



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

[Docket No. FTA–2026–0232]

Request for Information on Family Friendly Transit

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Request for Information (RFI).

SUMMARY: Many transit agencies have developed ways to assess and improve the quality of the public transportation service that they provide to their communities. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) seeks input from the transit industry and the public about how to assess public transportation service quality across five areas: safety and security, cleanliness, universal accessibility, real time service data availability, and system reliability. FTA will use this information to develop tools to help the public, transit agencies, and all levels of government assess the quality of public transportation service in their communities more directly and identify actions necessary to improve family-friendly service.

DATES: Comments are requested by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: You may file comments identified by docket number FTA–2026–0232 by any of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- **Mail:** Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E., West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, D.C. 20590-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Office of Budget and Policy, Federal Transit Administration, FTAPerformanceData@dot.gov or (202) 366-4050.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background The performance of America’s public transportation systems is often measured by the number of trips taken or miles traveled, yet these metrics do not capture the full impact of transit systems on the well-being of the communities and travelers they serve. FTA is considering developing common service quality metrics grounded in the premise that transit systems offer the most value when they can successfully answer key questions travelers may ask themselves before making a trip, such as: *Will I feel safe and secure?*, *When is the next bus/train, and will it be on time?*, and *Can I easily get where I need to go with my family?* These potential service quality metrics will help the public, transit agencies, and all levels of government, to assess more directly the quality of public transportation service in their communities and identify actions necessary to improve family-friendly service. For the purpose of this request for information, “family-friendly service” means the availability of high-quality transit service that is welcoming to as many members of the public as possible, not just commuters or adults traveling alone. This request for information will focus on transit systems that serve urbanized areas with 200,000 or more in population for two reasons. First, larger transit agencies are more likely to have mature service quality frameworks and metrics in place with established data collection systems. Second, FTA prioritizes reducing burdens on small and rural transit providers.

FTA encourages responses from academic institutions, industry associations, transit rider advocacy organizations, advisory groups, recipients of FTA funding that operate rail transit systems, transit agencies operating bus systems in large urban areas with populations of 200,000 or more, metropolitan planning organizations, State departments of transportation, other transit providers, industry stakeholders, and the public.

II. Service Quality Performance Areas. FTA has identified five service quality performance areas: safety and security; cleanliness; universal accessibility; real-time service data availability; and system reliability. For each area, FTA (i) proposes questions travelers may ask themselves

before making a trip and (ii) identifies existing data reported to the National Transit Database (NTD) or collected as part of its oversight responsibilities that it may consider for possible service quality performance metrics (see below). FTA seeks comment regarding these proposed service quality performance areas, the effectiveness of leveraging existing NTD and oversight data, whether it should assess any other publicly available data, and whether FTA should consider collecting any new data through the NTD or other means.

Possible service quality performance metrics derived from existing NTD data for each area include: rate of fatalities, rate of injuries (safety and security); percentage of rail stations that are ADA-accessible (as a metric for achieving universal accessibility); and mean distance between mechanical failures (system reliability). FTA seeks comments on these service quality performance metrics, as well as other service quality performance metrics.

- **Area #1: Safety and Security**

Traveler Question: Will I feel safe and secure on transit?

FTA currently collects data through the NTD on safety and security events on public transportation, such as fatalities, injuries, and assaults. FTA also acknowledges the importance of the public's perceptions of safety and security, in addition to event data. Therefore, FTA seeks to know whether transit agencies collect data from riders regarding perceptions and experiences of transit system safety and security, and how transit agencies analyze and use this data. In addition, FTA is interested in knowing what additional information it should consider collecting to enhance the public's understanding of transit safety and security, to include fare evasion trends, given observed correlations between fare evasion and more serious criminal offenses.

- **Area #2: Cleanliness**

Traveler Question: Is the transit vehicle or facility clean?

FTA does not currently collect data from transit agencies or the public regarding the cleanliness of transit vehicles or facilities, such as buses, ferries, trains, and rail stations.

FTA also acknowledges the importance of passengers' perception of cleanliness, alongside other data about cleanliness that transit agencies may track. FTA seeks comments on what data agencies collect regarding cleanliness of transit systems, including vehicles and facilities, as well as methodologies used to define or assess cleanliness.

- **Area #3: Universal Accessibility**

Traveler Question: Can I easily use the transit system, whether I am alone or with my family/others?

FTA currently collects some data on transit and paratransit service compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, much of this data concerns barriers to transit access for people with mobility disabilities, such as wheelchair users. FTA is considering assessing performance beyond the minimum requirements of the ADA to measure how easily individuals of all ages and abilities, including families traveling together, can utilize the system. Increasing transit system accessibility for people with intellectual, developmental, sensory, or mobility disabilities may help agencies to be more inclusive of all customers, including families with small children and strollers, as well as older adults with canes or walkers. FTA is interested in the extent to which transit agencies collect and use data regarding accessibility of transit systems beyond the minimum ADA requirements.

- **Area #4: Real-time Service Data Availability**

Traveler Questions: Can I plan my trip easily? When is the next bus/train? Will I know about delays, and be able to plan around unexpected delays?

Accurate, reliable, and timely transit service data helps people plan and take transit trips with more ease and confidence. Through the NTD, FTA currently collects General Transit Feed Specifications (GTFS) schedule information for fixed route modes, such as route identifiers, stop locations, and planned stop times. FTA also collects geographic

area coverage data for demand response service through the NTD. FTA seeks input on the extent to which agencies make real-time service data available to customers to support trip planning, including service disruptions. We are interested in leveraging existing data protocols based on industry standards for geographic-based transit service information, such as GTFS.

- **Area #5: System Reliability**

Traveler Question: Will I get to where I am going on time?

FTA currently collects information on scheduled service and mechanical failures that disrupt service through the NTD, but it does not collect data on actual delivered headways or on-time performance. FTA seeks input on how on-time performance is assessed by transit agencies, including methods and technology used, and how successful on-time performance is defined. FTA is also interested in other ways transit agencies may track and assess system reliability.

Section III. Questions to the Public

FTA requests detailed feedback on the following questions. Replies may respond to any question and do not need to respond to all questions. FTA looks forward to receiving feedback from all interested parties.

Service Quality Performance Areas and Metrics

1. To what extent do transit agencies use these five FTA-identified service quality performance areas (also referred to as ‘areas’) to drive customer service decision-making? What other service quality performance areas do transit agencies track, and how do they define them?
2. What other areas should FTA consider for assessing the quality of public transportation service in communities or for improving family-friendly service?

3. What performance metrics do transit agencies use to measure service quality in each area, or other areas they may use? What other metrics should FTA consider for assessing whether a public transportation service is welcoming and appealing to families?
4. For performance metrics used, what thresholds define success, and what factors are considered in determining each threshold for success?
5. What additional or alternative existing NTD data, if any, should FTA consider within each area?
6. What additional or alternative existing oversight data, if any, should FTA consider within each area?
7. What additional or alternative new NTD or oversight data, if any, should FTA consider within each area?

Data Availability, Limitations and Collection Methodology

8. To what extent is data that responds to the proposed traveler questions collected by transit providers or obtainable from third parties (e.g., applications, contractors for purchased transportation, non-profits or other organizations)?
9. What are the limitations (e.g., reliability, frequency, accuracy, etc.) of any current data collection methods? What resources are needed to overcome those limitations?
10. If data is not already collected through the NTD, what data collection methodologies exist for assessing each area (especially cleanliness, universal accessibility, and system reliability)?
11. To what extent is customer satisfaction data collected by transit agencies for each area? Please briefly describe methodology, including method(s) and frequency of collection, as well as how the information is used.

Other Considerations

12. Could standardization of operational data assist transit agencies in streamlining NTD data collection, validation, and reporting? What are transit agencies positive or negative

experiences using open data standards for operational data to improve and/or streamline NTD reporting?

13. What are the differences among transit agencies (*e.g.*, fleet size, service type, service area, network design) that could affect how thresholds for success are defined, and why?

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 5301, 49 CFR 1.91.

Jamie Pfister,

Acting Executive Director.

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