

September 5, 2025

## Airport Transit Connection Project Update

### Overview

Since the last status update presented to the SANDAG Board of Directors in [December 2024](#), staff have been carrying out additional analysis of the Airport Transit Connection (ATC) based on current forecast and survey data and stakeholder input. This analysis is being used to determine what alternative(s) advance to the environmental process.

### Key Considerations

Advanced planning work is in process to evaluate which ATC rail concepts are the most feasible and the best fit for the San Diego region prior to beginning the environmental analysis phase. Progress has been made in the following areas:

- The airport travel survey was conducted in fall 2024 to collect post-pandemic data on travel habits to and from the airport from residents, tourists, and airport employees. Survey results are being used to update the SANDAG transportation model while supporting the ATC planning process.
- Staff are updating ATC Trolley concept features in coordination with our local partner agencies. This includes determining if frequency better than 15 minutes can be achieved while reducing the time the Trolley operates at-grade in one of the most congested parts of Downtown.
- Staff developed a pare down approach to significantly reduce the number of ATC rail concepts before entering the environmental analysis phase. Round 1 of the pare down process has eliminated four automated people mover concept variations that connect the airport to the rental car center or Old Town Transit Center based on transit, resident, and visitor access. Round 2 is underway and will consider cost, construction complexity, and compatibility with stakeholder plans.

Additionally, near-term strategies for enhancing bus connections to the airport are being assessed including the option to boost service frequency between Downtown and the airport on Route 992. Transit priority measures between Downtown and Old Town transit hubs are also being planned so that MTS Route 992, the San Diego Flyer, and other shuttle services may benefit. This would ensure better transit options to the airport are available prior to the implementation of a proposed rail project.

### Next Steps

Staff will summarize airport travel survey results, complete the pare down process, and solicit public feedback to identify those ATC concepts that may advance to environmental review. Staff will continue collaborating with our peer agency stakeholders and state/federal funding partners to ensure the proposed project best meets the needs of the San Diego region and is highly competitive for grant funding.

***Antoinette Meier, Senior Director of Regional Planning***

### Action: Discussion

Staff will present an update on the advanced planning and outreach for the Airport Transit Connection project.

### Fiscal Impact:

Funding for the Airport Transit Connection (ATC) project is included in Capital Improvement Program Project No. 1149100.

### Schedule/Scope Impact:

The ATC concept pare down process will continue through early 2026 to carry out ridership modeling prior to start of environmental analysis.