

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
Email: state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

FROM: City of Watsonville
Community Development Dept.
250 Main Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County
701 Ocean Street, Room 520
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

FILE NO.: n/a

Project Title: VMT Policy

Project Location - Specific: Citywide

Project Location - City: Watsonville

Project Location - County: Santa Cruz

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: On September 27, 2022, the City Council adopted a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Policy inclusive of establishing VMT as the appropriate metric for evaluating transportation-related impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), establishing VMT thresholds of significance, establishing screening criteria, establishing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, and establishing a VMT Mitigation Banking Program.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Watsonville

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Community Development Department and Public Works & Utilities Department

Exempt Status (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Not a "project" & General Rule; §§15378, 15061(b)(3)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____


Reasons why project is exempt: The VMT Policy, including the VMT Mitigation Banking Program, is consistent with state law, in that it would allow the City to implement SB 743 in accordance with OPR's technical guidelines on evaluating transportation impacts in CEQA. The adoption of a VMT Policy is not a "project" as defined in section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines and Public Resources Code section 21065, as this is not a "project" that may cause a direct, or reasonably foreseeable indirect, physical change in the environment. The VMT Policy is an administrative activity of the City, providing guidance to property owners, project developers, applicants and proponents for determining the significance of transportation impacts of land use projects. The VMT Policy would not approve any specific development and would therefore not lead to any particular physical change to the environment. Moreover, even if found to be a "project," the VMT Policy is exempt under the "common sense" exception (14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15061(b)(3)) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the action of adopting the Policy would have a significant effect on the environment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Justin Meek

Telephone: 831.768.3077

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature:  **Date:** September 28, 2022 **Title:** Principle Planner, AICP

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant