



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

[DOT-OST-2026-1387]

Request for Information: Shaping the Future of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (OST-R), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice; request for information (RFI).

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) seeks public input to evaluate the utility of its product portfolio, identify critical data gaps in the national transportation picture, and improve the user experience for all stakeholders. As the transportation landscape evolves with new technologies and supply chain shifts, BTS is committed to ensuring its resources remain relevant and accessible. Feedback received through this Request for Information (RFI) will help guide the strategic alignment of BTS's product portfolio with the technical and analytical requirements of the public.

DATES: Written comments and information are requested on or before Thursday, July 2, 2026.

Informational Webinar: BTS will host an informational webinar. Further details regarding registration and public participation are provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by DOT Docket ID Number **DOT-OST-2026-1387** by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail/Hand-Delivery/Courier: Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Room W58-213, Washington, DC 20590.

If you would like to know that your comments reached the facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope.

Note: We recommend that you include your name and a mailing address, an email address, or a telephone number in the body of your document so that we can contact you if we have questions regarding your submission. If you submit your inputs by mail or hand-delivery, they must be submitted in an unbound format, no larger than 8 1/2 by 11 inches, single-sided, suitable for copying and electronic filing. All submissions received should include the agency name and docket number.

BTS notes that this RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. While responses to this RFI do not bind BTS to any further actions related to the response, all submissions will be made publicly available on www.regulations.gov.

Confidential Business Information: Confidential Business Information (CBI) is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments to this RFI contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private and that you actually treat as private, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI and submit the information directly to the person identified in the section titled **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** below and take the following steps: (1) Mark each page of the submission containing CBI as “Confidential”; (2) send, along with the original submission, a second copy of with the CBI removed or redacted; and (3) explain why the information you are submitting is CBI. Unless you are notified otherwise, BTS will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this RFI. Any comment submissions received that are not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket.

Privacy Act: Anyone can search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if

submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). For information on DOT's compliance with the Privacy Act, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>.

Electronic Access and Filing: As required by 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(4), this document, and all comments may be viewed online through the Federal eRulemaking portal at www.regulations.gov. An electronic copy of this document may also be downloaded by accessing the Office of the Federal Register's home page at: www.federalregister.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Edward Strocko, U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-3282. Email: BTSE Outreach@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), part of the Department of Transportation (DOT), is recognized by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as one of 16 recognized statistical agencies and units (RSAUs) that are part of the Federal statistical system. The Federal statistical system collects and transforms data into useful, objective information and makes it readily available to data users, while protecting the responses of individual data providers. Federal, State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments; businesses; and the public all trust this information to be credible and reliable and use it to make informed decisions. RSAUs are organizational units of the Executive Branch whose activities are predominantly the collection, compilation, processing, or analysis of information for statistical purposes, covering topics such as the economy, workforce, energy, agriculture, foreign trade, education, housing, crime, transportation, and health.

BTS is the preeminent source of statistics on commercial aviation, multimodal freight activity, and transportation economics, and provides context to decision makers and the public for understanding statistics on transportation. BTS assures the credibility of its products and services through rigorous analysis and transparent data quality. BTS promotes innovative

methods of data collection, analysis, visualization, and dissemination to improve operational efficiency, to examine emerging topics, and to create relevant and timely information products that foster understanding of transportation and its transformational role in society. The Bureau's National Transportation Library (NTL) is the permanent, publicly accessible home for research publications from throughout the transportation community; the gateway to all DOT data; and the help line for the Congress, researchers, and the public for information about transportation.

In the years ahead, BTS will be successful if it continues to be recognized for delivering robust, credible, widely used products covering the subjects identified in its mandates and in departmental goals. BTS products will be successful if they continue to be recognized as timely, relevant, definitive, and objective. BTS will continue to be innovative in its work if it tackles significant intellectual challenges with creative and effective responses. Ultimately, BTS is a success when its products are useful and used throughout the nation.

Request for Information

BTS is always seeking ways to better serve the transportation community and public with statistical information, data, and analysis tools. As part of our ongoing efforts to modernize, BTS is reviewing our current practices and strategies to:

- Keep up with dramatic changes in transportation by shifting our emphasis from trends and recent conditions to more frequent, forward-looking indicators of transportation use and performance;
- Adopt new data sources and new analytical methods for more timely, less expensive, and more responsive information products;
- Expand our emphasis areas from our traditional strengths in freight, aviation, and economics to other aspects of transportation; and
- Continue to meet our mandates and maximize efficiency in delivery of our current product portfolio, including benchmarks that establish the transportation universe for subject-specific measures and provide a foundation for timely transportation indicators.

To help shape our modernization efforts, BTS specifically invites input from data scientists, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning experts, statisticians, and economists who actively use and analyze datasets provided by BTS, in addition to members of the public.

List of Questions for Commenters

BTS invites responses to any of the questions listed below. Respondents are not required to answer every question. We encourage respondents to provide responses based on specific expertise, experience, or interest. Responses may be abstract and visionary, or highly concrete and technical, depending on what the respondent believes will be most helpful to BTS.

Product Portfolio Alignment: *Evaluating the alignment of the BTS product suite with public needs.*

1. **Portfolio Utility:** How are BTS data and statistical resources currently used, and how would improved guidance (such as technical documentation or video tutorials) provide more value from the existing product portfolio?
2. **Future Capabilities:** How would the addition of new data topics (such as supply chain resiliency or automated technologies) change how public or private entities or members of the public plan for the future, and how can BTS design these new products to be useful immediately?

Identifying Data Gaps: *Identifying gaps in the national transportation picture.*

3. **Core Data Requirements:** How should BTS amend the transportation data it collects to meet the data and statistical needs of government and industry decision makers?
4. **Analytical Outputs:** What actions can BTS take with its statistical products to make them more useful for transportation planning, policy making, operations, research, and analysis?
5. **Emerging Trends:** How do current limits in transportation data affect tasks such as conducting reliable analyses, setting clear decision points, developing accurate talking points, or producing summary statistics, especially with respect to emerging technologies

or shifting supply chain patterns?

6. **Granularity:** How would the inclusion of more specific geographic or demographic cross-sections in BTS products help meet analytical needs?

Data Utility & Application: *Understanding the real-world impact of BTS products.*

7. **Criticality & Use Case:** How are BTS datasets currently used, and how has this data informed decision-making?
8. **Evolving Requirements:** Have there been situations where a BTS product was insufficient, and how were other sources used to supplement that information?
9. **Compatibility:** Is it easier to ingest and integrate BTS data by certain modernized delivery methods (such as using Application Programming Interfaces (API) endpoints, machine-readable metadata, or standardized database schemas) compared to traditional file-transfer methods?

Data Architecture & Technical Integration: *Modernizing how data is delivered and consumed.*

10. **Modern Analytic Integration:** As the public increasingly utilizes advanced modern data analytic tools (such as Python, R, and AI/Large Language Models) how should BTS change, format, or improve its data offerings to seamlessly integrate with these technologies?
11. **Delivery Mechanisms:** Currently, BTS hosts and supplies data through mechanisms such as the TranStats database, the National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD), static downloadable files (*e.g.*, Excel), and selected APIs. Are other methods, formats, or delivery mechanisms more useful (*e.g.*, expanded raw Comma-Separated Values (CSV) availability, modernized RESTful APIs¹, cloud-hosted data lakes, etc.)?

User Experience (UX) & Discovery: Optimizing the experience for data seekers.

¹ Representational State Transfer (REST) APIs are a standardized type of web service that allows different software applications to communicate and exchange data automatically. "RESTful" refers to systems that follow this architecture to ensure data is delivered in a lightweight, scalable, and machine-readable format.

12. **Search & Navigation:** How are searches currently conducted on the BTS website, and do any technical difficulties or website navigation issues impede searches for information?

13. **Consumption Preferences:** Is it easier to access BTS information by certain methods (e.g., downloading raw data for independent analysis, using dashboards, reading analytical reports, etc.)?

Strategic Future & Feedback Loop: *Aligning BTS resources with long-term industry challenges.*

14. **Outlook:** How would having high-quality, long-term data help to resolve the biggest transportation challenges over the next 3 to 5 years?

15. **Ongoing Engagement:** What are the best methods to get news or technical updates about changes to BTS data and products (e.g., technical webinars, social media, a monthly newsletter, etc.) to ensure that the updates are timely?

16. **Challenges & Opportunities:** What additional recommendations, challenges, or opportunities related to the BTS mission should be considered that have not been addressed in the previous sections of this RFI?

Informational Webinar

To assist the public in responding to this RFI, BTS will host an informational webinar on Wednesday, June 17, 2026. During this session, BTS will provide an overview of the questions included in this notice and answer procedural questions regarding the submission of comments.

Webinar Details:

- **Date:** Wednesday, June 17, 2026
- **Time:** 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)
- **Registration:** Registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis at https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_oRQ-w4hVTTyY_TprDYzWDA.

Public Participation: This session is open to the public; however, registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis. This webinar is intended for a broad range of attendees, including data users, industry stakeholders, and members of the public interested in helping BTS shape a more modern and responsive national transportation data landscape.

Accommodations: The U.S. Department of Transportation is committed to providing equal access to this meeting for all participants. If you need alternative formats or services because of a disability, such as sign language, interpretation, or other ancillary aids, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section at least five business days prior to the event.

Post-Comment Period Engagement

Following the close of the comment period for this Request for Information, BTS will review all submissions to identify common themes. BTS intends to publish a summary of these themes and host a follow-up briefing to share how this feedback will guide its future work and initiatives.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 27, 2026.

Edward Strocko,

Acting Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

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