

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-XX**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
ADOPTING A POLICY IMPLEMENTING CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 743 (SB 743)  
REGARDING TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS UNDER THE  
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

**WHEREAS**, staff proposed new City policies implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to comply with Senate Bill 743 (SB 743) related to transitioning from use of Level of Service (LOS) to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in evaluating project transportation impacts, more particularly identified in Attachment A; and

**WHEREAS**, under SB 743, transportation metrics based on automobile delay, typically measured in terms of LOS, may no longer be used to establish significance of transportation impacts under CEQA; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has recommended using VMT to analyze transportation impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has analyzed and drafted an appropriate VMT threshold of significance, considering local conditions and guidance from OPR; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has worked with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) as the County's Congestion Management Agency to establish baseline (existing) VMT reference averages for Los Altos, Santa Clara County, and the Nine-County Bay Area Region; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council held a public hearing on [day of week], September X, 2021 on proposed City policies implementing CEQA pursuant to SB 743;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Los Altos hereby approves policies to comply with SB 743 related to transitioning from use of LOS to VMT in CEQA transportation analysis, more particularly identified in Attachment A.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos at a meeting thereof on the XXth day of September, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:  
PRESENT:

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Janis C Pepper, MAYOR

Attest:

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Andrea Chelemengos, MMC, CITY CLERK



### **CEQA Project Screening Criteria**

Projects shall be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact if they meet any of the following screening criteria:

- **Small Project Screening:** Any development that would generate fewer than 50 daily vehicle trips shall be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact.
- **Map-Based Screening:** Residential and employment land use projects located in areas of low VMT, defined as exhibiting VMT that is 15 percent or greater below the existing citywide average VMT, shall be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact. Citywide average VMT per capita or per employee baseline values are obtained from VTA and may be amended periodically to reflect the best available data and most relevant base year.
- **Local-Serving Retail Screening:** Retail commercial projects comprised of stores of up to 60,000 gross square feet shall be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact.
- **Local-Serving Public Facilities Screening:** Local-serving public facilities (publicly owned or controlled) shall be presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact. For schools, only public neighborhood elementary schools shall be presumed to be a local-serving use and satisfy this screening criterion. Other examples of projects that may be screened out by this criterion include a branch library, community or senior center, and a fire station.
- **Affordable Housing Screening:** Projects with 100 percent affordable housing shall be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact on VMT.
- **Screening based on Existing Use:** Redevelopment projects that replace existing VMT-generating uses and result in a net decrease in total VMT shall be presumed to cause a less than significant impact. For redevelopment projects that result in a net increase in total VMT, the screening criteria for each land use will be based on the size of the proposed development without any credit for the existing use.
- **Transportation Project Screening:** Transportation projects that reduce or do not increase VMT shall be presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact. Examples include transportation projects that enhance pedestrian, bike, or transit infrastructure, and transportation projects that maintain current infrastructure, without adding new automobile capacity.



### **CEQA Thresholds of Significance**

For projects not screened out with a presumption of less-than-significant impact on VMT based upon the above criteria, the following thresholds of significance shall apply to the corresponding project types to determine the transportation impact level of significance:

- **Residential Land Use Projects:** A proposed project exceeding a level of 15 percent below existing Los Altos citywide average VMT per capita shall be presumed to cause a significant transportation impact.
- **Office and Retail Land Use Projects:** A proposed project exceeding a level of 15 percent below existing Los Altos citywide average VMT per employee shall be presumed to cause a significant transportation impact.
- **Mixed-Use and all other Project Types:** Each land use within a mixed-use project, and all other project types, shall be evaluated independently by applying the most appropriate threshold of significance from above to each land use type included in the project, given project-specific information.
- **Changing or Adding to Existing Use:** Changes of use or additions to existing development that are not screened out will be analyzed based on the significance thresholds for each land use component described above.
- **Land Use Plans:** For General Plan Amendments, Specific Plans or Other Area Plans, each land use component will be analyzed independently, applying the significance thresholds listed above for each land use component.
- **Transportation Projects:** A net increase in VMT greater than that consistent with the Regional Sustainable Communities Strategy shall be presumed to cause a significant transportation impact.

### **Mitigation of Significant Impacts**

Projects that have a significant impact on VMT must either modify the project description to reduce the impact or implement feasible mitigation measures which will avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects. Mitigation measures may include multimodal transportation improvements or travel demand management (TDM) measures to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips.

### **Applicability of Policy (Pipeline Provisions)**

The policy contained herein is effective immediately following approval by the City Council (“Effective Date”) and shall apply to projects under the following provisions:

- Active projects with a draft environmental document circulated prior to July 1, 2020 may proceed with analyzing transportation impacts under the previous City policy, with use of automobile delay-based metrics and thresholds of significance,



- Active projects without a published draft environmental review document as of July 1 shall conduct transportation impact analyses pursuant to this policy using the VMT metrics and thresholds of significance contained herein.

### **Local Transportation Analysis**

All projects, including those screened out from being subject to a detailed CEQA VMT analysis, will be required to prepare a Local Transportation Analysis (LTA) to demonstrate conformance with multimodal transportation system strategies, goals, and policies in the General Plan and address adverse effects to the transportation system. The elements required in the LTA are set forth in a series of Transportation Checklists and vary based on the proposed use and project size.

This policy sets forth VMT as a new metric to evaluate potential impacts on the transportation network under CEQA that supersedes the significance criteria based on level of service (LOS) set forth in General Plan Implementation Action C8, Project Review. Notwithstanding the use of VMT as the new transportation performance metric, the City will require proposed development projects to implement improvements designed to meet the LOS D standard where such improvements would not conflict with the City's multimodal transportation system policies or negatively impact VMT.