

Transit Citizen Leadership Academy Brief Definitions of Transit Modes

Visit www.nMotion2015/materials for more specific information on how these may be utilized throughout our region.

Heavy Rail—An electric railway with the capacity for “heavy volume” of traffic usually with exclusive rights-of-way, multi-car trains, high speed, rapid acceleration, sophisticated signaling, and high platform loading.¹

Commuter Rail—also called ‘suburban rail’ is a passenger rail transit service that primarily operates between a city center and the middle to outer suburbs beyond 10 miles and commuter towns or other locations that draw large numbers of commuters (people who travel on a daily basis). Commuter rail trains operate following a schedule at speeds between 30 and 125 mph.²

Light Rail (LRT)—A metropolitan electric railway system characterized by its ability to operate single cars or short trains along exclusive rights-of-way at ground level, on aerial structures, in subways, or occasionally, in streets and to board and discharge passengers at track or car floor level. LRT offers flexibility other modes don’t.³

Streetcar—also called Trolley, is a vehicle on rails used for transporting passengers that operates on city streets.⁴

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)— is a bus-based public transit system designed to improve capacity and reliability relative to conventional bus systems. It is higher capacity, lower cost public transit that utilizes buses and/or specialized vehicles on roadways and/or dedicated lanes to quickly and efficiently transport passengers to their destinations, while offering the flexibility to meet transit demand. BRT can be customized to community needs and incorporates state-of-the-art technologies that result in more volume of passengers and less congestion.⁵

Express Bus—sometimes called commuter bus service, is a bus service that is intended to run faster than normal bus services between the same two commuter/destination points. They operate faster by not making as many stops in between and by taking quicker routes, such as interstates, or by using dedicated lanes or roadways. Express buses may also operate out of park-and-rides, in some cases only operating during rush hour/peak traffic times.⁶

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)—are advanced applications which aim to provide innovative services. ITS applies advanced technologies of electronics, communications, computers, control, and sensing and detecting in all kinds of transportation systems in order to improve safety, efficiency, service, and traffic through transmitting real-time information.⁷

¹https://definedterm.com/heavy_rail

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commuter_rail

³http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/light_rail_bro.pdf

⁴<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/streetcar>

⁵<https://nbrti.org/>

⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Express_bus_service

⁷<https://www.freeway.gov.tw/UserFiles/File/Traffic/A1%20Brief%20introduction%20to%20Intelligent%20Transportation%20System,%20ITS.pdf>