



HEXAGON TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS, INC.

Memorandum

Date: August 6, 2021
To: Ms. Marisa Lee, City of Los Altos Transportation Services Manager
From: Michelle Hunt
Subject: Guide to Transportation Checklists for New Developments

Introduction

The City of Los Altos has developed a series of checklists that are intended to set forth the transportation requirements for new developments. The checklists cover the following topics:

- Vehicle miles traveled screening criteria for CEQA,
- Basic transportation analysis elements,
- Intersection control and level of service analysis requirements,
- Operational study elements,
- Required off-site improvements, and
- Transportation Demand Management Plan requirements

Los Altos' City Council adoption of these checklists will establish clear expectations and procedures for project applicants, with the goals of promoting ease of use and achieving high-quality development.

Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a new metric used to assess a project's environmental impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). VMT measures the amount of daily vehicle trip making and trip length across the entire system and is usually expressed per person. A reduction in VMT would promote state and local goals related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses and infill development that reduces the reliance on individual vehicles.

Projects shall be presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact and not required to conduct a VMT analysis if they would generate fewer than 110 daily vehicle trips. The checklist indicates the development sizes for each land use that can be exempted from a VMT analysis under this small project screening criteria. Applicants should refer to the City's VMT Policy for additional screening criteria that may exempt a project from a VMT analysis (e.g. map-based, local-serving retail, local-serving public facilities, affordable housing, and existing use screening).

Basic Transportation Analysis Elements

The City of Los Altos has defined the following four types of Transportation Analysis (TA) reports:

- **Summary TA** – required for very small projects not subject to a VMT analysis and not expected to substantially affect intersection operations. Limited scope includes a description of project trips, parking requirements, and project access for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- **Focused TA** – required for small projects that could cause a significant impact on VMT and substantially affect the operation of intersections within close proximity of the project site. Scope includes all the elements in a Summary TA report, plus a VMT analysis, an evaluation of study intersections within 0.5 miles, and certain operational study elements. Study scenarios limited to existing conditions with and without the project.
- **Standard TA** – required for medium-size projects that could cause a significant impact on VMT and affect intersections farther from the project. Scope is similar to a Focused TA report with a larger study area (up to 1 mile), additional study scenarios to evaluate near-term conditions with and without the project, and additional operational study elements.
- **Expanded TA** – required for large projects that could cause a significant impact on VMT and substantially affect traffic patterns and congestion far from the project site. Scope is the same as a Standard TA except for a larger study area (more than 1 mile) and additional study scenarios to evaluate future (Year 2040) traffic conditions with and without the project.

While the scope of each type of TA report will vary depending upon the size of the development, all TA reports will be required to include the following basic elements:

- **Trip Generation** – estimate the net vehicle trips generated by the proposed development using published trip rates or data obtained from local surveys at comparable uses. Unless stated otherwise, project trip generation estimates will quantify daily trips as well as trips during the AM and PM peak commute hours (one-hour period between 7-9 AM and 4-6 PM).
- **Project Trip Assignment** – the project trip estimates will be assigned to the roadway network based on existing travel patterns, information regarding the geographic service area of the proposed use, and/or trip distribution data developed using the Bi-County Travel Demand Forecast Model.
- **Parking Summary** – Quantify the proposed parking supply on site versus the parking required according to the City's Zoning Code (and State Bonus Density Law, if applicable), including any exceptions allowed by the Code.

Intersection Control and Level of Service Analysis

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of transportation performance at a specific location that is based on traffic congestion and the ability to maneuver. Intersections LOS is measured based on the average delay experienced by motorists during peak hour traffic and is defined using a grading scale from LOS A, which represents free flow conditions with minimal delay to LOS F, where the vehicle demand exceeds roadway capacity and excessive delays are the result.

While CEQA documents will no longer use LOS to identify significant impacts, SB 743 does not preclude cities from using LOS as a planning metric in their General Plan. The City of Los Altos will continue to require transportation analyses of a project's consistency with the City's adopted LOS goals and will require transportation improvements intended to address LOS deficiencies through project conditions of approval. Furthermore, the City may require the TA report to include an analysis of intersection control options at key unsignalized intersections in the vicinity of the project.

The checklist identifies the selection criteria used to determine the signalized and unsignalized study intersections. Unless stated otherwise, intersection level of service analyses will be

conducted for the AM and PM peak commute hours (one-hour period between 7-9 AM and 4-6 PM). The study scenarios to be analyzed will vary depending upon the TA type. As indicated on the checklist, a Summary TA Report will not be required to evaluate intersection control or LOS while the largest development projects will be required to complete an Expanded TA Report that evaluates the operation of study intersections under the following scenarios:

- Existing
- Existing plus Project
- Near-Term
- Near-Term plus Project
- Future 2040
- Future 2040 plus Project

Operational Study Elements

In addition to an analysis of VMT and LOS, the City of Los Altos will require TA Reports to analyze other operational issues related to transportation. The required operational study elements will vary depending upon the TA type, the land use, and the development size. The smallest projects will be required to prepare a Summary TA Report that evaluates the following elements:

- Site Access,
- On-site Circulation,
- Pedestrian Site Access, and
- Bicycle Site Access.

Other operational study elements that may be required in Focused, Standard and Expanded TA reports include the following elements:

- Transit Connectivity
- School Walkability
- School Bikability
- On-Street Parking Occupancy Study
- Left / Right-Turn Queue Analysis
- Neighborhood Traffic Intrusion Analysis

Note that residential developments that qualify for streamlining under California Senate Bill (SB) 35 will be required to evaluate site access and on-site circulation per the City of Los Altos Parking Standards Exhibit A... but will not be required to conduct any other operational study elements.

Required Off-Site Improvements

All new development projects will be required to implement certain off-site improvements to ensure the transportation system meets the needs of all Los Altos residents and workers. The following improvements will be required along the project frontage regardless of the land use or project size:

- Sidewalk, curb, and gutter replacement
- Landscaping and streetlighting
- Curb ramps and crosswalks

In addition, as indicated on the checklists, developments above certain size thresholds will also be required to complete a microsurface along the full width of the street along the project frontage.

Furthermore, projects above specific size thresholds will be required to implement the following off-site improvements beyond the project frontage:

- Curb ramps and crosswalks where missing/substandard per the Los Altos *Complete Streets Master Plan*
- Sidewalk gap closure to nearest transit stop and commercial/civic/institutional uses
- Other improvements for bike/pedestrian access identified in the City of Los Altos *Complete Streets Master Plan*

The extent of these route-serving improvements will vary with the project size as indicated on the checklist.

TDM Plan Requirements

Los Altos' Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program, outlined in this document, is intended to help address the transportation-related impacts of new development by requiring projects to provide features and amenities that will foster a better pedestrian/bicycle environment, support transit, and make it easier and more appealing for residents, employees, and visitors to use alternatives to driving or driving alone. Satisfaction of Los Altos' TDM requirements will be based on the point system, which will help provide certainty for project applicants. The recommended point-based system provides an easily understood and flexible approach to evaluating project-level TDM compliance. New projects above specified size thresholds listed on the checklists are required to earn a minimum total number of points, with TDM measures assigned values based on estimated VMT reduction. As shown in the checklists, the required number of points varies by project size and land use. Los Altos' menu of TDM measure options was developed based on a combination of proven effectiveness, regional best practices, input from city staff, and local conditions in Los Altos. The number of points associated with each measure is enumerated on the checklists.

Compliance and Monitoring

For projects subject to a minimum TDM point requirement, initial compliance with the TDM program shall be demonstrated through completion of a TDM Plan Report, which will be reviewed and approved by city staff.

For projects subject to Annual Monitoring, project owners or operators shall provide City staff with an Annual Monitoring Report that confirms conformance with the TDM Point requirement as well as TDM program data, such as decreases in the number of auto trips, reduced VMT, and/or percentage of employees and/or residents using non-automobile commute options. Compliance shall be demonstrated through completion and DPW approval of an Annual Monitoring Report. If a project is found to be out of compliance with its TDM measures, and/or that TDM measures do not perform sufficiently to warrant assignment of available points as determined by the DPW, the City may require project owners/operators to revise those TDM measures or implement substitute measures. While TDM Annual Monitoring Reports will not be required to demonstrate a minimum trip reduction or maximum SOV mode share has been achieved, the monitoring data will be used by the City to assess the overall effectiveness of the TDM Program and to determine if/when modifications to the Program are warranted.

Mixed-Use Projects

Development projects that feature a mix of uses must incorporate TDM measures that are appropriate and sufficient for each proposed type of use. Applicants must ensure that they correctly apply proposed TDM measures to planned uses and claim points for such measures appropriately. Some TDM measures, such as community complete streets improvements, are applicable to multiple uses and may be counted toward the TDM point targets for multiple uses within a proposed project. Other TDM measures are only applicable to certain uses. For example, shower/locker facilities for cyclists are a TDM measure that is only applicable to non-residential uses. Additionally, if such an amenity exclusively serves a single component of a mixed-use project (e.g., the proposed office space) it may only be counted toward the TDM point target for that use component. However, facilities, programs, or other amenities that serve multiple planned uses (e.g., a shuttle service accessible to residents, retail workers, and office staff) may be counted toward the TDM point total for every use that they serve