

Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley

FACT SHEET



The Project

The Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley is a SANDAG priority project that adds 11 miles of light rail to the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, from Downtown San Diego to the University Community. The extension serves major activity centers such as Old Town; Mission Bay; University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego); and Westfield UTC.

The Trolley extension includes nine new stations: Tecolote Road, Clairemont Drive, Balboa Avenue, Nobel Drive, VA Medical Center, UC San Diego Central Campus, UC San Diego Health La Jolla, Executive Drive, and the terminus at the UTC Transit Center.

The Need

Freeways and arterials in the Mid-Coast corridor are generally congested, and traffic congestion is projected to increase as the region grows. By 2030, the corridor's population is forecast to increase 19 percent and employment is expected to increase by 12 percent. Additionally, the University Community has developed as a major employment and high-density residential area, similar to Downtown San Diego. The University Community is San Diego's second downtown, and UC San Diego is a high transit use area with students and employment. Lastly, in October 2017, SANDAG opened a regional transit center at Westfield UTC, and the Trolley extension connects directly to the transit center.

The Trolley extension project provides an effective alternative to congested

freeways and roadways for travelers, improves public transit services, and enhances travel options by connecting the corridor with areas served by the existing Trolley system.

Project Costs

The project budget is \$2.17 billion, which includes financing costs.

Project Status

The Trolley extension was first introduced as a project in SANDAG's 1986 Regional Plan. In fall 2014, the SANDAG Board of Directors and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) gave final environmental clearance to the project. Pre-construction activities—consisting of the relocation of underground utilities—began in early 2016, and primary construction activities started in fall 2016. The Trolley extension opened for revenue service in November 2021, on time and within budget.

Funding Status

The Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley is fully funded and one of the highest priorities for SANDAG in its TransNet Early Action Program. The FTA provided approximately half of the project funding, with TransNet providing the remaining local match.

In September 2016, through its New Starts Program, the FTA signed a Full Funding Grant Agreement with SANDAG to provide the nearly 50 percent federal match needed to fund the project and allow construction to start in fall 2016. In June 2017, SANDAG secured a loan from the federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)

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program, which reduced borrowing costs and increased flexibility, saving taxpayer dollars in building the largest transit project in the region's history. In July 2019, SANDAG issued \$335 million in Capital Grant Receipt Revenue Bonds to lower interest rates on initial funding sources for the project. In June 2021, the project received just over \$57 million in additional funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, increasing federal funding and decreasing the necessary TransNet contribution.

Summary

SANDAG delivered the Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley on time and on budget. A SANDAG priority project, the Trolley extension improves regional transit access by providing a new and efficient way for people to travel to jobs, schools, hospitals, and recreation areas in addition to creating a one-seat (no transfer) ride from the international border and communities south of Downtown San Diego all the way north to the University Community. The project is a successful example of SANDAG's ability to deliver large-scale, transformational projects that will serve the San Diego region for generations to come.



For More Information

- » Visit: sandag.org/MidCoast
- » Call: (877) 379-0110