



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 6, 2025
TO: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
FROM: Sam Taylor, MPO Staff
RE: FY 2025 Transit Asset Management Targets

Through its federal Transit Asset Management (TAM) rule,¹ the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and state agencies to collaborate to achieve and maintain a state of good repair for transit systems. Transit providers that receive federal funds must establish targets each year for federally required TAM performance measures. These measures relate to the condition of transit assets in four categories: rolling stock (vehicles that provide passenger service), equipment (non-revenue service vehicles), facilities (passenger, parking, administrative, and maintenance), and infrastructure (rail fixed guideway systems). The FTA also requires MPOs to set regional performance targets for these TAM measures in coordination with transit and state agencies. This memorandum proposes updates to the Boston Region MPO's existing set of TAM performance targets, which the MPO last updated in March 2024.

The MPO staff recommends that the MPO vote to adopt the proposed updates to its regional TAM targets presented in this memorandum at its March 6, 2025, meeting. The regional targets consist of those submitted by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), and the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) for fiscal year (FY) 2025.

1 TAM REQUIREMENTS

The FTA's TAM rule requires applicable transit providers to carry out several activities to achieve and maintain a state of good repair for their assets:

- develop and implement a TAM plan, and update this plan at least once every four years²

¹ 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 625.

² The MBTA, CATA, and MWRTA adopted their first plans in 2018 and updated them in 2022.

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- conduct transit asset inventories and condition assessments, and report inventory and condition information to the National Transit Database (NTD) annually
- develop annual performance targets for TAM performance measures
- report targets and prior year performance to the NTD annually

MPOs also have TAM responsibilities, which are defined by the FTA's TAM Rule and the Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning rule, which sets requirements for MPO planning processes.³ MPO TAM responsibilities require

- developing targets for TAM performance measures for metropolitan regions, in coordination with transit agencies and state departments of transportation;
- reporting these targets in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), along with progress made toward meeting these targets compared to past performance or baseline data; and
- describing in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), to the maximum extent practicable, how projects programmed in the TIP will achieve performance targets identified in the LRTP.

2 TAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The TAM Rule specifies four performance measures, which apply to four TAM asset categories: rolling stock, equipment, facilities, and infrastructure. Table 1 describes these measures.

³ The Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning rule is documented in 23 CFR Parts 450 and 771 and 49 CFR Part 613.

**Table 1
TAM Performance Measures by Asset Category**

Asset Category	Relevant Assets	Measure	Measure Type	Desired Direction
Rolling Stock	Buses, vans, and sedans; light and heavy rail cars; commuter rail cars and locomotives; and ferry boats	Percentage of revenue vehicles that have met or exceeded their ULB	Age-based	Minimize percentage
Equipment (non-revenue vehicles)	Service support, maintenance, and other non-revenue vehicles	Percentage of non-revenue vehicles that have met or exceeded their ULB	Age-based	Minimize percentage
Facilities	Passenger stations and stops, parking facilities, and administration and maintenance facilities*	Percentage of assets with condition ratings below 3.0 on FTA TERM Scale	Condition-based	Minimize percentage
Infrastructure	Rail fixed guideway systems	Percentage of track segments with speed restrictions, by mode	Performance-based	Minimize percentage

* Stops that meet the threshold for a passenger facility are listed in the FTA’s TAM Facility Performance Measure Reporting Guidebook, available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/asset-management/tam-facility-performance-measure-reporting-guidebook>.
 FTA = Federal Transit Administration. TAM = Transit Asset Management. TERM = Transit Economic Requirements Model. ULB = Useful Life Benchmark.
 Source: FTA.

Two definitions apply to these performance measures:

- **Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)**—“The expected life cycle of a capital asset for a particular transit provider’s operating environment, or the acceptable period of use in service for a particular transit provider’s operating environment.”⁴ For example, FTA’s default ULB for a bus is 14 years.⁵

⁴ FTA. Performance Management. July 13, 2023. Accessed February 12, 2025, at <http://www.transit.dot.gov/PerformanceManagement>.

⁵ FTA. Default Useful Life Benchmark Cheat Sheet. October 25, 2021. Accessed February 12, 2025, at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/TAM/ULBcheatsheet>.

- **FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) Scale**—A five category rating system used in FTA’s TERM to describe asset condition, with a rating of 5 reflecting the best conditions.⁶

3 FY 2025 TAM PERFORMANCE TARGETS

3.1 Process

The MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA have developed a set of FY 2025 TAM targets that account for recent asset inventory and condition data. The targets also consider these agencies’ expectations of the effects that capital investment will have on asset procurement and improvement during the fiscal year. The MBTA elected to set targets on the state fiscal year (SFY) schedule of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, and CATA and MWRTA elected to set targets on the federal fiscal year (FFY) schedule of October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025.

When setting targets, each agency has the discretion to use FTA-identified default ULBs for vehicles or to adjust ULBs with approval from the FTA. The MBTA has used FTA default ULBs for all vehicle types except for paratransit autos and vans, and some articulated buses, which are measured using MBTA-defined ULBs. The MWRTA uses FTA default ULBs for vans and equipment vehicles (excluding automobiles) and uses ULBs from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation’s Fully Accessible Vehicle Guide for its cutaway vehicles and automobiles.⁷ CATA uses useful life criteria as defined in FTA Circular 5010.1F(Award Management Requirements) for ULB values for its vehicles.⁸

The FTA will neither penalize transit agencies and MPOs for failing to achieve regional TAM targets nor reward these entities for attaining them. The FTA will review how the Boston Region MPO is incorporating performance-based planning and programming practices, including those related to TAM, into its planning process during quadrennial certification reviews.

3.2 FY 2024 Performance and FY 2025 Targets

The MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA set targets, by mode, on rolling stock, or vehicles that provide passenger service. Overall, the MBTA expects the percentage of total rolling stock exceeding ULB to increase as vehicle fleets

⁶ FTA. Performance Management.

⁷ Massachusetts Department of Transportation. MassDOT Fully Accessible Vehicle Guide: An Overview of Accessible Vehicle Specifications. September 2023. Accessed February, 2025, at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdot-fully-accessible-vehicle-guide-0/download>.

⁸ FTA. FTA C 5010.1F “Award Management Requirements.” November 1, 2024. Accessed February 12, 2025, at https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2024-10/C5010.1F-Circular-11-01-2024_0.pdf.

continue to age. The MWRTA has factored in new vehicles for its targets on cutaway vehicles and vans. CATA anticipates an improvement in its cutaway vehicles performance in FY 2025. Table 2 shows rolling stock targets for all agencies.

**Table 2
Rolling Stock, FY 2024 Performance and FY 2025 Targets**

Agency	Asset Type	FY 2024 Performance	FY 2025 Targets
		Percent of Vehicles ≥ ULB	Target Percent of Vehicles ≥ ULB
MBTA	Articulated Bus	21.2%	21.2%
MBTA	Bus	16.4%	16.2%
MBTA	Commuter Rail – Locomotive	22.4%	22.4%
MBTA	Commuter Rail – Coach	7.6%	7.2%
MBTA	Ferry Boat	0%	0%
MBTA	Heavy Rail – Passenger	28.7%	45.7%
MBTA	Light Rail – Passenger	39.0%	39.0%
MBTA	Vintage Trolley	100%	100%
MBTA	Paratransit – Automobiles	0%	26.6%
MBTA	Paratransit – Van	25.1%	25.1%
MWRTA	Automobiles	100%	100%
MWRTA	Cutaway Vehicle	26.7%	29.2%
MWRTA	Van	0%	0%
CATA	Bus	19%	18%
CATA	Cutaway Vehicles	65%	0%

Notes: CATA and MWRTA follow the federal fiscal year of October 1 to September 30. MBTA figures follow the state fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.
 CATA = Cape Ann Transportation Authority. FY = Fiscal Year. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MWRTA = Metrowest Regional Transit Authority.
 Source: CATA, MBTA, and MWRTA.

The MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA established targets for the Equipment category, pertaining to non-revenue service vehicles. The MBTA set SFY 2025 targets that anticipate a slight improvement over past performance, with fewer vehicles exceeding ULB due to the retirement of older vehicles and procurement of new vehicles in the coming fiscal year. The MWRTA exceeded its FY 2024 target of 40 percent of equipment exceeding ULB, so the agency has set its FY 2025 target to 40 percent. CATA set its FY 2025 target to 25 percent as significant improvement is expected over last year’s performance. Table 3 shows equipment targets for all agencies.

**Table 3
Equipment, FY 2024 Performance and FY 2025 Targets**

Agency	Asset Type	FY 2024 Performance	FY 2025 Targets
		Percent of Vehicles ≥ ULB	Target Percent of Vehicles ≥ ULB
MBTA	All Equipment	24.7%	22.3%
MWRTA	All Equipment	40%	40%
CATA	All Equipment	100%	25%

Notes: CATA and MWRTA figures follow the federal fiscal year of October 1 to September 30. MBTA figures follow the state fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.
 CATA = Cape Ann Transportation Authority. FY = Fiscal Year. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MWRTA = Metrowest Regional Transit Authority. ULB = Useful life benchmark.
 Source: CATA, MBTA, and MWRTA.

The MBTA has both administrative and maintenance facilities as well as passenger and parking facilities. The MBTA set targets equal to its SFY 2024 performance for both types of facilities. MWRTA and CATA have just one facility each, and those facilities scored 3.0 or greater in FY 2024 on the FTA’s TERM condition rating scale.⁹ Therefore, MWRTA and CATA have set targets to 0 percent of facilities scoring below 3.0. Table 4 shows facilities targets for all agencies.

**Table 4
Facilities, FY 2024 Performance and FY 2025 Targets**

Agency	Asset Type	FY 2024 Performance	FY 2025 Targets
		Percent of Facilities < 3.0	Target Percent of Facilities < 3.0
MBTA	Administrative/Maintenance	20.7%	20.7%
MBTA	Passenger/Parking	2.6%	2.6%
MWRTA	Administrative/Maintenance	0%	0%
CATA	Administrative/Maintenance	0%	0%

Notes: CATA and MWRTA figures follow the federal fiscal year of October 1 to September 30. MBTA figures follow the state fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.
 CATA = Cape Ann Transportation Authority. FY = Fiscal Year. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MWRTA = Metrowest Regional Transit Authority.
 Source: CATA, MBTA, and MWRTA.

The MBTA is the only agency setting infrastructure targets for FY 2025, as it is the only agency with track infrastructure. The percentages shown are a measure of the percentage of track segments on each type of rail with performance, or speed, restrictions. The MBTA set targets in accordance with FTA’s performance

⁹ FTA. Performance Management.

management guidelines for infrastructure.¹⁰ The MBTA calculated SFY 2025 performance targets for heavy rail and light rail by using actual performance from the first four months of SFY 2025 as a baseline, and adjusting for planned track improvements and expected conditions during this fiscal year. For commuter rail, the MBTA set a SFY 2025 target of 4 percent of track segments having speed restrictions. Targets for infrastructure are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5
Infrastructure, SFY 2024 Performance and SFY 2025 Targets (MBTA Only)**

	SFY 2024 Performance	SFY 2025 Targets
Category	Percent of Miles with Performance Restrictions	Target Percent of Miles with Performance Restrictions
Commuter Rail	1.2%	4.0%
Heavy Rail	17.8%	13.0%
Light Rail	9.4%	7.0%

Note: The data shown is for the state fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.
FY = Fiscal Year. MBTA = Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.
Source: MBTA.

4 REQUESTED ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

MPO staff recommends that the Boston Region MPO vote to adopt this set of FY 2025 TAM performance targets for the Boston region. Should the MPO select this approach, staff will present and describe these targets in the performance chapter of the FFYs 2026-30 TIP document. In addition, MPOs are federally required to review their TAM performance targets when updating their LRTP. Going forward, the MPO will work with transit agencies and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to use TAM performance measures and targets to monitor the condition of transit assets in the region, and to consider what effect the transit programs and projects proposed for the MPO’s TIP will have on future transit state of good repair.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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