



Planning Commission Study Session

20-302

**Update on the Proposed
Changes to the City's
Transportation Analysis
Methodology**

April 22, 2020



Study Session Goals

- Present key policy considerations
- Discuss the components of a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis and the tools used to study VMT
- Receive Feedback / Direction on Policy Considerations



Previous Study Session

December 11, 2019

- CEQA, General Plan, and Climate Action Plan
- Senate Bill 743 - GHG, multimodal networks, land use diversity
- July 1, 2020 - California cities must:
 - No longer use Level of Service (LOS) to measure CEQA Transportation impacts
 - VMT recommended by the State
- LOS and VMT Information
- Future Policy Considerations
- Research, Interagency Coordination, Workplan, Outreach



City Council and Planning Commission Feedback

November 5, 2019 and December 11, 2019

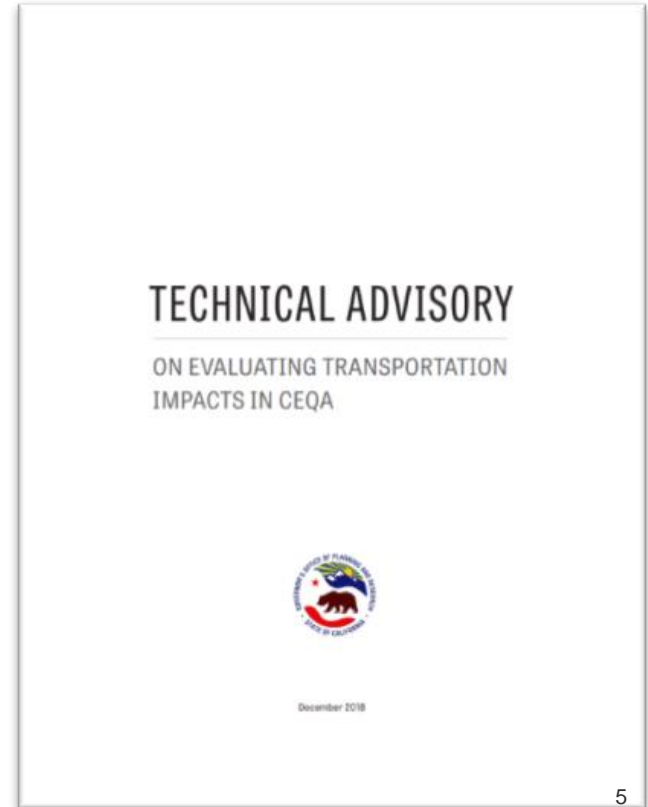
- Traffic condition is Regional
- Develop a Countywide plan for all cities
- Use of big data in measuring VMT
- How Travel Demand Models measure VMT
- Methodology for estimating VMT
- LOS is important to keep
- Overall support for transition to VMT
- Concern with existing availability of Transit
- Improve Transportation Demand Management Programs (TDMs)
- Support for Bike and Scooter Share
- Desire for Vision Zero



Technical Guidance

“Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts In CEQA, December 2018”

- Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)
- Recommendations on implementing VMT for cities
- Does not alter lead agency discretion





Key Policy Considerations



Setting the Baseline



Establishing CEQA Thresholds



Determining CEQA Exemptions



Analyzing Transportation Projects



Measuring Level of Service



Environmental Review

Baseline – environmental setting of existing conditions that provides a basis of comparison for the expected environmental conditions after a project is implemented

Threshold of Significance – level of effect above which Lead Agency will consider impacts to be significant, and below which it will consider impacts to be less than significant

Exemption – projects that can be presumed to have a less than significant impact



Setting the Baseline

Land Uses	City (Santa Clara)	Countywide	Regional
Total Household VMT / Capita	9.39	13.33	13.95
Total Employment VMT / Employee	16.34	16.64	15.33

- Traffic is a countywide issue
- VTA - Congestion Management Program - Countywide Coordination
- Countywide transportation projects – Implemented at County level
- Mitigation/Implementation difficult to implement regionally



Thresholds of Significance

Land Uses	Countywide	15% Threshold
Total Household VMT per Capita	13.33	11.33
Total Employment VMT per Employee	16.64	14.14

- State recommends 15% threshold
- 15% studied by State as achievable
- Goal: Project VMT to be 15% **below** existing baseline VMT
- If Project does not meet Goal = Mitigate or Significant Impact



CEQA – Exempted Projects

State Recommended

Type:

- Small Infill Projects (110 trips/day)
- Local Serving Retail (50K or less)
- Affordable Residential Development

Location:

- Existing Low VMT areas
- Developments within 1/2 mile of existing Transit

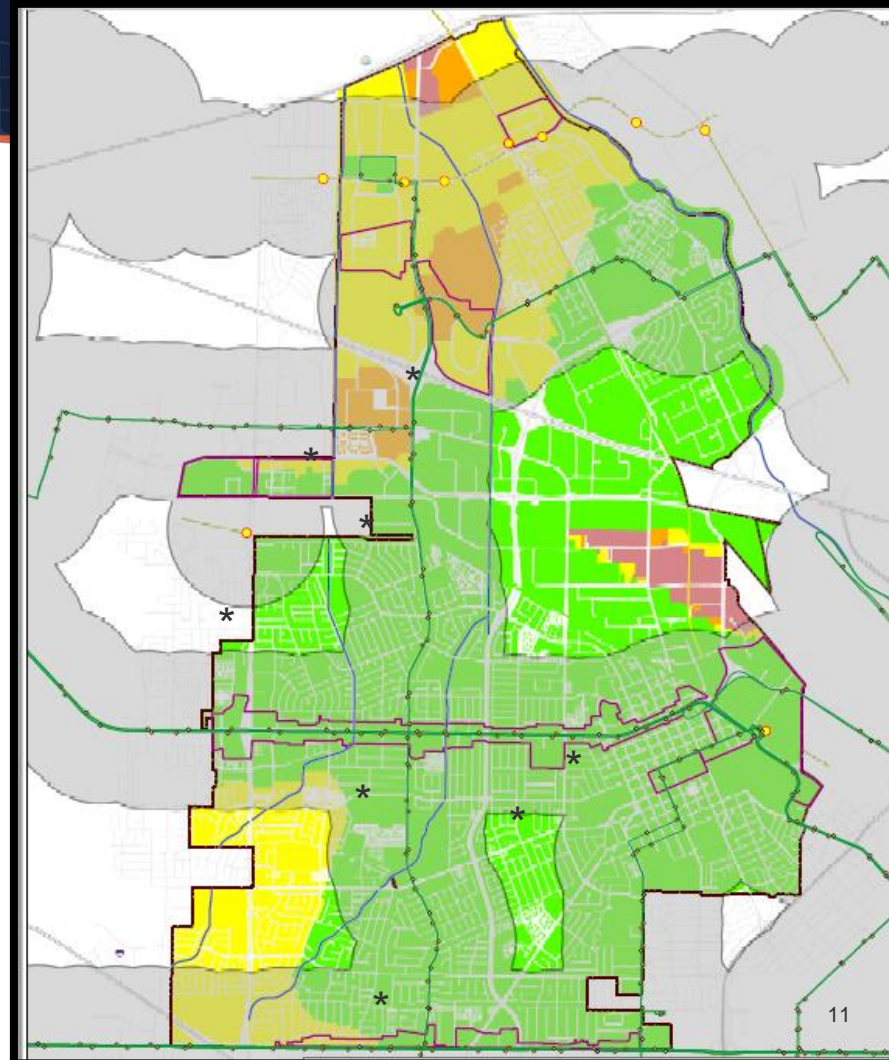


*Local Serving Retail
Santa Clara Station*

Development Near Transit

Within 1/2 mile of existing transit stop/station or high-quality transit corridor

- Gray areas = within 1/2 mile transit buffer
- Projects within buffer that meet **transit supportive requirements** = exempt from VMT analysis





Development Near Transit

Within 1/2 mile of ex. transit stop/station or high-quality transit corridor

Transit Supportive Requirements:

- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) no less than 0.75
- 35 du/acre for residential
- Promotes multimodal transportation
- Does not proposed excessive parking
- Transit Oriented design
- Does not replace affordable with fewer market rate residential



Lawrence Station



VMT Heatmaps

Maps of Existing Residential and Employment VMT levels

- Developed by VTA
- Based on Travel Demand Model, Census Data, California HH Survey, etc.
- Map reflects Countywide baseline and 15% threshold
- Maps for Residential and Employment

Four VMT levels in Santa Clara

Green = meets threshold

Yellow = minor mitigations

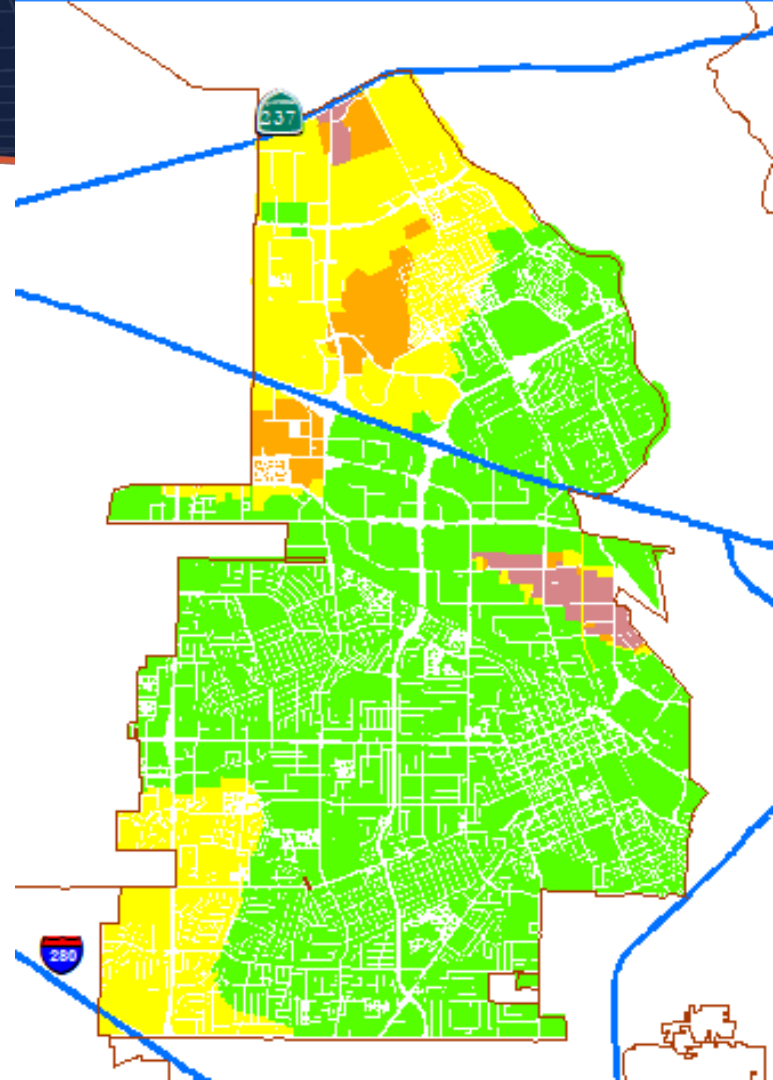
Orange = majors mitigations

Red = difficult to mitigate

Residential VMT Heat Map

Countywide Residential Average

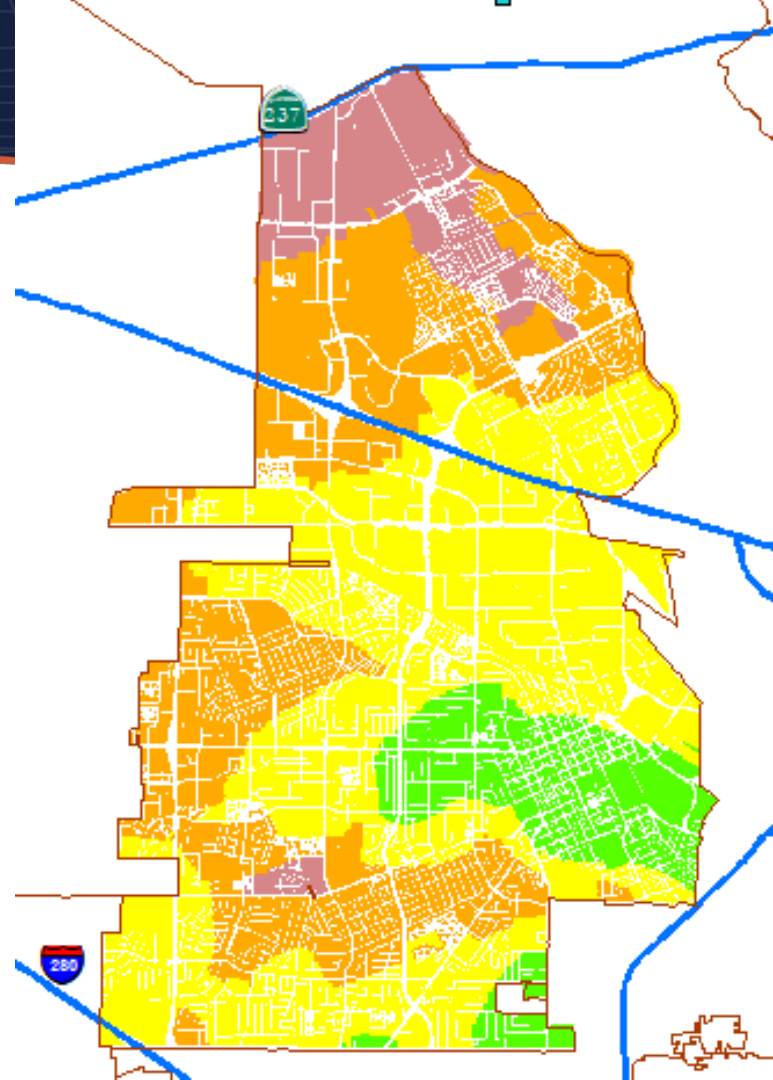
- VMT per Capita
 - Baseline -- 13.33
 - 15% Threshold -- 11.33
- **Green** = meets threshold
- **Yellow** = minor mitigations
- **Orange** = majors mitigations
- **Red** = difficult to mitigate



Employment VMT Heat Map

Countywide Employment Average

- VMT per Employee
 - Baseline -- 16.64
 - 15% Threshold -- 14.14
- **Green** = meets threshold
- **Yellow** = minor mitigations
- **Orange** = majors mitigations
- **Red** = difficult to mitigate





Analyzing Transportation Projects

CEQA Analysis Elements

- Consistent with State greenhouse gas reduction goals
- Near-term and Long-term Project induced vehicle travel
- Impacts on multimodal transportation networks
- Impacts on diversity of land uses



*Lawrence Expressway
ramp improvements*



Measuring Level of Service

Current CEQA Requirement	Proposed non CEQA Requirement
Measures delay at intersections	Measures delay at intersections
Potential environmental impact	Operational deficiency
Requires CEQA mitigation or override	City Policy to address (not CEQA)
Mitigation includes roadway widening or intersection capacity improvements	Improvements (roadway widening, intersection capacity improvements, multimodal, or TDM measures)
CMP requirements are CEQA requirements per General Plan	CMP requirements no longer CEQA impact



Level of Service as an Operational Analysis Element

Transportation analysis requirements outside of CEQA

- ***Intersection operational analysis (LOS)***
- Queuing analysis
- Driveway operations
- Signal warrant studies
- Pedestrian, bicycle and transit assessment/improvements
- Traffic control and crosswalk evaluation
- Neighborhood intrusion/cut-through
- Loading zones, parking evaluation
- Congestion Management Program requirements



VMT Tools

Travel Demand Model

Used for regional projects, land use plans, hospitals, private schools

VMT Evaluation Tool

Measures VMT for residential and office projects

Heat map

Provides locations where projects meet the threshold



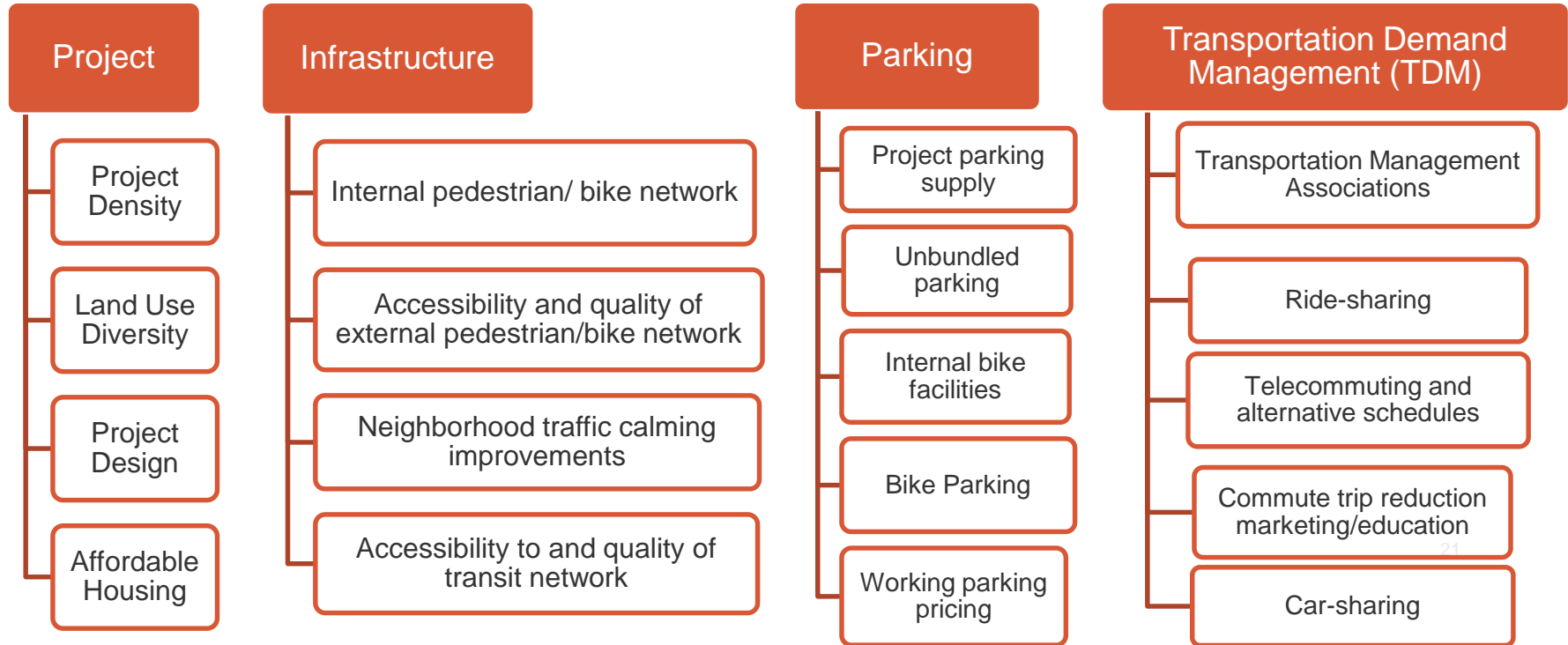
VMT Evaluation Tool

Excel Based Tool that calculates proposed project's VMT impacts and provides feasible VMT mitigation measures

- Based on Travel Demand Model data
 - Measures VMT/Capita or VMT/employee for every parcel using:
 - Project location and description
 - Proposed multimodal improvements & TDM measures
 - Other project characteristics such as number of parking spaces
- Available to all at no cost on the VTA website



VMT Reduction Strategies





Schedule / Next Steps

- April/May 2020
 - Community / Developer Outreach
 - 2nd Planning Commission Study Session
 - 2nd City Council Study Session
- May/June 2020 – Planning Commission
- June 2020 – City Council



Questions and Feedback



Planning Commission Study Session

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