

Free research report examines travel behavior before and after LA Metro introduces new light-rail line

Study is valuable for planners, policy makers

San Jose, CA – May 12, 2015 – Los Angeles is pursuing possibly the most ambitious rail transit investment program in the US by creating the Expo Line. A new peer-reviewed research report from the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) provides an understanding of the potential impacts of that project by assessing changes in transit use of nearby residents and nearby bus service. This study is one of the first that tracks changes in travel behavior before and after the opening of new light rail transit service. [*Changes in Transit Use and Service and Associated Changes in Driving Near a New Light Rail Transit Line*](#) is available for free download from <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1108.html> The principal investigators were Hilary Nixon, PhD, Marlon Boarnet, PhD, and Doug Houston, PhD.

“Two important and linked lessons came out of this study,” said Dr. Nixon. “First, changes in bus service coincident with the introduction of new light rail transit can negatively affect the overall transit ridership in the corridor. Second, households living near new Expo Line light rail stations reduced their vehicle miles traveled (VMT), but those households living near bus stops that were eliminated increased their VMT.”

This second observation is not definitive, Dr. Nixon cautioned, but it suggests the possibility that bus service is a complement to rail transit service, at least for driving reduction.

Transit agencies should have a holistic view

The policy implications of this research suggest that transit agencies should think more carefully about bus and rail transit service, particularly when new rail transit is introduced. The researchers suggest that transit agencies take a more holistic view of travel impacts, including driving as well as transit. In addition, changes to bus service should be carefully crafted not only to maximize use of new rail transit service, but also to facilitate changes in travel behavior consistent with a shift away from auto-mobility.

The new Expo Line rail service extends south and west from downtown Los Angeles along Exposition Blvd. This report focuses on the first phase of the line’s construction, which opened in two stages in April and June 2012. It runs 8.7 miles (13.9 km) from downtown Los Angeles westward to Culver City, near the junction of the 405 and 10 Freeways.

Report is valuable for other cities

This report could be valuable to planners and policy makers because LA Metro’s long-range plan has committed funds to six new rail transit lines scheduled to open between now and 2019. This would expand the Metro rail network by nearly 50 miles (80km). Other municipalities contemplating similar expansions could benefit, as well.

For a free, no-registration download, go to <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1108.html>

Tweet this: @MinetaTrans report: New LA light rail line shows effects on other transit service. Planners take note. <http://ow.ly/Lq6Ke>

ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND THE RESEARCH TEAM

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ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information transfer programs regarding surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. Congress established MTI in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. MTI won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2012. The Institute is funded through the US Department of Transportation, the US Department of Homeland Security, the California Department of Transportation, and public and private grants. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI, the lead institute for the nine-university Mineta National Transit Research Consortium, is affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University's College of Business. Visit transweb.sjsu.edu

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