

Documentation of Existing Transit Riders to Prove Eligibility for Warrants for New Starts and Small Starts Projects

June 2016

This document provides guidance to Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program project sponsors on how to document existing weekday transit ridership in a proposed project corridor to determine if a New or Small Starts project might be eligible for warrants. Warrants are pre-qualification approaches that allow a proposed New Starts or Small Starts project to automatically receive satisfactory ratings on certain project justification criteria based on the project's characteristics or the characteristics of the project corridor. For information on how to become eligible for project justification criteria warrants, please see the *Capital Investment Grant Program Final Interim Policy Guidance* found on FTA's website. Project sponsors wishing to be considered for warrants should discuss the matter with FTA during Project Development, prior to submitting information to FTA for evaluation and rating.

When documenting existing transit ridership in the proposed project corridor, project sponsors should provide the following information to FTA:

- A map showing both the proposed CIG project alignment and the alignments of the existing transit routes in the corridor. Generally only transit routes within ¼ mile of the proposed project alignment should be included. Additionally, transit routes that only very briefly pass through the proposed project corridor, but do not parallel it for a significant portion of the alignment, should not be included.
- Documentation of the current transit ridership on the existing routes in the proposed project corridor. Generally this should be from boarding and alighting counts, otherwise called stop-by-stop counts of passengers getting on and off the transit services. These counts should be provided to FTA by individual route.
- A calculation of the existing transit ridership in the corridor. The number of existing riders is the sum of: 1) the number of riders on-board transit services when they begin travel into the corridor; and 2) the number of riders who board transit services in the corridor. The numbers of riders should be summed in both route directions (e.g., inbound, outbound) as long as the existing route serves the project corridor in both directions.
- A description of the methodology used by the project sponsor to collect the existing ridership data, including the dates of collection. Data collections should be representative of an average weekday, which often means that they be based on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays, since Mondays and Fridays may have differing ridership patterns. Additionally, they should not generally include weekdays when extra service is scheduled to meet special service needs such as civic celebrations, parades, or holiday events.

Project sponsors should contact FTA if they do not currently have the data requested above to discuss what information they may instead have available and whether that would allow the proposed project to qualify for warrants.

FTA provides the hypothetical example below to illustrate how the calculation of existing transit ridership in the corridor should be made.

Exhibit 1 – Example Project Corridor

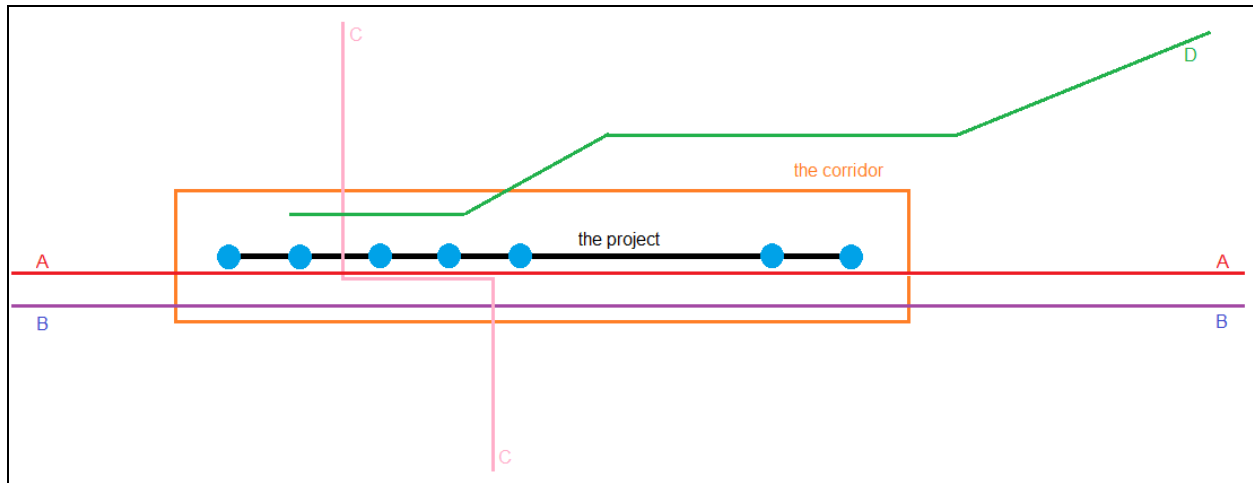


Exhibit 1 illustrates the existing transit routes in the proposed project corridor, identified as Routes A, B, C and D, and their geographic proximity to the proposed project. The corridor is defined as one-quarter mile from the project.

Ridership on routes A and B in the example above should be included in the existing ridership calculation because they operate within one quarter mile of the project and for the full span of the project investment. Because these routes span the full length of the project, both boardings within the project corridor and riders on-board entering the corridor should be counted

Ridership on route D may be included in the calculation because it operates within one quarter mile of the proposed project, but only for a short distance. Therefore, only customers who board and alight within the corridor should be included in the existing ridership calculation.

Route C should not be included in the calculation because it primarily operates perpendicular to the proposed project corridor rather than parallel to the corridor. The portion of route C that runs through the project corridor is so small that the travel patterns served by Route C differ significantly from those that would be served by the proposed project.

Exhibit 2 – Example Project Corridor, Locations for Counts On-Board Existing Transit Service Entering the Corridor

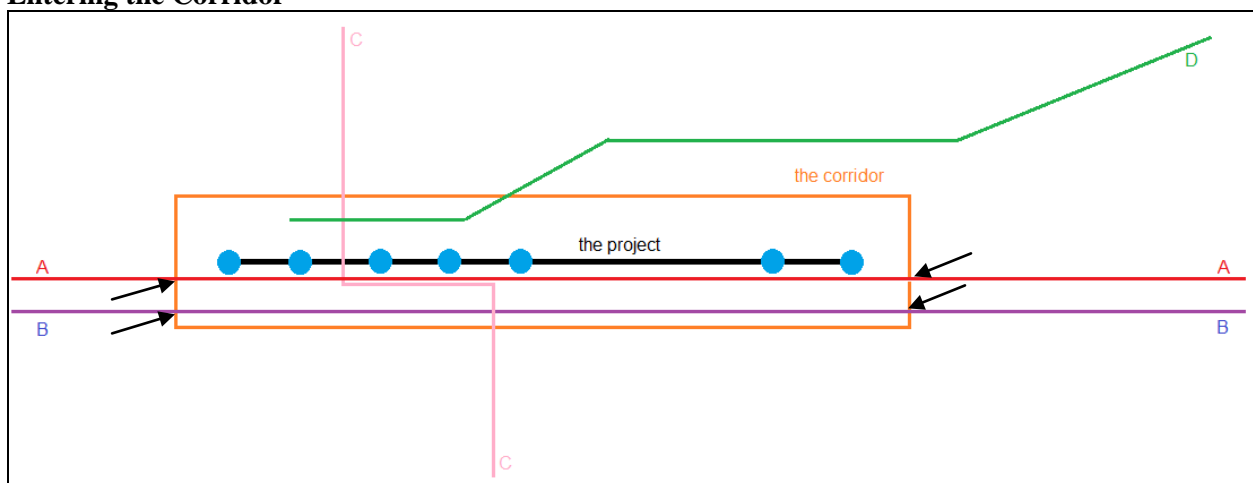


Exhibit 2 shows where in this example the number of riders on-board the transit vehicle needs to be identified. The arrows indicate the location and direction of the on-board load that should be reported.

Exhibit 3 – Example Project Corridor, Counts by Route

Route	Westbound Daily On-Board Riders Entering Corridor	Westbound Daily Boarding Riders Within Corridor	Eastbound Daily On-Board Riders Entering Corridor	Eastbound Daily Boarding Riders Within Corridor	Total Daily Riders in Corridor
A	1,250	650	824	645	3,369
B	775	578	585	594	2,532
D	-	150	-	175	325
Total	2,025	1,378	1,409	1,414	6,226

Exhibit 3 is an example of a table summarizing for FTA the total number of existing riders for the example project corridor.