

Light Rail - A streetcar-type vehicle operated on city streets, semi-exclusive rights-of-way, or exclusive rights-of-way. Service may be provided by step-entry vehicles or by level boarding.

MTA Mobility/Paratransit – A service operated by the Maryland Transit Administration for citizens who are unable to use Local Bus, Metro/Subway or Light Rail service. Service is provided within three-quarters (3/4) of a mile of any MTA fixed-route service in Baltimore City, Baltimore County or Anne Arundel County. mta.maryland.gov/mobility

Rapid Transit - Rail or motorbus transit service operating completely separate from all modes of transportation on an exclusive right-of-way.

Ridesharing

A form of transportation, other than public transit, in which more than one person shares the use of the vehicle, such as a van or car, to make a trip. Also known as "carpooling," "bus-pooling" or "vanpooling." *Visit metrorideshare.com for local Rideshare program information*

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

One of the key funding programs in the federal transportation bill. STP moneys are "flexible," meaning they can be spent on mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as on roads and highways.

Sustainability

The traditional definition of sustainability calls for policies and strategies that meet society's present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. *Source: US Environmental Protection Agency*

Technical Committee (TC)

A subcommittee of the BRTB, The TC makes recommendations to the BRTB based on technical sufficiency, accuracy and completeness of all plans and programs. This input enables the Board to have a technical viewpoint prior to making decisions.

Telecommuting/Teleworking

Refers to employees who work at an alternate site, such as at home, usually one or more days per week, thereby reducing their commutes. *www.TeleworkBaltimore.com*

Title VI

Refers to Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, and requires that transportation planning and programming be nondiscriminatory on the basis of race, color and national origin. Integral to Title VI is the concept of environmental justice.

Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)

Basic unit of geography used to predict travel behavior in the travel demand model. Constructed using census block information.

Traffic Count

A record of the number of vehicles, people aboard vehicles (occupancy) or both that pass a given checkpoint during a given time period.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

A type of development that links land use and transit facilities to support the transit system and help reduce sprawl, traffic congestion and air pollution. It includes housing, along with complementary public uses (jobs, retail and services), located at a strategic point along a regional transit system, such as a rail hub.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Programs designed to reduce demand by automobiles on the transportation system. Examples are the promotion and use of transit, alternative work hours, ridesharing, etc. Land-use planning also plays a role in providing alternate travel options.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A short-term (covering four years) program of transportation projects that will use federal funds expected to flow to the region; the projects contained in the TIP are drawn from, and are consistent with, the long-range transportation plan.

Travel Demand Model

Used by transportation planners for simulating current travel conditions and for forecasting future travel patterns and conditions. Models help planners and policy-makers analyze the effectiveness and efficiency of alternative transportation investments in terms of mobility, accessibility, environmental and equity impacts.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

A work program and budget that lists the transportation studies and tasks to be performed by BMC staff or one of the BRTB members. The work program, which is developed annually, begins in July of a given year and ends the following June.

United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT)

The federal cabinet-level agency with responsibility for highways, maritime, motor carrier safety, railroad, transit, aviation and ports; it is headed by the Secretary of Transportation. The DOT includes the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, among others.

Urbanized Area

Area that contains a city of 50,000 or more population plus incorporated surrounding areas meeting size or density criteria as defined by the U.S. Census.

Value Pricing

The concept of assessing higher prices for using certain transportation facilities during the most congested times of the day, in the same way that airlines offer off-peak discounts and hotel rooms cost more during prime tourist seasons. Also known as congestion pricing and peak-period pricing, examples of this concept include higher bridge tolls during peak periods or charging single-occupant vehicles that want to use carpool lanes.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

One vehicle (whether a car carrying one passenger or a bus carrying 30 people) traveling one mile constitutes a vehicle mile. This number is used in transportation models because reducing VMT can help ease traffic congestion and improve air quality.

Walkable

Refers to a single route, or a system of routes, between points that is relatively short, barrier-free, interesting, safe, well-lighted and comfortable, inviting pedestrian travel. Walkable Communities are areas that incorporate these kinds of principles.

QUICKLIST

Here are a few commonly used phrases and acronyms:

BMC – Baltimore Metropolitan Council
BPAG – Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Group
BRAC – Base Realignment and Closure
BRTB – Baltimore Regional Transportation Board
CFG – Cooperative Forecasting Group
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
FMTF – Freight Movement Task Force
ICG – Interagency Consultation Group
LRTP – Long-range Transportation Plan
MDE – Maryland Department of the Environment
MDOT – Maryland Department of Transportation
MDP – Maryland Department of Planning
MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTA – Maryland Transit Administration
PAC – Public Advisory Committee
SHA – State Highway Administration
TC – Technical Committee
TIP – Transportation Improvement Program
UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program

Questions?

If you have any comments about this glossary or just can't find the word you are looking for, please contact the Public Involvement Coordinator at 410-732-0500 x1047 or comments@baltometro.org.



Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms & Terms

The transportation arena has a language all its own. Navigating your way through the complex web of transportation terminology can be a challenge. So, we've put together this list of acronyms and commonly used words.

www.baltometro.org/get-involved/glossary-of-acronyms

Accessibility

The extent to which facilities are barrier free and useable by persons with disabilities, including wheelchair users. Examples of facilities are sidewalks, buses, trains, etc.

Activity Center

Locations where there are a concentration of residences, business, commercial and other uses that draw a large number of people on a daily basis.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

Federal civil rights legislation for disabled persons passed in 1990; calls on public transit systems to make their services more fully accessible as well as to underwrite a parallel network of paratransit service.

Alternative Fuel Vehicles

Low-polluting fuels instead of high-sulfur diesel or gasoline. Examples include methanol, ethanol, propane or compressed natural gas (CNG), liquid natural gas (LNG), low-sulfur or "clean" diesel and electricity.

Annual Element

Transportation projects, included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), that are proposed for funding in the coming year. The annual element, as part of a four-year TIP is submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) as part of the required planning process.

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)

A system that senses, at intervals, the location of vehicles such as buses or subways. These vehicles are equipped with special electronic equipment that communicates a signal back to a central control facility.

Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)

The organization of the Baltimore region's elected executives, representing Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties. The goal of the organization is to improve the quality of life and economic vitality in the Baltimore region. Areas of activity include: Air and Water Quality Programs, Building Permits Data System, Computer Mapping Applications; Cooperative Purchasing; Economic and Demographic Research; Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety; Rideshare Coordination; and Transportation Planning. BMC provides technical and staff support to the BRTB.

Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB)

The mission of the BRTB is to provide regional transportation planning and policy making for the Baltimore region. The BRTB is the federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the Baltimore region. As an MPO, the BRTB is directly responsible for making sure that any federal money spent on existing and future surface transportation projects and programs is based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. The BRTB convenes a number of committees and advisory groups that focus on specific technical and policy areas, such as freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian access, traffic incident management, air quality. All meetings of the BRTB and subcommittees are open to the public.

BRTB Empowered Representative – Each BRTB member designates an individual empowered with the rights and responsibilities to act in place of the BRTB member.

[Base Realignment and Closure \(BRAC\)](#)

The congressionally authorized process the Department of Defense uses to reorganize its base structure to more efficiently and effectively support our forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business. The most recent base realignment was enacted as federal law in November 2005 as is known as BRAC 2005. *www.brac.maryland.gov*

[Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Group \(BPAG\)](#)

A subcommittee of the BRTB that focuses on tasks such as (1) Developing and implementing the regional bicycle and pedestrian plan; (2) Promoting biking and walking in the region through events such as Bike-to-Work Day and Safe Routes to Schools.

[Capital Funds](#)

Moneys to cover one-time costs for construction of new projects — such as roads, bridges, bicycle/pedestrian paths, transit lines and transit facilities — to expand the capacity of the transportation system, or to cover the purchase of buses and rail cars.

[Central Business District \(CBD\)](#)

The downtown retail trade and commercial area of a city or an area of very high land valuation, traffic flow, and concentration of retail business offices, theaters, hotels and services.

[Census Data](#)

Required by the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Census is a complete listing of the population conducted every 10 years by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Bureau also conducts a yearly American Community Survey (ACS) about America's changing population, housing and workforce. Census Bureau data is used by local officials, transportation planners and community leaders to make projections about future travel patterns, housing needs, etc. *census.gov*

[Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program \(CMAQ\)](#)

A federal source of funding for projects and activities that reduce congestion and improve air quality, both in regions not yet attaining federal air quality standards and those engaged in efforts to preserve their attainment status.

[Conformity](#)

A process in which emissions generated by projects in transportation plans are reviewed to ensure they are consistent with federal clean air requirements; transportation projects collectively must not worsen air quality.

[Cooperative Forecasting Group \(CFG\)](#)

A subcommittee of the BRTB. The mission of the CFG is to collaboratively develop socio-economic projections (population, households, employment, and labor force) for the Baltimore region. The BRTB endorses these projections each year for use in travel demand modeling and testing for air quality conformity purposes.

[Environmental Justice](#)

This term stems from a Presidential Executive Order to promote equity for disadvantaged communities and promote the inclusion of racial and ethnic populations as well as low-income communities in decision-making. Transportation agencies must ensure that services and benefits, as well as burdens, are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination.

[Equity Analysis](#)

Consistent with federal requirements for environmental justice, the BRTB conducts an equity analysis covering the 20-year regional transportation plan to determine how the benefits and burdens of the plan's investment strategy affect minority and low-income communities.

[Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#)

U.S. Department of Transportation agency responsible for administering the federal highway aid program to individual states, and helping to plan, develop and coordinate construction of federally funded highway projects. FHWA also governs the safety of hazardous cargo on the nation's highways.

[Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\)](#)

U.S. Department of Transportation agency that provides financial and planning assistance to help plan, build and operate rail, bus and paratransit systems.

[Financial Constraint](#)

A federal requirement that long-range transportation plans include only projects that have a reasonable expectation of being funded, based upon anticipated revenues. In other words, long-range transportation plans cannot be wish lists of projects. They must reflect realistic assumptions about revenues that will likely be available during the 20+ years covered in the plan.

[Fiscal Year \(FY\)](#)

An annual schedule for keeping financial records and for budgeting transportation funds. Maryland's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30, while the federal fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30.

[Flexible Funding](#)

Unlike funding that flows only to highways or only to transit by a rigid formula, this is money that can be invested in a range of transportation projects. Examples of flexible funding categories include the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program.

[Freight Movement Task Force](#)

A subcommittee of the BRTB that provides the freight community a voice in the regional transportation planning process. The FMTF is a forum for Baltimore region freight stakeholders to share information and discuss motor truck, rail, air, and waterway concerns.

[Geographic Information System \(GIS\)](#)

A system of computer hardware, software and data for collecting, storing, analyzing and issuing information about areas of the earth. GIS can display attributes and analyze results electronically on a map. For example, BMC uses GIS to create maps that show topics such as congestion, minority populations in relation to transportation projects, growth patterns, etc.

[Global Positioning System \(GPS\)](#)

A system that uses satellite signals to track the location or position of vehicles or vessels on earth. In the Baltimore region, BMC uses GPS in cars to track and monitor traffic congestion on area highways.

[Interagency Consultation Group \(ICG\)](#)

A subcommittee of the BRTB that focuses on coordination of the transportation air quality conformity process. This group works to promote coordination among the transportation and air quality agencies for the region.

[Intermodal or Multi-Modal](#)

The term "mode" is used to refer to a means of transportation, such as automobile, bus, train, ship, bicycle and walking. Intermodal refers specifically to the connections between various types of transportation or services and multi-modal refers to use of several modes.

[Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\)](#)

A broad range of diverse technologies such as information processing, communications, control, and electronics which can help transportation systems in many ways, including congestion management.

[Land Use](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines land use planning as the degree to which land reflects human activities (like agriculture, residential and industrial uses) and describes land use and management practices by people.

[Level of Service \(LOS\)](#)

Report card that rates traffic flow from A (excellent) through F (failing), and compares actual or projected traffic volume with the maximum capacity of an intersection or road in question.

[Long Range Transportation Plan \(LRTP\)](#)

The statement of the ways the region plans to invest in the transportation system over the next twenty years. The 2015 LRTP is called *Maximize2040*. *www.maximize2040.com*

[Metropolitan Planning Organization \(MPO\)](#)

A federally required body responsible for the transportation planning and project selection in its region; the governor designates an MPO in every urbanized area with a population of over 50,000. The BRTB is the Baltimore region's designated MPO.

[Maglev](#)

Magnetic levitation: A rail transportation system with exclusive right-of-way which is propelled along a fixed guideway by the use of magnets on the rails and under the rail cars. Service between Baltimore and Washington have been studied.

See <http://www.bwmaglev.com/> for more information.

[Mixed Use](#)

In land-use and transportation planning, generally refers to different compatible land uses located within a single structure or in close proximity to each other. An example is buildings that host stores on the bottom level and offices or residences above it.

[Mobility](#)

The ability to move or be moved from place to place. *Source: FHWA Planning Glossary*

[Mode](#)

The types of transportation available for use, such as rail, bus, personal vehicle or bicycle. Also includes air and water travel.

Planners may also refer to "the modes" when speaking of an agency who provides the service such as the Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland Port Administration, etc.

[Nonattainment Area](#)

Any geographic region of the United States that the EPA has designated as not attaining the federal air quality standards for one or more air pollutants, such as ozone and carbon monoxide.

[Ozone](#)

Ground-level ozone is an air pollutant that causes human health problems, and damages crops and other vegetation. It is a key ingredient of urban smog. The Baltimore region is a nonattainment area for Ozone.

[Particulate Matter](#)

Also known as particle pollution or PM, is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets found in the air. By themselves, these particles and droplets are invisible to the naked eye. But together, they can appear as clouds or a fog-like haze. PM is a serious health concern. Because of their small size, they can get into sensitive areas of the lungs and heart, causing major problems.

[Paratransit](#)

Door-to-door bus, van and taxi services used to transport elderly and disabled riders. Paratransit is sometimes referred to as dial-a-ride service, since trips are made according to demand instead of along a fixed route or according to a fixed schedule.

[Pedestrian-Oriented Development](#)

Development that is designed with an emphasis primarily on the streets, sidewalks, and on pedestrian access to the site and building(s), rather than emphasizing personal-vehicle access and parking. Buildings generally are placed close to the street and the main entrance is oriented to the street's sidewalk. Although parking areas may be provided, they are generally limited in size and are located at the side or rear of the buildings. This type of development also is characterized by the mix of uses within walking distance, allowing people to move easily among many destinations.

[Performance Measures](#)

Indicators of how well the transportation system or specific transportation projects will improve transportation conditions.

[Public Advisory Committee \(PAC\)](#)

A subcommittee of the BRTB made up of individuals and representatives of community organizations and industry professionals. Members are approved by the BRTB to (1) Provide independent, region-oriented advice on issues related to key regional transportation planning activities; (2) Promote public awareness and participation in the regional transportation planning process; and (3) Promote equity in the regional transportation planning process.

[Public Transportation](#)

Transportation by bus, rail, or other conveyance, either publicly or privately owned, which provides to the public general or special service on a regular and continuing basis. Also known as "mass transportation", "mass transit" and "transit."

Source for transit definitions: FHWA Planning Glossary

Bus - Large motor vehicle used to carry more than 10 passengers, including school buses, intercity buses, and transit buses.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - Bus service that is, at a minimum, faster than traditional local bus service and, at a maximum, includes dedicated lanes just for BRT operations. To reduce travel time and to provide faster service, BRT may incorporate ITS technologies that provide off vehicle payment, rapid boarding, and/or route divergences.

Circulator Bus - A bus serving an area confined to a specific locale, such as a downtown area or suburban neighborhood with connections to major traffic corridors.

Commercial Bus - Any bus used to carry passengers at rates specified in tariffs; charges may be computed per passenger (as in regular route service) or per vehicle (as in charter service).

Commuter Rail - Urban passenger train service for short-distance travel between a central city and adjacent suburb. Does not include rapid rail transit or light rail service.

Demand Response Vehicle - A nonfixed-route, nonfixed-schedule vehicle that operates in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator or dispatcher.

Feeder Bus - A bus service that picks up and delivers passengers to a rail rapid transit station or express bus stop or terminal.

Heavy Rail - An electric railway with the capacity to transport a heavy volume of passenger traffic and characterized by exclusive rights-of-way, multicar trains, high speed, rapid acceleration, sophisticated signaling, and high-platform loading. Also known as: Subway, Elevated (railway), or Metropolitan railway (metro).