

TRANSPORTATION DEFINITIONS

Accessibility

The extent to which facilities are barrier free and useable by persons with disabilities, including wheelchair users.

Accessible Vehicle

Public transportation revenue vehicles that do not restrict access, are useable and provide allocated space and/or priority seating for people who use wheelchairs. (FTA)

Alternative Fuels

Low-polluting fuels which are used to propel a vehicle instead of high-sulfur diesel or gasoline. Examples include methanol, ethanol, propane or compressed natural gas, liquid natural gas, low-sulfur or "clean" diesel and electricity.

APC

Automatic Passenger Counter, a system whereby the passengers are counted automatically as they board and deboard.

Arterial Street

A major thoroughfare, used primarily for through traffic rather than for access to abutting land, that is characterized by high vehicular capacity and continuity of movement.

Articulated Bus

An extra-long (54 to 60 ft.) motor bus with the rear body section connected to the main body by a joint mechanism that allows the vehicle to bend when in operation for sharp turns and curves and yet have a continuous interior.

Base service

Refers to the number of buses that remain in service on a line for the entire day. This does not include buses that only operate during school and commute hour service. Base service is determined by the frequency of buses that must run from the beginning to the end of a line to adequately service riders during off-peak periods (mid-day and evenings).

Boarding

Getting on a transit vehicle

Bikeway: A facility designed to accommodate bicycle travel for recreational or commuting purposes. Bikeways are not necessarily separated facilities; they may be designed and operated to be shared with other travel modes.

Block

The schedule operated by a single bus from pull-out to pull-in.

Bus Priority System

A system of traffic controls in which buses are given special treatment over other forms of transportation.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Refers to a new concept that seeks to achieve a high quality transit service like light rail but at a lower cost using buses. BRT vehicles are generally low-floor, high capacity, low-emission buses, with exclusive rights-of-way, rapid fare collection, and infrastructure development.

Bus Stop

An authorized location for a bus to stop on a route. Marked with a sign and may include a shelter, bench, or trash can.

Busway

Exclusive freeway lane for buses and carpools.

Carpool

Shared use of a car, in particular for commuting to work to save costs and in the interest of environmental benefits.

Commuter Rail

Commuter rail is a transit mode that is a multiple car electric or diesel propelled train. It is typically used for local, longer-distance travel between a central city and adjacent suburbs, and can operate alongside existing freight or passenger rail lines or in exclusive rights of way.

Community Bus Service

Lighter load routes designed to serve smaller areas or areas where arterial routes can't serve well.

Day Pass

A single day pass purchased from a bus operator.

Deadhead Operation

Refers to non-revenue time when a bus is not carrying passengers, usually a trip from, to, or between lines or garages. Usually this refers to the trip between the home division garage to the point where the bus enters or leaves its route.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

A comprehensive study of likely environmental impacts resulting from major federally-assisted projects; statements are required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Fare

The money that is collected to pay for your ride.

Fare Structure

The actual description of the fares that the passengers are supposed to pay. This also includes the price of passes or tickets.

Farebox Recovery

The percentage of the operating cost that is recovered through the farebox. This is what the passengers are actually paying towards the cost of the service on a daily basis. It includes cash, tickets, and pass receipts.

Feeder Routes

Arterial buses that traverse neighborhoods to get passengers to a main route or to another transportation system.

Fixed Route

Service provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed-route trip serves the same origins and destinations, unlike demand responsive and taxicabs.

Gas Tax

A sales tax imposed on the sale of fuel, often dedicated to transportation and/or the construction of roads.

Greenhouse Emissions

A gas that contributes to the greenhouse effect by absorbing infrared radiation.

Grant

A contribution of funds subject to the specific performance and regulatory provisions.

Headway

Scheduled time interval between vehicles moving in the same direction on a particular route.

Heavy Rail

Transit service using rail cars with motive capability, driven by electric power usually drawn from a third rail, configured for passenger traffic and usually operated on exclusive rights-of-way. Utilizes generally longer trains and consists of longer station spacing than Light Rail.

HOV

(High Occupancy Vehicle) Refers to high occupancy vehicle lanes (carpool lanes), which are lanes reserved for people who share a ride in carpools, vanpools, and/or buses, or who drive a motorcycle. These lanes are marked with a diamond symbol and HOV signs.

Hybrid bus

Refers to a bus that runs on hybrid propulsion (fossil fuel combined with electric power). An onboard generator powered by an internal combustion engine or fuel cell supplies electricity.

Intermodal

Those issues or activities that involve or affect more than one mode of transportation, including transportation connections, choices, cooperation and coordination of various modes. Also known as "multimodal."

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS): The application of advanced technologies to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation systems.

Kiss and Ride

A place where commuters are driven and dropped off at a station to board a public transportation vehicle.

Light Rail

Local rail rapid-transit system using large, single passenger cars, railroad-type signals, and, usually, private rights-of-way.

Limited Stop Routes

Routes that stop less frequently than normal routes to achieve faster trip time.

LOS (Level of Service)

Refers to a measure of congestion that compares actual or projected traffic volume with the maximum capacity of the intersection or road in question. LOS is rated from A (free-flowing traffic) to F (gridlock).

Low-Floor Vehicle

Refers to a bus that does not have steps. Building a bus floor at one level between the front to rear doors allows passengers to enter and exit more quickly. The addition of steps usually adds boarding and alighting time, especially for passengers with limited mobility.

Managed Lanes

High-occupancy toll (hot) lanes-facilities that employ pricing and vehicle eligibility to maintain free-flow conditions and provide high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) preference.

Mass Transportation Agency

An agency authorized to transport people by bus, rail, or other conveyance, either publicly, or privately owned, and which provides to the public, general or special service on a regular and continuing scheduled or unscheduled basis.

Maximum Load Point

Refers to a point on a bus route where the maximum numbers of passengers are on the bus.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

An areawide agency charged with the coordination of the urban transportation planning process; the regionwide recipient of Federal funds for transportation planning purposes.

Minibus

A small bus vehicle, typically capable of carrying 20 passengers, or less, most often used for making short trips. Minibuses are often used for demand-responsive transportation and buspools.

Mode

A particular form or method of travel distinguished by vehicle type, operation technology and right-of-way separation from other traffic.

Multimodal

Refers to the availability of multiple transportation options, especially within a system or corridor. A multimodal approach to transportation planning focuses on the most efficient way of getting people or goods from place to place by means other than privately owned vehicles; by bus, trolley, light rail, streetcar, cable car, and / or ferry systems.

Non-Capital Costs

The costs of administration, operation, maintenance, and marketing, exclusive of equipment and facility costs.

Off-Peak Period

Non-rush periods of the day when travel activity is generally lower and less transit service may or may not be scheduled."

Operating Cost

Recurring costs in transportation systems that include wages, salaries, taxes, insurance, and supplies, but not capital depreciation of interest payments.

Operator

An employee of a transit system who spends his/her workday in the operation of a vehicle, e.g., bus driver, rapid transit train motorman, conductor, etc.

Park-n-Ride Lot

Designated parking areas for automobile drivers who then board transit vehicles from these locations.

Passenger Miles

The total number of miles traveled by passengers on transit vehicles; determined by multiplying the number of unlinked passenger trips times the average length of their trips.

Paratransit

In accordance with the ADA, paratransit service is provided for the purpose of delivering transportation services to individuals who, because of functional disability (physical, cognitive, or other), cannot access or use the public transportation system. Comparable transportation service required by the American Disabilities Act for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transportation systems.

Paratransit Service Area

Federal regulations define the ADA paratransit service area as being within three-quarters of a mile on either side of a fixed bus route.

Peak Hours

The hour of the day in which the maximum demand for transportation service is experienced (refers to private automobiles and transit vehicles).

Public Timetables

Bus schedules that are published for use by the public.

Public Transportation:

Passenger transportation service, operating on established schedules along designated routes or lines with specific stops; designed to move large numbers of people; providing general or special service (bus, light rail, rapid transit).

Real Time Transit Information

These systems are technology applications designed to provide better customer service by disseminating timely and accurate information which is used to make decisions about modes of travel, routes, and times. It generally includes information on projected vehicle arrival and departure times, service disruptions and delays, transfers and other transportation services, as well as other related information such as date and time, weather, public announcements, security related information and updates during terrorist/emergency events, and other general events in the local area.

Ridership

The number of trips taken by people using a public transportation system in a given time period.

Right-of-Way

Publicly owned land that can be acquired and used for transportation purposes.

Running Time

Time given to a bus to get from one timepoint to the next or from one end of route to the other.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Passed by Congress July 29, 2005, signed by the President August 10, 2005. It includes new and revised program guidance and regulations (approximately 15 rulemakings) with planning requirements related to public participation, publication, and environmental considerations. SAFETEA-LU covers FY 2005 through FY 2009 with a total authorization of \$286.4 billion.

Service Hours

The hours of service on a given route.

Shuttle

A public or private vehicle that travels back and forth over a particular route, especially a short route or one that provides connections between transportation systems, employment centers, etc.

Smart Card

A stored value, prepaid card for electronic fare payment and ticketing.

Standing Load

A load of passengers with people standing because all the seats are occupied.

System Map

Map of all the routes operated by the transit agency; some include connecting service provided by other agencies.

Transfer

A passenger's change from one transit unit (vehicle or train) or mode to another transit unit or mode.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

An initiative to build transit ridership, while discouraging sprawl, improving air quality and helping to coordinate a new type of community for residents. TODs are compact, mixed-use developments situated at or around transit stops. Sometimes referred to as Transit Oriented Communities, or Transit Villages.

Transit Pass

A prepaid farecard or ticket, valid for riding during a specified period.

Transit System

An organization (public or private) providing local or regional multi-occupancy-vehicle passenger service. Organizations that provide service under contract to another agency are generally not counted as separate systems.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A program of intermodal transportation projects, to be implemented over several years, growing out of the planning process and designed to improve transportation in a community. This program is required as a condition of a locality receiving federal transit and highway grants.

Van Pool

A vanpool is a group of seven to fifteen people who live more than twenty miles from work and commute together on a regular basis in a van. Some vanpools are company sponsored, while others are rented from vendors or owned by the drivers.