

Update to CEQA Transportation Performance Thresholds of Significance

Planning Commission
September 9, 2020





Recommendation

Department of Transportation

- It is recommended that the Planning 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



CEQA Changes to Transportation Environmental Analyses

Department of Transportation

- SB 743 (Steinberg 2013) was signed into law
 - Directed Office of Planning and Research to amend California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines to provide an alternative to Level Of Service (LOS) for evaluating transportation impacts
 - The method must “promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses”
- SB 32 (Pavley 2016) further requires California to reduce gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.
- July 1, 2020- California lead agencies are required to use a Vehicle Miles Traveled in transportation analyses under CEQA



CEQA Changes to Environmental Analyses

Department of Transportation

- On November 3, 2014 City Council adopted a new set of transportation performance measures and thresholds to align with the goals listed in the General Plan
 - Prioritize the movement of people
 - Encourage sustainable transportation solutions, and
 - Support a mix of land uses that promote livable communities



General Plan Principle 5:

Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars

Objective 1: Enhance livability

Objective 2: Encourage walking, biking, transit and other alternative to motor vehicles

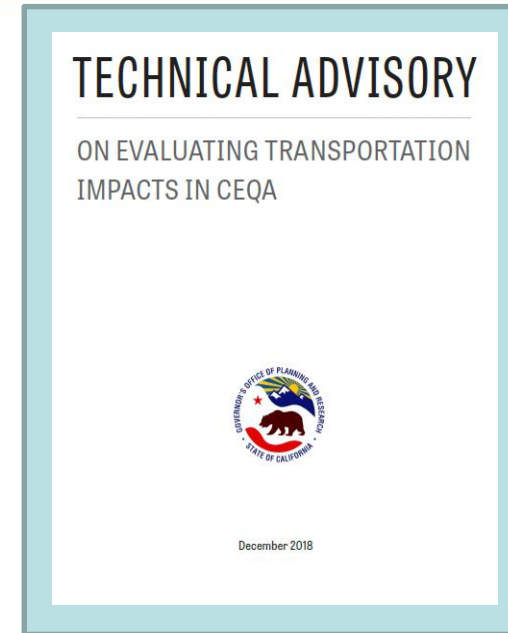
Objective 3: Create a supportive climate for economic viability



Recommendation

Department of Transportation

- **Recommended thresholds**
 - > More aggressively reduce GHG emissions
 - > Develop multimodal transportation networks
 - > Promote a diversity of land uses
 - > Consistent with the direction of City Council in 2014
 - > Proposed VMT and VT per capita thresholds are below existing levels
- May result in more projects subject to additional environmental review process





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>

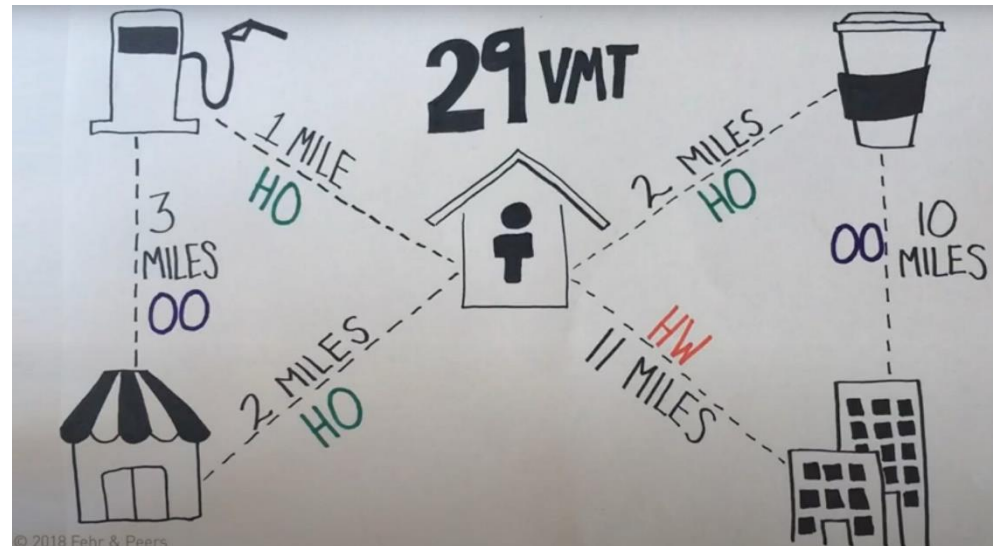
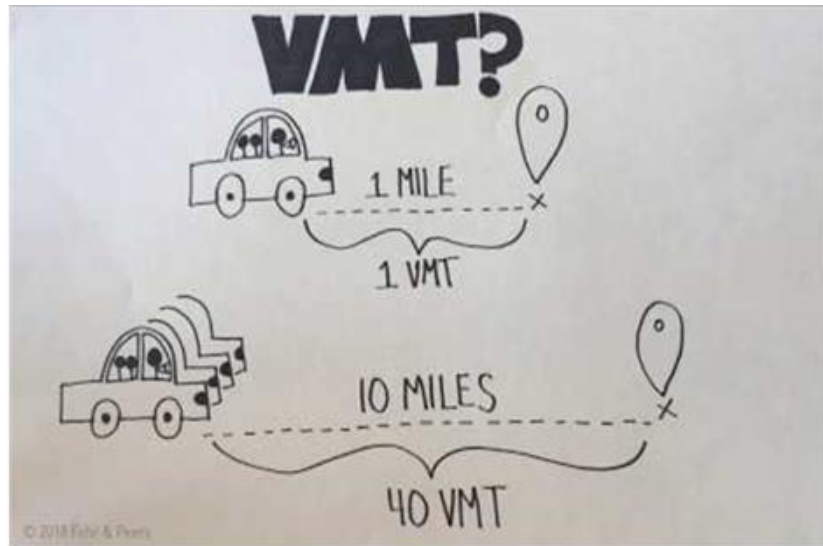


Vehicle Miles Traveled

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- **Vehicle Miles Traveled**

- > $VMT = (\# \text{ vehicles traveled on a link}) \times (\text{length of link})$
- > Assesses project impact on all modes of travel, including transit
- > VMT per capita is calculated using total population and employment



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State CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- By July 1, 2020 all California jurisdictions shall assess CEQA transportation impacts using VMT
- Automobile delay, as measured by Level of Service (LOS), no longer constitutes a significant environmental effect under CEQA
- The California Air Resources Board (CARB) finds per capita vehicle travel would need to be below existing levels (16.8% for light duty vehicles) to achieve State climate goals
- OPR recommends a per capita or per employee VMT 15% below existing development



CEQA Thresholds of Other Agencies

Department of Transportation

- In other California agencies, a project will have a potential impact if:
 - > Exceeds 15% below the existing average household VMT per capita for residential projects
 - > Exceeds 15% below the existing average work VMT per employee for office projects
 - > Net increase in VMT for regional serving retail projects
 - > Work trip element exceeding 15% below the existing average work VMT per employee



CEQA Thresholds of Other Agencies

Department of Transportation

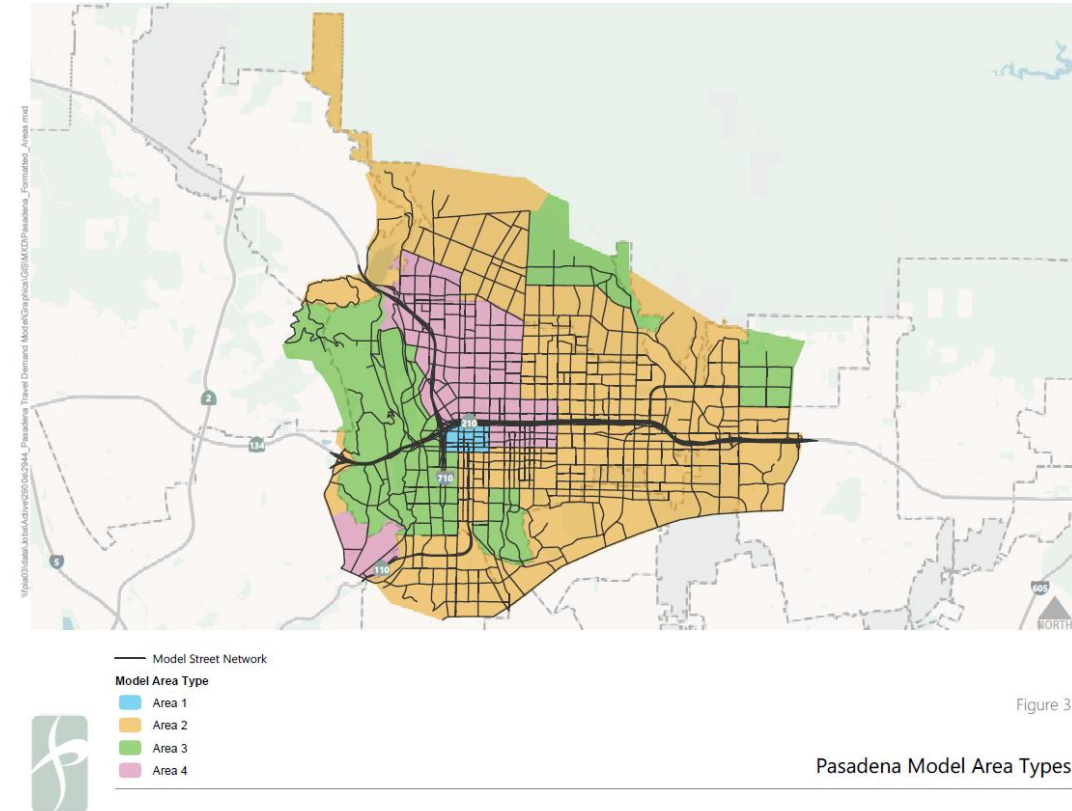
- Agencies also support streamlining of projects:
 - > Projects within a transit oriented priority area
 - > A project pre-screened to have low residential or office VMT
 - > Residential housing projects composed of 100% affordable housing located in any infill location



Travel Demand Model Update

Department of Transportation

- 2017 model updates
 - > New land use developments
 - > Changes to the transportation network
 - > Updated vehicular trip generation rates
 - > Local conditions specific to the City
 - GPS data
 - traffic counts
 - parcel level land use
 - vehicular availability
 - street network and travel time information





Travel Demand Model Update

Department of Transportation

- The 2013 Travel Demand Model assumed that the accountability of trips were equally shared (50-50) with other jurisdictions based on the trips' origin and destination
 - > Internal-Internal VMT includes 100% of VMT that begin and end within the City
 - > Internal-External VMT includes 50% of VMT originating in the City
 - > External-Internal VMT includes 50% of VMT destined to the City
 - > External-External VMT are not included. These trips are assumed to be assigned to other areas generating the trips.



Travel Demand Model Update

Department of Transportation

- OPR's 2018 Technical Advisory recommends that lead agencies not truncate VMT analyses at their boundaries
- The 2017 Travel Demand Model includes the entire trip regardless of where it began or ended, therefore estimating the full extent of travel
 - > Internal-Internal VMT includes 100% of VMT that begin and end within the City
 - > Internal-External VMT includes 100% of VMT originating in the City
 - > External-Internal VMT includes 100% of VMT destined to the City
 - > External-External VMT are not included. These trips are assumed to be assigned to other areas generating the trips.



Travel Demand Model Update

Department of Transportation

- 2017 model updates
 - Changes to account for 100% rather than 50% of VMT that have only one trip-end in Pasadena

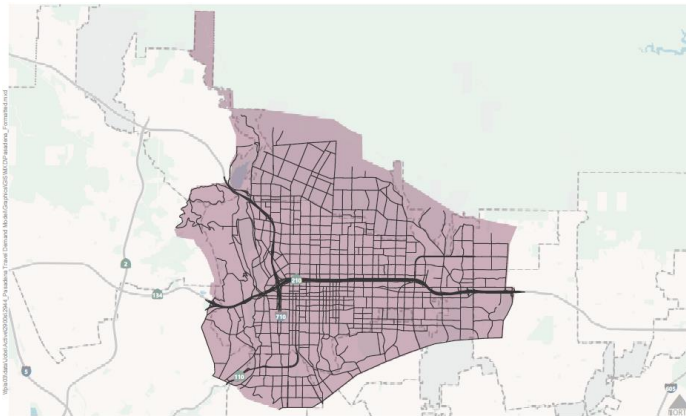


Figure 1
 Model Street Network
 Pasadena Model Area
 Pasadena Model Area and Street Network

2013 Origin-Destination Model Area

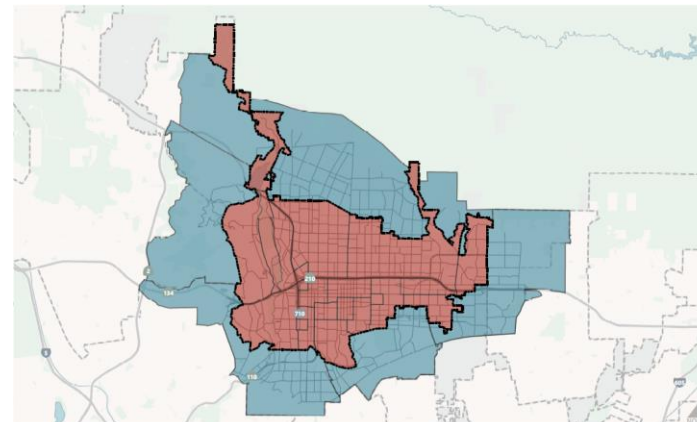


Figure 11
 Pasadena City Boundary
 Pasadena Streetlight Zones (22 zones)
 Buffer Streetlight Zones (7 zones)
 Regional Zones that extend across LA County were also included but are not depicted here
 Streetlight Zones

2017 Origin-Destination Model Area*

* Regional Zones that extend across LA County were also included but are not depicted in this image



2013 vs 2017 Model Results Comparison

Department of Transportation

- **Project 1:**
 - > Industrial District
 - > Transit Oriented District
 - > Construct approximately 600 units and 10,000 sf commercial
- **Project 2:**
 - > Central Business District
 - > Transit Oriented District
 - > Construct approximately 70 units and 5,000 sf commercial



2013 vs 2017 Model Results Comparison

Department of Transportation

	2013 Baseline			2017 Baseline			2017 15% below Baseline		
	VMT/Cap			VMT/Cap			VMT/Cap		
	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% Threshold	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Baseline	% Threshold	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold (15% below 35.6)	% Threshold
Project 1	20	22.6	-12%	32	35.6	-10%	32	30.3	6%
Project 2	16	22.6	-29%	27	35.6	-24%	27	30.3	-11%
	VT/Cap			VT/Cap			VT/Cap		
	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% Threshold	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Baseline	% Threshold	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold (15% below 4.2)	% Threshold
Project 1	3.5	2.8	25%	4.4	4.2	5%	4.4	3.6	23%
Project 2	2.5	2.8	-11%	3.5	4.2	-17%	3.5	3.6	-2%



DOT Recommended CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- CEQA impact thresholds to be 15% below Citywide baseline average for VMT and VT per capita
- Promotes:
 - > More aggressive reductions in GHG emissions
 - > Development of multimodal transportation networks
 - > Diversity of land uses
 - > Aligns with General Plan Principle
- May result in more projects subject to additional environmental review



DOT Recommended CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- DOT is not recommending streamlined evaluation processes for:
 - > projects within a transit oriented priority area
 - > projects pre-screened to have low residential or office VMT
 - > residential housing projects composed of 100% affordable housing located in any infill location
- Every project of communitywide significance is evaluated to document and mitigate any potential transportation impacts associated with such potential projects



Next Steps

Department of Transportation

- **Municipal Services Committee**
- **City Council**
 - > Adopt a Resolution for new CEQA Thresholds
- **Outside CEQA Analysis**
 - > Work with Transportation Advisory Commission
 - > Update the administrative procedures for Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines



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