Monitoring VMT Traveled Reduction Claims in Local Development Review

The research will provide an assessment of the methods available for estimating and mitigating VMT.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

In response to Senate Bill (SB) 743, California is in the process of shifting from a focus on level-of-service to a focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the environmental review process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This shift has created many challenges for transportation analysts, given the lack of established practices with respect to VMT estimation and mitigation.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The project will address three questions:

1. What is the current state-of-the-practice with respect to the estimation of VMT impacts and the selection of mitigation strategies in CEQA environmental review documents?
2. What tools/methods are cities adopting for estimating and mitigating VMT impacts in the development review process?
3. What are possible methods for monitoring the efficacy of the VMT mitigation strategies adopted as an outcome of the environmental review process?

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The research will provide an assessment of the available methods for estimating and mitigating VMT. It will also recommend the methods available for monitoring VMT impacts and the efficacy of mitigation measures.
WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

With these results, the State, counties and cities will have information on established and effective practices with respect to VMT estimation and mitigation in response to SB 743.

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

1. We had a kick-off meeting on October 13, 2020.
2. The next steps are to identify jurisdictions, including rural and suburban ones, that have adopted VMT impact standards, review VMT estimation guidance, and/or VMT mitigation guidance pursuant to SB 743, review literature on existing methods for estimating and mitigating VMT, and to select a sample of CEQA documents to review for VMT impact analysis methods.

IMAGE

Image 1: California’s Environmental Review Process