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# COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION: DEVELOPING AN EQUITABLE VMT MITIGATION PROGRAM FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY



Tuesday, May 21, 2024



12:00–12:30p.m. (PT)



**Serena Alexander, PhD** | MTI Research Associate; Associate Professor, Northeastern University

# The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) & Senate Bill 743

LOS



VMT



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# Project Team

## MTI Project Coordinators and Researchers

Serena Alexander, PhD

Hilary Nixon, PhD

Andre Ashour



## SJSU Student Teams

Literature Review: Brandon Weaver, Emily Rosas, and Lena Eyen,

Spatial Analysis: Gil Navarrete, Maxwell Belote-Broussard, Luana Chen, and Shane Fields

Community Engagement: Abenaezer Tassew, Juan Mendez-Arias, and Victor Huynh

Stakeholder Interviews: Annie Jones, Michelle Chang, Thuy Nguyen

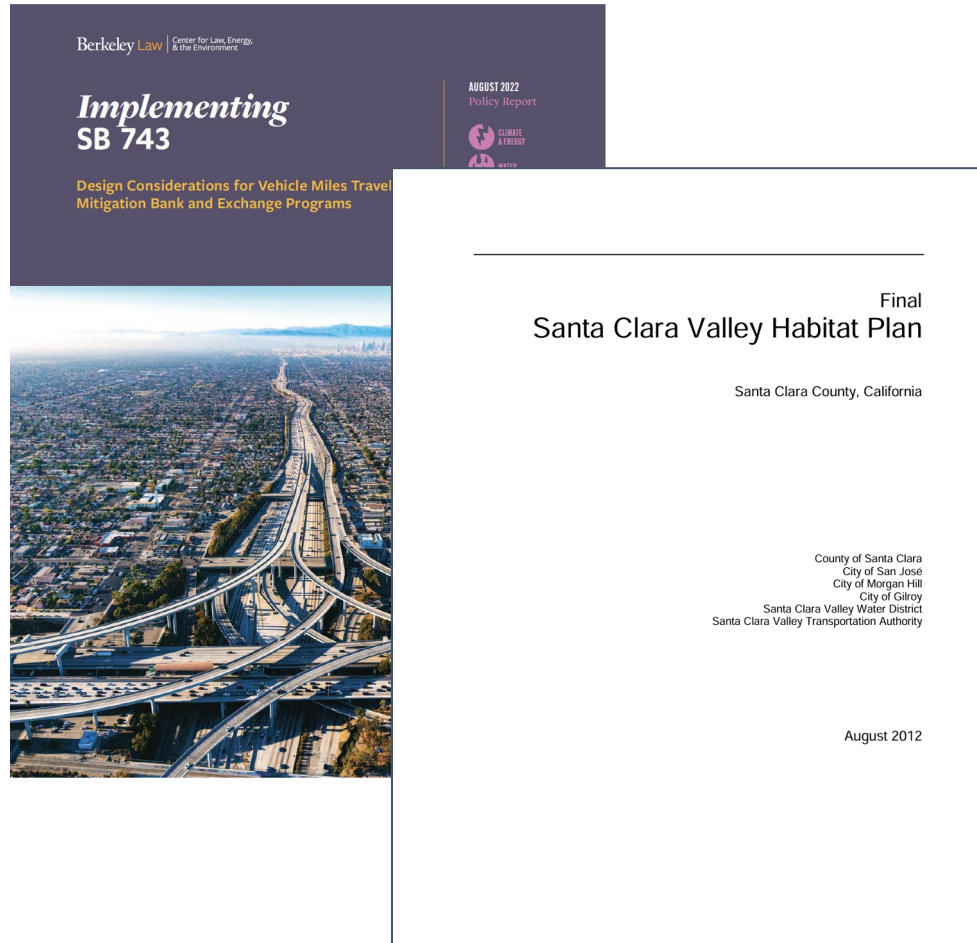
Stakeholder Interviews: Anna Kalthoff, Elizabeth Bartlett, and Tishrona Godfrey

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# Report Background

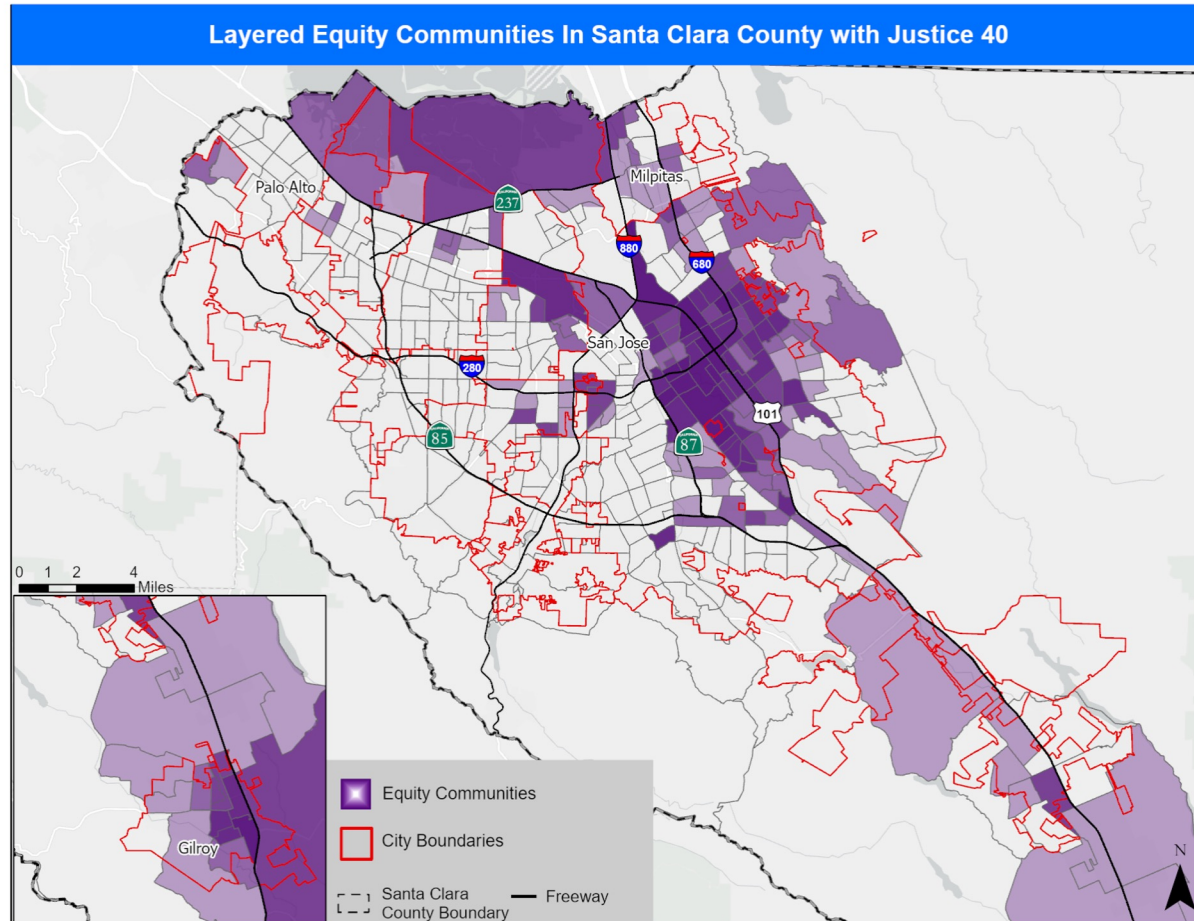
- Graduate MUP students from the Fall 2023 cohort of the SJSU Urban Planning Policy Analysis course (URBP 236) assisted with the development of the equity framework for the program in four areas:
  - Literature Review
  - Spatial Analysis
  - Community Engagement Observations
  - Stakeholder Interviews
- Building upon student findings and preliminary recommendations, the MTI research team developed a refined set of policy recommendations for the VTA project team.

# Literature Review



- Focused on identifying best practices and strategies for incorporating equity into program design and frameworks.
- 23 pieces of literature, including 5 planning documents and 18 research articles, were analyzed, including VMT mitigation-related literature and some related to other relevant program types, like environmental resources.

# Spatial Analysis



Contains equity communities as outlined in SB 535, Justice 40, AB 1550, Healthy Places Index (>.40/<.40), and MTC's Plan Bay Area 2050.  
Created by Maxwell Belote-Broussard on February 9, 2024.

- Focused on identifying other areas in addition to MTC EPCs to consider for community engagement (in VTA's current project) and project prioritization (in the future).
- A total of 10 maps were created using ArcGIS Pro to highlight where equity areas for each index overlapped with high and low-VMT areas and which communities experienced multiple inequities and burdens.

# Community Engagement



- Focused on assessing equity indicators in VTA's community engagement approach during Phase 1.
- Students attended three tabling events, one Virtual Community Meeting, and one CBO focus group session.
- The research team attended TAG meetings and reviewed additional literature.

# Stakeholder Interviews



- Focused on gathering more in-depth information for community transportation needs, challenges, and preferences.
- Two student groups completed a total of 20 stakeholder interviews.
- The research team consolidated findings from both student groups and produced graphs to visualize responses.



# Literature Review Findings

- Program equity should be defined in a locally relevant way.
- Equity should be incorporated at key decision-making points, particularly for the project prioritization and evaluation metrics.
- It is a best practice to develop an informative and implementable accountability plan.



Source: SCAG

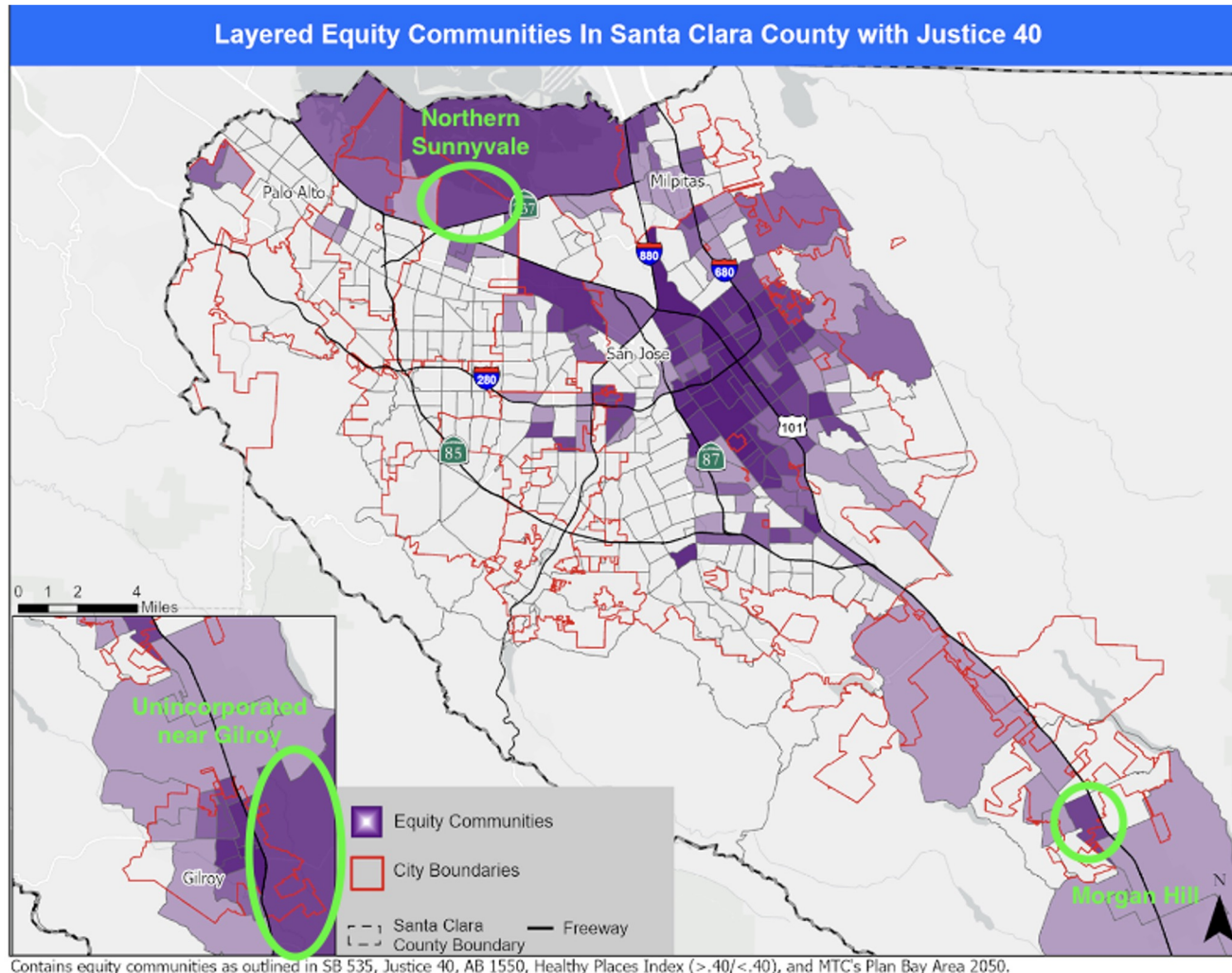


Source: Contra Costa County



Source: Ventura County

# Spatial Analysis Findings



Additional areas to consider for community engagement and VMT mitigation measure selection were identified in **northern Sunnyvale, Morgan Hill**, and in the **unincorporated area east of Gilroy**.

# Community Engagement Findings

The VTA project team's approach to public meetings, survey groups, and surveys was excellent. Areas that could be improved are simplifying informational materials for non-technical audiences and better leveraging social media as a channel of communication.



## Project Website - Landing Page

**Equitable VMT Mitigation Program for Santa Clara County**

Reducing Driving from Development Projects

The Equitable Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Program aims to reduce the amount of driving from land use developments in Santa Clara County, working across jurisdictional lines and improving travel options. The amount of driving, or VMT, is tied to greenhouse gas emissions, local air quality, health, noise pollution, and street safety. So lowering VMT improves quality of life and the environment. VTA is leading this project to develop a framework where cities, the county and developers can work together to reduce driving and improve equity along the way. We welcome your input and involvement to reduce VMT.

Check out these short videos for an introduction to the project, what VMT is, and why it's important to reduce VMT.

VMT Project Videos

Project Introduction    What is VMT & Why Does it Matter?    Why It's Important to Reduce VMT

Subscribe to VMT Updates

Email Address:

SUBSCRIBE

Upcoming Meetings

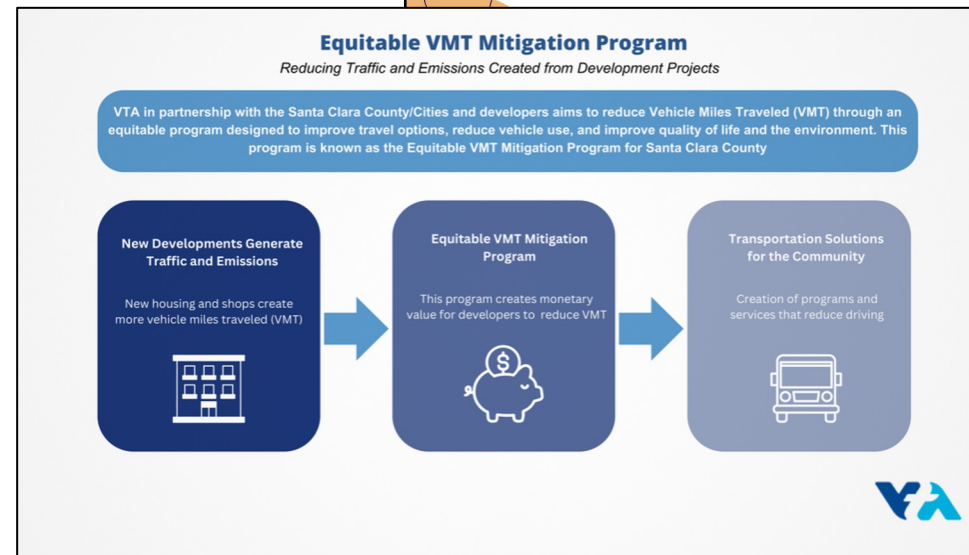
Day on the Bay Festival

Dec 15 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
 1500 AVENUE 84  
 AVENUE 84 PARK  
 225 HOLE STREET FLORENCE  
 CALIFORNIA 95021

**Suggestion**

- Include more specific details on the project when those details are available.
- Insert comma: "...the county, and developers..."
- Increase font size for project video titles.

Why is the public's input and involvement important?  
 Connect to upcoming meetings.

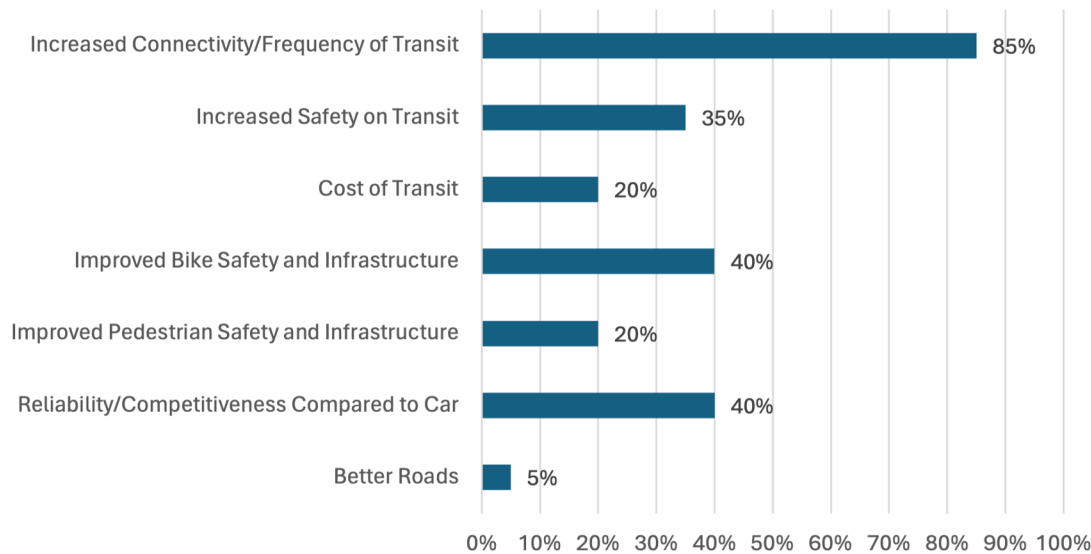


# Stakeholder Interview Findings

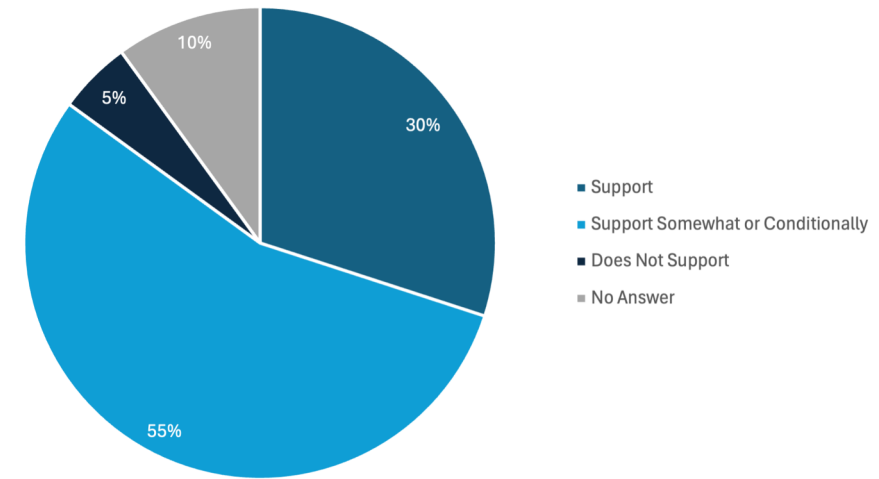
Improved transit and enhanced feelings of safety for alternative travel modes were top priorities shared by interviewees.

Most interviewees were conditionally support of development contributions to VMT mitigation measures. Main concerns were transparency and accountability in project selection and funding processes.

Transportation Priorities for All Interviewees



Level of Support for Development Contributions to Fund VMT Mitigation Measures Among All Interviewees



# Key Recommendations

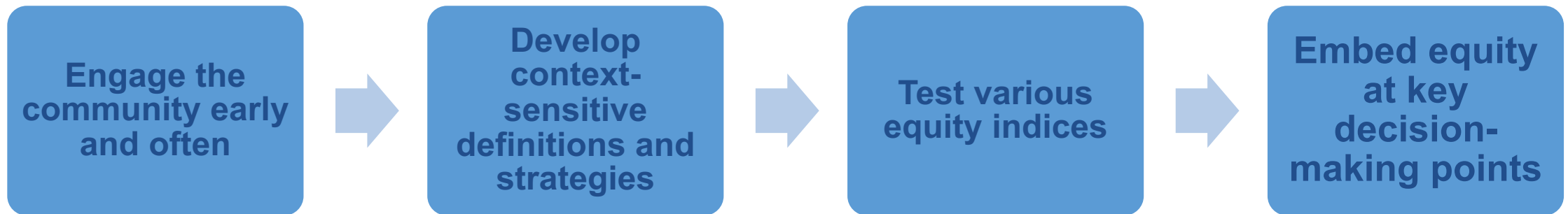
Recommendation	Administrative Ease	Time Frame to Implement	Degree of Equity Contributions
<p><b>Develop and adopt a localized definition of VMT Equity</b></p>	<p>Somewhat challenging</p>	<p>Short-to-medium term</p>	<p>Significant</p>
<p><b>Develop an informative and implementable accountability plan</b></p>	<p>Somewhat challenging</p>	<p>Long-term</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

# Key Recommendations

Recommendation	Administrative Ease	Time Frame to Implement	Degree of Equity Contributions
<p><b>Embed equity at key decision-making points, especially project prioritization and evaluation</b></p>	<p>Somewhat challenging</p>	<p>Long-term</p>	<p>Significant</p>
<p><b>Prioritize public transit investments to improve the availability, frequency, reliability, and speed of transit</b></p>	<p>Challenging</p>	<p>Long-term</p>	<p>Moderate</p>

# Key Takeaways and Conclusion

- VTA is already making great progress in engaging the community equitably and developing the project equity framework. The following strategies would further contribute to program equity:
  - VTA should incorporate findings from the spatial analysis and stakeholder interviews into the process of developing a localized definition of VMT equity.
  - Development of an informative and implementable accountability plan can help VTA reinforce program equity goals as well as improve transparency and trust with the public.



Thank you!  
Questions?



Scan the QR code to access the full MTI report!



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