

Glossary of Transit Terminology

Source: *Glossary of Transit Terminology*, American Public Transit Association, Washington, DC, 1994.

Base Period	The period between the morning and evening peak periods when transit service is generally scheduled on a constant interval. Also known as “ off-peak period. ”
Base Fare	The price charged to one adult for one transit ride; excludes transfer charges, zone charges, express service charges, peak period surcharges and reduced fares.
Deadhead	The movement of a transit vehicle without passengers aboard.
Downtime	A period during which a vehicle is inoperative because of repairs or maintenance.
Dwell Time	The scheduled time a vehicle or train is allowed to discharge and take on passengers at a stop, including opening and closing doors.
Fare Box Recovery Ratio	Measure of the proportion of operating expenses covered by passenger fares; found by dividing fare box revenue by total operating expenses for each mode and/or systemwide.
Fare Box Revenue	Value of cash, tickets, tokens and pass receipts given by passengers as payment for rides; excludes charter revenue.
Fare Elasticity	The extent to which ridership responds to fare increases or decreases.
Headway	Time interval between vehicles moving in the same direction on a particular route.
Kiss and Ride	A place where commuters are driven and dropped off at a station to board a public transportation vehicle.
Layover Time	Time built into a schedule between arrival at the end of a route and the departure for the return trip, used for the recovery of delays and preparation for the return trip.
Load Factor	The ratio of passengers actually carried versus the

total passenger capacity of a vehicle.

Off-Peak Period	Non-rush periods of the day when travel activity is generally lower and less transit service is scheduled. Also called “ base period. ”
Operating Assistance	Financial assistance for transit operating expenses (not capital costs); such aid may originate with federal, local or state governments.
Operating Deficit	The sum of all operating expenses minus operating revenues .
Operating Expense	Monies paid in salaries, wages, materials, supplies and equipment in order to maintain equipment and buildings, operate vehicles, rent equipment and facilities and settle claims.
Operating Revenue	Receipts derived from or for the operation of transit service, including fare box revenue , revenue from advertising, interest and charter bus service and operating assistance from governments.
Passenger Miles	The total number of miles traveled by passengers on transit vehicles; determined by multiplying the number of unlinked passenger trips times the average length of their trips.
Peak Period	Morning and afternoon time periods when transit riding is heaviest.
Peak/Base Ratio	The number of vehicles operated in passenger service during the peak period divided by the number operated during the base period .
Ridership	The number of rides taken by people using a public transportation system in a given time period.
Transfer Center	A fixed location where passengers interchange from one route or vehicle to another.

TCRP Synthesis #10, Appendix H

Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION	SYNONYMS
A.M. PEAK	The portion of the morning service period where the greatest level of ridership is experienced and service provided. The A.M. peak period has typically coincided with the morning rush hour period rush hour period and; depending on the system, generally falls in between the hours of 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM. In large systems with long routes, the peak may. occur at different times on the various routes. The advent of flex time and alternative work shifts has had an impact on the time and duration of the AM peak at some systems, generally flattening I but lengthening the peak.	A.M. Rush , Early Peak Morning Peak Morning Rush Morning Commission Hour
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (ADA)	The law passed by Congress in 1990 which makes it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment, services provided by state and local governments, public and private transportation, public accommodations and telecommunications.	
ARTERIAL STREET	A major thoroughfare, used primarily for through traffic rather than for access to adjacent land, that is characterized by high vehicular capacity and continuity of movement.	
AUTOMATIC PASSENGER COUNTERS (APC) (predates "smart technology")	A technology installed on transit vehicles that counts the number of boarding and alighting passengers at each stop while also noting the time. Pa3sengers are counted using either pulse beams or step treadles located at each door. Stop location is generally identified through use of either global positioning systems (GPS) or signpost transmitters in combination with vehicle odometers.	Smart Counters
AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATION (AVL)	A smart technology that monitors the real-time location of transit vehicles (generally non-rail modes) through the use of one or more of the following: global positioning systems (GPS), Loran-C, or signpost transmitters in combination with vehicle odometers. Most installations include integration of the AVL system with a geographic information system (GIS or computer mapping system). The monitoring station is normally located in the dispatch/radio communications center.	
BRANCH	One of multiple route segments served by a single route.	
BUS HOURS	The total hours of travel by bus, including both revenue service and deadhead travel.	Vehicle Hours
BUS MILES	The total miles of travel by bus, including both revenue and deadhead travel.	Vehicle Miles
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)	The traditional downtown retail, trade, and commercial area of a city or an area of very high land valuation, traffic flow, and concentration of retail business offices, theaters, hotels, and services.	
CROSSTOWN ROUTE	Non-radial bus service which normally does not enter the Central Business District (CBD).	
DEADHEAD	There are two types of deadhead or non-revenue bus travel time: 1) Bus travel to or from the garage and a terminus point where revenue service begins or ends; 2) A bus's travel between the end of service on one route to the beginning of another.	Non-Revenue Time

TERM	DEFINITION	SYNONYMS
EXPRESS SERVICE	<p>Express service is deployed in one of two general configurations:</p> <p>1) A service generally connecting 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 bus way with limited stops at each end for collection and distribution.- Residential collection can be exclusively or partially undertaken using park-and-ride facilities.</p> <p>2) Service operated 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.</p>	<p>Rapids (1 or 2) Commuter Express (1) Flyers (1)</p>
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.	
GARAGE	The place where revenue vehicles are stored and maintained and from where they are dispatched and recovered for the delivery of scheduled service.	<p>Barn Base Depot District Division O/M Facility (ops/maint) Yard</p>
HEADWAY	The scheduled time interval between any two revenue vehicles' operating in the same direction on a route: Headways may be- LOAD driven, that is, developed on the basis of demand and loading standards or, POLICY based, i.e., dictated by policy decisions such as service every 30 minutes during the peak periods and every 60 minutes during the base period.	<p>Frequency Schedule Vehicle Spacing</p>
INTERLINING	<p>Interlining is used in two ways:</p> <p>Interlining allows the use of the same revenue vehicle and/or operator on more than one route without going back to the garage. Interlining is often considered as a means to minimize vehicle requirements as well as a method to provide transfer enhancement for passengers. For interlining to be feasible, two (or more) routes must share a common terminus or be reasonably proximate to each other (see DEADHEAD).</p>	<p>Through Routes Interlock Routes Interlocking</p>
LAYOVER	Layover time serves two major functions: recovery time for the schedule to ensure on-time departure for the next trip and, in some systems, operator rest or break time between trips. Layover time is often determined by labor agreement, requiring "off-duty" time after a certain amount of driving time.	Recovery
LIMITED SERVICE	Higher speed arterial service that serves only selected stops. As opposed to express service; there is not usually a significant stretch of non-stop operation.	
LINKED PASSENGER TRIPS	A linked passenger trip is a trip from origin to destination on the transit system. Even if a passenger must make several transfers during a one-way journey, the trip is counted as one linked trip on the system. Unlinked passenger trips count each boarding as a separate trip regardless of transfers.	

TERM	DEFINITION	SYNONYMS
MAXIMUM LOAD POINT	The location(s) along a route where the vehicle passenger load is the greatest. The maximum load point(s) generally differ by direction and may also be unique to each of the daily operating periods. Long or complex routes may have multiple maximum load points.	
MISSED TRIP	A schedule trip that did not operate for a variety of reasons including operator absence, vehicle failure, dispatch error, traffic, accident or other unforeseen reason.	
OWL	Service that operates during the late night/early morning hours or all night service.	Hawk
PASSENGER CHECK	A check (count) made of passengers arriving at, boarding and alighting, leaving from, or passing through one or more points on a route. Checks are conducted by riding (ridecheck) or at specific locations (point check). Passenger checks are conducted in order to obtain information on passenger riding that will assist in determining both appropriate directional headways on a route and the effectiveness of the route alignment. They are also undertaken to meet FTA Section 15 reporting requirements and to calibrate revenue-based ridership models.	Tally
PASSENGER MILES	A measure of service utilization which represents the cumulative sum of the distances ridden by each passenger. It is normally calculated by summation of the passenger load times the distance between individual bus stops. For example, ten passengers riding in a transit vehicle for two miles equals 20 passenger miles.	
PEAK HOUR/PEAK PERIOD	The period with the highest ridership during the entire service day, generally referring to either the peak hour or peak several hours (peak period).	Commission Hour
PICK	The selection process by which operators are allowed to select new work assignments, i.e., run or the Extra Board in the next (forthcoming) schedule.	Bid Mark-up Line-up Shake-up Sign-up
PULL-IN TIME	The non-revenue time assigned for the movement of a revenue vehicle from its last scheduled terminus or stop to the garage.	Turn-In Time Deadhead Time Run-off Time
PULL-OUT TIME	The non-revenue time assigned for the movement of a revenue vehicle from the garage to its first scheduled terminus or stop.	Deadhead Time Run-on Time
RECOVERY TIME	Recovery time is distinct from layover, although they are usually combined together. Recovery time is a planned time allowance between the arrival time of a just completed trip and the departure time of the next trip in order to allow the route to return to schedule if traffic, loading, or other conditions have made the trip arrive late. Recovery time is considered as reserve running time and typically, the operator will remain on duty during the recovery period.	Layover Time
REVENUE HOUR	The measure of scheduled hours of service available to passengers for transport on the routes. Excludes deadhead hours but includes recovery/layover time. Calculated for each route.	
REVENUE SERVICE	When a revenue vehicle is in operation over a route and is available to the public for transport.	

TERM	DEFINITION	SYNONYMS
ROUTE	An established series of streets and turns connecting two terminus locations.	Line
RUNNING TIME	The time assigned for the movement of a revenue vehicle over a route, usually done on a [route] segment basis by various time of day.	Travel Time
SCHEDULE	From the transit agency (not the public time table), a document that, at a minimum, shows the time of each revenue trip through the designated time points. Many properties include additional information such as route descriptions, deadhead times and amounts, interline information, run numbers, block numbers, etc.	Headway Master Schedule Timetable Operating Schedule Recap/Supervisor's Guide
SERVICE AREA	The square miles of the agency's operating area. Service area is now defined consistent with ADA requirements.	
SERVICE SPAN	The span of hours over which service is operated, e.g., 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. or 24 hr. (owl). Service span often varies by weekday, Saturday, or Sunday.	Span of Service Service Day
TIMED TRANSFER	A point or location where two or more routes come together at the same time to provide positive transfer connections. A short layover may be provided at the timed transfer point to enhance the connection. 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	Pulse Transfer Positive Transfer
TOTAL MILES	The total miles includes revenue, deadhead, and yard (maintenance and servicing) miles.	
TRAVEL TIME	The time allowed for an operator to travel between the garage and a remote relief point.	Relief Time Travel Allowance
TRIP	The one-way operation of a revenue vehicle between two terminus points on a route. Trips are generally noted as inbound, outbound, eastbound, westbound, etc. to identify directionality when being discussed or printed.	Journey One-Way Trip
UNLINKED PASSENGER TRIPS	The total number of passengers who board public transit vehicles. A passenger is counted each time he/she boards a revenue vehicle even though the boarding may be the result of a transfer from another route to complete the same one-way journey. Where linked or unlinked is not designated, unlinked is assumed.	Passengers Passenger Trips