Glossary and acronyms

AATA - Ann Arbor Transit Authority. Provides bus transit service within Washtenaw County.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis - The process of measuring air quality against the NAAQS set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, involves physical and chemical measures of various pollutants’ concentrations in the ambient air for a specific geographic area during a defined time period and determines whether the area meets the national ambient air quality standards.

Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Urban Area Transportation Study - See UATS.

BWATC - Blue Water Area Transportation Commission. Provides bus transit service in the City of Port Huron and surrounding areas (St. Clair County).

Capacity - The maximum number of vehicles that a road can be reasonably expected to move at expected speeds, under normal conditions.

Capital expenses (also, expenditures, or costs) - Non-recurring or infrequently recurring costs of long-term assets such as buses, stations, or buildings, often including related expenses. Capital funding is financial assistance from federal, state, or local sources to finance public highway or transit-capital-related projects.

Commute trip - Trips made travelling back and forth from home to work.

Congestion - What occurs when road capacity is exceeded, and vehicles are forced to travel slower than the road's designated speed. Congestion can either be recurring congestion (happening often, even daily) or non-recurring (caused by random forces, such as a traffic crash).

Cross-jurisdictional - Describes transportation service that is provided across municipal boundaries (e.g., a road that crosses from one city to another).

DDOT - Detroit Department of Transportation. Oversees the municipal roads and transportation system within the City of Detroit.

Drivers - All motor vehicle operators, bicyclists, pedestrians, and train engineers.

Environmental Justice - Based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898 of 1994, there are three basic principles of environmental justice—to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionate negative effects on low-income and minority populations; to enable meaningful public participation in decision-making; and to prevent the denial of benefits to persons regardless of race, color, or national origin.

Executive Committee - SEMCOG's main policy-making body; the Executive Committee provides the management of the organization. The Executive Committee is the second-to-last SEMCOG committee to review the RTP.

Federal Aid Committee (FAC) - The agencies charged with managing federal transportation spending, generally at the county level. In Southeast Michigan, Federal-Aid Committees are staffed by the county road commissions. UATS, SCCOTS, and the City of Detroit also have FACs.

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration. Administers, plans, funds, and regulates the federal highway system.

Financial constraint - Federal regulations require that the RTP and TIP be financially constrained, i.e., all projects must have identified a source of funding.

FTA - Federal Transit Administration. Administers, regulates, and helps fund the country's public transportation systems.

General Assembly (GA) - Composed of elected-official representatives from all SEMCOG members. The GA meets three times a year and votes to adopt regional plans. The GA is the “final stop” at SEMCOG for voting on the RTP.

Intermodal - The movement of people or freight by two or more modes of transportation — on air, land or water. For instance, a shipping container moving from a train, to a truck, to a freighter is using intermodal transportation.

Jurisdiction - The agency or community having legal control of a project.

MDEQ - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

MDOT - Michigan Department of Transportation. The state agency overseeing the operation of state roads and the distribution of state transportation funds.

MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization. The organization designated by the governor that is responsible, along with the state, for comprehensive transportation planning in a metropolitan area. SEMCOG is Southeast Michigan’s MPO.

NAAQS - National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Standards required by the Clean Air Act to protect human health and the environment.

Non-motorized transportation - Any method of transportation not using a motor vehicle (usually bicycling or walking).
Operating expenses (also, expenditures, or costs) - Expenses necessary to provide transportation service, to plan and coordinate improvements, and to maintain safe conditions, including both direct costs (such as wages and fuel) and indirect costs (computer expenses and advertising).

Operating funds - Financial assistance from federal, state, or local sources to finance public highway or transit operating expenses.

Pedestrian - An individual traveling on foot (or wheelchair).

Public comment - Feedback from the community as a part of the region's public involvement process.

Public involvement - Public involvement efforts include a variety of techniques targeting the entire community (including ethnic, minority, and low-income groups) and assures that the public has the opportunity to help shape the substance of plans and projects. This includes public participation on committees and at special “visioning sessions.”

Public transit - Passenger transportation service. It operates on established schedules along designated routes or lines with specific stops, and is designed to move relatively large numbers of people at one time (e.g., buses and subways). Also known as “mass transit,” “public transportation,” “mass transportation,” and “transit.”

Region - An entire metropolitan area, including designated urban and rural subregions. The Southeast Michigan region includes Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.

RideShare - SEMCOG’s program to encourage carpooling and vanpooling. The program aims to conserve energy, reduce pollution, and alleviate congestion, crashes, and injuries.

Road commission - The agency overseeing county roads. Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties each have county road commissions. In Wayne County, the Department of Public Works oversees roads. (See also Federal-Aid Committees.)

RTP - Regional Transportation Plan. The longrange (at least 20 years) transportation plan that documents the projects, policies, and initiatives needed to meet the region’s transportation needs.

SCCOTS - St. Clair County Transportation Study. SEMCOG’s partner in St. Clair County, they collect transportation information and prepare plans for inclusion in the RTP.

SEMCOG - Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. A regional planning partnership of local governmental units serving 4.8 million people in the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan. Currently, there are 147 member communities, including all seven counties. SEMCOG is the region’s designated MPO.

SMART - Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation. Provides bus service for Macomb County and for specific communities within Oakland and Wayne counties.

STIP - State Transportation Improvement Program. The State of Michigan’s compilation list of all the TIPs in the state.

TAC - Transportation Advisory Council. TAC includes elected officials, transportation technicians, and representatives of special interest organizations. TAC is the first SEMCOG committee to review the RTP.


TIP - Transportation Improvement Program. SEMCOG’s document listing transportation projects to be funded under federal transportation programs for a three-year period. To be eligible for federal funding, a project must be included in the TIP.

TIPDC - Transportation Improvement Program Development Committee. An advisory committee to SEMCOG’s Transportation Advisory Council. TIPDC reviews projects submitted for funding through the Transportation Improvement Program. The committee consists of members from each of the county’s Federal-Aid Committees, MDOT, and representatives from counties, cities, villages, townships, and school districts.

TMA - Transportation Management Area. An urbanized area with a population over 200,000 (as determined by the latest census); TMA designation is usually requested by the governor and the MPO (or affected local officials), and is officially designated by FHWA and the FTA. In Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG and UATS are designated TMAs.

Transportation infrastructure - The physical underpinnings of society at-large, including, but not limited to, roads, bridges, transit, sidewalks, and bikeways.

Transportation system - An intermodal system containing all forms of transportation in a unified, interconnected manner, including highways, transit, non-motorized pathways, aviation, marine ports, etc.
Trip - Any travel by a person involving a motorized vehicle, walking (five minutes or more), or use of a bicycle. Walking for exercise, neighborhood strolling, and recreational biking are not considered trips.

Urbanized area - An area containing a city or “twin cities” of 50,000 or more people surrounded by a closely settled incorporated area, which also meets specified criteria for population and density. Southeast Michigan has four urbanized areas — Detroit, Ann Arbor, Port Huron, and Toledo, Ohio.

UATS - Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Urban Area Transportation Study. SEMCOG’s partner in Washtenaw County, they collect transportation information and prepare plans for inclusion in the RTP; is also a federally designated TMA under TEA-21.

USDOT - United States Department of Transportation.

USEPA - United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Directions to SEMCOG

Southbound I-75*

Take I-75 south to I-375, follow I-375 south onto westbound Jefferson Ave. Turn right on Woodward Ave. Go north two blocks, turn left on Congress. Turn left on Griswold, go south half a block and turn right into the Larned/Griswold/Congress Parking Garage. (Eastbound I-94 will connect you to I-75.)

Southbound Lodge (M-10)*

Follow the Lodge south to eastbound Jefferson Ave. Turn left onto Woodward. Go north two blocks, turn left on Congress. Turn left on Griswold, go south half a block and turn right into the Larned/ Griswold/ Congress Parking Garage. (Northbound I-75 and westbound I-94 will connect you to the Lodge.)

*Eastbound I-96 connects to both I-75 and I-94.