



Railway maintenance of Utah Transit Authority's system
(Image courtesy of UTA)

The purpose of FTA's Transit Asset Management (TAM) newsletter is twofold: to keep you up to date on our office's asset-management initiatives (as a complement to our [web site](#) and [e-mail alerts](#)), and to create a forum for communication for all of us in the industry to share information, so that we can learn from each other.

The topic for the next edition is Business Processes for Transit Asset Management. Please share any useful processes that your agency has adopted or let us know if there is any related topic that you would like to know more about. Email us:

TAMNews@dot.gov

State of Good Repair: Noteworthy Practices

This edition of the Transit Asset Management Newsletter covers noteworthy practices in State of Good Repair. The first section is an article that describes some lessons learned from two of the FTA State of Good Repair Pilot Projects. Following the article is a brief summary of the FTA State of Good Repair Grant Program. Finally there is a list of resources in the left column that includes other noteworthy practices.

Introduction

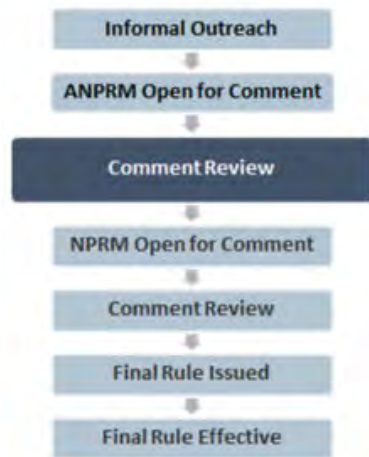
In 2010 FTA released [Transit Asset Management Practices – A National and International Review](#), which documented 11 case studies of current practices. The report found that while most agencies are doing some asset management activities, there is room for improvement, particularly in aligning policies toward achieving a State of Good Repair (SGR). Later that year, Congress directed FTA to use up to \$5 million of research funds for asset management initiatives, including a pilot program aimed at improving asset management in the transit industry.

This article highlights the Utah Transit Authority and Meridian Valley Regional Transit pilot projects. More information about these and the rest of the pilot projects is available in the Resources section of this newsletter.

Utah Transit Authority (UTA)

UTA provides public transportation services to five metropolitan areas, including Salt Lake City, throughout the Wasatch Front region of Utah, including light rail, commuter rail, fixed route buses, express buses, ski buses, Bus Rapid Transit, and Paratransit buses. UTA used the SGR Pilot Program funding to further develop its existing Asset Management System (AMS) beyond the simple database inventory of physical assets it had previously relied on. The previous system was

FTA Rulemaking Process



The FTA Rulemaking is currently in the Comment Review Phase of the process.

News:

TAM-Related Activities at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting:

- [Workshop: Transit Asset Management and the ISO-55000 Asset Management Series of Standards](#) Sunday, January 11, 2015 1:30 – 4:30PM
- [Lecture: More Than Roads and Bridges: Incorporating Other Assets in Transportation Asset Management Planning](#) Monday, January 12, 2015 8:00AM – 9:45AM
- [Lecture: Fleet Management: Safety, Prioritizing, and Planning](#) Monday, January 12, 2015 3:45PM – 5:30PM
- [Poster: Prioritizing Data for Transit Management and Performance Decisions](#) Tuesday, January 13, 2015 2:00PM – 3:45PM

Now Available Online:

- [TRB's Transit Cooperative Research Program \(TCRP\) Report 172: Guide for Developing a Transit Asset Management Plan](#)

[National Transit Institute, Introduction to Transit Asset Management Course:](#)

- Orlando, FL February 5, 2015
- Thousand Palms, CA March 17, 2015

Resources:

[TAM Pilot Projects:](#)

inconsistent as to how asset information was entered and stored. It was also very limited in detail regarding asset attributes.

UTA developed objectives for the new AMS based on input from the UTA staff that would be using the system most often and created a series of interdependent modules that would allow the agency to achieve those objectives. The agency's full report (available in the Resources section of this newsletter) describes the modules in detail.

The resulting AMS is a versatile, easy-to-use system that helps the agency make informed investment decisions. Instead of simply having a list of assets, the new AMS allows the user to prioritize investments based on several different factors including asset condition, risk, and budget.

UTA largely attributes the success of this pilot to a well-developed plan that began with a brainstorming session early in the process. At the session, the participants discussed their needs, including what information they already had, what information they needed, and the best way for new information to be presented. UTA was conscious early on of the importance of engaging with internal and external stakeholders as soon and as often as possible throughout the development process. This approach led to an AMS that is well-connected to the initial objectives of the agency and its stakeholders.

Meridian Valley Regional Transit (VRT)

VRT is a Regional Public Transportation Authority in southwest Idaho, which contracts for transit service in the cities of Boise, Garden City, Nampa, and Caldwell. The VRT system includes 26 transit routes and paratransit services with a fleet of six vans, 58 buses, and 11 support vehicles.

VRT wanted to improve their system for tracking its asset inventory, which provides basic accounting, work order processing, and inventory tracking capabilities. Particularly VRT wanted its system to be able to analyze and prioritize investment needs. To achieve this, VRT formed a formal partnership with the Boise State University shuttle system, the Idaho State DOT, a county ridematching service provider, and two local transit providers in the region. The partnership committed to developing a Regional Recapitalization Plan and a Transit Asset Management Program.

To begin, the partnership developed a project schedule for capturing business requirements, identifying team resources and potential system vendors, and implementing a system. As part of the

- [Regional Transportation Authority \(RTA\)](#)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- [Meridian Valley Regional Transit \(VRT\)](#)
- [Utah Transit Authority \(UTA\)](#)
- [Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board \(Caltrain\)](#)
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT)

[FTA's State of Good Repair Roundtables](#) - The four Roundtables, held between 2009 and 2012, created a forum for experts in the transit industry to discuss the challenges of transit recapitalization and share ideas on how to address them. Each Roundtable offers numerous case studies on a variety of TAM-related topics.

[Transportation Research Board's 10th National Conference on Transportation Asset Management \(2014\)](#):

- [Asset Management at Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority \(SEPTA\)](#) – SEPTA provides an overview of the agency's TAM program and various components.
- [Risk-Based Asset Management Planning at San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit \(BART\)](#) – BART provides an overview of the agency's Asset Management Framework and focuses on how the agency incorporated risk into its decisionmaking processes, including some lessons learned.
- [Lessons Learned Implementing the FTA Asset Management Guide](#) – Parsons Brinckerhoff describes some lessons learned while assisting agencies in implementing the FTA Asset Management Guide.
- [Utah Transit Authority's \(UTA\) Comprehensive Transit Asset Management System](#) – UTA provides an overview of the new TAM software system that the agency developed as part of the TAM Pilot Program with multiple screen shots of each of the system's components.
- [Implementing an Asset Management Program at a Legacy Transit System During a Capital Funding Crisis](#) – The SEPTA explains how the agency was able to implement an Asset Management program despite the challenges of a large, diverse, and aging system.
- [UTA – Perspectives of a Growing Agency](#) – UTA discusses the evolution of Asset

development process, each partner agency agreed to help capture requirements for a regional asset management system, inventory its own assets, and record its asset conditions. The agencies developed methods for collecting any additional data that would ensure consistent and comparable data across all the partnership agencies. The combined assets of the regional partnership include: passenger buses and vans, support vehicles, park and ride lots, bus shelters and benches, operations and maintenance facilities, and transit centers. The wide range of assets required that all partner agencies participate meaningfully throughout the planning process to ensure that the resulting system is flexible enough to meet each agency's needs. As the region's governing body, the partnership will also be responsible for providing necessary support and guidance throughout the planning and implementation process.

The partnership worked together to develop project objectives, which were then used to identify system requirements. Tier 1 requirements (SGR Reporting and Management) were implemented first. The data for VRT are now live and available for generating reports for the National Transit Database. Ongoing activities include integrating the Tier 1 data for the remaining partner agencies and incorporating the Tier 2 (Maintenance and Operations) requirements, which is scheduled for completion in September 2015. As the lead agency, VRT will serve as a mentor and support the partnership agencies as they add their asset inventories to the system.

The success of this pilot has and will continue to depend on the solidarity and cooperation of the partnership.

Lessons Learned

Although the case studies focus on agencies of different sizes and complexities, the lessons learned from both were similar and are relevant and applicable to any agency that is looking to develop and implement an Asset Management Plan.

Working as a Team Yields Additional Benefits:

By developing a regional system that pooled resources across several agencies, the Idaho partnership was able to implement an asset management system more effectively than any agency could have done alone. Forming a regional partnership will also allow the region to apply for grants as a group in the future, maximizing their ability to fund large scale improvements across multiple agencies.

Management at the agency, including its continued development and how it will apply lessons learned.

- [RTA Transit Asset Management Program](#) – RTA describes the agency’s condition assessment program, including its prioritization process and Capital Optimization Support Tool (COST) that the agency uses to conduct scenario analyses.
- [MTA Asset Management Strategy](#) – The New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) describes its vision for Asset Management and its progress in developing asset management strategies and plans.

FTA State of Good Repair Grants

In 2012, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century authorized the [State of Good Repair Grant Program](#) (4.9. USC Section 5337) which is a formula-based program dedicated to maintaining fixed guideway and high-intensity motorbus systems in a State of Good Repair (SGR). Eligible activities include capital projects that maintain SGR, including the rehabilitation and replacement of a number of different components of a transit system. The development and implementation of Transit Asset Management Plans are also eligible activities. LYNX of Orlando, Florida, has used SGR grant funding to develop a Transit Asset Management Plan. The LYNX bus system serves the greater Orlando area and is managed by the Central Florida Regional Transit Authority. The agency is conducting a comprehensive inventory of primary facilities and stations with the intent of improving its transit asset management database. The database will include condition assessments which will detail the order in which assets and deficiencies are prioritized. FTA is in the process of publishing the State of Good Repair Program Guidance. Please check [FTA’s SGR website](#) for updates.

For more information on the State of Good Repair Grant apportionments, see:

[Apportionment Diagram for SGR Grants](#)

[Apportionment Table for SGR Grants](#)

UTA also found that through early engagement with those who would be using the system, the agency was able to obtain buy-in and gain an understanding of the users’ needs. This led to the development of more user-friendly and versatile system that improves the efficiency of UTA’s business processes.

Executive Level Support is Essential:

Both transit agencies found that high-level executive engagement helped to bring leaders together to form a regional vision, and to provide the necessary direction to ensure that asset management principles were integrated throughout the agency.

Transit Agencies Need to Develop an Asset Management Philosophy:

It is important to develop measurable goals and objectives in the beginning of the process. Goals and objectives helped the Idaho partnership understand what is expected and what they are all working toward. UTA used their goals and objectives to develop an Asset Management Philosophy statement that guides their decisionmaking.

Identifying and Taking Advantage of Existing Resources Leads to Efficiency:

By identifying existing data sources and processes, both agencies were able to streamline the implementation process and minimize changes to existing work processes, while also maintaining consistency in the way that the asset management system is used. For example, VRT was able to save time and effort by leveraging existing practices such as the established FTA asset hierarchy described in the [FTA Asset Management Guide](#).



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration