

Update to CEQA Transportation Performance Thresholds of Significance

Transportation Advisory Commission
July 23, 2020





Recommendation

Department of Transportation

- It is recommended that the Transportation Advisory Commission review and provide comments to the City Council on the recommended update to CEQA Transportation Performance Thresholds of Significance
- Staff recommends CEQA impact thresholds to be 15% below Citywide baseline average to evaluate VMT and VT per capita.
- New thresholds will enable the City to more aggressively reduce GHG emissions, develop multimodal transportation networks, and promote a diversity of land uses.



Recommendation

Department of Transportation

- The recommended thresholds are in line with the direction adopted by the City Council in 2014.
- The recommended thresholds are in line with the Office of Planning and Research's most current guidelines.
- A potential result of lower thresholds may be that some projects that would otherwise be in compliance with the adopted Land Use of the General Plan may be subject to additional environmental review processes.



Transportation Review Thresholds

Department of Transportation

Thresholds for Determining Transportation Review of Projects (Adopted by City Council on November 3, 2014)

TYPE OF PROJECT	EXEMPTION	Category 1: (Outside CEQA) BELOW COMMUNITYWIDE SIGNIFICANCE	Category 2: (CEQA) COMMUNITYWIDE SIGNIFICANCE
Residential (Net # of units)	10 units or less	11 – 49 units	50+ units
Non-Residential Use (Net)	10,000 Sq Ft or less than 300 daily trips	10,001 to 49,999 Sq Ft	50,000+ Sq Ft



CEQA Impact Thresholds

Department of Transportation

METRIC	DESCRIPTION	Current Guidelines	Staff Recommendation
		IMPACT THRESHOLD	IMPACT THRESHOLD
VMT Per Capita	Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the City of Pasadena per service population (population + jobs).	An increase over existing Citywide VMT per Capita. <u>Current CEQA Threshold: 22.6</u>	Net change in VMT per service population is 15% below baseline Citywide VMT per Capita. <u>2017 Baseline: 35.6*</u> <u>15% Below Baseline Threshold: 30.3</u>
VT Per Capita	Vehicle Trips (VT) in the City of Pasadena per service population.	An increase over existing Citywide VT per Capita. <u>Current CEQA Threshold: 2.8</u>	Net change is VT per service population is 15% below baseline Citywide VT per Capita. <u>2017 Baseline: 4.2*</u> <u>15% Below Baseline Threshold: 3.6</u>



CEQA Impact Thresholds

Department of Transportation

METRIC	DESCRIPTION	Current Guidelines	Staff Recommendation
		IMPACT THRESHOLD	IMPACT THRESHOLD
Proximity and Quality of Bicycle Network	Percent of service population within a ¼ mile of bicycle facility types.	Any decrease in existing Citywide service population within a ¼ mile of Level 1 or 2 bike facilities. <u>CEQA Threshold: 31.7%</u>	Any decrease in baseline Citywide service population within a ¼ mile of Level 1 or 2 bike facilities. <u>2017 Baseline: 32.3%</u> <u>Recommended Threshold: 32.3%</u>
Proximity and Quality of Transit Network	Percent of service population located within a ¼ mile of transit facility types.	Any decrease in existing citywide service population within a ¼ mile of Level 1 or 2 transit facilities. <u>CEQA Threshold: 66.6%</u>	Any decrease in baseline citywide service population within a ¼ mile of Level 1 or 2 transit facilities. <u>2017 Baseline: 66.8%*</u> <u>Recommended Threshold: 66.8%</u>



CEQA Impact Thresholds

Department of Transportation

METRIC	DESCRIPTION	Current Guidelines	Staff Recommendation
		IMPACT THRESHOLD	IMPACT THRESHOLD
Pedestrian Accessibility	The Pedestrian Accessibility Score uses the mix of destinations and a network-based walk shed to evaluate walkability	Any decrease in the Citywide Pedestrian Accessibility Score <u>Current CEQA Threshold: 3.9</u>	Any decrease in the Citywide Pedestrian Accessibility Score <u>2017 Baseline: 3.9*</u> <u>Recommended Threshold: 3.9</u>



Travel Demand Model Update

Department of Transportation

- The current thresholds are based on the City's traffic conditions in year 2013 and must be updated to reflect conditions that are more current. The new model is based on the 2017 baseline year traffic conditions, and noticeable changes are due to the following:
 - > New land use development
 - > Changes to the transportation network
 - > Updated vehicular trip generation rates
 - > Changes to account for 100% rather than 50% of trips that have only one trip-end in Pasadena (originate in Pasadena with a destination outside the City, or destined to Pasadena with an origin outside the City)



Travel Demand Model Update

Department of Transportation

- The City's model captures and reflects local conditions using GPS data, traffic counts, parcel level land use, vehicular availability, and street network and travel time information.
- Travel data specific to the City is used in evaluating potential project transportation impacts.
- By using this model, transportation analyses more accurately reflect and capture potential impacts at the local level.



State CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- In response to the growing concern over the environment and a sense of urgency to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the State of California made a fundamental decision to move away from the traditional transportation evaluation metric of Level of Service (LOS).
- The California Air Resources Board (CARB) finds per capita vehicle travel would need to be kept below what today's policies and plans would achieve.
- OPR recommends that a per capita or per employee VMT that is 15% below that of existing development may be a reasonable threshold to achieve the state's goals.



CEQA Thresholds of Other Agencies

Department of Transportation

- Other agencies in California have stated, in their guidelines, that a project will have a potential impact if:
 - > the household VMT per capita exceeds 15% below the existing average household VMT per capita for residential projects,
 - > the work VMT per employee exceeds 15% below the existing average work VMT per employee for office projects,
 - > the project would result in a net increase in VMT for regional serving retail projects,
 - > For other land use types, VMT impacts are measured for the work trip element exceeding 15% below the existing average work VMT per employee, or evaluate each land use independently per the thresholds described above



CEQA Thresholds of Other Agencies

Department of Transportation

- Some agencies also support streamlining of projects in travel efficient locations and that improve access to destinations, livability, and community such as:
 - > Projects within a transit oriented priority area
 - > A project pre-screened to have low residential or office VMT
 - > Residential housing projects composed of 100% affordable housing located in any infill location



DOT Recommended CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- Staff recommends CEQA impact thresholds to be 15% below Citywide baseline average to evaluate VMT and VT per capita.
- Doing so may position the City to more aggressively reduce GHG emissions, develop multimodal transportation networks, and promote a diversity of land uses.
- A potential result of lower thresholds may be that some projects that would otherwise be in compliance with the adopted Land Use of the General Plan may be subject to additional environmental review processes.



Next Steps

Department of Transportation

- Present to the Planning Commission and the Municipal Services prior to presenting to City Council for consideration.
- A resolution will be prepared for Council approval prior to the CEQA Thresholds of Significance taking effect.
- At the direction of the City Council, staff will work with the Transportation Advisory Commission to update the administrative procedures for the Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines (Outside CEQA)
- The 2017 baseline and subsequent updates to the baseline will be included in DOT's Transportation Impact Analysis Current Practice and Guidelines found in the City's website.

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