

Appendix H: Definitions and Acronyms

Bus: Rubber-tired vehicles operating on roadways or on specially designated bus lanes or guideways. Buses are powered by diesel, gasoline, battery or alternative fuel engines contained within the vehicle.

Busway: A fixed guideway used by bus transit vehicles.

Commuter Rail: rail transit service that operates on a fixed guideway, completely separate from automobile traffic. Can operate on same tracks as freight rail service. Schedules and stations designed to serve commuters within a region.

Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Trains: Self-propelled, diesel-powered passenger rail cars which can be driven from either end, eliminating the need to turn the train around. DMUs are designed to allow rail cars to be quickly coupled or uncoupled, lengthening or shortening the train to accommodate passenger volumes.

Express service: Fixed route transit service with a limited number of stops on a route, usually at the beginning and end of the route. Usually designed to serve commuters traveling relatively long distances; can effectively link park and ride lots or transit hubs with major employment destinations.

Fixed Guideway: A transit corridor that physically defines the permanent path of transit vehicles with tracks, overhead power connections (catenary), or other physical guidance system. Can be at the same level as a roadway, elevated, or below grade. A fixed guideway is generally reserved exclusively for transit vehicles allowing them to operate freely, apart from auto and truck congestion; in some places trolleys and streetcars operate in mixed traffic. Because these major capital investments are fixed in place, fixed guideway transit systems focus growth around the stations and stops in the same way that roadways encourage development oriented to auto travel. Throughout the country, major fixed guideway investments induce transit oriented development that is denser, mixed-use and walkable, thereby enhancing ridership and generating considerable returns on the public investment.

Fixed Route: Transit service that follows a fixed timetable and serves a routine set of stops.

Flexible Route: Transit route that does not follow a set timetable or service a routine set of stops. Also called demand-responsive transit.

Full schedule service: Fixed route transit service that operates over the full day, plus weekends and evenings.

Grade separation: Paths, special lanes, freeways, or fixed guideways that are completely separated from regular roadways so as not to be delayed by cross-streets or roadway congestion (Victoria Transportation Institute).

Heavy Rail: High-speed, passenger rail cars operating singly or in trains of two or more cars on fixed rails in separate rights-of-way from which all other vehicular and foot traffic are excluded.

Interested Party: An individual, group, agency or other entity with an interest in the outcome of a transportation plan or project. Section 450.316 of the 2007 federal transportation legislation, called SAFETEA-LU, specifically notes that “citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties” should be provided with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the MPO planning processes. Interested parties are sometimes referred to as stakeholders.

Light Rail: Lightweight passenger rail cars operating on a fixed guideway that may not be fully separated from traffic, allowing for flexibility in locating LRT corridors along existing roadways or at intersections and crossings. Light rail vehicles are driven electrically with power being drawn from an overhead electric line.

Major Capital Investment in Transit: The cost and physical elements needed to bring a fixed guideway transit system or individual corridor into service. Includes the vehicles (trains and buses); land needed for corridor in which the transit vehicles operate; tracks, bridges, overpasses, and other structures; communications equipment, utilities, overhead electrical wires and power supply; stations, parking and access. Also includes planning, design, construction, and operational testing prior to beginning service.

Public Transit: a transportation system for moving passengers that is open to the public. Also referred to as public transportation.

Rush Hour Only Service: Fixed route transit service that operates during peak commuting hours, sometimes also includes midday service. In the Triangle region, the morning peak travel period is roughly 3 hours long, from 6 AM to 9 AM; our evening peak is roughly 4 hours long, from 3:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

Transit: Transportation service provided on multi-passenger vehicles such as trains, buses, vans, trolleys and streetcars.

List of Acronyms

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| BRT | Bus Rapid Transit. A bus-based transit system operating on a roadway or section of pavement reserved just for buses. |
| Capital Area MPO | Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization: Includes Wake County and portions of Granville, Franklin, Johnston, and Harnett Counties, and the municipalities therein. |
| CAT | Capital Area Transit: The local transit system agency serving Raleigh. |
| CHT | Chapel Hill Transit. The local transit system serving Chapel Hill, UNC-CH and Carrboro |
| CSX | CSX Railroad |
| C-Tran | Cary Transit. The local transit service serving Cary. |
| DATA | Durham Area Transit Authority. The local transit service serving Durham. |
| DCHC MPO | Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization. Includes Durham and Orange Counties, as well as a portion of Chatham County and the municipalities therein. |
| DMU | Diesel Multiple Unit. Self-propelled diesel-powered trains. |

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| Duke Transit | Duke University Transit Service |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement. A document developed through a cooperative process that identifies the impacts associated with the development of a project, and mitigation measures designed to address the impacts. Required under federal legislation for projects receiving federal funding. |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration |
| FRA | Federal Railroad Administration |
| FTA | Federal Transit Administration |
| HOT | High Occupancy Toll lanes |
| HOV | High Occupancy Vehicle. HOV lanes are those designed for buses and/or vehicles with 2 (or 3) or more passengers |
| ITRE | Institute For Transportation Research and Education |
| LRT | Light Rail Transit. An urban railway system characterized by its ability to operate single cars or short trains in streets or exclusive (reserved just for rail vehicles) right-of-way, capable of discharging passengers at track or car floor level. |
| LRTP | Long Range Transportation Plan. The official plan of a Metropolitan Planning Organization identifying new highway, transit, pedestrian/bicycle and other transportation investments planned for a period of at least 20 years. A project must be in an LRTP found to conform to air quality standards before it can be built. |
| MPO | Metropolitan Planning Organization; an organization made up of representatives from local government, transit providers and NCDOT, who are collectively responsible for regional transportation planning. |
| NCDOT | NC Department of Transportation. State agency responsible for transportation facilities and services. |
| NCRR | North Carolina Railroad Company |
| Wolfline | North Carolina State University transit service |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act. Triggered when projects require federal funding and/or permits. |
| NS | Norfolk Southern Railroad |
| RDU | Raleigh-Durham International Airport |
| ROW | Right of way. A corridor dedicated to a specific use such as rail, highways, utilities, etc. |
| RTA | Regional Transportation Alliance |
| RTP | Research Triangle Park |

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| SAFETEA-LU | Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Congress establishes the legal authority to commence and continue FTA programs through authorizing legislation covering several years. This legislation reauthorized surface transportation programs through fiscal year 2009. |
| TAZ | Traffic Analysis Zone(s) |
| TJCOG | Triangle J Council of Governments, the advisory planning group for the Research Triangle Region made up of elected officials from Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange and Wake Counties. |
| TAC | Transportation Advisory Committee. The policy board for an MPO. |
| TTA | Triangle Transit Authority. The regional public transit agency that provides regional bus and other commuter resources in Durham, Orange, and Wake Counties. Recently changed name to Triangle Transit. |
| VMT | Vehicle Miles Traveled |