

OPTP Working Glossary

This Glossary is adapted for use in the Oregon Public Transportation Plan, primarily from glossaries prepared by Federal Transit Administration and Transportation Research Board, with other ODOT documents.

Access, Transit: Measure of the ability of people to travel among various origins and destinations; a measure of relative access of a population to employment opportunities, community services, education, healthcare, etc. A measure of the ability of people to get to the nearest transit stop. The ability of persons with disabilities to use transit.

Accessibility: The ability to or ease with which people can reach or access destinations (including employment, education, activities, and services) via public transportation and return to their origin.

ADA Accessibility: The extent to which facilities, including transit vehicles, are free of barriers as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and can be used by people who have disabilities, including users of mobility devices.

ADA complementary paratransit service: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transit agencies that provide fixed-route service to provide complementary paratransit” services to people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route bus or rail service because of a disability. The ADA regulations specifically define a population of customers who are entitled to this service as a civil right. The regulations also define minimum service characteristics that must be met for this service to be considered equivalent to the fixed-route service it is intended to complement. In general, ADA complementary paratransit service must be provided within 3/4 of a mile of a bus route or rail station, at the same hours and days, for no more than twice the regular fixed route fare.

Affordability: refers to the ability of individuals and households to purchase transportation services, particularly those required to access basic goods and services (including health care, shopping, school, work, and social activities). Affordability can be defined as the situation in which the broadest range of household incomes can bear the financial burden of purchasing basic transportation services. Affordability is a critical objective since it affects the opportunities available to disadvantaged people.

Alternative fuels: Vehicle engine fuels other than standard gasoline or diesel. Typically, alternative fuels burn cleaner than gasoline or diesel and produce reduced emissions. Common alternative fuels include methanol, ethanol, and compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, clean diesel fuels and reformulated gasoline.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Passed by Congress in 1990, this Act mandates equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the areas of employment, transportation, communications and public accommodations. Under this Act, most transportation providers are



obliged to purchase lift-equipped vehicles for their fixed-route services and must ensure system-wide accessibility of their demand-responsive services to people with disabilities. Public transit providers also must supplement their fixed-route services with paratransit services for those people unable to use fixed-route service because of their disability.

Availability: Refers to whether or not transit is available to a rider spatially and in time, e.g. a stop close enough to for the rider to use, is there a sufficient service area covered to reach their destination, are vehicles running at useful times to the rider.

Brokerage: A method of providing transportation where riders are matched with appropriate transportation providers through a central trip-request and administrative facility. The transportation broker may centralize vehicle dispatch, record keeping, vehicle maintenance and other functions under contractual arrangements with agencies, municipalities and other organizations. Actual trips are provided by a number of different vendors.

Busway: A roadway reserved for buses only; also known as a “bus lane.”

Buy America: Federal transportation law which requires that all purchases of vehicles, equipment or any other manufactured item be of U.S.-made and assembled components, unless the purchase price is less than \$100,000 or the U.S. Department of Transportation has given the purchaser a Buy America waiver.

Capital costs: Refers to the costs of long-term assets of a public transit system such as property, buildings and vehicles. Preventive maintenance, mobility management, and certain kinds of operating expenses may be eligible to be treated as “capital” and are eligible to be reimbursed based on the percentage of federal and local match for capital projects.

Circulator bus: A bus that makes frequent trips around a small geographic area with numerous stops along the route. It is typically operated in a downtown area or an area that attracts tourists or large crowds and has limited parking and congested roads. It may be operated all day or only at times of peak demand, such as rush hour or lunch time.

Clean Air Act: Federal legislation that details acceptable levels of airborne pollution and spells out the role of state and local governments in maintaining clean air.

Community transportation: The family of transportation services in a community, including public and private sources that are available to respond to the mobility needs of all community members.

Complementary paratransit: also called *ADA complementary paratransit service*, a certain type of paratransit or demand responsive service provided to accommodate passengers with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route service. Complementary paratransit is required of transit agencies that provide fixed-route service to equivalently serve individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route transit system.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Project (CMAQ): A flexible funding program administered by the Federal Highway Administration that funds projects and programs to reduce harmful vehicle



emissions and improve traffic conditions. CMAQ funds may be used for transit projects, rideshare projects, high-occupancy vehicle lanes or other similar purposes.

Connectivity: Presence of useful, integrated links people can use to move between places, transportation system modes, or segments of the same mode. For example, do service routes intersect usefully in one place and time, can fares be interchangeable, or is information about all necessary links in a trip available in one place.

Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan: A locally developed plan for coordinating local public transportation and human service agency transportation services that aims to maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. The coordinated plan should be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and participation by the public. Under MAP-21, any public agency applying for funding of a new or expanded service under Sections 5310 must show that the project is identified in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan developed through a process that consists of representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers with participation by the public.

Coordination: A cooperative arrangement among public and private transportation agencies and human service organizations that provide transportation services. Coordination models can range in scope from shared use of facilities, training or maintenance to integrated brokerages or consolidated transportation service providers.

Coverage: Also called “availability,” refers to spatial availability, temporal availability and how far one may travel, i.e., the service area.

Demand-response: As defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), demand-response is any non-fixed route system of transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling by the customer, including services provided by public entities, nonprofits, and private providers. A “demand response system” is one where passenger trips are generated by calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick the passengers up and transport them to their destinations.

Dial-a-ride service: Another term for demand-response service (see above) where the rider telephones (or “dials”) to request service.

Disabled: Any person who by reason of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction or other permanent or temporary incapacity or disability is unable, without special facilities, to use local transit facilities and services as effectively as people who are not so affected.

Efficiency, Transit: According to the Transportation Research Board, transit efficiency generally refers to the ratio of inputs (capital and labor) to outputs (performance measures) in a given public



transit system. Transit system efficiency can be measured in several possible ways, which can result in different conclusions about what solutions are optimal, such as accessibility-based transit efficiency (ratio of inputs to the spatial and temporal distribution of service coverage); economic efficiency (ratio of monetary inputs to fare revenues); or service efficiency (ratio of inputs to service performance measures, such as headway, ridership, or fare box returns). Transit agencies generally measure for system efficiency in several ways, as opposed to interpreting any single measure as representative of the system's overall efficiency.

Employment transportation: Transportation specifically designed to take passengers to and from work or work-related activities.

Environmental Justice (EJ): refers to presence of and actions to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations; also to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and to prevent the denial of, reduction in or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Fare box revenue: A public transportation term for the money or tickets collected as payment for rides. Can be cash, tickets, tokens, transfers or pass receipts.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): A component of the U.S. Department of Transportation that is responsible for ensuring that America's roads and highways are safe and technologically up-to-date. Although State, local, and tribal governments own most of the Nation's highways, the FHWA provides financial and technical support to them for constructing, improving, and preserving America's highway system. The FHWA's annual budget of more than \$30 billion is funded by fuel and motor vehicle excise taxes. FHWA is the lead agency in federal intelligent transportation (ITS) activities and regulated interstate transportation. In addition to ITS, funds under FHWA's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, Surface Transportation Program (STP), and Federal Lands Highways Program can be used for a variety of transit activities.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA): A component of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal funding to support a variety of locally planned, constructed, and operated public transportation systems throughout the U.S., including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, streetcars, monorail, passenger ferry boats, inclined railways, and people movers. FTA provides financial assistance for capital, operating and planning costs of these public transportation systems. It also sponsors research, training, technical assistance and demonstration programs. Up to 1991 the FTA was known as the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

Fixed route service: Transit services where vehicles run on regular, scheduled routes with fixed stops and do not deviate. Typically, fixed-route service is characterized by printed schedules or timetables, designated bus stops where passengers board and alight and the use of larger transit vehicles.



Flexible routing and schedules: Flexible route service follows a direction of travel but allows for deviation or rerouting along the way to accommodate specific trip requests. Examples of flexible route systems are route deviation and point deviation. The schedule may be fixed or flexible.

Headway: The length of time at a stop between buses following the same route. If buses operating along Route A arrive at Stop 1 at 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, and 11:00, it is operating on half-hour headways during the period between 9:00 and 11:00. When headways are short the service is said to be operating at a high frequency, whereas if headways are long, service is operating at a low frequency.

Human services transportation: Transportation for clients of a specific human or social service agency that is usually limited to a specific trip purpose. Human service agency trips are often provided under contract to a human service agency and may be provided exclusively or rideshared with other human service agencies or general public service.

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS). Refers to a broad range of wireless and wire line communications-based information and electronic technologies. When integrated into the transportation system's infrastructure and into vehicles themselves, these technologies relieve congestion, improve safety and enhance productivity. ITS is made up of 16 types of technology based systems, divided into intelligent infrastructure systems and intelligent vehicle systems.

Intercity transportation: Long distance service provided between cities, often as part of a large network of intercity bus operators and/or passenger train services. Both express and local bus service may be provided. The Greyhound system is an example of a national intercity bus network. Oregon's POINT service is an example of a statewide intercity network.

Intracity transportation: Transportation that allows people to move within a city. The service may include different transportation options such as bus connections to light rail, or a bus connection to a bicycle trail.

Jitney: A privately owned, small vehicle that is operated on a fixed route but not on a fixed schedule.

Match: State or local funds required by various federal or state programs to complement funds provided by a state or federal agency for a project. A match may also be required by states in funding projects that are joint state/local efforts. Some funding sources allow services, such as the work of volunteers, to be counted as an in-kind funding match. Federal programs normally require that match funds come from other than federal sources.

Medicaid: Also known as Medical Assistance, and in Oregon, called "Oregon Health Plan," this is a health care program for low-income individuals. It is jointly funded by state and federal governments. The program pays for transportation to non-emergency medical appointments if the recipient has no other means to travel to the appointment.



Metropolitan planning organization (MPO): The organizational entity designated by law with lead responsibility for developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of 50,000 or more in population. MPOs are established by agreement of the governor and units of general purpose local government that together represent 75 percent of the affected population of an urbanized area.

Mobility: Ability to and/or ease with which people can use the transportation system to travel between destinations.

Mode, intermodal, multimodal: *Mode* refers to a form of transportation, such as automobile, transit, bicycle, and walking. *Intermodal* refers to the connections between modes, and *multimodal* refers to the availability of multiple transportation modes within a system or corridor.

National Transit Database: Reporting system managed by FTA that collects financial and operating data; reporters are recipients of transportation funds under Section 5311 and 5307.

Older Americans Act (OAA): Federal law first passed in 1965. The act established a national network of federal, state, and local agencies to plan and provide services to enable older persons to maintain their independence in their homes and communities. The Act created the infrastructure for organizing, coordinating, and providing community-based services and opportunities for older Americans and their families.

Operating costs: The sum of all recurring expenses (e.g., labor, fuel, administration) associated with the operation and maintenance of a transit system; excludes capital equipment purchases, loans, depreciation, or leases.

Paratransit: Types of passenger transportation that are more flexible than conventional fixed-route transit, but more structured than the use of private automobiles. Paratransit is a broad term that may be used to describe any means of shared ride transportation other than fixed route mass transit services. Paratransit services usually use smaller vehicles (less than 25 passengers) and provide advance-reservation, demand-responsive service that is either curb-to-curb or door-to-door. Paratransit services that are provided to accommodate passengers with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route service and that meet specific service equivalency tests are called *ADA complementary paratransit services*.

Peak Hour / Peak Period: The period with the highest ridership during the entire service day, generally referring to either the peak hour (“rush hour”) or peak several hours. Transportation systems typically encounter two peak periods per day: AM Peak and PM Peak – about two hours each – in which the greatest movement of passengers occurs and where the greatest level of ridership is experienced and service provided. AM Peak (generally from 7am – 9am) refers to the morning commute period, generally from home to work. PM Peak (generally from 4pm – 6pm) refers to the evening commute period, generally from work to home.



Person-Trip/Passenger-Trip: A trip made by one person from one origin to one destination. Many transit statistics are based on "unlinked passenger trips," which refer to individual one-way trips made by individual riders in individual vehicles. A person who leaves home on one vehicle, transfers to a second vehicle to arrive at a destination, leaves the destination on a third vehicle and has to transfer to yet another vehicle to complete the journey home has made four unlinked passenger trips.

Radial network: A public transit route service pattern in which most routes converge into and diverge from a central transfer point or hub, like the spokes of a wheel. Arterial or loop routes may be used. If the routes are timed to arrive and depart at the same time, it is called a pulse system.

Rapid transit: Rail or bus transit service operating completely separate from all modes of transportation on an exclusive right-of-way. Often operates as an express service with a minimal number of stops. Light Rail and Bus Rapid transit are examples.

Reliability: refers to the predictability and consistency of transportation system or transit system performance, e.g. whether vehicles consistently arrive at a rider's originating stop and destination at the scheduled time.

Resiliency: refers to a system's ability to accommodate variable and unexpected conditions without catastrophic failure, and to the system's ability to recover from a disrupting incident such as a natural disaster.

Ridership: The number of people making one-way trips on a public transit system in a given time period.

Safety: refers physical or mechanical safety; it means the condition of being safe from hurt, injury, or loss. For public transportation, safety primarily refers to activities and policies related to prevention of accidents, vehicle and other equipment failures, and passenger safety, such as safety while waiting at stops and stations and riding on vehicles.

Security: refers to the feeling or perception of personal safety, or to the physical security of the transit system, transit vehicle, or other equipment. For public transportation, security refers to occurrences beyond the more typical crash or slip-and-fall, such as bomb threat, arson, hijacking, sabotage, cyber security event, assault, burglary, theft, vandalism, etc. Security planning and incident prevention is typically conducted by transit agencies, in consultation with other agencies such as state FEMA agencies, police and fire, and federal Homeland Security, as well as others.

State Units on Aging (SUAs): Agencies of state and territorial governments designated by governors and state legislatures to administer, manage, design and advocate for benefits, programs and services for the elderly and their families and, in many states, for adults with physical disabilities. Since 1965 all State Units on Aging have administered the Older Americans Act (OAA) in their respective states. Through a state network of area agencies on aging and service providers, a range of services is provided to older persons including home-care, congregate and home delivered



meals, transportation, information and assistance and advocacy on behalf of individual older citizens. SUAs also have significant policy, planning and advocacy roles in leveraging other federal, state and local public and private funds to support programs on aging.

Title III: A title of the Older Americans Act that authorizes expenditures for nutrition and transportation programs that serve older persons.

Title VI: A title of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that ensures that no person in the United States will be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The transportation planning regulations, issued in October 1993, require that metropolitan transportation planning processes be consistent with Title VI.

Transit amenities: include, but are not limited to, bus shelters, trash and recycling cans, bike parking, signage, lighting, pedestrian havens and crossings, landscaping, benches, bus turn-outs, medians, and sidewalks.

Transit facilities: include, but are not limited to, bus stops, park-and-rides, transit centers, and administrative and maintenance facilities.

Transit providers: a generic term for all entities that provide public transit services, including transit facilities and amenities. The assumption is that all “transit providers” have legal standing to provide the service, coordinate their planning efforts with local and state governments, and receive state and/or federal funding for transit programs. Transit providers can be non-profits, for-profits, public or private service providers, a special district, or a department of a city, county, or Tribe.

Transportation control measures (TCMs): Local actions to adjust traffic patterns or reduce vehicle use to reduce air pollutant emissions. These may include HOV lanes, provision of bicycle facilities, ridesharing, telecommuting, etc.

Transportation disadvantaged: Includes communities of color, the poor, older adults, youth, and people with limited English proficiency or disabilities who are at a significant disadvantage without access to convenient, safe, well integrated transportation alternatives. All of these groups are often without easy access to cars and live in locations without convenient, safe transportation alternatives.

Transportation improvement program (TIP): A document prepared by states and planning commissions that describes projects to be funded under Federal transportation programs for a full-year period. Without TIP inclusion, a project is ineligible for Federal funding.

Transportation management area (TMA): Defined as all urbanized areas over 200,000 in population. Within a TMA, all transportation plans and programs must be based on a continuing and comprehensive planning process carried out by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in cooperation with states and transit operators. The TMA boundary affects the responsibility for the selection of transportation projects that receive Federal funds.



Trip generator: A place that generates a demand for frequent travel is called a trip generator. Trip generators may be origins or destinations. For example, a high-density residential area generates a need for all kinds of trips outside of the residential area into commercial areas; a medical center generates trips for medical purposes; and a downtown area may generate trips for retail, recreational, or personal business purposes.

Urbanized area (UZA): An area that contains a city of 50,000 or more population, plus incorporated surrounding areas, and meets size or density criteria established by the Census Bureau.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): The federal agency that funds a variety of human services transportation through the Administration on Aging, Head Start, Medicaid, Temporary Aid to Needy Families, and other federal programs.

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT): The federal department responsible for the funding, efficiency, and safety of the nation's highway, aviation, transit, pipeline, and maritime transportation infrastructure.

