



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Kevin Tsang | COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

FROM: Giancarlo Ganddini | GANDDINI GROUP, INC.

DATE: January 7, 2021

SUBJECT: Winchester at Jean Nicholas Commercial Retail Center Vehicle Miles Travelled Analysis
Project No. 19-0221

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an assessment of the proposed project's Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) impact for compliance with CEQA Section 15064.3.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project site is located at the northwest corner of Winchester Road (SR-79) and Jean Nicholas Road in the unincorporated French Valley community of Riverside County. The currently vacant project site is proposed to be developed with 2,627 square feet of coffee shop with drive-thru and a 16 fueling position super convenience market/gas station. Full access for the project site is proposed on Jean Nicholas Road at Mauna Loa Road with right turns in only access at a driveway on Jean Nicholas Road between Mauna Loa Road and Winchester Road (SR-79). The proposed project is anticipated to be constructed and fully operational by year 2022.

BACKGROUND

California Senate Bill 743 (SB 743) directs the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to amend the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for evaluating transportation impacts to provide alternatives to Level of Service that "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses." In December 2018, the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted the updated CEQA Guidelines package. The amended CEQA Guidelines, specifically Section 15064.3, recommend the use of Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) as the primary metric for the evaluation of transportation impacts associated with land use and transportation projects. In general terms, VMT quantifies the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project or region. Agencies may currently opt-in to applying the updated CEQA guidelines for VMT analysis and implementation is required State-wide by July 1, 2020.

The updated CEQA Guidelines allow for lead agency discretion in establishing methodologies and thresholds provided there is substantial evidence to demonstrate that the established procedures promote the intended goals of the legislation. Where quantitative models or methods are unavailable, Section 15064.3 allows agencies to assess VMT qualitatively using factors such as availability of transit and proximity to other destinations. The [Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA](#) (State of California, December 2018) ["OPR Technical Advisory"] provides technical considerations regarding methodologies and thresholds with a focus on office, residential, and retail developments as these projects tend to have the greatest influence on VMT.

VMT SCREENING

This VMT assessment is based on guidance from the OPR Technical Advisory and the Riverside County Transportation Department Transportation Analysis Guidelines (December 2020) ["Riverside County Guidelines"]. The Riverside County Guidelines provide the following screening criteria for certain land development projects that may be presumed to result in a less than significant VMT impact:

- Small projects generating less than 110 trips per day or resulting in less than 3,000 Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MTCO_{2e});
- Projects near high quality transit;
- Local serving retail (less than 50,000 square feet);
- Affordable housing;
- Local essential service (e.g., day care center, public K-12 school, police/fire facilities, medical/dental offices under 50,000 square feet, government offices, community parks);
- Map-based screening (i.e., projects in low-VMt areas);
- Redevelopment projects with lower VMT than existing on-site uses.

Screening Assessment for Small Projects

The Riverside County Guidelines establish a VMT screening criteria for projects with low trip generation per existing CEQA exemptions or that result in less than 3,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO_{2e}) per year based on the Riverside County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Screening Tables. In accordance with the Riverside County Guidelines, retail projects up to 60,000 square feet do not exceed the 3,000 MT CO_{2e} screening threshold and can be presumed to result in a less than significant VMT impact.

The proposed project consists of retail uses with a total building area of less than 60,000 square feet. Therefore, the proposed project can be considered to result in a less than significant VMT impact based on the County-established small projects screening criteria for local-serving retail uses.

Screening Assessment for Local Serving Retail

New retail development typically redistributes shopping trips rather than creating new trips. By adding retail opportunities into the urban fabric and thereby improving proximity, local-serving retail tends to shorten trips and reduce VMT. Similarly, other local serving uses such as schools, daycare, student housing, and public facilities would typically improve the proximity of such uses within the community, thereby shortening travel distances and reducing VMT.

The proposed project has a total building area of less than 50,000 square feet and is expected to serve the local community. Therefore, the proposed project can be considered to result in a less than significant VMT impact since it consists of local-serving retail uses.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project can be presumed to result in a less than significant VMT impact based on the VMT screening criteria established by the Riverside County Guidelines for small projects and local serving retail.

Should you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please contact me at (714) 795-3100.