

WHAT IS SB 743?



SB 743 REQUIRES CITIES TO EVALUATE TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS WITH METRICS THAT SUPPORT THE REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS, AND DIVERSIFICATION OF LAND USES. WHILE VEHICLE LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) WAS THE DEFAULT METRIC FOR DETERMINING TRANSPORTATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS FOR MANY YEARS, THIS VEHICLE OPERATIONS FOCUSED MEASURE DOES NOT SUPPORT STATEWIDE SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND CAN NO LONGER BE USED WITHIN CEQA.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires development and transportation projects of a certain size to identify and publicly disclose environmental impacts, and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

Traditionally, CEQA transportation analysis has used LOS to define transportation impacts; however, SB 743 changes the requirements to better address sustainable transportation goals. LOS can no longer be used to measure transportation impacts; instead, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has recommended that lead CEQA agencies replace LOS with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). This shift in metrics will better align transportation impact analysis and mitigation outcomes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage infill development, and improve public health. Cities can still use LOS within the local development review process to inform site access and traffic operations.

IMPLEMENTATION

Reflecting OPR's guidance, cities and other lead agencies are required to update their CEQA Guidelines to replace LOS with VMT per capita as the metric to evaluate environmental impacts related to transportation. To comply with SB 743, cities must take the following steps:

- Under CEQA, cities will need to select new metrics, establish thresholds, and develop mitigations.
- Outside of CEQA, cities will need to define the appropriate process for analyzing mobility conditions and determine what metrics they should maintain for non-CEQA local analysis purposes.
- Cities will need to coordinate across agencies that currently rely on LOS to define project impacts.

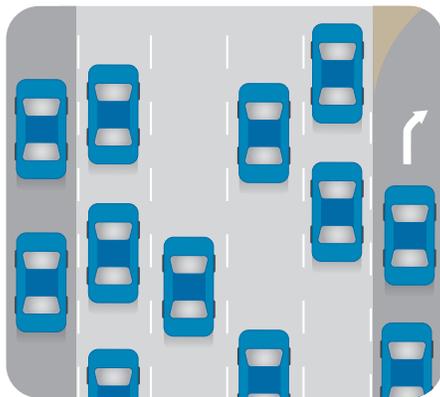
Cities should consider complimentary policy changes, such as adopting or amending transportation impact fees, developing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, and/or adjusting parking requirements. Cities have until July 1, 2020 to comply with the new guidance, and may opt-in to use new metrics prior to that date.

WHAT IS LEVEL OF SERVICE?

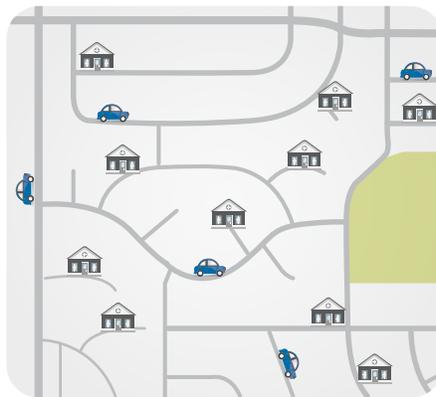
Level of Service (LOS) is used to measure peak-hour vehicle delay at an intersection or in a vehicle lane. It is expressed as a letter grade, ranging from LOS A to LOS F, where LOS A represents free-flow conditions and LOS F represents over-capacity conditions experienced by drivers as congestion or traffic. Measuring LOS requires fine-grained traffic analysis that enables traffic engineers to understand how the roads are functioning.

LOS has traditionally been used to evaluate transportation impacts of a development project or a transportation project in CEQA. Common mitigations for unacceptable LOS increase road and intersection capacity by adding vehicle lanes, creating channelized turns, and prioritizing vehicle movement and speed over other community goals.

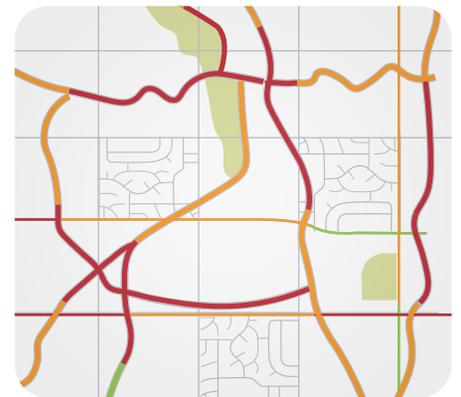
MEASURING TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS WITH LOS LEADS TO...



NARROW FOCUS ON INTERSECTION OPERATIONS PRIORITIZES VEHICLE MOVEMENT DURING PEAK COMMUTE HOURS



GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT AND EXPENSIVE VEHICLE CAPACITY MITIGATIONS



WEAK MULTIMODAL NETWORK AND BROAD CONGESTION

A FOCUS ON MAXIMIZING ROAD AND INTERSECTION CAPACITY TO IMPROVE LOS HAS RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES:

- Inhibits infill development and incentivizes greenfield and sprawl development, exacerbating regional congestion over time;
- Creates barriers to transit and active transportation projects;
- Fails to optimize the multimodal transportation network;
- Mitigation requires more road construction than local jurisdictions can afford to maintain.

WHY ADOPT VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED?

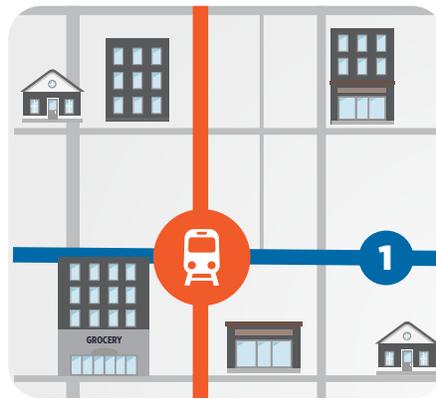
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) measures the total amount of distance traveled by vehicles over a period of time within a geographic area. VMT can be modeled to estimate how much driving is expected based on land use and transportation infrastructure.

VMT per capita measures how many miles a person is likely to travel based on their home or work location and the existing transportation network and land use around that location. Effectively, a location that is walkable, bikeable, and transit accessible would perform well when using VMT per capita under CEQA. This metric favors development and transportation infrastructure that supports multimodal connections, thereby improving mobility and providing choices for people other than automobiles.

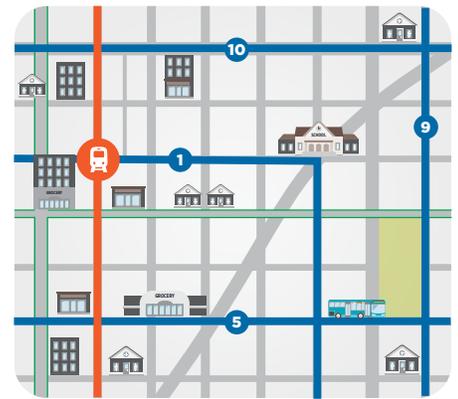
MEASURING TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS WITH VMT PER CAPITA LEADS TO...



HOLISTIC LOOK AT LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION NETWORK PRIORITIZES NON-VEHICLE TRIPS



DEVELOPMENT IN LOW VMT PER CAPITA AREAS AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT



STRONG MULTIMODAL NETWORK AND LOWER VMT PER CAPITA

KEY BENEFITS OF USING THE VMT PER CAPITA METRIC INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Removes barriers to infill development;
- Sees the big picture (regional impacts, not just local);
- Easier to model than LOS (based on location rather than development-specific trip generation estimates);
- Already used in project analysis (e.g. for GHG emissions assessments);
- Provides a more accurate measure of transportation impacts;
- Mitigation reduces maintenance costs and does not induce more vehicle travel.

HOW TO MITIGATE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED?

Cities and other lead agencies have discretion in the selection of VMT mitigation measures. Building upon studies, OPR suggests a number of potential mitigation measures to reduce VMT and recognize that agencies will continue to innovate and expand upon the suggested list of mitigation options.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies offer many possible mitigation measures. TDM refers to programs that work collectively to change how, when, where, and why people travel and reduce reliance on the single-occupant vehicle (SOV). TDM strategies include a range of biking, walking, transit, and carpooling incentives that can range from infrastructure improvements, such as bicycle parking, bus shelters, and sidewalks to information campaigns and financial incentives.

Land use management strategies also provide a means for reducing VMT. For instance, OPR recommends incorporating affordable housing into a project or increasing the mix of uses within the project or project's surroundings. Land use strategies are particularly important in neighborhood commercial areas that lack frequent transit. For example, if more services are provided closer to where people live then vehicle trip distances will be shorter.

Parking management is the most effective way to influence people's decisions about whether they choose to drive. Parking pricing and time limits can be used to incentivize parking turn over and thereby maintain an ideal occupancy rates in high value parking spaces. These tools also require people to think about the cost of vehicle trips and encourage other mode choices when possible. If parking costs more than walking or taking a bus, some people will choose the non-drive option.

MANAGING VMT LEADS TO SMART GROWTH...

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

