A METHODOLOGY TO ASSESS LEVEL-OF-SERVICE ON US-1 IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

By
Rafael E. De Arazoza
Florida Department of Transportation
District 6
602 South Miami Avenue
Miami, Florida 33130
(305) 377-5910

And
Douglas S. McLeod
Florida Department of Transportation
Mail Station 19
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450 (904) 922-0449

For Presentation at the
Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting
January 1993

DRAFT UPDATE

January 2021

Updated by AECOM Technical Services, Inc.
Based on input from the 2019/2020 US-1 LOS Task Force

R.E. De Arazoza
D.S. MaCleod

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the methodology developed to assess level-of-service (LOS) on US-1 in the Florida Keys. Although predominantly an uninterrupted flow two-lane roadway in the Keys, US-1's uniqueness warrants all alternative LOS evaluation process to that found in the 1985 Highway Capacity Manual.

U.S.-1 extends from the Key West to the Florida mainland with no major roads intersecting it. Furthermore, no other principal arterial serves the Keys or the Keys' resident and tourist population, over 100,000. Its unique geography, land use patterns, trip making characteristics presented a challenge in developing and applying a reasonable and acceptable method to assess its LOS.

A uniform method was developed to assess LOS on U.S.-1 to cover both its overall arterial length from Key West to the Florida mainland, and 24 roadway segments delineated. The methodology employs average travel speed as the main measure of effectiveness. It was developed from basic criteria and principles contained in Chapters 7 (Rural Multilane Highways), 8 (Rural Two-Lane Highways) and 11 (Urban and Suburban Arterials) of the 1985 Highway Capacity Manual.

The results of the study correlate well with perceived operating conditions on US-1 and over a two- year period the methodology appears to have a good level of reliability. The authors recommend that for uninterrupted flow conditions in developed areas, Chapters 7 and 8 of the Highway Capacity Manual incorporates average travel speed as the main measure of effectiveness to determine LOS.

R.E. De Arazoza
D.S. MaCleod

A METHOD TO ASSESS LEVEL-OF-SERVICE ON US-1 IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present the methodology developed by the Monroe County US-1 level- of-service (LOS) Task Force to assess LOS on US-1 (the Overseas Highway) in the Florida Keys (1). The authors are members of the referenced task force.

US-1 which is mostly two-lanes, has unique geographic and trip characteristics. It extends through the Florida Keys covering approximately 180 kilometers (112 miles) from the City of Key West to the Florida mainland (Figure 1). There are 48 bridges crossing water for a total length of 35 km (22 mi), with the longest bridge approximately 11 km (7 mi) long. There is no other road, to provide vehicular access to the Florida Keys from the rest of Florida or anywhere else. Few local roads are 5 km (3 mi) in length. Consequently, US-1 serves not only as a regional principal arterial which serves intra as well as interstate travel, but also serves as the local road for most of the trips within the Keys. US-1 Annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes range from a low of 4700 to a high of 34200. The road serves a large tourist demand and is one of the most scenic in the United States. The linear geography with the narrow land width of most of the Florida Keys are further characteristics.

Most of the surrounding land use is rural developed and suburban in nature; however, some areas are totally rural and others are urban, such as the Key West and its suburbs. With the exception of the few completely rural segments and the bridges, strip commercial stores, motels and restaurants are very common throughout the Keys along US-1. Numerous driveways and intersecting local roads provide access to the surrounding residential areas.

The US-1 LOS study encompassed approximately 174 km (108 mi) of US-1 from Key West/Stock Island to the Monroe/Dade County Line, broken down as follows:

- **129 km (80 mi) (74%) two-lane uninterrupted flow;**
- **32 km (20 mi) (19 %) four-lane uninterrupted flow; and**
- **13 km (8 mi) (7%) four-lane urban/suburban interrupted flow.**

Part of the growth management process in Florida is to assess roadway LOS to determine if roadway facilities meet standards established by state regulations. The Transportation Research Board Special Report 209 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) (2) is extensively used throughout Florida as the source document to determine highway capacities and LOS.

HCM Chapter 7 (Rural Multilane Highways), 8 (Rural Two-Lane Highways) and 11 (Urban and Suburban Arterials) were consulted to determine applicability to the unique conditions and vehicular traffic operations and characteristics of the Florida Keys. Only the 13 km (8 mi) of urban/suburban interrupted flow and the small percentage of the two-lane truly rural portions correlate directly to the HCM Chapters 11 and 8.

Thus, the challenge was to develop a methodology to assess arterial LOS along US-1 without deviating from the principles of the HCM. Towards that end a task force was created consisting of representatives from State and local agencies and an engineering consulting firm.

THE NEED TO DEVELOP A LOS MEASUREMENT METHOD

From a state transportation perspective, the overall operating condition of US-1 is important, not the condition of any smaller segment. With Key West as a major tourist destination at the southern end of the Keys and no alternative routes, the logical analysis section of highway extends from Key West to the mainland. From local transportation and development approval perspectives, shorter segments for analysis are desirable.

Chapter 8 of the HCM presents a methodology which applies to typical rural two-lane highways with basically long stretches of roads, and few side intersecting streets and driveways directly connecting to the roads. Chapter 8 methodology relies mainly on "percent time delay" to assess LOS. The HCM further states that "Percent time delay...is defined as the average percent of time that all vehicles are delayed while traveling in platoons due to inability to pass. Percent time delay is difficult to measure directly in the field. The percent of vehicles traveling at headways less than 5 seconds can be used as a surrogate measure in field studies."

Chapter 8 of the HCM also uses average travel speed and capacity utilization as additional measures of effectiveness to assess LOS. However, the HCM states clearly that percent time delay is the primary measure of service quality. Further inspection of the average speeds for level terrain depicted by Table 8-1 of the HCM do not correspond well with the typical operating speeds of US-1 in the Florida Keys. For instance, Table 8-1 shows average speeds ranging from 58 mph (93 kmh) (LOS A) to 45 mph (72 kmh) (LOS D).

The overall weighted posted speed limit for US-1 in the Florida Keys is 79.7 kmh (49.5 mph). The overall median operating speeds along US-1 according to the 1991 and 1992 field studies (3, 4) were 76.8 and 75.5 kmh (47.7 and 46.9 mph), respectively. The field studies showed, for the most part, the survey vehicle(s) was traveling close to the posted speed limit.

It is believed the average motorist in the Florida Keys is mostly concerned with operating at an acceptable average travel speed rather than being concerned about the ability to pass. This is supported by the physical and traffic characteristics of the Keys (e.g., adjacent land development, sight-seeing tourists), local knowledge, and discussions with motorists.

From the above statements, it was clear to the task team that HCM Chapter 8 methodology could not be applied to US-1 for analysis of its two-lane sections.

With regards to the four-lane uninterrupted flow portions of US-1, a similar dilemma occurred. HCM Chapter 7 methodology applies to multi-lane highways with operating characteristics generally unlike those of US-1 through the Florida Keys. For instance, average travel speeds depicted by Table 7-1 of the HCM are also higher than those encountered in the Keys. Further, the methodology inherent in equations (7-1), (7-2) and (7-3)are closely related to those of freeways with their higher service flow rates, which again neither simulate nor resemble those of US-1 in the Keys. The Four-lane portion is found mostly in Key Largo (the northeastern end of the Keys) which has a weighted posted speed limit of 72.5 kmh (45 mph). Key largo is developed with strip commercial and residential development. It has numerous driveway connections and side streets directly accessing US-1.

The remaining 7% of the total US-1 mileage is four-lane interrupted flow. These are the portions encompassing Marathon (in the middle of the Keys) and Stock Island (near Key West). The operating characteristics here are truly urban/suburban and interrupted flow in nature resembling those of HCM Chapter 11. Thus, the methodology of Chapter 11 was employed in assessing LOS on these segments.

From the preceding discussion, it was evident that a distinct method to assess LOS on US-1 had to be developed. The task team's efforts concentrated on keeping consistency with the basic philosophy of the HCM, and yet be sensitive to the Keys uniqueness. Thus, the proposed methodology correlates measured travel speeds along US-1 with LOS speed thresholds developed as part of this study. This is in line with the concept behind the HCM of average travel speed being the main parameter to measure arterial LOS.

METHODOLOGY

Considering the types of trips served by US-1, it was decided to conduct travel time and delay runs to cover both the entire length of US-1 from Key West to the Monroe/Dade County Line (mainland) and for each segment of the highway along the way. Twenty-four segments were selected as depicted by Table 1. Each segment is fairly homogeneous in nature having a uniform roadway cross section and traffic flow.

Travel speeds for the overall length (from Key West to the mainland) provide an indication of the LOS for the regional trips. Travel speeds for each segment also provides an opportunity to assess the impact of local trips. Establishing speed criteria for both the overall length and for each roadway segment satisfies the requirements of the Florida growth management process.

The next step in the process was to determine the number of travel time runs and how, when and to/from where. Runs were started at both ends of US-1. For example, one run started on Stock Island (Key West City limits) and proceeded to the mainland (Dade County). After reaching this point, the vehicle turned back and proceeded to end the run where it started, on Stock Island. On another day the reverse was true (i.e., the run started in Dade County instead of Stock Island). It was decided to perform a total of fourteen two-way runs or twenty-eight in each direction covering the 174 km (108 mi) study portion of US-1. Twenty-eight runs provide enough data for statistical significance. Control points were established at each of the 24 segments to record travel time and speed data specific to each one of those segments. Seven runs were started at Stock Island and seven in Dade County. Each began at staggered hours to cover the varied trip purposes and time frames within the Keys. The surveys were conducted during March, reflecting the area's peak traffic season.

The 2021 travel time runs shall be conducted based on the current schedule. In addition, supplemental runs shall be conducted in the southbound direction within Segments 1 to 4 during AM peak (7-8 am) on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the second week. Also, conduct supplemental runs in the northbound direction within Segments 1 to 4 during the PM Peak (5-6pm) on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the second week. The results of the supplemental runs will be included in the 2021 ATTDS Report for informational purposes only and will not be used in overall LOS calculations. This information will be reviewed to decide if supplemental runs should be incorporated into future ATTDS and LOS calculations, as directed by the Monroe County BOCC.

For each run the process provided data, such as running speed and travel speed, in each direction of US-1. Vehicular traffic counts were also collected at three locations covering seven days.

The travel time runs yielded a total of 28 one-way travel speed values for the overall length of US-1 and for each of the 24 segments. The value selected for analysis was the median speed which would reflect a "typical peak period during the peak season." In other developed parts of Florida the typical peak hour of the peak season approximates the 100th highest hour of the year (5). The median value was also selected, instead of the average, to avoid the influence of extremely high or low speed value at either end of the survey population. The process up to this point provided median travel speeds. The question then became, what LOS do these speeds represent.

The next step was to develop a set of LOS/Speed threshold values for both the overall length of US-1 and the pertinent segments of the highway. Towards this end, the speed ratios between LOS thresholds from Tables 7-1, 8-1 and 11-1 of the HCM were used in the analysis. These ratios were weighted against actual mileage of US-1 in the Florida Keys to represent the prevailing type of flow; two-lane uninterrupted flow, four-lane uninterrupted flow and four-lane interrupted flow. For example, from the level terrain portion of HCM Table 8-1, the ratio between LOS B speed and LOS A speed is 55/58 = 0.948. The ratio between LOS C/LOS A = 52/58 = 0.897; the ratio between LOS D/LOS A = 50/58 = 0.862 and so on. The same process was applied to Tables 7-1 (96.6 kmh) (60 mph) and 11-1. Then each ratio was weighted to take into account the length of the section of US-1 to which that type of traffic flow applied. Once all the ratios were developed, the weight criteria was applied as in the following example:

TYPE OF FLOW	LOS C/LOS A RATIO	WEIGHT
Two-lane uninterrupted	52/58 = 0.897	74
Four-lane uninterrupted	44/50 = 0.880	19
Four-lane interrupted	22/35 = 0.629	07

Therefore, the overall speed ratio between LOS C and LOS A is:

$$[74(0.897)+19(0.880)+7(0.629)]+100=0.875$$

The above process was applied to develop all the required ratios. Further observations with reference to Tables 8-1, 7-1 and 11-1 yielded the following. From Table 8-1 the difference between LOS A and LOS B speeds is 4.8 kmh (3 mph), or 4.8 kmh (3 mph) above an assumed posted speed limit of 88 kmh (55 mph). From Tables 7-1 and 11-1 the differences are 3.2 kmh and 11.3 kmh (2 mph and 7 mph), respectively, with LOS lower than assumed speed limits. Therefore, from these observations plus local knowledge, it was determined that the overall US-1 posted speed limit is 79.7 kmh (49.5 mph) reasonably fell between the LOS A and B thresholds.

This assumption is not far away from the premise that if a vehicle is able to sustain a travel speed equal to the posted speed limit, then it will correspond typically with the upper ranges of LOS (i.e., LOS A or B).

With the above speed differentials and LOS range premise in mind, the US-1 overall speed thresholds for LOS A and B became 82.1 kmh (51 mph) (2.4 kmh (1.5 mph) above 79.7 kmh (49.5) and 77.3 kmh (48 mph), respectively. Applying the developed ratio between LOS C/LOS A to the LOS A speed resulted in 72.5 kmh (45 mph), rounded off (i.e., 0.875 x 82.1 kmh (51 mph) = 71.8 kmh (44.6 mph)), which then became the threshold for LOS C. After applying all the ratios the overall LOS criteria for US-1 became:

LOS	Speed
A	≥ 82 kmh (51 mph)
B	≥ 77 kmh (48 mph)
C	≥ 72 kmh (45 mph)
D	≥ 68 kmh (42 mph)
E	≥ 58 kmh (36 mph)
F	< 58 kmh (36 mph)

Inspection of the criteria above indicates a close relationship with the speed differentials of both Tables 8-1 and 7-1 of the HCM. Comparing the median speed data for US-1 from the 1991 and 1992 field studies to the above criteria resulted in an overall LOS of C for both years, i.e., 76.8 kmh (47.7 mph) for 1991 and 75.5 kmh (46.9 mph) for 1992. These speeds are 2.9 kmh (1.8 mph) and 4.2 kmh (2.6 mph) below the overall weighted 79.7 kmh (49.5 mph) speed limit, which would correspond to the upper range of LOS C. The authors also believe

that LOS C is the appropriate LOS designation for the whole of US-1 from Key West to the mainland.

A final step was still needed to complete the task of developing LOS/Speed threshold values for the segments of US-1. No further work was needed to cover the 7% mileage of the interrupted portions of US-1 found on Marathon and Stock Island, adjacent to Key West. As discussed earlier, these segments correlate with Chapter 11 of the HCM. Therefore, direct application of Table 11-1 LOS/speed criteria for a Class I arterial was made.

The remaining segments fell within the two-lane and four lane uninterrupted flow criteria. It was decided to make LOS A speed criterion 2.4 kmh (1.5 mph) above the weighted posted speed limit in order to keep consistency with the overall criteria. LOS C speed was set 9.7 kmh (6 mph) below LOS A speed consistent with Tables 7-1 and 8-1 of the HCM. LOS B and D speed criteria were set to provide equal increments between LOS A and LOS D (i.e., LOS B 4.8 kmh (3 mph) below LOS A speed and LOS D 4.8 kmh (3 mph) below LOS C speed). LOS E was set 9.7 kmh (6 mph) below the LOS D Speed. This makes the segmental speed differential between LOS thresholds consistent with the differentials in the overall criteria, except for one consideration. On any uninterrupted flow segment, signalized intersection delay would be deducted from the segment's travel time to account for the influence of ~~that signal on the segment~~ the traffic signals (i.e., signal delay = 1.0 x ~~15~~ 35 seconds average stopped delay). This corresponds to an LOS C delay due to isolated signals. LOS C delay was chosen because LOS C is the state LOS standard for US-1 in the Florida Keys. The rationale behind deducting signal delay from the segment analysis was to recognize the impact of signals in reducing travel time. This provides the required sensitivity in the segment which is not only to assess the impact of regional vehicular trips, but also those that are local in nature. The following illustrates the concept plus one example for the US-1 Segmental LOS/speed relationship.

- **The uninterrupted flow segment criteria are:**

LOS	SPEED
A	≥ 2.4 kmh (1.5 mph) above the posted speed limit
B	≥ 4.8 kmh (3.0 mph) below LOS A
C	≥ 9.7 kmh (6.0 mph) below LOS A
D	≥ 14.5 kmh (9.0 mph) below LOS A
E	≥ 24 kmh (15.0 mph) below LOS A

F **< 24 kmh (15.0 mph) below LOS A**

- **A segment having a weighted posted speed limit of 72 kmh (45 mph) would then have this criteria:**

LOS	SPEED
A	**≥ 74.9 kmh (46.5 mph)**
B	**≥ 70.0 kmh (43.5 mph)**
C	**≥ 65.2 kmh (40.5 mph)**
D	**≥ 60.4 kmh (37.5 mph)**
E	**≥ 50.7 kmh (31.5 mph)**
F	**< 50.7 kmh (31.5 mph)**

- **The LOS/Speed criteria for interrupted flow segments (marathon and Stock Island) are based directly on a Class I arterial from Table 11-1 of the HCM.**

LOS	SPEED
A	**≥ 56.4 kmh (35 mph)**
B	**≥ 45.1 kmh (28 mph)**
C	**≥ 35.4 kmh (22 mph)**
D	**≥ 27.4 kmh (17 mph)**
E	**≥ 20.9 kmh (13 mph)**
F	**< 20.9 kmh (13 mph)**

Speed data from both the overall length of US-1 and the individual segments were compared against the applicable LOS/speed thresholds. This provided for an assessment of the facility LOS plus an indication of reserve speed, if any.

Under Florida's and Monroe County's growth management process if the overall LOS for US-1 fell below the LOS C standard, then no additional land development would be allowed to proceed in the Florida Keys. Unless the proposed new development traffic impact were mitigated. If the overall LOS for US-1 was C or better, then additional development could take place in those segments where there was reserve speed available (i.e., segment's speed was higher than the standard threshold).

Besides meeting highway LOS standards there are numerous other considerations in Florida's growth management process pertaining to the Florida Keys that are beyond the

scope of this paper. As mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to present the methodology to assess LOS on US-1.