

## TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

To: Heba El-Guindy, T.E.,  
Mobility and Traffic Engineering Manager  
9770 Culver Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90232

From: Matt Stewart, P.E.  
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: June 18, 2021

Subject: Sweet Flower Dispensary Project  
Final Transportation Study

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### INTRODUCTION

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (“Kimley-Horn”) was contracted by Sweet Flower (“Developer”) to prepare a transportation study for the proposed Sweet Flower Dispensary Project (“Project”). The developer has proposed to convert the existing office building to a retail cannabis dispensary. This transportation study was prepared per *City of Culver City’s Transportation Study Criteria and Guidelines* (July 2020 version).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project site is located on the southern corner of the intersection of Culver Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue, at 10000 Culver Boulevard. The Project site is occupied by a 7,608 square foot (SF) office building and adjacent surface parking lot. The Project will construct a 4,459 SF retail cannabis dispensary, including sales floor and back office, on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the existing building. The 1,523 SF 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building is leased by the Developer but will not be used. The 1,626 SF 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the building is occupied and will continue to be occupied by an existing tenant. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of the building were previously used as retail space. The Project is proposed to be open in Q3 2021.

Vehicle parking for the Project is provided in a parking lot that is shared with an apartment building located at 4617 Lincoln Avenue. The existing parking lot includes 20 parking spaces that are shared between both buildings. Additionally, a channelizing island and “No Right Turn” sign will be installed to discourage traffic exiting the parking lot from turning into the residential neighborhood. The design of the channelizing island is in conceptual stage and will be presented to the City for review.

Sweet Flower is projected to be open from 9 AM to 10 PM. Sweet Flower is projected to employ a maximum of 6 employees per shift. Sweet Flower currently operates four other retail cannabis dispensaries in the City of Los Angeles. The dispensaries are located in Westwood, Beverly Grove, the Arts District, and Studio City. The other four Sweet Flower locations operate with pick-up and delivery services. The proposed Project will operate with pick-up and delivery service.

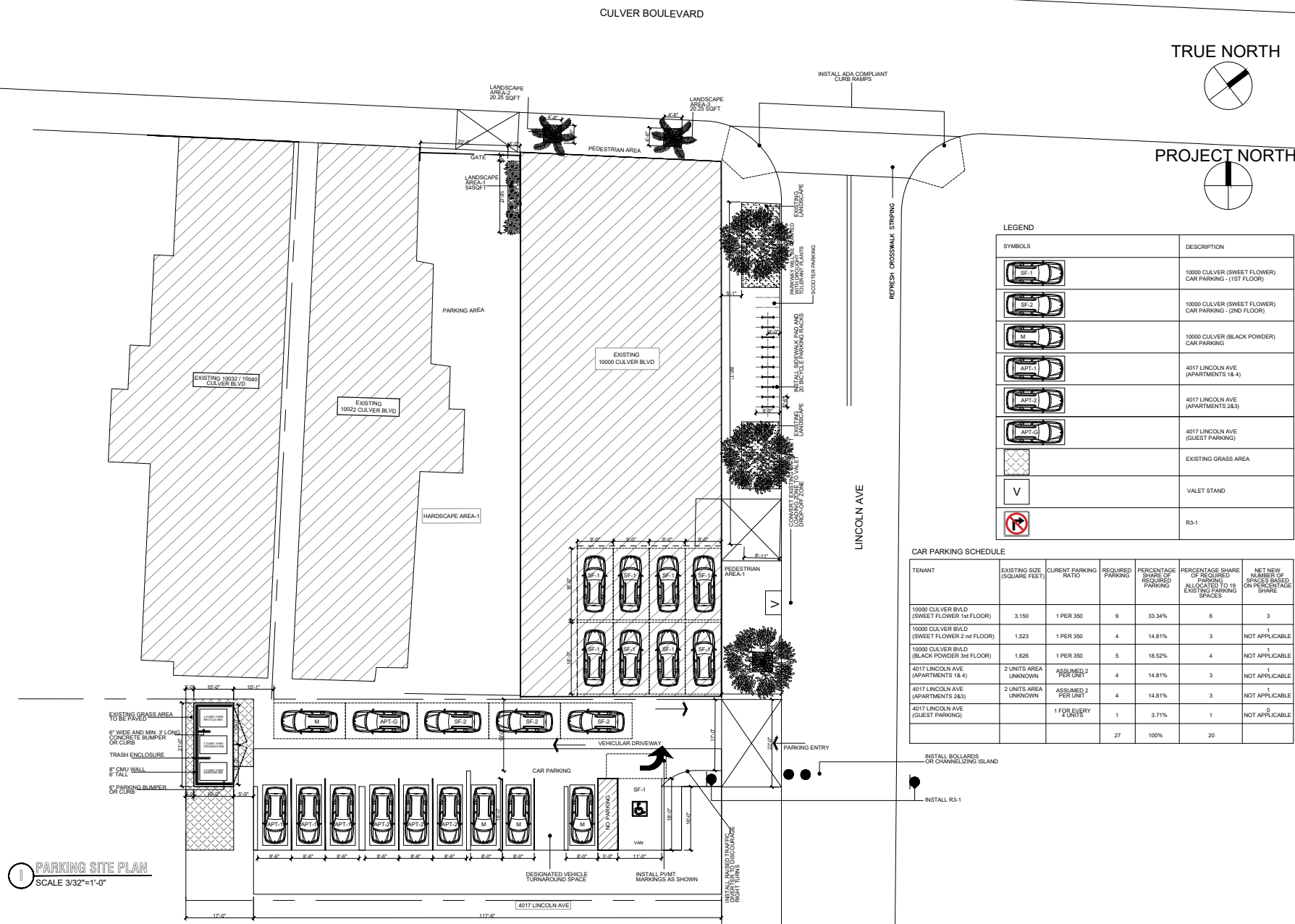
The project site plan is shown on the **Figure 1** on the following page.

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## TRIP GENERATION

The project trip generation for Sweet Flower will be observed during the Analysis Following Project Occupancy based on collection of driveway counts, pick-up and drop-off counts, and counts of customers arriving via other transportation modes.

A preliminary estimate of project trip generation is provided below. Weekday daily, AM, and PM peak hour trips were estimated for the project using trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) publication entitled *Trip Generation*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. The morning and evening peak hours correspond to the peak hours of the adjacent street system. This analysis assumes that the AM peak hour of the adjacent street system does not extend beyond 9 AM, when Sweet Flower would open. The trip generation estimate includes the following two types of credits:

- 1) The first trip generation credit is for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures the applicant will use to discourage vehicle trips to the project. TDM measures that the developer has proposed are described in the following section. Based on the City of Culver City VMT User Manual, the TDM measures are projected to reduce vehicle trips to the site by approximately 0.6%.
- 2) The second trip generation credit is the pass-by reduction. Pass-by trips are trips that would already be on the adjacent roadways (and so are already counted in the existing traffic) and will be shown as turning into the site while passing-by. Pass-by trip reductions are provided by the ITE *Trip Generation* manual. *Trip Generation* data show that 53% of trips to Pharmacy/Drugstores without Drive-Through Windows are pass-by trips during the weekday PM peak hour. Although there is no data included in *Trip Generation* for pass-by rates to marijuana dispensaries, the two land uses are similar and pass-by rates may be assumed to be similar. To be conservative, an estimate 15% pass-by rate is applied for the PM peak hour.

**Table 1: Sweet Flower Trip Generation (ITE Method)**

| ITE Land Use Code                   | Land Use             | Size  | Units | Daily Trips  | AM Peak <sup>3</sup> |          |          | PM Peak   |           |           |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|--------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                     |                      |       |       |              | Total                | In       | Out      | Total     | In        | Out       |
| 882                                 | Marijuana Dispensary | 4.459 | KSF   | 1,128        | 6                    | 6        | 0        | 97        | 49        | 48        |
| <b>Subtotal of Project Trips</b>    |                      |       |       | 1,128        | 6                    | 6        | 0        | 97        | 49        | 48        |
| TDM Credits <sup>1</sup>            |                      |       |       | -7           | 0                    | 0        | 0        | -1        | 0         | 0         |
| Pass-by Reduction <sup>2</sup>      |                      |       |       | 0            | 0                    | 0        | 0        | -14       | -7        | -7        |
| <b>Subtotal of Trip Credits</b>     |                      |       |       | -7           | 0                    | 0        | 0        | -15       | -8        | -7        |
| <b>Total External Project Trips</b> |                      |       |       | <b>1,121</b> | <b>6</b>             | <b>6</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>41</b> |

<sup>1</sup> A 0.6% TDM credit is applied for transportation demand management programs that will be enacted at the site.

<sup>2</sup> A 15% pass-by credit is applied for the PM peak hour.

<sup>3</sup> No customers are expected to arrive at Sweet Flower prior to its opening at 9 AM. Therefore, no project trips are expected to occur during the AM peak hour. A maximum of 6 employees are projected to arrive at Sweet Flower prior to its 9 AM opening. Data collection during post-occupancy analysis will be used to confirm the time of the adjacent street AM and PM peak hours.

**Table 1** indicates that the proposed project will generate approximate 1,121 new daily trips, with 6 new trips during the AM peak hour and 82 new trips during the PM peak hour.

To supplement the ITE *Trip Generation* data, an empirical trip generation study was conducted at the existing Sweet Flower Westwood site on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 while the store was open from 9 AM to 10 PM. Daily and PM peak hour trips were counted and are summarized in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Westwood Sweet Flower Trip Generation Count (Empirical Method)**

| Land Use                           | Size  | Units | Daily Trips | AM Peak <sup>2</sup> |          |          | PM Peak   |          |          |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
|                                    |       |       |             | Total                | In       | Out      | Total     | In       | Out      |
| Marijuana Dispensary               | 4,800 | KSF   | 255         | 0                    | 0        | 0        | 28        | 15       | 13       |
| <b>Subtotal of Project Trips</b>   |       |       | 255         | 0                    | 0        | 0        | 28        | 15       | 13       |
| Non-Driving Trips <sup>1</sup>     |       |       | -124        | 0                    | 0        | 0        | -13       | -7       | -6       |
| <b>Total Vehicle Project Trips</b> |       |       | <b>131</b>  | <b>0</b>             | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>7</b> |

<sup>1</sup> 49% of Westwood Sweet Flower customers indicated they used a non-driving mode (including transit/walk/bike/rideshare/other) to access the store

<sup>2</sup> No Project traffic is expected to arrive at Sweet Flower prior to its opening at 9 AM. Therefore, no project trips are expected to occur during the AM peak hour.

As shown in **Table 2**, the Westwood Sweet Flower generated 255 daily trips and 28 PM Peak hour trips. Based on the size of the store (4,800 SF), a trip generation rate for Sweet Flower marijuana dispensaries was developed. The trip generation rate is shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Sweet Flower Trip Generation Rate (Empirical Method)**

| Land Use             | Independent Variable | Daily Rate | AM Peak |     |     | PM Peak |     |     |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------|---------|-----|-----|---------|-----|-----|
|                      |                      |            | Rate    | In  | Out | Rate    | In  | Out |
| Marijuana Dispensary | KSF                  | 53.1       | 0.0     | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.8     | 54% | 46% |

As shown in **Table 3**, the Westwood Sweet Flower store generates 53.1 daily trips per 1,000 SF and 5.8 PM peak hour trips per 1,000 SF. The Culver City Sweet Flower Project will have similar characteristics to the Westwood Sweet Flower store and is expected to generate a similar number of project trips. It should be noted that there are variations between the two sites including the surrounding land uses and roadway networks. Furthermore, data collection at the Westwood Sweet Flower location was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and may reflect lower than typical trip generation counts. However, the Westwood Sweet Flower location can be used to provide a second estimate for the Project. The trip generation estimate based on the empirical data is shown in **Table 4** on the following page.

**Table 4: Sweet Flower Trip Generation (Empirical Method)**

| Land Use                            | Size  | Units | Daily Trips | AM Peak <sup>2</sup> |          |          | PM Peak   |          |          |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
|                                     |       |       |             | Total                | In       | Out      | Total     | In       | Out      |
| Marijuana Dispensary                | 4.459 | KSF   | 237         | 6                    | 6        | 0        | 26        | 14       | 12       |
| <b>Subtotal of Project Trips</b>    |       |       | 237         | 0                    | 0        | 0        | 26        | 14       | 12       |
| Drive-Ratio Credit <sup>1</sup>     |       |       | -116        | 0                    | 0        | 0        | -12       | -6       | -5       |
| <b>Total External Project Trips</b> |       |       | <b>121</b>  | <b>6</b>             | <b>6</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>7</b> |

<sup>1</sup> A 49% Drive-Ratio Credit is applied based on trip generation survey conducted at Westwood Sweet Flower.

<sup>2</sup> No customers are expected to arrive at Sweet Flower prior to its opening at 9 AM. Therefore, no project trips are expected to occur during the AM peak hour. A maximum of 6 employees are projected to arrive at Sweet Flower prior to its 9 AM opening. Data collection during post-occupancy analysis will be used to confirm the time of the adjacent street AM and PM peak hours.

**Table 4** indicates that the proposed project will generate approximately 121 new daily vehicle trips, with 6 new trips during the AM peak hour and 14 new trips during the PM peak hour. As noted above, actual project trip generation will be assessed following opening of the Project.

## VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED ANALYSIS

State CEQA Guidelines §15064.3 codifies the change from level of service to VMT as a metric for transportation impact analysis. Pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 743, VMT analysis is the primary method for determining CEQA impacts.

The State of California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has developed “screening thresholds” to quickly identify when a project should be expected to cause a less than significant impact without conducting a detailed study.<sup>1</sup> Thus, lead agencies may screen out VMT impacts using project size, whether a project site is in a low VMT area, and whether a project is in a high quality transit area (“HQT”).

The City has developed guidelines and “screening thresholds” to identify when a project is expected to cause a less than significant impact without conducting a detailed study. The City has adopted a full set of screening criteria, as presented in **Table 5: VMT Screening Options for Land Use Projects**. The analysis presented below evaluates the Project’s potential to result in significant transportation impacts, based on the criteria presented in **Table 5**.

### Project Type Screening

As described above, the Project proposes a 4,459 SF marijuana dispensary. The empirical trip generation estimate (121 daily vehicle trips) is beneath the 250 daily trip threshold, but the ITE trip generation estimate (1,121 trips) exceeds the threshold. As a result, the Project was not screened under this criterion from conducting further VMT analysis.

### Transit Priority Area Screening

<sup>1</sup> State of California Office of Planning and Research, *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*, December 2018.

The City's guidelines describe the areas that are defined as High Quality Transit Areas. The Project is not located in one of these areas. As a result, the Project was not screened under this criterion from conducting further VMT analysis.

**Table 5: VMT Screening Options for Land Use Projects**

| Screening Category   | Screening Criteria   |
|--|--|
| Project Type Screening                                     | Presumed less than significant impact for small projects that result in less than 250 daily or 25 peak hour trips  |
| Transit Priority Area (TPA) Screening                      | Presumed less than significant VMT impact for projects within a ½ mile from these key TPAs: Metro E (Expo) Line Culver City Station, Metro E (Expo) Line La Cienega Station, Westfield-Culver City Transit Center, or Sepulveda/Venice Boulevard intersection may be screened. Threshold may be updated in response to changes in TPAs without required Planning Commission or City Council approval when mutually agreed upon by the Directors in the Transportation, Public Works, and Community Development Departments |
| Transit Priority Area (TPA) + Affordable Housing Screening | Presumed less than significant VMT impact for projects located within any TPA where at least 15% of the on-site residential units are affordable   |
| Affordable Housing Project Screening                       | Presumed less than significant VMT impact for affordable housing projects where 100% of the dwelling units are affordable  |
| Local Serving Retail Project Screening                     | Presumed less than significant VMT impact for local serving retail projects having less than 50,000 square feet in size at a single store  |

Source: City of Culver City Transportation Study Criteria and Guidelines, July 2020

#### **Transit Priority Area + Affordable Housing Screening**

The Project does not include affordable housing units. As a result, the Project was not screened under this criterion from conducting further VMT analysis.

#### **Affordable Housing Screening**

The Project does not include affordable housing units. As a result, the Project was not screened under this criterion from conducting further VMT analysis.

#### **Local Serving Retail Screening**

The Project proposes a 4,459 SF marijuana dispensary. Generally, retail projects that are smaller than 50,000 SF are not expected to result in an increase in VMT at a local or regional level and are screened from conducting a VMT analysis. However, due to the relatively small number of marijuana dispensaries in Culver City, the City requested that the Project not be screened as a "local-serving retail project" and that the project's impact to Total VMT be analyzed.

#### **VMT Assessment**

A VMT assessment was conducted using the City of Culver City VMT Tool. At the time of this study, the Tool is not equipped to analyze VMT for small-scale retail projects. When the Tool is updated to allow for analysis of small-scale retail projects, another VMT assessment will be conducted to measure the change in Total VMT as a result of the Project.



## REVIEW OF SITE ACCESS AND INTERNAL CIRCULATION

Vehicular access to 10000 Culver Boulevard is currently provided by a driveway from Lincoln Avenue. The driveway serves the tenants of 10000 Culver as well as apartment residents and guests for the apartment building at 4017 Lincoln Avenue. As part of the Project, vehicular access for visitors to Sweet Flower would be provided by valet-service. Vehicular access to Black Powder, the apartment building, and employees of Sweet Flower would continue to be provided via the existing driveway.

Customers of Sweet Flower arriving by vehicle would be required to use managed parking spaces. Customers would temporarily park their vehicles in two new valet drop-off zones on Lincoln Avenue in front of Sweet Flower. A valet attendant would drive the vehicle into one of the designated parking spaces for Sweet Flower. When the customer is ready to exit, they would notify a second valet attendant who would then move the car from one of the parking spaces to a designated pick-up loading zone in the driveway near the exit. During periods of high demand, one of the Sweet Flower parking spaces under the 4017 Lincoln building would be reserved for valet attendants to use to turn vehicles around. The customer could then exit the parking lot by making a left turn onto Lincoln Avenue.

The turnover of parking spaces for the apartment building, Black Powder, and Sweet Flower employees is relatively infrequent. Customer visits to Sweet Flower take an average of 20-30 minutes, and turnover of spaces for customers is therefore higher.

Pedestrian and bicycle access to Sweet Flower would be provided by Culver Boulevard. Bicycle parking is proposed in the public parkway on Lincoln Avenue.

## REVIEW OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON MULTI-MODAL FACILITIES

The project is not expected to impact multi-modal facilities in the project's vicinity. A level of service analysis at study intersections will be conducted during Analysis Following Occupancy to analyze project impacts.

## PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The developer proposes to implement several transportation demand management (TDM) measures to reduce vehicular trips generated by the Project, as follows:

- **Transportation Subsidies for employees**
  - TAP cards (\$55/month) will be provided to all full-time employees
  - Shared scooter credit (\$15/month) will be provided to all full-time employees
  - Rideshare credit (\$30/month) will be provided to all full-time employees
  - "Green Transport" bonus of \$50 per month for full-time employees who utilize bicycles as their primary source of transportation
- **Transportation Subsidies for customers**
  - Discounts (5% off) for customers that use an alternate transportation mode
- **Transit Education**
  - Provide up-to-date transportation information explaining all commuter options to employees and visitors to Sweetflower
  - Provide up-to-date transportation information on the developer's website
- **Bicycle Parking**
  - Bicycle and Scooter parking on Lincoln Avenue (10-11 bicycle racks with space for up to 20-22 bicycles and/or scooters).

- **Valet Parking**
  - Valet parking will be provided for customers that drive to Sweetflower. The valet stand will be located on Lincoln Avenue
- **Traffic Calming**
  - Restricted access to Lincoln Avenue – signs and pavement markings in the Sweetflower parking lot will indicate that visitors may not make a right-turn toward the residential portion of Lincoln Avenue. A physical channelizing island will be constructed within the public right-of-way to prevent right turns out of the project driveway as much as possible.

The Culver City VMT Tool estimates that the three measures above would result in a 0.6% decrease in VMT generated by the Project.

### **ANALYSIS FOLLOWING OCCUPANCY**

The following items will be included with the traffic study addendum to be completed within six months to a year of occupancy of Sweet Flower, to be determined by City staff:

- Multi-modal intersection traffic counts (maximum of 5 study intersections) for both AM and PM peak periods;
- Counts of project generated traffic (turning movement counts at the driveway, passengers drop-off/pick-up, walking and cycling trips, etc.);
- Level of service analysis at the study intersections to evaluate impact of Project; and
- Supplemental traffic and parking analysis, if needed, to address staff or community concerns following occupancy.