

Appendix E

VMT Analysis



VMT ANALYSIS

DATE: October 22, 2021

TO: Mattie Magers, Environmental Planner/Project Manager | Rincon Consultants

FROM: Jim Damkowitch, Josh Pilachowski, Aditi Meshram | DKS Associates

SUBJECT: Santa Maria Park Edge Project - VMT Analysis

Project #21050-000

In accordance with Senate Bill 743 (SB 743) and the resulting changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines published by the Natural Resources Agency, local agencies may no longer use measures of vehicle delay such as Level of Service (LOS) to quantify transportation impacts on the environment. VMT is a systemic metric and is a useful indicator of overall land use and transportation efficiency, where the most efficient system is one that minimizes VMT by encouraging shorter vehicle trip lengths, more walking and biking, or increased carpooling and transit. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has been codified in the CEQA Guidelines as the most appropriate measure for measuring transportation impacts under CEQA. This change went to effect statewide on July 1, 2020.

The change from LOS to VMT for CEQA purposes requires the City now must address VMT thresholds of significance, screening, and mitigation procedures.

Based on current practice of the City of Santa Maria, transportation impacts are considered significant if the proposed project would result in a VMT per capita or office VMT per employee above 85% of the countywide average, consistent with technical guidance published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)¹.

The methodology in this analysis for evaluating VMT and completing an SB 743 compliant analysis of the proposed Park Edge Apartments in the City of Santa Maria is described herein.

¹ <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showdocument?id=6941>

VMT SCREENING CRITERIA

OPR's Technical Advisory lists the following screening thresholds for land use projects. These types of development projects are presumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT and therefore, a less than significant adverse impact on transportation. OPR's Technical Advisory suggests that lead agencies may screen out VMT impacts using project size, maps, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing.

- Project Size: Projects that are consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) or General Plan and generate or attract fewer than 110 daily trips (per CEQA). **Based on the initial trip generation data (prepared by DKS), the proposed Park Edge Apartments project generate a total of 3,118 daily trips and does not trigger this screen.**
- Proximity to High Quality Transit: residential or office projects within one-half mile of an existing major transit station or stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor can be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact. The area in the project vicinity is served by local Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT) bus service (Routes 5, 6, and 7). Bus Route 7 operates along Santa Maria Way during the daytime, directly adjacent to the project site, but only stops further north on McCoy Lane during the evening. Bus Route 6 has an evening line with a stop directly adjacent to the project site, but the daytime route has its closes stop further north on Broadway. Bus Route 5 operates along State Route 135, with the closest stop to the project site being further north near the intersection of Broadway and McCoy Lane. **Given that existing bus route is not considered "high quality" the project does not trigger this screen.**
- Affordable Housing Development: **The proposed project does not include the provision of affordable housing, therefore the proposed project does not trigger this screen.**
- Locally Serving Retail: typically less than 50,000 square feet. **The proposed project contains 5,400 square feet of commercial square footage and thus this specific portion of the proposed project is covered by the screen and therefore does not require a VMT analysis per City Guidelines or SB 743.**
- Infrastructure: projects that would not likely lead to a substantial or measurable increase in vehicle travel are presumed to be VMT neutral and generally presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact (i.e., induced VMT). These include: Roadway Maintenance and Rehab Projects; Signal Timing / Synchronization / Adaptive Signal Control /Signal Preemption Improvements; Intersection Control Type and Turn Lane Channelization Improvements; Widening for Local or Local Collector Streets; and, Transit / Bicycle / Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements. **The proposed project does not contain any substantial infrastructure improvements that trigger this screen.**

- Project Location: projects that fall within an identified location (in this case Traffic Analysis Zone, or TAZ) that demonstrates VMT per Capita for residential projects below 85% of the countywide average for that metric. The proposed project is split between two TAZs (30106 and 30115). Mapping shows that TAZ 30106 demonstrates VMT per Capita that is below 85% of the countywide average and therefore is geographically screened. The portion of the project within TAZ 30115 demonstrates VMT per Capita between 85% and 100% of the countywide average, as shown below. **A portion of the proposed project falls within a TAZ that potentially triggers this screen.**

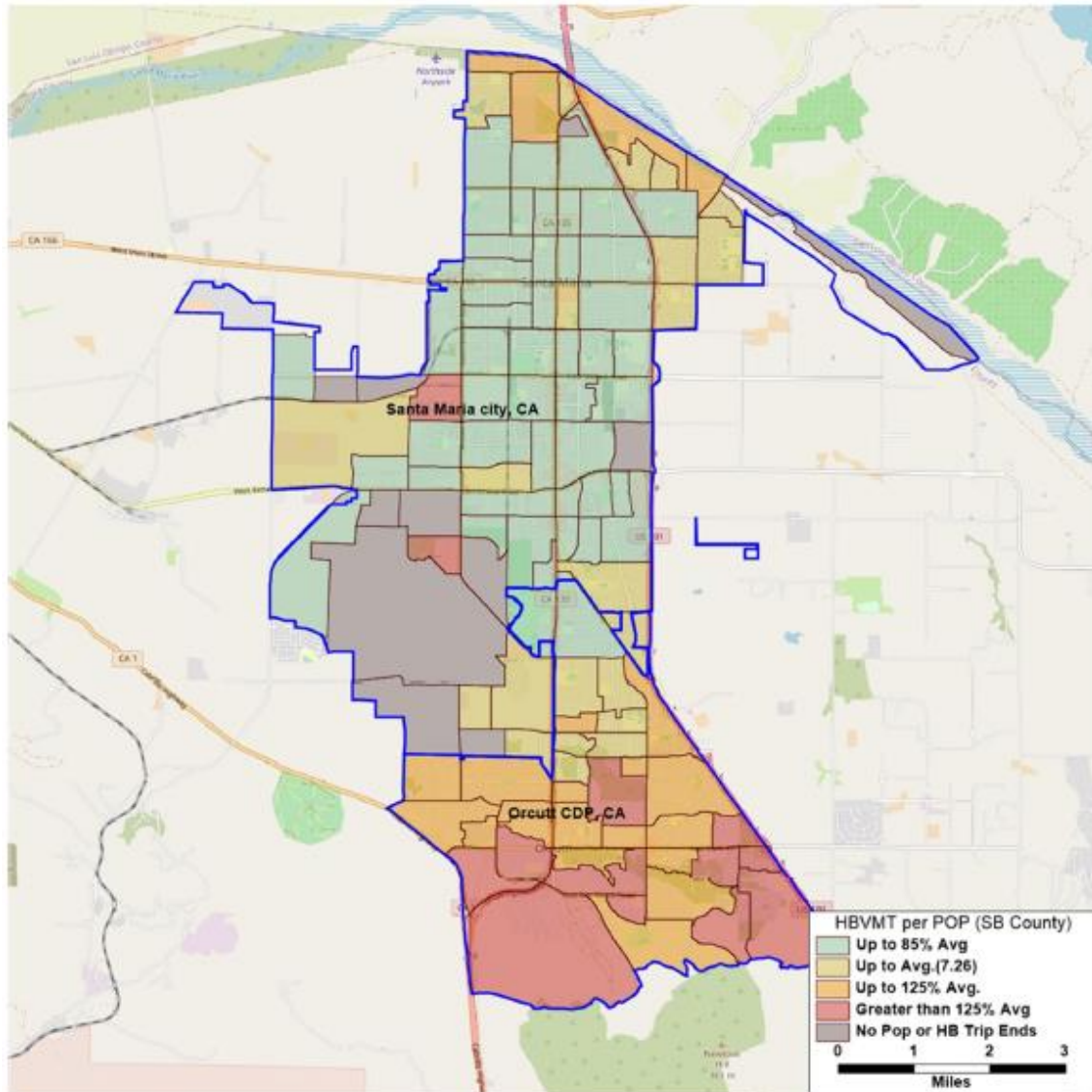


FIGURE 1: COUNTYWIDE AVERAGE: HOME-BASED TRIPS VMT/POPULATION (FOR RESIDENTIAL USES)

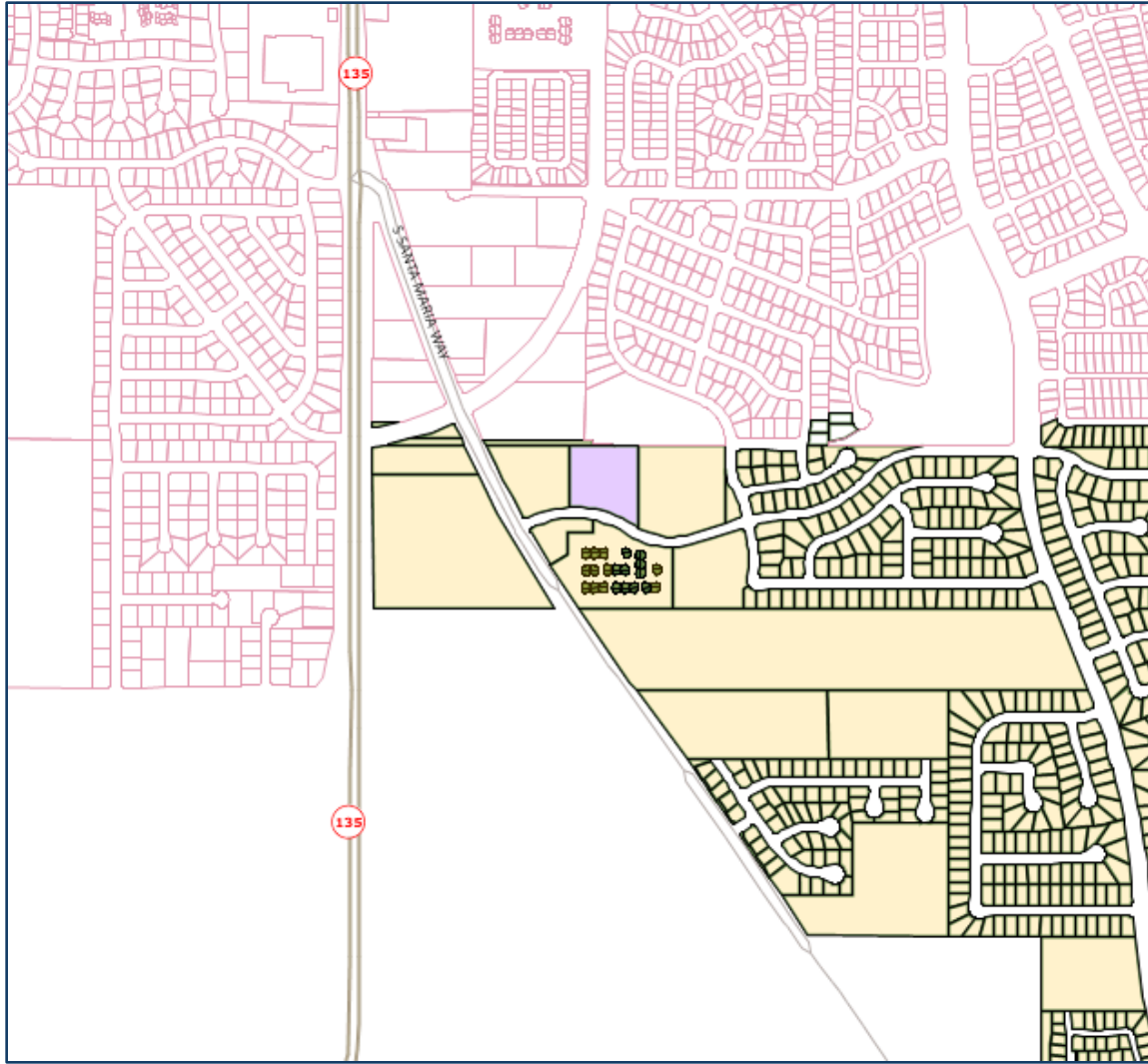


FIGURE 2: PROJECT SITE LOCATION

VMT ANALYSIS

The City’s VMT per service population threshold metrics are identified in **Table 1**. The countywide averages and resulting 85 percent of average thresholds in this table reflect a one-way trip. To convert to daily these values are multiplied by 2 to reflect a full round trip VMT.

Table 5. Threshold of Significance by Baseline Geography

Geographic Area	Average (one-way)	Average (Daily)	85% Average
Home Based Work (VMT per Employee)			
Santa Barbara County	11.08	22.16	18.8
Santa Maria Area (+Orcutt)	12.00	24.00	20.4
Santa Maria City	11.65	23.30	19.8
Home Based (VMT per Population)			
Santa Barbara County	7.26	14.52	12.3
Santa Maria Area (+Orcutt)	5.90	11.80	10.0
Santa Maria City	5.25	10.50	8.9

Based on the screening assessment and the proposed project description, the operative VMT metric that requires analysis is VMT per capita using the City adopted countywide average baseline. It is recommended that the City of Santa Maria assess land development projects according to the primary proposed land use type, as follows:

Residential VMT – Establish baseline VMT and threshold on a per capita basis. “Residential” uses include, but are not limited to, single-family, multi-family, and mobile homes.

The City’s adopted threshold is 85 percent of the existing countywide baseline VMT per capita, as calculated within the City of Santa Maria for residential uses². These recommendations are consistent with OPR guidance.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL AND VMT SKETCH PLANNING TOOL

The CEQA VMT analysis uses the sketch planning tool maintained by the City of Santa Maria. The sketch planning tool was developed using numerous runs of the base year travel demand model maintained by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG). This is the same model used to establish the City’s VMT thresholds. Hence, the City’s VMT Sketch Planning Tool adequately captures the relationship between increments of land use growth and VMT efficiency

² <https://www.cityofsantamaria.org/home/showdocument?id=6941>

metrics. Use of the VMT sketch planning tool eliminates the need for a full model run to analyze development projects.

For the baseline VMT rates, daily VMT was tabulated at the home (production) location to determine home-based VMT per capita. All home-based trip types including Home-Based Work is reflected including the full trip length that occurs outside City boundaries.

The VMT sketch planning tool takes as inputs the location and quantities of land use associated with the project. The outputs include VMT efficiency metrics and an indication of whether additional analysis for mitigation is required.

Consistent with OPR guidelines only automobile trips are considered as a part of this analysis. Heavy-duty truck and delivery vehicle VMT as well as alternative mode VMT (transit vehicles) are not reflected.

PROJECT USE (VMT PER CAPITA METRIC)

For residential land uses of the proposed project, the Santa Maria VMT sketch planning tool was used. Only the residential portion of the project that was located in TAZ 30115 and was not screened out is subject to VMT analysis. The proposed location of the development is in a low residential VMT zone, therefore the estimated VMT generated by this development is expected to be low and does not trigger any mitigation needs, according the adopted VMT thresholds. The tool calculated the VMT rate for the remaining residential portion. The residential development is estimated to generate 4.2 VMT per capita. As seen in **Table 1**, the rate is lower than the adopted threshold of 12.34 VMT per capita. Based on this result the proposed project does not result in a significant VMT impact under CEQA. Screenshots of the VMT Sketch Planning Tool inputs and outputs are provide in **Attachment 1**.

The proposed project does not exceed the threshold of 85% of countywide average for VMT per Capita. As a result, no mitigation is required.

TABLE 1. VMT ANALYSIS RESULT

RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS (IN SOUTHEAST PARCEL)	PROJECT VMT PER CAPITA	RESIDENTIAL USES VMT/CAPITA (COUNTYWIDE AVERAGE)	CITY THRSESHOLD (85% OF COUNTYWIDE AVERAGE)
92	4.2	14.52	12.34

ATTACHMENT 1.
SANTA MARIA
VMT SKETCH PLANNING TOOL INPUTS AND OUTPUTS



About Project Information Results

Enter Project Information

-----Project Trip Generation-----

Project Name
Peak Hour Project Trips
Daily Project Trips

Next

-----Project Details-----

Project Location: Enter Parcel Number
OR

Affordable Housing?
Does the project consist of at least 20% affordable housing or only local serving retail (generally less than 50,000 sf)?
 Yes No

Next

Enter information below for each land use in the project.
For mixed-use development, please select each of the applicable categories and enter information for each use.

Project Type

Development Information: Residential
Number of Housing Units

Calculate

Close



About Project Information Results

Enter Project Information

-----Project Trip Generation-----

Project Name
Peak Hour Project Trips
Daily Project Trips

Next

-----Project Details-----

Project Location: Enter Parcel Number
OR

Affordable Housing?

Does the project consist of at least 20% affordable housing or only local serving retail (generally less than 50,000 sf)?

Yes No

Next

Enter information below for each land use in the project.
For mixed-use development, please select each of the applicable categories and enter information for each use.

Project Type

Development Information: Residential

Number of Housing Units

Calculate

Close



About Project Information Results

The VMT Screening Results

Project Name: Park Edge Apartments
Project Parcel: 128-090-023
Daily Trips: 3118
Peak Hour Trips: 249

-----Proposed Development and Estimated VMT Impact-----

Residential: 48
VMT screening is not necessary.

Office:
This project does not include Office development.

Commercial:
This project does not include Commercial development.

Industrial:
This project does not include Industrial development.

Please refer to this [link](#) for information about mitigation strategies if needed.

[Open Document in Browser](#)

Close



About Project Information Results

The VMT Screening Results

Project Name: Park Edge Apartments
Project Parcel: 109-010-038
Daily Trips: 3118
Peak Hour Trips: 249

-----Proposed Development and Estimated VMT Impact-----

Residential: 92

The residential development is estimated to generate 4.2 VMT per household. The rate is lower than the adopted threshold and further VMT analysis is not necessary.

Office:

This project does not include Office development.

Commercial:

This project does not include Commercial development.

Industrial:

This project does not include Industrial development.

Please refer to this [link](#) for information about mitigation strategies if needed.

[Open Document in Browser](#)

Close