

OPR Steps

Project Questions

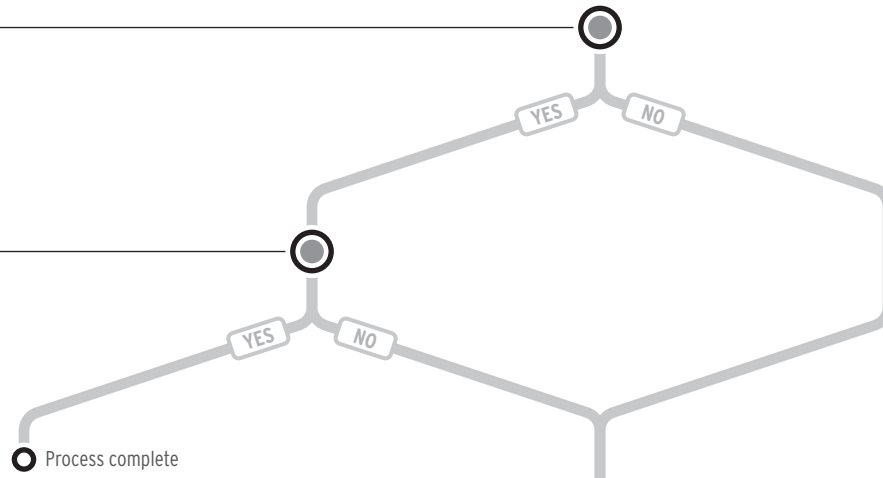
Procedural Flowchart

Decision
 Analytical process or procedural outcome

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?

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



Step 2 Establishing Baseline VMT Levels

What are the baseline VMT levels?

Calculate baseline VMT (see notes)

Step 3 Establishing VMT Threshold

What are the project and cumulative VMT thresholds?

PROJECT

CUMULATIVE

Calculate project VMT (see notes)

Calculate cumulative VMT (see notes)

Step 4 Forecasting Project VMT Effects

What are the project and cumulative VMT forecasting options?

Forecast project VMT effects (see notes)

Perform RTP or RTP/SCS consistency check (see notes)

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?

Potential significant project and/or cumulative impact: Develop mitigation measures

Process complete

Step 6 Developing Mitigation Measures

What is the surrounding land use context?

URBAN

SUBURBAN

RURAL

Develop mitigation measures for urban context (see notes)

Develop mitigation measures for suburban context (see notes)

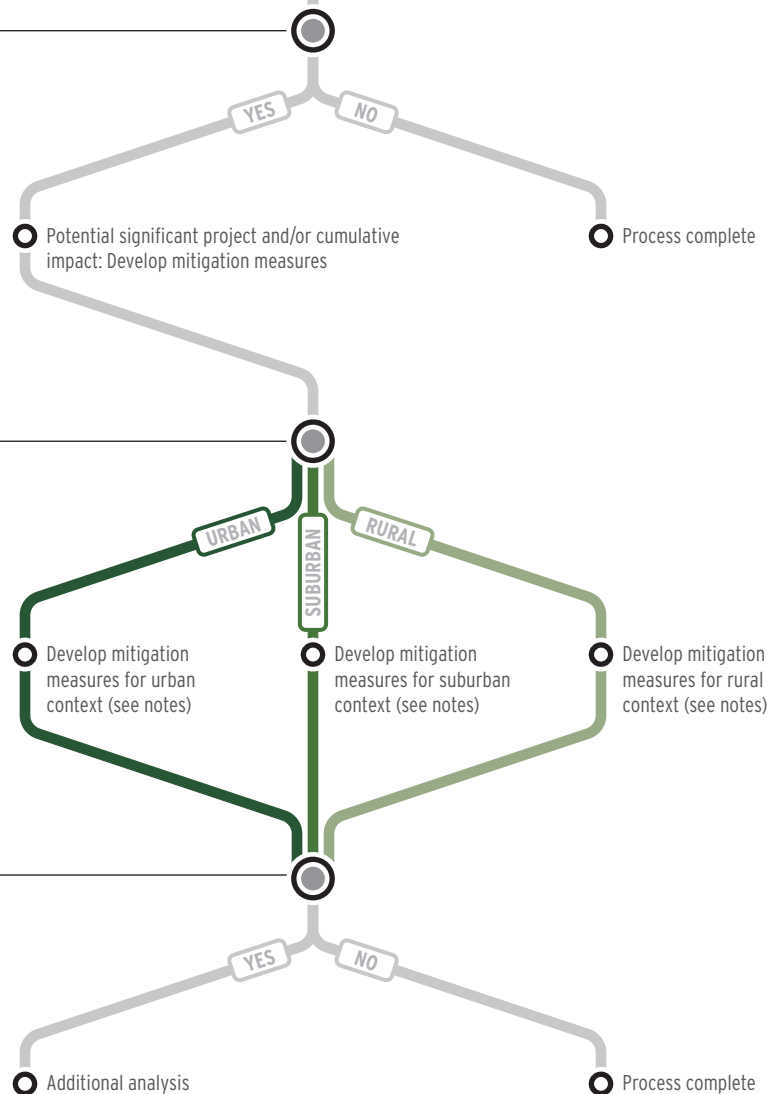
Develop mitigation measures for rural context (see notes)

Step 7 Identifying Impacts of Mitigation

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

Additional analysis

Process complete



OPR Steps

Analysis Procedures

Technical Notes

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/sb375/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.

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Step 5 Identifying Significant Impacts

Identify significant impacts for all impact scenarios. Significant Impact may occur if project's Step 4 VMT exceeds Step 3 threshold or the project is found inconsistent with the RTP or RTP/SCS (i.e., the project generates more VMT than the adopted RTP or RTP/SCS).

Step 6 Developing Mitigation Measures

Urban

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.

Suburban

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.

Rural

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 is likely to require modification of the project such that any new capacity is managed to achieve specific performance objectives that balance vehicle throughput, person throughput, and travel speeds. Ideally, new capacity would result in higher levels of person miles traveled per lane mile, which can only occur if vehicle occupancy is increased by the project.

Step 7 Identifying Impacts of Mitigation

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).