

# Transit Vision & Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting October 28, 2009

## Glossary of Transit Terms



**greenlink**

# Glossary of Transit Related Terms

## **American Public Transportation Association (APTA)**

The national, nonprofit trade association representing the public transit industry.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**

Federal legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. In addition to other public and private facilities, the act requires that all transportation facilities and services must be accessible to individuals with physical handicaps.

## **Automatic Passenger Counter (APC)**

Automated devices that count passengers as they enter and exit a transit vehicle or system.

## **Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL)**

Automated devices that utilize Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to determine and transmit the location of vehicles.

## **Block**

Term for identifying/numbering individual buses operating in route service

## **Bus**

A rubber-tired road vehicle designed to carry a substantial number of passengers (i.e., 10 or more), commonly operated on streets and highways for public transportation service. Common dimensions are 102” wide and 25/30/40/60 feet in length.

## **Bus Bay**

Bus berthing area in a facility such as a transit center, park and ride lot, or rail station.

## **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

BRT is a public transit mode that uses buses to provide a light rail quality of service by combing the benefits of light rail transit with the flexibility and efficiency of bus transit.

## **Capital Costs**

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

## **Central Business District (CBD)**

Urban core (downtown) portion of a region

## **Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)**

Study process utilized to evaluate a transit system

## **Commuter Rail**

Diesel or electric propelled urban passenger transit service operating between a central city and adjacent suburbs

## **Crosstown Route**

Non-radial bus service that normally does not enter the Central Business District (CBD).

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## **Cycle Length**

The total time, including layovers and recovery time, required to complete a round trip on a transit route.

## **Deadhead**

Deadhead or non-revenue bus travel time includes bus travel to or from the garage and a terminus point where revenue service begins or ends or bus' travel between the end of service point on one route to the beginning of another.

## **Density**

The number of population, dwellings or principle buildings, or uses per acre of land.

## **Dwell Time**

The amount of time that a transit vehicle consumes at stop locations to board/discharge passengers

## **Express Service**

Service that generally connects residential areas and activity centers via a high speed, non-stop connection, e.g., a freeway, or exclusive right-of-way such as a dedicated busway with limited stops at each end for collection and distribution. Residential collection can be exclusively or partially undertaken using park-and-ride facilities. Service can also operate non-stop over a portion of an arterial in conjunction with other local services. The need for such service arises where passenger demand between points on a corridor is high enough to separate demand and support dedicated express trips.

## **Fare**

User payment in the form of coins, bills, tickets, passes, and tokens collected for each ride.

## **Fare Elasticity**

The extent to which ridership responds to fare increases or decreases.

## **Farebox Recovery**

Measure of the proportion of transit system operating expenses covered by passenger fares; derived by dividing farebox revenue by total operating expenses.

## **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

The Federal Transit Administration is one of 11 operating administrations within the U.S. Department of Transportation. As authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU), the FTA provides stewardship of combined formula and discretionary programs totaling more than \$10B to support a variety of locally planned, constructed, and operated public transportation systems throughout the United States.

## **Feeder Service**

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

## **Fixed Route**

Service that operates with a set route, times, stops, and frequencies

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## **Geographic Information System (GIS)**

GIS is a collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

## **Global Positioning System (GPS)**

A system of satellites and receiving devices used to compute positions on the Earth.

## **Guideway**

Also referred to as a transitway, is a dedicated right of way for use by bus or rail transit vehicles

## **Headway**

The interval of time between vehicles on a transit route, also referred to as service frequency. A route with a 60 minute cycle length that is serviced by four buses will have a 15 minute headway.

## **Heavy Rail Transit (HRT)**

An electric railway technology that uses an exclusive right-of-way (at-grade/aerial/subway), high platform loading, sophisticated signaling, and multi vehicle trains. Service is designed for high capacity and speed. Power is provided through a ground level third rail source.

## **High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)**

Vehicles that can carry multiple persons such as buses, vanpools, and carpools. These vehicles sometimes utilize exclusive traffic lanes called HOV lanes.

## **Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)**

An umbrella term for a broad range of technologies utilized to improve transportation in the areas of safety, convenience, efficiency, and reliability.

## **Intermodal**

Typically a place such as a building or site specifically designed to accommodate the meeting of two or more transit modes of travel.

## **Layover:**

Also called “recovery time,” is the extra time added to the running time of a route to improve schedule reliability and account for unanticipated delays

## **Light Rail Transit (LRT)**

An electric railway technology that may use shared or exclusive rights-of-way, high or low platform loading, and multi- or single-vehicle trains. Power is provided by overhead electric cables.

## **Load factor**

The ratio of passengers actually carried versus the total passenger capacity of a vehicle. Used in both intercity transportation work and urban transit.

## **Local Service**

A type of operation that involves frequent stops and consequent low speeds, the purpose of which is to deliver and pick up transit passengers as close to their destinations or origins as possible.

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## **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making organization made up of representatives from local government and transportation authorities. MPOs were created in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs were based on a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3-C) planning process. The role of the MPO includes: establishing a local forum for transportation decision making; evaluating transportation alternatives; developing and updating a long-range transportation plan; developing a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and getting the public involved. The Greenville Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS) is the MPO responsible for transportation planning in the Greenville area.

## **Mode**

A particular form of travel (e.g., bus commuter rail, train, bicycle, walking or automobile).

## **Mode Split**

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

## **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 by means other than privately owned vehicles; by bus, trolley, light rail, streetcar, cable car, and/or ferry systems.

## **National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)**

Federal legislation that establishes environmental policy for the nation. It provides an interdisciplinary framework for federal agencies to prevent environmental damage and contains “action-forcing” procedures to ensure that federal agency decision makers take environmental factors into account.

## **On-time Performance**

A performance metric utilized to determine the overall percentage of trips that are within a defined window from the actual times compared with the established scheduled times

## **Operating Costs**

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

## **Paratransit**

Non-traditional, shared ride transportation modes, such as ADA paratransit, municipal dial-a-ride services, community shuttles, and vanpool programs that are not fixed route or rail services but generally complement or supplement them. ADA Complementary Paratransit service is required for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route transit systems.

## **Park and Ride**

A parking area for automobile drivers who then board vehicles, shuttles, or carpools from these locations.

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**Peak-hour(s)**

The maximum-volume hour or hours of the day on a transit route or roadway. Weekday morning peak-hours are generally between 6:00-9:00am, while weekday evening peak hours are between 3:00-6:00pm.

**Point Check**

The process of counting and recording on board vehicle passengers and documenting arrival time at a specific point along a transit route. This check is typically performed at the point where maximum vehicle loading occurs.

**Pulse**

Refers to the frequency with which routes in a timed-transfer network meet at a central transfer point.

**Radial Service**

Local or express service designed primarily to connect the Central Business District with outlying areas.

**Revenue Vehicle**

Transit fleet vehicles available to operate in revenue service carrying passengers. Spare units are included, but service units such as supervisory or maintenance vehicles are not.

**Reverse Commute**

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

**Ride Check**

The process of counting and recording passenger boardings, alightings, and other operational information along a designated transit route.

**Ridership**

The number of passengers that utilize a public transport route, service, or system in a defined time period

**Route**

A specified path taken by a transit vehicle usually designated by a number or a name, along which passengers are picked up or discharged.

**Running Time**

The total time required to operate a round trip on a route, exclusive of layovers and recovery time.

**Signal Priority**

Traffic signal technology that allows specially equipped transit vehicles to receive priority through allowing the green light to continue as a vehicle approaches or speed up the change cycle to green when a vehicle is waiting. This technology is not the same as signal preemption which is provided for use on certain emergency vehicles.

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## **South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)**

State agency responsible for statewide transportation programs including transportation planning and the allocation of federal funds. The federal transportation planning process is a cooperative effort between SCDOT, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), Council Of Governments (COG), and transit providers. The Offices of Planning and Mass Transit are involved with and support local and state transit agencies and initiatives.

## **Stakeholder**

An individual or organization involved in or affected by the transportation or land use planning processes. In a broad sense, everyone is a stakeholder in both transportation and land use planning.

## **Streetcar**

Urban transit mode similar to LRT that can operate in mixed traffic or exclusive right of way. Trains can consist of single or multiple units and utilize overhead electric cables.

## **Subsidy**

Financial assistance for transit operating expenses (not including capital costs) granted by federal, state, or local governments to support transit agencies

## **Transit Development Plan (TDP)**

Planning process that and reviews system characteristics, evaluates transit needs, and develops recommendations over short and long term periods

## **Timed Transfer**

A point or location where two or more routes come together at the same time to provide timely and convenient transfer connections. A short layover may be provided at the timed transfer point to enhance connections. Timed transfers have had increasing application as service frequencies have been reduced below 15 to 20 minutes and hub-and-spoke network deployment has grown.

## **Transit Association of South Carolina (TASC)**

The Transportation Association of South Carolina began in 1981 to bring together public and human service providers, state agencies, private providers, and vendors to promote public transit in South Carolina and act as an advocate to promote transit friendly legislation.

## **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

Transit-oriented Development is a broad planning movement to place new developments around transit stations that particularly take advantage of the proximity to transit access. The goals are to reduce vehicle use and increase pedestrian access. Transit-oriented development is pedestrian-friendly development focused around a major transit access point. Elements include compact, mixed-use development patterns with facilities and design that enhance the environment for pedestrians in terms of safety, walking distances, comfort, and the visual appeal of the surroundings.

## **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The first three to five years of a Regional Transportation Plan. The TIP must include specific funding for the projects as well as the project schedule from preliminary engineering to construction.

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## **Trip**

Usually a single direction trip on a route

## **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**

Measures that focus on ways to increase traffic capacity without major construction of new travel facilities. This includes developing alternative transportation modes and the incentives to use alternate modes so that fewer vehicles are needed to transport the same number of people. Other commute alternatives include carpooling/vanpooling, bicycling, shuttle systems, alternative work hours, parking controls, telecommuting, and HOV lanes.

## **Transportation Systems Management (TSM)**

Measures involving operational improvements to existing transportation systems that maximize person-moving capacity, reduce the severity and duration of temporary (i.e., crash and weather) delays, improve safety, and incorporate advanced technologies and communications to optimize the efficiency of transportation systems. The package of TSM strategies may include a number of options designed to improve traffic flow and increase the number of people using alternate modes of transportation.

## **Turnback**

Also called a “Short-turn” is a bus or train that covers only part of a route. This service is usually scheduled at certain peak times along the most utilized segment of a route.

## **Unlinked Passenger Trips**

Transit ridership measure that is the number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Individual passengers are counted each time they board a vehicle, no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.

## **Vanpool**

Shared ride and cost service through prearranged ridesharing using vans and small buses providing regular round trip transportation between the participants boarding point(s) and a common destination

## **Vehicle Revenue Miles**

Miles travelled when a transit vehicle is in revenue service

## **Vehicle Revenue Hours**

Hours travelled when a transit vehicle is in revenue service