

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION, TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT, and RESOLUTIONS relative to updating the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) Thresholds Guide.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. DETERMINE, based on the whole of the administrative record, that the proposed action is not a project under CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(1) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061 (b)(3) and 15308, and that none of the exceptions in Section 15300.2 apply.
2. ADOPT the accompanying RESOLUTION, pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 743 and CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15064.3 and 15064.7(b), updating the City's adopted transportation thresholds.
3. ADOPT the accompanying RESOLUTION to elect to be exempted from the Congestion Management Program (CMP) as described in California Government Code Section 65088 to 65089.10, pursuant to the provisions in Section 65089.3.
4. APPROVE the proposed CEQA Transportation Section update recommended by the Los Angeles City Planning Commission (LACPC) in the Letter of Determination dated March 11, 2019, as amended to incorporate technical corrections presented by the Department of City Planning (DCP) in a document dated June 7, 2019, attached to the Council file.
5. ADOPT the accompanying Findings attached to the LACPC Letter of Determination dated March 11, 2019.
6. INSTRUCT the DCP and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to report back annually for two years on status, and whether any additional changes are needed to meet the intent of SB 743.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The LADOT reports that this action will not impact the General Fund.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

SUMMARY

The overview of the CEQA Transportation Section update states that when SB 743 became law in 2013, 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. 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 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. The update presented by DCP covers thresholds for a project's significance, consideration of impact analysis and expert studies, as well as thresholds for cumulative, mitigation, and residual impacts.

In a report to Council dated June 5, 2019, LADOT discusses the DCP report and the LACPC's recommendations. LADOT states that the LACPC recommends that Council adopt new transportation impact thresholds using VMT instead of Level of Service (LOS) as mandated by SB 743. LADOT recommends that Council approve the LACPC's recommendations, and further recommends that Council adopt the accompanying Resolution permitting the City of Los Angeles to opt out of the CMP to further align with the switch from LOS to VMT evaluation method for CEQA clearances.

At its meeting held June 12, 2019, the Transportation Committee discussed this matter with the General Managers of LADOT and DCP. The General Manager, LADOT, stated that existing mitigation language in the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide rewards development in less dense suburban areas, while effectively punishing development in urban areas. SB 743 allows cities to mandate mitigations rather than to request voluntary compliance from developers, and to also measure the actual impact of a new development and (if necessary) modify mitigation measures to reach CEQA impact goals. Overall, the new provisions provide a broader set of tools for the City to work with developers to reduce environmental impacts.

The Committee Chair expressed support for the proposed update of the Transportation Section of the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, stating the new provisions protect neighborhoods and improve mobility. Committee recommended that Council approve the recommendation of the LACPC and LADOT, as amended to incorporate technical revisions of the proposed updates as presented by DCP in a document transmitted to the Office of the City Clerk on June 7, 2019, and attached to the Council file.

Respectfully Submitted,

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE



MEMBER VOTE

BONIN: YES

MARTINEZ: YES

KORETZ: YES

jaw

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-