



# City of Sierra Madre **AGENDA REPORT**

*William Pevsner, Chair  
Thomas Denison, Vice-Chair  
Peggy Dallas, Commissioner  
John Hutt, Commissioner  
Bob Spears, Commissioner*

*Vincent Gonzalez, Director  
Planning & Community Preservation*

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Vincent Gonzalez, Director of Planning and Community Preservation

DATE: November 4, 2021

**SUBJECT: THE MEADOWS AT BAILEY CANYON – KEY ISSUES:  
TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION**

---

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive a presentation and discuss key issues studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) regarding the contemplated project – The Meadows at Bailey Canyon.

## **SUMMARY**

On August 19, 2021, the Planning Commission requested that staff provide a high level discussion regarding key issues surrounding the project commonly referred to as “The Meadows at Bailey Canyon” (Project). On September 2, 2021, the Planning Commission received a presentation by staff regarding Water Supply, presented by Interim City Manager Jose Reynoso, and Wildfire Prevention, presented by Fire Chief Brent Bartlett.

The study session before the Planning Commission will address Traffic and Circulation for the contemplated Project. The discussion will be led by Fehr & Peers, traffic consultants to Dudek, the environmental project lead for New Urban West, Inc. Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (LLG), the sub-consultant to MIG, the City’s peer review consultant will be in attendance and available to answer questions.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Key Issues – Traffic and Circulation**

Two traffic studies associated with the Meadows Project have been completed. One analyzing Vehicle Miles Traveled (“VMT”) and a supplemental analysis, studying “Level of Service” or (“LOS”), which measures roadway performance and potential delay created by the proposed project.

### Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Senate Bill (SB) 743, passed in 2013, requires that, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) be the primary metric used to identify transportation impacts under CEQA.

Using the Low Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Area Screening criteria the project is presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact and would therefore be consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15064.3(b).

#### CEQA Guideline 15064. DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS CAUSED BY A PROJECT

SECTION 15064.3. DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS (a) Purpose. This section describes specific considerations for evaluating a project’s transportation impacts. Generally, vehicle miles traveled is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. For the purposes of this section, “vehicle miles traveled” refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. Other relevant considerations may include the effects of the project on transit and non-motorized travel. Except as provided in subdivision (b)(2) below (regarding roadway capacity), a project’s effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact.

#### (b) Criteria for Analyzing Transportation Impacts.

(1) Land Use Projects. Vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. Generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact.

### **Project VMT Screening**

A VMT-related impact would be considered significant if implementation of the proposed project meets the following two conditions:

1. The baseline project generated VMT per service population or Home-based VMT per capita or Home-based-work VMT per employee exceeds 15% below the Northwest Region 1 baseline 2 VMT, or
2. The cumulative project generated VMT exceeds 15% below the Northwest Region baseline VMT.

Prior to initiating a VMT assessment, the City has identified project screening criteria pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidance provided by Office of Planning and Research (OPR). **If a project meets any one of the following three screening criteria, then no further VMT assessment is required.**

#### 1. Project Type Screening

OPR identified local serving project types that may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. These include uses such as resident and/or employee serving uses like retail, daycare facilities, parks, gas stations, and the like. This screening criteria also allows for projects generating fewer than 110 daily trips to be screened out. For residential land use, projects generating less than 110 daily vehicle trips typically corresponds with the following:

- 11 single family housing units
- 16 multifamily, condominium, or townhouse housing units

The proposed project has 42 single family subdivisions, and therefore, cannot be screened out under this criterion.

#### 2. Transit Priority Area (TPA) Screening

Projects located within a TPA may be presumed to have a less than significant impact. The proposed project is not located within a TPA.

#### 3. Low VMT Area Screening

Residential projects located within a low VMT-generating area may be presumed to have a less than significant impact and screened out. As defined by the City, a low VMT zone has VMT per service population 15 percent or more below the Northwest Region Baseline VMT. The proposed project would satisfy the screening criteria based upon the Origin-Destination (OD) method as summarized in the table below and can be screened out from VMT assessment.

*Table 1 – OD VMT Analysis*

<b>Analysis Metrics: OD VMT</b>	<b>2012 Base Yr.</b>	<b>2040 Cumulative Yr.</b>
Project TAZ VMT per Service Population	31.01	30.47
2012 Baseline Northwest Region VMT Service Pop.		37.02
Percent Difference with 2012 Baseline	-16%	-18%

As noted in Table 1, this project is located within a low VMT-generating area and, therefore, is screened out from conducting further analysis. Accordingly, the project does not result in a significant VMT impact.

### Level of Service (LOS)

To provide additional information to the public, the Project Applicant also supplemented the VMT analysis with an additional Level of service (LOS) traffic study. LOS is a mechanism used to determine how well a transportation facility is operating from a traveler's perspective. Typically, six levels of service are defined and each is assigned a letter designation from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions, and LOS F the worst.

It should be noted that LOS is no longer required to be analyzed under CEQA. The VMT analysis is the current threshold used to determine traffic impact for CEQA purposes. As such, the Meadows DEIR does not contain the LOS based analysis.

A professional traffic engineering firm, Fehr & Peers completed the LOS based study to determine local operational traffic impacts related to implementation of the proposed Meadows project. The study included the following:

- Measuring existing traffic, proposed additional trips, and the impact of the additional cars on all area intersections in both the short-term and long-term; and
- Gathering field data on existing traffic measured at two different points in time to ensure the best possible information

The LOS study demonstrates that the Project would potentially generate up to 396 daily trips, 31 additional peak hour trips in the morning commute, and 42 additional peak hour trips in the evening commute.

The study concludes that the proposed Meadows project will not result in any measurable change to existing level of service on area roadways. Accordingly, area motorists will not experience substantial increases in delay or congestion as a result of the project.

### **CEQA / ENVIRONMENTAL**

A Draft Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for the contemplated project—The Meadows at Bailey Canyon, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

This item has been noticed through the regular agenda notification process. Copies of this report are available at City Hall, at the Sierra Madre Public Library, and can be accessed on the City's website at [www.cityofsierramadre.com](http://www.cityofsierramadre.com).