

From: [Elizabeth Elliott](#)
To: [Betsy Megas](#)
Subject: RE: Comments for your LOS to VMT study session
Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 3:15:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Good afternoon,

Your email has been received and will be shared with the Planning Commission.

Thank you for your input.

ELIZABETH ELLIOTT | Office Specialist IV
Planning Division | Community Development Department
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O : 408.615.2450 Direct : 408.615.2474

From: Planning <Planning@santaclaraca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 2:56 PM
To: Elizabeth Elliott <EElliot@santaclaraca.gov>
Subject: FW: Comments for your LOS to VMT study session

From: Betsy Megas <dvortygirl@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 12:39 PM
To: Planning <Planning@santaclaraca.gov>
Subject: Comments for your LOS to VMT study session

To the Planning Commission:

I am glad that you are taking the opportunity to study the city's progress so far on the transition from LOS to VMT for traffic impact evaluation under CEQA and I look forward to watching online tonight.

Your packet says that there's "no additional cost to the city, other than staff time". In the longer term and the bigger picture, I think that is a huge oversimplification and underestimation. The city has the opportunity to save a great deal of money by reducing the number of cars and car miles on its roads.

As we've seen during the shelter-in-place, our roads are a very different experience when there are

fewer cars. They are quieter, safer, and more efficient for walking and bicycling. Without traffic congestion, they are more efficient for essential motor vehicles. Our air quality, along with air quality around the world, is better than it's been in many years. Poor air quality has real costs to public health, to the local environment, and to climate. Poor air quality, traffic congestion, and noise also degrade the sense of place, and the ability to walk and bike in a neighborhood.

Car crashes appear to be reduced due to the shelter-in-place, as well. In a normal year, California sees about 4000 motor vehicle related fatalities per year, and car collisions cost the state some \$4.5 billion annually. [<https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/pdf/statecosts/CA-2015CostofCrashDeaths-a.pdf>]

More directly, cars require a tremendous amount of space to move around and to store, both on and off public streets. The Planning Commission's recent reduction in parking at the Related project saved somewhere between \$35,000 and \$55,000 *per space* that was eliminated. The costs of "free" parking get passed along to taxpayers, or to tenants and thence to retail customers.

Cars also cost individuals in the neighborhood of \$10,000 per car, per year in purchase price/depreciation, fuel, insurance, and maintenance [<https://newsroom.aaa.com/auto/your-driving-costs/>], to say nothing of the costs to individual health and time that come with sedentary commutes and the stresses of being stuck in traffic. Because of our land use and transportation choices, options for shopping, housing, and jobs are limited for those who cannot afford to maintain a car or who cannot drive.

Some cities, including Oakland and San Francisco, are creating "slow streets" or "open streets" for walking and bicycling during the shelter-in-place. Milan, for one, is now looking to open up afterwards so as to encourage far more active transportation. [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/21/milan-seeks-to-prevent-post-crisis-return-of-traffic-pollution>].

I look forward to Santa Clara taking an active approach to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled with our land use and development choices, and to take full advantage of all these opportunities to learn, to save costs, and above all to improve public and environmental health.

Many thanks,

Betsy Megas

Member of the Santa Clara City and VTA Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; speaking for myself.