

**TO: Envision San José 2040  
4-Year Review Task Force**

**FROM: Jared Hart &  
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**SUBJECT: September 21, 2020  
TASK FORCE MEETING**

**DATE: September 14, 2020**

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This memorandum provides information to assist you in preparation for the September 21, 2020 Envision San José 2040 Task Force meeting. Links to the referenced documents and other resource materials (e.g., reading materials and correspondence) are posted on the Envision San José 2040 4-Year Review website (<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/generalplanreview>).

The following is a summary of agenda items for the September 21, 2020 Task Force meeting:

### **Agenda Item 2 – Approval of August 20, 2020 Meeting Synopsis**

The Task Force will vote to approve the [meeting minutes](#) for the August 20, 2020 Task Force meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3 – Staff Recommendations on Vehicles Miles Traveled Policies**

Staff will lead a brief presentation on two sets of existing transportation goals and policies in the General Plan: (1) vehicle miles traveled (VMT); and (2) mode split. Staff will also present a recommendation for updates to these transportation goals and policies. Task Force members will be given an opportunity to discuss, provide input, and ask questions about staff recommendations, while members of the community will have an opportunity to address the Task Force. Task Force members will then vote on staff recommendations on transportation goals and policies.

## **Background**

### *Scope of Work*

As part of the General Plan Four-Year Review scope of work, the City Council approved staff to consider moving to Tier II of the General Plan's transportation goals, policies, and actions to further support the reduction of VMT and further the achievement of the greenhouse gas reduction goals of Climate Smart San José.

### *Climate Smart San José*

Climate Smart San José, adopted by the Council in 2018, is the City's overarching plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to align with the goals of the 2016 Paris Agreement. With 63% of San José emissions coming from transportation, Climate Smart sets the City on a path to meeting the Paris Agreement's emissions reduction goals by supporting focused land use and multi-modal transportation goals of the General Plan. Climate Smart uses the *Envision San José 2040* as a foundation and builds on

the General Plan by strengthening the City’s commitment to reducing single occupancy vehicle commute trips and vehicle miles traveled per capita.

*Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)*

VMT measures the distance people drive by vehicle. Typically, developments at a greater distance from other land uses and in areas without transit generate more driving than developments near other land uses with more robust transportation options. As a means to reduce energy consumption, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to create a healthier community, San José maintains a goal to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the city by 40 percent per service population (workers and residents).

Climate Smart recognizes that more ambitious VMT reduction targets are needed to achieve overall climate goals. As shown in Table 1, Climate Smart states that by 2040, the goal for citywide VMT is a decrease by 43 percent relative to 2017. This 2040 reduction goal is five percent beyond that of the General Plan. Climate Smart also recommends 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction targets.

**Table 1: General Plan and Climate Smart VMT Reduction Goals**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2017<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2030 Goal (Climate Smart)</b>	<b>2040 Goal (Climate Smart)</b>	<b>2040 Goal (General Plan)</b>	<b>2050 Goal (Climate Smart)</b>
<b>Citywide VMT per service population</b>	14.1	11.1	8.0	8.8	6.1
<b>% Reduction from 2017 level</b>	-	21%	43%	38% <sup>2</sup>	57%

The General Plan establishes a three-tiered policy approach to reduce the City’s VMT from 2009 levels – 10 percent reduction initially (Goal TR-9), then a 20 percent reduction (Goal TR-10), and eventually a 40 percent reduction by 2040 (Goal TR-11). Tier I policies are considered relatively easier to implement than Tier II policies and are therefore prioritized. Tier III policies involve coordinating with regional and statewide efforts to reduce VMT. Each tier has a set of policies and different phasing of implementation. Tier I and III policies have been in effect since the adoption of the General Plan in 2011. Tier II policies do not go into effect until the City Council determines as part of a Four-Year Review of the General Plan to apply them, based on staff analysis of the City’s performance in reducing VMT.

*Commute Mode Split*

Commute mode split measures the percentage of commute trips made in five categories of transport modes – drive alone, carpool, transit, bicycle, and walk. When the General Plan was adopted in 2011, approximately 78 percent of the City’s commute trips were made by driving alone. The General Plan aims to reduce the proportion of commute drive alone trips in half, and establishes the 2040 commute mode split targets for the City’s employed residents and workers.

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey.

<sup>2</sup> The current General Plan VMT reduction goal of 40% relative to the 2009 level is equivalent to approximately 38% reduction relative to the 2017 level.

Climate Smart recommends more ambitious commute mode split goals. As shown in Table 2, Climate Smart states that by 2040, the commute mode split goal is that no more than 25 percent of commute trips will be made by driving alone. This 2040 goal for drive-alone share is 15 percent point lower than that of the General Plan. Climate Smart also recommends 2030 and 2050 commute mode split goals.

**Table 2: General Plan and Climate Smart Commute Mode Split Goals**

Mode	2030 Goal (Climate Smart)	2040 Goal (Climate Smart)	2040 Goal (General Plan)	2050 Goal (Climate Smart)
Drive Alone	45%	25%	40%	12%
Shared Mobility/ Carpool	25%	25%	10%	18%
Transit	10%	20%	20%	35%
Bicycle	10%	15%	15%	20%
Walk	10%	15%	15%	15%

**City’s Performance in Reducing VMT and Commute Drive-alone Rate**

Since 2011, the City has been implementing all four Tier I actions, including:

- (1) creating a balanced transportation system via reallocating street space from vehicles to other modes<sup>3</sup>
- (2) working with the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to increase service along major routes<sup>4</sup>
- (3) reducing parking requirements for certain developments supported by transportation demand management (TDM) measures<sup>5</sup>
- (4) developing a TDM monitoring system<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the City has supported state efforts on vehicle taxes, regional efforts on congesting pricing and parking policies, and county efforts on freeway and expressway toll lanes, in alignment with Tier III actions.

In 2018, San José became the fourth city in California make VMT the City’s transportation metric under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for development and transportation projects (see Council Policy 5-1, or VMT Policy). The City adopted the VMT policy to align with Senate Bill 743<sup>7</sup> with the intent to shift the focus of transportation analysis under CEQA from vehicle congestion to a reduction in vehicle emissions and creation of a robust multimodal transportation network that supports integrated land uses and the environmental and mobility goals of the General Plan.

<sup>3</sup> By end of 2020, the City will have achieved its goal of completing 400 miles of bike lanes in its 2009 Bike Plan, many of which were achieved via reallocation of street space from vehicles to bike facilities.

<sup>4</sup> VTA adopted the New Transit Service Plan in 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Transit-oriented development, mixed use development, and development in Urban Villages can reduce parking below minimum requirements if combined with selected TDM measures.

<sup>6</sup> Approved developments conditioned with TDM measures are required to submit annual TDM monitoring reports to the City.

<sup>7</sup> In September 2013, the California Legislature passed and Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 743 (Steinberg). SB 743 directs the State Office of Planning and Research to establish new CEQA guidance for jurisdictions that removes vehicular LOS from transportation analysis under CEQA and replaces it with VMT, or another measure that “promote[s] the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses.”

After implementing these actions, the citywide VMT level in 2019 dropped nearly 4 percent from 2009 levels, as shown in Table 3. Although this is less than the Tier I reduction goal of 10 percent, the downward trend of VMT levels shows that the City’s actions thus far have generated some positive outcomes. However, the percentage of commute drive alone trips in 2019 remains high and has only dropped by 3 percent relative to 2008, as shown in Table 4. To further reduce VMT and the percentage of drive alone car trips, more action at the local, regional, and state levels is needed.

**Table 3: Citywide VMT and General Plan Reduction Goals**

Year	2009	2019	Tier I Goal (General Plan)	2040 Goal (General Plan)
Citywide VMT per service population	14.6	14.1	13.1	8.8
% Reduction from 2009 level	-	4%	10%	40%

**Table 4: Commute Mode Split and General Plan Goals**

Year	2008 <sup>8</sup>	2019 <sup>9</sup>	2040 Goal (General Plan)
Drive Alone	83%	80%	≤ 40%
Shared Mobility/ Carpool	10%	12%	≥ 10%
Transit	4%	5%	≥ 20%
Bicycle	< 2%	< 2%	≥ 15%
Walk	< 2%	< 2%	≥ 15%

### Tier II VMT Reduction Actions

The General Plan identifies seven actions for implementation in Tier II – four of which are related to parking requirements for new development, two related to TDM measures for new development, and one related to the VMT Policy:

1. [Parking] *Explore development of a program...to require that parking spaces...be unbundled from rent or sale of the dwelling unit or building square footage (TR-10.1);*
2. [Parking] *...Reduce the minimum parking requirements citywide (TR-10.2);*
3. [Parking] *...Establish criteria that could allow a portion of adjacent on-street and City owned off-street parking spaces be counted toward meeting...parking space requirements (TR-10.4);*
4. [Parking] *...Establish maximum parking rates, or “parking caps” for new development (TR-10.6);*

<sup>8</sup> American Community Survey.

<sup>9</sup> American Community Survey.

5. [TDM] *Encourage participation in car share programs for new development... (TR-10.3);*
6. [TDM] *...Monitor employer achievement of TDM program measures and explore incentives for successes and/or consider penalties for non-compliance (TR-10.5); and*
7. [VMT] *Strengthen the VMT thresholds in the [VMT Policy] in line with the Tier II VMT reduction goals (TR-10.7).*

Staff have already begun exploring these Tier II actions and other actions given *Climate Smart* and in anticipation of City Council approval to move forward. Examples of these actions include the following:

#### *American Cities Climate Challenge*

San José is one of 25 large cities across the country selected to join the American Cities Climate Challenge (ACCC), a two-year program working to significantly deepen and accelerate efforts to tackle climate change and promote a sustainable future. Through the ACCC, the City is reevaluating its parking policies in order to improve consistency with *Climate Smart* and the General Plan transportation and land use goals. The City has been engaging with technical policy experts, consultants, and the community on parking and TDM to assist in developing broad project objectives and policies. Like many of the Tier II actions, the ACCC parking strategy evaluates measures, including on-street parking pricing, reducing or removing minimum parking requirements, implementing TDM, maximum parking requirements, and unbundling the cost of parking from the cost of renting, leasing, or owning usable residential or commercial space. As San José continues to densify and expand transit downtown and in Urban Villages, reforming parking requirements and implementing parking management strategies will support key sustainability and land use and transportation goals. Another initiative underway as part of the ACCC is market transformation to increase shared transportation in San José. While not included in the General Plan's action tiers, both are integral to reducing VMT.

#### *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy Update*

The City is currently in the process of updating its Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy (Appendix 8 of the General Plan). The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy update (referred to as the 2030 GHGRS) builds on the goals of the previous GHGRS and furthers the strategies embedded in other City plans to align with the State's 2030 GHG target (SB 32) and with consideration for the State's long-term emissions goal. Transportation is the biggest contributor of GHG emissions in San Jose, making up 63% the City's total emissions. In the transportation sector, GHG-emission-reducing-measures include low carbon fuels, cleaner vehicles, and other strategies to reduce VMT. The 2030 GHGRS is anticipated to be considered by Council in November 2020.

#### *VMT Policy Phase II*

As described above, Council approved the City's VMT Policy in 2018 to bring the City into compliance with SB 743. Given the City's ambitious 2040 General Plan and greenhouse gas reduction goals, the City Council directed staff to evaluate additional City policies and practices related to transportation and new development, such as evaluation of parking policies through the ACCC. Work on other transportation related policies will inform updates to the VMT Policy. The VMT Policy update process will be initiated by staff in fall 2020 to consider refinements as needed, holistically update the non-CEQA local transportation analysis requirements for new development, and explore transportation impact fees related to VMT or other appropriate metrics. The Phase II update is anticipated to be

completed in summer 2021 and will include policies and practices aimed at achieving the General Plan goals, supporting planned growth, and completing the multi-modal transportation network.

*Transportation Plans*

To accomplish VMT reductions, the City has focused significant effort on providing multimodal transportation options to residents and employees, enhancing the quality of established neighborhoods, and encouraging new development within growth areas that are closer to these transportation options. The City’s *Access & Mobility Plan* (expected 2021), *Multimodal Transportation Improvement Plans* (MTIPs), *Vision Zero Action Plan* (2020), *Bike Plan 2025* (expected October 2020), and *Emerging Mobility Action Plan* (expected 2021), among others, are guides for the development of citywide and area-wide transportation implementation strategies. Some of these plans also contain the analytical tools needed to inform clear decision making and iterate on the strategies.

**Staff Recommendations**

Based on the analysis above, staff recommends the following changes to the General Plan to further support the reduction of VMT and the achievement of the greenhouse gas reduction goals of Climate Smart San José:

1. Move forward with implementation of General Plan Tier II VMT actions and eliminate the tiered structure of VMT reduction actions. Staff have been implementing policies and actions in Tiers I and III since the adoption of the General Plan and have already begun policy work on Tier II actions as described above. By moving forward with implementation of Tier II VMT actions, all three tiers will effectively be “turned on,” thus there is no longer a need for the tiered structure for VMT reduction actions.
2. Amend the General Plan VMT reduction goals to align with the VMT reduction goals recommended by Climate Smart. Besides amending the 2040 reduction goals, staff also recommends establishing interim 2030 reduction goals per Climate Smart. Aligning the VMT reduction goals would avoid confusion of different goals in the General Plan and Climate Smart. It would also strengthen the City’s commitment to its continued implementation of Climate Smart strategies. Table 5 shows the proposed changes to the VMT reduction goals in the General Plan.

**Table 5: Proposed Amendments to General Plan VMT Reduction Goals**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2017<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>2030 Goal (Proposed New)</b>	<b>2040 Goal (Proposed Removal)</b>	<b>2040 Goal (Proposed Replacement)</b>
<b>% Reduction from 2017 level</b>	-	20%	38%	45%
<b>Citywide VMT per service population</b>	14.1	11.1	8.8	8.0

<sup>10</sup> American Community Survey.

3. Amend the General Plan mode split goals to align with those recommended by Climate Smart. Besides amending the 2040 mode split goals, staff also recommends introducing interim, 2030 mode split goals per Climate Smart. Originally, these goals were based solely on commute trips because (1) they have a higher potential of shifting from driving alone to more sustainable modes; and (2) more reliable trip data are available for commute trips. As the City is adapting to the rapidly evolving data industry as well as to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created uncertain trip characteristics for years to come, staff recommends amending the General Plan mode split goals to evaluate all trip purposes as opposed to focusing only on work trips. Table 6 shows the proposed changes to the mode split goals in the General Plan.

**Table 6: Proposed Amendments to General Plan Mode Split Goals**

<b>Mode</b>	<b>2019<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>2030 Goal All Trips (Proposed New)</b>	<b>2040 Goal Commute Trips (Proposed Removal)</b>	<b>2040 Goal All Trips (Proposed Replacement)</b>
<b>Drive Alone</b>	80%	≤ 45%	≤ 40%	≤ 25%
<b>Shared Mobility/ Carpool</b>	12%	≥ 25%	≥ 10%	≥ 25%
<b>Transit</b>	5%	≥ 10%	≥ 20%	≥ 20%
<b>Bicycle</b>	< 2%	≥ 10%	≥ 15%	≥ 15%
<b>Walk</b>	< 2%	≥ 10%	≥ 15%	≥ 15%

4. Amend the General Plan to include additional actions to achieve the proposed updated VMT reduction and mode split goals and further support achievement of the greenhouse gas reduction goals of Climate Smart San José. These additional actions include:
  - a. *Explore development of transportation management associations (TMA) in transit-oriented developments, mixed-use developments, developments within Urban Villages, and across the City.*
  - b. *Implement transportation focused actions identified in the City’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy and Climate Smart San José Plan.*
  - c. *Develop, implement, and regularly update, as needed, a citywide pedestrian plan.*
  - d. *Develop a citywide transportation plan that identifies, prioritizes, and monitors the City’s near-term transportation investments.*

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<sup>11</sup> American Community Survey.

- e. Develop area transportation plans that identify, prioritize, and monitor long-term transportation projects and programs in the City's Growth Areas in alignment with General Plan goals and policies.*
- f. Explore development of a regional VMT bank and exchange program in which development mitigation contributions can be pooled to pay for more effective VMT reduction strategies that would not be feasible for individual projects to implement.*
- g. Develop and implement strategies to increase shared mobility options.*
- h. Develop and implement strategies to rapidly improve the operations of and expand transit options throughout the City. This includes the development of new routes services by rail, bus, and new transit technologies.*
- i. Adopt a transit first policy that prioritizes transit travel speeds over other vehicles on the road in terms of signal operations and roadway allocation. In particular, give transit services pre-emptive signal priority as a default. Also, give transit its own lanes and right of ways where ever possible.*
- j. Develop strategies to ensure that the development and implementation of autonomous vehicle technology is aligned with land use and transit-priority policies that foster sustainable, affordable, and efficient modes.*
- k. Develop regulations to promote the safe and responsible operation of micro-mobility such as shared bikes, e-scooters, and e-bikes.*
- l. Implement Vision Zero strategies to eliminate all traffic fatalities, significantly reduce severe injury crashes, and create safe and comfortable walk and bike environments.*
- m. Develop strategies to promote the continuation of remote working after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

If you have any Planning-related questions, please contact Jared Hart at: [Jared.Hart@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Jared.Hart@sanjoseca.gov) or Kieulan Pham at: [Kieulan.Pham@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Kieulan.Pham@sanjoseca.gov). If you have any transportation-related questions, please contact Jessica Zenk at: [Jessica.Zenk@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Jessica.Zenk@sanjoseca.gov) or Wilson Tam at: [Wilson.Tam@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Wilson.Tam@sanjoseca.gov).

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