

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 19, 2026
TO: Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
FROM: Adriana Jacobsen, MPO Staff
RE: FY 2026 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 2025.

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 19, 2026, 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) 2026.

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 Title 49, part 625, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) (49 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**

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

⁴ Federal Transit Administration, Performance Management (July 13, 2023), accessed January 28, 2026, at <http://www.transit.dot.gov/PerformanceManagement>.

⁵ Federal Transit Administration, Default Useful Life Benchmark Cheat Sheet (October 25, 2021), accessed January 28, 2026, at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/TAM/ULBcheatsheet>.

⁶ Federal Transit Administration, Performance Management.

3 FY 2026 TAM PERFORMANCE TARGETS

3.1 Process

The MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA have developed a set of FY 2026 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, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and CATA and MWRTA elected to set targets on the federal fiscal year (FFY) schedule of October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

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 2025 Performance and FY 2026 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 remain level, with the exceptions of commuter rail coaches, paratransit automobiles, and heavy rail vehicles. Forty-seven commuter rail coaches will reach their ULB in FY 2026, bringing the share of vehicles above their ULB up about ten percentage points. Several paratransit vans will reach their ULB in FY 2026 as well. Continued

⁷ Massachusetts Department of Transportation, MassDOT Fully Accessible Vehicle Guide: An Overview of Accessible Vehicle Specifications (September 2025), accessed January 28, 2026, at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdot-fully-accessible-vehicle-guide-0/download>.

⁸ Federal Transit Administration, FTA C 5010.1F "Award Management Requirements" (November 1, 2024), accessed January 28, 2026, at https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2024-10/C5010.1F-Circular-11-01-2024_0.pdf.

delivery of new Red and Orange Line vehicles will reduce the percentage of the heavy rail fleet above the ULB. MWRTA and CATA did not meet their FY 2025 targets because replacement vehicles did not arrive as scheduled due to supply chain issues, but the MWRTA and CATA have set targets for a reduction of percentage of vehicles that have exceeded ULB. Table 2 shows rolling stock targets for all agencies.

**Table 2
Rolling Stock, FY 2025 Performance and FY 2026 Targets**

| Agency | Asset type | FY 2025 Performance | FY 2026 Targets |
|--------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Percent of vehicles ≥ ULB | Target Percent of vehicles ≥ ULB |
| MBTA | Articulated Bus | 21.05% | 21.05% |
| MBTA | Bus | 14.67% | 14.11% |
| MBTA | Commuter Rail (Locomotive) | 21.11% | 21.11% |
| MBTA | Commuter Rail (Coach) | 6.31% | 16.89% |
| MBTA | Ferry Boat | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| MBTA | Heavy Rail (Passenger) | 41.74% | 37.94% |
| MBTA | Light Rail (Passenger) | 38.17% | 38.17% |
| MBTA | Vintage Trolley | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| MBTA | Paratransit (Automobiles) | 55.00% | 55.00% |
| MBTA | Paratransit (Vans) | 25.13% | 45.30% |
| MWRTA | Automobiles | 100% | 100% |
| MWRTA | Cutaway Vehicles | 42.9% | 35% |
| MWRTA | Van | 0% | 0% |
| CATA | Bus | 36% | 0% |
| CATA | Cutaway Vehicles | 29% | 7% |

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 lower targets for automobiles because the Transit Police are expected to scrap 52 vehicles and receive 31 new vehicles in FY 2026. Targets for the other two MBTA equipment categories are based on planned scrap lists. CATA and MWRTA set their equipment targets equal to their FY 2025 performance. Table 3 shows equipment targets for all agencies.

**Table 3
Equipment, FY 2025 Performance and FY 2026 Targets**

| Agency | Asset type | FY 2025 Performance | FY 2026 Targets |
|--------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Percent of vehicles ≥ ULB | Target Percent of vehicles ≥ ULB |
| MBTA | Automobiles | 63.27% | 19.35% |
| MBTA | Trucks and other Rubber Tire Vehicles | 16.61% | 18.99% |
| MBTA | Steel Wheel Vehicles | 41.10% | 42.47% |
| MWRTA | All Equipment | 30% | 30% |
| CATA | All Equipment | 75% | 75% |

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 five-point FTA TERM scale defines a 3.0 – 3.9 rating for a transit facility as “moderately deteriorated or defective, but has not exceeded useful life.”⁹ All three agencies set targets based on achieving this rating or higher. The MBTA has both administrative and maintenance facilities as well as passenger and parking facilities. The MBTA set targets equal to its SFY 2025 performance for both types of facilities, as no facilities are predicted to receive a different condition rating. MWRTA and CATA have just one facility each, and those facilities scored 3.0 or greater on the TERM scale. 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 2025 Performance and FY 2026 Targets**

| Agency | Asset type | FY 2025 Performance | FY 2026 Targets |
|--------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Percent of Facilities < 3.0 | Percent of Facilities < 3.0 |
| MBTA | Administrative/Maintenance | 2.18% | 2.18% |
| MBTA | Passenger/Parking | 19.05% | 19.05% |
| MWRTA | Administrative/Maintenance | 0% | 0% |
| CATA | Administrative/Maintenance | 0% | 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.

⁹ Federal Transit Administration, Performance Management.

The MBTA is the only agency setting infrastructure targets for FY 2026, 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 management guidelines for infrastructure. The SFY 2026 performance targets were set at 4 or 4.5 percent for all modes based on anticipated conditions and currently programmed funding. Targets for infrastructure are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5
Infrastructure, SFY 2025 Performance and SFY 2026 Targets (MBTA Only)**

| Category | SFY 2025 Performance | SFY 2026 Targets |
|---------------|--|---|
| | Percent of Miles with Performance Restrictions | Target Percent of Miles with Performance Restrictions |
| Commuter Rail | 1.68% | 4.00% |
| Heavy Rail | 2.18% | 4.50% |
| Light Rail | 0.30% | 4.50% |

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.

4 REQUESTED ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

MPO staff recommends that the Boston Region MPO vote to adopt this set of FY 2026 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 2027-31 TIP document. In addition, MPOs are federally required to review their TAM performance targets when updating their LRTPs. 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.

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