



2026 FTA Transit Asset Management Roundtable Summary Report

Introduction

On July 14-15, 2026, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) hosted its seventeenth Transit Asset Management (TAM) Roundtable in Denver, Colorado. This event brought together nearly 80 participants from transit providers of varying sizes and service types, State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). The two-day event included an update from FTA on TAM program accomplishments and future plans, peer learning presentations on *Using Data and Lifecycle Management to Reimagine Fleet Investment* and *Implementing FTA TAM Systems Guidance in Traditional Asset Classes*, tours provided by Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD), and a keynote from RTD Chief Financial Officer, Kelly Mackey.

During the round-robin style introduction, attendees responded to an icebreaker question about what TAM-related issue they would fix if they had unlimited funding. They were also given the option to share about their organization's oldest assets. Though the attendees provided a variety of answers, many expressed interest in acquiring data management systems to standardize asset data, modernizing assets such as facilities and rail fleets, and streamlining federal reporting requirements.

The first day featured a peer learning session on *Using Data and Lifecycle Management to Reimagine Fleet Investment* with two presenters, Claude McCrea and Robert Dutton from Delaware Transit Corporation (DART). DART developed a data-driven case for rehabilitating a portion of their fixed-route vehicles, rather than replacing them. The presenters shared how agencies can leverage data to identify the best options for lifecycle management.

Following group discussions and a keynote address on RTD's background and asset management approach, attendees went to one of two off-site tours hosted by RTD. The bus tour covered the bus operations center where attendees learned about how RTD handles unexpected disruptions and keeps passengers and employees safe, a bus maintenance facility where RTD does extensive repairs and rehabs, and a bus depot where buses are dispatched and general day-to-day maintenance is done. For the rail tour, attendees visited two rail maintenance facilities and were able to learn about RTD's rail car maintenance strategy. RTD also shared information about their rail operations control center, which allows them to effectively manage their rail network and address issues on the track such as slow zones, emergency events, and other instances which may involve track maintenance.

The second day began with a presentation from Tamalynn Kennedy, FTA TAM Program Manager, on TAM program updates, as well as dedicated time for questions from the audience. This presentation covered the launch of an updated NTI training course, [Introduction to Transit Asset](#)



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[Management](#), software updates to the [TERM Lite tool](#), and the recently updated [TAM Plan Self Assessment](#) tool that can help TAM program managers review their TAM Plan.

The presentation from FTA was followed by the second peer learning session, *Implementing FTA TAM Systems Guidance in Traditional Asset Classes*. Dennis Yaklich from RTD shared the agency's experience with applying systems thinking to asset management. RTD determined that tracking complex rail and transit assets in isolation can create dangerous blind spots. By shifting their focus from individual components to defined subsystems (such as track segments, catenaries, and signals), RTD developed a new methodology to manage, renew, and report on their assets.

The afternoon of day two also featured a group activity that allowed participants to have dedicated time for additional conversations, connect with other attendees and further explore lingering questions together.

Key Themes

The key themes presented in this section are representative of the peer learning sessions, the group activity and the small group discussions that occurred throughout the event.

Predictive Maintenance Planning and Data Systems

A primary focus of the Roundtable discussions was the widespread effort among transit providers to move away from reactive maintenance practices in favor of structured, predictive lifecycle strategies. Some agencies also noted that their current asset data is divided across separate databases, custom tools, or spreadsheet-based records, which can prevent critical communication between different departments. To remedy this, some agencies are prioritizing the acquisition of EAM software or other centralized data systems to replace highly fragmented tracking methods and establish a single source of truth for their data.

Participants highlighted that implementing a centralized system can allow organizations to automate data collection, ease the creation of standardized data analytics, and ultimately improve communication and information sharing across their organizations in addition to informing asset lifecycle decisions. With accurately documented asset conditions, TAM managers find it much easier to determine and present clear capital needs to executive leadership. Attendees noted that this technological shift not only improves internal communication across departments, it also can streamline NTD reporting.

Vehicle Rehabilitation and Replacement

Transit providers reported experiencing bus procurement delays of up to 26 months, rising capital costs, and a limited pool of manufacturers due to procurement constraints. Participants emphasized that a focus on extending current vehicle lifespans through rehabilitation could be a vital strategy for agencies struggling with vehicle acquisition to keep routes running while waiting for funding or vehicle deliveries.



The presentation from DART demonstrated how agencies can build a data-driven business case for mid-life vehicle rehabilitation. Mid-life rehabilitation can help address the need to maintain transit service while also extending the useful life of a transit agency's fleet. DART shared how agencies can leverage vehicle performance data to justify vehicle rehabilitation as a cost-effective alternative to full replacement.

DART designed its "Reimagine Fleet Rehabilitation" program to perform comprehensive mid-life overhauls on 23 percent of its fixed-route fleet. While full replacement of these 51 vehicles would have cost DART over \$45 million, their data-driven business case showed that a comprehensive rehabilitation program could restore the fleet for just \$17.8 million. This initiative was successfully presented to DART's legislative body by demonstrating that proactive overhauls would directly minimize service disruptions while reducing costs. DART's technical scope targeted high-wear areas including engines, transmissions, drivelines, and exhaust systems.

Systems Thinking Approach

The presentation from RTD detailed how the agency transitioned from component-level tracking to a unified "systems thinking" framework. By defining and evaluating at the subsystem level (e.g. track segment, catenary, and signal), RTD established a highly effective methodology to manage, renew, and report on complex capital assets. A central pillar of RTD's systems approach is their rule for evaluating asset conditions based on the lowest-performing component. When assessing the asset condition based on the average condition of all its components, a critical component such as a failing rail tie or corroded rail segment can be obscured by otherwise "good" scores across the rest of the subsystem. Since averaging asset conditions can create safety risks, RTD's approach evaluates condition based on the lowest scoring component to help identify repair and replacement needs.

Building on this approach, RTD has implemented the practice of "full-depth replacement", which acknowledges that piecemeal repairs do not fully restore an asset's useful life, so the entire subsystem must be comprehensively replaced to ensure the effort is optimally effective. Additionally, RTD utilizes an "Age-Minus" strategy to determine replacements, capping an asset's condition score based on either its physical wear or its age, whichever is lower.

While implementing systems thinking requires a large initial effort of documenting and technical expertise, peer agencies found the framework useful and inspiring. For instance, one agency expressed strong interest in establishing a cross-functional team to identify the weakest links within their rail system and prioritize replacement needs based on RTD's approach.

Change Management and Securing Leadership Support

A recurring discussion theme involved the challenge of overcoming resistance to change when introducing modern asset management practices. Transit agencies are leveraging software implementations and transitions from paper to digitized processes to overcome legacy habits. By showcasing new, data-informed executive dashboards and prioritized project rankings from these



systems, agencies can better communicate their maintenance needs to leadership. Ultimately, these changes can help bridge the gap between maintenance teams and executives.

Several agencies shared successful change-management and communication strategies. For example, one agency compiles a bi-annual “TAM at a Glance” executive briefing that highlights key accomplishments and current State of Good Repair mitigations. Their high-level, visual summary has successfully transformed executive perception of the TAM plan from an exercise in compliance into a core capital planning tool. Another agency successfully transitioned away from paper maintenance records to digital databases and is currently piloting AI-powered chat agents to assist maintenance technicians in accessing historical vehicle repairs. One agency shared that they have established a formalized project prioritization board that rates all capital requests against seven standardized drivers of condition, ensuring that capital funds are directed to critical SGR needs rather than being driven by external or political pressures. Some attendees noted that while consistent C-suite turnover has been challenging, the constant shifting has created an environment where it is easier to implement change and break down departmental silos.

Conclusion

The 2026 Transit Asset Management Roundtable in Denver successfully demonstrated how agencies can utilize specific asset management practices to evaluate lifecycle management options, support proactive maintenance strategies, and inform decision-making. By highlighting DART's vehicle rehabilitation model and RTD's systems thinking framework, the event provided examples of actionable methods for optimizing capital investments amid industry challenges. Shared experiences, peer connections, and lessons learned from the roundtable will help guide participating agencies in building comprehensive asset management programs.