

Measure G
Fund San Diego County Transportation, Infrastructure, and Safety Projects
through a Half-Cent Sales Tax

The Question

Should the County of San Diego approve a half-cent sales tax to fund specified transportation priorities?

The Situation

From 2022 to 2023 travel time during rush hour increased 7 percent with an average commute time of 25 minutes, transit ridership increased 11 percent, and vehicle miles traveled reduced slightly by 0.4 percent. In 2022 there were 102 pedestrian and 17 bike fatalities. Tailpipe emissions from passenger cars and trucks accounted for 41 percent of the region's greenhouse gas emissions.

SANDAG, the San Diego Association of Governments, is designated by state law as the metropolitan planning organization for the region. It must create a 30-year transportation and infrastructure plan to support population growth and meet federal and state environmental targets by 2035. The 2021 Plan was projected to cost \$163 billion over 30 years with funding from federal and state sources, matched by local monies. Currently SANDAG receives a half-cent (0.5 percent) of the current 7.75 percent sales tax charged countywide to fund the TransNet improvement program approved by voters in 1988 and extended by voters to 2048. TransNet funds numerous transit, highway, freight, bikeway, and walkway programs, in addition to an environmental conservation program, transit fare subsidies, and grants. Other local funding sources include Managed Lanes tolls, farebox revenues, and general local funds from other sources.

The Proposal

Measure G would add a half-cent sales tax on retail sales, raising the countywide sales tax from 7.75 to 8.25 percent. Proponents estimate that the sales tax would generate approximately \$350 million per year. If passed, this tax rate would remain in effect until changed by voters. Measure G would fund SANDAG's transportation, infrastructure, and safety projects identified in the 2021 Plan and specified in the measure, allocating proceeds for transit (50%), road & highway projects (27%), transit operations & maintenance (12%), local roads & streets (7%), repair & maintenance of rail transit equipment (2%) and administration (2%).

The measure creates a nine-member oversight committee required to conduct and deliver an annual audit to the Board of Supervisors. A coalition of labor unions and environmental groups brought Measure G to the ballot.

Fiscal Effect

No fiscal impact was provided by the County.

Supporters Say:

- By improving transportation now, Measure G will keep smog, congestion and traffic from getting worse. As a sales tax, visitors and tourists will contribute their fair share to improving transportation.
- Funds will be used countywide for repairing potholes and roads, fix aging underground storm drains, re-route rail lines away from collapsing bluffs, and fix deteriorating bridges. Funds will be under local control with every dollar raised bringing \$2 more from state and federal funds.
- Measure G includes independent citizen oversight, public disclosure and annual financial audits. If funds are misused, the oversight committee can refer to the District Attorney for criminal prosecution.

Opponents Say:

- San Diego area residents can't afford this massive tax increase. Measure G makes San Diego's cost-of-living crisis worse by imposing additional sales tax on residents on top of California's sky-high existing sales tax.
- Measure G earmarks funds and contains loopholes that allow the money to go to transit projects, electric vehicle infrastructure, and salaries and benefits. It awards funds to contractors under Project Labor Agreements that bar small businesses from working on road projects.
- Measure G backers are the same politicians that raided existing road repair funds from previous tax hikes. Recent audits have uncovered millions in waste, fraud and abuse from road taxes already paid.

For More Information

Supporters:

Kyle M. Weinberg, President, San Diego Education Association
Brigette Browning, San Diego & Imperial Counties Labor Council
Nancy Cruz, Environmental Health Coalition
Linda Legerrette, Middle Class Taxpayers Association
Laura Keenan, Founder, Families for Safe Streets San Diego
LetsGoSD.org

Opponents:

James M. Desmond, San Diego County Supervisor
Haney Hong, President, San Diego County Taxpayers Association
Carl DeMaio, Chairman, Reform California
Steve Esparza, Executive Director, California Latino Voter Alliance
Richard Rider, Chairman, San Diego Tax Fighters
NoNewTaxesSD.com

