

Scope of Work

Screening Criteria, Thresholds of Significance and Calculation of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analyses to Evaluate Environmental Impacts of Projects in Humboldt County and Incorporated Cities and VMT Analysis of the Regional Climate Action Plan

Purpose: To assist the County of Humboldt and its incorporated cities in fulfilling the requirements of SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013), Public Resources Code 21099¹, and to follow OPR’s revised CEQA Guidelines that identify vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project’s transportation impacts. This analysis will result in recommendations for establishing VMT-based methodology, thresholds, and procedures for CEQA analysis of local and regional transportation impacts of land use and transportation projects and plans in unincorporated Humboldt County and its incorporated cities. Also, using the recommended screening criteria, thresholds of significance and VMT calculation methodology, this project will evaluate the impacts of the 4-7-2022 Draft Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan.

Overall Project Outcomes:

(1) VMT-based methodology, thresholds, and procedures:

- Modify the Humboldt County Travel Demand Model (HCTDM) as necessary for use in analyzing induced travel demand, at the local and regional level, consistent with the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 743 and guidance provided by Caltrans District 1 dated 7/13/22 on file with the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department.
- Utilize the Streetlight application to refine the induced travel demand from the HCDTM
- Establish baseline VMT conditions at local and regional level.
- Based on substantive evidence and stakeholder input, recommend at least three cost effective models and/or methodologies for assessing project-level VMT impacts.
- Identify appropriate quantitative, qualitative and/or performance-based standards for use to estimate/evaluate the transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions from typical residential, commercial and industrial development projects of various sizes.
- Build capacity of local lead agencies and developers to meet SB 743 requirements

(2) Assess VMT impacts and mitigation measures for the Regional CAP EIR using the VMT-based methodology, thresholds, and procedures.

(3) Project Area - The analysis will use clear/consistent language that won’t confuse “county” when it means unincorporated area and when it means the County of Humboldt agency, versus when the VMT analysis is referring to unincorporated and incorporated area combined. The proposed VMT analysis is intended to apply to the unincorporated and incorporated areas of Humboldt County, which is the Project Area.

¹ The criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts must “promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses” (PRC 21099).

Project Tasks:

1. Establish Baseline Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Data

Task 1.1: Collect, Review, and Incorporate Relevant Data from Planning Documents: The consultant will conduct an initial review and analysis of relevant planning documents (such as County and City Circulation Elements of their General Plans, recent Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) EIR, etc.).

Task 1.2: Review/Update Existing Travel Demand Models: The consultant will work with Caltrans District 1 to review the existing Humboldt County Travel Demand Model (HCDTM) and Greater Eureka Area Microsimulation Model (GUAMM), to determine applicability for developing baseline VMT for use in establishing thresholds. This information will be used in the analysis to determine how to best establish VMT baselines, including potential methodologies for establishing VMT baselines for each jurisdiction, and to identify any necessary model modifications. Consultant shall update traffic demand models, as needed for developing baseline VMT for use in establishing thresholds.

Task 1.3: Develop Baseline VMT Data: Estimate and summarize the baseline VMT by major trip types by jurisdiction.

Task 1.4 Document Jurisdictional VMT Data: After reviewing the draft baseline VMT with an advisory group selected by the County and incorporating any recommended revisions, the consultant will document the Baseline VMT Methodology and Data in a Technical Memorandum.

2: Develop VMT Mitigation Measures

Task 2.1: Identify High-Priority VMT Mitigation Measures: With advisory group input, recommend potential VMT reduction strategies based on effectiveness and applicability to local conditions and common projects in the Humboldt County region.

Task 2.2: Develop Localized Quantification Methodology for High Priority Mitigation Measures: Identify methodologies and approaches to quantify VMT reductions associated with high priority mitigation measures. Quantify the estimated level of VMT reduction for each measure.

3: Develop Potential VMT Thresholds, Methodologies, & Forecasting Tools

Task 3.1: Review and Analyze Potential VMT Thresholds: The consultant will review and analyze different VMT metrics (e.g. per capita, per employee, etc.) to determine the most appropriate metric to apply when establishing the VMT thresholds within unincorporated Humboldt County and its incorporated cities. The consultant will identify the realistically achievable VMT mitigation considering appropriate thresholds.

The consultant will also review and analyze potential VMT thresholds and analysis methods in local land use and transportation planning documents including the most current Regional

Transportation Plan, and the General Plan Circulation Elements and General Plan Environmental Impact Reports for the unincorporated County and the three largest cities (Eureka, Arcata and Fortuna).

The consultant will also analyze the need for and applicability of establishing sub-regional VMT thresholds.

Task 3.2: Develop, Evaluate & Recommend Threshold Alternatives: With stakeholder input, the consultant will identify up to three (3) potential VMT thresholds by jurisdiction that could be used to evaluate impacts of new residential, commercial and industrial development of varying sizes and use types. One threshold will be screening criteria that eliminates the need for further detailed analysis on smaller scale projects. The consultant will test the alternative thresholds to verify they result in outcomes consistent with General Plan land use policies of each jurisdiction. The consultant will make a final recommendation on the potential VMT thresholds for each jurisdiction within the region.

Task 3.3: Prepare VMT Threshold Guidance Documents: The consultant will prepare guidance documents that describe how to apply these thresholds in a clear, easy-to-follow manner.

Task 3.4: Identify, Review & Recommend Potential VMT Calculation Methodologies: Identify a minimum of three (3) and up to five (5) potential VMT calculation methodologies for use by the jurisdictions in Humboldt County. These methodologies will consider projects of varying size and scale. Evaluate a minimum of three (3) and up to five (5) projects using the VMT calculation methodologies to verify they are appropriate to use in the Humboldt County region. Recommend the implementation of one or more VMT calculation methodologies for use by the jurisdictions within Humboldt County.

Task 3.5: Prepare Updated Guidance Documents for VMT Calculations: Document VMT calculation approaches that can be used by the jurisdictions within Humboldt County. Develop model traffic study guidelines that the jurisdictions can incorporate into their existing guidelines.

Task 3.6: Develop VMT Forecasting Tool & User Manual: Review available tools that could be modified for use in the Humboldt County region. Develop a tailored VMT forecasting tool for small and medium-sized projects for use by the jurisdictions in Humboldt County, using localized data on travel behavior where appropriate. Produce a “VMT forecasting tool user manual” for use by jurisdiction staff.

4. Assess VMT impacts and mitigation measures for the Regional CAP EIR using the above VMT standards

Task 4.1: Provide a VMT analysis of the CAP to be used in the CAP EIR using the recommended quantitative, qualitative and/or performance-based VMT standards. Consultant will provide discussion of the VMT analysis for the CAP EIR which includes the Environmental Setting, Regulatory Setting, Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15125, 15126, 15126.2, 15126.4, and 15143).

The thresholds of significance used will be based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines; best available data; and regulatory standards of federal, state, and

local agencies. The level of each impact is determined by comparing the effects of the project to the environmental setting. Key methods and assumptions used to frame and conduct the impact analysis as well as issues or potential impacts not discussed further (such issues for which the project would have no impact) are also described.

Task 4.2: Provide a summary of the VMT analysis. Consultant will prepare an impact statement, a summary of each impact, and its level of significance including the substantial evidence supporting the impact significance conclusion.

Task 4.3: Provide a VMT analysis for each CAP alternative . Consultant will prepare a VMT analysis of the impacts of each alternative in the CAP EIR in accordance with CCR Section 15126.6.