

Glossary Text

Act 26 (Pennsylvania Act 1991-26) - This Act was passed as part of Pennsylvania's 1991-92 Budget and provides funding from a portion of the Oil Franchise Tax for the completion of Turnpike expansion projects.

Act 43 (Pennsylvania Act 1981-43) – This Act enables landowners to propose the creation of agricultural security areas to local units of government. With local approval, agricultural security areas would consist of 500 or more acres of viable farmland. Incentives to encourage farming and to discourage development in these agricultural areas are provided by the Act. It also authorizes county governments to establish programs for the purchase of development easements.

Act 61 (Turnpike Organization, Extension and Toll Road Conversion Act) - This Act, passed in 1985, authorizes the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to undertake the design and construction of certain new highway projects and to operate them as toll roads.

Action Team - Governor Robert P. Casey directed Secretary of Transportation Howard Yerusolim to develop a Fayette County-based Action Team comprised of elected officials and community leaders. The Team revisited the Needs Study issue from December 1992 to April 1993 and helped present the needs data to the environmental agencies for the Mon/Fayette Transportation Project from Uniontown to Brownsville.

Aerial Mapping - Aerial photographs are taken and used in the data collection process and to produce topographic maps of a project corridor. Shown on the mapping are all buildings, roads, rivers and other topographical features as well as contour elevations for use in developing project alternatives. Project mapping at the preliminary stage is usually at a scale of 1" = 200'. In the final design phase, the aerial mapping will be at a scale of 1" = 50'.

Alignment - The line which represents the location of a highway being considered as a new alignment alternative.

Alternative - Any one of a number of transportation options for a project, including the following: "No-build," Transportation System Management (TSM), network upgrade, highways on new location, high occupancy vehicle lanes, bus lanes, bicycle lanes and transit.

Alternatives Analysis - Preliminary engineering and environmental studies of a wide range of alternatives. The objective is to reduce the number of alternatives for more detailed study, and then, after detailed engineering and environmental studies, to select a preferred alternative.

Biodiversity - Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the variety and abundance of species, their genetic composition and the communities, ecosystems and landscapes in which they occur.

Chadville Demonstration Project - In 1992, PENNDOT completed and opened this project. The expressway is designated as PA Route 43 and extends 3.8 miles from U. S. Route 119 in Chadville south to Big Six Road near the Fayette Business Park.

Concurrence Point - When environmental agencies agree on the conclusion of a step in the PENNDOT 10-Step Transportation Project Development Process.

Congestion Management System (CMS) Analysis - A study that determines how measures such as transit, car pooling, van pooling, flex-time, intersection improvements and high occupancy vehicle lanes might reduce traffic congestion and reduce or eliminate the need for a new highway as an alternative in the development of the project.

Contaminated Area - Property that contains hazardous or environmentally sensitive materials.

Corridor - A band of variable width (generally 5,000 to 7, 000 feet) in which alternative alignments are developed and studied.

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) - A branch of the Executive Office of the President which develops regulations that are used to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) - This document is a detailed study of the proposed alternatives and the impact of those alternatives on the region. When a DEIS is published, there is a 45-day review and comment period for environmental agencies and the general public. A Public Hearing is held during the 45-day review period. All substantive comments are then addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Design Year - The year for which a roadway facility is designed, normally 20 years after planned construction, taking into consideration projected volumes of traffic.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires an EIS on federally funded projects which could have significant impacts. It is the document that assures that planners, engineers and environmental scientists have studied appropriate alternatives and that citizens are fully aware of the environmental, social, cultural and economic effects of all alternatives. The EIS documents the development and impact analysis of the alternatives as well as the basis for the selection of the preferred alternative.

Environmental Justice - On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 which requires that federal agencies, to the greatest extent allowed by law,

shall administer and implement their programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment so as to identify and avoid “disproportionately high and adverse” effects on minority and low-income populations.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - This federal agency is responsible for enforcing environmental regulations such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.

Feasibility Study - A preliminary evaluation of a full range of potential alternatives to compare their ability to meet engineering, environmental and cost-effective requirements.

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) - All substantive comments and questions received during the review period and at the public hearing on the DEIS are addressed in this document which is prepared by transportation agencies. Other studies are done, as needed, to address comments and questions. The document is then submitted to the Federal Highway Administration with a recommended alternative for approval.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - This agency oversees the process of planning, designing and constructing federally-funded highway projects. FHWA approves the selected alternative and prepares the Record of Decision. (See Record of Decision.)

Final Design Phase - Includes preparation of final right-of-way plans for property acquisition as well as plans and specifications for bidding construction contracts.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) - A vehicle carrying a specified minimum number of people. Some highways provide HOV lanes that can be used only by vehicles meeting the minimum occupancy requirement. Increased HOV usage reduces the total traffic on a highway.

Hydric Soil - Soil that is saturated or flooded long enough during the growing season to develop conditions which indicate the possible presence of wetlands.

Intermodal Relationships - Coordination of different modes of transportation, such as rail, air, busways, bikeways and highways during the planning and development of a particular project.

Intermodal Facility - A transportation facility where a user transfers from one mode of transportation to another.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) - This federal law provides \$155 billion in authorizations for highways, highway safety and mass transit from 1992 through 1997. It gives transportation agencies and planners expanded flexibility to use highway funds for mass transit, car pools, pedestrian and bicycle

thruways, traffic management measures, fringe parking, environmental enhancement and research development of new technologies for transportation.

Letter of Intent to Enter - Letters sent to inform property owners that study team members might need to enter properties to collect data for engineering and environmental studies.

Level of Service (LOS) - A measure of the operational conditions within a stream of traffic considering interruptions, speed, freedom to maneuver, comfort and convenience. The six levels are designated "A" through "F." "A" represents the best conditions (free-flow), while "F" is the worst possible conditions (congested). The flow of traffic through an intersection can also be measured as a level of service.

Logical Terminus - The rational beginning or ending point of a transportation project, such as at an existing transportation facility.

Major Investment Study (MIS) - An evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of alternative transportation investments in attaining local, state and national goals and objectives for the metropolitan area. The study utilizes a cooperative process that leads to a decision on the design concept and scope of an investment. These alternatives may include new highways, light rail transit, busways, upgrading of existing roadways, river transportation, heavy rail or multimodal facilities (which is a combination of alternatives).

Mass Transit Facilities Alternative - An alternative that includes upgrading or constructing new mass transit facilities (i.e. rail transit, busways).

Mason-Dixon Link - This is the Mon/Fayette Expressway Project from Interstate 68 near Morgantown, West Virginia to PA Route 43 near Fairchance, Pennsylvania. This "link" crosses over the Mason-Dixon Line.

Measures of Effectiveness - A basis of comparison used during the Congestion Management System (CMS) Analysis and Major Investment Study (MIS) to focus on identified project needs and provide a method to determine the degree that traffic conditions, such as congestion and mobility, can be improved by each of the various transportation alternatives under construction.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - The planning organization which is responsible under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) for regional planning of a major metropolitan area. The Southwestern Planning Commission (SPC) is the MPO for the Pittsburgh region.

Mitigation Measures - Measures taken to eliminate or reduce the negative impacts of a project.

Mon/Fayette Expressway Projects – The four Mon/Fayette Transportation Projects are being developed from Interstate 68, east of Morgantown, West Virginia, to Interstate 376 at Pittsburgh and Monroeville, Pennsylvania.

Mon/Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway Projects Executive Committee - A committee which was formed in 1992 consisting of officials from the FHWA, PENNDOT, WVDOT, PTC and selected representatives from federal, state and local governments and the environmental resource agencies.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) - The federal law that requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for major undertakings using federal funds. To comply with NEPA, a 10-step process has been developed to address all potential environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of a proposed project before decisions are reached on design. Public involvement is an integral component of the NEPA process.

Natural Resource - Resources, such as wetlands, wildlife, streams, aquatic life, etc., which must be considered in the development of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Needs Study - The purpose of this study is to identify such items as roadway deficiencies, safety problems, capacity issues and social demands, which support the consideration of a transportation improvement. State and federal environmental agencies are asked to agree that there is a need for improvements before a project moves into the next study phase.

Network Upgrade Alternative - An alternative which considers improvements to the existing roadway network such as the addition of lanes and minor alignment shifts to correct deficiencies.

New Alignment Alternative - An alternative on a new location.

"No-Build" Alternative - The alternative of not making major improvements to the existing highway system. This alternative would include only routine maintenance improvements such as resurfacing, traffic lane marking and minor lane widening to the existing highway system. The no build alternative is always evaluated during environmental studies for transportation projects and included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Notice of Intent - Formal notice filed in the Federal Register by FHWA to announce the intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Peak Hour - The one-hour period of a typical day during which traffic volumes are the greatest.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) - Regulatory agency responsible for enforcing state environmental regulations.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) - PENNDOT is the agency of the Pennsylvania state government responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of state highways and bridges in Pennsylvania, not including toll highways which are under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. PENNDOT is funded by state and federal tax dollars.

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) - The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission was created in 1937 by Act 211. The PTC has the authority to construct, finance, operate and maintain toll highways. Presently, the Turnpike Commission has over 500 miles of limited access highway including: Mainline Pennsylvania Turnpike, which stretches from the Ohio state line to the New Jersey border and from Norristown to Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania; the Beaver Valley Expressway (Turnpike 60); Turnpike 43, near California, Pennsylvania and the Amos K. Hutchinson Bypass (Turnpike 66), near Greensburg. The operation of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is supported by tolls and bond revenue, not tax dollars. However, the Mon/Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway Projects will be partly funded by state and federal tax dollars as well as tolls.

Plan of Study (POS) - Outlines and describes the engineering and environmental studies proposed for a project, the range of alternatives to be studied, the public and resource agency involvement and the anticipated project schedule.

Preferred Alternative-The alternatives identified in the DEIS that is favored based on engineering and environmental studies and public and agency output.

Preliminary Design Phase - The stage early in the NEPA process that considers a number of potential alternatives and collects data to be used in the EIS preparation.

Public Hearing - Formal meeting required to complete the NEPA public involvement requirements. Testimony at the hearing is made part of the official record and is evaluated by state and federal agencies before the preparation of an FEIS.

Public Meetings - Sessions in which residents who live in the project corridor and other interested parties have the opportunity to meet with transportation and environmental professionals to ask questions, express their concerns and assist in the information-gathering process.

Record of Decision (ROD) - FHWA's final decision and explanation regarding identification of the selected alternative.

Required Right-of-Way – An area which must be acquired for the construction of a project.

Resource Agencies - Federal and state agencies which review projects for their consistency and sensitivity to environmental laws and policies. Several resource agencies also possess regulatory authority. The agencies examine the information presented in the review process and guide the PA Turnpike Commission through state and federal environmental regulations that must be followed with each transportation project.

Roadway Deficiencies - Problems with the existing roadway system or lack of a roadway system that cause safety concerns, motorist inconvenience or traffic congestion.

Section 4(f) - Enacted as a portion of the Federal Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f) declares "that a special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites." The use of these sites for a transportation project will not be approved unless it is determined that there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act - Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires approval by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE) prior to the dredging or placement of any fill materials into the waters of the United States, including wetlands.

Selected Alternative-The alternative identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) as the alternative to be implemented for the project.

Southern Beltway Feasibility Study - A study completed by SPRPC in 1989, which reviewed the feasibility of a proposed Southern Beltway and suggested alternatives for later consideration. These alternatives are not necessarily those that will be developed for the Southern Beltway.

Special Agency Coordination Meeting (SACM) - A monthly meeting of various state and federal transportation and environmental resource agencies to review project status and various project issues. These meetings provide for the involvement of agencies during project development. The resource agencies included are as follows:
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency, and US Fish and Wildlife Services.

Special Purpose Meeting - Meetings between PTC officials and groups or organizations with special concerns about the Mon/Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway Projects.

Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission (SPRPC) - The metropolitan planning organization (MPO) formerly responsible for transportation planning throughout the region of Southwestern Pennsylvania including Allegheny, Washington, Westmoreland, Beaver, Butler and Armstrong Counties. In early 1999, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) became the MPO for this region.

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Structure - A bridge that crosses over other roads, railroad tracks, major streams or rivers.

Study Area - The specific area under investigation for a transportation improvement and an environmental study.

Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 – This federal legislation authorized seven pilot toll road facilities nationwide including the Mon/Fayette Expressway Project. This act set the stage for receipt of earmarked federal funding through later appropriation acts and ISTEA.

System Linkage - Improving access to various points throughout the region by connecting or "linking" two or more transportation facilities.

TEA 21 – On June 9, 1998, President Clinton signed into law PL 105-178, the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA 21) authorizing highway, highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs for the next 6 years. TEA 21 builds on the initiatives established in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which was the last major authorizing legislation for surface transportation.

Technical Support Data - Various issue-specific technical documents and files that provide support for project related decisions and the EIS document.

Turnpike 43 - The toll road connecting Interstate 70 with US Route 40 in Washington County.

Turnpike 60 – The toll road connecting PA Route 60 north of PA Route 51 near Beaver, PA to US Route 422 and PA Route 60 near New Castle, PA. This road is commonly known as the Beaver Valley Expressway.

Turnpike 66 – The toll road connecting US Route 119 and I-70 near New Stanton, PA to US Route 30 near Greensburg and then to US Route 22 just east of Murrysville, PA. This road is commonly known as the Greensburg Bypass.

Traffic and Revenue Study – Study conducted during the design phase to determine traffic and toll revenue projections for the recommended alternatives.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) – An alternative which includes those activities which maximize the efficiency of the present transportation system. Possible

TSM subject areas include items such as fringe parking, ride sharing, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on existing roadways and traffic signal timing.

Waste Area – An area where excess materials from excavation during construction is deposited.

Wetlands – The term wetland describes what are more commonly known as marshes, bogs, swamps, wet meadows and shallow ponds. Wetlands are an important natural resource that provide flood control, pollution control and habitat for fish, birds and mammals and aquatic life as well.

Wetland Delineation – The process of determining the boundary of a wetland.