

VMT Traffic Thresholds of Significance



Community Development Department

May 26, 2020

Introduction

General Plan Guidance

- Air quality

Goal NR 2: Improved Air Quality. Air quality that enhances the health and well-being for all residents of Temple City.

- Land Use Mix and Balance

Goal NR 3: Land Use Mix and Balance. A balanced mix of land uses that promote clean air and reduce automobile trips and energy consumption.

- Mobility

Goal M 6: Sustainable Transportation. A sustainable transportation system that can be built, operated, and maintained within the City's existing and future resource limitations.

Introduction

- Council action required to adopt new “thresholds of significance” for CEQA
- CEQA requires review of a project’s impacts
- Requires project’s impacts to be:
 - Mitigated (reduced)
 - Disclosed

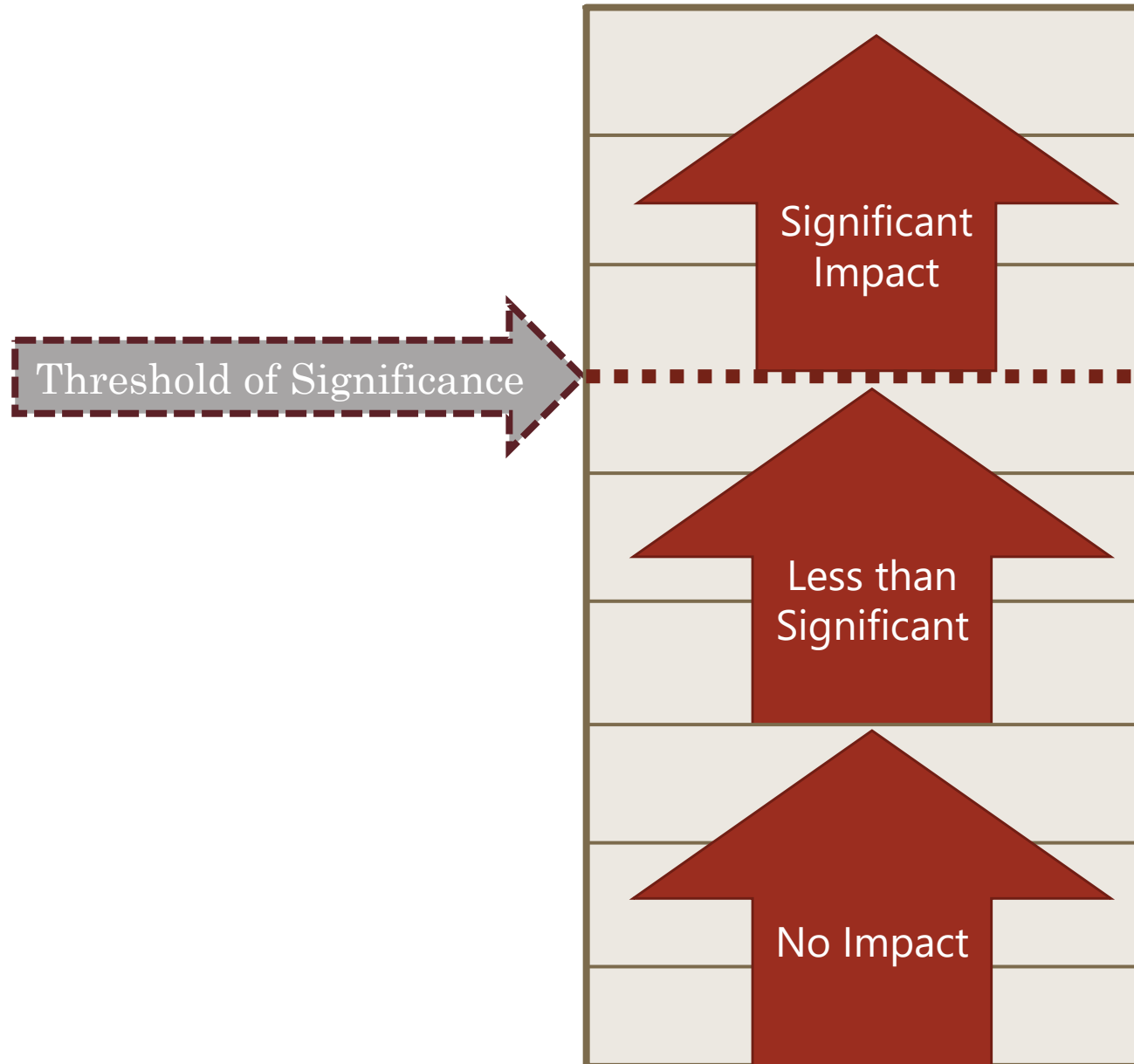
CEQA & Thresholds of Significance

- **Types of Impacts**

- A. No impact
- B. Less than significant impact (*Negative Declaration*)
- C. Less than significant with mitigation measures (*Mitigated Negative Declaration*)
- D. Significant and unavoidable impact (*Environmental Impact Report*)

- **Thresholds of Significance** – Sets when an impact is significant

CEQA & Thresholds of Significance



Changes in Planning

- **Complete Streets Movement**

- Streets are for more than just moving automobiles
 - Pedestrians – Economically vital districts have pedestrians
 - Bicycles – Environmental, health, traffic benefits
 - People with disabilities
 - Creation of a sense of place
- The City Council approved a policy supporting complete streets

Changes in Planning

- **SB 743 – Vehicle Miles Traveled**

- Installation of a bicycle lane is a significant environmental impact?
- Traffic congestion is not an impact on the natural environment
- Eliminates level of service (LOS) under CEQA
 - Moves away from automobile delay
- Requires us of VMT - looks at total trips and length of trips
 - Air quality
 - Greenhouse gas emissions
- City can have auto delay/LOS standards as policy.

VMT Discussion Points

- **Screening Out Local Serving Projects**

- Likely reduce the distance people drive to get services and goods

- Staff recommendation: Be consistent with OPR

- Examples of local serving projects:

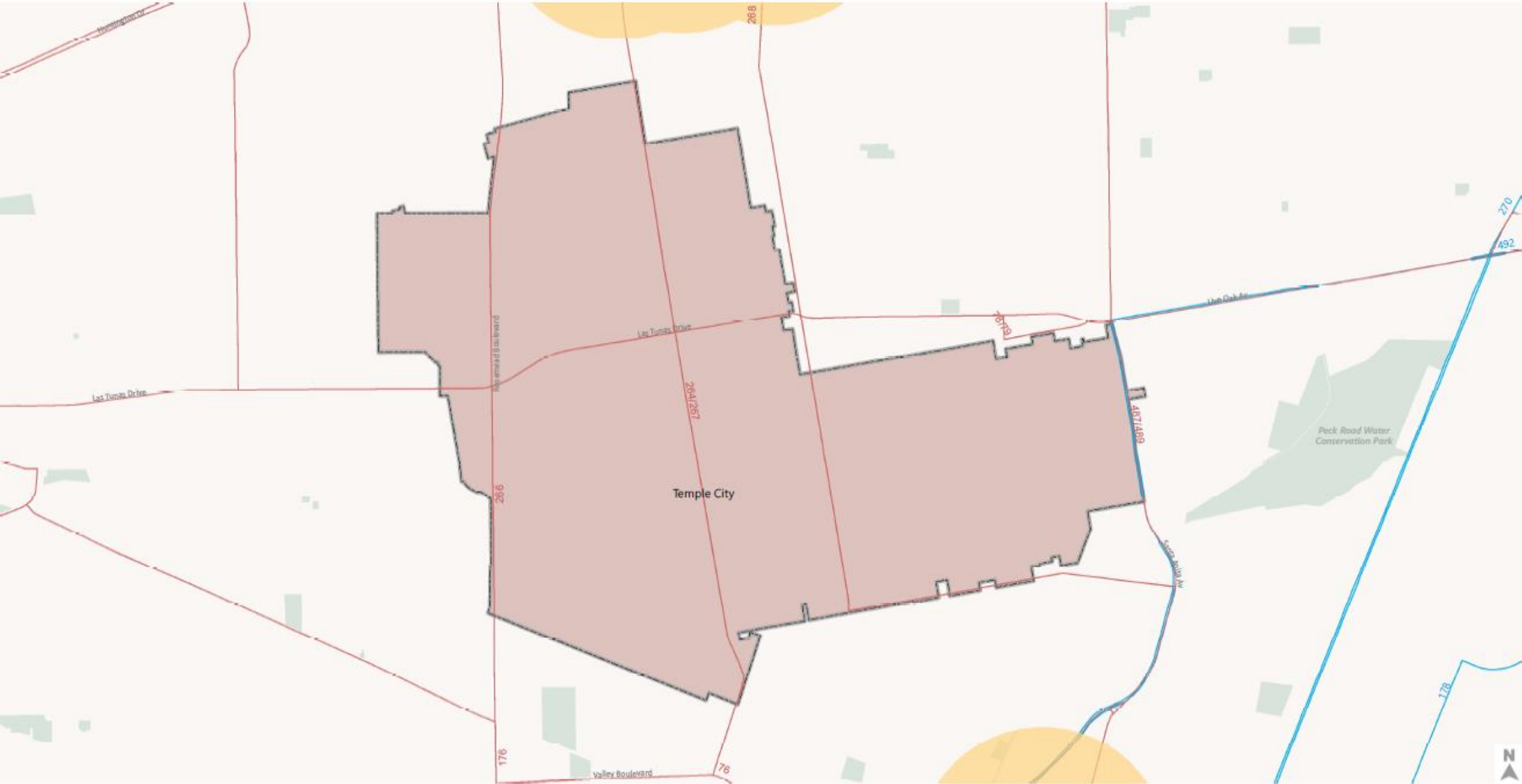
- Retail less than 50,000 sq ft
- Local parks
- K-12 schools
- Daycare centers
- Churches
- Attachment 3 for more examples
- Projects generating less than 110 daily trips
- City can adopt lower, not higher threshold

VMT Discussion Points

- **Screening Out Projects in Low VMT Areas**
 - These areas likely have a good mix of uses
 - Adding more uses provides less and/or shorter trips and bundling of trips
- Staff recommendation: Be consistent with OPR
- Screen out residential and office projects located in low VMT areas

VMT Discussion Points

- **Screening Out Projects in TPAs**
 - Staff recommendation: Be consistent with OPR
 - Locations within half-a-mile of a transit stop or station with a minimum of 15-minute headways during peak commute hours



- Transit Stop with Frequent Service
- Transit Priority Area
- LA Metro Bus (Simplified)
- LA Metro Rail
- Metrolink
- ▭ City Boundary

VMT Discussion Points

- **Screening Out Affordable Housing Projects**
 - Staff recommendation: Be consistent with OPR
 - Helps promote affordable housing
 - Middle and low-income families are more likely to use transit options and active transportation (bicycle and walking)

VMT Discussion Points

- **Setting a Baseline VMT**

- Applies to projects that are not screened out
- Compare the project's VMT to the "baseline" VMT
- Baseline VMT = Average VMT in an area
 - City
 - Subarea of the COG (Alhambra, San Gabriel, Temple City, and El Monte)
 - San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
 - SCAG region
- Staff recommends choosing the SGVCOG as the baseline

VMT Discussion Points

- **When a VMT Impact Becomes Significant:**
 - Staff recommendation: Be consistent with OPR
 - Land Use Plans: Significant impacts occurs if a plan generates VMT higher than 15 percent below the baseline VMT
 - Projects: Significant impacts occurs if a project generates VMT higher than 15 percent below the baseline VMT
 - Transportation Projects: Significant impacts will occur if the projects result in a net increase in VMT.

Conclusion

Recommendation

Adopt the attached resolution recommending that the City Council find that the action is exempt from CEQA and adopt the proposed thresholds of significance.

Next Steps

Planning Commission
(May 26)

City Council
(June 16)