

April 17, 2026

San Diego Regional Vehicle Miles Traveled Mitigation Study

Overview

California Senate Bill 743, (Steinberg, 2013) also known as the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Policy, became effective on July 1, 2020. SB 743 made VMT the primary metric for evaluating the transportation impacts of projects.

SANDAG and the County of San Diego received a Caltrans Strategic Partnership Grant to explore the development of regional options for VMT mitigation. Staff from the County of San Diego will present three potential VMT mitigation frameworks developed under the project, as well as options and challenges associated with any potential implementation.

Key Considerations

- Under SB 743, the State of California has indicated that VMT is the appropriate metric to evaluate transportation impacts under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- The VMT metric has created challenges for development, especially within small suburban jurisdictions and rural areas as they attempt to feasibly mitigate VMT
- The Study evaluated regional opportunities for VMT mitigation that are compatible with the San Diego region.
- The Study was developed with input from a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of traffic engineers and planning staff from 19 jurisdictions and nine partner agencies. Five TAC meetings were held to develop and refine the Study. A TAC roster is attached to this staff report.
- TAC feedback on the final draft of the Study focused on eligibility of regional transportation projects to offset VMT impacts through any regional program; logistics of administering a potential program; understanding how a potential program would meet legal requirements for mitigation; and considering how a potential program could impact approvals for projects with VMT impacts.
- Three potential frameworks were developed: a Regional Exchange Program, a Regional Credit Program, and Local In-Lieu Fee Guidelines.
- A related VMT Calculator is being developed as a resource for calculating VMT reductions from regional bicycle, transit, pedestrian, neighborhood electric vehicle network, and park & ride lot infrastructure.
- All three potential regional VMT mitigation frameworks would be voluntary, with participation being left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction as the CEQA lead agency.
- Potential implementation of each regional VMT mitigation framework presents different needs and challenges.

Action: Discussion

Staff from the County of San Diego and SANDAG will present the results of a Vehicle Miles Traveled mitigation study proposal developed through a Caltrans Strategic Partnership grant. The Transportation Committee is asked to discuss the results of the study and provide feedback on next steps.

Fiscal Impact:

This grant funded project is part of SANDAG's FY 2026 Budget and Overall Work Program Project No.3402400.

Schedule/Scope Impact:

The project is expected to be completed in June 2026.

- Alongside the regional approaches outlined in the Study, the state is developing a framework for collecting developer funds that can be used to construct eligible housing projects as mitigation for VMT impacts under California Assembly Bill (AB 130) (Wicks). The [AB 130 mitigation framework](#) is expected to be in place by July 1, 2026.

Next Steps

The Study will be finalized after receiving input from the Transportation Committee ahead of the grant completion date of June 2026. The Study was presented to the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) in March 2026. The feedback received from RPC supported completing additional analysis to understand the funding needs and possible funding sources for developing a regional VMT mitigation pilot program. RPC recommended deferring decisions on the framework for any potential pilot program until after the funding picture was clearer. County staff will be presenting the San Diego Regional VMT Mitigation Study to the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors in June 2026.

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Attachment: 1. Technical Advisory Committee Membership Roster