

**CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
STAFF REPORT**

DOCKET: UDO-CC6
STAFF: David Reed

REQUEST

This text amendment is proposed by Planning and Development Services staff to revise Section 12.2 of the *Unified Development Ordinances* as it pertains to traffic impact study standards.

BACKGROUND

In 2001, the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners and the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen (City Council) adopted standards delineating when traffic impact studies would be required for certain types of nonresidential development (UDO-73). Prior to the adoption of UDO-73, there were no codified standards in place to guide the preparation of traffic impact studies (TIS) for proposed development. Whether a TIS was requested of developers was determined based upon traffic conditions in a particular area. Consequently, TIS requests were inconsistent (even for similar types of development) and there was no predictable process for requiring such studies.

Since 2001, many significant development projects have included a TIS as part of the rezoning process. Because UDO-73 did not apply to most residential developments, however, some residential projects that were impactful enough to justify preparation of a TIS did not require submission of such a study at the time of development application. As a result, such projects took longer for developers to complete, as a TIS would be requested after Transportation staff had evaluated the project's projected trip generation numbers, rather than at the start of the project. This situation created frustration for staff, developers, and elected officials.

Furthermore, UDO-73 did not include specific language requiring a TIS for any review process other than a Special Use Zoning, so large developments that can be approved by the Planning Board and do not require rezoning are currently not required to submit a TIS.

Since the adoption of UDO-73, weekly interdepartmental sketch plan review meetings have become an integral part of the development review process in our community. Winston-Salem Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) staff often identify the need for a TIS during these sketch plan reviews based on the trip generation of a proposed development, regardless of development type. Applicants have generally submitted a TIS as part of their application whenever these agencies have requested one. The proposed amendment would make the language in the UDO consistent with this practice, allowing developers to complete the development review process in a timelier manner.

ANALYSIS

The trip generation threshold that requires submission of a TIS in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County is generally similar to the requirements of other large North Carolina communities. However, ours is the only large community where residential development is largely exempt from TIS requirements (see table below).

Summary of TIS Requirements for Large NC Communities

Jurisdiction	TIS Threshold	Residential Development Requirement
Durham/Durham County	150 Peak Hour Trips	Yes
Raleigh	150 Peak Hour Trips or 3,000 Trips per day	Yes
Wake County	1,000 Trips per day	Yes
Charlotte/Mecklenburg	2,500 Trips per day	Yes
Greensboro	100 Peak Hour Trips or 1,000 Trips per day	Yes
Guilford County	PRDs over 25 acres; Case-by-Case for Large Non-residential Developments	Yes for PRDs over 25 acres
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County	150 Peak Hour Trips	No

Our peer communities generally do not differentiate traffic impacts based on the use that generates the traffic. As a result, staff recommends amending the UDO to base the need for a TIS on the amount of traffic a proposed development will add to the road network, regardless of the use that is generating the traffic, and requiring a TIS for developments which meet the trip generation threshold, regardless of whether the proposed development is being submitted for a rezoning or a Planning Board Review.

This text amendment also streamlines existing TIS provisions and revises ordinance language to make this section more consistent with the rest of the UDO. This change was suggested by the Planning Board during its work session discussion on this item.

Staff believes the proposed amendment will create a more consistent, predictable process for developers and allow our UDO to better reflect our development review practices.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL

**CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES FOR UDO-CC6
NOVEMBER 12, 2020**

David Reed presented the staff report.

For clarification, Mo McRae noted different variables that go into a TIS, and asked whether, if an additional unit was added, would deviate from the comprehensive plan.

Kirk Ericson stated that our current TIS requirement is a simple analysis of things like existing road conditions in the area, whether the proposed development will put you into a Level of Service E or F, or some other scenario where there would be impacts on the surrounding area. The TIS standards were developed by Transportation staff, the folks who are actually the review authority for the TIS reports. Kirk added that putting a requirement like that in an ordinance could be explored, if the Board so directed, but it's not something that would be done without having conversations with the folks who wrote the ordinance and would administer it.

Melynda asked why the report didn't include a gross number of trips that would trigger a TIS and noted that some neighboring cities use numbers like 3,000 or 1,000 total trips per day. David indicated that some cities do the study differently, but they generally use 150 peak-hour trips. 150 is what our transportation planners mostly use, and they did not suggest any other way of determining what the trigger should be. Melynda asked if they had a ballpark idea of how many gross trips would trigger 150 peak-hour trips. David stated that in investigating residential uses, he looked to see how many units in a development would trigger a TIS, and it was approximately 150 homes. If there were a subdivision with fewer than 150 homes, it would likely not trigger a TIS, unless it were in a very congested area. David also stated that in multifamily developments, 340 midrise units would also trigger a TIS.

George stated that the term "peak" seems to have changed during times of COVID and asked staff whether the definition of "peak" has changed or is pretty set the way it is. David stated that that would be up to the transportation planners, but that at this point, for that many households, that's the number they use as a benchmark.

Mo commented that actual historic data has been used to determine "peak" during COVID, and that it also has the ability to analyze future trips. A stress test is put into the analysis, and from what she's seen in the industry, she does not see the term "peak" changing. George stated that

"peak" affects more than just this UDO and that term will need to be changed at some point. If not, then a total trip number would need to be used if peak time is not getting at the kinds of questions that the Board has.

After doing the calculation, Kirk stated that each single-family residence, according to the ITE manual, basically generates about 9.5 trips per day. That would be a subdivision of 150 homes, which is the threshold for triggering a TIS. That would have between 1,400 and 1,500 trips per day. Each ITE use has its own threshold, but the peak hour seems to receive approximately 10 percent of the trips on any given 24-hour period.

PUBLIC HEARING

FOR: None

AGAINST: None

WORK SESSION

MOTION: Clarence Lambe recommended approval of the ordinance amendment.

SECOND: Jason Grubbs

VOTE:

FOR: George Bryan, Melynda Dunigan, Jason Grubbs, Tommy Hicks, Clarence Lambe, Chris Leak, Mo McRae, Brenda Smith

AGAINST: None

EXCUSED: None

Aaron King
Director of Planning and Development Services