Shifting from Maintaining LOS to Reducing VMT
Case Studies of Analysis and Mitigation under
CEQA Guidelines Implementing SB 743

Pasadena VMT Experience

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City of Pasadena
• Hybrid Approach
• CEQA Metrics and Thresholds
  > VMT, VT, Ped, Bike & Transit
  Proximity metrics
• Project Approval Conditions
  > Auto Level of Service (LOS) uses HCM
  > Street Segment Analysis limited to residential streets
  > Focused on reducing traffic intrusion in neighborhoods; enhancing ped/bike/transit
# Thresholds for Determining Level of Transportation Review of Projects

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF PROJECT</th>
<th>EXEMPTION</th>
<th>Category 1: BELOW COMMUNITYWIDE SIGNIFICANCE</th>
<th>Category 2: COMMUNITYWIDE SIGNIFICANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential (Net # of units)</td>
<td>10 units or less</td>
<td>11 – 49 units</td>
<td>50+ units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Residential use (Net)</td>
<td>10,000 Sq. Ft or less than 300 daily trips</td>
<td>10,001 to 49,999 Sq. Ft</td>
<td>50,000+ Sq. Ft</td>
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</tbody>
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Outside of CEQA Analysis  

CEQA Analysis
Vehicle-Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita and Vehicle Trips (VT) per capita

- Service population is residents plus employees

CEQA Thresholds are existing citywide levels

- Forecast model designed to work at all levels from General Plan to development review
Challenges – General

- Learning curve/lack of practical experience
- Unfamiliar to community and decision makers
- Limited mitigation options
  - California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA)
    TDM Strategies
  - Changes to project’s proposed land use
- People are still concerned with traffic congestion
  - Persistent perception of growth in traffic congestion despite analytical evidence
  - Unsupported perception of neighborhood traffic intrusion
Challenges – Technical

- Model output contains limited information
- Model baseline requires regular updating
- It can be difficult to predict outcomes (reducing project scale does not always reduce impacts)
- VMT mitigation measures are challenging

> More research required on quantifying the benefits TDM measures
Space Bank Project

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- **Proposed**
  - 550 Market Rate Apartments for Rent
  - 10,000 sq Ft of Commercial

- **Existing Use**
  - Public Storage

- **Environmental Impacts (CEQA)**
  - VMT per Capita: 21.6 < 22.6
  - VT per Capita: 2.8 < 3.6
  - Bike & Transit Proximity - no impacts
  - No Ped impacts

- **Mitigation Measures**
  - CAPCOA TDM Strategies
Space Bank Mitigation Measures

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- Applicant proposed less than code required parking
- Imposed CAPCOA TDM strategies to reduce vehicular trip by 23% to mitigate the VT impact to a level of insignificance
  - Unbundled Parking with lease
  - Transit passes to tenants at 50% discount
  - Transit station Improvements at nearby stops
  - Pedestrian Lighting
  - Annual survey of vehicular trips to demonstrate achieving targeted trip cap for five consecutive years
Case Study- Urban Mixed-use Project

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Case Study - Urban Mixed Use

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- **Proposed**
  - 273 Market Rate Apartments for Rent
  - 18,000 Sq Ft of Commercial
  - Pocket park

- **Existing Use**
  - Commercial

- **Environmental Impacts (CEQA)**
  - VMT per Capita
    - 22.6 > 17.1
  - VT per Capita
    - 2.8 < 3.8
  - Bike & Transit Proximity - no impacts
  - No Ped impacts

- **Mitigation Measure**
  - Reduce vehicular trip by 28%
  - TDM Strategies similar to Space bank Project
• Adopt VMT Metrics
  > Update the General Plan Mobility and Land Use Elements
• Adopt VMT-based Fair share Transportation Impact Fee
  > Non-vehicular transportation improvements
• Develop Street Design Guide
• LOS can still play a role in protecting neighborhoods and improving projects’ circulation
  > Traffic intrusion
  > Traffic operations
  > Access management
• Invest in developing Travel Demand Forecasting Model platform/process
  > Train key staff to maintain and operate the model
• Align policies with the adopted metrics.
• Work with Caltrans to incorporate State highway concerns into analytics.
More Information

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