

May 28, 2021

Chair Catherine Blakespear  
 SANDAG  
 401 B. Street, Suite 800  
 San Diego, CA 92101

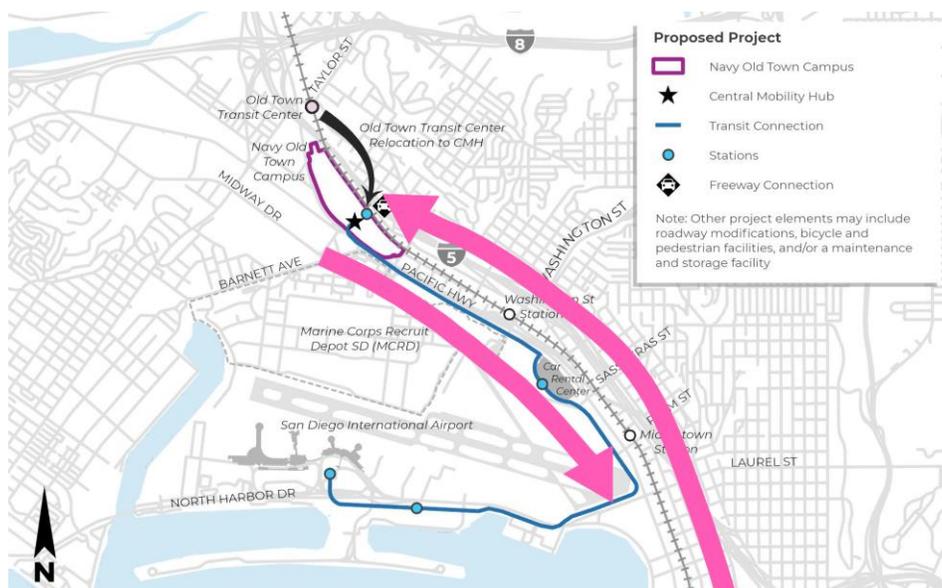
**SUBJECT: Central Mobility Hub Draft EIR – Analyzing for Airline Passenger and Airport Workers**

Dear Chair Catherine Blakespear:

On behalf of Circulate San Diego, whose mission is to create excellent mobility choices and vibrant, healthy neighborhoods, I am writing to request that alternatives for the airport connector are fully considered as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Central Mobility Hub.

Circulate San Diego has been a leading champion of a rail connection (Airport Connection) to the San Diego International Airport (Airport). Such a connection could provide a fast, environmentally-friendly, and affordable option for passengers and employees to access the Airport.

Circulate is pleased that SANDAG and other agencies are taking affirmative steps to create a rail connection to the Airport. Nonetheless, we have concerns about the current Proposed Project. Most of the San Diego region’s transit riders live to the east and south of the Airport. The Proposed Project creates an Airport Connection route that would require these San Diegans to travel approximately 1.5 miles north past the Airport to a new station, before doubling back to reach the Airport. This process would add an extra three miles to those trips.



This Airport Connection route has the potential to discourage transit use by wasting riders' time and introducing inefficiency in the system. In addition, it would increase project cost by duplicating existing service between Downtown and the Central Mobility Hub. This is especially troubling considering that the residential and workday population of Downtown is far greater than the population of the Midway District, even when factoring in the potential population from the Navy's recent SPAWAR proposal.

Below are specific requests, which the agency should address in the EIR to evaluate adequately the potential environmental impacts of the Project and its potential alternatives.

#### **Transportation Analysis:**

- 1. Describe the anticipated destinations and points of origin for both airline passengers and employees who would use the Airport Connection to travel to and from the Airport. This description should include the number of airline passengers and number of workers coming from points of origin and compare across all of the project alternatives for the Airport Connection.**
- 2. Analyze the aggregate travel time for airline passengers and workers using the Airport Connection compared between the project alternatives based on destinations and points of origin. This analysis should keep in mind the relative residential and workday populations of neighborhoods surrounding the proposed Central Mobility Hub and the Downtown neighborhood.**
- 3. Analyze the cost of fares for airline passengers and workers using the Airport Connection compared between the project alternatives. This analysis should keep in mind that airline passengers tend to be more affluent and less price-sensitive than many Airport workers. Different pricing models should be analyzed to avoid mistakes in other airport-transit connections that have priced out workers.<sup>1</sup> This analysis should include treatment of Alternative 2 as normal Trolley trip, included in a one-way, daily, or monthly PRONTO pass.**
- 4. If the Airport Connection goes all the way to the NAVWAR site, consider the options of adding a stop at Middletown or other Trolley station so that riders coming to or from destinations south of the Airport are not forced to travel far north, only to double back. Any such stop should include a robust and safe pedestrian connection to the Airport Connector.**
- 5. Consider pedestrian access from the proposed Central Mobility Hub across Interstate 5 to Old Town. With the loss of Old Town Station, pedestrians should have a short, direct, and inviting route in order to reach Old Town.**
- 6. Consider the Airport Connection's point of access to the Airport. Transit that is located closer to the Airport terminal than vehicle pickup lanes gives passengers and employees quicker and safer access to transit. In addition, placing vehicle pickup lanes closer to the terminal than transit prioritizes the automobile and discourages transit use. Integrating transit access into**

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<sup>1</sup> Mathew Roth, "SFO Commission Calls BART Surcharge for SFO Workers 'Unconscionable,'" StreetsBlogSF, July 8, 2009, available at <https://sf.streetsblog.org/2009/07/08/sfo-commission-calls-bart-surcharge-for-sfo-workers-unconscionable>.

**the terminal design offers optimal passenger experience.**

- 7. For Alternative 2, consider aligning service with the Orange Line to avoid disruption or delays to Blue Line service between Downtown and UCSD. In addition, consider the possible future value of an Orange Line extension past the airport, providing a rail connection to Point Loma and Liberty Station from the Airport and Downtown.**

Circulate San Diego is encouraged by SANDAG's commitment to high quality transit in San Diego, including its commitment to an Airport Connection. It is imperative that such a project makes ordinary geometric sense, and that it benefits not just airline passengers, but Airport workers as well. The Draft EIR for Central Mobility Hub should include an analysis of this as part of the project

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colin Parent". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Colin Parent  
Executive Director and General Counsel