

## Appendix D. GLOSSARY

### GLOSSARY TO TRANSPORTATION TERMS AND ACRONYMS

**AASHTO—American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials:** An interest group based in Washington, D.C. Involved in research, advocacy and technical assistance.

**ABAG Association of Bay Area Governments:** A voluntary association of counties and cities that is the general planning agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Also provides demographic, financial, administrative, training and conference services to local governments and businesses. A member sits on MTC.

**Accessibility:** The extent to which facilities are barrier free and useable by persons with disabilities, including wheelchair users.

**ADA Americans With Disabilities Act:** 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.

**Apportionment:** A federal budgetary term that refers to a statutorily prescribed division or assignment of funds. It is based on prescribed formulas in the law and consists of dividing authorized obligation authority for a specific program among transit systems.

**Appropriation:** A federal budgetary term that refers to an act of Congress that permits federal agencies to incur obligations and make payments out of the Treasury for specified purposes. An appropriation act is the most common means of providing budget authority, but in some cases the authorization legislation itself provides the budget authority.

**ARB—Air Resources Board, aka CARB:** The state agency responsible for adopting state air quality standards, establishing emission standards for new cars sold in the state, and overseeing activities of regional and local air pollution control agencies.

**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.

**AVL—Automated Vehicle Location System (IVHS term):** This computerized system can tell you the answer: It employs satellites and other technologies to track vehicles in a fleet, assisting with dispatching and other applications. Currently used by truckers and courier services, it could be used in the future by transit systems to provide real-time schedule information for patrons, and will help the CHP monitor FSP tow trucks.

**BAAQMD—Bay Area Quality Management District:** Also known as the Air District. Regulates industry and employers to keep air pollution in check and sponsors programs to clean the air. The Air District works with MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments on issues that affect transportation, land use and air quality.

**BATA—Bay Area Toll Authority:** Entity created by the state Legislature to administer the base \$1 toll from the Bay Area's seven state-owned toll bridges, a responsibility previously held by the CTC. MTC began operations as BATA on Jan. 1, 1998.

**Bay Area Partnership:** Often referred to simply as "The Partnership," this is a confederation of the top staff of various transportation agencies in the region (MTC, public transit operators, county CMAAs, city and county public works departments, ports, Caltrans, U.S.

DOT) as well as environmental protection agencies. The Partnership works by consensus to improve the overall efficiency and operation of the Bay Area's transportation network, including developing strategies for financing transportation improvements.

**Caltrans California Department of Transportation:** The state agency that operates California's highway system and intercity rail systems.

**Capital Revenues:** Moneys dedicated for new projects to cover one-time costs, such as construction of roads, transit lines and facilities, or purchase of buses and rail cars.

**CEQA—California Environmental Quality Act of 1970** See EIR.

**CHP—California Highway Patrol:** State law enforcement agency responsible for highway safety, among other things.

**CMA Congestion Management Agency:** A countywide agency responsible for preparing and implementing a county's Congestion Management Program. CMAs came into existence as a result of state legislation and voter approval of Prop. 111 in 1990. Subsequent legislation made optional the requirement for counties to have a CMA. Most Bay Area counties still have them.

**CMAQ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program:** A federal fund source contained in TEA 21 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.

**CNG—Compressed Natural Gas:** A clean-burning alternative fuel for vehicles.

**Conformity:** The ongoing process that ensures the planning for highway and transit systems, as a whole and over the long term, is consistent with the state air quality plans for attaining and maintaining health-based air quality standards; conformity is determined by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S.

DOT), and is based on whether transportation plans and programs meet the provisions of a State Implementation Plan.

#### **CTC California Transportation**

**Commission:** A state-level commission, consisting of nine members appointed by the governor, that establishes priorities and allocates funds for highway, passenger rail and transit investments throughout California. The CTC works with the state Business, Transportation and Housing Agency in overseeing Caltrans, and participates in the development of state and federal legislation that affects transportation funding.

**Deadhead:** The movement of a transit vehicle without passengers aboard; often to and from a garage or to and from one route to another.

**DEIR/DEIS** See EIR/EIS.

#### **DOT—Department of Transportation:**

At the federal level, a cabinet agency with responsibility for highways, mass transit, aviation and ports; headed by the secretary of transportation. The DOT includes the FHWA, the FTA and the FAA, among others. There are also state DOTs. (California's is referred to as Caltrans).

**Dwell Time:** The scheduled time a vehicle or train is allowed to discharge and take on passengers at a stop, including opening and closing doors.

**Earmark:** A federal budgetary term that refers to the specific designation by Congress that part of a more general lump-sum appropriation be used for a particular project; the earmark can be designated as a minimum and/or maximum dollar amount.

**EIR/EIS:** Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement An analysis of the environmental impacts of proposed land development and transportation projects; it's an EIR when conducted in response to CEQA, and an EIS when conducted for federally funded or approved projects per NEPA. A draft EIR or draft EIS (DEIR or DEIS—often they're prepared simultaneously) is circulated to the public and agencies

with approval authority for comment. Like a pollywog whose next stage in life is a frog, a DEIR or DEIS grows up to be a certified FEIR or FEIS that contains responses to public comments and ways to mitigate adverse impacts.

**Ethanol:** An alternative fuel; a liquid alcohol fuel with vapor heavier than air; produced from agricultural products such as corn, grain and sugar cane.

**Fare Box Recovery Ratio:** Measure of the proportion of operating expenses covered by passenger fares; found by dividing fare box revenue by total operating expenses for each mode and/or systemwide.

**Fare Box Revenue:** Value of cash, tickets, tokens and pass receipts given by passengers as payment for rides; excludes charter revenue.

**Fare Elasticity:** The extent to which ridership responds to fare increases or decreases.

**Fare Structure:** The system set up to determine how much is to be paid by various passengers using a transit vehicle at any given time.

**FHWA Federal Highway Administration:** 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.

**Fixed Guidway 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 coaches and ferries as "fixed guideway" transit.

**Fixed Route Service:** Provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed-route trip serves the same origins and destinations, unlike demand responsive and taxicabs.

**FSP—Freeway Service Patrol:** Free, roving tow truck service to aid stranded motorists and help to clear incidents along 100 miles of the region's most congested freeways. A JUMP Start project that is jointly sponsored by the MTC SAFE, Caltrans and the CHP.

**FTA Federal Transit Administration:** U.S. Department of Transportation agency that provides financial and planning assistance to help plan, build, and operate rail, bus and paratransit systems. The agency also assists in the development of local and regional traffic reduction programs.

**Fiscal Year:** The yearly accounting period for the federal government which begins October 1 and ends on the following September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends (e.g., FY 94 is from October 1, 1993 to September 30, 1994).

**Headway Time:** Interval between vehicles moving in the same direction on a particular route.

**Highway Trust Fund:** The federal trust fund established by the Highway Revenue Act of 1956; this fund has two accounts – the Highway Account and the Mass Transit Account. Trust fund revenues are derived from federal highway-user taxes and fees such as motor fuel taxes; trust fund uses and expenditures are determined by law.

**HOV Lane—High-Occupancy-Vehicle Lane:** The technical term for a carpool lane, commuter lane or diamond lane.

**Intermodal:** The term "mode" is used to refer to and to distinguish from each other the various forms of transportation, such as automobile, transit, ship, bicycle and walking. Intermodal refers specifically to the connections between modes.

**ISTEA Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act:** Pronounced "Ice Tea," this landmark federal legislation signed into law in 1991 initiated broad changes in the way transportation decisions are made. ISTEA emphasized diversity and balance of modes, as well as the preservation of existing systems before construction of new facilities. ISTEA

expired in 1997, but much of its program structure was carried forward in successor federal legislation (see TEA 21).

**ITIP Interregional Transportation**

**Improvement Program:** A state funding program intended to address needs that cross metropolitan boundaries. Caltrans nominates and the CTC approves a listing of interregional highway and rail projects for 25 percent of the funds to be programmed in the STIP (the other 75 percent are RTIP funds, see below).

**ITS Intelligent Transportation Systems:**

Technical innovations that apply communications and information processing to improve the efficiency and safety of surface transportation systems. In the Bay Area, ITS initiatives include closed-circuit video monitoring of freeway traffic conditions and the use of automatic vehicle location technology to coordinate traffic signals, speed emergency vehicle response times, and let transit riders know when the next bus or train will arrive.

**Lifeline Transportation Network:** An MTC initiative to enhance low-income residents' access to key destinations such as job centers, government buildings and medical facilities during both peak commute periods and off-peak hours. While most of the Lifeline network identified by MTC is already served by existing transit routes, some low-income communities and/or destinations are not served by transit or lack service at specific times of day. MTC is working with transit operators and potential funding partners to fill these gaps in the network.

**LIFT Low-Income Flexible Transportation:**

An MTC program that provides financial assistance for services to help low-income residents get to and from work and other locations. Examples of eligible LIFT projects include new and expanded public transit services, transportation to child care centers, development of child care facilities at transit hubs, rideshare activities and "guaranteed ride home" programs.

**LOS Level of Service:** A report card that rates traffic flow from A (excel-

lent) through F (flunks), and compares actual or projected traffic volume with the maximum capacity of the intersection or road in question.

**MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization:**

A federally required planning 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. MTC is the Bay Area's MPO.

**MTC Metropolitan Transportation**

**Commission:** The transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine counties that touch San Francisco Bay.

**MTS Metropolitan Transportation**

**System:** A defined network of streets and roads, highways, mass transit routes, bikeways, transfer points, airports and seaports considered essential to regional mobility.

**Multimodal:** Refers to the availability of multiple transportation options, especially within a system or corridor. A multimodal approach to transportation planning focuses on the most efficient way of getting people or goods from place to place, be it by truck, train, bicycle, automobile, airplane, bus, boat or foot.

**Nonattainment Area:** Any geographic region of the United States that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated as not attaining the federal air quality standards for one or more air pollutants, such as ozone and carbon monoxide.

**Operating Funds:** Moneys used to fund general, day-to-day costs of running transportation systems. For transit, costs include fuel, salaries and replacement parts; for roads, operating costs involve maintaining pavement, filling potholes, paying workers' salaries, and so forth. Paratransit: Door-to-door bus, van and taxi services used to transport elderly and disabled riders. 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.

**Paratransit:** Comparable transportation service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route transportation systems.

**PMS–Pavement Management System:** Used in the Bay Area to refer to MTC’s computer-assisted program for diagnosing and curing potholes in a timely, cost-effective manner – and preventing them in the first place through judicious maintenance. In wide use among the region’s cities and counties.

**Program:** (1) verb, to assign funds to a project that has been approved by MTC, the state or other agency; (2) noun, a system of funding for implementing transportation projects or policies, such as through the State Transportation Improvement Program (see STIP).

**Resolution 3434:** An identified list of high-priority rail and express bus improvements to serve the Bay Area’s most congested corridors. MTC adopted Resolution 3434 in December 2001 to establish clear priorities for the investment of transit expansion funds.

**RTIP Regional Transportation Improvement Program:** A listing of highway and transit projects that the region hopes to fund; compiled by MTC every two years from priority lists submitted by local jurisdictions. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) must either approve or reject the RTIP list in its entirety. Once the CTC approves an RTIP, it is combined with those from other regions to comprise 75 percent of the funds in the STIP (see below).

**RTP–Regional Transportation Plan:** A blueprint to guide the region’s transportation development for a 25-year period. Updated every three years, it is based on projections of growth and travel demand coupled with financial projections. Required by state and federal law.

**RTPA–Regional Transportation Planning Agency:** Regional Transportation Planning Agency: A state-designated agency responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Plan and the Regional

Transportation Improvement Program, administering state funds, and other tasks. MTC is the Bay Area’s RTPA.

**SAFE Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways:** As the region’s SAFE, MTC – in partnership with the California Highway Patrol and California Department of Transportation – oversees the installation and operation of call boxes along Bay Area freeways and administers a roving tow truck service to quickly clear incidents from the region’s most congested roadways. State legislation in 1987 created the MTC SAFE, which is funded in part through a \$1 surcharge on motor vehicle registrations.

**SHOPP State Highway Operations and Protection Program:** State funding program for highway projects that will improve traffic safety; preserve bridges, roadways and/or roadsides; increase mobility; or improve facilities related to the state highway system.

**SIP State Implementation Plan:** Here’s a case where one term refers to two different – albeit related – documents. Metropolitan areas prepare regional SIPs showing steps they plan to take to meet federal air quality standards (outlined in the Clean Air Act). Several SIPs make up the statewide plan for cleaning up the air, also known as a SIP.

**SOV Single-Occupant Vehicle:** A vehicle with one occupant, the driver, who is sometimes referred to as a “drive alone.”

**SRTP Short-Range Transit Plan:** A nine-year comprehensive plan required of all transit operators by federal and regional transportation funding agencies

**STA State Transit Assistance:** Provides funding for mass transit operations and capital projects.

**STIP State Transportation Improvement Program:** What the CTC ends up with after combining various RTIPs as well as a list of specific projects proposed by Caltrans. Covering a five-year span and updated every two years, the STIP determines when and if transportation projects will be funded by the state.

**STP Surface Transportation Program:**

One of the key funding programs in TEA 21. STP monies are “flexible,” meaning they can be spent on mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as on roads and highways.

**System Management:** A coordinated series of programs involving MTC and partner agencies such as the CHP and Caltrans to make the region’s existing transportation system work more efficiently. These efforts include congestion relief initiatives such as the roadside call box network and roving Freeway Service Patrol tow trucks, and traveler information programs such as the toll-free TravInfo® phone service and the [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org) web page.

**TCM Transportation Control Measure:**

A strategy to reduce driving or smooth traffic flows in order to cut auto emissions and resulting air pollution. Required by the Clean Air Act, TCMs for the Bay Area are jointly developed by MTC, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and ABAG. Examples of TCMs include roving tow truck patrols to clear stalls and accidents from congested roadways, new or increased transit service, or a program to promote carpools and vanpools.

**TCRP Traffic Congestion Relief**

**Program:** A five-year state transportation investment plan passed by the California Legislature and signed into law by Governor Gray Davis in 2000. The plan originally called for \$6.8 billion of spending (with \$1.7 billion to the Bay Area) from fiscal 2000-01 to 2005-06, but subsequent refinancing agreements postponed the funding until fiscal 2002-03 to 2007-08.

**TDA Transportation Development Act:**

State law enacted in 1971. TDA funds are generated from a tax of one-quarter of one percent on all retail sales in each county; used for transit, special transit for disabled persons, and bicycle and pedestrian purposes, they are collected by the state and allocated by MTC to fund transit operations and programs. In non-urban areas, TDA funds may be used for streets and roads under certain conditions.

**TDM Transportation Demand**

**Management:** Low-cost ways to reduce demand by automobiles on the transportation system, such as programs to promote telecommuting, flextime and ridesharing.

**TE Transportation Enhancement**

**Activities:** A TEA 21 funding category. Ten percent of STP monies must be set aside for projects that enhance the compatibility of transportation facilities with their surroundings. Examples of TE projects include bicycle and pedestrian paths, restoration of rail depots or other historic transportation facilities, acquisition of scenic or open space lands next to travel corridors, and murals or other public art projects.

**TEA 21 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century:**

Passed by Congress in May 1998, this federal transportation legislation retains and expands many of the programs created in 1991 under ISTEA. Reauthorizes federal surface transportation programs for six years (1998-2003), and significantly increases overall funding for transportation.

**TIP Transportation Improvement**

**Program:** This is the primary spending plan for federal funding expected to flow to the region from all sources for transportation projects of all types. MTC prepares the TIP every two years with the assistance of local governments, transit operators and Caltrans. It covers at least a three-year period.

**TLC Transportation for Livable**

**Communities:** New funding program created by MTC in 1998 to fund small-scale, community- and transit-oriented projects that improve neighborhood vitality.

**TOS Traffic Operations System:**

In the Bay Area, Caltrans and the CHP will monitor traffic flows by means of detectors embedded in pavement and closed-circuit television cameras, quickly dispatching tow trucks and other assistance. Message signs and broadcasts will alert drivers and transit riders to conditions ahead, while ramp metering will control traffic flows. All these devices together comprise the TOS.

**TransLink®:** MTC's prototype for a universal ticket valid on all transit modes, from BART to buses to ferries. Translink® will be tested in a pilot project involving six Bay Area transit operators beginning in the spring of 2001.

**TRO—trip reduction ordinance:** This regulation is to limit the number of SOV users in order to stanch polluting emissions. Aimed at employers, TROs have been enacted by local governments in response to CMP requirements, which vary from county to county. Now the BAAQMD has passed an Employer-based Trip Reduction Rule that should result in cities and counties adopting more stringent and more uniform TROs.

**U.S. DOT United States Department of Transportation:** The federal cabinet-level agency with responsibility for highways, mass transit, aviation and ports; headed by the secretary of transportation. The DOT includes the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, among others. There are also state DOTs (known as Caltrans in California).

**VMT Vehicle Miles Traveled:** The more cars there are on the road at the same time in the same area, the worse congestion will be. This term helps pin down the numbers. Reducing the growth of VMT can help ease traffic congestion and improve air quality.

Sources:

Citizen's Guide to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission

American Public Transit Association (APTA)

