

GTFS Realtime Service Alert working group

Meeting minutes

Why this meeting?

Our regular meetings for the GTFS Realtime Service Alert are an opportunity for us to collaboratively work through open proposals and drive progress forward. Each meeting will have a unique agenda focused on what's currently being worked on, including updates, discussions on requirements, prioritizing next steps, and unblocking any obstacles for contributors. This meeting is open to all; anyone can join even if it's just to listen.

Expected outcomes

- A more efficient use of everyone's precious time and energy.
- Greater accountability and follow-through.
- Better alignment and understanding of goals and priorities.
- Improved collaboration and teamwork.

2026-07-28

Attending

- Stefan de Konink (Open Geo)
- Marteen Peeters (Apple)
- Rajinder Singh
- Basil Isaac
- Brian Ferris (Google)
- Casey Frost (BART)
- Chad Duvauchelle
- Evan Siroky (Caltrans)
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit)
- Hal Bertram (Ito)
- Mike Fosker (Ito)
- Natalie Gleadell (Ito)
- Josh Fabian (MBTA)
- Phil Cline (Swiftly)
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA)
- Vicente Campos (Santiago Metro)
- Januario Henrique

Proposed agenda

- Announcements and status updates
 - [Add communication_period and impact_period#546](#)
 - `communication\_period` and `impact period` officially adopted.
 - [Clarify spec: Add definitions to Cause and Effect values and clarify Trip Update precedence for consumer routing decisions#648](#)
 - Raised thanks to previous discussions on this WGM.
- [GTFS-RT Service Alerts Guidance document](#)
 - Not a spec document.
 - Added `communication\_period` and `impact period`.
 - Open to final feedback before publishing in a few weeks.
 - Next steps: After the publication of RT Alerts Guidance and the Pathways Guidance, we plan to focus on expanding alerts to pathways.
 - Direction_id and Image are both mentioned in the guidance. Do you use direction_id in Service Alerts?
- NO_SERVICE on station-based modes
 - Consensus: NO_SERVICE means no pickup and no dropoff.
 - If both the `route\_id` and `stop\_id` exist for a `NO\_SERVICE` alert on a train, do you still interpret it as no pickup or drop-off? Or does the interpretation change?
 - Should we have an alert for trains not serving the whole segment (trip section removal)? Or do we figure out a way to use tripModifications/tripUpdates for train segment closures?
- [Alert best practice question](#)
 - The spec says: "Maintain persistent identifiers (id fields) within a GTFS Realtime feed (e.g., FeedEntity.id, VehicleDescriptor.id, CarriageDetails.id) across feed iterations."
 - Should we add a best practice specifically requiring the ID of an alert to remain the same?
 - In your work, what is a reasonable amount of change in an alert that makes you consider it a different alert? E.g.
 - If an additional route/stop is closed due to the same incident.
 - If an initial `SIGNIFICANT\_DELAYS` alert results evolves into a `DETOUR` alert.

Meeting notes

- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Um. To, like, extend the time they provide trip updates to make sure there's no... Like, there's no ambiguity. But that won't happen in practice. Basically, it seems like what the spec would suggest is that we change how we do our implementation. Which is fine, it just means that... it means that everyone needs to switch at the same time. to be able to follow that new paradigm. And that won't happen in practice. That's just impossible. And I wasn't there for the previous meeting, so I'm sorry. I know this was discussed before. And I'm sorry, like, I didn't hear the arguments, so maybe I need a refresher. um...

- Tzu-Jen Chan: Yeah, I think, I think last meeting, um... I think, Stefan, you raised this, uh... idea, and we kind of discuss them. Get a sort of consensus at the end of a meeting. Would you like to kind of reintroduce this kind of concept, and maybe try to answer questions on that.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): I think the main question back is why would this not work in practice? What do you see is conflicting?
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Because in practice, trip updates are often provided for stops that are closed. Basically. Um, so... Okay.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Okay, so do we both agree that the standard should not facilitate, let's say, poor practice or poor use of that same standard? That we should not, let's say, try to standardize for invalid use of our standards.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Okay. Yes. Like, I agree with that.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): So... If you agree with that, then the consensus that I would like to bring is that if trip updates are being provided for stops that are closed, then according to our standard, that stop should be used in your journey planner. And if a different publication of that same agency suggests that the data is in fact invalid in trip updates, it should be escalated to the agency that they're providing invalid trip updates. Instead of that, we are going to. um, let's say, facilitate, uh, that, um, for example, our, uh, service alerts, uh, could override the trip updates because we. But we happen to see that this works in practice.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Yes, but... Okay. On a technical perspective.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): My proposal would be something like, I agree that these kind of things happen. I think we should have something like a public feed validate or real-time feed validate, or even you as a company can show this to the clients. that, let's say, you're doing business for, and their data is wrong. And basically, you expect that they fixed their data. I think that's the minimum thing that we can expect from the publishers. But... I would like to avoid that a consumer is required to, um, implement two competing, um. technical concepts to override invalid data. The one thing is trip updates where you would say, this is a denormalized timetable and there is a stop in there which should not being served, but it actually is being served versus the service alerts where you would say, no, this stop is not being served and you have an alert cast for it.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): uh... Okay? And then, guys, that brings back to my second point is to me like the like, the time horizon of both values make more much more sense on like a stop close or route close, or anything like this makes much more sense on the alert basis. Because you can define the actual start and end time, instead of assuming that you'll apply it on every single stop, and every potential stop, and every single trip happening on that road stop, etc. Because it does mean. I don't understand when you say, like, you'll have two competing implementations, because what this is suggesting right now that alerts, uh, like, our lower priority is that. You have, like, an alert that is there for a day, a week, a month. And then every single time you need to check, you check. On top of the trip update. Instead of checking the alerts, which, if it makes sense, you check a single thing, instead of checking every single trip going through that stop and or route.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): I do not follow here completely. What I'm saying is that if trip updates are being. Presents? That trip update for that stop, and it's just being

served, is the ground truth. If a trip update feed is not being provided, there's no other way to provide a cancellation via the service alert route. I think that's the, um, that's in fact what I'm saying. And, um, your argument would be it's simpler to apply a cancellation via the service alert feed, because it's one, um, service alert, opposed to for every journey you are applying a cancellation on a. Uh, individual trip.

- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Okay, imagine the fact that. One or the other is wrong, either the alert or the trip updates. But you don't know which in practice, right? um... Right now, the behavior that's suggested is that. for, I don't know, the next 30 minutes, because often, like, the trip updates have 30 to 90 minutes, uh, like, time window. For the next 90 minutes, we'll show trips, and then afterwards, we're expected to show cancellation. Is that right?
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Um, I think that, I think you're right, yeah, opposed to, um, for our cancellations, we do publish, uh, the, uh, all the cancellations that have been provided before, but that could be an implementation detail, yeah.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Yeah. Well, I mean, that's that's why, like. I will never show that in my app, that doesn't make sense. Like, which means, like... like, yes, it's bad data. At the core of it, it's bad data. But we need a way to handle it that makes sense, and that's understandable by everyone.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): that, again, I do not follow this, because if your... if your trip update feed would have been correct. Then you're not showing bad data.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): So, I think, I think the key thing here is the time horizon perspective, right? So, um, and just to think, not, not in principle, because I think your principle is sound, however, just think about it technically. So, let's say a given stop has 291 scheduled arrivals. Um, for a given service day. And let's say that that given stop is closed for construction for 2 months.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Yep, yep. Yes.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): So, you multiply that by 60 days, that's 17,000 trip updates that you'd need to provide at any given time in order for that to be reflected properly. So, in contrast with.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Wait, wait, wait, wait, one sec. No, this is... this should not be in your real-time feed in the first place. This should be in your schedule. If for 4 months your stop is closed, your schedule should have changed.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Okay. Okay, but then it's for 3 weeks.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Because... because in your service.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): It's the same thing.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Even if it's two weeks, your schedule should have changed, because the root of that stop is not following the shapes that are in your planning. And sure, you can... I understand your argument that with service alert, you could do this.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Okay.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): uh, smarter, or, uh, I would not say smart, um, in a more compact way. I would, I would agree with that, but that's not how the, uh, or at least not the feeling that I had for the simplicity of the standard. I think the standard says something like, for a horizon of, let's say, one day, you have your GTFS real time.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Thank you.

- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): And that would make sense for that horizon. And if something changes for the construction work, you would expect that something changes in the planning. And if, for example, an agency does not want to update their planning for whatever reason, even if there are weeks of construction work. I... Sure, you could solve that by service alert, but please not make that the best practice.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): I hear what you're saying, but from a practicality standpoint, in being able to actually do that, like... I, as a producer, cannot update my schedule more than four times a year. Because of a contractual limitation with the vendor that provides it. So... and that... that's a common reoccurrence across the country. So, while I would love to be able to do that, and we're able to do that on certain modes, other modes, we can only do it 4 times a year. So, we do have to be able to, in between, for those 3 months that we're unable to change our scheduled package, be able to reflect those things in real time.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): I think that, again, the standard should not reflect...
- Tzu-Jen Chan: Let's get it going.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): So I hear what you're saying, and then I... and on it. In an ideal world, yes, those... that would be... that would be great, but...
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): No, I understand, but your standardization principle is that you would like to have a standard that is not limited by implementation details of a vendor, of a specific vendor. So I would agree. that you need something as service alerts. That is not in question. The question is, should a standard facilitate, let's say, your extreme limitations?
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): Um, if I could just add something here, I think... I think... There does seem to be an agreement that. The problem is when there's a conflict like a conflict between a trip updates and and real time alerts. There's also a way of thinking about. Let's not think about like 60 days, but too much. Let's think about even a time horizon of 5 days less than a week, and then you'd have to provide trip updates for 5 days. some people are limited by producer capacity, et cetera, et cetera. It's not that easy to come out of it. And I think the keyword that Stefan used here is also facilitate the use of bad practices. So... Is there a possible way where we could, uh, go, all of us, to a place where. the best possible way, the thing that the spec encourages heavily, is to have trip updates truly reflect the state of what's going on on the ground, but also leave a little room for, like, a leeway that, while not facilitating, I'm talking using language like should, like, truly. knowing that if you are not going to... if there's a conflict, you are walking on eggshells, basically. Is there a way where... because what I'm thinking about now is that, I guess. There are, of course, the standard should be able to provide, like, an ideal setting where everything works, but we're also constrained by a lot of... Variability in implementations, variability in just capacity, and sometimes pre-existing behaviors that we want to improve. But sometimes it's not that easy to go there. Is there a place where we can... where the spec could encourage. good behaviors. While, at the same time. if there's... Problems leaves a little leeway. while basically acknowledging that you're using uncertain information. Is there a place where we could get a consensus there, at least? If I'm not making a lot of sense, I can try to clarify it a bit more.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): So your proposal is... there is something like a GTFS real-time horizon. The horizon being set, as in the example, would, for example, be 90

minutes, and therefore, outside of the GTFS real-time horizon. you would have an invalid planning. So, because the data is not available, if you would just follow the trip updates. I could live with, if your horizon of trip updates is limited to a certain amount of time, that the last trip update, so the end time of the trip update, would allow for beyond that time to apply service alerts. But not for the trips that are within the trip updates.

- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): Okay, so let me reframe my earlier argument just a little bit. 'Cause I wanna think about it less from a data perspective, even though that this is actually... that is what we're talking about right now. I want to think about it from the customer perspective, the passenger perspective, right? So, um, in my example from earlier of a stop is closed for two months, whatever the time length is, um, it will eventually reopen. Right. So, rather than... even if I could... Publish a new schedule. every week, or every day, or what have you, to, if there's a prolonged closure, remove that stop from the route, and then add it back later. Uh, as, uh, as a customer, I would want to know when. that stop is coming back. With the service alert, I can define that entire time range, and then proactively show it to a customer that says, this closure will end on this day. Whereas, if I were to only do that in a schedule update, I wouldn't be able to do that.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): We fully agree on this point. What we may have a discussion about is if that service alert impacts your journey planner.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): Does that make sense?
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): So the journey... not the presentation layer. There is a closure. That's not the discussion here. The discussion is, can you board or alight at that stop? If it's only in the service alert, while in the trip updates, there is... they're stated that the trip will arrive at this certain time. So there's real-time information for that. That conflict is what I something would like to have solved. What take presence there?
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): So I think, I think it actually becomes a multiple, multiple conversations, right? So there, there is this, this. which I think I agreed with earlier on in the last session of trip updates should take precedence, but there should also be a way, I think, to indicate. And maybe it's... maybe it's not good for... meant for trip updates itself, but maybe it's a separate thing of a prolonged... uh, a longer time horizon. That... because again... because again, it's just a... it's... it's... it would get unwieldy for us. at least I feel like it, like, the size of the protobuf whenever, um... you're having to deal with those prolonged things, which I just feel like becomes untenable. Um... but... I'm open to other ways of solving that, other than just within the current. tobacco trip updates, maybe it's an addition there as well. Um, but... Yeah, I don't... I just don't know what that looks like.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): Just also frame it in a certain way. I think we all agree that if service alerts exist on its own, by all means use it. The only issue is the conflict. And what Guillaume said earlier, I think, is also important, like, if you have a 90-minute horizon trip updates. And it says that all your... all your stops for, like, uh, Grand Central... Grand Central Station, they're good. But trip... but the service alert says that it's closed. I guess you might... yeah, you might believe trip updates, but I guess if it keeps rolling, if those 90 minutes keep rolling, and nothing seems to be closed, but the alert is still there, and it seems to be saying that things are closed, I

think that's more when you get into the... the ambiguity. So... so... I think there might be a position where we... we say, yes, you should... definitely should use trip updates, but then at the same time, we... we outline all of this, like, this new document to add to the spec where it... outlines how to deal if there's a conflict between alerts and trip periods. If it keeps going on, uh, you might... eventually, like, you might be able to use this, but you're truly walking on, on, like, ambiguous ground. Is there a possibility to do that? Go ahead, Kiyo.

- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): So, I'm. there's a possibility to do that, but to me, it doesn't make sense in, like, engineering terms. We have the same problem for skip stops. So let's say, assume that like that, we don't have alerts for for for a system. But we do have skip like the stop is marked as skipped for the those 90 min. But for our point of view, ignoring alerts, which we don't have, for example, in this case. Like, it means that this stop is effectively closed for 90 minutes, but in 95 minutes, it's going to be open. Which makes no sense. Like, maybe it's true, but in the vast majority of the cases, it's not, because that rolling window is actually rolling, and, like, in 95 minutes, it's actually going to be closed. Like we have this problem and like currently there's the. Before this proposal, there was no way of basically doing that. We absolutely need alerts or need a way to specify it on a longer time horizon. Um, so, like, we have the same problem, and I think, hopefully, this will solve that. But if we go at the other side, where we have a conflict in the next hour. The alert says it's closed. Trip update says it's not. Basically, what we're suggesting right now is that in the app. Or in your interface. The alert says this stop is closed. But there's going to be a trip at this stop. In 90 minutes. This stop is going to be closed, but closed for real this time, for the same alert that we just told you is not actually live. That doesn't make sense for a user perspective. I understand for a technical perspective, trip updates should take precedence. But it's not feasible on a user experience perspective of showing both information at the same time while being consistent. But we can if we say alerts are our priority. Then we stay consistent. Um, and I, like, I don't see ourselves doing, like, doing trip update first.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): I think the situation is that you have vendors or producers that have. Correct service alerts. And you have the situation where that same producer doesn't have correct trip updates. I think we are in the exactly opposite situation, where the trip updates were actually the control actions that we have in the Netherlands are found from the AVL systems. and therefore are the ultimate truth, while the travel informant is lagging behind. So the message to do the service alert is always late. And I think that's... I cannot disagree with your statement. You're right that this can happen. I just want to resolve the conflict of information that a new vendor that the standard for is not... is not getting away with doing a poor implementation. and saying it's GTFS real time compliant.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): And yes, I agree, but I think it's way more important to be practical than based on principle. And, and, uh... And Brian from Google mentioned that you've seen it wrong in both places, which I think is true. We've seen it wrong in both sides. But I think it's way easier to fix an alert than fix a CAD ideal system. um...

- Tzu-Jen Chan: Yep. What about, I see Brian have some comment. Happy to hear other folks thought like Brian want to share your thought or modern from Apple from other consumer perspective.
- Brian Ferris (Google): Uh, this is Brian at Google. Uh, I don't know, this is a tough one, uh, because... I've seen issues with both trip updates and alerts where they're conflicting, and I know one is right and the other's wrong, but it's not, like, always consistent. I don't... I don't know if I necessarily have a strong opinion on what should the — I mean, ideally, everything is correct. Um, but I do think, in practice, I think maybe what Guillaume was hinting at is, like, you can put this in the spec. Um, but I wouldn't be surprised if we continue to take liberties of, like, alright, well, yeah, but this is what we're gonna do to fix this particular situation, or default in this sort of, you know, user judgment, based on what we're seeing. So I, you know, I agree with the general sentiment of, like, try to push the spec in the right direction. Um, but, I mean, if the general goal is, like, well, you want data to be correct, I mean, I think everybody agrees with that. Like, I don't think there's much of an argument. Uh, and this is one of those sort of edge cases where it's. It is challenging to be prescriptive, because I think there's going to be exceptions in both directions.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): And to your point, Stefan, if the trip updates are more advanced and they have cancellations but not the alerts, I don't think the situation — what we display could be fine too. I don't think anything would be wrong in that situation. Even if it would be even better if the alerts are there, but it's... it's not. It's not problematic.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): No, no, that's correct. Do I understand correctly that you would like to... that you prefer that the service alerts are leading then, so that it's applied at the last phase of the... let's say you first have trip updates. Then you have service alerts, so if trip updates or the stops are canceled, and the service alerts stop off cancels, nothing happens. If the trip updates are okay, so there will be a stop, and the service alert will cancel it, then it would then be canceled. That's your proposal.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Yeah, exactly what is proposed right now, except flipped. Alerts are first.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): So, consumers must implement, basically, the two, uh, standards, uh... that's the, uh... That's the proposal.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): I'm not sure what you mean by that, because you need to implement it both. In both ways.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): For your journey planner, you have to implement it both. So the integration pipeline must apply both. For the service alert currently, you do not have to put it in your integration pipeline.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Yeah, if you don't take alerts into account into routing, then yeah, you don't need to. And. What you're saying is that if trip updates are priority, then you can, in practice, ignore alerts?
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Exactly, yes.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): But then that doesn't work with what's proposed right now, because it means what's proposed right now is that an alert that's applied a day from now, even an alert that starts a day from now should be applied. That's right. An error that starts in the future should be applied if there's no trip updates.

- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): I thought that the proposal was, if there is no trip updates feed, then the service alerts are to be applied. I thought that was the proposal. If the... if the...
- Tzu-Jen Chan: Okay. Yeah, I think that's the current proposal right there. And I think, yeah, yeah, yeah, I think what kind of suggests is, if I understand you correctly, is, yeah, we know all the issues about when did have conflict.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Yeah, yeah, sure, okay.
- Tzu-Jen Chan: And I think Naomi is saying maybe we can do something like, if there is a conflict, then service will take over. Is that, is that what you mean? No.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): No, but even from the current proposal, was that... Um... Service servers. If they do. Okay, so if data... Consumers use service alerts to affect decisions. I guess it's still an option. But then, okay, then that goes back. That's not my argument, although I agreed to it. Um, in the PR, there were, um, two people that mentioned that this is still not good, because it's still not clear. Like, it, um, it's still not... care what we should do in both cases, because now service alerts taking into account is an option and not like another requirement or guidance. And on top, like the guidances, unless there's evidence, which in practice means you do whatever you want. um...
- Tzu-Jen Chan: I think there might be a room that we can add a current proposal that says consumer should or should not. must, depending on what, which word we want to use, like, should or must take, uh, servicer into consideration for our routing. Uh, if we agree, right, Vijay? Um, that's something that I think potentially we can adjust, and, and some people in the comments suggesting right now.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): And I also want to have, then, from the consumer perspective, a discussion how retraction of a service alert with a cancellation would, um, update the integration pipeline. So, if a stop is canceled in a service alert, and it's basically now available, then the integration pipeline must do something to make the stop available again. um... But if the stop was not available in the trip updates feed and then it basically says it has been canceled there, then the source data must be kept in order to uncancel. let's say both, or uncancel the service alert, basically. Or you need to have something like a service alert cancellation flag and a trip update cancellation flag, where the service alert cancellation flag always takes precedence. And I think for that, we also need to write down a best practice if we go in this direction proposed.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): I'm okay that we... a more deterministic or more purposefully set flag on alerts. Let's say those alerts should be taken into account accounted to routing. um... Because I don't see a way to get out of the ambiguity. all like with like, considering historical behavior of consumers and producers. Without, like, a new way of defining it.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): The problem with, uh, adding the... adding a flag that it should be considered for routing is that a legacy system, uh, still not providing trip updates, is not able to add that flag either. So... That will... that will not solve it for the, uh, the interface that, um. Uh, that is built, uh, 10 years ago, and only have, or maybe 5 years ago, and only have service alerts. So while I would support that change.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): Right, but to your point earlier, we shouldn't be, um, trying to let the spec determine, or let what legacy systems determine what the spec says, so...

- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Yeah, sure. Yeah. But you understand that if you are now want to facilitate people like your system, that you said, I only have service alert, would you then be able to update your service alert feed by being able to add this flag? And if you said, no, I cannot do that because of my contract and implementation, whatever, then we can add all the flags that you want, ever. But they will not be get implemented. So we need commitment for the producers that have issues with it. And those should then be driving these kinds of standard changes.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): So, what I see at this point is there's no inherent, like. Service alerts have the potential to be used to affect routing. But in terms of spec language here eventually, yes, if we're gonna say something as a like a requirement, people are gonna have to implement it, whether it were a producer or a consumer. Uh... So... Knowing that, next steps, should we go in the spec and say that. In a language where producers are encouraged, or not, producers need to be able to provide as much updates as possible. And also not punishing consumers who use, or should we say, consumers must use service alerts, because that's also, as Guillaume mentioned earlier, that was also part of the unclarity or ambiguity. Can you use or should you use service alerts if there's a conflict, or if... Yeah, if both exist, or if triptocity simply just doesn't exist, yeah. Tu-Jen?
- Tzu-Jen Chan: I'll just add a side note that I think in the history in GTFS, we are more open to have. Consumer change their implementation. Compared to, you know, have a breaking change for producer. I think in our history, that's more like... in proposals that we have, like, a more strict, uh, backward compatibility things, and customer, we have more open... I think that's a kind of... just... just a side note that I wanted to... Sure.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): I think from the standardization point, we would like to have a trip update must reflect cancellations in the operational process. And consumers. must apply service alert at the last, let's say, the service alert as an extra measurement. And in that case, you would have both covered, because both then need to be implemented from a producer's side. And the other one from the consumer side.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): Okay, so that, yeah, in a direction that's good because that emphasizes trip updates, but does not block the possibility or actually, yeah, of using.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Exactly.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): So it doesn't punish consumers if they try to use service alerts. So, uh, is... are people in agreement here over that type of wording? Basically. Going at it from direction of. Producers must make sure that trip updates reflect, and consumers should implement trip updates and should implement service alerts as also something that can. basically reflect what's going on in real life so that they can use it if they want to change their... Journey, uh, trip planner suggestions, journey suggestions.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): I think that sounds reasonable. Based on the conversation that we had.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Okay. Yeah, let me just try to restate it differently. Just make sure I understand. But basically, you should assume that. Trip updates and service alerts must be in sync, whatever defines sync. They must be in sync. And

either one of them can cancel a trip. There's no priority. It's just either one of them cancel trip stops. That makes sense, too.

- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): And they must be implemented independently, otherwise you cannot uncanceled it. That's the implementation detail that I think we should write somewhere down.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): So basically, like, trip updates do not influence an alert.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): Uh, yes, but also from, uh, if you implement this in the system, then you likely have now, uh, pick up and drop off as two fields. I think you have a trip updates cancellation, and you will have a service alert cancellation. And, uh, I think the...
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): Is that what you're gonna say?
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): The OR function between them will determine if the trip is actually canceled. Or the stop is canceled, or the trip is canceled, but you understand what I mean here.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): Okay. That's great that actually we've been able to reach a point actually where we agree on this. I think, yeah, eventually it's just a matter of wording, but I think everyone... Wants to see that real-time actually reflects real life and is used to kind of... actually eventually benefit riders. I do have a couple more questions related to this specific announcement. The 1st one is. When using, actually, service alerts, do we restrict it to no service only, so that it just stops all the other kind of, uh, effects? So, if an effect, like, no one should use, like, detour, or stop moved. to influence anything. If they're gonna use something, it's just no service, because that relates to a skip stop, that relates to a canceled trip, or even, like, a canceled segment, etc.
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo): It is a great question.
- Guillaume Campagna (Transit): Yeah, we've that this is currently our behavior, which like no service is no service and detour. It basically doesn't change the behavior. We've seen agencies confused by this because if a stop is cancelled. Due to a detour. Then they expect a detour effect to. to cancel the stop. Um... Our point of view is, like, in a detour context, it means there's probably a replacement stop or an alternative stop, so it's better not to change the behavior. But that's very dependent on a case by case basis. Like, it's not something that we can infer one way or another.
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA): I think the problem becomes, um, what the recommended way of... what you target in each of those instances of no service or detour, for example. So, like, in a situation where there is a set of stops that we're detouring around, but we're not replacing them, we're just skipping them entirely. The effect for that and the target that at least we would produce would be the route. and the stop that's affected. Um, so... at the route level, I want to inform that. all of those trips are detouring, and the stop level, I want to say that there isn't going to be service at that stop, it's being skipped. So it's almost like both things need to happen, and almost like there's two service alerts that are required to make that happen. Um... But because it's the same thing, the general thought would be that it would be one alert, rather than two, or more, depending upon how many stops are skipped. Um... So, uh... I don't know. I'm up for suggestions there because it feels like today, if you make that

distinction, you'd need. Multiple alerts to close a single street that has, like, 6 or 7 stops on it.

- Tzu-Jen Chan: I think in our So most of you probably know we have a service guidance that we are drafting. Still looking for feedback and I think right now the wording we are using right now right there is. the concept is, like, only no service. Only no service could be the special effect that consumer will likely to use that for routing, and all the other things, mostly for... annotation, just for notification. So, basically, we... the warning we are using right there is we, I think, strongly recommended consumer not using all the other effects other than no service to affect the routing, because. Producer's intention might be just the entire road detour. And if you close everything, that's not correct. And then we also strongly encourage producer to be careful when you use no survey and try to make sure you are, in fact, an informed entity to be as specific as possible. I think that's the current. thing we are trying to, uh, drafting and proposing right now, um, so just share that, um, to the group.
- Skander Chouchene (MobilityData): Uh, personally, uh, yeah, as Tzu-Jen said, we're only focusing on no service, but if there is definitely a place for DETOUR we can include it.
- [Consensus on not including specific effects for using alerts in routing for now. A potential future field indicating the alert's usability for routing is better]
- Skander Chouchene: Final question, should we use MUST, SHOULD or CAN.
- Guillaume: We could use MUST for implementing tripUpdates and service alerts both by producers and consumers, and SHOULD for the usage of service alerts for routing decisions.

Remaining topic:

- **Real-time Alert Guidance**
 - Drafted by Mobility Data, with templates for common alert scenarios.
 - Includes experimental fields like direction_id and images.
 - Feedback is welcome, particularly on whether to keep experimental fields in the document.
 - No problem by the working group that the experimental fields were mentioned.

2026-04-28

Attending

- William Hodgson (Green Mtn Transit)
- Evan Siroky (Cal-Trans)
- Katie Monroe (SEPTA)
- Mari Wirta (Sound Transit)
- Mike Fosker (Ito)
- Cody Kraatz (SimplifyTransit)
- Stann
- Stefan de Konink (OpenGeo)

- Tyler Cooper (WMATA)
- Brian Ferris (Google)
- Maarten Peeters (Apple)
- Josh Fabian (MBTA)
- Roger Kneubühl (SBB SKI)
- E Sall
- MobilityData team

Proposed agenda

- Status update for open PRs
 - [Add communication period and impact period#546](#)
 - Producer: SBB (aiming August 2026)
 - Producer: Swiftly (timeline TBD)
 - Producer and Consumer: SimplifyTransit
 - Producer and Consumer: MBTA (late Apr or May)
 - Producer: WMATA
 - Consumer: MOTIS
 - [Add new SPECIAL_EVENT Cause to GTFS-realtime Service Alerts#577](#)
 - Producer: SimplifyTransit, MBTA, WMATA
 - Consumer: TBD
- Discussion on key points in the [Service Alert Guidance](#) and [Cause/Effect definition](#) draft
 - Explicitly mention consumers may use NO_SERVICE to affect routing
 - “Using alert effects other than ‘NO_SERVICE’ to affect routing is strongly discouraged”
 - NO_SERVICE effect definition on different entities
 - Route
 - Trip
 - Railway station/platform
 - Bus station/stop
 - Alert recommendations for use cases
 - Route closure
 - Trip Cancellation
 - Station/stop closure
 - Route segment closure
 - Detour
 - Short Turn

Meeting notes

1. GitHub Issue Management and Bot Behavior

[Stefan de Konink] I would like to raise something before we have this meeting. What I noticed on the GitHub issues is that we get a lot of stale issues and these issues are getting closed. I find this

not very nice because the issues are still there. They were nice proposals and this needs to be handled better.

[Tzu-Jen Chan] Yes, it is annoying. We will probably adjust the bot behavior, or even not use it anymore. We can definitely go to the note at that. Sometimes I also feel like I have to type "not stale" to remove the tag. I agree.

2. Communication Period and Impact Period Status Updates

[Tzu-Jen Chan] Is there any update regarding the timeline to implement the communication and impact periods?

[Tyler Cooper] Still in the roadmap, and I believe last time we had said by the end of the year or something like that, and that is still generally tracking. But if that changes, we'll let y'all know.

[Cody Kraatz] Simplified Transit is planning to have that ready for testing in the alerts feed at probably the end of May, hopefully before then. We would also be preparing to consume it in the way that we're thinking about presenting it. I am very curious how apps, especially, will be looking at the communication period.

[Maarten Peeters] I don't have any more information on how we'll be using it. I think once we can see the feeds, in the short term, probably not that much until we really see how it's being used across the board.

[Cody Kraatz] And similarly, if there's anything we can do in terms of training or guidance on how to use it — we have a certain consumer use case in mind for our purposes, and I want to make sure that doesn't conflict with, and would actually maybe support, how others would use it.

[Brian Ferris] I'm generally supportive of the proposal. I'm probably more interested in the impact period than the communication period. We're going to look at this data; communication period would start out as a signal to see if that was something we want to explicitly take action on.

[Tyler Cooper] From our standpoint, basically, how we're gonna use communication period is, at the start of that period is basically when our internal tools trigger, say, like an email or a text message to get sent to customers announcing the service change. Obviously, it will probably have been in the feed for a little while, so any trip planning that happens during the active period will still get the message, but it's like when we may synchronize it with a similar press release that would go out on our website. And similarly, on our first-party apps and things, it would send a push notification at the beginning of that communication period. So we're using it as a trigger to fire certain events; we're not really worried about it getting displayed to people ahead of the communication period. It's more so just when certain things are going to happen from a workflow perspective.

[Josh Fabian] We have not yet implemented the communication period and impact period yet. We can get it up in our test environment relatively quickly. Our question is if there are any ready consumers to be able to test that data with us.

[Cody Kraatz] We're definitely planning to consume the feed. The communication period would denote the period for which the alert should be shown to riders. If it's in the feed, consumers will

make decisions independent of the communication period, even if it's present. They might not really honor it.

[Brian Ferris] I wouldn't want to set a hard rule that we will only show the alert if the communication period is active. If the impact period was active, but the communication period was not, we would probably still show the alert. I don't think we would treat the communication period as an absolute of when you should or should not show the alert.

[Tzu-Jen Chan] In the current proposal, the impact period should be included in the communication period.

3. "Special Event" Cause Proposal

[Cody Kraatz] We should have some of these alerts available in the next week or so for folks to consume and test. We definitely are seeing more and more of the need for it. Hopefully, we will have it on a test feed. If the bindings are updated and everyone is anticipating it, it's not going to break anything and it shouldn't change how Google Maps or Transit consume and display these alerts. It should be smooth on the consumer side.

[Tyler Cooper] I don't have a timeline on that specific one yet, but it's still in our broader roadmap. It's more of a comms exercise than it is a technical one.

[Josh Fabian] It would be a pretty low lift to get this into our test environment, even lower than the communication and impact periods. Again, just making sure that we have a party who's willing to consume it.

4. Defining "No Service" and Its Impact on Routing

[Tzu-Jen Chan] We recently drafted proposed documentation to clarify expectations around using alerts. Guidance one, around 30 pages, so if you have time, please have a look and review it and leave your comment right there. We are explicitly mentioning "No Service" as a special effect because many consumers use it to affect routing. If a producer does not include the most granular entities, we do not encourage using "No Service."

[Katie Monroe] This is a mistake that does happen without sufficient clarity, so I appreciate the move to add guidance.

[Cody Kraatz] We've definitely seen this happen. Having that in the standard backs up the training.

[Brian Ferris] The text generally aligns with the guidance we give to data producers as well. We try to do a lot of our own safety checks, but we are supportive of anything in the language of the spec to call out for folks to be intentional.

[Tzu-Jen Chan] For railways specifically, the current draft definition we have is that service will not serve it and will not even pass through.

[Mike Fosker] I'm surprised by the second part of that railway station one—that a station or platform having no service would mean the train would not even pass through. That's not what I would have expected.

[Katie Monroe] We frequently close a station while still having service run through it.

[Cody Kraatz] Unless you're double-tracked at that station, it's just absolutely not true. If you just delete that, you have great guidance.

[Maarten Peeters] That example makes a great case for putting these kinds of "No Services" in the Trip Updates and not trying to push these through to Service Alerts. In the Trip Updates it will be clear there's no stop because that station will be skipped. In Service Alerts, you get that distinction—is it a skip stop where we just pass through, or are we splitting the trip into two trips?

[Brian Ferris] Our interpretation of a platform, a stop, or a station is that the rider will not be able to board or alight at that station. We don't treat railways differently in this case.

[Josh Fabian] For our subway, we have situations where trains cannot stop at a station, but equally, we have situations where the train will just not go through and maybe we have a bus bridge. It raises the question of whether we're trying to do too many things with a single effect.

[Tyler Cooper] Not everyone is set up or capable of producing Trip Updates. Some may only produce a static feed and service alerts. I would hate to take that functionality away from that type of agency.

5. Trip Updates vs. Service Alerts

[Stefan de Konink] I would only support this proposal if it explicitly mentions that Trip Updates take priority over "No Service." If Trip Update states a service is running and there's no mention of cancellation, then I assume the Trip Updates take preference and I would ignore "No Service" as an informal message that does not change routing.

[Cody Kraatz] Sounds like a progressive enhancement mindset, which makes sense.

[Tyler Cooper] If the point of a Trip Update is to tell you what the trip is doing, then why would we be relying on a different method? I support that 100 percent.

[Brian Ferris] If there's a discrepancy between Trip Updates and Service Alerts, I'm generally supportive of preferring Trip Updates.

[Maarten Peeters] By default, we should assume the Trip Update takes precedence. If you make it a default, we can work from that. It's easier to have those conversations if the spec has a hard rule rather than just guidance.

[Tyler Cooper] Because alerts have historically affected routing, it's been used as a crutch to not have to operationally worry about all the other things. Advocating for doing it correctly at the specification standpoint is the correct way forward.

[Tzu-Jen Chan] We have a consensus. We will add a sentence to explicitly mention that if both an alert and Trip Update are provided, the Trip Update should take priority. We will also change the "No Service" definition for stops or stations to mean riders cannot board or alight, without separating by mode.

7. Working Group Meetings Schedule

[Tzu-Jen Chan] Next month is for Station Modeling. In our original plan, this is the last meeting in 2026 for service alerts, but we will consider adjusting the schedule for another one in 2026. I invite everyone in the group to review the entire documentation for the guidance and cause-and-effect definitions.

2026-03-24

Attending

- Hal Bertram (ITO World)
- Bogdan
- Cody Kraatz (Simplify Transit)
- Evan Siroky (CalTrans)
- Josh Fabian (MBTA)
- Katie Monroe (SEPTA)
- Marteen Peeters
- Mari Wirta (Sound Transit)
- Phil Cline (Swiftly)
- Roger (SBB)
- Sylvia Greer (Raleigh NC)
- Tyler Cooper (WMATA)
- Vivek (Caltrans)
- Will Anderso (CTA)
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- MobilityData

Proposed agenda

- Working Group meeting Introduction
- Status update for open PRs
 - [Add communication_period and impact_period#546](#)
 - Producer: SBB (aiming August 2026)
 - Producer: Swiftly (timeline TBD)
 - Producer and Consumer: SimplifyTransit
 - Producer and Consumer: MBTA (late Apr or May)
 - Producer: WMATA
 - Consumer: MOTIS
 - [Add new SPECIAL_EVENT Cause to GTFS-realtime Service Alerts#577](#)
 - Producer: SimplifyTransit, MBTA, WMATA
 - Consumer: TBD
- Definition of the current enum CAUSE and EFFECT
 - [Definition draft](#)

Meeting notes

[Working Group meeting Introduction](#)

- TJ: These meetings are an opportunity for the community to work collaboratively on open spec proposals. Each meeting will have a dedicated agenda. One of the main purposes of this meeting is to build consensus on topics that have broad demand and certain level of complexity. All community members can still propose changes in the official GitHub repository following the GTFS governance process
- TJ: This meeting will happen on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The themes and topics will be laid out [here](#). Before the meeting we'll share the agenda and relevant materials. During the meeting we'll go over each one of the agenda items, gather notes and find points of agreement to move on the conversations.
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Status update for open PRs

- TJC: Any updates from swiftly on [Add communication_period and impact_period#546?](#)
- PC: No update yet, but we are still planning how this will fit into our agenda for summer.
- TJ: we also got confirmation from MOTIS that they are working on the final steps to support this from a consumer perspective
- CK: SimplifyTransit is also planning to support this as a producer and a consumer but at this point we can't share a specific timeline.
- JF: at MBTA we plan on publishing this probably late april. You can argue we are also acting as consumers. We are interested in looking at what consumers pick this up.
- TY: at WMATA we are looking to implement this by the end of this year.

- BM: I also want to start producing this. Is there already an updated proto file that includes the fields used for this feature.
- TJC: Not sure at this point
- BM: if someone has it, please share it
- TJC: is there any questions or concerns about the current proposal or does it look good to you? Just double checking that there are no major concerns before opening a vote.
- Thumbs up from Josh Fabian and Bogdan
- TJC: BTW we want to share that the plan is for GTFS to support realtime information for elevator and escalator status. We think that this proposal is one of the pending things to unblock its use.
- TJC: now we can move on to [Add new SPECIAL_EVENT Cause to GTFS-realtime Service Alerts#577](#), is there any consumer/producer interested in implementing?
- CK: we are definitely looking into implementing, I think it'll be straightforward but we don't have an exact timeline. It seems like it was something that a lot of other users had significant interest in. I'm not sure how many consumers do much with specific causes, unless someone is using icons.
- TJC: We heard from consumers that they have too many records of "Other Cause" which is not very useful to users.
- TJC: Regarding the PR and to double check, are there any other concerns around the PR itself?
- TJC: looks like there are no concerns. Thanks Cody for sharing the intention to produce this, but we also need to find more producers and consumers for this. Any other comments before we move on?
- JF: MBTA could likely be an early adopter for #577
- TY: WMATA as well.
- TJC: Thanks.

Definition of the current enum CAUSE and EFFECT

- TJC: Maybe we can start discussing with Cause and start from the top. This is the draft definition that we think could be useful: [Definition draft](#). We want to have an open discussion on this.
- CK: I just had a thought, in our organization we list things in sequential order, so if we want to have "unknown" and "other causes", why don't we move them to the bottom of the list? Just a suggestion.
- TJC: If we want to just change the order in the documentation, MobilityData can take care of that since it is just a documentation maintenance change. Thanks for that suggestion Cody.
- Roger: I'm from SBB (Switzerland) we transform a list of the causes in the european standard and from our Point of view there are a series of causes and effects that we think are missing, we can share this with you.
- TJC: if you could share that publicly either on GitHub or Slack that would be ideal
- CK: It seems like the documentation links the causes to specific enums, so maybe we're looking at a breaking change.
- KM: I think the order is something that we can fix. At SEPTA we don't use service alerts very effectively at this time, but we're moving towards using it better. Maybe

this has been discussed extensively, but the technical problem seems to be encompassing infrastructure and vehicles IT technology that directly impacts the service. We have many vehicles with lots of infrastructure problems, curious if it would be useful to have a category for this.

- KM: Also, The wording for some causes might be relevant, for example we have some pedestrian strikes and bridge strikes. Our comms teams sometimes have to work around the wording. So clarifying the terminology could be useful.
- TJC: I'm curious to hear other people's opinions on this, if we explore updating this definitions so that we can have a more consistent way to produce causes and riders can have a better understanding in different regions as well.
- KM: I'm curious to understand how consumers use cause.
- CK: if someone has an example of how that data shows up in trip planners I would be very interested.
- KM: same, I want to have a direct impact on the user experience.
- JF: Probably the only use we have for cause is when we take that input and re-render it in some way. I think there is some value in terms of informing users.
- TC: we want to echo that, we found that riders value knowing the type of disruption, especially if the disruption was something that is or isn't within the agency's control, since that would give them an idea of how drastic the disruption is.
- TJC: It seems like there's a more interesting discussion around cause, but are there any other thoughts maybe on effects?
- TC: We're exploring the idea of using as a way to supplement severity of importance, for example a categorization like "construction" or "technical problem"
- MW: Is there anything that we can share that would help this inform this discussion? For example what the Puget Sound area is doing related to service disruption information.
- TJC: I think it would be useful to inform and make a better proposal.
- MW: Sounds good, it seems like it would be helpful, but I wanted to ask before
- TJC: I would like to talk about "effect", probably one of the most important: "No Service". Do we want to add some definition to the no service effect? Because I think it would have some effect on rider facing behaviour
- CK: maybe it would be good to explicitly state that apps won't allow routing to suggest this service if "no service" is stated.
- TJC:
- KM: One issue we run into with "no service" is partial suspension where maybe "reduced service" is not accurate. If we have more detailed information with fine-grained alerts, I believe we would still run into granularity issues since effects are not very black and white. Side boarding, single tracking and other trolley diversions might be problems that would remain even with very specific alerts.
- Bogdan: I'm not sure how consumers interpret and implement this information But I think it would be very good if this behavior was codified by the documentation. I would personally like it to continue doing that, just for agencies that don't have an actual CAD AVL system to output cancellations through trip updates. I think we should push for a clarification whether we expect no service to have a direct impact and at the same time push people towards the correct tool, for example use cancellations and trip modifications for detours.

- TJC: I think the first thing we would like to do would be...
- TJC: To wrap things up, it would be good to revisit this conversation on Cause and Effects in our next meeting. I also want to share that we are working on a Service Alert Guidance document, so we'll share that as soon as possible with you.
- TJC: is there any suggestions or thought about what we can discuss in our next meeting beyond what's been already mentioned?
- CK: I just want to thank MobilityData for organizing, it'll take a while to align but it's good to have these conversations and raise these points.
-