

**CITY OF CARSON**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**RESOLUTION NO. 22-2844**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF  
THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING  
THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT “VEHICLE MILES  
TRAVELED” THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR  
PURPOSES OF ANALYZING TRANSPORTATION  
IMPACTS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY ACT (CEQA) AND FIND THAT THE ACTION IS  
EXEMPT FROM CEQA**

**WHEREAS**, the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (“CEQA Guidelines”) encourage public agencies to develop and publish generally applicable “thresholds of significance” to be used in determining the significance of a project’s environmental effects; and

**WHEREAS**, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7(a) defines a threshold of significance as “an identifiable quantitative, qualitative or performance level of a particular environmental effect, noncompliance with which means the effect will normally be determined to be significant by the agency and compliance with which means the effect normally will be determined to be less than significant”; and

**WHEREAS**, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7(b) provides that thresholds of significance to be adopted for general use as part of the lead agency’s environmental review process must be adopted by ordinance, resolution, rule, or regulations, developed through a public review process, and be supported by substantial evidence; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7(c), when adopting thresholds of significance, a lead agency may consider thresholds of significance adopted or recommended by other public agencies provided that the decision of the lead agency to adopt such thresholds is supported by substantial evidence; and

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 743, enacted in 2013 and codified in Public Resources Code section 21099, required changes to the CEQA Guidelines regarding the criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (“OPR”) proposed, and the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted, new CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 that identifies vehicle miles traveled (“VMT”) – meaning the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project – as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project’s transportation impacts under CEQA. CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 went into effect on July 1, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result, automobile delay, as measured by “level of service” and other similar metrics, generally no longer constitutes a significant environmental effect under CEQA; and

**WHEREAS**, on October 11, 2022, the Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing to consider the proposed VMT thresholds of significance attached hereto as Exhibit “A.”

**WHEREAS**, having done so, the Planning Commission finds that proposed VMT thresholds of significance, are supported by substantial evidence. The proposed thresholds are consistent with OPR guidance. The process utilized the SCAG model, reflecting City baseline land use and transportation network to develop the VMT thresholds. This was largely completed through technical analysis using the model and spreadsheets and translated into transportation study guidelines; and

**WHEREAS**, the City’s project review process will retain “level of service” analysis to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.** The foregoing recitals are true and correct, and are incorporated herein as findings of fact.

**Section 2.** The adoption of new local CEQA VMT thresholds of significance for transportation impacts will not have a significant environmental impact and is exempt from the CEQA pursuant to Section 15308 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations because the action is undertaken by the City for the protection of the environment. The revised CEQA thresholds will be compliant with State law (SB 743) and will be used in a regulatory process (CEQA process) that involves procedures for the protection of the environment. Accordingly, the action is exempt from the environmental review requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15308 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

**Section 3.** The Planning Commission of the City of Carson hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the VMT thresholds of significance attached hereto as Exhibit “A.”

**Section 4.** This decision of the Planning Commission shall become effective and final 15 days from the date of the action, in accordance with Section 9173.33 of the Zoning Ordinance, unless an appeal is filed within that time in accordance with Section 9173.4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Section 5.** The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution.

**APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 11th day of October 2022.

*Chris Palmer - Covid Signature*  
**ACTING CHAIRPERSON**

**ATTEST:**

*Maria A. Gonzalez*  
**SECRETARY**

**EXHIBIT “A”**

**City of Carson VMT Baselines and Thresholds of Significance**

**[to be attached]**

**EXHIBIT A**  
**City of Carson VMT Baselines and Thresholds of Significance**

Consistent with State CEQA guidelines section 15064.3, the City of Carson has adopted the project baselines and thresholds of significance set forth in Table 1 below to guide in determining when a project will have a significant transportation impact.

**Table 1**

<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Thresholds</b>
Land Use Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Project Impact: A significant impact would occur if the VMT rate for the plan would exceed 15 percent below the applicable baseline VMT rate.</li><li>2) Cumulative Project Effect: A significant impact would occur if the project increases total regional VMT compared to cumulative no project conditions.</li></ol>
Land Use Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Project Impact: A significant impact would occur if the VMT rate for the project would exceed 15 percent below the applicable baseline VMT rate.</li><li>2) Cumulative Project Effect: A significant impact would occur if the project increases total regional VMT compared to cumulative no project conditions.</li></ol>
Retail Project (over 50,000 square feet)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Project Impact: A significant impact would occur if the VMT rate for the project would exceed 15 percent below the applicable baseline VMT.</li><li>2) Cumulative Project Effect: A significant impact would occur if the project increases total VMT in the study area compared to baseline conditions.</li></ol>
Transportation Project	A significant impact would occur if the project causes a net increase in total regional VMT compared to baseline conditions, opening year no project conditions, or cumulative no project conditions.
All land use and transportation projects	A significant impact would occur if the project is inconsistent with the RTP/SCS.

Notes: 1) Baseline VMT rate is defined as the City of Carson per applicable service population.  
2) Baseline may be changed pending updates to the SCAG RTP model