

# PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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**Chloe Eudaly** Commissioner **Chris Warner** Director

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** PBOT Traffic Engineers, Traffic Engineering community

**FROM:** Wendy Cawley, PE, City Traffic Engineer

**PUBLISH DATE:** June 26, 2020

**SUNSET DATE:** June 25, 2021

**RE:** Guidance – Traffic Count & Speed Data, Collection and Analysis during pandemic

### Overview

The Mayor of the City of Portland, Ted Wheeler, declared a State of Emergency to cancel or postpone all large gatherings and events, causing the closure of schools and limiting business activities, in conjunction with the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” executive order from Governor Kate Brown. This has resulted in a significant decrease in vehicular traffic volumes on streets throughout the Portland metropolitan area. Thus, collection of traffic count data by the public and private traffic engineering community will be impacted for an uncertain amount of time. As orders are lifted and businesses reopen per phased approval, traffic volumes are gradually increasing. This document offers guidance on how to collect, process, and analyze traffic data during this transition period and champion development and construction activities in our growing city.

### Background

Development proposed within the limits of the City of Portland must comply with transportation criteria found in Title 17 and Title 33 of the city code. Criteria often requires traffic capacity and level of service evaluations at key intersections surrounding the development, much of which depends on peak hour or daily tube counts of vehicular traffic volumes.

PCC 17.88.050 states that a traffic study is required under the following conditions:

- A. Where approval criteria** for a land use review include a requirement of adequacy of transportation services and the development proposed through the review meets or exceeds the following thresholds:
1. Trip generation threshold. More than 100 new vehicle trips will be generated in the peak direction (inbound or outbound) during the site's peak traffic hour; or
  2. Neighborhood traffic threshold. More than 250 new trips will be generated per day that are likely to use predominately residential Local Service Traffic Streets.



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**B. Safety or operational impacts.** Where the City Engineer has identified potential safety or operational concerns that may be impacted by the layout of a site or the location or size of driveways for a proposed development.

Further, 33.852 notes that the study area must be evaluated for street function, capacity, and level of service. PBOT development staff requires that traffic counts shall reflect representative traffic conditions on collector and arterial roadways, and at intersections of regional significance.

#### **Guidance for collection of traffic volume data**

1. Use historical peak hour count data within 18 months prior to emergency declaration (March 2020);
2. Inquire with City staff to determine if there is an adjustment factor that can be applied from nearby active traffic count locations;
3. If recent count data is not available, the traffic engineer may collect current traffic count data and apply an adjustment factor determined using data over the most recent two-year period prior to emergency declaration from:
  - i. ODOT automatic traffic recorder stations;
  - ii. ODOT annual corridor volume counts; or
  - iii. City-maintained permanent count station or signalized intersection with real-time detector data collection in the vicinity and along the same corridor of the count.
4. All traffic studies shall use the current 1.5%/year background growth rate from data collection year to buildout year.

#### **Guidance for collection of traffic speed data**

PBOT has been collecting speed data at several locations during the pandemic. Initially, 85%-tile speeds were trending a few mph over pre-pandemic speeds. However, the 10+ mph over posted speeds were significantly higher than pre-pandemic speeds. This indicates that the same number of people are speeding but they are going faster than they were prior to the pandemic, likely due to fewer cars being on the roadway.

As traffic volumes continue to rise, speed data is trending closer to pre-pandemic conditions. As of the date of this memo, PBOT will consider new speed counts as usable data for traffic impact studies, speed zone investigations and other studies.

#### **Analysis requirements for traffic data**

1. PBOT Traffic Scoping forms must be completed and approved for land use actions
2. Include statement regarding reduced traffic volumes due to emergency declaration
3. Cite all data collection sources and methods, as applicable and include in report's appendix
4. Include the calculation of all adjustment factors in report's appendix

#### **Resources**

PBOT Staff: Wendy Cawley, Amanda Owings, Carlos Hernandez, Alison Tanaka, Tom Jensen

PBOT Interactive Traffic Counts:

<http://pdx.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7ce8d1f5053141f1bc0f5bd7905351e6>

ODOT data: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Data/Pages/Traffic-Counting.aspx>

PORTAL data: <https://portal.its.pdx.edu/home>

**C:** File, website, local traffic consultants