

Acronyms & Definitions

Definitions

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Environmental Justice - A federal directive requiring all federal programs to identify and address , as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Populations considered to be EJ populations include African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, or Hispanic Americans, the elderly, and low-income households.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the Federal-Aid Highway Program and provides financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

Fiscal Constraint - The concept that the total cost of a given area's transportation projects cannot exceed the funding that area can reasonably expect to receive. Federal law requires both the Long Range Plan (LRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be fiscally constrained.

Freight - Goods carried by a vessel or vehicle, especially by a commercial carrier.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - A collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act of 1991 (ISTEA) - Expanded upon the 1974 Federal-Aid Highway Act that mandated the formation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all areas greater than 50,000 in population. ISTEA specified a greater importance of public participation in the transportation planning and decision making process. Metropolitan Planning Organizations are required to maintain a formal public participation process.

Long Range Transportation Plan / Long Range Plan (LRP) - The long-range, multi-modal plan updated every four years, documenting policies, initiatives, and projects designed to meet the surface transportation needs of the region.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - An organization designated by the governor and local elected officials as the agency responsible, along with the state, for planning in urbanized areas (with population of 50,000 – 200,000 people, which are designated by the U.S. Census). The organization serves as a forum for cooperative decision-making by local elected officials.

Multi-Modal - Planning and infrastructure focusing on connectivity between modes (such as trucks, boats, cars, bicycles, pedestrians, buses, and planes) as a means of facilitating linked trip-making for people and freight.

Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) - Niles-Buchanan-Cass urbanized area and transportation study area that is designated by the United States Census.

Nonmotorized - A transportation mode not using motorized vehicles. (For example bicycling, walking, horseback riding, and roller blading are all types of nonmotorized transportation).

Problem - Gaps between the desired vision, goals, and objectives and the current or projected performance of the system.

Public - Anyone who resides, has interest, or does business in a given area that may potentially be affected by transportation decisions.

Public Comment - Feedback from the public, as part of the region's public participation process, that is welcomed by all individuals regardless of their previous level of participation or education in the planning related decision-making process.

Public Participation - Public participation efforts include a variety of techniques targeting the entire community (including ethnic populations and low-income households) and assures the public has the opportunity to help shape the substance of plans and projects.

Public Transit - 1. Passenger transportation service operating on established schedules along designated routes or lines with specific stops and designed to move relatively large numbers of people at one time, and 2. Passenger transportation service operating on an on-demand basis, where there are flex-routes that are determined by the passenger's traveling needs (such as Dial-A-Ride).

Regional Planning - Planning that address issues such as transportation, environment, social, and economic concerns that are best looked at on a larger basis than municipality by municipality. Planning on a regional level can be very beneficial as it allows cities, villages, and townships to pool resources and tools that will in turn benefit the region as a whole. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's region is Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties.

SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) - “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users”. SAFETEA-LU is a bill that President George W. Bush signed into federal law on August 10, 2005. It authorizes the Federal Surface Transportation Programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period of 2005-2009. It is the successor of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which was enacted in 1998.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) - Council reporting to Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's governing body; identifies and responds to regional issues involving existing and future transportation systems, including roads, transit, airports, and rail. Recommends action on regional transportation plans and implementation through the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) - Adopted in 1998, TEA-21 further defined the public participation goal of ISTEA (*See Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991*), by requiring that Metropolitan Planning Organizations provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) - A four-year list, updated every two years or when needed, of regional transportation improvement projects designed to implement the goals and objectives of the Long Range Plan (LRP).

Transportation Study - The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission region contains two (2) transportation study areas:

- TwinCATS - St. Joseph/Benton Harbor (Twin Cities) Area Transportation Study
- NATS – Niles/Buchanan Area Transportation Study.

Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS) - St. Joseph/Benton Harbor (Twin Cities) urbanized area and transportation study area that is designated by the United States Census.

Under Represented Population - Low-income, elderly, minority populations that typically are not represented by the population of individuals at public meetings. They are not able to attend meetings for various reasons and therefore have little or no voice in the decision-making process. *See Environmental Justice.*

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) - A department in the United States government whose mission it is to serve the country by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system, while enhancing quality of life today and in the future.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) - A federal agency responsible for setting limits on how much of a pollutant can be present in the environment. Working with each state, the USEPA helps develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) outlining the strategy the state will follow to improve air quality.

Acronyms

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AASHTO – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

ADA – American with Disabilities Activities

ADT – Average Daily Traffic or Average Daily Trips

AMPO – Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

APA – American Planning Association

APTA – American Public Transportation Association

BMP – Best Management Practice

BMS – Bridge Management System

BTS - Bureau of Transportation Statistics

CAA – Clean Air Act

CAAA – Clean Air Act Amendments

CE – Categorical Exclusions

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CIP – Capital Improvement Program

CMAQ – Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

CMP – Congestion Mitigation Process

DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

DOT – Department of Transportation

EA – Environmental Assessment

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

EJ – Environment Justice

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FAA – Federal Aviation Administration

FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Study

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FONSI – Finding of No Significant Impact

FTA – Federal Transit Authority

FY – Fiscal Year

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

GPS – Global Positioning Systems

HOV – High-Occupancy Vehicle

HSR – High Speed Rail

I/M – Inspection and Maintenance

IHS – Interstate Highway System

IM – Interstate Maintenance

ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

ITS – Intelligent Transportation Systems

LOS – Level of Service (traffic flow rating)

LRT – Light Rail Transit

LRP – Long Range Plan or Long Range Transportation Plan

M & O – Management and Operations

MDOT – Michigan Department of Transportation

MIS – Major Investment Study

MOA – Memorandum of Agreement

MOU - Memorandum of Understanding

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

MSA – Michigan Statistical Area

MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan

NAA – Nonattainment Area

NAAQS – National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NATS – Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NHS – National Highways System

PE – Preliminary Engineering

PL – Planning Funds

RFP – Request for Proposals

ROD – Record of Decision

ROW – Right of Way

RR – Railroad

SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users

SIB – State Infrastructure Bank

SIP – State Implementation Plan

SOV – Single-Occupancy Vehicle

SPR – State Planning and Research Funds

STIP – State Transportation Improvement Plan

STP – Surface Transportation Program

STPP – Surface Transportation Policy Project

SWMPC – Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (formerly called SWMC)

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

TAZ – Traffic Analysis Zone

TCM – Transportation Control Measure

TDM – Transportation Demand Management

TDP – Transit Development Program

TEA-21 – Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

TIFIA – Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

TOD – Transit Oriented Development

TSM – Transportation System Management

TwinCATS – Twin City Area Transportation Study (St. Joseph and Benton Harbor)

UWP / UPWP – Unified Work Program / Unified Planning Work Program

VMT – Vehicle Miles Traveled

VOC – Volatile Organic Compound

VPD – Vehicles Per Day

More Information

For more transportation-related definitions and acronyms, visit the Bureau of Transportation Statistics Dictionary:

<http://www.bts.gov/dictionary/list.xml?letter=T>