



8.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH, AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This chapter describes how the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) have engaged agencies and the public in the advancement of the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project and preparation of this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR). While outreach began in 1990 with the original Notice of Intent (NOI) and Notice of Preparation (NOP), this chapter covers the consultation and coordination that occurred leading into California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping through the publication of this Final SEIS/SEIR and Record of Decision. Previous agency and public outreach is described in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report* (Metropolitan Transit Development Board [MTDB], 1995a); the *Final Environmental Impact Report for the Mid-Coast Corridor* (MTDB, 1995b); and the *Mid-Coast Corridor Project Balboa Extension and Nobel Drive Coaster Station Final Environmental Impact Statement* (MTDB, 2001).

The project's public outreach and involvement activities communicate project information while providing opportunities for input during the decision-making process and ensuring public awareness of opportunities to review and comment on the environmental document. Project outreach has included coordination with the public, as well as stakeholders and government and resource agencies.

This chapter has been revised to present the additional coordination that has occurred since completion of the Draft SEIS/SEIR (refer to Section 8.8). The Draft SEIS/SEIR was circulated for a 60-day review and comment period from May 17 through July 17, 2013. Comments received during this period are summarized in Section 8.6 and in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final Refined Build Alternative Report* (SANDAG, 2014dd). This chapter has also been revised to summarize comments received on the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/ Supplement to the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report* (Supplement) (SANDAG, 2014ee), which was circulated for a 45-day review and comment period from July 18 through September 2, 2014. Comments received during this period are summarized in Section 8.7. All comments received during the review and comment periods for the Draft SEIS/SEIR and the Supplement and responses to those comments are provided in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final SEIS/SEIR Volume 3: Comments and Responses*.

8.1 Regulatory Context

The public outreach program described in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Public Involvement Plan* (SANDAG, 2010g), was developed in compliance with the requirements of federal and state statutes addressing public involvement for transportation projects, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), CEQA, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 United States Code 2000d et seq.). Additionally, the program complies with government outreach policies and guidelines, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/FTA Interim Policy on Public Involvement (1995), Presidential Executive Order 12898 of 1994, and the City of San Diego Land



Development Code, Chapter 12, Article 8. To meet the requirements of NEPA, CEQA, and Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), SANDAG has prepared and followed the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Agency Coordination Plan* (SANDAG, 2011d). Per Section 139(g)(1) of SAFETEA-LU, the agency coordination requirements apply to all U.S. Department of Transportation Environmental Impact Statement documents for which the NOI was published in the *Federal Register* after August 10, 2005. Although the original NOI was published in 1990, a second NOI for the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project was published in the *Federal Register* on July 19, 2011, and is included in Appendix B of this Final SEIS/SEIR.

8.2 Public and Agency Outreach Prior to Scoping

Prior to formal scoping for the Draft SEIS/SEIR, SANDAG prepared the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Public Involvement Plan* (SANDAG, 2010g) to guide outreach efforts through the project development process. This plan was updated in 2011 prior to the public comment period for the Draft SEIS/SEIR. The plan identified stakeholder groups affected by and interested in the project, highlighted key project communication information, and outlined strategies and tactics to foster broad public involvement. In addition, these efforts included preparation and regular updating of a project stakeholder database.

During the phase prior to formal scoping of the project, SANDAG undertook an analysis of changed conditions in the Mid-Coast Corridor and re-evaluated transit alternatives for the project based on changed conditions since the original environmental documentation for the project was completed. Public and agency outreach efforts were conducted in support of this effort in the period extending from November 2008 through spring of 2010. The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report* (SANDAG, 2010e) describes in detail the public and agency outreach conducted in this phase of the project prior to CEQA scoping, and these efforts are briefly summarized below. The purpose of early outreach efforts during this study period was both to inform and obtain input from the public and agencies about the project, its status, and the upcoming CEQA scoping.

8.2.1 Overview of Outreach Activities

SANDAG reached out to the following stakeholders during the pre-scoping phase:

- San Diego Mayor and City Council members
- Affected agencies (City of San Diego, California Department of Transportation [Caltrans], and the University of California, San Diego [UCSD])
- Independent Taxpayers Oversight Committee
- Community planning groups in the Mid-Coast Corridor
- Property owners
- Employers
- The accessibility community



- Minority groups
- Environmental organizations
- Transportation advocates
- Business groups

As part of stakeholder outreach and involvement activities, SANDAG also:

- Conducted stakeholder briefings
- Participated in community events
- Presented to interested organizations, including community and civic groups, employers in the corridor, minority and accessibility organizations, and environmental organizations
- Attended and provided status reports to interested stakeholders and community organizations
- Produced regular project e-newsletters starting in October 2009
- Produced and distributed the project fact sheet
- Maintained and promoted the project Web site (<http://www.sandag.org/midcoast>)

From initiating the public involvement program in November 2008 to the beginning of the CEQA scoping period in May 2010, SANDAG conducted key government agency and staff outreach activities, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Regular updates to the SANDAG Transportation Committee and the SANDAG Board of Directors
- Presentations to the Independent Taxpayers Oversight Committee
- Briefings to elected officials and their staff

8.2.2 Project Working Group

SANDAG formed the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Working Group (Project Working Group) to provide input on the following:

- The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Public Involvement Plan* (SANDAG, 2010g)
- The project purpose and need statement
- The alternatives to be considered for analysis
- The Draft SEIS/SEIR
- This Final SEIS/SEIR



San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts serves as chair of the Project Working Group, and members include representatives from community planning groups, environmental organizations, employers, students, accessibility advocates, and others (Table 8-1). The Project Working Group held seven meetings prior to CEQA scoping.

Table 8-1. Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Working Group

CHAIRMAN Ron Roberts, Supervisor County of San Diego	VICE CHAIRMAN Bob Emery Retired Metropolitan Transit System Board Member and Poway City Council Member
MEMBERS	
Daniel Allen La Jolla resident	Rob Hutsel San Diego River Park Foundation
Anette Blatt Scripps Health	Janay Kruger University Community Planning Group
Joe LaCava La Jolla Community Planning Group	John Alderson Westfield LLC
Vacant SANDAG Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee	Evan McLaughlin La Jolla resident
Brian Gregory, Asst. Vice Chancellor UCSD	Vacant San Diego Convention Center
Debra Gutzmer CBRE, Inc.	Barbara Obrzut La Jolla resident
Chanelle Hawken San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce	Jeff Barfield Clairemont Community Planning Group
Ann Van Leer Land Conservation Brokerage, Inc.	David Potter Clairemont resident
Mark Marcus La Jolla Country Day School	Ian Foster Clairemont resident

Source: SANDAG, 2014

Notes: Since the formation of the Project Working Group, some original members have stepped down from participating on the committee. Replacement members have been found. This list is current as of September 2014.

SANDAG = San Diego Association of Governments; UCSD = University of California, San Diego

8.3 Scoping

During April 2010 and July 2011, SANDAG conducted CEQA and NEPA scoping. This section describes the scoping activities and summarizes the comments received during each scoping period. The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project California Environmental Quality Act Scoping Summary Report* (SANDAG, 2010f) and the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Report* (SANDAG, 2011b) provide additional information on the respective scoping processes.

8.3.1 California Environmental Quality Act Scoping

This section describes the scoping notice process, scoping meetings, and key public and agency comments received during CEQA scoping. The purpose of CEQA scoping was to initiate early consultation with Trustee and Responsible Agencies, public agencies that have jurisdiction by law, and the public, regarding scope and content, including the



range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects that were analyzed in the Draft SEIS/SEIR.

8.3.1.1 Scoping Notices

On April 28, 2010, SANDAG issued a NOP for a SEIR (see Appendix B). NOP packages were mailed to 120 organizations, including 22 federal agencies, 17 Native American tribes, 41 state agencies, 11 regional agencies, and 29 local agencies. In addition, the NOP was posted by the State Clearinghouse on April 28, 2010, and the San Diego County Office of the County Clerk on May 5, 2010.

Table 8-2 lists the newspapers used to publish the NOP notices, which provided information on the five scoping meetings and how to submit written comments. Table 8-3 lists the 20 libraries in which SANDAG posted meeting notices.

Table 8-2. Publications Used for Public Notices

Publication	Circulation	Publication	Circulation
<i>Asian Journal</i>	35,000	<i>San Diego Downtown News</i>	18,500
<i>Beach & Bay Press</i>	18,500	<i>San Diego Union-Tribune</i>	317,855
<i>Clairemont Community News</i>	23,000	<i>Star News</i>	33,500
<i>El Latino</i>	80,500	<i>UCSD Guardian</i>	11,000
<i>La Jolla Village News</i>	18,500	<i>Voice & Viewpoint</i>	25,000
<i>North County Times</i>	85,790		

Source: SANDAG, 2012

Table 8-3. Public Libraries Receiving Public Notices

Balboa Branch Library	Mission Valley Branch Library	San Diego County Public Law Library
City of San Diego Central Library	North Clairemont Branch Library	Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library
Clairemont Branch Library	North Park Branch Library	University Community Branch Library
Kensington-Normal Heights Branch Library	North University Community Branch Library	University Heights Branch Library
La Jolla/Riford Branch Library	Ocean Beach Branch Library	UCSD Geisel Library
Linda Vista Branch Library	Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library	University of San Diego Copley Library
Mission Hills Branch Library	Point Loma/Hervey Branch Library	

Source: SANDAG, 2012
UCSD = University of California, San Diego

SANDAG also sent direct mail postcards announcing the scoping meetings to 24,959 residents and businesses located within one-half mile of the project alignments being considered.



8.3.1.2 Scoping Meetings

Subsequent to the notices, SANDAG hosted five public scoping meetings in buildings that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and served by public transit (Table 8-4). SANDAG used an open-house format with display board stations featuring various topics. SANDAG staff and members of the technical team knowledgeable in each topic area were present at these stations. The stations addressed the following topics:

- Project and process overview
- Draft comparative evaluation of alternatives
- Alternatives for scoping
- Public involvement
- Comments

Table 8-4. CEQA Public Scoping Meetings

Meeting Time/Date	Community Location	Target Audience
Wednesday, May 5, 2010 4–7 p.m.	Downtown San Diego (SANDAG)	Agencies and General Public
Tuesday, May 11, 2010 3–6 p.m.	University of California, San Diego	General Public
Wednesday, May 12, 2010 4–7 p.m.	Clairemont	General Public
Wednesday, May 12, 2010 4–7 p.m.	University Community	General Public
Tuesday, May 25, 2010 4–7 p.m.	Old Town	General Public

Source: SANDAG, 2012

SANDAG made bilingual English/Spanish materials available at all scoping meetings, along with a Spanish interpreter who helped Spanish-speaking participants understand project information and submit comments.

8.3.1.3 Summary of California Environmental Quality Act Scoping Comments

The 30-day comment period began on May 3, 2010, and closed on June 1, 2010. SANDAG continued accepting comments for one week after the comment period closed to account for any comments that were sent via U.S. mail. Sixty-eight individuals provided verbal and written comments during the five public scoping meetings. SANDAG also accepted e-mail, letters, and telephone communications during the scoping period. Various groups, including agencies, community organizations, elected officials, and members of the general public, submitted comments.

In all, SANDAG received 244 comment submissions that included more than 700 individual comments. The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project California Environmental Quality Act Scoping Summary Report* (SANDAG, 2010f) includes a summary of comments and copies of all agency, organization, and individual citizen comments.



SANDAG summarized the comments into the following major issues:

- Project purpose and need
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Alternative alignments
- Stations and station locations
- Project cost and funding
- Traffic analysis
- Neighborhood concerns
- Land use and development
- Parklands
- Environmental justice
- Aesthetics
- Air quality
- Noise and vibration
- Solid waste and hazardous materials
- Ecosystems and wildlife
- Water resources and flood control issues
- Cultural resources

Nine government agencies submitted comment letters during the CEQA scoping period: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)¹ (a Trustee Agency), the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB), the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, Caltrans, the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), UCSD (a Trustee Agency), and the City of San Diego. The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project California Environmental Quality Act Scoping Summary Report* (SANDAG, 2010f) includes copies of all agency letters received during CEQA scoping.

8.3.2 National Environmental Policy Act Scoping

This section describes scoping activities and coordination with cooperating and participating agencies during NEPA scoping.

8.3.2.1 Scoping Activities

On July 19, 2011, the FTA published a new NOI in the *Federal Register* to supplement the previous scoping period for the project's environmental document. The purpose of this second NOI was to ensure awareness of the ongoing project planning and environmental review processes and to provide opportunities to comment on the project. Communications regarding the NEPA scoping notification included the following:

- A report to the SANDAG Transportation Committee on July 15, 2011
- NOI and NEPA scoping notices on the SANDAG "Notices" Web site (www.sandag.org/notices)

¹ As of January 1, 2013, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) has changed its name to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which is how it is referred to in this report for text describing actions subsequent to the name change. However, for publications and regulations published or issued before that date, as well as actions taken and meetings held before January 1, 2013, the CDFG name has been retained.



- Letters of invitation to potential cooperating and participating federal, state, and local agencies pursuant to SAFETEA-LU agency coordination guidance
- FTA letters to the region's 17 Native American tribes inviting them to participate in the project planning and environmental review processes
- E-mail notifications to members of the Project Working Group
- E-newsletter to the project's interested participants list (614 individuals)
- Information on the NOI and NEPA scoping process, and instructions for submitting comments on the project Web site

The NOI included a description of the relationship between NEPA scoping and the prior year's CEQA scoping process. SANDAG indicated in the NOI and in all public outreach materials that comments previously submitted during the CEQA scoping process also would be considered as part of the NEPA scoping process.

8.3.2.2 Coordination with Cooperating and Participating Agencies

The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Agency Coordination Plan* (SANDAG, 2011d) identifies the federal, tribal, state, regional, and local agencies affected by, having jurisdiction over, or an interest in the project. The Coordination Plan also identifies Trustee and Responsible Agencies, and agencies that have jurisdiction by law. The FTA and SANDAG are the lead agencies for the environmental review. The potential cooperating agencies identified in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Agency Coordination Plan* (SANDAG, 2011d) include FHWA/Caltrans and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The FTA and SANDAG also identified 46 federal, tribal, state, and local agencies as potential participating agencies, including Trustee and Responsible Agencies under CEQA.

The Letters of Invitation to these potential cooperating and participating agencies described the project study area, the purpose of the project, and the project history. The agencies were asked to identify issues of concern, comment on the project alternatives, participate in upcoming coordination activities, and review and comment on project information, the alternatives considered, and anticipated impacts and mitigation.

Eight potential cooperating or participating agencies responded to these letters: the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, FHWA, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Caltrans, UCSD, City of San Diego, and North County Transit District (NCTD). Of the eight agencies, three submitted comments as part of the NEPA scoping process: the FHWA, Caltrans, and the American Council on Historic Preservation. The U.S. National Park Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency also submitted comments. None of the agencies identified as potential cooperating agencies accepted the role of cooperating agency; instead they elected to serve in the role of participating agency. No written response was received from the USACE; however, since then, the USACE has indicated that it will serve in the role of participating agency based on the level of permit required.



8.3.2.3 Summary of National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Comments

The 30-day NEPA scoping period began on July 19, 2011, and closed on August 15, 2011, with mailed comments being accepted after August 15, 2011, to account for any delays in U.S. mail. The public submitted a majority of the comments, in addition to four federal agencies and one state agency. In all, SANDAG and the FTA received 17 comment submissions containing 51 individual comments. The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Report* (SANDAG, 2011b) includes a summary of comments and copies of all agency and public comments received during scoping and copies of all agency letters.

The NEPA comments were similar to those received during CEQA scoping or involved issues previously identified for analysis in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. They include the following major issues:

- Alternatives
- Access to tracks by a private railroad and warehouse located along the alignment
- Stations
- Transit access at stations, including pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and transit connectivity
- Economic impacts
- Safety, particularly in regard to safe track crossings by pedestrians and bicyclists in University City, Clairemont, and Pacific Beach
- Funding
- Recreational facilities, particularly in regard to impacts to the Rose Creek Bicycle Path
- Land use
- Air quality
- Noise
- Water resources, particularly in regard to contour, alignment, and channelization changes to Rose Creek
- Parklands, particularly in regard to compatibility of the project with the Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment and restoring degraded habitat and removing concrete impediments in Rose Creek

Government agency comments included the following:

- American Council on Historic Preservation—Encouraged early and ongoing consultation with appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Native American tribes, and other consulting parties
- FHWA—Stated several concerns for highway system impacts



- Caltrans—Encouraged transit-oriented development around proposed stations; encouraged continued interagency coordination; noted that the High-Speed Passenger Train Bond (Proposition 1A) includes funding for the Trolley Blue Line projects; and wanted the environmental document to be adequate for use for the State Highway Encroachment Permit, which is required for any construction work within Caltrans’ right-of-way
- National Park Service—Stated “no comments” by letter
- Federal Emergency Management Agency—Requested review of current Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the City of San Diego and San Diego County; noted minimum federal National Flood Insurance Program floodplain management building requirements; and warned that the city and county agencies may have adopted more restrictive requirements

8.4 Public and Agency Outreach during Preparation of the Draft SEIS/SEIR

This section describes the public and stakeholder coordination activities and agency consultation that occurred between the CEQA and NEPA scoping periods and publication of the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Refer to Sections 8.5.2 and 8.8 for a summary of outreach efforts that have occurred since completion of the Draft SEIS/SEIR.

8.4.1 Public and Stakeholder Coordination Activities

The following public outreach activities were conducted between NEPA scoping and release of the Draft SEIS/SEIR:

- Project presentations to community, business, and transportation organizations
- Meetings with affected property owners near the project alignment and the project stations, including UCSD, Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla (Scripps Hospital), the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center, La Jolla Village Square shopping center, and Westfield University Towne Centre (UTC) shopping center
- Project updates to the SANDAG Transportation Committee
- E-newsletters providing project updates
- Meetings of the Project Working Group
- Briefings for elected officials

The focus of the public outreach efforts was to ensure that the public was kept up-to-date on the project status, share new project information, and notify the public about the Draft SEIS/SEIR public review period (from May 17 to July 17, 2013) and opportunities to provide comment.

8.4.2 Agency Consultation Activities

SANDAG coordinated and consulted regularly with local, regional, state, and federal government agencies prior to circulation of the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Frequent presentations, meetings, and informal communications occurred with the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), NCTD, Caltrans, and the City of San Diego. Because the project



alignment traverses the UCSD West and East Campuses, coordination with UCSD included presentations and working meetings with technical staff and project update briefings with the UCSD Design Review Board. Through coordination with UCSD, the alignment and station locations on the UCSD West and East Campuses were refined for evaluation in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Chapter 2.0, Section 2.1 describes the refinements to the Locally Preferred Alternative that were made prior to the circulation of the Draft SEIS/SEIR through coordination with UCSD. SANDAG also held meetings with UCSD to identify types and location of equipment sensitive to electromagnetic interference from Trolley operations near the proposed UCSD West Campus Station.

SANDAG held meetings with staff from several City of San Diego departments to discuss transportation impacts and mitigation, floodplain impacts, and impacts to parklands and recreational areas. Beginning in the fall of 2011, meetings were held on an ongoing basis with the Development Services Department and the Transportation and Storm Water Department to discuss traffic methodologies and traffic volumes; traffic impacts and mitigation at grade crossings and station area intersections; traffic impacts and mitigation during construction; and impacts to bicycle facilities (both long term and during construction). Meetings also were held with the city to discuss the project alignment on Genesee Avenue and design options to minimize impacts to the street and adjacent properties.

Additionally, SANDAG coordinated with the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department and the Transportation and Storm Water Department to obtain concurrence determinations related to the *de minimis* impact and temporary occupancy exemption findings for the Section 4(f) evaluation. Specifically, on October 29, 2012, SANDAG met with the staff from the Transportation and Storm Water Department to discuss construction-related impacts to the Ocean Beach Bicycle Path. On November 7, 2012, SANDAG met with staff from the Park and Recreation Department to discuss the Section 4(f) evaluation for Marian Bear Memorial Park and Mission Valley Preserve. Documentation of preliminary concurrence is included in Appendix C. Subsequent to the initial meeting with the Park and Recreation Department, the location of impacts within Marian Bear Memorial Park changed. A new preliminary statement of concurrence was issued by the department on February 15, 2013, based on its review of the revised impacts. SANDAG also met with the City of San Diego Floodplain Manager from the Public Works Department on December 20, 2012, regarding the floodplain analysis and crossings of the San Diego River, Tecolote Creek, and Rose Creek.

Frequent meetings also were held with Caltrans to review the project alignment along the Interstate (I-) 5 corridor between State Route (SR) 52 and Voigt Drive, design of the freeway crossings south of Nobel Drive and at Voigt Drive, the alignment along Voigt Drive and the location of the proposed Voigt Drive direct-access ramps, the scope of the environmental and engineering studies, and the permits required for the project.

On January 22, 2013, a coordination meeting was held with the CPUC and the MTS to discuss project design, operations at the eight existing grade crossings (including the operating plan, gate optimization measures, and traffic mitigation measures), typical right-of-way sections, and pedestrian crossings at the two proposed aerial stations on Genesee Avenue. Coordination with the CPUC will continue throughout the design of the project.



Since initiating the outreach program, SANDAG has coordinated and consulted with state and federal resource agencies, including Trustee and Responsible Agencies under CEQA. In May 2010, project briefing meetings were held individually with the USACE, the CDFG, and the San Diego River Conservancy. Summaries of the meetings are contained in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project California Environmental Quality Act Scoping Summary Report* (SANDAG, 2010f). A follow-up meeting was held with the USACE on July 23, 2012, and a pre-application meeting was held with the USACE, the CDFG, and the SDRWQCB on August 14, 2012. A telephone conference call was held with the USACE and the FTA on September 7, 2012, to discuss permitting requirements, the role of the USACE in the environmental review of the project, and the potential for minimizing impacts to water resources. A second pre-application meeting was held with the USACE on October 31, 2012, to discuss design options for the channel structure at Rose Creek and SR 52 (i.e., box culvert, open channel, bridge, and natural bottom channel), to minimize impacts to Waters of the U.S. in the Rose Creek watershed. Through coordination with the USACE, an open channel design at SR 52/Rose Creek was selected to replace the box culvert as the preferred design option for the Build Alternative; this project design change was incorporated into the Build Alternative analyzed in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. A letter of confirmation of impacts to Waters of the U.S. was transmitted to the USACE on February 13, 2013. A letter to the USFWS initiating Endangered Species Act Section 7 informal consultation was transmitted to that agency on February 27, 2013. Copies of this correspondence are included in Appendix C of this Final SEIS/SEIR. On February 27, 2013, a coordination meeting was held with the SDRWQCB to review the open channel design at SR 52/Rose Creek. The SDRWQCB did not express concern regarding the open channel design. The USACE also attended the meeting. Coordination with state and federal resource agencies will continue throughout the environmental review and project development process.

Section 106 consultation was initiated to identify historic and cultural resources and concerns related to the project's possible effects on historic properties. In response to CEQA scoping, in May 2010 the NAHC sent a letter recommending that the California Historic Resources Information System and 20 local Native American groups be contacted. In November 2011, FTA sent formal Section 106 consultation letters to 23 Native American groups, including those identified by the NAHC. SANDAG also sent letters to local interested public historical or cultural organizations. Additional information on the Section 106 consultation process is presented in the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Historic Property Survey and Eligibility Determination Report* (SANDAG, 2013c), the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Historic Property Effects Report* (SANDAG, 2014k), and the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Archaeological Resources Survey Report* (SANDAG, 2013e)².

As part of Section 106 consultation, coordination with the SHPO has been ongoing. In October 2011, FTA consulted with the SHPO for concurrence on the limits of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for both archaeological and architectural resource investigations. On October 28, 2011, the SHPO concurred that the project APE is sufficient pursuant to

² This document contains sensitive information regarding the location of archaeological sites and is not available to the public or other unauthorized persons.



Code of Federal Regulations 800.4(1)(a). In July 2012, FTA sent two reports to the SHPO (the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Historic Property Survey and Eligibility Determination Report* [SANDAG, 2013c] and the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Archaeological Resources Survey Report* [SANDAG, 2013e]) and a letter requesting concurrence on the eligibility of historic properties within the APE. After receiving written and verbal comments from the SHPO, in January 2013 the two reports were updated along with the preparation of the *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Archaeological Resources Supplemental Research Report* (SANDAG, 2013d)³. In February 2013, additional coordination was conducted with the SHPO to address the eligibility of historic architectural properties and archaeological resources within the APE.

SANDAG also held meetings with the VA Medical Center staff to review the alignment and optional station location at the VA Medical Center. SANDAG will continue to coordinate with agencies throughout the environmental review and permitting process and project construction.

8.5 Draft SEIS/SEIR Comment Period

On May 17, 2013, FTA issued a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*, inviting comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR. In addition, the Notice of Completion was posted at the San Diego County Office of the County Clerk on May 8, 2013, and by the State Clearinghouse on May 14, 2013. Copies of the Notice of Availability and Notice of Completion are included in Appendix B of this Final SEIS/SEIR. The Draft SEIS/SEIR was made available for a 60-day public review and comment period from May 17 through July 17, 2013.

The document was distributed to all interested and concerned parties, including public agencies, elected officials, groups and organizations, businesses, and individuals. Specifically, copies of the Draft SEIS/SEIR were mailed to 20 federal agencies, 17 Native American tribes, 31 state agencies, 6 regional agencies, and 9 local agencies. In all, more than 450 copies of the Draft SEIS/SEIR were distributed. The Draft SEIS/SEIR and technical reports also were made available for review at area libraries (Table 8-3) and SANDAG offices, as well as posted on the project Web site (www.sandag.org/midcoast).

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 were also accepted at the public hearing held on the Draft SEIS/SEIR. SANDAG continued accepting comments after the comment period closed to account for any comments that were sent via U.S. mail. Responses to comments received by FTA and SANDAG are addressed in this Final SEIS/SEIR.

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8.5.1 Public Meetings and Hearing

Four public meetings and one public hearing were held during the Draft SEIS/SEIR public review and comment period. Table 8-5 lists the newspapers used to publish the formal public notices, which provided information on the public meetings and public hearing and how to submit written comments. Additionally, an advertisement promoting the public meetings and public hearing was published in the publications identified in Table 8-6. SANDAG also sent direct mail postcards announcing the public meetings and public hearing to 37,173 residents and businesses located within one-quarter mile of the project alignment.

Table 8-5. Publications Used for Public Notices of the Draft SEIS/SEIR Comment Period

Publication	Circulation
<i>Asian Journal</i>	35,000
<i>El Latino</i> (Spanish)	80,500
<i>San Diego Daily Transcript</i>	Unknown
<i>San Diego Voice & Viewpoint</i>	25,000
<i>U-T San Diego</i> *	317,855

Source: SANDAG, 2013

Note: * In 2012, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was renamed *U-T San Diego*

Table 8-6. Publications Used for Advertisement of Public Meetings and Public Hearing for the Draft SEIS/SEIR Comment Period

Publication	Circulation
<i>Asian Journal</i>	35,000
<i>Beach & Bay Press</i>	18,500
<i>Clairemont Community News</i>	23,000
<i>El Latino</i> (Spanish)	80,500
<i>Indian Voices</i>	Unknown
<i>La Jolla Today</i>	18,500
<i>La Jolla Light</i>	18,080
<i>La Prensa</i> (Spanish)	Online
<i>Peninsula Beacon</i>	18,500

Publication	Circulation
<i>Presidio Sentinel</i>	35,000
<i>San Diego Downtown News</i>	18,500
<i>U-T San Diego</i> ¹	317,855
<i>San Diego Uptown News</i>	22,000
<i>San Diego Voice & Viewpoint</i>	25,000
<i>Star News</i>	33,500
<i>UCSD Guardian</i> ²	11,000
<i>Voice of San Diego</i>	Online

Source: SANDAG, 2013

Notes: ¹ In 2012, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was renamed *U-T San Diego*.

² Advertisement was run twice in publication.

The public meetings and one public hearing were held in buildings that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and served by public transit (Table 8-7). At the public meetings, SANDAG used an open-house format with display board stations featuring various topics. SANDAG staff and members of the technical team knowledgeable in each topical area were present at these stations. The stations addressed the following topics:



Table 8-7. Public Meetings and Hearing

Meeting Time/Date	Community Location
Tuesday, June 4, 2013 4-7 p.m.	Clairemont
Monday, June 10, 2013 3-6 p.m.	University of California, San Diego
Wednesday, June 12, 2013 4-7 p.m.	University Community
Tuesday, June 18, 2013 4-7 p.m.	Old Town
Friday, June 21, 2013 4-7 p.m.	Downtown San Diego (SANDAG)*

Source: SANDAG, 2013

Note: * Served as the public hearing

- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives Evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR
- Transportation
- Construction
- Property Acquisitions and Relocations
- Public Involvement
- Environmental

SANDAG made bilingual English/Spanish materials available at all public meetings, along with a Spanish interpreter who helped Spanish-speaking participants understand project information and submit comments. Approximately 350 individuals attended the four public meetings combined.

SANDAG also hosted one public hearing, which was held in conjunction with the SANDAG Transportation Committee meeting. The purpose of the public hearing was to give interested parties an opportunity to formally submit comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR.

8.5.2 Public and Agency Outreach during the Comment Period

During the Draft SEIS/SEIR review and comment period, SANDAG gave presentations and/or met with members of the public and representatives from agencies, groups/organizations, property owners, and businesses. Some of the property owners and community groups SANDAG met with during the review and comment period included Scripps Hospital, La Jolla Country Day School, Westfield UTC shopping center, Garden Communities, the Colony La Paz Condominium Association, La Jolla Colony Home Owners Association, and the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center.

SANDAG also meet with several agencies during the review and comment period. A meeting was held with the CPUC to discuss the project and traffic impacts and mitigation near the grade crossings. A meeting was held with the NCTD to discuss the project and permit requirements. A meeting also was held with UCSD to discuss the project alignment and stations on the UCSD campus, UCSD comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, and analysis results. Additional meetings were held with UCSD and Caltrans to discuss



the coordination of the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project with other construction projects in the vicinity of UCSD.

8.6 Comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR

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 1,416 individual comments. Table 8-8 lists the number of submissions and comments received by affiliation.

Table 8-8. Number of Submissions and Comments by Affiliation

Affiliation	Submissions	Comments
Federal agency	6	17
State agency	10	113
Local agency	3	41
Tribal agency	1	4
Elected official	2	23
Groups/organizations	30	402
Businesses	21	173
Individuals	236	643
TOTAL	309	1,416

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, 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 are addressed in Volume 3 Section V3-1 of this Final SEIS/SEIR.

8.7 Comments on the Supplement

On July 18, 2014, FTA issued a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*, inviting comments on the Supplement. In addition, the Notice of Completion was posted at the San Diego County Office of the County Clerk on July 9, 2014, and by the State Clearinghouse on July 11, 2014. Copies of the Notice of Availability and Notice of Completion are included in Appendix B of this Final SEIS/SEIR. The Supplement was made available for a 45-day public review and comment period from July 18 through September 2, 2014. Table 8-9 lists the newspapers used to publish the formal public notices, which provided information on how to submit written comments.

Table 8-9. Publications Supplement SEIS/SEIR Comment Period

Publication	Circulation
<i>Asian Journal</i>	35,000
<i>El Latino</i> (Spanish)	80,500
<i>San Diego Daily Transcript</i>	Unknown
<i>San Diego Voice & Viewpoint</i>	25,000
<i>U-T San Diego</i> *	317,855

Source: SANDAG, 2014

Note: * In 2012, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was renamed *U-T San Diego*.

Additionally, an advertisement regarding the review and comment period for the Supplement was published in the publications identified in Table 8-10.

Table 8-10. Publications Used for Advertisement of Supplement Comment Period

Publication	Circulation
<i>Asian Journal</i>	35,000
<i>Beach & Bay Press</i>	18,500
<i>Clairemont Community News</i>	23,000
<i>Clairemont Times</i>	15,000
<i>El Latino</i> (Spanish)	80,500
<i>Indian Voices</i>	Unknown
<i>La Jolla Light</i>	18,080
<i>La Prensa</i> (Spanish)	Online

Publication	Circulation
<i>Peninsula Beacon</i>	18,500
<i>Presidio Sentinel</i>	35,000
<i>San Diego Downtown News</i>	18,500
<i>San Diego Uptown News</i>	22,000
<i>San Diego Voice & Viewpoint</i>	25,000
<i>Star News</i>	33,500
<i>U-T San Diego</i> *	317,855
<i>Voice of San Diego</i>	Online

Source: SANDAG, 2014

Note: * In 2012, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was renamed *U-T San Diego*.



The document was distributed to all interested and concerned parties, including public agencies, elected officials, groups and organizations, businesses, and individuals. The document was also distributed to individuals who submitted comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Specifically, electronic and/or hard copies of the Supplement were mailed to 20 federal agencies, 18 Native American tribes, 31 state agencies, 6 regional agencies, and 9 local agencies. The Notice of Availability was sent via e-mail to those who commented on the Draft SEIS/SEIR and provided an e-mail address rather than a postal address. In all, more than 600 copies of the Supplement were distributed. The Supplement also was made available for review at area libraries (Table 8-3) and SANDAG offices, as well as posted on the project Web site (www.sandag.org/midcoast).

The Notice of Availability specified that comments submitted during the Supplement comment period must be limited to the analysis of impacts to the San Diego fairy shrimp only. Comments on the Supplement were submitted via mail, e-mail, voice mail, and fax. SANDAG continued accepting comments after the comment period closed to account for any comments that were sent via U.S. mail. Responses to comments received by FTA and SANDAG are addressed in this Final SEIS/SEIR.

In total, nine comment submissions (e.g., comment cards, e-mails, and letters) were received containing ten individual comments. Table 8-11 lists the number of submissions and comments received by affiliation. All of the comments received on the Supplement are addressed in Volume 3 Section V3-2 of this Final SEIS/SEIR.

Table 8-11. Number of Submissions and Comments by Affiliation

Affiliation	Submissions	Comments
Federal agency	1	2
State agency	2	2
Groups/organizations	1	2
Individuals	2	2
TOTAL	4	4

Source: SANDAG, 2014

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 dominant themes of comments received during the comment period for the Supplement related to the following:

- Support for the project despite impacts to the San Diego fairy shrimp
- Emergency access during construction in south University City
- Mitigation for the San Diego fairy shrimp



8.8 Public and Agency Outreach since Close of the Draft SEIS/SEIR Public Review Period

SANDAG continued to hold briefings with community groups and coordinate with stakeholders and agencies after the close of the Draft SEIS/SEIR review and comment period. The focus of the briefings and coordination efforts primarily related to discussion of comments received on the project and Draft SEIS/SEIR and refinements made to the project in response to comments.

8.8.1 Continued Public and Stakeholder Coordination Activities

Comments received from UCSD and Scripps Hospital indicated concerns regarding electromagnetic field (EMF) impacts to sensitive equipment. As a result, coordination meetings were held with representatives from these stakeholders and mitigation measures were identified based on additional EMF analysis, as detailed in Chapter 4.0, Section 4.14.4 of this Final SEIS/SEIR. Meetings with UCSD and Scripps Hospital also focused on the project alignment and the Voigt Drive realignment, while additional meetings were held with UCSD regarding station design and results of the updated noise and vibration analysis.

Transit parking at the Nobel Drive Station and UTC Transit Center was refined based on coordination with the property owners, as described in Chapter 2.0, Section 2.3.3 of this Final SEIS/SEIR. Specifically, coordination meetings were held with representatives of the La Jolla Village Square shopping center regarding the design of the Nobel Drive Station park-and-ride facility. Meetings with representatives from the Westfield UTC shopping center focused on the shopping center's future development plans, the planned bus transit center, and transit parking for the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project.

Coordination also occurred with affected property owners along the alignment to discuss the project alignment and construction-related impacts. These included Armstrong Garden Centers, Narvarra Morena Properties near the Tecolote Road Station, Bayview Plaza near the Clairemont Drive Station, Good Samaritan Episcopal Church, the La Jolla Community Church, The Shops at La Jolla, Monte Verde/La Jolla Canyon Development, La Jolla Country Day School, and the VA Medical Center.

SANDAG also met with representatives of the Sheraton La Jolla Hotel regarding the noise and vibration analysis and mitigation. Additional analysis was performed to determine noise levels for the upper floors of the hotel and the hotel's inner courtyard. No modifications were made to the length and height of the sound wall in this location as proposed in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. This additional analysis is included in Volume 3 of this Final SEIS/SEIR as attachments to the Sheraton Hotel's comment response.

The Refined Build Alternative approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors on November 15, 2013, shifted the I-5 crossing, south of Nobel Drive, approximately 360 feet to the south of the crossing location shown in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. Following approval of the Refined Build Alternative by the SANDAG Board of Directors in November 2013, SANDAG received comments on the shift from the Cape La Jolla Gardens residential community located west of I-5 in the vicinity of the I-5 crossing. The comments expressed concerns on the shifted I-5 crossing being located closer to Cape



La Jolla Gardens and that the revised location of the I-5 crossing was not included in the Draft SEIS/SEIR before it was circulated for public review and comment. As part of the development of the refined alignment, additional engineering and environmental analysis was conducted to verify grades, alignment, and utility impacts, and to determine if any new and significant environmental impacts would be caused by shifting the alignment south from the I-5 crossing location shown in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. The analysis determined that the shift was feasible from an engineering perspective and that no additional noise or visual impacts would occur with the shift in the crossing location under the Refined Build Alternative.

On May 9, 2014, SANDAG staff made a presentation to the SANDAG Board of Directors on the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project that included a description of the I-5 crossing location as presented in the Draft SEIS/SEIR and the Refined Build Alternative, a summary of the impact analysis conducted for the shift in the crossing location, and a summary of the concerns expressed by the Cape La Jolla Gardens residential community. The SANDAG Board of Directors approved amending the Refined Build Alternative to return the I-5 crossing south of Nobel Drive to the location designated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR for inclusion in the final environmental documents. The design change of the crossing that eliminated the straddle bents over I-5 was retained.

In July and August 2014, four station design workshops were held in communities near the proposed new stations in the Mid-Coast Corridor to obtain input on station design features. These workshops were open to the public, and public notice was provided through newspaper advertisements, the project eNewsletter, the SANDAG Web site, on social media, and through coordination with community group leaders. The station design was advanced based on feedback gathered during these workshops; SANDAG will present this advanced station design to the University City, Clairemont, Linda Vista, and Pacific Beach Community Planning Groups in late 2014.

Coordination with stakeholders and the public along the alignment will continue throughout design and construction of the project.

8.8.2 Agency Consultation Activities

On November 7, 2013, SANDAG and the USFWS held a conference call regarding the presence of the coastal California gnatcatcher population on UCSD property, as identified by UCSD, fairy shrimp surveys for the 2013 to 2014 season, and the potential for light-footed clapper rail to occur within the San Diego River area. Mitigation for biological resources and informal Section 7 consultation were also discussed during this meeting. In March 2014, the federally endangered San Diego fairy shrimp was identified in an ephemeral basin on the east side of the existing LOSSAN tracks near Morena Boulevard. This basin would be directly impacted by construction of the project. On April 30, 2014, SANDAG and FTA discussed the positive survey findings with the USFWS and the need for formal Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. On May 6, 2014, SANDAG and FTA hosted a field visit with the USFWS to review the location of impacts to San Diego fairy shrimp and the proposed mitigation location. Formal Section 7 consultation was initiated with the USFWS on June 12, 2014 (refer to Appendix C for the consultation initiation letter). SANDAG and FTA continued to provide information as requested by the USFWS during the Section 7 consultation process. On September 5,



2014, the USFWS issued a Biological Opinion concurring with the FTA's determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect the subject species and critical habitat, and included authorization for incidental take of San Diego fairy shrimp.

Meetings were held with various departments at the City of San Diego, including the City Real Estate Assets Department, Storm Water Department, and Development Services Department. Meetings focused on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, permitting, utilities, and property requirements.

Following public review of the Section 4(f) evaluation as part of the Draft SEIS/SEIR, SANDAG coordinated with the City of San Diego to obtain final concurrence determinations related to the Section 4(f) findings. Specifically, on January 31, 2014, SANDAG met with staff from the Park and Recreation Department to discuss the findings of the Section 4(f) evaluation and to review comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR that relate to Section 4(f) resources. Several comments indicated the potential for a constructive use of the Rose Canyon Open Space Park; however, upon further evaluation, SANDAG confirmed that no constructive use would occur. On February 13, 2014, the Park and Recreation Department provided a signed statement indicating its final concurrence with the Section 4(f) findings of *de minimis* direct use of Marian Bear Memorial Park, temporary occupancy exceptions of Marian Bear Memorial Park and Mission Valley Preserve Open Space, and no constructive use of Rose Canyon Open Space Park. On February 5, 2014, SANDAG met with the Transportation and Storm Water Department to discuss the findings of the Section 4(f) evaluation and review the comment received that related to the Ocean Beach Bicycle Path. On February 6, 2014, the Transportation and Storm Water Department provided a signed statement indicating final concurrence with the Section 4(f) findings of a *de minimis* impact to the Ocean Beach Bicycle Path. Documentation of final concurrence also is included in Appendix C.

A comment letter received from the California Coastal Commission (CCC) indicated that the Coastal Zone boundary shown in the Draft SEIS/SEIR between the San Diego River and Balboa Avenue was incorrect and that this portion of the project was within the Coastal Zone. On August 26, 2013 SANDAG met with the CCC in response to the comment letter received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR. SANDAG and the CCC staff identified an acceptable approach to obtaining letters of exemption for upcoming geotechnical survey work located within the area in question to allow work to proceed while the boundary issue was being resolved. A follow-up meeting was held with the CCC staff on May 8, 2014, regarding the Coastal Zone boundary and anticipated permitting requirements. Subsequently, SANDAG requested a formal Coastal Zone boundary determination for the area between the San Diego River and Balboa Avenue; the boundary determination was provided by the CCC on May 30, 2014, and stated that the boundary extended to the eastern edge of the MTS right-of-way. The boundary request and CCC response are included in Appendix C of this document. Another meeting was held on May 27, 2014, during which SANDAG and the CCC staff generally discussed SANDAG's upcoming application for a Coastal Development Permit for the project. On July 2, 2014, SANDAG met with CCC staff to discuss the acceptability of potential mitigation sites for anticipated impacts to coastal wetlands from several SANDAG projects.



A kick-off meeting also was held with the Federal Railroad Administration Rail Safety Group to provide an overview of the project. In addition, meetings were held with NCTD regarding track separation and the modifications to the signal systems at Taylor Street near the Old Town Transit Center.

On April 9, 2014, the SHPO concurred with the FTA's finding that the project would have "no adverse effect" on historic properties (including historic architectural and archaeological properties). In May 2014, SANDAG conducted a follow-up call with the SHPO to confirm the appropriate phrasing for conclusions regarding resources that were not detected within the area of potential effects during Extended Phase I surveys. That phrasing is reflected in this Final SEIS/SEIR.