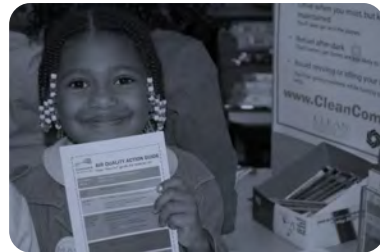




# Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms and Terms



UPDATED

**September 2022**

# Contents

Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms and Terms ..... 1

    Introduction.....3

    A.....3

    B.....4

    C.....5

    E.....7

    F.....8

    G.....9

    H.....9

    I.....10

    L.....10

    M.....11

    N.....12

    O.....12

    P.....12

    R.....14

    S.....15

    T.....16

    U.....18

    V.....19

    W.....19

    QUICKLIST.....20

p

# Introduction

---

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.

## A

---

### 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.

### Asset Management

A strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving physical assets, with a focus on both engineering and economic analysis based upon quality information, to identify a structured sequence of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement actions that will achieve and sustain a desired state of good repair over the lifecycle of the assets at minimum practicable cost. Applies to roadways and transit.

## B

### Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)

The organization of the Baltimore region's elected executives, representing Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard and Queen Anne's 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.

### **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.

### **Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC)**

BMC works with its member jurisdictions and the State of Maryland to leverage their collective government buying power. Savings are realized through purchasing in quantity and consolidating the administrative costs associated with procurement.

This work is accomplished through the Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (BRCPC), related BRCPC subcommittees like the Energy Board, as well as a variety of strategic partnerships with other councils of government.

## **C**

### **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.

### Census Data

The U.S. Census is a complete listing of the population conducted every 10 years by the 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](https://www.census.gov)

### Conformity

A Clean Air Act requirement that ensures that Federal funding and approval are given to long-range transportation plans and short-term programs in nonattainment and maintenance areas for the transportation-related pollutants that are consistent with the air quality goals established by a State Implementation Plan (SIP). Conformity, in the context of the SIP, refers to transportation activities that will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards or any interim milestone.

### Congestion Management Process

A systematic approach required in transportation management areas that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for certain funding through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.

### 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.

### Cooperative Forecasting Group (CFG)

A subcommittee of the BRTB, whose mission 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.

# E

---

## Environmental Justice

Environmental justice assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination (See also Title VI). Executive Order 12898 instructs any agency receiving federal funding to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income population.

## Equity

The federal government, through Executive Order 13985, defines “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

## 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.

# F

---

### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mission is helping people before, during and after disasters. BMC staff work with stakeholders from member jurisdictions to support regional emergency preparedness programs coordinated through the Baltimore Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and by the Baltimore Urban Area Homeland Security Work Group (UAWG).

### 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 October 1 through September 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.

## G

---

### 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 vehicles to track and monitor traffic congestion on area highways.

## H

---

### Highway Safety Improvement Program

Federal-aid highway funding program that funds safety projects that are consistent with the State's strategic highway safety plan and that correct or improve a hazardous road location or feature or address a highway safety problem.

**I****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.

**Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58, is also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” or BIL) and provides approximately \$350 billion for Federal highway programs over a five-year period (fiscal years 2022 through 2026).

**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.

**L****Land Use**

Refers to the manner in which portions of land or the structures on them are used or designated for use in a plan (e.g., commercial, residential, retail, or industrial).

### 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)

A document resulting from regional collaboration and consensus on a region's transportation system, and serving as the defining vision for the region's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, this is the official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that is developed, adopted, and updated by the MPO through the metropolitan transportation planning process.

## M

### Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The policy board of an organization created and designed to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process for urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000, and designated by local officials and the Governor of the State. The BRTB is the Baltimore region's MPO.

### 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.

# N

---

## Nonattainment Area

A geographic region of the U.S. that has been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a nonattainment area under section 107 of the Clean Air Act for any pollutants for which a National Ambient Air Quality Standard exists, meaning that Federal air quality standards are not being met.

# O

---

## 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

# P

---

## 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.

## Performance Measures

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

### Public Participation

A process that consists of a series of activities and actions conducted by a sponsoring agency or other entity to both inform the public and obtain input from them. Public participation affords stakeholders the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. Other terms for public participation include public involvement and public engagement. (Source [EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov))

### Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) serves as a guide for residents in the Baltimore region to navigate the regional transportation planning process. It also outlines the policies and procedures that the BRTB and staff follow while educating and engaging the public. The PPP is an official document that outlines the process that the BRTB follows to fulfill federal, state, local, and/or internal requirements for involving the public in decision making. Lastly, the Public Participation Plan includes a toolkit of public engagement practices and an evaluation 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: *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).

**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](https://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.

## R

---

### **Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP)**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded funding to the Baltimore region to conduct emergency housing and shelter planning through the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP). Through a partnership between the City of Baltimore and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), the grant funds regional housing and shelter planning at BMC in collaboration with a committee of local emergency management agencies in the Baltimore region known as the Baltimore Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). The project is producing individually tailored plans

for each jurisdiction as well as one regional plan; and supporting training and exercises for emergency management personnel.

### Regional Councils of Government

Regional councils of government (COG) are multipurpose, multijurisdictional, public organizations. Created by local governments regional councils bring together participants to foster regional cooperation, planning and service delivery. They may not include the structure and functions of MPOs. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council is a COG.

### 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 [baltometro.org](http://baltometro.org) for local Rideshare program information.

## S

---

### Stakeholders

Individuals and organizations involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. Stakeholders include Federal, State, and local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, users of the transportation infrastructure, and the general public.

### 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.

# T

---

### 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. See [baltometro.org](http://baltometro.org) for more information on teleworking and how to set up a program in your company or organization.

### Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any program receiving Federal assistance (See Environmental Justice; Equity).

### 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 Equity

Equity in transportation seeks fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members. A central goal of transportation is to facilitate social and economic opportunities by providing equitable levels of access to affordable and reliable transportation options based on the needs of the populations being served, particularly populations that are traditionally underserved. (Source [USDOT](#)) See also Title VI; Environmental Justice

### 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.

### Transportation Systems Management and Operations

An integrated program to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through the implementation of systems, services, and projects designed to preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability. The term includes improvements to the transportation system such as traffic detection and surveillance, arterial management, freeway management, demand management, work zone management, emergency management, electronic toll collection, automated enforcement, traffic incident management, roadway weather management, traveler information services, commercial vehicle operations, traffic control, freight management, and coordination of highway, rail, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian operations.

### 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.

# U

---

## Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

A statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area. At a minimum, a UPWP includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the sources of funds.

## 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.

## Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)

A committee of local emergency management agencies in the Baltimore region. Since 2003, the Baltimore region has received more than \$100 million in federal U.S. Department of Homeland Security funds through the Baltimore Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program. These funds have been used by the Baltimore Urban Area Homeland Security Work Group (UAWG) and its subcommittees to strengthen homeland security and emergency preparedness planning, organizing, training, exercising, and equipping of local jurisdictions.

## Urbanized Area

A geographic 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.

# V

---

## 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.

## Visualization Techniques

Methods used to convey information in a clear and easily accessible format to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs. Such techniques can include GIS- or web-based surveys, inventories, maps, pictures, and/or displays identifying features such as roadway rights of way, transit, intermodal, and non-motorized transportation facilities, historic and cultural resources, natural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas.

# W

---

## 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
- BRTB** – Baltimore Regional Transportation Board
- CFG** – Cooperative Forecasting Group
- EPA** – Environmental Protection Agency
- FMTF** – Freight Movement Task Force
- ICG** – Interagency Consultation Group
- L RTP** – Long-range Transportation Plan
- MDE** – Maryland Department of the Environment
- MDOT** – Maryland Department of Transportation
- MDP** – Maryland Department of Planning
- MPO** – Metropolitan Planning Organization
- MDOT MTA** – Maryland Transit Administration
- MDOT SHA** – State Highway Administration
- TC** – Technical Committee
- TIP** – Transportation Improvement Program
- UPWP** – Unified Planning Work Program

