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*Direct underground Trolley connection to airport also offers the ability to extend into Point Loma, Liberty Station, beach communities*

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**San Diego** – The Metropolitan Transit System has determined that the long-desired Trolley extension to the San Diego International Airport is feasible, and can be built in the next ten years. Like so many cities throughout the U.S. and globally, providing light-rail service to the airport would enable greater connectivity for San Diegans, tourists, and our binational community. Transportation experts from Mott MacDonald presented multiple options for construction that were evaluated as part of the preliminary feasibility study to the MTS Board of Directors.

“San Diegans have always wanted a Trolley connection to the airport and now is the time to move forward,” said Nathan Fletcher, MTS Board Chair, and Chair, San Diego County Board of Supervisors. “We have an opportunity to invest in good jobs and build a world-class rail connection to our airport that will greatly benefit not only visitors to San Diego but hard-working San Diegans who currently have no rail connection to the airport. The feasibility study findings demonstrate a Trolley to the airport is possible and while we have a ways to go in planning, stakeholder engagement and execution, there is a unique opportunity to further our reputation as a world-class region by offering the fastest rail connection in the United States between an airport and convention center. Just like the recent Trolley extension to UC San Diego, the VA Medical Center, and UTC, this would be yet another game-changer for San Diego.”

The MTS Board of Directors authorized staff to pursue federal and state grants for the project, focusing on the underground options that connect to the existing rail alignment near Hawthorn Street, and to continue community outreach efforts. The Board also directed MTS staff to continue its outreach to stakeholders, including the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, the Port of San Diego, Solar Turbines, and the general public.

Advantages of a Trolley connection directly to the San Diego Airport include:

- **More expansion:** Ability to expand Trolley further to the west – possible extensions could include Point Loma, Liberty Station, Sports Arena, and beach communities. It is also possible to provide direct service from the airport to the eventual Bayfront convention center in Chula Vista.
- **Accessibility:** Connecting directly to all three Trolley lines, five Rapid routes, six bus routes, COASTER and Amtrak.
- **Fast service:** Offering the fastest rail connection between a convention center and an

airport in the United States – 14 minutes.

- **More opportunity for residents:** Serving 520,000 residents near Trolley stations; 1.2 million total within one transfer.
- **Can be built quickly:** The extension to the airport could be built as soon as 10 years at a cost estimated at \$1.5 - \$2 billion.
- **Central Mobility Hub:** The proposed alignment does not preclude connecting to a Central Mobility Hub in the future.

The Mott MacDonald study looked at three different options for construction, an elevated guideway off Laurel Street, and two underground options at Hawthorne. MTS staff favored the underground option along Hawthorn Street due to no airspace restrictions, minimized private property impacts and lowest cost. With this option in mind, Mott McDonald examined two types of undergrounding be considered in a final plan – tunnel boring and cut and cover. The study concluded the project is feasible.

The MTS alignment also proposes a station at each airport terminal running parallel with Harbor Drive, including aligning with the Terminal 1 reconstruction, which celebrated its groundbreaking earlier this week. The proposed alignment would allow future expansion into Point Loma and beyond. The Airport has set aside more than \$500 million for transportation improvements, including transit to the airport.

MTS operates 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines across 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Frequencies and spans have been restored to near-pre-COVID-19 levels. Updated schedules can be accessed on the [MTS website](#). MTS requires people to wear face coverings at all times, and practice physical distancing when possible.

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