

**SF County Transportation Authority
Final SAR 02-03: Strategic Analysis Report on Transportation System Level of Service
(LOS) Methodologies, 12/16/2003**

Appendix B

**TRANSPORTATION IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA
(source: San Francisco Planning Department)**

The following are the significance criteria regarding transportation used by the Planning Department for the determination of impacts associated with a proposed project:

- The operational impact on signalized intersections is considered significant when project-related traffic causes the intersection level of service to deteriorate from LOS D or better to LOS E or F, or from LOS E to LOS F. [The operational impacts on unsignalized intersections are considered potentially significant if project-related traffic causes the level of service at the worst approach to deteriorate from LOS D or better to LOS E or F and Caltrans signal warrants would be met, or would cause Caltrans signal warrants to be met when the worst approach is already operating at LOS E or F.] The project may result in significant adverse impacts at intersections that operate at LOS E or F under existing conditions depending upon the magnitude of the project's contribution to the worsening of the average delay per vehicle. In addition, the project would have a significant adverse impact if it would cause major traffic hazards or contribute considerably to cumulative traffic increases that would cause deterioration in levels of service to unacceptable levels. [*include sentence regarding unsignalized intersections only if relevant*]
- San Francisco does not consider parking supply as part of the permanent physical environment. Parking conditions are not static, as parking supply and demand varies from day to day, from day to night, from month to month, etc. Hence, the availability of parking spaces (or lack thereof) is not a permanent physical condition, but changes over time as people change their modes and patterns of travel.

Parking deficits are considered to be social effects, rather than impacts on the physical environment as defined by CEQA. Under CEQA, a project's social impacts need not be treated as significant impacts on the environment. Environmental documents should, however, address the secondary physical impacts that could be triggered by a social impact. (CEQA Guidelines § 15131(a).) The social inconvenience of parking deficits, such as having to hunt for scarce parking spaces, is not an environmental impact, but there may be secondary physical environmental impacts, such as increased traffic congestion at intersections, air quality impacts, safety impacts, or noise impacts caused by congestion. In the experience of San Francisco transportation planners, however, the absence of a ready supply of parking spaces, combined with available alternatives to auto travel (e.g., transit service, taxis, bicycles or travel by foot) and a relatively dense pattern of urban development, induces many drivers to seek and find alternative parking facilities, shift to other modes of travel, or change their overall travel habits. Any such resulting shifts to transit service in particular, would be in keeping with the City's "Transit First" policy. The City's Transit First

Policy, established in the City's Charter Section 16.102 provides that "parking policies for areas well served by public transit shall be designed to encourage travel by public transportation and alternative transportation." DISCUSS ANY AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION, PARKING FACILITIES, BIKE LANES, ETC HERE (can be a summary if discussed extensively elsewhere)]

The transportation analysis accounts for potential secondary effects, such as cars circling and looking for a parking space in areas of limited parking supply, by assuming that all drivers would attempt to find parking at or near the project site and then seek parking farther away if convenient parking is unavailable. Moreover, the secondary effects of drivers searching for parking is typically offset by a reduction in vehicle trips due to others who are aware of constrained parking conditions in a given area. Hence, any secondary environmental impacts which may result from a shortfall in parking in the vicinity of the proposed project would be minor, and the traffic assignments used in the transportation analysis, as well as in the associated air quality, noise and pedestrian safety analyses, reasonably addresses potential secondary effects.

- The project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would cause a substantial increase in transit demand that could not be accommodated by adjacent transit capacity, resulting in unacceptable levels of transit service; or cause a substantial increase in delays or operating costs such that significant adverse impacts in transit service levels could result. With the MUNI and regional transit screenlines analyses, the project would have a significant effect on the transit provider if project-related transit trips would cause the capacity utilization standard to be exceeded during the PM peak hour.
- The project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would result in substantial overcrowding on public sidewalks, create potentially hazardous conditions for pedestrians, or otherwise interfere with pedestrian accessibility to the site and adjoining areas.
- The project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would create potentially hazardous conditions for bicyclists or otherwise substantially interfere with bicycle accessibility to the site and adjoining areas.
- A project would have a significant effect on the environment if it would result in a loading demand during the peak hour of loading activities that could not be accommodated within proposed on-site loading facilities or within convenient on-street loading zones, and created potentially hazardous conditions or significant delays affecting traffic, transit, bicycles or pedestrians.
- Construction-related impacts generally would not be considered significant due to their temporary and limited duration.