

Understanding Traffic Terminology

AADT - Annual Average Daily Traffic is the term used to show the average traffic volume in both directions on a section of road, adjusted for seasonal variation. VTrans recommended methodology and adjustment factors have been used to determine the AADT at each location.

ADT – Average Daily Traffic is the unadjusted, average number of vehicles passing in both directions at a specified location of a roadway.

Average Weekday Traffic – Average Weekday Traffic is similar to ADT, however, excludes weekend traffic volumes.

Average Weekend Traffic – Average Weekend Traffic is the unadjusted, average number of vehicles on weekend days only.

Direction of Travel – Some data are summarized based on the generalized direction of travel on a roadway: northbound (NB), southbound (SB), eastbound (EB) or westbound (WB).

Vehicle Classification – The type of vehicle is based on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) 13 separate classes of vehicles. For the purposes of this report, vehicle class is summarized into three groups:

- **Passenger Vehicles** - Passenger vehicle class includes motorcycles, passenger cars, pickup trucks and SUVs (FHWA Classes 1-3)
- **Single-Unit Trucks** - Single-unit truck class includes school buses, 2-axle, 3-axle and 4-axle single-unit trucks (FHWA Classes 4-7; also called medium-duty trucks or "mediums")
- **Tractor Trailer Trucks** - Tractor-trailer truck class includes heavy-duty vehicles with four or more axles; a semi-tractor pulling a trailer(s), i.e. a "semi" or "18-wheeler" (FHWA Classes 8-13 or "heavies")

Vehicle Speed – Vehicular speed of travel is measured in miles per hour (mph), and for the purpose of this report is described in three ways:

- **Median Speed** – Statistical measurement based on the 50th percentile vehicle speed at the specified location. One-half of the vehicles in the sample travel faster, and one-half travel slower than the median speed.
- **Average Speed** – Average or mean travel speed of all vehicles at a specified location.
- **85th Percentile Speed** – The speed below which 85 percent of motorists travel at a specified location. The 85th percentile speed is typically used by transportation engineers as the basis for setting the posted speed limit, although other factors should also be considered.