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San Diego Region Celebrates Grand Opening Of Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley

More Than 8,500 Attend Festivities at UC San Diego Central Campus Trolley Station

On Sunday, SANDAG and MTS joined federal, state, and local leaders, and more than 8,500 community members to celebrate the start of service on the Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley.

The Mid-Coast Trolley Extension, built by SANDAG, remained on budget and on schedule throughout construction. The extension provides a direct connection from the U.S./Mexico Border to the University Community.

During the event, community members enjoyed free Trolley rides and family-friendly festivities, including live music, food, giveaways, carnival rides, and remarks from local, state, and national leaders who were instrumental in the construction of the Trolley Extension.

"This is a historic day for the San Diego region as we commemorate one of the largest infrastructure projects in our history," said SANDAG Chair and Encinitas Mayor Catherine Blakespear. "The Mid-Coast Trolley Extension is an example of how we can transform our transportation system through the 2021 Regional Plan by providing convenient, safe, and competitive transit access to job centers, education, and healthcare for everyone."

Chair Blakespear was joined by MTS Vice Chair and National City Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis, San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, Congressman Scott Peters, Congressman Juan Vargas, Federal Transit Administration Administrator Nuria Fernandez, California Department of Transportation Director Toms Omishakin, and UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep Khosla to celebrate the grand opening. U.S. Senator Alex Padilla also provided virtual remarks at the community celebration at UC San Diego's Central Campus Trolley Station.

"This extension is a dream come true for me and for many people in our region," says MTS Vice Chair Sotelo-Solis. "A one-seat ride from the border and our South Bay communities all the way up to University City on board our all-electric Trolleys is a phenomenal addition to our public transit system. It promises to increase opportunities for our people, reduce congestion and to help San Diego achieve our climate action goals."

"Today is a day San Diegans have been looking forward to for many years – the opening of the Blue Line Trolley extension that will transform how many of us travel to destinations from the

University community to our border with Mexico,” said San Diego Mayor Gloria. “This project will give San Diegans more clean transportation options that help us reach our bold climate goals while creating good jobs. I’m grateful to the countless people who made this day possible.”

Completion of the Mid-Coast Extension of the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley is a significant step toward realizing the vision for SANDAG’s 2021 Regional Plan to create a modernized transportation system that is accessible for everyone by offering travel alternatives that are as fast or faster than driving alone.

“We can’t overstate the importance of this project for our region,” said Congressman Peters. “The extension of the Mid-Coast trolley checks all the boxes needed for San Diego’s continued prosperity: fewer cars on our roads to reduce traffic congestion and vehicle emissions, more options for commuters from San Ysidro all the way to UC San Diego, and a foreseeable boost in our local economy. I made the \$1 billion of federal funding a top priority during my time in Congress. It’s been thrilling to watch it get built and an honor to help open it up to the public.”

The success of the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension is a testament to SANDAG’s ability to leverage local funds to secure additional funding from state and federal sources, and to plan, construct, and deliver large-scale projects. This major investment in regional transportation is only possible thanks to collaboration through SANDAG’s regional planning process, which sets in motion decades of planning, engineering, design, and construction.

“As we celebrate President Biden signing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, San Diego is already putting its principles into practice by extending the UC-San Diego Blue Line Trolley,” said FTA Administrator Fernandez. “This additional 11 miles of light rail will be transformational for the region, and we expect that more people – and people of varying needs and abilities – will have new access to get where they need to go. I congratulate SANDAG and the people of San Diego on this wonderful improvement to your transit system.”

The \$2.1 billion project was made possible with funds from TransNet, the half-cent sales tax administered by SANDAG to support transportation projects in the San Diego region with the remaining funding provided through a \$1 billion Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration.

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