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**From:** Jordan Moldow [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 7, 2024 11:23 PM  
**To:** TEPublicComment; Benabente, Julie; Romanow, Kerrie; Balis, Anne; Ziemba, Kate  
**Cc:** District4; District 6; District5; District9; District8; District3; Smith, Ryan; BPAC  
**Subject:** Public Comment - T&E 4/8 - Item (d)1. "Climate Smart San José Plan Semi-Annual Report"

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Public Comments from Jordan Moldow (speaking on behalf of himself):

The city needs to be stricter about not increasing road capacity and not increasing VMT (via stronger policies that are written into law, and actually followed), and then needs to be more aggressive at decreasing VMT. Part (but not all) of doing that is to prioritize building out the bicycle network, and doing it quicker.

These are the past two semi-annual presentations for Climate Smart San José: [\[April 2023\]](#) [\[October 2023\]](#). And this is the presentation for today: [\[April 2024\]](#). There is very little emphasis on VMT reduction, no reported progress, and no reported present-day VMT level. The only update last April was the passage of the elimination of parking minimums. The only updates in October were about grants. Most of the updates this April are about grants, with one update about kicking off the planning process for Santa Clara St.

Most of the emphasis for Climate Smart has been on electrification. An important topic, but it cannot be the main/only focus of the Climate Smart implementation.

[This \[table of initiatives\]](#) was attached to the April 2023 meeting. There was only one listed initiative for VMT reduction, and it was the removal of parking minimums and the update of the TDM plans. Meanwhile there are pages of initiatives on EV cars and other electrification initiatives. The city needs to be doing more on VMT reduction.

Meanwhile, there are projects like [101/Zanker](#) that the city is actively working on. San José, VTA, and Caltrans believe that this project will somehow decrease VMT, but that is almost certainly false. That project is going to widen multiple local roads, create new local roads, create a new 6-9-lane overcrossing, and create a new interchange that has more car capacity than the old interchange it is replacing.

Projects like that create a VMT deficit that will be difficult to offset, much less actually make a net positive progress on VMT reduction. These car projects will, without a doubt, induce much more VMT, making it even harder for our public/active transit projects to make a positive dent in emissions. See, for example, [this recent article from The Guardian: "US spends billions on roads rather than public transport in 'climate time bomb'" \[1\]](#). Some similar reporting: [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#). These articles are about the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law, but I would not be surprised if the same is true for how 2016 Measure B funds have been allocated, and other local funds in San José and Santa Clara County.

It's not good enough for San José to *say* it is committed to reducing VMT, and that it has a preference for not increasing car capacity. It needs to actually cement the latter as binding policy, and hold itself accountable to following it, and to

providing realistic VMT projections for projects. And the Climate Smart program needs to start prioritizing more VMT reduction projects.

And to that end, the All Ages and Abilities bicycle network needs to be implemented faster. And Vision Zero needs to be achieved ASAP. These are not the only things that need to be done to decrease VMT, but they are important and necessary steps.

[1] ["US spends billions on roads rather than public transport in 'climate time bomb'"](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/feb/29/biden-spending-highways-public-transport-climate-crisis)  
["New analysis finds money from Biden's \\$1.2tn infrastructure bill has overwhelmingly been spent on widening highways for cars"](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/feb/29/biden-spending-highways-public-transport-climate-crisis)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/feb/29/biden-spending-highways-public-transport-climate-crisis>

[2] ["How Biden's Infrastructure Plan Created a 'Climate Time Bomb' in Black Neighborhoods" - Capital B News](https://capitalbnews.org/biden-infrastructure-plan-highway-expansion/)  
["Half of the projects funded through the law have been allocated to expanding highways."](https://capitalbnews.org/biden-infrastructure-plan-highway-expansion/)  
<https://capitalbnews.org/biden-infrastructure-plan-highway-expansion/>

[3] ["The IJJA is a climate time bomb. Will states defuse it?" - Transportation For America](https://t4america.org/2024/02/28/the-iija-is-a-climate-time-bomb-will-states-defuse-it/)  
["Despite the transportation sector being the biggest emitter of U.S. greenhouse gasses, our AI-powered analysis of over 57,000 infrastructure law-funded state projects shows that over a quarter of the law's formula dollars are funding highway expansion projects that will drastically increase emissions. Will states reverse course with the last two fiscal years of funding?"](https://t4america.org/2024/02/28/the-iija-is-a-climate-time-bomb-will-states-defuse-it/)  
<https://t4america.org/2024/02/28/the-iija-is-a-climate-time-bomb-will-states-defuse-it/>

[April 2023] <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11807824&GUID=98D68F85-3F8E-4FD7-A917-12B533CB8F7C>

[October 2023] <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12327245&GUID=71EC736F-902F-4648-956F-B7FCF3731847>

[April 2024] <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12828164&GUID=11729F52-FCB2-4FCB-8A99-D93DED599352>

[table of initiatives] <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11788391&GUID=A17708AB-DAAE-45C2-AF3C-AB0938BD149E>

[101/Zanker] <https://www.vta.org/projects/us-101zanker-roadskyport-drivefourth-street-improvement-project>

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