

TALKING THE TALK

A Pocket Guide to the Language of
Transportation Planning

2004

INTRODUCTION

Participate

To take part or have a share, as with others (usually followed by “in,” as “to participate in a conversation”).

“Participate” is the most important word in this glossary: the operative term in the ongoing development of plans to address the long- and short-term transportation needs of the St. Louis (Missouri-Illinois) region. Roads, bridges, transit, pathways for pedestrians and cyclists – these are publicly-funded resources that support many aspects of our lives. Building, managing, and preserving the multi-modal transportation system is a task far larger than the official planning and operating agencies can accomplish. The process requires a regionwide discussion in which all those who use and are affected by the system can participate.

Talking the Talk has been put together as a guide to facilitate such a regionwide conversation. It is intended to open up the dialogue by defining and simplifying a number of key terms that are familiar to those of us who regularly speak the language of transportation planning, but that may be foreign to those of us just joining the conversation.

This is the third edition of *Talking the Talk*, updated and expanded from earlier editions, 1992 and 2000. Staff of the East-West Gateway Council of Governments will welcome the comments of readers. Your suggestions will ensure that future editions can continue to be even more helpful and “user-friendly.”

The preparation of this document was financed in part by the United States Department of Transportation through the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration, the Missouri Department of Transportation, and the Illinois Department of Transportation. The contents of this report reflect the opinions, findings and conclusions of the author. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

TALKING THE TALK

(In Alphabetical Order)

Access Board

Popular name for the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, which develops guidelines and criteria to determine if public buildings and transportation facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Administration on Aging

Federal agency established by the Older Americans' Act of 1965 with responsibility for administering many programs for older persons at the national level, including transportation services.

Air Quality Advisory Committee (AQAC)

Committee established by East-West Gateway in 1992 to serve as a public forum for the dissemination of information and receipt of feedback about air quality issues. The AQAC is also responsible for the coordination of air quality and transportation planning activities in the region.

All-Hazard Mitigation Plan

A plan developed by East-West Gateway on behalf of the City of St. Louis and Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties. The plan identifies strategies to lessen the impacts of disasters such as floods, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes, dam failures, and more. Local governments on the Missouri side of the region that have adopted this plan are eligible to apply for federal mitigation grant funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Alternative Fuels

Fuels that can replace ordinary gasoline or diesel. These include, compressed natural gas, ethanol (E85) or liquefied natural gas (propane).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Federal law enacted in 1990 to protect the civil rights of persons with disabilities, ensuring them the same level of access to employment, public transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications enjoyed by persons without disabilities.

Apportionment

The maximum level of funding for individual states authorized by the federal government from the Highway Trust Fund. A state's apportionment is calculated annually, using a formula specified in federal law, and is available for four years.

Appropriations

Annual level of funding committed from one level of government to the next. The Congress appropriates federal transportation funds to the states, for example. States, in turn, appropriate federal funds to metropolitan areas.

Arterial

A major thoroughfare, primarily for traffic that is passing through an area, that can handle relatively large numbers of vehicles at any one time.

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)

The national membership organization of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, based in Washington, DC. Local officials from the St. Louis region work with other members of AMPO to advocate for the transportation needs of metropolitan areas.

Attainment Area

Geographic area in which levels of a particular air pollutant meets or does better than the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standard for that pollutant. Attainment areas are defined using federal pollutant limits set by the US Environmental Protection Agency. An area may be “in attainment” for several pollutants and may have unacceptable levels for others.

Bike Lane

A portion of a roadway that has been designated by striping, signage, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicycles.

Bike Path

A path for the exclusive use of cyclists or pedestrians that is physically separated from motorized vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier.

Bikeway

Any road, path, or way that is specifically designated as being open to bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facility is designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or is to be shared with other transportation modes.

Bridges to Work

A community-based program managed by East-West Gateway and housed at the Metropolitan Employment and Training Center near the Wellston MetroLink station. Provides counseling to job-seekers on transportation-related problems; refers and connects urban core residents with transportation to suburban employment centers.

Bus Lane

A lane on a roadway that is reserved for bus use only. Also known as a “diamond lane.”

Bus Rapid Transit

A flexible system of rubber-tired rapid transit vehicles that integrates stations, running ways, and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies to improve the speed, reliability, and identity of bus transportation.

Call-A-Ride

Curb-to-curb van service provided by Metro in the City of St. Louis and portions of St. Louis County for individuals with advance reservations. Call-a-Ride Plus is van service for persons with disabilities who qualify and have a Call-A-Ride Plus ID.

Capacity

The number of people and / or vehicles that can be accommodated on a specific transportation facility (roadway, bridge, transit vehicle, for example) during a defined time period.

Capital Costs

One-time or infrequent costs of purchasing tangible transportation assets, such as land, roadways, bridges, guideways, stations, buildings and vehicles. Contrast with operating costs.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

A colorless, odorless, poisonous gas formed by the incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gasoline, oil and wood. CO is a component of motor vehicle exhaust. It is also produced from incomplete combustion of many natural and synthetic produces. Other sources include industrial processes, non-transportation fuel combustion and natural sources such as wildfires.

Carpool

An arrangement in which a number of people travel together on a regular basis in a car, usually to work or educational destinations.

Catenary

The overhead power line system for electrically-propelled rail vehicles, including light rail cars.

Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP)

Data describing the travel patterns and characteristics of Americans that is gathered by the Census Bureau as part of the decennial Census and packaged for the use of transportation planners.

Changeable Message Signs

Programmable signs used to advise drivers of traffic or roadways conditions ahead, and, in some instances, to recommend alternative routes. Also referred to as Variable Message Signs (VMS).

Clean Air Act

Federal law passed in 1970 that prescribes the national air pollution control program. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are the most far-reaching revisions of the original law. The Clean Air Act is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The states take the lead in carrying out the Act.

Clean Cities Program

A voluntary Missouri-Illinois initiative composed of fleet owners/operators, fuel and vehicle industry representatives, and government representatives from the St. Louis region. It is part of the U.S. Department of Energy program to expand the commercial use of alternative fueled vehicles. The program goals are to reduce dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality and promote economic development. The St. Louis metropolitan area was designated as a Clean City in 1994.

Clean Fuels

Low pollution fuels that can replace ordinary gasoline and help to reduce harmful emissions from vehicles. The Clean Air Act established a clean fuel program. The federally operated reformulated gasoline program (RFG) began in 1995. Under the Clean Air Act, states, based on air quality need, can adopt their own clean fuel programs for all or part of their states. Programs require gasoline with a lower volatility than federal conventional gasoline.

Compressed Natural Gas Vehicles (CNG)

Vehicles that are fueled by natural gas, or methane, in a compressed, gaseous state. CNG is the same gas that is used to heat buildings and is typically stored in cylinders at 3,000-3,600 psi. CNG is a cleaner burning fuel and therefore extends the life of an engine and reduces tailpipe emissions.

Collectors

Classification of roadways that carry vehicles to and from major arterial roads and provide access and circulation within residential neighborhoods.

Collector-Distributor Roadway

A road that generally runs parallel to an expressway and distributes traffic at access points to an expressway.

Community Transportation

Generally refers to group transportation provided at the community level by not-for-profit agencies and organizations for specific customer groups.

Community Transportation Association of America

A non-profit membership organization located in Washington, DC committed to removing transportation barriers and improving mobility for all people – including those in rural communities, those with no private vehicles, and those with disabilities.

Commuter Rail

Local and regional passenger train service between a central city, its suburbs, or another central city. May be either locomotive-hauled or self-propelled. Also known as “suburban rail.”

Complementary Paratransit

Transit service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act that complements already available fixed-route transit service, for individuals who cannot use that fixed route service because of disability.

Conformity

Consistency between transportation improvements planned at the regional level and state plans for air quality, ensuring that transportation projects, when implemented, will not compromise the state's efforts to achieve healthy air standards.

Conformity Determination

The analytical process used to assess the consistency of transportation and air quality plans. The process for determining conformity is defined in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

Congestion

The volume of traffic at which customers experience unacceptably slower travel times, increased costs, and greater likelihood of crashes.

Congestion Management System (CMS)

A systematic process by which congestion levels are monitored and improvement strategies are put in place and evaluated.

Congestion Mitigation

Lessening congestion by either decreasing the number of vehicles on the road or improving the flow of traffic.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ)

Federal funding program for transportation projects to help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Among other purposes, funding can be used for transit projects, rideshare projects, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and public fleet conversion to cleaner fuels.

Congestion Pricing

The practice of charging drivers a fee for using roadways during high-demand periods. Also known as relief tolling, variable pricing, and road pricing.

Cordon Line

A boundary that defines a metropolitan transportation study area for the purpose of surveying and modeling traffic.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE)

Provisions enacted by Congress in 1975 to reduce energy consumption by increasing the fuel economy of cars and light trucks. Regulating CAFE is the responsibility of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). NHTSA sets fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks sold in the U.S. USEPA calculates the average fuel economy for each manufacturer.

Corridor

A defined geographic area characterized by common travel patterns. This is often the geography for which transportation improvements are analyzed, through what is called a "corridor study."

Council of Governments

A voluntary association of local government units which desire to work together to study issues and / or solve problems in a geographic area. East-West Gateway was incorporated as the council of governments for the eight-county St. Louis area in 1965.

Curb-to-Curb Service

Service whereby a transit vehicle picks up and discharges passengers at the curb or driveway. Compare with "door-to-door" and "door-through-door" service.

Cutline

A line or cross-section drawn across a transportation network to measure and compare traffic volumes and forecasts.

Deadhead

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

Dedicated Funding

A source of public monies that, by law, is available for use only to support a specific purpose and cannot be diverted to other uses. Contrasts with "flexible funding," which can be diverted.

Demand-Response Service

Transit service whereby individuals can request (usually by reservation in advance) transportation from a specific origin to a specific destination. Metro's Call-A-Ride program is an example of demand-response service.

Demand and Response Transportation System (DARTS)

A principal provider of paratransit service in St. Clair County, operated by Southwestern Illinois College's Programs and Services for Older Persons.

Detectable warnings

A distinctive surface pattern of raised domes detectable by cane or underfoot, which are used to alert people with vision impairments of their approach to streets and hazardous drop-offs. The Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility guidelines requires these warnings in specified areas in pedestrians walkways intersect with vehicle ways.

Design life

The time period for which a transportation facility was built to last – typically 20-30 years.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

A small, for-profit business that meets two criteria prescribed by the U.S. Department of Transportation: it (or its stock) is at least 51 percent owned by one or more individuals who are both socially and economically disadvantaged and its management and business operations are controlled by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.

Discretionary Spending

The expenditure of public funds in a manner not constrained by a predetermined formula.

Dwell Time

The time that is scheduled for a vehicle to take picking up and dropping off passengers at a stop, including opening and closing the doors.

Earmark

A federal budgetary term that refers to the specific direction by Congress that part of a more general appropriation be used for a particular project.

East-West Gateway Council of Governments

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the eight-county region that includes the City of St. Louis; Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties in Missouri; Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois. As MPO, East-West Gateway is responsible for the coordinated planning of federally-funded transportation projects and programs in the region. www.ewgateway.org

Economic Development

Increases in wealth, wages, and productivity in a metropolitan region. One of the goals of the transportation plan is to support sustainable economic development.

Efficiency

How well the transportation system serves the needs of its customers, per unit of resources spent.

Employee Transportation Coordinator

Individual designated by a business or organization to assist employees in forming vanpools or carpools, plotting their commute by public transit, or address other transportation needs.

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Process of assessing the environmental impacts of a transportation project, where such impacts are not significant enough to require the preparation of a full Environmental Impact Statement.

Environmental Barrier Analysis

A process implemented at the community or corridor to identify physical barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing transportation services. Lack of curb cuts or sidewalks, inadequate street signs, uneven pavement are all examples of environmental barriers.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Report that details the social, economic, and environmental effects of a proposed federally-funded capital project. Effects could include air, water, or noise pollution; destruction or disruption of natural resources; displacement of residences or firms.

Environmental Justice

The equitable distribution of costs and benefits associated with any federal investment on all members of the community. An environmental justice analysis seeks to ensure that low-income persons and people of color, in particular, benefit from federal investments and do not experience disproportionate adverse environmental and health impacts.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The federal agency responsible for enforcing environmental laws, including laws designed to protect the environment from harmful consequences of transportation projects and patterns. www.epa.gov

Equity

The fair and reasonable distribution of the benefits and costs associated with transportation investments across the region and among diverse customer groups.

Ethanol

A renewable fuel produced through fermentation of corn or other high starch content grains. E85 is a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. Ethanol is stored in liquid form and dispensed just like gasoline.

Exclusive Right-of-Way

A highway or other transportation facility used only by buses or other designated vehicle types.

Expressway

A divided high-speed roadway having two or more traffic lanes in each direction, with limited controlled access.

Fare Box Revenue

The value or revenue to the transit system from cash, tokens, and pass receipts paid by passengers who use the system. Fare box revenue accounts for approximately one-fourth of Metro's operating revenues.

Federal-Aid System

The system of roads that are eligible for either National Highway System (NHS) or Surface Transportation Program (STP) federal funding.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security with responsibility for managing the federal response to natural disasters, such as floods, fires, storms, droughts. www.fema.gov

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)

The yearly accounting period for the federal government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends. (FFY05 runs from October 1, 2004 until September 30, 2005.)

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal-aid highway programs. www.fhwa.dot.gov

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal transit programs. www.fta.dot.gov

First responder

A firefighter, public safety officer, or other professional or volunteer trained to provide basic emergency medical care upon arrival at the scene of an incident such as a motor vehicle crash, before the arrival of emergency medical technicians.

Fiscal Year (FY)

The yearly accounting period for a government, agency, or firm. East-West Gateway's fiscal year begins on July 1 of each year and ends on June 30 of the following calendar year. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends.

Fixed Guideway System

A system of vehicles that can operate only on its own guideway constructed for that purpose. Light rail and rapid rail are examples of fixed guideway systems.

Fixed Route Service

Transit service provided on a repetitive, fixed schedule along a specific route with designated stops. "Bus routes" are examples of fixed route service, contrasted with flexible routing.

Flexible Funding

Federal funds that can be invested in a range of transportation projects, as warranted by local needs and preferences. Surface Transportation Program funds, for example, can be used for road or transit purposes.

Formula Funds

Funds distributed or apportioned to qualifying recipients on the basis of a calculation described in federal law.

Freeway

A divided arterial highway designed for the unimpeded flow of large volumes of through traffic.

Functional Classification

The grouping of streets and highways into classes, or systems, according to the service they are intended to provide.

Gasohol

Fuel made from a mixture of gasoline (90 percent) and ethanol (10 percent). Gasohol has higher octane properties than gasoline and burns more slowly, coolly, and completely, resulting in reduce emissions of some pollutants. It also vaporizes more readily, potentially aggravating ozone pollution in warm weather.

Gateway Blueprint

The Gateway Blueprint is an initiative of East-West Gateway Council of Governments that encourages sustainable development by supporting local planning within a regional framework. The Gateway Blueprint provides tools to assist communities in making decisions that affect the economic efficiencies, health and viability of both the local community and the region as a whole.

Gateway Clean Air Program

Vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program in Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties and the City of St. Louis, which is administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The program began 2000 and is operated by a contractor at 12 stations located throughout the Missouri portion of the St. Louis region.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Computer software and technology that allows information to be analyzed and displayed spatially, on a map. GIS is an important tool of regional planning.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

A satellite navigation system that enables receivers (such as those installed in some vehicles) to process specially programmed satellite signals and compute the exact location, velocity, and time.

Grade Separation

A vertical separation between intersecting roads or railroad tracks. One facility travels over another via an overpass or other structure.

HazMat

Refers to the safe handling of hazardous materials on roadways. The U.S. Department of Transportation regulates HazMat transport. www.hazmat.dot.gov

Headway

The time interval between vehicles moving in the same direction in a particular route. Ten minute headway means that the bus comes every ten minutes, for example.

Heavy Rail Transit

Self-guided passenger ground transportation that occupies its own secure right-of-way and is powered by a third rail at ground level. Contrast with "light rail."

Hybrid Vehicle

A vehicle that combines two or more sources of power, such as gasoline and electricity or diesel and electricity.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

A vehicle carrying two or more people.

High Speed Ground Transportation

A system of vehicles that travel on continuously welded track at speeds between 120 to 320 miles per hour. "Bullet trains" are a form of high speed ground transportation.

Highway

Roads, streets, and parkways, including rights-of-way, bridges, railroad crossings, tunnels, drainage structures, signs, guardrails, and protective structures.

Highway Trust Fund

The federal trust fund established by the Highway Revenue Act of 1956. Trust fund revenues are derived from federal highway user fees and motor fuel taxes.

Human Services Transportation

Transportation related to accessing human or social services such as health care, nutrition services, education.

Illinois Department of Transportation

State agency based in Springfield responsible for planning, constructing, and maintaining Illinois' transportation network. The local district office is in Collinsville. www.dot.state.il.us

Incident

A traffic crash, stalled vehicle, load spillage or any other event that blocks or impedes traffic flow in one or more lanes.

Infrastructure

The physical facilities that support necessary social and commercial functions, including transportation, waste systems, public housing, sidewalks, utility installations, parks, public building, and communications networks.

Inspection and maintenance (I/M)

Program operated by the state of Missouri under which a vehicle is checked to see if it is being maintained to keep pollution down and whether emissions control systems are working properly. In this way, vehicles with malfunctioning systems are identified and the vehicle owner is required to make repairs to reduce emissions. In the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Air Team I/M program, vehicles registered within certain zip codes in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois are required to be tested every other year.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

The use of information and communication technologies in vehicles, roadways, signage or other aspects of the transportation system to improve efficiency and safety.

Intermodal

A transportation system connecting or including different modes of transportation.

Interstate Highway System

That system of highways that connects the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers of the United States. The routes of the Interstate system are selected by joint action of the highway department of each state and the adjoining states, subject to the approval of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and the Congress.

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

Funding program of the Federal Transit Administration intended to expand the mobility options low-income workers and urban core residents who want to work in suburban areas not served by existing public transit.

Journey to Work

Travel to or from one's place of work. This term does not include travel undertaken as a part of work.

Just-in-time Delivery

Delivery of products and raw materials to customers close to the precise time when they are needed for installation, manufacturing, or sale, in order to reduce the need to store large inventories.

Kiss and Ride

Curb location at a transit station or commuter parking lot where passengers can be dropped off or picked up.

Land Use

Property is often grouped in categories, including commercial, residential, retail, industrial, recreational or green space.

Layover Time

In scheduling, there is an allowance made for how long it takes between the arrival at the end of a route and the departure for the return trip.

Legacy 2025

The region's metropolitan plan that sets the agenda for future investment decisions regarding the area's transportation system. The focus areas are preservation of the existing infrastructure, safety and security, congestion, access to opportunity, sustainable development, and efficient movement of goods. The plan is updated every three years.

Level of Service

A description of the state of a transportation facility is rated on a scale of "A" to "F." For a highway, an "A" rating means traffic is flowing freely and "E" and "F" means it is very congested. Other LOS highway measurements include density, speed and maximum service flow.

Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Fixed rail vehicles that are electrically powered by overhead wires, also known as Catenary wires. Light rail transit systems make more frequent stops and travel more slowly than heavy rail or high speed rail service that is designed to serve more riders and make less frequent stops.

LEARN + WORK LINK

An effort to create a strategy to improve transportation options for residents of inner city communities so that they can get to work and attend education and training programs to improve their job skills. With MetroLink serving as its backbone, it builds on and complements existing transit assets by getting input from community residents and community-based organizations.

Load Factor

The ratio of passengers carried to the total passenger capacity of a vehicle.

Local Street

A street intended to provide access to adjacent property.

Locally Preferred Alternative

The transportation improvement selected by local elected officials after completion of a major transportation investment analysis (MTIA) process.

Long-Range Plan

A document that is an assessment of a region's transportation facility, service and policy needs over the next 20 years. The plan considers a wide range of social, environmental, energy and economic factors. The plan considers overall regional goals and how transportation can meet those goals within financial limits.

Madison County Transit (MCT)

A publicly funded governmental entity created by the Illinois Legislature in 1980 to oversee the development of public transit in Madison County.

Major Transportation Investment Analysis (MTIA)

The planning process used to identify and evaluate potential large-scale, expensive transportation alternatives to address problems in a corridor or a subregion.

Mass Transit Account

The surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 designated that a portion of the federal Highway Trust Fund revenue from motor fuel taxes be placed in this federal account so the funds could assist mass transit.

Match

Federal grants often require a commitment of state or local funds to qualify for a federal grant. Services, such as the work of volunteers, may be counted as an in-kind funding match. Federal transportation programs normally require the match cannot come from another federal source.

Medicaid

The federal-state medical assistance program also supports patient transportation with any necessary transportation purpose being eligible.

Metro

The regional transit agency, formerly know as the Bi-State Redevelopment Corp., was formed in 1949 through a compact between Illinois and Missouri that was approved by the U.S. Congress. Metro owns and operates the region's mass transit system and has the power to act across local, county and state boundaries to develop regional transportation programs. Metro's network consists of buses, light rail, the Gateway Arch transportation system, the Arch Parking Garage and the Downtown Parks Airport. www.metrostl.org

MetroBus

The motor vehicle used by the regional transit agency to transport passengers

MetroLink

The St. Louis region's light rail system operates 65 light rail cars on 38 miles of track from Lambert International Airport in St. Louis County to Southwestern Illinois College in Shiloh, Illinois near Scott Air Force Base. Future MetroLink extensions will include a mid-county extension to Clayton and south through Richmond Heights to Shrewsbury.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

A group of local officials with the federal mandate to develop transportation plans and programs for urban areas with a population of more than 50,000. MPOs are formed by agreement with the state's governor and representatives of local governments that represent at least 75 percent of the affected population. East-West Gateway Council of Governments was incorporated in 1965 as the MPO for the City of St. Louis and the counties of Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties in Missouri and Madison, Monroe and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

Metropolitan Education and Training Center

The facility is a partnership of public and community-based organizations, consisting of St. Louis Community College, St. Louis County, Better Family Life, East-West Gateway Regional Jobs Initiative and the City of St. Louis. The MET Center offers job training programs, academic enhancement, employment preparation, job placement, career development and transportation assistance. The MET Center is located adjacent to the Wellston MetroLink Station at 6347 Plymouth Ave.

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)

The state agency is responsible for designing, building and maintaining state highways in Missouri. The agency helps coordinate the development and improvement of airports, rail facilities, and ports. It also can assist in the operational cost of transit systems. www.modot.gov

Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission

The commission has authority over all state transportation programs and facilities, including bridges, highways, aviation, railroads, mass transportation, ports and waterborne commerce. The commission has six members, appointed by the governor with the consent of the state Senate to staggered terms of six years apiece. No more than three commissioners can be of the same political party. The commission appoints the director, chief counsel and secretary of the Missouri Department of Transportation.

Modal Split

The ratio of people who use private automobiles compared to those who use public transit. It also means the process to study the number of trips that will be made by two or more modes of transportation.

Mode

The type or means of travel includes auto driver, passenger, mass transit passenger, cyclist, equestrian, pedestrian or other.

Multimodal

Multimodal refers to the integration of various types of transportation in one system. A goal of planning is the achievement of a seamless multimodal system.

National Highway System (NHS)

Roads eligible for this federal funding program include interstate highways and roads designated as important for interstate travel, national defense, intermodal connections, and international commerce.

Network

A graphic or mathematical representation of travel paths that is used in travel demand market.

New Start

Federal funding for construction of "fixed guideway systems" which are designed for a system of vehicles that can only operate on that guideway, such as rapid rail, light rail or exclusive right-of-ways for buses.

Obligated Funds

A legally binding commitment of money to a project by an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Off-Peak Period

Times of the day when travel to and from work is less, therefore travel activity is generally lower and less transit service is scheduled. This is also called a "base period."

Operating Expenses

Money paid for salaries, wages, materials, supplies, fuel and equipment used to maintain property, roads, bridges facilities, equipment and buildings. Also would cover funds needed to operate vehicles, rent equipment and facilities and settle claims.

Outlay

A federal budget term referring to a payment to meet an obligation. The point at which the actual payment of money is made.

Paratransit

A variety of transportation services designed to serve the needs of persons not usually able to use conventional routes or vehicles. Flexible schedules and small vehicles, including vans, operate within normal transit corridors to serve the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Peak Hour/Peak Period

The defined time period in the morning or evening in which the largest volume of travel is experienced.

Pedestrian walkway

Secured place or path for people to walk.

Persons Miles of Travel (PMT)

When an individual travels one mile, the result is one person mile of travel. When four persons travel five miles in the same vehicle, 20 PMTs result.

Person Trips

A trip by one individual in any mode of transportation between an origin and a destination is a one person trip. Four persons traveling together in one automobile account for four "person trips."

Policy on Reasonable Progress

When federal money is awarded to a project, the money needs to be spent in a timely manner. If the work stalls or falls behind schedule, East-West Gateway Council of Governments can require that the money be returned to the regional funding pool and redirected to other projects.

Preservation

The maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing transportation systems without expanding capacity.

Primary seat belt law

In states with a primary seat belt law, police can issue a citation any time they observe an unbelted driver or passenger. A secondary seat belt law means a law enforcement officer can only issue a citation for not wearing a seat belt if the vehicle has been stopped for some other reason.

Privatization

When a for-profit business provides a public service, usually under contract to a government agency.

Programmed Funds

The amount of funds scheduled for a project in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Programming

The designation of money for transportation projects which when approved are included in the transportation improvement program (TIP).

Project Sponsor

Any local government or public agency that implements and provides matching funds for a proposed transportation project.

Provider

An agency that operates transit services and not an agency who only funds programs.

Public Authority

Any government entity that has the authority to finance, build, operate or maintain toll or toll-free transportation facilities.

Public road

Any street or thoroughfare open to traffic and under the jurisdiction and maintenance of a non-private authority and is open to traffic.

Public Transportation

Buses, trains and other vehicles that can be used on a regular basis by any member of the community.

Rapid Transit

A transportation system of trains that use their own right of ways and are powered electrically by overhead wires or a third rail in the middle of the track.

Record of Decision

The final approval of an Environmental Impact Statement issued by the Federal Highway Administration.

Requests for Bids, Proposals, Qualifications (RFB, RFP, RFQ)

Preliminary stages of competitive process for procurement of capital items or consulting services.

Reverse commute

Travel to home or to work against the main flow of traffic.

Ridesharing

When more than one person shares a vehicle to make a trip. Also known as carpooling and vanpooling.

Right of Way (ROW)

A common law or statutory allowance granted so that a public road, utility line or railroad can pass through a strip of land.

Route Deviation

A mix of a regular timetable and on-demand response to requests for transit usually devised to accommodate passengers with disabilities who cannot access the fixed route stop.

Shuttle

A service featuring vehicles that carry 20-or-fewer persons, connecting major trip destinations and serving as a feeder service to main transit routes.

Single Occupant vehicle (SOV)

Any vehicle that contains only a driver.

St. Charles County Transit District

The agency empowered to own and operate transportation systems and facilities in St. Charles County.

St. Clair County Transit District

A special purpose unit of local government that collects .25 percent sales tax for the purpose of providing public transportation in a district within St. Clair County.

St. Louis Regional Plan for Access to Jobs

A five-year program designed to use transportation systems to help members of low-income households get to their jobs.

St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

The Census Bureau delineation for major metropolitan areas, in the case of St. Louis the MSA consists of Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, St. Louis counties and the city of St. Louis on the Missouri side of the river and St. Clair, Madison and Monroe counties on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River.

State Infrastructure Banks (SIBs)

Federal and other funding sources are used to set up a state level fund used to lend money to sponsors of transportation projects or to provide credit enhancement. As the loans are repaid, the SIB's balance is replenished so that new loans or loan guarantees can be made to other projects related to the basic installations and facilities of the transportation system.

Suballocated Funds

Funds that are distributed to the states from the federal government and then in turn are given to local jurisdictions for specific purposes.

Surface Transportation Policy Project

The project is a nationwide coalition dedicated to ensuring safer communities and smarter transportation choices that improve the economy, public health, social equity and the environment. The STPP is a non-profit organization funded by individual donations and a variety of national and regional foundations.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

A federal capital program that provides flexibility for spending funds for a category of activities known as transportation enhancements, broadening the definition to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities and enhancement of environmental quality.

Title III

A section of the Older Americans Act that pays for nutrition and transportation programs to serve elderly persons.

Title VI

The section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs that received federal financial assistance, including transportation projects.

Transfer Center

A location at which passengers change from one route or vehicle to another route or vehicle to get where they are going.

Transit

Passenger service provided to the general public along fixed routes with regular or variable schedules available for published fares.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

The integrated development of residential, commercial and public space within walking distance of public transit facilities with the purpose of making it safe and attractive to walk through, while still accommodating automobile traffic.

Transit Tax

Any levy on sales, income or property that is dedicated to fund transportation services, including any public transportation services such as buses and light rail.

Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ)

An area used to study the effects of traffic and transit on an area that can be from one to 10 square miles in area, with the average size depending on the total size of the study area.

Transportation Control Measures (TCMs)

Any measure designed to reduce traffic congestion and other traffic problems, for the purpose of improving air quality.

Transportation Development Districts

A defined area in which a specific tax is levied and collected to fund transportation improvements or transportation services in that area.

Transportation Enhancements

Improvements funded through a 10 percent portion from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds that enhance the aesthetic, safety and performance aspects of existing transportation facilities.

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

A legislative initiative by the U.S. Congress signed into law in 1998 that reauthorized and restructured funding and planning for highway and transit programs. TEA-21 creates opportunities to improve air and water quality, restore wetlands and natural habitat and rejuvenate urban areas through transportation redevelopment, increased transit and sustainable alternatives to urban sprawl.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A program of intermodal projects to be implemented over several years that grows out of the planning process and designed to improve transportation in a community. A TIP is required as a condition for a locality to receive federal transit and highway grants.

Transportation Management Area (TMA)

All urbanized areas with a population of more than 200,000 are considered a Transportation Management Area. Within a TMA, all transportation plans and programs must be approved and supervised by the Metropolitan Planning Organization in cooperation with the state and the transit operators.

Transportation Management Association (TMA)

A voluntary association of public and private agencies that join to cooperatively improve transportation. TMAs attempt better manage transportation demand in congested suburban areas.

Transportation Network

A representation of roadways and a transit system in a computer database.

Transportation Planning Committee (TPC)

The TPC is a technical advisory group to East-West Gateway's Executive Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors.

Transportation Redefined

Transportation Redefined is the long-range plan for the St. Louis region. First adopted in 1994, the plan states regional goals and objectives. The plan lists highway and transit projects that should be implemented during the next 20 years.

Transportation System Management

The TSM consists of projects that are non-capital intensive and that improve the efficiency of a transportation system. This includes refinement of system and traffic management, the use of bus priority or reserved lanes, and parking strategies.

Travel Demand Forecasting

The process that is used to predict travel behavior and the future demand within a specific time frame.

Travel Demand Model

A mathematical representation of human travel behavior that is designed to forecast travel so that problems can be defined and solutions can be tested.

Travel Time

The measurable interval it takes to cover a distance door-to-door. In transportation planning, measures of travel time include the time spent accessing, waiting and transferring between vehicles.

Trip

A one-direction movement from an origin to a destination.

Trip-chaining

The combination of trips to and from work with errands such as grocery shopping, dropping or picking up children at school.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP identifies transportation planning and programming activities in the upcoming year so that federally funded transportation work can be coordinated on a metropolitan wide basis.

Urbanized Area

An area of 50,000 or more residents designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, that includes a central city or two adjacent cities but excludes the rural portion of the cities.

Vanpool

A pre-arranged service in which a number of people regularly share a ride in a van. The service can be employer operated, administered by a public agency or individually owned or leased.

Vehicle miles to travel (VMT)

The sum of all the miles traveled by a vehicle in a specific amount of time with no consideration of how many people were involved.

Volume to Capacity Ratio

The measurement is a way to measure roadway congestion by comparing the current volume of traffic to the capacity for which it was designed. A low ratio reflects relatively free flowing conditions and a high ratio is typical of congested conditions.

Ways to Work

A federally certified program that provides small loans to low-income families that are commonly used for automobile purchase or repair, mortgage or housing expenses or child care. The purpose of the program is to help parents keep a job or stay in school.

Weaving section

A part of the highway usually formed when merge areas are closely followed by diverging areas. The sections are formed when two or more vehicle flows must cross paths along a length of roadway.

Wheels for Success

A non-profit corporation that provides reliable automobiles for a nominal price for those low-income individuals who have difficulty finding transportation to employment opportunities.

Where We Stand

A periodic report compiled by East-West Gateway Council of Governments that describes the standing of the St. Louis region among its peers in relationship to more than 80 social, economic, fiscal and physical variables.

Workforce Investment Bonds (WIBs)

WIBs are part of the Workforce Investment Act, which combines federally funded job training.

For More Information

More information on transportation issues, plans and programs, and events is available from East-West Gateway's web page, accessible at www.ewgateway.org. Numerous other transportation resources are linked to this site.

Both state and federal transportation agencies provide a wealth of up-to-date information about transportation issues, statistics, and policies via the World Wide Web, as well. The reader may wish to visit:

the Illinois Department of Transportation at www.dot.state.il.us

the Missouri Department of Transportation at www.modot.state.mo.us

the US Department of Transportation at www.dot.gov