CHAPTER 3 – TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the contents of the trip generation letter and traffic impact analysis (TIA) submittals. All projects except those exempt pursuant to SVMC 22.20.020 shall be subject to transportation concurrency review. This review is conducted to ensure that adequate transportation facilities are provided in conjunction with new growth. Transportation concurrency shall be measured using the concept of level of service (LOS). Acceptable LOS thresholds are defined in the Spokane Valley Comprehensive Plan.

This flowchart may be used to determine what type of transportation concurrency document is required. The City shall not sign off on a project until transportation concurrency has been determined.

The table below summarizes the mandatory scope elements for each type of analysis required by Spokane Valley:
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### 3.2 TRIP GENERATION & DISTRIBUTION LETTER GUIDELINES

All projects which generate 10 or more new peak-hour vehicular trips shall submit a trip generation and distribution letter. The letter shall be based on the current version of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual* and developed by an Engineer.

If a project is subject to State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review, the trip generation and distribution letter shall be submitted for review at the time of the SEPA application.

The letter is required to be approved by the City prior to submittal of a traffic impact analysis report.

#### 3.2.1 APPLICABILITY

a. A trip generation and distribution letter is required for most projects. However, the following projects are typically under the peak-hour threshold and may not be required to prepare a trip generation and distribution letter:
i. Residential short plats (the number of trips from a duplex shall be equivalent to two single family homes);

ii. Drive-through coffee stands with no indoor seating;

iii. Multi-family projects with nine units or less;

iv. Changes of use from residential to commercial with no new buildings or building additions;

v. Office projects of less than 2,500 square feet (ITE land uses 700-799); and,

vi. Industrial projects of less than 9,000 square feet (ITE land uses 100-199).

b. For projects expected to generate less than 10 peak-hour vehicular trips the project applicant is required to submit a letter with the following information for all proposed development phases for the property:

   i. Brief project description;

   ii. Number of expected employees;

   iii. Hours of business; and,

   iv. The expected number of vehicular trips (customers and employees) to the business during the AM and PM peak hours.

3.2.2 MINIMUM ELEMENTS

The trip generation and distribution letter for projects generating 10 or more peak-hour trips shall include the following elements:

   a. Project description, including proposed use;

   b. Site plan with vicinity map;

   c. Building size noted in square feet;

   d. Zoning of the property;

   e. Determination of whether the project is in a SEPA Infill Area (see following section);

   f. Proposed and existing access points, site circulation, queuing lengths for driveways (and drive-throughs, if applicable) and parking locations;

   g. Project phasing and expected build out year;

   h. An estimate of trip generation for the typical weekday, AM peak-hour, and PM peak-hour conditions. Supporting calculations and data sources shall be shown. Any adjustments for transit use, mixed use internalization, pass-by trips, and/or diverted trips shall be clearly stated;

   i. A comparison of the trip generation between the previous and the proposed site use for projects involving a change of use. If the comparison shows a
net increase in trip generation, the project shall be subject to the TIA requirements of a new development;

j. A preliminary distribution pattern for traffic on the adjacent street network, shown in a graphical format; and,

k. The engineering seal signed and dated by the engineer who prepared the letter.

3.3 LIMITED TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Pursuant to SVMC 21.20.040, portions of Spokane Valley had additional environmental review performed as part of the Comprehensive Plan EIS. Because of the additional environmental review within the SEPA Infill Areas, the majority of development projects within these areas do not require a full TIA report if the Applicant adopts the subarea environmental analysis and mitigation requirements identified in the SEPA documents. However, to assess potential traffic safety or site access issues, a limited TIA is required as set forth below.

3.3.1 APPLICABILITY

A limited TIA is required for the following situations:

a. Projects adding 20 or more peak-hour trips through an arterial intersection and which are located within a SEPA Infill Area;

b. Projects within a SEPA Infill Area that impact local access intersections, alleys, or driveways located within an area with a current traffic problem as identified by the City or previous traffic study, such as a high-accident location, poor roadway alignment, or area with a capacity deficiency; or

c. At the discretion of the City in lieu of a full TIA.

A full TIA (see Section 3.4) is required for land uses that exceed the total trip bank established in SVMC 21.20.040. Applicants are encouraged to consult with City staff if they are unsure if they apply for both SEPA relief and a limited TIA.

3.3.2 SCOPE

The scope of the limited TIA shall be developed by an engineer. A draft scope shall be reviewed and approved by the City prior to submission of the limited TIA. The scope of the limited TIA shall conform to the following:

a. The study area may include any intersections or streets within a 1/2 mile radius of the site.

b. A safety analysis may be required, as identified by City staff in the scope review phase. If the analysis is required, the City shall assist by providing crash data if available. Safety analysis at a minimum requires three years of crash history showing the date and time, type, number of vehicles involved in the crash, including weather and road conditions. Crash analysis shall include bicycle and pedestrian crashes. Crash information shall be assessed by the developer’s engineer to identify possible impacts the proposed new
trips would add to the problem. Examples may include queuing that exceeds storage pocket lengths or that extends to upstream intersections, recurring left turn crashes, limited sight distance, or proposed project access intersections that may be poorly placed.

c. If a safety and operational analysis reveals deficiencies, then mitigation measures shall be developed with recommendations to fix the deficiencies.

d. Unless otherwise identified by the City, the analysis shall be performed for the build-out year of the proposed development.

3.3.3 METHODOLOGY

The analysis shall be done using the following methodology:

a. Background growth rate – The background growth rate may be based on historical growth data or the growth rate as calculated from Figures 30 and 32 of the Comprehensive Plan (the 2016 and 2040 average daily traffic volumes). A minimal annual growth rate of 1% is required unless otherwise approved by the City;

b. The LOS shall be determined in accordance with the methods reported in the current version of the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM);

c. Use of the two-stage gap acceptance methodology for unsignalized intersections is subject to City approval;

d. “Synchro” is the primary traffic software used by the City to model intersection and turn pocket queuing analysis. Depending on the analysis, the City may request other traffic analysis using other modeling software. In addition to Synchro, the engineer may use the most current version of Highway Capacity Software (HCS). Other analysis tools may be utilized with City approval if HCM methodology cannot accurately model an intersection;

e. Trip generation data shall be based on the latest version of the ITE Trip Generation Manual. Trip generation data from studies of similar facilities may be substituted with prior City approval; and,

f. Turning movement counts and crash diagrams may need to be developed to document a safety or operations problem. If traffic counts are required, they shall be taken on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday representing a typical travel day. Counts shall not be taken during a week which contains a holiday or during a week of a significant weather event. Projects near schools may be required to collect turning movement counts during a typical school day.

3.3.4 LIMITED TIA REPORT MINIMUM ELEMENTS

The limited TIA report shall include at least the following:
3.3.4.1 Title Page

The limited TIA shall include a title page with the following elements:

a. Name of project;
b. City project number/permit number;
c. Applicant’s name and address;
d. Engineer’s name, address and phone number;
e. Date of study preparation; and,
f. The engineering seal, signed and dated by the professional engineer licensed in the State of Washington who prepared the report.

3.3.4.2 Project Description and Summary

The limited TIA shall include a brief description of project, location, study intersections, findings, and mitigation.

3.3.4.3 Proposed Development and Trip Generation

The limited TIA shall include the following information for the proposed development:

a. Project description, including proposed use;
b. Site plan with vicinity map;
c. Building size noted in square feet;
d. Zoning of the property;
e. Determination of whether the project is within a SEPA Infill Area (see following section);
f. Proposed and existing access points, site circulation, queuing lengths for driveways (and drive-throughs, if applicable) and parking locations;
g. Project phasing and expected opening year;
h. An estimate of trip generation for the typical weekday, AM peak-hour, and PM peak-hour conditions. Supporting calculations and data sources shall be shown. Any adjustments for transit use, mixed use internalization, pass-by trips, and/or diverted trips shall be clearly stated;
i. A comparison of the trip generation between the previous and the proposed site use for projects involving a change of use. If the comparison shows a net increase in trip generation, the project shall be subject to the limited TIA requirements of a new development;
j. A preliminary distribution pattern for traffic on the adjacent street network, shown in a graphical format; and,
k. Project phasing and timing.
3.3.4.4 Summary of Existing Conditions

The limited TIA shall provide a brief summary of existing conditions for the study area that includes at least the following:

a. Brief summary of the transportation network adjacent to the site including a qualitative description of the facilities, speed limits, presence of bike lanes/trails, bus stops, and on-street parking;

b. Figure or table of the peak hour turning movement volumes at the study intersections;

c. Collision history – three years minimum;

d. Length of existing turn pockets at study intersections; and,

e. Other information as identified during the scoping process.

3.3.4.5 Background Projects

If background project traffic is necessary to assess build-out conditions, it shall include the following:

a. Traffic from newly constructed projects;

b. Projects for which traffic impacts have been tentatively reserved;

c. Projects for which a Concurrency Certificate has been awarded;

d. Non-project, general background traffic increases; and,

e. Vested traffic for vacant buildings that are undergoing redevelopment.

The limited TIA shall provide the following information for background projects, as identified by the City:

a. Project descriptions;

b. Vicinity map;

c. Trips generated by projects and assigned to study intersections,

d. Figure or table of the build-out peak hour turning movement volumes at the study intersections;

e. Planned transportation improvements (private development and City); and,

f. Where required, safety and operations analysis results.

3.3.4.6 Other Analyses

Other analyses may be required as requested by the City, including but not limited to:

a. Queue lengths at driveways and drive-through windows;

b. Noise;
c. Air quality (typically required when physical improvements are proposed and requires electronic submittal of Synchro files);

d. Intersection control warrant analysis (signal, roundabouts, four-way stop, yield);

e. Auxiliary lane warrant analysis;

f. Parking study (including vehicles and/or bicycles);

g. Site access; and,

h. Pedestrian access study.

3.3.4.7 Findings

The following shall be addressed in the findings section:

a. Traffic and safety impacts;

b. Proposed project modifications; and,

c. Off-site mitigation.

3.3.4.8 Appendices

The following information shall be included in appendices:

a. Definitions;

b. Trip generation sources;

c. Passer-by and origin-destination studies (if applicable);

d. Volume and turning movement count sheets;

e. Analysis software (Synchro, HCS, SimTraffic, etc.) report printouts (electronic submittal may be required);

f. Warrant analysis calculations; and,

g. References.
3.4 TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

For developments that are not within a SEPA Infill Area, this section outlines the requirements for a TIA. The intent of the TIA is to allow the City to properly plan and improve the transportation system to meet the mobility needs of future growth and to comply with SEPA requirements.

3.4.1 APPLICABILITY

A TIA is required for the following situations:

a. Projects adding 20 or more peak-hour trips to an intersection of arterial streets, within a one-mile radius of the project site as shown by the trip generation and distribution letter; or,

b. Projects impacting local access intersections, alleys, or driveways located within an area with a current traffic problem as identified by the City or previous traffic study, such as a high-accident location, poor roadway alignment or capacity deficiency.

3.4.2 SCOPE

The scope of the TIA shall be developed by an engineer. Prior to submittal of the TIA, the City and other impacted jurisdictions/agencies shall approve the scope of the TIA. The scope of the TIA shall conform to the following:

a. The study area shall include any intersections of arterial streets within a one-mile radius of the site that would experience an increase of at least 20 vehicle trips during a peak hour. Some intersections may be excluded if analyzed within the past year and are shown to operate at LOS C or better. All site access points shall be analyzed. Additional arterial intersections outside of the one mile radius and intersections of local streets may also be required at the discretion of the City;

b. If any of the study intersections are on a Major Arterial Corridor, a corridor LOS analysis shall be conducted for all relevant corridors. For example, If a project increases traffic by 20 vehicles at the intersection of Pines Road/Mission Avenue, then a corridor LOS analysis shall be required for Pines Road. If a corridor has been analyzed within the last two years and is shown to operate at LOS C or better, the City may exempt the corridor LOS analysis, although traffic counts on the corridor may still be required in order to maintain an up-to-date database of counts along the Major Arterial Corridors. Below is a list of the Major Arterial Corridors from the Comprehensive Plan:

   • Argonne/Mullan Road between Trent Avenue and Appleway Blvd
   • Pines Road between Trent Avenue and 8th Avenue
   • Evergreen Road between Indiana Avenue and 8th Avenue
   • Sullivan Road between Wellesley Avenue and 8th Avenue
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• Sprague Avenue/Appleway Blvd between Fancher Road and Park Road

c. A PM peak hour LOS analysis shall be conducted for all study area intersections (and corridors if applicable). An LOS analysis of the AM peak hour, Saturday afternoon, or other time period may be required at the discretion of the City;

d. As identified by City staff in the scope review phase, a safety analysis may be required, which may include intersection queuing, turn lane warrants and LOS, sight distance, and pedestrian/bicycle conflicts to identify potential safety issues; and,

e. Additional analysis may be required by other reviewing agencies.

The Intersection and corridor (if applicable) LOS shall meet or exceed the thresholds pursuant to the City’s Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 4: Capital Facilities, Table 4.3 Spokane Valley Level of Service Standards.

In the event that the LOS standard is not met, the project applicant shall work with the City to identify appropriate mitigation measures, which could include modification of the intersection designs, constructing/funding improvements to City-owned intersections, or changing the scale of the development.

A safety analysis may be required, as identified by City staff in the scope review phase. If the analysis is required, the City shall assist by providing crash data if available. Safety analysis at a minimum requires three years of crash history showing the date and time, type, number of vehicles involved in the crash, weather and road conditions. Crash analysis shall include bicycle and pedestrian crashes. Crash information shall be assessed by the developer’s engineer to identify possible impacts proposed new trips would add to the problem. Examples may include queuing that exceeds storage pocket lengths or that extends to upstream intersections, recurring left turn crashes, limited sight distance, or proposed project access intersections that may be poorly placed. Safety issues shall be mitigated to the satisfaction of City staff.

3.4.3 METHODOLOGY

The analysis shall be done using the following methodology:

a. Background growth rate – The background growth rate may be based on historical growth data or the growth rate as calculated from Figures 30 and 33 of the Comprehensive Plan (the 2016 and 2040 average daily traffic volumes). A minimal annual growth rate of 1% is required unless otherwise approved by the City;

b. The LOS shall be determined in accordance with the methods reported in the current version of the *Highway Capacity Manual (HCM)* or as further defined by City staff;

c. Corridor LOS shall be determined by calculating the volume-weighted average intersection LOS of all signalized arterial/arterial intersections
along the defined length of the Major Arterial Corridor.\(^1\) With all intersection LOS calculated along the corridor, the control delays of all intersections shall be averaged to calculate total corridor LOS. The same control delay thresholds defined for individual intersections shall be used to assign corridor LOS (e.g., corridor average control delay of 38 seconds would correspond to LOS D). Based on City input, WSDOT ramp terminal intersections may or may not be included as part of the corridor LOS calculation, and may be evaluated separately as individual intersections.

d. Use of the two-stage gap acceptance methodology for unsignalized intersections requires prior City approval;

e. “Synchro” is the primary traffic software used by the City to model intersection and turn pocket queuing analysis. Depending on the analysis, the City may request other traffic analysis using other modeling software. In addition to Synchro, the Engineer may use the most current version of HCS. Other analysis tools may be utilized with prior City approval if HCM methodology cannot accurately model an intersection;

f. Trip generation data shall be based on the current version of the ITE Trip Generation Manual. Trip generation data from studies of similar facilities may be substituted as approved by the City; and,

g. Turning movement counts shall be recorded less than one year prior to submitting a traffic study. Counts less than two years old may be used if no significant development projects or changes to the transportation network have occurred. Counts shall be taken on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday representing a typical travel day. Counts shall not be taken during a week which contains a holiday or during a week of a significant weather event. Projects near schools may be required to collect turning movement counts during a typical school day. Given the potentially large-scale of corridor LOS evaluation, counts older than one year may be used for intersections along a corridor that are more than one mile away, so long as they are factored using the growth rate identified above. However, the City may request, at its discretion, that the project collect new traffic counts at any intersection along a relevant Major Arterial Corridor in an effort to maintain a relatively current database for TIA review.

\[1\] To clarify, unsignalized project driveway intersections with the Major Arterial Corridor are not part of the corridor LOS calculation since they are not arterial streets.

### 3.4.4 TIA REPORT MINIMUM ELEMENTS

The TIA report shall include at least the following:

#### 3.4.4.1 Title Page

The TIA shall include a title page with the following elements:
a. Name of project;
b. City project number/permit number;
c. Applicant’s name and address;
d. Engineer’s name, address and phone number;
e. Date of study preparation; and,
f. The engineering seal, signed and dated by the engineer who prepared the report.

3.4.4.2 Introduction and Summary

a. Purpose of report and study objectives;
b. Executive summary;
c. Proposed development description;
d. Location and study area;
e. Findings; and,
f. Recommendations and mitigation.

3.4.4.3 Proposed Development

The TIA shall include the following information for the proposed development (this is the same information that is required for the trip letter):

a. Project description;
b. Location and vicinity map;
c. Site plan with building size (square feet);
d. Proposed zoning;
e. Land use;
f. Access points, site circulation, queuing lengths, and parking locations;
g. An estimate of trip generation for the typical weekday, AM peak-hour, and PM peak-hour conditions. Any adjustments for transit use, pass-by trips, and/or diverted trips shall be clearly stated;
h. A distribution pattern for traffic on the adjacent street network, shown in a graphical format; and,
i. Project phasing and timing.

3.4.4.4 Summary of Existing Conditions

The TIA shall provide a summary of existing conditions for the study area that includes the following:

a. Transportation network description, including functional classification, bike/pedestrian facilities and transit routes;
b. Existing zoning;
c. Existing traffic volumes including percent heavy vehicles;
d. Collision history – three years minimum;
e. Posted speed limits (and if known the 85 percentile speed determined from a speed study);
f. Length of existing turn pockets at signalized intersections;
g. Location of the following:
   i. On-street parking,
   ii. Bus stops, and,
   iii. Private and public schools in the area,
h. LOS and safety analysis results.

### 3.4.4.5 Background Projects

Background project traffic shall include the following:

a. Traffic from newly constructed projects;
b. Projects for which traffic impacts have been tentatively reserved;
c. Projects for which a Concurrency Certificate has been awarded;
d. Non-project, general background traffic increases; and,
e. Vested traffic for vacant buildings that are undergoing redevelopment.

The TIA shall provide the following information for background projects, as identified by the City:

f. Project descriptions;
   a. Vicinity map;
   b. Trip generation;
   c. Trip distribution;
   d. Planned transportation improvements (private development and City); and,
   e. LOS and safety analysis results.

### 3.4.4.6 Analysis Scenarios

The TIA shall include the following analysis scenarios:

a. Existing conditions;
b. Build-out year without project;
c. Build-out year with project;
d. Build-out + five year analysis if project is expected to proceed in phases, take more than six years to complete, or if the study intersection is included on the City’s Six-Year TIP; and,

e. Major developments with regional impacts may be required to use the current version of the SRTC Regional Travel Demand Model and the associated horizon years for analyses, as determined by City staff.

3.4.4.7 Other Analyses

Other analyses may be required as requested by the City, including but not limited to:

a. Queue lengths at driveways and drive-through windows;

b. Noise;

c. Air quality (typically required when physical improvements are proposed and requires electronic submittal of Synchro files);

d. Intersection control warrant analysis (signal, roundabout, four-way stop, yield);

e. Auxiliary lane warrant analysis;

f. Parking study (including vehicles and/or bicycles);

g. Site access; and,

h. Pedestrian access study.

3.4.4.8 Findings

The following shall be addressed in the findings section:

a. Traffic impacts;

b. Compliance with level of service standards;

c. Proposed project modifications; and,

d. Offsite mitigation.

3.4.4.9 Appendices

The following information shall be included in appendices:

a. Definitions;

b. Trip generation sources;

c. Passer-by and origin-destination studies;

d. Volume and turning movement count sheets;

e. Synchro report printouts (electronic submittal may be required);

f. Warrant analysis calculations; and,

a. References.
3.5 **MEETINGS**

A public meeting(s) may be required for any residential project generating over 100 PM peak-hour trips, commercial projects generating over 100 PM peak-hour trips impacting a residential area, or for other projects at the discretion of the City. The intent of the public meeting is to let the public know about the proposed project and to allow for public input to determine the scope of the TIA. Notice of date, time, place and purpose of the public meeting(s) shall be provided by the following means:

- a. One publication in the City’s official newspaper at least 15 days prior to the meeting;
- b. A mailing to adjacent residents, property owners, neighborhood groups, jurisdictions, and/or organizations within a 400-foot radius of the project boundaries, not less than 15 days prior to the public meeting. Other persons or entities outside of the 400-foot radius may be required to be notified if the City determines they may be affected by the proposed project or have requested such notice in writing; and,
- c. A sign shall be erected, on the subject property fronting and adjacent to the most heavily traveled public street, at least 15 days prior to the meetings. The sign shall be at least four feet in width and four feet in height and shall have letters three inches in size. The sign shall be easily read by the traveling public from the right-of-way. This sign shall announce the date, time and place of the traffic meetings and provide a brief description of the project.

- a. Proper notification and all associated costs shall be the responsibility of the Applicant. Notification shall be considered satisfied upon receipt of an affidavit provided by the Applicant to the City stating the above requirements have been completed.