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April 20, 2021

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TRAFFIC AND VMT ANALYSIS FOR THE SEASIDE BOX WAREHOUSE PROJECT – CITY OF SANTA MARIA, CA

Associated Transportation Engineers (ATE) has prepared the following traffic and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis for the Seaside Box Warehouse Project (the "Project"), proposed in the City of Santa Maria. The study quantifies the Project's trip generation, determines the Project's consistency with City's General Plan transportation policies, and provides an evaluation of potential CEQA impacts based on the VMT thresholds adopted by the City.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Seaside Box Warehouse Project site is located at 1300 West La Brea Avenue in the City of Santa Maria. The Project is proposing to develop a 40,854 SF warehouse facility that would be used to store and distribute agricultural pallets and boxes. Access to the Project site would be provided via two driveways on West La Brea Avenue.

PROJECT TRIP GENERATION

Pursuant to City policies, trip generation estimates were developed for the Project using the rates presented in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual.¹ The ITE rates for Warehouses (Land Use Code #150) were used for the analysis. Table 1 summarizes the trip generation estimates developed for the Project.

¹ Trip Generation, Institute of Transportation Engineers, 10th Edition, 2017.

Table 1
Project Trip Generation Estimates

Land Use	Size	ADT		AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
		Rate	Trips	Rate	Trips	Rate	Trips
Warehouse	40,854 SF	1.74	71	0.17	7	0.19	8

As shown in Table 1, the Project would generate 71 average daily trips (ADT), 7 AM peak hour trips (PHT) and 8 PM peak hour trips.

CONSISTENCY WITH CITY POLICIES

As reviewed above, the Project would generate 71 ADT, 7 AM PHT and 8 PM PHT. The addition of these trips to the study-area street network would not generate impacts or be inconsistent with the City of Santa Maria's transportation policies related to traffic operations (less than significant change in intersection performance). Recent studies completed for Projects located in the study area¹ show that the intersections adjacent to the site (Blosser Road/La Brea Avenue and Blosser Road/Stowell Road) currently operate at acceptable levels of service; and the Project's relatively minor traffic additions would not degrade operations to unacceptable levels.

VMT ANALYSIS

Per the State's Natural Resource Agency Updated Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA adopted in 2018, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) has been designated as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. "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. For land use projects, vehicle miles traveled exceeding an applicable threshold of significance may indicate a significant impact. The City of Santa Maria recently updated the "Environmental Procedures and Guidelines" manual², in compliance with Senate Bill 743, to include analysis procedures, screening criteria, and thresholds of significance for the assessment of VMT as the transportation impact metric for CEQA rather than the traditional LOS metric used previously.

¹ Aquistapace Blosser Southeast Specific Plan Amendment Revised Traffic Impact Study, City of Santa Maria, Associated Transportation Engineers, June 2019.

² City of Santa Maria Environmental Procedures, City of Santa Maria; Updated November 2020.

CEQA Guidelines. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) published a Technical Advisory on Transportation that includes recommendations regarding assessment of VMT, thresholds of significance, and mitigation measures.³ The Technical Advisory provides screening tools to determine when a project may have a significant VMT impacts, as follows:



"Many agencies use "screening thresholds" to quickly identify when a project should be expected to cause a less-than-significant impact without conducting a detailed study. (See e.g., CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15063(c)(3)(C), 15128, and Appendix G.) As explained below, this technical advisory suggests that lead agencies may screen out VMT impacts using project size, maps, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing."

Screening Criteria

Consistent with the recommendations in the OPR Technical Advisory, Section 4.3.1 of the City of Santa Maria's Environmental Procedures and Guidelines manual establishes screening criteria for certain projects that are exempt from performing a detailed VMT analysis and may be presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact. Section 4.3.1-A states that:

"The following discretionary development projects are not subject to VMT analysis:

1. A discretionary retail development project that is 50,000 SF or less. Does not apply to regional shopping centers that predominately serve customers that live in outside the City limits.
2. Affordable housing projects where a minimum of 20 percent of the units are deed restricted for low or very low income residents.
3. Small discretionary projects that would generate or attract fewer than 110 daily trips (per CEQA).
4. Residential and non-residential land uses located in the green Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) areas of the Countywide Average Home-Based VMT per Capita and per Employee Maps (Appendix A and B) are expected to generate VMT at 85 percent or less of the baseline average rate and are presumed to have less than significant VMT impacts.

³ Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, December 2018.

As shown previously in Table 1, the Project is forecast to generate 71 ADT. The Project would therefore not exceed the City's screening criteria for VMT analysis (more than 110 ADT) and would have a less-than-significant VMT impact.

This concludes ATE's traffic and VMT analysis for the Seaside Box Warehouse Project.

Associated Transportation Engineers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SA Schell', written over the printed name.

Scott A. Schell
Principal Transportation Planner

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