FINAL
FY 2005-2009
REGIONAL SHORT-RANGE
TRANSIT PLAN

April 15, 2005
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As of April 6, 2005
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

With its warm weather and superb quality of life, San Diego County has become one of the most attractive and fastest growing regions in the country. Over one million new people and half a million new jobs are anticipated over the next 30 years. With this growth come the byproducts of a healthy economy. Unchecked, streets and freeways will become more congested, commute times will increase, and people will be traveling longer distances.

MOBILITY 2030, San Diego’s blueprint for its transportation system, envisions a truly multimodal transportation network that will support our future mobility needs. With a heavy emphasis on developing a world-class transit system to support “smart growth” communities with higher-density and mixed-use development, nearly one half of the region’s transportation investments over the life of the TransNet Extension ordinance will help fund projects that improve or support the regional transit system.

While it is important to develop new transit services to support the region’s growth, it is equally important to maintain and optimize the existing system to address current travel demands, improve the quality of service for our existing riders, and enhance its appeal to new rider markets. In this era of fiscal constraints and increasing operating costs, we are faced with hard decisions on how best to balance the vision of transit in the future with the fiscal and operational reality of today.

WHAT IS THE REGIONAL SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT PLAN?

The Regional Short-Range Transit Plan (RSRTP) proposes how the region should balance the short-term needs of maintaining and optimizing existing services, while beginning to implement the long-term transit vision identified in MOBILITY 2030. As such, the RSRTP provides a framework for transit system development over the next five years. Previously, North San Diego County Transit Development Board (NCTD) and the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) prepared separate SRTPs for their respective jurisdictions. As a result of Senate Bill 1703 (Peace), the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) has assumed the transit planning oversight and programming and construction responsibilities for the region, including the preparation of a consolidated RSRTP. The FY 2005-2009 RSRTP provides the framework and guidelines for consolidated transit planning throughout the region, reflecting the goals and direction for transit service development as described in MOBILITY 2030.

The RSRTP serves six primary purposes:

1. It establishes regional guidelines for short-range transit improvements and adjustments within the context of the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Transit Vision;

2. It defines the goals and objectives for transit service and capital development;

3. It provides an evaluation of current and future travel demand, the existing transit system, and identifies deficiencies and gaps in service;

4. It prioritizes operating expenditures to maintain and improve the regional transit system;

5. It supports SANDAG’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP), as well as state and federal grant applications; and
6. It coordinates with and guides the Transportation Development Act (TDA) claims approval process and the MTS and NCTD budget development processes.

WHERE DOES THE RSRTP FIT IN THE REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS?

As the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and regional transportation planning agency (RTPA), SANDAG is responsible for developing long-range strategic plans, including the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As the region’s vision for growth, the RCP focuses on addressing and balancing the interconnected issues of achieving more walkable and mixed-use communities, greater housing supply and affordable housing, a healthy ecosystem, a prosperous economy, better coordination on borders issues, and greater transportation choices to reduce the dependence on automobiles.

To support this vision, SANDAG’s RTP, MOBILITY 2030, provides a blueprint for the development and management of a multimodal transportation system over the next 30 years. As the transportation component of the RCP, MOBILITY 2030 provides the foundation for better land use coordination, system management, demand management, and multimodal system development. The plan includes a five-year, $25 million Smart Growth incentive program to foster the integration of smart growth land uses and transportation facilities, acknowledging the need for better land use and transportation coordination to more efficiently and effectively serve the region’s communities and businesses. System management through the use of high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, advanced technology, and programs such as the Freeway Service Patrol (roving tow trucks aimed at easing congestion by removing disabled vehicles from freeways during rush hours) will maximize the efficiency of the transportation infrastructure. RideLink, the region’s transportation demand management program, and the Congestion Management Program will be used to manage travel demand during peak hours.

Finally, MOBILITY 2030 outlines an investment strategy that balances the development of automobile and transit infrastructure for a truly multimodal transportation system. Nearly one half of the transportation investments identified in the plan are focused on improving and supporting the region’s transit system, including the development of a network of high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes, managed lanes (lanes for carpools, buses, and paying single-occupant automobiles), several high-speed and reliable transit services to connect San Diegans to major employment and activity centers, and advanced technology that enhances the travel experience for riders. MOBILITY 2030 is based on a reasonably-expected revenue scenario, which includes the extension of the region’s half-cent sales tax for transportation projects through 2048 (confirmed by the passage of the TransNet Extension in November 2004), and other public funding is increased based on historical trends. The RTP also includes a revenue-constrained and unconstrained scenario.

The RSRTP supports the vision of MOBILITY 2030 by providing guidelines, goals, and a short-term (five years) plan for transit system adjustments and enhancements. As a revenue-constrained plan, the RSRTP identifies and establishes priorities for specific service, operational, and capital improvements that balance the goals of maintaining a productive and cost effective transit system with implementing enhancements envisioned in MOBILITY 2030. These improvements are then forwarded to the annual budget process for adoption. The short-term nature of the RSRTP allows SANDAG the opportunity to annually adjust these investment priorities between maintenance and enhancements based on system monitoring, available funding, and operational constraints.
ABOUT THIS RSRTP

The contents of this RSRTP are organized into the following six chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the RSRTP, and describes the role of the RSRTP in the regional planning process.

- Chapter 2 presents SANDAG’s strategic vision for the future of transit in San Diego, and describes the processes and guidelines governing transit service planning and development in the region, including guidelines for short-range service development.

- Chapter 3 describes the existing and potential travel demand for transit in San Diego, including population and employment growth, major activity centers, travel patterns, and changing demographics.

- Chapter 4 provides a description of the existing transit services in the region, and identifies challenges and opportunities facing transit provision in the region.

- Chapter 5 presents the goals and objectives guiding transit planning and development for the next five years, and evaluates the region’s transit system in meeting them.

- Chapter 6 identifies the unmet transit needs in the region and the FY 2006 service adjustments identified to address these gaps and deficiencies.

In addition to this document, a complementary Technical Appendix presents the following:

- History of SANDAG, MTDB, NCTD, and MTS (Appendix A);
- Inventory of the existing transit system, including services, rolling stock, and capital facilities (Appendix B);
- FY 2005 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Performance Improvement Recommendations (Appendix C);
- FY 2004 operating statistics by route (Appendix D);
- Historical operating statistics by transit operator (Appendix E);
- Title VI assessment (Appendix F);
- SANDAG Policy No. 18 (Appendix G); and
- Performance in Achieving Last Year’s Goals and Objectives (Appendix H).

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

Information on the RSRTP, MOBILITY 2030, RCP, and other SANDAG programs is available at www.sandag.org. Outreach efforts for the RSRTP will be consistent with SANDAG Policy No. 25, Public Participation/Involvement Policy. This policy covers the public participation and public information efforts in development planning, design and construction, transit service, and fare changes. Applicable applications for the RSRTP include outreach efforts, the use of press releases, Web site updates, and opportunities to address the SANDAG Board of Directors.
CHAPTER 2: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

REGIONAL TRANSIT VISION

Although more than 320,000 daily trips are made on the region’s bus, trolley, and rail services, transit trips account for approximately 3 percent of all the region’s trips. However, close to 20 percent of peak-period trips to downtown San Diego are made by transit and approximately 16 percent of trips in the downtown to International Border corridor are on transit, indicating that in areas where a high level of transit service is provided, transit can accommodate a significant portion of travel demand. Still, with a relatively short duration of peak-period congestion, ample parking, limited or no transit service to developing parts of the region, and an automobile-oriented land use pattern, there is little doubt as to why the majority of trips are made by single-occupant vehicles. In fact, the most recent survey of transit riders indicates that the majority of regular riders use transit because they have no other travel alternative. But, when transit is competitive with the auto and/or meets traveler needs, a higher percent take transit. For example, nearly 90 percent of the riders on the 800-series commuter express routes (traveling on the I-15 HOV lane) have an auto available for their travel, and for the Coaster the figure is over 80 percent. In addition, the COASTER provides the equivalent of an extra lane on I-5 at peak times, thereby enhancing transportation capacity in the corridor.

With the significant population growth projected over the next 30 years, public transportation will need to play an increased role in serving San Diego’s mobility needs. As the region grows, so will the demand on its land use and transportation infrastructure. In some instances, people will be living further and further away from their jobs. As the length and duration of their commutes increase, so will the geographic extent and duration of congestion. In other cases, urban villages will be developed that will promote walking, biking, and transit for commute as well as non-commute trips. To effectively address the increased congestion and travel demand from this growth, the region must focus appropriate levels of investment towards enhancing and expanding the transit system consistent with travel demand and in a way to entice new traveler markets to transit.

The SANDAG Board adopted the Regional Transit Vision (RTV) in late 2001, which was incorporated into the Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan in April 2003, to help guide the future development of transit in the San Diego region. The RTV was developed as a collaborative effort between SANDAG, MTDB, NCTD, Caltrans, local jurisdictions, and a 50-member Citizens Advisory Committee for Transportation. In addition, extensive market research was conducted throughout the region to learn more about the attitudes and preferences that influence San Diegans’ daily travel choices. This research identified three primary service qualities important to residents: (1) speed and flexibility, (2) travel experience, and (3) personal safety.

Service Concept

Based on input from partner agencies and the public, SANDAG developed the RTV as a network of fast, flexible, reliable, safe, and convenient transit services that link residential areas with major employment and activity centers. This network is comprised of four service concepts: neighborhood, local, corridor, and regional. A description of each concept follows (see Figure 2.1).
Neighborhood Services
This service type is designed to facilitate community-level trip making and would provide neighborhood circulation, feeder access to medium- and long-distance services, and/or specialized service (e.g., for senior citizens unable to drive). Neighborhood services would likely use vehicles that are smaller than traditional buses, and have an average stop spacing of 1/4 mile.

Local Services
This service type will serve local trip needs, resulting in lower travel speeds (10 to 15 mph) and more frequent stops (1/4 to 3/8 mile average spacing). These services are designed as the basic mobility network for the region. Most of the existing bus system operates as this type of service.

Corridor Services
This service type focuses on facilitating medium-distance trip making. This service maintains relatively high average speeds (20 to 25 mph) and operates with limited stops (3/4 to 1 mile average spacing) primarily on major arterials. Corridor services will serve as the spine of the regional transit system.

Regional Services
Given that many trips in the region are longer distance, this service type maintains high average speeds (35 to 40 mph) and operates with very limited stops (more than three miles between stops, on average) on freeways and major arterials. Regional services will operate as the primary transit in corridors where longer station spacing is justified based on longer-distance travel patterns (e.g., I-15 corridor), or as an overlay for corridor services where a faster, more limited-stop service is justified to handle high-volume, long-distance trip needs. These routes would focus on serving key employment sites and major trip attractions.

Together, these four service concepts can provide a system of public transportation that meets the distinct travel needs of the region’s various travel markets.

**Figure 2.1 Regional Transit Vision Service Concepts**
Factors Influencing the Future of Transit

The success of the RTV in relieving congestion and preserving our quality of life hinges on the region’s success in pursuing the following four complementary efforts.

Capital and Operations Funding
Both capital and sustainable operating funds will be required to realize the optimum network of transit services envisioned under the RTV. Transit infrastructure, including vehicles, right-of-way, guideways, stops and stations, transit centers, maintenance yards, and storage facilities, require capital investment. In addition, capital funding is needed to maintain and replace past investments in transit infrastructure as the existing system ages. The level of capital funding secured will be a prime determinant of how much transit can grow. The second part of the funding picture involves funding for transit service operations. Virtually all transit services in the U.S. require funding subsidies to provide day-to-day services. Significant increases in ongoing local funding for operations will be required to support any major increase in the level and quality of transit service provided in the region. A 40-year extension of the local TransNet sales tax was approved by San Diego County voters in November 2004. This program will provide both capital and operations funding for numerous Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services and the Mid-Coast LRT line. It also includes some growth in operating funds to support the existing transit services.

Land Use Coordination
The success of any transit service is linked to regional and local land use patterns. Low-density development, big box retail, and auto-oriented urban design (e.g., narrow sidewalks, wide intersections, limited pedestrian facilities and lack of human scale) decrease the attractiveness and effectiveness of transit. For the RTV to be successful, SANDAG and the region’s local jurisdictions must be committed to focusing higher-intensity development along major travel corridors, in established urban areas, and near major transit centers. In addition, the region will need to focus on improving the pedestrian orientation and urban design of our communities to facilitate access to and from transit facilities. This should also include the siting of public facilities such as schools and hospitals which will need to involve other governments’ agencies such as school districts and hospital districts. Through the strategic initiatives included in the RCP, SANDAG is establishing policies, programs and activities to work in partnership with local jurisdictions to better coordinate transit and land use planning. These include participation agreements between SANDAG and local governments, an intergovernmental review process for long-range plans, development regulations, and development projects. SANDAG will also proactively solicit involvement in the preparation of regional plans and forecasts, and the identification of smart growth areas.

Transit Priority Measures
As traffic congestion increases throughout the region, transit priority measures (e.g., HOV or managed lanes on freeways, transit-only lanes, queue jumpers at intersections, and signal priority measures on arterial streets) will become increasingly important for providing fast, reliable, and cost-effective transit service. Priority measures will allow transit services to travel faster than automobiles through congested corridors, while the faster and more reliable travel times will allow transit operators to provide dependable and efficient services. SANDAG will work with local jurisdictions and transit agencies to develop demonstration projects to showcase the travel benefit of transit priority. For example, SANDAG and the transit agencies will be undertaking projects in North University City and Escondido to examine the feasibility of traffic signal priority.

Advanced Technology
Advances in technology should be employed to enhance the passenger's travel experience and to promote the efficient operation of service. Advanced design vehicles and “smart fare card” technology will allow for easier and speedier boarding and alighting. Real-time transit vehicle arrival information will provide reassurance to waiting passengers and promote a more relaxed waiting environment. SANDAG
currently has programs underway to deploy both the smart card fare system and the real-time vehicle information.

Together, these transit supportive efforts will result in increased ridership through better quality of service, and will improve operational efficiency.

**SERVICE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

SANDAG Policy No. 18, Regional Transit Service Planning, was adopted in September 2004 and specifies the transit service planning responsibilities of the consolidated agency and the transit agencies, and outlines a framework for transit service planning. The policy allows the transit system to quickly and efficiently respond to changes in travel demand and operating/fiscal environment, while ensuring that the system is adjusted and developed consistent with longer-range regional transportation and land use goals as incorporated into the RCP, the RTP, and the RSRTP. As a result, transit service revisions that relate directly to implementation of regional goals (regionally significant service changes) are generally those that:

- Support regional travel demand corridors that cross transit agency jurisdictional boundaries;
- Support inter-jurisdictional trip making (i.e., are consistent with the guidelines contained in the RSRTP; for example, would support and enhance geographic connections, provide timed transfers, and maintain or expand the frequency/service span of such services); and
- Can be implemented within the transit agency’s adopted budget or with new available operating resources.

SANDAG will ensure that all proposed service and operational changes comply with the policy. Any non-compliance will be resolved prior to the implementation of the change.

**REGIONAL SHORT-RANGE PLANNING PROCESS**

The short-range planning process outlined in SANDAG Policy No. 18 provides a framework for systematically adjusting services to meet changes in travel demand and operating constraints, while promoting service enhancements to attract new market segments. This process is based on collaborative planning principles that promote customer and stakeholder involvement from inception through implementation. In addition, quantitative methods are employed to ensure consistency and objectivity in service development and evaluation. SANDAG’s short-range planning process consists of five primary functions:

- Providing Guidance and Establishing Goals and Objectives
- Developing Service Adjustments
- Evaluating and Prioritizing New and Revised Service Changes
- Implementing New and Revised Services
- Monitoring

Each of these functions is described in detail below.
**Guidance**

The RSRTP, consistent with SANDAG’s RTP and RCP, is drafted annually by SANDAG, in consultation with the transit agencies. The RSRTP provides the framework, guidance, goals, and objectives for service planning during the upcoming year and balances the immediate needs of optimizing the transit system in response to operational and financial constraints, with the mid-/long-range system development goals established in the long-range plans.

**Develop Service Adjustments**

Service changes and new services are planned and developed to address deficiencies and gaps in the existing system, accommodate changes in travel demand, attract new riders, optimize existing services, reflect changes to the operating and fiscal environment, respond to customer comments and requests, and begin to implement and support services envisioned in the long-range plans. Planning studies and analyses are initiated as a result of system monitoring, public comments, regional goals and funding priorities, fiscal constraints, and forecasted growth throughout the region. Planning studies range from minor route analyses to subregional service restructuring and major corridor studies and are conducted by both the transit agencies and SANDAG. Regardless of the magnitude of analysis, all studies include a definition of goals, identification of the issue or deficiency to be addressed, and a prioritized list of recommended service improvements and adjustments. Stakeholder advisory committees and community groups provide input throughout the planning process to ensure that all issues are addressed, and to assist in the development of recommendations. In addition, final recommendations are presented to the transit agencies and SANDAG for adoption. The transit service planning process, including the public hearing process and role of the transit agencies and SANDAG, is described in detail in SANDAG Policy No. 18, Regional Transit Service Planning (included in Appendix G).

SANDAG’s focus in planning transit system and service changes is on establishing a policy framework, including development of regional goals and objectives, developing and evaluating service proposals within that framework, ensuring consistency of transit service proposals and changes with regional goals and objectives, and approving transit agency operating budgets for funding. At the direction of the Transportation Committee, revisions to Policy No. 18: Regional Transit Service Planning, were adopted in March 2005 affecting the service planning roles and responsibilities for SANDAG and the transit agencies. The Policy No. 18 revisions transferred the responsibility for service change public hearings to the transit agencies. Prior to a public hearing, SANDAG will conduct an administrative review of major and regionally significant service changes to determine that the service proposals are consistent with regional policies, goals, and objectives, or to make a finding of overriding considerations if the proposals are inconsistent with regional policies. The checklist in Table 2.1 provides guidance for evaluating consistency. Transit agencies will advise SANDAG of local or minor service changes prior to implementation. Transit system and service planning issues will be brought to the SANDAG Transportation Committee for discussion and direction, if appropriate.

Every year, service proposals are consolidated into a regional Service Implementation Plan and evaluated to establish priorities based on regional goals and funding availability. Service proposals must be funded through the transit agencies’ budgets prior to implementation, as described in the next section.
Table 2.1 Regional Consistency Checklist

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<td>Requires Unbudgeted Operating Subsidy or Funding Reallocation</td>
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<td>Addresses a Known Gap or Deficiency</td>
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<td>Positive Effect on Network Connectivity</td>
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<td>Meets Performance Standards</td>
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<td>Positive Effect on Major Capital Facility (e.g., Transit Center or Rail Line)</td>
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<td>Advance &amp; Support Smart Growth</td>
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<td>Consistent w/SANDAG Plans &amp; Policies</td>
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Evaluation and Approval

Once the regional Service Implementation Plan is developed by SANDAG and the region’s transit agencies, it is considered for implementation during the annual budget development process. This process begins in January each year, and concludes six months later when the SANDAG Board approves the transit agencies’ budgets for funding for the upcoming fiscal year. During this budget process, service enhancements identified in the regional service improvement plan are considered for implementation based on the priorities identified through the RSRTP planning process and funding availability. The Service Implementation Plan is adopted by SANDAG as part of the RSRTP.

This year projected operating revenues are unlikely to be sufficient to support increases in service. In fact, ongoing operating budget deficits may result in reductions in services to balance operating budgets. The SANDAG Board may evaluate the use of non-recurring revenues (e.g., one-time capital funds and reserves), fare increases, and/or service reductions proposed by the transit agencies to balance the transit operating budgets. MTS is conducting a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) in FY 2005 to restructure services to be more efficient, reduce operating subsidy requirements, and establish a financially sustainable level of service. The service change proposals resulting from the COA will be considered by SANDAG over the next several years. Any budget-balancing actions would be considered with the goals of minimizing impact to existing riders, maintaining lifeline levels of service throughout the region, and maintaining network connectivity. A public hearing will be held at the transit agencies prior to the adoption of any major service reduction to provide a forum for the public to comment on the proposed service changes.

Implementation

Service changes, whether improvements or reductions, are implemented during one of three regularly scheduled service changes each year, held in the fall, winter, and spring. Transit operators are responsible for implementation, which may include installing or removing stops, ensuring vehicles are available, scheduling, driver bidding, developing maps and timetables, and marketing. Transit operators are also responsible for notifying the public of service changes, usually in the form of written notification provided aboard vehicles or within ride guides.
Monitoring

SANDAG and the region’s transit agencies and operators continuously monitor the transit system to ensure that services meet the travel needs of the public, quality of service is maintained and improved, and service is provided cost-effectively. The transit agencies and individual operators focus on the day-to-day operations of their specific routes, and monitor the impacts of the current operating environment on the performance of their services. Impacts may include delays due to traffic congestion, detours resulting from construction, as well as heavy passenger loads due to school bell times, summer tourist travel, and military presence. Ongoing and annual route evaluations provide the transit agencies and operators with an in-depth understanding of the performance of each route, and include recommendations for improving under-performing routes and enhancing higher-performing routes. In addition, operators evaluate the cost impact and cost-effectiveness of their operation through monthly and quarterly budget monitoring reports, which compare budgeted expenses to actual costs. Data sources for operator monitoring include customer, driver, and supervisor comments, trips and route level passenger counts, and a series of reports detailing operating statistics such as revenue miles and hours, schedule reliability, road calls and missed trips, overtime hours employed, fuel and maintenance costs, and fare revenue.

While operators focus on their specific operations, SANDAG monitors transit service and operations on a transit agency and systemwide level. SANDAG undertakes two performance monitoring programs to systematically evaluate transit agency and systemwide performance: a quarterly report on transit agency performance and operating trends, and the annual Performance Improvement Program (PIP). The quarterly report provides an evaluation of the changes in transit agency and operator-level performance and efficiency, including reasons for upward or downward trends. Through the PIP, SANDAG evaluates each transit agency’s and operator’s efforts towards meeting performance targets and implementing annual operational improvements agreed upon by SANDAG and the agency/operator to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit system in line with the goals and objectives of the RSRTP and RTP. A detailed description of each performance monitoring program is presented in Chapter 5.

In addition to these formal monitoring programs, the transit agencies and operators receive and respond to comments from the public on transit services and service changes. Each comment is investigated and, if appropriate and feasible, service changes are made to address the comment or kept for future consideration. The transit agencies share these comments and responses with SANDAG for future transit system assessments and updates to the RSRTP.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARTNER AGENCIES

Interagency coordination is essential for SANDAG to successfully fulfill its roles and responsibilities for guiding, planning, funding, and monitoring improvements to transit services and facilities. Coordination with partner agencies ensures that SANDAG’s programs, services, and facilities complement and are consistent with other local, regional, and state efforts. This collaboration also helps SANDAG to better understand and address concerns expressed by partner agencies and key stakeholders, resulting in greater cooperation and support for SANDAG efforts. Most interagency relationships are maintained at the local and state levels, as described below. In addition, SANDAG coordinates with federal agencies for conformance and funding.
Local Level Coordination

Transit Agencies
SANDAG sets policy for service planning and fare setting for the region’s transit agencies and operators. SANDAG coordinates the various implementation efforts of the region’s transit agencies to ensure that seamless and unified service is provided to the public. This coordination is achieved through cooperative agreements such as the Comprehensive Fare Ordinance, coordinating committees comprised of SANDAG and operator staff such as the Regional Transit Management Committee and committees established for specific planning and project purposes. In addition, transit agencies are involved in various aspects of SANDAG planning, engineering, and finance activities.

Local Jurisdictions
To ensure consistency with local jurisdiction plans and programs, SANDAG coordinates its transit service planning activities with the 18 cities in the County and the County of San Diego. In addition, the City of San Diego provides two staff members to serve as planning and engineering liaisons between SANDAG and the City of San Diego. SANDAG policies and programs promote pedestrian and transit-oriented development through long-range plans, memorandums of understanding (MOUs), development project review, zoning and street design manual updates, right-of-way protection and acquisition, fund programming, education, and outreach.

State Level Coordination

Caltrans
Caltrans is responsible for transportation planning, engineering, and construction of state facilities. To enhance coordination, Caltrans provides SANDAG with an engineering liaison located at SANDAG. Caltrans also maintains oversight responsibilities for various state and federal funding programs. SANDAG enjoys a cooperative partnership with Caltrans District 11, particularly on large construction projects, including the I-15 Managed Lanes/BRT Project and the Mission Valley East LRT extension. This year, in collaboration with SANDAG, Caltrans is conducting a demonstration project on segments of Interstate 805 and SR 52 to convert freeway shoulder lanes to transit-only lanes.

Coordinating Committees

Interagency coordination is established and maintained through ad hoc and standing committees at both the staff and Board levels. Table 2.2 provides a list of committees through which SANDAG coordinates its activities.
Board of Directors (BOD) – The Board of Directors is the governing body responsible for establishing all of the agency’s policies and programs. The Directors are elected officials—either a mayor, councilmember, or supervisor from each of the region’s 18 incorporated cities and the county. Voting is based upon membership and the population of each jurisdiction, providing for a more accountable and equitable representation of the region’s residents. Representatives from Imperial County, Caltrans, the U.S. Department of Defense, the San Diego Unified Port District, the San Diego County Water Authority, MTS, NCTD, and a representative from the Republic of Mexico serve on the Board as non-voting, advisory members.

Transportation Committee (TC) – The nine-member Transportation Committee has delegated authority from the SANDAG Board of Directors to act and advise on major policy-level matters related to transportation. Committee members provide oversight and approval for the consolidated transportation responsibilities, including transportation infrastructure projects, transportation and transit plans, transportation project priorities, Transportation Development Act claims and amendments to regional and state transportation improvement programs, and transit operator budgets. The committee consists of Board members or alternates representing North County Coastal, North County Inland, East County, South County, the City of San Diego, a supervisor from the County of San Diego, plus one member each from the Boards of MTS and NCTD, and the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. There is also one advisory member representing Caltrans.

Regional Transit Management Committee (RTMC) – Provides management level coordination among SANDAG and the transit agencies on issues related to transit service planning, policies and major transit developments for the San Diego region; deals with broad issues related to financing, legislation, planning, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service issues; composed of general managers and senior staff from both MTS and NCTD, and the fixed-route transit operators in the MTS area; meets once a month.

Joint Committee on Regional Transit (JCRT) – Consists of three board members each from MTS and NCTD, who meet periodically to discuss ways of better integrating the two transit systems and act as the advisory committee on regional consolidation. A member of the SANDAG Transportation Committee participates as a non-voting member.

Technical Working Groups – Committees comprised of operators, jurisdictions, and other stakeholders developed for specific planning studies to review deliverables, and provide input and directions for work.

Regional Short-Range Transit Plan Working Group – Coordinates on development of the annual RSRTP including the Service Implementation Plan.

Subcommittee on Accessible Transportation (SCAT) – Administered by SANDAG; makes recommendations on regional accessible transit operational issues; meets quarterly; membership consists of representatives from the region’s transit operators, senior and disabled persons, and the public and nonprofit agencies serving them.

Accessible Services Advisory Committee (ASAC) – Monitors accessibility in operations and service procedures and makes recommendations on implementation of Complementary Paratransit Plan; comprised of operators, social service agencies, and consumers; meets six to eight times per year.

Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Working Group – Administered by SANDAG, this group advises on facility improvements related to bike and pedestrian uses.
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC

To better serve the travel demands of the San Diego region, SANDAG encourages public participation at all levels of transit planning, development, and implementation. On November 19, 2004, SANDAG adopted Policy No. 25, Public Participation/Involvement Policy Outreach. This policy covers the public participation and public information efforts in development planning, design and construction, transit service, and fare changes. It includes discussion of the overall public participation process and Native American consultation. Applications for the RSRTP include reports to the Transportation Committee with opportunities for the public to address the Transportation Committee, Web site updates, and a public hearing on the plan at the Transportation Committee.

Consistent with Policy No. 25, SANDAG’s Public Participation/Involvement Program informs and involves citizens in various agency programs, projects, and work activities. Since this program also assists in identifying and resolving environmental justice and social equity issues, special outreach is provided to lower income households, minorities, persons with disabilities, representatives from community and service organizations, tribal councils, and other public agencies. Citizen participation objectives include involvement of interested citizens, stakeholders, and representatives of community organizations in agency work through timely workshops on topical issues, fully noticed public hearings, and ongoing broad citizen/organization involvement in the planning and decision processes.

Prior to a public hearing on proposed transit service changes at the transit agencies, SANDAG will determine that the service proposals are consistent with regional policies, goals, and objectives, or make a finding of overriding considerations if the proposals are inconsistent with regional policies. Following this action, the transit operators hold a public hearing as part of their Board meetings to solicit public comment on proposed service changes.

Board members and staff regularly make presentations to various leadership, civic, and community groups about transportation issues and solutions. Board members and staff proactively provide information to the general public through Web sites (www.sandag.org and www.sdcommute.com), public notices and display advertisements in general circulation and minority/community newspapers, newsletters, report synopses, Take Ones/Rider Alerts on transit vehicles Rideguides, and news releases. In addition, SANDAG sponsors public outreach events to promote transportation programs and gauge public opinion on transportation and other regional needs. Special workshops and other forums are offered as needed to focus attention on individual projects and encourage the public’s involvement. Policy No. 18 and SANDAG’s Public Participation/Involvement Program meets federal transportation planning process regulations.
CHAPTER 3: THE NEED FOR TRANSIT

We don’t need to wait for the future to feel the effects of regional growth. As streets and roads become more congested during longer periods of the day and affordable housing continues to be pushed further away from our city centers, people must spend more time traveling, thus eroding their quality of life and the quality of the region. As we prepare for the future we must strive to reverse this negative impact of growth by improving the region’s mobility.

During the last 20 years, the growth in travel demand has consistently outpaced the growth in population and employment, and this trend is expected to continue through 2030. Like most metropolitan areas experiencing rapid growth, the San Diego region has not been able to keep up with the demand for travel. Many of the region’s major transportation facilities are operating at or beyond their capacity, and we cannot expect that building new roads and freeways will solve all of our transportation problems. We must also maximize the efficiency of the region’s transportation system by focusing on moving people (person throughput) rather than vehicles (vehicle throughput). The best way to increase person throughput is with a robust transit system.

As with any service, designing a successful transit system begins with a comprehensive understanding of peoples’ travel demands. Where are they coming from? Where do they want to go? When do they want to travel? What travel factors are important to them – speed, safety, comfort, cost, reliability, etc.? Answering these questions will allow us to make the most of our transit resources by providing the appropriate services to the areas and during the times that match the public’s transportation demands.

UNDERSTANDING OUR CURRENT AND POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

Since market research forms the backbone of any private sector development and investment strategy, SANDAG conducts periodic surveys to support the planning and development of transit services in the region. A telephone survey of residents and an on-board survey of transit riders are both conducted every three to five years, with the most recent ones completed within the last few years. These surveys help us better understand who our current riders are, why people use or don’t use transit, and what changes we should make to improve service for our existing riders and to attract new riders.

Based on the most recent resident survey completed in 2003, 85 percent of respondents have ridden transit in the region, and 51 percent used transit sometime within the past 12 months. However, only 9 percent indicated that they use transit regularly – at least once per week. These statistics indicate that the majority of people who used transit within the past year are occasional riders who use transit to get to Qualcomm Stadium, special events in downtown San Diego, or due to special circumstances.

While many types of people use the region’s transit services and for different purposes, the typical transit rider fits a much narrower profile. When we look closer at the survey results of our regular transit riders, we notice two defining characteristics – in general, they are from low income households and do not have regular access to a car. According to the 2003 onboard survey, over half of all respondents were from households that earn less than $20,000 per year, with close to 66 percent earning under $30,000 per year. Meanwhile, San Diego’s 2003 median household income is nearly around $50,000. The survey also indicated that almost three quarters of all respondents did not have access to a car for the trip they were

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1 One exception is the average Coaster commuter train rider who generally comes from a higher income household and has regular access to a car.
making, and 65 percent of them came from households with one or no automobile. In addition, 40 percent of our riders are under 30 years of age.

The demographics for Corridor Services like Coaster and I-15 HOV lane express buses are different than other services. Operating experience in San Diego has shown that providing higher-quality transit that has its own priority (i.e., bypasses congestion) can attract a choice rider market. This ability to attract choice riders shows promise for achieving the RTP’s goals of getting more people on transit, thereby expanding the capacity of the transportation infrastructure without building roads, by moving people, not cars. Also, transit mode split into downtown San Diego approaches 20 percent for peak periods and mode split in the I-5 South Bay corridor is approximately 16 percent, demonstrating that where good transit service is provided, people use it. These results show that investments in transit, transit priority, and amenities can attract people to transit and help improve mobility – a key goal of the RTP. Consistent with the RTV, a variety of transit services (i.e., Transit First) is needed to both serve transit dependents and attract choice riders.

Based on our most recent resident and onboard survey, we can see that our current ridership is mostly transit-dependent, with the exception of the Coaster commuter rail passengers and I-15 express bus riders, where approximately 80 percent have a car available to make the trip and higher than average incomes. This research indicates that, on the basic transit system, people use our service because they have no other alternative. This point is emphasized by the fact that our household survey found that nearly 60 percent of our past riders stopped using transit as soon as they bought or repaired a car. In fact, 39 percent of them stopped using transit because it took too long, while 33 percent said that the service was inconvenient. Others did not like their travel experience onboard transit.

The market research conducted for the development of Transit First shows that improving the speed and schedule reliability of service by providing transit travel priority to avoid traffic congestion are the most important transit improvements for both existing and potential riders. For existing riders, improving the access of our services, both geographic and temporal (days and hours of service) is also an important factor, since they are largely transit-dependent. For our potential market of “choice” riders (people with various travel options) we must also focus on providing a travel experience that is competitive with the automobile. Addressing all of these criteria will allow us to improve service for our existing riders as well as attract new riders.

If a car is available, most San Diegans choose to drive instead of taking transit. There are three primary reasons for this mode choice:

1) Speed and Reliability – compared to the automobile, transit service is generally slow and unreliable, particularly for longer distance trips;

2) Accessibility - transit is not accessible, whether geographic (does not operate in areas needed) or temporal (does not operate during the times of day or days of week needed); and

3) Travel Experience - transit does not fulfill people’s travel preferences, such as safety, comfort, and cleanliness.

WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM AND GOING TO?

The first step in improving the accessibility of our services is to understand the travel patterns of the region, and how they are changing.
**Population**

Since most trips begin or end at home, it is important to understand where people live in the region. In 2000, the San Diego region housed over 2.8 million people (see Table 3.1). Nearly one half of the population resided in the Central and North City areas of the region, including downtown San Diego, Mid-City, National City, Pacific Beach, and the Golden Triangle. Other areas of high population concentrations include the South Suburban communities of Imperial Beach and Chula Vista, the East Suburban cities of El Cajon and Santee, and the North County areas of Oceanside, Vista, and Escondido. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of population throughout the region.

Within the next 10 years we can expect to see much of the residential development occur outside of the traditional urban centers (see Figure 3.2). Although downtown and southeast San Diego will continue to experience high growth rates, most of the population increase is expected in the newer communities of East Chula Vista, Spring Valley, Rancho San Diego, and the North County Coastal inland areas east of Del Mar, Encinitas, Carlsbad, and Oceanside.

**Employment and Major Activity Centers**

Now that we understand where people are coming from, we need to know where they are going. Since work trips make up the largest portion of travel demand during the peak periods, and the highest levels of congestion occur during the peak periods, it is important to understand where major employment centers are located throughout the region, as well as where we expect them to be in the future. Over the past decade San Diego has experienced a shift in the regional economy from predominantly local services to an export-driven economy, including industries such as biomedical production, computer, and electronic manufacturing. This change in economic focus has resulted in the development of new business centers and industrial parks located primarily in suburban areas of the region.

In 2000, 1.4 million jobs were located throughout the region (see Table 3.1). Most of the employment was located in downtown San Diego, Midway/Sports Arena area, Mission Valley, Kearny Mesa, Golden Triangle, Mira Mesa, Rancho Bernardo, Carlsbad, and San Marcos. Figure 3.3 presents the distribution of employment throughout the region. As evident in Figure 3.4, employment growth by 2010 will continue to be located primarily in the suburban areas of the region. Although downtown San Diego will continue to experience high employment growth, most of the new jobs will be located in the established business centers listed above, as well as newer facilities in Poway and Otay Mesa.
### Table 3.1 Population and Employment (2003 and 2010)

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<th>Central</th>
<th>North City</th>
<th>South Suburban</th>
<th>East Suburban</th>
<th>North County West</th>
<th>North County East</th>
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Figure 3.2
Population Growth
2003 - 2010

Population Growth per 1/4 Square Mile
- Less than 100
- 100 to 250
- 250 to 500
- 500 to 1,000
- Greater than 1,000

Transit Route

Note: Grids are 1/2 mile by 1/2 mile
Figure 3.3
2003 Employment

Employment per 1/4 Square Mile
- Less than 500
- 500 to 1,000
- 1,000 to 2,500
- 2,500 to 5,000
- Greater than 5,000

Transit Route

Note: Grids are 1/2 mile by 1/2 mile

SANDAG
Although work trips are a large portion of the daily trips in the region, people travel for many other reasons, including school, shopping, medical appointments, recreation, entertainment, and visiting friends and family. Many of these trips are made locally within a person’s community. As shown on Figure 3.5, hospitals, schools, and shopping centers are evenly distributed throughout the region to provide local access to residents. However, major attractors, such as universities, tourist attractions, and regional shopping centers, draw visitors from throughout the region. These major attractors are concentrated in the established urban areas of the region, including downtown San Diego, Mission Valley, North Bay, Mission Bay, and the Golden Triangle.

WHEN DO THEY WANT TO TRAVEL?

Knowing where people want to go leads to only part of the solution for improving transit accessibility. We also need to understand when people need to travel.

For many businesses, a typical work schedule is 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday through Friday. Morning and afternoon peak-hour congestion indicates that this is still the predominant work schedule in the region. However, recent surveys and studies\(^2\) indicate that weekday work schedules vary a few hours from the typical schedule. Many employees are not on a strict schedule, and have the flexibility to arrive at work early or late. In addition, some businesses allow their employees to maintain flexible schedules such as 9/80 work weeks where employees work nine hours per day, and receive one day off every two weeks.

Work schedules also vary by industry. For example, retail stores, restaurants, movie theaters, and other services are open well into the night and/or on weekends. Other businesses, including manufacturing, hotels, and hospitals, are open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Many employees of these businesses work late night and/or weekend shifts. Since a higher percentage of these service workers are transit-dependent, the need for transit services during these off-peak periods is critical for them to maintain employment.

Since most people are at work during the weekdays, many of their other trips are made at night and on weekends. Most of these trips, such as going to the store, medical appointments, or visiting friends and family, are made on a regular basis. Travel to major regional attractors, however, generally follows a seasonal pattern. For example, traffic to major universities is greater during weekdays in the fall, winter, and spring, when school is in session. In contrast, attractions such as the beaches, the Zoo, SeaWorld, and Seaport Village are frequented much more during summer weekends than during any other days of the year.

\(^2\) Route 844A on-board survey and employer surveys conducted for Poway Business Park and Rancho Bernardo.
WHAT ARE THEIR TRAVEL PREFERENCES?

In 2001, the region’s transit agencies conducted a resident survey\(^3\) to better understand the factors that influence choice riders in their travel experience. Eight key factors were identified as being important considerations for choosing a mode of travel – the need for flexibility and speed, sensitivity to personal travel experience, sensitivity to personal safety, concern for the natural environment, sensitivity to use of time, sensitivity to transportation costs, sensitivity to crowds, and sensitivity to stress. However, only two of these factors—sensitivity to personal travel experience and the need for flexibility and speed—proved to be common in the majority of responses.

As a follow up to this research, the 2003 resident survey asked several questions about the perception of flexibility, speed, and travel experience for transit compared to the private automobile. Figure 3.6 shows the average responses to these questions.

**Figure 3.6 Agreement with Travel Statements by Various Modes**

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In general, travel experience, including safety, comfort, and cleanliness, rated higher in importance compared to flexibility and cost. The Coaster proved to be the most similar to the private automobile for travel experience, while the bus and trolley service were perceived to be less clean, comfortable, and safe. The perception of speed of transit compared to a private automobile varied by transit mode. Modes with dedicated right-of-way outside of mixed-flow traffic, such as the Coaster commuter rail and San Diego Trolley light rail services, were competitive to driving, and even surpassed the private automobile in avoiding traffic. Existing bus service, however, was not perceived as being a fast transportation alternative. In terms of flexibility, none of the transit modes were competitive with driving.

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR TRANSIT PLANNING

While people have travel needs at all times of the day and our desire is to accommodate as many trips as possible with transit, the biggest demand is during peak periods. Since these trips are regular/routine work trips, they are the best ones to serve with transit. Discretionary off-peak trips are harder to capture except for transit dependents for whom we need to provide effective basic levels of service. Due to financial constraints and the diverse nature of our service area, we can’t provide high levels of service all the time. As a result, the primary policy goal is to provide commuter service during the most congested times of day, thereby increasing transportation mobility when capacity is constrained, and providing effective and efficient basic service during off-peak times.

Based on the foregoing discussion, we can make three key conclusions that will help guide the development of transit service improvements in this RSRTP. First, transit is an important part of the region’s transportation system and has an important part in expanding its capacity. Second, a well designed transit system can serve travel between the major activity centers throughout the region. Finally, a transit system that is competitive in terms of travel time, convenience, and comfort can be an attractive alternative to the automobile for work and other higher-volume trips.
CHAPTER 4: THE EXISTING TRANSIT SYSTEM

This chapter provides a broad overview of the region’s transit system, as well as the challenges and opportunities we face in providing efficient and effective service throughout the region. A more detailed description of the transit system can be found in the technical appendices.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

SANDAG oversees transit service throughout the County of San Diego. Its jurisdiction consists of 4,261 square miles. However, most of the development is centered on the western half of the county. The physical environment within the region consists of hills, canyons, lagoons, and bays, which limit the travel corridors connecting our region, and result in circuitous and non-contiguous street patterns. Combined, these factors present a challenge to providing access and a high level of service to all areas of the region.

San Diego County is bordered by Orange and Riverside Counties to the north, Imperial County to the east, and Mexico to the south. With more affordable housing opportunities in Western Riverside, San Diego County is experiencing a significant increase in travel demand from Riverside County into the region. Likewise, with the busiest international border in the country, many of the trips made within the region originate in Mexico.

Although the RCP envisions intensification of development in our urban centers, the existing built environment consists of medium density urban centers and lower-density suburban development, with the exception of downtown San Diego and University City. In addition, ample parking and affordable gas prices provide added incentive for people to drive.

Types of Service

Providing service within the context of San Diego’s diverse topography, development pattern, and population is a challenge. Therefore, we must provide a family of services that is tailored to fit the different travel markets and operating environments we serve. The trolley, Coaster and express bus routes provide fast interregional service along major travel corridors (Regional and Corridor services), while local bus service (Local services) provides convenient access to homes, businesses, and other local or nearby destinations. Demand-responsive services (Neighborhood services) operate in lower-density areas that lack distinct travel patterns, while ADA paratransit service provides basic mobility for senior and disabled citizens.

Since various services are designed to meet different needs, they must be developed and evaluated according to their primary function. For example, commuter express services are designed to provide fast service from a few points of origin to a common destination. In contrast, local bus service should provide access to origins and destinations along the entire length of the route. Therefore, we should expect to see a greater number of passengers served by local bus service, due to higher passenger turnover along the route, while express services should achieve faster operating speeds. Understanding these differences is crucial towards developing the appropriate type of service for each travel need. SANDAG and the region’s transit agencies have identified service categories within the Regional Corridor, Local and Neighborhood service concepts to distinguish among services, to help plan for and provide a diverse transit system, and to allow for a more equitable comparison of service performance to support the family of services strategy.
**Service Provision**

Transit service in the region is provided by two transit agencies; the Metropolitan Transit System and the North County Transit District. Within MTS there are five different transit operators—Chula Vista Transit (CVT), Metropolitan Transit System Contract Services (MTSCS), National City Transit (NCT), San Diego Transit Corporation (SDTC), and San Diego Trolley, Incorporated (SDTI). Under the umbrella of SANDAG and its policies, the transit agencies strive to provide a seamless system of services to the public. Policies related to service planning and implementation, fare structure and setting, and public involvement, have been adopted by SANDAG since agency consolidation in July 2003. A policy related to land use/transit coordination is under development. These policies promote an integrated regional transit system, including coordinated services and schedules between transit agencies, a systemwide cash and prepaid fares structure, and regional traveler information.

**Service Coverage**

As shown in Figure 4.1, good geographic coverage is provided throughout the region. This coverage is reduced at night when overall travel demand is less. Only major travel corridors connecting established urban areas are served late at night. Figure 4.2 shows a similar reduction in service levels in some geographic coverage on weekends when service is limited in the outlying areas of the region. Frequency, or level of service, also differs throughout the region. As presented in Figure 4.3, frequency of service is more enhanced in urbanized areas where development patterns and travel demand warrant a higher level of service.

**Transit Facilities**

Operating a public transportation system requires a fleet of buses, paratransit vehicles, light rail cars, and commuter rail coaches. To keep the system working well, there is a need for ongoing investment in the region’s transit infrastructure. Many of the rail facilities are over 20 years old, and capital replacements and upgrades are necessary to keep the system running efficiently and ensure the service reliability needed to attract and keep our customers. For example, next year the Blue Line between Downtown San Diego and the international border will be 25 years old, and many elements of it need to be replaced or rehabilitated. New vehicles and upgraded maintenance facilities are also needed for the bus system. Based on recent estimates, MTS and NCTD need in excess of $60 million annually for capital replacement and maintenance needs. At the same time, we need to expand our infrastructure in both bus and rail facilities to provide the transit capacity needed to meet the region’s mobility requirements. This need for both capital replacement and capital expansion is one of the key challenges facing the region’s transportation system. SANDAG and the transit agencies are working together to address this challenge. A description of the existing facilities and rolling stock is presented in this section for the region’s bus and rail services.

**Bus Facilities**

The fleet of vehicles in the San Diego region includes over 800 buses and approximately 200 minibuses and vans. While the majority of buses are diesel-fueled, MTS operators continue to replace their retired buses with compressed natural gas (CNG) engines that emit less air pollution compared to diesel. Over half (51 percent) of the MTS fixed-route bus fleet is currently operating on CNG. Nearly one-third (31 percent) of NCTD’s fleet operates on CNG. Other vehicle design innovations that are currently being incorporated into new vehicles include low-floor technology, automated passenger information, automatic fare collection, and an advanced scheduling and dispatching system.
These innovations are designed to improve the accessibility of vehicles to senior and disabled customers, provide better customer information, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit system. Maintenance and fueling facilities are needed to ensure that these vehicles are able to operate safely and reliably. There are several bus maintenance facilities within SANDAG’s jurisdiction that provide fleet fueling, maintenance, and storage. These facilities are located to provide quick and convenient access to the various subareas of the region.

The existing transportation system includes a variety of facilities that support and enhance the operation of transit service, including HOV lanes and freeway ramps, exclusive bus lanes, signal prioritization, queue jumpers, park-and-ride lots, bus pads and turnouts, and preferential traffic restrictions (see Figure 4.4). All of the existing priority treatments are located in the MTS service area. These facilities are discussed in more detail in the “Opportunities and Challenges” section below. Under the RTV, SANDAG envisions that transit priority treatments will be implemented throughout the region to promote faster, more reliable, and competitive transit services.

Finally, accessible, safe, and clean bus stops, shelters, and transit centers are also important to a well-operated transit system by providing comfort and convenience to passengers. Bus stops are installed at all access points to the transit system, while transit centers provide shelters and stops at locations where many local and regional routes come together. There are currently over 7,600 bus stops in San Diego County, with over 5,500 in the MTS area and over 2,100 in the NCTD area. Transit centers are the hubs of the region’s transit system, providing initial access and transfers in a clean, safe, and comfortable environment. Many transit centers provide parking, adding to the convenience of accessing the region’s transit system by automobile. The region’s transit centers are shown in Figure 4-5.

Proper bus stop location must strike a balance between access and efficiency. Bus stops should provide convenient and easy access to major destinations, at junctions with other routes for transfer opportunities, and in areas with high ridership. Although placing more stops along a route may improve access, too many stops negatively impact quality of service, travel time, operating costs, productivity, and efficiency. Therefore, bus stops should be strategically placed to maximize access, while the number of stops along a route should be minimized to achieve greater operating speeds, efficiency, and quality of service.

Bus stop amenities are generally installed based on demand. Benches and shelters are provided at stops that demonstrate moderate demand, while transit centers are established at major transfer locations where significant ridership is demonstrated, usually along rail corridors. The RTV envisions that these transit centers, many bus stops, and future BRT stations will be greatly enhanced with advanced designs and customer conveniences, and will be the catalyst for higher-density land use development.

Rail Facilities

San Diego County has two rail transit operators: the San Diego Trolley light rail system and the Coaster commuter rail service. When the four Mission Valley East light rail transit stations are added to the Trolley system in summer 2005, there will be 53 stations in the Trolley system. The total one-way length of the system will be 53 miles when the six-mile Mission Valley East extension opens. The Coaster has eight stations along its 41-mile length. The region’s rail fleet includes 123 light rail cars, and seven commuter rail locomotives pulling 28 coaches. Commuter rail locomotives are diesel-electric, while SDTI’s rail vehicles are electrically propelled. New low-floor light rail vehicles are being procured for the Mission Valley East extension. Two rail maintenance facilities serve the light rail and Coaster systems.
Figure 4.4
Transit Priority Treatments
Priority treatments for these rail services take many forms, the most basic being the exclusive right-of-way provided by the rail lines themselves. Other forms include traffic signal priority treatments (e.g., Commercial Street), signaling systems and gates to stop cross traffic when operating in exclusive right-of-way, and grade separations. Stations are generally spaced farther apart than bus service to provide access to activity centers, park-and-ride lots, and neighborhoods, while maintaining higher operating speeds. Station facilities can range from simple designs like many of the downtown stations to large multimodal facilities like the Oceanside Transit Center. Joint developments are planned or in place for many of the region’s rail stations, helping to support Smart Growth initiatives.

**Supporting Programs**

**Marketing**

Educating people about public transportation and the services available to them will always be a challenge. SANDAG and the region’s transit agencies must continuously look for fresh, original marketing opportunities to effectively promote transit as a viable alternative to driving. The marketing departments of SANDAG, MTS, and NCTD participate in community events, launch route and service-specific marketing programs, and participate in regional and national campaigns to promote transit usage, including the federally funded Public Transportation Partnership for Tomorrow (PT2) campaign. Essentially, we try to reach the general public with our various efforts, in hopes of capturing new riders with a message that will relate to them uniquely.

Our marketing departments are also responsible for designing and producing public information materials to inform the public of our services, fare changes, new programs, and other changes to our services. Materials include the Regional Transit Map (RTM), timetables, Ride Guides, brochures, Take One and Rider Alert notices, and much more. Their efforts are what are seen and heard onboard vehicles, at bus stops and transit centers, on billboards in the community, in radio advertisements, and in press releases. Other information sources include our Internet site (www.sdcommute.com), The Transit Store (located at First and Broadway in downtown San Diego), and the customer information telephone line (1-800-COMMUTE). Information is presented in multiple languages and in various formats to reach the broadest audience.

**Security**

Our security programs also help to improve the image of the transit system while promoting safety on board vehicles and at major transit centers. In addition to uniformed officers, we incorporate technology such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) to continuously monitor vehicle and station activity. These programs have resulted in a safer transit system and one that is generally perceived as such.

**Transit Priority**

Transit First Now! is an ongoing program developed within the framework of the Transit First strategic plan and RTV to provide localized priority treatments for the existing transit system. Through evaluation of congestion “hot spots,” transit route on-time performance and surveys of bus drivers, SANDAG has identified a series of locations and route segments for potential transit priority treatments. Priority could be provided through such measures as queue jump lanes and signals at busy intersections, short transit-only lanes on congested arterials, and signal priority along major streets. More discussion of transit priority facilities is included below.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Since transit service is provided in a constantly changing operating environment, it is important for us to understand the external factors that influence our ability to provide efficient and effective transportation services. It is important to understand the challenges we face, but it is even more important to take advantage of the opportunities that are presented towards meeting these challenges. The following section presents the greatest challenges and opportunities we face today in developing and implementing a robust transit system that will meet the mobility needs of the region.

Traffic Congestion

Challenge
Traffic congestion consistently tops the list of concerns on public opinion surveys, and for good reason. Our region currently suffers from a high level of peak-period congestion on many major freeways and arterials, making the daily commute to work and school increasingly time-consuming. Existing transit services, which primarily operate in mixed-use traffic, must also compete in the same congested environment as solo auto drivers, resulting in continued declines in speed and reliability.

Transit’s operating costs are also impacted by traffic congestion. Faced with longer running times and slower speeds, more buses and drivers must be assigned to each route to maintain existing service frequencies. In the recent past, more than $1 million annually has been spent on additional resources to mitigate the impacts of traffic congestion, which could otherwise be spent on new and enhanced services.

Opportunity
Although congestion is expected to increase as a result of regional growth, SANDAG’s commitment to the RTV promotes measures to protect transit services from congestion, and improve its competitive position with the automobile. By implementing transit priority measures at major congestion hot spots, transit service will bypass congestion, enabling it to maintain reliable and possibly faster service compared to driving alone. The following are examples of transit priorities for intersections and along major travel corridors that SANDAG will be developing over the next five years to support the existing and future transit system.

- **Signal Priority** - Signal priority for transit extends a green light on a traffic-signal cycle to allow the uninterrupted flow of an approaching bus or light rail vehicle. Signal priority is presently employed on C Street, 12th Avenue, and Commercial Street in San Diego to facilitate trolley movements.

- **Queue Jumpers** - Queue jumpers provide bus priority through congested intersections by providing short bus-only lanes at intersection approaches that allow buses to reach the head of intersection, bypassing the line of stopped cars at a red light. The bus receives a special advance green light approximately three seconds ahead of the adjacent car lanes, allowing the bus to get a jump on entering the intersection prior to the auto traffic. Queue jumpers exist in San Diego at westbound Friars Road at Frazee Road, southbound Fourth Avenue at E Street, eastbound on Broadway at Third Avenue, in Chula Vista on East H Street at Hidden Vista Drive, and on East Palomar Street at Heritage Park. Two additional queue jumpers are under construction in San Diego at northbound First Avenue at Beech Street and eastbound Rosecrans Street at Pacific Highway (the approach to the Old Town Transit Center).
• **HOV and Managed Lanes** - As freeway congestion increases, HOV and managed lanes will become more important for helping buses avoid congestion, maintain schedule reliability, and reduce travel times. These lanes restrict uses to buses, carpools, and, in some cases, paying single-occupant automobiles through the FasTrak program. HOV lanes currently exist on Interstates 5 and 15 and a 10-mile extension of the I-15 HOV facility is currently under construction north of SR 56. This extension will be in the form of managed lanes, providing four HOV lanes with a movable center barrier to accommodate peak direction flow. HOV lanes also exist at many freeway on-ramps in the region.

• **Freeway Shoulder Lanes** – Because the addition of HOV and managed lanes in the region requires a major capital facility, SANDAG is pursuing an interim short-term solution to the need for transit priority on freeways. In partnership with Caltrans, SANDAG is implementing a demonstration project to convert freeway shoulder lanes to transit-only lanes on segments of the I-805 and SR 52 freeways. The year-long demonstration, modeled on a transit freeway shoulder program in Minneapolis, will be underway in summer 2005. Existing Route 960 will operate on the freeway transit lanes during the demonstration. The demonstration will be evaluated for its ability to improve transit reliability and speed, as well as safety, passenger, auto and bus driver perceptions, and its potential application to other locations in San Diego County.

• **Exclusive Bus Lanes** - This concept extends beyond HOV and managed lanes by creating lanes exclusively for bus use. Bus-only lanes allow bus service to bypass congestion along a major travel corridor. An example of an exclusive bus lane is located at the north end of downtown San Diego, where 11th Avenue merges onto northbound SR 163. This lane will be extended several blocks further south as part of the Smart Corner redevelopment project. Bus-only lanes can also be beneficial at freeway access points and at major bus stops, such as at the onramps from University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard to Interstate 15 and the peak-period bus lane on Fifth Avenue between Beech Street and I-5.

**Lower-Density Development**

**Challenge**
Traffic congestion and dependence on the automobile is largely the result of lower-density, homogenous development. A continuation of the region’s suburban employment and residential development patterns will increase our dependence on the automobile by reducing the access, convenience, and effectiveness of transit. In addition, the low-density development results in longer travel times, more trips made, and increasing amounts and duration of congestion. Adding to this situation is the need for travel to schools in developing areas, which is already challenging due to the sharply defined peaks of this kind of travel.

**Opportunity**
Since SANDAG has recognized for many years that we cannot build our way out of congestion, the RCP represents a bold new approach to regional planning specifically focused on coordinating and integrating land use and transportation planning and development. The RCP helps to minimize the impacts of growth on our infrastructure and natural resources, and maintains our quality of life. Central to the smart growth strategy is good coordination between land use and transportation development that focuses compact, efficient, and higher-density development in key urbanized areas where an integrated transit system is planned to provide efficient and effective mobility between and throughout these areas. In addition, the
strategy encourages the development of mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly communities to encourage walking and bicycling for neighborhood trips and to access transit stations.

To implement the RCP, SANDAG will incorporate smart growth criteria into the evaluation and prioritization of transportation projects for funding. This approach to programming scarce transportation dollars is used as an incentive for local jurisdictions to develop coordinated smart growth land use plans. SANDAG will also promote smart growth by providing incentive funds to plan and develop mixed-use, walkable, and transit-oriented land uses through a $25 million Smart Growth Incentive Pilot Program. Under the pilot program, grant funds would be made available to local jurisdictions for projects that help integrate transportation and land use, such as transit-oriented developments and other smart growth projects that make areas more conducive to mixed land uses, walking, and biking. The pilot program will focus on implementing ready-to-go projects that improve access to transit in areas with high activity levels and on transportation-related improvements that encourage the smart growth development envisioned in the RCP. The pilot program would be a precursor to the longer-term $280 million funding program included in the extension of the TransNet local transportation sales tax. Lessons learned from the pilot program would be used to develop this longer-term incentive program.

In addition, SANDAG and the region’s transit agencies actively pursue opportunities to enter into joint-use development projects around major transit stations. Larger projects include mixed-use development consisting of office, residential, and/or retail uses, while smaller projects often include convenience services such as dry cleaners and banking. These types of developments help make transit convenient to where people live, work, and shop. Examples of completed joint development projects include the James R. Mills Building at the 12th & Imperial Transfer Station, the Sweetwater Union High School Adult Education Center at the 24th Street Station in National City, and the apartments and day care center at the 47th Street Station. Other transit-oriented development (TOD) projects include America Plaza, Rio Vista, Fenton Parkway, Hazard Center, La Mesa Blvd., and the new Smart Corner downtown with trolley running diagonally through it. In addition, efforts are currently underway to develop property at the Morena/Linda Vista, Grossmont Center (La Mesa), and E Street Trolley Stations, the Solana Beach Coaster Station, and the San Luis Rey bus transit center. A number of transit facilities currently under construction will offer new opportunities for joint development. The Mission Valley East trolley extension and Sprinter Coaster Rail line between Escondido and Encinitas provide a number of joint development opportunities around the new rail stations. And the I-15 BRT stations under development at Sabre Springs/Penasquitos, Rancho Bernardo, and Del Lago as part of the extension of the I-15 HOV/managed lanes, provide an opportunity for joint or TOD at these BRT facilities.

SANDAG and the transit agencies are proactive in reviewing development plans to promote transit-oriented development around transit stations and stops and to ensure that transit is addressed or integrated into the design. Formal agreements such as memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were established between many of the region’s local jurisdictions and the former Metropolitan Transit Development Board that outlined a formal review process. SANDAG has assumed the review responsibility for the MTS area while NCTD conducts a similar development review in the NCTD area. (The adoption of a Land Use/Transportation Coordination policy by SANDAG will seek to consolidate this function.) In addition, SANDAG works with local jurisdictions to incorporate smart growth principles in community and general plan updates. Bringing existing bus stops up to ADA standards and securing new shelter and bench stops are among the most common types of improvements with financial benefits, while preservation of transit right-of-way, strengthening of pedestrian connections to transit stops, and contributions toward major transit facilities such as transit centers and rail stations are part of the review process and program. As an example of the effectiveness of this effort, in 2003 a total of 161 transit improvements were secured valued at $1.635 million. Without these facilities secured through the development review process, the costs for these transit improvements would have to be borne by the transit agencies.
SANDAG is currently developing the Land Use/Transportation Planning Coordination to be adopted in early 2005. It is expected to call for SANDAG and local agencies to promote and enhance the coordination of land use and transportation planning through MOUs and early review of local long-range planning documents, development regulations, and development projects. It is also expected to call for early local involvement in the preparation of SANDAG regional plans and forecasts, and identification of smart growth areas. In accordance with its land use and transportation integration policy responsibilities, SANDAG should also take the lead in actively engaging entities and agencies responsible for siting and developing major public facilities, such as schools and hospitals, to ensure that transit access to these facilities is both feasible and cost-effective.

**Infrastructure Maintenance and Replacement**

**Challenge**

The region’s transit facilities and vehicles are aging. For example, the Blue Line trolley between Downtown San Diego and the international border will be 25 years old next year, and has extensive replacement and upgrade requirements. Also, several bridges on the Coaster (LOSSAN) rail corridor in San Diego County were built in the early 1900s and will be requiring replacement in the near future. Other vital components of the regional rail transit system will also require replacement to ensure current operating standards can be maintained. In addition, much of the region’s rail and bus rolling stock is well beyond its expected life span. While, ongoing investment is needed to maintain reliable, high quality service, funding constraints make it difficult to address all the infrastructure needs in the short term.

**Opportunity**

A stronger recognition and definition of these capital needs could lead toward an annual programming of funds for maintenance and replacement infrastructure in the region. The passage of the TransNet Extension provides an increased amount of transportation funds for the region beginning in Fiscal Year 2009, and there may be some opportunity to advance funding to earlier years. The SANDAG Transportation Committee and Board have the opportunity through the RTP, RTIP and annual budget process to begin to address these infrastructure needs.

**Financial Constraints**

**Challenge**

As a result of local, state, and federal budget deficits, funding to build new transportation projects is limited. More importantly, operating and maintaining the existing transit system is becoming an increasing challenge. Higher operating costs and lower levels of public subsidies have resulted in combined annual operating budget deficits for the transit agencies in excess of $10 million. This trend is expected to continue for the next several years. Historically, this operating deficit was addressed through the use of nonrecurring revenues (e.g., capital or reserve funding). However, as these one-time revenue streams become depleted, it is essential to find new opportunities for funding, and/or adjust services to a sustainable level. For the past two years, MTS services have been reduced to help address the budget deficit and this year, MTS is conducting the COA to achieve $10-13 million in annual operating cost savings. NCTD also continues to adjust services to maintain a sustainable level of service.

**Budget deficits limit our ability to maintain existing services and develop new ones. We must continue to seek new funding sources and secure our existing ones, including the TransNet sales tax measure.**
Opportunity

MTS is currently conducting a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of its existing services. The goal of this effort is to restructure the services to more efficiently serve the region’s travel demands and save $10-$13 million in annual subsidy requirements. The study includes development of a new service concept for the area and a comprehensive community input process. Any service reductions will be made primarily to those services that have become unproductive due to the changing local economy, development patterns, and/or travel demand. Initial recommendations are expected by April 2005 to provide input into the development of FY 2006 operating budget. Subsequent recommendations from the COA will be incorporated into future RSRTPs. NCTD’s budget situation is also tight at this time and adjustments may be needed to balance service with budgets. No major service changes are planned until the Sprinter opens in December 2007.

As a result of the recent operating deficits, SANDAG has been proactive in seeking non-traditional funding sources to maintain existing services and implementing new ones. SANDAG and the transit agencies have been successful in securing several million dollars in federal Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and local Air Pollution Control District (APCD) funding to continue Sorrento Valley Coaster Connection service and Routes 905 and 960, as well as the implementation of a new reverse commute route from downtown San Diego to the Poway Business Park via Interstate 15, and a Coaster Connection service in Carlsbad. In addition, SANDAG is evaluating opportunities to partner with residential developers to incorporate transit privileges into rents or homeowner association fees that will guarantee additional sustainable fare revenues to support service enhancements to those communities.

SANDAG and the region also have an opportunity to address our budget deficit and improve the transit system through new operating funds that will be available as a result of the extension of the TransNet sales tax measure, approved by San Diego County voters in November 2004. As a result, local funds will be available for matching state and federal capital grants, and to provide operating funds for the new LRT and BRT services and for some growth in the basic transit system. While the extension of the sales tax measure provides much needed capital and operating dollars to maintain existing services while developing new services as envisioned in the RTV, the availability of sufficient transit operating funding for the existing system will continue be an issue.

Image of Transit

Challenge

Our most recent household survey, conducted in 2003, determined that most San Diegan’s consider transit the last resort in transportation options. This response is not surprising considering that the perceptions of transit in meeting people’s travel needs and preferences are poor. Based on the survey, the four most important factors in people’s choice of transportation mode are: personal safety, reliability, ability to avoid congestion, and reasonable travel time. The perception of bus service was significantly lower for all four mode choice factors when compared to trolley, Coaster, and the private automobile. However, transit services with dedicated right-of-way and more enhanced amenities, stations, and vehicles were perceived to be fairly competitive with the automobile. In fact, trolley and Coaster service were perceived to be significantly better in avoiding congestion compared to driving alone because these services operate outside of congested freeways and roads.
Opportunity
The survey results tell us that a majority of San Diegan’s will use transit if it is accessible, and competitive with the private automobile in terms of convenience, reliability, and speed. In fact, 54 percent of respondents stated that they would use transit under the right circumstances. The RTV attempts to develop these “circumstances” with a network of accessible, enhanced, high-speed, and reliable transit services spanning the region. These services would operate at high frequencies throughout the day, evening, and weekends, and bypass congestion using dedicated transit lanes or transit priorities.

SANDAG is currently developing several projects to showcase the range of technologies and service concepts that are part of the RTV. The Showcase Bus Rapid Transit Project is planned to operate at high frequencies between San Diego State University and downtown San Diego via El Cajon and Park Boulevards. Traffic signal priority and short transit lanes are proposed to help the service maintain speed and schedule reliability through congested areas of the route. Operating in a similar arterial street environment, the Super Loop project in North University City also proposed to use traffic signal priority, queue jumpers, and other treatments to increase the speed and reliability of operation. The South Bay BRT project plans to use a combination of freeway managed lanes or transit shoulder lanes and dedicated transit lanes on arterial streets to bypass congestion and provide a dependable travel time between South Bay communities and downtown San Diego. The I-15 BRT project will be implemented as part of the managed lane project, with direct access ramps connecting the HOV/managed lanes with transit centers adjacent to the freeway right-of-way. In all of these projects, innovative station designs will provide better access and customer amenities. Other elements, such as the automated fare collection system and regional transit management system, will provide “smart card” fare payment technology, real-time traveler information, and will enable transit operators to more efficiently manage the operation of the services. Once implemented, these projects will meet and exceed the perceptions of safety, reliability, speed, and avoiding congestion compared to rail transit, as well as driving alone.

Aging and Disabled Population

Challenge
As the number of residents in the region continues to grow, so does its aging population. We anticipate the senior population will significantly increase as Baby Boomers prepare for retirement, and with it, the demand for senior transportation services will also increase. Today, approximately 14 percent of the region’s population consists of people that are age 60 or older. We expect this number to grow by about 3 percent by 2010. By 2030, we anticipate that 25 percent of the residents of San Diego County will be age 60 or greater. With the increasing number of aging citizens that are unable to drive, there will be a steady growth in the demand for senior transportation services. In addition, the number of disabled persons is also expected to rise. However, along with this new opportunity to capture a greater percentage of the travel market comes the increasing need to provide senior and disabled services in ways that are both appropriate and cost-effective.

Opportunity
Transit vehicle design can help improve the accessibility and ease of boarding for people who are able to use fixed-route services. Kneeling buses and low-floor vehicles allow easier boarding and deboarding by providing a lower clearance to the street or rail platform. Vehicles are also equipped with wheelchair lifts to pick up or drop off passengers who are not able to step onboard the vehicles. Finally, priority seating is provided at the front of vehicles to increase the convenience for senior and disabled riders.

As mandated by federal law, SANDAG provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services to complement all general fixed-route services in the region. ADA paratransit is a demand-responsive, point-to-
point service that operates similar to taxi service. As such, it is a very expensive service to provide because of the low number of passengers served compared to the number of mile and hours it operates. Due to this high cost, eligibility to use this service is limited to those disabled persons who are unable to use fixed route transit, as defined in the federal guidelines governing the eligibility requirements, safety, equity and cost-effectiveness of the service.

Since transit can only meet the needs of those who can use fixed-route services and certifiable disabled persons, the region must provide other options for the majority of seniors and disabled persons within our communities. Some lower-cost transportation alternatives include ridesharing (e.g., carpool or vanpools), nonprofit transportation services (e.g., All Congregations Together, College Avenue Senior Center, and FISH), and community-based volunteer driver programs (e.g., City of Vista’s Out and About program). The Coordinated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) provides technical information and assistance on specialized transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged communities, and can help with any of these as well as other transportation options. As part of the effort to coordinate transportation services, the CTSA provides information on alternative transportation, referral services, workshops and travel training, grant assistance, and coordination with existing Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) transportation services. Examples of alternative providers include coordinated programs using volunteer drivers in Vista, Poway and Rancho Bernardo. In addition, the STRIDE website developed and maintained by the CTSA provides a wide range of useful information on social service providers in San Diego County.

SANDAG’s Subcommittee for Accessible Transportation (SCAT), acting as the region’s Social Service Transportation Advisory Council, held hearings to receive public comments on unmet transit needs in San Diego County, as required by the California Public Utilities Code. Also attending the hearings were representatives of the region’s transit districts and the CTSA. The purpose of the hearings was to assist SANDAG and the region’s transit operators in identifying unmet needs of transit-dependent and transit-disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons of limited means. The hearings were held in Vista and San Diego in October and November 2004.

Testimony was received from 67 respondents, making 200 individual comments. These comments fell into several categories for both fixed-route and paratransit services for seniors and persons with disabilities. They included the need for expanded fixed-route and ADA paratransit services, better on-time performance, and transit accessibility improvements. General comments about the needs of transportation-disadvantaged persons will be used by SANDAG during the update of the annual short-range transit planning and budget process. Many comments were specific to individual fixed-route and paratransit services.

SCAT reviewed the comments and recommended that the Transportation Committee accept them for consideration during the annual short-range transit planning and budget process, and also forward the comments to the transit agencies for operational planning purposes. In addition, SANDAG is developing a mid-term program for an action plan to analyze needs for seniors’ transportation in the region, identify gaps and deficiencies, and develop more comprehensive coordinated programs to meet those needs. Toward this end, the TransNet reauthorization, approved by voters in November 2004, includes a mini-grant program to support innovative transportation services for seniors.
CHAPTER 5: HOW ARE WE DOING?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In 2002, SB 1703 (Peace) formally consolidated MTDB, NCTD, and SANDAG into one regional transportation agency to ensure that coordinated and well-balanced transportation solutions are planned and implemented to meet current and future travel needs. This consolidation provides an opportunity to establish regionwide policies, goals, and objectives for transit service planning and development. These policies, goals, and objectives help to translate SANDAG’s Regional Transit Vision into working guidelines. The policies provide the guiding framework for planning, designing, and implementing transit. The goals are generalized statements that describe the outcomes SANDAG intends to achieve consistent with the policies. The goals are supported by statements of objectives that will be evaluated at the end of each year to determine progress made in the previous year toward their achievement. Table 5.1 presents the goals and objectives for the next five years. They have been designed to reflect SANDAG’s focus on regional policies that can be addressed through the transit system and services. More specific operational goals and objectives are left to the transit agencies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Transit System Development</strong> – Transit service should strive to address needs and deficiencies in the regional transit system.</td>
<td>• Eliminate one or more transit deficiencies identified in the FY 2005-2009 RSRTP and/or individual transit agency performance goals.</td>
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| **System Productivity** – Transit service should strive to improve system productivity. | • Reduce duplication of services (i.e., routes, schedules).  
• For new and enhanced services, at least meet minimum productivity standards (to be defined through the RSRTP service evaluation process) for similar types of services. 
• Optimize the amount of service provided within available funding. 
• Improve operational efficiency though the Productivity Improvement Program and related efforts. 
• Facilitate and promote strategies to provide priority for transit operation on streets and highways. 
• When required by funding constraints, develop service reductions that minimize impacts to current passengers, maintain service throughout the region where demand is demonstrated, and maintain network connectivity to the extent possible. |
| **Capital Investments** – Transit service should support major transit capital facilities and investments. | • Provide high levels of transit service to regional transit centers and regional transit services (i.e., rail and bus rapid transit services) in concert with local transit service needs. |
| **Network Connectivity** – Transit service should maximize network connectivity. | • Maintain and enhance timed transfers at high-volume transfer locations as demand warrants, particularly to regional services and at transit centers.  
• Support local and regional travel demand through provision of transit services unconstrained by jurisdictional boundaries. |
| **Travel Demand** – Transit service should meet travel demands. | • Provide appropriate levels of transit service (frequency and span) to sufficiently accommodate demand.  
• In general, provide higher frequencies during periods of greater demand.  
• Plan transit service improvements and revisions with input from riders, the public, and the community. |
| **Customer Experience** – Transit service should provide a positive customer experience. | • Provide transit service routing that is as direct as possible (i.e., avoid out-of-direction travel while balancing directness with access).  
• Provide as fast and reliable a transit service as possible. |
| **Smart Growth** – Transit service and Smart Growth areas should be mutually supportive. | • Take advantage of opportunities presented by existing and planned Smart Growth developments when adding or revising transit services, as appropriate and feasible.  
• Transit service should be provided consistent with the Smart Growth place types and criteria defined in the RCP. |
| **Financially Sustainable Plan** – Transit operating expenditures should be sustainable over time. | • The annual budget should be balanced and rely on available funding without dipping into reserves or depending on non-recurring sources of revenue.  
• Service levels and operating expenses should match available revenue.  
• New ongoing operating revenue streams should be put in place. |
Last year’s goals and objectives are included in Appendix H. These goals and objectives reflect both regional policies and more specific operational issues. As a result of the further definition of transit service planning and implementation roles and responsibilities of SANDAG and the transit agencies through recently adopted revisions to Policy No. 18, some of last year’s goals and objectives are more appropriately the responsibility of SANDAG, while others rest with the transit agencies. Therefore, in lieu of a detailed evaluation of progress toward meeting last year’s goals, a more general assessment is included in this report. (The detailed assessment of our progress in achieving the objectives is also included in Appendix H.) The transit agencies will continue to establish and monitor operational goals and objectives related to their system and services.

In general, progress has been made in several areas to address last year’s Regional Short-Range Transit Plan goals and objectives. The Metropolitan Transit System has initiated its Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) to identify service efficiencies and restructure services to better reflect travel patterns and market needs and improve system performance and quality. North County Transit District continues to implement and refine its Fast Forward service plan. Both transit agencies have extensive programs to obtain customer input on transit services, and SANDAG continues to provide support in this area through the passenger counting program and various passenger and resident surveys. Both SANDAG and the transit agencies have ongoing system and service performance monitoring programs (described below) to help assess areas needing improvement and identify programs, facilities, and other actions that can help achieve operational and regional goals. With the passage of the Proposition A TransNet sales tax extension, SANDAG has made progress in advancing several BRT projects, transit priority treatment programs (such as the freeway transit lane demonstration), and Smart Growth area planning to support the transit system and regional goals. The regional Smart Card fare collection equipment deployment is ongoing and the automated vehicle locator (AVL) demonstration continues.

SYSTEM EVALUATION

In addition to establishing regional goals and objectives for the transit system and annually evaluating progress toward meeting them, SANDAG monitors the transit system on a quarterly and annual basis to help guide adjustments to the region’s transit network and services in response to ever-changing mobility needs and operational environment and to maintain consistency with policies, goals, and objectives. Formal monitoring processes have been established to regularly evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit system. These are described below.

Quarterly Transit Agency Operating Performance Report. Transit agencies provide SANDAG with performance indicators for their transit operators on a quarterly basis. These data allow SANDAG to evaluate trends in the productivity and cost-effectiveness of the transit system by transit agency and mode of service (e.g., fixed-route, trolley, ADA paratransit, etc.). Performance during the current quarter and year-to-date is compared to the same quarter of the previous year to account for seasonal fluctuations in data. The comparison identifies changes to key performance indicators, including operating cost, fare revenue, ridership, passengers per revenue mile or hour, subsidy per passenger, farebox recovery ratio, and average fare. Large fluctuations in these indicators are investigated to determine the root cause of the change.

Performance Improvement Program (PIP). As part of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) administration, SANDAG is responsible for monitoring the cost-effectiveness of each transit agency and operator receiving TDA funds. The PIP evaluates the performance of each operator against several performance targets set by SANDAG and the transit agencies and operators on an annual basis. In addition, transit agencies and operators commit to productivity improvement strategies to be implemented
during the ensuing year, the statuses of which are evaluated through the PIP process. Finally, the transit agency’s and operator’s status in achieving the recommendations from the previous Triennial Performance Audit is evaluated.

In addition to the regional transit system evaluation and monitoring conducted by SANDAG, the transit agencies conduct more specific performance monitoring on an ongoing basis. These activities include maintaining a database of customer comments and complaints to assist with service evaluation and identify when immediate actions are needed to remedy operational deficiencies, annual route-specific performance evaluations, transit operator performance monitoring, as well as transit agency budget and operational evaluations.
CHAPTER 6: SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT WORK PROGRAM

The growing population and expansion of suburban development is resulting in increased trip-making and higher levels of traffic congestion. To address these growing pains and preserve our quality of life, SANDAG has developed an RCP and an RTV that represent a bold new approach to improving the region’s mobility through better coordination between transportation and land use planning. The RCP focuses our future growth in urbanized areas characterized by compact, efficient, and higher-density land uses to reduce our infrastructure needs and preserve our natural resources. To provide mobility within and between these “smart growth” areas, SANDAG adopted the complementary RTV as the framework for transit development in the region, and the RTP (Mobility 2030) to serve as the long-range (5-30 years) infrastructure and service improvement plan for implementing the RTV. Transit First is the implementation strategy for the RTV.

Establishing a short-range (0-5 years) transit work program to support the RTV and Transit First strategy is the purpose of the RSRTP. With unlimited financial resources we would be able to provide fast, frequent, and flexible service 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to all areas of the region. However, in reality, the region is faced with severe financial constraints that limit how and to what extent we can implement the RTV in the short-term. In addition, this funding deficit hinders our ability to provide basic mobility to our existing riders. Therefore, we must adopt an approach to developing the transit system that balances the basic mobility needs of our current riders with developing the world-class transit system envisioned in the RTV. An approach for doing this is incremental, short-term implementation of the Transit First strategy.

As stated in Chapter 3, improving the speed and schedule reliability of service, as well as avoiding traffic congestion, are the most important transit improvements for both existing and potential riders. For existing riders, improving the access of our services, both geographic and temporal (days and hours of service), is also an important factor, since they are largely transit-dependent. For our potential market of choice riders, we must focus on providing a travel experience that is competitive with the automobile. Therefore, our investment strategy should focus on improving the speed and reliability of transit service, while balancing the need to improve transit access with the need to provide a competitive travel experience.

This chapter outlines a short-range transit work program aimed at achieving a balanced transit improvement strategy. The first part of the work program identifies specific recommendations for improving basic mobility for our existing riders, including the FY 2005 Regional Service Implementation Plan that presents the new or revised services proposed for FY 2005 funding consideration. The second part of the work program describes the specific efforts we are undertaking to move toward the RTV.

IMPROVE BASIC MOBILITY

As stated in Chapter 4, the availability of transit service varies depending on the time of day and day of week. Although a high level of service is provided most of the time in the established urban areas of the region, other communities experience a significant reduction in service late at night and on weekends. In addition, the quality of service varies by route. Many routes experience overcrowding during peak work and school hours, while other routes demonstrate low schedule reliability due to congestion or high levels of wheelchair passenger boardings. Finally, as our population continues to age, more importance will need to be placed on providing additional transportation options for seniors. The first step toward achieving the RTV is to improve the basic mobility for our current ridership as identified below.
As presented in Chapter 3, the propensity of people to use our existing transit system is generally greater in communities with low income and low auto ownership. Figure 6.1 shows the areas of high transit propensity within the region. Chapter 3 also identified areas within the region that have a high level of trip attraction, including employment parks, retail centers, major regional attractions, and other destinations. Figure 6.2 shows the concentration of trip attractions throughout the region. As shown on Figure 6.3, areas of high transit propensity\(^4\) are generally located in urbanized areas south of Interstate 8, as well as Oceanside and Escondido. In contrast, major travel destinations\(^5\) are dispersed throughout the region.

Table 6.1 evaluates the service effectiveness between areas of high transit propensity (origin) and areas with greater trip attraction (destination). Twenty percent of the origin/destination pairs have “Good” service effectiveness based on fast travel times, easy connections, and high service levels when needed, while 42 percent have “Average” effectiveness and 38 percent have “Poor” effectiveness. Although service effectiveness between many of the travel pairs is considered “Poor,” due to indirect routing, slow travel times, and limited service when needed, not all of these travel pairs warrant service improvements.

Table 6.2 shows the travel demand between each origin/destination pair. As presented, only 8 percent of the travel pairs demonstrate high travel demand, while the travel demand between a majority of origins and destinations is low. With our limited financial resources we should ensure that transit service between areas of high travel demand is “Good” before improving service between areas with low demand.

Table 6.3 compares service effectiveness with travel demand. Although service effectiveness is generally consistent with travel demand\(^6\), the following travel pairs are identified as having lower service effectiveness compared to their demand, and should be prioritized for service enhancement.

\(^4\) Areas with both low income and low auto ownership.
\(^5\) Areas with 100 or more daily trips per acre.
\(^6\) Travel pairs demonstrating high travel demand generally have good service effectiveness, while areas with low travel demand have poor service effectiveness.
Figure 6.1
Concentration of Transit Propensity

Vehicles per Household
Less than 1.5

Household Income
Less than $30,000
Figure 6.2
Concentration of Travel Destinations

Trip End Attractions per Acre
- Less than 10
- 10 to 50
- 50 to 100
- 100 to 200
- Greater than 200

SANDAG
Table 6.1 Service Effectiveness Between Origin/Destination Pairs

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**GOOD** (Fast travel times, easy connections, service throughout the day, nights and weekends, high frequencies on major travel corridors during peak hour (15 minutes or less))

**AVERAGE** (Medium travel times, up to two transfers required, limited night and weekend service, moderate frequencies on major travel corridors during peak hour (30-60 minutes))

**POOR** (Slow travel times, indirect routing, more than two transfers required, none to very limited night and weekend service)
Table 6.2 Travel Demand Between Origin and Destination Travel Pairs

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- **HIGH** (Greater than 20,000 trips per day)
- **MEDIUM** (Between 10,000 and 20,000 trips per day)
- **LOW** (Less than 10,000 trips per day)
### Table 6.3 Comparison of Service Effectiveness and Travel Demand

Concentrations of Travel Destinations

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<td>Mid City</td>
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<td>Midway/ Sports Arena</td>
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<td>Euclid/ Southeast SD</td>
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<td>San Ysidro</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**POOR** (Service effectiveness is not appropriate for travel demand)

**MODERATE** (Service effectiveness is marginally appropriate for travel demand)

**GOOD** (Service effectiveness is appropriate for travel demand)
Service Gaps and Deficiencies

To address these needs in a fiscally constrained environment, MTS is conducting the COA. This comprehensive effort will restructure service to better serve today’s travel patterns and reduce operating subsidy requirements. The gaps identified for the MTS area in last year’s RSRTP, listed below, are being considered as part of the COA. As a result of the COA and the opening of the Mission Valley East LRT line, many of these gaps will be addressed in FY 2006. NCTD has numerous improvement needs that were identified in last year’s RSRTP, as listed below. While some were addressed in 2004, many were not due to budget constraints.

Direct Routings

- **Mid-City to Mission Valley** – While a significant amount of service is provided in Mid-City and Mission Valley, there is little direct service connecting these two areas. Changes to Route 13 to be implemented with the opening of the Mission Valley East light rail extension in summer 2005 will provide more direct service between these two areas.

- **Euclid/Southeast San Diego to National City Area** – The limited service span and frequency of Route 603 between the Euclid Avenue Trolley Station and Plaza Bonita severely restricts Euclid and Southeast San Diego residents from accessing adjacent communities and using regional services at night and on weekends.

- **South Bay to Old Town or Fashion Valley Transit Center Express** – An express service from South Bay to Old Town or Fashion Valley Transit Center allowing existing passengers to bypass downtown congestion along Broadway. This service would also provide congestion relief along the north/south corridors in South Bay, and would address some of the capacity issues currently experienced on the trolley Blue Line.

- **Faster Service between La Jolla and Old Town or Downtown** – The long travel time on local routes between these destinations could be reduced through the provision of new express service or a system of transit priority treatments.

Intracommunity Service

- **Internal Travel within National City Area** – Service is limited on the three National City Transit services (Routes 601, 602, and 603), which consistently prove to be some of the most productive services within the region’s transit system. In addition, there is currently no service to the industrial area on the west side of National City (west of Interstate 5).

- **San Ysidro Service** – Route 905 service should be expanded to provide more and better local service to address travel demand and provide connections to Otay Mesa.

- **Internal Travel within Downtown San Diego** – As a result of new residential development and changing travel patterns, transit services within, into, and out of downtown San Diego should be restructured to provide better internal circulation and more efficient interregional connections.

- **Enhanced Summer Service on Routes 9 and 34** – Travel to SeaWorld, Belmont Park, and the beaches of San Diego is greatly increased during the summer months. As a result of budget deficits, additional summer service has been discontinued, resulting in severely overcrowded trips and poor
schedule reliability.

- **San Elijo Hills** – This 3,000 home planned community south of San Marcos currently has no transit service. Twin Oaks Valley Road is projected to be constructed that links San Elijo Hill with Cal State San Marcos in 2007. Service request for service to San Marcos and to the COASTER have been received.

Late Night and Weekend Service

- **Service on Express Routes** – Enhanced service on existing express routes was been identified as a primary unmet need in the recently completed Welfare to Work Transit Study. Focus groups of CalWORK’s clients indicated that the same trip made on an express service during the weekdays would take nearly four times as long on the weekends.

- **Weekend Service on Coaster** – Despite high demand, Coaster service operates limited hours on the weekdays and even less service on Saturdays. No Sunday service is currently provided. Due to budget constraints, no planning or implementation actions were taken for this service in 2004.

- **General System Late Nights/Weekends** - In general, most of the transit services throughout the region have limited late night and weekend service.

Operational Issues

- **Overcrowding** – Overcrowded buses generally occur during peak work and school hours of the day, and have a direct and indirect effect on ridership. Not only do they deter potential passengers from using the service, the capacity constraint limits ridership despite higher demand. Overcrowding can be addressed by increasing service levels where and when it is needed, or by restructuring adjacent routes to accommodate the additional demand. SANDAG and the transit operators should work together to address overcrowding issues as efficiently and effectively as possible.

- **Maintain and Improve Transfer Opportunities** – Timed connections at convenient locations based on travel demand allow riders to efficiently transfer between services and complete their trips in a timely manner. This concept is particularly important when service frequencies are low (greater than 15 minutes). As part of NCTD’s Fast Forward Plan, timed transfers were implemented at all key transfer locations to improve connections between services. MTS service schedules are also developed around a “pulse” concept in which all routes arrive and depart a transfer center at the same time, allowing for transfers between services to be coordinated and timed. Since the RTV is developed around a concept of interconnected services, it is important that timed transfer opportunities are maintained and improved where transfer demand exceeds through riders, except in cases where frequencies are greater than 15 minutes.

- **Schedule Coordination along I-15 corridor** – The numerous routes in this corridor tend to be scheduled to meet primary work schedules and, as a result, several buses arrive at stops in a short time period followed by long time gaps. A comprehensive review of travel demand and the services in the corridor is being conducted as part of the COA.

Interjurisdictional Issues
• **Carmel Valley Service** – A key service issue to be resolved is the provision of transit service in the Carmel Valley area. As a result of the employment and residential development in the Carmel Valley area, including new affordable housing complexes, transit demand to and from this area is increasing. While employment is cluster along El Camino Real and High Bluff Drive, residential areas are difficult to serve due to the low-density development and discontinuous street patterns. Service options include peak-hour service to employment areas, connections with the Coaster at the Solana Beach Station, and a lifeline link between Carmel Valley residents and the regional transit network. The region will continue their joint efforts in FY 2006 to develop transit solutions for this growing area.

• **Del Mar Heights** – There is no coastal transit link between the Del Mar Heights area and Solana Beach as well as service to Sorrento Valley. NCTD’s Board has identified this gap as a regional priority.

• **Temecula to Escondido Express** – The I-15 Interregional Partnership Project (IRP) has identified express transit service between Temecula and Escondido, as well as distributor shuttles at key destinations, as transportation solutions to the congestion problem along I-15 between Riverside and San Diego Counties. Due to budget constraints, no planning or implementation actions were taken for this service in 2004.

Based on a variety of factors including productivity, ridership, level of demand, cost-effectiveness, land use patterns, and other items, not all of these needs are equal. Some of them have higher priority than others. The assignment of priorities takes place as an interactive process between SANDAG and the transit agencies in the development of annual budgets.

Special Studies

Many of the service gaps and deficiencies require more detailed study to develop effective solutions. Key studies to be completed in 2006 are listed below.

• **Comprehensive Operational Analysis** – MTS is conducting a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of its bus and trolley services. The goal of the COA is to evaluate and restructure MTS services and operations to more efficiently and effectively serve the region’s transit needs and meet regional transportation goals within the constraints of the current financial and operating environment. The changes recommended by the COA will be included in next year’s RSRTTP update.

• **Mid-City Network Plan** – The purpose of this study is to develop a long term transit network plan for the Mid-City communities, to prioritize transit improvements, and to develop a phasing plan to conform to alternative budget scenarios. The study will examine network structure, service types, connections, frequencies, route alignments, and the relation of the Showcase Project to the Mid-City network. The Showcase Project will connect SDSU and downtown San Diego via one of the most transit oriented corridors in the region. However, as a regional service, its bus stops will be spaced farther apart than for local services, limiting direct access to the route. Therefore, to increase the ridership and productivity on this route, feeder services to the Showcase Project will be developed as part of the Mid-City Network Plan.

• **University Avenue Mobility Plan Restructuring** – The community plan for the North Park area is being revised and transportation enhancements for University Avenue are a key element. There are opportunities to enhance bus operations and the quality of bus stops in the area.

• **Carmel Valley/Del Mar Heights** – Development of cost-effective and efficient service proposals for the Carmel Valley/Del Mar Heights area is needed to determine how best to address the identified
service deficiency in these communities. Maximum use will be made of previous studies in the
development of service proposals for this area.

FY 2006 Regional Service Implementation Plan

With limited financial resources, we are faced with difficult choices when deciding future transit
investments. Each year, SANDAG develops its Regional Service Implementation Plan to guide system
improvements to address gaps and deficiencies in service and implement the concepts of the RTV.
However, due to current funding constraints, SANDAG and the transit agencies must adjust and, in some
cases, reduce existing services while simultaneously striving to improve basic mobility and implement the
concepts of the RTV.

Each year, the region's transit operators submit their individual Service Implementation Plans (SIP) to
SANDAG for consideration. The SIPs list the proposed changes and new services each transit operator
recommends for implementation to meet existing service gaps and deficiencies within their operations.
SANDAG combines these individual SIPs into a Regional SIP (RSIP) that includes improvements
proposed by transit operators as well as SANDAG staff. In years when additional funding is expected to
be available, proposals for new services are prioritized and recommended for funding consideration
based on a regional evaluation process established in accordance with SANDAG Policy No. 18, Regional
Transit Service Planning.

As has been the case for the last several years, no additional funds are expected to be available for
transit operations in FY 2006. Transit operators will receive regional operating funds in the same
proportion as in the past, with approximately 70 percent allocation to MTS and approximately 30 percent
to NCTD. Therefore, only those service improvements proposed by MTS and NCTD are included in this
year's RSRTP; no SANDAG proposals are included. This year, no regional priorities for these service
proposals have been established since implementation is dependent on each transit agency's ability to
implement the services within available funding levels. SANDAG's role in service implementation will
include a determination that new and revised service proposals are consistent with the goals and
objectives of the RSRTP, in general with development of the RSRTP and, more specifically, at the time
the transit agencies propose to implement the services. In future years, SANDAG will establish regional
priorities for service improvements in the RSIP through an evaluation methodology linked to the RSRTP
framework, goals, and objectives.

Table 6.4 displays how well the proposed service changes address the RSRTP Goals and Objectives. All
of the proposed changes address two or more of the adopted Goals and Objectives. As each proposed
service change moves toward implementation, it will be reviewed by SANDAG to determine its
consistency with the Regional Consistency Checklist (see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2), in accordance with
SANDAG Policy No. 18: Regional Transit Service Planning.

The MTS service proposals included in this year's RSRTP are expected to change substantially to reflect
the results of the COA. The current service proposals are listed in Table 6.5 in route number order without
an assigned priority by MTS. The NCTD services are listed in the priority established by the NCTD Board.

The RSIP is the basis for the transit agencies to develop their annual operating budgets for SANDAG
adoption. Service changes are then implemented by the transit agencies and operators during one of the
regularly scheduled service changes (summer, fall, and winter) held throughout the year. Table 6.5
presents the proposed service changes for FY 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Service Change</th>
<th>Regional Transit System Development</th>
<th>System Productivity</th>
<th>Capital Investments</th>
<th>Network Connectivity</th>
<th>Travel Demand</th>
<th>Customer Experience</th>
<th>Smart Growth</th>
<th>Financial Stability</th>
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<td>MTS</td>
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<td>Coaster Rail2Rail &amp; Petco Park Service</td>
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### Table 6.5 FY 2006 Regional Service Implementation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Service Proposal Descriptions</th>
<th>Pass/Hour</th>
<th>Sub/Pass</th>
<th>Annual Subsidy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Valley East Service Changes</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extend to terminate at new 70\textsuperscript{th} Street Trolley Station.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$14,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Restructure to provide service between Euclid and new San Diego State University Trolley stations, and extend along Montezuma Road to 73\textsuperscript{rd} Street and El Cajon Boulevard.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$132,283</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>New route to serve the former Route 13 alignment in Mission Valley.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(included with Route 13 figure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>New route to replace Route 81 service between new Grantville and Rio Vista Trolley Stations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$129,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Discontinue with opening of Mission Valley East trolley line.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>($858,579)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>Extend along Lake Murray Boulevard and Fletcher Parkway to replace a portion of Route 81.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$72,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>Extend to terminate at the new 70\textsuperscript{th} Street Trolley Station.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>($8,055)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Changes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Increased frequency and longer span of service on weekday evenings between 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. on existing routing.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$1.67</td>
<td>$57,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Weekday peak-period frequency enhancement to every 15-minute on existing routing.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$1.40</td>
<td>$230,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>Increase frequency from 60-minute to 30-minute Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. only on existing routing.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$0.25</td>
<td>$3,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>905 West</td>
<td>New service Saturdays 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between San Ysidro/Tijuana and Iris Avenue Trolley Stations, with a few trips to Otay Mesa.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$0.49</td>
<td>$6,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>Increase frequency from 30- to 15-minute on Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on existing routing.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$0.62</td>
<td>$24,801</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>929 South</td>
<td>Increase frequency from 30- to 15-minute on weekends 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. between 8\textsuperscript{th} Avenue and Iris Avenue Trolley Stations.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$0.59</td>
<td>$58,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator</td>
<td>Route</td>
<td>Service Proposal Descriptions</td>
<td>Pass/Hour</td>
<td>Sub/Pass</td>
<td>Annual Subsidy</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>932 South</td>
<td>Increase frequency from 30- to 15-minute on weekends (7-hour period, roughly 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.) between Bayfront/E Street and San Ysidro/Tijuana Trolley Stations.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$0.48</td>
<td>$54,295</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>15-minute frequency weekdays 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. between College Grove and 70th Street.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$0.71</td>
<td>$75,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTS</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>Increase frequency from 30- to 15-minute on Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on existing routing.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$0.62</td>
<td>$30,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>15-minute service between 5:00 and 8:00 a.m., weekdays.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$0.78</td>
<td>$29,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>15-minute service 7:70 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., weekdays.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>$1.37</td>
<td>$191,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>COASTER</td>
<td>Renew Rail2Rail Program, all days.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>$13.47</td>
<td>$161,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>Carlsbad Coaster Connection Palomar South</td>
<td>Provide five trips to meet COASTER on weekdays.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1.99</td>
<td>$20,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>Carlsbad Village Coaster Connection</td>
<td>Add five morning and afternoon trips.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1.07</td>
<td>$13,665</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>Improve to 90-minute frequency, weekdays.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$2.72</td>
<td>$155,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>Plaza Camino Real Shopping Shuttle</td>
<td>New circulator from Plaza Camino Real to Pacific Coast Plaza and El Camino North Shopping Center, 60-minute service in both directions between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., seven days a week.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$3.24</td>
<td>$302,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>Solana Beach to Sorrento Valley Coaster Station</td>
<td>New route from Del Mar Highlands to Sorrento Valley COASTER Station and UTC. 15-minute service weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. Saturday service from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$6.68</td>
<td>$535,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>C-Side Shuttle Coaster Connection</td>
<td>Add nine weekday trips from Del Mar Heights and Solana Beach to Solana Beach COASTER Station between 5:00 and 8:00 a.m., and 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>$246,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>Extend all trips to Quarry Creek Shopping Center, weekdays and Saturdays.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>$422</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>New 120-minute frequency from 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Sundays/holidays.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$13.07</td>
<td>$37,980</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>Restore 60-minute service on Saturdays.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$8.98</td>
<td>$21,005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operator</td>
<td>Route</td>
<td>Service Proposal Descriptions</td>
<td>Pass/Hour</td>
<td>Sub/Pass</td>
<td>Annual Subsidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>Poinsettia Station via Alga Road to Palomar College Transit Center</td>
<td>Add 60-minute service between 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. weekdays. Add 11 trips from 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$3.59</td>
<td>$532,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTD</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>Extend service from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., weekdays.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$7.34</td>
<td>$44,913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outlook for FY 2006 – A Focus on Efficiency

Due to the current budget deficit, there will be little or no additional FY 2006 operating funds available to implement the new services identified in this year's RSIP. In fact, service reductions and adjustments to MTS services may be required to help balance the FY 2006 operating budgets. Therefore, to balance transit operating budgets and implement any of the services identified in the FY 2005 RSIP, transit agencies must focus on increasing the efficiency of the existing services. NCTD completed its Fast Forward: Strategic Business Plan in 1999 to improve the efficiency of its services. MTS is conducting the COA to identify service efficiencies that will help reduce the operating budget. The following are strategies that will be considered in the COA and help increase regional cost-efficiency, achieve operating budget targets, and identify inefficient resources that can be reallocated to implement new services identified in the FY 2006 RSIP.

Service Reductions and Operational Efficiencies – Since FY 2003, MTS transit operators have had to reduce and refine services to implement operational efficiencies to stay within available operating funds. This trend is expected to continue for the next few years. In addition, further reduction of ineffective services can free resources to be used to implement more productive services identified in the FY 2006 RSIP. Service reductions should seek to minimize impacts on existing riders.

- **Eliminate Duplication of Services** – At times, transit routes are developed that duplicate other services. This duplication results in lower efficiency and effectiveness since we are competing with ourselves for the same travel market. Therefore, duplicative services should be eliminated or restructured, and the resources from these services should be reinvested in new enhancement opportunities. Current examples of duplicative service include:
  - Routes 980/990 and 860.
  - Routes currently serving the Sprinter alignment (existing services should be restructured in conjunction with the opening of this service).
  - Downtown San Diego services.
  - Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Avenue services in San Diego.

- **Specific Operator Performance Improvement Recommendations (PIR)** – As part of SANDAG’s Transportation Development Act (TDA) Performance Improvement Program, each transit operator is required to develop annual recommendations for improving its performance and cost-efficiency. A list of the PIRs for FY 2005 implementation is presented in the technical appendix.

MOVING TOWARDS THE REGIONAL TRANSIT VISION

Due to financial constraints, the RTV Mobility 2030 transit network must be implemented in phases. The transit work program outlines SANDAG’s short-term efforts to migrate existing services towards the RTV, and mid-term efforts to develop new services.

*Migrating Existing Services Toward the RTV Concepts*

Not only does improving the speed and schedule reliability of existing transit services begin to implement the concepts of the RTV, it has the greatest promise of enhancing service for existing riders as well as attracting new customers. Although many existing services provide a high level of transit access to major recreation and employment centers, they are often slow and unreliable due to traffic congestion and
frequency of bus stops. Using transit priority measures and appropriate bus stop planning, slow and unreliable transit services can be enhanced to provide a base level service consistent with the RTV.

- **Transit First Now!** – The Transit First Now! program is designed to identify and develop strategies that will allow existing transit services to bypass congested areas, speed up service, and make it more reliable. Implementation of these strategies will help initiate the RTV using existing services to test and evaluate various concepts for broader applications. Transit First Now! strategies include transit priorities and bus stop consolidation.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, priority measures such as signal prioritization, queue jumpers, HOV/managed lanes, conversion of freeway shoulders to transit lanes, and exclusive bus lanes allow bus service to maintain high speeds and reliable schedules through heavily congested areas. As part of the Transit First Now! project, we have identified key congestion hot spots that are currently impacting our services, and are evaluating priority strategies to address these congested areas.

In addition to costly priority treatments, SANDAG and the transit agencies are evaluating no-cost approaches to improving speed and schedule reliability, including the regional bus stop consolidation program. Since bus stop placement has a significant impact on the speed and reliability of service, proper bus stop location must strike a balance between access and efficiency. Bus stops should provide convenient and easy access to major destinations, at junctions with other routes for transfer opportunities, and in areas with high ridership. Although placing more stops along a route may improve access, too many stops negatively impacts quality of service, travel time, operating costs, productivity, and efficiency. Therefore, bus stops should be strategically placed to maximize access, while the number of stops along a route should be minimized to achieve greater operating speeds, efficiency, and quality of service. SANDAG and MTS have implemented a successful bus stop consolidation pilot project on Route 11 that will help in developing regional guidelines for bus stop planning.

**Develop New Services to Support the RTV**

A primary concept of the RTV is an enhanced system of corridor and regional services that act as high speed overlays to supplement the basic mobility provided by the existing transit service. The RTV also envisions a set of complementary neighborhood circulators that provide feeder services to corridor and regional services as well as internal community circulation. Together, these new services will provide the improvements necessary for transit to provide the level of mobility necessary to support the RCP. Transit First is the implementing strategy for the RTV.

To support the RCP, we must develop transit services that link efficient and “smart” land uses together to provide a competitive alternative to the personal automobile. Based on our market research, competing with the automobile requires an emphasis on speed, flexibility, and the customer’s travel experience. Mobility 2030 outlines a system of enhanced corridor and regional services that complement our existing transit network by providing fast, flexible, and pleasant transportation between urban centers and along major employment, retail, and commercial corridors. These services are designed to attract new rider markets by making transit a “first choice” for many trips.

Currently, two types of higher-speed services are provided as part of the region’s transit system. The first type is the Regional Services. The purpose of these services is to provide fast and direct service from residential areas to major employment centers. As such, they operate primarily during weekday peak hours. To increase speeds and provide point-to-point service, few stops are provided between the origin and destination of the route. Regional Services are an important component of the transit system,
particularly as people move further away from their jobs, or when distinct urban centers begin to emerge throughout the region under the RCP. However, they are generally expensive to operate, due to low passenger turnover and high mileage, and are provided sparingly, only during the times and days they are most needed. The Coaster commuter rail service and I-15 express services (Routes 810, 820, 850, 860, and 870) are examples of Regional Service.

The second type of higher-speed service is Corridor Services. Unlike Regional Services, these routes act as a higher-speed overlay to local service operating along major employment, retail, and commercial corridors with travel destinations distributed evenly along the route. Corridor Services generally share stops with its complementary local service. However, the stops are limited, but evenly distributed, along the entire length of the route to provide faster service along the corridor. These services operate throughout the day and often on weekends. The Blue and Orange Trolley lines and Routes 30 and 50 are examples of Corridor Services.

Under the RTV and Mobility 2030, Regional and Corridor services will be enhanced to provide the speed, flexibility, level of service, and amenities that are needed to better compete with the private automobile. Through transit priorities and as described in Chapter 4, these services will provide similar, if not faster, travel times compared to driving alone. Advanced technology will improve the customer’s travel experience through amenities such as real time vehicle location, enhanced customer information vehicles and at stations, automated fare collection, and advanced vehicle design. Station enhancements will provide a safer, more attractive, and pleasant waiting environment for our customers. Finally, greater frequency of service operating throughout the day and week will provide the flexibility to make transit a viable transportation option for San Diegans.

Although SANDAG is developing long-range plans for the full RTV network of regional and corridor services, the following mid-term Mobility 2030 services currently being developed will be the first applications of the RTV concepts. These transit projects and services are included in Program of Projects Expenditure Plan in the TransNet sales tax extension approved by San Diego County voters in November 2004. As these projects are implemented, existing duplicative services should be restructured to provide complementary feeder and collector service, or to address an unmet need.

- **Showcase Project** – This project is designed to showcase the full Transit First customer experience that includes new-design vehicles, upgraded stations, transit priority treatments, a close integration of transit into land use planning around stations, level boarding, smart card fare collection, and real-time passenger information technology. The Showcase Project is intended to provide an example of, and generate support for, the comprehensive RTV network of services, as well as provide a “laboratory” for testing and learning how to achieve the RTV experience.

  The Showcase Project will be operated between San Diego State University and downtown San Diego via El Cajon and Park Boulevards. The service is expected to operate from early morning to late at night, every ten minutes on weekdays and weekends. SANDAG and the City of San Diego are working on a planning and preliminary engineering analysis of the Showcase Project, in addition to preparing an environmental document and an operating plan. The service is expected to be initiated in the next 3-5 years.

- **I-15 Managed Lanes/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project** – Caltrans and SANDAG are jointly working to develop the North I-15 Managed Lanes/BRT facility between SR 163 and SR 78. This project will include the construction of a four lane, bi-directional managed lane facility in the freeway median that will grant priority access to carpools and BRT services. A series of direct-access ramps will connect the managed lanes to BRT stations located in Mira Mesa, Sabre Springs, Rancho Bernardo, South Escondido, and downtown Escondido.
This project will provide the capital facilities to operate regional services along the increasingly congested I-15 corridor. The design of the stations will also be enhanced, and automatic fare collection and real-time passenger information will be provided. As construction of this project nears completion, SANDAG will work with the region’s transit agencies to develop an operating plan and purchase vehicles to provide fast, reliable, and flexible service along this corridor.

Construction of the Managed Lanes between SR 56 and Center City Parkway began in summer 2004 and is scheduled to be competed by the end of 2007. Final design for three of the BRT stations is nearing completion (Del Lago/South Escondido, Rancho Bernardo, and Sabre Springs/Penasquitos) and construction is scheduled to begin between spring and fall 2006. They would begin operation when the Managed Lane project is completed.

- **Super Loop** – The Super Loop will provide enhanced circulation in the heart of University City connecting University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and University Towne Centre (UTC) and Transit Center. In addition to internal circulation, the Super Loop will provide a core distribution service for other existing and planned transit services in the area. The Super Loop Project includes construction of stations and implementation of priority treatments. A Request for Qualifications process for a consultant to perform Preliminary Engineering and environmental documentation will be issued in early 2005.

- **South Bay BRT Project** – As a result of increased border traffic from Mexico and the rapid growth in South Bay (particularly eastern Chula Vista), SANDAG is currently working with Caltrans, local jurisdictions, and developers to implement a South Bay to downtown San Diego BRT project. This service is initially anticipated to extend from downtown San Diego to eastern Chula Vista with an ultimate connection to the Otay Mesa border crossing. The service will use the right-of-way dedicated along East Palomar Road in Otay Ranch to provide a vital link between the transit-oriented residential development and the employment, retail, and entertainment destinations in downtown San Diego.

SANDAG awarded a contract in July 2003 to conduct advanced planning and preliminary engineering for the South Bay BRT Project. In addition, this project is a candidate for application of the freeway transit shoulder lane concept in the interim until the I-805 managed lanes are constructed.

- **Escondido BRT/Transit Priority Study** – SANDAG, in cooperation with NCTD and the City of Escondido, will conduct a preliminary study in spring 2005 to develop, screen, and recommend the appropriate transit priority measures for NCTD Route 350. This six-mile route operates between the Escondido Transit Center in downtown Escondido and Westfield Shoppingtown–North County shopping mall. Measures to be evaluated include traffic signal priority for transit vehicles, queue jumpers to give the bus an advantage at congested intersections, and dedicated lanes to increase transit's competitiveness and reliability.

Route 350 carries more than 2,100 riders each weekday and is one of the more heavily used NCTD routes. Weekday service runs every 15 minutes and the route suffers from congestion in key locations during the morning and evening commute periods. The route serves several major activity centers including the Westfield Shoppingtown–North County shopping mall, San Pasqual High School, Bear Valley Middle School, the downtown Escondido area, and the transit center (which will be the terminus for SPRINTER light rail service beginning in 2007). A future focus will be to conduct advanced planning/preliminary engineering on the recommended transit priority measures in FY 2006.

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7 Full project completion anticipated in 2010 with usable segments complete in 2007.
In addition to the corridor and regional services described above, SANDAG and the region’s transit agencies are planning and constructing three new rail lines to extend the network of rail service in the region.

- **Mission Valley East Light Rail (Trolley) Extension** – The Mission Valley East light rail extension will close the gap between the existing San Diego Trolley Blue Line at Mission San Diego and the Orange Line at the Grossmont Transit Center. When completed, this extension will create a light rail loop around the greater San Diego metropolitan area bordered by I-8 to the north, SR 94 to the south, SR 125 to the east, and I-5 to the west. Direct service will be provided to San Diego State University, as well as between east county suburban communities and Mission Valley, Old Town, and the coastal communities adjacent to Mission Bay.

  This project has been under construction since 2000, and is anticipated to be completed and open for service in mid-2005. The project includes a tunnel and underground station at San Diego State University that will serve to provide front door access to the university and adjacent redevelopment projects. Bus services in the corridor will be restructured to support the new rail line and enhance access to the surrounding communities.

- **Sprinter Rail Line** – The Sprinter rail line will provide fast and reliable service between Oceanside and Escondido along the SR 78 corridor. Once completed, 15 new stations will be constructed, including a station at Cal State University in San Marcos. The Sprinter is anticipated to relieve the growing congestion along the SR 78 corridor as well as providing east/west connections to north/south regional services such as the Coaster, Amtrak, Metrolink, and regional bus service. NCTD has awarded the construction contract and materials are being ordered and delivered. The Sprinter is scheduled to begin operations in December 2007.

- **Mid-Coast Light Rail Line** – The Mid-Coast Line would extend from the Old Town Transit Center along the I-5 corridor to UCSD and University City. With the passage of the *TransNet Extension*, planning and engineering will be resumed for this project. The existing environmental clearance for the first segment to Balboa Avenue will be reevaluated, and preliminary engineering and environmental clearance will be undertaken for the line north of Balboa Avenue. Consultant selection activities will begin in early 2005.

**Neighborhood Services**

While regional and corridor service provides the backbone to the future transit network, a system of neighborhood circulators must be developed to provide feeder service to and from the regional services. Neighborhood services should also provide convenient community circulation to local and regional trip attractions. The following are services that are currently being developed to enhance neighborhood circulation.

- **Downtown Circulators** – To better coordinate transportation and land use planning, SANDAG and the Centre City Development Corporation (CDCC) conducted a Downtown Comprehensive Transit Study to develop a new transit service and operating strategy for downtown San Diego. Central to the transportation needs of the project area is better internal circulation to link the various neighborhoods and attractions of downtown San Diego. The results of the study have been incorporated into CCDC’s community plan update. Included in the proposals is a loop shuttle that could run on Ash, A, 13th, and Market Streets, and Kettner Boulevard. The alignment is expected to be refined and could change as implementation planning takes place. Also included in the plan is a proposal for a local shuttle...
between various downtown locations and Balboa Park. The COA currently being conducted by MTS will also consider downtown transit operations and some of the services may be restructured to provide more of a circulator function.

- **Pacific Beach/Mission Bay Circulator** – Pacific Beach and Mission Bay are home to many of San Diego’s finest regional attractions, including SeaWorld, Belmont Park, Garnet Avenue, and the beach. Convenient connections from Old Town Transit Center to these destinations have been identified as unmet needs through the long-range transit development plan for the north bay and beach area. The completion of the Mission Valley East light rail extension will also increase transit demand between Pacific Beach, with a large student population, and SDSU via Old Town. Finally, redevelopment activities at the Sports Arena and Midway provide additional opportunities for transit demand and transit/land use coordination. MTS and SANDAG are currently developing service concepts to address the transit needs in the north bay and beach area, including a circulator connecting Old Town with the attractions of Pacific Beach.

- **Nobel Coaster Station Feeder Service** – A new Coaster station is planned at Nobel Drive in the UTC area. When completed, this station will provide new opportunities for Coaster passengers accessing destinations in the UTC area, as well as University City residents accessing Coaster destinations in North County. SANDAG has completed a Nobel Coaster station bus feeder study to identify opportunities to provide feeder service to and from the Coaster station with existing as well as proposed new services.

- **Poinsettia COASTER Station Reverse Commute Shuttles** – NCTD has implemented two reverse commute shuttles (Routes 444 and 445) providing reverse commuter opportunities from San Diego to work in the Palomar Airport Road corridor. These shuttles have been in operation since January 2003.

- **Carlsbad Station COASTER Connection** – NCTD plans to implement a new service in May 2005 linking eastern Carlsbad with the Carlsbad Village COASTER Station. The purpose of the service is designed to relieve parking congestion at the station as well as expand ridership.

- **Solana Beach/Lomas Santa Fe Connection** – NCTD plans to study the viability of providing this east-west community connection to and from the Solana Beach Coaster Station with funding assistance from the business served.

**Marketing and Public Information**

An important component of the successful implementation of transit projects will be the execution of branding and marketing programs. The communications and marketing tactics selected will be implemented in stages, and will be directed at progressively larger audiences as projects unfold, effectively increasing awareness and understanding of the program among elected officials, community stakeholders, and the public at large. A specific branding program developed under the Transit First strategy will help translate the goals of the RTV “customer experience” into vehicle and station designs. With the consolidation of the transit agencies and SANDAG, regional marketing activities are now a SANDAG responsibility. However, SANDAG should work with the transit agencies in marketing transit for local and community services, subareas and niche markets.

As a complement to the marketing program, we must be effective in disseminating information to the public. We should employ various media that have the greatest impact on capturing the largest audience. Signage at stations and on vehicles should be clear and concise and direct riders to their services as
effectively as possible. Finally, information on all of our services should be provided in appropriate languages based on the specific service area audience.