

Appendix H2

VMT Assessment

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Technical Memorandum

February 28, 2025

To: Engineering Department – City of Palm Desert

From: Jacob Swim TE, Michael Baker International

Subject: Catavina Residential – VMT Screening Assessment

Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to document a vehicle mile traveled (VMT) assessment for the proposed Catavina Residential development (Project) in support of the transportation component of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis. Specifically, a VMT screening analysis is documented in this memorandum. The Project proposes to construct 546 single family dwelling units located near the southwest corner of Frank Sinatra Drive and Portola Avenue in the City of Palm Desert.

Table 1 provides key Project information. **Exhibit 1** shows the location of the Project and **Exhibit 2** shows the conceptual site plan.

Table 1 – Project Information Summary

Item	Description
Project Title	Catavina Residential
Project Location	The Project is proposed near the southwest corner of Frank Sinatra Drive and Portola Avenue in the City of Palm Desert, California.
Surrounding Uses	The Project site is surrounded by residential to the north and south, undeveloped and vacant land to the east and residential to the west.
Existing Use	The Project Site is on vacant and undeveloped land.
Proposed Use	The Project consists of constructing 546 single family residential dwelling units.
Assessor's Parcel Number	620-170-009

Project Trip Generation

In order to determine vehicular traffic generated by the Project, trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition was used. Trip rates for ITE Land Use 210 (Single-Family Detached Housing) is provided in **Table 2**.

Table 2 – ITE Trip Generation Rates

Land Use	ITE Code ¹	Daily Trip Rate	AM Peak Hour Rate		PM Peak Hour Rate	
			Total	In : Out	Total	In : Out
Proposed Land Use						
Single-Family Detached Housing	210	8.81 /DU	0.64 /DU	25% : 75%	0.90 /DU	63% : 37%

¹ Source: ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition. Rates shown are based on fitted curve equation.

Using the ITE trip generation rates in Table 2, Project trips were calculated and provided in **Table 3** which shows the Project is expected to generate approximately 4,810 daily vehicle trips with 349 AM (87 inbound and 262 outbound) peak hour trips and 490 PM (309 inbound and 181 outbound) peak hour trips.

Table 3 – Project Trip Generation

Land Use	Intensity	Daily Trips	AM Peak Hour Trips		PM Peak Hour Trips	
			Total	In : Out	Total	In : Out
Proposed Land Use						
Single-Family Detached Housing	546 DU	4,810	349	87 : 262	490	309 : 181

Notes:

DU = Dwelling Units

VMT Assessment Guidelines & Methodology

The Project is within the jurisdiction of the City of Palm Desert within the County of Riverside. The County has adopted guidance on evaluating VMT for transportation impacts under CEQA. However, the City does not currently have guidance on evaluating VMT for transportation impacts. Therefore, the primary resource for this VMT screening assessment is the *County of Riverside Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled and Level of Service Assessment*¹ dated December 2020 (County Guidelines). As outlined in the County Guidelines, certain projects, because of their size, nature, or location, are exempt from the requirements of preparing a detailed VMT analysis. The County Guidelines provides screening criteria to determine if a development project is presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact which is discussed in the next section of this memo.

Screening Criteria

Each of the screening criteria outlined in the County Guidelines were evaluated for the proposed Project and the results are summarized in **Table 4**. As shown, the Project meets the screening criteria based on the “Map-Based Screening” criterion identified below. Therefore, a detailed VMT analysis is **NOT** required, and the Project is presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact on the environment.

Table 4 – VMT Screening Criteria Summary

Screening Criteria		Project Evaluation	Result
Small Projects	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: • Single-Family Housing projects less than or equal to 110 Dwelling Units; or • Multi-Family (low-rise) Housing projects less than or equal to 147 Dwelling Units; or • Multi-Family (mid-rise) Housing projects less than or equal to 194 Dwelling Units; or • General Office Building with area less than or equal to 165,000 SF; or • Retail buildings with area less than or equal to 60,000 SF; or • Warehouse (unrefrigerated) buildings with area less than or equal to 208,000 SF; or • General Light Industrial buildings with area less than or equal to 179,000 SF; or • Project GHG emissions less than 3,000 Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (MTCO₂e) as determined by a methodology acceptable to the Transportation Department; or • Unless specified above, project trip generation is less than 110 trips per day per the ITE Manual or other acceptable source determined by Riverside County.	The Project exceeds the Single-Family Housing limit of 110 dwelling units since it's proposing to construct 546 units. In addition, the Project is expected to generate approximately 4,810 daily trips which exceeds the 110-daily trip threshold in this criterion.	Screening Criteria Is Not Met
Projects Near High Quality Transit	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: • Within a ½ mile of an existing major transit stop; and • Maintains a service interval frequency of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.	The Project is not located within a ½ mile of an existing major transit stop. The closest bus stop is approx. 1 mile from the project site. In addition, Route 5 from the Sun Line Transit Agency that runs along Cook Street does not maintain a service frequency of 15 minutes or less.	Screening Criteria is NOT Met
Local-Serving Retail	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: • No single store on-site exceeds 50,000 SF; and • Project is local-serving as determined by the Transportation Department	This Project is a residential development and therefore, this criterion does not apply.	Screening Criteria is NOT Met

Table 4 – VMT Screening Criteria Summary

Screening Criteria		Project Evaluation	Result
Affordable Housing	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: A high percentage of affordable housing is provided as determined by the Riverside County Planning and Transportation Departments.	The Project is not proposing any affordable housing. This criterion does not apply.	Screening Criteria Is Not Met
Local Essential Service	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: - Project is local-serving as determined by the Transportation Department; and - Local-serving and Day Care Center; or - Police or Fire Facility; or - Medical/Dental Office Building under 50,000 square feet; or - Government offices (in-person services such as post office, library, and utilities); or - Local or Community Parks	The Project is residential and does not match any of these land use categories that are local-serving.	Screening Criteria Is NOT Met
Map-Based Screening	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: Area of development is under threshold as shown on screening map as allowed by the Transportation Department.	The Average VMT/Capita (16.15) in the surrounding TAZ's with similar land uses indicate the Project TAZ would result in a lower VMT/Capita than the County VMT/Capita (18.26). Refer to the section "Map-Based Screening Assessment" in this memo for additional information.	Screening Criteria Is Met
Redevelopment Projects	Presumed to cause a less-than-significant impact: Project replaces an existing VMT-generating land use and does not result in a net overall increase in VMT.	The Project site is vacant and undeveloped. Therefore, this criterion does not apply.	Screening Criteria Is NOT Met

Source: County of Riverside Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled, December 2020

Map-Based Screening Assessment

The Map-Based Screening eliminates the need for complex analyses by allowing existing VMT data to serve as a basis for screening smaller residential and office developments. This criterion is applicable to the Project since residential dwelling units are proposed on the Project site.

Map-based screening is performed using the map titled: RIVTAM Model (2012) Daily Residential Home Based VMT per Capita Comparison to Riverside County Average, which indicates it is based upon the County average. The map utilizes the sub-regional Riverside Transportation Analysis Model (RIVTAM) to measure current VMT performance within individual TAZ's and compares them to the applicable impact threshold (e.g., VMT per capita for residential land uses). The County Guidelines define VMT per Capita as the sum of VMT for personal motorized trips made by all residents of a development project, divided by the total number of residents of the project.

Exhibit 3 shows the Project area on the County's map combined with an overlay of the RIVTAM Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). The Project is located within RIVTAM TAZ 1605, which experiences less than the County average VMT/Capita (18.26). For projects that are found to reside in a low VMT generating TAZ, the analyst is also required to verify that the underlying land use assumptions contained in the low VMT generating TAZ are consistent with the proposed development project. Within the Project TAZ 1605, there are only two houses which produces 20 home-based VMT which translates to a 9.94 VMT/Capita. In order to determine a reasonable VMT/Capita for the Project TAZ, the surrounding TAZ's with similar land uses were evaluated. **Table 5** provides the home-based VMT, population, and VMT/Capita for the surrounding TAZs. As shown, the average VMT/Capita is 16.15 which is less than the Riverside County average VMT/Capita of 18.26. Therefore, the Project is eligible to be screened out based on Map-Based screening criteria.

Table 5 – VMT Per Capita For Surrounding TAZ's

TAZ	Home Based VMT	Population	VMT / Capita
1603	7,806	552	14.14
1604	28,858	1,706	16.92
1605 (Project)	20	2	9.94
1608	1,245	115	10.83
1610	17,752	1,108	16.02
1649	1,663	97	17.15
1651	12,059	686	17.58
1655	17,154	1,093	15.69
1656	6,142	382	16.08
Total	92,700	5,741	16.15 (Average)
Riverside County	43,061,399	2,358,437	18.26

Conclusion

The VMT evaluation finds the Project meets the screening criteria under "Map-Based Screening" as outlined in the County's Guidelines. **Therefore, the Project is presumed to result in a less-than-significant transportation impact under CEQA, and a detailed VMT analysis is not required.**

EXHIBIT 1 – PROJECT LOCATION MAP

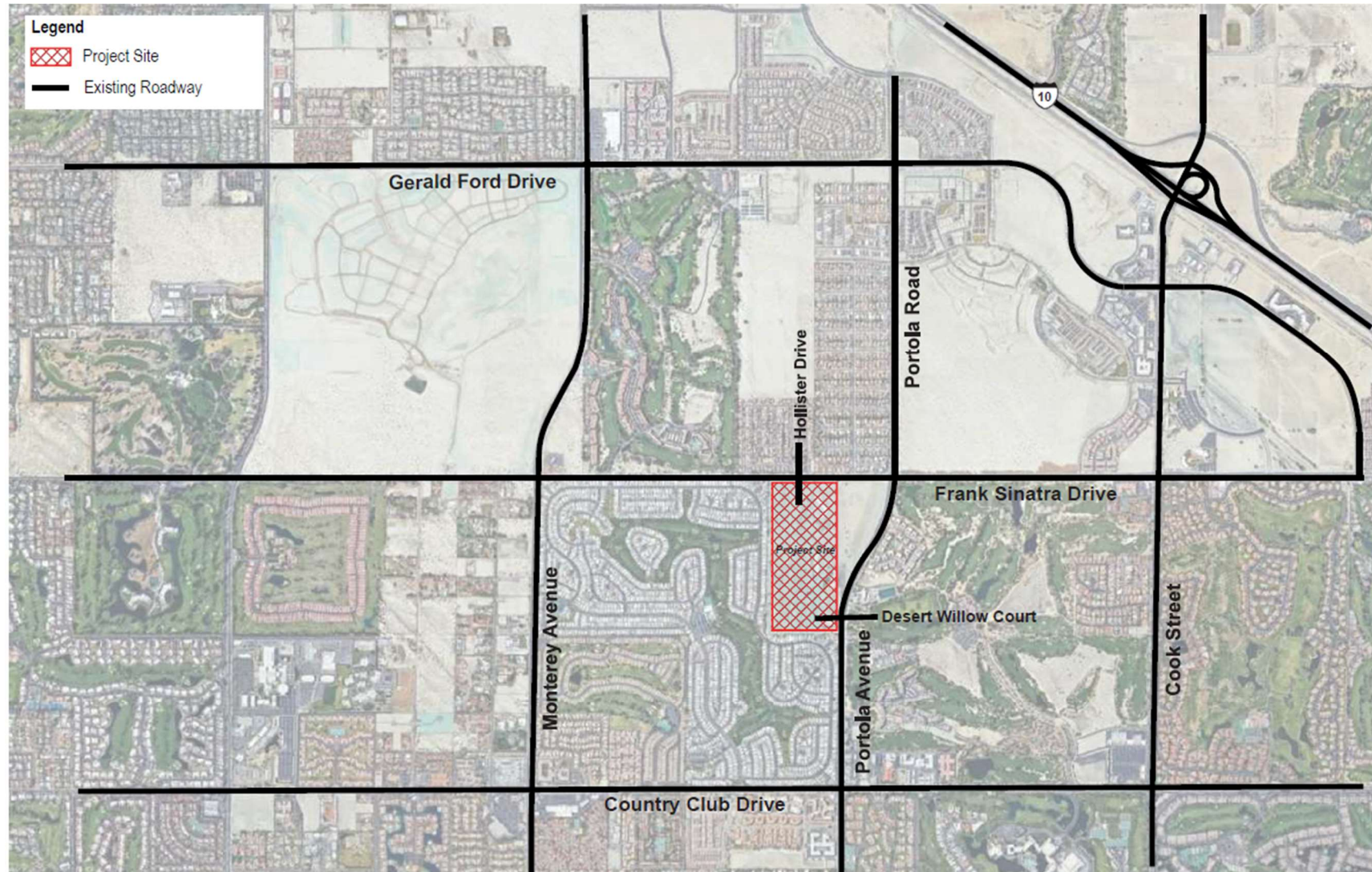


EXHIBIT 2 – PROJECT SITE PLAN



