Navigating Transportation Projects Through SB 743

**OPR Steps**

**Step 1 Screening**

- Is the project type: Transit
- OR Active transportation
- OR One of the road project types on page III.27 of the OPR Technical Advisory?

**Step 2 Establishing Baseline VMT Levels**

- What are the baseline VMT levels?

**Step 3 Establishing VMT Threshold**

- What are the project and cumulative VMT thresholds?

**Step 4 Forecasting Project VMT Effects**

- What are the project and cumulative VMT forecasting options?

**Step 5 Identifying Significant Impacts**

- Do the VMT forecasts from Step 4 exceed the VMT thresholds from Step 3 or is the project inconsistent with the RTP or RTP/SCS?

**Step 6 Developing Mitigation Measures**

- What is the surrounding land use context?

**Step 7 Identifying Impacts of Mitigation**

- Are the mitigations required new or expanded facilities/services that may have environmental impacts that require evaluation under CEQA?

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**Project Questions**

- Is the project type: Transit
- OR Active transportation
- OR One of the road project types on page III.27 of the OPR Technical Advisory?

- Does substantial evidence exist to support a finding that the project will not generate new VMT?

- What are the baseline VMT levels?

- What are the project and cumulative VMT thresholds?

- What are the project and cumulative VMT forecasting options?

- Do the VMT forecasts from Step 4 exceed the VMT thresholds from Step 3 or is the project inconsistent with the RTP or RTP/SCS?

- What is the surrounding land use context?

- Are the mitigations required new or expanded facilities/services that may have environmental impacts that require evaluation under CEQA?
## OPR Steps

### Step 1
**Screening**

If "yes" to both questions on flowchart, process complete. If "no" to the first question, go to Step 2.

### Step 2
**Establishing Baseline VMT Levels**

Baseline should be tied to the date of the NOP release. Hence, baseline VMT calculations may require obtaining current year data or interpolating between base year and future year model estimates.

### Step 3
**Establishing VMT Threshold**

- **Project VMT Threshold: Option 1**
  Use the OPR Technical Advisory recommendation that any increase in VMT caused by the project is an impact.

- **Project VMT Threshold: Option 2**
  Use RTP or RTP/SCS consistency.

- **Cumulative VMT Threshold**
  Use RTP or RTP/SCS consistency.

Lead agencies have the option to use VMT as the impact metric for transportation projects, but it is not required. The RTP or RTP/SCS are the regional plans that demonstrate compliance with air quality conformity requirements and GHG reduction targets. As such, projects that are consistent with these plans (or do not cause increases in planned VMT growth) are part of the regional solution for meeting air pollution and GHG goals.

### Step 4
**Forecasting Project VMT Effects**

- **Project Forecasting: Option 1**
  Use a short-term induced travel elasticity to directly estimate the project’s VMT effect. Rely on short-term elasticities contained in the ARB SB 375 Policy Brief on Induced Travel available at http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/ab375/policies/hwycapacity/highway_capacity_brief.pdf

- **Project Forecasting: Option 2**
  Use a regional travel forecasting model to estimate opening year no project and opening year plus project VMT. Verify the model is sensitive to short-term induced travel effects through dynamic validation and sensitivity testing.

- **Cumulative Forecasting**
  Perform RTP or RTP/SCS consistency check. If the project is specifically referenced or listed in the RTP or RTP/SCS as well as accurately represented in the regional travel forecasting model, no further analysis is required. If not, then the project should be added to the RTP or RTP/SCS regional forecasting model and the model should be re-run to forecast regional VMT.

Project level analysis may overstate the project’s effect on VMT because it does not fully consider the project’s influence on the VMT generation of surrounding land uses. Hence, cumulative analysis may be more meaningful for impact purposes.

## Technical Notes

- Baseline should be tied to the date of the NOP release. Hence, baseline VMT calculations may require obtaining current year data or interpolating between base year and future year model estimates.

- Lead agencies have the option to use VMT as the impact metric for transportation projects, but it is not required. The RTP or RTP/SCS are the regional plans that demonstrate compliance with air quality conformity requirements and GHG reduction targets. As such, projects that are consistent with these plans (or do not cause increases in planned VMT growth) are part of the regional solution for meeting air pollution and GHG goals.
For urban areas, potential mitigation options include modifying the project—or the overall system operations of the network that the project is part of—to reduce VMT by relying on greater levels of traffic flow and demand management plus travel or parking pricing.

For suburban areas, potential mitigation options include modifying the project—or the overall system operations of the network that the project is part of—to reduce VMT by relying on greater levels of traffic flow and demand management.

For rural areas, there are limited options for roadway capacity expansion mitigations given that their purpose and need is likely to conflict with VMT reduction goals.

Mitigation actions can create other environmental impacts. Mitigation actions that require the expansion of existing facilities or services or the creation of new facilities or services may have an effect on the environment that should be evaluated as prescribed by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a)(1)(D).