

## APTA Fact Book Glossary

Definitions are grouped by topic, consistent with groupings on tables, in the following categories:

- Employee and Labor Definitions
- Energy Use and Vehicle Power Definitions
- Financial - Capital Expense Definitions
- Financial - Operating Expense Definitions
- Financial - Fare Structure Definitions
- Financial - Revenue Definitions
- General Definitions
- Infrastructure Definitions
- Mode of Service Definitions
- Service Consumed Definitions
- Service Supplied Definitions
- Vehicle Characteristic and Amenity Definitions

### EMPLOYEE AND LABOR DEFINITIONS:

**Capital Employee** is an employee whose labor hour cost is reimbursed under a capital grant or is otherwise capitalized.

**Operating Employee** is an employee engaged in the operation of the transit system. Operating employees are classified into the following four categories describing the type of work they do:

**General Administration Employee** is an operating employee at any level engaged in general management and administration activities, including transit system development, customer services, promotion, market research, injuries and damages, safety, personnel administration, general legal services, general insurance, data processing, finance and accounting, purchasing and stores, general engineering, real estate management, office management and services, general management, and planning.

**Non-Vehicle Maintenance Employee** is an operating employee at any level engaged in non-vehicle maintenance, or a person providing maintenance support to such persons for inspecting, cleaning, repairing and replacing all components of vehicle movement control systems; fare collection and counting equipment; roadway and track; structures, tunnels, and subways; passenger stations; communication systems; and garage, shop, operating station, and general administration buildings, grounds and equipment. In addition, it includes support for the operation and maintenance of electric power facilities.

**Vehicle Operations Employee** is an operating employee at any level engaged in vehicle operations or a person providing support in vehicle operations activities, a person engaged in ticketing and fare collection activities, or a person engaged in system security activities.

**Vehicle Maintenance Employee** is an operating employee at any level engaged in vehicle maintenance, a person performing inspection and maintenance, vehicle maintenance of vehicles, performing servicing functions for revenue and service vehicles, and repairing damage to vehicles resulting from vandalism or accidents.

**Number of Employees** is the number of actual persons directly working for a transit agency, regardless of whether the person is full-time or part-time.

**Salaries and Wages** are payments to employees for time actually worked.

**Fringe Benefits** are payments to employees for time not actually worked, and the cost of other employee benefits to the transit agency. Payment for time not actually worked includes payments to the employee for vacations, sick leave, holidays, and other paid leave. Other benefits include transit agencies payments to other organizations for retirement plans, social security, workmen's compensation, health insurance, other insurance, and other payments to other organizations for benefits to employees.

**Total Compensation** is the sum of Salaries and Wages and Fringe Benefits.

**ENERGY USE AND VEHICLE POWER DEFINITIONS:**

**Alternate Power** is fuel that is substantially not diesel fuel or gasoline.

**Electric Power Consumption** is the amount of electricity used to propel transit vehicles, also called **propulsion power**. It does not include electricity used for lighting, heating, or any use other than propulsion power.

**Fossil Fuel** is any fuel derived from petroleum or other organic sources including diesel fuel, compressed natural gas, gasoline, liquefied natural gas, liquid petroleum gas or propane, and kerosene.

**FINANCIAL - CAPITAL EXPENSE DEFINITIONS:**

**Capital Expenses** are expenses related to the purchase of equipment. Equipment means an article of non-expendable tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals the lesser of the capitalization level established by the government unit for financial statement purposes or \$5,000. Capital expenses in the NTD accounting system do not include all expenses which are eligible uses for federal capital funding assistance; some of those expenses are included with operating expenses in the National Transit Database accounting system used herein.

**Facilities** capital expense includes administration, central/overhaul maintenance facilities, light maintenance and storage facilities, and equipment of any of these items. Categories of facilities capital expense are:

**Guideway** is capital expense for right-of-way facilities for rail or the exclusive use of buses, including the buildings and structures dedicated for the operation of transit vehicles including elevated and subway structures, tunnels, bridges, track and power systems for rail, and paved highway lanes dedicated to bus. Guideway does not include passenger stations and transfer facilities.

**Passenger Stations** is capital expense for passenger boarding and disembarking areas with platforms including transportation centers and park-and-ride facilities but excluding transit stops on streets.

**Administration Buildings** is capital expense for buildings which house management and support activities.

**Maintenance Facilities** is capital expense for building used for maintenance activities such as garages and shops.

**Rolling Stock** capital expense is expense for vehicles, including boats, used by transit agencies. Categories of rolling stock capital expense are:

**Revenue Vehicles** is capital expense for vehicles used to transport passengers.

**Service Vehicles** is capital expense for vehicles used to support transit activities such as tow trucks, supervisor cars, and police cars.

**All Other** capital expense includes furniture, equipment that is not an integral part of buildings and structures, shelters, signs, and passenger amenities (e.g., benches) not in passenger stations. Categories of all other capital expense are:

**Fare Revenue Collection Equipment** is capital expense for equipment used to collect fares such as fare boxes, turnstiles, and ticket machines.

**Communications and Information Systems** is capital expense for equipment for communicating such as radios and for information management such as computers and software.

**Other** is capital expense that does not fall in the categories defined above.

**FINANCIAL - OPERATING EXPENSE DEFINITIONS:**

**Operating Expenses** are the expenses associated with the operation of the transit agency and goods and services purchased for system operation. It is the sum of either the functions or the object classes listed below.

An **Operating Expense Function** is an activity performed or cost center of a transit agency. The four basic functions are:

**Vehicle Operations** includes all activities associated with the subcategories of the vehicle operations function: transportation administration and support; revenue vehicle operation; ticketing and fare collection; and system security.

**Vehicle Maintenance** includes all activities associated with revenue and non-revenue (service) vehicle maintenance, including administration, inspection and maintenance, and servicing (cleaning, fueling, etc.) vehicles.

**Non-Vehicle Maintenance** includes all activities associated with facility maintenance, including: maintenance of vehicle movement control systems; fare collection and counting equipment; structures, tunnels and subways; roadway and track; passenger stations, operating station buildings, grounds and equipment; communication systems; general administration buildings, grounds and equipment, and electric power facilities.

**General Administration** includes all activities associated with the general administration of the transit agency, including transit service development, injuries and damages, safety, personnel administration, legal services, insurance, data processing, finance and accounting, purchasing and stores, engineering, real estate management, office management and services, customer services, promotion, market research and planning.

An **Operating Expense Object Class** is a grouping of expenses on the basis of goods and services purchased. Nine object classes are reported as follows:

**Salaries and Wages** are the pay and allowances due employees in exchange for the labor services they render on behalf of the transit agency. The allowances include direct payments to the employee arising from the performance of a piece of work.

**Fringe Benefits** are the payments or accruals to others (insurance companies, governments, etc.) on behalf of an employee and direct payments and accruals to an employee arising from something other than a piece of work.

**Employee Compensation** is the sum of "Salaries and Wages" and "Fringe Benefits."

**Services** include the labor and other work provided by outside organizations for fees and related expenses. Services include management service fees, advertising fees, professional and technical services, temporary help, contract maintenance services, custodial services and security services.

**Materials and Supplies** are the tangible products obtained from outside suppliers or manufactured internally. These materials and supplies include tires, fuel and lubricants. Freight, purchase discounts, cash discounts, sales and excise taxes (except on fuel and lubricants) are included in the cost of the material or supply.

**Utilities** include the payments made to various utilities for utilization of their resources (e.g., electric, gas, water, telephone, etc.). Utilities include propulsion power purchased from an outside utility company and used for propelling electrically driven vehicles, and other utilities such as electrical power for purposes other than for electrically driven vehicles, water and sewer, gas, garbage collection, and telephone.

**Casualty and Liability Costs** are the cost elements covering protection of the transit agency from loss through insurance programs, compensation of others for their losses due to acts for which the transit agency is liable, and recognition of the cost of a miscellaneous category of corporate losses.

**Purchased Transportation** is transportation service provided to a public transit agency or governmental unit from a public or private transportation provider based on a written contract. Purchased transportation does not include franchising, licensing operation, management services, cooperative agreements or private conventional bus service.

**Other Operating Expenses** is the sum of taxes, miscellaneous expenses, and expense transfers.

**Total Operating Expense** is the sum of all the object classes or functions.

**FINANCIAL - FARE STRUCTURE DEFINITIONS:**

**Passenger Fares** are revenue earned from carrying passengers in regularly scheduled and demand response service. Passenger fares include: the base fare; zone premiums; express service premiums; extra cost transfers; and quantity purchase discounts applicable to the passenger's ride.

**Adult Base Cash Fare** is the minimum cash fare paid by an adult for one transit ride; excludes transfer charges, zone or distance charges, express service charges, peak period surcharges, and reduced fares.

**Passenger Fares Received per Unlinked Passenger Trip** is "Passenger Fares" divided by "Unlinked Passenger Trips."

**Peak Period Surcharge** is an extra fee required during peak periods (rush hours).

**Transfer Surcharge** is an extra fee charged for a transfer to use when boarding another transit vehicle to continue a trip.

**Zone or Distance Surcharge** is an extra fee charged for crossing a predetermined boundary.

**Smart Cards** are small cards, usually plastic, with an imbedded computer chip good for one or more trips that is usually altered by a fare collection machine removing some or all of the stored value as each trip is taken.

**FINANCIAL - REVENUE DEFINITIONS:**

**Passenger Fare Revenue** is revenue earned from carrying passengers in regularly scheduled and demand response service. Passenger fares include: the base fare; zone premiums; express service premiums; extra cost transfers; and quantity purchase discounts applicable to the passenger's ride. Passenger fare revenue is listed only for operating revenue sources.

**Government Funds, Federal** (also called **Federal Assistance**) is financial assistance from funds that are from the federal government at their original source that are used to assist in paying the operating or capital costs of providing transit service. On tables in the Public Transportation Fact Book, federal financial assistance is counted as either operating or capital funding consistent with accounting practices of the federally mandated National Transit Database reporting system rather than as defined in federal transit funding laws.

**Government Funds, State** (also called **State Assistance**) is financial assistance obtained from a state government(s) to assist with paying the operating and capital costs of providing transit services.

**Government Funds, Local** (also called **Local Assistance**) is financial assistance from local governments (below the state level) to help cover the operating and capital costs of providing transit service. Some local funds are collected in local or regional areas by the state government acting as the collection agency but are considered local assistance because the decision to collect funds is made locally.

**Directly Generated Funds** are any funds generated by or donated directly to the transit agency, including passenger fare revenues, advertising revenues, concessions, donations, bond proceeds, parking revenues, toll revenues from other sectors of agency operations such as bridges and roads, and taxes imposed by the transit agency as enabled by a state or local government. Some directly generated funds are funds earned by the transit agency, such as fare revenues, concessions, and advertising, while other directly generated funds are financial assistance such as taxes imposed by the transit agency. Directly generated funds are listed in three categories:

**Passenger Fares** which is defined above.

**Transit Agency Funds, Other Earnings** are directly generated funds that do not come from passenger fares or from government funds.

**Government Funds, Directly Generated** are directly generated funds that come from taxes, toll transfers, and bond proceeds.

**Total Government Funds** is the sum of federal assistance, state assistance, local assistance, and that portion of directly generated funds that accrue from tax collections, toll transfers from other sectors of operations, and bond proceeds.

#### GENERAL DEFINITIONS:

**Public Transportation** (also called **transit**, **public transit**, or **mass transit**) is transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but not including school buses, charter buses, or sightseeing service.

**Transit agency** (also called **transit system**) is an entity (public or private) responsible for administering and managing transit activities and services. Transit agencies can directly operate transit service or contract out for all or part of the total transit service provided. When responsibility is with a public entity, it is a **public transit agency**. When more than one mode of service is operated, it is a **multimodal transit agency**.

**Report year** is the year for which data are summed in the Fact Book. The report year data are the sum of the fiscal year data for each U.S. transit agency that ends during a calendar year. For most Fact Book tables it is data for all transit agency fiscal years that end in calendar year 2011.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINITIONS:

**Directional Route Miles** are the length of the rights-of-way, either rail, roadway including public streets and roads with mixed traffic, or water route, traversed by transit vehicles and measured in both direction for a two-way right-of-way or one direction for a one lane right-of-way. The number of routes operated over a specific section of right-of-way is not significant to the count.

**Lane Miles** are the length of a roadway dedicated to high occupancy vehicles (HOV) multiplied by the number of dedicated traffic lanes, including roadway shoulders if they are legally used during peak hours.

**Maintenance Facility, General Purpose** is a facility used for inspecting, servicing and performing light maintenance work upon revenue vehicles, including brake adjustments, engine degreasing, tire work, minor body repairs, and painting.

**Maintenance Facility, Heavy** is a facility used for performing heavy maintenance work on revenue vehicles. Heavy maintenance includes unit rebuilds, engine overhauls, significant body repairs, and other major repairs.

**Passenger Station** is a place for passengers to board or alight from vehicles with a platform. Bus and light rail stops along streets are not considered to be stations even if they have shelters and other amenities.

**Track Miles** are the length of all tracks, measured in one direction only, used by a rail system for operations including mainline tracks, siding tracks, and yard tracks.

#### MODE OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS:

**Mode** is a system for carrying transit passengers described by specific right-of-way, technology, and operational features.

**Aerial Tramway** is an electric system of aerial cables with suspended powerless passenger vehicles. The vehicles are propelled by separate cables attached to the vehicle suspension system and powered by engines or motors at a central location not on board the vehicle.

**Automated Guideway Transit** (also called **personal rapid transit**, **group rapid transit**, or **people mover**) is an electric railway (single or multi-car trains) of guided transit vehicles operating without an onboard crew. Service may be on a fixed schedule or in response to a passenger activated call button.

**Bus** is a mode of transit service (also called **motor bus**) characterized by roadway vehicles powered by diesel, gasoline, battery, or alternative fuel engines contained within the vehicle. Vehicles operate on streets and roadways in fixed-route or other regular service. Types of bus service include **local service**, where vehicles may stop every block or two along a route several miles long. When limited to a small geographic area or to short-distance trips, local service

is often called **circulator, feeder, neighborhood, trolley, or shuttle service**. Other types of bus service are **express service, limited-stop service, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**.

**Bus Rapid Transit** is a type of bus service which offers higher speed and higher capacity service than regular fixed-route buses. These improvements are associated with dedicated rights-of-way, stations, traffic signal priority or pre-emption, low-floor vehicles or level-platform boarding, and separate branding of the service.

**Cable Car** is a railway with individually controlled transit vehicles attached while moving to a cable located below the street surface and powered by engines or motors at a central location not on board the vehicle.

**Commuter Bus** is a type of fixed-route bus service that connects outlying areas with central cities with no stops for at least 5 miles after leaving the central city. This service typically uses over-the-road-type buses rather than transit buses and primarily provides peak period commuter service.

**Commuter Rail** is a mode of transit service (also called **metropolitan rail, regional rail, or suburban rail**) characterized by an electric or diesel propelled railway for urban passenger train service consisting of local short distance travel operating between a central city and adjacent suburbs. Service must be operated on a regular basis by or under contract with a transit operator for the purpose of transporting passengers within urbanized areas, or between urbanized areas and outlying areas. Such rail service, using either locomotive hauled or self-propelled railroad passenger cars, is generally characterized by multi-trip tickets, specific station to station fares, railroad employment practices and usually only one or two stations in the central business district. Intercity rail service is excluded, except for that portion of such service that is operated by or under contract with a public transit agency for predominantly commuter services. Most service is provided on routes of current or former freight railroads.

**Demand Response** is a mode of transit service (also called **paratransit or dial-a-ride**) characterized by the use of passenger automobiles, vans, or small buses operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who then dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations. The vehicles do not operate over a fixed route or on a fixed schedule. The vehicle may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations and may even be interrupted en route to these destinations to pick up other passengers.

**Ferryboat** is a transit mode comprising vessels carrying passengers and in some cases vehicles over a body of water, and that are generally steam or diesel powered. When at least one terminal is within an urbanized area, it is **urban ferryboat** service. Such service excludes international, rural, rural interstate, island, and urban park ferries.

**Heavy Rail** is a mode of transit service (also called **metro, subway, rapid transit, or rapid rail**) operating on an electric railway with the capacity for a heavy volume of traffic. It is characterized by high-speed and rapid acceleration passenger rail cars operating singly or in multi-car trains on fixed rails; separate rights-of-way from which all other vehicular and foot traffic are excluded; sophisticated signaling, and high platform loading.

**Hybrid Rail** is a mode of transit operated on the routes of intercity railroads and has operating characteristics of commuter rail. This service typically operates diesel multiple-unit vehicles with characteristics of light rail vehicles. Hybrid rail vehicles are operated with temporal separation from railroad traffic.

**Inclined Plane** is a railway operating over exclusive right-of-way on steep grades (slopes) with powerless vehicles propelled by moving cables attached to the vehicles and powered by engines or motors at a central location not on board the vehicle. The special tramway type of vehicles has passenger seats that remain horizontal while the undercarriage (truck) is angled parallel to the slope.

**Light Rail** is a mode of transit service (also called **streetcar, tramway, or trolley**) operating passenger rail cars singly (or in short, usually two-car or three-car, trains) on fixed rails in right-of-way that is often separated from other traffic for part or much of the way. Light rail vehicles are typically driven electrically with power being drawn from an overhead electric line via a trolley or a pantograph; driven by an operator on board the vehicle; and may have either high platform loading or low level boarding using steps. Passenger stations or stops are usually farther apart than the normal spacing for streetcar systems.

**Monorail** is an electric railway of guided transit vehicles operating singly or in multi-car trains. The vehicles are suspended from or straddle a guideway formed by a single beam, rail, or tube.

**Publico** is a mode of transit service provided by vans or small buses. Publicos are privately owned and operated and are regulated by a public service commission under a franchise agreement. They operate on fixed routes but do not have fixed schedules. The only current publico service is in San Juan, PR.

**Streetcar** is a type of light rail service where nearly the entire route is in streets or other roadways. Single-vehicle trains are most common with frequent in-street stops. They normally are used for shorter trips in central or higher density areas. Passenger stops are closer together than the station spacing on light rail systems.

**Transit Vanpool** is ridesharing by prearrangement using vans or small buses providing round trip transportation between the participant's prearranged boarding points and a common and regular destination. Data included in this report are the sum of vanpool data reported in the National Transit Database (NTD) and do not include any data for vanpools not listed in it. Vanpool service reported in the NTD must be operated by a public entity, or a public entity must own, purchase, or lease the vehicle(s). Vanpool included in the NTD must also be in compliance with mass transit rules including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions, be open to the public (and that availability must be made known) and use vehicles with a minimum capacity of 7 persons.

**Trolleybus** is a mode of transit service (also called **trolley coach**) using vehicles propelled by a motor drawing current from overhead wires via connecting poles called trolley poles from a central power source not on board the vehicle.

#### **SERVICE CONSUMED DEFINITIONS:**

**Unlinked Passenger Trips**, also called **boardings**, is the number of times passengers board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination, and regardless of whether they pay a fare, use a pass or transfer, ride for free, or pay in some other way.

**Passenger Miles** is the cumulative sum of the distances ridden by each passenger.

**Average Trip Length** is the average distance ridden for an unlinked passenger trip computed as passenger miles divided by unlinked passenger trips.

**Average Passenger Load** is the average number of passengers aboard a vehicle at any one time for its entire time in revenue service including late night and off-peak hour service as well as peak rush hour service.

#### **SERVICE SUPPLIED DEFINITIONS:**

**Average Speed** of a vehicle is the miles it operated in revenue service divided by the hours it is operated in revenue service.

**Miles of Track** is a measure of the amount of track operated by rail transit systems where each track is counted separately regardless of the number of tracks on a right-of-way.

**Revenue Service** is the operation of a transit vehicle during the period which passengers can board and ride on the vehicle. Revenue service includes the carriage of passengers who do not pay a cash fare for a specific trip as well as those who do pay a cash fare; the meaning of the phrase does not relate specifically to the collection of revenue.

**Revenue Vehicle** is a vehicle in the transit fleet that is available to operate in revenue service carrying passengers, including spares and vehicles temporarily out of service for routine maintenance and minor repairs. Revenue vehicles do not include service vehicles such as tow trucks, repair vehicles, or automobiles used to transport employees.

**Vehicles Available for Maximum Service** are vehicles that a transit agency has available to operate revenue service regardless of the legal relationship through which they are owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by the transit agency. Also called **revenue vehicles owned or leased**.

**Vehicles Operated Maximum Service** is the largest number of vehicles operated at any one time during the day, normally during the morning or evening rush hour periods.

**Vehicle Total Miles** are all the miles a vehicle travels from the time it pulls out from its garage to go into revenue service to the time it pulls in from revenue service, including "deadhead" miles without passengers to the starting points of routes or returning to the garage. For conventional scheduled services, it includes both revenue miles and deadhead miles.

**Vehicle Revenue Miles** are the miles traveled when the vehicle is in revenue service (i.e., the time when a vehicle is available to the general public and there is an expectation of carrying passengers). Vehicles operated in fare-free service are considered in revenue service. Revenue service excludes school bus service and charter service.

**Vehicle Total Hours** are the hours a vehicle travels from the time it pulls out from its garage to go into revenue service to the time it pulls in from revenue service, including "deadhead" miles without passengers to the starting points of routes or returning to the garage. For conventional scheduled services, it includes both revenue time and deadhead time.

**Vehicle Revenue Hours** are the hours traveled when the vehicle is in revenue service (i.e., the time when a vehicle is available to the general public and there is an expectation of carrying passengers). Vehicles operated in fare-free service are considered in revenue service. Revenue service excludes school bus service and charter service.

#### **VEHICLE CHARACTERISTIC AND AMENITY DEFINITIONS:**

**Accessible Vehicles** are transit passenger vehicles that do not restrict access, are usable, and provide allocated space and/or priority seating for individuals who use wheelchairs.

**Alternate Power** transit vehicles are vehicles powered by any fuel except diesel fuel or gasoline.

**Automated Stop Announcement** is an automated system that announces upcoming stops.

**Automatic Vehicle Location or GPS** equipment allows a vehicle to be electronically located or tracked by local sensors or satellites.

**Automatic Passenger Counter** equipment counts passenger boardings/alightings but is not part of the farebox.

**Average Age** of transit vehicles is calculated from the difference between the current year and each vehicle's model year, not from the vehicle's actual date of manufacture or delivery.

**Dynamic Destination Signs**

**Electronic Destination Signs**

**Exterior Bicycle Rack** equipped vehicles can carry bicycles on racks outside of the vehicle such as on the front of a bus or the open deck of a ferryboat.

**Passenger-Operator Intercom** equipped vehicles have an intercom system that allows passengers and the vehicle's or train's operator to communicate with each other.