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# Coalition to rally against SANDAG's regional plan

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Posted: Thursday, October 8, 2015 9:07 pm

WARD

SANDAG

http://sdforward.com



Posted on Oct 8, 2015 by Maggie Avants

When the Board of Directors of the San Diego Association of Governments

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gathers Friday to consider adopting the final version of San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan, it won't be without controversy.

The <u>SANDAG board meeting</u> starts at 10 a.m. Members of <u>Environmental Health Coalition</u> plan to rally beginning at 9 a.m. outside SANDAG's headquarters on B Street in downtown San Diego.

The coalition claimed in a news release Thursday that the \$200-billion, 35-year regional transportation plan is freeway-centric and that it "ignores years of community requests for prioritized improvements to transit, biking and walking infrastructure." It also "exacerbates air pollution, health and asthma problems in low-income communities south of I-8" and "prevents San Diego from meeting its lofty Climate Action Plan goals."

"Research shows that low-income communities south of the I-8 already struggle with some of the highest levels of air pollution in the state," EHC said. "Another study shows that residents in these communities are 10 times more likely to get hit by a car than other San Diego

neighborhoods. The neighborhood's needs are not prioritized in this plan and as a result, these communities and environmental organizations cannot support it."

The plan is updated every four years, looking 35 years into the future, taking into consideration what the region's transportation needs will be.

By 2050, the region is expected to be home to a million more people than it is now, half a million more jobs and 300,000 more homes. In anticipation, city and county land-use plans have changed to focus most forecasted growth in already existing communities, according to a news release earlier this week from SANDAG Spokesperson David Hicks.

"The regional plan responds to those new land use patterns, overlaying more transportation choices to connect communities with different modes of travel." Hicks wrote.



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San Diego Forward is billed as a "big-picture vision for the region's future, combined with a specific plan for building \$204 billion worth of transportation infrastructure between now and 2050 to help make that vision a reality."

The plan "seeks to strike a balance, helping to guide future growth in a way that preserves mobility in the region and supports jobs and our economy, while creating healthy communities, preserving half the region as open space, and exceeding the greenhouse gas reduction targets set for our region by the California Air Resources Board," according to the news release.

"This plan relies on adding layers of transportation choice," said SANDAG Chair and Santee Councilman Jack Dale. "By growing within our existing communities — then connecting those communities with not just freeways, but with carpool lanes, transit services, bikeways, and safe walking routes — we can achieve all of our goals."

According to SANDAG, the San Diego Forward plan:

- Commits more than 50 percent of its \$204 billion investment to transit, including five new Trolley lines, 32 new Rapid lines, and significant increases in transit frequencies.
- Dedicates 15 percent of its resources to add 160 miles of Managed Lanes to our
  existing freeways for the specific purpose of allowing transit, carpools, and vanpools to
  be more efficient and bypass traffic.
- Directs more than \$588 million to building 275 miles of bikeways, making active transportation a realistic alternative to car travel for more people.
- Invests a total of \$4.9 billion in active transportation improvements throughout the region, including biking and walking improvements, such as upgrades to freeway overpasses.
- Ensures that in the next five years 75 percent of all transportation funds will be invested
  in transit and active transportation, including the Mid-Coast Trolley extension, the MidCity Centerline Rapid Stations project, the South Bay Rapid project, and the continued
  double-tracking of our coastal rail corridor.

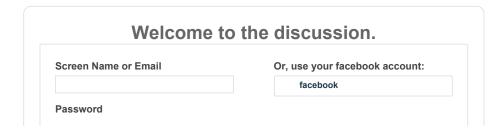
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