CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: March 5, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

Subject: Consideration of Adoption of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Thresholds and Policies

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Thresholds as recommended by the Planning Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This is the final step in the process of adoption of Vehicle Miles Traveled thresholds for the City. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the analysis of how many vehicle miles are expected from a development. The proposed VMT thresholds are consistent with State Law, and will allow for more streamlined review of certain projects, while still allowing the City to maintain local control over review of development. This project will also adopt the local (Sonoma County Transportation Authority/SCTA) travel model for analysis of VMT, which is more detailed and more cost effective to do than other models.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The City received a grant award for this project from the State, and has retained Fehr & Peers, a transportation engineering/consulting firm, to assist the City with this project. Fehr & Peers has done a significant amount of work for the Sonoma County Transpiration Authority (SCTA), including travel modeling that included the City of Sebastopol and surrounding areas. They have also developed "SB743" screening maps for SCTA which includes VMT tools and screening maps.

On February 13, 2024, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed draft Final Memo for the Vehicle-Miles Traveled (VMT) Thresholds in accordance with Senate Bill SB 743. After hearing a staff report, the Commission voted to request that staff prepare a Resolution recommending the City Council adopt the VMT thresholds, with minor corrections to the draft memo. Those modifications have been made, and a resolution is now presented to the Commission for adoption.

The February 13th, 2024, staff report, which includes background and discussion, is attached to this report, as is the proposed Resolution and final draft VMT memo.

Key Points

- With the adoption of the 15% mitigation threshold for VMT this allows for flexibility for projects that trigger VMT review during the CEQA process and there is no significant changes from what the State of California requires.
- Using a 15% reduction of the City's residential baseline VMT for residential projects and a 15% reduction based on the Regional baseline VMT for commercial/office projects this provides a local model that is more detailed and cost effective.
- Level of Service (LOS) is still a consideration for projects when looking at traffic issues but VMT is the metric
 used for CEQA analysis.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

F	ISC	ΔΙ	IM	ΙΡΔ	·C-	۲٠
		\sim L	HV	1 -		

None. If adopted, the VMT thresholds will reduce costs for some applicants for processing of applications.

OPTIONS:

Adopt the final memo as recommended by the Planning Commission

ATTACHMENTS:

Planning Commission Resolution recommending Adoption of the VMT Thresholds

Prior meeting materials are available at:

https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/events/planning-commission-meeting-february-13-2024/

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: February 21, 2024 CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: February 21, 2024

The proposed action is exempt under Section 15378(b)(5) California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as

this is a required action to comply with State Law.

Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: 2/26/2024

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Account Code (f applicable)

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: $\frac{2/27/2024}{2/28/2024}$ City Manager Approval: Approval Date: $\frac{2/28/2024}{2/28/2024}$

RESOLUTION NO. 24-01

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE PROPOSED VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) THRESHOLDS

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol completed a comprehensive General Plan update with adoption of a new General Plan on November 15, 2016; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, codified at Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR, § 15000 et seq.), on November 15, 2016, the City Council certified and adopted an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Sebastopol General Plan (the "Project"; State Clearinghouse No. 2016032001); and

WHEREAS, the State of California SB743, effective 2020, which shifts transportation impact metrics for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) from vehicle level of service (LOS) for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and,

WHEREAS, the project is consistent with the General Plan, in that it conforms to the following:

Goal CIR 5: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in Order to Reduce Congestion and Help Achieve Regional Efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

Policy CIR 5-1: Actively support the Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) in its efforts to reduce GHG emissions and strive to meet its regional goals. Policy CIR 5-2: Ensure that the City's Trip Reduction Program (Municipal Code Section 8.16) is implemented. The purpose of the City's Trip Reduction ordinance is to reduce traffic and improve air quality within the City of Sebastopol by promoting the development of Trip Reduction Programs (also referred to as Transportation Demand Management Programs, or TDM) at existing and future work sites. Examples of TDM programs may include (but are not limited to) subsidized transit passes, guaranteed ride home, carpool matching, telecommuting, alternative work schedules, car sharing, employer-sponsored vanpools, priced workplace parking, preferential parking for carpools and/or low-emission vehicles, and shower facilities at workplaces to support bike riding.

Policy CIR 5-3: Support the establishment and expansion of a regional network of electric vehicle charging stations and encourage the expanded use of electric vehicles.

Actions in Support of Goal CIR 5

Action CIR 5a: Supply transportation data to the RCPA as requested to assist in the assessment of GHG reduction efforts.

Action CIR 5b: Establish specific TDM requirements that is consistent with the

City's Trip Reduction Program for projects and consider making requirements sector-based (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial).

Action CIR 5c: Complete surveys of employment trips as outlined in the City's Trip Reduction Program.

Action CIR 5d: Establish standards and requirements for electric vehicle parking, including the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, in new development projects. And,

WHEREAS, the Sebastopol Planning Commission held discussions of the VMT project on July 25, 2023, and the City Council held a discussion on the VMT project on September 5, 2023, and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public meeting on February 13, 2024, to consider the final recommended VMT thresholds, hear a staff presentation, took public comment, and after deliberating, voted 3-0-0-2 (Ayes: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz, Commissioner Oetinger; Absent: Commissioners Burnes, Hanley) to have staff prepare a Resolution recommending the VMT thresholds to City Council for consideration at its February 27, 2024 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission voted to recommend the VMT thresholds at its February 27, 2024 meeting as follows (unanimously, or by role vote).

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION DOES HEREBY ADOPT THIS RESOLUTION recommending the City Council adopt the proposed attached Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Memo, including its methodologies and thresholds for the purposes of CEQA review within the City of Sebastopol.

Approved on February 27, 2024, by the following vote:

AYES: Chair Fernandez, Vice Chair Fritz, Commissioners Hanley, Oetinger

NOES: None ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Burnes

Certified:

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director