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**Federal Transit
Administration**



**AMERICAN
PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION**

Federal Transit Administration and American Public Transportation Association

Performance-Based Planning and
Programming Roundtable Series

Summary Report Update

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Executive Summary

Purpose of Performance-based Planning and Programming Roundtables

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), in partnership with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), held eleven peer-exchange roundtables and two national webinars on performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) in fiscal years 2016 - 2018. The PBPP roundtables were intended to engage transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and State and Federal leadership in discussions about performance-based planning, the metropolitan planning process, transit asset management, and safety. Roundtable participants also shared information and insights about what is working, where there is room for improvement, and how they can establish regional and statewide performance targets and prioritize investment priorities as part of a performance-based approach to transportation planning. At each roundtable, FTA staff provided an overview of the key requirements, and participants shared the challenges and opportunities they are facing in implementing PBPP. They also discussed how PBPP can be leveraged to obtain resources to improve transit system state of good repair (SGR) and safety.

A planning team—which consisted of representatives from FTA, APTA, APTA subcommittees on performance management, the USDOT Volpe Center, FTA Regional Offices, and local roundtable hosts—targeted geographically diverse roundtable locations in order to provide broad opportunity for participation. Two initial FTA-APTA PBPP roundtables took place in Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City, UT, in December 2015 and February 2016. The initial roundtables targeted the fifty largest transit agencies in the country. Based upon feedback from the initial roundtables, FTA hosted nine additional roundtables to reach out to small and medium-sized transit agencies and MPOs. These roundtables were held in Albany, NY, in May 2016; Charlotte, NC, in May 2016; Fort Worth, TX, in June 2016; Kansas City, MO, in August 2016; Seattle, WA, in September 2016; Baltimore, MD, in January 2017; Reno, NV, in May 2017; Chicago, IL, in August 2017, and Atlanta, GA, in November 2017. Additionally, FTA hosted two national webinars took place in June and November 2017 that had over six hundred total participants.

Several key themes were expressed across all roundtables. These included the benefits of PBPP; improved familiarity with performance management; staff and resource constraints; competition between highway and transit projects for funding; cultural challenges; concerns about setting performance targets in a financially constrained environment; data collection, availability, and management; and concerns about the timelines associated with FTA's rulemaking. Roundtable participants demonstrated varying levels of maturity in their implementation of performance-based planning and performance management. In the fiscal year 2017 and 2018 roundtables, participants demonstrated an evolving understanding of elements of the rulemaking. During the later events, additional themes emerged including best practices in coordinating across agencies and the importance of clear communication and coordination in target setting and data and information sharing among planning partners.

From participant feedback, it is evident that the PBPP roundtables were a welcome and helpful overture from FTA. Transit agency and MPO executives as well as lead technical staff benefited from the opportunity to voice concerns and interact in an open, collaborative forum with FTA leadership, regional

staff, and peers. FTA plans to continue the success of the first series of PBPP roundtables in advancing this dialogue and expand support and technical assistance for transit agencies and MPOs as they incorporate performance management into their planning and programming processes, as required by Federal legislation. FTA believes the networking opportunities provided by the roundtable series will further expand development and sharing of best practices as local and regional practitioners implement Federal requirements for performance-based planning processes.

Background

Performance-based planning and programming

Performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) is a component of performance management. Performance management is a strategic approach that uses performance data to inform decisions in order to help achieve desired performance outcomes. When implemented effectively, performance management can improve project and program delivery, inform investment decision-making, focus staff on leadership priorities, and provide greater transparency and accountability to the public. Many metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), transit agencies, and State departments of transportation (State DOTs) currently prioritize investment decisions based upon local goals and objectives, and apply a data-driven approach to the selection of transportation projects. Agencies typically apply screening or ranking criteria developed by local decision-makers to identify and prioritize projects that best meet regional goals. This process has created a foundation that can be applied to performance measures established by Federal regulations, which are intended to augment, not replace, local performance-based planning activities. The PBPP roundtables, led by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in partnership with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), were held to facilitate a conversation among MPOs, transit agencies, and State DOTs about how to best transition to a performance-based planning process.

Legislative requirements

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act emphasized performance management within the Federal-aid highway program and transit programs and required use of performance-based approaches to statewide, metropolitan, and nonmetropolitan transportation planning. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act reaffirmed the requirements established by MAP-21. On Friday, May 27, 2016, FTA and FHWA published the [*Final Rule on Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning*](#) (hereafter referred to as "the Planning Final Rule") in the Federal Register to implement the changes to the planning process established by MAP-21 and the FAST Act. The Planning Final Rule became effective on October 1, 2016.

This Federal legislation supports a transition to a performance-driven planning and programming process that provides for a greater level of transparency and accountability, improved project decision-making, and more efficient investment of Federal transportation funds. As part of this approach, recipients of Federal-aid highway program funds and Federal transit funds are required to link the investment priorities included in their Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs) and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) to achieving performance targets.

Through a series of rulemakings, FTA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are establishing national performance measures in key areas, including safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delays. The Planning Final Rule requires States, MPOs, and operators of public transportation to use the established performance measures to set targets in these key national performance areas. These targets will be used to document expectations for future performance. The Planning Final Rule further establishes that States and MPOs must coordinate their targets relating to transit safety and transit state of good repair (SGR) in order to ensure consistency, to the maximum extent practicable.

Planning Final Rule

The changes to the FTA/FHWA statewide and nonmetropolitan and metropolitan transportation planning regulations ([23 CFR Part 450](#) and [49 CFR Part 613](#)) make the regulations consistent with current statutory requirements. Major regulatory revisions include a new mandate for States and MPOs to take a performance-based approach to planning and programming; a new emphasis on the nonmetropolitan transportation planning process, by requiring States to have a higher level of involvement with nonmetropolitan local officials and providing a process for the creation of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs); a structural change to the membership of the larger MPOs; a new framework for voluntary scenario planning; and a process for programmatic mitigation plans.

The Federal legislation also requires State DOTs, MPOs, and operators of public transportation to develop additional performance-based plans. These performance-based plans and processes include the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program performance plan, the strategic highway safety plan, the public transportation safety plan, highway and transit asset management plans, and, optionally, the State freight plan. The Planning Final Rule requires MPOs and States to integrate the goals, objectives, performance measures, and targets of these other performance plans and processes into their planning process. This integration helps ensure that key performance elements of these other performance plans are considered as part of the investment decision-making process.

Transit Asset Management Final Rule

In July 2016, FTA published a Final Rule for Transit Asset Management (TAM, hereinafter referred to as the “TAM Final Rule”). The TAM Final Rule requires FTA grantees to develop asset management plans for their public transportation assets, including vehicles, facilities, equipment, and other infrastructure. The purpose of this rule is to establish a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, and improving public transportation capital assets effectively through their entire life cycle.

The TAM Final Rule includes the following components:

- Defines “state of good repair”
- Requires grantees to develop a TAM Plan
- Establishes performance measures
- Establishes annual reporting requirements to the National Transit Database (NTD)
- Requires FTA to provide technical assistance

Requirements in this TAM Final Rule are part of a larger performance management initiative, which is meant to strengthen the national transportation system. MAP-21 advanced a performance-based and multimodal approach, which is being implemented jointly by the FTA and FHWA in partnership with MPOs, transit providers, and State DOTs.

The TAM Final Rule required transit providers and group TAM Plan sponsors to set SGR performance targets within three months of the effective date of the Final Rule [49 CFR § 625.45 (b)(1)]. Accordingly, transit providers and group TAM Plan sponsors were required to set initial SGR performance targets no later than January 1, 2017. MPOs were required to establish performance targets 180 days after the transit agencies establish their performance targets.

In prior outreach, FTA stated that transit providers and group TAM Plan sponsors were required to report initial targets to the NTD in January 2017. While setting initial targets by January 1, 2017 was required, submitting those targets by this date was not required; however, a transit provider or group TAM Plan sponsor could report initial targets to the NTD in January 2017 if it chose to do so. Agencies were still expected to provide those targets to their respective MPOs by June 30, 2017. FTA will continue to issue guidance on future reporting for SGR performance targets and other TAM reporting requirements.

Public Transportation Safety Rules

The [Public Transportation Safety Program Final Rule](#) was published in August 11, 2016, and went into effect September 12, 2016. This rule provides the framework for FTA to monitor, oversee, and enforce transit safety, based on the methods and principles of Safety Management Systems. FTA is tasked with developing additional rules to support this performance-based approach to safety, including the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, which was published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2017. This Plan identifies the safety performance measures that transit agencies will need to report against in their agency safety plans. The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) was published February 5, 2016. The Final Rule for this is currently under review by FTA.

Purpose of roundtables

Given the scale of changes to the transportation planning process introduced under MAP-21, FTA recognized that early outreach could help transit agencies work more collaboratively with regional and State planning partners as new requirements came into effect. FTA also recognized that, particularly for small and medium-sized transit agencies, such outreach could aid in sharing information about the new requirements and gaining input on how FTA could further support these agencies in their implementation of PBPP. FTA partnered with APTA to provide eleven peer-exchange roundtables and two national webinars to provide opportunities for participants to learn from peers and discuss questions, challenges, and noteworthy practices. This outreach began in late 2015 before the Planning Final Rule was finalized and continued throughout 2016.

FTA implemented the PBPP roundtables, in partnership with APTA, to bring together MPO, transit agencies, and State DOT staff to have a shared conversation and develop a common understanding of the requirements for PBPP. FTA and APTA established several key objectives for the roundtables:

- Understand the current state of the practice of using PBPP and goal-setting to prioritize transportation projects and infrastructure investments;
- Provide a detailed explanation of the MAP-21 requirements for performance-based planning and how it relates to national goals and objectives;
- Explain the nexus between TAM and safety, as well as the relationship between the planning process and implementation requirements for PBPP;
- Facilitate a conversation among FTA, MPOs, transit agencies, State DOTs, and industry stakeholders to create a foundation for defining ways to meet new statutory requirements that support locally-defined processes; and
- Inform FTA about what level of guidance and technical assistance is needed to assist MPOs and transit agencies to implement PBPP and promote sound multimodal transportation investments.

Roundtable Structure

To support the objective of helping transit agencies and MPOs comply with Federal requirements, the PBPP roundtables followed a standard, two-day structure:

- Day One
 - Check-in and Registration
 - Opening Remarks
 - Round Robin Discussion—*Transit Agency and MPOs: Cooperation and Coordination*
 - Overview of Performance-based Planning Requirements for Transit Agencies
 - Q&A and Open Discussion
 - Peer Panel 1: What is your approach to planning and programming in your region?
 - Q&A and Open Discussion/Wrap-up
- Day Two
 - Welcome and Recap
 - Peer Panel 2: What process and performance criteria do you apply in your planning processes?
 - Q&A and Open Discussion
 - Round Robin Discussion – *How will you coordinate Performance-based Planning with your MPOs?*
 - Closing Remarks

Please see Appendix 6 for copies of all roundtable agendas.

Roundtables Overview

This report focuses on the eleven roundtables and two national webinars that FTA and APTA held during fiscal years 2016-2018:

- Washington, D.C. – December 2015
- Salt Lake City, Utah – February 2016
- Albany, New York – May 2016
- Charlotte, North Carolina – May 2016
- Fort Worth, Texas – July 2016
- Kansas City, Missouri – August 2016
- Seattle, Washington – September 2016
- Baltimore, Maryland – January 2017
- Reno, Nevada – May 2017
- National Webinar #1 – June 2017
- Chicago, Illinois – August 2017
- Atlanta, Georgia – November 2017
- National Webinar #2 – November 2017

Roundtable locations

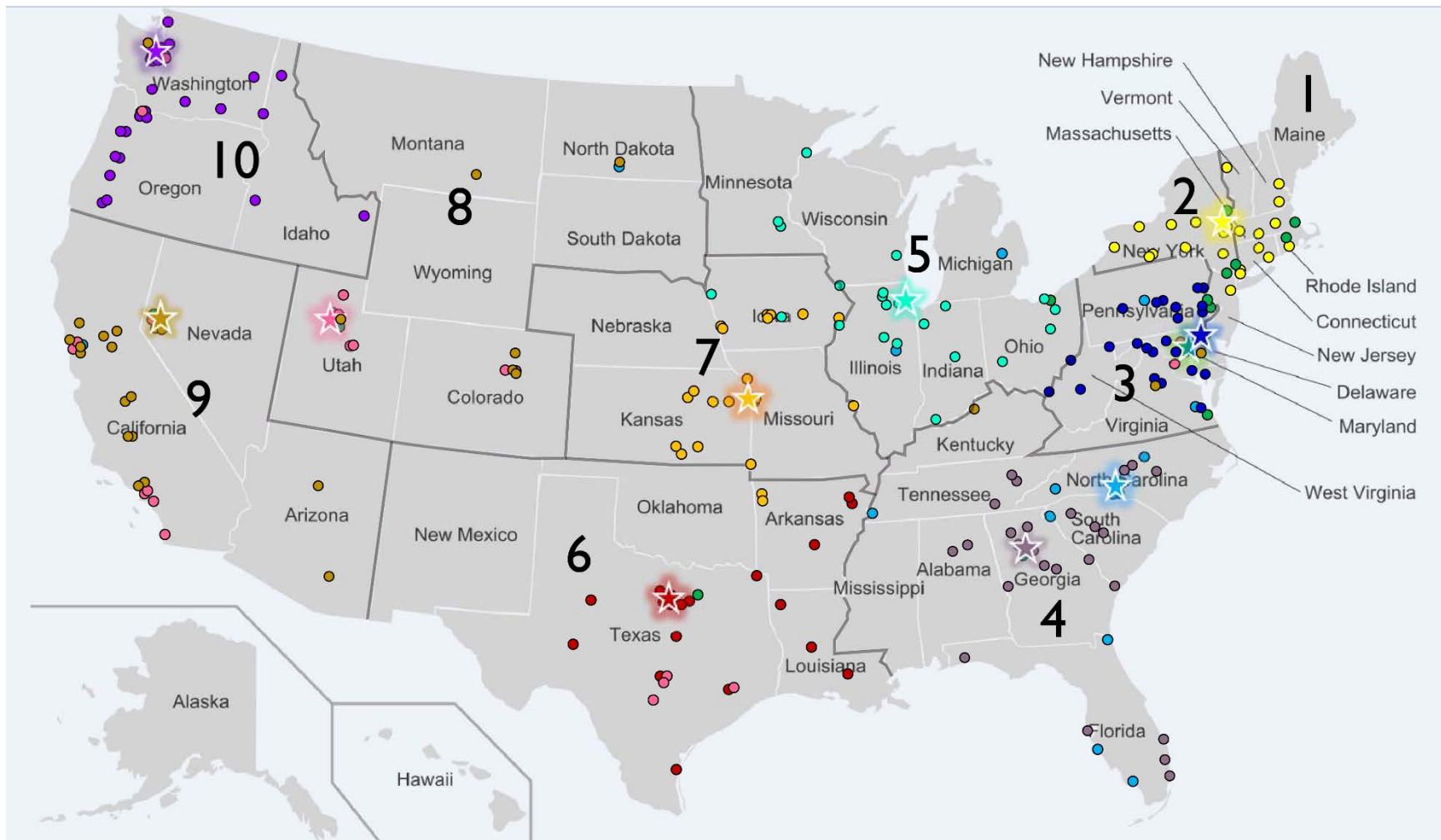


Figure 1: Roundtable host agency and participating agency locations.

- ☆ Roundtable location
- Participating agency

1 - 10 FTA Region labels

Roundtable statistics

Host agencies and participating agencies

The roundtable planning team worked with FTA Regional Offices to identify local agencies to serve as hosts for each roundtable. Host agency staff supported roundtable planning by taking part in weekly planning team meetings, helping to identify and secure appropriate venues for the events, and helping to identify participants and panel speakers. Host agency executives also provided opening remarks on the first day of each roundtable. The host agencies for the eleven roundtables were as follows:

| Roundtable | Host Agency |
|--------------------|---|
| Washington, D.C. | Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority |
| Salt Lake City, UT | Utah Transit Authority |
| Albany, NY | Capital District Transportation Committee |
| Charlotte, NC | Charlotte Area Transit System |
| Fort Worth, TX | Fort Worth Transportation Authority |
| Kansas City, MO | Mid-America Regional Council |
| Seattle, WA | Puget Sound Regional Council |
| Baltimore, MD | Baltimore Metropolitan Council |
| Reno, NV | Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County |
| Chicago, IL | Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning |
| Atlanta, GA | Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority |

To develop invitee lists for the roundtables, the planning team used the [National Transit Database](#) and the [Transportation Planning Capacity Building MPO Database](#) to identify small and medium-sized MPOs and transit agencies, which were defined as those with service areas of 50,000-200,000 people. The planning team aimed to have approximately 50 individuals participate in each roundtable, so agencies with service area populations over 200,000 were invited as necessary to attain enough attendees at each event.

The planning team targeted invitations to executive-level staff, many of whom attended themselves and/or recommended technical staff engaged in the regional planning process. A total of 372 individuals representing 271 agencies participated in the eleven roundtables. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of participating agencies by type. See Appendix 3 for a complete list of all roundtable participants.

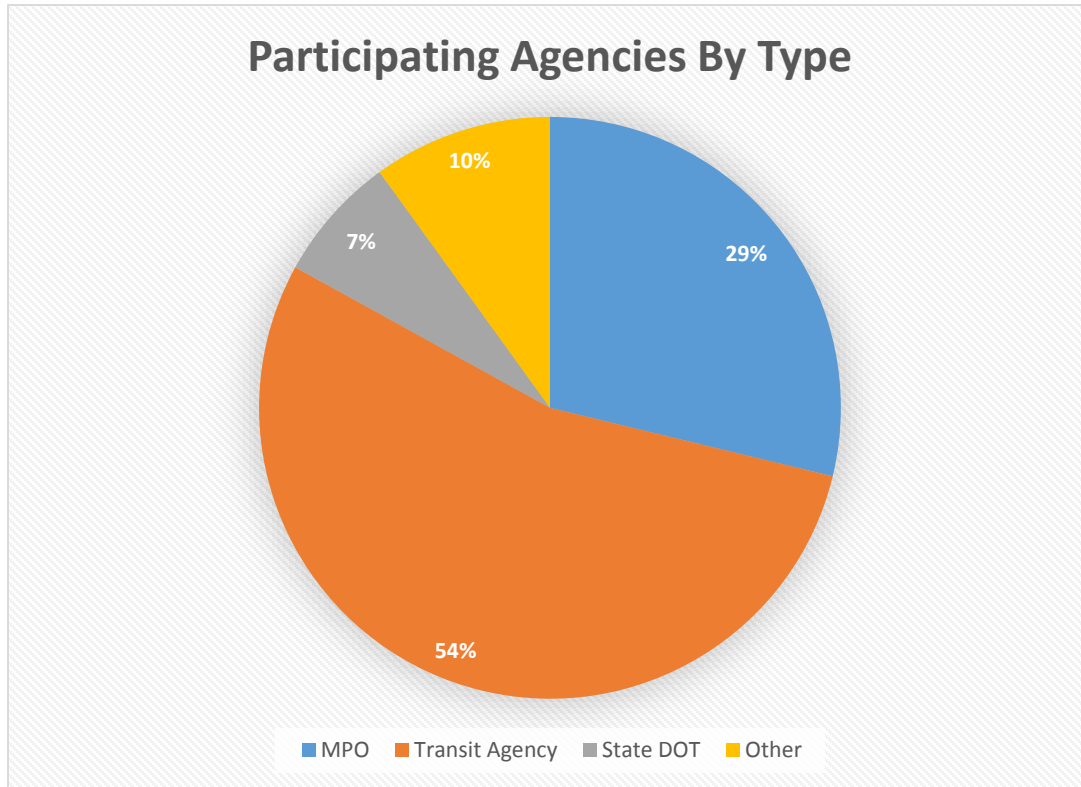


Figure 2: Participating Agencies by Type

National Webinars

FTA held two national peer-exchange webinars on PBPP for small- to mid-sized transit agencies and their partners on June 20, 2017 and November 29, 2017. Each of the individuals who were selected to serve as webinar presenters had served as presenters during an in-person PBPP roundtables held across the country, and each presenter had strong examples to share of incorporating interagency coordination, performance based planning, target setting, and integrating transit asset management into their planning process. The presenters were geographically diverse, representing agencies in New York, Baltimore, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Iowa, and Nevada. The presenters discussed the detailed components of their planning processes and coordination procedures, including topics such as project prioritization, developing performance measures and targets, transportation trust funds, legacy transit systems, data management, data analysis tools, condition assessment apps, and vanpool programs. Over 600 people participated in the two webinars, and webinar participants demonstrated engagement by maintaining active involvement throughout the duration of the event.

Recordings of the [June 20 webinar](#) and [November 29](#) webinar are available on FTA’s website. See a breakdown of the agencies whose representatives presented during the webinars below.

| June 20 Webinar | November 29 Webinar |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital District Transportation Committee • Capital District Transportation Authority • Baltimore Metropolitan Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Ohio Valley Transportation Authority • Iowa Department of Transportation |

- Maryland Transportation Administration
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
- Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County

Cross-Roundtable Themes

On Day One of each roundtable, Dwayne Weeks, Director of the Office of Planning within the FTA Office of Planning and Environment, delivered an introductory presentation to provide an overview and to establish the purpose and goals for the event. This presentation discussed the context of performance management in recent USDOT legislation. FTA regularly updated this presentation after each roundtable to reflect the new rules once they had been finalized.

Two roundtable activities were designed to foster discussion amongst participants: the Day One and Day Two “Round Robin” sessions. During the Day One Round Robin, roundtable participants completed a worksheet about their planning and programming processes, the degree to which they coordinate with their transit agency or MPO, and other agency-specific questions. After completing worksheets individually, participants then assembled into small groups to discuss their responses. The roundtable facilitator concluded the Round Robin by reconvening the small groups to discuss worksheet responses as a collective group.

Key challenges and themes emerged during the Day One question and answer and Day One and Two Round Robin sessions. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the key challenges as reported by participants.

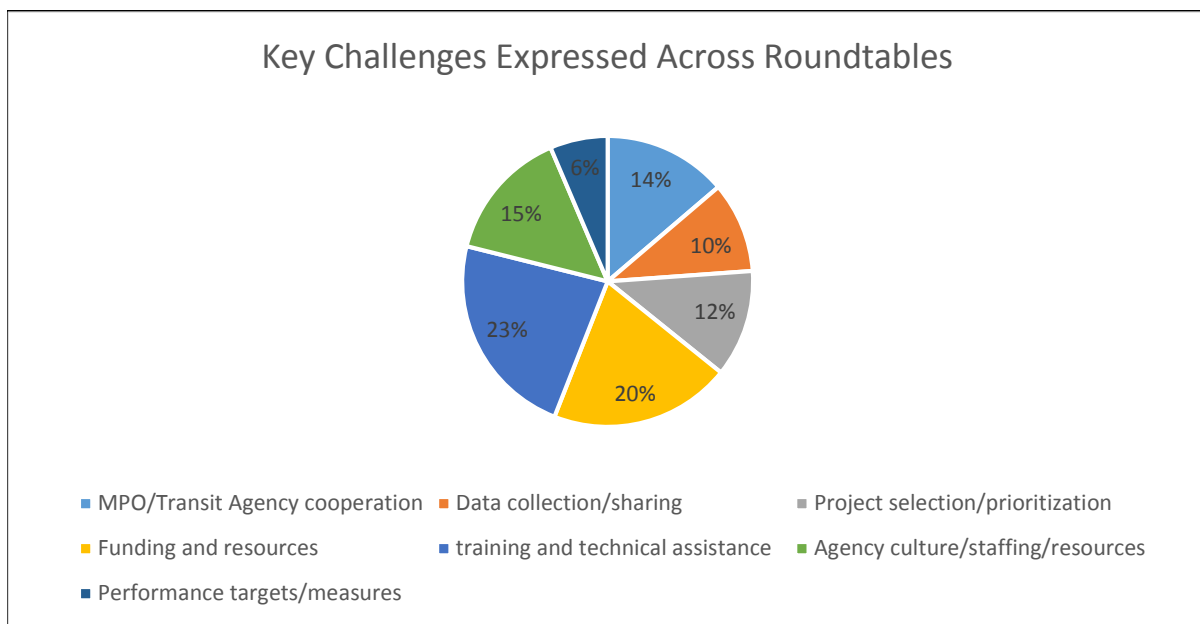


Figure 3: Key Challenges Expressed Across Roundtables

The following section summarizes the most common themes expressed by roundtable participants and FTA's responses. This documentation is meant to serve as both a record of the themes and responses discussed at the events, as well as a resource for participants and transit agency, MPO, State DOT and other staff who may not have attended the roundtables, but have similar questions.

Familiarity with performance management

Almost all roundtable participants were familiar with performance management and the way in which PBPP can be implemented in transit operations. More than half of the participants across all roundtables were already using performance measures to influence their investment prioritization, based on a show of hands. Many participants expressed concern about implementing sophisticated performance management processes that might require them to hire a consultant or otherwise significantly change the way they do business. Roundtable participants recognized the potential benefits of performance management and expressed optimism about the ability of PBPP to facilitate key aspects of transit agency operations, such as communicating with the public and stakeholders, improving transparency about investment decisions, and generally improving operations in the long term, but expressed concerns about how they can implement the requirements within existing resources.

As Heard During the Roundtables: *Familiarity with Performance Management*

The CEO of the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) explained that the MATA executive board officially adopted four performance measures in 2012: (1) ridership/service efficiency, (2) service reliability/service quality, (3) customer focus, and (4) safety and security. MATA also adheres to Title VI service standards and measures performance against a Short Range Transit Plan that outlines MATA's service design principles and sets service standards.

Timeline

Questions about implementation timelines evolved over the course of the roundtables, as new rules were finalized. The most common question involved the timelines for reporting SGR targets as established in the TAM Final Rule, with roundtable participants expressing concern about their ability to set meaningful performance targets by the January 31, 2017 deadline. Roundtable participants also noted that many MPOs follow fiscal year cycles that begin on July 1, so complying with the Federal

legislation in time for the first deadlines may be especially challenging for MPOs that did not factor these considerations into their planning for the new fiscal year.

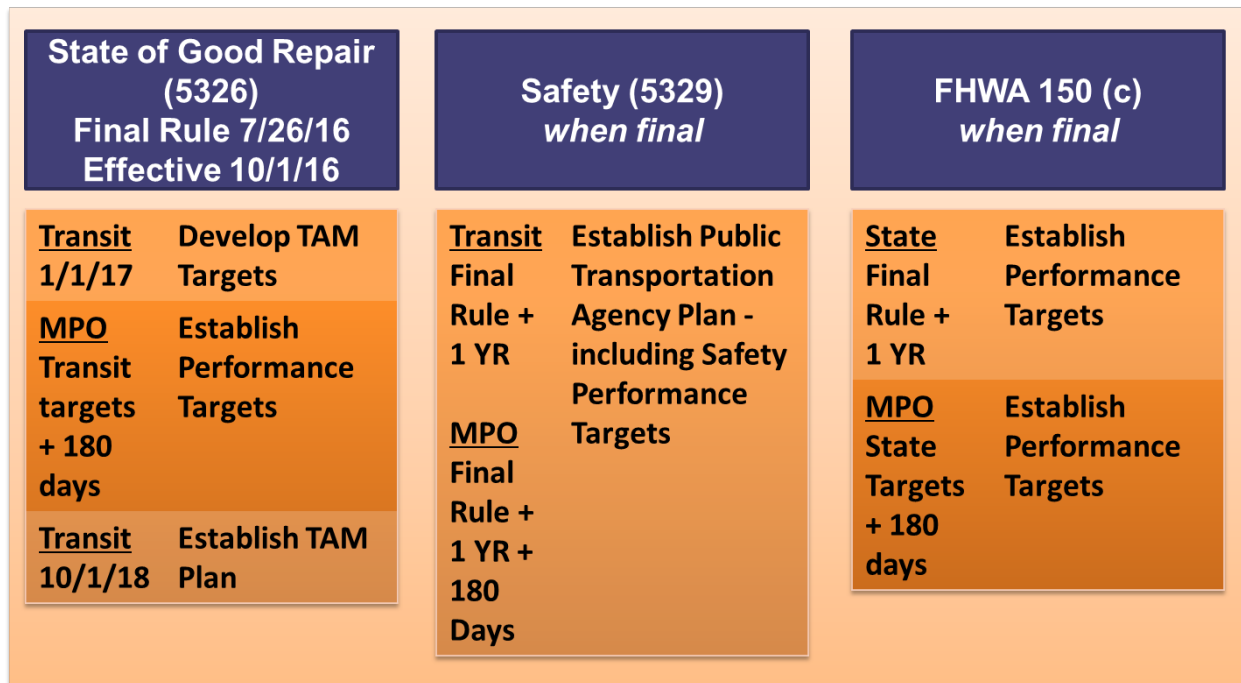


Figure 4: Timelines for Planning-Related Actions Mandated by Federal Legislation

Adjustments to timeline. FTA developed a resource to clarify deadlines associated with the Planning Final Rule and TAM Final Rule (see Figure 4). FTA has since eliminated the requirement to report initial performance targets to the National Transit Database (NTD) by January 31, 2017, though agencies are still expected to set their targets by January 1, 2017, and provide those targets to their respective MPO by June 30, 2017. The Planning Final Rule requires MPOs to establish SGR targets within 180 days of the transit agency establishing its SGR targets

Staff and resource constraints

One recurring challenge posed by roundtable participants was staff and resource constraints. Many small transit agencies and MPOs, especially those in rural areas, have as few as one or two full-time staff members. Small transit agencies often do not have a planner on staff, and this can present challenges since planners and engineers often approach problems from different angles. For agencies facing burdensome staff and resource constraints, completing the various requirements necessary to comply with the new rules seems to be a daunting task, especially as demonstrated by the larger or more sophisticated transit agencies and MPOs. One participant suggested that, particularly for rural transit agencies, it would be helpful if a regional association could serve as a resource for small agencies with limited capacity.

Staff and resource constraints. FTA emphasized that performance targets should reflect local conditions, and has provided resources in the form of guidance and templates specifically designed for smaller agencies.

Target setting and reporting

Roundtable participants requested clarification on the purpose of targets and, specifically, what constitutes a “good” target. Roundtable participants asked whether they were meant to set realistic targets they knew they could achieve, or aspirational targets that they would like to be able to achieve. Roundtable participants also expressed concern about setting targets when they lack necessary data or the resources to collect more data.

As Heard During the Roundtables: Resource Sharing and Coordination

Small agencies stressed that they have limited resources to take on more work to collect data, set targets, and monitor performance. Some MPOs in the Albany region share staff resources to help smaller transit agencies address challenges. The Capital District Transportation Authority both officially “hosts” the Capital District Transit Committee (CDTC) and is a member of the CDTC. This dynamic has institutionalized a strong relationship that allows the organizations to coordinate effectively.

As Heard During the Roundtables: Target Setting and Benchmarking

Few agencies reported that they had begun the process of setting targets, though several already collect the data to do so. For example, the San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) had been collecting data on operations, finances, fare collection, and other systems for years, but the agency did not have a formal method in place for using that data to drive investment decisions. However, the agency benchmarked with peers through the American Bus Benchmarking Group, a group of 20 transit agencies across urban and rural environments in the U.S. that all share performance data. San Joaquin RTD staff were able to see how they compared against their peers, understand the long-term impacts of their investments, identify lines of further inquiry, and improve communication with stakeholders.

The Memphis Area Transit Authority explained how failure to meet locally established performance measures was used to build a successful local campaign for increased funding levels.

Targets and consequences

Roundtable participants expressed concerns about meeting targets, though the TAM Final Rule states that there is no reward for hitting a target and no punishment for missing a target. Several participants expressed concern that an agency’s ability or inability to meet targets will be tied to future Federal funding awards. Participants expressed that it is difficult to set targets before understanding FTA’s end goals for those targets. They also expressed uncertainty about what type of target FTA expects them to set (e.g., whether to set achievable targets, or set targets they cannot currently achieve in order to demonstrate the need for more funding). Some agencies discussed the possibility of having internal, aspirational targets and public-facing targets that are more achievable, as missing public-facing targets could damage their reputations in the eyes of stakeholders and members of the public.

Setting targets for local conditions. FTA reaffirmed that there is no penalty for agencies that do not meet their performance targets, and no intention to reward agencies that meet or exceed their performance targets. FTA consistently emphasized that the identification of performance targets is a local decision that needs to be made with the cooperation of the transit agencies, MPOs, and State DOTs. Because transit

agencies face a variety of unique challenges and local goals and objectives, those performance targets will need to reflect local circumstances. FTA explained that MPOs, transit agencies, and State DOTs should use the performance measures and targets to prioritize investments and determine the level of funding needed to meet performance targets. Furthermore, by making this information available to local decisionmakers, it will improve transparency of the planning process and help prioritize investments in SGR and safety.

Competition for limited funding

Transit agency representatives noted that they are “operating in a highway world.” They acknowledge that there is intense competition for limited Federal and State funding and, with so many projects competing for the same funds, transit agencies find it challenging to advocate for transit projects. Furthermore, they recognize that Congress has identified many more national goals focused on highway performance than transit performance, which may create further challenges in effectively competing for limited funds. These challenges are compounded by political forces in areas

As Heard During the Roundtables: Competing for Limited Funding

The Executive Director of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) in Austin, TX, discussed the performance measures included in CAMPO’s 2040 and 2045 long-range transportation plans. Many considerations impacted plan development, such as fiscal constraint, system preservation, and emerging technologies. CAMPO has found that there is often a discrepancy in the amount of funding given to different cities within a State. CAMPO has also found that there is often a discrepancy in the amount of funding given to highway-oriented projects versus transit-oriented projects within an area.

As Heard During the Roundtables: Coordination and Agency Culture

Long-standing practices and the culture embedded in those practices will be challenging to change. Many small and medium-sized transit agencies admit that they “manage by gut” given multiple demands on staff resources, not the least of which is putting service out on the street each day. Further, participants in each roundtable acknowledge that transit agencies typically complete their own prioritization processes and then deliver the final list of projects to MPOs for inclusion in the TIP. This has been fairly standard practice; one MPO stressed that it is not in a position to second guess its transit agency’s decisions. Roundtable participants recognize that more coordination will be needed to implement a successful performance-based planning process. As one participant noted, a performance approach “validates our commitment to the citizens of our State.”

where taking transit is a matter of necessity, not choice. Because of this cultural divide, transit operators and highway planners may often work in isolation. Transit agency representatives also expressed concern that agencies with larger backlog will receive more funding. Roundtable participants suggested that it would be very valuable to have strategies that give transit agencies more leverage in accessing flexible funds—such as Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds—that are authorized under highway programming but have eligible transit uses. Roundtable participants also requested more general information on how MPOs, transit agencies, and State DOTs within a region can collaborate on target setting and performance measure development.

Agency culture

Most roundtable participants, especially those representing transit agencies, expressed concern that cultural challenges would increase the difficulty of implementing PBPP. Roundtable participants expressed concerns that, because PBPP will change the ways in which their agencies have done business for many

decades, it will be a challenge to convey the process and potential benefits of PBPP to senior leadership, stakeholders, and the public. It is also challenging to frame public transportation positively in some areas, especially in regions where driving a car is often faster than taking public transportation.

Shifting the culture. FTA emphasized that performance-based planning should be seen as an opportunity to make smarter transit investments that yield a more useful transit system, one that is coordinated with other regional transportation and land use decisions. APTA will also be helping to educate elected officials about the methods and values of PBPP processes.

Guidance on Collaboration

FTA advised that MPOs, transit agencies, and State DOTs should revisit and update their metropolitan planning area agreements as identified in the Planning Final Rule. Metropolitan planning agreements are the vehicles for determining how agencies can work together to share data, establish performance targets, and prioritize projects. This presents an opportunity to redefine roles and responsibilities and improve collaboration, cooperation, and coordination while implementing a performance-based planning process.

FTA clarified that MPOs are not required to set the same targets as their transit operators, but indicated that coordination may become complicated in areas where there is more than transit provider operating within a single MPO.

FTA indicated that MPOs, transit agencies, and State DOTs would ideally collaborate to set consensus-based performance measures and targets that are agreeable to all agencies involved. FTA further clarified that the Planning Final Rule mandates that at least one transit agency representative must serve as a member of the MPO executive board (for agencies with service area populations of 200,000 people or more) to facilitate this collaboration. Additionally, planning partners are required to amend their metropolitan planning agreements to identify the respective roles and responsibilities of the transit agencies, MPOs, and State DOTs in setting targets, collecting data, and reporting achievements.

Rating system and asset type consistency

Roundtable participants noted that there is inconsistency in condition rating systems between the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) requirements for TAM and safety that were published in 2015. Participants also noted that there are inconsistencies in how different agencies define types of assets. For example, agencies expressed concerns that a storage shed could receive the same level of importance as a maintenance facility when rating condition of facilities. Others expressed concern that asset age is not necessarily a good proxy for state of good repair. Many of the transit agencies were looking for improved guidance on defining assets and asset condition.

Revisions to rating system definitions. FTA noted that the definitions will be reconciled with the TAM Final Rule before the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans Rule is finalized.

Guidance on asset type. FTA has developed guidance and training on developing an asset management plan and gauging asset condition. These include the Facility Condition Assessment Guidebook, the Guideway Performance Assessment Guidebook, and others. The available guidance is located at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/TAM>.

Data collection and sharing

Roundtable participants expressed concern about collecting adequate data, in terms of both capacity to do so and the quality of that data. They also expressed concern about the comparability of different data sets and the degree to which they risk comparing “apples to oranges” if data collection and analysis guidelines are not clearly established. Finally, participants expressed concern that data analysis is not always transparent. Data analysis can be skewed to fit particular narratives, and different agencies may analyze the same dataset in different ways. Roundtable participants emphasized that, based upon their experiences, it is important to apply standardized processes for validating, cleaning, and processing raw data to ensuring the data’s accuracy.

As Heard During the Roundtables: Non-traditional Data Collection

The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (RPC) in Rochester, New Hampshire, used a specialized software program to quantify the most common words and phrases used in stakeholder interviews about the agency’s operations. The resulting word compilation provided a clear illustration of stakeholders’ most pressing concerns, and while non-traditional, the method that Strafford RPC used to develop the compilations was quantifiable, transparent, and repeatable.

Templates for quality data. The National Transit Database (NTD) and the templates for reporting performance measures and targets to the NTD are designed with validation checks. FTA has issued guidance on NTD reporting at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd>.

Best practices

Multiple participants at each roundtable requested that FTA develop and circulate best practices in performance management from agencies of various sizes throughout the country, and specifically, models of high-quality TAM Plans. As the TAM and Safety Plans are new and the impacts they will have on transportation operations remain to be seen, FTA is cautious of being overly prescriptive in its definition of “good” TAM and Safety plans. Additionally, because each agency’s operations are unique, TAM and Safety Plans are expected to vary greatly across agencies. Some roundtable participants expressed that they experienced an “ah-ha” moment when they realized that the TAM and Safety Plans are related. While they understand that FTA has communicated about the rules separately in order to reduce confusion, agencies would benefit from better understanding the connection. FTA is wary that agencies may model their plans off of best practice examples at the expense of tailoring them to specific locations, service populations, and other key elements unique to their agencies. However, roundtable participants consistently expressed concern in developing these plans without examples of best practices at least scaled to various agency sizes and contexts (e.g., large and small, rural and urban, etc.).

Peer reference resources. FTA has made available a [Peer Library](#) of resources for agencies to share examples of TAM Plans and related resources.

Coordination between transit agencies, MPOs, and State DOTs

While participants of the fiscal year 2016 roundtable series were just beginning to grapple with the components of the rulemaking, participants of the fiscal year 2017 and 2018 roundtables had had some experience implementing aspects of PBPP into their planning processes. As a result, they asked many more questions and engaged in deeper conversations about best practices and challenges when coordinating across agencies, particularly with regard to complying with group plans and setting targets. State DOT representatives and Tier I agencies sought clarification on best practices in serving as group plan sponsors. Some participants requested a sample breakdown of responsibilities and dependencies across different agency types in the same location.

As Heard During the Roundtables: *Pioneering Coordination Approaches*

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is developing Tier II TAM plans for several small agencies in the region as well as coordinating targets between transit agencies and MPOs. Staff consider this a “lowest common denominator” approach but recognize that it is not necessarily the best approach for ensuring that plans and targets are tailored to each agency’s needs.

Communicating data

Roundtable participants were much more engaged in conversations about the importance of clearly communicating data to elected officials, board members, and other stakeholders.. They reiterated the point that data uniformity is an issue when agencies measure data points in different ways and discussed the ways in which clear, transparent data can reduce conflict and competition for limited funding for projects. Participants expressed that they could have an endless amount of high-quality

data, but without a compelling narrative to accompany it, the data isn’t effective in swaying the opinions of decisionmakers. Participants noted that smaller communities especially may not understand the full impact of performance targets, and visualizing the impacts of successful transit asset management is an essential aspect of continuously educating both agency staff and elected officials.

Tool Highlight:

Iowa DOT’s TAM App for Facilities Condition Assessment

The Iowa Department of Transportation developed a Transit Asset Management App to conduct facility condition assessments. Compatible with both Apple and Android devices, the app allows users to enter information for specific facilities and rate the condition of each facility’s components and subcomponents using a simple interface. The app incorporates information from FTA’s [TAM Facilities Performance Measure Reporting Guidebook](#).

Learn about Iowa DOT’s app and other tools by visiting FTA’s [TAM Peer Library](#).

Training and technical assistance

At each roundtable, participants stated that there is a need for training to inform local elected officials, agency management, staff, and stakeholders about PBPP. Many participants stated that agency management and board members will need to be more informed about how performance-based planning can support processes for project selection and prioritization. Roundtable participants consistently requested more robust technical assistance tools, in the form of:

- Templates for developing TAM and Safety Plans
- Additional direction in setting targets

- Additional in-person learning opportunities with FTA leadership
- Additional peer-to-peer learning opportunities
- Clarification of roles between State DOTs, MPOs, and transit agencies
- Greater coordination between FTA and FHWA, particularly regarding deadlines and dependencies for related requirements

**As Heard During the Roundtables:
*Using Data to Change Culture***

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) has put robust effort into reducing subjectivity in decisionmaking through data cleaning and scenario planning. Now, staff members, board members, and other stakeholders have access to the same data and they can better understand how it informs the agency's project prioritization list. Previously, agency leadership would have to make difficult phone calls to let board members know that their projects would not advance. Those phone calls are much easier now that everyone understands the data-driven criteria and scoring process. Agency leadership emphasized that having the board's support is essential, as this work can't be done at the staff level alone.

Further Training and Technical Assistance Resources

FTA is working with APTA to improve training and technical assistance and guidance. Below are links to resources to assist transit agencies in developing TAM Plans and performance targets:

- [FTA TAM website](#)
- [Template for Transit Asset Management Plan](#)
- [Examples of Case Studies and Condition Assessments](#)
- [Examples of TAM Plans and condition assessments used by a variety of transit agencies and MPOs](#)

FTA has coordinated to develop a National Transit Institute (NTI) course for small and medium-sized transit agencies, titled *Transit Asset Management Implementation for Tier II Transit Providers*. FTA is updating existing courses and developing additional courses on PBPP. See the [NTI course catalogue](#) for additional information.

Conclusion

Participant feedback

Participants in this first series of PBPP roundtables noted that the regional focus of each roundtable was critical for providing a common context for discussion and idea exchange, as well as providing valuable networking opportunities. Roundtable participants were able to quickly spark conversations with their peers, discussing the similar issues they experience in various locations within their region. Conversations between executives and technical staff with similar roles in different jurisdictions were common at every roundtable. To help continue this peer-to-peer exchange, the PBPP planning team developed and disseminated summary and follow-up materials to participants to further facilitate networking and cross-agency learning.

Future outreach

FTA will continue to provide technical assistance to transit agencies and MPOs as they incorporate performance management in their planning and programming processes. The FTA Office of Planning and Environment developed a brief summary document to clarify key deadlines associated with the rulemaking (see Figure 4). Additionally, FTA developed a list of key resources for implementing PBPP that target small- and medium-sized agencies' needs (see Appendix 4).

The planning team used the feedback provided by participants of the 2016 series to refine and improve the fiscal year 2017 and 2018 roundtables, in order to expand effectiveness and increase the value they provide for transit agency and MPO teams implementing PBPP across the country.