No Great “LOS”
How San Francisco switched to VMT

NACTO Designing Cities
Seattle
September 28, 2016
MAKING THE SWITCH

• CEQA and LOS
• Why it is No Great LOS
• Milestones (and rest stops)
• Project Implications
• Conclusion
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

- Purpose: analyze, disclose, and reduce the impacts of projects on the environment
- Applies to all discretionary actions/approvals
- Levels of determination (ascending order of impact, time/cost)
  - Exemption (statutory and categorical)
  - Negative Declaration
  - Environmental Impact Report
- 18 topics areas, each with several items to consider
- OK to approve projects with impacts
CEQA AND LEVEL OF SERVICE

• CEQA statute supplemented by Office of Planning and Research CEQA Guidelines

• Used to require LOS as transportation threshold; removed in 2010 and given to local agency discretion

• If LOS is threshold, project causing auto congestion = significant environmental impact → EIR

• LOS also considered in CMPs and General Plans
LOS AND PLACE

Congestion: A

Urban Life: F

Measures the delay of vehicles
(Letter Grade – A through F)

Congestion: F

Urban Life: A

Source: streetsblog
LOS PROBLEMS
Outdated, Narrow Focus

Does not Protect the Environment
- Widened Roadways
  - Safety, Induced Demand
- Sprawl/Greenfield

Conflicts with Adopted Policies
- Smart, Infill Development
- Reducing Emissions
- Mobility Options, Safety

Source: FHWA
Source: Streetsblog
Source: slate.com
Transportation Sustainability Program

Photo: Sergio Ruiz
HOW DO WE GROW SUSTAINABLY?

By 2040:

- **100,000+** new households
- **190,000+** new jobs

40% of housing projections already in pipeline
TRANSPORTATION SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

Keeping people moving as our city grows

align
MODERNIZE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

More meaningful transportation analysis that better captures environmental effects

shift
ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

On-site transportation amenities that reduce reliance on driving

invest
ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Development fee to help fund transit and safer streets
1973. San Francisco City Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors adopted the Transit First Policy.

1981. The Transit Impact Development Fee (TIDF) was enacted by local ordinance.

2003. SFCTA Board requested policy analysis of alternative to auto Level of Service (LOS).

2007. SFCTA recommended eliminating LOS and replacing it with an auto trip generation measure & mitigation fee.

2012. Transportation Sustainability Program (TSP) Ordinance was introduced.

2013. City/County form Technical Working Group to develop a different metric.
City/County initiate ‘TDM Framework for Development’ project.
(Region) Plan Bay Area adopted July 18, 2013.

2013. SB 743 passed requiring replacement of LOS as a development review metric with a different metric that promotes GHG reduction, multimodal transportation, and infill development.

2009. City staff worked with State Resources Agency to revise CEQA guidelines: New language allows LOS or “an alternative measure”.

2008. Senate Bill 375, “The California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008” enacted (Steinberg).
INFILL OPPORTUNITY ZONES

San Francisco TAZs within Infill Opportunity Zones
By Percentage of TAZ contained within IOZ
CITY/COUNTY AND STATE LOS REFORM HISTORY

Since at least 2003

California Legislature
Passes Senate Bill 743

OPR releases Preliminary Evaluation of Alternative Methods

OPR releases Preliminary Discussion Draft

OPR releases Revised Proposal

City adopts TSF

City publishes NOP for TSP

State revises CEQA Guidelines

City adopts Resolution 19579

2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 TBD

December September December August November January March

Transportation Sustainability Program
VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED – DEFINED
CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 743 - TIMELINE

Removal of Automobile Delay – Vehicular Level of Service

California Legislature

Passes Senate Bill 743

OPR releases Preliminary Evaluation of Alternative Methods

OPR releases Preliminary Discussion Draft

City adopts TSF

OPR releases Revised Proposal

CEQA Guidelines implemented

Since 2003, City conducts public outreach on LOS Reform/TSP

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

September

December

August

November

January

March

TBD

OPR conducts public outreach
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Goodbye LOS…Hello VMT!

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

• VMT Significance Criteria
  • Substantially Induce Additional Automobile Travel
    » Examples: Expansion or Creation of New Highways

• Presumed Less than Significant on VMT
  • Transit lanes
  • Vision Zero improvements
  • Bicycle facilities
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Goodbye LOS…Hello VMT!

LAND USE PROJECTS

• If significant impact:
  • Mitigation Measures
    » Transportation Demand Management
    » Change mix of uses
Transportation and Circulation Sub-Topics

Automobile Delay (Level of Service)

1. VMT and Induced Automobile Travel Analysis

2. Riding Transit

3. Walking

4. Bicycling

5. Loading (freight and passenger)

6. Emergency Vehicle Access

7. Construction

Development Standards

- TDM Plan
Car mobility vs Complete mobility
Sprawl vs Infill
Transportation Sustainability Program

- **Invest**
  - November 2015

- **Align**
  - March 2016

- **Shift**
  - Next Steps
    - Planning Commission Adoption – August 7
    - Board of Supervisors hearings – Fall
    - Implementation – Fall/Winter
FINAL THOUGHTS

• Steal ideas from others and make them your own
• Policy and politics matter
• Think about how pieces fit together
• Change takes time, consistency, and follow-through
• Statewide resistance continues
• Give something back
  • “We’re going from counting cars to doing something about them”
THANK YOU

TRANSPORTATION SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM
Keeping people moving as our city grows

Website: sf-planning.org/transportation-sustainability-program

Email: tsp@sfgov.org
sarah.jones@sfmta.com