



Town of Yountville

6550 Yount Street
Yountville, CA 94599

Staff Report

Agenda Item #: {{section.number}}B

Yountville Town Council Staff Report

DATE: December 7, 2021

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Kirsty Shelton, Planning & Building Director

PREPARED BY: Diane Levine, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT:

Consider Approval of Resolution 21-4095 Adopting the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Recommendations for Yountville Detailed in the TJKM Technical Memorandum, which includes Thresholds of Significance, Screening Criteria, and Mitigation Measures for Transportation Related Environmental Impacts as Required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Implementing SB 743.

DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

A project's impact on transportation is one of the key environmental topics reviewed under CEQA. When it is determined that a project may have "significant impacts," mitigation measures may be required, such as changes in project scope and scale, or alternative transportation infrastructure.

Adopted in 2013, SB 743 creates a process to change the way transportation impacts are analyzed under CEQA. Specifically, SB 743 required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to Level of Service (LOS) for evaluating transportation impacts. For context LOS is a measure of delay experienced by users of transportation infrastructure (such as congestion at a stop light). OPR has selected vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the new metric for evaluating land use planning and development projects. VMT is a measure of transportation efficiency of a proposed project with respect to the actual vehicle trips generated by a project (such as how many vehicle trips would be generated by employees and customers of a new, large local serving retailer). Specifically, VMT is the measure of miles traveled within a specific geographic area for a given period of time and provides an indication of automobile and truck travel on a transportation system.

For some background, the Town of Yountville General Plan previously established a threshold of significance pursuant to CEQA for transportation impacts based on measured delay on roadways impacted by proposed projects, with all intersections required to meet a minimum LOS C, stable intersection flow with no more than a 25 second delay. In anticipation of the change of analysis, the General Plan includes policy to replace LOS standards with VMT metrics for traffic conditions in Yountville.

The VMT metric uses the number of trips and total distance in miles that a vehicle would have to travel between the origin and destination. In general, projects farther away from other land uses or that lack nearby transit options, including bicycle and pedestrian, tend to generate higher VMT, while projects located closer to a variety of land uses and/or high-quality transit generate a lower VMT.

VMT, as the metric for transportation impacts, will help create and/or encourage better, more walkable

neighborhoods that have access to everyday needs. Infill and transit-oriented development that is supported by the VMT analysis can potentially help reduce overall vehicle use, reduce energy consumption, and reduce water consumption through more compact land use planning. Furthermore, lower VMT is associated with additional benefits such as placemaking (creation of quality public spaces), reduction in other air pollutant emissions and water pollution, long term reduction in traffic congestion, and improvements in safety and public health, among others.

On behalf of all Napa County jurisdictions, the Napa Valley Transportation Agency took the lead in developing VMT analysis and mitigation tools by contracting with TJKM Associates. TJKM has created a customized VMT Toolkit with project screening criteria, methodology to measure VMT, and reduction strategies to accurately calculate VMT generation within Yountville. Staff and the consultant team have prepared recommendations for which thresholds to adopt when assessing VMT for transportation analysis purposes, project screening criteria, and screening standards to determine when a project's VMT impacts may be presumed to be less than significant. Also made available is the VMT Reduction Calculator Tool, which provides mitigation strategies that may be applicable to a project to reduce its VMT impact to less than significant levels.

Table 1 in Attachment 1 summarizes the consultant's recommendations for VMT impact thresholds and screening criteria. It is further summarized below.

VMT per Capita Thresholds for Significance: Based on OPR Guidance, staff and the consultant team recommend Yountville VMT threshold be 85 percent of the Yountville average rate (VMT per capita). Selecting the Yountville average rate as opposed to the County average allows for a slight increase in allowable VMT impacts, which will assist in the production of necessary housing.

VMT per Employee Thresholds for Significance: Based on OPR guidance, Staff and the consultant team recommend Yountville VMT thresholds for projects in which most trips would be generated by employees should be 85 percent of the Napa County average rate for VMT per employee. Selecting the County average rate opposed to the Town average considers that employee travel is Countywide and therefore should be based off those numbers.

VMT impacts may be presumed to be less than significant and be exempt from further CEQA review if a project meets screening criteria that is consistent with OPR guidance, as depicted in Table 2: *VMT Screening Criteria*, below.

Table 2: VMT Screening Criteria

Type of Project	OPR Recommended Screening Criteria	Recommended Screening Criteria for Town of Yountville
Small Projects	Projects that generate fewer than 110 motor vehicle trips per day	Same as OPR recommendation
Residential Uses in Low-VMT Areas	Residential projects located in low-VMT areas that do not exceed 85% of a regional or town-wide average for VMT per Capita (i.e., VMT per Resident)	Same as OPR recommendation (with threshold to be based on 85% of the town average)
Employment Uses in Low-VMT Areas	Office projects located in low-VMT areas that do not exceed 85% of a regional average for VMT per Employee	Same as OPR recommendation (with threshold to be based on 85% of the countywide average). In addition to office developments: this threshold would be applied to commercial projects in which most daily trips would be generated by employees (not customers)
Local-serving Retail	Retail projects of 50,000 sq. ft. or less.	Same as OPR recommendation
Hotel Projects in Low-VMT Areas	N/A	Hotel projects in areas where the rate of VMT per Employee does not exceed 85 percent of the Countywide average,
Affordable Housing	100% affordable housing projects in infill locations.	Same as OPR recommendation

Projects in Proximity to Major Transit Stops	Projects that are located within a half mile of an existing or planned high-quality transit corridor or major transit station, and: (1) is high density (minimum floor area ratio of 0.75), (2) does not exceed parking requirements, (3) is consistent with Plan Bay Area, and (4) does not replace affordable units with smaller numbers of moderate- or above moderate- income units.	Projects within one-half (0.5) mile of a transit stop with 15 minute or less headways, unless the project has a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of less than 0.75, reduces the supply of affordable housing, or includes more parking than required under the zoning code.
Transportation Projects	Roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects that do not lead to a measurable increase in vehicle travel.	Same as OPR recommendation

OPR Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, December 2018, and TJKM, 2021.

Projects that do not meet any of the above screening criteria would require assessment of VMT attributable to a proposed project, such as a Traffic study or a Transportation Demand Management Plan. CEQA provides a threshold criterion when determining if a project's environmental impacts are significant. The recommended significance thresholds are as described below in Table 3: *Recommended VMT Impact Thresholds for Town of Yountville*.

Table 3: Recommended VMT Impact Thresholds for Town of Yountville

Type of Project	Threshold Calculation	Daily VMT Threshold
Residential	85% of town-wide average rate of VMT per Capita (i.e., VMT per Resident).	13.58 VMT per Resident
Office & Other Employment Uses (defined as uses in which most daily trips would be generated by employees)	85% of Countywide average rate of VMT per Employee	18.70 VMT per Employee
Retail & Other Customer-serving Uses (defined as uses in which most daily trips would be generated by customers)	Net change in total VMT.	Net increase in total VMT over 800 would be considered potentially significant (excluding employee VMT if the rate of VMT per Employee is below the threshold of 18.70 VMT per Employee).
Hotel	<u>VMT attribute to hotel employees:</u> 85% of Countywide average rate of VMT per Employee. <u>VMT attributable to hotel guests:</u> net change in total VMT.	18.70 VMT per Employee Hotel guests presumed to have no impact on VMT due to occupancy rates for existing hotels in the surrounding Yountville area.
Transportation Projects	Net change in total VMT.	Net increase in total VMT would be considered potentially significant.

Source: TJKM, 2021.

Also, note TJKM has also made available to all jurisdictions within Napa County, a VMT Reduction Calculator Tool. This tool contains multiple mitigation measure strategies that can be offered on a project-by-project basis, depending on their applicability, to achieve VMT reductions, where possible. For example, the Employer Telework Program mitigation measure could potentially reduce VMT resulting from a project with a formula; calculating the percentage of employees that would participate in teleworking and how often, resulting in a percentage of change that would apply to a reduction in VMT. Although not all tools may be applicable, Staff recommends including all mitigation measure strategies in Yountville's VMT Reduction Calculator Tool as to have them available when/if they become applicable to a project. Furthermore, there is no disadvantage to have the VMT Reduction Calculator Tool encompass all mitigation measure strategies. This Calculator tool will help staff and applications reduce a project's VMT.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Exempt per California Environmental Act (CEQA) Guideline, Section 15061(b)(3)

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

Is it Currently Budgeted? N/A

Where is it Budgeted? N/A

Is it Mandatory or Discretionary? Mandatory

Is there a Staff Resource Impact? Nominal

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Is item Identified in Strategic Plan? Yes

If yes, Identify Strategic Goal and Objective. **Exceptional Town Services and Staff:** The Town supports its talented staff who deliver high quality municipal programs and services while maintaining public infrastructure for the benefit of the community. **Quality of Life:** The Town enhances the livability of Yountville by providing well-maintained public facilities, parks, and trails, and quality programs and events.

Briefly Explain Relationship to Strategic Plan Goal and Objective. Updating the Town standards to comply with State law will assist the environmental review process of future projects. In addition, encouraging less vehicle miles traveled will benefit the community's quality of life.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive staff report and direct questions to Staff.

Conduct Public Hearing and Receive Public Comment.

Conduct Council discussion.

Adopt Resolution Number 21-4095 Approving the VMT recommendations for the Town of Yountville detailed in the TJKM Technical Memorandum, which includes Thresholds of Significance, Screening Criteria, and Mitigation Measures for Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) impacts as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines implementing SB 743 addressing environmental review of transportation impact under CEQA.