

Transportation Impact Fee Adopted By Santa Monica Planning Commission

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Developers eyeing new projects in Santa Monica may have to be cognizant of how their respectively planned residences or commercial buildings will impact traffic within the city, or be willing to pay City Hall a fee for not fostering its goal of “No New Net Trips” during p.m. peak hours.

A resolution outlining a “Transportation Impact Fee” was unanimously approved by the Santa Monica Planning Commission at its special meeting on Wednesday. The fee was incorporated as part of the adopted Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) to “mitigate negative transportation impacts of new development.”

Acknowledging “new development will continue to occur” in Santa Monica that “will generate new trips in the PM hour,” the resolution stated the new trips must be “offset through the development of new transportation infrastructure providing alternatives to automobile travel.”

The Transportation Impact Fee would basically direct new developments “contribute its fair share” toward the costs in cultivating new transportation infrastructure within the city.

“(Any) new development which does not contribute its fair share towards the cost of this new transportation infrastructure will inhibit the City’s ability to meet the No New Trips goal and only serve to further exacerbate the negative effects of increased vehicle travel,” the resolution stated.

“It is appropriate for new development(s) to pay for improvements to the transportation network to offset the additional vehicle trips generated by such development(s) so that no net trips are generated in the PM peak hour,” the resolution further stated.

Included in the development of alternative automobile infrastructure are increased public transit, bicycling, ridesharing, and walking.

Among recent new developments presented to planning commissioners and the city council, one project did not include plans for a parking garage. Many developments also make contributions toward the planned Expo Light Rail and to the development of bike lanes.

The passed resolution expressed the intent of the Planning Commission to amend a subchapter of Santa Monica’s zoning ordinance in order to establish the Transportation Impact Fee.

According to the resolution, Santa Monica is home to about 87,000 residents, but expands to an estimated 300,000 people during weekdays and between 500,000 and one million people on weekends and holidays.

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