas and temporary construction easements and impacts

In addition to comments on project features and impacts, comments on the Build Alternative options evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR were reviewed, specifically those in support of, or in opposition to, the VA Medical Center Station Option and the Genesee Avenue Design Option.

#### 2.2.1 Comments on the VA Medical Center Station Option and Genesee Avenue Design Option

Approximately 45 comments expressed strong support for inclusion of the VA Medical Center Station Option into the project; no comments were received against the inclusion of this station. The support for this station was consistent with the support expressed for the station in 2010 during scoping for the Draft SEIS/SEIR.
Approximately 10 comments were received expressing opposition to the use of straddle bents on Genesee Avenue. The Genesee Avenue Design Option was identified as being of particular concern because of its visual, community character, and vibration impacts.

**2.2.2 Comments on Station Locations and Impacts**

Comments related to station locations and impacts were focused primarily on the Tecolote Road, Clairemont Drive, Balboa Avenue, Nobel Drive, and UTC Transit Center Stations and associated park-and-ride facilities.

Property owners and businesses provided the majority of the comments on the Tecolote Road Station, most of which related to the acquisition of property for station parking, the displacement of one business (i.e., Armstrong Garden Center), and impacts to adjacent businesses. The comments suggested eliminating the station entirely, reconfiguring the station site, or replacing surface parking with a parking structure to avoid or reduce impacts to businesses.

Comments on the Clairemont Drive Station related primarily to the configuration of the station parking lot and the potential for it to limit or preclude future development opportunities. The comments also noted that the on-street bus stops on Clairemont Drive would be inconvenient for passengers transferring to and from the Trolley.

Residents in the neighborhood adjacent to the Balboa Avenue Station provided comments, primarily related to the location of the station. The station location proposed in the Draft SEIS/SEIR is on city-owned property south of Balboa Avenue in between the railroad right-way and Morena Boulevard. The comments received suggested relocation of this station to the area north of Balboa Avenue at the City Maintenance Yard/Rose Canyon Municipal Operations Lot to avoid or reduce traffic, parking, and other environmental impacts (e.g., noise, crime, and visual) to the adjacent neighborhood. Residents also commented that the station location proposed in the Draft SEIS/SEIR was in a single-family residential area and suggested it would be more appropriate to relocate the station and accompanying bus transfer center to a more commercial area.

Representatives of the La Jolla Village Square shopping center provided comments on the Nobel Drive Station, which would be located on the west side of I-5 within the shopping center parking lot. Most of these comments related to the configuration of the proposed parking structure for the station and construction impacts, as well as access and circulation within the parking lot. The comments suggested increasing the size of the parking structure to include additional transit and commercial parking.

Representatives from the Westfield University Towne Centre (UTC) shopping center and Regency Centers (owner of the Costa Verde shopping center) expressed concerns related to the UTC Transit Center Station, which would be located in the center of Genesee Avenue at Esplanade Court/UTC Driveway, and the park-and-ride facility located within the shopping center parking lot. Westfield UTC and Regency Centers also expressed concerns with the timing of construction of the proposed Westfield UTC parking structure.
2.2.3 Comments on Alignment Location and Impacts

Comments related to the location and impacts of the alignment were focused primarily on the areas where the alignment would extend along the Interstate (I-) 5 corridor, Voigt Drive, and Genesee Avenue.

Several individuals and businesses commented on the alignment north of State Route (SR) 52, along the I-5 corridor north to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) campus. Comments from the Shops at La Jolla Village requested an evaluation of alternatives to avoid blocking views of the shopping center’s signage and suggested shifting the alignment to the east or moving the alignment underground to minimize visual and construction impacts to the shopping center. Comments from the Sheraton Hotel expressed similar concerns and requested that the alignment be shifted to the east.

Both UCSD and Scripps Memorial Hospital provided comments that could affect the alignment along Voigt Drive from north of the UCSD West Station to the UCSD East Station. Comments from UCSD requested that the Voigt Drive and Campus Point Drive improvements proposed as part of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) I-5 North Coast Corridor Project be constructed at the same time as the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project. Comments from Scripps Memorial Hospital identified the location of sensitive medical equipment that could be susceptible to vibration and electromagnetic interference in the southwest corner of the XiMED building on the south side of the hospital campus, which is closest to the alignment on Voigt Drive. The aerial structure would be as close as 37 feet from the corner of the building. Scripps Memorial Hospital requested an analysis of the impacts and feasibility of shifting the alignment to the south away from the XiMED building.

Several individuals provided comments requesting that the project be modified to terminate at the Balboa Avenue Station or the VA Medical Center Station.

2.2.4 Comments on Traction Power Substation Locations

Comments on TPSS locations and associated noise and visual impacts under the Build Alternative focused on the Clairemont Drive Station, south of La Jolla Colony Drive, next to Charmant Drive and I-5, and on Genesee Avenue. Comments on the TPSS proposed at the Clairemont Drive Station stated that the TPSS could affect the potential for future development on the site.

Several commenters, including the University City Planning Group, requested the relocation of the TPSSs south of La Jolla Colony Drive and adjacent to Charmant Drive. The visibility of the La Jolla Colony Drive TPSS from Rose Canyon Open Space Park was expressed as a concern, as was noise impacts for users and wildlife within the park. The comments received on the TPSS on Charmant Drive noted the visual impact to the community and requested that the TPSS be relocated to the La Jolla Village Square shopping center. A City of San Diego councilmember submitted comments regarding the visual impacts of the proposed TPSSs on Genesee Avenue and suggested they be relocated.
General comments on impacts of TPSSs included statements that the noise analysis did not adequately examine the humming noise that can be an irritant to wildlife and people, and that the visual analysis did not consider mitigation for the visual impacts. Screening or undergrounding all TPSSs to reduce visual and noise impacts was suggested.

2.2.5 Comments on Construction Staging Areas and Construction Easements

Several property owners along the alignment expressed concerns with proposed staging areas. Comments from the Shops at La Jolla Village stated that the construction staging area/temporary construction easements on its property would affect access to loading docks. Comments from the Westfield UTC shopping center expressed concerns that the proposed construction staging area at the shopping center would result in parking and traffic impacts to the shopping center, particularly during the holiday season. The comments from Regency Centers/Costa Verde shopping center and Costa Verde Hotel (Monte Verde and La Jolla Canyon Gardens properties) stated that the construction staging area proposed on the Monte Verde property would conflict with the planned site for two condominium towers and would impact parking for shopping center tenants.

In addition, comments were received from the University City Planning Group expressing concerns related to temporary construction easements at Scripps Memorial Hospital and temporary loss of hospital parking.

2.3 Refinements to the Build Alternative

Refinements are proposed to the Build Alternative based on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, additional analysis of impacts identified in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, and coordination with agencies and stakeholders. The resulting proposed Refined Build Alternative would be evaluated in the Final SEIS/SEIR. The proposed refinements include the addition of the VA Medical Center Station; refinements to the light rail transit (LRT) alignment, stations, TPSSs, and construction staging areas; and further engineering refinements. The Genesee Avenue Design Option is proposed to be eliminated from further consideration. The following sections summarize the refinements to the Build Alternative.

2.3.1 Addition of VA Medical Center Station Option

The option for an additional station at the VA Medical Center was evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, including comments from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, strongly support the addition of the VA Medical Center Station. No comments were received in opposition to the station. The Draft SEIS/SEIR evaluation concluded that the addition of the VA Medical Center Station would improve access to the UCSD West Campus as well as to the VA Medical Center and would produce approximately 1,600 boardings daily. No adverse or significant environmental impacts were identified for the VA Medical Center Station in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Based on the strong support for the station and the results of the evaluation, it is proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.
2.3.2 Elimination of Genesee Avenue Design Option

The Build Alternative evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR provided for center columns supporting the aerial structure along Genesee Avenue with roadway widening where necessary to accommodate the center columns. To reduce right-of-way acquisitions associated with the center column design, the Genesee Avenue Design Option was developed, which used straddle bents in place of some center columns to support the aerial structure and stations on Genesee Avenue west of Regents Road.

The evaluation of impacts of the Genesee Avenue Design Option in the Draft SEIS/SEIR found that the option would result in significant and unavoidable visual impacts along Genesee Avenue and adversely affect the character of the community. Although the amount of right-of-way acquisitions would decrease slightly under the Genesee Avenue Design Option, the number of acquisitions would be the same and temporary construction easements would be greater than for the Build Alternative.

Comments received from property owners along Genesee Avenue and the community expressed opposition to the Genesee Avenue Design Option. Based on the results of the evaluation and the opposition expressed, the Genesee Avenue Design Option is proposed to be excluded from the Refined Build Alternative evaluated in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

2.3.3 Refinements to LRT Alignment

The proposed refinements to the LRT alignment include changes to the location and design of the crossing of I-5 south of Nobel Drive and a shift in the Voigt Drive alignment in the vicinity of Scripps Memorial Hospital.

2.3.3.1 I-5 Crossing South of Nobel Drive

Under the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, the LRT alignment would cross I-5 approximately 1,500 feet south of Nobel Drive. In the Draft SEIS/SEIR Plan Set, two straddle bents were included to support the aerial structure over the northbound and southbound lanes on I-5.

A refinement to the Build Alternative was developed that improves visual aesthetics through the elimination of the straddle bents. The refinements to the I-5 crossing south of Nobel Drive are shown in Figure 2-1. The refinement would relocate the crossing to the south by approximately 360 feet. Although the Draft SEIS/SEIR did not identify any visual impacts at the crossing location, it did identify that the straddle bents associated with the aerial structure over I-5 would not be visually consistent with the aesthetics and scale of the built environment at this location and would contrast with the setting. Several comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR expressed opposition to the use of straddle bents along the alignment. The elimination of the straddle bents at the I-5 crossing would improve aesthetics and is proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

2.3.3.2 Voigt Drive Alignment

Under the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, the LRT alignment in the vicinity of Scripps Memorial Hospital would be located on the north side of Voigt Drive. Comments from Scripps Memorial Hospital on the Draft SEIS/SEIR identified the location of sensitive medical equipment that could be susceptible to vibration and electromagnetic
Figure 2-1. Refinements to I-5 Crossing South of Nobel Drive

Source: SANDAG, 2013
interference in the XiMED building located on the south side of the hospital campus, which is closest to the alignment. The comments requested that an alignment south of Voigt Drive, away from the XiMED medical office building, be considered and evaluated.

Further analysis of electromagnetic field impacts on the XiMED building determined that the project could affect the equipment located in the XiMED building even with the proposed mitigation at the source evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Based on these findings and the comments from Scripps Memorial Hospital, a refinement to the Build Alternative was developed that would shift the LRT alignment to the south side of Voigt Drive. With the shift, the project-related electromagnetic interference at the XI MED building would be substantially reduced. The refinement to the Voigt Drive alignment is shown in Figure 2-2. The refinement was reviewed with UCSD and Scripps Memorial Hospital, and is proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

**Figure 2-2. Refinements to Voigt Drive Alignment**
2.3.4 Refinements to Stations

The refinements to stations in the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR include changes to the configuration of the Clairemont Drive Station park-and-ride lot and removal of the pedestrian ramps, reconfiguration of the parking structure at the Nobel Drive Station, relocation of the UCSD East Station to accommodate the change in alignment on Voigt Drive, and acquisition of parking spaces at the UTC Transit Center instead of construction of a parking deck for transit patrons. The refinements to these stations are described in the following section, and are all proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

The stations at Tecolote Road, Balboa Avenue, UCSD West, and Executive Drive as defined in the Draft SEIS/SEIR are proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative without substantial changes. No comments were received that would affect the UCSD West Station or the Executive Drive Station.

2.3.4.1 Tecolote Road Station
Although comments were received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR to reconfigure or eliminate the Tecolote Road Station to avoid the acquisition of Armstrong Garden Center nursery, it is proposed to continue with the design as evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Further study in response to the comments determined that elimination of the station would reduce the project’s transit ridership and increase parking demands at the Old Town Transit Center (OTTC) and Clairemont Drive Stations. It also was determined that alternative site designs to avoid the acquisition of the nursery would shift the impact to other adjacent businesses and reduce the visibility and access to the station. In addition, it was determined that the replacement of the proposed surface parking with a parking structure would still require acquisition of Armstrong Garden Center and also would increase the cost of the project.

2.3.4.2 Balboa Avenue Station
Although many comments were received regarding the Balboa Avenue Station, it is proposed to continue with the design as evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Many comments requested that the Balboa Avenue Station be relocated to the City of San Diego Maintenance Yard to the north side of Balboa Avenue or be eliminated entirely. Although the City Maintenance Yard site could accommodate the station and provide sufficient space to meet the forecasted station parking demand, relocation of the station would reduce transit ridership because of the reduced accessibility of the station for transit passengers driving to the station from the south, east, and west, as well as the increase in out-of-direction travel for buses serving the station. The station provides an important connection for bus routes serving nearby communities, and elimination of the station would substantially affect ridership.

2.3.4.3 Clairemont Drive Station
Under the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, bus transfers at the Clairemont Drive Station would be accommodated by on-street bus stops on Clairemont Drive east of Morena Boulevard. Pedestrian ramps were provided for access to the station from Clairemont Drive to Morena Boulevard. Comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR noted that the on-street bus stops on Clairemont Drive would be inconvenient for passengers transferring to and from the Trolley.
A refinement to the Clairemont Drive Station was developed that provides for bus transfers within the Clairemont Drive Station parking lot. The relocation of the bus transfer location eliminates the need for the pedestrian ramps from Clairemont Drive to Morena Boulevard. Transit passengers transferring between bus and the Trolley would cross Morena Boulevard at the existing signalized crosswalk at Ingulf Street located at the south end of the station platform. Figure 2-3 illustrates the layout of the Clairemont Drive Station proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

Figure 2-3. Refined Clairemont Drive Station

2.3.4.4 Nobel Drive Station

Under the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, the Nobel Drive Station provided for a 600-space joint-use parking structure to be constructed at the La Jolla Village Square shopping center. The structure would include 260 transit parking spaces as well as 340 replacement parking spaces for the surface parking spaces lost as a result of constructing the station and parking structure at the shopping center.
Comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR were received from the property owner opposing the design of the proposed parking structure. Coordination with the property owner and further engineering refinements resulted in a change in the layout of the parking structure, which would include replacement parking spaces and 260 transit parking spaces. Figure 2-4 illustrates the layout of the Nobel Drive Station proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

![Figure 2-4. Refined Nobel Drive Station](image)

Source: SANDAG, 2013

### 2.3.4.5 UCSD East Station

A refinement to the location of the UCSD East Station was necessary to accommodate the shift in the LRT alignment to the UCSD campus on the south side of Voigt Drive. With the shift in the LRT alignment, the station has been relocated to the east to accommodate the proposed alignment and avoid conflict with the planned future UCSD track and field facility. The station would span the planned future location of the realigned Campus Point Drive. Figure 2-5 illustrates the layout and location of the UCSD East Station proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

### 2.3.4.6 UTC Transit Center

The UTC Transit Center platform would be located in the center of Genesee Avenue, south of Esplanade Court/UTC Driveway. Under the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, the station was proposed to include 260 transit parking spaces in a joint-use parking structure at the Westfield UTC shopping center. The parking structure would be constructed by
Westfield as part of the planned expansion of the shopping center. The transit parking spaces would be constructed as an additional level on the parking structure.

Comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR indicated concerns regarding the timing of the parking structure construction by Westfield and commitment of funds by SANDAG. Design of the shopping center parking structure is currently underway, with construction scheduled to begin in mid-2014, prior to the scheduled date of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the project. Because SANDAG cannot commit funds for construction prior to the ROD, the 260 transit parking spaces will be provided by acquisition of parking spaces above the minimum site requirements from the UTC shopping center. Figure 2-6 illustrates the layout of the UTC Transit Center Station proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.
2.3.5 Refinements to Traction Power Substations

Electricity to power the Trolley system extension will be provided by TPSSs located at grade along the LRT alignment. The Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR was anticipated to require 18 TPSSs, including 3 replacement substations on existing sites between Santa Fe Depot and the OTTC and 15 new substations. Refinements are proposed to the number and location of the TPSSs based on the results of a load flow analysis. Figure 2-7 shows the location of the refinements proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

The load flow analysis identified a requirement for 16 TPSSs, 2 fewer than the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. The TPSSs proposed at the OTTC and on Anna Street north of the San Diego River were determined to be unnecessary based on the results of the load flow analysis. Other proposed refinements to the TPSS locations include the following:

- Relocation of the substation at the Wright Street Yard to the south within the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) property (Inset 1 in Figure 2-7)
- Relocation of the substation at Baker Street to the Clairemont Drive Station parking lot (Inset 2 in Figure 2-7)
- Relocation of the substation with the City Yard site north of Balboa Avenue (Inset 3 in Figure 2-7)
Figure 2-7. Refinements to Traction Power Substations

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Figure 2-7. Refinements to Traction Power Substations (continued)

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Figure 2-7. Refinements to Traction Power Substations (continued)

Source: SANDAG, 2013
• Relocation of the substation on Charmant Drive to the west side of I-5 within the Caltrans right-of-way at the south end of the La Jolla Village Square shopping center property (Inset 4 in Figure 2-7)

• Relocation of the substation on Voigt Drive from north of the UCSD baseball field to east of I-5 and south of Voigt Drive (Inset 5 in Figure 2-7)

• Relocation of the substation at Genesee Avenue and La Jolla Village Drive to the east of Genesee Avenue to the San Diego Gas & Electric substation facility on Fez Street (Inset 6 in Figure 2-7)

2.3.6 Refinements to Construction Staging Areas

The Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR included 15 construction staging areas. Some of these were located at future park-and-ride lots, station areas, and existing parking lots. Vacant areas near the project alignment also were identified as staging areas. Refinements were made to the number and location of construction staging areas based on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR or due to proposed refinements to the LRT alignment. Four construction staging areas are proposed for elimination based on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR:

• Site on Charmant Drive on the east side of I-5
• Site at the parking lot of Scripps Memorial Hospital located east of I-5 and north of Voigt Drive
• Site on the Monte Verde property at La Jolla Village Drive and Genesee Avenue
• Site on the UTC Westfield property

To address the proposed shift in the alignment from the north to the south side of Voigt Drive, an additional construction staging site has been identified. This site is on the UCSD parking lot located east of I-5 and south of Voigt Drive where the new substation would be located. All of the other sites under the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR are proposed to be retained under the Refined Build Alternative for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR. The refinements to the construction staging areas proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative are shown by location in Figure 2-8.

2.3.7 Other Engineering Refinements

Other proposed engineering refinements, as a result of further engineering studies, include changes in retaining walls and bridges. The proposed refinements to the LRT alignment required review of the design of retaining walls. Retaining wall designs were refined based on the adjustments to the horizontal and vertical alignment changes. The most notable change is the elimination of two retaining walls and the addition of two bridges north of La Jolla Colony Drive near the La Paz condominiums. The refinements to these retaining walls and the addition of two bridges are proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.
Figure 2-8. Refinements to Construction Staging Areas

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Figure 2-8. Refinements to Construction Staging Areas (continued)

Source: SANDAG, 2013
3.0  SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF REFINED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

This chapter presents a summary description of the proposed Refined Build Alternative for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR. The proposed alternative is a refinement of the Build Alternative evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. It includes the addition of the station at the VA Medical Center and the refinements to alignment, stations, and TPSSs developed in response to comments, coordination with agencies and stakeholders, and further engineering refinements.

The proposed Refined Build Alternative would extend the Trolley Blue Line from Santa Fe Depot in Downtown San Diego to the UTC Transit Center in University City. The project would use the existing Trolley tracks for approximately 3.5 miles, from the Santa Fe Depot to north of the OTTC and south of the San Diego River. The Trolley Blue Line trains would share the existing tracks with the Trolley Green Line trains. The project also would include construction of 10.9 miles of new double track that would extend from south of the San Diego River to the terminus at the UTC Transit Center.

The new extension would follow the Los Angeles—San Diego—San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) tracks within existing MTS and City of San Diego right-of-way from the Santa Fe Depot to north of the I-5/SR 52 interchange. The alignment would then leave the LOSSAN right-of-way and parallel the east side of the I-5 corridor traveling north partially within Caltrans right-of-way and partially on private property. South of Nobel Drive, the alignment would transition to an aerial structure and cross over to the west side of I-5. From Nobel Drive, the alignment would continue north to the UCSD West Campus, cross back over to the east side of I-5 and along the south side of Voigt Drive to Genesee Avenue, and continue south in the median of Genesee Avenue to the UTC Transit Center.

The proposed Refined Build Alternative would include 9 new stations (4 at grade and 5 elevated); 5 park-and-ride facilities with 1,070 parking spaces; 14 new and 2 upgraded TPSSs; and 36 new low-floor LRT vehicles. No new maintenance facilities are needed. New stations would be located at Tecolote Road, Clairemont Drive, Balboa Avenue, Nobel Drive, the VA Medical Center, UCSD West, UCSD East, Executive Drive, and the UTC Transit Center. Figure 3-1 shows the project alignment and station locations under the proposed Refined Build Alternative, and Figure 3-2 shows the plan and profile along with locations of stations and TPSSs.

The operating plan for proposed Refined Build Alternative is the same as described for the Build Alternative in Chapter 2.0 of the Draft SEIS/SEIR. With the extension of the Trolley Blue Line, continuous service would be provided from the San Ysidro Transit Center at the U.S.–Mexico international border to University City. The service would be provided every 7.5 minutes during peak and off-peak periods in 2030.
Figure 3-1. Proposed Refined Build Alternative

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Figure 3-2. Conceptual Plan and Profile of Proposed Refined Build Alternative

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Figure 3-2. Conceptual Plan and Profile of (continued)