

CTA Glossary

Term:	Definition:
ADA Accessibility	Accommodations provided under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure that people with disabilities have access to jobs, public accommodations, telecommunications, and public service, including public transit. (An example would include elevators and ramps)
Alternatives Analysis	Determining which of various alternatives will achieve a set of goals in light of existing conditions and constraints (Required federal process for New Starts projects)
Ballast	Layer of crushed rock or stone upon which railway track is laid
Cab	Control space in railcar for train operator.
Center Platform	A platform located between the inbound and outbound tracks
Clearances	Required horizontal and vertical dimensions to accommodate rail cars, trucks and emergency vehicles.
Codes + Standards	Regulatory guidelines followed while developing plans and constructing infrastructure and stations
Communications	Public address systems, visual messaging, security cameras and TV monitors in stations and on platforms
Concepts	Preliminary ideas that may or may not be developed further
Configuration	Geometric arrangement of tracks, platforms, or stations
Constructability	Review of if, and how, a station \ structure can be built
Contact Rail	The third rail which provides electric power to operate trains
Context-Sensitive Design	Implementation of design to accommodate public issues
Cross-overs	A special piece of track that allows train movement from one track to another
Customer Assistant Kiosk	Booth in CTA stations near fare control area, from which the Customer Assistant works
Customer Demand	Volume of customers requesting transit service in a specific direction and at a specific time.
Elevated Structure	Steel structure that supports tracks, platforms and \ or station houses
Embankment Structures	Layered earthwork structure with concrete retaining walls or landscaped slopes that supports tracks, platforms, and \ or station houses on a raised area
Environmental Impact	Study that includes evaluation of alternates to determine impact to socio-economic, historic, wetlands, noise, air, endangered species
Express Service	Train runs that do not stop at all stations
Fare Array	Arrangement of customer fare collection turnstiles and gates at the entry to stations, separating unpaid zone from paid zone
Fares	Monetary cost of riding buses and trains
Feeder Bus	Bus line(s) bringing customers to a transfer station or end of the line station
Headways	The scheduled time span between the arrival of trains or buses on specified routes. Also called Service Frequency
Infrastructure	Basic elements of the transit system including track, structures, signals, and power
Interim Improvements	Needed short term repairs before the reconstruction or replacement is scheduled
Interlocking	A series of switches and track crossovers, controlled through the signal system, which allows for train movement over multiple tracks
Intervals	(See Headway)
Life-extension	Interim repairs to structures, tracks, platforms and stations, before complete reconstruction or replacement (See also Useful Life)

Multimodal	Transfer from one mode of transportation to another
Planning Process	Preliminary engineering that includes concept development, order of magnitude costs and constructability
Power Infrastructure	Basic elements of the traction power system
Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)	A development or construction opportunity involving both public and private funding
Rail Ties	Series of supports, typically of wood or plastic, that support running rail and the electrified 3rd rail
Reconstruction	Total removal of existing and rebuilding of a new element
Rehabilitation	Partial improvement of an existing element
Relay Houses	Buildings which contain signal control equipment, located at intervals along the track
Retaining Walls	Vertical, typically concrete, walls that hold back earth and fill materials that create embankments
Reverse Commuter	A regular transit customer traveling in the opposite direction from typical 'rush hour' customers
Ridership	The number of customers entering a station and paying a fare, expressed in daily, monthly and annual totals per station and system
Right of Way	The land used by the CTA to operate train lines, typically expressed in width
ROW Expansion	Additional land that needs to be acquired in order to build new tracks, platforms or stations, typically expressed as an increase in width
Service	The operation of train and bus lines
Shoring	Temporary steel or wood structures installed to provide additional support to a permanent structure
Side Platform(s)	Platforms located on the outside of inbound and outbound tracks
Signal Systems	System which controls the speed and movement of trains to maintain safe distance
Signal Towers	Buildings which house operations personnel who operate track and signal interlocking equipment
Sloped Embankment	Track area that is raised above ground level on layered material such as clay, with sides that slope down to ground level
Slow Zones	Sections of the system where trains must reduce speed in order to safely operate rail service, due to deteriorated infrastructure or construction
Stair Enclosures	Walls around stair openings, providing security and weather protection
Substations	A building that houses electrical equipment to convert power supply from ComEd
Subway	A track system that is located below ground level
Supplemental Service	Additional train or bus operations to serve customers during special events or service interruptions
Switch	The mechanical component of a crossover, allowing a train to change from one track to another
Third Rail	The electrified rail that provides power to trains (See also Contact Rail)
Traditional Commuter	Regular customer of transit service traveling in typical 'rush hour' time period and direction
Transfer Station	A stop on the system that allows passenger to change from one train line to another line without additional fare (e.g. Howard)
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)	A mix of uses (retail, commercial, institutional, residential) adjacent to transit stops which promote transit usage
Trip Types	Reason why the passenger is using the system (commuter, weekend, shopping, special destination)
Turnstile	Fare collection device at stations allowing individual customer to pay for use of train \ bus with transit cards
Useful Life	The expected length of time that any asset (track, station, train) remains in good operating condition
Viaduct	A bridge-like structure over a street that allows trains to pass over the street and vehicles to pass under the tracks

Vision Study	A general feasibility study that develops overall design and operational concepts for further consideration
Water-proofing	A coating on buildings and structures which prevents water leakage
Wayside	Equipment or building located immediately adjacent to a track.
Windbreaks	A three-sided enclosure which provides wind protection for waiting customers on platforms