

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) - Federal civil rights legislation for disabled persons passed in 1990; calls on public transit systems to make their services more fully accessible as well as to underwrite a parallel network of paratransit service.

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

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) – The total amount of traffic observed, counted or estimated during a 24-hour period.

Capacity – The maximum sustainable vehicle flow rate that can be expected to traverse a roadway segment / intersection during a specific time period given roadway, geometric, traffic, environmental, and control conditions. usually expressed in vehicles per day (vpd) or vehicles per hour (vph).

Clean Air Act (CAA), aka FCAA – Federal legislation that sets national air quality standards; requires each state with areas that have not met Federal air quality standards to prepare a State Implementation Plan (SIP). The sweeping 1990 amendments to the CAA, sometimes referred to as CAAA, established new air quality requirements for the development of metropolitan transportation plans and programs.

Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) – The comprehensive Federal legislation that establishes criteria for attaining and maintaining the Federal standards for allowable concentrations and exposure limits for various air pollutants; the act also provides emission standards for specific vehicles and fuels.

Conformity – The ongoing process that ensures the planning for highway and transit systems, as a whole and over the long term, is consistent with the state air quality plans for attaining and maintaining health-based air quality standards; conformity is determined by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), and is based on whether transportation plans and programs meet the provisions of a State Implementation Plan.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) – A transportation funding source contained in SAFETEA-LU for projects and activities that reduce congestion and improve air quality in regions not yet attaining Federal air quality standards.

Delay – The amount of time spent not moving due to a traffic signal being red, or being unable to pass through an unsignalized intersection.

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration (See U.S. DOT).

Fixed Cost - An indirect cost that remains relatively constant, regardless of the level of operational activity.

FTA – Federal Transit Administration See U.S.DOT.

Highway Trust Fund – The Federal trust fund established by the Highway Revenue Act of 1956; this fund has two accounts -- the Highway Account and the Mass Transit Account. Trust fund revenues are derived from Federal highway-user taxes and fees such as motor fuel taxes; trust fund uses and expenditures are determined by law.

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."

ISTEA - the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, passed into law in 1991. ISTEA authorized the Federal surface transportation highway and transit programs for 1991-1997.

Level of Service (LOS) – A qualitative measure of intersection or road segment operating condition. A grading scale of A through F is used to characterize traffic operating conditions. The scale is based on the ability of an intersection or street segment to accommodate the amount of traffic using it, and can be used for both existing and projected conditions. The scale ranges from “A” which indicates little, if any, vehicle delay, to “F” which indicates significant vehicle delay and traffic congestion.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – A Federally required transportation planning body responsible for the regional transportation program and the transportation improvement plan (TIP) in its region; the governor designates an MPO in every urbanized area with a population of over 50,000.

Multimodal – The concept of incorporating private passenger vehicles, transit, and non-motorized (bicycles and pedestrians) transportation features into the planning process.

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

National Highway System (NHS) – An approximately 155,000-mile network designated (partially) in ISTEA to provide an interconnected system of principal routes to serve major travel destinations and population centers. The NHS picks up where the Interstate Highway System left off.

Obligation – A Federal budgetary term that refers to a binding agreement that will result in an outlay; an agreement by the Federal government to pay for goods or services immediately or at some future time when the goods or services are delivered. Also known as a "commitment".

Peak Hour – The hour of greatest traffic flow at an intersection or on a road segment during a day. Typically, it is broken down into AM and PM peak hours.

Reverse Commuting – Movement in a direction opposite the main flow of traffic, such as from the central city to a suburb during the morning peak period.

Ridesharing – A form of transportation, other than public transit, in which more than one person shares the use of the vehicle, such as a van or car, to make a trip. Also known as "carpooling" or "vanpooling."

Roadway Expansion – An improvement project that adds capacity to the roadway network, whether added through lanes, turn lanes or new roadway treatments for the purposes of improving traffic flow / safety

SAFETEA-LU – The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, signed on August 10, 2005. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation highway and transit programs for 2005-2009.

Single-Occupant Vehicle (SOV) – A vehicle with one occupant, the driver, who is sometimes referred to as a "drive alone."

Surface Transportation Program (STP) – STP monies are "flexible," meaning they can be spent on mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as on roads and highways.

TEA-21 - The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, enacted in 1998. TEA-21 authorized the Federal surface transportation highway and transit programs for 1998-2003

Transportation Control Measure (TCM) – A strategy to reduce driving or smooth traffic flows in order to cut auto emissions and resulting air pollution. Examples of TCMs include roving tow truck patrols to clear stalls and accidents from congested roadways, new or increased transit service, or a program to promote carpools and vanpools.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) – Usually low-cost programs developed to reduce the levels or patterns of transportation demand in order to use the transportation system more efficiently, such as programs to promote telecommuting, flextime and ridesharing.

Transportation Enhancement Program (TE) – A transportation funding source in SAFETEA-LU used on projects / programs to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation's intermodal transportation system.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – This is primarily a spending plan for Federal funding expected to flow to the region from all sources for transportation projects of all types.

Transportation Management Area (TMA) – Urban areas with a population over 200,000 are given this a Federal designation for metropolitan planning purposes. TMAs have additional requirements and responsibilities placed upon them beyond smaller MPOs.

Transportation System Management (TSM) – Projects designed to increase the efficiency of the existing transportation system through minor, localized improvements such as focused intersection and signalization improvements.

United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) – The Federal cabinet-level agency with responsibility for highways, mass transit, aviation and ports; headed by the secretary of transportation. The DOT includes the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, among others.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) – This term helps pin down the numbers. Reducing VMT can help ease traffic congestion and improve air quality.

Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio – The resultant of dividing the counted / estimated traffic volume in a corridor by the estimated corridor / intersection capacity for a similar increment of time.