

NTD Asset Inventory Expansion Webinar Q&A Session - 12/18/15

Question: Will the facility inventory indicate leased versus owned?

Answer: The current proposed facility inventory does not indicate leased versus owned. You only report a facility if you have a capital responsibility for replacement or rehabilitation and you must indicate your percent of responsibility. If you are 100% responsible for the capital replacement of that facility, you would put in 100%. So, if it's a leased facility for which you have no capital responsibility, then it's not a reportable facility under this proposal. You are only reporting administrative and maintenance facilities for which you have a capital responsibility.

Question: Does out-of-service track have to be maintained in a state of good repair?

Answer: I think that's actually more of an NPRM question. In terms of NTD reporting, we will not specifically be asking for whether or not track is in a state of good repair or not. The performance metric that's reportable to the National Transit Database is only percent of track that is under speed restriction. In some operating environments, that's known as slow zones, so percent of your track that has a slow zone. Right now, we do not have the final guidance on that metric. So the definition of what would be considered a slow zone will be forthcoming. When the TAM NPRM is finalized and the metrics are finalized, there will be additional guidance issued at that time.

From a Transit Asset Management proposal standpoint, a segment of track that is out of service or not being used to provide service or is condemned would no longer be part of your Asset Inventory. If I am understanding this question correctly, and please join back into the chat pod to clarify what you mean by "out-of-service track", if this is track that is out-of-service because of some condition that is keeping it from being in service, then yes, returning it to a state of good repair is part of the proposal for transit asset management. If it is out of service because it is obsolete or it will be condemned, then it is no longer part of your system and would not be required to be in a state of good repair.

Question: Will the fixed guideway segments form S20 for rail be discontinued?

Answer: Right now, we do not have plans to discontinue the fixed guideways segments form. Again, if you request us to consider that as part of the implementation of this asset inventory, please also consider submitting that comment through the Federal Register.

Question: Is there a requirement for providing evidence of verification of the data provided to NTD and/or asset management in state of good repair systems?

Answer: Right now all of your information would continue to be validated in the same way that your current NTD reporting is validated. We have a group of analyst that review at all of the reporting each year, and they will do a comparison of that data against peers and against prior years. Because most of this information will be new to the inventory, of course, we won't be able to verify against prior years. But we will be able to look at peer comparisons and get a sense for if you're falling within or far outside of the bounds of what your peers are experiencing. So there will be some level of verification that exists that will be similar to the NTD report verification that exists now.

Question: What about contractor leased 5310 and transit maintenance facilities? Availability of industrial zone land for bus maintenance is a huge urban issue.

Answer: I am not entirely sure what this question is referring to. I may need a little bit more clarity. If you have a little bit more clarity on this question, please type this in.

As I mentioned before, maintenance facilities and administrative facilities are reportable if you have a capital responsibility. So if it's a leased facility for which you have no capital responsibility, under this proposal, it is not reportable to the NTD. So in terms of a contractor leased 5310 maintenance facility, it would depend on capital responsibility. If there is capital replacement cost or capital replacement responsibility that the agency has for that facility, they would report it. If not, it is not reportable.

Question: Would useful life benchmark include engine replacement?

Answer: The useful life benchmark for a revenue vehicle and for service vehicle is basically the point at which you would expect to replace that vehicle. So the point at which that vehicle would go into your state of good repair backlog. Your useful life benchmark would not be the point at which it gets you to a midlife overhaul. It would be the amount of time you expect to keep that bus in your fleet before you replace it. If you plan to keep a bus for 15 years before replacing it, then your useful life benchmark would be 15 years.

In addition, I think that guidance on useful life benchmark determination would be a part of the Transit Asset Management rulemaking guidance package. So that would help the stakeholders determine what is included and what is not.

Question: Was the ten-year period by decade or a rolling ten-year period?

Answer: The ten-year period is by decade. If you reference the Excel spreadsheet here that is linked through the pod or on the NTD website, you will see it's in ten-year buckets, 1950 to 1960, 1960 to 1970, et cetera, et cetera. So it's a static ten-year bucket.

Question: This is a comment, I think, pertaining to the question related to useful life benchmark. The comment says useful life for a cutaway is not the same as for a heavy-duty transit bus. The useful life of a Blue Bird or El Dorado bus is not the same as an NABI, Gillig, or New Flyer.

Answer: We are proposing that you have one useful life benchmark for each vehicle classification, which essentially means vehicle type. So you would have a different useful life benchmark for cutaways than you would have for 40-foot buses than you would have for articulated buses than you would have for rail passenger vehicles, et cetera. So for each vehicle type, you would report a different useful life benchmark.

Question: How will location be reported, street markings, GIS coordinates?

Answer: Right now the inventory is set up to collect addresses or GIS coordinates for maintenance and administration facilities and also passenger facilities. You could either enter an address or an exact latitude and longitude.

Question: Can you further explain the difference between useful life benchmark as defined in the near-term compared to the previously used useful life standard for used vehicles?

Answer: The difference between the useful life benchmark and the -- I am going to call it a minimum useful life for our formula programs are: the minimum useful life is used to determine when FTA will fund the purchase of a replacement vehicle, whereas the useful life benchmark from the TAM NPRM is intended to identify when you, based on your operating environment, as well as the age and the condition of the vehicle, anticipate it will need to be replaced. So those time frames may be different with the grant program minimum useful life typically being less. So it will be around 12 years before FTA will fund a replacement, but you may be able to get service out of your vehicle for 15 years, so then that would be your useful life benchmark. And as I mentioned to a previous commenter, further guidance of what goes into that useful life benchmark is forthcoming as part of the rulemaking process.

Question: What is the purpose of the performance metrics? How will FTA use or apply results of these metrics?

Answer: The performance metrics, as I mentioned, are part of the Transit Asset Management rule. MAP-21 indicated we had to create a transit asset rule that included performance metrics. So they are mandated in the transportation legislation. Right now I guess the best answer to your question is that the transit management rule is not a finalized rule yet. So the use of

those performance metrics will be clarified more in the final rulemaking documents and in the guidance, et cetera. But the purpose of the performance metrics essentially is to meet a legislative mandate first and foremost. There is additional use, I believe, for transit agencies and for the FTA to get a sense of, the performance of the transit assets in service right now across the nation.

And I would add that a performance management framework is the direction that the entire DOT is taking, so it goes beyond just FTA's use of performance metrics. It's part of DOT's movement and it is part of the mandate from MAP-21, supported still by the FAST Act performance management framework, but it also intended to have a quantitative goal of your performance so that you can track how you are making progress towards those goals.

Question: Will this reporting requirement be part of the annual NTD reporting process, or will it be a separate reporting?

Answer: All of the reporting requirements that we discussed today would be part of the annual NTD reporting process. So based on the cycle that you are currently reporting, if you are a September reporter, you would report all of this with your September reporting. Again, we anticipate it will be mandatory in fall of 2017. So for fiscal year 2017, you would begin reporting this information with your annual NTD report.

Question: We share two bus-only lanes, each in different cities, with another transit property. We report one and they report the other. Are we both supposed to report the two?

Answer: I am going to ask also that you follow up with me offline for this specific question. If you have very specific questions to your operating environment, I would be very happy to help you suss those out individually.

In general, with fixed guideway, what you would do is both report it if you both use it, and one of you would indicate if you are the primary owner of that asset. That is how we typically report guideway right now, but again, if you have a specific question to your operating environment, please do email me, and I will be happy to get you any information and specific guidance on your operation.

Question: Many of our 5310 agencies do have administration facilities used for all their activities but not funded with transit funds. Would these need to be included in the NTD?

Answer: The source of funds is not what dictates whether or not the facility is reportable in your Asset Inventory. You must report a facility if it is used in the provision of public transportation service and you are responsible for capital replacement.

For all other assets, so for revenue vehicles, if it is used in the provision of public transportation service, you report it to us, and you indicate your level of capital responsibility. That is for vehicles, and that is for passenger facilities. Regardless of the funding, they are reportable to the NTD, and you indicate whether or not you are responsible for capital replacement.

Question: Do we report track that goes through our rail yard?

Answer: Yes. Rail yards would be reportable.

Question: Could you please provide some examples as to what constitutes a useful life benchmark?

Answer: At this point, we do not have any examples to share, but that guidance will be coming out in support of the Transit Asset Management rulemaking.

Question: The contractor currently leases a facility which the county added equipment to make it CNG compliant. What if the county took over the lease?

Answer: I probably need a little bit more information to answer this specifically, so I will ask that you send me a direct email. If you could email me offline, I can help you untangle this question.

Question: Next question is related to passenger stations, does a ferry dock have to be reported? The ferry dock in question does not have a passenger facility and is not owned by the reporting agency.

Answer: That's a good question. Again, I'll ask that you email me offline, and I will get a little bit of additional information on this one as well.

Question: Where is the detail on escalators and elevators in passenger stations reported?

Answer: Elevators and escalators would still be reporting in the same manner that they are currently reported to the NTD.

Question: My transit agency directly receives 5311, 5310, and 5307 funding. I notice that most of the proposed changes will affect 5310 and 5311 recipients. So therefore, will all the NTD reporting requirements for 5307 fund recipients remain the same?

Answer: No. All of these requirements in here are applicable to 5307 recipients. There's not a significant change for 5307 recipients in the vehicle revenue inventory, but if you operate any rail over fixed guideway, then all of the elements that I discussed today would be applicable to you. All of the additional facility reporting elements are applicable to you. And all of the passenger station reporting elements are applicable to you as a 5307 grant recipient. And again, this assumes that you have reportable facilities. So as I mentioned previously, the requirements for each is slightly different.

Question: The current A-30 form does not differentiate between different kinds of ferryboats. Should the useful life benchmark be an average of the useful life for each vessel, or is there the ability to have a different useful life listed for each vessel?

Answer: You will be able to have a different useful life benchmark for each vessel. The way that revenue vehicles are reported into the NTD now, you report them into fleets. Each fleet having the same type of characteristics, the same age, the same manufacturer, the same capacity, the same engineering specifications and of the same age. So if you have two ferry boats that were both manufactured at the same time and are of the same engineering and design specs, you would report them as one fleet of ferry vehicle, you have two in the fleet, and you could give them a useful life benchmark.

If you had a third ferryboat that was from a different manufacturer, from a different year, had different set of specs, you would report that as a separate fleet and it would also have its own useful life benchmark.

Questions: Again, on the 5310 agencies, transportation is just a small portion of their activities. So while the agency is responsible for replacing the facility, it will not be replaced with transit funds. If these facilities are included in NTD, this would overstate the need for transit funds.

Answer: The proposed reporting requirement is to report any facility that you use for public transportation and for which you have a capital responsibility. The use of transit funds is not the requirement for reporting; if you are using this in public transportation, then I think the assumption is that now or in the future you could use transit funds to fund this piece of infrastructure. It is a capital need to provide this service. So we are requesting that it be reported into the NTD.

Question: Can you please reiterate the requirements for fixed guideway reporting? If commuter rail service is operated over track that is owned by a freight railroad and the transit agency is not responsible for capital replacement, does detailed track inventory information, crossover, turnout crossings, curbs, et cetera, have to be reported?

Answer: Yes. All track used in public transportation would be reportable to the NTD. If you have no responsibility for its capital replacement, you would report the inventory and indicate that you have 0% responsibility for the capital replacement of the asset. If you have 50% responsibility, you would indicate that you have 50% responsibility. But the assets for rail fixed guideway used in transportation public service are reportable regardless of ownership.

Question: Do free vehicles need to be reported?

Answer: Yes. You would report it -- if you use that vehicle in public transportation, then it would be a reportable vehicle to the NTD.