
2 Project Description

2.1 Introduction

The City of Vacaville adopted its General Plan and certified the General Plan EIR on August 11, 2015. The General Plan establishes guiding principles and community development goals that reflect the values, ideals, and aspirations of the City through 2035. The General Plan addresses all aspects of development including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, public facilities and infrastructure, and open spaces, among other topics. The General Plan sets forth goals, policies, and actions to attain the desired type, location, and level of development, including goals policies and actions specific to transportation and circulation. The proposed project would amend the City's General Plan Transportation Element to include policy direction on evaluating an increase in new vehicle trips using the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in addition to updating the City's Energy and Conservation Action Strategy (ECAS) to address the State's current climate action goals that go beyond 2020 in order to continue to provide CEQA streamlining for projects consistent with the General Plan and the ECAS.

2.2 Project Location

The project location includes the entire City limits and the City's planning area and Sphere of Influence, which includes approximately 98 square miles, as shown in Figure 2-1. The City lies in a geological transition zone between the Sacramento Valley to the east and the Coast Ranges to the west. The City is located in Solano County between the cities of Dixon and Fairfield. Interstate 80 (I-80) bisects the middle of the city. Along the I-80 corridor the City of Fairfield is located approximately 10 miles to the southwest while the City of Dixon is located approximately 12 miles northeast.

2.3 Project Background

The Transportation Element of the City's General Plan establishes the City's transportation network that supports automobile mobility while also supporting walking and bicycling, improving transit service to key destinations, conserving energy resources, and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution. The Transportation Element includes policies to address these issues, as well as parking, goods movement, airports and transportation funding. As noted in the Transportation Element, "land use patterns and transportation systems are directly related. Land use decisions drive the need for a transportation system, while the capacity of the transportation network may support or constrain land use options." To address the need to better evaluate the transportation impacts created by new development, Senate Bill (SB) 743 was signed into law in 2013. SB 743 is intended to promote the State's goals of encouraging infill development, alternative transportation, and reduced GHG emissions. To promote these goals new methods of evaluating transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), specifically VMT was adopted. Evaluating transportation impacts using VMT is an alternative to the existing measures of congestion and delay (typically expressed as level of service [LOS]). As a result of SB 743, the CEQA Guidelines were revised to identify VMT as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project's transportation impacts, which went into effect on July 1, 2020. The City proposes to update its General Plan Transportation Element policies to implement the VMT impact metric. The City's proposed VMT standard of significance would be

based on the recommendations put forth by the State, as described in *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (OPR, December 2018).

The Transportation Element includes level of service (LOS) standards for measuring the operating conditions experienced by roadway users, and applies quantifiable traffic measures such as average speed, intersection delays, and volume-to-capacity ratios to approximate driver satisfaction. LOS standards for signalized and un-signalized intersections, and roadway segments are included in Goal TR-3, Policies TR-P3.1 through TR-P3.5, TR-P3.7 through TR-P3.9, TR-P4.1, TR-P4.2, TR-P4.5, TR-P5.1, TR-P6.2, and Actions TR-A3.3 and TR-A3.4. Policy TR-P3.1 establishes the City's desire to maintain LOS C at all intersections and interchanges; Policy TR-P3.2 sets a standards of LOS D at signalized and unsignalized all-way stop sign controlled intersections. Policies TR-P3.4 and TR-P3.5 provide limited exceptions to meeting this LOS.

The ECAS was also adopted in 2015 along with the General Plan. The ECAS is a long-range strategy for the City to reduce GHG emissions and achieve greater conservation of resources with regards to transportation and land use, energy, water, solid waste, and open space. When the ECAS was prepared it included measures and implementation actions to reduce GHG emissions to meet the prior State goal that established a target of reducing Statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. In 2016, the State passed new legislation under SB 32 which requires reducing Statewide GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. To meet the current State goal the ECAS will be revised and updated.

2.3 Project Description

The proposed project contains two components: (1) amending the Transportation Element of the General Plan; and (2) updating the ECAS. Each component of the project is described in more detail below.

Amend Transportation Element and Establish VMT Thresholds

The City proposes to revise and update the Transportation Element of the City's General Plan to include background on SB 743, which requires an evaluation of Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) as the primary metric used to identify transportation impacts in CEQA documents. Compliance with SB 743 does not preclude the City from maintaining LOS policies in its General Plan and Municipal Code. However, it prevents the City from using LOS or other delay-based metrics to evaluate the potential significance of transportation impacts for CEQA purposes.

General Plan goals, policies and actions to be amended include the following:

- Add Goal TR-3. Take proactive steps to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions caused by Vehicle Miles Travelled in Vacaville.5
- Add new policies and implementation actions that address reducing VMT in the City, including the following:
 - Pursue an overall land use / transportation relationship that becomes more efficient over time, as measured by improved VMT efficiency (i.e., VMT per dwelling unit or per thousand square feet of floor space).
 - Evaluate development proposals using VMT measurement techniques and significance thresholds from the Senate Bill (SB) 743 Implementation Guidelines for the City of Vacaville.

- Update the Senate Bill (SB) 743 Implementation Guidelines for the City of Vacaville as needed (i.e., due to major changes in land use, transportation system disruptions, changes in technology for estimating VMT, etc.).
- Consider the potential effect on VMT when evaluating proposed transportation improvements.
- Require feasible mitigation measures for significant VMT impacts and monitor whether those measures are achieving the intended outcomes.
 - Establish specific monitoring protocols and processes for mitigation measures aimed at reducing VMT.
- Amend existing policies that state specific LOS thresholds shall be required and delete policies that are no longer relevant.

The proposed VMT thresholds follow the recommendations of the OPR Technical Advisory:

- Certain projects are assumed to have a less-than-significant impact, including small projects (110 average daily trips or less), projects near major transit stops or on major transit corridors, and affordable housing projects.
- A residential project which exceeds a level of 15 percent below existing citywide VMT per capita may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- An employment project which exceeds a level of 15 percent below existing citywide VMT per employee may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- A retail project that increases existing citywide total VMT may indicate a significant transportation impact.

As part of updating the Transportation Element, the City’s baseline and cumulative VMT would be established and guidance provided indicating what areas of the City would meet the VMT threshold. This also includes updating the City’s travel demand model to ensure this tool provides defensible estimates for developing the City’s baseline and cumulative VMT estimates.

Updates to the ECAS

The City proposes to update the ECAS to focus on supporting the State’s 2030 GHG goals which includes reducing Statewide GHG emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. As part of this update, the City has developed a projection of its 2030 business as usual (or BAU) GHG emissions including a target reduction consistent with SB 32. The 2030 GHG emissions were developed relying on, in part, the communitywide GHG emission inventory for year 2008 (this is the most recent information available). To update the 2030 GHG forecast, various factors were reviewed including population, VMT (based on the transportation modeling), General Plan land use designations, and federal and State-mandated GHG emission reduction measures. The existing policies and implementation strategies are proposed to be updated and new strategies added to meet the 2030 reduction targets and maintain progress of the 2050 reduction targets.

Project Objectives

The proposed project is consistent with the objectives of the City’s General Plan. These include:

- Preserve its “small town feel” by continuing to be a family-friendly city.

- Promote a balance of high-quality housing and commercial development within the Urban Growth Boundary.
- Support existing businesses while attracting new businesses, particularly those that reflect community aspirations.
- Foster community-oriented neighborhoods that are diverse, attractive, safe, walkable, and affordable.
- Maintain its unique character by preserving historic and cultural resources.
- Meet the transportation challenges of the future, so that people can travel safely and conveniently on foot or by car, air, bicycle, and transit.
- Emphasize and protect natural and scenic features, such as open spaces, ridgelines, and creeks that define Vacaville’s setting and atmosphere.
- Ensure that development adheres to basic principles of high quality design.
- Continue to strengthen Vacaville’s Downtown culture and identity, supporting a vibrancy that will draw residents and visitors.
- Protect its unique identity through the preservation of agricultural lands and the creation of new park and open space lands.
- Protect public health, safety, and the environment by taking steps to reduce noise and air pollution, conserve water and energy, and prepare for natural and man-made disasters.
- Continue to provide beautiful parks, exciting cultural and recreational amenities, and civic institutions that inspire community pride.
- Encourage and support high quality schools.
- Enhance the cultural environment in the city by promoting the arts and cultural activities.
- Welcome people from all backgrounds, ages, income levels, and physical capabilities and invite them to become integral, long-term members of the community.
- Promote the health of its residents by providing a safe environment and increased opportunities for physical activity.
- Look ahead to plan for expected population growth and allow landowners to maintain economic use and value of their property.

2.4 Project Approvals

The following actions would be taken by the City Council in order to implement the proposed project: Certify that the City’s General Plan EIR as supplemented by the SEIR adequately addresses the significant effects of the proposed project pursuant to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines;

- Amend the Transportation Element of the 2015 General Plan as described above;
- Adopt the updated Energy and Conservation Action Strategy (ECAS)

Any local agency seeking to amend its general plan within the airport influence area (AIA) of a public use airport must first refer its proposed amendments to the airport land use commission for a determination if the proposed action is consistent with the airport land use compatibility plan, per Government Code Section 65302.3(a) and Public Utilities Code 21676(a). The City’s General Plan area includes the Nut Tree Airport and partially falls within

the Travis Air Force Base AIA. Therefore, the update to the Transportation Element will be referred to the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission for a finding of consistency.

No other federal, State or local agencies would have jurisdiction over the project.

Figure 2-1 Planning Area

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