



Staff Reports

File #: 61-2021, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Julie Lucido, Public Works Director

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TITLE:

Bicycle Plan and Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds of Significance General Plan Amendment

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a resolution (1) approving the City of Napa Bicycle Plan; (2) adopting the Vehicle Miles Traveled thresholds of significance under CEQA; (3) approving an amendment to the Transportation Element of the General Plan; and (4) for the City of Napa Bicycle Plan, determining that the actions authorized by this resolution were adequately analyzed by a previous CEQA action.

DISCUSSION:

City of Napa Bicycle Plan

The current City of Napa Bicycle Plan was adopted by City Council and incorporated into the City's General Plan in 2012. The City of Napa Bicycle Plan was developed as a subset of the Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan prepared by Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTa). In 2017, NVTa began the process of updating the Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan, which included updates to the City of Napa Bicycle Plan.

The Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan is a long-range planning document intended to guide development of bicycle infrastructure, programs and policies that improve the bicycling environment for all residents and visitors in Napa Valley. The City of Napa Bicycle Plan functions as both a component of the comprehensive Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan, and as a stand-alone document with a specific City of Napa focus. The Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan was updated to align with current best practices in bicycle facility design and the State's Active Transportation Program requirements. The update process spanned two years and included extensive public outreach. NVTa solicited input on the Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan from community members, stakeholder groups and jurisdiction staff. Eleven in-person community outreach events were held, in addition to online outreach efforts, and opportunities for public comment during Plan specific agenda items at public meetings held for the NVTa Technical Advisory Committee, NVTa Active Transportation Advisory Committee, and the City of Napa Bicycle and Trails Advisory Commission.

The City of Napa Bicycle Plan establishes four main goals related to the topics of connectivity, equity, safety, and education and encouragement. The four Plan goals are as follows:

- **Connectivity:** Develop a well-designed low Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) connected bicycle network

- Equity: Improve bicycle access for disadvantaged and/or underserved communities
- Safety: Improve safety for all ages and abilities
- Education and Encouragement: Increase mode share of bicycling

One of the main purposes of the City of Napa Bicycle Plan is to identify a future bicycle network for the City of Napa that is safe and connected. The Plan identified 49 existing miles of bicycle facilities and proposes an additional 59.2 miles of bicycle facilities, as well as 13.2 miles of study corridor area. The proposed bicycle network was developed based on fieldwork, analysis of existing conditions, input from the community and City staff, with consideration for best practices in bicycle network planning. The resulting network proposes high-quality bicycle infrastructure facilities that connect to key community destinations and neighborhoods and close network gaps. The study corridor designation earmarks complex corridors that would benefit from additional study to determine the appropriate bicycle facility type for that roadway.

Throughout Plan development the City of Napa Bicycle and Trails Advisory Commission (BTAC) reviewed and provided input on the Plan at regularly scheduled Bicycle and Trails Advisory Commission Meetings. BTAC reviewed components of the plan including the goals and policies and the existing and proposed bicycle facility network for the City of Napa, as well as the draft City of Napa Bicycle Plan document. The City of Napa Bicycle and Trails Advisory Commission recommended that the City of Napa Bicycle Plan be brought before Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.

Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds of Significance

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), lead agencies must analyze land development and transportation projects to determine whether they may have a significant impact on the environment. A project's impact on transportation is one of the key environmental topics reviewed by a lead agency under CEQA. With the passing of Senate Bill 743, California changed the transportation metric analyzed under CEQA from Level of Service to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). This change went into effect July, 1, 2020.

The change from Level of Service to Vehicle Miles Traveled is intended to balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, transit investments, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Level of Service is the measure of automobile delay (measured in seconds) at intersections and on roadway segments. Vehicle Miles Traveled measures how much automobile travel (measured in miles) a proposed project would generate on roadways. VMT analyzes the number of trips and total distance that a vehicle would have to travel between its origin and destination.

The City of Napa General Plan currently establishes a threshold of significance for transportation impacts based on Level of Service on roadways impacted by proposed projects. For consistency with Senate Bill 743, staff is proposing to amend the Transportation Element of the City of Napa General Plan to include significance thresholds for Vehicle Miles Traveled. While the City will use VMT to analyze transportation impacts of a project for CEQA purposes, it will continue to use Level of Service for local planning purposes to analyze whether intersection improvements are needed as a result of a project.

The State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) provided recommendations regarding significance thresholds under Senate Bill 743 as part of a Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA. The document made the following significance threshold recommendations for residential, office, and retail projects:

- Residential Projects: A proposed project exceeding a level of 15 percent below existing VMT per capita may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- Office Projects: A proposed project exceeding a level of 15 percent below existing regional VMT per employee may indicate a significant transportation impact.
- Retail Projects: A net increase in total VMT may indicate a significant transportation impact.

Staff is proposing to utilize OPR's recommended significance thresholds for the City of Napa's significance thresholds for Vehicle Miles Traveled.

The source for existing Vehicle Miles Traveled data that the City of Napa will be utilizing is the updated Solano-Napa Activity Based Model. The Solano-Napa Activity Based Model is a regional travel demand model and provides baseline VMT data for the County of Napa. The City will be utilizing the average Napa County VMT as the existing regional VMT baseline information consistent with the OPR Technical Advisory document.

Per the Solano-Napa Activity Based Model, Napa County's current average daily VMT per capita is 17.3 and its current average daily VMT per employee is 26.9. Under the OPR recommended thresholds for residential and office projects, which requires a 15 percent reduction from baseline, a residential project would cause a significant impact if it generated daily VMT per capital levels higher than 14.7 and an office project would cause a significant impact if it generated daily VMT per employee levels higher than 22.87.

The Solano-Napa Activity Based Model will also be utilized for the analysis of VMT for retail projects. Retail projects will compare the change in total VMT with and without the project. A retail project would cause a significant impact if it generated daily VMT levels higher than the no project scenario.

General Plan Amendment

For the City of Napa Bicycle Plan to be consistent with the City's General Plan, a General Plan Amendment is necessary. The proposed General Plan Amendment replaces the existing "Bicycle Facilities" section policies, programs and maps with the goals, policies, implementation programs and maps that are included in the updated City of Napa Bicycle Plan.

Additionally, to be consistent with the updated CEQA transportation metric established by Senate Bill 743, a General Plan Amendment is necessary. The proposed General Plan Amendment modifies the "Roadway Level of Service" section of the Transportation Element to include policies specific to Vehicle Miles Traveled.

Planning Commission Recommendation

On April 1, 2021, the Planning Commission held a public meeting on the proposed City of Napa Bicycle Plan and Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds of Significance and the associated General Plan

Amendment. At that meeting, the Planning Commission recommended that City Council adopt a resolution (1) approving the City of Napa Bicycle Plan; (2) adopting the Vehicle Miles Traveled thresholds of significance; (3) approving an amendment to the Transportation Element of the General Plan; and (4) for the City of Napa Bicycle Plan, determining that the actions authorized by this resolution were adequately analyzed by a previous CEQA action.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

There is no financial impact to the City of Napa anticipated as a result of the proposed actions.

CEQA:

City of Napa Bicycle Plan

City staff recommends that the City Council consider the environmental effects of the Recommended Action in its capacity as “Responsible Agency” with respect to the implementation of the Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan and determine that the potential environmental effects of the Recommended Action related to the City of Napa Bicycle Plan were adequately analyzed by the “Final Initial Study - Mitigated Negative Declaration” for the Napa Countywide Bicycle Plan dated September 2019 and prepared by Rincon Consultants, Inc. and adopted by the Napa Valley Transportation Authority at its regular meeting on October 23, 2019, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15096.

Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds of Significance

The Public Works Director has determined that the Recommended Action related to the Vehicle Miles Traveled policy is not subject to CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c).

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

ATCH 1 - Resolution

EX A - City of Napa Bicycle Plan

EX B - Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds of Significance

EX C - General Plan Amendment (Transportation Element)

ATCH 2 - Redline of the General Plan Amendment

NOTIFICATION:

Legal notice of public hearing published in the Napa Valley Register on April 23, 2021.