

# Update to CEQA Transportation Performance Thresholds of Significance

City Council  
November 16, 2020





# Recommendation

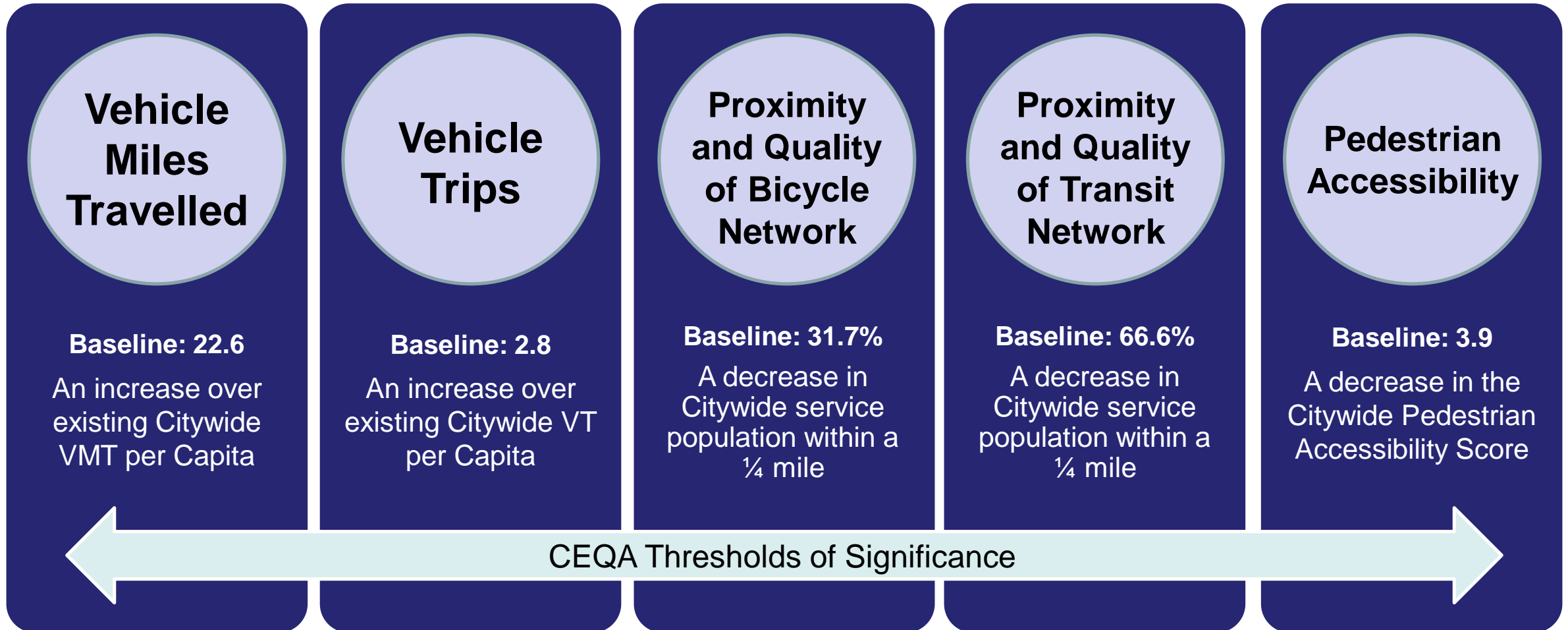
Department of Transportation

1. Find that:
  - a. the adoption of New Transportation Performance Measure Thresholds of Significance for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is not a “project” pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060 (c)(3) and 15378;
  - b. the thresholds are promulgated pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7;
  - c. the thresholds have been formally subjected to a public review process; and
  - d. the thresholds are supported by substantial evidence as summarized herein; and
2. Adopt a resolution updating the existing Transportation Performance Measures and Thresholds of Significance for CEQA for the new measures to:
  - a. update the transportation performance thresholds based on a 2017 Baseline travel demand model;
  - b. include the incremental change in Vehicle Miles Travelled/service population and Vehicle Trips/service population thresholds to be 15% below 2017 Citywide baseline average to evaluate Vehicle Miles Travelled and Vehicle Trips per service population CEQA impacts; and
  - c. maintain the Proximity and Quality of the Transit Network metric, the Proximity and Quality of the Bicycle Network metric, and the Pedestrian Accessibility metric to remain at the 2017 Baseline level.



# 2013 CEQA Thresholds

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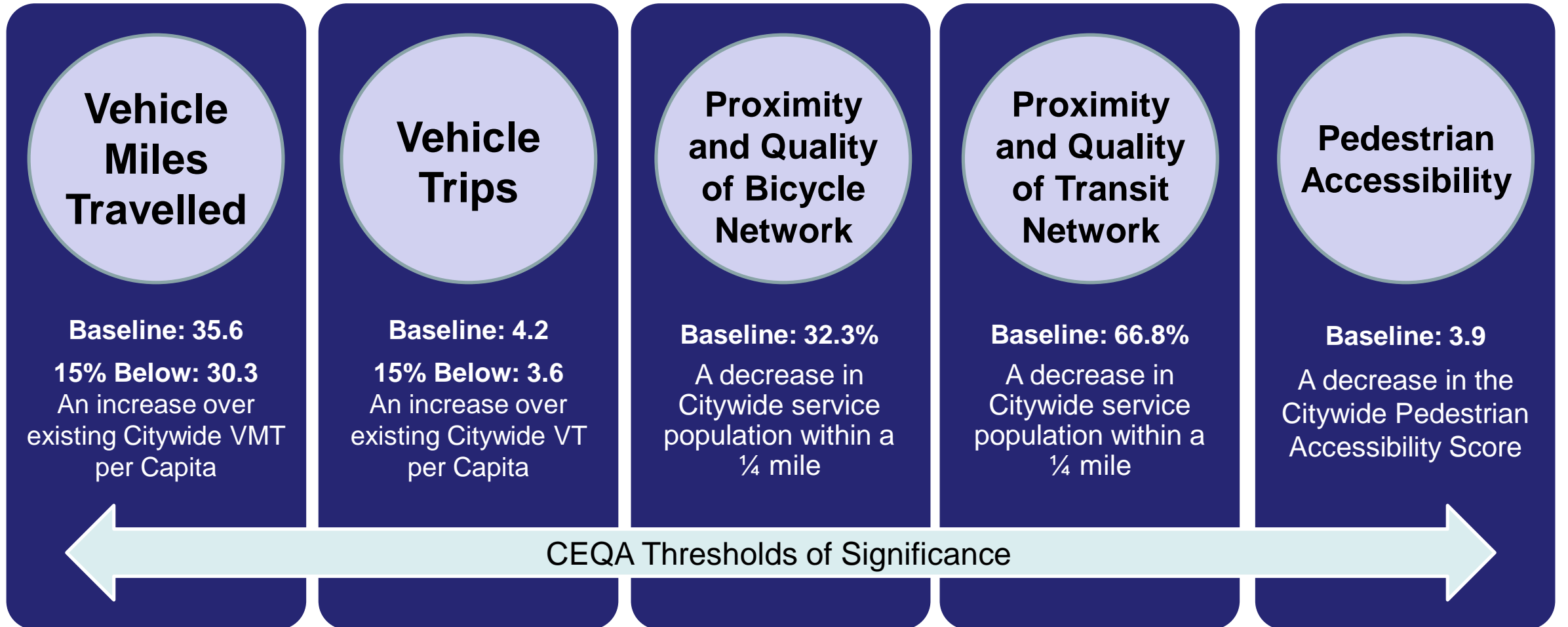


CEQA Thresholds of Significance



# Recommended 2017 CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation



CEQA Thresholds of Significance



# Changes In 2017 Threshold Update

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- 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
- 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



# Commission Actions

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- July 23, 2020- TAC approved staff's recommendation
  - > Recommended staff provide additional information clarifying shift from LOS to VMT and provide further discussion of what projects would be impacted by lower thresholds
- September 9, 2020- Planning Commission approved a motion requesting staff provide additional information to better illustrate how CEQA and the VMT metric relates to other modes, cities of comparable size, and implications of a stricter threshold
- October 13, 2020- Planning Commission approved increasing the baseline from 2013 to 2017
  - > Requested additional information related to the 15% below baseline recommendation



# Climate Action Plan

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- Outlines commitment to achieving state-wide emission reduction targets
- Identifies that 52% of community-wide GHG emissions come from the transportation sector
  - > Identifies transportation strategies to reduce GHG emissions
  - > Identifies City policy documents that advance GHG emission goals
    - Bicycle Transportation Action Plan
    - Short Range Transit Plan
- 15% below baseline threshold of significance will allow the City to make greater progress toward the state's GHG reduction targets



# Analysis, Policies and Plans

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## 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
- Helps 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

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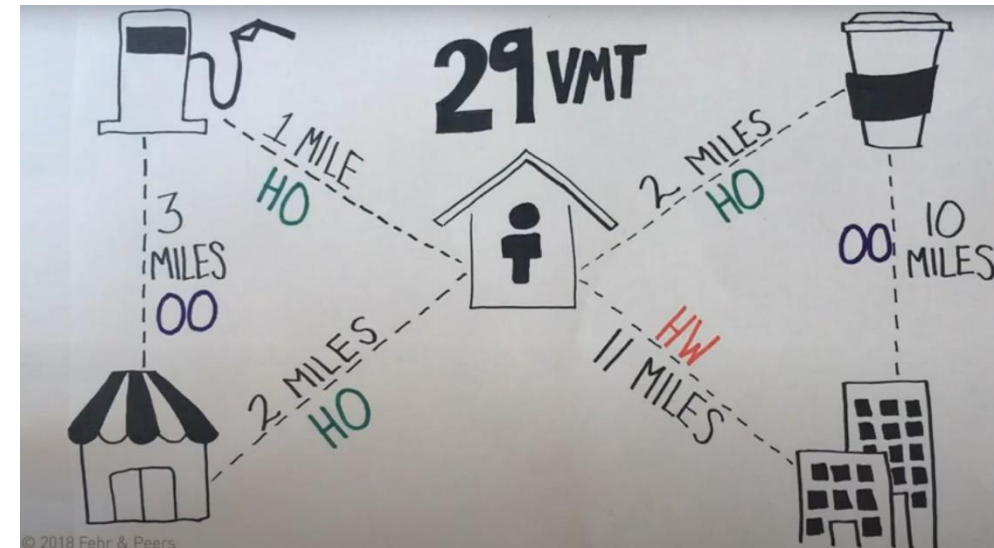
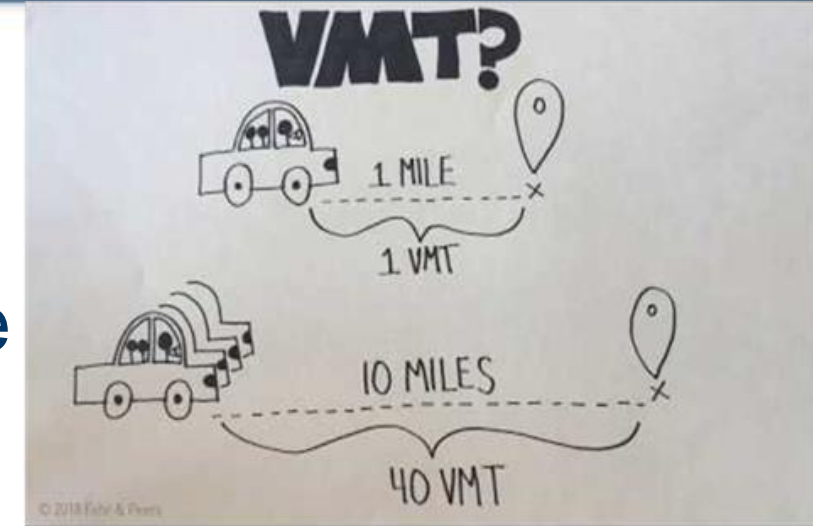
- Uses current data in analyzing traffic impacts
- Evaluates intersection performance, vehicle delay and travel
- Applies four analysis metrics that measure traffic impacts
  - > Street Segment → Analyzes traffic intrusion on local streets
  - > Auto Level of Service → Analyzes traffic delay and impacts
  - > Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index
  - > Bicycle Environmental Quality Index
- Of 58 projects analyzed, 26 have exceeded at least one cap
- Conditions are aimed at improving vehicular movement, protecting neighborhood character and reducing neighborhood traffic intrusion



# How VMT Promotes Reduced Travel

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- Density mix population and employment
- Diversity of land uses that promote balance
- Destination accessibility
  - > Walkable streets
  - > Bike Friendliness
  - > Distance to transit





# Variability in CEQA Thresholds Between Agencies

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- Agencies can have efficiency metrics that are unique to their jurisdiction
  - > Home-based VMT per resident- Evaluates how close households are to destinations and transportation options
  - > Home-based work VMT per employee- Evaluates how close a workplace is to places where employees live
  - > Total project generated VMT per service population- Evaluates how VMT intensive the project is as a whole
- Local data is specific to the study area or jurisdiction
- The model is dependent City-wide representative inputs
- Size of district area matters



# San Gabriel Valley Region Thresholds

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- 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



# 2013 Stricter Thresholds Analysis

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- 25 projects were evaluated using the City's 2013 thresholds

	Existing 2013 Threshold	15% Threshold Reduction	20% Threshold Reduction	25% Threshold Reduction
<b>VMT Project Threshold</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>17.0</b>
# Projects exceeding threshold	0	1	2	4
% Projects exceeding threshold	0%	4%	8%	16%
	Existing 2013 Threshold	15% Threshold Reduction	20% Threshold Reduction	25% Threshold Reduction
<b>VT Project Threshold</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>
# Projects exceeding threshold	3	7	8	14
% Projects exceeding threshold	12%	28%	32%	56%



# Case Study 1: 2013 vs 2017 Model Results

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- Transit Oriented District
- Demo existing industrial land use
- Construct approximately 600 apartments and 10,000 sf commercial



# Case Study 1: 2013 vs 2017 Model Results

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	2013 Model			2017 Model		
	VMT/Cap			VMT/Cap		
	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold
<b>Project 1</b>	20.4	22.6	-9.7%	31.5	35.6	-11.5%
				31.5	30.3	4.1

	VT/Cap			VT/Cap		
	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold
	<b>Project 1</b>	3.5	2.8	25.0%	4.4	4.2
				4.4	3.6	23.2%

2017 VMT Baseline = 35.6  
 15% below 2017 VMT Baseline = 30.3

2017 VT Baseline = 4.2  
 15% below 2017 VT Baseline = 3.6

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# Case Study 2: 2013 vs 2017 Model Results

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- Central Business District
- Transit Oriented District
- Demo existing parking lot
- Construct approximately 70 for sale residential units and 5,500 sf commercial





# Case Study 2: 2013 vs 2017 Model Results

Department of Transportation

	2013 Model			2017 Model		
	VMT/Cap			VMT/Cap		
	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold
Project 2	16	22.6	-29.2%	26.6	35.6	-25.3%
				26.6	30.3	-12.1%
	VT/Cap			VT/Cap		
	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold
	2.5	2.8	-10.7%	3.5	4.2	-16.7%
Project 2				3.5	3.6	-2.0%

2017 VMT Baseline = 35.6  
 15% below 2017 VMT Baseline = 30.3

2017 VT Baseline = 4.2  
 15% below 2017 VT Baseline = 3.6

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# Case Study 3: 2013 vs 2017 Model Results

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- Transit Oriented District
- Demo existing parking lot
- Construct approximately 90 apartments, 4 work-live units, 4,000 sf retail, 2,000 sf restaurant



# Case Study 3: 2013 vs 2017 Model Results

Department of Transportation

	2013 Model			2017 Model		
	VMT/Cap			VMT/Cap		
	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold	Project VMT/Cap	VMT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold
<b>Project 3</b>	16.2	22.6	-28.3%	29.9	35.6	-16%
				29.9	30.3	-1.2%
	VT/Cap			VT/Cap		
	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold	Project VT/Cap	VT/Cap Threshold	% over/under Threshold
<b>Project 3</b>	2.8	2.8	0%	3.9	4.2	-7.1%
				3.9	3.6	9.2%

2017 VMT Baseline = 35.6  
 15% below 2017 VMT Baseline = 30.3

2017 VT Baseline = 4.2  
 15% below 2017 VT Baseline = 3.6

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# Establishing Stricter CEQA Thresholds

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- Projects that would otherwise be in compliance with the General Plan may be subject to additional environmental review processes
- Recent State legislation reduces the ability of local jurisdictions to deny approvals of housing projects and requires communities to attempt to remove development constraints
- Thresholds must be supported by “substantial evidence”
- 15% baseline is supported by OPR, CAPCOA and Caltrans studies
- City Council may recommend a threshold of significance stricter than 15%
  - > Only one jurisdiction has been found to have a threshold stricter than 15%
  - > 16.8% below baseline threshold is supported by CARB



# Recommended CEQA Thresholds

Department of Transportation

- Update the baseline to 2017
- Establish a VMT per service population and VT per service population impact threshold 15% below the Citywide baseline average
  - > Will allow the City to make greater progress toward GHG reduction targets
  - > May subject more projects to additional environmental review processes
  - > 15% below baseline is supported by OPR, CAPCOA and Caltrans studies
- Maintain the Proximity and Quality of the Transit Network metric, the Bicycle Network metric, and the Pedestrian Accessibility metric to remain at the 2017 Baseline level



# Next Steps

Department of Transportation

- **Upon Approval by City Council**
  - > Adopt a Resolution for new CEQA Thresholds
  - > New thresholds to go into effect 6 months from City Council approval
- **Outside CEQA Analysis**
  - > Review the administrative procedures for Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines
  - > Return to City Council with findings and recommendation



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# CEQA Threshold Mitigation Measures

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- **Commute Trip Reductions**
  - > Required commute trip reduction program
  - > Employer sponsored vanpool or shuttle
  - > Ride share program
  - > School carpool program
- **Parking**
  - > Reduce parking supply
  - > Unbundle parking
  - > Parking cash-out
  - > Price workplace parking
  - > Residential area parking permits





# CEQA Threshold Mitigation Measures

Department of Transportation

- **Bicycle infrastructure**
  - > Implement/improve on-street bicycle facilities
  - > Include bike parking: racks, lockers or hub
  - > Bike share
- **Transit**
  - > Transit network expansion
  - > Increase service frequency
  - > Implement neighborhood shuttle
  - > Transit access improvements
  - > Transit stop amenities
  - > Transit subsidies



# Outside CEQA Specific Cap Conditions

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- **Street Segment Cap Conditions**
  - > Aggressive Average Vehicle Occupancy target
  - > Project turn-restrictions
  - > Revise project access and circulation
  - > Raised medians
  - > Targeted neighborhood protection and traffic calming plan for the development with input from the affected residents, Council districts, and DOT
- **Intersection Cap Conditions**
  - > Intersection signal modifications
  - > Coordinated signal system improvements
  - > Vehicle detection upgrades
  - > Intersection monitoring devices



# Outside CEQA Specific Cap Conditions

Department of Transportation

- **Pedestrian Environmental Quality Conditions**
  - > Pedestrian lighting to the nearest transit station
  - > Pedestrian signal improvements
  - > Enhanced pedestrian crossing equipment installations
  - > Curb extensions
  - > Sidewalk improvements
- **Bicycle Environmental Quality Conditions**
  - > Private bike share programs
  - > Bike parking: racks, lockers or hub
  - > Contribution of funds to City bike projects adjacent to the proposed development