Final Refined Build Alternative Report
September 2014

Prepared by:
The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)
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## Abbreviations

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

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Caltrans</td>
<td>California Department of Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOSSAN</td>
<td>Los Angeles—San Diego—San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRT</td>
<td>light rail transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTTC</td>
<td>Old Town Transit Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROD</td>
<td>Record of Decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANDAG</td>
<td>San Diego Association of Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEIS/SEIR</td>
<td>Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Subsequent Environmental Impact Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPSS</td>
<td>traction power substation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCSD</td>
<td>University of California, San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTC</td>
<td>University Towne Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Veterans Administration</td>
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In April 2013, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) 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 June 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 warranted 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 provided the basis for refinements to the Build Alternative, or Refined Build Alternative, proposed for evaluation in the Final SEIS/SEIR.

The Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Refined Build Alternative Report (SANDAG, November 6, 2013) documents the development of the Refined Build Alternative and includes a summary of comments related to the Build Alternative and a description of refinements to the Build Alternative. SANDAG staff presented the report and the proposed Refined Build Alternative to the SANDAG Board of Directors on November 15, 2013. After considering the staff recommendation and receiving public comments, the SANDAG Board of Directors voted to approve the Refined Build Alternative as the project to be evaluated in the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final SEIS/SEIR.

Following approval of the Refined Build Alternative in November 2013, SANDAG received comments on one component of the Refined Build Alternative, which shifted the alignment of the light rail transit crossing of Interstate (I-) 5 near Nobel Drive to the south of the crossing location presented in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. On May 9, 2014, SANDAG staff made a presentation to the SANDAG Board of Directors discussing the concerns raised regarding the modified I-5 crossing location. The SANDAG Board of Directors...
approved amending the Refined Build Alternative to retain the I-5 crossing at the location presented in the Draft SEIS/SEIR.

This Final Refined Build Alternative Report is an update to the November 2013 Refined Build Alternative Report documenting the SANDAG Board of Directors’ approval of the Refined Build Alternative on November 15, 2013 and amendment to the Refined Build Alternative on May 9, 2014. It also includes a summary description of the amended Refined Build Alternative to be evaluated in the Final SEIS/SEIR. The SANDAG Board of Directors agenda items and reports, voting results, minutes, and staff presentations for the November 15, 2013 and May 9, 2014 meetings, in which action was taken by the SANDAG Board of Directors on the Refined Build Alternative, are included as appendices to this report.
2.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFINED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

This chapter describes the development of the proposed Refined Build Alternative proposed for evaluation in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR). Refinements were made to the Build Alternative evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR based on comments received on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, a review of analysis in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, coordination with agencies and stakeholders, and further engineering study. The Refined Build Alternative was approved by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors on November 15, 2013, and amended by the SANDAG Board of Directors on May 9, 2014, to retain the Interstate (I-) 5 crossing south of Nobel Drive at the location in the Build Alternative as evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR and described in Chapter 3 of this report.

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 Web site 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 1,416 individual comments. Table 2-1 lists the number of submissions and comments received by affiliation.

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

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<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>State Agency</td>
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<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribal Agency</td>
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<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups/Organizations</td>
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<td>402</td>
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<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
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</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>1,416</strong></td>
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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 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 Veterans Administration (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 University Towne Centre (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 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 I-5 corridor, Voigt Drive, and Genesee Avenue.

Several individuals and businesses commented on the alignment north of State Route 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 were 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 proposed refinements included 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 was proposed to be eliminated from further consideration. The following sections summarize the proposed 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 U.S. 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, the VA Medical Center Station was 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 was 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 included 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 was proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.
Figure 2-1. Refinements to I-5 Crossing South of Nobel Drive

Source: SANDAG, 2013
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 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 XiMed 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 proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

2.3.4 Refinements to Stations

The refinements to stations in the Build Alternative in the Draft SEIS/SEIR included 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 proposed refinements to these stations are described in the following section.

The stations at Tecolote Road, Balboa Avenue, UCSD West, and Executive Drive as defined in the Draft SEIS/SEIR were 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 was 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 was 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 City Maintenance Yard/Rose Canyon Municipal Operations Lot 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**

Source: SANDAG, 2013
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](source)

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 Westfield UTC shopping center. Figure 2-6 illustrates the layout of the UTC Transit Center Station proposed for inclusion in the Refined Build Alternative.

**Figure 2-6. Refined UTC Transit Center**

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 were 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 included the following:

- Relocation of the substation at the Wright Street Yard to the south within the Metropolitan Transit System 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)
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
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 were 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 was 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 were 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, included 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 was 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 were 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
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3.0 SANDAG BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVAL OF REFINED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

This chapter documents the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors’ approval of the Refined Build Alternative on November 15, 2013, and subsequent approval of an amendment to the Refined Build Alternative on May 9, 2014.

3.1 SANDAG Board of Directors Meeting—November 15, 2013

SANDAG staff presented the proposed Refined Build Alternative to the SANDAG Board of Directors on November 15, 2013. The *Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Refined Build Alternative Report* (SANDAG, November 6, 2013) was provided to the SANDAG Board of Directors as an attachment to the agenda. The staff presentation included a description of the Build Alternative and options evaluated in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR), a summary of comments received during the 60-day comment period on the Draft SEIS/SEIR, a description of proposed refinements to the Build Alternative evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR, next steps in the environmental review of the project, and a recommendation that the SANDAG Board of Directors approve the Refined Build Alternative as the project to be evaluated in the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final SEIS/SEIR. A copy of the SANDAG Board of Directors agenda item on the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project: Refined Build Alternative and the SANDAG staff presentation are included in Appendices A and E, respectively, to this report.

The SANDAG Board of Directors received public comment at the meeting, including comments from representatives of La Jolla Village Square shopping center, Armstrong Garden Centers, and the Cleveland National Forest Foundation. The representative for La Jolla Village Square shopping center spoke in support of the project and expressed concerns regarding the station at La Jolla Village Square. Representatives for Armstrong Garden Centers spoke in opposition to the project, expressed concern regarding relocation of the business due to the proposed Tecolote Road Station, and requested SANDAG consider other alternatives for the Tecolote Road Station that will not impact Armstrong Garden Center. The representative for the Cleveland National Forest Foundation made comments regarding the need for public transit improvements such as the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project and impacts on parking. Additionally, approximately 600 e-mails were sent from the public to the SANDAG Board of Directors prior to the meeting expressing opposition to the acquisition of Armstrong Garden Center, and another 19 e-mails were received after the meeting. A signed petition in opposition to the acquisition of Armstrong Garden Center also was submitted to the SANDAG Board of Directors. Appendix B contains copies of the correspondence received regarding the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project agenda item at the November 15, 2013 SANDAG Board of Directors meeting.

The SANDAG Board of Directors approved by a vote of 17 to 0 a recommendation to approve the Refined Build Alternative as the project to be evaluated in the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project Final SEIS/SEIR. A copy of the voting results and meeting minutes are included in Appendices C and D, respectively, to this report.
3.2 SANDAG Board of Directors Meeting—May 9, 2014

The Refined Build Alternative approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors on November 15, 2013 shifted the Interstate (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. SANDAG staff also presented the options for completing the environmental process with a decision either to return to the I-5 crossing location as presented in the Draft SEIS/SEIR or retain the I-5 crossing location in the Refined Build Alternative. A copy of the SANDAG Board of Directors agenda item on the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project: Refined Build Alternative and the SANDAG staff presentation are included in Appendices F and J, respectively, to this report. The SANDAG Board of Directors received public comment at the meeting, including comments from representatives of La Jolla Village Square shopping center and Cape La Jolla Gardens. The representative for La Jolla Village Square shopping center spoke in support of the project and the representative for Cape La Jolla Gardens spoke in support of the motion to return the I-5 crossing to the location in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. The representative for Cape La Jolla Gardens also submitted a letter to the SANDAG Board of Directors, which is included in Appendix G.

The SANDAG Board of Directors approved, by a vote of 17 to 0, amending the Refined Build Alternative for the Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project 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. A copy of the voting results and meeting minutes are included in Appendices H and I, respectively, to this report.
4.0 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF REFINED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

This chapter presents a summary description of the Refined Build Alternative, as approved by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors on November 15, 2013 and amended on May 9, 2014, for evaluation in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR). The alternative is a refinement of the Build Alternative evaluated in the Draft SEIS/SEIR. It includes the addition of the station at the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center and the refinements to alignment, stations, and traction power substations (TPSSs) developed in response to comments, coordination with agencies and stakeholders, and further engineering refinements.

The Refined Build Alternative would extend the Trolley Blue Line from Santa Fe Depot in Downtown San Diego to the University Towne Centre (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 Old Town Transit Center 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 Metropolitan Transit System and City of San Diego right-of-way from the Santa Fe Depot to north of the Interstate (I-) 5/State Route 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 California Department of Transportation 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 University of California, San Diego (UCSD) West Campus, cross back over to the east side of I-5 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 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 light rail transit vehicles. No new maintenance facilities would be 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 4-1 shows the project alignment and station locations under the Refined Build Alternative, and Figure 4-2 shows the plan and profile along with locations of stations and TPSSs.

The operating plan for the 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 4-1. Refined Build Alternative

Source: SANDAG, 2014
Figure 4-2. Conceptual Plan and Profile of Refined Build Alternative

Source: SANDAG, 2013
Figure 4-2. Conceptual Plan and Profile of Refined Build Alternative (continued)

Source: SANDAG, 2014