



Glossary of Terms

Alignment – the route traveled by a transit line

Alternatives Analysis (AA) – a detailed study of all reasonable transportation alternatives within a corridor that address identified transportation problems. This process is required by the Federal Transit Administration for fixed guideway transit projects pursuing Federal funding.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) – an enhanced bus service designed to combine the flexibility of buses with the efficiency of rail. Key elements of a BRT system include dedicated bus lanes, off-board fare payment, real-time information, and modern stations.

Commuter Rail – local and regional passenger train service that connects a central center with outlying suburbs, towns, or satellite cities. Trains operate primarily during peak travel periods, such as the morning and evening commute times or rush hours. Trains are usually powered by diesel engines and can use freight rail tracks.

Corridor – a broad geographical study area for future transportation projects that follows a general route alignment such as a rail right-of-way or local roads and highways or local roads and highways. There are three study corridors for the Triangle Regional Transit Program Alternatives Analysis: the Wake County Corridor, the Durham/Orange County Corridor, and the Durham/Wake County Corridor.

Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) – a railroad passenger vehicle that is powered by a built-in diesel engine. DMUs can be operated in single cars or with any number of units coupled together.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – the agency of the United States Department of Transportation with jurisdiction over transit

Fixed Guideway Transit – a transit facility using and occupying a separate right-of-way or rail for the exclusive use of transit and other high-occupancy vehicles

Guideway – a separate right-of-way or rail for the exclusive use of transit

Light Rail (LRT) – a system of modern rail cars or a single rail car operating on a rail track in exclusive rights-of-way or in the street with mixed traffic, but in their own dedicated lane. Light rail cars are commonly powered by an overhead catenary and electric line, or by an on-board diesel or electric motor. Main features include rail vehicles, rail tracks, overhead electric lines, modern rail stations, signal priority at intersections, and integration with transit-oriented development strategies.





Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) - The mode, alignment, stations, and termini location selected for the development of a high capacity transit system by local jurisdictions. The LPA is the end result of the Alternatives Analysis process.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - long-range (20+year) vision, strategy, and capital improvement program that guides investment of public funds in transportation facilities. The plan is developed by an MPO and contains a financial plan. It is updated every five years and may be amended as a result of changes in available funding and findings from local studies.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - the agency designated by the governor to administer the federally required transportation planning process in a metropolitan area. An MPO must be in place in every urbanized area over with 50,000 or greater population.

No-Build Alternative - in the Alternatives Analysis process, the no build alternative assumes no change from the current system. It is required by the FTA to serve the baseline against which all other alternatives are compared.

Special Transit Advisory Commission (STAC) - a broad-based citizen group comprised of 38 members from across the Research Triangle Region. The STAC was appointed by the Capital Area MPO and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO to assist in the joint development of the 2008 Regional Transit Vision Plan and to craft recommendations for the transit component of their respective Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs).

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) - TSM represents the best that can be done for mobility with existing infrastructure - that is, without construction of a new or widened highway or without construction of a new transit guideway. Generally, the TSM alternative emphasizes upgrades in transit service through operational and small physical improvements plus selected highway upgrades through intersection improvements, traffic signal improvements, minor widening, and other focused traffic engineering actions.

Triangle Regional Transit Program (TRTP) - TRTP is a collaboration of the public, local municipalities, regional planning organizations, and state and federal agencies evaluating new and improved mass transit services for the region. It builds upon previous planning efforts and will develop an action plan for a significantly expanded regional bus network and regional rail transit system.

List of Acronyms

AA - Alternatives Analysis	LRT - Light Rail Transit
BRT - Bus Rapid Transit	LRTP - Long Range Transportation Plan
CAMPO - Capital Area MPO	MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization
DCHC MPO - Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO	STAC - Special Transit Advisory Commission
FTA - Federal Transit Administration	TRTP - Triangle Regional Transit Program
LPA - Locally Preferred Alternative	TTA - Triangle Transit Authority
	TSM - Transportation Systems Management

