

(/)

Today's Paper(/todays-paper/) Weather 65° F(/weather/) Traffic(/mytraffic/) Surf(/surf-report/) Newsletters(/newsletter/signup/)

Twitter (/https://twitter.com/sdut) Facebook (/https://www.facebook.com/SanDiegoUnionTribune) Instagram (/https://www.instagram.com/sandiegouniontribune)

SUBSCRIBE/LOGIN(/ACCOUNTS/LOGIN/?NEXT=/NEWS/2016/APR/29/SANDAG-HIGHWAYS-PUBLIC-TRANSIT-TAX-LEVY-MEASURE/&FLOW\_TYPE=SUBSCRIPTION)

Search

<a href="#">NEWS(/NEWS/)</a>	<a href="#">SPORTS(/NEWS/SPORTS/)</a>	<a href="#">BUSINESS(/NEWS/BUSINESS/)</a>	<a href="#">A&amp;E(/NEWS/ENTERTAINMENT/)</a>	<a href="#">LIFESTYLE(/NEWS/LIFESTYLE/)</a>
<a href="#">MILITARY(/NEWS/MILITARY/)</a>	<a href="#">OPINION(/NEWS/OPINION/)</a>	<a href="#">VIDEO(/TV/)</a>	<a href="#">OBITS(/NEWS/OBITUARIES/)</a>	<a href="#">DEALS &amp; CLASSIFIEDS(/OFFERS/)</a>
<a href="#">JOBS(/NEWS/JOBS/)</a>	<a href="#">HOMES(/NEWS/REAL-ESTATE/)</a>	<a href="#">CARS(/NEWS/CARS/)</a>		




[ENVIRONMENT\(/NEWS/ENVIRONMENT/\)](#)

# More freeways or mass transit for region?

## SANDAG half-cent tax measure generates clash over future of transportation in the county

By Joshua Emerson Smith(/staff/joshua-emerson-smith/) | 10:28 p.m. April 29, 2016



Activists are divided over the division and timing of funds for road, freeway and public transit projections in San Diego County. / photo by Eduardo Contreras \* U-T

A battle is raging about one of the most fundamental aspects of San Diego County's future: how folks get around.

Will commuters ever willingly continue to drive their cars to work, as they've done for decades? Or will lawmakers fashion a public transportation system — consisting largely of bus, trolley and train lines — that's efficient and sexy enough to appeal to millennials and perhaps their parents?

In the latest clash, green groups have joined Republicans to oppose a countywide, half-cent sales tax that would provide millions of dollars for public transit and bike lanes but also lock in money

Facebook share link: <http://www.facebook.com/...>

Twitter share link: <https://twitter.com/...>

Reddit share link: <http://www.reddit.com/submit?url=http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/apr/29/sandag-highways-public-transit-tax-levy-measure/>

Email share link: [mailto:www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2016/apr/29/sandag-highways-public-transit-tax-levy-measure/](mailto:mailto:www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2016/apr/29/sandag-highways-public-transit-tax-levy-measure/)

Print share link: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2016/apr/29/sandag-highways-public-transit-tax-levy-measure/>

With billions in transportation spending hanging in the balance, environmentalists have doubled down on their envisioned moratorium against expanding freeways. They're betting that public support will dramatically shift in favor of mass transit in coming years.

### TOP STORIES

[\(/news/2016/may/20/stone-opening-napa/\)](/news/2016/may/20/stone-opening-napa/)

Stone to open in Napa

[\(/news/2016/may/20/torrey-pines-lacrosse-adopts-cancer-patient/\)](/news/2016/may/20/torrey-pines-lacrosse-adopts-cancer-patient/)

Lacrosse team forms bond with young cancer patient

[\(/news/2016/may/20/econometer-retail-ways-deposit/\)](/news/2016/may/20/econometer-retail-ways-deposit/)

Online sales: A bummer for stores and economy?

[\(/news/2016/may/20/econometer-retail-ways-deposit/\)](/news/2016/may/20/econometer-retail-ways-deposit/)

Highways public transit tax

The latest craze in fitness? Dynamic pricing

[\(/news/2016/may/20/fitness-studios-san-diego-los-angeles/\)](/news/2016/may/20/fitness-studios-san-diego-los-angeles/)

[\(/news/2016/may/20/bike-to-work-cities/\)](/news/2016/may/20/bike-to-work-cities/)

How does San Diego stack up on bike commutes?

“Sprawl development isn’t going to work anymore,” said Nicole Capretz, executive director of the San Diego-based nonprofit Climate Action Campaign.

“It used to be that one or two organizations would care about freeway expansion. Now you have critical mass, where we all understand that it’s a huge driver of a lot of our problems,” she added.

Conservatives have critiqued the proposed levy because they’re either against new tax measures or believe this one doesn’t devote enough funding to roads and highways.

“It’s not enough on the things that touch most people, which is freeways and interchanges,” said Tony Krvaric, chairman of the county’s Republican Party.

“We have a standing rule against any tax increase,” he added. “So we start in opposition.”

The proposal has strong support from some of the region’s Democratic elected officials, who stress that about 86 percent of the money collected would go to non-highway projects such as bus and rail lines, preservation of open space and discretionary money for cities.

“This measure isn’t for groups that want an all-or-nothing approach, but it will get us much closer to making more transportation options available for more people in the region,” said San Diego City Councilman Todd Gloria, who sits on the regional agency’s board and chairs its transportation committee.

While the tax proposal received a key approval Friday from the San Diego Association of Governments’ 21-member board, the targeted levy could face an uphill battle.

If the county Board of Supervisors agrees to put it on the ballot, the measure would need two-thirds voter approval in November to become law. Polling by SANDAG in recent weeks shows the public’s backing for the measure ranging from 67.8 percent to 62.2 percent, with support waning as voters learn more about the proposal.

If the measure passes, it would bring in about \$18 billion during the next four decades — accounting for about 28 percent of transportation funding that SANDAG obtains from the county’s residents.

Perhaps more importantly, it would help cement the agency’s hotly contested \$204 billion, long-range regional transportation plan. While the half-cent initiative wouldn’t fund any new road projects, it would create a fresh voter mandate for widening stretches of highway that have faced opposition, such as state Route 94 heading into downtown San Diego.

If the measure fails, it would likely set up a showdown going into 2020, when SANDAG would update that regional transportation blueprint. The agency also could put forth a revised tax proposal in that same year, timed to coincide with a presidential election, when typically larger voter turnout improves the chances for approving tax increases.

A coalition of environmentalists, labor unions and social justice advocates are pushing for the face-off that could culminate in four years.

The group has attacked the half-cent tax proposal for not doing enough to address climate change or limit freeway pollution in urban neighborhoods. Specifically, they argue that the plan delays transit projects while prioritizing freeways in the near term.

**Should a half-cent sales tax hike be used more for increasing mass transit or improving freeways?  
(/polls/2016/apr/should-half-cent-sales-tax-be-used-more-increasing//results/)**

32%	Mass transit	(432)
24%	Freeways	(327)
44%	Neither. No new tax!	(587)

1346 TOTAL VOTES.

**TRENDING**

Donald Trump’s path to victory over Hillary Clinton(/news/2016/may/20/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-victory/)

Secret Service agent shoots armed person outside White House(/news/2016/may/20/white-house-on-alert-after-shooting-on-street/)

Bolts likely knew of Jalen Ramsey’s microfractured knee(/news/2016/may/20/chargers-ramsey-tunsil-bosa-tesesco/)

Padres chat with Jeff Sanders at noon(/news/2016/may/20/san-diego-padres-chat-jeff-sanders/)

The latest craze in fitness? Dynamic pricing(/news/2016/may/20/lymber-app-fitness-studios-san-diego-los-angeles/)

**DEALS** View All

**SEA SPA AT LOEWS CORONADO BAY RESORT**

\$135 -- Loews Coronado: Massage or Facial w/Pool & Bubbly



**POPULAR VIDEOS**

