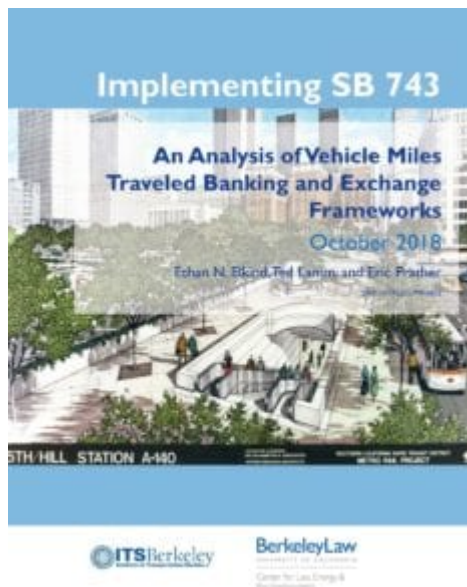


It took five years, but California has finally ditched an outdated and counter-productive metric for evaluating transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). With the guidelines finalized on December 28th, a mere half-decade since the passage of [SB 743](#) (Steinberg) in 2013, the state will ditch “auto delay” as a measure of project impacts and instead assess overall driving miles (VMT). You can see the new guidelines [Section 15064.3](#).

It's a big deal. Now new projects like bike lanes, offices, and housing will be presumed exempt from any transportation analysis whatsoever under CEQA if they are within 1/2 mile of major transit or decrease driving miles over baseline conditions. That means significantly reduced litigation risk and processing time for these badly needed infill projects.



Sprawl projects, meanwhile, will need to account for and mitigate their impacts from dumping more cars on the road for longer driving distances. Berkeley Law's Center for Law, Energy and the Environment (CLEE) explored one such mitigation option in the form of a VMT “mitigation bank” or exchange in the recent report [Implementing SB 743](#), where developers could pay into a fund to reduce VMT, such as for new transit or bike lane projects.

The one caveat is that due to political pressure, new roadway expansions are exempt from this requirement under the guidelines. It's unfortunate, but those roadway projects will still need to undertake VMT analysis anyway for climate and air quality impacts, so perhaps they are not as exempt as their backers hoped.

You can learn more about these changes and what they mean going forward at a March 1st

conference that CLEE is co-organizing in Los Angeles with the Urban Sustainability Accelerator at Portland State University. **[Shifting from Maintaining LOS to Reducing VMT: Case Studies of Analysis and Mitigation under CEQA Guidelines Implementing SB 743](#)** will be a professional educational program for land use, transportation and environmental planners and attorneys in public, private and nonprofit practice, presented by expert practitioners.

- **When**: Friday March 1, 2019
- **Where**: Offices of the Southern California Association of Governments, Los Angeles

Topics to be discussed include:

- VMT impact analysis (methodology; appropriate tools and models, determining impact area)
- VMT significance thresholds (project effects, cumulative effects)
- VMT significance thresholds (project, cumulative)
- VMT mitigation strategies (project level, programmatic, VMT banks and transaction exchanges, legal and administrative framework)

Space is limited to 70 people to attend in person; registrants can view the program online streaming concurrently or subsequent to the program.

Registration Fees:

- Free for staff of state, regional and local governments sponsoring the SB 743 implementation assistance project and of their member governments (use link below for information about affiliations qualifying for free registration)
- \$30 general registration, not seeking professional education credits
- \$90 planners seeking 6 AICP credits\* (\$15/credit)
- \$210 attorneys seeking 6 MCLE credits\* (\$35/credit)

*\*We have accreditation for six hours of California Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) credits and are seeking accreditation for six hours of AICP credits.*

***You can learn more about this conference [here](#) and can proceed directly to the online preregistration form [here](#).***