

Assembly Day 2

Session Three: SB 743, 2 Years in to Implementation

Q&A:

1. Could electric truck infrastructure support work in rural areas?
 - a. Answer: Potentially in the future, but this is likely a long way off. Electric vehicles are prohibitively expensive for low income communities, and rebate programs require upfront payments that people can't afford. There have been some projects that implement community-based car-share programs, including programs that site the vehicles at affordable housing complexes. There is also a cultural component to electric vehicles in rural areas that will need to be slowly addressed.
2. Since using Passenger Car Equivalents (PCE) to measure large truck impacts on traffic for purposes of CEQA have long been accepted, what is the rationale OPR has given for excluding heavy duty trucks from VMT measurements? Can PCEs be used in the VMT context to capture heavy duty truck impacts?
3. Movement of work from largely downtown locations in cities to home offices in a suburb or even out of state would create a large reduction in VMT in the jurisdiction where the office is located. How would this be used in mitigation calculations - for the jurisdiction where the office is located, for the firm making the change - could that firm swap its credits or use them for another development purpose?
 - a. Answer: I can't speak to the larger quantification question, but I do know that our local COG distributed surveys online seeking more information about how many people are now working remotely and how long they would have traveled if they weren't working from home.
4. Tolling on SR 37 as a VMT reduction strategy also would increase economic stress on a working group that includes a large minority population, creating a conflict in some policy goals. How could this be addressed?
 - a. Answer: In discussions with the project team they are trying to exempt low-income travelers -- which then reduces the effectiveness of the VMT reduction. You can see the draft EIR here: <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-popular-links/d4-environmental-docs#district-wide>
5. Can you post the GHG handbook title and where to find, please?
 - a. Answer: <https://www.fehrandpeers.com/greenhouse-gas-and-vmt-mitigation-measures/>
6. I appreciate Eric's presentation about Caltrans moving in a different direction. However, Caltrans position in a proposed highway widening project that exponentially increases VMT is that while VMT will increase, GHG emissions will decrease because cars produce less emissions when congestion is relieved, and newer fleets will be cleaner and include electric vehicles. Therefore, the project will have less-than-significant impacts vis-a-vis GHGs. How does this square with the state's push to reduce VMT, and will Caltrans continue to promote widening to relieve congestion under the theory that it will assist in such emissions reductions? Bill

- a. Answer: This is a great question. We worked this out in one case where there was concern a road diet would increase GHG, so that the road diet could proceed. Will address this orally now it appears.
7. What thoughts do you have about linking affordable housing policy and VMT- disincentives for sprawl projects to build on site /incentives to build in low VMT areas?
 - a. Answer: We have given affordable housing projects a big screening pass in areas that will enable low VMT living.
8. Proximity to “transit stations” isn’t predictive of mode shift when there aren’t quality transit options in terms of frequency of transit and flexible origins and destinations. In Marin for example, geography and dispersed downtowns throughout the County can’t seem to necessarily incentivize mode shift if transit isn’t highly subsidized. What is the vision of how completed and integrated networks of modes and land use planning can be aligned in areas where population densities don’t support fixed route transit?
 - a. Answer: That's more to address than I can in this space, but one point is that VMT reduction isn't only about mode shift or specifically mode shift to transit. In many cases people will still drive, but we hope they will make shorter and fewer trips due to more compact, mixed land uses, for example.
9. Which rural jurisdictions have begun to implement SB 743?
 - a. Answer: It is being 'implemented' so to speak in the valley jurisdictions I work in (Fresno, Tulare, Kings) but there is such a heavy reliance on exceptions as well as a general tendency of lead agencies in this region to rely on CEQA exemptions to avoid any analysis at all (which we allege is inappropriate) that practically speaking, not much is happening.
10. Question for Ramses: Has there been any discussion about up-zoning in city of San Jose?
 - a. Answer: We are moving land use capacities to denser areas which in effect up zones those parts. But we still have a ~75% that is single family zoning that is a bit of a third rail politically to change. SB9 is very unpopular in those area

Chat Log:

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am not seeing correct view on screen- need presentation view

I believe it just isn’t in presentation mode. I pinged Eric but don’t think he saw it while he is presenting. Also sometimes if you have it in dual screen mode he can’t see this on his monitor.

Sorry, on my screen it was in presentation mode.

It obscured the chat.

CAPCOA GHG handbook: <https://www.fehrandpeers.com/greenhouse-gas-and-vmt-mitigation-measures/>

Does Mariah have any ideas on how to encourage rural communities to be more responsive to Jamey’s inquiries?

I am unable to copy the GHG/VMT info in the chat. Will it be sent to registrants after the webinar?
just Email me, matthew@pcl.org

Today's chat log will be available for viewing after the webinar ends at pcl.org/registrantinfo
mthompson@crla.org if anyone wants to get in touch

Session Four: A New Planning Paradigm for California

Q&A:

1. Is there a link to the report Mike is talking about?
 - a. Answer: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/50j4b4r8>
2. Initial comments were about the need for action now. I am concerned that fixing planning processes takes a lot of time. What can we actually do right now to make a difference?
3. Is there any type of citizen/resident/environmental "league" who advocate/monitor/report with government officials?
4. Can Louise talk more about the difficulties of integrating all our different goals -- housing, climate resilience, wildfire resistance, protecting natural & working lands? The RHNA process this year seemed to ignore the last three and only prioritize the first. How can we do better?

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We will track down the link to the report Mike mentioned for everyone.

agree

Would subsidies (mentioned by Ms. Creswell) be to builder/developers or to those who would be beneficiaries of the proposed affordable housing?

Here is a link to the report Mike mentioned in his presentation.

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/50j4b4r8>

Subsidies are needed to make building affordable housing possible --but those subsidies mandate that the housing produced be regulated and maintained as affordable over time. Subsidies are also needed to help individuals afford rents, for example like vouchers.

Cathy, I'm not sure whether that's really necessary. Inclusionary zoning requirements are having a lot of success in producing affordable units.

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/50j4b4r8> link only provides the working paper, a pre-publication version. Is the report available yet?

Many Cities just aren't willing to use their existing legal authority to mandate affordable units to be a part of new projects. And therefore aren't making a serious effort towards meeting the affordability goals outlined in their Housing Element.

Inclusionary policies are important and helpful but they cannot provide the volume of affordable housing needed for extremely low and very low income households. Broader use of inclusionary is definitely needed but we also have to support nonprofit affordable housing developers build critically needed housing. That housing also integrates service can be designed to improve both the health of families and sustainability of communities.

Right, but aren't there already significant tax incentives and subsidies for affordable housing? I guess I'm wondering exactly how much more subsidy is needed in your view?

Let me see if we can find the link to the report or we will forward it out as soon as we find it.

Obviously these approaches aren't mutually exclusive, but I think inclusionary zoning has been underutilized in relation to publicly funded Projects.

We need significantly more funding on a consistent basis. Too often there will be state efforts to invest in affordable housing but it comes in fits and starts. The amount of funding is both insufficient but it is provided inconsistently. In the meantime, land resources for affordable housing are gobbled up for other uses, costs increase, and needs increase. So we need a permanent funding source that is stable and sufficient to actually have an impact across the state.

That's an interesting point regarding the lack of consistent funding.

That link is the only version of the report currently available - that link should provide the opportunity to download the summary and individual reports, although I have not used it directly yet. We can include any updated info in our follow up email we will send after this session.

So Mike basically just wants more projects to use the 2816931 exemption

problem with Mike's position is that your position presumes that CEQA applies to everything

And having lived and worked in Oregon in the legal context, Oregon is not that different.

I've litigated land use in both States, not that different at all. Oregon is just much better at funding planning.

and updating their land use plans.

Has nothing to do with CEQA

I agree with you Mike, but I think your position is blaming the wrong root cause. I submit a building permit application for a small ADU. Takes 6 months to get a planner to respond to it.

Because the municipality is underfunded.

Changing CEQA isn't going to change the fact that our local agencies are underfunded and under skilled at key positions

What I have experienced locally is cities are required to have a place for public input but really don't listen.... it's simply a requirement!

Is there any type of citizen, environmental "league"? In other words, a group of people who advocate and report, in some format. These are my words and I'm fairly new to this.

I agree with Mike on engagement with plan making. The problem is that many governments treat it as a pro forma process without any serious engagement with the community and often without seriously changing plans to reflect community input. Clearer rules for active community engagement, even mandates, are needed. It would only be appropriate for community oriented organizations to have an important role in developing such guidance.

Loving Nailah's remarks!

Mike wants no CEQA environmental review for projects consistent with local land use plans. Gov't Code § 65457.

Already does that.

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=65457

Been on the books since 2007.

Agree. Sick of dot maps. We need to know how DOES community engagement result in responsive planning and implementation. That would incentivize participation.

We can't do it at local level either

I frequently see a disconnect between Sacramento County and Sacramento City and also between the Departments within each entity. It sometimes feels like the various departments' prime objective is to serve their own functional mission rather than the greater good of serving their citizen constituency. It's a structural and leadership problem. It feels like our elected and administrative leadership is at the pre-school level of cooperative work on behalf of the taxpayer citizen.

Exactly, I've been asked if I can introduce County and City staff into each other. They worked on the same issue area and had never talked ☹

We struggle with that very goal, Nailah. And are hampered because we cannot see inside these organizations. We're flying blind and figuring things out by inference, which is a pretty poor way to learn how things are working or how to improve cooperation and coordination.

Thank you, it would be great to find the report Mike mentioned in his presentation.

I think Louise just mentioned TCC (?). Is this correct, and if so please post a link to the chat.

<https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/>