

Induced Traffic Confirmed

The jury is in! Recent studies show that building or widening highways induces more traffic, called induced travel. Shortly after the lanes or road is opened traffic will increase to 10 to 50% of the new roadway capacity as public transit or carpool riders switch to driving, or motorists decide to take more or longer trips or switch routes. This is short-term induced travel. In the longer term (three years or more), as the new roadway capacity stimulates more sprawl and motorists move farther from work and shopping, the total induced travel rises to 50 to 100% of the roadway's new capacity. This extra traffic clogs local streets at both ends of the highway travel. The following table summarizes these studies.

Elasticity -- % new capacity filled with induced traffic

	Short-term	Long-term (3+ years)
SACTRA		50 - 100%
Goodwin	28%	57%
Johnson and Ceerla		60 - 90%
Hansen and Huang		90%
Fulton, et al.	10 - 40%	50 - 80%
Marshall		76 - 85%
Noland	20 - 50%	70 - 100%
Duranton and Turner		103%

Todd Litman presents a more complete analysis in "Generated Traffic and Induced Travel, Implications for Transport Planning," 9 December 2009, www.vtpi.org, or ITE Journal, Vol. 71, No. 4, ww.ite.org, April 2001, pp. 38-47.

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