

Approved  
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8/25/2022

March 24, 2022

Mr. Greg Hann  
Empire Design Group  
511 N. Main St  
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

## **ORTEGA PLAZA VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) SCREENING EVALUATION**

Mr. Greg Hann,

Urban Crossroads, Inc. is pleased to provide the following Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Evaluation for the Ortega Plaza development (**Project**) which is located on the southwest corner of Grand Avenue and Ortega Highway (SR-74) in the City of Lake Elsinore.

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Project is proposed to consist of a 10-vehicle fueling position and a 1,400 square foot drive through fast food restaurant within the proposed 3,375 square foot convenience store. The site is currently designated as Commercial in the City's General Plan, which allows for the proposed retail use (See Attachment A).

### **BACKGROUND**

Changes to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines were adopted in December 2018, which requires all lead agencies to adopt VMT as a replacement for automobile delay-based level of service (LOS) as the new measure for identifying transportation impacts for land use projects. This statewide mandate went into effect July 1, 2020. To aid in this transition, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released a Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (December of 2018) (**Technical Advisory**) (2). Based on OPR's Technical Advisory, the City of Lake Elsinore recently adopted new Traffic Impact Analysis Preparation Guide (May 2020) (**City Guidelines**) (2), which documents the City's VMT analysis methodology and thresholds. The VMT analysis presented in this report has been developed based on the adopted City Guidelines.

### **VMT SCREENING**

Under the City Guidelines, projects are required to be evaluated by available screening criteria based on their location and project type to determine if a presumption of a less than significant transportation impact can be made. It is our understanding that the City of Lake Elsinore utilizes the Western Riverside County Council of Governments (WRCOG) VMT Screening Tool (**Screening Tool**). The Screening Tool allows users to input an assessor's parcel number (APN) to determine

if a project's location meets one or more of the screening thresholds for land use projects. The following screening steps are listed in the City Guidelines:

- Step 1: Transit Priority Area (TPA) Screening
- Step 2: Low VMT Area Screening
- Step 3: Project Type Screening

A land use project only needs to meet one of the above screening thresholds to result in a less than significant impact.

### **STEP 1: TPA SCREENING**

As described in the City Guidelines, projects located within a Transit Priority Area (TPA) (i.e., within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of an existing "major transit stop"<sup>1</sup> or an existing stop along a "high-quality transit corridor"<sup>2</sup>) may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. However, the presumption may not be appropriate if a project:

- Has a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of less than 0.75;
- Includes more parking for use by residents, customers, or employees of the project than required by the jurisdiction (if the jurisdiction requires the project to supply parking);
- Is inconsistent with the applicable Sustainable Communities Strategy (as determined by the lead agency, with input from the Metropolitan Planning Organization); or
- Replaces affordable residential units with a smaller number of moderate- or high-income residential units.

Based on the Screening Tool results presented in Attachment B, the Project site is not located within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of an existing major transit stop, or along a high-quality transit corridor (See Attachment B).

**TPA screening criteria is not met.**

### **STEP 2: LOW VMT AREA SCREENING**

The City Guidelines consistent with the Technical Advisory, states that "residential and office projects located within a low VMT-generating area may be presumed to have a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. In addition, other employment-related and mixed-use land use projects may qualify for the use of screening if the project can reasonably be expected to generate VMT per resident, per worker or per service population that is similar to the existing land uses in the low VMT area." The Screening Tool uses the sub-regional Riverside County Model (RIVCOM) to measure VMT performance within individual traffic analysis zones (TAZ's) within the WRCOG region. The Project's physical location is evaluated in the Screening Tool to determine VMT generated by the existing TAZ as compared to the City of Lake

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<sup>1</sup> Pub. Resources Code, § 21064.3 ("Major transit stop" means a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.").

<sup>2</sup> Pub. Resources Code, § 21155 ("For purposes of this section, a high-quality transit corridor means a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.").

Elsinore's baseline VMT per service population. The parcel containing the proposed Project was selected and the Screening Tool was run for the Origin-Destination VMT per service population measure of VMT. Based on the Screening Tool results (see Attachment B), the Project TAZ is shown to generate a VMT per service population of 23.3. Whereas the Screening Tool shows the City of Lake Elsinore baseline 35.6 VMT per service population. The Project is located in a low VMT area.

**Low VMT Area screening criteria is met.**

### **STEP 3: PROJECT TYPE SCREENING**

City Guidelines state that small projects that generate less than 400 daily vehicle trips are considered less than significant absent substantial evidence to the contrary. Trips generated by the Proposed Project have been estimated based on trip generation rates collected by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2021 (3). The Proposed Project is anticipated to generate 956 daily vehicle trip-ends per day. Therefore, the Project does not meet the 400 daily vehicle trips threshold (See Attachment C).

Additionally, the City Guidelines describe those projects consisting of local-serving retail less than 50,000 square feet may be presumed to cause a less than significant impact absent substantial evidence to the contrary. Local serving retail generally improves the convenience of shopping close to home and has the effect of reducing vehicle travel.<sup>3</sup> The proposed Project consists of a 10-vehicle fueling position and a 4,775 square foot convenience store/fast-food restaurant, which is less than the 50,000 square foot threshold, the Project's impact on VMT is presumed to be less than significant.

**Project Type screening criteria is met.**

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, the Project was evaluated consistent with the available screening criteria. The Project was found to meet the Low VMT Area and Project Type screening criteria. The Proposed Project is presumed to result in a less than significant impact for VMT; no further VMT analysis required.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at aso@urbanxroads.com.

Respectfully submitted,

URBAN CROSSROADS, INC.



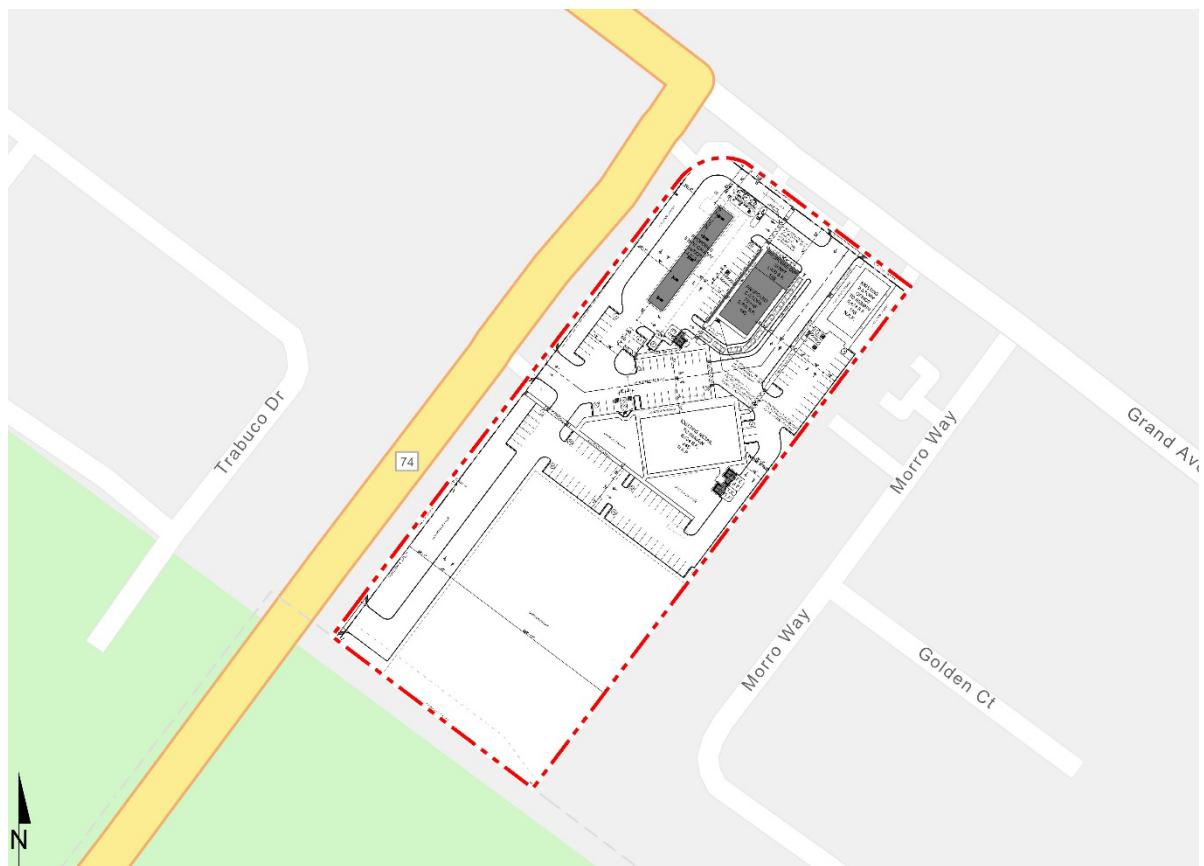
Alexander So  
Senior Associate

<sup>3</sup> Page 5 of City of Lake Elsinore Traffic Impact Analysis Preparation Guide May 2020

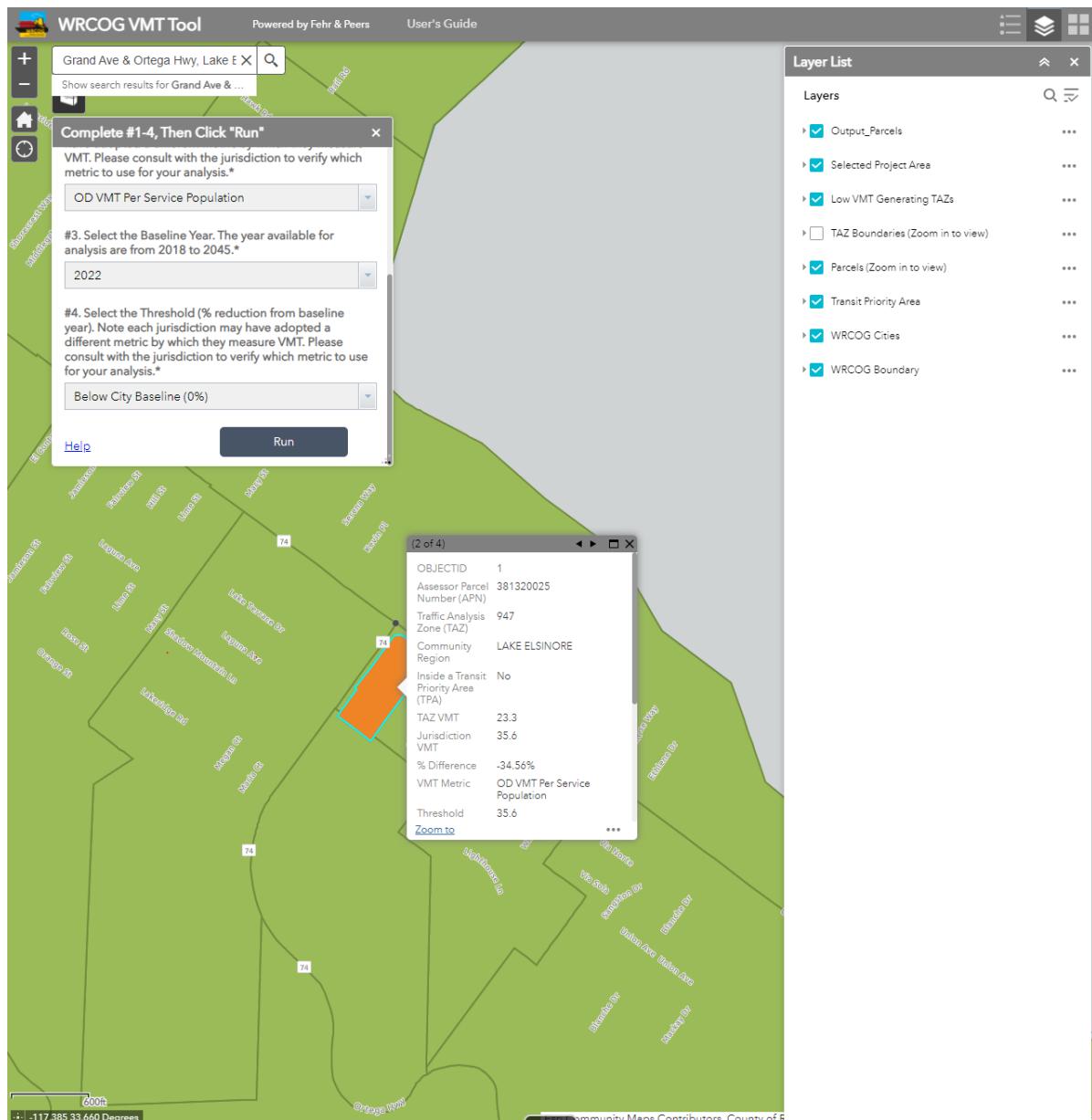
## REFERENCES

1. **Office of Planning and Research.** *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA.* State of California : s.n., December 2018.
2. **City of Lake Elsinore.** *Traffic Impact Analysis Preparation Guide.* City of Lake Elsinore : s.n., May 2020.
3. **Institute of Transportation Engineers.** *Trip Generation Manual.* 11th Edition. 2021.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN**



**ATTACHMENT B**  
**WRCOG SCREENING TOOL**



**ATTACHMENT C**  
**PROJECT TRIP GENERATION**

**TABLE 1: PROJECT TRIP GENERATION SUMMARY**

Land Use <sup>1</sup>	Units <sup>2</sup>	ITE LU Code	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour			Daily
			In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	
<b>Trip Generation Rates:</b>									
Fast-food Restaurant with Drive-Through Window	TSF	934	22.75	21.86	44.61	17.18	15.85	33.03	467.48
Convenience Store/Gas Station	VFP	945	8.03	8.03	16.06	9.21	9.21	18.42	265.12

<sup>1</sup> Trip Generation Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), *Trip Generation Manual*, 11th Edition (2021).

<sup>2</sup> TSF = thousand square feet; VFP = Vehicle Fueling Position

Land Use	Quantity	Units <sup>1</sup>	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour			Daily
			In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	
<b>Project Trip Generation Summary:</b>									
Fast-food Restaurant with Drive-Through Window	1,400	TSF	32	31	63	24	22	46	654
Pass-by Reduction (AM = 50%; PM/Daily = 55%)			-16	-15	-31	-12	-12	-24	-360
Convenience Store/Gas Station <sup>2</sup>	10	VFP	80	80	160	92	92	184	2,652
Pass-by Reduction (76% AM; 75% PM/Daily)			-61	-61	-122	-69	-69	-138	-1,990
<b>Proposed Project Total</b>			<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>956</b>

<sup>1</sup> TSF = thousand square feet; VFP = Vehicle Fueling Position

<sup>2</sup> The convenience store is included as part of the gas station