

September 21, 2020

Re: Agenda Item 3 – Staff Recommendations on Vehicle Miles Traveled Policy

Dear Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force Members & Staff,

On behalf of Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), we are writing in response to Staff's Recommendations on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Policies for Agenda Item 3. VTA and the City of San Jose have long partnered to create fast, frequent, and accessible transit experiences for the residents of San Jose. The City and VTA have been working closely toward the goal of reducing VMT and Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.

VTA supports staff's recommendation on movement toward the implementation of "Tier II VMT Reduction Actions" and encourage the City to move towards a framework where Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs are required for large scale development projects. VTA supports the City's movement toward stronger VMT reductions as highlighted in Task Force Staff's memo in Table 5 and increased mode shift goals as noted in Table 6.

VTA applauds the historic Transit-First policy recommendations outlined in staff recommendation number 4. Transit-First Policy will result in Fast Transit. Fast Transit is good because it brings compounding benefits:

- Fast Transit causes mode shift – making transit more appealing will help CSJ reach its 2040 mode share goals
- Fast Transit improves affordability and equity – increasing transit speeds improves the freedom and opportunity afforded to all riders, especially those who are low-income, youth, seniors and disabled
- Fast Transit supports Climate Action Plans – transit gets people to share a ride and reduces emissions per mile of travel. With transportation being the largest contributor to poor air quality, this is a big deal
- Fast Transit causes more transit – when cities help us speed up transit on their local streets, we can reallocate scarce operating dollars from serving slow routes to actually improving our service (e.g., frequencies, longer hours of service, or new routes)
- Slow transit is expensive – when buses are slow it adds to operation costs (VTA spends \$70 million per year (1/3 of our bus operation budget) just to add more buses to gain faster transit)

Additionally, VTA encourages the City's review and incorporation of a pathway forward for Transit-Oriented Development in the VMT Policy update as well as review of the policy through

an equity lens to ensure no unintended consequences, particularly in outer lying portions of the city with access to high frequency transit.

VTA released the Santa Clara Countywide VMT Evaluation tool in May 2020. VTA encourages the City to move ahead with referencing the VMT data from the VTA countywide travel demand model and the Santa Clara Countywide VMT Evaluation Tool to ensure that the City is using model data and a tool that is consistent with neighboring cities within Santa Clara County.

VTA looks forward to a continued and meaningful working relationship where we continue our collective work to achieve Climate Smart and VMT reductions goals in San Jose and throughout Santa Clara County.

Sincerely,



Jessie O'Malley Solis
Transit-Oriented Development Manager