

Commonly Used Transportation-Related Acronyms For the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO

Federal and State Plans, Programs and Processes

“Comprehensive Development Agreement” (CDA)

A Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA) is a public-private partnership that provides needed funding to build projects. For projects of substantial cost, private financing, only recently allowed by the Texas Legislature, may be required. In Texas, CDAs are awarded to a company or team of companies that may provide any combination of finance, design, construction, maintenance and operation services under Department of Transportation guidelines.

“Managed Lanes”

Managed lanes are typically dedicated lanes reserved to meet changing travel needs. Some lanes may be reserved for high occupancy vehicles, commercial vehicles or time-of-day adjusted fees. Drivers typically have a choice of paying to use the managed lanes when the value of a trip is worth the money, or using the free lanes. The value to the users of the managed lanes is the predictability and reliability of travel times throughout the day.

“Environmental Process” National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

NEPA is the national environmental policy requiring that any project using federal funding or requiring federal approval, including transportation projects, examine the effects of proposed and alternative choices on the environment before a federal decision is made.

“Environmental Document” Environmental Assessment (EA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Documents, developed by the sponsor of a major transportation project, that describe the impacts on the environment as a result of a proposed action. It also describes impacts of alternatives as well as plans to mitigate the impacts. The "environment" considered includes land, water, air, structures, living organisms, environmental values at the site, and the social, cultural, and economic aspects. An EA is compiled to determine the need for an *Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS). The purpose of the NEPA process is to ensure that the decision maker is fully informed of the environmental aspects and consequences prior to making the final decision.

“Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI)

A FONSI is prepared when an Environmental Assessment (EA) concludes that the project will not have any significant impacts on the environment. FONSI approval is the final step in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment.

“Categorical Exclusion” (CE)

Categorical exclusions are those of actions or projects that do not cause significant impacts to the environment. Projects within the right-of-way (roadway reconstruction, repaving, bridge rehabilitation projects, and signal installations) qualify for a categorical exclusion.

Environmental Justice (EJ)

The three fundamental Environmental Justice principles are 1) to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations, 2) to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process, and 3) to prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

“Long Range Transportation Plan” Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is the official multi-modal, financially constrained transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area. Locally, the project list is amended quarterly but a complete plan update is federally required to be completed every five years.

“Short Range Transportation Plan” Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a financially constrained document prepared by an MPO that lists roadway, bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects to be funded with FHWA/FTA and state funds for the next four-year time period.

“Statewide Short Range Plan” Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The STIP is a staged, multi-year, statewide, intermodal program of transportation projects, consistent with the statewide transportation plan and planning processes as well as metropolitan plans, TIPs, and processes. It is generally amended on a quarterly basis.

“Mobility Plan” Statewide Mobility Program (SMP)

The SMP is the statewide ‘Build It’ plan adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission. The SMP outlines funding levels and projects for a ten year time period plus allows for development authority up to a certain amount for other projects. Funding categories addressed in the SMP are:

- Category 2 Metro Corridor (large MPOs)
- Category 3 Urban Corridor (Small MPOs)
- Category 4 Statewide Connectivity Corridor (Rural)
- Category 5 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
- Category 7 Metro Mobility (Surface Transportation Program – Metro Mobility or STP-MM) (MPO Discretionary)
- Category 9 Transportation Enhancements
- Category 10 Miscellaneous
- Category 11 District Discretionary
- Category 12 Strategic Priority (Texas Transportation Commission Discretionary)

The San Antonio-Bexar County MPO does not receive category 3, 4 or 5 funding.

“Preservation Plan” Statewide Preservation Program (SPP)

The SPP is the statewide ‘Maintain It’ plan adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission. The SPP outlines funding levels and projects for a ten year time period. Funding categories addressed in the SPP are:

- Category 1 Preventative Maintenance & Rehabilitation
- Category 6 Structure Rehabilitation
- Category 8 Safety

“Needs Based Plan” Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan (TMMP)

The TMMP addresses a statewide initiative to quantify long-range transportation needs within the eight large metropolitan areas of the state and to develop a shorter-range prioritized listing of projects aimed at improving mobility, reducing traffic congestion, and mitigating air quality impacts. Unlike the region's long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Mobility 2030), it is not financially constrained. The TMMP focuses on the magnitude of unmet transportation needs for the region and provides decision-makers with a better feel for the quantity of additional funding needed.

“MPO Staff Budget and Planning Studies” Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is the management plan for the metropolitan planning program. Its purpose is to specify and coordinate the planning activities of all participants in the planning process. Activities are arranged under five tasks: 1) Administration, 2) Data Development, 3) Short Range Planning, 4) Long Range Planning, and 5) Special Studies. Planning studies and their budgets are delineated in the document.

“State Air Quality Plan” State Implementation Plan (SIP)

The SIP is produced by the state environmental agency. It is a plan mandated by the Clean Air Act Amendments that contains procedures to monitor, control, maintain, and enforce compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. It must be taken into account in the transportation planning process if an area is “non-attainment”.

“TxDOT’s Ten Year Plan” Unified Transportation Program (UTP)

The UTP is a statewide ten year financial plan that is comprised of both the Statewide Mobility Program and the Statewide Preservation Program. The UTP is adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission and is the Commission’s mechanism to authorize project development.

Agencies and Organizations

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

EPA is the federal regulatory agency responsible for administering and enforcing federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and others.

FHWA: Federal Highway Administration

FHWA is a branch of the US Department of Transportation that administers the Federal-aid Highway Program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

FTA is a branch of the US Department of Transportation that is the principal source of federal financial assistance to America's communities for planning, development, and improvement of public or mass transportation systems.

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization

An MPO is a regional transportation policy body, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, and designated by local officials and the governor of the state. The MPO is responsible, in cooperation with the state and other transportation providers, for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation.

TCEQ: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

TCEQ is the state regulatory agency responsible for administering and enforcing federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and others.

Selected Funding Sources

ATD: Advanced Transportation District

Creation of the Advanced Transportation District and authorization of the imposition of a local sales and use tax for advanced transportation (Senate Bill 769) was enacted by the Texas Legislature during the 1999 session. The Texas Legislature amended this legislation in 2003. Advanced transportation as defined in the legislation includes light rail, commuter rail, fixed guideways, traffic management systems, busways, bus lanes, technologically advanced bus transit vehicles and systems, bus rapid transit vehicles and systems, passenger amenities, transit centers, stations, electronic transit-related information, fare, and operating systems, high occupancy vehicle lanes, traffic signal prioritization and coordination systems, monitoring systems, and other advanced transportation facilities, equipment, operations, systems, and services, including planning, feasibility studies, operations, and professional and other services in connection with such facilities, equipment, operations, systems, and services.

VIA ordered an election for November 2, 2004. Voters in Bexar County approved the sales tax increase at the rate of one-fourth of one percent. Half of the revenue generated from this sales tax goes to VIA, with the remainder split between the City of San Antonio and TxDOT.

STP-MM: Surface Transportation Program – Metropolitan Mobility

The STP-MM funding category, also known as “Category 7”, is to address transportation needs within the metropolitan area boundaries of MPOs with populations greater than 200,000. It is the most flexible federal funding source and projects are selected by the MPO. The funding can be used on functionally classified roadways greater than a local road or rural minor collector. Use of the funds requires a 20% local match. The MPO’s average annual allocation over the past 17 years of the program is \$19.5M (\$15.6M is the federal amount).

TMF: Texas Mobility Fund

Texas voter approval in 2001 of Proposition 15 and enactment of legislation by the 77th Legislature in 2001 created the Texas Mobility Fund. The creation of the Mobility Fund allows TxDOT to issue bonds secured by future revenue. This allows the acceleration of mobility projects throughout the state. The Mobility Fund is to be administered by the Texas Transportation Commission (the Commission) as a revolving fund to provide a method of financing for the construction, reconstruction, acquisition and expansion of state highways, including costs of any necessary design and costs of acquisition of rights-of-way, as determined by the Commission in accordance with standards and procedures established by law.

MPO Committees

BMAC: Bicycle Mobility Advisory Committee

BMAC advises the Transportation Policy Board issues relating to bicycling concerns. BMAC membership includes representation from interested citizens, the Alamo Area Council of Governments; Bexar County; City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, Planning and Development Services Department, and Office of Environmental Policy; Texas Department of Transportation, VIA Metropolitan Transit; Greater Bexar County Council of Cities, VIA Transit Police and City of San Antonio Bicycle Patrol, San Antonio Wheelmen, South Texas Off Road Mountain Bikers, Texas Bicycle Coalition, school districts, and a bicycle organization. BMAC generally meets monthly.

PMAC: Pedestrian Mobility Advisory Committee

PMAC advises the Transportation Policy Board issues relating to pedestrian concerns. PMAC membership includes representation from interested citizens, the Alamo Area Council of Governments; Bexar County; Bexar ADA Council, City of San Antonio Disability Office, Parks and Recreation Department, Planning and Development Services Department, and Office of Environmental Policy; San Antonio Utility Coordination Committee, Texas Department of Transportation, VIA Metropolitan Transit; Greater Bexar County Council of Cities, school districts, and a walking organization. PMAC generally meets monthly.

SGCC: Strategic Geospatial Coordination Committee

SGCC is a regional consortium of geographic information system (GIS) users whose purpose is to coordinate projects and products, and develop consistent technical standards for geographically referenced information. SGCC membership includes staff members from the Alamo Area Council of Governments, Bexar Appraisal District, Bexar County, Bexar Metro 9-1-1, City of San Antonio, Comal County, City of New Braunfels, MPO, and three at-large members selected by the committee. The SGCC generally meets monthly.

TAC: Technical Advisory Committee

TAC reports directly to the Transportation Policy Board, and provides guidance on the technical products and procedures employed in the transportation planning process, reviews and submits recommendations on the development of Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the

subsequent amendments to each. TAC also reviews any item requested by the Transportation Policy Board and reports its findings to the Transportation Policy Board. TAC membership includes representation from the Alamo Area Council of Governments; Bexar County, City of San Antonio Planning and Development Services Department, City of San Antonio Public Works Department, Greater Bexar County Council of Cities, Northeast Partnership, Private Transportation Providers, Texas Department of Transportation, and VIA Metropolitan Transit. TAC generally meets monthly.

TPB: Transportation Policy Board

The policy organizational unit, as outlined in the most recent designation agreement, is the Transportation Policy Board. The Transportation Policy Board is composed of elected and appointed City, County, State, Metropolitan Transit Authority officials, and Suburban Cities. Its responsibilities are as follows:

1. Provide policy guidance for the transportation planning process.
2. Carry out, in cooperation with the State and local governments, and annually certify a transportation planning process that is in full compliance with Federal requirements.
3. Set goals and cooperatively determine the responsibilities of the participating agencies for planning tasks and a budget in the Unified Planning Work Program.
4. Review and adopt the Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan/ Regional Mobility Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (revised as necessary) which provides for both the near-term and long-term needs of the Study area.
5. Develop in cooperation with the State and local governments and annually endorse a multi-year Transportation Improvement Program which is consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
6. Review and revise the limits of the Study area as necessary.
7. Designate a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and any other such offices, technical committees, or task forces as found necessary to carry out the transportation planning process.
8. Meet at intervals necessary to perform its function.
9. Appoint an MPO Director.