Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) began the meeting by reviewing the I-805 BRT/47th Street Trolley Station Area Planning Project and the work done to date by the project team and the Community Working Group. The project was introduced to the Community Working Group in March 2012. In June, the goals and objectives of the project were discussed and identified and in September, alternatives and screening criteria were developed. At the December 1st Field Trip and Lunch Meeting, the following alternatives were recommended for detailed analysis:

3C: Track Level, Off-Line Station, Left-Hand DAR, East Side Platform,
3H: Track Level, Off-Line Station, Flyover, East Side Platform,
3A: Track Level, In-Line Station, Left Hand DAR,
2A: Mid-Level, In-Line Station Side Platforms
1A: Freeway Level, In-Line Station Side Platforms
2C: Mid-Level, Off-Line Station, Flyover, East Side Platform, Tunnel Crossing Under Tracks, and
3BW: Track Level, Off-Line Station, Left Hand DAR, West Side BRT & West Side LRT Platforms

Based on the project objectives and initial evaluation criteria, the original 15 alternatives were scored and ranked. However, aside from ranking, a few alternatives were also selected in order to have a diverse set of alternatives for further analysis.

Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) reminded the Community Working Group that as we further analyze these alternatives, it is important to eliminate alternatives that are no longer viable due to significance of the impacts discussed.

April De Jesus (SANDAG) summarized three technical reports that were recently completed and can be found on the project website www.sandag.org/47thstreet:

- **Initial Screening Report** documents how the initial alternatives were developed and provides details on the recommendations of alternatives selected for detailed analysis. This report provides a general overview of each of the different types of alternatives, including the various opportunities and constraints of each alternative and their scoring.

- **Rail Facilities Technical Memorandum** addresses the existing rail facilities and impacts to them based on the proposed BRT alternatives. This memo also outlines the appropriate measures needed to further evaluate the preferred alternatives selected for detailed analysis. This
includes the overall impacts of moving the trolley platform westward, effects on bus and trolley operations, and the phasing of rebuilding the Greenwood Underpass.

- **Freeway Facilities Report** describes existing conditions and future existing conditions of freeway facilities, including constraints and assumptions relating to proposed project alternatives. This includes the phasing of Caltrans projects on I-805, and the additional impacts caused by our project after the second phase of the I-805 widening for the managed lanes, including the number of bridges each alternative will affect.

At the meeting on December 1st, the Community Working Group requested that the project team further analyze the potential for a bus stop on the West side of I-805 or an opportunity to provide access through a pedestrian path or vehicle road. Danielle discussed the West Side Alternatives analysis, and noted that the project team had been coordinating with Dann Narveson from SCI who owns the cemetery on the West side of the freeway. Danielle noted that SCI would consider selling some of the cemetery property closest to the freeway in order to provide access to the transit station.

A west side bus stop would be most efficient for pedestrian movements if the trolley platform was also relocated closer to the west side; however, it was found that moving the trolley platform would create the need for significant reconstruction and right of way acquisition, speed reductions in rail services including the need for single track operations during construction, and relocation of a substation. The substation is located west of I-805, north of the trolley tracks, on K Street at 44th Street. The project team proposed to eliminate the west sides alternatives, 3BW: Track Level, Off-Line Station, Left Hand DAR, West Side BRT & West Side LRT Platforms, due to the significant impacts and costs associated with a west side alternative. Danielle reiterated that the project team will continue to evaluate the opportunity for station access by vehicles, local bus services and parking on the west side. The Community Working Group, agreed to drop the West Side alternative after this discussion.

Fu Sun (CH2MHILL) briefly reviewed the I-805 BRT/47th Street Trolley Station Project Study Area and potential impacts to surrounding land uses, including the I-805, Chollas-Mead Elementary School, The Orange Line Trolley Tracks, Greenwood Cemetery, the YMCA, and the bridges for Market Street, Greenwood Underpass, Imperial Avenue and Ocean View Boulevard. Fu continued detailing impacts associated with each alternative.

The evaluated alternatives are shown in compliance with Caltrans’ design standards; as we move further in the project phases, we will consider requesting design exceptions from Caltrans to decrease the amount of impacts for evaluated alternatives.

All alternatives would have Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes in the median of the freeway, shifting the I-805 express lanes and general purpose lanes towards the outside of the freeway, and also include a pedestrian bridge at track level on the north or south side of Greenwood Underpass.

There is currently a Caltrans project on Interstate 805 which will expand the 2 HOV lanes currently under construction into 4 Managed Lanes. This Caltrans project does not require the rebuilding of bridges but pushes the width to the right-of-way limits. Our project would require additional right-of-way for transit
access to and from the station, and therefore, would require rebuilding some existing bridge infrastructure. In many cases, the bridges need to be replaced because we need to widen the freeway under existing bridges for more room on I-805 freeway.

- A community member mentioned that because the bridge decks need to be replaced, it may create an opportunity to fix a few concerns that the Community Working Group had mentioned in the past. For example, there is currently no pedestrian bridge at the Greenwood Underpass; this project would provide a solution to that concern.

- Derryl Williams (Groundworks) mentioned that there is a massive bottle neck at the Imperial Avenue off-ramp, and hopefully we can fix that issue with this project. Harwell Ontoy (Caltrans) mentioned that the current I-805 Caltrans project is now in phase 1, and phase 2 will address this issue and increase storage capacity on the ramp.

- Michael Brunker (YMCA) reminded the community working group that until the pedestrian path is built, we have to acknowledge that there are still people crossing under the creek via storm drains, and this issue still needs to be addressed. There is a lot of sediment dumping into Chollas Creek. Harwell Ontoy (Caltrans) mentioned that the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) project that is being done to comply with the Waste Load Allocation (WLA) under the Chollas Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). This project will include Best Management Practices, and is currently in the review process. For more information, please contact Sayra Ramos via e-mail at Sayra.ramos@dot.ca.gov

Fu Sun (CH2MHiI) discussed each remaining alternative in detail.

**Alternative 1A: Freeway Level, In-Line Station, Side Platforms**

Fu shared a photo simulation of the planned SR 15 Centerline Station platform which would be similar to this alternative. The BRT platform for this alternative would be in the freeway median, at freeway level. Similar to the planned SR 15 Centerline Stations, a sound wall would create a barrier between the general purpose lanes and the BRT platform in the freeway median. This alternative would have at-grade side platforms with stairs and two elevators at each platform to provide passengers access to and from the trolley platform. This alternative also would require the reconstruction of the Imperial Avenue and Greenwood Underpass bridge structures.

- This alternative is similar to the planned SR 15 Centerline Stations at El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue that the Community Working Group visited in December.

- Charles Davis asked if a lot of the hillside would be cut back because this alternative is in the middle of the freeway, and the Project Development Team confirmed.

**Alternative 2A: Mid-Level, In-Line Station**

This alternative is similar to alternative 1A, because the station platform would be in the freeway median; however, it will be raised at a vertical level between the freeway and the Greenwood
Underpass. The buses would drive up and down a ramp in order to elevate the buses to the mid-level station platforms, and passengers would walk up and down a ramp to the trolley track level at a grade that is ADA compliant. Having the passenger loading area at the mid-level eliminates the need for redundant elevators by providing a ramp that has an incline percentage in compliance with ADA. Similar to alternative 1A, this alternative would also require a bridge replacement for Imperial Avenue and the Greenwood Underpass bridge structure.

- Derryl Williams (Groundworks) mentioned a concern about someone in a wheel chair being able to wheel up the ramp from mid-level, since there are no elevators in this alternative. This alternative will have a ramp at less than a 5% grade incline, which meets the American Disabilities Act requirement.
- Barrow Emerson (SANDAG) reminded the community working group that as seen during the December field trip, the distance from the existing platform to the edge of the freeway is about a 3 minute walk.
- Fu Sun (Ch2MHILL) clarified that the height distance from the trolley tracks to freeway level is approximately 34 feet.
- Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) reminded the group that this alternative is attractive because it eliminates the need to maintain redundant elevators. It is an MTS standard that every platform will need access via two elevators if an elevator is needed. This allows access even if one elevator breaks down. Additionally, because we don’t want pedestrians to run across the tracks to catch a bus, an inline station would probably need two elevators on each side of the trolley tracks.

**Alternative 3A: Track Level, In-Line Station, Left Hand DAR**

This alternative is similar to 1A and 2A because the station platforms will be just above the freeway median; however, the platform will be at track-level, cantilevered above the express lanes south of the Greenwood Underpass. Similar to alternatives 1A and 2A, this alternative would require the replacement of Imperial Avenue and Greenwood Underpass bridge structures. This would also require the construction of a new direct access ramp in the freeway median that would bring the bus up to track level platforms. This alternative would require the bus to cross the tracks; however, trolley/rail services will always have priority.

- Michael Brunker (YMCA) informed the group that the northbound off-ramps from Imperial Avenue need to be re-evaluated and improved because in order to get onto I-805, cars need to merge over three lanes. Harwell Ontoy (Caltrans) stated that as we further evaluate alternatives, we will re-evaluate the standards of ramps to make sure we are in compliance with merging requirements. Phase 2 of the I-805 project which widens the freeway, will also address these issues. More information on this project can be found at:
  
A community member asked if the I-805 BRT/47th Street Trolley Station Area Project improvements would allow for buses and carpools. Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) clarified that these alternatives would create improvements solely for bus access.

A community member asked if we could share right-of-way with carpools in order to keep from widening I-805 even further. Barrow Emerson (SANDAG) clarified that the I-805 project widened because the forecasts require enough capacity for two managed lanes in each direction, and therefore, any additional uses would require additional widening.

**Alternative 3C: Track Level, Off-Line Station, Left-Hand DAR, East Side Platform**

Unlike the previously discussed alternatives, this alternative would create an offline station east of the freeway, at trolley level, directly adjacent to I-805 and closer to the 47th Street Trolley Station. Similar to previously discussed alternatives, this station would require the replacement of Imperial Avenue and Greenwood Underpass bridge structures. This alternative would require a new Direct Access Ramp (DAR) to provide buses access from BRT lanes at freeway level to the station platform at track level and also would need a connector bridge for vehicles and pedestrians from the DAR to the offline station. There are two options for the potential location of the BRT station: Option 1 includes a BRT station that is closer to the freeway; Option 2 includes a BRT station that is closer to the Trolley station and the bus will circle within a loop in the trolley station parking lot.

- Michael Brunker (YMCA) would like the Community Working Group to think about having an additional station at Imperial Avenue, so this project would be similar to the SR 15 “Centerline” Stations project that has a station at both El Cajon Boulevard and University Avenue.

**Alternative 3H: Track Level, Off-Line Station, Flyover, East Side Platform**

This alternative is similar to alternative 3C, because it has an offline station east of the freeway, at trolley level, directly adjacent to I-805 and closer to the 47th Street Trolley Station; however, this alternative would use a flyover to the off-line station, rather than a Direct Access Ramp. Benefits to the flyover are that there would be no need to replace the Greenwood Underpass and there will be less impact on the trolley operations during construction; however, the Ocean View Boulevard, Imperial Avenue and Market Street bridges would need to be replaced.

**Alternative 2C: Mid-Level, Off-Line Station, Flyover, East Side Platform, Tunnel Crossing Under Tracks**

Similar to 3H, this alternative would use a flyover to connect the bus from the managed lanes to the east side of I-805; however, rather than incline up to the track level, this alternative would include a tunnel at the mid-level between the track and freeway level. One advantage of this alternative is that there is no need for buses to cross the trolley tracks. This alternative requires the replacement of the Ocean View Boulevard, Imperial Avenue and Market Street bridges, and would also impact the Creekside Villa Apartments.

- Patrick Ambrosio (Tremont Apartments) suggested that this isn’t a good idea because it cuts into the apartment buildings.
Derryl Williams (Groundworks) asked if this tunnel would be similar to the one at SDSU. Fu Sun (Ch2MHILL) clarified that this one wouldn’t be nearly as deep. However, construction would be cut and cover, which means that the project would need to demolish and re-build significant portions of the housing which increases the costs. Derryl Williams suggested that this alternative be eliminated for that reason.

*Due to the major cost and impacts associated with Alternative 2C, the Community Working Group decided to eliminate this alternative.

The project team is now moving forward with evaluating five alternatives which will be re-numbered as the following:

1. Freeway Level, In-Line Station, Side Platforms (Formerly 1A)
2. Mid-Level, In-Line Station, Side Platforms (Formerly 2A)
3. Track Level, In-Line Station, Left Hand DAR (Formerly 3A)
4. Track Level, Off-Line Station, Left Hand DAR, East Side Platform (Formerly 3C)
5. Track Level, Off-line Station, Flyover East Side Platform(Formerly 3H)

Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) proposed that the project team move forward with the initial scoring and bring it back to the next Community Working Group meeting for discussion in approximately one month.

Derryl Williams (Groundworks) had asked if we are delaying schedule because of this process. Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) clarified that we are still on schedule with what we presented in our first Community Working Group Meeting. Our goal is to trim the alternatives down to 3-4 alternatives to take into a formal environmental document. The environmental phase will take approximately two years, followed by two years of design.

Dennis Wahl (IBI Group) discussed the matrix of detailed criteria that would be used for evaluation of the five alternatives. Evaluation criteria included:

- Transit Operations
  - Effect on BRT Ridership, trolley ridership and local services ridership: these criteria would be evaluated by looking at ridership variations from model output.
  - Effect on BRT Passenger Travel Time: this criterion would be evaluated based on changes in BRT travel time between on-line and offline stations using estimates similar to those done for the SR 15 Centerline Stations project in Mid-City.
  - Effect on BRT Operations: this criterion would be evaluated based on potential impacts from waiting for trains and circulating through the BRT station platform.
Effect on BRT Operating Costs: this criterion would be evaluated based on the differences in operating cost due to trip time variations

Effect on Security Costs: This criterion would be evaluated based on differences in security systems and personnel needs

- Station Design
  - Ease of Transfers between BRT and Trolley Services: This criterion would be evaluated based on walk time related to horizontal distances and vertical circulation
  - Pedestrian Circulation: this criterion would be evaluated based on distance and quality of connection between BRT and Trolley, local buses, drop off area, and parking
  - Passenger Security: This criterion will be evaluated based on line of sight, lighting, security equipment and operation, etc.

- Non-motorized Access
  - Pedestrian Access Opportunities: this criterion would be evaluated based on pedestrian experience to access the station including horizontal and vertical walking distances, quality of lighting along routes, directness of routes, protection for crossing major roadways, etc.
  - Bicycle Access Opportunities: this criterion would be evaluated based on the bicycle experience to accessing the station, including the availability of bicycle facilities and many of the pedestrian access considerations

- Transportation System Impacts
  - Effect on Connecting Transit Service Operating Cost and Transit Service Ridership: these criteria would be evaluated based on the effect of feeder service plan options
  - Effect on Freeway Operations: This criterion would be evaluated based on the potential for weaving of other impacts to traffic flow on the freeway

- Engineering Elements
  - Capital Costs: this criterion would be evaluated by comparing the capital costs using the Caltrans 11-page estimate
  - Constructability: this criterion would be evaluated based on the complexity of construction phases, bridge replacement requirements, effect on Trolley and Railroad operations
Design Exceptions within Caltrans Right of Way, within MTS/Railroad Right of Way: These criteria will be evaluated based on the need, nature, and the number of design exceptions.

PUC Requirements: this criterion will be evaluated based on the approvals/design requirements within the railroad right of way.

Right of Way/Easement Requirements: this criterion will be evaluated based on the need for Right of Way outside the freeway or railroad.

Environmental Impacts

Effect on adjacent land uses: this criterion will be evaluated based on the noise, visual, lighting spillover, and displacements to adjacent land uses.

Noise Impacts: this criterion will evaluate the potential impact to sensitive receptors.

Chollas Creek Hydrology & Water Quality: this criterion will be evaluated based on the change in criteria of creek covered, differences in water quality and treatments required.

Construction Impacts: this criterion will be evaluated based on the nature and duration of impacts during construction to freeway and railroad, transit passengers, residents, etc.

Visual Impacts: This criterion will be evaluated based on land form changes, need for retaining walls higher than 6’ view blockage, native vegetation removal, mature tree removal for both residents and freeway users.

Derryl Williams (Groundworks) asked why this project considers buses moving up the middle of the freeway rather than a train. Barrow Emerson (SANDAG) clarified that when we looked at the forecasted ridership, it didn’t have enough transit patronage for a trolley. However, rail is proposed in this corridor 40 years from now. A Bus Rapid Transit lane is more viable in the 2020 timeframe.

A community member suggested that MTS should consider a third rail line with these alternatives.

Derryl Williams (Groundworks) asked what type of engine these buses will have. Barrow Emerson (SANDAG) stated that the new buses being purchased for South Bay BRT will be CNG as an option with New Flyer from North Dakota.

Nan De Forrest (resident) suggested that the evaluation should include priorities based on the communities concerns. For example, security in this neighborhood is one of the most important elements needed for a transit station, and Chollas Creek is also a huge concern in comparison to construction impacts. Nan asked if there was a way to rank the criteria along with ranking alternatives.

Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) confirmed that the evaluation of alternatives will just serve as a basis for discussion, and the highest ranking alternatives don’t necessarily need to move forward to the
environmental phase. The Community Working Group will decide on selected alternatives with the matrix used as a tool towards getting the best alternative.

Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) re-emphasized that the key today is to make sure that there isn’t any criteria that was missed or not covered in the matrix.

- Patrick Ambrosio (Tremont Apartments) would like to see an alternative that will increase surrounding property values. He explained that using the SR 15 Mid-City Centerline Stations project as an example, the alternatives in the environmental document showed changes to the freeway environment and didn’t have much impact on the surrounding community, because those changes will come after the construction of the transit station.

A community member asked if it would still be possible to have a station north of the tracks for alternative 3C. Danielle Kochman (SANDAG) confirmed that we evaluated both the north and south locations, and stayed with the south side because there would be less retaining wall needs.

A community member stated concern about the coordination between all the planning projects in the Southeast San Diego Community. Karen Bucey (City of San Diego) mentioned that all entities involved with planning in this region have been coordinating on a monthly basis. Sherry Brooks (Civic San Diego) stated that the SANDAG Smart Growth Map designates this area as a community center, and we should look at infrastructure that supports that adjacent to this project site. Barrow Emerson (SANDAG) reminded the Community Working Group that the I-805 BRT/47th Street Trolley Station Area project will provide additional transit services to the area and other agencies will take the lead on redevelopment. Michael Brunker (YMCA) reminded the group that the trolley came before Market Creek Plaza.

The group wrapped up the meeting by discussing the next steps for this project, which to bring initial scoring back to the Community Working Group for feedback, then eventually selecting alternatives to move into the environmental phase.