Glossary of Terms

100-Year Floodplain – The portion of the floodplain submerged by the statistical flood event with a 1 percent probability of occurring in any year.

Alightings – The number of passengers leaving a passenger vehicle at a station.

Aquifer – Rock or sediment that is saturated with water and sufficiently permeable to transmit economically significant quantities of water to wells and springs.


Archaeological resources – Materials and objects that remain below the ground surface as evidence of the life and culture of historic, prehistoric, or ancient people, such as artifacts, structures, or settlements. Resources of concern are located in areas known or suspected to contain subsurface artifacts of pre-European or post-European settlement populations. Areas of expected moderate to high archaeological sensitivity according to various factors including present and past topography, exposure, slope, distance to water, and availability of food.

At-grade – The intersection of two roads, or a road and a railway, that cross at the same elevation.

Attainment area – A geographic area in which levels of a criteria air pollutant meet the health-based primary standard (National Ambient Air Quality Standard) for the pollutant. Attainment areas are defined using federal pollutant limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Automatic Block Signaling (ABS) – A block system that consists of a series of signals that divides a railway line into a series of blocks and then functions to control the movement of trains between them through automatic signals. ABS operation is designed to allow trains operating in the same direction to follow each other in a safe manner with greatly reduced risk of rear end collision while reducing costs and increasing capacity from previous manual block systems that require human operators.

Best Management Practice (BMP) – A structural and/or management practice employed before, during and after construction to protect receiving water quality. These practices either provide techniques to reduce soil erosion or remove sediment and pollutants from surface runoff.

Biodiversity – The diversity of genes, species, and ecosystems. This term includes the entire hierarchy of ecological organization, and encompasses regional ecosystem diversity (landscape diversity), local ecosystem diversity (community diversity), species diversity, and genetic diversity within populations of a species.

Boardings – The number of passengers entering a passenger vehicle at a station.

Cab Signaling – A system of signaling devices located in a train operator’s compartment or cab, indicating a condition affecting the movement of a train or engine and used in conjunction with interlocking signals and either in conjunction with or in lieu of wayside block signals.

Canadian Pacific Railway – A major freight rail carrier that operates in New York State, and is the host railroad for Amtrak trains between Schenectady and Rouses Point.
Car Mile – A single vehicle, such as a railroad car, moved one mile (also see “Train Mile”).

Carbon Dioxide – Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the primary greenhouse gas (GHG) pollutant of concern from anthropogenic (man-made) sources. Although not the GHG with the strongest effect per molecule, CO₂ is by far the most abundant and, therefore, the most influential GHG. CO₂ is emitted from any combustion process (both natural and anthropogenic), from some industrial processes such as the manufacture of cement, mineral production, metal production, and the use of petroleum-based products, from volcanic eruptions, and from the decay of organic matter. CO₂ is removed (“sequestered”) from the lower atmosphere by natural processes such as photosynthesis and uptake by the oceans. CO₂ is included in any analysis of GHG emissions.

Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e) – To present a complete inventory of all GHGs, component emissions are added together and presented as CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e)—a unit representing the quantity of each GHG weighted by its effectiveness using CO₂ as a reference. This is achieved by multiplying the quantity of each GHG emitted by a factor called global warming potential (GWP). GWPs account for the lifetime and the radiative forcing of each chemical over a period of 100 years (e.g., CO₂ has a much shorter atmospheric lifetime than SF₆, and therefore has a much lower GWP).

Carbon Monoxide (CO) – A colorless, odorless, tasteless gas formed in large part by incomplete combustion of fuel. Full combustion activities (i.e. transportation, industrial processes, space heating, etc.) are the major sources of CO.

Center Island Platform – A passenger platform located between two tracks so that it can serve them both.

Centerline – The midpoint in a cross-sectional view of a right-of-way, roadway, or railroad track, see also “Track Centers, Distance Between.”

Class I Railroad – The Surface Transportation Board (STB) defines a Class I railroad in the United States as “having annual carrier operating revenues of $250 million or more” after adjusting for inflation using a Railroad Freight Price Index developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). According to the Association of American Railroads (AAR), Class I railroads had minimum carrier operating revenues of $378.8 million (USD) in 2009. Smaller railroads are assigned to Class II or III.

Classification Yard – A rail terminal facility, usually consisting of a system of turnouts (which see) and parallel tracks, used for sorting freight cars by destination and for assembling trains.

Combined Statistical Area (CSA) – A grouping of adjacent metropolitan and/or micropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the United States and Puerto Rico. The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines combined statistical areas based on social and economic ties measured by commuting patterns between adjacent MSAs. The areas that combine retain their own designations as metropolitan or micropolitan statistical areas within the larger combined statistical area. The primary distinguishing factor between a CSA and an MSA is that the social and economic ties between the individual MSAs within a CSA are at lower levels than between the counties within an MSA.

Coniferous – Any of various mostly needle-leaved or scale-leaved, chiefly evergreen, cone-bearing gymnospermous trees or shrubs such as pines, spruces, and firs.

Container on Flat Car – A form of intermodal freight transportation (which see) in which freight containers are carried on railroad cars equipped for that purpose; may be arranged to handle a single level of containers or double-stacked containers (see “Double-Stack Car”).

Control Point – An interlocking, or the location of a track signal or other marker, the indications of which dispatchers can specify when controlling trains.
**Cooperating Agency** – Any federal, state or local agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative.

**Critical Environmental Area (CEA)** – An area designated as a CEA under the New York State Environmental Quality Act by state and local agencies must have one or more of the following exceptional or unique characteristics: 1) A benefit or threat to human health; 2) A natural setting; 3) Agricultural, social, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or educational values; or 4) An inherent ecological, geological or hydrological sensitivity to change that may be adversely affected by any change.

**CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSXT)** – A major rail freight carrier with largest market share in New York State, and host railroad for Amtrak trains between Poughkeepsie and Niagara Falls.

**Daily Trains per Route** – The number of trains traversing a defined railroad line or section of line during a specified 24-hour period.

**dBA** – An abbreviation for A-weighted decibel. The decibel is a unit used to describe sound pressure levels on a logarithmic scale. For community noise impact assessment, an A-weighted frequency filter is used to approximate the way humans hear sound.

**Deciduous** – Refers to woody vegetation, such as oak or maple trees, that shed their leaves after the growing season.

**Double-Stack Car** – A railroad freight car that provides a frame in which a freight container can be placed and secured, with provisions and clearances to allow a second container to be placed and secured on top of the first container.

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS)** – The document prepared by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. These regulations require that the EIS evaluate all reasonable alternatives considered, discuss the reasons that alternatives have been eliminated from detailed study, summarize the studies, reviews, consultations, and coordination required by environmental laws and Executive Orders.

**Dual Mode Locomotive** – Railroad locomotive that can switch from electric to diesel operation for power generation.

**Empire Project Advisory Committee (EPAC)** – Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from key federal/state agencies, key railroads, and statewide organizations representing regional governments.

**Endangered Species** – Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

**Environmental Justice** – Executive Order 12898 requires each federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing... disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts on minority populations and low-income populations.”

**Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)** – Those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity, as defined by the regional Fishery Management Council.

**Farmland of Statewide Importance** – Land other than prime farmland but that is also highly productive. This is land, in addition to prime farmland, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops.
**Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)** – A statute enacted in 1981 by the United States Congress to ensure that significant agricultural lands are protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses. For highway projects receiving federal aid, the regulations promulgated under the FPPA (7 CFR Part 658, 1984) require a state highway authority (NYSDOT) to coordinate with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The FPPA regulates four types of farmland soils: prime farmland, unique farmland, farmland of state-wide importance, and farmland of local importance.

**Farmland Soils** – Soils suited to producing crops; those with soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce a sustainable yield when treated and managed using acceptable methods. Specifically, farmland soils are those soil types designated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981 and the implementing regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** – A federal agency that regulates federal actions in floodplains.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** – The branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering the funding of federal-aid highway projects.

**Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)** – The FRA was created by the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 103, Section 3(e)(1)). The purpose of the FRA is to: promulgate and enforce rail safety regulations; administer railroad assistance programs; conduct research and development in support of improved railroad safety and national rail transportation policy; provide for the rehabilitation of Northeast Corridor rail passenger service; and consolidate government support of rail transportation activities.

**Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS)** – The document prepared after circulation of a draft EIS and consideration of comments received. FRA NEPA regulations require that the FEIS identify a preferred alternative, evaluate all reasonable alternatives considered, discuss and respond to substantive comments on the draft EIS, summarize public involvement, and describe the mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the proposed action.

**Floodplain** – The level area adjoining a river channel that is inundated during periods of high flow.

**Freight Train Mile** – A freight train operating one mile (also see “Train Mile”).

**Geographic Information System (GIS)** – A computer-based application used to perform spatial analysis.

**Grade** – The slope of a railway or road along the direction of travel, normally characterized by the vertical rise per unit of longitudinal distance.

**Grade Crossing** – A crossing or intersection of highways, railroad tracks, other guideways, or pedestrian walks, or combinations of these at the same level or grade.

**Grade separation** – The intersection of two roads, or a road and a railway, that cross at different elevations. One roadway passes above or under the other roadway with an overpass or underpass structure.

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions** – Any or all of several gases that negatively affect ambient air quality when released into the atmosphere as part of the exhaust gases and smoke thrown off by internal combustion engines used to propel transportation vehicles. Water vapor, carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), nitrous oxide, methane, and ozone are the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth’s atmosphere.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** – Gross Domestic Product is one of the major economic indices of the socio-economic development of a region. GDP is equal to the total of added values in the
regional economic industries, estimated as a difference between production and intermediate consumption.

**Gross Tons** – The total weight of a vehicle and the lading, if any, that it is carrying, i.e., the sum of Tare Weight and Revenue Tons (which see).

**Gross Tons per Year** – The total weight of lading and vehicles carried over a roadway or railroad line of track during a one-year period.

**Groundwater Protection Areas** – Areas of land designated by water resource agencies through which rainwater or snowmelt percolates to replenish the underlying aquifer in the area of a public well. These areas require special protection because they directly affect the quality and safety of the public drinking water supply.

**High-Level Platform** – A passenger station platform whose surface is at the same elevation above the rail as the floor of conventional railroad passenger cars, typically 51 inches, to enable stepless boarding and alighting in conformance with ADA requirements.

**High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program** – The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) launched the HSIPR Program in June 2009. The HSIPR Program supports a series of strategic transportation goals: building a foundation for economic competitiveness; ensuring safe and efficient transportation choices; promoting energy efficiency and environmental quality; and supporting interconnected livable communities. In the long-term, HSIPR Program funding is intended to build an efficient, high-speed passenger rail network connecting major population centers 100 to 600 miles apart. In the near-term, the program will aid in economic recovery efforts and lay the foundation for this high-speed passenger rail network through planning studies and targeted investments in existing intercity passenger rail infrastructure, equipment, and intermodal connections.

**Historic resources** – Properties, structures and districts that are listed in or have been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Interlocking** – In rail systems, an arrangement of switch, lock, and signal devices that is located where rail tracks cross, join and/or separate. The devices are interconnected in such a way that their movements must succeed each other in a predetermined order, thereby preventing opposing or conflicting train movements.

**Intermodal Freight Transportation** – Goods that are loaded into a highway trailer or container, then shipped from origin to destination by moving the trailer or container via some combination of road, rail marine and/or (rarely) air transport.

**Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)** – The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-240; ISTEA, pronounced Ice-Tea) is a United States federal law that posed a major change to transportation planning and policy, as the first U.S. federal legislation on the subject in the post-Interstate Highway System era. It presented an overall intermodal approach to highway and transit funding with collaborative planning requirements, giving significant additional powers to metropolitan planning organizations. Signed into law on December 18, 1991 by President George H. W. Bush, it expired in 1997. It was preceded by the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 and followed by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and most recently in 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)

**Interstate** – A limited access highway that is part of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways ("Interstate Highway System").
**Interstate Highway System** – The network of Interstate Highways established by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The statute established a 41,000-mile network of controlled-access highways (expanded to 42,000 miles by legislation in 1968) intended to connect all metropolitan areas with populations greater than 50,000 and all state capitals.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund** – A system for funding Federal, State and local parks and conservation areas, created by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964.

**Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act** – Legislation (16 U.S.C. 1855(b)) governing all fisheries resources within 320 kilometers (200 miles) of the U.S. coast that established regional Fishery Management Councils and required the preparation of Fisheries Management Plans.

**Main Track** – A principal track over which all or most of a railroad line’s train traffic moves. Depending on traffic volume, railroad lines may have a single main track, or two or multiple main tracks.

**Maintenance of way** – The upkeep and repair of a railroad’s fixed property (such as tracks and bridges); the process of maintaining railroad roadbed (such as rail, ties, ballast, bridges, etc.).

**Maximum Authorized Speed (MAS)** – The top speed (mph) at which trains are allowed to operate in a particular section of track; generally specified in the employees’ timetable.

**Meet** – An operating event wherein two trains, one running in each direction, pass each other; can occur without restriction on a line with two or more main tracks, but must occur at a passing siding on a line with a single main track.

**Metro North Railroad (Metro-North)** – The unit of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority that operates commuter rail lines serving Grand Central Terminal. Metro-North is the host railroad for Amtrak trains between Spuyten Duyvil and Poughkeepsie.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** – As defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, a MSA includes at least one city with 50,000 or more inhabitants, or an urbanized area (of at least 50,000 inhabitants), and a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000. Each MSA has its own metropolitan planning organization as decreed by federal law.

**Mitigation** – Actions that avoid, minimize, or compensate for potential adverse impacts.

**Multi-modal** – The act of providing alternative modes or choices of transportation service, such as automobile, bus, rail, taxi, etc.

**National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)** – The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded during a specified time in a specified geographic area.

**National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA)** – The federal legislation that requires an interdisciplinary approach in planning and decision-making for federal-aid actions. The Act includes requirements for the contents of environmental impact statements that are to accompany every recommendation for major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The interdisciplinary study approach includes the analysis of potential impacts to the natural, social and economic environment.

**National Heritage Area** – Established by Congress to promote historic preservation and an appreciation of the history and heritage of designated sites. National Heritage Areas are administered by state or local governments or non-profit or private corporations and are not federally owned and managed.

**National Historic Landmark (NHL)** – A historic building, site, structure, object, or district that represents an outstanding aspect of American history and culture.
**National Historic Site** – Usually, a national historic site contains a single historical feature that was directly associated with a person or family of historical significance. These areas may also be associated with specific historic periods that are important in American history.

**National Memorial** – A place designated by the U.S. Congress for protection as a memorial to a historic person or event.

**National Natural Landmark (NNL)** – The National Registry of Natural Landmarks includes nationally significant geological and biological features.

**National Priority List (NPL)** – The “Superfund” statute (42 U.S.C. Sect. 9601) requires the EPA to establish a National Priorities List of sites which are to be given top priority consideration for removal of hazardous substances and remedial action.

**National Register of Historic Places** – A list of structures, sites and districts of national historical significance as determined by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act.

**National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)** – A program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for mapping and classifying wetland resources in the United States.

**National Wildlife Refuge** – The National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the nation’s system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve fish, wildlife and plants.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** – Formerly the Soil Conservation Service, NRCS is a unit within the United State Department of Agriculture that is responsible for administering the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

**Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)** – Nitric oxide (NO) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are collectively referred to as oxides of nitrogen (NOx). NO forms during high temperature combustion processes. NO₂ forms when NO further reacts in the atmosphere. NOx reacts with the sunlight to form ozone, a colorless gas associated with smog or haze conditions. Ozone is a pollutant regulated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

**Noise receptor** – Locations that may be affected by noise: sensitive receptors include residences, parks, schools, churches, libraries, hotels, and other public buildings.

**Non-Attainment Area** – A geographic area in which levels of a criteria air pollutant fail to meet the health-based primary standard (National Ambient Air Quality Standard) for the pollutant. Non-Attainment areas are defined using federal pollutant limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**On-Time Performance** – Arrival time of a public transportation vehicle at an intermediate or final destination station at the time designated in the operating timetable for that event. For contract enforcement purposes, usually taken to mean arrival at the trip’s final destination station at or no more than a specified number of minutes after the published arrival time.

**Overhead Bridges** – With reference to the railroad tracks, overhead bridges are bridges that carry another feature, such as a road, over the referenced tracks.

**Overtake** – An operating event wherein a faster train passes a slower train running in the same direction; can occur between appropriately placed crossovers on a line with two or more main tracks, but must occur at a passing siding on a line with a single main track.

**Ozone** – A gas which is a variety of oxygen. Ozone is a pollutant regulated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Ground-level ozone is the main component of smog. Ozone is not directly emitted by motor vehicles, but is formed when oxides of nitrogen react with sunlight.
**Participating Agency** – A federal, state, tribal, or local government agency that may have an interest in the project.

**Passenger Mile (PM)** – A basic unit of productivity defined as one passenger riding one mile.

**Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT)** – PMT is a measure of passenger demand and trip length. One passenger traveling one mile constitutes one passenger-mile. One passenger riding ten miles = 10 PMT; 50 passengers each riding 100 miles = 5,000 PMT.

**Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA)** – PRIIA was enacted in 2008 as Public Law 110-432. PRIIA authorized a high-speed grant program for FY 2009 through FY 2013 to improve intercity passenger rail service, operations and facilities. PRIIA also directed the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to develop a long-range national rail plan that is consistent with approved State rail plans and the rail plans of the nation.

**Passing Track** – A track adjacent to a main or secondary track used primarily for trains to execute meet or overtake movements.

**Peak hour** – The hour of the day when traffic volume on a given roadway is highest. A separate peak hour can be defined for morning and evening periods. On a public transportation facility, peak hour usually refers to the most heavily patronized hour of the operating day.

**Pervious Surface** – Relating to hydrology, a surface through which precipitation can penetrate into the ground, reducing direct runoff or perching (as compared to an impervious surface where no precipitation is able to penetrate into the ground, thereby making it necessary to collect more runoff into drainage systems). Some newer road surfacing mixes are designed to be pervious.

**Positive Train Control (PTC)** – A system that prevents train accidents due to operator errors. PTC consists of locomotive-borne electronic equipment linked to central office dispatching systems via wireless data networks. If a train operator exceeds his/her movement authority, the train is sent a wireless signal and is automatically stopped.

**Prime Farmland** – As defined by the USDA, land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses.

**Prime Farmland Soil** – Soil map units that are designated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as having the properties needed to produce sustained high yield crops when managed with modern farming techniques.

**Protected Stream** – A stream or small water body along a stream that has a water quality classification of C(T) (trout supporting waters) or higher and is subjected to the stream protection provisions of the NYSDEC Protection of Waters regulations.

**Record of Decision (ROD)** – The document, prepared by the Federal Highway Administration or Federal Railroad Administration, that presents the basis for the Federal agency action, summarizes any mitigation measures to be incorporated, and documents any required Section 4(f) approvals. No Federal agency action may be undertaken until a Record of Decision has been signed. A Record of Decision is prepared no sooner than 30 days after the public release of the FEIS.

**Revenue Tons** – The portion a total vehicle weight represented by the weight of the lading the vehicle is carrying.

**Ridership** – The number of passengers using a vehicle (e.g., a train) or group of scheduled vehicles (e.g., several trains providing a complete schedule such as the Empire Service); may be measured for various units of time: per hour, day, week, month or year, depending on the intended use of the data.
**Rolling Stock** – The wheeled vehicles, both powered and unpowered, collectively used on a railway, including locomotives, passenger coaches, freight wagons and guard’s vans.

**Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)** – The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470f), Section 106, requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

**Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C., Section 303)** (Section 4(f)) – Legislation protecting publicly owned parks, public recreation areas, historic properties or wildlife and waterfowl refuges. The statute states that no Department of Transportation project may use land from these areas unless there is demonstrated to be no prudent and feasible alternative to using the land, and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from the use.

**Section 404 of the U.S. Clean Water Act (Section 404)** – The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) is the enabling legislation for protection of waters of the United States by the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**Section 6(f) of the U.S. Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (Section 6(f))** – Legislation that provides for the public purchase and preservation of tracts of land.

**Service Road** – A roadway, often a minimally graded and improved single lane, providing access to rubber-tired maintenance of way vehicles along a length of otherwise inaccessible railroad line.

**Service Yard** – A rail terminal facility, usually consisting of system of turnouts (which see) and parallel tracks, as well as driveways placed between the tracks for rubber-tired maintenance vehicles; used to store passenger trains between revenue runs, restock their supplies, and perform cleaning and other light servicing tasks.

**Side Platform** – A passenger platform located to the outside of the tracks, and normally serving only the track immediately adjacent to the platform.

**Siding** – A track adjacent to a main or secondary track, for meeting, passing, or storing cars or trains.

**Significant Wildlife Habitat** – Wildlife habitats, including deer wintering yards, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, seabird nesting habitat, and significant vernal pools, that are protected under 38 M.R.S.A. § 480-B.

**Sole Source Aquifer (SSA)** – An aquifer designated by EPA as the “sole or principal source” of drinking water for a given aquifer service area; that is, an aquifer that is needed to supply 50% or more of the drinking water for that area and for which there are no reasonably available alternative sources should the aquifer become contaminated.

**Stakeholder** – All parties with a vested interest in the project. Such parties include the general public, federal and state agencies, Amtrak, CSX, Metro-North Railroad and other railroads, transportation agencies/metropolitan planning organizations, elected officials, corridor municipalities, business and interested non-governmental organizations.

**State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)** – A project review process that requires the sponsoring or approving governmental body to identify and mitigate the significant environmental impacts of the activity it is proposing or permitting.

**State Implementation Plan (SIP)** – A plan created under The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) that establishes emission reduction requirements for ozone and carbon monoxide non-
attainment areas. Proposed projects must demonstrate that the impacts of their emissions are consistent with the appropriate SIP.

**Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)** – A plan required for major construction projects under the EPA’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit for construction activities. The SWPPP is required to address measures to prevent erosion, sedimentation, and other potential discharges of pollutants to water bodies and wetlands.

**Study Area** – The area within and surrounding the project corridor that was studied for the purposes of determining project-related impacts to resources resulting from implementing any of the studied alternatives. The study area is centered about the existing or prospective rail line centerlines and varies from 300 feet to ½ mile in width, depending on the resource. The study area follows the existing railroad corridor for the 90 mph and 110 mph alternatives; while for the 125 mph alternative, the prospective railroad corridor follows a markedly different alignment through the Empire Corridor West.

**Teragrams of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent** – Equivalent to one million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, unit used in greenhouse gas analysis.

**Terminal Facility** – The station, platforms and associated tracks, and Service Facility (which see) provided at or in the vicinity of the end station on a railroad or other public transportation route.

**Threatened Species** – Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

**Tiering** – Staged environmental review process applied to the environmental review of complex projects.

**Tier 1 EIS** – Intent in the Tier 1 EIS is to make corridor-level decisions regarding the level of intercity passenger rail service provided in the corridor and evaluate and identify conceptual alternatives to be further considered in the Tier 2 NEPA document(s).

**Tier 2** – The Tier 2 NEPA document(s) would explore in greater detail the component projects of the preferred corridor-level alternatives chosen in Tier 1. Tier 2 would include analysis based on engineering designs, identification of site-specific environmental consequences, and development of site-specific mitigation measures for the preferred alternative.

**Tonnage** – Weight, as measured in short tons (1 short ton = 2,000 pounds).

**Track Centers, Distance Between** – Measured distance in feet or meters between the centerlines of two adjacent and parallel railroad tracks.

**Train Mile** – A consist of a locomotive with or without coupled railroad cars moved together one train mile. A train of one locomotive and five cars moved one mile will generate one train mile, one locomotive mile, five car miles, and six vehicle miles (also see “Car Mile”).


**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – A staged multiyear program of transportation projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

**Travel Time** – The elapsed time for a passenger or a vehicle to move between two defined points; an “origin” and a “destination.” May be broken down into sub-units describing portions of a trip, e.g.:...
• Trains: Running times between each pair of passenger stations.

• Passengers: Sub-parts of an origin-to-destination trip, e.g.: Origin Access Time (origin to bus stop); Feeder (bus to railroad station); Line Haul (train to destination city); Destination Access (walk or taxi or bus from railroad station to destination).

**Turnout** – A track switch allowing movement of a railroad train from one track to another.

**Undergrade Bridges** – With reference to the railroad tracks, undergrade bridges are bridges that carry the referenced tracks over another feature such as a road, water bodies, other railroad tracks, etc.

**Unit Train** – A railroad freight train of uniform consistency that remains coupled, and that transports a single commodity directly from producer to a specific destination and that, after unloading, returns to the point of origin ready for another load.

**United States Army Corps of Engineers (U.S. ACE)** – A federal agency that administers Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act; its regulatory programs address wetlands and waterways protection.

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** – A federal agency responsible for administering programs that address farming issues

**United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)** – A federal agency responsible for administering programs that address environmental issues.

**United States Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. FWS)** – A federal agency responsible for addressing the protection of fish and wildlife including rare, threatened, or endangered species. The USFWS plays an advisory role in the Section 404 regulatory program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**United States Geological Survey (USGS)** – A scientific agency of the United States Government tasked with studying the landscape of the United States, its natural resources, and the natural hazards that threaten it. The USGS is a fact-finding research organization with no regulatory responsibility.

**Vehicle miles traveled** – The number of vehicle miles of travel (VMT) is an indicator of the travel levels on the roadway system by motor vehicles. VMT is estimated for the given time period. This estimate is based upon traffic volume counts and roadway length.

**Vernal pool** – A naturally occurring temporary pool of surface water that provides breeding habitat for certain amphibian and invertebrate species.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** – Colorless gaseous compounds originating, in part, from the evaporation and incomplete combustion of fuels. In the presence of sunlight VOCs react to form ozone, a pollutant regulated by the Clean Air Act Amendments.

**Watershed** – A region or area that contains all land ultimately draining to a water course, body of water, or aquifer.

**Wetland** – Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

**Wildlife Management Area (WMA)** – Lands owned by New York State under the control and management of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources. These lands have been acquired primarily for the production and
use of wildlife although most WMA’s also provide good opportunities for hiking, cross-country skiing, bird watching, or quiet enjoyment of nature.

**Wild and Scenic River** – A river or river segment, designated by the National Park Service, because of the outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287).