

## TRANSIT GLOSSARY

**Alternatives Analysis (AA)** — An analysis of the engineering and financial feasibility of alternatives under consideration for a rail extension or other major transit construction project; required before federal monies can be allocated to a project.

**Activity Center** — An area with high population and concentrated activities which generate a large number of trips (e.g., CBD, shopping centers, business or industrial parks, recreational facilities (also known as trip generator)).

**Alignment** — The horizontal and vertical ground plan of a roadway, railroad, transit route or other facility.

**At Grade** — The location of a structure or transit guideway at the same level as the ground surface.

**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.

**Bus** — A rubber-tired, self-propelled, manually-steered vehicle with fuel supply carried on board the vehicle. Types include advanced design, articulated, charter, circulator, double deck, express, feeder, intercity, medium-size, new look, sightseeing, small, standard-size, subscription, suburban, transit and van.

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** — Buses operating in designated roadway lanes or on an exclusive facility to provide a transit service with higher capacity and more reliability than typical bus transit. BRT generally operates stops with fewer stops than local routes, typically using unique shelter or station designs to differentiate the service. Often, a single bus can serve a local suburban route and then use the BRT facility for express service to downtown.

**Bus Rapid Transit “Lite” (BRT Lite)** — Bus rapid transit service in mixed traffic lanes, using traffic signal priority, bypass lanes and other means to reduce vehicle delays and improve service quality.

**Busway** — A special roadway designed for exclusive use by buses. It may be constructed at, above, or below grade and may be located in separate rights-of-way or within highway corridors.

**Capital Costs** — Costs of long-term assets of a public transit system such as property, buildings, vehicles, etc.

**Central Indiana Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA)** — A regional authority created in 2004 to develop a comprehensive system of transportation alternatives for Central Indiana residents.

**Commuter Rail** — Local and regional passenger train service between a central city, its suburbs and/or another central city, operating primarily during commutes hours. Traditional commuter rail operates with a diesel or diesel-electric locomotive and passenger cars. Average trip lengths are usually longer than for light rail or rapid rail transit. Operations may be carried out over tracks that are part of a freight railroad system.

**Corridor** — A broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow or connects major sources of trips. It may contain a number of streets and highways and many transit lines and routes.

**Demand-response Transit (Paratransit, “Dial A Ride”)** — A transit service that does not have fixed routes or schedules. Service is provided door-to-door on an as-needed basis. This service can be

provided using buses, but often uses smaller vehicles such as vans. Demand-response service is commonly used to serve elderly and disabled populations, as well as rural areas.

**Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU)** — A self-propelled rail transit vehicle for use on non-electrified track. DMUs are lighter than locomotive-hauled cars and allow more flexibility in service operation, capable of providing the frequent service of light rail or the longer, less frequent service of commuter rail. DMU's that operate on freight lines must be Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) compliant for crash-worthiness.

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)** — A detailed study of the environmental impacts of a proposed capital improvement, including impacts to the human and natural environments. A DEIS must consider all reasonable alternatives for a project, including a “no build” alternative. During the preparation of the DEIS, there are opportunities for public input. Following the conclusion of a DEIS, one alternative is selected for advancement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Assessment (EA)** — A detailed study of the environmental impacts of a proposed capital improvement. An EIS or EA is required by the National Environmental Policy Act for all projects receiving federal funding.

**Express Bus Service** — Service operated non-stop over a portion of an arterial in conjunction with other local services. The need for such service arises where passenger demand between points on a corridor is high enough to separate demand and support dedicated express trips.

**Exclusive Right-of-Way** — A right-of-way that is fully grade separated or access controlled and is used exclusively by transit.

**Farebox Recovery Ratio** — A measure of the proportion of transit operating expenses covered by passenger fares. It is calculated by dividing a transit operator's fare box revenue by its total operating expenses.

**Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** — A part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) which administers the federal program of financial assistance to public transit.

**Feeder Service** — Service that picks up and delivers passengers to a regional mode at a rail station, express bus stop, transit center, terminal, Park-and-Ride, or other transfer facility.

**Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)** — The FEIS documents the environmental impacts of the alternatives studied in the DEIS and addresses the comments submitted by agencies and the public in the DEIS phase. Following the completion of the FEIS, a Record of Decision (ROD) is issued, and the environmental study process is complete.

**Fixed-Guideway System** — A system of vehicles that can operate only on its own guideway constructed for that purpose (e.g., rapid rail, light rail). Federal usage in funding legislation also includes exclusive right-of-way bus operations, trolley buses, and ferryboats as “fixed-guideway” transit.

**Fixed Route** — Transit service provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route, with vehicles stopping to pick up passengers at and deliver passengers to specific locations.

**Frequency** — The amount of time scheduled between consecutive buses or trains on a given route segment; in other words, how often the bus or train comes (also known as Headway).

**Headway** — The scheduled time interval between any two revenue vehicles operating in the same direction on a route.

**Heavy Rail Transit (Rapid Transit)** — High capacity rail transit powered through electrified third rail. Heavy rail systems are always on exclusive right-of-way, and are grade separated from conflicting uses (streets and pedestrians). Their high-frequency service is well-suited to dense urban environments. Subways and elevated rail lines, such as those in New York and Chicago, fall in this category.

**High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)** — Vehicles that can carry more than two persons. Examples of high occupancy vehicles are a bus, vanpool and carpool.

**Hoosier Heritage Port Authority (HHPA)** — The public agency, established by Hamilton County, the City of Noblesville, and the Town of Fishers, to oversee the operations of the old Nickel Plate rail line between Indianapolis and Tipton.

**Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (IPTC)** — Also known as IndyGo.

**Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council (IRTC)** — Policy and technical committee of the Indianapolis MPO.

**IndyGo** — Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation providing local bus and paratransit service throughout Marion County. Except for limited express bus service to selected suburban locations (financed with federal funds), all IndyGo service is limited to Marion County since the service is funded by local property tax.

**Intercity Rail** — A long distance passenger rail transportation system between at least two central cities that, in California, traditionally has been provided by AMTRAK either directly or through a local Joint Powers Authority.

**Intermodal** — Switching from one form of transportation to another.

**Intermodal Facility** — A building or site specifically designed to accommodate the meeting of two or more transit modes of travel.

**Kiss and Ride** — A place where commuters are driven and left at a station to board a public transportation vehicle.

**Light Rail Transit (LRT)** — Rail transit systems providing frequent service with smaller, lighter vehicles than heavy rail systems. Typically, power is provided by an overhead wire similar to early trolley systems. LRT can operate in mixed traffic on city streets, or along an exclusive right-of-way. Service is provided for short or medium-length trips, with stops located as close as every half-mile to one mile. “Diesel light rail” is a self-propelled rail car capable of providing similar service without the overhead wire (see Diesel Multiple Unit).

**Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)** — A preferred alternative for fixed-guideway transit improvements, selected at the end of the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process. The selection of an LPA represents the most reasonable concept to move forward into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

**Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)** — The area over which the MPO has planning jurisdiction. In Indianapolis, this area includes Marion County and parts of Hamilton, Hancock, Shelby, Johnson, Morgan, Hendricks, and Boone counties.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** — The agency designated by the Governor to provide transportation planning services in the Indianapolis MPA.

**Minibus** — A rubber-tired road vehicle designed to carry a small number of passengers (i.e., 12 or less), commonly operated on streets and highways for public transportation service.

**Mode** — A particular form of travel (e.g., bus commuter tail, train, bicycle, walking or automobile).

**Mode Split** — The proportion of people that use each of the various modes of transportation. Also describes the process of allocating the proportion of people using modes. Frequently used to describe the percentage of people using private automobiles as opposed to the percentage using public transportation.

**New Starts** — Federal funding granted under Section 5309 (B) of the United States Code. These discretionary funds are administered by the FTA for the construction of new fixed guideway systems or extensions of existing fixed guideway systems.

**Off-Peak** — Non-rush periods of the day when travel activity is generally lower and less transit service is scheduled.

**Operating Cost** — The total costs to operate and maintain a transit system including labor, fuel, maintenance, wages and salaries, employee benefits, taxes, etc.

**Origin-Destination Study** — A study of the origins and destinations of trips made by vehicles or passengers.

**Paratransit** — See Demand-response Transit

**Park-and-Ride** — A parking area for automobile drivers who then board vehicles, shuttles or carpools from these locations.

**Peak Hour/Peak Period** — The period with the highest ridership during the entire service day, generally referring to either the peak hour or peak several hours (peak period).

**Reverse Commute** — Movement in a direction opposite to the main flow of travel, such as from the Central City to a suburb during the morning commute hour.

**Ridesharing** — A form of transportation, other than public transit, in which more than one person shares in the use of the vehicle, such as a van or car, to make a trip.

**Right-of-Way (ROW, R/W)** — The land over which a public road or rail line is built. An exclusive right-of-way is a road, lane, or other right-of-way designated exclusively for a specific purpose or for a particular group of users, such as light rail vehicles or buses.

**Rolling Stock** — The vehicles used in a transit system, including buses and rail cars.

**Route Miles** — The total number of miles included in a fixed route transit system network.

**Service Area** — A geographic area which is provided with transit services. Service area is now defined consistent with ADA requirements.

**Streetcar** — See Trolley.

**Timed Transfer** — A point or location where two or more routes come together at the same time to provide positive transfer connections. A short layover may be provided at the timed transfer point to

enhance the connection. Timed transfers have had increasing application as service frequencies have been reduced below 15 to 20 minutes and hub-and-spoke network deployment has grown.

**Transfer** — A slip of paper issued to a passenger that gives him or her the right to change from one transit vehicle to another according to specified limitations.

**Transit Center** — A fixed location where passengers transfer from one route to another.

**Transit Dependent** — Someone who must use public transportation for his/her travel.

**Trolley (Streetcar)** — An electric railway powered through an overhead wire. Streetcars are generally smaller than LRT vehicles and operate in a way that is more similar to local bus service. Streetcars are usually used to provide short-distance service, and stops are generally only a few blocks apart. Streetcars operate entirely within streets, rather than on exclusive rights-of-way

**Trolley (Streetcar)** — A rubber-tired vehicle powered through an overhead wire. Also called a trackless trolley.

**Unlinked Trip** — A trip taken by an individual on one specific mode. A linked trip may involve two or more unlinked trips.

**Vehicle Miles** — The number of miles traveled by a vehicle, and are usually calculated by mode.

**Wheelchair Lift** — A device used to raise and lower a platform in a transit vehicle for accessibility by handicapped individuals.

**Yard** — An area in a system used for maintenance, storing or holding trains.

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Source: Portions adapted from Sacramento Regional Transit District