

# Glossary

---

Access	The number of jobs or residents reachable from a starting location by transit and walking. Access is often calculated for many starting points in a network, based on some assumed travel-time “budget,” and summarized on a map.
Arterial road	A high-capacity through road.
Circulator	Circulator is often used to describe a service that provides transit coverage to a low-density area, because the travel paths that result are so often circular in shape. In some places a circulator is also operated downtown. Large circular transit routes that offer high speed or high frequency and serve high demand areas, however, are generally referred to as loops.
Commuter express service	An FTA designation that distinguishes between fixed routes that must be supplemented by paratransit, and fixed routes that may not. From the FTA’s website: “Commuter bus service means fixed route bus service, characterized by service predominantly in one direction during peak periods, limited stops, use of multi-ride tickets, and routes of extended length, usually between the central business district and outlying suburbs. Commuter bus service may also include other service, characterized by a limited route structure, limited stops, and a coordinated relationship to another mode of transportation.” <a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/12876_3906.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/12876_3906.html</a>
Connection	A connection or transfer takes place when a person uses two transit vehicles to make a trip.
Coverage	Coverage can refer to the amount of geographic space, the proportion of people or the proportion of jobs that are within a certain distance of transit service. An assumption about how far people will walk to a given transit service—often ranging from 1/4 to 1/2 mile—must be made in order to estimate coverage.
Deadhead hours	The time a vehicle spends between the garage and the start or end of revenue service, or between the end of a trip on one route and the beginning of a trip on another route.
Dial-a-ride	Demand response service, usually requires booking a day in advance, over the phone.
Express	Express can have a range of meanings when applied to transit. It most often describes a route with a long non-stop segment. It can also be used to describe a route with wide stop spacing and overall faster speeds, though that is more commonly called a rapid.
Farebox recovery	Farebox recovery is a measure of how much of a transit system, network or route’s operating cost is recovered through fares. It is often expressed as a ratio, e.g. “The farebox recovery ratio for KCATA’s fixed routes in 2013 was 20%.”
Feeder	A local route that connects or feeds into a radial route. Low-frequency feeders sometimes pulse so that transferring is more convenient
Fixed route transit	Fixed route transit describes any transit service that is operated on the same predictable route. In contrast, paratransit and demand-responsive service may always or often follow different routes for each vehicle trip, as they serve different customers and their trips.
Frequency	Frequency is often expressed in minutes, i.e. a service that comes every 15 minutes has “15 minute frequency.” A more technical term for frequency is headway.

Grid Network	A network of routes that intersect all over the city. Grid networks are best suited for places with many activity centers, as opposed to radial networks, where most people are traveling to a central location. Grid networks require high-frequency to make transfers short, reliable and convenient.
Headway	Headway is the time between successive trips at a stop, a more technical transit term for frequency. A service that comes every 15 minutes can be said to have a “15 minute headway.”
Investment	Service or revenue hours per capita, a measure of the relative level of transit service.
Isochrone	An illustration to help visualize where someone can go from a location, in a certain amount of time, using transit or by walking.
Land use	Land use describes the way a parcel of land is being used, for example as commercial, industrial or multi-family residential. Land use descriptions can be general or very specific. Land use is distinct from zoning, as land may be rezoned under existing uses and buildings long before changes to its use take place.
Layover	Time for driver breaks between trips. Usually included in revenue hours. Unlike recovery time, layover time sometimes cannot be skipped even when a bus is behind schedule.
Longline	Some routes have a more frequent inner segment and a less frequent outer segment. At the end of the inner segment, some buses turn around and come back, while others continue on to a more distant turnaround point. The outer, less-frequent segment is often called the “longline,” though technically the longline is the longest path that buses on that route travel, and its length is the inner segment plus the outer segment. The inner segment is called the “shortline.”
Microtransit	Demand response service, like dial-a-ride, but usually distinguished by same day or instant booking, often with an app.
Mobility	Mobility is generally used to express the ease with which people can move from place to place. It is distinct from access, which describes the extent to which people can meet their needs nearby. In some places, people have high access (they are able to meet all of their needs without travelling very far or at all) and low mobility (because traveling long distances is difficult or slow). In other places, mobility is high and access is low.
Mode share	Mode share is a technical term for the percentage of a population that uses a particular mode (e.g. transit, walking, driving) for traveling. Mode share information in the U.S. is generally reported for commute trips.
National Transit Database	The National Transit Database is a federal clearinghouse of general information about transit in the U.S. and information specific to each transit agency. Agencies of a certain size are required to submit financial and performance data to the NTD each year. <a href="https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/">https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/</a>
One-seat-ride	A trip that requires boarding only one transit vehicle (no transfers).

Paratransit	Paratransit is a transit service that provides on-demand curb-to-curb travel for people with disabilities, per the American's with Disabilities Act. It is required by this U.S. law to be provided to people who have a disability that prevents them from using fixed route transit service, within 3/4 mile of fixed route transit, during all times when fixed route transit is operating.
Peak	In some places, two peaks of travel (and transit) demand take place each day: in the morning and afternoon, as people travel to and from work and school. However, in many places travel demand peaks only once, in the midday or afternoon, as service shifts change and students leave school.
Peak-only	A transit service that is peak-only operates only during the morning and afternoon travel peaks.
Productivity	The word productivity is often used in transit to describe the number of people served per unit of cost. Productivity can be expressed for an entire transit system, a subset of the system, individual lines or even for segments of lines.
Pulse	A pulse takes place when two or more transit services arrive together at the same place at the same time, so that their passengers may transfer among them with minimal waiting.
Radial	A route or network design where most routes go to and from a central point (typically a downtown). As opposed to a grid network.
Rapid	Rapid can have a range of meanings when applied to transit. It most often describes a route with wider stop spacing and overall faster speed.
Recovery time	Extra time between trips to make up for a delay. Unlike layover, which is a driver's break time, recovery time can be cut short so that the next trip can depart on-time.
Relevance	Boardings per capita, a measure of how relevant transit is to the population it serves.
Revenue hours	The time a transit vehicle and its operator spend out in public, available to passengers and (potentially) collecting revenue. Usually includes layover and recovery time, but excludes deadhead.
Ride check	The National Transit Database requires that transit agencies regularly sample on all of their services to collect ridership and on-time performance information. This is often performed using surveyors on transit vehicles, though increasingly it is performed by automated counters and GPS devices on transit vehicles. It is sometimes called a ride check.
Ridership	Ridership refers informally to the number of boardings or trips taken on a transit system or a particular transit service.
Shortline	Some routes have a more frequent inner segment and a less frequent outer segment. At the end of the inner segment some buses turn around and come back, while others continue on to a more distant turnaround point. The outer, less-frequent segment is often called the "longline," though technically the longline is the longest path that buses on that route travel, and its length is the inner segment plus the outer segment. The inner segment is called the "shortline."

Span	The span of a transit service is the number of hours it operates during the day, e.g. a service that runs from 6:00 am to 11:30 pm would have a 17.5 hour span. Span can also describe the number of days per week and per year that a service is operated.
Street connectivity	The degree to which streets connect to one another, and multiple paths exist between any two points, is describe as that place's connectivity. Areas with many cul de sacs or loops and few through routes have low connectivity; areas with grid-like street patterns have high connectivity. Low connectivity discourages trips by slower modes (such as walking or bicycling), and presents challenges for transit routing.
Transfer	When a person uses more than one transit vehicle to make a trip, they transfer in between vehicles. This is also often called a connection.
Transit dependency	If a person has a severe need for transit, due to a disability or to lack of access to an automobile, they are often referred to as transit dependent. However, transit dependency is in fact a spectrum, not a category. People with disabilities and people without their own cars may have access to rides or taxis, but the extent to which they use those rides may depend on the availability and quality of transit service.
Transit orientation	As with transit dependency, transit orientation is a spectrum, not a category. People who are living or working around higher activity densities, in places where walking to transit is safe and appealing, or who do not have easy access to an automobile may have some degree of transit orientation. Transit orientation can exist among poor and affluent populations alike.
Tripper	A tripper is a special type of transit service that makes only a few or a single trip each day. Transit agencies often send one or more trippers to relieve crowding on certain routes, or to provide direct service where none exists at other hours. Trippers often run at the start and end of school days or work shifts.
Vehicle hours	The time during which a transit vehicle is away from the garage, whether providing revenue service (represented by "revenue hours"), driving between the garage and the start or end of service (represented by "deadhead hours") or in layover and recovery time.