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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 6, 2023

TO: Lauren Alexander | The Armony Companies

FROM: Erin Vaca | DKS Associates
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SUBJECT: Rovina Lane Residential Project VMT Assessment Project #24378-000

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

An affordable housing project is proposed for construction at the southeast corner of Rovina Lane and Jacquelyn Lane in Petaluma, CA (APN: 019-2010-012-000). The proposed project consists of 32 multifamily dwelling units and would be 100% deed-restricted affordable. The project includes several shared facilities including a gym, outdoor play area, and bicycle storage and will provide a total of 60 parking spaces on site.

The City of Petaluma will not require a local transportation impact analysis for approval of the project and the project is assumed to be exempt from formal environmental analysis since it consists of 100% affordable housing. Therefore, the objective of this analysis is to confirm that the presumption of less than significant vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impacts is reasonable and to assess pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access to the site.

VMT ASSESSMENT

The City of Petaluma's adopted VMT thresholds of significance and analysis methodologies are published in *Senate Bill 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation Guidelines* (July 2021). Residential projects are assessed against a citywide average total home-based VMT per resident. Projects generating up to 83.2% of the citywide average may be presumed to have a less than significant impact. The citywide average home-based VMT per resident is 19.3 and the corresponding threshold of significance is 16.1.

The City's VMT policy lists VMT screening criteria, whereby qualifying projects can forgo formal VMT analysis. All potential screening strategies were reviewed and two of were found to be potentially relevant:

- **Projects in Low VMT Areas** - residential and office/employment-focused projects that are in low-VMT areas (based on adopted VMT thresholds of significance) that are similar to nearby developments in terms of density, mix of uses, and transit accessibility; and
- **Affordable Housing in Jobs-Rich Areas** - projects that include 100 percent affordable housing located in infill locations and areas with a high jobs-housing imbalance.

Based on the screening maps published in the City's VMT Policy and annotated with the project location (Figure 1), the project is not located in an area with VMT per resident below the citywide threshold of significance. However, the project is higher density than the immediately surrounding development and consists of affordable housing units. With respect to the 100% affordable housing criterion, the project site is an infill location that is within about two miles of the historic downtown area. Whether this qualifies as a jobs-rich area is not clear.

Because the project could not be definitively screened for VMT impacts, the project characteristics were tested using the VMT Reduction Calculator tool published by the Sonoma County Transportation Agency (SCTA). The SCTA tool relies on data from this agency's travel demand model, consistent with the recommendations for VMT analysis methods in the City's VMT policy. Two strategies were quantified using the VMT Reduction Calculator:

- T-1. Increase Residential Density – The project proposes 32.1 DU/acre. The surrounding area is zoned as R-4 in the Petaluma zoning code, which permits densities of 8 to 18 units per acre. Therefore, the density of typical development was left at the default value of 9.1 DU/acre. As a stand-alone measure, this strategy would result in a 30% decrease in VMT per resident.
- T-4. Integrate Affordable and Below Market Rate Housing **–** The proposed project consists of 100% affordable housing (permanently dedicated to lower income families earning 80 percent of area median income or below). As a stand-alone measure, this strategy would result in a 28.6% reduction.

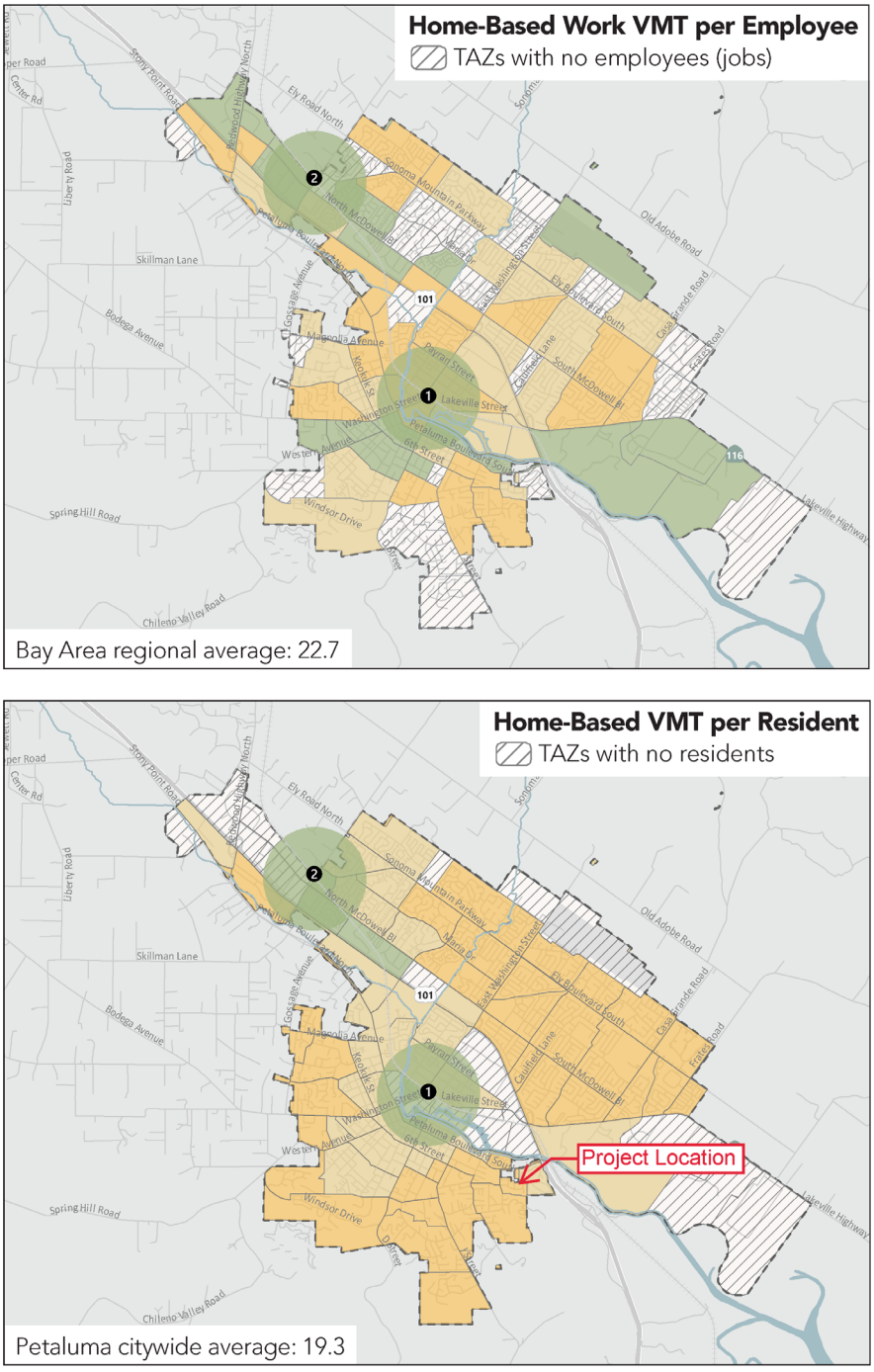
According to the VMT Reduction Calculator, the two strategies combined would result in a 50% reduction in project trips (see results sheet attached to this memorandum).

The expected VMT characteristics of the project site were obtained from base year (2019) SCTA model outputs provided by the City of Petaluma. The project is located in Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) 898, which exhibits 25.61 home-based VMT per resident. Assuming the average trip length remains constant and applying the reduction factor from the VMT Reduction Calculator, the expected VMT per resident would therefore be 12.8, falling below the threshold of significance.

SITE CIRCULATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND TRANSIT ACCESS

To support the assumption of less than significant VMT impacts, the proposed project should provide adequate facilities to support active transportation and transit use. As described below, the overall bicycle, pedestrian, and transit accessibility of the site is adequate.



Source: City of Petaluma. Senate Bill 743 Vehicle Miles Traveled Implementation Guidelines (July 2021)

FIGURE 1: VMT SCREENING MAP

The Golden Gate Transit provides multiple fixed-route bus services within the Bay Area, including routes from Santa Rosa to San Francisco. The nearest transit bus stop, served by **Route 101** and **Route 171**, is located along Petaluma Boulevard S, south of TruckMax USA, approximately 0.2 miles from the project site. The bus stop is provided with a bus shelter. Both routes operate between the Golden Gate Transit depot at Piner and Industrial and the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco.

Given that the nearest bus stop is 0.2 miles from the project site, it would take approximately seven minutes to walk to the bus stop from the project site. The shortest path to access the bus stop from the project site would be via Rovina Lane, which is currently a private roadway not accessible to the project. The alternative walking route to transit stops on Petaluma Boulevard would be via the existing pedestrian path to Lena Lane, Nadine Lane, and McNear Avenue. To improve bicycle/pedestrian access to the site and support VMT reduction, it is recommended to provide pedestrian access from the project site to Petaluma Boulevard S via Rovina Lane.

The downtown commercial area is approximately one mile from the project via Petaluma Boulevard. Currently, Class II buffered bike lanes exist on both sides of Petaluma Boulevard and on the east side of McNear Avenue, south of Petaluma Boulevard S. West of Mountain View Avenue, the bicycle facilities on Petaluma Boulevard S transition to standard Class II lanes. These facilities will provide adequate bicycle access from the project site and help support reduced VMT per resident.