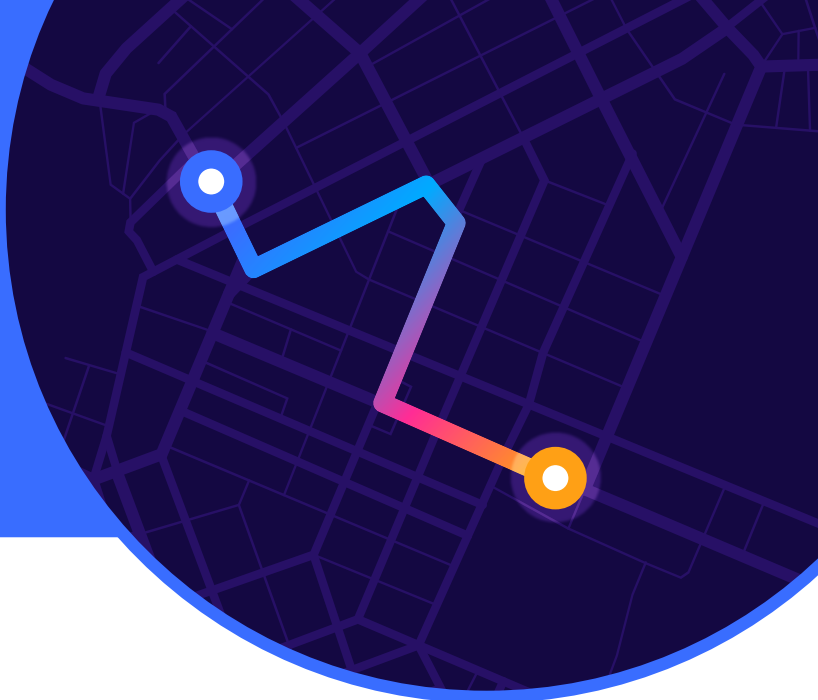


# HOW TO REPORT **GTFS DATA** TO THE US NATIONAL TRANSIT DATABASE



## Background

The 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law amended 49 U.S.C. 5335(a) to require FTA to collect “geographic service area coverage” data for public transit. The Federal Transit Administration is implementing this mandate by collecting General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data through the National Transit Database (NTD) beginning in Fiscal Year 2023/24.

This document from Optibus provides guidance for NTD reporters.

## Key terms and dates



### **October 31, 2023:**

NTD report due date for a 2023/24 fiscal year ending in June.



### **NTD:**

National Transit Database, the repository of service, ridership, financial, and asset data for public transit in the United States.



### **GTFS:**

General Transit Feed Specification, an industry-standard data format for passenger information and service information, which includes stops, routes, schedules, calendars and fares.

## 4 steps to compliance

### **1. Check for readiness**

Are you ready to report GTFS data to the NTD? Here is an easy way to check.

- Does your transit system have GTFS data? Is there a publicly accessible URL? A quick way to check is to do a Google search for <your agency name> + GTFS. If not see **Step 2: Create GTFS data.**
- When was the last time the GTFS dataset was updated? Make sure it represents the schedule currently in operation. If it's publicly available, you can use a data directory (see [example list of changes](#) in transit.land for Marin Transit).

## 2. Create GTFS data

Approximately 35% of all transit systems in the US maintain and publish GTFS data. If your agency is one of the 65% of agencies that does not publish this data, choose from one of the methods below.



### Scheduling software or real-time information system

If your transit agency has an existing scheduling or AVL (automatic vehicle location) system, you may be able to export GTFS data directly from this system.

*Optibus Planning and Scheduling products export GTFS data.*



### Web-based GTFS editing software

Purpose-built web-based software provides an interface to enter geographic and schedule data, and keep it up-to-date. This option provides a balance between labor-intensive spreadsheets and scheduling or CAD/AVL software with more features.

*Optibus GTFS Manager by Trillium* is the first web-based GTFS editing product, used to maintain data for nearly 400 agencies.



### Spreadsheet or manual data creation

GTFS data consists of comma separated text files that can be edited with spreadsheets. This makes it possible to prepare data with off-the-shelf software, but can be labor intensive.



### Consultant-supported

A consultant can prepare and maintain GTFS data for your agency with the necessary inputs (stop lists and schedules). This option is the least labor intensive for agency staff.

*Trillium (an Optibus subsidiary) offers GTFS consulting services* for this function, proven for more than 150 transit agencies.

### 3. Publish GTFS data

To make data available to the NTD and 3rd party trip planners such as Google Maps, you'll need to host the data at a stable URL.



#### Step 1

Specify a license for the data such as the [CDLA-permissive license](#).



#### Step 2

Upload the GTFS files to the transit agency website or utilize a cloud storage service.



#### Step 3

Promote the availability of the GTFS data to 3rd party application developers including [transit.land](#) and the [Mobility Database](#).

### 4. Report to NTD

Reporters will supply their GTFS dataset in the NTD reporting process. Certify your GTFS URL and dataset are up-to-date on the D-10 form.

## We are here to help!

[Optibus](#) Scheduling and Planning products export GTFS data as part of their core feature set. Optibus' subsidiary, Trillium, specializes in GTFS management, ensuring that our clients' data is clean and accurate. [Contact us](#) if you have questions about GTFS or NTD reporting or need help to comply with this new requirement.

