

Transportation Terms Glossary

August 2019

The table below provides a summary of terms and acronyms commonly used in transportation.

Term	Acronym	Summary
5% set-aside		A constitutionally established 5% portion of funds from the HUTD fund that can be allocated under state statutes; the remaining 95% is constitutionally allocated; see Highway User Tax Distribution fund
Minnesota state highway investment plan	MnSHIP	MnDOT's 20-year plan for trunk highway investment priorities
Alternatives analysis	AA	An engineering study or phase in project development that compares different options for type of transportation investment in a corridor
Airports funds	AIR	See State Airports fund
Americans with Disabilities Act	ADA	Federal law requiring various accommodations for persons with disabilities
Apportionment sum		A portion of funds from the CSAH fund for aid to counties for the county state-aid highway system
Appropriation		See Direct appropriation, also see Statutory appropriation
Area transportation partnership	ATP	Regional decision-making body that performs stakeholder involvement and project planning roles in transportation; the state is divided into eight ATPs
Arterial bus rapid transit	A-BRT	A form of BRT mainly operated on urban arterial (major local) streets; see Bus rapid transit
Average daily traffic	ADT	A measure of the volume of traffic passing a particular point on a road, expressed as an average per day
Bonds		Funds borrowed from investors for capital projects, in return for later repayment with interest; there are two distinct forms of bonding for transportation; see General obligation bonds, also see Trunk highway bonds
Bridge improvement program	BIP	See Trunk highway bridge improvement program
Budget activity		A fiscal category for functions within the budget of a state agency underneath each "program" (for instance, Aeronautics is a budget activity within MnDOT's Multimodal Systems program); see Program

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Bus rapid transit	BRT	Form of mass transit utilizing buses that generally provides an express service and includes some characteristics similar to rail service
Center for Transportation Studies	CTS	A center in the University of Minnesota that supports multidisciplinary transportation research
Chapter 152	152; Ch. 152	2008 law that made various changes to transportation finance and funding
Commercial driver’s license	CDL	A driver’s license classification that authorizes a person to operate different types of larger trucks and buses
Congestion mitigation and air quality	CMAQ	One of the core categories of federal aid, generally for projects to reduce congestion and improve air quality
Commuter rail		Form of passenger railroad transit service, usually connecting suburban or rural areas to a metropolitan area
Cost participation		Division of transportation project cost responsibility between MnDOT and political subdivisions
County state-aid highway	CSAH	A constitutionally established system of county roads that are under the jurisdiction of each county and are eligible to receive dedicated state aid
County State-Aid Highway fund	CSAH	An accounting fund for administering both county state-aid dollars and the 5% set-aside funds
Counties Transit Improvement Board	CTIB	A former joint powers board in the Twin Cities metropolitan area that funded transitway projects
Debt service		The sum of principal and interest owed on bonds; see Bonds, also see General obligation bonds
Department of Public Safety	DPS	See Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Deputy registrar		County, city, or private corporation appointed by DPS to administer motor vehicle titling and registration
Direct appropriation		An authorization to spend a specific amount of money during a specified time period (such as a biennium), made in session law (rather than in state statute); also see Statutory appropriation
District		Regional unit in MnDOT’s organizational structure that handles roadway operations, construction projects, and project planning; the state is divided into eight districts
Draft environmental impact statement	DEIS	Draft version of an EIS; see Environmental impact statement
Driver and Vehicle Services	DVS	A division in the Department of Public Safety that administers driver licensing and vehicle registration

Term	Acronym	Summary
Driver services operating account	SR-DS	An account in the Special Revenue fund for driver licensing fees and DVS program administration
Driver’s license agent		County, city, or private corporation appointed by DPS to administer driver licensing
Dynamic shoulder lane	PDSL	See Priced Dynamic Shoulder Lane
Environmental assessment	EA	A document as well as a process for a transportation project that evaluates environmental impacts of the project; smaller than an EIS
Environmental impact statement	EIS	A document as well as a process for a transportation project that evaluates environmental impacts of that project; federally required for certain projects
Excess sum		A portion of funds from the CSAH fund for aid to counties for the county state-aid highway system
Express bus		Form of mass transit service utilizing transit buses that generally travel on longer fixed routes with fewer stops
FAST	FAST-DS	Vendor-supplied information technology system used for driver licensing
Federal fiscal year	FFY	The accounting period used by the federal government, identified by the calendar year in which it ends; it runs from October 1 to the following September 30
Federal Highway Administration	FHWA	A federal agency in the U.S. Dept. of Transportation that administers highway-related funding and programs
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	FMCSA	A federal agency in the U.S. Dept. of Transportation that administers commercial motor carrier safety
Federal motor vehicle safety standards	FMVSS	A set of federal regulations governing and providing technical standards for manufacture of motor vehicles
Federal Transit Administration	FTA	A federal agency in the U.S. Dept. of Transportation that administers transit-related funding and programs
Final design		A phase in a highway or transit project development process, for preparing construction plans and specifications; the last phase before construction
Final environmental impact statement	FEIS	Final version of an EIS; see Environmental impact statement
Fiscal year	FY	An accounting period of one year, identified by the calendar year in which it ends; the state fiscal year runs from July 1 to the following June 30
Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act	FAST Act	The most recent federal act authorizing transportation funding and setting policy, for 2016 to 2020

Term	Acronym	Summary
Flexible highway account	Flex account	An account that receives a portion of the 5% set-aside funds; funds are allocated by statute to highway purposes including turnbacks
Gas tax		See Motor fuels tax
General fund	GF	The largest and primary accounting fund of the state
General obligation bonds	GO Bond	Bonds in which debt service is paid by the state through revenues generated with a tax of statewide application; see Bonds, also see Trunk highway bonds
Graduated driver licensing	GDL	A system of phased driving privileges for novice drivers
Greater Minnesota transit account		An account in the Transit Assistance fund for state aid to transit providers in greater Minnesota
High-occupancy toll lane	HOT	A traffic lane dedicated to (1) vehicles with more than one occupant, and (2) drivers who pay a toll to use the lane; see High-occupancy vehicle lane
High-occupancy vehicle lane	HOV	A traffic lane dedicated to vehicles with more than one occupant (with other vehicle types sometimes allowed)
Highway bus rapid transit		A form of BRT mainly operated on highways; see Bus rapid transit
Highway User Tax Distribution fund	HUTD	A constitutionally created fund that receives revenue from user taxes (gas tax, registration tax, and MVST), and from which funds are allocated to state and local road systems via constitutional and statutory formulas
Interregional corridor	IRC	A system of key high-volume highways that connect regional centers throughout the state and adjacent states
Locally preferred alternative	LPA	Formally selected route for a federally funded transit project, specifying the type of service and basic route
Light rail transit	LRT	Form of passenger rail transit service, usually within a metropolitan area
Managed lane		Roadway lane in which traffic management methods are used, including pricing and minimum vehicle occupancy
Metro Mobility		Metropolitan Council program that provides door-to-door special needs transit service
Metro Transit		Division of the Metropolitan Council that provides transit service in the Twin Cities metropolitan area
Metropolitan Airports Commission	MAC	A governmental agency that manages several airports in the Twin Cities metropolitan area

Term	Acronym	Summary
Metropolitan area transit account		An account in the Transit Assistance fund for state aid to transit in the Twin Cities metropolitan area
Metropolitan Council		A regional agency that administers planning and programs in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including operating transit service
Metropolitan planning organization	MPO	A federally designated governmental body that performs regional transportation planning and project decision-making for a metropolitan area
Metropolitan Transportation Services	MTS	A division of the Metropolitan Council that administers transit planning, funding, and service contracting
Mileage-based user fee	MBUF	Transportation taxation mechanism primarily based on vehicle distance traveled; often identified as an alternative to motor fuels taxes
Minnesota Department of Public Safety	DPS	A state agency that administers public safety issues; its divisions include the State Patrol, Driver and Vehicle Services, and the Office of Traffic Safety
Minnesota Department of Transportation	MnDOT	A state agency that administers the state’s trunk highway system, transportation planning, and aid for local highways, aeronautics, and transit
Minnesota licensing and registration system	MNLARS	1) DVS information technology systems for driver licensing and motor vehicle registration 2) DVS information technology system only for motor vehicle registration (as differentiated from FAST-DS)
MnPASS	MnPASS	MnDOT system of Twin Cities metropolitan area high-occupancy and tolled express lanes on trunk highways
Minnesota rail service improvement program	MRSI	A program for providing state aid for rail system improvement
Motor fuels tax		A constitutionally dedicated state tax on gasoline and other motor fuels; set at a 28.5 cents per gallon rate for gas and diesel fuel
Motor vehicle lease sales tax	MVLST	Portion of state general sales tax revenue that is due to motor vehicle leases
Motor vehicle rental tax		A tax on short-term rental of vehicles; set at a 9.2% rate
Motor vehicle registration tax		A constitutionally dedicated tax on motor vehicle registration (commonly referred to as tab fees)
Motor vehicle sales tax	MVST	A constitutionally dedicated tax on the sale of motor vehicles; set at a 6.5% rate
Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act	MAP-21	A federal act authorizing transportation funding and setting policy, originally for 2013 to 2014; predecessor to FAST Act

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Municipal state-aid street	MSAS	A constitutionally established system of city streets under the jurisdiction of each city, for which eligible cities receive dedicated state aid
Municipal State-Aid Street fund	MSAS	An accounting fund for administering municipal state-aid funds
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969	NEPA	Federal law requiring analysis of environmental impacts from transportation (and other infrastructure) projects
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	NHTSA	A federal agency in the U.S. Dept. of Transportation that administers traffic safety and consumer programs
Office of Traffic Safety	OTS	A division in the Department of Public Safety that administers and coordinates traffic safety programs
Operations & maintenance	O&M	A MnDOT budget activity that covers general daily highway maintenance work and smaller projects
Opt-out		See Suburban transit provider
Preliminary engineering	PE	A phase in a highway or transit project development process, for initial design, planning, and environmental analysis
Program		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A major fiscal category for functions within the budget of a state agency (for instance, State Roads is a program within MnDOT’s budget); see Budget activity 2) A set of policies and practices to implement an agency activity 3) A set of commitments to undertake specified transportation projects
Program delivery		Portion of highway construction project costs that reflects accompanying planning, engineering, and oversight for the project
Programmed		An agency commitment to undertake a specific transportation project
Regional railroad authority	RRA	County-level political subdivision of the state that preserves rail corridors and develops transitways
Regional Traffic Management Center	RTMC	A MnDOT office that provides coordinated traffic management, dispatch, and communications services in the Twin Cities metropolitan area
Regional transit capital bonds	RTC	A form of financing for transit facilities, from proceeds of bonds issued by the Metropolitan Council and backed by a property tax levy; see Transit taxing district
Regular route transit		Transit service operating on fixed routes on a set schedule

Term	Acronym	Summary
Right-of-way	ROW; R/W	The entire area of land under the legal control of a road authority, usually including the roadway and ditches
Right-of-way acquisition loan fund	RALF	Metropolitan Council program for loans to local units of government to purchase right-of-way prior to commencing a highway project
Set-aside		See 5% set-aside
Special transportation service	STS	Nonemergency transportation provided to eligible persons who are elderly or disabled
Statewide multimodal transportation plan	SMTTP	MnDOT's 20-year multimodal plan of transportation policy objectives and priorities
Statutory (or standing) appropriation		An authorization to spend money made in state statute (rather than in session law), so that spending authority does not need to be renewed as part of the biennial budget process; also see Direct appropriation
State Airports fund	AIR	An accounting fund for state funding of aeronautics
State road construction	SRC	A MnDOT budget activity that covers the costs of final engineering tasks, right-of-way acquisition, and contracts with private firms for highway construction projects
State transportation bonds		A form of general obligation bonds of the state used for transportation purposes; see General obligation bonds
State transportation improvement program	STIP	MnDOT's four-year comprehensive schedule of state and federally funded trunk highway construction projects
Suburban transit provider	STP	A transit provider in the Twin Cities metropolitan area that generally operates independently of Metro Transit
Tab fees		See Motor vehicle registration tax
Toward zero deaths	TZD	A program to reduce traffic fatalities
Town bridge account		An account that receives a portion of the 5% set-aside funds for town bridge replacement
Town road account		An account that receives a portion of the 5% set-aside funds for town road construction and maintenance
Transit Assistance fund	TA; TAF	An accounting fund for state aid to fund transit
Transit taxing district	TTD	A geographic area within the Twin Cities metropolitan area where the Metropolitan Council levies a property tax for transit capital purposes
Transitway		General category for a transportation corridor utilized by certain modes of transit service; usually includes BRT, commuter rail, express bus, and LRT

Term	Acronym	Summary
Transportation advisory board	TAB	An advisory body in the Metropolitan Council that addresses transportation planning and project selection
Transportation Alternatives program	TA; TAP	One of the categories of federal aid primarily for various pedestrian, bicycle, and trail projects
Transportation Economic Development program	TED	A joint MnDOT/DEED program for transportation infrastructure projects to support economic development
Transportation improvement program	TIP	Metropolitan Council’s four-year schedule of highway and transit projects (which matches the Twin Cities metropolitan highway portion of MnDOT’s STIP)
Transportation policy plan	TPP	Metropolitan Council’s policies and long range plan for transportation development in the metropolitan area
Transportation revolving loan fund	TRLF	An accounting fund and state program for loans to local units of government for transportation projects
Trunk highway	TH	The system of state and interstate highways under the jurisdiction of MnDOT
Trunk Highway fund	TH	An accounting fund for construction, maintenance, and general administration of the trunk highway system
Trunk highway bonds	THB	A constitutionally distinct form of general obligation bonds of the state, whose proceeds can go solely to projects on the trunk highway system; see Bonds
Trunk highway bridge improvement program	BIP	MnDOT program for state bridge maintenance and replacement; see Chapter 152
Turnbacks		Former trunk highways that have been turned over to the jurisdiction of a local unit of government
Vehicle services operating account	SR-VS	An account in the Special Revenue fund for vehicle-related fees and DVS program administration
Vehicle miles traveled	VMT	A measure of the amount of travel in motor vehicles or the amount of usage of a roadway