



Date: October 1, 2018
 Current Meeting: October 10, 2018
 Board Meeting: N/A

BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
 Technical Advisory Committee

THROUGH: General Manager, Nuria I. Fernandez

FROM: Director - Planning & Programming, Chris Augenstein

SUBJECT: Funding Framework for Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT) Estimation Tool

Policy-Related Action: No

Government Code Section 84308 Applies: No

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that VTA staff request contributions from Member Agencies and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to develop a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Estimation Tool.

BACKGROUND:

Senate Bill (SB) 743, approved by the California Legislature in September 2013, includes changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Congestion Management Program (CMP) law related to the analysis of transportation impacts. The bill directs the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop alternative metrics to replace the use of vehicular "level of service" (LOS) for evaluating the transportation impacts of projects under CEQA. The legislation states that once the new criteria are adopted, "automobile delay, as described solely by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion, shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment" in the locations where the new criteria will apply (21099 (b) (2)). OPR has indicated that the primary metric to replace the use of LOS in CEQA transportation analysis will be Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The State has also indicated that July 1, 2020 is the mandatory date to complete the switch from LOS to VMT in CEQA documents, although agencies may switch before then.

Between December 2013 and November 2017, OPR released four rounds of draft guidance on implementing SB 743. Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) staff brought information items to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Congestion Management Program & Planning Committee (CMPP) after each of these rounds. The staff reports and materials from these previous information items are available

at VTA's home for the LOS-to-VMT transition, www.vta.org/los-vmt <<http://www.vta.org/los-vmt>>. Additional information about SB 743 as well as OPR's *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* is available at <<http://www.opr.ca.gov/ceqa/updates/sb-743/>>.

DISCUSSION:

VMT Estimation Tool - Overview

As local agencies implement SB 743, one of the decisions they face is what tool (or tools) they will use to estimate VMT for land use projects and plans in their CEQA documents. OPR provided some general guidance on estimating project VMT in their Technical Advisory, but has left considerable discretion to Lead Agencies to select a tool. Based on the example set by agencies that have made the LOS-to-VMT switch so far, it appears that land use project evaluation will involve a combination of: (a) "screening out" projects that meet certain criteria so their VMT does not need to be quantified; (b) running a travel demand model for larger or more unique projects; and (c) using a spreadsheet or web-based "sketch tool" for more routine projects.

The City of San Jose has developed a VMT Estimation Tool (sketch tool) along with its new VMT-based Transportation Analysis Policy, which was adopted in February 2018. San Jose's tool, which is spreadsheet-based and relies on baseline VMT data from the City of San Jose's travel demand model and VMT reduction factors from a wide range of research studies, is available at www.sanjoseca.gov/vmt <<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/vmt>>.

Through the LOS-to-VMT Ad Hoc Working Group process that VTA has convened, VTA has heard a clear call from Member Agencies for VTA to assist in the SB 743 implementation process, and to promote as much consistency as possible in the data and methods used to estimate VMT. The Ad Hoc Working Group expressed support for developing a VMT Estimation Tool that is customized for Santa Clara County, by building on the City of San Jose's spreadsheet-based tool, expanding it to cover all areas and parcels within the county, and making it web and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) based.

At the August VTA TAC meeting, VTA staff presented an information item regarding the possible development of a countywide VMT Estimation Tool. A number of TAC members expressed support for developing a tool that is GIS and web-based. At the meeting, VTA staff noted that funding from Member Agencies would be necessary to develop a VMT Estimation Tool since the current CMP Division budget does not include funding for such a tool. VTA staff indicated that they would come back to a future TAC meeting with a more detailed proposal for the VMT Estimation Tool and a proposed funding framework.

Proposed Funding Framework

VTA staff recommends the following framework for funding the development of a countywide VMT Estimation Tool:

VTA will request that Member Agencies provide cash contributions in the near-term (late 2018/early 2019) towards the vendor costs to develop the VMT Estimation Tool. The vendor costs are estimated at approximately \$265,000, including the build cost, first-year maintenance, and a 20% contingency. VTA will also request a contribution from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) through their funding pool that supports local agency

planning and technical assistance.

This funding framework would allow VTA to hire a vendor to develop the tool by late spring/early summer 2019 and to have a prototype tool available for Member Agency testing by late fall 2019. This would allow approximately six months for tool refinement and staff training before the mandatory VMT adoption date of July 2020.

At the October TAC meeting, VTA staff will share an updated proposal for the VMT Estimation Tool and a table of proposed contribution amounts for each agency. Staff will request the TAC's concurrence to move ahead in requesting contributions from Member Agencies and MTC.

ALTERNATIVES:

As noted above, staff's recommendation is that VTA request funding from Member Agencies and MTC in the near-term.

As an alternative, the TAC could recommend VTA staff pursue other funding options such as increasing CMP fees starting in the FY20/21 budget cycle, but this would delay hiring a vendor to fall 2019, which may make it challenging to meet the state's July 2020 mandatory adoption date.

If the TAC does not recommend VTA staff to pursue funding through near-term contributions or an increase in the FY20/21 CMP fees, VTA will not have the funding to hire a vendor and will not produce a countywide VMT estimation tool. In this case, each Member Agency would need to find its own way to estimate VMT from land use projects and plans to meet state requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact to VTA from the recommended action, although developing the VMT Estimation Tool would involve in-kind staff time from within the current and FY20//21 CMP budget.

Prepared by: Rob Swierk
Memo No. 6691

Vehicle-Miles-Traveled Estimation Tool: Funding Framework

VTA Technical Advisory Committee
October 2018



VMT Estimation (“Sketch”) Tool - Overview

- For land use projects/plans; estimate project’s VMT per capita or per job, to compare to threshold
- Existing conditions/present year (not cumulative conditions)
- Generally used when:
 - Project is not “screened out” of doing a VMT analysis
 - Routine type/size, so running model not necessary
- OPR August 2014 Draft listed 20+ VMT estimation tools; City of San Jose now using a custom spreadsheet tool
- May Ad Hoc WG - support for countywide, consistent tool



Solutions that move you

Feedback at August TAC Meeting

- Support for VTA taking lead on countywide tool
 - Web/GIS-based
 - Starting with research basis from San Jose tool
 - Expanded with countywide model data
- Also start a process to update research basis with local/empirical data, over time
- Staff to come back with specific funding framework



Proposed Funding Framework

Estimated Costs:

- Total project cost: \$380k
 - Vendor cost (build/1st year maint/contingency): \$265k
 - VTA staff time: \$115k

Funding:

- VTA to request cash contributions for vendor cost
- Member Agencies contribute cash per CMP fee ratios (San Jose and VTA in-kind)
- Potential MTC matching funding
- Aim to secure funding by Dec/Jan, vendor by late spring, pilot tool by late fall 2019



Benefits of Proposed Approach

- Provide a tool to reference in CMP and CEQA documents*
- Encourage consistency – data, documentation
- Pool resources – tool development, testing, training
- Far more cost-efficient than going it alone!

**All Lead Agencies should consult CEQA experts and counsel regarding SB 743 implementation*



Solutions that move you

VMT Estimation Tool for Santa Clara County Proposed Funding Framework

**10.10.2018 TAC
Agenda Item #11**

Project Description:

This project involves the creation of a “VMT Estimation Tool” (an online, Geographic Information Systems-based tool) to allow VTA and its Member Agencies to estimate Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for land use projects and plans. This tool would estimate how many VMT a land use project, such as a new housing development or office building, would generate per person per year, and how the project’s VMT could be reduced by multimodal features or Transportation Demand Management measures. This tool would largely rely on the research basis in the City of San Jose’s recently-released VMT Estimation Tool, but would be expanded with current travel demand model and demographic data to cover the entire geography of Santa Clara County.

Funding Framework Assumptions:

- Total project cost approx \$380,000, outside vendor cost approx \$265,000
- VTA intends to cover at least 50% of outside vendor cost through cash contributions from Member Agencies
- All Member Agencies except CSJ and VTA contribute cash according to CMP fee schedule
- Potential MTC matching cash contribution or consultant assistance
- Cash contributions requested late October 2018; aim for funding agreements by Dec 2018/Jan 2019

Cash Contributions

Agency	Contribution (Assuming All Member Agencies Contribute, Totaling 50% of Vendor Cost)	
County	\$	26,740
Campbell	\$	4,972
Cupertino	\$	7,639
Gilroy	\$	3,716
Los Altos	\$	2,453
Los Altos Hills	\$	654
Los Gatos	\$	3,385
Milpitas	\$	7,576
Monte Sereno	\$	197
Morgan Hill	\$	2,470
Mountain View	\$	12,302
Palo Alto	\$	13,921
San Jose		In-kind staff time
Santa Clara	\$	20,377
Saratoga	\$	2,134
Sunnyvale	\$	24,464
<i>Subtotal Cities & County</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>133,000</i>
<i>Remaining Funding Needed</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>132,000</i>
MTC		TBD
VTA		In-kind staff time
TOTAL	\$	265,000

Note: Amounts at left will increase if any Member Agency does not agree to contribute, or VTA needs to cover more than 50% of Vendor Cost with Member Agency contributions.

In-Kind Contributions

Agency	Estimated Contribution
VTA	\$115,000 going forward; Substantial additional time over past 9 months
City of San Jose	Substantial - both developing city tool and supporting countywide process