

4. [20-0475](#) Forward a Recommendation to the City Council to Adopt a Resolution Establishing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the Threshold of Significance for Analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Adopt a Council Policy for Transportation Impact Analysis, and Find that the Action is Exempt from CEQA

Principal Planner Amber Blizinski and Transportation and Traffic Manager Dennis Ng presented the staff report.

Commissioner Harrison asked why Los Altos, San Jose and Mountain View chose different baselines. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Specialist Karen Mack answered that San Jose sought to encourage more job growth over residential development when it established its citywide residential baseline. Principal Planner Blizinski added that the recommended countywide baseline for Sunnyvale is more aligned with the goals of the City's General Plan and Climate Action Playbook which focuses on more residential growth as is evidenced when looking at the heat maps. Commissioner Harrison also asked how a project can promote multi-modal transportation. Principal Planner Blizinski and Transportation and Traffic Manager Ng responded that it can be accomplished by actions such as completing bike lane connections, contributing towards bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and working with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority on transit improvements including adding and enhancing transit stops near the project.

Vice Chair Simons asked if unbundling parking is a cost to the City using the citywide baseline. Principal Planner Blizinski stated that the mitigation measures listed in the presentation's project examples are part of the estimation tool to demonstrate how VMT is reduced and that staff would choose appropriate mitigation measures for each individual project. VMT Specialist Mack clarified that unbundled parking is a cost to the residential renter or owner and not the City. Vice Chair Simons and Principal Planner Blizinski discussed how attitudes might have changed over time towards unbundled parking and that it might be a tool to consider with residential development as it has been shown to reduce VMT.

Vice Chair Simons opened the Public Hearing.

There were no public speakers for this agenda item.

Vice Chair Simons closed the Public Hearing.

MOTION: Commissioner Harrison moved and Commissioner Weiss seconded the motion for Alternative 1 - Forward a Recommendation to the City Council to Adopt a Resolution Establishing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the Threshold of Significance for Analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Adopt a Council Policy for Transportation Impact Analysis, and Find that the Action is Exempt from CEQA.

Commissioner Harrison commended staff for thoroughly evaluating the policy and thanked staff for clearly presenting the concept. She acknowledged the need to adopt VMT as the analysis tool, recognized the 15% threshold recommendation, understood the purpose of continuing to compare using the Level of Service model, and agreed with the decision to designate Sunnyvale as a countywide entity.

Commissioner Weiss agreed with Commissioner Harrison's comments and stated that the VMT model is attainable given the goals of the State, the City's Climate Action Playbook, and residential and commercial projects. She thanked staff for making the concept understandable.

Commissioner Olevson thanked staff for the work on the policy and stated that he will not support the motion. He commented that he believes the shift would take more authority away from the City and represents regional needs and not Sunnyvale's needs. He stated his intention to abstain from voting to avoid

disparaging staff's work.

Vice Chair Simons stated that he will not support the motion. He remarked that the citywide baseline involves unbundling parking which lowers the cost of housing and reduces VMT and that he would be in favor of this option if it helps the City better plan.

The motion failed by the following vote:

**Yes:** 3 - Commissioner Howe  
Commissioner Harrison  
Commissioner Weiss

**No:** 1 - Vice Chair Simons

**Absent:** 1 - Chair Howard

**Abstained:** 2 - Commissioner Olevson  
Commissioner Rheaume

Assistant Director Andrew Miner asked Vice Chair Simons if he is comfortable supporting the countywide baseline with a recommendation that unbundled parking is allowed as a mitigation measure for future residential projects. Vice Chair Simons responded that he views the citywide baseline for residential as more beneficial overall. Principal Planner Blizinski stated that using the citywide baseline makes it more difficult for residential development to be built as heavier mitigation requirements can place a heavier burden on residential developers. VMT Specialist Mack added that unbundling parking is a mitigation measure option included in the countywide baseline also and that it can be an effective mitigation measure anywhere in the city. Principal Planner Blizinski further remarked that it is possible to add a recommendation that the City Council consider allowing residential developers to propose unbundled parking as a part of future development applications.

The Commissioners agreed by general consensus to begin an Informal Consideration discussion period. They informally discussed the project among themselves and with staff, and by general consensus agreed to end the Informal Consideration period.

MOTION: Vice Chair Simons moved and Commissioner Harrison seconded the motion for Alternative 2 - Adopt a Resolution Establishing Vehicle Miles Traveled

(VMT) as the Threshold of Significance for Analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Adopt a Council Policy for Transportation Impact Analysis with Modifications, and Find that the Action is Exempt from CEQA. The modification is as follows:

1. Recommend that the City Council consider allowing residential developers to propose unbundled parking as a part of future development projects as it has been shown to reduce VMT.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Yes:** 4 - Commissioner Harrison  
Commissioner Rheaume  
Vice Chair Simons  
Commissioner Weiss

**No:** 1 - Commissioner Howe

**Absent:** 1 - Chair Howard

**Abstained:** 1 - Commissioner Olevson

Assistant Director Miner stated that this recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration at the meeting on Tuesday, June 30, 2020.