

September 21, 2020

Envision 2040 General Plan 4-Year Review Task Force
c/o City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San José CA 95113

In re: Meeting # 8 - Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Policies

Dear Task Force Members,

On behalf of SPUR, I write in response to the staff memo for the September 21, 2020 General Plan 4-Year Review Task Force meeting that will focus on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) policies.

San José has a long history of low-density, sprawl development over an area of over 180 square miles. This inefficient and unsustainable land use development pattern has had terrible repercussions for housing affordability, fiscal stability, public transit service, vehicle miles traveled, and environmental quality. It is time to reverse this now.

SPUR has long called for land use and development policies that encourage mode shift. To this end, there is a lot at stake in our decisions about parking. As we increase the amount of urban real estate devoted to parking, we push activities farther away from each other, thereby making it even harder for people to walk or bike where they need to go. Increased parking becomes a vicious circle: the more parking we build, the more people have no choice but to drive. Access-by-proximity, the great advantage that belongs to city dwellers, depends on a compact, intimate mingling of people and land uses. We cannot simultaneously provide parking spaces for each person at each destination and become a city that enjoys access by proximity.

We commend the City for being an early-adopter of SB 743 which moved us away from Level of Service (LOS) to VMT analysis. The overview memo for this item affirms that the City maintains its commitment to the goal of reducing VMT substantially as a means to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and create a healthier community. We agree with staff that it is critical to align the General Plan VMT and mode split goals with those of Climate Smart and urge the Task Force to make this recommendation.

We strongly support the Tier II VMT Reduction Actions in the General Plan and the staff recommendation to move forward with implementation now. We especially urge the Task Force to embrace the elimination of minimum parking requirements citywide and the adoption of very low parking maximums for all new development going forward.

San José must overcome its sprawling land use patterns and excessive parking supply. To do this, we must redevelop with greater densities and far less parking and make alternative modes of transportation readily available, safe, and inexpensive. As we move to encourage walkable, urban infill development and transit

villages, we must also eliminate minimum parking requirements and strictly limit the amount of parking that may be provided in new developments in order to achieve these goals.

Thank you for your kind consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Lane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Lane, San José Director
SPUR