GTFS Technical Support Mini-Guide

Background

DRPT supports developing and maintaining GTFS fixed route and GTFS-Flex feeds through a statewide on-call task order with Optibus. The task order provides all rural (direct recipients) and most small urban transit agencies access to technical assistance at no cost to the transit agency.

What is GTFS?

General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) is the de-facto standard for sharing transit information between systems and route planning tools such as Google and Apple Maps. It defines a common standard for public transportation schedules and associated geographic, fare, and service calendar and frequency information.

Currently, DPRT supports agencies with developing and maintaining GTFS standards for GTFS fixed route and GTFS-Flex:

- **GTFS fixed route** is for services that have designated stops and routes.
- **GTFS-Flex** is for services that operate demand response, microtransit, or paratransit, providing coverage within ¾ mile of fixed route transit. A combination of fixed route and flex can be used to represent deviated fixed route operations.

Why GTFS?

GTFS data allows people to easily find transit information when they search online. It enables trip planning applications to display your transit service as an option for a trip. Further, it is a required element of NTD Reporting and is the foundation for Remix fixed route and on-demand planning tools, which are available to all transit agencies in the Commonwealth. Additionally, GTFS is Integrated into the ConnectingVA platform, which is the Commonwealth's resource for transit and ridesharing resources and hosts the Virginia Trip Planner.

Best Practices

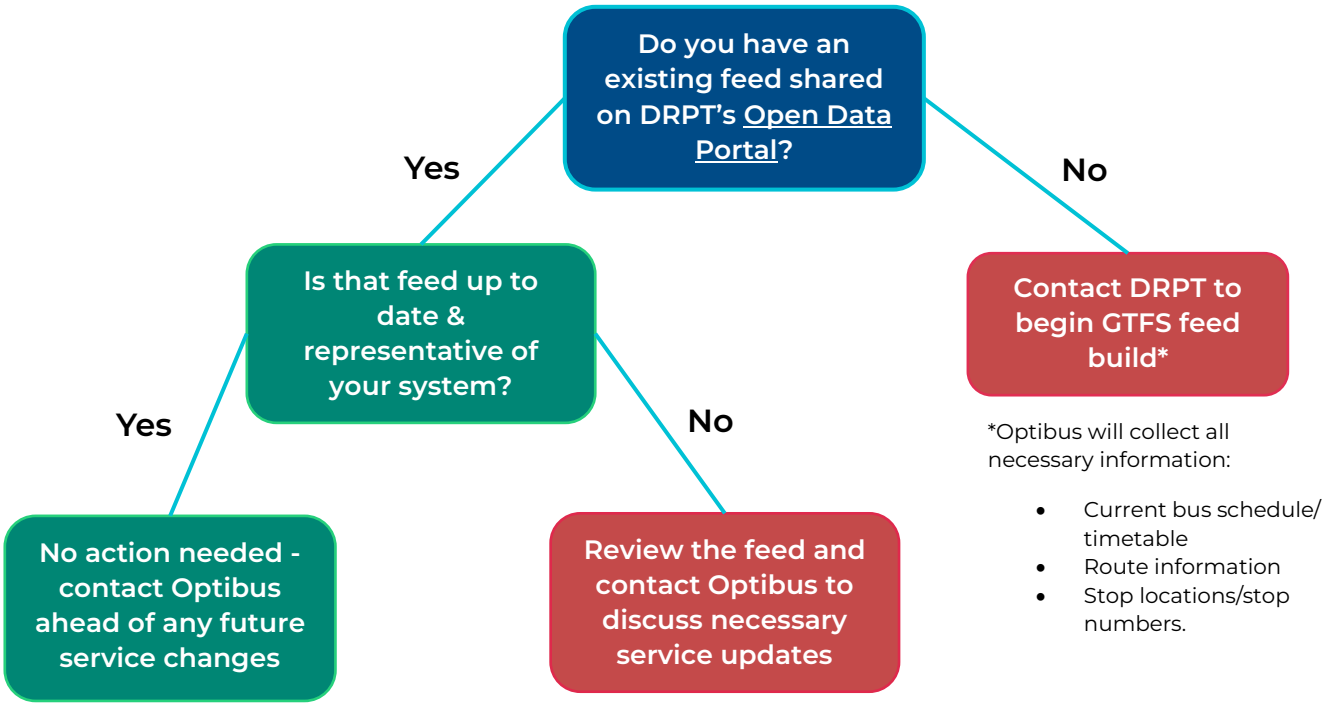
Agencies should update their GTFS data whenever changes are made to transit services. At a minimum GTFS data should be reviewed annually prior to the agency's NTD Reporting. For direct recipients, this would be in December.

Accurate GTFS data can be used for a variety of different business needs including:

- GTFS feeds can be exported to create timetables and route maps for websites and printed materials.
- Agencies can use GTFS data for route planning using Remix or other tools including ESRI ArcGIS
- Attracting riders by having accurate information available in trip planning applications

If you have an ITS or CAD/AVL system, many already include GTFS support. You may be able to export a feed directly from your software. Contact your software vendor for more information.

Workflow for Maintaining Your Feed



*Optibus will collect all necessary information:

- Current bus schedule/ timetable
- Route information
- Stop locations/stop numbers.

Key Contacts

Please contact the following individuals if you have any questions or need to make feed changes:

- **Optibus Support**: gtfs.support@optibus.com All feed questions or to make changes to your existing feeds (for agencies that already have a feed built and maintained by Optibus)
- **Grace Stankus**: grace.stankus@drpt.virginia.gov General GTFS questions and or to access technical support
- **Wood Hudson**: wood.hudson@drpt.virginia.gov Remix questions and resources

Additional Resources

- Remix Fixed Route and On Demand Planning tools (available to all transit agencies in Virginia but a Remix login is required) Remix GTFS Publisher Workflow Guide
- RTAP GTFS spreadsheet builder
- DRPT's Virginia Transportation Map
- GTFS to HTML tool for generating timetables and maps for websites (free)