

Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) POLICY

Ascension Parish Planning Commission

This policy establishes requirements for studies that provide information on traffic projected to be generated by all proposed developments. The purpose and intent of these requirements is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and visitors of Ascension Parish “PARISH” by ensuring the provision of safe and adequate transportation facilities. The objective of the policy is to establish requirements for the identification of potential traffic impacts, operational and/or safety, of proposed developments and potential mitigation where required. Traffic Impact Policies are a standard method utilized by all levels of government to address the contribution to traffic congestion by new or expanded development. A list of references utilized to develop this policy based on best practices is attached.

The landowner, developer and/or engineering representative “APPLICANT” must provide an engineering study to document the anticipated impact of the proposed development on the existing transportation network. All information and analysis submitted by the APPLICANT must follow the requirements and methods outlined in this policy.

Developments seeking access to state roadways where a review of a traffic impact study is performed by Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development “DOTD” are not exempt from the requirements in this policy.

Procedures

The PARISH Department of Planning and Development “DPD” should be contacted prior to all new development applications, Plat Plan and Building Permit Applications, to determine the level of traffic impact analysis required. This policy does not apply to an individual requesting a single family residential access. The APPLICANT should submit a Traffic Scoping Information Form and the required supporting documentation to request a Traffic Scoping Meeting with the DPD. The scope of the traffic impact study, required format, and required supporting documentation will be determined at the Traffic Scoping Meeting. The DPD, or designee, shall review the information provided and schedule a Traffic Scoping Meeting, if needed, for projects requiring a building permit. For projects requiring Planning Commission approval, the Traffic Scoping Meeting will occur simultaneous with the zoning Pre-Application meeting.

In instances where the APPLICANT is requesting access to a state roadway and/or where a traffic impact study is required by the DOTD Traffic Impact Policy, the PARISH process should be initiated first. DOTD should not be contacted until after the PARISH Traffic Scoping Meeting unless the PARISH requests DOTD attend. When the DOTD process is initiated separately, the APPLICANT shall inform and invite the designated PARISH representative to DOTD traffic impact meetings and copy him/her on subsequent correspondence. If the designated PARISH representative is not available or elects not to attend any meetings with DOTD regarding traffic impacts/access connections, the APPLICANT shall provide him/her minutes of the meeting(s).

The APPLICANT shall be solely responsible for the cost of preparation of any required Traffic Impact Studies. The APPLICANT should provide a required stamped and signed TIA and supporting data to the DPD, or their designee, for review and approval. Review fees will be assessed in accordance with the Ascension Parish Office of Planning and Development Fee schedule. The DPD, or their designee, shall provide a TIA Approval Letter to the APPLICANT that clearly outlines any required mitigation.

The TIA Approval Letter shall be included in the packet provided to the commissioners for projects requiring approval by the Planning Commission. At the commission meeting, the Planning Commission approves, denies, or requests further modifications or analysis based on the recommendations in the TIA Approval Letter.

The TIA Approval Letter shall be submitted with the Permit Application for projects requiring a building permit. A building permit will not be issued unless the APPLICANT receives a TIA Approval Letter.

Required mitigation measures, if any, shall be in place prior issuance of an occupancy permit.

Traffic Scoping Meeting

The APPLICANT shall submit a Traffic Scoping Information Form to the DPD to request a Traffic Scoping Meeting with the DPD, or their designee, prior to traffic counts or preparation of the TIA. At this meeting, the DPD, or their designee, shall discuss and develop the following Traffic Impact Analysis requirements based on project specific conditions:

- TIA Threshold
- Study area
- Data Collection Requirements which could include, but not be limited to
 - Field Observations
 - Seven-day, 24 hour volume counts
 - Daily volume counts
 - Turning movement counts
 - Classification counts
 - Speed data
 - Travel Times
 - Crash History
 - Traffic Signal Inventory/phasing/timing
- Trip generation and distribution which could include, but not be limited to
 - Land Use Category
 - Daily trips
 - Peak hour trips
 - Internal Capture percentages
 - Pass by percentages
- Incorporation of trips for other proposed developments within the study area and/or growth rate usage and methodology
- Analysis requirements which could include, but not be limited to
 - Capacity Analysis
 - Turn Lane Warrant Analysis
 - Signal Warrant Analysis
 - Safety Analysis
 - Roundabout Study
 - AutoTurn Analysis
 - Simulation Modeling

Trip Generation Rates

In general, applicants shall use the trip rates (use fitted equation if available) contained in the most recent edition of the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) *Trip Generation* manual or count data from an equivalent site.

Traffic Impact Analysis Threshold Levels

A TIA shall be required for all subdivisions and developments requiring a building permit except for an individual single-family residence. Expansion of an existing project under construction may also be subject to a traffic study. Generally, three (3) threshold levels of Traffic Impact Studies (Thresholds 1, 2, and 3) are defined to include, but not be limited to, the following requirements. The exact requirements based on site-specific and project specific elements will be defined at the Traffic Scoping Meeting.

Threshold 1 (Traffic Impact Analysis Statement Required) – If the proposed development results in less than forty (<40) peak hour trips, either AM or PM (whichever is greater) the APPLICANT would submit:

- a. The proposed trip generation and distribution with source of information
- b. Traffic Scoping Information Form with Required Additional Information (may include revisions per the Traffic Scoping Meeting)
- c. Sight distance evaluation at proposed driveway locations

Threshold 2 (Traffic Impact Analysis Study Required) – If the proposed development results in greater than forty (>40) and less than four hundred (<400) peak hour trips, either AM or PM (whichever is greater) the APPLICANT would submit:

- a. through c. above, and:
- d. Capacity analysis for existing and proposed conditions at intersections within the study area established during the Traffic Scoping Meeting;
- e. Capacity analysis for proposed conditions at the development driveways;
- f. Left turn lane, right turn lane and signal warrants at the development driveways;
- g. Recommendations for mitigating improvements to maintain or improve the existing Level-of-Service, as well as recommendations for driveway locations and configurations.

Threshold 3 (Limited Traffic Impact Analysis Study Required) – If the proposed development results in greater than four hundred (>400) peak hour trips, either AM or PM the APPLICANT would submit:

- a. through g. above and;
- h. Obtain summary of the crash history within the study area;
- i. Review crash reports and provide recommendations to improve safety.

The peak hour trips are not the only threshold factor in deciding the analysis that will be required. At the discretion of the DPD, or their designee, other items which significantly influence the traffic movements or safety may require a higher level of study. These include but are not limited to the following:

- High-accident areas
- Areas currently experiencing excessive traffic congestion
- Areas currently undergoing substantial growth
- High volumes on surrounding roads affecting access to a proposed development
- Lack of existing left turn lanes on adjacent roadways
- Inadequate sight distance at access points

- Proximity of proposed access points to existing drives or intersections
- Developments that include drive-through operations

The APPLICANT shall meet all applicable requirements found in the Parish Unified Land Development Code. The PARISH has the right to require mitigating improvements for which will be the financial responsibility of the APPLICANT.

Documentation

Threshold 2 and 3 Traffic Impact Analysis studies shall be stamped and signed by the approved registered PTOE certified Louisiana Professional Engineer.

Contents and Format

The contents of a TIA, as well as the TIA study area limits shall vary depending on the site and prevailing conditions. As previously stated, content requirements shall be established by the DPD, or their designee during the Traffic Scoping Meeting.

Each TIA must take into account other proposed developments in the study area for which a TIA has been submitted or approved. This information shall be obtained and provided by the DPD, or their designee, and/or the DOTD. A growth rate may be applied to existing traffic data in lieu of estimated trips for specific developments if approved by the DPD in the Traffic Scoping Meeting.

The TIA study shall be prepared in the following format:

1. Description of study area A vicinity map and description of the study area shall be provided. The map shall include roadways that allow access to the site and are included in the study area. Documentation of the study area development established during the Traffic Scoping Meeting shall be included in the appendix.
2. Description of the Project This description shall include the size of the parcel, access to the site, onsite circulation, and the existing and proposed uses of the site. In addition, the square footage of each use or number and size of units proposed shall be specified. A proposed site plan proposed shall be included.
3. Existing conditions The existing conditions, in the vicinity of the project, shall be described including field observations. Existing traffic controls and geometrics (number of lanes, intersection configurations, etc.) on roadways or at intersections within the study area shall be described in detail.
4. Existing Traffic Volumes Traffic data shall be collected be conducted at study area intersections during peak hours and dates approved by the DPD, or their designee. The TIA shall include a description of traffic count type, location and date of collection. A figure that presents AM and PM peak hour counts with turning movements and average daily traffic shall be included when applicable. Raw count data shall be included in the appendix.

Unless approved by the DPD, the counts shall be conducted during the school year (September through May) and during weeks that have no major school holidays. (These holidays shall include, but not be exclusive to, Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, Spring Break, Mardi Gras, Labor Day, and Exam weeks.) Counts shall not be conducted during special events in the area unless for a specific purpose.

5. Trip generation estimates. Traffic volumes expected to be generated by the proposed development shall be estimated. Trip generation calculations shall be included in the appendix.
6. Trip distribution Trips generated by the site must be distributed and assigned to the roadway network to determine the project's impacts. The methodology and assumptions which are used in the determination of trip distribution shall be described. For projects with several phases to be developed over several years, the trip distribution shall be estimated for the completion of each phase of the development. A figure that presents the new trips distributed and assigned to the roadway network shall be included.
7. Projected Traffic Volumes within the TIA study area Project generated, and distributed trips shall be estimated for intersections in the study area, including proposed driveways. A figure that presents AM and PM peak hour projected volumes with turning movements shall be included.

A detailed description of the incorporation the trips generated from other proposed developments or the use of growth rates as approved by the DPD, or their designee, in the Traffic Scoping Meeting shall be included.

8. Capacity analysis Capacity analyses provide an indication of how well the study area intersections serve existing and future traffic demands. A description of the methodology and Level of Service (LOS) definitions shall be included within the TIA. For existing and future conditions, LOS at all study intersections, inclusive of the site access locations, shall be calculated for signalized and unsignalized intersections using procedures contained in the *Highway Capacity Manual*. The LOS and delay shall be reported for each turning movement at each approach, each overall approach and the overall intersection as applicable in tabular format. Capacity analysis documentation shall be included in the appendix.

The objective of the APPLICANT shall be to maintain or improve the existing LOS. An overall LOS "D" shall be considered acceptable. Where LOS "D" is not existing or the existing LOS cannot be achieved with improvements/mitigation, a description of impacts, constraints, mitigation measures analyzed, and results shall be provided.

9. Warrant Analysis Traffic signal and or left/right lane turn warrants may be conducted and storage lengths recommended where applicable. Meeting warrants is not the only consideration for signalization and/or turn lanes, engineering judgment must also be applied. Warrant analyses documentation shall be included in the appendix.
10. Crash Data When required, three years of the most current crash data shall be obtained for intersections within the study area. The details of the safety analysis shall be determined on a project specific basis by the DPD, or their designee.
11. Traffic improvements Improvements to the network should be developed to address deficiencies. Improvements shall be analyzed to determine the expected impact.
12. Conclusions and Recommendations The equivalent of an executive summary should be provided to describe the proposed project, the data collected, the analysis conducted, improvements considered and resulting recommendations.

Actions Based on TIA/ Mitigation

A proposed development which is subject to the TIA requirements of this policy may be disapproved when the results of the required TIA demonstrate that the proposed project will overburden the existing roadway system by causing a reduction in service of affected roadways, negatively impacts the safety of the roadway, or is below the adopted Level of Service (LOS) "D". In the case where the existing Level of Service (LOS) is below "D", the required mitigating improvements shall improve the LOS to "D" or better. An APPLICANT, in coordination with the DPD, or their designee, may modify the development proposal to reduce traffic-related impacts. Modifications to applications for projects may include, but shall not be limited to:

- Dedication of additional right of way
- Re-routing of traffic and proposed access points serving the proposed project
- Traffic signal timing and/or phasing adjustments (with coordination and approval from the owner of the signal)
- Restriping or reconfiguration of intersections
- Construction of additional lanes
- Installation of a roundabout
- Installation of a signal
- Providing funding for infrastructure improvements
- Any other recommendations by the DPD upon review.

APPLICANTS will be responsible for the cost and implementation of identified improvement(s) to mitigate the traffic impact of their proposed development unless funding can be provided through a grant mechanism.

If traffic mitigation is part of an approved Traffic Impact Analysis, all approved traffic improvements must be implemented prior to issuance of an occupancy permit, unless otherwise provided for in the TIA Approval Letter and/or DOTD Letter of Compliance that it is to be completed within construction of a subsequent phase.

Mitigation shall comply with the Ascension Parish Master Plan in place at the time of application, if any. The APPLICANT shall verify with the DPD whether a Master Plan proposed route or improvement will affect the subject property. If so, access through the property and/or require Right-of-Way, may be required to be dedicated to the Parish as part of the APPLICANTS's mitigation efforts.

The Parish has the right to place moratoriums in areas where reasonable operational conditions, as determined by the DPD, or their designee, are not able to be achieved with mitigation.

Waiver of/Exemption from TIA Requirements

The Planning Commission may not waive the traffic impact analysis submittal requirements of this policy.

REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

- A. Traffic Impact Policy for New Access Requests Affecting Traffic on State Routes, Louisiana Administrative Code, State of Louisiana Division of Administration
- B. Access Connection Permits, Louisiana Administrative Code, State of Louisiana Division of Administration
- C. Access Connection Policy, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)
- D. Traffic Impact Policy for New Access Requirements, DOTD
- E. Trip Generation Manual, 9th Edition, Institute of Transportation Engineers
- F. Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report 209, Transportation Research Board
- G. Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
- H. Engineering Directives and Standards VI.1.1.9, Department of Transportation and Development, Office of Highways
- I. Traffic Impact Analysis, St. Tammany Regulatory Ordinance, 2014
- J. Public Infrastructure Design Standards, Lafayette Consolidated Government, Department of Public Works, 2015