

**Appendix F**

**VMT Analysis**

**(Available on City website)**

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## **VITALIA/REFUGE PALM DESERT RESIDENTIAL VMT SCREENING ANALYSIS**

Ms. Nicole Sauviat Criste,

Urban Crossroads, Inc. is pleased to provide the following vehicle miles traveled (VMT) screening analysis for the Vitalia/Refuge Palm Desert Residential development (**Project**) located west of Rembrandt Parkway and south of Gerald Ford Drive in the City of Rancho Mirage (See Attachment A).

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

It is our understanding that the Project is to consist of 969 residential dwelling units, of which 248 are single family detached, 302 are rental homes, 150 are paired housing, and 269 are apartments (See Attachment A).

### **BACKGROUND**

Changes to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines were adopted in December 2018, which require all lead agencies to adopt VMT as a replacement for automobile delay-based level of service (LOS) as the measure for identifying transportation impacts for land use projects. This statewide mandate went into effect July 1, 2020. To aid in this transition, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released a [Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA](#) (December of 2018) (**Technical Advisory**) (1). Based on OPR's Technical Advisory, the County of Riverside has prepared their [Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service, Vehicle Miles Traveled \(County Guidelines\)](#) (2). This VMT analysis has been developed based on the adopted County Guidelines as the City of Palm Desert utilizes the County Guidelines.

### **VMT SCREENING**

The County Guidelines set forth screening criteria under which Projects are not required to submit detailed VMT analysis. This guidance for determination of non-significant VMT impact is primarily intended to avoid unnecessary analysis and findings that would be inconsistent with the intent of SB 743. VMT screening criteria for development projects include the following:

- **Small Projects** with low trip generation per existing CEQA exemptions or resulting in a 3,000 metric tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent per year screening level threshold. Specific examples include Single Family Housing projects less than or equal to 110 Dwelling Units and Multi Family (low rise) Housing projects less than or equal to 147 Dwelling Units.

**The small project screening threshold is not met.**

- **Projects Near High Quality Transit** within ½ mile of an existing major transit stop and maintains a service interval frequency of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods. The study area is currently served by the SunLine Transit Agency, but bus service is outside the immediate Project vicinity. Based on the current transit in the study area, the Project site is not located within ½ mile of an existing major transit stop, nor along a high-quality transit corridor.

**The high quality transit screening threshold is not met.**

- **Affordable Housing** with a high percentage of affordable units as determined by the Planning and Engineering departments.

**The affordable housing screening threshold is not met.**

- **Map-Based Screening** eliminates the need for complex analyses by allowing existing VMT data to serve as a basis for screening smaller residential and office developments. Map-based screening is performed for residential and office developments, per the County Guidelines. A Project is presumed to have a less-than-significant impact if the area of development is under the threshold as shown on the screening map. This map-based screening eliminates the need for complex analyses by allowing existing VMT data to serve as a basis for the screening of smaller residential and office developments.

Map-based screening is performed using the map titled: RIVTAM Model (2012) Daily Residential Home Based VMT per Capita Comparison to Riverside County Average, which indicates it is based upon the County average. The map utilizes the sub-regional Riverside Transportation Analysis Model (RIVTAM) to measure current VMT performance within individual TAZ's and compares them to the applicable impact threshold (e.g., VMT per capita for residential land uses). The County Guidelines define VMT per Capita as the sum of VMT for personal motorized trips made by all residents of a development project, divided by the total number of residents of the project.

Attachment B shows the Project area on the County's VMT map combined with an overlay of the RIVTAM Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs). The Project is located within RIVTAM TAZ 4672, which experiences less than the County average VMT / Capita. TAZ 4672 experiences 13.62 VMT / Capita whereas the Riverside County threshold is 15.2 VMT / Capita.

For projects that are found to reside in a low VMT generating TAZ, the analyst is also required to verify that the underlying land use assumptions contained in the low VMT generating TAZ are consistent with the proposed development project. Urban Crossroads

reviewed the land use assumptions contained within the Project TAZ (TAZ 4672). TAZ 4672 contains 1,192 households (dwelling units), 2,651 population, which are representative of the 969 dwelling unit project. In addition, the Project TAZ includes jobs which are represented as 1,102 total employees. The residential land uses were found to be consistent with the Project's residential land use. The Project is therefore eligible to be screened out based on map-based screening criteria.

**The map-based screening threshold is met.**

### **FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS**

The Project has been reviewed for VMT screening based upon the Project location on Riverside County's "Daily Residential Home Based VMT per Capita Comparison to Riverside County Average". No further VMT analysis is needed. Residential projects in areas that show less than the County average existing VMT may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [jkain@urbanxroads.com](mailto:jkain@urbanxroads.com) for John Kain or [mwhiteman@urbanxroads.com](mailto:mwhiteman@urbanxroads.com) for Marlie Whiteman.

Respectfully submitted,

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## REFERENCES

1. **Office of Planning and Research.** *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA.* State of California : s.n., December 2018.
2. **County of Riverside.** *Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service, Vehicle Miles Traveled.* December 2020.
3. **Institute of Transportation Engineers.** *Trip Generation Manual.* 11th Edition. 2021.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN**



**ATTACHMENT B**  
**RIVERSIDE COUNTY DAILY RESIDENTIAL HOME BASED VMT PER CAPITA**  
**PROJECT TAZ OVERLAY**



