TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

FROM: San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Staff

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Downtown Bus Parking Lot Project (Layover Facility)

Notice of Preparation

SANDAG, as lead agency, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Downtown Bus Parking Lot project (Layover Facility) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (See Attachment 1). SANDAG needs to know your views, or the views of your organization or agency, as to the scope and content of the environmental information that will be addressed in the draft EIR. An Initial Study (IS) was not prepared for this project and is not required under CEQA when it has been determined that an EIR will be prepared for the project.

Scoping Meeting

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c)(1), a scoping meeting will be held on May 7, 2012 between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at SANDAG, 401 B Street, Suite 800, San Diego, CA 92101. Participants are welcome to attend all or any part of the meeting, which will be conducted in Open House format.

Public input will be taken at the meeting. In addition, public input can be provided in writing at the meeting or can be submitted to SANDAG. Contact information is provided below.

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

SANDAG Contact Information

Please send your response to:
Rob Rundle, Principal Regional Planner
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101
E-mail: rob.rundle@sandag.org
Phone: (619) 699-6949
Fax: (619) 699-1905
Please include your name and contact information or the name of a contact person in your organization or agency, if appropriate.

**Lead Agency:** San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

**Project Title:** Environmental Impact Report for the Downtown Bus Parking Lot Project (Layover Facility)

**Project Location:** One of four properties located on city blocks generally bounded by Ash Street to the north, Kettner Boulevard to the west, B Street to the south and Union Street to the east in the City of San Diego, California (See Attachment 3).

**Date:** April 18, 2010

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**Attachment:**
1. Project Description and Scope of Environmental Analysis
2. Regional Vicinity Map
3. Project Location Map

**Prepared By:**

[Signature]

Rob Rundle, Principal Regional Planner
Background and Overview

SANDAG, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), and City of San Diego, is considering development of a bus parking lot for transit vehicle layover in downtown San Diego. SANDAG is the lead agency and will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project. SANDAG is evaluating the feasibility of locating the facility (see Attachment 3) on one of the following blocks/portions of blocks:

- Block bounded by Ash Street, Kettner Boulevard, A Street and India Street;
- Block bounded by Ash Street, State Street, A Street and Columbia Street;
- Block bounded by Ash Street, Union Street, A Street, and State Street, controlled by the State of California; or
- Block bounded by A Street, Union Street, B Street, and State Street.

The Project is being funded by the local TransNet half-cent sales tax for transportation and is proposed as one of several transit improvements planned by SANDAG and MTS to address long-term transit infrastructure needs throughout downtown San Diego. The Project is intended to provide a facility to accommodate transit vehicle layovers. A “layover” is a break period between transit service runs during which the driver parks the vehicle. Layovers are used to help maintain buses on schedule and allow transit operators a rest period between routes and/or accommodate shift changes.

MTS transit vehicles currently layover in this area at the curb, along sections of State, India, and B Streets. A number of MTS routes terminate at State and Union Streets; therefore, transit vehicles concentrate in this area while waiting to start routes out of downtown San Diego. After dropping off passengers, transit operators pull over to designated curb sections and park for short periods of time (generally, 5-15 minutes, depending on the frequency of the service of each route). Transit vehicles cycle continuously throughout the 21-hour operating day (4:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.). Approximately 400-450 transit vehicles would lay over each day which generally equates to 19-21 each hour over a 21 hour daily operating schedule.

Articulated buses generally require 65 to 70 feet of curb space to park, plus 50-60 feet of clear curb space to maneuver into and out of the space. Parked transit vehicles currently use areas that could otherwise accommodate parking, loading, or taxi areas.

The following objectives have been identified for the proposed Project:

- Maintain on-time operations of buses by providing a rest period between runs;
Minimize operating costs by minimizing the travel time between the bus stops where routes originate/terminate and the layover;

Accommodate MTS/SANDAG plans to expand the fleet of local and regional Bus Rapid Transit vehicles;

Minimize impacts to local street circulation;

Repurpose existing underdeveloped property east of the railroad corridor and north of Broadway to accommodate transit uses;

Design the layover with sensitivity to adjacent land uses; and

Allow the City of San Diego to reinstate parking, loading, or taxi zones in curbside areas currently used to accommodate transit vehicle layovers.

**Project Characteristics**

SANDAG proposes to install between 15 and 18 transit bus bays and a small administration building on-site to accommodate up to 18 transit vehicles at a time and approximately 35 vehicles per hour during peak periods. The facility would operate between 4 a.m. and 1 a.m. to coincide with transit operations. As referenced, the proposed Project would be located on one of four sites currently under consideration by SANDAG and MTS. The aforementioned sites are being considered based on the ability to achieve Project objectives referenced above. Configuration of the proposed facility would differ slightly from site to site. Generally, existing parking areas would be graded, repaved and striped to accommodate transit bus parking lanes or stalls. Depending on the site, existing structures may be repurposed to accommodate facility needs. Alternatively, all existing structures would be removed and a new one-story prefabricated building of up to 1,000 square feet in size would be placed on the site. The building would be designed to accommodate up to four offices for transit supervisors, a dispatch area, restrooms and a break room. Space for replacement parts, supplies and a janitorial storage area would also be provided. Up to eight MTS employees would work at the facility full time to supervise operations and provide dispatch services. To construct a facility that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, the facility will include screening elements such as walls and landscaping. A regional vicinity map and project area map are included as Attachments 2 and 3 respectively.

In the future, the bus parking lot may be available for joint development in which the bus parking is accommodated within a larger project which may include residential, office, retail, civic, or other uses. However, at this time, the bus parking lot is proposed to be built as an independent facility and as a surface parking lot.

**Notice of Preparation**

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is intended to alert regulatory and trustee agencies, interested agencies, organizations, and individuals of the preparation of the EIR for the Downtown Bus Parking Lot. Comments regarding the scope of the EIR received during the 30-day NOP review period will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the draft EIR.
Issues Addressed in the EIR

The EIR will analyze the impacts of the Downtown Bus Parking Lot on the physical environment. Potential environmental effects associated with construction and operation of the proposed Project consist of aesthetics, air quality, cultural/historic resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials; land use and planning; noise, and transportation/traffic. Environmental impacts found to be less than significant or without impact and not requiring further analysis within the EIR include agriculture and forestry, biological resources, geology/soils, hydrology/water quality, mineral resources, population/housing, public services, recreation, and utilities/service systems.

In addition, the EIR will address cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts and related issues required by CEQA.

Alternatives Analyzed in the EIR

The EIR will include a discussion of reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project. Each alternative will be compared to the proposed Project for its potential to achieve the established objectives while minimizing significant environmental impacts. In addition to the Project, the EIR will include an evaluation of the "No Project Alternative." The No Project Alternative is required per Section 15126.6(e) of the CEQA Guidelines. The No Project Alternative assumes the continued use of curb space to meet all layover needs. The EIR will also include an analysis of alternative sites and alternative operating plans. In addition, the EIR will identify other alternatives that were initially considered but rejected for reasons including infeasibility or inability for a particular alternative to meet the Project objectives or reduce environmental impacts beyond that of the proposed Project.

Although these alternatives have been preliminarily identified, SANDAG is seeking input on the alternatives in the NOP process which could result in modifications to the project design or project sites and consequently, the alternatives identified above.
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DOWNTOWN BUS PARKING LOT (LAYOVER FACILITY)