



Task Force Meeting No. 8 Synopsis September 21, 2020

Task Force Members Present: Teresa Alvarado, David Pandori, Dev Davis, Pam Foley, Sylvia Arenas, Michelle Yesney, Linda LeZotte, Jessie O'Malley Solis, Eddie Truong, Pat Sausedo, Vincent Rocha, Nate LeBlanc, Karl Lee, Erik Schoennauer, Don Little, Harvey Darnell, Juan Estrada, Megan Fluke, Jason Su, Kevin Zwick, Leslye Corsiglia, Shiloh Ballard, Jim Zito, Sam Ho, Robert (Bob) Levy, Smita Patel, Tamiko Rast, Margie Matthews, Jesus Flores, Ray Bramson, Bonnie Mace, Susan Butler-Graham, Jeffrey Buchanan, Luis Arguello, Margie Matthews, and Mariel Caballero. (verified by Zoom participant panel)

Task Force Members Absent: Michael Van Every, Roberta Moore, David Bini, Steven Solorio, and Andre Luthard (verified by Zoom participant panel)

City Staff, Consultants and Other Public Agency Staff Present: Rosalynn Hughey (PBCE), Michael Brilliot (PBCE), Jared Hart (PBCE), Kieulan Pham (PBCE), Jessica Setiawan (PBCE), Robert Rivera (PBCE), Jessica Zenk (DOT) and Wilson Tam (DOT).

Public Present: 45 public attendees on Zoom, 13 live viewers on YouTube and Granicus

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Agenda

The meeting convened at approximately 6:00 p.m. The Co-Chair Teresa Alvarado welcomed the Task Force and the public. Supervising Planner Kieulan Pham presented the agenda and the format of the meeting.

2. Approval of the August 27th Meeting Synopsis

Motion to approve by Councilmember Pam Foley and second by Linda LeZotte. Margie Matthews abstained. No Task Force members opposed.

3. Staff Recommendations on Updates to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Policies

Wilson Tam, Transportation Planning Manager with the Department of Transportation, presented staff's recommendations updates to vehicle miles traveled policies in the General Plan.

4. Public Comment

Community members provided public comment (11), generally in support of staff's recommendations with some considerations for further analysis. Comments included:

- How do people social distance on mass transit?

- Look to Madrid and Paris for cities that are successful with mass transit
- Urgent to reduce VMT to reduce effects of climate change
- Consider effects of policies on low income areas, such as increasing vehicle traffic to those areas
- Should measure how the policies would achieve the VMT, General Plan, and Climate Smart goals.
- Encourage equity analysis.
- More bike lanes and have them protected
- Support staff's recommendations on VMT policies and moving to Tier II.
- Support pedestrian and bike improvements, but also consider prioritizing transit operations funding

Comments in opposition included:

- Light rail operations have not worked for 30 years.
- San José is built on sprawl and mass transit does not work here, even before COVID19 effects.
- San José's current bike lanes are unsuccessful.

5. Task Force Discussion

Task Force member Jim Zito asked how electric vehicle adoption in the region affects the transportation analysis given the rise of electric vehicle ownership and adoption. Secondly, he questioned if the analysis incorporates the “new normal” referring to people being able and more comfortable working from home because of the global pandemic. Jessica Zenk, Deputy Director for the Department of Transportation, answered that changes in technology are reflected at a high level within the transportation data. Vehicles-miles traveled reflects the per capita reduction of miles but does not look at the changes in fuel economy. Changes in the average fuel economy would be reflected in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for the transportation sector. With regards to the “new normal”, she answered that the data does not incorporate recent changes from the global pandemic.

Task Force member Harvey Darnell questioned if the VMT data reflects the high jobs to employed resident (J/ER) ratio. Jessica Zenk confirmed that the VMT data does incorporate the distance and frequency people are leaving for their jobs. High VMT data is reflective of those trips because the J/ER ratio is skewed. Jessica emphasized the important of balancing the J/ER ratio to reduce VMT. Harvey expressed his support for the aspirational goals of the policy. Wilson Tam, Department of Transportation Planning Manager, added that VMT is a regional issue and if all cities within the region addressed VMT, then it would also reduce the J/ER imbalances.

Task Force member Jessie O'Malley Solis asked staff if VMT Policy 5-1 will be updated over time to be consistent with the proposed VMT goals of the General Plan. Wilson Tam responded that the VMT private development policy would be revisited periodically to incrementally drop the threshold overtime.

Task Force member Shiloh acknowledged that staff's material was well written and delivered. She expressed her support and emphasized that behavior change with regard to transportation is a very difficult task. She stated she was not surprised to see the lack of progress on the goals and asked why the City of San Jose has not made further progress in reaching their transportation goals. Jessica Zenk answered that the data collection for recent changes made would not absolutely capture the effectiveness of recent transportation changes. She emphasized that progress would be incremental and that the decisions, especially land use decisions, are sticky and would be around for a long time. She also mentioned opportunities to make giant leaps of progress pointing to the recent opening of Berryessa Bart Station, planning for BART in Downtown and the electrification of Caltrans.

Task Force member Bob Levy requested clarification of the overall decrease and per capita decrease of VMT City-wide. Wilson Tam clarified that "looking at absolute values, if we envisioned 40% growth [by 2040] and on a capita basis another reduction of 40%, [then] it kind of balances out." Bob Levy requested to see the overall empirical evidence that the City would be able to get the aspirational reductions. Jessica Zenk pointed to the Department of Transportation's future work on San Jose's Citywide Access and Mobility Plan which would provide a more empirical understanding of how the City can achieve their goals. Bob Levy expressed his support for micro-mobility with transit hubs.

Task Force member Michelle Yesney expressed her support for staff's recommendations and stated that the recommendations were very clear in that they determined tiers are not necessary and can continue to work on the long term goals of the City.

Task Force member Megan Luke also expressed her support for staff's recommendations and asked how much closer will the city be to reaching its goals of greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, if the Tier policies are achieved. Jessica Zenk responded that part of the work for Climate Smart had identified parts of the solution and the Access and Mobility Plan would continue the effort allowing for periodic review of measures and estimates of what would work and how it would work.

Task Force Co-Chair Theresa Alvarado asked for a timeline for the Access and Mobility Plan. Jessica Zenk responded that much of the community engagement will take place 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Jared Hart, City-wide Planning Division Manager, gave further information about greenhouse gas emissions by directing the Task Force to the Environmental Service Department website for further data. He stated that overall since 2014, GHG emissions have decrease by 17% mostly due to cleaner energy provided by PG&E. In addition, Wilson provided the Climate Smart Dashboard website and state that the website was created with the intent to monitor those measures over time.

Task Force Member Leslie Corsiglia expressed her support for staff's recommendation and spoke to the importance of addressing the job and housing imbalance and also housing fit. She stated

she would like to include language that is more intentional about the way we plan for housing being near transit and available jobs.

Bonnie Mace outlined four additional elements to include with a recommendation. She stated she would support a recommendation with introduction of new technologies, changing face of work, the jobs and housing imbalance, and equity among communities in terms of how VMT is done. She also asked when VMT replaced level of service, how did that affect outlying districts that are more sparsely developed. Jessica Zenk agreed on the four items and stated they can be called out explicitly and answered that the topic of VMT in sparsely developed areas would be discussed during the topic for Evergreen-East Hills Development Policy at the upcoming task force meeting.

Task Force member Erik Schoennauer stated that decision-makers need to strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection. He stated that many strategies in tier 2 can be absorb but some are problematic, specifically speaking about parking cap for office development. He argues that parking caps that are wrong could deter investment in office from San Jose and kill investment.

Task Force member Smita Patel agreed with Erik about parking caps and development. She expressed her concerns around equity and wanted to ensure safeguards are in place so people are not unfairly impacted by the VMT policies. Jessica responded that the Access and Mobility Plan will include a clear and strong equity lens and it is clear there needs to be a strong effort to deeply incorporate that perspective when we look at our goals city-wide.

Task Force member Don Little emphasized the point in a metered and measured response to ensure goals are not just aspirational but are being met and are feasible.

Task Force member Megan Fluke asked staff if they have considered preservation of open space as part of their VMT strategy. Jessica Zenk answered that staff has not explicitly stated that open space preservation should be part of the strategy, but staff have the access and mobility plan to think about additional Tier policies to reach our goals.

Council Member Arenas asked staff how has VMT fared compare to LOS. Many people feared more development in certain areas and she asked staff to alleviate any concerns. Jessica Zenk responded that LOS does not have the same pattern effect compared to VMT and clarified that the red areas are not meant to open development but are harder to develop because VMT is unmitigable. Council Member Arenas also agreed with other Task Force members about the need for an equity lens while analyzing future public policies.

Task Force member Jeffrey Buchanan expressed his appreciation for the boldness of the plan. He asked how does the impacts to service due to economic recession or how do lower service levels impact the goals. Jessica Zenk responded that staff is working closely with VTA to grow ridership. The City has policies that on a high level are trying to put people next to transit either where they work or live. Jeffrey emphasized the importance for the city to support operation funding as much as possible.

Task Force member Mariel Caballero expressed her opinion about the importance of these policies especially on how they impact climate change and the environment. Mariel Cabellero then made a motion that was amended by suggestions from Task Force members Bonnie Mace and Jeffrey Buchanan. Bonnie Mace suggest four additional directives to be added to staff's recommendation and Jeffrey Buchanan suggested to analyze subcontracts as part of TDM policies. Both suggestions were included in the Mariel Caballero's motion identified below.

Councilmember Arenas asked clarifying questions related to what new technologies meant and Bonnie Mace clarified that it include electrification of vehicles and Bob Levy clarified that it would include micro mobility and electrification of scooters and bikes.

Task Force member Susan Butler-Graham asked staff if staff's recommendation included looking into signal prioritization and rapid bus lanes. Staff confirmed that the recommendation did include prioritization.

Task Force member Leslye Corsiglia clarified that jobs and housing would include looking into jobs/housing fit. Task Force member Pat Sausedo asked clarifying questions about Jeffrey Buchanan's amendment and how that would be beginning to work. Jessica Zenk responded that the process could be explored as part of staff's development and TDM policies work.

Task Force member Pat Sausedo also asked questions relating to how staff is tracking data to track the "new normal." Jessica Zenk responded that data is aggregated from many sources include census, economic data, Caltrans and household surveys. Tracking data may become available as advancements in technology and tracking become readily available.

Task Force member Jessie O'Malley Solis commended staff and encourage staff to continue to look at transit-oriented development and expressed that staff's recommendation compliments VTA's goals as a transit agency and congestion management agency reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions. She also expressed that it is important to review equity implications through the implementation process, and she hopes the Task Force will fully support staff's recommendations.

Task Force member Jim Zito want the motion to include the active pursuit of partnerships with school districts and businesses and providing incentives such as shuttle bus services, remote office and distance learning. This will cut down traffic and the unnecessary time people spend on the road.

Motion # 1

Task Force member Mariel Caballero's motion is to approve staff's recommendation and to add the following friendly amendments from Task Force members Bonnie Mace and Jeffrey Buchanan to analyze:

- 1) New technologies and their effect on VMT,
- 2) The changing face of work and their effect on VMT,

- 3) The jobs/housing imbalance,
- 4) Equity among communities,
- 5) Open space and feasibility and metric issues, and
- 6) Including subcontractors as part of TDM policies.

Motion passed (30): Teresa Alvarado, David Pandori, Dev Davis, Pam Foley, Sylvia Arenas, Michelle Yesney, Linda LeZotte, Jessie O'Malley Solis, Eddie Truong, Pat Sausedo, Vincent Rocha, Nate LeBlanc, Karl Lee, Erik Schoennauer, Don Little, Harvey Darnell, Juan Estrada, Megan Fluke, Jason Su, Kevin Zwick, Leslye Corsiglia, Shiloh Ballard, Jim Zito, Sam Ho, Robert (Bob) Levy, Smita Patel, Tamiko Rast, Margie Matthews, Jesus Flores, Ray Bramson, Bonnie Mace, Susan Butler-Graham, Jeffrey Buchanan, Luis Arguello, Margie Matthews, and Mariel Caballero.

Motion is opposed (1): Shawn Milligan

6. Adjourn

Co-chair Teresa Alvarado adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m. The next meeting will reconvene on October 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.