

# PLANNING DEPARTMENT TRANSMITTAL TO THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

<b>CITY PLANNING CASE:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:</b>	<b>COUNCIL DISTRICT:</b>
CPC-2018-6577-MS		All
<b>PROJECT ADDRESS:</b>		
Citywide		
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
City of Los Angeles  <input type="checkbox"/> New/Changed		
<b>APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
<b>APPELLANT</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
N/A		
<b>APPELLANT'S REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
N/a		
<b>PLANNER CONTACT INFORMATION:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
Rubina Ghazarian	(213) 978-1194	<a href="mailto:Rubina.ghazarian@lacity.org">Rubina.ghazarian@lacity.org</a>
<b>ENTITLEMENTS FOR CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION</b>		
Resolution to adopt CEQA transportation thresholds		

**FINAL ENTITLEMENTS NOT ADVANCING:**

N/A

**ITEMS APPEALED:**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**REVISED:**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE:**

**REVISED:**

- Letter of Determination
- Findings of Fact
- Staff Recommendation Report
- Conditions of Approval
- Ordinance
- Zone Change Map
- GPA Resolution
- Land Use Map
- Exhibit A - Site Plan
- Mailing List
- Land Use
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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- Categorical Exemption
- Negative Declaration
- Mitigated Negative Declaration
- Environmental Impact Report
- Mitigation Monitoring Program
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTES / INSTRUCTION(S):**

Resolution

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:**

Yes

No

\*If determination states administrative costs are recovered through fees, indicate "Yes".

**PLANNING COMMISSION:**

- City Planning Commission (CPC)
- Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC)
- Central Area Planning Commission
- East LA Area Planning Commission
- Harbor Area Planning Commission

- North Valley Area Planning Commission
- South LA Area Planning Commission
- South Valley Area Planning Commission
- West LA Area Planning Commission

<b>PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE:</b>	<b>COMMISSION VOTE:</b>
February 28, 2019	6 -0
<b>LAST DAY TO APPEAL:</b>	<b>APPEALED:</b>
N/A	n/A
<b>TRANSMITTED BY:</b>	<b>TRANSMITTAL DATE:</b>
Commission Office	March 19, 2019



# LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

200 North Spring Street, Room 272, Los Angeles, California, 90012-4801, (213) 978-1300

[www.planning.lacity.org](http://www.planning.lacity.org)

## LETTER OF DETERMINATION

MAILING DATE: MAR 11 2019

Case No. CPC-2018-6577-MS

Council Districts: All

CEQA: N/A

Plan Areas: All

Project Area: Citywide

Applicant: City of Los Angeles

At its meeting of **February 28, 2019**, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission took the actions below in conjunction with the approval of the following:

An update to the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide to comply with California Senate Bill 743 and aligning with the update to the State CEQA Guidelines and Appendix G.

1. **Recommended** that the City Council determine, based on the whole of the administrative record, that the proposed resolution is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(1), CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 and is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308, and none of the exceptions in Section 15300.2 apply;
2. **Approved and recommended** that the City Council adopt the proposed Resolution pursuant to Senate Bill 743 and CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15064.3 and 15064.7(b), updating the City's adopted transportation thresholds;
3. **Adopted** the staff report as the Commission's report on the subject;
4. **Adopted** the attached findings; and
5. **Recommended** that the City Council instruct the Department of City Planning and the Department of Transportation to report back annually for two years on status and any additional changes needed to meet the intent of Senate Bill 743.

The vote proceeded as follows:

Moved: Ambroz  
Second: Perlman  
Ayes: Khorsand, Mack, Millman, Mitchell  
Absent: Choe, Padilla-Campos

Vote: 6 - 0

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James K. Williams, Commission Executive Assistant II  
Los Angeles City Planning Commission

**Effective Date/Appeals:** The decision of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission is not appealable.

If you seek judicial review of any decision of the City pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5, the petition for writ of mandate pursuant to that section must be filed no later than the 90th day following the date on which the City's decision became final pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6. There may be other time limits which also affect your ability to seek judicial review.

Attachments: Proposed CEQA Transportation Section Update, Findings, Resolution

cc: Arthi Varma, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning  
Rubina Ghazarian, City Planner

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**PROPOSED CALIFORNIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)  
TRANSPORTATION SECTION UPDATE**

## LOS ANGELES CEQA TRANSPORTATION SECTION UPDATE

### Table of Contents

I. Introduction and Background	1
A. OVERVIEW	1
Projects Addressed	1
Not Covered in This Impact Area	1
B. THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE	1
THRESHOLD T-1:	1
THRESHOLD T-2.1:	1
THRESHOLD T-2.2:	1
THRESHOLD T-3:	1
C. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	1
FEDERAL	2
STATE	2
REGIONAL	2
LOCAL	2
II. Screening and Evaluation	3
III. IMPACT ANALYSIS	5
EXPERT STUDIES	5
A. THRESHOLD AREAS	5
THRESHOLD T-1:	5
THRESHOLD T-2.1:	6
THRESHOLD T-2.2:	7
B. CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS	8
THRESHOLD T-1:	8
THRESHOLD T-2.1:	9
THRESHOLD T-2.2:	10
C. MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS	11
THRESHOLD T-1:	11
THRESHOLD T-2.1:	11
THRESHOLD T-2.2:	11
IV. Reference Section	11
A. DEFINITIONS	11
B. SOURCES	13
C. DATA RESOURCES	14

## TRANSPORTATION

### I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### A. OVERVIEW

This issue area covers impacts related to transportation system. In 2013, when Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed Senate Bill (SB) 743 into law, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) was charged with developing new guidelines for evaluating transportation impacts under CEQA using methods that no longer focus on measuring automobile delay and level of service (LOS). SB 743 directed agencies to develop new guidelines that develop a transportation performance metric that can help promote: the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal networks, and a diversity of land uses. OPR's proposed updates to the CEQA guidelines in support of these goals<sup>1</sup> establish vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the primary metric for evaluating a project's environmental impacts on the transportation system. The guidelines also require that the environmental assessment for a project consider whether the project may conflict with plans or policies addressing the circulation system, hazards due to design or incompatible issues, and inadequate emergency access.

#### Projects Addressed

Discretionary development projects, land use plans (e.g., community plans, area plans, specific plans), and transportation projects.

#### Not Covered in This Impact Area

- Air quality impacts associated with transportation (see Section 3.III. Air Quality)
- Greenhouse gas impacts associated with transportation (See Section 3.VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions)
- Noise impacts associated with transportation (see Section XI. Noise)

#### B. THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The thresholds of significance for impacts to the transportation system are the following Appendix G Environmental Checklist thresholds:

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<sup>1</sup> State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *Proposed Updates to the CEQA Guidelines, Final*, November 2017.



**THRESHOLD T-1:** Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

**THRESHOLD T-2** Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

**T-2.1** For a land use project<sup>2</sup>, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1)?<sup>3</sup>

**T-2.2** For a transportation project, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2)?<sup>4</sup>

**THRESHOLD T-3:** Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

**THRESHOLD T-4:** Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

## C. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The regulatory framework for transportation resources includes state, regional, and local regulations. Some of the primary plans and regulations that apply to transportation resources are identified below. Detailed information regarding plans and policies identified below may be found in the Regulatory Framework Document.

### STATE

- Assembly Bill 1358 (AB 1358), the California Complete Streets Act of 2008

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<sup>2</sup> A land use project includes any discretionary action that either changes development capacity (such as a zone change or redesignation of a general plan land use) or results in new construction, additions or change of use.

<sup>3</sup> Subdivision (b)(1) establishes the following criteria for analyzing transportation impacts of land use projects: "Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. Generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact."

<sup>4</sup> Subdivision (b)(2) provides the following direction for analyzing transportation impacts of transportation projects: "Transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, vehicle miles traveled should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. For roadway capacity projects, agencies have discretion to determine the appropriate measure of transportation impact consistent with CEQA and other applicable requirements. To the extent that such impacts have already been adequately addressed at a programmatic level, such as in a regional transportation plan EIR, a lead agency may tier from that analysis as provided in Section 15152."

In Section F of their Technical Advisory, OPR provides further direction to lead agencies who determine that vehicle miles traveled is the appropriate measure of impact for transportation projects. (See OPR. Technical Advisory, November 2017).

- Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008
- Senate Bill 743 (SB 743)
- State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *Proposed Updates to the CEQA Guidelines, Final*, November 2017.
- State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*, April 2018.

## REGIONAL

- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)

## LOCAL

- City of Los Angeles General Plan
- City of Los Angeles Framework Element
- City of Los Angeles Community Plans
- City of Los Angeles Mobility Plan 2035
- The pLAN for Healthy Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC)
- LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines
- Citywide Design Guidelines for Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development
- LADOT Transportation Technology Strategy – Urban Mobility in a Digital Age
- LADOT Vision Zero Action Plan
- LADOT Vision Zero Corridor Plans
- Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (pending)
- The Sustainable City pLAN
- Walkability Checklist

## II. SCREENING AND EVALUATION

As a first step in determining whether conditions exist that might indicate an environmental impact, a project is reviewed through the following screening and evaluation process. The screening and evaluation process includes a series of screening criteria that are used to determine whether any further analysis is required. If the project does not pass the screen, further research will be necessary, as described in Section III, to analyze whether the project may result in significant impacts related to the transportation system. If based on the instructions for the screening criteria the project passes the screen, no further analysis will be required for that threshold question, and a no impact determination can be made for that particular threshold.

**GUIDANCE AND CONSIDERATIONS** The Mobility Plan 2035 established policies to prioritize the safety of all road users when planning, designing and operating streets. In determining Threshold T-1, to assess if a project conflicts with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy, the analysis should consider the degree to which a project may hinder the safe and comfortable access to a project site from other locations, with a special focus on people relying on transit services or active transportation modes such as biking or walking. The metric of auto-vehicle delay shall not be used since the means to address vehicle travel capacity may conflict with the City's goal to reduce auto-vehicle miles traveled.

A transportation project may induce additional travel demand. Since travel demand is largely a function of project scale, while also influenced by location, a project's impact on the transportation system should be evaluated for new development activity or transportation projects that exceed the screening criteria described below.

### SCREENING CRITERIA FOR THRESHOLD T-1

*Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

If the answer is no to all of the following questions, further analysis will not be required for Threshold T-1, and a no impact determination can be made for that threshold:

**Question 1a:** Would the project generate a net increase of 250 or more daily vehicle trips?

**How to Determine:** See Section 2.1.2 in the LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Sources:** Project plans and LADOT's VMT Calculator.

**Question 1b:** Is the project proposing to, or required to make any voluntary or required, modifications to the public right-of-way (i.e. street dedications, reconfigurations of curb line, etc.)?

**How to Determine:** For projects subject to dedication and improvement requirements under the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), determine the street designation and improvement standard for any project frontage along streets classified as an Avenue or Boulevard (as designated in the City’s General Plan) using the Mobility Plan 2035, or Navigate LA. If any street fronting the project site is an Avenue or Boulevard and it is determined that additional dedication, or physical modifications to the public right-of-way are proposed or required, the answer to this question is yes. For projects not subject to dedication and improvement requirements under the Los Angeles Municipal Code, though the project does propose dedications or physical modifications to the public right-of-way, the answer to this question is yes.

**Question 1c:** Is the project on a lot that is ½ acre or more in total gross area, or is the project’s frontage along a street classified as an Avenue or Boulevard (as designated in the Mobility Plan 2035) 250 linear feet or more, or is the project’s frontage encompassing an entire block along an Avenue or Boulevard (as designated in the Mobility Plan 2035)?

**How to Determine:** Determine the project’s total gross lot area (using Zimas); if greater than ½ acre the answer to this question is yes. Determine the classification of (b)1 the street(s) fronting the project site (as designated in the City’s General Plan, or Navigate LA). If any street fronting the project site is an Avenue or Boulevard and the project’s frontage along that street is 250 linear feet or more, the answer to this question is yes. If any street fronting the project site is an Avenue or Boulevard and the project’s frontage encompasses an entire block along that street, the answer to this question is yes.

**Sources:** Project site plans, Navigate LA, City of Los Angeles General Plan, Zimas.

## SCREENING CRITERIA FOR THRESHOLD T-2.1

*For a land use project<sup>5</sup>, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1)?<sup>6</sup>*

If the answer is no to any of the following questions, further analysis will not be required for Threshold T-2.1, and a no impact determination can be made for that threshold:

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2 for definition of a land use project.

<sup>6</sup> This threshold relates to vehicle miles of travel generated by a land use development project.

**Question 1:** Would the land use project<sup>7</sup> generate a net increase of 250 or more daily vehicle trips?

**How to Determine:** See Section 2.2.4 in the LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Sources:** Project plans, the LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines, and the VMT Calculator.

**Question 2:** Would the Project or Plan located within a one-half mile of a fixed-rail transit station replace an existing number of residential units with a smaller number of residential units?

**Sources:** Project plans.

**Question 3:** Would the project generate a net increase in daily VMT?

**How to Determine:** See Section 2.2.4 in the LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Sources:** Project plans, LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines, and the VMT Calculator.

In addition to the above screening criteria, the portion of, or the entirety of a project that contains small-scale or local serving retail uses<sup>8</sup> are assumed to have less than significant VMT impacts. If the answer to the following question is no, that portion of the project meets the screening criteria and a “no impact” determination can be made for the portion of the project that contains retail uses. However, if the retail project is part of a larger mixed-use project, then the remaining portion of the project may be subject to further analysis in accordance with the above screening criteria. Projects that include retail uses in excess of the screening criteria would need to evaluate the entirety of the project’s vehicle miles traveled, as specified in Section 2.2.4 in the LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Question 4:** If the project includes retail uses, does the portion of the project that contains retail uses exceed a net 50,000 square feet?

**How to Determine:** Review the project plans.

**Sources:** Project plans.

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2 for definition of a land use project.

<sup>8</sup> The definition of retail for this purpose includes restaurant.

## SCREENING CRITERIA FOR THRESHOLD T-2.2

*For a transportation project, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2)?<sup>9</sup>*

If the answer is no to the following question, further analysis will not be required for Threshold T-2.2, and a no impact determination can be made for that threshold:

**Question 1:** Would the project include the addition of through traffic lanes on existing or new highways, including general purpose lanes, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, peak period lanes, auxiliary lanes, and lanes through grade-separated interchanges (except managed lanes, transit lanes, bicycle lanes, and auxiliary lanes of less than one mile in length designed to improve roadway safety)?

**How to Determine:** Review the project plans.

**Sources:** Project plans.

## SCREENING CRITERIA FOR THRESHOLD T-3

*Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

If the answer is yes to either of the following questions, further analysis will be required for Threshold T-3, and if the answer is no to both questions a no impact determination can be made for that threshold:

**Question 1:** Is the project proposing new driveways, or introducing new vehicle access to the property from the public right-of-way?

**Question 2:** Is the project proposing to, or required to make any voluntary or required, modifications to the public right-of-way (i.e. street dedications, reconfigurations of curb line, etc.)?

**How to Determine:** For projects subject to dedication and improvement requirements under the Los Angeles Municipal Code, determine the street designation and improvement standard for the any project frontage along streets classified as an Avenue or Boulevard (as designated in the City's General Plan) using the Mobility Plan 2035, or Navigate LA. If any street fronting the project site is an Avenue or Boulevard and it is determined that additional dedication, or physical modifications to the public right-of-way are proposed or required, the answer to this question is yes. For projects not subject to dedication and

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<sup>9</sup> This threshold relates to vehicle miles of travel induced by a transportation project that increases roadway capacity.

improvement requirements under the Los Angeles Municipal Code, though the project does propose dedications or physical modifications to the public right-of-way, the answer to this question is yes.

## SCREENING CRITERIA FOR THRESHOLD T-4

*Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?*

**How to Determine:** Refer to 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide K.2. FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

## III. IMPACT ANALYSIS

If an impact threshold was not screened out using the Screening Criteria or scoped out from the initial study under the Scope of Analysis, then the City should consider whether there will be an impact to any transportation system resources under the Appendix G Environmental Checklist threshold questions using the threshold analyses below.

### A. THRESHOLD AREAS

The following section presents the thresholds as they should be analyzed for transportation system impacts. Each threshold is stated and is followed by a series of questions that the user should answer to determine the extent to which the project may cause an impact under the threshold. Each question has a corresponding criteria that provides direction to the user to best determine the answer.

#### **THRESHOLD T-1: Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?**

To determine if there is an impact under the threshold above, depending on whether you have a project or a plan, you will need to address the following:

**Development Project<sup>10</sup> Question 1:** Would the project conflict with applicable program, plans, ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system?

**How to Determine:** The project will have a potential impact if:

- The project is inconsistent with transportation-related policies applicable to the proposed project. Determine potential impact with respect to

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<sup>10</sup> Development projects are a subset of land use projects where the intended project outcome in terms of site plans, use and building permits are well enough defined to inform a project level of analysis. They typically will involve new construction, additions or change of use, or can include a specific plan, general plan amendment and/or zone changes if the project outcome is specific as to the building use, intensity and placement to be completed over a predetermined time period.

consistency with plans, ordinances, and policies based on overall consistency with each program/plan/ordinance/policy.

- The determination of impact for this threshold is based on a nuanced consideration of overall plan, ordinance, and policy consistency. An impact determination would result if (1) the project directly conflicts with a standard established by a plan, policy or ordinance, and the finding(s) that govern relief cannot be made, and (2) that standard is adopted to protect the environment. In general, transportation standards adopted to protect the environment are those that support multimodal transportation options and a reduction in VMT. A project that generally conforms with, and does not obstruct the City's development programs, ordinances, plans and policies will generally be considered to be consistent.

**Sources:** For guidance on addressing project specific questions, see Section 2.1 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Plan Project<sup>11</sup> Question 1:** Would the plan conflict with applicable plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system?

**How to Determine:** The plan will have a potential impact if:

- The plan is inconsistent with applicable State, Regional, and Local policy documents, such as the SCAG RTP/SCS and the City of Los Angeles *Mobility Plan 2035*. Determine potential impact with respect to consistency with plans, and policies based on overall consistency with each plan/policy.
- The determination of impact for this threshold is based on a nuanced consideration of overall plan, ordinance, and policy consistency. An impact determination would result if (1) the project directly conflicts with a standard established by a plan, policy or ordinance, and the finding(s) that govern relief cannot be made, and (2) that standard is adopted to protect the environment. In general, transportation standards adopted to protect the environment are those that support multimodal transportation options and a reduction in VMT. A project that generally conforms with, and does not obstruct the City's development programs, ordinances, plans and policies will generally be considered to be consistent.

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<sup>11</sup> Plan Projects are a subset of land use projects where the specific information is not available as to the sequence of discrete development projects that is necessary to inform a project level of analysis. Plan Projects typically will involve community plans, land use plans, or other general plan elements or citywide or areawide ordinances. Plan Projects can include specific plans, general plan amendments and/or zone changes if specific information is not available as to the building use, intensity and placement to be completed over a predetermined time period, and such assumptions of specific project outcomes would be too remote and speculative to inform a project-level analysis.



- The plan may propose new goals and policies that could be seen to conflict with, or be inconsistent with the existing plan. However, upon plan adoption, the updated plan may now internally align with the proposed goals and policies. As such, the proposed plan will be evaluated as to the consistency with the plan and policies as revised under the relevant legislative and policy making procedures.

**Sources:** For guidance on addressing plan specific questions, see Section 2.1 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-2.1: For a land use project<sup>12</sup>, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1)?**

To determine if there is an impact under the threshold above, depending on whether you have a development project or a plan, you will need to address the following:

**Development Project<sup>13</sup> Question 1:** Would the project cause substantial VMT per capita, per employee, or total (depending on project type)?

**How to Determine:** The project will have a potential impact if:

- For residential projects, the project would generate household VMT per capita exceeding 15% below the existing average household VMT per capita in the Area Planning Commission (APC) in which the project is located.
- For office projects, the project would generate work VMT per employee exceeding 15% below the existing average work VMT per employee in the APC in which the project is located.
- For retail projects, the project would result in a net increase in VMT.
- For other land use types, the project would generate work VMT per employee exceeding 15% below the existing average work VMT per employee in the APC in which the project is located.
- For mixed-use projects, evaluate each project land use component separately using the criteria in the above bullets. Note, no separate evaluation is needed for the total sum retail components of a project that are under 50,000 square feet.

**Sources:** See Section 2.2 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines or project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 2 for definition of a Land Use Project.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 10 for definition of Development Projects.

**Plan Project<sup>14</sup> Question 1:** Would the plan cause substantial VMT per capita or per employee?

**How to Determine:** The plan will have a potential impact if:

- The land use growth anticipated under the plan in conjunction with transportation system improvements included in the plan would result in average household VMT per capita exceeding the average household VMT per capita projected for the plan area with the SCAG RTP/SCS cumulative year land use forecast and transportation system improvements and policies.
- The land use growth anticipated under the plan in conjunction with transportation system improvements included in the plan would result in average work VMT per employee exceeding the average work VMT per employee projected for the plan area with the SCAG RTP/SCS cumulative year land use forecast and transportation system improvements and policies.

**Sources:** See Section 2.2 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-2.2: For a transportation project, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2)?**

To determine if there is an impact under the threshold above, you will need to address the following:

**Question 1:** Would the transportation project increase the project area<sup>15</sup> VMT?

**How to Determine:** The project will have a potential impact if:

- The project will increase the project area<sup>16</sup> VMT as measurable by the City's base year travel demand model plus an induced travel elasticity factor per lane mile.

**Sources:** See Section 2.3 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

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<sup>14</sup> See footnote 11 for definition of Plan Projects.

<sup>15</sup> The project area, for the purposes of a VMT analysis of transportation projects will be defined on a project by project basis. The area shall include the transportation analysis zones that contain a non-significant amount of vehicles traveling somewhere along their journey and also along the project corridor segment.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 15.

**THRESHOLD T-3: Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

To determine if there is an impact under the threshold above, you will need to address the following:

**Question 1:** Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature?

**How to Determine:** Preliminary project access plans are to be reviewed in light of commonly-accepted traffic engineering design standards to ascertain whether any deficiencies are apparent in the site access plans which would be considered significant. The determination of significance shall be on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

- The relative amount of pedestrian activity at project access points.
- Design features/physical configurations that affect the visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists to drivers entering and exiting the site, and the visibility of cars to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The type of bicycle facilities the project driveway(s) crosses and the relative level of utilization.
- The physical conditions of the site and surrounding area, such as curves, slopes, walks, landscaping or other barriers, that could result in vehicle/pedestrian, vehicle/bicycle, or vehicle/vehicle impacts.
- Any other conditions, including the approximate location of incompatible uses that would substantially increase a transportation hazard.

**Sources:** See Section 2.4 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-4: Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?**

**How to Determine:** Refer to 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide K.2. FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

**B. CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS**

**THRESHOLD T-1: Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?**

To determine if there is a cumulative impact under the threshold above, depending on whether you have a project or a land use plan, you will need to address the following:

**Development Project<sup>17</sup> Question 1:** Would the project in combination with the effect of related projects along the same block or street frontage cumulatively conflict with applicable programs, plans, ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system?

**How to Determine:** The project will have a potential cumulative impact if:

- The project is inconsistent with major policies applicable to the proposed project. Determine potential impact with respect to consistency with plans, ordinances, and policies based on overall consistency with each plan/ordinance/policy and considering the cumulative effect of nearby related projects.
- The determination of impact for this threshold is based on a nuanced consideration of overall plan, ordinance, and policy consistency. An impact determination would result if (1) the project directly conflicts with a standard established by a plan, policy or ordinance, and the finding(s) that govern relief cannot be made, and (2) that standard is adopted to protect the environment. In general, transportation standards adopted to protect the environment are those that support multimodal transportation options and a reduction in VMT. A project that generally conforms with, and does not obstruct the City's development programs, ordinances, plans and policies will generally be considered to be consistent.

**Sources:** For guidance on addressing project specific questions, see Section 2.1 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Plan Project<sup>18</sup> Question 1:** Would the plan in combination with the effect of other nearby plans cumulatively conflict with applicable program, plans, ordinances or policies addressing the circulation system?

**How to Determine:** The plan will have a potential cumulative impact if:

- The plan is inconsistent with applicable State, Regional, and Local policy documents, such as the SCAG RTP/SCS and the City of Los Angeles *Mobility Plan 2035*. Determine potential impact with respect to consistency with plans, ordinances, and policies based on overall consistency with each plan/policy and considering the cumulative effect of other plan or development projects.
- The determination of impact for this threshold is based on a nuanced consideration of overall plan, and policy consistency. An impact determination would result if (1) the project directly conflicts with a standard established by a plan, policy or ordinance, and the finding(s) that

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<sup>17</sup> See footnote 10 for definition of Development Projects.

<sup>18</sup> See footnote 11 for definition of Plan Projects.

govern relief cannot be made, and (2) that standard is adopted to protect the environment. In general, transportation standards adopted to protect the environment are those that support multimodal transportation options and a reduction in VMT. A project that generally conforms with, and does not obstruct the City's development programs, ordinances, plans and policies will generally be considered to be consistent.

- The plan may propose new goals and policies that could be seen to conflict with, or be inconsistent with the existing plan. However, upon plan adoption, the updated plan may now internally align with the proposed goals and policies. As such, the proposed plan will be evaluated as to the consistency with the plan and policies as revised under the relevant legislative and policy making procedures.

**Sources:** For guidance on addressing plan specific questions, see Section 2.1 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-2.1: For a land use project<sup>19</sup>, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1)?**

To determine if there is a cumulative impact under the threshold above, depending on whether you have a project or a land use plan, you will need to address the following:

**Development Project<sup>20</sup> Question 1:** Is the project inconsistent with the RTP/SCS and, if so, does that inconsistency indicate a significant impact on transportation?

**How to Determine:** For projects development project that are subjected to an efficiency-based impact threshold such residential, office and/or mixed use projects that do not include regional serving retail uses, the project will have a potential impact if:

- The project analysis demonstrates both:
  - a project impact relative to the efficiency-based Threshold T-2.1 (i.e. VMT per capita or VMT per employee), and
  - that the project is inconsistent with the RTP/SCS in terms of development location, density, and intensity, or is located in an area where the RTP/SCS does not specify any development, and in either case the project results in an increase in household VMT per capita, or work VMT per employee (depending on project type)

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<sup>19</sup> See footnote 2 for definition of a land use projects.

<sup>20</sup> See footnote 10 for definition of Development Projects.

above that which was forecasted by the RTP/SCS for the project area in the RTP/SCS horizon year.

For regional serving retail projects<sup>21</sup>, the project will have a potential impact if:

- The regional serving retail project would result in a cumulative impact if a cumulative "plus project" scenario were shown to lead to a net increase in daily VMT as compared to the cumulative "no project" scenario representing the adopted RTP/SCS horizon year conditions (as incorporated into the City's travel demand model).

**Sources:** See Section 2.2 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**Plan Project<sup>22</sup> Question 1:** Is the plan inconsistent with the RTP/SCS and, if so, does that inconsistency indicate a significant impact on transportation?

**How to Determine:** The plan will have a potential impact if:

- The land use growth anticipated under the plan in conjunction with transportation system improvements included in the plan would result in average household VMT per capita exceeding the average household VMT per capita projected for the plan area with the SCAG RTP/SCS cumulative year land use forecast and transportation system improvements and policies.
- The land use growth anticipated under the plan in conjunction with transportation system improvements included in the plan would result in average work VMT per employee exceeding the average work VMT per employee projected for the plan area with the SCAG RTP/SCS cumulative year land use forecast and transportation system improvements and policies.

**Sources:** See Section 2.2 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-2.2: For a transportation project, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2)?**

To determine if there is a cumulative impact under the threshold above, you will need to address the following:

**Question 1:** Is the project inconsistent with the RTP/SCS and, if so, does that inconsistency indicate a significant impact on transportation?

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<sup>21</sup> Regional serving retail projects are defined as retail projects that are above 50,000 square foot in total area

<sup>22</sup> See footnote 11 for definition of Plan Projects.

**How to Determine:** The project will have a potential impact if:

- The transportation project is not included in the RTP/SCS and the project results in an increase in VMT.

**Sources:** See Section 2.3 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-3: Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

To determine if there is a cumulative impact under the threshold above, you will need to address the following:

**Question 1:** Would the project in combination with other related projects substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature?

**How to Determine:** Review project site access plans for related projects with access points proposed along the same block(s) as the proposed project. Determine the combined impact and the project's contribution.

**Sources:** See Section 2.4 in LADOT Transportation Assessment Guidelines.

**THRESHOLD T-4: The project would result in inadequate emergency access.**

**How to Determine:** Refer to 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide K.2. FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

**C. MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS**

**THRESHOLD T-1: Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?**

Identify mitigation measures that could reduce or eliminate any inconsistencies with applicable plans, ordinances, or policies. Determine level of significance after mitigation.

**THRESHOLD T-2.1: For a land use project<sup>23</sup>, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(1)?**

Identify mitigation measures that could reduce the amount of vehicle miles traveled per capita or per employee (such as transportation demand management [TDM] measures or changes in land use mix). Determine level of significance after mitigation.

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<sup>23</sup> See footnote 2 for definition of a land use projects.

**THRESHOLD T-2.2: For a transportation project, would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)(2)?**

Identify mitigation measures that could reduce the amount of increased vehicle travel induced by capacity increases (such as tolling new lanes to encourage carpools and fund transit improvements, converting existing general purpose lanes to high occupancy vehicle [HOV]/high occupancy toll [HOT] or bus lanes, implementing or funding TDM measures off-site, or implementing intelligent transportation systems [ITS] strategies to improve passenger throughput on existing lanes). Determine level of significance after mitigation.

**THRESHOLD T-3: Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?**

Identify mitigation measures that could reduce or eliminate hazards due to a geometric design feature. Determine level of significance after mitigation.

**THRESHOLD T-4: The project would result in inadequate emergency access.**

**How to Determine:** Refer to 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide K.2. FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

#### **IV. REFERENCE SECTION**

##### **A. DEFINITIONS**

The “**Regional Transportation Plan**” (RTP), is a planning document prepared every four years by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for the six county region that includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura and Imperial counties. The RTP also contains a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), that provides regional guidance with respect to land use in response to state laws (AB 32, SB 375) requiring reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The RTP also provides the basis for conformance with the Clean Air Act with respect to mobile sources (the Air Quality Management Plan provides documentation with respect to stationary sources and other sources such as trains, planes and ships). The RTP includes growth projections for the next 20 years for each jurisdiction in the region. It is this growth projection that is the default projection used for most land use (and related) analyses in the region unless more specific data is available from the Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP).

The “**General Plan**” is a dynamic document consisting of several elements, including the Land Use Element. For the City of LA, the Land Use Element is comprised of 35 Community Plans plus plans for the Port of Los Angeles and Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA). California state law requires that every city and county prepare and adopt a



long-term, comprehensive General Plan for its future development. The Land Use Element plan should be integrated and internally consistent with a compatible statement of goals, objectives, policies and programs that provide a decision-making basis for physical development. Government Code Sections 65860 requires that zoning ordinances be consistent with the General Plan.

A “**Community Plan**” is a planning document prepared for each of 35 areas (communities) within the City that (together with plans for the Port and LAWA) comprise the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The 35 community plans develop, maintain and implement the General Plan as appropriate for each community.

“**Mobility Plan 2035**” (MP2035) provides the policy foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users. As the City’s General Plan Transportation Element, the MP2035 incorporates “complete streets” principles and lays the policy foundation for how future generations of Angelenos interact with their streets.

The “**Framework Element**”, or the General Plan Framework Element, is a strategy for long-term growth that sets a citywide context to guide the update of the community plans and citywide elements. The Framework Element responds to State and Federal mandates to plan for the future. The Framework Element does not mandate or encourage growth. The Framework Element establishes the broad overall policy and direction for the entire General Plan. It provides a citywide context and a comprehensive long-range strategy to guide the comprehensive update of the General Plan’s other elements. The Framework Element also provides guidance for the preparation of related General Plan implementation measures including specific plans, ordinances, or programs, including the City’s Capital Improvement Program.

An “**ordinance**” is a law set forth by a governmental authority; a municipal regulation.

## **B. SOURCES**

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures-A Resource for Local Government to Assess Emission Reductions from Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures*, 2010.

City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Municipal Code.

City of Los Angeles, *The Citywide General Plan Framework, An Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan*, adopted 1995, and re-adopted 2001.

City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *Complete Streets Design Guide*.

City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *Mobility Plan 2035, An Element of the General Plan*, Adopted by City Council September 7, 2016.

City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, *Manual of Policies and Procedures*.

City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, *Transportation Assessment Guidelines*, \_\_\_\_\_ 2018.

Federal Highway Administration, *Volume III – Guidelines for Applying Traffic Microsimulation Modeling Software*, August 2003.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Guidelines for Driveway Location & Design*, 1987.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Transportation and Land Development*, 1988.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Trip Generation*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2012.

Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Trip Generation Handbook*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2014.

Southern California Association of Governments, *2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*, adopted April 2016.

Transportation Research Board, *2010 Highway Capacity Manual*, 2010.

Transportation Research Board, National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 684, *Enhancing Internal Trip Capture Estimation for Mixed-Use Developments*.

## **C. DATA RESOURCES**

### **NAVIGATE LA**

Navigate LA is the Department of Public Works web tool. Navigate LA consolidates information from several City departments and provides a variety of information including haul route maps, Mobility Plan 2035 street designations, and whether a street is on the High Injury Network.

### **ZIMAS**

The City maintains a GIS-based Zone Information and Map Access System (ZIMAS) database. ZIMAS provides several searching tools for locating properties of interest. Users can find specific sites by searching on address, Assessor Identification Number (AIN), or legal description. If this information is unknown, users can initiate a search for a general location by entering street intersections or may visually search for the property on the map display using the various tools that interact with the map. Information that can be obtained from ZIMAS:

- Parcel size
- Assessor Parcel No (APN)

- Community Plan Area
- Council District
- Building Permit Information
- Zoning
- General Plan Land Use
- Hillside Area
- Specific Plan
- Historic Places LA
- Community Design overlay
- Clean Up Green Up applicability

# FINDINGS

## General Plan Findings

The update to the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, pursuant to SB 743, is not an ordinance update, and will not amend any portion of the City's General Plan. As such, adoption does not require findings to ensure consistency with the General Plan, pursuant to City Charter Sections 556 and 558. Regardless, as general practice, the Department recognizes the importance of ensuring that updates are in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the City's General Plan.

### **A. General Plan Framework Element**

SB 743 tasked OPR with selecting an alternative criteria for evaluating transportation impacts that "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses". The update to the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide is in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan, as outlined in the specific topic areas below:

#### Development of Multi-Modal Transportation Networks

Goal 3L - Districts that promote pedestrian activity and provide a quality experience for the City's residents.

Policy 3.10.2 - Accommodate and encourage the development of multi-modal transportation centers, where appropriate.

#### Diversity of Land Uses

Goal 4A - An equitable distribution of housing opportunities by type and cost accessible to allow residents in the City.

Goal 7B - A City with a balance of land uses that provides for commercial and industrial development which meets the needs of local residents, sustains economic growth, and assures maximum feasible environmental quality.

Goal 7D - A City able to attract and maintain new land uses and businesses.

Goal 7G - A range of housing opportunities in the City.

Objective 7.9 - Ensure that the available range of housing opportunities is sufficient, in terms of location, concentration, type, size, price/rent range, access to local services and access to transportation, to accommodate future population growth and to enable a reasonable portion of the City's workforce to both live and work in the City.

### **B. Transportation Element**

SB 743 tasked OPR with selecting an alternative criteria for evaluating transportation impacts that "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses". The update to the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide is in substantial conformance with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan, in that they would further accomplish the goals,

objectives, and policies of the Transportation Element, Mobility Plan 2035, as outlined in the specific topic areas below:

### Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Key Policy Initiative - Target greenhouse gas reductions through a more sustainable transportation system.

Objective - Meet a 9% per capita GHG reduction for 2020 and 16% per capita reduction for 2035 (SCAG RTP).

### Development of Multi-Modal Transportation Networks

Policy 1.1 - Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.

Policy 3.1 - Recognize all modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicular modes - including goods movement - as integral components of the City's transportation system.

### Diversity of Land Uses

Policy 3.3 - Promote equitable land use decisions that result in fewer vehicle trips by providing greater proximity and access to jobs, destinations, and other neighborhood services.

### Analysis of Transportation Impacts with a VMT Metric

Objective - Decrease VMT per capita by 5% every five years, to 20% by 2035.

Policy 4.8 - Encourage greater utilization of Transportation Demand Management strategies to reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.

Policy 5.2 - Support ways to reduce VMT per capita.

Policy 5.3 - Support a range of transportation metrics to evaluate the multiple purposes that streets serve.

### CEQA Findings

The adoption of the proposed update to the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7, is not a "project" pursuant to CEQA as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15378, and is therefore not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15060(c)(3). Separately and independently, the proposal is also exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3), as it will not result directly or indirectly in significant environmental impacts; and/or Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(1), as the proposal is ministerial, because the City is mandated to adopt the proposal. As such, the new thresholds are categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15308 and none of the exceptions in 15300.2 apply.

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,  
UPDATING THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT TRANSPORTATION  
THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE PURSUANT TO SENATE BILL 743

**WHEREAS**, Governor Edmund G. Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 743 in 2013, which directed the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop updated criteria for measuring transportation impacts using alternative metrics that promote a reduction in greenhouse gases, the development of multimodal transportation, and a diversity of land uses; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released the Proposed Updates to the CEQA Guidelines in November 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, the Natural Resources Agency released the Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action Amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines in November 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of Administrative Law approved the CEQA Guidelines on December 28, 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Los Angeles City Council introduced a motion directing the Department of City Planning (DCP) and the Department of Transportation (LADOT) to “begin specific tasks in anticipation of the State’s adoption of the amended CEQA Guidelines implementing SB 743”; and

**WHEREAS**, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7(b) allows lead agencies to adopt thresholds of significance for the lead agency’s general use in its environmental review process; and

**WHEREAS**, the DCP and LADOT have prepared the proposed updated Transportation thresholds of significance, pursuant to Senate Bill 743 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, for the City Council’s consideration and adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Transportation thresholds of significance are more stringent than OPR’s recommendation, in order to account for the size and varying travel characteristics of the City of Los Angeles; and

**WHEREAS**, staff may need to update Transportation thresholds of significance, based on a data-driven evaluation, in order to meet the intent of State legislation and Council direction; and

**WHEREAS**, City Charter Section 506 grants the head of each department the power to make and enforce all rules and regulations necessary for the exercise of the powers conferred upon the department by the Charter, including rules and regulations to implement CEQA compliance for the department’s projects, such as, establishing thresholds of significance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE City Council of the City of Los Angeles, California, hereby:

1. Adopts the proposed Transportation thresholds of significance as the City's thresholds of significance for transportation-related environmental impacts in the City's projects, pursuant to CEQA, replacing all other City transportation thresholds of significance including but not limited to those identified in 2006 CEQA Thresholds Guide (Threshold Guide) (including as described on pages L. 1-1 to L.8-1, with the exception of emergency access covered in K.2).
2. Authorizes the Director of the DCP, in consultation with LADOT, to update the Transportation thresholds of significance for land use projects and plans, as necessary and appropriate, provided any update is consistent with the intent of Senate Bill 743 and in compliance with procedural and substantive requirement of CEQA and all other applicable state and local laws.
3. Authorizes the General Manager of the LADOT, in consultation with DCP, to update the Transportation thresholds of significance for transportation projects, as necessary and appropriate, provided any update is consistent with the intent of Senate Bill 743 and in compliance with procedural and substantive requirement of CEQA and all other applicable state and local laws.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED at a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ by the following vote, to wit: