

Alphabet Soup

Sorting out the Acronyms



AGENCIES

Acronym	Agency	Purpose
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials	Organization of State Departments of Transportation; also develops and promotes engineering design standards for transportation facilities known as the AASHTO Green Book.
COT	(Delaware) Council on Transportation	Panel of citizens appointed by the Governor of Delaware to review the State's Capital Transportation Program and make recommendations to the Governor on transportation investments.
DelDOT	Delaware Department of Transportation	State agency responsible for planning, building, operating, and maintaining the state's transportation system; including transit, roads, bridges, sidewalks, signals, and bike paths.
DNREC	Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control	State agency charged with enforcing environmental standards and overseeing compliance efforts; also oversees public open space.
DRBA	Delaware River and Bay Authority	Responsible for the Delaware Memorial Bridge; the Wilmington, Millville Executive, Cape May, Delaware Airpark, and Dover Civil Air Terminal Airports; and the ferries connecting DE and NJ.
DSPC	Diamond State Port Corporation	A Delaware state agency responsible for the development, maintenance and operation of the Port of Wilmington and related facilities.
DTC	Delaware Transit Corporation	A division of DelDOT that operates bus services in Delaware; also provides facilities, support and coordination for rail service in Delaware.
DVRPC	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Philadelphia region; includes counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. WILMAPCO coordinates with DVRPC on inter-regional issues such as freight and air quality.
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	Federal agency charged with establishing and enforcing environmental standards and overseeing compliance efforts.

FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	Part of US Department of Transportation; particular focus on planning and project development and implementation related to roadways and bridges.
FTA	Federal Transit Administration	Part of US Department of Transportation; particular focus on planning and project development and implementation related to transit services.
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment	State agency designed to protect and restore the quality of Maryland's air, water, and land resources. They work to achieve environmental goals while fostering economic development, safe communities, and environmental education.
MdTA	Maryland Transportation Authority	Responsible for managing, operating and improving MD's toll facilities (a turnpike, two tunnels and four bridges), and for financing new revenue-producing transportation projects.
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation	State Agency with overall responsibility for the transportation system in MD, encompassing five agencies including the MD State Highway Administration, the MD Transit Administration, the MD Aviation Administration, the MD Port Administration and the MD Motor Vehicle Administration.
MDSHA	Maryland State Highway Administration	Division of MDOT responsible for constructing and maintaining the State's highways, roads and bridges.
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization	Federally designated, locally governed agency charged to develop long range transportation plans and program federal transportation funds for metropolitan areas.
MTA	Maryland Transit Administration	Division of MDOT with responsibility for transit operations and facilities in MD.
NCC or NCCo	New Castle County, DE	Northern-most county in Delaware, part of WILMAPCO region. May also refer to New Castle County government. Most populous county in DE. SNCC is occasionally used as an abbreviation for southern New Castle County.
NMWG	Non-motorized Transportation Working Group	This group provides input to the TAC on plans and policies to promote pedestrian and bicycle facilities and multi-modal project development.

PAC	WILMAPCO's Public Advisory Committee	Made up of concerned citizens representing local groups, regions and agencies, the PAC assists MPO staff in developing effective public outreach and education and provides citizen input to the WILMAPCO Council. Their special focus is ensuring that the public has been given adequate opportunity to participate in the planning process.
TAC	WILMAPCO's Technical Advisory Committee	The TAC represents state, county, and local agencies that participate in the MPO planning process. They review technical and policy materials to advise the WILMAPCO Council and work with staff to develop planning products.
WILMAPCO	Wilmington Area Planning Council	The MPO for New Castle County, DE and Cecil County, MD. WILMAPCO provides a forum for cooperative regional planning and public involvement in the transportation planning process.

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Frequently Used Acronyms and Terms in Transportation and Land Use Planning

Acronym	Term or Title	Meaning
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	Legislation enacted in 1991 to address the needs of disabled individuals in public settings. Sets standards and provides guidelines for accessibility with regard to public facilities (e.g., buildings, transit vehicles) and public rights-of-way (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, curb ramps).
ADT	Average Daily Traffic	The total traffic volume during a given period (from 1 to 364 days) divided by the number of days in that period. Current ADT volumes can be determined by continuous traffic counts or periodic counts. For roadways having traffic in two directions, the ADT includes traffic in both directions.
AQ	Air Quality	The improvement of the quality of the air to protect the public health is the goal of federal air quality legislation.
AVs/CVs	Autonomous Vehicles/Connected Vehicles	AVs use technologies such as sensors, cameras, and GPS to operate independently. Autonomous vehicles do not share data with other vehicles. CVs incorporate communications technology that enables them to share data with other vehicles and roadside infrastructure. A related term is “automated vehicles,” which use both connected and autonomous technologies to enable operation with limited or no human involvement.
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit	Enhanced bus system that generally operates in dedicated bus lanes or other transitways. Intent is to combine the flexibility of buses with the efficiency of rail.
CAAA	Clean Air Act and its Amendments	The Clean Air Act was passed in 1977 and later amended by Congress in 1990.
CBD	Central Business District	Downtown portion of a city that serves as the primary activity center. Its land use is characterized by intense business activity that serves as a destination for a significant number of daily work trips.

CMP	Congestion Management Process	A federally required planning tool for metropolitan areas that identifies and develops planning and programming responses to congestion problems in the transportation system.
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality	The federal CMAQ program provides funds to State DOTs, MPOs, and transit agencies to invest in projects that reduce criteria air pollutants regulated from transportation-related sources.
	Complete Streets	An approach to roadway design that seeks to provide facilities that are safe and accessible for all users: drivers, transit vehicles and riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
	Conformity	Refers to the region's conformity to air quality standards. Conformity means that the projects in the regional transportation plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will not cause or contribute to new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of air quality standards.
CSD	Context Sensitive Design	This design strategy helps develop transportation projects that fit within a physical setting and preserve scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.
CSS	Context Sensitive Solutions	An approach to creating public works projects that meet the needs of users, neighboring communities, and the environment. This approach integrates projects into the setting through careful planning, consideration of different perspectives, and tailoring of designs to particular project circumstances.
CTP	(Delaware) Capital Transportation Program	A 6 year document that lists all the projects Delaware DOT plans to undertake. Also identifies funding sources and schedules.
CTP	(Maryland) Consolidated Transportation Program	A 6 year document that lists all the projects Maryland DOT plans to undertake. Also identifies funding sources.
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	Part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), these statements are required to evaluate the impact of transportation investments in environmentally sensitive areas.

EJ	Environmental Justice	An initiative that ensures federal funds are not used for projects or activities that discriminate against minority and low income populations or cause adverse effects.
(FAST) Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act	The \$305 billion, five-year funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending. It was passed by Congress on December 3, 2015, and President Barack Obama signed it on December 4.
	Fiscal Constraint	A requirement for both the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For the regional plan, fiscal constraint means the total estimated costs of projects and programs cannot exceed forecasted funding levels. For the TIP, fiscal constraint means providing (1) budgets showing committed funding and funding sources for each project and (2) realistic implementation schedules based on when these funds will be available.
FY	Fiscal Year	For WILMAPCO, our fiscal (financial) year is July 1 - June 30.
GARVEE	Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle	a bond or other form of debt repayable, either exclusively or primarily, with future Federal-aid highway funds under Section 122 of Title 23 of the United States Code.
GIS	Geographic Information Systems	A system of computer software, hardware and data to help manipulate, analyze and present information that is tied to a spatial location.
	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Greenhouse gas emissions trap heat in the atmosphere. A surplus of these emissions resulting from human activity is believed to contribute to an observed increase in average global temperature. Global warming is a result of an enhanced greenhouse effect, which is a naturally occurring process by which heat from the sun is radiated off the Earth's surface and then is trapped in the earth's atmosphere by greenhouse gases, whereby the Earth's surface temperature increases. A key greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide.
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle	Generally buses, vans and carpools that are occupied by more than one person.
HOV Lanes	High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes	Highway lanes designated for use during certain time periods by vehicles occupied by an established number of occupants in excess of one.

HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program	A transportation program that identifies the highest ranking accident locations or corridors in each state and provides solutions to improve conditions.
IIJA or BIL	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	This act was signed into law by President Joe Biden on November 15, 2021 and includes funding for broadband access, clean water, electric grid renewal, and transportation. About 54 percent of the law's \$1.2 trillion total goes toward surface transportation.
ITMS or ITS	Integrated Transportation Management Systems or Intelligent Transportation System	A multi-modal approach to improving the movement of people and goods using modern technology to monitor travel and adjust conditions as needed. This includes EZPass, traffic cameras and transit tracking. (Known in DE as DelTRAC)
LOS	Level of Service	A measurement of congestion on a road or intersection based on traffic volumes, capacity, average speed and delay. LOS ratings are usually assigned letter grades from A – F.
LRT	Light Rail Transit	Similar to a streetcar, however most LRT, or trams, are segregated from other traffic, passengers get on and off at stations rather than in the street, and the cars run faster.
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act	Enacted on July 6, 2012, MAP-21 authorized funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years FY 2013 and 2014.
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Also called the Regional Transportation Plan - RTP)	The long-range transportation plan developed by an MPO.
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards	Standards set by the Clean Air Act Amendments restrict emission's levels for 6 pollutants: Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Dioxide, Ozone (O ₃), Lead, Particulate Matter (PM 10 and PM 2.5), and Sulfur Dioxide. The WILMAPCO region meets all emissions levels, except Ozone (made up of NO _x and VOC). Areas such as ours, that do not meet NAAQS are designated in non-attainment and face sanctions if we cannot attain the standards.
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act	Signed into law on January 1, 1970, NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.

NHS	National Highway System	The National Highway System (NHS) includes the Interstate Highway System as well as other roads important to the nation’s economy, defense, and mobility.
NOx	Nitrogen Oxides	Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) is a pollutant caused by the burning of fossil fuels in cars, factories and power tools. NOx reacts in the air to form ground-level ozone or smog. In general, the faster a car drives, the more NOx it generates.
O ₃	Ozone	Ground-level ozone is the major component of smog. While ozone in the upper atmosphere is beneficial, ground-level ozone is a harmful pollutant. It is formed when NOx and VOC are combined with sunlight. Ozone causes respiratory health problems, harms vegetation and damages buildings and ecosystems.
PE	Preliminary Engineering	A phase or type of work intended to develop proposals up to 20% conceptual plans that balance transportation needs, environmental values, public concerns and costs.
PEL	Planning and Environment Linkages	A collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process.
	Performance Measures / Performance Targets	Performance measures are specific metrics used to assess progress toward achieving goals (e.g., “Decrease number of highway fatalities”). Performance targets are specific levels to be achieved within certain time frames (e.g., “Decrease number of highway fatalities to 121 by 2030”).
PFA	Priority Funding Area	The Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act of 1997 directs state funding for growth-related infrastructure to Priority Funding Areas, to focus growth in already developed areas. PFAs include municipalities, neighborhoods designated for revitalization by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Enterprise and Empowerment Zones, and certified heritage areas within county-designated growth areas.

PPP	Public Participation Plan	MPOs are required to develop a public participation plan that defines a process for providing the public with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process. The PPP must consider the needs of people and groups traditionally underserved by transportation systems, including low-income and minority households.
ROW	Right of Way	An area reserved for future transportation facilities, or the legal right to gain access to ensure the operation of the transportation system.
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan Adopted in 2003 by the WILMAPCO Council	WILMAPCO's long-range transportation plan. It contains demographic data, forecasted trend data, goals, strategies and actions relating to land use and transportation in the MPO region and is used to guide transportation investments and capital programs.
SIP	State Implementation Plan	A collection of regulations that explain how a state will clean up polluted areas under the Clean Air Act. The states must involve the public in the approval process before a SIP is finalized. The EPA approves each SIP, and if it isn't acceptable, the EPA can assume responsibility for enforcing the Clean Air Act in that State.
SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle	A car with only a driver - no passengers
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Plan (known as CIP in Delaware and CTP in Maryland)	A statewide document for capital investments; a combination of MPO TIPs and planned capital investments for non-metropolitan areas in a State.
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program	A federal program that provides funding for a variety of smaller transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, vegetation management, environmental mitigation, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and vulnerable road user safety assessments.
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zones	An area designation used by state and local transportation officials for tabulating traffic-related data- especially journey-to-work and place-of-work statistics. A TAZ usually consists of one or more census blocks, block groups, or census tracts.

TCM	Transportation Control Measure	A method used to reduce transportation-related emissions by reducing vehicle use or improving traffic flow. It includes things such as providing public transit, ride-share services, bicycle/ pedestrian facilities, or flexible work schedules.
TDM	Transportation Demand Management	Managing the demands on the transportation system by such means as carpooling, telecommuting, and other options rather than increasing transportation supply.
TIA	Transportation Investment Areas	Future transportation investments are guided to areas of existing development using a TIA map. This provides more efficient coordination between land use and transportation.
TID	Transportation Investment District (Delaware)	A geographic area defined for the purpose of securing required improvements to transportation facilities in order to provide the transportation improvements needed to support land development in locations identified as appropriate for development in local Comprehensive Plans.
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program	A document that lists all the projects within a metropolitan region that will be funded within the next 3 years. Ties in with the DOT's STIP, a 6-year document. Must be approved by each region's MPO (WILMAPCO) in order to receive federal funding.
	Title VI	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that no person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
TMA	Transportation Management Area	An urbanized area with a population of more than 200,000. Within a TMA, all transportation plans and programs must be based on a continuing and comprehensive planning process carried out by the MPO in cooperation with states and transit operators. TMAs must also have a Congestion Management Process in place.
TOD	Transit Oriented Design or Transit Oriented Development	Designing development around a transit system to encourage greater use. Frequently housing or commercial units located near a major bus or rail station.

UDC	Unified Development Code	The development code for New Castle County, designed to promote consistency and coordination of development in New Castle County.
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program	An annual document that outlines the planning work program for WILMAPCO staff and member agencies to achieve the MPO goals under federal planning regulations.
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds	VOC's are caused by burning fossil fuel, paints, glues and other chemicals, as well as natural things like skunks and pine trees. They can be toxic and/or carcinogenic. Most VOC's, contribute to the formation of ground level ozone. Vehicle VOC emissions increase dramatically as auto speeds decrease.
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled	A measure of the amount of travel, in distance, for vehicles on the transportation system. It is used to evaluate road usage, congestion and emissions.