

Transportation Planning Acronyms and Glossary

3-C	Continuing, Cooperative and Comprehensive Planning Process
A	
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
Administrative Modification	A minor revision to a long-range statewide transportation or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).
Amendment	A revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, that involves major change to a project included in a MTP, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for MTPs and TIPs involving "non-exempt" projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, an amendment is a revision approved by the state in accordance with its public involvement process.
Area Sources	Small stationary and non-transportation pollution sources that are too small and/or numerous to be included as point sources but may collectively contribute significantly to air pollution (e.g., dry cleaners).
Attainment Area	Any geographic area in which levels of a given criteria air pollutant (e.g., ozone, carbon monoxide, PM10, PM2.5, and nitrogen oxide) meet the health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for that pollutant. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a nonattainment area for others. A "maintenance area" (see definition below) is not considered an attainment area for transportation planning purposes.
BTS	Bureau of Transportation Statistics
C	
CAA	Clean Air Act
Capacity	A transportation facility's ability to accommodate a moving stream of people or vehicles in a given time period.

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Capital Program Funds	Financial assistance from the transit major capital programs of 49 U.S.C. Section 5309. This program enables the Secretary of Transportation to make discretionary capital grants and loans to finance public transportation projects divided among fixed guideway (rail) modernization; construction of new fixed guideway systems and extensions to fixed guideway systems; and replacement, rehabilitation, and purchase of buses and rented equipment, and construction of bus-related facilities.
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	A colorless, odorless, tasteless gas formed in large part by incomplete combustion of fuel. Human activities (i.e., transportation or industrial processes) are largely the source for CO emissions.
CE	Categorical Exclusions
Clean Air Act (CAA)	The original Clean Air Act was passed in 1963, but the national air pollution control program is actually based on the 1970 revision of the law. The Clean Air Act as amended in 1990 made major changes and contains the most far-reaching revisions of the 1970 law.
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program
CMP	congestion management process
CO	carbon monoxide
COG	Council of Governments
Comprehensive Transportation Plan	Formerly known as the thoroughfare plan, this document has its basis in State law. The law states that these plans must be multi-modal and based on land use plans. The CTP is a series of maps for highways, public transportation and rail, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation. The maps are an agreement between the State and the local area of the long-term "vision" for the transportation system. The plan is not financially constrained.
Conformity (Air Quality)	A CAA (42 U.S.C. 7506[c]) requirement that ensures that federal funding and approval are given to transportation plans, programs and projects that are consistent with the air quality goals established by a State Implementation Plan (SIP). Conformity, to the purpose of the SIP, means that transportation activities will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The transportation conformity rule (40 CFR part 93) sets forth policy, criteria, and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of transportation activities.
Congestion Management Process (CMP)	A systematic approach required in transportation management areas (TMAs) that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. through the use of operational management strategies. Provides information on transportation system performance and finds alternative ways to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of people and goods, to levels that meet state and local needs.

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Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program	A federal-aid funding program created under ISTEA. Directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting national air quality standards. CMAQ funds generally may not be used for projects that result in the construction of new capacity available to SOVs (single-occupancy vehicles).
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSS	context sensitive solutions
CTP	Comprehensive Transportation Plan
D	
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Department of Transportation (DOT)	When used alone, indicates the U.S. Department of Transportation. In conjunction with a place name, indicates state, city, or county transportation agency (e.g., Illinois DOT, Los Angeles DOT).
DOT	Department of Transportation
E	
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EJ	Environmental Justice
Emissions Budget	The part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) that identifies the allowable emissions levels, mandated by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), for certain pollutants emitted from mobile, stationary, and area sources. The emissions levels are used for meeting emission reduction milestones, attainment, or maintenance demonstrations.
Environmental Justice (EJ)	Environmental justice assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination. (See also "Title VI.")
Environmental Mitigation Activities	Strategies, policies, programs, actions, and activities that, over time, will serve to avoid, minimize, or compensate for (by replacing or providing substitute resources) the impacts of to or disruption of elements of the human and natural environment associated with the implementation of of a long-range statewide transportation plan or MTP. The human and natural environment includes, for example, neighborhoods and communities, homes and businesses, cultural resources, parks and recreation areas, wetlands and water sources, forested and other natural areas, agricultural areas, endangered and threatened species, and the ambient air. The environmental mitigation strategies and activities are intended to be regional in scope, and may not necessarily address potential project-level impacts.
(EPA) Environmental Protection Agency	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.
F	
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration

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FAST Act	The FAST Act: Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The FAST Act is the current federal transportation funding and authorization bill and the first federal transportation law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs.
FBRMPO	French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization
(FHWA) Federal Highway Administration	A branch of the U.S. 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. The FHWA also administers the Federal Lands Highway Program, including survey, design, and construction of forest highway system roads, parkways and park roads, Indian reservation roads, defense access roads, and other Federal Lands roads.
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal funding to transportation authorities, local governments, and states to support a variety of locally planned, constructed, and operated public transportation systems throughout the U.S., including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, streetcars, monorail, passenger ferry boats, inclined railways, and people movers.
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
Financial Plan	The documentation required to be included with a MTP and TIP (optional for the longrange statewide transportation plan and STIP) that demonstrates the consistency between reasonably available and projected sources of federal, state, local, and private revenues and the costs of implementing the proposed transportation system improvements.
Financial Programming	A short-term commitment of funds to specific projects identified in both the regional and the statewide Transportation Improvement Program.
Fiscal Constraint	Making sure that a given program or project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation. The MTP, TIP, and STIP must include sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the MTP, TIP, and STIP can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained. For the TIP and the STIP, financial constraint/fiscal constraint applies to each program year. Additionally, projects in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas can be included in the first two years of the TIP and STIP only if funds are "available" or "committed."
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
Formula Capital Grants	Federal transit funds for transit operators, allocated by FTA, and used to purchase rolling stock (e.g., buses and trains) as well as design and construct facilities (e.g., shelters, transfer centers, etc.).
FTA	Federal Transit Administration

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G

(GIS) Geographic Information System	Computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and display geographically referenced information.
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H

HC	hydrocarbons
(HOV) High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)	Vehicles carrying two or more people. The number that constitutes an HOV for the purposes of HOV highway lanes may be designated differently by different transportation agencies.

I

I/M	Inspection and Maintenance
IHS	Interstate Highway System
IM	Interstate Maintenance
Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)	Electronics, photonics, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system. The National ITS architecture is a blueprint for the coordinated development of ITS technologies in the U.S., providing a systems framework to guide the planning and deployment of ITS infrastructure.

Intermodal	The ability to connect, and connections between, differing modes of transportation.
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Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)	Legislative initiative by the U.S. Congress that restructured and authorized federal funding for transportation programs; provided for an increased role for regional planning commissions/ MPOs in funding decisions; and required comprehensive regional and statewide longterm transportation plans.
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Interstate Highway System (IHS)	The specially designated system of highways, begun in 1956, which connects the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers of the United States. Also connects the U.S. to internationally significant routes in Canada and Mexico.
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ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
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ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
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L

Land Use	Refers to the manner in which portions of land or the structures on them are used (or designated for use in a plan), i.e., commercial, residential, retail, industrial, etc.
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Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (LRSTP)	The official, statewide, multimodal transportation plan covering no less than 20 years developed through the statewide transportation planning processes.
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(LRTP) Long-Range Transportation Plan	A document resulting from regional or statewide collaboration and consensus on a region's or state's transportation system, and serving as the defining vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, this is the official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that is developed, adopted, and updated by the MPO through the metropolitan transportation planning process. (See also MTP)
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LOS	LOS or Level of Service is a qualitative measure used to analyze roadways and intersections by categorizing traffic flow and assigning quality levels of service based on performance measure like vehicle speed, density, congestion. Letters A, B, C, D, E, F are typically assigned with "A" being the best free-flow conditions and "F" designating corridors and intersections experiencing significant delays and breakdowns in service.
LOSRC	Land-of-Sky Regional Council
LRSTP	Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan
M	
M&O	Management and Operations
Maintenance Area	Any geographic region of the United States that the EPA previously designated as a nonattainment area for one or more pollutants pursuant to the CAA Amendments of 1990, and subsequently redesignated as an attainment area subject to the requirement to develop a maintenance plan under section 175A of the CAA, as amended.
MAP 21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, Federal Transportation Authorizing Legislation signed into law in July of 2012 and later replaced by the FAST Act in December of 2015
Merger Process	Merger is a process to streamline the project development and permitting processes, agreed to and supported by stakeholder agencies and local units of government. The Merger Process allows agency representatives to work more efficiently (quicker and comprehensive evaluation and resolution of issues) by providing a common forum to discuss and find ways to comply with key elements of their agency's mission.
Metropolitan Planning Area	The geographic area determined by agreement between the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the area and the Governor, in which the metropolitan transportation planning process is carried out.
(MPO) Metropolitan Planning Organization	The policy board of an organization created and designed to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process for urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000, and designated by local officials and the Governor of the state.
(MTP) Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Formerly LRTP. The official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that is developed, adopted and updated by the MPO through the metropolitan transportation planning process.
Mode	A specific form of transportation, such as automobile, subway, bus, rail, air, bicycle, or foot.
N	
NADO	National Association of Development Organizations
(NAAQS) National Ambient Air Quality Standards	Federal standards that set allowable concentrations and exposure limits for various pollutants. The EPA established these standards pursuant to section 109 of the CAA. Air quality standards have been established for the following six criteria pollutants: ozone (or smog), carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and sulfur dioxide.

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National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)	Established requirements 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.
NCAMPO	North Carolina Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
NCDOT	North Carolina Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHS	National Highway System
NOI	Notice of Intent
(NAA) Nonattainment Area	A geographic region of the United States that has been designated by the EPA as a nonattainment area under section 107 of the CAA for any pollutants for which an NAAQS exists, meaning that federal air quality standards are not being met.
NOx	nitrogen oxide
O	
Operational and Management Strategies	Actions and strategies aimed at improving the performance of existing and planned transportation facilities to relieve congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.
Ozone (O ₃)	Ozone is a colorless gas with a sweet odor. It is a secondary pollutant formed when VOCs and NOx combine in the presence of sunlight. Ozone is associated with smog or haze conditions. Although the ozone in the upper atmosphere protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays, ground-level ozone—resulting from human and natural sources—produces an unhealthy environment in which to live.
P	
Particulate Matter (PM-10 and PM 2.5)	Particulate matter consists of airborne solid particles and liquid droplets. Particulate matter may be in the form of fly ash, soot, dust, fog, fumes, etc. These particles are classified as "coarse" if they are smaller than 10 microns, or "fine" if they are smaller than 2.5 microns. Coarse airborne particles are produced during grinding operations, or from the physical disturbance of dust by natural air turbulence processes, such as wind. Fine particles can be a by-product of fossil fuel combustion, such as diesel and bus engines. Fine particles can easily reach remote lung areas, and their presence in the lungs is linked to serious respiratory ailments such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and aggravated coughing. Exposure to these particles may aggravate other medical conditions such as heart disease and emphysema and may cause premature death. In the environment, particulate matter contributes to diminished visibility and particle deposition (soiling).
Performance Measures	Indicators of how well the transportation system is performing with regard to such measures as average speed, reliability of travel, and accident rates. Used as feedback in the decisionmaking process.
(PL) Planning Funds	Primary source of funding for metropolitan planning administered by the FHWA.
PM	particulate matter
PPM	parts per million
	Previously known as the Priority Needs List. The PNL is the regional list of high priority projects.
	Steps in the Project Development Process:

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	Identify the Need
Prioritization List	<p>Show the Project on the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)</p> <p>Program the Project in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)</p> <p>Evaluate the project for SPOT Prioritization criteria and list it on the Prioritization List</p> <p>Program the project in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the State and MPO level.</p> <p>Determine funding sources</p> <p>Complete Environmental Documentation and Review (time-consuming and complicated)</p> <p>Design, Right of Way, and Construction</p>
PTD	Public Transportation Division of NCDOT
Public Participation/Public Involvement	The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.
R	
Regional Councils of Governments (COG)	Regional councils of governments are multipurpose, multijurisdictional public organizations. Created by local governments to respond to federal and state programs, regional councils bring together participants at multiple levels of government to foster regional cooperation, planning and service delivery. They may also be called planning commissions, development districts, or other names, and may or may not include the structure and functions of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).
ROD	Record of Decision
RPO	Rural Planning Organization
S	
(SAFETEA-LU) Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users	The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU authorized the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.
SHSP	Strategic Highway Safety Plan
SIB	State Infrastructure Bank
SIP	State Implementation Plan

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Sources (Pollution)	Refers to the origin of air contaminants. Can be point (coming from a defined site) or nonpoint (coming from many diffuse sources). Stationary sources include relatively large, fixed facilities such as power plants, chemical process industries, and petroleum refineries. Area sources are small, stationary, non-transportation sources that collectively contribute to air pollution, and include such sources as dry cleaners and bakeries, surface coating operations, home furnaces, and crop burning. Mobile sources include on-road vehicles such as cars, trucks, and buses; and off-road sources such as trains, ships, airplanes, boats, lawnmowers, and construction equipment. Common mobile sourcerelated pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and particulate matter (PM-10 and PM 2.5).
SOV	Single-Occupancy Vehicle
SPOT	Strategic Planning Office for Transportation (NCDOT's) Project Prioritization Office) SPOT is also sometimes used to refer to the prioritization process used to add projects to the State TIP.
SPR	State Planning and Research Funds
Stakeholders	Individuals and organizations involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. Include federal/state/local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, users of the transportation infrastructure, and the general public.
State Implementation Plan (SIP)	The portion (or portions) of the implementation plan (as defined in section 302[q] of the CAA), or most recent revision thereof, which has been approved under section 110 of the CAA, or promulgated or approved under section 301(d) of the CAA and which implements the relevant requirements of the CAA. Although the SIP is produced by the state environmental agency (not the MPO) to monitor, control, maintain, and enforce compliance with the NAAQS, it must also be taken into account in the transportation planning process.
State Infrastructure Bank (SIB)	A revolving fund mechanism for financing a wide variety of highway and transit projects through loans and credit enhancement. SIBs are designed to complement traditional federal-aid highway and transit grants by providing states increased flexibility for financing infrastructure investments.
State Planning and Research Funds (SPR)	Primary source of funding for statewide long-range planning, administered by the FHWA.
(STIP) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program	A statewide prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of four years that is consistent with the long-range statewide transportation plan (LRSTP), metropolitan transportation plans (MTPs), and transportation improvement plans (TIPs), and is required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.
STP	Surface Transportation Program
(STI) Strategic Transportation Investment	The Strategic Transportation Investments Bill (HB817), which was signed into law on June 26, 2013, will help to make it possible to better leverage existing funds to enhance the state's infrastructure, providing greater opportunity for economic growth.
(STP) Surface Transportation Program	Federal-aid highway funding program that supports a broad range of surface transportation capital needs, including many roads, transit, sea and airport access, vanpool, bike, and pedestrian facilities.

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T

TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee: governing body of an MPO or an RPO, made up of elected officials from local governments plus the representatives from the NC Board of Transportation. FBRMPO TAC has been renamed the "Board" in May of 2013.
TCC	Technical Coordinating Committee
TCM	Transportation Control Measure
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
Technical Advisory Committee	Staff representatives from the 18 local governments, staff from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and representatives from other local and State Agencies.
Telecommuting	Employment utilizing electronic communications (by telephone, computer, fax, etc.) with a physical office, either from home or from another site, instead of traveling to and working in the office.
TIFIA	Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
Title VI	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance. (See "Environmental Justice.")
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TMIP	Travel Model Improvement Program
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
TPB	Transportation Planning Branch
Transportation Control Measure (TCM)	Any measure that is specifically identified committed to in the applicable SIP that is either one of the types listed in section 108 of the CAA or any other measure for the purpose of reducing emissions or concentrations of air pollutants from transportation sources by reducing vehicle use or changing traffic flow or congestion conditions. Notwithstanding the above, vehicle technology-based, fuel-based, and maintenance-based measures that control the emissions from vehicles under fixed traffic conditions are not TCMs.
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	Programs designed to reduce demand for transportation through various means, such as the use of public transit and of alternative work hours.
Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)	Legislated in 1998, TEA-21 authorized approximately \$217 billion in federal funding for transportation investment for FYs 1998- 2003. Used for highway, transit, and other surface transportation programs.
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	A prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of four years that is developed by an MPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process, consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP), and required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53.
Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998 (TIFIA)	A federal credit program under which the DOT may provide three forms of credit assistance— secured (direct) loans, loan guarantees, and standby lines of credit – for surface transportation projects of national or regional significance. The fundamental goal is to leverage federal funds by attracting substantial private and non-federal co-investment in critical improvements to the nation's surface transportation system.

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Transportation Management Area (TMA)	An urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more, as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and designated by the Secretary of Transportation, or any additional area where TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO and designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.
TRB	Transportation Research Board
Trust Fund	A fund credited with receipts that are held in trust by the government and earmarked by law for use in carrying out specific purposes and programs in accordance with an agreement or a statute.
U	
(UA) Urbanized Area	Urbanized area: defined every ten years by the Census Bureau. An urbanized area includes an area within a population of at least 50,000 that meets minimum population density requirements.
(UC) Urban Cluster	Similar to urban area, with a population between 2,500 and 50,000.
(UPWP) Unified Planning Work Program	A statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area. At a minimum, a UPWP includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source(s) of funds.
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
V	
V/C	Volume/Capacity Ratio. This indicator ranges from 0 to 1.0 and is used to measure congestion on the roads.
Visualization Techniques	Methods used by states and MPOs in the development of transportation plans and programs with the public, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders in a clear and easily accessible format such as maps, pictures, and/or other displays to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs.
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound