



# \$204B Transportation Plan Gets Green Light From SANDAG

By Gene Cubbison

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SANDAG gave the green light to a plan that determines how San Diegans will get around for the next 35 years. NBC 7's Gene Cubbison reports. (Published Friday, Oct. 9, 2015)

A big decision on how San Diegans will get around over the next 35 years came down on Friday.

Regional planners with the San Diego Regional Assn. of Governments (SANDAG) unanimously approved a \$204 billion strategy to accommodate more freeway travel along with mass transit.

But critics object to the spending formulas and timelines for expanding public transit options.

"A lot of these transit projects come at the end of the plan, and we need to start now if we're going to reduce our carbon emissions," said Lisa Wellens, policy director of the "San Diego 350" climate-change action movement.

"We should be reducing our carbon emission levels to 80 percent below 1990 levels," Wellens told NBC 7 in an interview Friday. "This plan doesn't address



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that at all, and will only increase transit ridership by four percent. Our transit times (will still be) double what they'll be in cars,"

The brains behind the so-called [San Diego Forward](#) strategy insist it's the best possible menu of priorities pushed by many competing interests.

"We've built a lot into this plan that gives us flexibility, based on what kinds of technologies come in the future," said Charles Stoll, transportation planning director of SANDAG. "Our managed lane system gives us a very good opportunity to test, say, driverless cars."

While new trolley lines will get most of the funding in the first five years of the program, that'll taper off and won't pick back up until 2035 — and that's at the crux of objections by transit activists.

SANDAG officials tout 160 miles of new "managed" freeway lanes — to handle more carpools, van pools and bus rapid-transit shuttles — which they predict will significantly help alleviate congestion for commuters.

But other clean-air activists see that as too little, too late.

"Usually in a matter of four to five years, when you add lanes to the freeways, those lanes are backed up to the level of congestion that they were before," said Monique Lopez, policy planner for the Environmental Health Coalition. "This is unsustainable investment."

This rebuttal from Stoll: "For a region as diverse as ours, there's no one solution. This plan is very diverse and balanced and provides a system that gives people choices."

Just over half of the money for the plan will come from federal and state transportation grants.

Local property taxes would cover about 35 percent, with gas taxes making up the difference.

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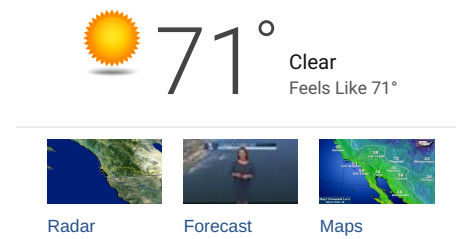
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**Emile Shlemon** · Oceanside, California

"Our managed lane system gives us a very good opportunity to test, say, driverless cars."

No it won't, this "test" has failed already on the \$15 Billion that was spent on the 15 improvements. It's still nightmare traffic there after all the testing, and managed lanes. Total failure !

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**Darke Tyger** · Works at High Tech

How San Diego manages it's traffic has nothing to do with climate change. That is a whole money making scam in itself make no mistake....We are onto this crap now and all that "save the planet" and "for the children" lies and propaganda heartstrings crap isn't going to work anymore.

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**Lynn Aliment**

Agree completely. Eliminating all greenhouse gasses from San Diego county would have zero impact on the climate. But a huge and unnecessary impact on our collective wallets..

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**Adam Chavez** · Field Operations at Datel systems & softwares

A paycheck for politicians is all this plan is.

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