

GPAC MEMORANDUM

TO: San Marcos General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)
FROM: De Novo Planning Group
SUBJECT: General Plan Advisory Committee Mobility Discussion
DATE: October 8, 2021

The October 21, 2021 GPAC meeting will focus on the topics of mobility. This meeting packet includes specific reading materials related to mobility (also referred to as circulation or transportation). The Mobility Element is a required element to the City's General Plan.

REQUIRED READING

[Existing Conditions Report Mobility Section](#)

[Existing Conditions Report Regulatory Framework \(Mobility Section\)](#)

[Current General Plan Mobility Element](#)

[California Office of Planning and Research Circulation Element Guidelines](#)

MOBILITY BACKGROUND

The Mobility Element will provide the framework for decisions concerning the city's multimodal transportation system, which includes roadways, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and rail modes of travel. State law (California Government Code Section 65302(b)) mandates that the Mobility Element contain the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, military airports and ports, and other public utilities and facilities, to the extent these items exist in the planning area. The Mobility Element will reflect the City's desire to provide for complete streets, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and explore the application of new technologies and best practices for mobility planning in San Marcos. Moreover, the Mobility Element must be implementable, with solution-oriented plans that can be designed and developed in the City.

Below are some common mobility-related topics to consider in preparation for the GPAC meeting:

LEVEL OF SERVICE

LOS is a qualitative measure used to describe roadway operations for different user types, including vehicles, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians. LOS is assigned letter grades ranging from "A" (free flow conditions) to "F" (severe congestion).

Vehicular LOS should not be viewed like school grades where A is best and F is worst. Providing free-flow conditions (LOS A) at all hours of the day requires wide streets, large intersections, substantial right-of-way and considerable funding for maintenance. LOS A or B for vehicles also tends to lead to poor LOS for

pedestrians and bicyclists because the wider streets, higher speeds, and longer waiting times to cross makes bicycling and walking less safe and less appealing.

Vehicle LOS should be balanced against mobility needs for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, impacts on existing development, and the cost to construct and maintain the facilities.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a measure used extensively in transportation planning for a variety of purposes. It measures the amount of travel for all vehicles in a geographic region over a given period of time, typically a one-year period. It is calculated as the sum of the number of miles traveled by each vehicle. VMT is a key metric in transportation planning because it provides a measure of total travel, how travel changes over time, and differences in travel among regions and states. VMT is the leading measure of both personal and commercial vehicle travel demand. VMT data are also useful in policy decisions for infrastructure investment. Since VMT measures travel demand, it is useful in determining where resources are most needed, and it is an important measure to monitor and forecast.¹

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets are streets designed considering the full range of users including vehicles, trucks, pedestrians, bicycles, children, the disabled, and seniors. There is no one single design for a complete street; complete streets are context-sensitive and respond to the land use and travel needs of users at a particular location. Complete streets may include sidewalks, bike lanes, transit lanes, frequent crossings, median islands, curb extensions, and other transportation facilities.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation Demand Management uses incentives, information, and encouragement programs to reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles and decrease traffic congestion.

These programs help people walk, bike, ride transit, and telecommute and encourage shifting driving trips from peak hours. Transportation Demand Management measures may be implemented by governments or employers.

MOBILITY HUB

Mobility Hubs are places of connectivity where different travel options – walking, biking, transit, and shared mobility – come together. They provide an integrated suite of mobility services, amenities, and supporting technologies to better connect high-frequency transit to an individual's origin of destination. A mobility hub can span one, two, or few miles to provide on-demand travel choice for short trips around a community.²

¹ Texas A&M Transportation Institute, *Methodologies Used to Estimate and Forecast Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)*.

² San Diego Forward, *Mobility Hubs*, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).