



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0153

Agenda Date: 2/13/2025

2025 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

ESD 24-02

TITLE Evaluate Adopting Transit-Supportive Policies for Sunnyvale

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Environmental Services Department

Support Departments: Office of the City Manager
Office of the City Attorney
Community Development Department
Department of Public Works
Finance Department

Sponsor(s): Sustainability Commission

History: 1 year ago: Deferred by Sustainability Commission
2 years ago: N/A

Council Strategic Priority: Yes
(At time of sponsorship) Accelerating Climate Action, the Active Transportation Plan and Vision Zero Plan

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What precipitated this Study?

Sunnyvale has adopted Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction targets as part of its Climate Action Playbook (CAP), to achieve a 20% reduction in vehicle miles traveled per person by 2030, and 30% by 2045. Through the 2028 Game Plan development and forecasting process, the City’s consultant conducting the greenhouse gas forecasting recommended that the 2030 VMT goal be lowered to 10% reduction by 2030.

This recommended change was due to a lack of progress in VMT reduction or substantial evidence to support the feasibility of achieving this goal. Due to this updated information regarding Sunnyvale’s VMT goal, the Sustainability Commission sponsored this Study Issue as a way to support VMT reduction.

At the October 10, 2023, City Council Study Session on Game Plan 2028 development, City Council requested that staff and consultants keep the original 2030 VMT reduction target of 20%. During the January 16, 2024, Study Issue rankings meeting, the Sustainability Commission deferred the Study Issue as they were aware staff and consultants were working to adjust the 2030 VMT target in Game Plan 2028 to the original target.

At the June 25, 2024, City Council meeting, updates to the CAP and adoption of Game Plan 2028

were approved. During discussion of the CAP updates and Game Plan 2028, staff and consultants shared that the 2030 VMT target was reinstated to its original target of 20% through consultant research of the City’s Area Specific Plans, General Plan, and the creation of a new Move that would establish metrics tracking and reporting of the several VMT related Moves in Game Plan 2028. The new Move, Move 3.K - Establish tracking metrics to evaluate effectiveness of various Moves’ impact on VMT and a monitoring schedule to report progress, is intended to ensure the city makes substantial progress in meeting the 2030 VMT target.

Sunnyvale’s Climate Action Playbook outlines two targets related to reducing VMT:

- Play 3.1: Increase opportunities for and encourage development of mixed-use sites to reduce vehicle miles per person.
- Play 3.2: Increase transportation options and support shared mobility.

Sunnyvale’s General Plan has a number of policy goals focused on, related to, or inclusive of transit.

- Goal LT-1: Coordinated Regional and Local Planning: Policy LT-1.7, LT-1.8
- Goal LT-2: An Effective Multimodal Transportation System: Policy LT-3.1, Policy LT-3.6, Policy LT-3.23, Policy LT-3.29
- Goal LT-4: An Attractive Community for Residents and Businesses: Policy LT-4.3
- Goal LT-6: Protected, Maintained, and Enhanced Residential Neighborhoods: Policy LT-6.2
- Goal LT-8: Options for Healthy Living: Policy LT-8.4
- Goal HE-1: Adequate Housing: Policy HE-1.1
- Goal HE-3: Minimized Governmental Constraints on Housing: Policy HE-3.3
- Goal HE-4: Adequate Housing Sites: Policy HE-4.2, Policy HE-4.5
- Goal HE-6: Sustainable Neighborhoods: Policy HE-6.3

What are the key elements of the Study?

Drawing on model policies and recommendations from the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and other sources identified by staff, the Study Issue would examine where City policy has gaps to addressing and encouraging transit enhancement and development in Sunnyvale. The following policy areas are of particular focus:

- “Transit-oriented community” policies to be applied to areas around existing MTC “Tier 3” transit stations in Sunnyvale (Caltrain and VTA Light Rail), preferably meeting or exceeding MTC’s policy recommendations from its Transit-Oriented Communities Policy.
- Sites or corridors where the same set of “transit-oriented community” policies should be adopted in order to promote future development of high-frequency transit service such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).
- Transit-supportive policies that should be applied to Sunnyvale as a whole, drawing from sources such as VTA’s sample “Transit-First Policy” framework.

Estimated years to complete study: 2 years

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost):	Moderate
Funding Required for Non-Budgeted Costs:	\$175,000
Funding Source:	Will seek budget supplement (General Fund)

Staff will seek consultant services to complete this Study. The costs would also be needed to support community engagement work. This engagement includes taking the study results to the Sustainability Commission, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, and Planning Commission for input.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. The Study would include assessment of potential costs, including capital and operating, as well as revenue/savings.

EXPECTED CITY COUNCIL, BOARD OR COMMISSION PARTICIPATION

Council-Approved Work Plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Sustainability Commission, Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Drop. This policy issue does not merit discussion at a Study Issues Workshop.

VMT reductions are achieved through a combination of implementing compatible land uses, building a transportation system that accommodates multiple uses and having high-quality transit that gets people where they need to go in a quick and efficient manner. The CAP Game Plan 2028 sets aggressive targets to reduce VMT 20% by 2030 and includes metric and reporting actions to ensure the City is on track to meet its VMT reduction goals. The City has established policies and goals that will achieve VMT reductions due to the close proximity of high-quality transit (LRT/Caltrain/Bus) in the specific plan areas of Peery Park, Downtown, El Camino Real, Lawrence Station and Moffett Park. Planning for these areas includes the introduction of land uses that encourage alternative mode choices with employment, commercial/retail and housing to support each other. Each of these specific plan areas have the necessary and desired policy and supportive ideas to help achieve the City's VMT goals and are aligned with Play 3.1 of the Climate Action Plan. Play 3.2 addresses building a transportation system that accommodates multiple uses. An additional study is unlikely to provide policy solutions beyond what the City's current policies include and will cause redundancy in staff workload as this policy issue is already addressed in Game Plan 2028.

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