

## TRAFFIC STUDY FACT SHEET

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### What is a traffic study?

A traffic study is a detailed examination and analysis of a transportation system supported by data collection.

The process is as follows:

- A study starts with the identification and definition of a transportation problem, followed by data collection and analysis.
- A study is typically performed to explore a specific aspect of, or question about, a transportation system.
- Study results are usually summarized in a report.

### What is the purpose of a traffic study?

Transportation studies serve to quantify the extent of a transportation problem or to provide an analysis of a proposed transportation solution.

### Who initiates a traffic study?

A traffic study is usually undertaken by the jurisdiction responsible for the transportation system. A study can be invoked by a request from a public official, local resident, or jurisdictional staff member.

### Who should prepare a traffic study?

Traffic studies should be prepared under the supervision of a qualified and experienced transportation professional who has specific training in traffic and transportation engineering and planning. Some jurisdictions require that traffic studies be signed and sealed by a registered professional engineer.

### Who should review a traffic study?

Reviews should be conducted by properly trained transportation engineers or transportation planners in agencies that are responsible for operating transportation systems and planning and implementing transportation improvements

### When should a traffic study be conducted?

The following are some conditions that may warrant conducting a traffic study:

- When a new development is proposed and it will generate substantial new traffic;
- When financial assessments are implemented (transportation impact fees);
- When a major roadway improvement or reconstruction project is proposed;
- When existing transportation problems are evident, such as a high crash location or at a location with complex roadway geometrics;
- When a development is proposed for a sensitive area; and
- At the judgment or discretion of jurisdiction staff based on unusual circumstances.

### How are traffic volumes and parking estimates made for traffic studies?

The current edition of ITE's *Trip Generation Manual* and *Parking Generation* provide information on how to estimate site generated trip generation and parking demands. ITE's website provides additional information on these resources:  
<http://www.ite.org/tripgeneration/index.asp>

### How much does it cost to prepare a traffic study?

Transportation studies can be expensive and should not be conducted without considering the alternatives. There is no "typical" cost for conducting studies since transportation problems often are unique in scope and sensitive to regional differences in travel patterns. A traffic study can range in cost from a few thousand dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars based on the complexity and extent of the study.

### How is community outreach conducted for a traffic study?

A variety of media strategies can be used to notify the public of a major traffic study, including but not limited to: direct mailings, newspapers, radio, television, and variable message signs.