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"
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 carpool, 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.

Published at 7:57 PM PDT on Oct 9, 2015

YOU MAY LIKE

eBook Explores How a Cloud Approach can Drive Success for Your Small Business
Microsoft

If You Own A Home in California, You're In For A Big Surprise
Bills.com

See The Online Home Store That Has Retailers Worried
Wayfair

Mother Opens Up About Son's Microcephaly
SD Explained: Future for 3 Schools Uncertain

Amazon and Google Offer Same-Day Grocery Delivery

FROM THE WEB

- New Social Security Law Goes into Effect in May (Money Morning Subscription)
- Electric Companies Don't Want Homeowners to Know This (National Solar)
- 2016: Banks Feel Cheated When Homeowners Do This (LendingTree Quotes)
- Cable TV Is Dying. Here's What Comes Next (The Motley Fool)
- (2016) You're In For A Big Surprise If You Own A Home in California (Bills.com)
- Video Shows Crane Topple Over in Lower Manhattan
- Mom in Court to Face Charges in Tot's Death
- What's Next for San Diego Unified After Foster Resignation?
- Latest Videos, News Video, and Video Clips
- Gage Park Home Where 6 Found Slain Had No Signs of Forced Entry: PD

MORE FROM NBC7 SAN DIEGO

View Comments (5) | Email | Print

Leave Comments
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!

Like · Reply · 1 · Oct 10, 2015 11:37am

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.

Like · Reply · 1 · Oct 10, 2015 12:36pm

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..

Like · Reply · 1 · Oct 10, 2015 2:00pm

Adam Chavez · Field Operations at Datel systems & softwares

A paycheck for politicians is all this plan is.

Like · Reply · 1 · Oct 10, 2015 2:13pm