

## Appendix H. Acronyms and Definitions

**Active Transportation:** Transportation which requires physical activity as part of the mode. Typically, active transportation refers to walking, bicycling and to transit, as transit trips begin and end with a walking or bicycling trip.

**ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:** Federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities including those with mental disabilities, temporary disabilities, and the conditions related to substance abuse.

**ADT - Average Daily Traffic:** The number of vehicles passing a fixed point in a day, averaged over a number of days. The number of count days included in the average varies with the intended use of data.

**AVL – Automated Vehicle Locator:** A device that makes use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) to enable a business or agency to remotely track the location of its vehicle fleet by using the Internet.

**AVO - Average Vehicle Occupancy:** The ratio of person trips to vehicle trips; often used as a criteria in judging the success of trip reduction programs.

**BRT – Bus Rapid Transit:** A high speed bus system operated within an exclusive right-of-way. BRT incorporates exclusive transit ways, modern stations, on-board fare collection, high-tech vehicles and frequent service. BRT systems can be built incrementally and designed for vehicles - rather than people - transfer from local bus routes to the high speed lines.

**CAAA - Clean Air Act Amendments:** 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act which classify non-attainment areas and provide for rules dealing with air pollution in such areas; specifically brought transportation decisions into the context of air quality control.

**CMAQ - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program:** A categorical funding program created under ISTEA, which directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting national air quality standards in non-attainment areas for ozone and carbon monoxide.

**CMP - Congestion Management Process (previously known as Congestion Management System):** A systematic process required under SAFETEA-LU for all TMAs that shall address congestion management through the metropolitan planning process that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 and chapter 53 of title 49 through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. The CMP is required under 23 CFR 500.109 and shall include methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multi-modal transportation system, identify causes of congestion, identify and evaluate alternative actions, provide information supporting the implementation of actions, and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation actions. The CMP is periodically reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness of the implemented strategies, the results of this evaluation shall be provided to decision-makers to provide guidance on selection of effective strategies for future implementation purposes.

**Complete Streets –** Streets that offer transportation choices that are safe and convenient for all ages and ability levels. These choices may include transit, walking, bicycling and automobile travel.

**CONST – Construction (phase of a project):** The phase of a project after the preliminary environmental and engineering work is completed, where the project is being built and the improvements are prepared for implementation.

**DOT - Department of Transportation:** Agency responsible for transportation at the local, state, or federal level. For title 23 U.S.C. federal-aid highway actions, this would mean the Federal Highway Administration and for federal-aid transit actions under title 49 U.S.C, this would mean the Federal Transit Administration.

**E+C – Existing plus Committed Transportation Network:** Also called a No-Build network, this is a test of how a roadway network, consisting of an existing network plus currently funded future roadway projects, could withstand the demand of projected population and employment growth.

**EA – Environmental Assessment:** The process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made. The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that decision-makers consider environmental impacts before deciding whether to proceed with new projects

**EIS - Environmental Impact Statement:** A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document that explains the purpose and need for a project, presents project alternatives, analyzes the likely impact of each, explains the choice of a preferred alternative, and finally details measures to be taken in order to mitigate the impacts of the preferred alternative.

**EJ - Environmental Justice:** Derived from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and established by Executive Order, EJ requires federally funded plans and programs to assess their impact, either positive or negative, on traditionally underserved (e.g., low-income, minority, etc.) communities or segments of the population. The goal of EJ is to ensure public involvement of low income and minority groups in decision making to prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority groups, and to ensure that these groups receive equal benefits from transportation improvements.

**EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:** is an agency of the federal government of the United States charged with protecting human health and with safeguarding the natural environment: air, water, and land.

**Executive Board:** A standing committee created for the purpose of serving as spokespersons for the citizens of the metropolitan area and is the designated MPO to prioritize and direct federal transportation funds to local projects. The Board is comprised of elected officials from the cities over 5,000 population and the counties of Nashville-Davidson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson in the urbanized area. The Executive Board also has representatives from TDOT, representing the Governor. The Board is responsible for creating policies regarding transportation planning issues. The Executive Board meetings are open to the public and where any member of the public can address the MPO on any transportation issue.

**FHPP - Federal High Priority Projects:** Discretionary projects earmarked by the U.S. Congress as high priorities at the federal level during the Congressional appropriations and re-authorization process. This amounts to roughly 5% of the total transportation budget.

**FHWA - Federal Highway Administration:** Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering federal highway transportation programs under title 23 U.S.C.

**Fiscal Constraint:** A requirement, originally of ISTEA, that all plans be financially – constrained, balanced expenditures to reasonably expected sources of funding over the period of the TIP or Long-Range Transportation Plan.

**FTA - Federal Transit Administration:** Federal entity responsible for transit planning and programs under title 49 U.S.C.

**Functional Classification:** Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that



individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network.

**FY - Fiscal Year:** A federal fiscal or budget year; runs from October 1 through September 30 for the MPO and the federal government. State and local governments operate on a fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

**HIA – Health Impact Assessment:** An assessment conducted ideally in the planning phases of a built environment project which estimates any positive or negative impacts that a project may have on environmental or personal health. The assessment makes recommendations for improvements to the project to mitigate negative impacts such as reducing emissions or improving positive impacts such as increasing physical activity.

**GIS – Geographic Information System:** a system for capturing, storing, analyzing and managing data which is spatially referenced to the earth. GIS is a tool that allows users to create interactive queries (user created searches), analyze the spatial information, edit data, maps, and present the results of all these operations.

**HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle:** In Tennessee, vehicles carrying two (2) or more people receive this designation and may travel on freeways, expressways and other large volume roads in lanes designated for high occupancy vehicles. Motorcycles are also authorized to use these lanes.

**HUD – United States Department of Housing and Urban Development:** Federal agency charged with helping to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality, affordable homes.

**IM – Interstate Maintenance:** A funding category created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the IM authorizes funding for activities that include the reconstruction of bridges, interchanges, and over crossings along existing Interstate routes, including the acquisition of right-of-way where necessary, but shall not include the construction of new travel lanes other than high occupancy vehicle lanes or auxiliary lanes.

**IMS - Incident Management System:** A systematic process required under SAFETEA-LU to provide information on accidents and identify causes and improvements to the Transportation system to increase safety of all users.

**ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991:** Federal law which restructured transportation planning and funding by requiring consideration of multimodal solutions, emphasis on the movement of people and goods as opposed to traditional highway investments, flexibility in the use of transportation funds, a greater role of MPOs, and a greater emphasis on public participation. ISTEA preceded TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU.

**ITE - Institute of Transportation Engineers:** An international society of professionals in transportation and traffic engineering; publishes Trip Generation (a manual of trip generation rates by land use type).

**ITS - Intelligent Transportation System:** Use of computer and communications technology to facilitate the flow of information between travelers and system operators to improve mobility and transportation productivity, enhance safety, maximize the use of existing transportation facilities, conserve energy resources and reduce adverse environmental effects; includes concepts such as “freeway management systems,” “automated fare collection” and “transit information kiosks.”

**Intergovernmental Agreement:** Legal instrument describing tasks to be accomplished and/or funds to be paid between government agencies.

**LOS - Level of Service:** A qualitative assessment of a road’s operating condition, generally described using a scale of A (little congestion) to E/F (severe congestion).



**LRT – Light Rail Transit:** a particular class of urban and suburban passenger railway that utilizes equipment and infrastructure that is typically less massive than that used for rapid transit systems, with modern light rail vehicles usually running along the system.

**L RTP – Long-Range Transportation Plan:** A document resulting from regional or statewide collaboration and consensus on a region or state's transportation system, and serving as the defining vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, the plan indicates all of the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next 20 years. It is fiscally constrained, i.e., a given program or project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation.

**MG - Minimum Guarantee:** A funding category created in TEA-21 that guarantees a 90% return of contributions on formula funds to every state.

**MPO Activities:** Are plans, programs and projects related to the MPO process.

**MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization:** The forum for cooperative transportation decision-making; required for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000.

**MTA – Metropolitan Transit Authority:** The public transit agency serving Nashville/Davidson County.

**NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act:** Passed in 1970, NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions.

**NHS - National Highway System:** Specific major roads to be designated September 30, 1995; the NHS will consist of 155,000 (plus or minus 15%) miles of road and represents one category of roads eligible for federal funds under ISTEA.

**NOx – Nitrous Oxide:** The third largest greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide also attacks ozone in the stratosphere, aggravating the excess amount of UV light striking the earth's surface.

**Obligated Funds:** Funds that have been authorized by and committed to legally by a federal agency to pay for the federal share of the project cost.

**Officials:** Are people who have governmental decision-making, planning or administrative responsibilities that relate to MPO activities.

**PE – Preliminary Engineering (phase of project):** a process to begin developing the design of the facilities and system, to analyze the function and operation of the system, evaluation cost efficiencies and prepare for the final design of the project.

**PMS - Pavement Management System:** A systematic process utilized by state agencies and MPOs to analyze and summarize pavement information for use in selecting and implementing cost-effective pavement construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs; required for roads in the National Highway System as a part of ISTEA; the extent to which the remaining public roads are included in the process is left to the discretion of state and local officials; criteria found in 23 CFR 500.021-209.

**Public:** Includes citizens, public agencies, advocacy groups and the private sectors that have an interest in or may be affected by MPO activities.

**Public Participation:** Is an integral part of a planning or major decision-making process. It provides opportunities for the public to be involved with the MPO in an exchange of data and ideas. Public participation offers an open process in which



the rights of the community, to be informed to provide comments to the Government and to receive a response from the Government, are met through a full opportunity to be involved and to express needs and goals.

**ROW - Right-of-Way:** Real property that is used for transportation purposes; defines the extent of the corridor that can be used for the road and associated drainage.

**RTA – Regional Transportation Authority:** Nine-county regional agency that plans and develops regional transit in the Nashville area.

**RTDM - Regional Travel Demand Model:** This is a tool for forecasting impacts of urban developments on travel patterns as well as testing various transportation alternative solutions to traffic patterns. The travel patterns are determined from US Census results and in simple terms tell where residents live and where they go to work or school on a regional wide basis.

**SAFETEA-LU - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users** - legislation enacted August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009. SAFETEA-LU was preceded by ISTEA and TEA-21.

**School Siting:** the process by which a community decides where to locate a new public school. The placement of schools and the zones of populations assigned to attend a school affect transportation patterns in the community as well as the modal types used to make a home to school trip.

**SIP – State Implementation Plan (for air quality):** the regulations and other materials for meeting clean air standards and associated Clean Air Act requirements.

**SR – State Route:** a roadway owned, financed and maintained by a state.

**SRTS – Safe Routes to School:** the name of a national movement and a component of SAFETEA-LU by which communities provide infrastructure and education to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school.

**STA – State gas tax fund:** Also called motor fuel excise tax, this is a tax charged by the gallon and collected as consumers pay at the pump. The tax goes primarily towards basic operating costs, highway maintenance contracts, resurfacing, bridges, major reconstruction, new construction, consultant contracts, right-of-way purchases, and to match federal funds.

**STIP - State Transportation Improvement Program:** A priority list of transportation projects developed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation that is to be carried out within the four (4) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project. Transportation projects in the state's 11 urban areas are determined through Metropolitan Planning Organization process.

**STP – Surface Transportation Program (L-STP or U-STP):** A program funded by the National Highway Trust Fund.

**L-STP** provides funding to areas of 5,000 to 50,000 in population for improvements on routes functionally classified urban collectors or higher. **U-STP** Provides funding to Census designated urbanized areas over 50,000 in population (e.g. MPO areas based on US Census) for improvements on routes functionally classified urban collectors or higher.

**TCC - Technical Coordinating Committee:** A standing committee of most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs); function is to provide advice on plans or actions of the MPO from planners, engineers and other staff members (not general citizens).

**TDM – Transportation Demand Management:** a method of planning for and implementing transportation improvement in a manner that reduces traffic congestion and pollution by influencing changes in travel behavior.



**TDEC – Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation:** State agency responsible for protecting and improving the quality of Tennessee’s land, air, water and recreation resources.

**TDOT – Tennessee Department of Transportation:** State agency responsible for the planning and implementation of Tennessee’s multimodal transportation system including roads and bridges, aviation, public transit, waterways, and railroads.

**TOD - Transit Oriented Development:** a mixed-use development that is anchored by a transit station. The transit mode may include bus or rail, and the development may include uses such as housing, office and retail.

**Transportation Disadvantaged:** People who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation due to disability, income status or age.

**Transportation Enhancements:** Specific activities which can be funded with Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds; activities include pedestrian/bicycle facilities, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic historic sites, scenic or historic highway programs, scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation/operation of historic transportation structures, railway corridor preservation, control/removal of outdoor advertising, archeological planning/research and mitigation of highway runoff water pollution.

**TEA-21 - Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century:** Federal Legislation that authorized funds for all modes of transportation and guidelines on the use of those funds. Successor to ISTEA, the landmark legislation clarified the role of the MPOs in the local priority setting process. TEA-21 emphasized increased public involvement, simplicity, flexibility, fairness, and higher funding levels for transportation. TEA-21 preceded SAFETEA-LU.

**TIP - Transportation Improvement Program:** A priority list of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization that is to be carried out within the four (4) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project and be consistent with adopted MPO long range transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

**TMA - Transportation Management Area:** An area designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation given to all urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 (or other area when requested by the Governor and MPO); these areas must comply with special transportation planning requirements regarding congestion management systems, project selection and certification; requirements identified in 23 CFR - 450.300-33.6.

**The TMA Group:** A local non-profit organization headquartered in Williamson County responsible for carrying out certain transit services on behalf of the Regional Transportation Authority and the Franklin Transit Authority, and for the administration of the regional Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee, under contract to Williamson County and the Nashville Area MPO.

**TSM - Transportation Systems Management:** Strategies to improve the efficiency of the transportation system through operational improvements such as the use of bus priority or reserved lanes, signalization, access management, turn restrictions, etc.

**UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program:** Developed by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs); identifies all transportation and planning activities anticipated within the next one to two years, including a schedule for the completion of the identified tasks and activities.

**V/C Ratio Volume over Capacity Ratio:** This is a roadway performance measure to show how a highway volume compares with a highway’s capacity.

**VMT - Vehicle Miles Traveled:** This is an output of the travel demand model and is a measure of traffic flow over a highway segment. While 1000 vehicles traveling over a mile road and 1 vehicle traveling over 1000 miles are mathematically.

**VOC – Volatile Organic Compounds:** are organic chemical compounds that have high enough vapor pressures under normal conditions to significantly vaporize and enter the atmosphere. Included among these compounds are dry-cleaning solvents and some constituents of petroleum fuels.