

## TRANSPORTATION PROJECT ACRONYM GLOSSARY

TEA-21 – Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. TEA-21 is the law authorizing multiyear funding and projects for all federal surface transportation programs. Sets the requirements for obtaining federal surface transportation programs. It expires in September 2003.

IDOT- Illinois Department of Transportation. State of Illinois agency that administers transportation programs and funding.

US DOT – United States Department of Transportation. The federal department that oversees federal transportation programs.

FwHA – Federal Highway Administration. The branch of the US DOT that oversees federal highway projects and funding.

EPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency. The federal department that oversees enforcement of major environmental laws.

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act. Federal law providing for environmental assessments of impacts and public input into all federally funded projects. An environmental study could be either an EIS or and EA.

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement. An EIS is a detailed environmental study conducted on federally funded projects. Requirements for environmental impact studies and public input on those impacts were created by NEPA. The findings of an EIS may be challenged in court.

EA – Environmental Assessment. An environmental assessment is less detailed level of environmental impact study than a EIS, but one which also falls under the requirements of NEPA for federally funded projects. At the conclusion of an environmental assessment, a FONSI may be issued (finding of no significant impact) or an environmental assessment may conclude that a full EIS is needed. A FONSI may be conditional, setting out the mitigation requirements that must be met in order for the proposed project to have no significant impact under the law. The findings of an EA may be challenged in court.

NIPC – Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. A regional planning organization for the Chicago area.

CATS – Chicago Area Transportation Study. The metropolitan planning organization that is designated as the official body under state and federal regulations to oversee transportation planning and coordinate project funding in this region. Develops the long term transportation plan (RTP). Administers the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant program (CMAQ). CMAQ funds projects intended to reduce air pollution and encourage alternatives to vehicle trips.

RTA – Regional Transportation Authority. A regional oversight agency created by the State of Illinois to coordinate the activities of the three transit service boards in the Chicago metropolitan area (PACE, METRA, and CTA).

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan. This is the long range transportation plan adopted by the region and by the state. A project must be in the RTP to obtain federal transportation funding, as the first step in obtaining federal funds.

North Central Council of Mayors. This is a sub regional organization affiliated with CATS serving the west cook county suburbs. It assists in the planning for transportation projects and dissemination of federal and state funds for projects. Oak Park is a voting member.

HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle. An HOV lane on a highway is designated only for vehicles containing at least two or more persons, including cars, busses, or vans.

RTA – Regional Transportation Authority. Oversees the region's transit related agencies and coordinates planning for transit projects for CTA (Chicago Transit Authority, Metra commuter rail, and PACE suburban bus service).

TIP – Transportation Improvement Plan. The TIP is the short-term, multi year plan approved by the state and federal governments that make a transportation project eligible for federal funding. In order for a project to be on the TIP, a Phase I study must be completed. For example, the proposed I-290 HOV plan is not included in the state's Fiscal Year 2002-2006 TIP meaning it is ineligible for federal construction funding. A project's addition to the TIP is a point at which a project can be challenged in court, for example, on the basis that the findings of the Phase I study did not meet all requirements spelled out in the law.

WCMC – West Central Municipal Conference. This is a council of local governments comprising 36 communities in west suburban Cook County including Oak Park.

### THREE MAJOR FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EISENHOWER PROJECT

- 1). **Major investment study.** A major investment study is required before proceeding with any major federally funded transportation project. In the case of a highway project, this study identifies the viable alternatives for a major highway project and examines the economic, social and environmental impacts of each.
- 2). **Congestion management study.** This study must be done if the proposed transportation project would affect a non-attainment area under the federal Clean Air Act, such as the Chicago metropolitan area is, and examines the various options for relieving congestion and the air quality impacts of each.
- 3). **NEPA analysis.** This is an analysis of the overall environmental impacts of the various alternatives identified in the other two studies, based on the info provided in those studies. This could be an EIS or it could be an EA leading to an EIS or a FONSI. An EIS is more comprehensive.