

**Appendix H:  
Level of Service Definitions**

## LEVEL OF SERVICE: SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS

Level of service for signalized intersections is defined in terms of delay, which is a measure of driver discomfort, frustration, fuel consumption, and lost travel time. The levels of service range between level of service A (relatively congestion-free) and level of service F (congested).

The delay experienced by a motorist is made up of a number of factors that relate to control, geometry, traffic, and incidents at an intersection. Total delay is the difference between the travel time actually experienced and the reference travel time that would result during ideal conditions: in the absence of traffic control, in the absence of geometric delay, in the absence of any incidents, and when there are no other vehicles on the road. The portion of the total delay attributed to the control facility is called the control delay. Control delay includes initial deceleration delay, queue move-up time, stopped delay, and final acceleration delay. Control delay may also be referred to as signal delay for signalized intersections.

Level of service criteria for signalized intersections is determined in terms of the average control delay per vehicle. The following average control delays are used to determine approach levels of service:

Control Delay (s/veh)	LOS by Volume-to-Capacity Ratio*	
	≤1.0	>1.0
≤ 10	A	F
> 10 – 20	B	F
> 20-35	C	F
> 35-55	D	F
> 55 – 80	E	F
> 80	F	F

Note: \*For approach-based and intersectionwide assessments, LOS is defined solely by control delay.

**Level of Service A** describes operations with very low control delay. This occurs when progression is extremely favorable; most vehicles arrive during the green phase and do not stop at all. Short traffic signal cycles may contribute to low delay.

**Level of Service B** generally occurs with good progression and/or short traffic signal cycle lengths. More vehicles stop than for level of service A, causing higher average delays.

**Level of Service C** has higher delays than level of service B. These higher delays may result from fair progression and/or longer cycle lengths. Individual cycle failures, where motorists are required to wait through an entire signal cycle, may begin to appear at this level. The number of vehicles stopping is significant, although many still pass through the intersection without stopping.

**Level of Service D** At this level, the influence of congestion becomes more noticeable. Longer delays may result from some combination of unfavorable progression, long cycle lengths or high volume-to-capacity ratios. The proportion of stopping vehicles increases. Individual cycle failures are noticeable.

**Level of Service E** is considered the limit of acceptable delay. These high delay values generally indicate poor progression, long cycle lengths and high volume-to-capacity ratios. Individual cycle failures occur frequently.

**Level of Service F** is considered unacceptable to most drivers. This condition often occurs with over saturation, i.e., when arrival flow rates exceed the capacity of the intersection. It may occur at volume to capacity ratios below 1.0 with many individual cycle failures. Poor progression and long cycle lengths may also be major contributing causes to such delay levels.

## LEVEL OF SERVICE: TWO WAY STOP CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS

The quality of traffic service at a two-way stop controlled, or “TWSC,” intersection is measured according to the level of service and capacity of individual legs. The level of service ranges from LOS A to LOS F, just as with signalized intersections.

The right of way at the TWSC intersection is controlled by stop signs on two opposing legs of an intersection (on one leg of a “T”-type intersection). The capacity of a controlled leg is based on the distribution of gaps in the major street traffic flow, driver judgment in selecting a gap through which to execute the desired maneuver and the follow up time required by each driver in a queue.

The level of service for a TWSC intersection is determined by the computed or measured control delay and is defined for each minor movement. Level of service is not defined for the intersection as a whole. The delay experienced by a motorist is made up of a number of factors that relate to control, geometry, traffic, and incidents. Total delay is the difference between the travel time actually experienced and the reference travel time that would result during conditions with ideal geometry and in the absence of incidents, control, and traffic. This program only quantifies that portion of the total delay attributed to traffic control measures, either traffic signals or stop signs. This delay is called control delay. Control delay includes initial deceleration delay, queue move-up time, stopped delay, and final acceleration. Average control delay for any particular minor movement is a function of the approach and the degree of saturation.

The expectation is that TWSC intersections are designed to carry smaller traffic volumes than signalized intersections. Therefore, the delay threshold times are lower for the same LOS grades. The following average control delays are used to determine approach levels of service:

Level of Service A	$\leq 10$ seconds per vehicle
Level of Service B	$> 10$ and $\leq 15$ seconds per vehicle
Level of Service C	$> 15$ and $\leq 25$ seconds per vehicle
Level of Service D	$> 25$ and $\leq 35$ seconds per vehicle
Level of Service E	$> 35$ and $\leq 50$ seconds per vehicle
Level of Service F	$> 50$ seconds per vehicle