A background image showing a cyclist in a white shirt and black backpack riding a bicycle on a city street. In the background, a bus is visible with the text 'NOT IN SERVICE' on its front. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter and a diagonal teal and white graphic element.

SB 743 Implementation Caltrans Draft Transportation Analysis under CEQA (TAC)

Caltrans TAC Webinar | May 15, 2020

Welcome

- Welcome and Introductions
- Presenters –
 - **Ellen Greenberg**, Deputy Director, Sustainability
 - **Jeremy Ketchum**, Assistant Division Chief, Division of Environmental Analysis
- Submit Questions Via Chat Feature to QUESTIONS (Co-Host)
- Draft TAC online on the Caltrans SB 743 implementation website

Topics for Today

- What is SB 743?
- Connecting the dots...SB 743 + Climate Change
- TAC Overview
- Questions & Answers
- Next Steps

What is SB 743?

SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013) amended the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is codified as Public Resources Code § 21099.

It better aligned CEQA with State climate and planning goals.

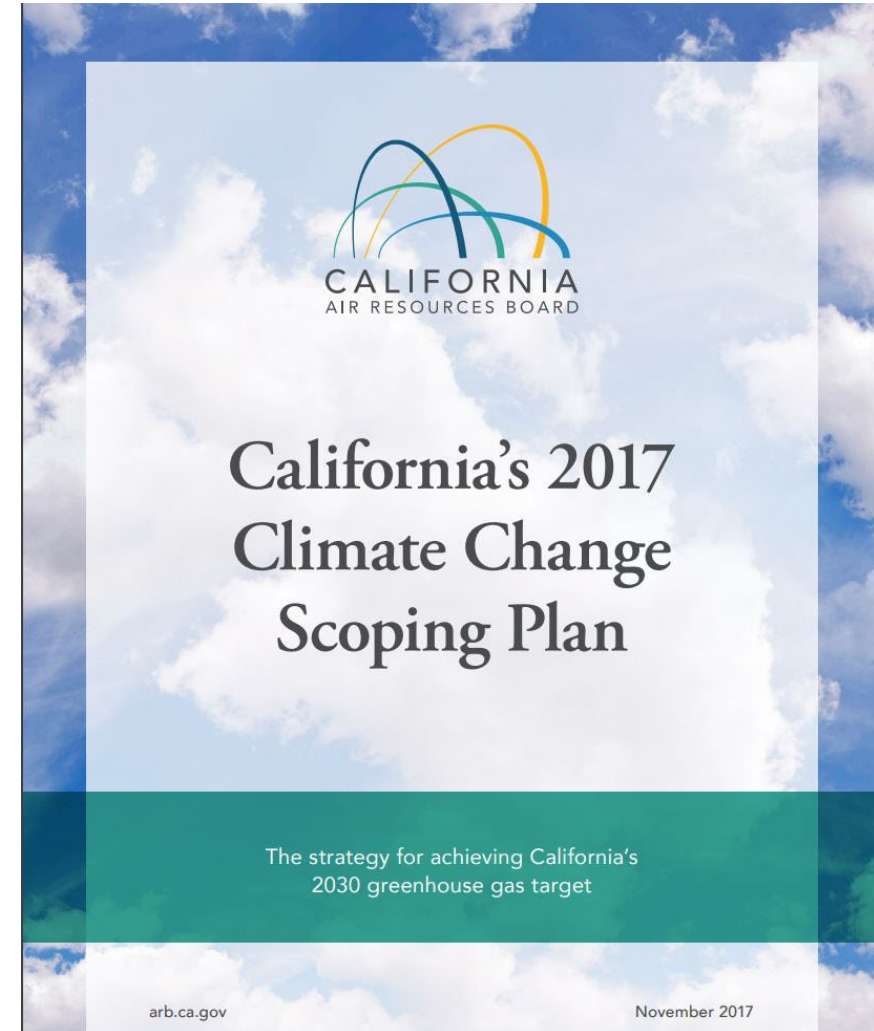
It changes CEQA analysis of transportation impacts associated with both land development and infrastructure projects.

CEQA Guidelines were amended December 2018 to reflect passage of SB 743. Now Caltrans is preparing related guidance.

Connecting the Dots

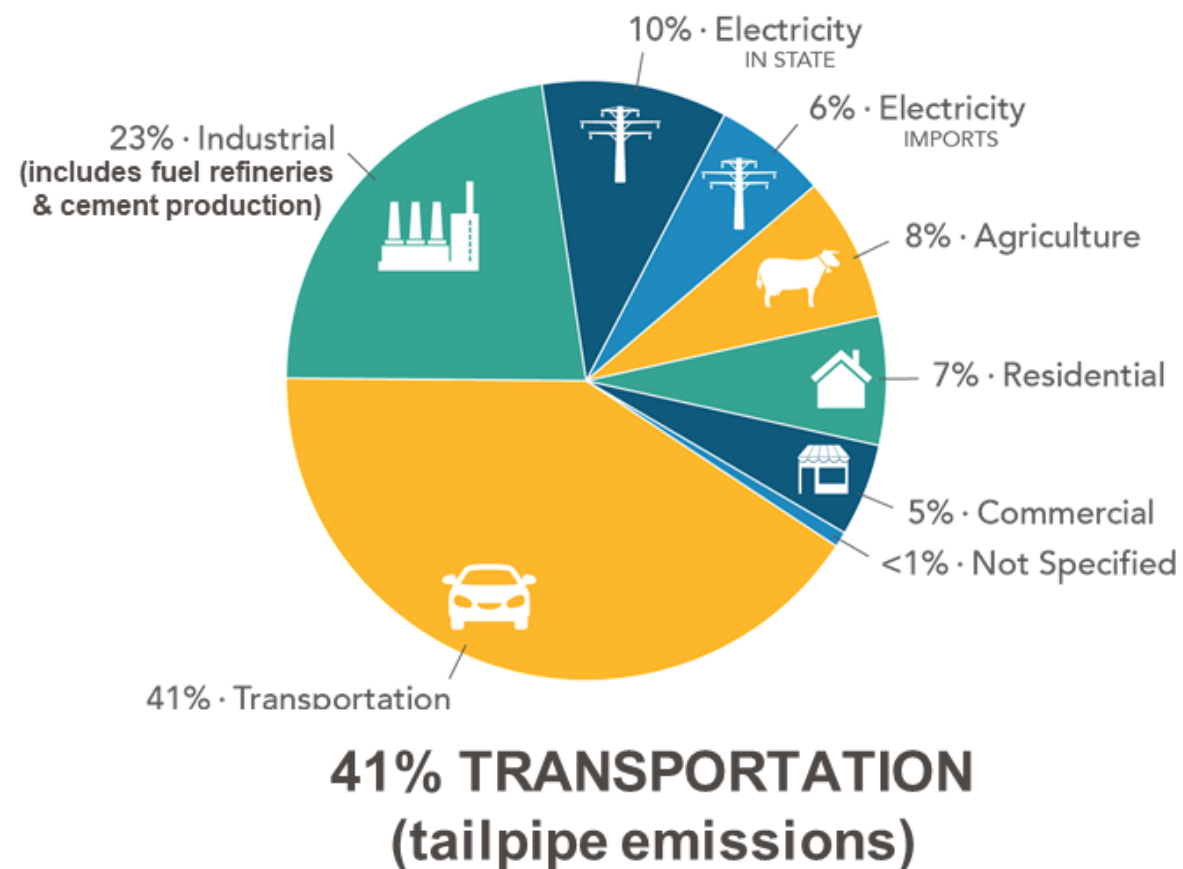
The State's plan for meeting our climate commitments is the 2017 "Scoping Plan" prepared by the Air Resources Board (ARB).

Implementing SB 743 is part of that larger effort.



California GHG Emissions

Transportation emissions from the transportation and industrial sectors together account for half of statewide emissions of harmful greenhouse gases



(Source: CARB, 2018. ["California GHG inventory for 2016--by economic sector."](#))

Reducing Transportation Emissions

The Scoping Plan's overall transportation sector GHG reduction strategy has three main components:

- Increasing zero emission vehicles
- Converting to cleaner fuels in conventional vehicles
- **Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (vehicle use)**

Reducing vehicle miles traveled is the focus of SB 743.

Desired Outcomes

SB 743 is part of a broader set of state initiatives to achieve climate and environmental goals in ways that support healthy people and a prosperous economy

SB 743 contributes to the desired outcomes by:

- streamlining infill and Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- supporting more walking, bicycling and transit use
- helping to move away from auto dependency, and
- addressing a primary contributor to traffic delay

Need to know: SB 743

- CEQA transportation analysis is changing
- CEQA Guidelines Updated
- OPR's Technical Advisory provides guidance
- Agencies update their own CEQA procedures
- Caltrans is updating our CEQA procedures with our guidance

What Changed in the CEQA Guidelines?

For Transportation Projects:

- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is generally the most “appropriate measure” to evaluate transportation impacts
- Projects that reduce VMT are presumed to have a less than significant impact
- For roadway capacity increasing projects, agencies may choose the appropriate measure of transportation impact consistent with CEQA
- **Caltrans has chosen to use VMT for projects on the state highway system**

Caltrans SB 743 Implementation

Caltrans has two focus areas for SB 743 implementation:

1. Land Use Projects

Our review of land use projects, through the Local Development- Intergovernmental Review Program (LD-IGR)

2. Transportation Projects: Today's Focus

Delivery of projects on the State Highway System

Note: local agencies may select different approaches for CEQA analysis of local street and road projects.

Guidance Materials Being Prepared

Land Use Project Review – Guidance Document

- Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG)

Transportation Project Analysis – Guidance Documents

- Transportation Analysis Framework (TAF)
- Transportation Analysis under CEQA (TAC)

Resources for VMT mitigation

Transportation Analysis under CEQA (TAC)

Transportation Analysis under CEQA (TAC)

- **Project Scoping** – inclusion of VMT-reducing alternatives
- **Screening process** – identifying projects not requiring VMT analysis because they will have no VMT impact
- **Tiering** – potential for tiering, interaction between SB 743 and RTP/SCSs environmental documents
- **CEQA Significance Determination**
- **Mitigation**

Project Scoping

- From Draft TAC: “it may become increasingly difficult to achieve feasible and proportional project-level VMT mitigation as a roadway capacity-increasing project proceeds from initial scoping to final design. **“Therefore, it is important to thoroughly consider a range of project alternatives which can potentially minimize, or avoid altogether, the additional VMT from capacity-increasing projects”**
- Alternatives may include multimodal infrastructure and services and pricing-based strategies including expanded toll lane use.
- Scoping also involves determination of the appropriate level of environmental document

Screening

Screening by Project Type: Non-Capacity-Increasing vs. Capacity-increasing Projects

- TAC provides guidance to identify those projects that will lead to measurable and substantial increases in vehicle travel.
- Many project types are not likely to lead to a measurable and substantial increase in vehicle travel. These are listed in the OPR TA.

Caltrans and OPR are interested in examples of specific projects or project types that partners view as unlikely to lead to VMT increase and that are not included in the OPR list.

Tiering

- Limited opportunities now
- Future RTP/SCS EIRs may allow for tiering if:
 - Induced travel is adequately captured
 - Plans are consistent with State climate targets
 - Mitigation is enforceable

Traffic Studies

- Utilize guidance in TAF
- Calculate induced travel
- NCST and TDM approaches

Significance Determination – 1 of 3

Standard CEQA 3-step process for determining significance applies:

1. Evaluate the impact without mitigation to determine significance, first incorporating project features not intended to mitigate specific adverse project impacts.
2. If the impact is significant, mitigation is required and then applied to the project.
3. The remaining impact is then evaluated for significance.

Significance Determination – 2 of 3

- Significance will be evaluated based on potential to increase induced VMT, using the future “no project” condition as a baseline
- Normally, future conditions with the project are compared to a baseline of existing conditions. However, alternatives to an existing conditions baseline may be appropriate in certain circumstances, as noted in case law and summarized in the recent updates to the CEQA Guidelines.

Significance Determination – 3 of 3

- Within the **MPO areas**, a project that results in an increase in VMT when comparing the future build alternative to the future no-build alternative will generally be considered significant and mitigation will be required.
- For projects within the **rural (non-MPO) counties**, significance should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account context and environmental setting.

Cumulative Impacts

- Two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable, compound, or increase other environmental effects.
- Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15064(h), impacts are “cumulatively considerable” when the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.
- Cumulative analysis not required if there is no potential to induce new VMT, or if it reduces VMT.
- Not required to mitigate for effects caused by past or other future projects.
- If a project contributes to a significant cumulative impact, but the contribution is mitigated, then the project has a less than significant cumulative impact.

Consistency with Plans

- Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans, specific plans, and regional plans.
- Consistency with the Scoping Plan as it pertains to both GHG emissions and any increase in VMT attributable to the project.
- ***Interface between SB 743 implementation and SB 375 GHG reduction targets subject of ongoing discussions***

Mitigating VMT Impacts

- Explore compatible VMT and GHG mitigation measures
- Document mitigation measures to reduce VMT
- Mitigate to the maximum extent possible – Examples include strategies to support: mode shift, higher vehicle occupancy, shorter average vehicle trips, and transportation demand management
- May result in need for a statement of overriding considerations when full mitigation cannot be achieved

More Coming on Mitigation

- Initial mitigation resources included with guidance documents
- Caltrans mitigation resource web page (phase 1) now live
- Mitigation-related research and investigations ongoing
- Wide interest in possible mitigation banking/credit system

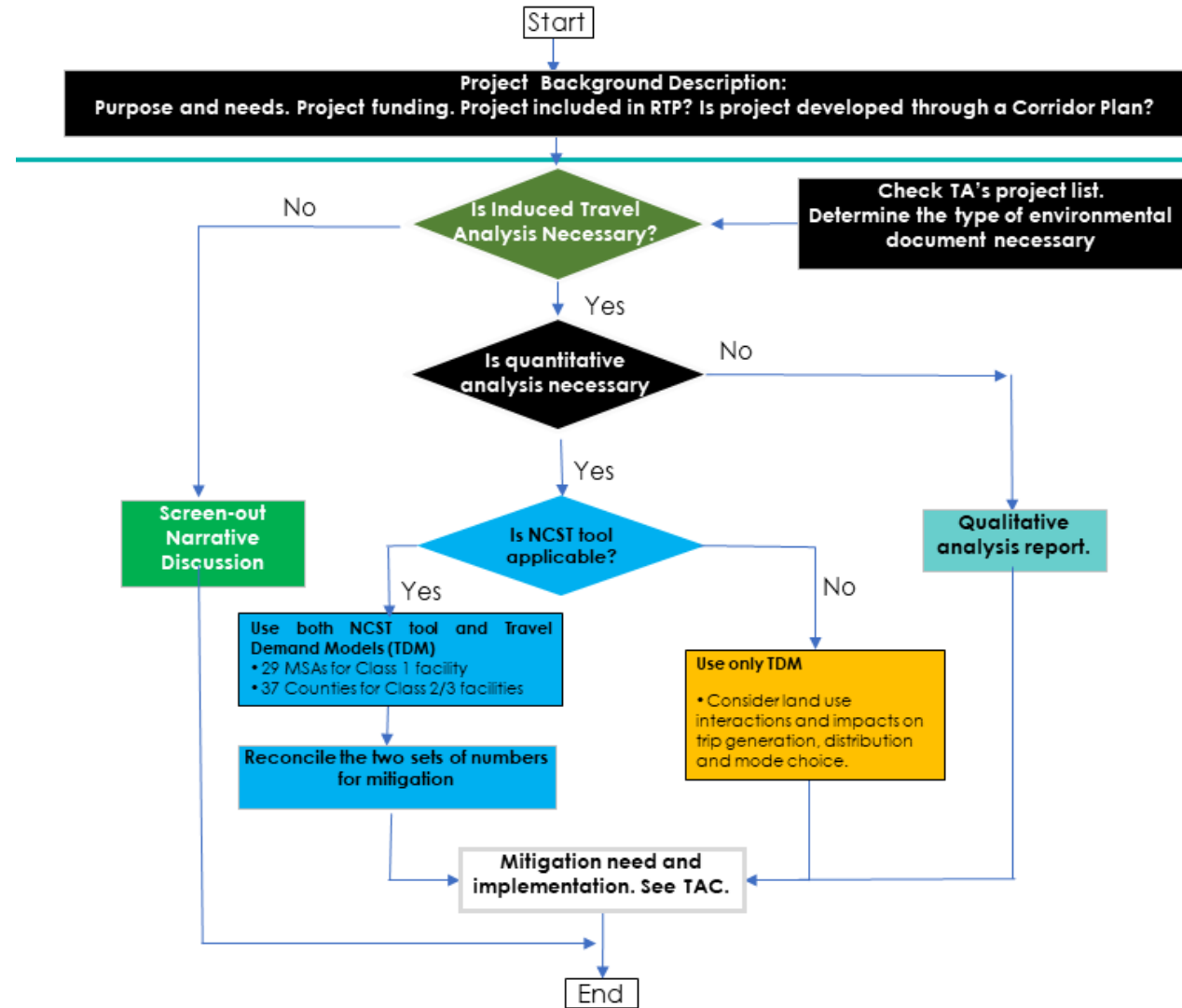
We are actively working to clarify questions about the ability to advance elements of the RTP/SCSs as mitigation for VMT impacts under 743.

Statement of Overriding Considerations

Standard process for determining significance applies

- When specific economic, social, or other conditions make mitigation measures or project alternatives infeasible, individual projects may be approved in spite of one or more significant effects of the project (PRC section 21002).
- A project approved with unmitigated significant effects must state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record.
- This “statement of overriding considerations” shall be supported by substantial evidence.

The Logic of Analysis using TAF/TAC



Example Project

Urban Freeway Widening with 4 Alternatives – Class 1 Interstate Facility

- Alternative 1 General Purpose Lanes
- Alternative 2 HOV Lanes
- Alternative 3 Express/HOT Lanes
- Alternative 4 No-Build

Example Project

Considerations:

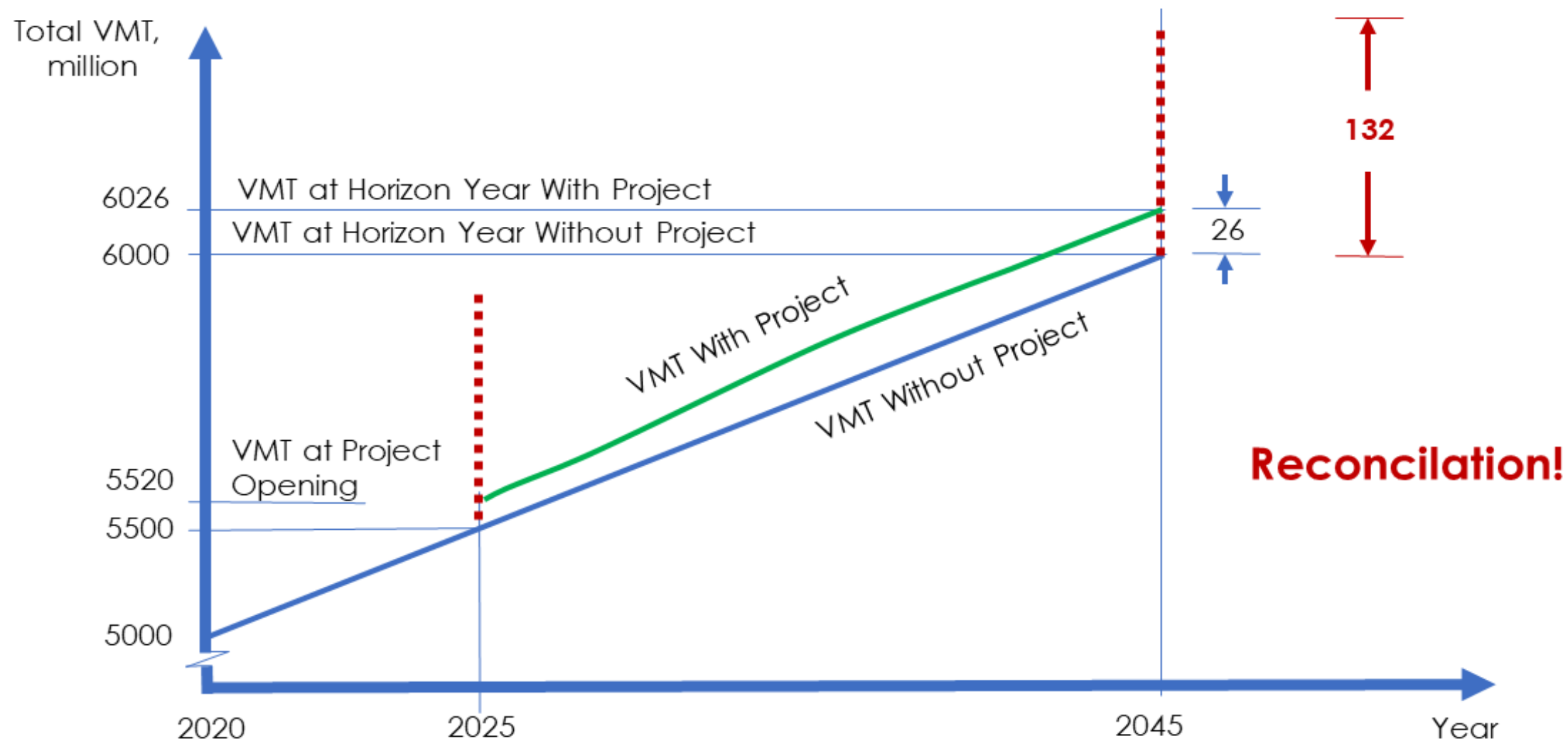
Project Scoping

- PEAR indicated that an EIR should be prepared because the project type is one that would likely lead to a “measurable and substantial increase in vehicle travel.”
- PEAR also recommended that HOT lane alternative be included as an alternative that could reduce, or avoid altogether, the additional VMT resulting from the project

Project Screening

- Project is capacity increasing and will require an induced travel analysis
- PEAR also determined that the project did not meet the requirements to tier off of the travel analysis prepared for the MTP

Example Project: General Purpose Lane Alternative



Example Project: Induced Travel Analysis

Summary

Project Alternative	Total VMT (Million VMT)	Induced Travel by TDM (Million VMT)	Induced Travel by NCST (Million VMT)
2020 Existing Conditions	5,000	N/A	N/A
2025 No Build	5,500	0	N/A
2025 Add GP Lanes	5,520	20	132
2025 Add HOV Lanes	5,510	10	132
2025 Add HOT Lanes	5,515	15	N/A
2045 No Build	6,000	0	N/A
2045 Add GP Lanes	6,026	26	132
2045 Add HOV Lanes	6,022	22	132
2045 Add HOT Lanes	6,024	24	N/A

Next Steps

- Informational Webinars: TAF and TAC webinars will be posted on the Caltrans SB743 Implementation Website
- Finalizing Guidance and Training Staff: June-September

Questions & Answers

- The responses to the questions in this webinar are based on the current draft document and available information as of May 11.



Thank you
for participating

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/office-of-smart-mobility-climate-change/sb-743>