

September 5, 2025

San Diego International Airport Terminal 1 Phase 1 Opening

Overview

The San Diego International Airport (SAN) is the busiest single-runway commercial airport in the nation. New Terminal 1 (New T1) is a \$3.8 billion dollar project that will replace the 54-year-old Terminal 1 with a modern and more efficient facility. In 2024, SAN served more than 25 million passengers, and the number is projected to grow to 35 million by 2035. As passenger volumes continue to rise, the New T1 airside and terminal/roadway improvements are essential to meet the demand for modern air travel, while significantly enhancing the customer experience.

Action: Information

San Diego International Airport staff will present an update on New Terminal 1 Phase 1A opening, including information on how the traveling public can use new airport roads.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

None.

Key Considerations

Construction of New T1 began in November of 2021 and has remained on schedule. The project will be delivered in two phases: Phase 1A, opening September 23, 2025, will include the first 19 gates, and Phase 1B, scheduled for early 2028, will add the remaining 11 gates.

Notable features of New T1 will include:

- 30 gates, including enhanced gate-area seating, a variety of local and some national restaurants, and shops, a post-security outdoor dining patio, and a 13-lane security checkpoint.
- A state-of-the-art parking plaza with up to 5,200 spaces that is located within walking distance of both terminals.
- Improved access and mobility through a new on-airport entrance allowing airport-bound drivers to merge from Laurel Street and North Harbor Drive onto a three-lane, free-flow roadway without intersections and a multi-use bicycle and pedestrian path.
- Secure bicycle lockers, acquired and installed with SANDAG's assistance.
- Enriching art featuring nine public art pieces, including six newly commissioned art pieces, each a permanent tribute to San Diego's vibrant history and lifestyle, and three relocated from the airport's existing collection.
- Sustainability features such as 100% carbon-free electricity, a new 1.5-million-gallon underground cistern to support SAN's stormwater capture and reuse system, and more than 250 electric vehicle charging stations.

Shortly after the completion of Phase 1A, demolition of the existing terminal will begin, making way for Phase 1B. At the same time, work will continue on the Airside Improvements project, which is scheduled for completion in mid-2028. This final project component will create a new Taxiway Alpha to enable more efficient aircraft movements, reduce taxi times and delays, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Immediate Transit Connection Enhancements

Since 2021, the Airport Authority has operated the SAN Flyer, a free electric shuttle bus connecting the Old Town Transit Center to the terminals. The service has seen ridership exceed 1,000 passengers daily during peak periods and is currently averaging 600 passengers per day in August.

Additionally, passengers and employees can currently connect between Downtown San Diego and the airport using Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Route 992. Beginning September 23, all MTS Route 992 bus stops at the airport will move to new locations. At both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2, the stops will shift from the ground level up to the elevated departures roadway, maintaining seamless service between the terminals. The new stops are positioned in the center of the elevated departures roadways, making it easy for passengers and employees to walk equal distances to the pedestrian bridges that lead directly to the security checkpoints on the second level of each terminal.

Next Steps

A New T1 Community Reveal: Open House is scheduled for Sunday, September 14 (9 a.m. – 12 p.m.) giving the public a unique opportunity to explore the new terminal. Visitors can drop in and take a self-guided tour to experience the new facility first-hand.

Airport Authority staff will continue to collaborate with other regional partner agencies like SANDAG and MTS to improve transit connections to the airport.

Matt Harris, Director of Government Relations and Strategy, San Diego International Airport