

**Glossary of Human Service Transportation Terms  
Derived from the National Transit Database Glossary  
(<http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/Glossary.htm>)**

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**ADA**

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

**ADA Accessible Stations**

Public transportation passenger facilities, which provide ready access, and do not have physical barriers that prohibit and / or restrict access by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs. Refer to 49 CFR Part 37, Appendix.

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

The legislation defining the responsibilities of and requirements for transportation providers to make transportation accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Annual Passenger Trips**

The number of passengers who board operational revenue vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination. Trips should be counted regardless of whether an individual fare is collected for each leg of travel. It includes passenger trips on volunteer vehicles.

**Annual Vehicle Miles**

The total number of miles for the reporting period that all vehicles travel from the time they pull out to go into revenue service to the time they pull in from revenue service. This includes the miles of personal vehicles used in service.

**Brokerage System**

An association of transportation providers managed by broker or agent who makes transportation arrangements for a specific clientele such as the elderly and persons with disabilities. The transportation providers in a brokerage system are typically social service agencies and taxicab operators. The broker may be the transit agency directly or the transit agency may contract with an individual or firm to operate the brokerage system.

**Bus (MB)**

A transit mode comprised of rubber-tired passenger vehicles operating on fixed routes and schedules over roadways. Vehicles are powered by diesel, gasoline, battery, or alternative fuel engines contained within the vehicle.

**Capital Costs**

The expenses incurred within the year related to the purchase of facilities, vehicles and equipment.

### **Casualty and Liability Costs (506)**

The cost elements covering protection of the transit agency from loss through insurance programs, compensation of others for their losses due to acts for which the transit agency is liable, and recognition of the cost of a miscellaneous category of corporate losses.

### **Charter Service**

A vehicle hired for exclusive use that does not operate over a regular route, on a regular schedule and is not available to the general public.

### **Community**

Service operated primarily within the boundaries of a community that is not considered a municipality, county/independent city or parish.

### **Commuter Rail (CR)**

A transit mode that is an electric or diesel propelled railway for urban passenger train service consisting of local short distance travel operating between a central city and adjacent suburbs. Service must be operated on a regular basis by or under contract with a transit operator for the purpose of transporting passengers within urbanized areas (UZAs), or between urbanized areas and outlying areas. Such rail service, using either locomotive hauled or self-propelled railroad passenger cars, is generally characterized by multi-trip tickets, specific station to station fares, railroad employment practices, and usually only one or two stations in the central business district.

It does not include heavy rail (HR) rapid transit, or light rail (LR) / streetcar transit service. Intercity rail service is excluded, except for that portion of such service that is operated by or under contract with a public transit agency for predominantly commuter services. Predominantly commuter service means that for any given trip segment (i.e., distance between any two stations), more than 50 percent of the average daily ridership travels on the train at least three times a week. Only the predominantly commuter service portion of an intercity route is eligible for inclusion when determining commuter rail (CR) route miles.

### **Complementary Paratransit Services**

Transportation service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route transportation systems. This service must be comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system and meet the requirements specified in Sections 37.123-137.133 of *Transportation Services for Individuals with Disabilities (Part 37), Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Volume 1*. The complementary services must be origin-to-destination service (demand response (DR)) or on-call demand response (DR) service to an accessible fixed route where such service enables the individual to use the fixed route bus (MB) system for his or her trip.

### **Cooperative Agreement**

An agreement where one or more public transit agencies or governmental units contribute to, or are assessed for, the value of public transit services provided by another public transit agency. There is usually a written memorandum of understanding or mutual

agreement on the calculation and payment for the services. Generally, the service is part of the public transit agency's directly operated (DO) service.

### **Customer Services (162)**

Component activities include providing supervision and clerical support for public information and customer relations activities, selling and arranging for the provision of charter services providing route information in passenger stations and at other points along the transit way, providing telephone information service, handling customer complaints and administering a lost and found operation.

### **Demand Response (DR)**

A transit mode comprised of passenger cars, vans or small buses operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations. A demand response (DR) operation is characterized by the following a) the vehicles do not operate over a fixed route or on a fixed schedule except, perhaps, on a temporary basis to satisfy a special need, and b) typically, the vehicle may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations and may even be interrupted en route to these destinations to pick up other passengers.

### **Demand Response Service**

Shared use transit service operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who schedules a vehicle to pick up the passengers to transport them to their destinations.

### **Deviated Fixed Route Service**

Transit service that operates along a fixed alignment or path at generally fixed times, but may deviate from the route alignment to collect or drop off passengers who have requested the deviation.

### **Fare Revenues**

All income received directly from passengers, either paid in cash or through pre-paid tickets, passes, etc. It includes donations from those passengers who donate money on the vehicle. It includes the reduced fares paid by passengers in a user-side subsidy arrangement.

### **Federal Operating Assistance**

Financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration to assist in paying the operating costs of providing transit service.

### **Fixed Guideway (FG)**

A public transportation facility using and occupying a separate right-of-way (ROW) or rail for the exclusive use of public transportation and other high occupancy vehicles (HOV) or a fixed catenary system useable by other forms of transportation.

### **Fixed Route Service**

Transit service using rubber tired passenger vehicles operating on fixed routes and schedules, regardless of whether a passenger actively requests a vehicle.

### **FTA**

Federal Transit Administration

### **FTA Grant Program**

Financial assistance from FTA programs. These funds include:

- FTA Capital Program (§5309)
- FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program (§5307)
- FTA Clean Fuels Program (§5308)
- FTA Metropolitan Planning (§5303)
- FTA Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Program (§5310)
- FTA Other Than Urbanized Area Formula Program (§5311)
- FTA Research, Development, Demonstration and Training Projects (§5312)
- FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute Formula Program (§5316)
- FTA New Freedom Program (§5317)
- FTA Transit in the Park (§5320)
- Interstate Transfer Program

### **Heavy Rail (HR)**

A transit mode that is an electric railway with the capacity for a heavy volume of traffic. It is characterized by high speed and rapid acceleration passenger rail cars operating singly or in multi-car trains on fixed rails, separate rights-of-way (ROW) from which all other vehicular and foot traffic are excluded, sophisticated signaling, and high platform loading.

### **Intercity Bus Service**

Regularly scheduled bus (MB) service for the general public, using an over-the-road bus (MB), that operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity or connecting one or more rural communities with an urban area not in close proximity, has the capacity for transporting baggage carried by passengers, and makes meaningful connections with scheduled intercity bus (MB) service to more distant points.

### **JARC**

FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute Program

### **Jitney (JT)**

A transit mode comprised of passenger cars or vans operating on fixed routes (sometimes with minor deviations) as demand warrants without fixed schedules or fixed stops.

### **Joint Powers Agency**

Two or more public agencies, when authorized by their governing authority, to enter into agreements to jointly exercise any power common to the contracting parties. The agency or entity provided by the agreement to administer or execute the agreement may be one or more of the parties to the agreement or a commission or board constituted pursuant to the agreement or a person or a firm or corporation, including a nonprofit corporation designated in the agreement. The administering agency is a public entity separate from the parties to the agreement and shall possess the common power specified in the agreement and may exercise it in the manner or according to the method provided in the agreement. As a general proposition, there are no new powers but merely a new procedure for the exercise of existing powers.

### **Leases and Rentals (512)**

The payments for the use of capital assets not owned by the transit agency. True leases are those in which the lessor and lessee are not related parties, the total lease payments cover the lessor's cost of the property for the period of the lease plus interest, or the ownership of the property remains with the lessor upon expiration of the lease. For the true lease, this object class includes the lease payments on true lease property. Reporting manual reference: F-40

### **Light Rail (LR)**

A transit mode that typically is an electric railway with a light volume traffic capacity compared to heavy rail (HR). It is characterized by passenger rail cars operating singly (or in short, usually two car, trains) on fixed rails in shared or exclusive right-of-way (ROW), low or high platform loading, and vehicle power drawn from an overhead electric line via a trolley or a pantograph.

### **Linked Passenger Trip**

A trip from origin to destination on the transit system. Even if a person must make several transfers during a journey, the trip is counted as one linked trip on the system.

### **Local Operating Funds**

Financial assistance from local entities that support the operation of the transit system. They include, but are not limited to:

- Tax levies — A specified amount from local levies that is dedicated to supporting public transit system operating costs.
- General funds — Transfers from the general fund of local governments to cover the Local Share portion of the transit system budget.
- Specified contributions — Contributions from city, county or other municipal government towards the Local Share portion of the transit system budget.

- Donations — Donations from individuals or organizations to help cover the costs of providing transit service but which are not related to specific passengers or trips.
- Other — Other revenues such as advertising.

### **Mass Transportation**

Synonymous term with public transportation.

### **Minivans (MV)**

A light duty vehicle having a typical seating capacity of up to 7 passengers and a driver. A minivan is smaller, lower, and more streamlined than a full-sized van, but it is typically taller and with a higher floor than a passenger car, such as a hatchback or station wagon. Minivans normally cannot accommodate standing passengers.

### **Mode**

A system for carrying transit passengers described by specific right-of-way (ROW), technology and operational features.

### **Monorail (MO)**

A transit mode that is an electric railway of guided transit vehicles operating singly or in multi-car trains. The vehicles are suspended from or straddle a guideway formed by a single beam, rail or tube.

### **Operating Expenses (OE)**

The expenses associated with the operation of the transit agency, and classified by function or activity, and the goods and services purchased. The basic functions and object classes are defined in Section 5.2 and 6.2 of the Uniform System of Accounts (USOA). These are consumable items with a useful life of less than one year or an acquisition cost which equals the lesser of the capitalization level established by the government unit for financial statement purposes or \$5,000.

### **Operators**

The personnel (other than security agents) scheduled to be aboard vehicles in revenue operations, including vehicle operators, conductors, and ticket collectors. Operators may also include: Attendants who are transit agency employees that are aboard vehicles to assist riders in boarding and alighting, securing wheelchairs, etc., typically the elderly and persons with disabilities.

### **Paratransit**

Types of passenger transportation which are more flexible than conventional fixed-route transit but more structured than the use of private automobiles. Paratransit includes demand response (DR) transportation services, shared-ride taxis, car pooling and vanpooling (VP), and jitney (JT) services. Most often refers to wheelchair-accessible, demand response (DR) service.

**Passenger / Customer**

A person who is: Onboard, boarding or alighting from a transit vehicle for the purpose of travel, without participating in its operation.

**Passenger Fare Assistance**

The subsidy given to the transit agency, usually by state and local governments, on behalf of specific classes of passengers, such as students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. The subsidy may also come from the private sector, such as employers giving assistance to offer employees programs to use public transit services at reduced rates or free. The fare assistance helps to offset the reduced or free services provided to these passengers. It is usually based on the amount of service provided; i.e., the subsidy is calculated based on the number of rides taken, but may be a lump sum payment.

**Passenger Fares**

The revenue earned from carrying passengers in regularly scheduled and demand response (DR) services. Passenger fares include base fare, zone or distance premiums, express service premiums, extra cost transfers, quantity purchase discounts applicable to the passenger's ride and special transit fares.

**Personal Vehicles in Service**

Vehicles that are used by the transit provider to transport passengers in revenue service but are owned by private individuals, typically an employee of the agency or a volunteer driver.

**Private For-Profit Provider**

A nonpublic entity that provides public transportation services. For-profit entities exist primarily to generate a profit, (i.e., a surplus of revenues over expenditures).

**Private Nonprofit Provider**

A nonpublic entity with a tax-free status that provides public transportation services. Nonprofit entities exist to provide a particular service (e.g., public transportation) to the community. Nonprofit refers to a type of business — one that is organized under rules that forbid the distribution of profits to owners. Profit refers to a surplus of revenues over expenditures.

**Public Agency or Transit System**

A public entity that provides public transportation services. It may be a state or local government, or any department, special purpose district (e.g. transit or transportation district), authority or other instrumentality of one or more state or local governments (e.g., joint powers agency).

**Public Transportation**

As defined in the Federal Transit Act, "transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but does not include school bus, charter, or intercity bus transportation or intercity passenger rail transportation provided by the entity described in chapter 243 (or a successor to such

entity)." Reporting manual reference: Introduction, B-10, A-10, A-20, A-30, MR-10, S&S Introduction, RU Introduction

Notes: (1) Passenger rail transportation refers to Amtrak. (2) This definition does not affect the eligibility of intercity bus service under the §5311 Other Than Urbanized Area (Rural) Formula Program. (3) The intercity bus and intercity rail (Amtrak) portion of Intermodal terminals is however an eligible capital cost.

### **Purchased Transportation (PT)**

Transportation service provided to a public transit agency or governmental unit from a public or private transportation provider based on a written contract. The provider is obligated in advance to operate public transportation services for a public transit agency or governmental unit for a specific monetary consideration, using its own employees to operate revenue vehicles. Purchased transportation (PT) does not include franchising, licensing operations, management services, cooperative agreements, or private conventional bus service.

### **Reportable Incident**

Existence of one or more of the following:

- A fatality due to an incident - does include suicides, but does not include deaths by natural causes, or deaths not associated with an incident, and / or
- Injuries requiring immediate medical attention away from the scene for one or more persons, and / or
- Property damage equal to or exceeding \$25,000
- An evacuation due to life safety reasons
- A mainline derailment
- Acts of God
- Hazardous material spill
- Security incidents:
  - Terrorism related events:
    - Bomb threat
    - Bombing
    - Chemical / biological / radiological / nuclear release
  - Other system security events:
    - Arson
    - Sabotage
    - Hijacking

- Cyber
- Other personal events:
  - Aggravated assault
  - Rape
  - Suicide
  - Attempted suicide
  - Vandalism
  - Robbery
  - Burglary
  - Motor vehicle theft
  - Larceny / theft
  - Homicide

### **Revenue Service (Miles, Hours, and Trips)**

The time when a vehicle is available to the general public and there is an expectation of carrying passengers. These passengers either directly pay fares, are subsidized by public policy, or provide payment through some contractual arrangement. Vehicles operated in fare free service are considered in revenue service. Revenue service includes layover / recovery time. Revenue service excludes deadhead, vehicle maintenance testing, school bus service, and charter service.

### **Route Deviation**

A type of transit service that operates as conventional fixed route bus (MB) service along a fixed alignment or path with scheduled time points at each terminal point and key intermediate locations. Route deviation service is different than conventional fixed route bus (MB) service in that the bus (MB) may deviate from the route alignment to serve destinations within a prescribed distance (e.g.,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile) of the route. Following an off route deviation, the bus must return to the point on the route it left. Passengers may use the service in two ways:

1. If they want to be taken off route as part of a service deviation, they must tell the bus operator when boarding, or
2. If they want to be picked up at an off route location, they must call the transit system and request a pickup, and the dispatcher notifies the bus operator.

### **Scheduled Service**

The total service scheduled to be provided for picking up and discharging passengers. Scheduled service is computed from internal transit agency planning documents (e.g., run paddles, trip tickets and public timetables). Scheduled service excludes service interruptions, and special additional services.

### **School Bus Service**

The exclusive use of buses to carry children and school personnel to and from their schools or school-related activities. It includes county school buses, private school buses, and buses chartered from private companies for the express purposes of carrying students to or from school and / or school-related activities.

### **School Buses (SB)**

Vehicle Type: Passenger vehicles which are designed or used to carry more than ten passengers in addition to the driver, and used primarily for the purpose of transporting pre-primary, primary or secondary school students either to such schools from home or from such schools to home.

### **Seating Capacity**

The number of seats that are actually installed in the vehicle.

### **Service Area**

A measure of access to transit service in terms of population served and area coverage (square miles). The reporting transit agency determines the service area boundaries and population for most transit services using the definitions contained in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Transit agency reporters are required to submit service area information on the Identification form (B-10).

### **Special Transit Fares**

The revenues earned for rides given in regular transit revenue service, but paid for by some organization rather than by the rider, and for rides given along special routes for which revenue may be guaranteed by a beneficiary of the service. Special transit fares include providing rides for letter carriers with payments being made directly from the US Postal Service, providing rides for police with payments being made directly from the police authority, industrial firms, shopping centers, public and private universities, etc., to guarantee a minimum revenue on a line operated especially for the benefit of the payer, contractual arrangements with state or local governments, and contractual arrangements from non-government entities for special transit fares and from providing special service rides for sporting events, sightseeing, etc., where fares are not guaranteed on a contractual basis.

### **State Government Funds**

Financial assistance obtained from a state government(s) to assist with paying the costs of providing transit services.

### **Subsidy**

Government financial assistance.

### **Taxicab Operator**

A private for profit company where passenger vehicles are for hire by the riding public.

**Transit**

Synonymous term with public transportation.

**Unlinked Passenger Trips (UPT)**

The number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.

**Vanpool (VP)**

A transit mode comprised of vans, small buses and other vehicles operating as a ride sharing arrangement, providing transportation to a group of individuals traveling directly between their homes and a regular destination within the same geographical area. The vehicles shall have a minimum seating capacity of seven persons, including the driver. For inclusion in the NTD, it is considered mass transit service if it is operated by a public entity, or is one in which a public entity owns, purchases, or leases the vehicle(s). Vanpool(s) (VP) must also be in compliance with mass transit rules including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions, and be open to the public and that availability must be made known. Other forms of public participation to encourage ridesharing arrangements, such as the provision of parking spaces, use of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and coordination or clearing house service, do not qualify as public vanpools.

**Vanpool Service**

Transit service operating as a ride sharing arrangement, providing transportation to a group of individuals traveling directly between their homes and a regular destination within the same geographical area. The vehicles shall have a minimum seating capacity of seven persons, including the driver. Vanpool(s) must also be open to the public and that availability must be made known. Does not include ridesharing coordination.

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