Module 2 – Advanced SB 743

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

NELSON NYGAARD

Cohort: Santa Clara

Presented by: Meghan Weir & Sahar Shirazi

Date: 07/21/2022

Agenda

1. Introduction & Review
2. Calculating VMT

   Break *(5 min)*
3. Setting Thresholds & Screening
4. Questions and Feedback

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Introduction

1

Ground Rules

- Be an active participant
- Keep your video on if possible
- Ask questions by using the raise hand function or use the chat
- Take turns speaking and give others a chance to speak up, please mute when not speaking

Remember, this is **not** a webinar, we want it to be interactive!

Module 2 Learning Objectives

- Understand how to apply SB 743 when accounting for local context and what to consider if deviating from OPRs recommendations
- Be able to formulate threshold and screening recommendations and prepare memoranda for your jurisdictions
- Understand concepts such that you can present this information to elected officials
- Introduce VMT mitigation, which will be covered in detail in Module 3

Curriculum Overview

Phase 1a: Summer/Fall 2022

Phase 1b: Fall/Winter 2022

1 Introduction to SB 743

- Overview of Technical Assistance
- Intro to SB 743 & VMT
- OPR Recommendations

2 Advanced SB 743

- Application of VMT metrics, thresholds, and screens to your jurisdiction
- Review VMT data
- Peer examples

3 VMT Mitigation

- VMT mitigation concepts
- Available tools
- Mitigation fees, banks, and exchanges

Implementation Support

- Non-CEQA transportation
- Jurisdiction support
- Adoption strategy and implementation considerations

Module 1 Recap

- Overview of Technical Assistance
- Intro to SB 743 and VMT
- OPR Recommendations

Module 1 Recap – Summary of Questions

		Modules 4+ topics and order of sessions will be determined later		
Module 2 –Advanced SB 743	**Module 3 – VMT Mitigation**	**Potential Advanced+ SB 743**	**TIA Guidelines Support**	**Implementation and Other Policies**
How to pick appropriate thresholds and baselines	Mitigation is challenging!	Unique land uses (warehouses, tourism, schools, etc) deeper dive	How to incorporate level of service	Parking, other related policies
Unique land uses (warehouses, tourism, schools, rural, etc) intro	Banks, exchanges, other local or regional coordination options	COVID and evolving changes effect on existing and future VMT	Other CEQA checklist items – e.g., Safety / Hazards in TIA's	
Definition of screening criteria (high quality transit, affordable housing, retail size, low VMT areas, parking requirements) and how to leverage these in suburban / rural cases		Screening maps – how to ensure model reflects local context, and case studies where screening won't apply		
Relationship to CEQA guidelines and General Plan		Deeper dive on how to use CEQA guidelines and General Plan effectively		
Examples of other jurisdictions				

Memo 1 Template Review – Group Share

- Reminder of Purpose
  - Identify your jurisdiction's current transportation policies and CEQA thresholds to identify what needs to be updated.
  - Determine the process for updating, who needs to be involved, and the schedule.

- Participant questions:
  - Did this activity inspire any light bulb moments about SB 743 implementation?
  - Any successful outcomes during this activity, such as interdepartmental conversations that helped move your jurisdiction forward on VMT?
  - Any challenges that arose during this activity?

Curriculum Overview

Today

1

Introduction to SB 743

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2

Advanced SB 743

- Application of VMT metrics, thresholds, and screens to your jurisdiction
- Review VMT data
- Peer examples

Phase 1a: Summer 2022

3

VMT Mitigation

- VMT mitigation concepts
- Available tools
- Mitigation fees, banks, and exchanges

Phase 1b: Fall 2022

Implementation Support

- Non-CEQA transportation
- Jurisdiction support
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VMT Data & Calculations

2

How is VMT measured?

Absolute Value

- The total amount of daily VMT to and from a place, or on a roadway
- Tends to be a “big” number
- Directly related to total **amount** of land use
- This can be further divided by **trip purpose**

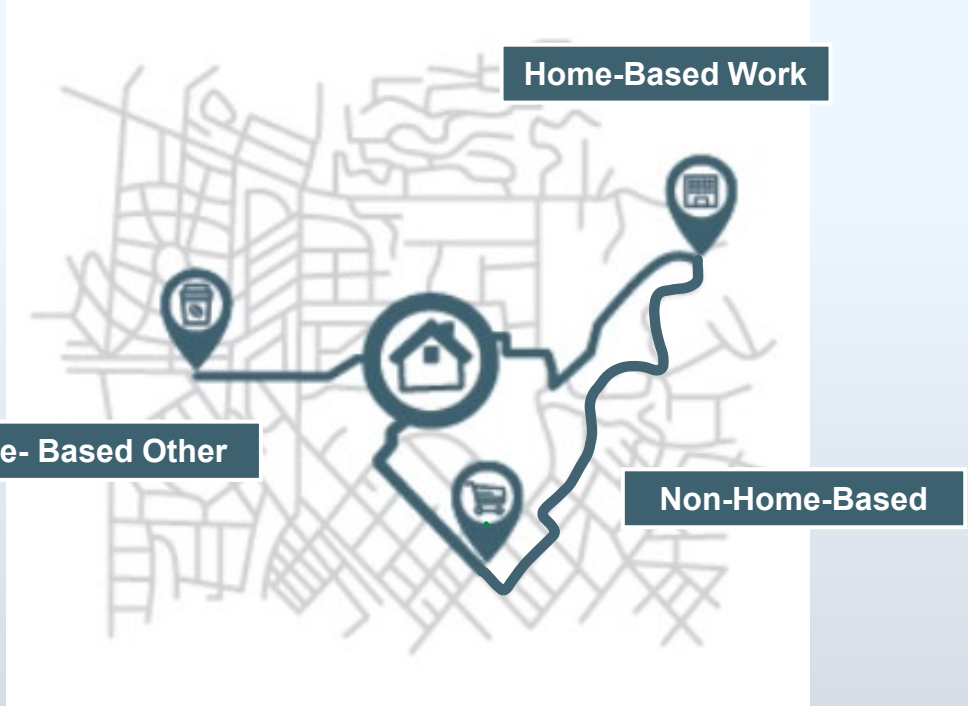
Per Capita Rate

- Absolute VMT divided by the number of residents, workers, or other population
- Tends to be a “small” number
- Directly related to the **efficiency of the project location** and the **land use type**
- Can be divided by **trip purpose**

How is VMT measured?

Trip Purposes

- All Trips
- All Home-Based trips
- Home-Based Work
- Home-Based Other
- Non-Home-Based



How is VMT measured? OPR recommendations

Land Use Projects

- **Residential *(and similar)*:**
  Home-Based VMT per Resident
- **Office/Employment *(and similar)*:**
  Home-Based Work VMT per Employee
- **Everything Else:** Discretion of jurisdiction, but consider *net change in total VMT*

How is VMT measured? OPR recommendations

Transportation Projects

- **Total VMT**
  - On Facility
  - In Region

Other CEQA Topics

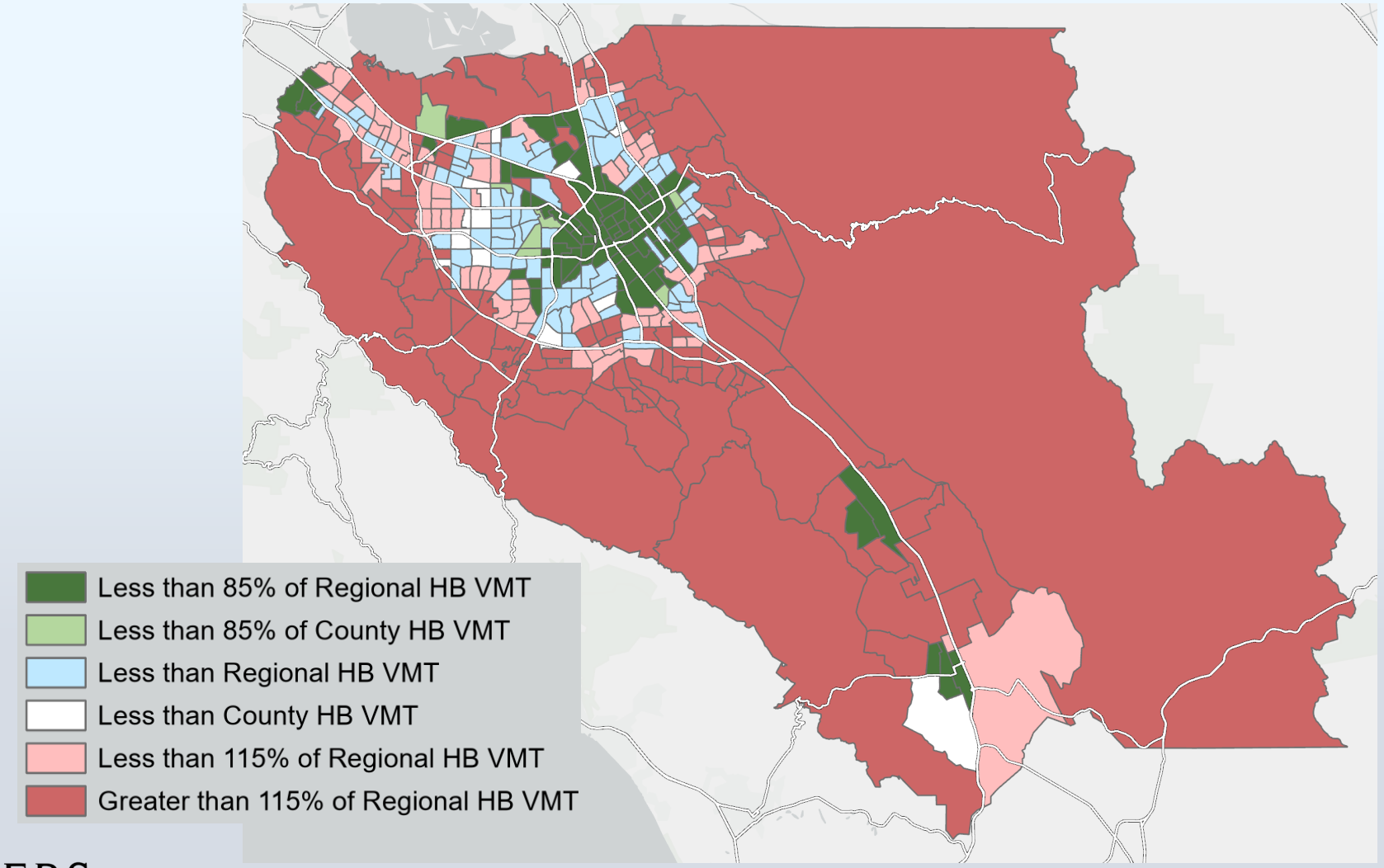
- **Total VMT**
  - In study area (Air Quality)
  - In region (GHG)

Data Sources & Methods

- OPR Recommends using a **Travel Demand Forecasting Model** to prepare VMT estimates
- When available, model values should be used for setting baselines and for screening purposes, while always documenting the limitations of that particular model
- Available Models for Santa Clara County
  - MTC Travel Model 1.5
  - City/County Association of Governments – Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Model (C/CAG - VTA Model)
  - Santa Clara County Vehicle Miles Traveled Tool (SCC VMT Evaluation Tool)
  - City of San José Travel Demand Forecasting (TDF) model

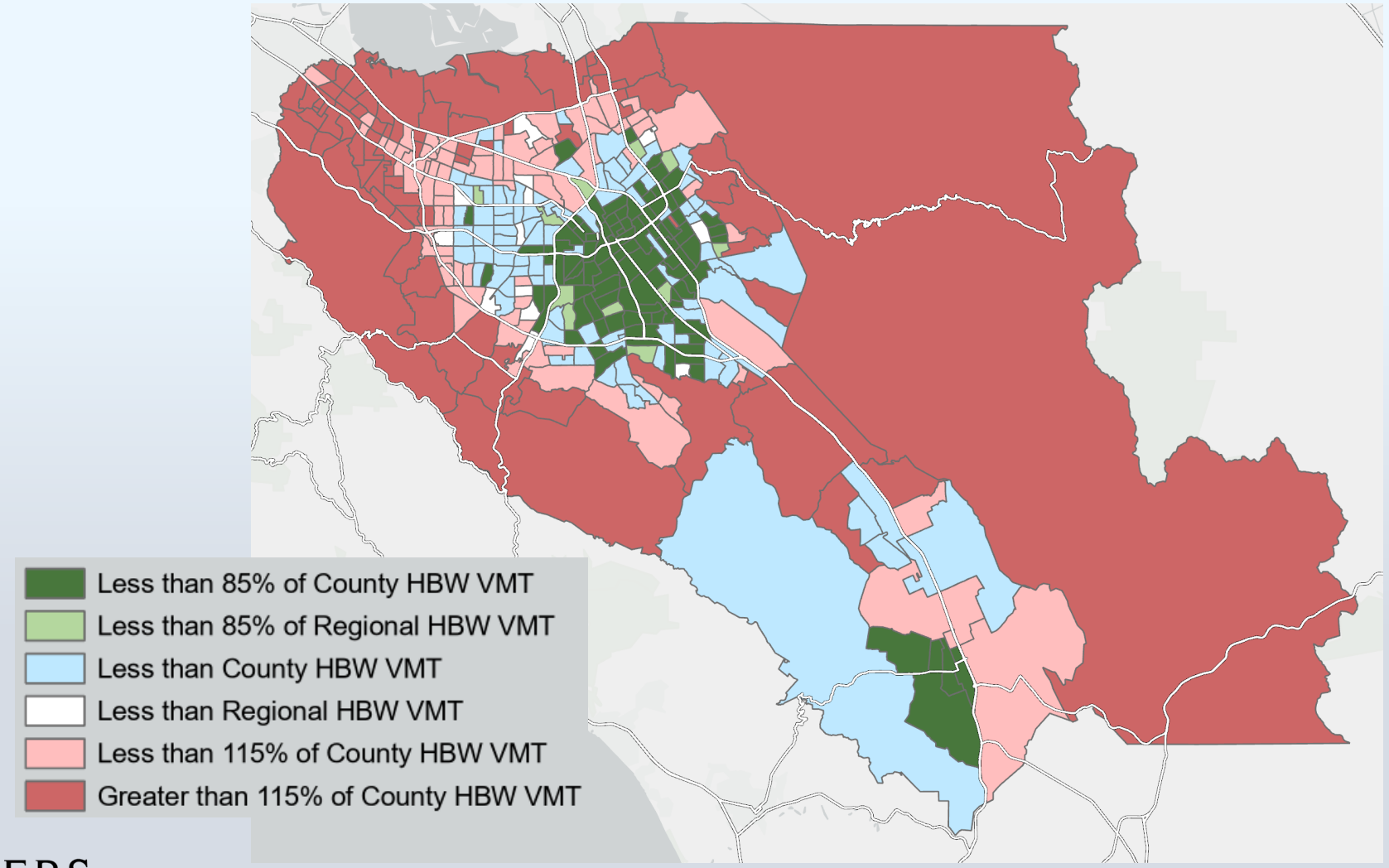
Methods – MTC Model Home-Based VMT

Jurisdiction	HB VMT per Resident
Los Altos Hills	23.2
Monte Sereno	21.6
Saratoga	20.2
Los Gatos	19.4
Unincorporated	19.3
Los Altos	17.7
Milpitas	16.9
Cupertino	16.9
Mountain View	16.2
Sunnyvale	15.8
Santa Clara County	15.7
Palo Alto	15.5
Regional Average	15.3
Campbell	15.0
San Jose	15.0
Santa Clara	13.9
Morgan Hill	13.4
Gilroy	11.6



Methods – MTC Model Home-Based-Work VMT

Jurisdiction	HBW VMT per Resident
Los Altos Hills	25.4
Los Altos	21.5
Monte Sereno	21.4
Palo Alto	21.0
Unincorporated	20.8
Milpitas	19.5
Mountain View	19.5
Saratoga	19.0
Sunnyvale	18.6
Santa Clara	17.9
Los Gatos	17.9
Regional Average	17.3
Cupertino	17.1
Santa Clara County	17.1
Morgan Hill	15.1
Campbell	14.9
San Jose	14.8
Gilroy	11.2



Methods – VTA Countywide Model

Land use inputs based on ABAG Projections 2017 series for Year 2015

Please contact VTA staff with any questions at vta.los.vmt@gmail.com

Jurisdiction	Home-Based VMT Per Resident	Home-Based Work VMT Per Employee
Bay Area Region	**14.0**	**15.3**
Santa Clara County	**13.3**	**16.6**
Campbell	13.7	14.6
Cupertino	13.4	17.0
Los Gatos	17.3	17.4
Milpitas	12.1	17.5
Mountain View	10.3	18.5
Palo Alto	9.5	16.7
San Jose	13.4	15.1
Santa Clara	9.4	16.3
Sunnyvale	10.3	17.9
Gilroy	18.9	18.8
Morgan Hill	24.6	21.4
Unincorporated Santa Clara County	22.8	21.3
Saratoga	18.0	24.3
Los Altos Hills	20.5	26.6
Monte Sereno	17.5	21.2
Los Altos	12.2	19.1

2015 Base VMT Data

- In 2019/early 2020, VTA used its travel demand model to develop estimates of 2015 Base VMT for all of Santa Clara County
- VTA also mapped areas in proximity to transit (per OPR guidance)
- VTA has made this data available to Member Agency staff (and consultants/contractors working with agency staff)
- Data is available in two ways: *(How-To PDFs available for each)*
  - GIS web service, hosted on VTA's servers – allows viewing, querying and screenshots
  - GIS shapefiles and a map template on Google Drive – allows user to download files and customize maps

GIS Web Service with Base Data

- Password-protected, only intended for agency staff (and their consultants/contractors)
- Includes heat maps for:
  - Residential VMT in relation to jurisdictional average (threshold = 15% below)
  - Residential VMT in relation to regional average (threshold = 15% below)
  - Employment VMT in relation to regional average (threshold = 15% below)
- Heat maps available both at TAZ/zone level and parcel/smoothed level
- Also maps areas in proximity to transit (per OPR Technical Advisory) as of 12/28/2019 – pre-pandemic service

Google Drive with GIS Shapefiles & Map Template

- Password-protected, only intended for agency staff (and their consultants/contractors)
- Intent is for agencies to customize and post high-res ***static maps*** (PDF, JPEG) online for public use
- Includes:
  - All the GIS files seen in the web service
  - An ArcGIS map template
  - A Visual Basic script that can automate the process of updating the heat maps for a different reference average (e.g., Countywide) or different threshold (e.g., other than -15%)

Santa Clara Countywide VMT Evaluation Tool

- VTA, in coordination with Member Agencies, developed a web-based VMT Evaluation Tool to screen and evaluate VMT generated by land use projects
- Covers three main land uses:
  - Residential
  - Office
  - Industrial
- Intended to be one part of a Lead Agency's land use evaluation process under SB 743
- The tool was launched in May 2020, and Version 2 was released in September 2021 - at https://vmttool.vta.org

Additional Santa Clara County-Specific Resources

- VTA LOS-to-VMT Transition web page:
  https://www.vta.org/projects/level-service-los-vehicle-miles-traveled-vmt-transition
- VTA CMP / VMT Technical Resources web page:
  https://www.vta.org/programs/congestion-management-program/technical-resources
- VMT Tool Quick Start Guide and FAQs (on CMP / VMT page above)
- Microsoft Teams group for announcements / info-sharing, email distribution list
- Contact vta.los.vmt@gmail.com or Rob Swierk with questions

How do we use VMT maps and tools?

Screening

- Low VMT areas allow for streamlined VMT analysis, and a presumption of less than significant impact

Project VMT estimates

- For most projects, project VMT per capita can be similar to existing VMT per capita in a TAZ, if the project's land uses are similar to existing uses
- If so, you can estimate a project's VMT with these maps

Other Methods

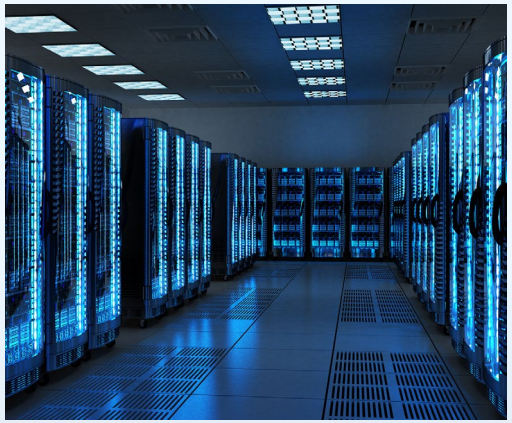
When might I want to do a new project-specific model run?

- The Project land use or demographics is *very different* from the existing land use in the TAZ
- The Project represents a *large amount of growth* in a City or TAZ
- The Project is of *high regional significance*

Other Methods

When will a qualitative assessment make sense?

- Models are not always sensitive to small land use changes
- For visitor-serving land uses (retail, hotel, tourism, recreational facilities), many cities use a qualitative assessment
  - Will the project create more demand, or serve existing populations?
  - Will the project "siphon" trips from a more distant land use serving the same purpose?
  - Can we estimate existing typical trip lengths as a proxy for VMT?



Break

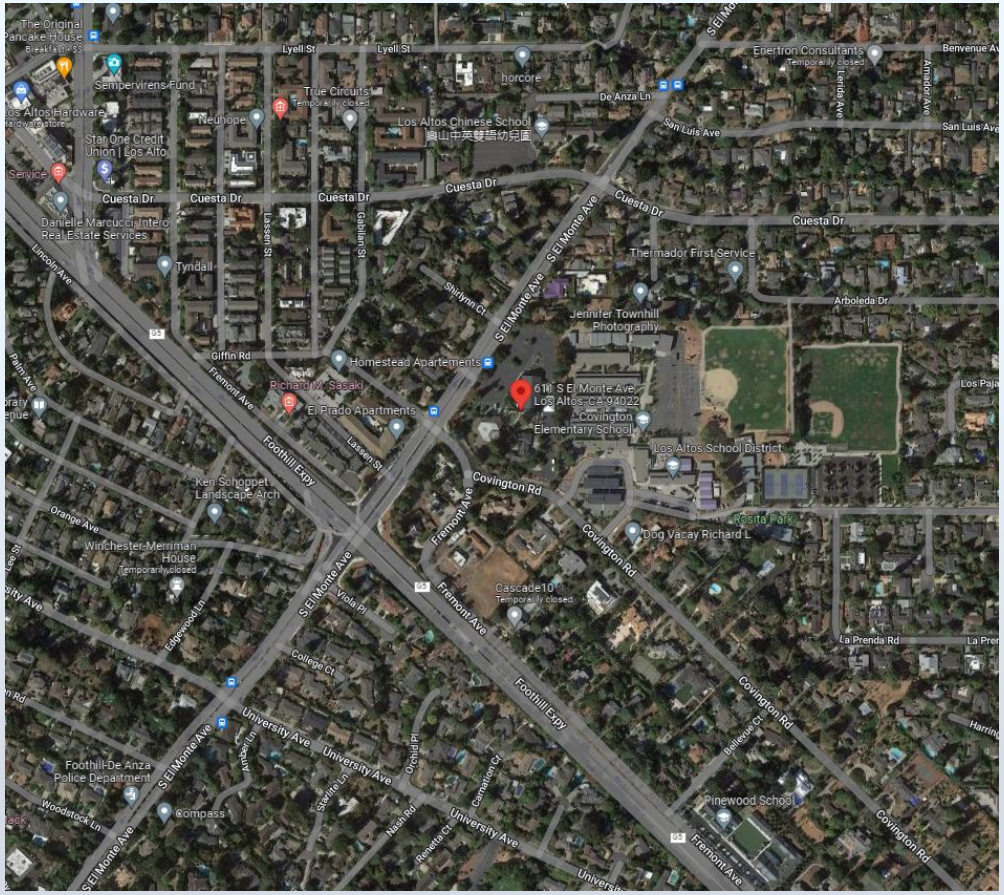
(5 minutes)

Practical Exercise

- Two “case studies” that represent land use projects typical to your county
- Break into small groups for a 10-minute discussion
- Discuss questions on following slide
- Return for 5-10 minute debrief

Practical Exercise – Case Study 1 [SC]

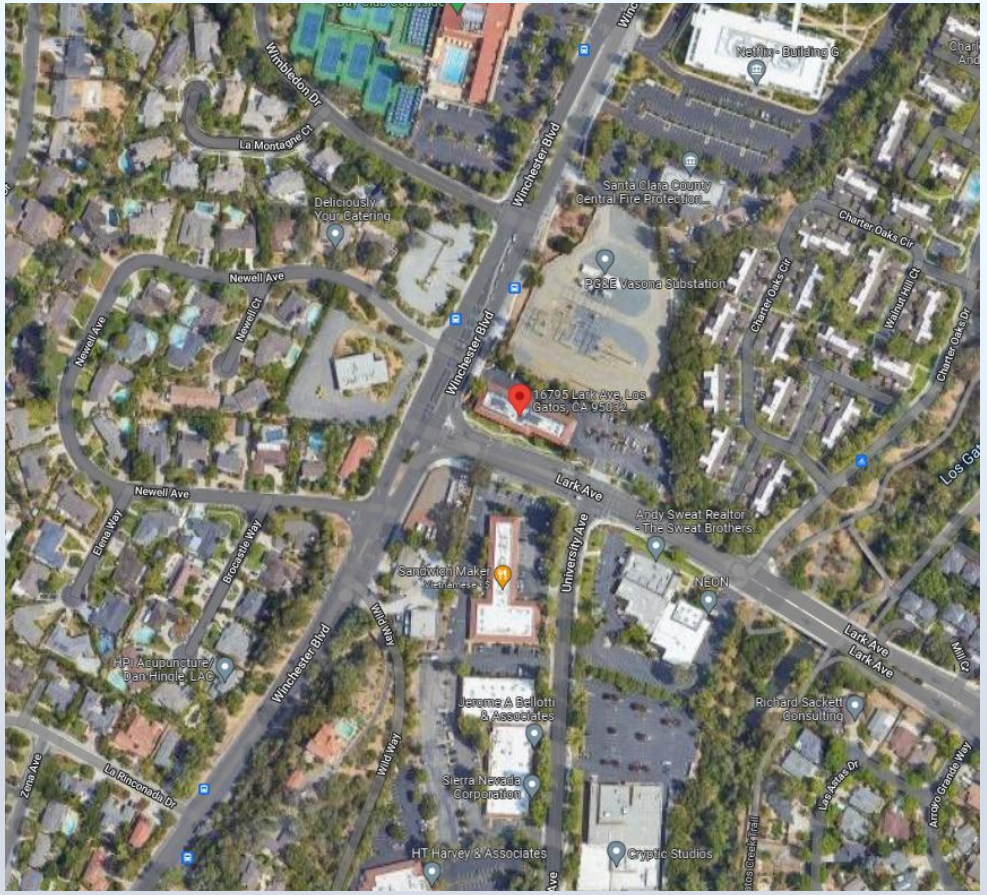
- Mixed-used / Residential
- 75 multifamily residential units and 5,000 square feet of retail on approximately 2.3 acres



Project Location: 611 S El Monte Ave, Los Altos, CA 94022

Practical Exercise – Case Study 2 [SC]

- Employment
- 100,000 square feet of space replacing ~40,000 square feet of space on ~1.5 acres



Project Location: 16795 Lark Ave, Los Gatos, CA 95032

Practical Exercise

Questions to discuss in small group:

- Identify the appropriate methodology/metric for that project
  - What VMT metric will you use?
  - How will you estimate project VMT?
- Estimate Project VMT using a map / table
  - Check VMT maps for your area
  - Does the project qualify for location-based screening?
- Does this pass your “gut check”?
- Bonus - If time allows, discuss “typical” projects in your jurisdictions that could benefit from having streamlined VMT approach.

Practical Exercise – Debrief

Aim for one minute recap per group.

- Identify the appropriate methodology/metric for that project
  - What VMT metric will you use?
  - How will you estimate project VMT?
- Estimate Project VMT using a map / table
  - Check VMT maps for your area
  - Does the project qualify for location-based screening?
- Does this pass your “gut check”?
- Bonus - If time allows, discuss “typical” projects in your jurisdictions that could benefit from having streamlined VMT approach.

Thresholds and Screening

3

Review: OPR Recommendations

Thresholds

- Residential and office/employment projects should achieve a VMT per capita that is 15 percent below the regional average.
  - **Residential Only:** Projects can use city average as baseline instead, provided they do not exceed the cumulative number of housing units projected in Plan Bay Area and are SCS-compliant
- Retail and Transportation projects should not create an increase in regional VMT

Review: OPR Recommendations

Screening

- Certain projects that can (generally) be assumed to have a less-than-significant VMT impact:
  - Very small projects (<110 daily trips)
  - Projects close to high quality transit
  - Projects in areas that already have low VMT
  - Retail and services that mostly attract local trips
  - Affordable housing

Poll: What Three Topics Concern You Most?

- High Quality Transit (or lack thereof)
- Low VMT Areas (or lack thereof)
- Affordable Housing
- Local Serving Retail
- Thresholds: Baseline Comparison
- Thresholds: Percent Reduction
- Unique Land Uses
- “All of our projects will have significant impacts!”
- Other Local Concerns (Please Share!)

Local Flexibility / Local Discretion

"OPR recommends that a per capita or per employee VMT that is fifteen percent below that of existing development may be a reasonable threshold." (pg. 10 of OPR Technical Advisory)

- General CEQA Guidance about Thresholds:
  - Should be adopted by ordinance, resolution, rule, or regulation.
  - May consider thresholds of significance previously adopted or recommended by other agencies
  - Supported by **substantial evidence**

Substantial Evidence

Substantial evidence includes:

1. Facts
2. Reasonable assumptions predicated upon facts
3. Expert opinions supported by facts

Overall, you must show enough relevant information and reasonable inferences from that information to support the reasons behind differing from OPR.

Top Three Concerns

Thresholds: Percent Reduction

OPR recommends using a 15% reduction compared to a baseline for residential and employment-based projects

Other thresholds adopted by cities include:

- 22% below regional average (*Based on 2020 CARB Scoping Plan)*
- 16.8% below regional average *(Based on 2017 CARB Scoping Plan)*
- Below existing *(Not recommended by OPR)*

Thresholds: Baseline Geographies

Employment: Compare to Regional Average

Housing: Compare to Regional or City Average

Generally, the region is defined as the 9-County Bay Area, as that most closely aligns with the GHG reduction goals on which thresholds are based; but many jurisdictions define the regional average as countywide average.

Screening: Affordable Housing

- OPR indicates that 100% affordable housing projects may be screened in infill locations
  - Cities may pursue a lower threshold based on evidence
  - Many definitions of “affordable” based on income ranges
  - Affordable housing is also a VMT mitigation measure

Screening: Low VMT Areas

- Low VMT areas depend on baseline geography selected
- Suburban cities may not have many low VMT areas
  - Check underlying map data
- Potential deviations from OPR:
  - Housing – can use citywide average with restrictions to increase low VMT areas
  - Employment – select countywide if this can be supported by substantial evidence

Thresholds: Unique Land Uses

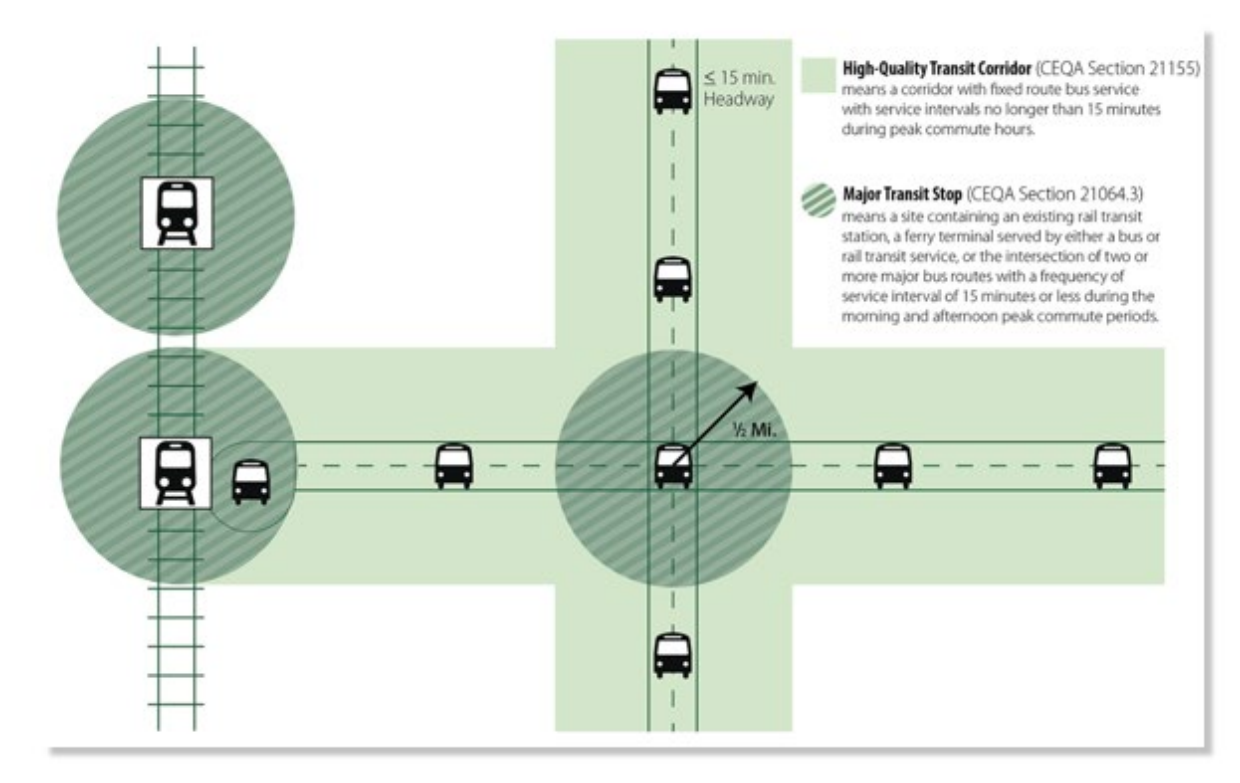
- OPR does not mention thresholds for any specific land use other than residential, office, and retail.

- Options Used So Far:
  - Travel demand model for large or complex uses
  - Qualitative assessment of no net new VMT
  - VMT no greater than average VMT per “service population” for similar land uses
  - Assess based on home-based work VMT per employee

Additional Topics

Screening: High Quality Transit

- Differences in *definitions* of high quality transit
  - 15 minutes on single line, or 15 minutes on a corridor with all routes combined?
  - Rail and ferry stations with highly infrequent service?
- Differences in *distance* to transit
  - ½ mile from rail; ¼ mile from bus (Redwood City)



Screening: Local Serving Retail

- OPR indicates that local serving retail of up to 50,000 square feet may be screened
  - Some cities are using smaller square footage (30,000 sf in Redwood City and Concord); some are allowing all retail regardless of size
  - Some cities have explicitly listed public-serving amenities as being covered by the same exemption (Redwood City, South San Francisco, Concord)

Screening: General Eligibility

Parking and FAR requirements

- "Project must not provide more than the required amount of parking"

Drive-Throughs

- Petaluma and Walnut Creek both require any land use with a drive-thru, regardless of other screening eligibility, to analyze VMT

Low Trip Generation + Long Trips

- Destination hotels, wineries

Streamlining: Tiering From Adopted GP

- In general, adopting thresholds does not require a GP update
- If the GP EIR analyzes VMT thoroughly, then:
  - Subsequent projects consistent with the General Plan may be streamlined; for example, may be eligible for MND even if in a high VMT area
  - Programmatic mitigation of VMT impacts can be applied
- Could be a focused EIR solely to address VMT policy, or could be addressed in the Housing Element EIR; get advice from legal counsel

Group share opportunity – Any advice to the group on how you are using GP EIR's to streamline tiering opportunities, especially related to housing

"All Our Projects Will Have Impacts!"

- For some communities, SB743 will result in changes to which types of projects are required to produce an EIR.

- Some potential approaches to help streamline further:
  - Tier from a General Plan or Specific Plan EIR (*with GP or Housing Element update – see GP tiering slide*)
  - Develop programmatic / fee-based mitigation programs (*discussed in Module 3*)

Discussion

- What is your biggest remaining question or concern about OPR guidance?
- What do you want the VMT analysis process to look like in your city?

Questions, feedback, and work to prep for next session

4

What's Next

- **Practical exercises**
- **Feedback survey**
- **Office hours:** Thursday, 08/04 from 09:30 AM to 11:30 AM
- **Module 3:** Sept 19, 12:30 PM – 02:30 PM

Practical Exercises

- Review memorandum template, noting any deviations from OPR recommendations
  - Identify the baseline for different project types
  - Confirm the screening criteria and VMT thresholds
- Prepare case studies to test your recommendations
- Review potential VMT reduction strategies in preparation

Thank you!

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