

# Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

**In the matter of:** A Resolution certifying  
the establishment of CEQA Vehicle Miles Traveled  
thresholds and screening criteria for East Placer  
County and associated amendments to the  
Transportation Study Guidelines

Resolution No. 2021-232

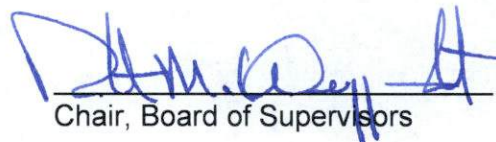
The following resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held on June 22, 2021, by the following vote:

Ayes: GORE, HOLMES, JONES, GUSTAFSON, WEYGANDT

Noes: NONE

Absent: NONE

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

  
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:  
  
Clerk of said Board

---

WHEREAS, public agencies in California have historically relied on a metric known as "Level of Service" (LOS) to evaluate the transportation impacts of development projects under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); 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 (OPR) 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 California Natural Resources Agency certified and adopted new CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 that went into effect on July 1, 2020 and 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 OPR provided guidance under a Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA; and

WHEREAS, upon certification of the updated CEQA Guidelines, automobile delay, as measured by LOS and other similar traffic congestion metrics, will no longer constitute a significant environmental effect under CEQA; and

WHEREAS, the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations ("CEQA Guidelines") encourage 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, On December 1, 2020, the Placer County Board adopted a CEQA thresholds for areas of West Placer County, excluding the eastern portion and the Tahoe Basin. The Board also approved a list of screening criteria which apply to all areas of Placer, including East Placer; and

WHEREAS, Placer County has further collaborated with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) to achieve a streamlined approach for assessment of a project's transportation related environmental impacts by informing VMT analysis methodologies, thresholds, screening criteria and tools for both CEQA and the TRPA Code of Ordinances compliance in East Placer and the Tahoe Basin; and

WHEREAS, the analysis leading to a recommendation considered the goals, programs, and policies of the Placer County General Plan, Housing Strategy and Development Plan, Placer County Sustainability Plan, and other adopted ordinances and plans, as well as factors unique to Placer County, including the diversity of land use contexts across the geography of Placer County, and other strategic initiatives to create a diversity of housing, develop outcome-focused economic development strategies, and provide land use planning and environmental stewardship, as described in Appendix C of the Transportation Study Guidelines; and

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

WHEREAS, the adoption of VMT as a threshold of significance is an organizational or administrative activity of County government that does not commit the County 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 County of Placer, following a public review process consisting of technical workshops with stakeholders within East Placer on February 26, 2020 and May 13, 2021; wishes to adopt the VMT thresholds of significance for determining transportation impacts, along with screening criteria for East Placer County, and amended Transportation Study Guidelines.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF PLACER:**

1. The above recitals are incorporated herein as findings for establishment of East Placer thresholds, screening criteria, and approval of Transportation Study Guidelines amendments.
2. Amendment to the previously adopted Transportation Study Guidelines attached hereto as Exhibit A, are hereby adopted as thresholds of significance for analyzing local transportation impacts under CEQA in East Placer.
3. The Department of Public Works may modify the Transportation Study Guidelines as necessary to reflect the latest research, data, and substantial evidence appropriate to facilitate implementation of the SB 743 requirements. However, any major policy changes that affect the basic thresholds or screening criteria approved herein shall be brought to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval prior to incorporation into the Transportation Study Guidelines.
4. The Board of Supervisors finds that this resolution is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378, 15061(b)(3), and 15268(a).
5. This Resolution shall become effective upon adoption by the Board of Supervisors.