

# Update to CEQA Transportation Performance Thresholds of Significance

Planning Commission  
October 14, 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 updating the CEQA baseline from 2013 to 2017
- Staff recommends CEQA impact thresholds to be 15% below Citywide baseline average to evaluate VMT and VT per capita



# 2013 CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

## Vehicle Miles Traveled

**Baseline: 22.6**

An increase over existing Citywide VMT per Capita

## Vehicle Trips

**Baseline: 2.8**

An increase over existing Citywide VT per Capita

## Proximity and Quality of Bicycle Network

**Baseline: 31.7%**

A decrease in Citywide service population within a 1/4 mile

## Proximity and Quality of Transit Network

**Baseline: 66.6%**

A decrease in Citywide service population within a 1/4 mile

## Pedestrian Accessibility

**Baseline: 3.9**

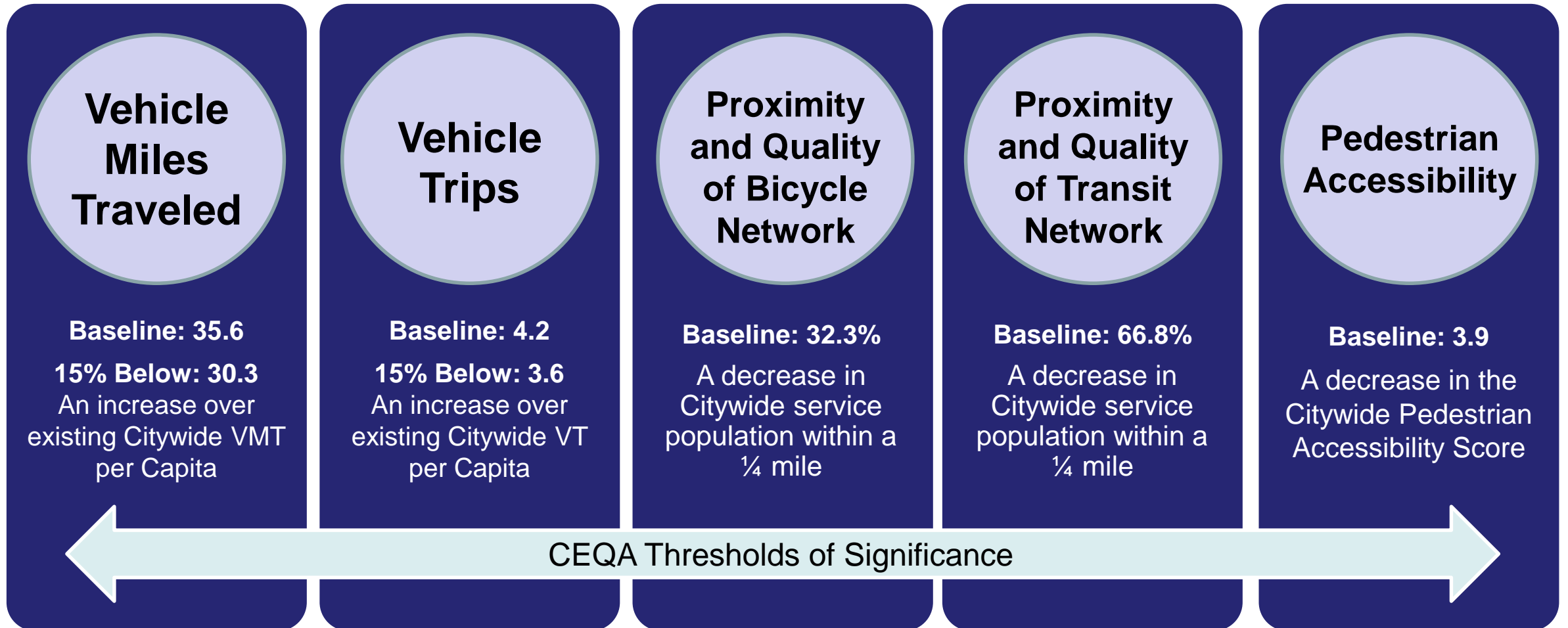
A decrease in the Citywide Pedestrian Accessibility Score

CEQA Thresholds of Significance



# Recommended 2017 CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation



CEQA Thresholds of Significance



# Changes In 2017 Threshold Update

Department of Transportation

- 2017 Baseline reflects changes within the city land use and transportation patterns since 2013
  - > Changes in land uses
    - New developments
    - Parcel level land use information
  - > Changes to the transportation network
    - New infrastructure
    - Traffic counts
    - GPS data
    - Travel time information
    - Street network changes
- Account for 100% rather than 50% of trips that have one trip-end in Pasadena
- Reflects a 15% below baseline established as the threshold of significance



# September 9, 2020 Planning Commission

Department of Transportation

- At the September 9, 2020 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission voted to approve the following motion:
  - > We recommend to the City Council that there is a need for more information and analysis of:
    - The bike network
    - Transit access and usage
    - Other methodologies from comparable cities
    - Impact on development of a threshold that is 20% below baseline
    - Mitigation measures and how they reduce neighborhood impact
    - How the City's Level of Service (LOS) analysis interacts with CEQA analyses



## **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**

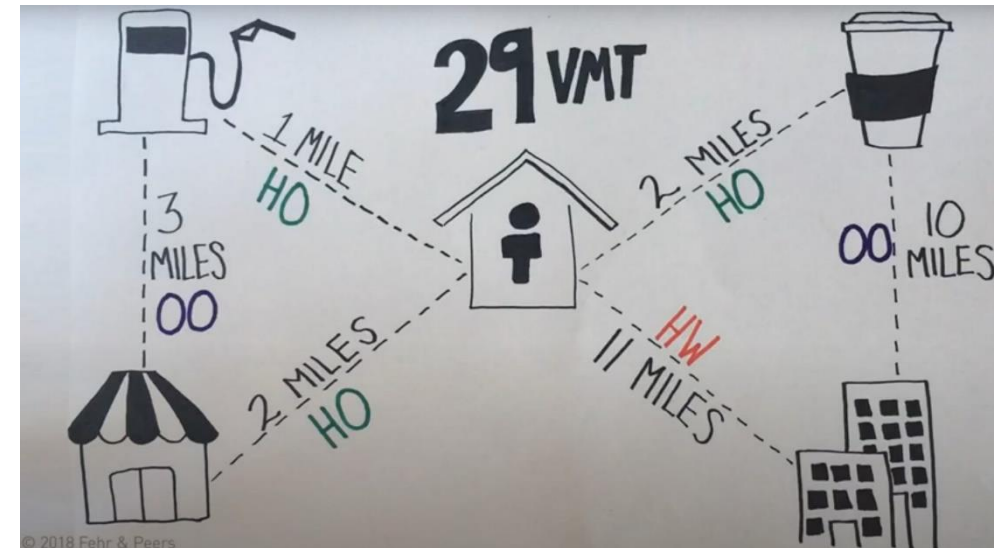
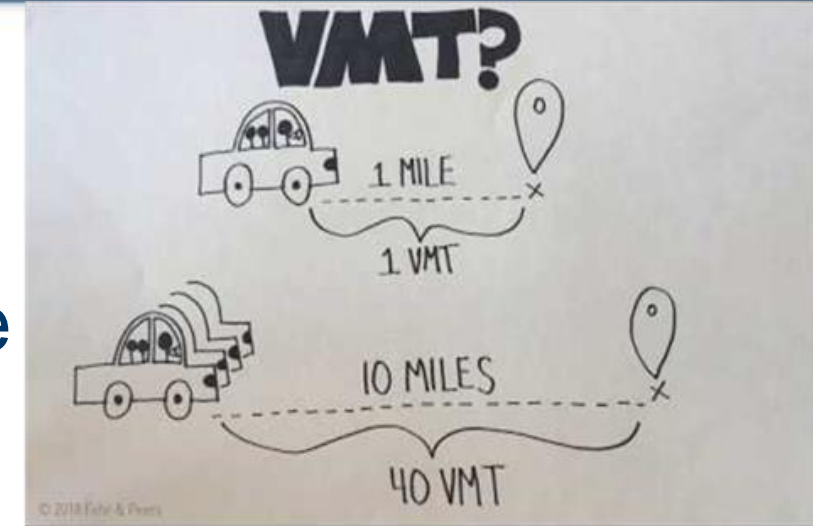




# How VMT Promotes Reduced Travel

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- Density mix population and employment
- Diversity of land uses that promote balance
- Design that promotes walkable streets
- Destination accessibility
- Distance to transit







# Analysis and Plans

Department of Transportation

## CEQA

- Prioritizes reduction of GHG emissions and multi-modal transportation solutions
- Analysis applied to projects with 50+ residential units or 50,000 sq. feet
- Applies five transportation analysis metrics
- Mitigations are identified for thresholds that are triggered

## Outside CEQA

- Prioritizes neighborhood protection measures and street network deficiencies
- Analysis applied to projects with 11-49 residential units or 10,001-49,999 sq feet
- Applies four analysis metrics
- Conditions are identified for caps that are exceeded

## Traffic Reduction-Traffic Impact Fee

- Fees apply to all new net square feet or dwelling units
- Help fund new transportation infrastructure to support General Plan build out
- Fee amounts and eligible projects were identified via a Nexus Study

## Bicycle Transportation Action Plan

- Identifies bike related goals, strategies, programs and projects to improve bicycle network, enhance bicyclist safety and encourage bicycling as a mode
- Plan identifies a network of bikeways with the end goal of providing every neighborhood a bicycling route within ¼ mile

## Short Range Transit Plan

- Guides the next 5 years of programming of transit service development
- Recommendations include service expansion, increased frequencies, and technology enhancements



# Outside CEQA Analysis

Department of Transportation

- Analysis applied to all projects with 11-49 residential units or 10,001-49,999 sq feet
- Applies four analysis metrics that measure traffic impacts
  - > Street Segment Analysis → Analyzes traffic intrusion on local streets in residential neighborhoods
  - > Auto Level of Service → Analyzes traffic delay and impacts
  - > Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index
  - > Bicycle Environmental Quality Index
- Conditions are aimed at protecting neighborhood character and reducing traffic intrusion and impacts



# Outside CEQA Analysis & CEQA Analysis

Department of Transportation

- Outside CEQA evaluates intersection performance, vehicle delay and vehicular travel
- CEQA evaluates accessibility to destinations, use of alternative modes of travel, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Outside CEQA conditions focus on vehicular movement
- CEQA mitigations focus on reducing vehicular travel and encouraging transit and non-motorized forms of travel



# The Bike Network

Department of Transportation

- **CEQA**
  - > To support the development of multimodal transportation networks, the City's Proximity and Quality of Bicycle Network\_threshold provides a percentage of the City's service population (population plus jobs) within 1/4 mile of each of three bicycle facility types.
  - > Any decrease in the metric requires that mitigations be identified to improve the network
  - > Mitigations may include bicycle amenities, closing gaps in the bike network, etc.
- **TR-TIF**
  - > Fair share of funds for the construction and/or improvement of bicycle infrastructure
- **Bicycle Transportation Action Plan**
  - > Provides a five-year plan to be implemented as funding becomes available
  - > Informs the types of mitigations that could be identified
  - > Identifies programs and projects to be funded by the TR-TIF



# Transit Access and Usage

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- **CEQA**

- > To support the development of multimodal transportation networks, the City's Proximity and Quality of Transit Network threshold provides a percentage of the City's service population (population plus jobs) within 1/4 mile of each of three transit facility types
- > Any decrease in the metric requires that steps be taken to improve the network
- > Mitigations may include increasing frequency of service, re-routing or expanding routes, etc.

- **TR-TIF**

- > Fair share of funds for capital cost of transit related investments

- **Short Range Transit Plan**

- > Provides a five year plan of programming of transit service development to be implemented as funding becomes available
- > Informs the types of mitigations that could be identified
- > Informs capital investments that could be funded by the TR-TIF

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# Other Methodologies from Comparable Cities

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- Agencies can opt to have efficiency metrics that are unique to their jurisdiction
  - > Thresholds of significance will vary from city to city
- Other agencies can base their thresholds on the dominant use in mixed-use projects
- Some agencies provide for streamlining of projects



# Other Methodologies from Comparable Cities

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- The following table describes three efficiency metrics used by California agencies:

Efficiency metric	Description
Home-based VMT per resident	Evaluates how close households are to destinations and transportation options  Considers only the VMT generated by residents making trips to and from home, and may omit other trip types
Home-based work VMT per employee	Evaluates how close a workplace is to places where employees live  Compares employment-based project trips, and may omit other trip types
Total project-generated VMT per service population*	Evaluates how VMT intensive the project is as a whole  This metric provides a comprehensive understanding by considering total VMT to and from a project or zone and divides it by the total service population. Retail, commercial, and employment based uses generate more total VMT than non-employment uses.





# Variability in CEQA Thresholds Between Agencies

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- Local data is specific to the study area or jurisdiction
  - > Population, city size
  - > Land use patterns, mix and density
  - > Street network, multi-modal infrastructure, transit
- The model is dependent on the population representation, variability of the trip generation rate, trip length, trip distribution patterns, travel mode shifts, and origin-destination pairs
- Small district areas will limit the amount of data points collected, leading to variability in data, and could lead to a less accurate analysis of a project's potential impacts



# San Gabriel Valley Region Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- San Gabriel Valley thresholds reflect local land use and transportation network conditions

	2016 Baseline Year VMT		
	Residential	Employment	Total VMT
	VMT/ capita	VMT/ employment	VMT/ service population
SCAG	15.02	19	34.24
SGVCOG	16.21	20.84	36.12
Northwest SGVCOG	16.29	21.01	37.02
Arcadia	15.4	19.55	36.42
La Canada Flintridge	19.39	23.91	43.8
Monrovia	15.6	21.7	34.27
San Marino	14.57	19.57	29.42



# City of Los Angeles VMT Model

Department of Transportation

- City of Los Angeles
  - > 500 sq miles; 4 million population; 2 million jobs
- Developed local thresholds with a per capita and per employee efficiency metric per Area Planning Commission
- Project land uses evaluated:
  - Housing
  - Retail
  - Office
  - Industrial
  - School

Area Planning Commission	VMT per capita	VMT per employee
Central	6.0	7.6
East LA	7.2	12.7
Harbor	9.2	12.3
North Valley	9.2	15.0
South LA	6.0	11.6
South Valley	9.4	11.6
West LA	7.4	11.1

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# 2013 Threshold of Significance

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- Any project that triggers a threshold of significance is subject to mitigations aimed at eliminating or reducing the potential impact
- 25 projects were evaluated using the City's 2013 thresholds
  - > Zero projects triggered the VMT Threshold
  - > Three projects triggered the VT Threshold
  - > One project has triggered the Bicycle Network Quality and Proximity metric
  - > Zero projects triggered the Transit Network Quality and Proximity metric
  - > Zero projects triggered the Pedestrian Accessibility metric



# VMT Stricter Threshold Results

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VMT/capita				
Project VMT/cap	Existing (2013) Threshold	15% Threshold reduction	20% Threshold reduction	25% Threshold reduction
	(22.6)	(19.2)	(18.1)	(17.0)
# projects exceeding thresholds	0	1	2	4
% projects exceeding thresholds	0%	4%	8%	16%



# VT Stricter Threshold Results

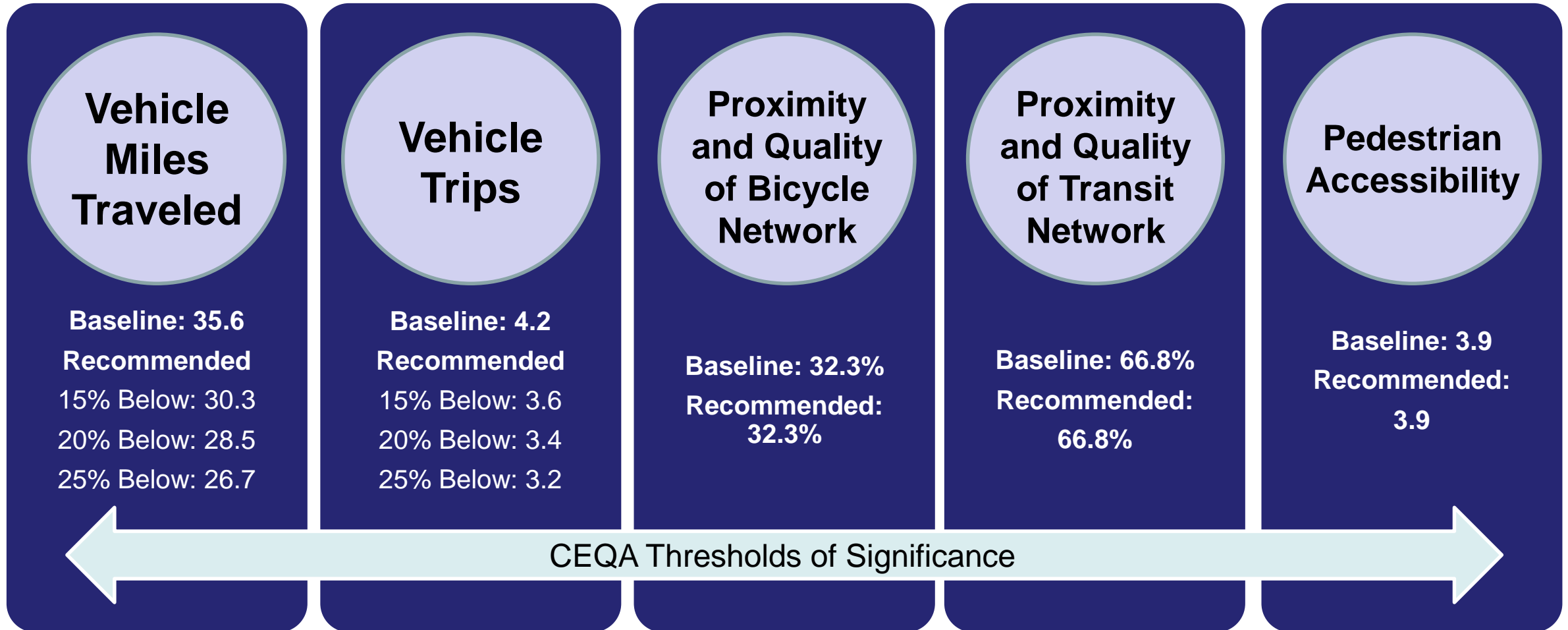
Department of Transportation

VT/capita				
Project VT/cap	Existing (2013) Threshold	15% Threshold reduction	20% Threshold reduction	25% Threshold reduction
	(2.8)	(2.4)	(2.2)	(2.1)
# projects exceeding thresholds	3	7	8	14
% projects exceeding thresholds	12%	28%	32%	56%



# 2017 CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation



CEQA Thresholds of Significance





# Recommended CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- Staff recommends updating the baseline to 2017
- Staff recommends a VMT per service population and VT per service population impact threshold 15% below the Citywide baseline average
  - > Lower thresholds will allow the City to make greater progress toward the state's GHG reduction targets
- Planning Commission may recommend a threshold of significance stricter than 15%
  - > More aggressive path to reducing GHG emissions
  - > May subject more projects to additional environmental review processes



# 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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