

Glossary

Last updated 8/2/2006

Environmental Justice

A federal directive requiring all federal programs to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Populations considered to be EJ populations include African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, or Hispanic Americans, the elderly, and low-income households.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the Federal-Aid Highway Program and provides financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

Fiscal Constraint

The concept that the total cost of a given area's transportation projects cannot exceed the funding that area can reasonably expect to receive. Federal law requires both the Long Range Plan (LRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be fiscally constrained.

Freight

Goods carried by a vessel or vehicle, especially by a commercial carrier.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

A collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act of 1991 (ISTEA)

Expanded upon the 1974 Federal-Aid Highway Act that mandated the formation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all areas greater than 50,000 in population. ISTEA specified a greater importance of public participation in the transportation planning and decision making process. Metropolitan Planning Organizations are required to maintain a formal public participation process.

Long Range Transportation Plan / Long Range Plan (LRP)

The long-range, multi-modal plan updated every four years, documenting policies, initiatives, and projects designed to meet the surface transportation needs of the region.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

An organization designated by the governor and local elected officials as the agency responsible, along with the state, for planning in urbanized areas (with population of 50,000 – 200,000 people, which are designated by the U.S. Census). The organization serves as a forum for cooperative decision-making by local elected officials.

Multi-Modal

Planning and infrastructure focusing on connectivity between modes (such as trucks, boats, cars, bicycles, pedestrians, buses, and planes) as a means of facilitating linked trip-making for people and freight.

Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS)

Niles-Buchanan-Cass urbanized area and transportation study area that is designated by the United States Census.

Nonmotorized

A transportation mode not using motorized vehicles. (For example bicycling, walking, horseback riding, and roller blading are all types of nonmotorized transportation).


Problem

Gaps between the desired vision, goals, and objectives and the current or projected performance of the system.

Public

Anyone who resides, has interest, or does business in a given area that may potentially be affected by transportation decisions.

Public Comment

Feedback from the public, as part of the region's public  participation process, that is welcomed by all individuals regardless of their previous level of participation or education in the planning related decision-making process.

Public Participation

Public participation efforts include a variety of techniques targeting the entire community (including ethnic populations and low-income households) and assures the public has the opportunity to help shape the substance of plans and projects.

Public Transit

1. Passenger transportation service operating on established schedules along designated routes or lines with specific stops and designed to move relatively large numbers of people at one time, and
2. Passenger transportation service operating on an on-demand basis, where there are flex-routes that are determined by the passenger's traveling needs (such as Dial-A-Ride).

Regional Planning

Planning that address issues such as transportation, environment, social, and economic concerns that are best looked at on a larger basis than municipality by municipality. Planning on a regional level can be very beneficial as it allows cities, villages, and townships to pool resources and tools that will in turn benefit the region as a whole. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's region is Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties.

SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users)

"Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users". SAFETEA-LU is a bill that President George W. Bush signed into federal law on August 10, 2005. It authorizes the Federal Surface Transportation Programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period of 2005-2009. It is the successor of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which was enacted in 1998.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Council reporting to Southwest Michigan Planning Commission's governing body; identifies and responds to regional issues involving existing and future transportation systems, including roads, transit, airports, and rail. Recommends action on regional transportation plans and implementation through the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

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

Adopted in 1998, TEA-21 further defined the public participation goal of ISTEA (See *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991*), by requiring that Metropolitan Planning Organizations provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

A four-year list, updated every two years or when needed, of regional transportation improvement projects designed to implement the goals and objectives of the Long Range Plan (LRP).

Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964

See appendix A

Transportation Study

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission region contains two (2) transportation study areas:

- TwinCATS - St. Joseph/Benton Harbor (Twin Cities) Area Transportation Study
- NATS – Niles/Buchanan Area Transportation Study.

Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS)

St. Joseph/Benton Harbor (Twin Cities) urbanized area and transportation study area that is designated by the United States Census.

Under Represented Population

Low-income, elderly, minority populations that typically are not represented by the population of individuals at public meetings. They are not able to attend meetings for various reasons and therefore have little or no voice in the decision-making process.

See Environmental Justice.

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)

A department in the United States government whose mission it is to serve the country by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system, while enhancing quality of life today and in the future.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

A federal agency responsible for setting limits on how much of a pollutant can be present in the environment. Working with each state, the USEPA helps develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) outlining the strategy the state will follow to improve air quality.