



HIGHWAY CAPACITY MANUAL

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
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Exhibit CS 02

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I. INTRODUCTION

SCOPE OF THE METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a methodology for analyzing the capacity and level of service (LOS) of signalized intersections. The analysis must consider a wide variety of prevailing conditions, including the amount and distribution of traffic movements, traffic composition, geometric characteristics, and details of intersection signalization. The methodology focuses on the determination of LOS for known or projected conditions.

The methodology addresses the capacity, LOS, and other performance measures for lane groups and intersection approaches and the LOS for the intersection as a whole. Capacity is evaluated in terms of the ratio of demand flow rate to capacity (v/c ratio), whereas LOS is evaluated on the basis of control delay per vehicle (in seconds per vehicle). Control delay is the portion of the total delay attributed to traffic signal operation for signalized intersections. Control delay includes initial deceleration delay, queue move-up time, stopped delay, and final acceleration delay. Appendix A presents a method for observing intersection control delay in the field. Exhibit 10-9 provides definitions of the basic terms used in this chapter.

Each lane group is analyzed separately. Equations in this chapter use the subscript i to indicate each lane group. The capacity of the intersection as a whole is not addressed because both the design and the signalization of intersections focus on the accommodation of traffic movement on approaches to the intersection.

The capacity analysis methodology for signalized intersections is based on known or projected signalization plans. Two procedures are available to assist the analyst in establishing signalization plans. The first is the quick estimation method, which produces estimates of the cycle length and green times that can be considered to constitute a reasonable and effective signal timing plan. The quick estimation method requires minimal field data and relies instead on default values for the required traffic and control parameters. It is described and documented in Chapter 10.

A more detailed procedure is provided in Appendix B of this chapter for estimating the timing plan at both pretimed and traffic-actuated signals. The procedure for pretimed signals provides the basis for the design of signal timing plans that equalize the degree of saturation on the critical approaches for each phase of the signal sequence. This procedure does not, however, provide for optimal operation.

The methodology in this chapter is based in part on the results of a National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) study (1, 2). Critical movement capacity analysis techniques have been developed in the United States (3-5), Australia (6), Great Britain (7), and Sweden (8). Background for delay estimation procedures was developed in Great Britain (7), Australia (9, 10), and the United States (11). Updates to the original methodology were developed subsequently (12-24).

LIMITATIONS TO THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology does not take into account the potential impact of downstream congestion on intersection operation. Nor does the methodology detect and adjust for the impacts of turn-pocket overflows on through traffic and intersection operation.

II. METHODOLOGY

Exhibit 16-1 shows the input and the basic computation order for the method. The primary output of the method is level of service (LOS). This methodology covers a wide range of operational configurations, including combinations of phase plans, lane

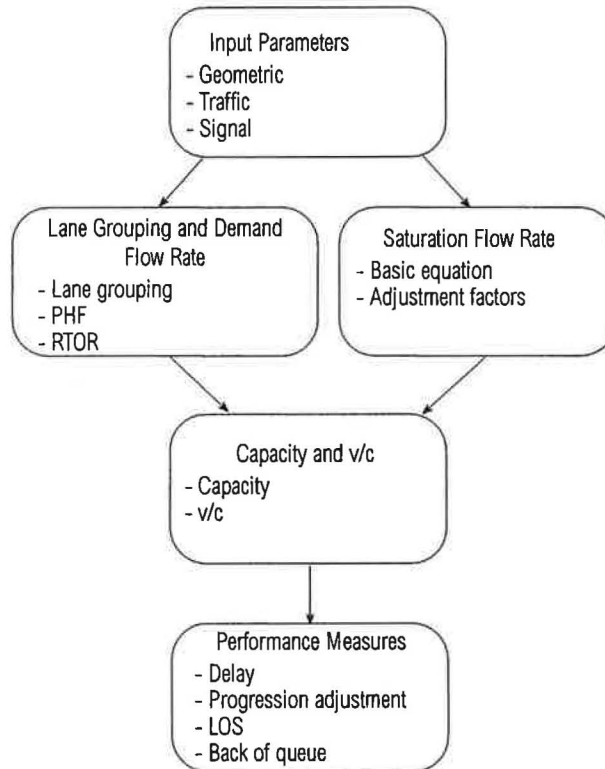
Background and underlying concepts for this chapter are in Chapter 10

A lane group is indicated in formulas by the subscript i

See Chapter 10 for description of quick estimation method

utilization, and left-turn treatment alternatives. It is important to note that some of these configurations may be considered unacceptable by some operating agencies from a traffic safety point of view. The safety aspect of signalized intersections cannot be ignored, and the provision in this chapter of a capacity and LOS analysis methodology for a specific operational configuration does not imply an endorsement of the suitability for application of such a configuration.

EXHIBIT 16-1. SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION METHODOLOGY



LOS

The average control delay per vehicle is estimated for each lane group and aggregated for each approach and for the intersection as a whole. LOS is directly related to the control delay value. The criteria are listed in Exhibit 16-2.

EXHIBIT 16-2. LOS CRITERIA FOR SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS

| LOS | Control Delay per Vehicle (s/veh) |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| A | ≤ 10 |
| B | > 10–20 |
| C | > 20–35 |
| D | > 35–55 |
| E | > 55–80 |
| F | > 80 |

LOS criteria