SB 743: Transit Agency / Congestion Management Agency Perspective

Rob Swierk, AICP
June 8, 2017
Presentation Outline

• Overview of VTA’s roles

• VTA perspective on SB 743

• Key Opportunities and Challenges
Overview of VTA’s Roles

• Transit operator, Congestion Management Agency (CMA), transportation sales tax authority
• Provide bus, light rail and paratransit services
• Funding partner in regional rail service, including Caltrain
• Lead Agency on bringing BART to San Jose/Silicon Valley
• Countywide transportation planning, design and construction of specific highway, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and promotion of Transit-Oriented Development
VTA and Transportation Analysis in Santa Clara County

• VTA helps promote consistency in transportation analysis of development/land use projects

• Fairly prescriptive TIA Guidelines – for CMP purposes, but used by many cities for CEQA and city analysis as well

• Active discussion with cities, county through committees, working groups

(www.vta.org/cmp)
VTA Perspective on SB 743

• Key Benefits:
  – Streamline transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects
  – Promote/streamline TOD (support ridership/revenue for transit)
  – Help cities/counties align transportation analysis with community values

• Key Challenges and Opportunities
  1. Meaningful transit analysis
  2. Reflecting real-world VMT
  3. Consistency in analysis, transition period
Challenge #1: Meaningful Transit Analysis

• Need to determine what analysis is meaningful and in keeping with SB 743 streamlining goals

• Transit capital projects vs. development/land use projects: different types of analysis
Opportunity: Analysis of Transit Capital Projects

• Assuming less-than-significant from VMT perspective - substantial benefit versus past analysis

• Certain analysis still meaningful:
  – Effects on transit facilities/access
  – Interaction with pedestrians/bicycles

• Analysis will likely highlight benefits, but could call out needed improvements
Opportunity: Analysis of Development / Land Use Projects – Effects on Transit

• Focus on most meaningful analysis: ensuring project does no harm to transit facilities/access

• Still worthwhile to assess effects of development project on transit travel time & reliability
  – Direct relationship to transit attractiveness and operating costs
  – Don’t want to undermine SB 743 streamlining goals
  – Consider informational analysis to identify offsetting measures? (e.g., signal priority, bulbout stops)
Challenge #2: Reflecting Real-World VMT

• Need to ensure that models and tools reflect on-the-ground conditions
  1. Difference between “naturally” low-VMT areas and other low-VMT areas
  2. Evolving locations: urbanizing activity centers, new transit hubs
“Naturally” low-VMT vs. other low-VMT areas

• Different areas achieve lower VMT in different ways
• “Naturally” low-VMT areas – near core transit, historic street/development pattern supports non-auto modes
• Other low-VMT areas – may be farther from core transit, but have trip caps, TDM targets & enforcement, institutional programs

• Challenges:
  – Ensuring that VMT tools and analysis are sensitive to both conditions
  – Ensuring follow-through on TDM / VMT reduction pledges
Ensuring Follow-through on TDM / VMT Reduction Pledges… a start

Table 2: Comparison of Trip Reduction Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard Reductions</th>
<th>Peer/Study-Based Reductions</th>
<th>Target-Based Reductions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum percentages in VTA TIA Guidelines?</td>
<td>Yes, see Table 1: Standard Auto Trip Reduction Rates</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data required in TIA Report?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, existing or new studies</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to a target required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of measures required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, if applicable</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Sharing required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VTA TIA Guidelines, October 2014
(www.vta.org/cmp)
Evolving Areas & VMT

• Areas transitioning from suburban to more urban, adding fine-grained mixed uses, new transit hubs
• Incremental change, lag time in travel behavior change
• Benefits may not be fully reflected in VMT models/tools
Opportunity: Better Reflect Real-World VMT

• Gathering observed VMT data (and trip gen, trip length, mode choice) will improve outcomes

• Actual data will help convince skeptical decision-makers, public

• Opportunity for new research, tools, data clearinghouse (need funding)
Challenge #3: Consistency in Analysis, Transition Period

- Potential lack of apples-to-apples comparison between agencies/reports
- May lead to confusion among decision-makers and public (esp. across agency boundaries)
- State Congestion Management Program (CMP) legislation, many city policies not yet in sync – transition period
Opportunity: Develop Common Approaches, Update Other Policies

• Opportunity for agencies to develop common approaches, documentation – help decision-makers and public

• VMT should help provide broader perspective on impacts/benefits than spot LOS

• Opportunity to update/add flexibility to CMP legislation, city policies
Thank You!

Robert Swierk, AICP
robert.swierk@vta.org