

## **RESOLUTION 2025-04**

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VISALIA ADOPTING VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND SCREENING CRITERIA FOR PURPOSES OF ANALYZING TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

**WHEREAS**, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted by the State of California in 1970 to ensure the long-term protection of the environment and requires public agencies to analyze and disclose the effects of their actions on the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (“CEQA Guidelines”) encourages public agencies to develop and publish generally applicable “thresholds of significance” to be used in determining the significance of a project’s environmental effects; and

**WHEREAS**, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7(a) defines a threshold of significance as “an identifiable quantitative, qualitative or performance level of a particular environmental effect, noncompliance with which means the effect will normally be determined to be significant by the agency and compliance with which means the effect normally will be determined to be less than significant”; and

**WHEREAS**, screening criteria are applied to determine when a project should be expected to cause a less-than-significant impact without conducting a detailed study; and

**WHEREAS**, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7(b) requires that thresholds of significance be adopted by ordinance, resolution, rule, or regulations, developed through a public review process, and be supported by substantial evidence; and

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 743, enacted in 2013 and codified in Public Resources Code Section 21099, directed the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to develop new CEQA Guidelines to replace LOS with metrics that more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) proposed, and the California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted, new CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 that identifies vehicle miles traveled (VMT), meaning the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project, as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project’s transportation impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 went into effect on July 1, 2020, after which automobile delay, as measured by Level of Service and other similar metrics, will no longer constitute a significant environmental effect under CEQA; and

**WHEREAS**, the adoption of VMT as a threshold of significance is an organizational or administrative activity of City government that does not commit the City to approve any specific project that will result in either direct or indirect physical changes in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), 15061(b)(3)), and the replacement of the LOS metric with VMT is required by the state and is therefore a ministerial action that is exempt from CEQA review (CEQA Guidelines Section 15268(a)); and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Visalia, conducted a study and a public review process consisting of public meetings on December 2, 2020 and on January 27, 2021, a public hearing and staff presentation before the Planning Commission on March 8, 2021, a staff presentation to the City Council on March 15, 2021, and a duly noticed public hearing held by City Council to consider Resolution 2021-08 on March 15, 2021, at which all persons interested were given an opportunity to be heard; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 15, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution 2021-08 approving the City of Visalia VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines, adopting the threshold of significance and criteria for screening for analyzing local transportation impacts under CEQA; and

**WHEREAS**, the thresholds of significance and screening criteria had been developed through a public review process and were supported by substantial evidence as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) Regional Transportation Plan RTP Travel Demand Model (TCAG Model) is the regional travel model and formed the technical basis and provided the substantial evidence for the development of the City of Visalia VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines; and

**WHEREAS**, the TCAG Model is updated and provides new data every four years, which shall require review by City staff and potential updates be performed to the numerical thresholds for VMT metrics, VMT screening maps for the different VMT metrics, and corresponding updates to the City of Visalia VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City Council of the City of Visalia that:

1. The above recitals are incorporated herein as findings for approval of the update to the City of Visalia VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines.
2. The update to the City of Visalia VMT Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted as a threshold of significance and criteria for screening for analyzing local transportation impacts under CEQA.
3. The thresholds of significance and screening criteria have been developed through a public review process and are supported by substantial evidence, as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15064.7.
4. The update to the numerical thresholds for VMT metrics, screening maps, and guidelines, are based on the latest edition of Tulare County Association

of Governments TCAG travel demand model and data, as contained in the City of Visalia Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines document for purposes of analyzing transportation impacts under Senate Bill 743 and the California Environmental Quality Act.

5. City staff are directed to review and update the City of Visalia Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines using the most recent approved information from the TCAG travel demand model as the information from TCAG is updated as part of the Regional Transportation Plan.
6. Future updates to the City of Visalia Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds and Implementation Guidelines based on the most recent approved information from the TCAG demand model do not require Council approval.
7. This Resolution shall become effective on February 3, 2025.

Adopted by the City Council at a regular meeting held on February 3, 2025, by the following vote: