

2019 TAM Multimodal Roundtable

FTA Panel Questions

July 17, 2019

This document answers questions attendees left for the FTA panel that were not addressed during the panel session:

1. **Can you create a quick guide/cheat sheet for how TAM and Safety linking should/could be done? And, an FAQ & timeline?**

Please see our [factsheet](#) illustrating the nexus between TAM and the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule. We have also developed an [FAQ response](#) to provide additional information on the connection between TAM and PTASP.

2. **We had a consultant come on-site who said that “the TAM Plan is subservient to the SMP.” That was confusing and they did not really clarify. Could the FTA clarify the relationship and how TAMP & SMP should coexist? If there’s any overlapping info, which one is the “plan of record”?**

Neither the TAM Plan nor the PTASP is subservient to the other. Both plans are required for recipients and subrecipients that must meet requirements under the TAM and PTASP rules. Processes and information that transit agencies develop to meet requirements under either rule can be useful to meet requirements under the other, but there is no requirement to combine or link the plans, aside from having a common Accountable Executive. Our [factsheet](#) on the nexus between TAM and PTASP illustrates some of the ways that the processes and information from the plans may be linked.

3. **The Bus & Bus Facility Grant indicated SGR Condition/ULB measures are used to substantiate submitted projects. Is there a defined link for grant submissions relating to TAM plan project priorities? Will there be? Should there be?**

For 5339(b), the statute does mention that “in making grants under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider the age and condition of buses, bus fleets, related equipment, and bus-related facilities.” We ask for applicants to identify the age, condition, and use in two of our evaluation criteria, as well as state what regional/local planning they have done that supports the project in a third evaluation criteria. The application does not specifically request the TAM plan for replacement or rehabilitation, though some applications may provide it to demonstrate the need, benefit, and planning that has taken place.

4. **TAM requires a quality assurance plan and so does SMS. In my experience, FTA has only required grantees of light rail extension projects to follow the FTA QA Guidelines and not for bus procurements, etc. Transit lags behind other industries with QA/QC planning. The principals of QA/QC solve most of the issues of an organization since it is everything that we do. Why does the FTA not proactively promote agency required Quality Management Systems?**

FTA supports recipients’ use of sound Quality Management Systems to apply QA/QC principles in all facets of public transit.

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5. **It is written somewhere, or stated in a webinar, that if the default ULB is not used, documentation will need to be provided to FTA at the triennial review. What documentation is needed?**

There is guidance in the [NTD 2017-2018 Asset Inventory Reporting Guide](#) as well as on the [Performance Management](#) section of the [TAM webpage](#). Both state that ULBs can be customized by modifying the default value in NTD, and no prior FTA approval is required to customize a ULB. An NTD validator may request further information if the customized ULB significantly differs from the default.

6. **What are agencies required to provide to MPOs regarding TAM data?**

The transit provider is required to provide its TAM plan and SGR performance targets to the MPO. However, FTA encourages both transit providers and MPOs to work collaboratively to the extent practicable, and recommends creating agreements that identify expectations and roles regarding performance management.

7. **If the TAM horizon is 4 years, and many capital projects start 4 years after the grant application, how can you require the TAM plan = Y indicator on the grant application? It may be in the CIP but not TAM plan.**

The TAM Final Rule (Section 625.29) states that FTA requires grantees to update their TAM plans at least every four years (horizon period), and the update “should ideally coincide to the extent practicable with the update cycle for the STIP and the TIP.” When updating TAM plans, grantees are not required to replace every project in their TAM plans with new ones. Updating the plan means that “a transit provider revisits every element of its TAM plan and makes necessary changes for a subsequent version.” To be eligible for FTA’s SGR funds, projects on a grantee’s TAM priority list should stay on the list until the project is completed.

While TAM plan updates are only required every four years, the plan can be updated or amended if there is a significant, unexpected change to either the asset inventory or an asset’s condition that meets the thresholds established in the plan. These thresholds could be identified in agreements with stakeholders, the Evaluation Plan, and/or group plan sponsor communication. The difference between a TAM plan update and a TAM plan amendment is the degree of unexpected change.