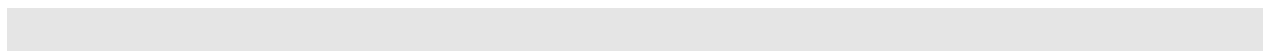


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## CHAPTER 6 – Traffic Study Criteria

### 6.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### 6.1.1 **Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to outline a standard format for preparing a traffic impact study in the City of Steamboat Springs.

A traffic impact study assesses the effects of a proposed development on the City's transportation system. The study identifies if the transportation system can operate efficiently with the development, if there are existing conditions that need to be improved, or if improvements are required to mitigate site impacts.

The owner/developer of a project site is responsible for contracting a traffic consultant to assess project traffic impacts and for providing any necessary mitigation measures as part of the development.

#### 6.1.2 **Applicability:**

The requirements listed in this document are applicable for all developments in the City of Steamboat Springs. In addition to the requirements of this document, owners/developers with sites having access to or within the influence area of a State Highway (for example US 40) must contact the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for specific requirements related to access permits, construction permits, or work in the CDOT right-of-way.

#### 6.1.3 **Amendments and Revisions:**

The Public Works Director may periodically update these criteria to reflect current practices.

#### 6.1.4 **Other Standards:**

Where no requirement is given in these criteria, the requirements of the State of Colorado State Highway Access Code and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), latest edition, shall govern unless otherwise approved by the Public Works Director. If these standards do not cover a specific situation, applicable standards must be obtained from the Public Works Director prior to initiation of the related work. In addition to these criteria, owners/developers are responsible for following all other applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

#### 6.1.5 **Related Plans:**

Any new infrastructure or modifications to existing infrastructure and any new development plans shall be in accordance with the most current adopted City long range planning documents available on the city website:

<https://steamboatsprings.net/245/Long-Range-Planning>

#### 6.1.6 **Review and Approval:**

The Engineering Division will review and approve all submittals for general compliance with these criteria and standard traffic engineering practices.

### **6.1.7 Variances:**

On occasion the unique conditions of a site may not fit within the criteria established in this document. The Public Works Director may grant a variance. The variance should be submitted to the Public Works Director in writing, and should describe the criteria to be varied, the proposed alternate criteria, and technical support for the request (see section 1.8 Variances, of the Engineering Standards).

## **6.2 TRAFFIC STUDY REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.2.1 General:**

A traffic study is required for any development, redevelopment, reuse, or remodel where any of the following conditions exist:

- Proposed development increases peak hour traffic by 10 vehicles or more. Developments increasing commercial gross floor area by 1,000 square feet or the number of residential/lodging units by 10 may exceed this trip threshold.
- Proposed development increases peak hour traffic volume by more than 20% at a point of State Highway access
- Site-specific traffic issues require evaluation, as so determined by the Public Works Director
- Project study area includes signal improvements, intersection improvements, and/or road segments with planned improvements. Study area is based on magnitude of traffic generation of proposed development. The study area and planned improvement evaluation will be agreed upon during Scope Approval process in order to evaluate traffic impacts and mitigation necessary to offset impacts related to development. Current planned improvements have been identified as follows:

- 13<sup>th</sup> Street / US 40
- Stockbridge – Indian Trails / US 40
- Downhill Drive / US 40
- 3rd Street / US 40
- JD Hay Way/US 40
- Stone Lane / US 40 road extension, intersection improvements, and traffic signal
- Mountain Town Subarea Plan intersection and roadway improvements
- Pine Grove Road/Mount Werner Road
- Ski Time Square Turnaround and Complete Streets
- Mount Werner/US40
- Downhill Drive/Elk River Road

### **6.2.2 Traffic Study Types:**

There are four types of studies that could be required:

- Trip Generation Letter – A site with less than 30 trips per hour and located in an area with planned road improvements or identified potential lane additions. In areas that have not been recently studied, a Short-Term Traffic Study may be required.
- Short-Term Traffic Study – A site generating between 30 and 100 trips in the peak hour. The site will be developed in a single construction phase with anticipated completion in less than three years from the time of development plan approval.
- Long-Term Traffic Study – Development sites with greater than 100 trips in the peak hour, or sites with US 40 intersections included in the study area. The site may be developed in multiple phases over a number of years. A build-out period not longer than 20 years should be assumed.
- Trip Evaluation Letter – For sites in the West of Steamboat Area, a master traffic study will be prepared prior to the first development in that area. All subsequent developments will need to prepare a trip evaluation letter comparing the proposed development with the development type and density projected for the site in the master study. The letter may need to include additional analysis if there is a significant difference between the projected and the proposed development.

### **6.2.3 Scope Approval Form:**

Prior to starting a traffic study, the applicant must complete and submit a Scope Approval Form (See Attachment A). The Scope Approval Form shall be prepared under the responsible charge of a traffic professional. This form will identify the type of study required, the study area and the parameters for the study. The Scope Approval Form must be approved by the City prior to starting the study and must be included as Attachment A in every traffic study submittal. See Section 6.2.5 for submittal process guidance.

### **6.2.4 Certification Requirements**

A short or long-term traffic study shall be prepared under the responsible charge of a traffic engineer. A trip generation letter or trip evaluation letter may be prepared under the responsible charge of any engineer familiar with procedures for using the *Trip Generation Manual* published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. All traffic studies and letters shall be sealed and signed by a professional engineer licensed in the state of Colorado.

### **6.2.5 Submittal Procedure**

Prior to submittal of a development application, the applicant shall determine if a traffic study is required by reviewing the criteria included in this section of the Engineering Standards. If the criteria for submittal of a traffic study are not met, a traffic study waiver request shall be submitted to the city via the Cityview application portal via the Preconsultation application. If a study is required, the applicant shall have a traffic professional complete the Scope Approval Form and submit to the city via the Cityview application portal via the Preconsultation application. Once the waiver is granted or the Scope Approval Form has received approval, the traffic professional can begin the study.

When a traffic study is required, it shall be included with the development application. Studies will not be accepted prior to development application. After the City's initial review of the draft

study, the traffic professional shall address City comments and submit a final study for City approval. The final traffic study shall include the PE's stamp, date, and signature when required. The final study must be approved by the City Engineer prior to scheduling the project's public hearing.

For sites with access to or within the influence area of state highways, the applicant is also required to contact CDOT for requirements and to get approval of the traffic study scope from CDOT.

## **6.3 TRAFFIC STUDY FORMAT**

### **6.3.1 General**

An outline of the minimum requirements for each type of study is listed in the following sections.

### **6.3.2 Trip Generation Letter Outline**

- Project Description
- Trip Generation
- Improvement Contribution
- Conclusions
- Figures, Tables, and Appendices:
  - Figure 1 – Vicinity Map
  - Figure 2 – Site Plan
  - Table 1 – Trip Generation Summary
  - Appendix A – Scope Approval Form and Approval Letter

### **6.3.3 Short-Term Traffic Study Outline**

- Title Page
- Project Description
- Existing Conditions
- Project Traffic
- Short-Term Background Conditions
- Short-Term Total Conditions
- Site Access and Circulation Evaluation
- Additional Analysis
- Alternative Modes Summary
- Summary and Recommendations
  - Figures, Tables, and Appendices – The following is a list of the minimum figures, tables, and appendices to include
  - Figure 1 – Vicinity Map
  - Figure 2 – Site Plan
  - Figure 3 – Existing Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 4 – Project Traffic Distribution
  - Figure 5 – Project Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 6 – Short-Term Background Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 7 – Short-Term Total Traffic Volumes

- Table 1 – Project Trip Generation
- Table 2 – LOS Summary Table
- Appendix A – Scope Approval Form and Approval Letter
- Appendix B – Traffic Count Data
- Appendix C – Highway Capacity Worksheets/ Synchro Worksheets
- Add additional tables, figures, and appendices as required to support additional analysis such as signal warrants, auxiliary lane summary, % signal contribution calculation, etc.

**6.3.4 Long-Term Traffic Study Outline (by phase, when applicable)**

- Title Page
- Project Description
- Existing Conditions
- Project Traffic
- Background Conditions (Short and Long)
- Short-Term Total Conditions
- Long-Term Total Conditions
- Site Access and Circulation Evaluation
- Additional Analysis
- Alternative Modes Summary
- Summary and Recommendations
- Figures, Tables, and Appendices
  - Figure 1 – Vicinity Map
  - Figure 2 – Site Plan
  - Figure 3 – Existing Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 4 – Project Traffic Distribution
  - Figure 5 – Project Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 6 – Short-Term Background Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 7 – Long-Term Background Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 8 – Short-Term Total Traffic Volumes
  - Figure 9 – Long-Term Total Traffic Volumes
  - Table 1 – Project Trip Generation
  - Table 2 – LOS Summary Table
  - Appendix A – Scope Approval Form and Approval Letter Appendix B – Traffic Count Data
  - Appendix C – Highway Capacity Worksheets/ Synchro Worksheets
  - Add additional tables, figures, and appendices as required to support additional analysis (such as signal warrants, auxiliary lane summary, % signal contribution calculation, etc).

**6.3.5 Trip Evaluation Letter Outline**

- Project Description
- Trip Generation Comparison
- Additional Analysis
- Conclusions
- Figures, Tables, and Appendices:

- Figure 1 – Vicinity Map
- Figure 2 – Site Plan
- Table 1 – Trip Generation Summary
- Add additional tables, figures, and appendices as required to support additional analysis
- Appendix A - Scope Approval Form and Approval Letter

## 6.4 TECHNICAL CRITERIA

### 6.4.1 Level of Service (LOS) and Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C)

Within the City of Steamboat Springs LOS A - C for vehicular movement is considered good, with LOS D acceptable during peak hours. For individual left turn movements from stop-controlled approaches, LOS E and F may be acceptable wherein V/C of each lane does not exceed 0.9 and where justified in the traffic study. Where the existing or future background LOS is already worse than LOS D or where V/C already exceeds 0.9, the site should target circulation and land use intensity that does not further degrade the LOS or V/C. Otherwise mitigation is required.

The LOS and V/C shall be determined using methods described in the most recent version of the Highway Capacity Manual. If modifications are made to the default parameters or if alternative analysis tools are required, they shall be noted, and justification provided. Where improvements are proposed in the future that are not currently planned and funded, the analysis should show the LOS and V/C both with and without the improvements. The LOS and V/C results shall be summarized in Table 2 by planning horizon for each intersection overall and each individual movement showing both the delay, the LOS category, and V/C ratio.

The Highway Capacity Manual recognizes that left turn movements from stop-controlled approaches may operate at unacceptable LOS even under low demand. Where these conditions are projected, the traffic study should consider the delay, volume/capacity ratio and queue lengths for the movement. If these alternative measures indicate that the left turn movement will not operate acceptably, mitigation is required, and access management may be required to force the use of alternate routes.

### 6.4.2 Auxiliary Lanes

The need for auxiliary lanes on State Highways shall be identified based on the CDOT access code criteria. Along City streets, auxiliary lanes may be required at locations with unacceptable LOS. Auxiliary lane design shall be in accordance with *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, latest edition*, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

### 6.4.3 Traffic Signal Warrants

The need for traffic signals shall be evaluated based on the traffic signal warrants listed in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), latest edition*. The peak hour warrant shall not be used for short-term evaluations but may be used in evaluations of long-term conditions.



#### **6.4.4 Stop signs and other signs**

Installations of traffic signs shall follow the guidelines listed in the *MUTCD, latest edition*.

#### **6.4.5 Pedestrian facility warrants at mid-block or uncontrolled intersections**

The need for a pedestrian facility at mid-block and uncontrolled intersections shall be evaluated based on the City of Steamboat Springs' warrants for pedestrian facilities at mid-block and uncontrolled intersections.

#### **6.4.6 Trip Generation**

Trip generation shall be estimated following the practices and methodologies listed in the Institute of Transportation Engineers *Trip Generation Manual, current edition*. For sites where ITE trip rates are not available, other industry sources or a trip generation study of similar sites may be used as approved on the Scope Approval Form. Reductions for alternate modes, internal capture, passby traffic, etc. shall not be taken unless approved on the Scope Approval Form. Trip generation results shall be summarized in Table 1 showing AM peak hour, PM peak hour, and daily unit trip rates and project results for inbound, outbound, and total trips by land use category.

#### **6.4.7 Trip Generation Comparison and Additional Analysis**

For sites in the West of Steamboat Area, a master traffic study will be prepared prior to the first development in that area. All subsequent developments will need to prepare a trip evaluation letter comparing the proposed development with the development type and density projected for the site in the master study. The comparison shall show the projected Table 1 Trip Generation Summary for that site from the master study compared with the proposed Table 1 summary for the site. Where the proposed traffic is greater than the projected traffic, additional analysis will be required to demonstrate that the additional traffic does not adversely affect the transportation system. For minor to moderate increases the short-term analysis in the master study shall be updated with the new projections. For significant increases (more than 100 trips per peak hour) both the short-term and long-term traffic portions of the master traffic study shall be updated. Any updates shall include the increased contribution identified in other trip evaluation letters completed for the area.

#### **6.4.8 Traffic Counts**

New traffic counts shall be collected if existing counts are more than two years old. Counts in the Mountain Area shall be winter counts collected during winter between mid-December and mid-March. Counts in the rest of town shall be summer counts collected between June 1 and August 31, unless school or schools are in proximity. Count collection dates shall be specified on the Scope Approval Form. For projects that need new counts in the study area, have existing counts that are 2 – 4 years old, and it is more than two months until the designated counting event, the existing counts may be utilized with a 3% annual growth factor applied and/or new counts may be taken with a seasonal adjustment factor applied. For estimating future background traffic in an area lacking historic growth rates data, a 3% annual growth rate shall be utilized. Where CDOT data for US 40 or data from historical growth demonstrate a lower growth factor, a lower factor can be used with City Engineer approval. Intersection traffic counts shall be Turning Movement Counts including pedestrians and bicycles. Count periods shall include two hours during the evening peak (typically 4:00- 6:00 PM) and two hours during the morning (7:00-9:00 AM) or midday (11:00- 1:00 PM) peaks, at a minimum.

Counts shall be conducted on two separate days, one weekday and one weekend, to be determined for seasonal specific conditions and identified in the Scope Approval Form. Where the peak hour of site-generated traffic is outside of these periods (such as at a school) additional traffic counts may be required as outlined on the scope approval form.

#### **6.4.9 Site Contribution**

The percent contribution for a site shall be determined as follows:

- Traffic Signal – calculate the highest percent site traffic of the minor street traffic required to satisfy the MUTCD Traffic Signal Warrant 3, Peak Hour. Right turn traffic should be excluded where there is a separate right turn lane. The maximum peak hour percentage shall be used to determine the site contribution.
- Intersection and Road Segment Improvements – calculate the percent site traffic of the total intersection or road segment traffic. The maximum peak hour percentage shall be used to determine the site contribution.
- Other improvements – as identified on the Scope Approval Form

Due to the varied nature of commercial, industrial, and multi-family trip generation, site contribution shall be evaluated with the development application submittal associated with the building. Mitigation of impact shall be required prior to building permit approval. For residential development proposal, site contribution shall be evaluated at time of subdivision application and mitigation of impact shall be required prior to approval of final plat.

#### **6.4.10 Mitigation Measures**

Where the LOS or V/C falls below acceptable levels, mitigation will be required. Acceptable mitigation measures may include capacity and access improvements, signalization, signal operation improvements, street widening, additional connections, or other physical improvements. Where existing conditions prevent physical improvements (i.e. steep terrain, adjacent buildings, limited ROW, etc.), a project may be required to reduce density, or implement transportation demand management (TDM) measures to minimize the demand for vehicle trips and encourage alternate mode use. The TDM strategies may include incentives for carpooling, transit ridership, enhanced bicycle or pedestrian facilities, provisions for telecommuting, or addition of use mixes to increase internal trips.

For any development proposal that requires a CDOT Access permit as part of the city development approval process, all mitigation and construction requirements associated with and identified as part of the CDOT Access permit is the responsibility of the development.

For any city street intersection, signal, approach lanes, or road segment identified for required mitigation and for which the identified site contribution exceeds 20% all mitigation and construction requirements shall be the responsibility of the development and shall be complete prior to certificate of occupancy or acceptance.

## 6.5 DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR REPORT SECTIONS

### 6.5.1 Title Page

Include the name and contact information for the study author and developer/owner. List the site name, location, original date, and any subsequent revision dates. Include “Draft” or “Final” based on the status of the study.

### 6.5.2 Project Description

Include a description of the project location, access locations, adjacent roads, proposed land use and size of project, any phasing, pedestrian and bike facilities, and study area boundaries. Describe adjacent land use and note any proposed future connections adjacent to the site. Include the name and contact information for the study author and site developer/owner.

### 6.5.3 Existing Conditions

Describe the existing conditions of the study area intersections and roadways including laneage, traffic control, road classification, and speed limit. Evaluate the LOS at the study area intersections identifying any issues for both intersections and individual movements. Identify improvements (lanes, phasing, traffic control, split changes, etc.) needed to maintain adequate intersection operations. For a trip generation letter identify any concerns for capacity based on the volumes (since no LOS is conducted).

### 6.5.4 Project Traffic

Estimate site traffic based on the average rates or equations, whichever is higher, contained in the current version of the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ *Trip Generation Manual*. For sites where information is not available in the ITE guide, other industry sources or counts of similar sites as approved on the Scope Approval Form meeting may be used.

### 6.5.5 Background Conditions

Estimate background traffic based on growth rates identified in the Scope Approval Form for the estimated project build-out year. Include traffic from any developments within the study area that are approved but not yet constructed. Also include any planned and budgeted intersection improvements. Describe background study area conditions, LOS, and identify any issues or mitigation measures needed.

### 6.5.6 Total Conditions

Add site traffic to background traffic. Describe study area conditions, LOS, and identify any issues or mitigation measures needed to accommodate site traffic.

### 6.5.7 Site Access and Circulation Evaluation

Include a discussion of the adequacy of the site accesses for the projected site traffic. As required, review vehicle turning paths, stacking distances, design layout’s ability to control speeds and provide efficient circulation, and the potential conflict points. If the property is included in the study area of the West or East US40 Access Study, describe planning requirements identified by the Access Study and how the proposed development complies with the study requirements.

#### **6.5.8 Additional Analysis**

Include any additional analysis (auxiliary lanes, % signal contribution, etc) required in the Scope Approval Form. Procedures for additional analysis shall generally follow the guidelines in the CDOT State Highway Access Code unless otherwise indicated in the Scope Approval Form.

#### **6.5.9 Complete Streets Summary**

**Existing:** Describe existing complete streets infrastructure indicating how the site currently provides travel ways for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. Include any missing links or barriers to alternate modes preventing connections to adjacent areas from the site. Describe conditions not only along corridors but also at points where alternate mode facilities cross corridors and intersections.

**Proposed:** Describe proposed complete streets infrastructure and improvements to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel on-site considering existing and future demand. Elements may include but are not limited to sidewalks, trails, shoulders, bus stops/routes, bike lanes, bike routes, or travel demand management strategies. Describe proposed improvements not only along corridors but also at points where multimodal facilities cross roadway corridors and intersections. Where complete streets infrastructure does not extend to the site, indicate the extent and type of any off-site missing links or improvements necessary to provide these connections. (Note the code may not require construction of off-site improvements, but the traffic study needs to evaluate what off-site improvements are needed to provide interconnectivity with the site.)

#### **6.5.10 Multimodal Summary**

Describe existing and planned multimodal infrastructure connecting to the site. Evaluate multimodal facilities for the site. Where facilities are not acceptable, recommend on or off-site improvements that can be made to improve needed facilities. Off-site mitigation shall be consistent with street standards and planning documents referenced in Section 6.1.5.

#### **6.5.11 Summary and Recommendations**

Provide a summary of the study. Include a list of any improvements proposed, noting who will construct and fund the improvements. Identify if Right-of-Way is available or is needed to construct the proposed improvements.

**Attachment A**  
**TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDY – SCOPE APPROVAL FORM**

Prior to starting a traffic impact study, a Scope Approval Form must be submitted for review and signed by the City Public Works Director. It shall be included in every traffic study submittal as Attachment A. This Scope Approval Form is for City requirements only. Consultants must contact CDOT to determine requirements related to access permits and work in CDOT right-of-way.

**Project Information**

Project Name:	
Project Location:	
Developer Name/ Contact:	
Traffic Engineer Name/ Contact:	

**Study Parameters**

**Type of Study Required:**     Trip Generation Letter     Long-term Traffic Study  
    Short-term Traffic Study     Trip Evaluation Letter

**Traffic Counts**

Winter Zone                       Summer Zone

Counts w/in last 2 years are available By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

New counts will be collected on \_\_\_\_\_

Existing counts will be estimated based on: \_\_\_\_\_  
   % growth rate: \_\_\_\_\_  
   Seasonal Adjustment Factor applied (ratio): \_\_\_\_\_

Future counts will be estimated based on a \_\_\_\_\_% growth rate.

**Peak Hours Analyzed**

AM Peak Hour                       PM peak hour                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Trip Generation Rates**

From ITE                       Other (cite) \_\_\_\_\_

No passby or mode split (typical)

Passby or mode split (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**Trip Distribution – Attach sketch A-1**

## Study Parameters

### List of Study Area Intersections

1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

### Key Analysis items

- Existing + site traffic at study intersections
- Peak Hour LOS at study intersections
- CDOT Access Permit Required (consult with CDOT prior to approval of scope)
- % Site contribution to intersection/road segment at \_\_\_\_\_
- Auxiliary lane evaluation at \_\_\_\_\_
- Traffic signal warrants at \_\_\_\_\_
- Four-way stop sign warrants at \_\_\_\_\_
- Queuing Analysis at \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Approvals

Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that the approval of this scope approval form shall not be construed as an approval of the proposed use, but rather a methodology for evaluation of the proposed use. During the city development review process, the proposed use will be reviewed by city staff for compliance with code, standards, and community planning documents.