Implementing SB 743 in Suburban San Jose

Challenges Faced Transitioning from LOS to VMT
Abstract

On February 27, 2018, the City of San Jose City Council approved Council Policy 5-1, “Transportation Analysis Policy”, to replace the existing Council Policy 5-3 (LOS), making it the fourth city to adopt the new metric in conformance to new California state law Senate Bill 743 (SB 743). Council Policy 5-1 was put into effect on March 29, 2018, removing transportation Level of Service (LOS) and replacing with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the new threshold for transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The City adopted a new Transportation Analysis Handbook and established a new analytical tool for estimating VMT (Sketch Tool). Implementation has brought forth many challenges and questions about the newly adopted VMT policy. Some challenges have included upholding existing area development policies while transitioning into VMT, difficulties with analyzing VMT impacts for car-centric land uses, and neighboring cities still conforming to LOS policies. The challenges faced in the first year of transitioning from LOS to VMT has caused the City to question whether the City is achieving the state’s ultimate goals—reduce greenhouse gases and increase multi-modal transportation.
Outline

- Background on SB 743
- Developing VMT Policy
- Background on San Jose
- Implementation of VMT in San Jose
- Challenges Faced
California Senate Bill 743 (SB 743)

• September 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 743 (SB 743)

“...more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.”
Developing a VMT Policy

1. Initiate Outreach
2. Evaluate Policy Options
3. Internal & External Outreach
4. Initiate Approval Process

- Informational Memo
- Establish VMT Website
- Community/Stakeholder Outreach
Developing a VMT Policy

Initiate Outreach

Evaluate Policy Options

Internal & External Outreach

Initiate Approval Process

- Analyze GP Implications
- Analyze Thresholds
- Analyze Baseline Options
- City Attorney’s Office Review
- Non-CEQA Requirements
Developing a VMT Policy

Initiate Outreach
Evaluate Policy Options
Internal & External Outreach
Initiate Approval Process

- Planning Commission & City Commission Study Sessions
- Circulate Draft Policy
- Stakeholder Outreach
Developing a Policy

Initiate Outreach

Evaluate Policy Options

Internal & External Outreach

Initiate Approval Process

Prepare CEQA Exemption

Prepare Resolution

Prepare Staff Report

Prepare GP Text Amendments

Schedule Hearing Date

Planning Commission & Council Hearing
City of San Jose

• Largest City in Northern California

• Population 1,035,317

• Area 180 sq. miles
  – 11 miles east to west
  – 21 miles north to south
City of San Jose

- 4th city to adopt a VMT policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Land Area (sq mi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>1,035,317</td>
<td>179.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>884,363</td>
<td>46.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>425,195</td>
<td>55.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasadena</td>
<td>142,647</td>
<td>22.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>3,971,883</td>
<td>502.76</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Census Bureau (2017). Population estimates, July 1, 2017
City of San Jose

- Job to Housing Balance
  - 30:70 ratio

- Residential land use primarily along the south east border side of the City
  - Jobs mostly in northern San Jose
  - Large population commuting outside of the City for work
City of San Jose VMT

- Council Policy 5-1 (VMT)
  - Effective date March 29, 2018
  - Consistency with City’s General Plan

- VMT Tool (Sketch Tool)

- Transportation Analysis Handbook

- Non-CEQA Transportation Requirements
VMT Significance Thresholds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>VMT per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing Citywide Average</td>
<td>11.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold (15% below)</td>
<td>10.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City of San José - VMT per Capita

- Threshold VMT Areas
- City Average VMT Areas
- Mitigatable VMT Areas
- Inmitgatable VMT Areas
VMT Significance Thresholds

### Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VMT per job</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing Regional Average</td>
<td>14.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threshold (15% below)</td>
<td>12.21</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Challenges: City-wide VMT Thresholds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Current Area VMT</th>
<th>City VMT Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>11.91</td>
<td>10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Employment</td>
<td>14.37</td>
<td>12.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Cities sometimes need to develop in high VMT areas
- Immitigable VMT areas triggers EIR / expensive impact fees
Challenges: Constrained by Area Development Policies

• 4 LOS area development policies (ADP)

• ADPs hinders mode shift

• Development in high VMT areas are car-centric

• Limited allocation in ADP areas slows down further development on key transit corridors

• Two Transportation Development Policies (TDP) counter VMT goals
Challenges: Surrounding cities still applying LOS metric

- Bordered by 7 cities, currently still applying LOS metric
- Lack of uniformity hinders regional transportation goals
  - Different mitigation focuses
Challenges: Loss in potential transportation improvements in low VMT areas

No mitigations required under CEQA
Challenges: Mitigation methods are not as straightforward as LOS mitigation measures.

LOS
- Intersection Improvements
- Extension/addition of turn-pockets
- Increase road capacity

VMT
- Bike/Pedestrian Improvement
- Transit Passes
- Pool/Car Sharing Programs
Challenges: How do we analyze car-centric landuses?

Gas Stations

Parking Structures

Drive-Thrus
Thoughts…

• Our ultimate goal is to reduce GHG emissions. Are we meeting our goal? How can we successfully reduce VMT?

• How can we incorporate existing land uses to contribute to lower GHG emissions?

• Establish a policy that can improve and evolve over time – plan for the FUTURE!