

10 GLOSSARY

100-year floodplain – An area with a 1% chance of being inundated in any single year.

access, accessibility – The opportunity to easily reach a destination without being impeded by physical, social, or economic barriers. Typically, accessibility is the extent to which transportation improvements make connections between geographic areas or portions of the region that were not previously well connection.

adverse effect – Defined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (35 CFR 800.5(a)(1)). An adverse effect to a historic property occurs when the project under consideration alters any characteristic that qualifies the property for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property.

Affected Environment – The physical features, land, area or areas to be influenced, affected or created by a transportation improvement under consideration; also includes various social and environmental factors and conditions pertinent to an area.

Agency Coordination – Refers to the process whereby the Department of Transportation contacts, consults and maintains communication with various public and environmental resource agencies, affording such agencies an opportunity to review and comment upon specific transportation proposals.

Area of Potential Effect (APE) – The geographical area or areas within which an undertaking may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist. The APE is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) – Specific standards utilized during construction and design to minimize the impact on surrounding resources.

Build Alternative – Build Alternatives are alternatives that are developed at the concept level for analysis purposes that meet the project purpose and need and have the potential to be constructed.

Census Tract – A small statistical subdivision of a county defined by a local committee of census data users for the purpose of presenting census information every ten years. The primary purpose of census tracts is to provide a stable set of geographic units for the presentation of statistical data.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) annual edition is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the departments and agencies of the Federal Government. It is divided into 50 titles that represent broad areas subject to Federal regulation.

Clean Air Act of 1970 (CAA) – Legislation mandating the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set national air quality standards to protect the public against common pollutants. State governments are required to devise clean-up plans to meet these EPA standards.

Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) – Legislation requires states and the Federal government to reduce emissions from automobiles, trucks, buses, ships, barges, and consumer products, and to meet air quality standards. The legislation particularly addresses ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter. The legislation defines how areas are designated “attainment” and allows the EPA to classify “non-attainment” areas as those that do not meet the federal air quality standards.

Clean Water Act (CWA) - The Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq.) is a law enacted by the United States Congress in 1972 which establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into Waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The basis of the CWA was enacted in 1948 and was called the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, but the Act was significantly re-organized and expanded in 1972.

coastal plain – An area of flat, low-lying land adjacent to a seacoast and separated from the interior by other features.

Comprehensive Plan – The general, inclusive long-range state of the future development of a community. The plan is typically a map accompanied by description and supplemented by policy statements that direct future capital improvement in an area.

Conformity – Process to assess the compliance of any transportation plan, program, or project with air quality implementation plans. The conformity process is defined by the Clean Air Act.

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) – Established as part of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the council coordinates federal environmental efforts, policies, and initiatives, and ensures that federal agencies meet NEPA requirements.

CSX Transportation (CSX) - CSX is a Class I Freight Railroad which operates on the east coast of the United States from Florida to New England, as far west as Chicago, Illinois and as far north as Montreal, Canada

cumulative impact - The impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

decibel – A unit of measure of sound pressure used to describe the loudness of sound on the A-weighted scale.

Determination of Effect – A finding made by Departments of Transportation for federal actions, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council for Historic

Preservation, which determines whether a proposed project affects a property included on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Determination of Eligibility – The decision made by the State Historic Preservation Office regarding whether historic buildings or districts are eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

direct effect - Effect that occurs as a direct result of the project.

Digital Terrain Model (DTM): A topographic model of the bare earth.

effect – Synonymous with impact, includes the result from actions that may have a beneficial or detrimental outcome.

endangered species – A species whose prospects for survival are in immediate danger based on a loss of habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, or disease. An endangered species requires immediate attention or extinction will likely follow.

Energy Storage System (ESS) – ESS is a form of “wireless” propulsion technologies which use power sources installed on the vehicle to allow for catenary-free operations. These technologies are also referred at times as On-Board/On-Tram technologies. Vehicles using this technology are powered by batteries, super capacitors, flywheels, fuel cells, diesel and/or alternative fuel sources or a combination of these power devices. (Source: District Department of Transportation, *Union Station to Georgetown, Alternatives Analysis for Premium Transit Service Propulsion Study*, September 2013).

Environmental Assessment (EA) – When the significance of impacts of a transportation project proposal is uncertain, an EA is prepared to assist in making this determination. If it is found that significant impacts will result, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) should commence immediately.

Environmental Justice (EJ) – Efforts to avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations with respect to human health and the environment.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – EPA is the federal source agency of air quality control regulations affecting transportation.

Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) – An analysis which identifies potential or existing environmental contamination liabilities and which may conform to American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) reporting requirements and methods.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – FEMA is a federal agency under the US Department of Homeland Security, established under Presidential Executive Order Executive Order 12127, which coordinates the federal government’s role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – FHWA is an agency under the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) which provides stewardship over the construction, maintenance and preservation of the Nation’s highways, bridges and tunnels. FHWA serves as the lead federal agency for the project in accordance with NEPA.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – A branch of the USDOT that is the principal source of federal financial assistance to America's communities for planning, development, and improvement of public or mass transportation systems. FTA provides leadership, technical assistance, and financial resources for safe, technologically advanced public transportation to enhance mobility and accessibility, to improve the Nation's communities and natural environment, and to strengthen the national economy.

final design – The development of detailed working drawings, specifications, and estimates for transportation projects.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – A document by a Federal agency briefly presenting the reasons why an action, not otherwise excluded (40 CFR 1508.4), will not have a significant effect on the human environment and for which an environmental impact statement therefore will not be prepared.

Geographic Information System (GIS) – A system of computer software and hardware, data, and personnel to manipulate, analyze and present geographically referenced information or data that is identified according to their locations.

ground-borne vibration – The vibration-induced levels that propagate through ground between the source and a receptor such as a building; typically assessed indoors.

Ground Level Continuous Power Supply System (GLCPSS): GLCPSS are “wireless” propulsion technologies which use ground level power sources (instead of Overhead Contact Systems (OCS)) to allow for catenary-free operations. These technologies are also referred to as Infrastructure/Wayside and/or Off-Tram technologies. These systems distribute power to the vehicle via induction. (Source: District Department of Transportation, *Union Station to Georgetown, Alternatives Analysis for Premium Transit Service Propulsion Study*, September 2013)

habitat - The area or environment where an organism or ecological community normally lives or occurs.

human environment – Human environment shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment.

impacts – Positive or negative effects upon the natural or human environment resulting from transportation projects.

indirect effects – Impacts that can be expected to result from a given action that occurs later in time or further removed in distance; for example, induced changes to land use patterns, population density or growth rate.

Integrated Compliance Information System (ICIS): The Integrated Compliance Information

System (ICIS) is a database maintained by the EPA for national enforcement and compliance program as well as National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program.

land use – Classification providing information on land cover and the types of human activity occurring on a parcel of land, such as “commercial,” “industrial,” “residential,” or “open space.”

Level of Service (LOS) – A letter grade designation used to describe given roadway conditions with “A” being at or close to free-flow conditions and “F” being at or close to over-saturation of the roadway; usually based on the progression of vehicles through the green phase of a signal, driver discomfort/frustration, lost travel time, and fuel consumption.

logical termini – Connecting points with known features (land uses, economic areas, population concentrations, cross route locations, etc.) at either end of a proposed transportation route that enhances good planning and which serve to make the route usable. Logical termini are considered rational end points for a transportation improvement.

Low-Income Populations: Any readily identifiable group of low-income persons whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) poverty guidelines. For low-income populations, FTA encourages the use of a locally developed threshold, such as that used for FTA’s grant program (Public Law 112-141), which defines “low-income individual” to mean “an individual whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty line.”

Minority Populations: The USDOT Order on Environmental Justice (5610.2a) and FTA Circular 4703.1 define minority populations as persons who are American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Black (not of Hispanic Origin), and Hispanic or Latino.

mitigation – 40 CFR 1508.20 defines “mitigation” as:

- (a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- (b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- (c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- (d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- (e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

mobility – The ability to move or be moved from place to place.

Mode, Intermodal, Multimodal – Form of transportation, such as automobile, transit, bicycle, and walking. Intermodal refers to the connections between modes and multimodal refers to the availability of transportation options within a system corridor.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C.

4321 et seq.) is a law enacted by the United States Congress in 1969 which requires federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of federal projects or decisions.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – The National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) is a law enacted by the United States Congress in 1966 which established a program for the preservation of historic properties in the United States. Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) – A federal list of buildings, sites, districts and other properties that have a historic significance.

Navigable Waterway – Navigable waterways are surface waters under the jurisdiction of EPA and USACE which “are currently used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide” as defined in 33 C.F.R. §328.3(a)(1); 40 C.F.R. § 230.3(s)(1).

No Build Alternative – A benchmark against which to compare other alternatives.

off-peak period – Used to describe times where travel is not at its peak, or highest level, during the day. Off-peak travel usually occurs in the midday and evenings in most cities.

Overhead Contact System (OCS) – OCS is a widespread form of “wired” streetcar propulsion technology which uses pantograph current collector and overhead catenary for the propulsion of streetcars. (Source: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_07-a.pdf)

Priority Corridor Network (PCN) – Priority Corridor Networks are transportation corridors in the Washington, DC region which WMATA has identified with sufficient current or future potential to warrant running way improvements to support faster and more reliable bus services. Corridors with daily transit ridership over 5,000 per day were considered as candidates. Other candidates were those in fast developing corridors, where greater than average transit growth is expected.

Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) – The presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) – The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976, which amended the Solid Waste Disposal Act, addresses solid (Subtitle D) and hazardous (Subtitle C) waste management activities. The Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) of 1984 strengthened RCRA’s waste management provisions and added Subtitle I, which governs underground storage tanks (USTs). Regulations promulgated pursuant to Subtitle C of RCRA (40 CFR Parts 260-299) establish a “cradle-to-grave” system governing hazardous waste from the point of generation to disposal.

right-of-way (ROW) – Land available for operation of transportation facilities (roadways or rail lines). The land is typically government-owned (local, state, or federal). A transportation facility may occupy all or a portion of the ROW.

Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) – The land area covered by the floodwaters of the base flood

is the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) on National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) maps. The SFHA is the area where the NFIP floodplain management regulations must be enforced and the area where the mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) – A state administrative agency responsible for carrying out consultation in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended and other state historic preservation regulations.

streetcar – Streetcars are a form of urban mass transit which use relatively lightweight passenger railcars operating singly or in short trains, or on fixed rails in rights-of-way in shared rights-of-way.

study area – A geographic area selected and defined at the outset of environmental evaluations that is sufficiently adequate in size to address all pertinent project matters occurring within it.

threatened species – A species that may become endangered if surrounding conditions begin or continue to deteriorate.

transit – Generally refers to passenger service provided to the general public along established routes with fixed or variable schedules at published fares. Related terms include public transit, mass transit, public transportation, or paratransit. Transit modes include commuter rail, heavy or light transit, bus, or other vehicles designated for commercial transportation of non-related persons.

topography – The surface features of a place or region.

Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) – a geographic area delineated by state and/or local transportation officials for tabulating traffic-related data.

Waters of the United States (WOUS) – The term “Waters of the United States” is defined in 40 CFR 230.3(s) as:

1. All waters which are currently used, or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide;
2. All interstate waters including interstate wetlands;
3. All other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, the use, degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce including any such waters:
 - (I) Which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreational or other purposes; or
 - (II) (From which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce; or
 - (III) Which are used or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce;

4. All impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the United States under this definition;
5. Tributaries of waters identified in paragraphs (s)(1) through (4) of this section;
6. The territorial sea;
7. Wetlands adjacent to waters (other than waters that are themselves wetlands) identified in paragraphs (s)(1) through (6) of this section; waste treatment systems, including treatment ponds or lagoons designed to meet the requirements of CWA (other than cooling ponds as defined in 40 CFR 423.11(m) which also meet the criteria of this definition) are not waters of the United States.

Wetlands – The Clean Water Act defines wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.”

Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA): The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), commonly referred to as Metro, is a tri-jurisdictional government agency that operates transit service in the Washington Metropolitan Area. WMATA was created by the United States Congress as an interstate compact between the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This page left intentionally blank

BENNING ROAD & BRIDGES TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

District Department of Transportation
55 M Street, SE
Washington, DC
20003
www.ddot.dc.gov