



Florida Department of Transportation Research

Development of Comprehensive Guidance on Obtaining Service-Consumed Data for the National Transit Database
BD549-47

The National Transit Database (NTD) is the main source of transit industry information in the U.S. The NTD contains statistics from more than 600 transit agencies across the nation. Each year, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) uses NTD data to submit reports to Congress and apportion funds to transit agencies.

To help transit agencies collect data, the FTA issues guidance, often in the form of circulars, to explain NTD reporting requirements. Current FTA guidance is limited in several ways. One drawback is that it applies only to motor bus and demand response vehicles - cars, vans, or small buses that respond to calls from passengers in need of transportation. Another shortfall is that the data sampling plans do not meet statistical requirements for some transit agencies, resulting in unnecessary oversampling.

Researchers from the National Center for Transit Research at the University of South Florida set out to develop new guidance comprehensive for all modes of public transportation, including private and public buses, heavy and light rail, ferryboats, vanpool services, taxi services contracted by transit agencies, and services for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

The result of this research effort, *The National Transit Database Sampling Manual*, provides guidance to transit agencies on how to determine the amount of service used by passengers measured by unlinked passenger trips (UPT) and passenger miles traveled (PMT).



Jacksonville Transit Authority Park-n-Ride Skyway

The UPT measure counts passengers each time they board a vehicle, no matter how many vehicles they may ride to travel from their origin to their destination. PMT records the total distance traveled by all passengers during a given period.

The FTA is expected to adopt the proposed sampling manual developed through this project. Once implemented, transit agencies can use the Excel-based templates in the manual to develop customized sampling plans to meet their own set of unique circumstances. Other expected benefits include reduced costs of producing reports and increased assurance of meeting FTA requirements.

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For more information, visit <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center>.