

Planning, Policy
and
Programming

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Project Title:
Studying the Impacts of the
Pandemic and Future Mobility
Patterns in California During
the Post Pandemic COVID-19
Recovery

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Studying the Impacts of the Pandemic and Future Mobility Patterns in California During the Post Pandemic COVID-19 Recovery

This analysis will shed light on the complicated impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, including commuting, non-commuting and various means of travel.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

Starting in early 2020, the world experienced huge disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has heavily altered social and economic activities with effects that are expected to last, at least in part, even after the health emergency is over.

Over the past year, the U.S. has experienced a steep decline in air travel for long-distance trips, as well as in the use of public transportation and shared mobility for shorter-distance trips. A temporary reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from car travel was observed in the early stages of the pandemic, especially during the heavy transition to remote working and the initial stay-at-home orders, but this was followed by a substantial recovery in car travel during later stages of the pandemic.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

In the analyses proposed in this study, the research team will focus on answering a set of research questions that have been shaped in previous meetings with experts from Caltrans and other leading California agencies.



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WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The analyses carried out in this study will shed light on the complicated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on activity participation and travel patterns, including commuting and non-commuting (e.g., discretionary) trips, and the use of various means of travel.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

Understanding what different groups and segments of the population do with regards to these changes, and how likely they are to continue to do certain things and/or react to future policies (e.g., enacted to contain car travel after the pandemic) is of most importance for transportation planners and policy-makers to influence in transportation in the "post COVID-19" society. Accordingly, this study will produce valuable insights that will be of direct interest to planners at Caltrans as well as useful to inform the scientific community and other relevant stakeholders and planning agencies.

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

We have made substantial progress in data cleaning, geocoding, and weighting both for the fall 2020 and summer 2021 datasets. We also completed the COVID project report for the Southern California Association of Governments for their region. We have completed the literature reviews and the data analyses. We completed data cleaning and integrated external datasets for summer 2021 dataset. The next step is to complete the draft final report, and to share it with the Panel for feedback to produce the final report.

IMAGE



Image 1: Public transit during the pandemic.