



optibus

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INDUSTRY IS HEADED, GO STRAIGHT TO

THE SOURCE

THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE
FOR WHAT'S NEW & WHAT
IT MEANS FOR YOU

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About Optibus

[Optibus](#) is the industry leading provider of transportation management software as a service. Its cloud-native platform brings much-needed innovation to public transportation: the essential mobility mode at the heart of our cities. Optibus offers a powerful combination of artificial intelligence, advanced optimization algorithms, and distributed cloud computing to make public transportation smarter, better, and more efficient. We leverage enhanced operational insight to help you see the impact of your decisions quickly and make adjustments as frequently as you require.

Founded in 2014, Optibus powers complex transit operations in over 500 cities around the world, planning and scheduling the movement of vehicles and drivers to improve the quality and reliability of transit service to maximize operating efficiency.

Optibus has been recognized by the World Economic Forum as a Technology Pioneer and by Gartner as a Cool Vendor. It has offices in New York, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Tel Aviv, London, and São Paulo. We believe there is power in the freedom of movement, making a healthy transit system the foundation of sustainable, resilient cities.

Learn more:

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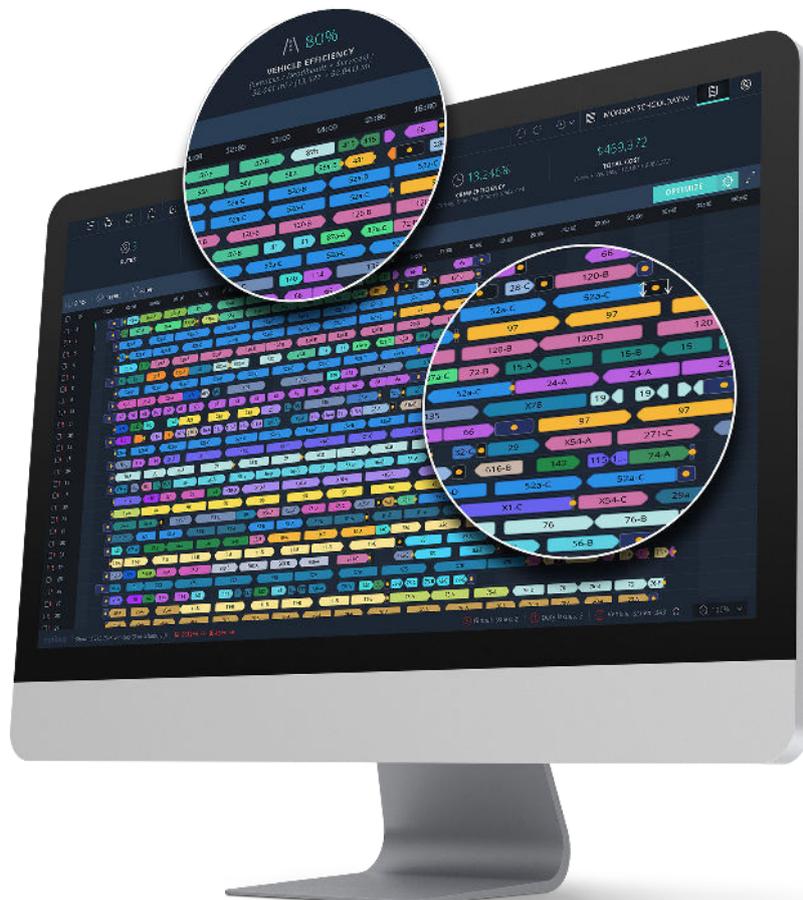


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Get Ready



Every time a new President steps into office, new priorities are identified that align with their goals. These changes trickle down into every department and become the new starting place for awarding competitive grants. One of the biggest changes of 2021 occurred early on. [Executive Order 13985](#) directs all agencies to ensure federal programs advance racial equity and support underserved communities. This means that all new grant applications must include an **equity analysis**.

To date, the FTA under the Biden Administration has released a few competitive grant opportunities:

1. Areas of Persistent Poverty
2. Low or No Emission Vehicle Program
3. American Rescue Plan Funding and Assistance
4. Route Planning Restoration Program

There are many more funding opportunities that are yet to be announced, so there is still plenty of time to get started. The requirements for the applications of these programs give us new insight into what is likely to be required in future Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO).

Planning for these changes now can help your organization be better prepared during your application cycle. These projections are based on insights gathered from prior application cycles, in addition to recent requirements. Of course, we will not be able to say with absolute certainty that these are the only changes – but understanding and preparing for these changes may increase your chances of having your application score high enough to be granted, and **our goal is to help you do just that.**

First step: Make sure your state and local elected officials know you intend to submit a grant. They can work to ensure your application receives appropriate support – plus, they have an interest in “bringing home” projects, so they are more likely to help in any way they can. If you aren’t a direct recipient, identify regional or state partners that can work on a consolidated application with you.

What Matters Today (and How Optibus Can Help)

In July of 2021, the FTA released "[America's Open and Transit's Open](#)" – their final report on best practices to bring back transit ridership. It listed five areas to build back better as travelers started to return to public transit. Their best practices include five main principles:

1. Ridership Campaigns
2. System Design Review
3. Restore Public Confidence in Public Safety
4. Leverage Partnerships
5. How to Build Back Better

Let's take a closer look at each one of them.

1. Ridership Campaigns

The first method recommended by the FTA to help bring back ridership is by employing compelling ridership campaigns. More specifically, according to the FTA, your organization's ridership campaigns should aim to "Inform riders of measures to ensure safety, improve transit service and quality, and increase access ... The most effective campaigns promote the benefits of public transportation, including cost effectiveness, efficiency, and the environmental benefits of transit."

As we navigate through this next chapter of the pandemic, it's especially imperative that your campaigns place clear emphasis on riders' safety – as now more than ever, riders need to feel reassured that your organization is taking proper precautions to protect against the spread of COVID-19.

Furthermore, as always, everyone deserves equitable, ample access to transportation within their communities – and thus, it's also imperative that you use these campaigns to demonstrate your organization's active efforts to improve transit access and equity.

One of the simplest, most effective ways to demonstrate your efforts and increase support and reach for your campaign is by utilizing social media platforms – creating both organic and paid campaigns on social media – as well as connecting with local (and even large-scale) media outlets.

You should aim to create relevant hashtags to build support and awareness – along with fun, relatable content for your audience. For this, we're happy to help get you started. We're offering our recent "[All About That Bus](#)" video campaign as a free resource for your organization to use, at your convenience, to help spread awareness.

To use this video as a branded asset for your organization's campaigns, simply adjust the segment at the end of the video with your logo and details, rather than Optibus'. For any questions about this video, you can email Crissy Ditmore: crissy.ditmore@optibus.com. For additional inspiration and ideas, the FTA shares many examples of effective campaigns aimed at increasing ridership [here](#) (on pages 3-4).



Judy Rodriguez
Director of Transportation
[WRTA](#)

“ The main reason we partnered with Optibus is because they listened to us. The sales team asked all the right questions, listened to our responses, and presented the software in a way that addressed our specific needs. The competition was eager to show us their software but did not effectively tailor their demonstration to address our needs. And on top of that, we love the Customer Success team. Our overtime costs have increased due to the driver shortage, but that cost is more than offset by the savings we've realized through Optibus. ”

2. System Design Review

As part of their “[America's Open and Transit's Open](#)” report, the FTA states: “The COVID-19 pandemic created an opportunity for transit agencies to adjust routes based on where customers want to go and better emphasize the customer experience by providing transit where and when people need it, improving accessibility, and through enhanced tools and technology.”

Again, enabling equitable outcomes for access to transit is of the utmost importance here – as there are vast racial, age and ability-related, and socio-economic inequalities still prevalent within our transportation systems that must be properly addressed and ameliorated. These inequalities are the systemic effects of deliberate policies of the past – those same policies are reinforcing the stark differences in how people have experienced the pandemic. There's no time like the present to begin to reconsider your transportation design, with equity as a central element to ensure new policies repair past harm and prevent it from happening again.

This is exactly what we're aiming to help organizations do with our [Geospatial Suite](#) – to help significantly improve transportation networks and enable equity in transit access through the use of data-driven planning.

The Geospatial Suite promotes equity in transit through its Impact Analysis feature. Using demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, Impact Analysis shows how existing routes and route changes affect access to public transit for select communities.



Jonathan Feldman
Director of Planning and Scheduling
[New York's Nassau Inter County Express \(NICE\) Bus](#)

“ We can spend more time designing better transit systems, and spend less time being bogged down in the process of building the schedule. . . . We’re expecting the results that we get from Optibus to not only improve the quality of the transit service we provide but also help us better retain our operators. We want to continually improve the quality of the rosters and schedules, and really give them an honorable schedule so they can come to work and do their jobs well. ”

Impact Analysis helps the your organization ensure compliance with [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin regarding programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

It also grants you the ability make your transportation network more robust and passenger-friendly for all ages and abilities, by visualizing crucial geographic information while planning routes – including bike/scooter paths and other mobility networks passengers use to connect to public transit; the shopping districts, senior centers, schools, health clinics, or job centers where passengers want and need to go; and municipal boundaries that ensure comprehensive transit access and coverage across a region.



This is especially crucial for older adult passengers, those with disabilities, and anyone with mobility challenges, thus incapable of using certain modes of transport (e.g. bicycles, scooters, etc.). Moving beyond the baseline of complying with Title VI, the Geospatial Suite can also help fulfill the equity analysis requirements for any new grant application.

Ensuring equity is one of the defining roles for public transit. Engaging with the community, respecting elder knowledge, wide stakeholder support, and metrics gleaned from our software can ensure your network redesign makes a positive impact in your community.

3. Restore Public Confidence in Transit Safety

Safety has always been, and will always be, a major concern for passengers, which can end up having a direct, adverse impact on ridership – and in the age of COVID-19, it's even more so. In order to effectively increase ridership, the FTA's report states that today's passengers care most about three particular components of safety: enhanced cleaning, upgraded air filtration, and crime prevention efforts.

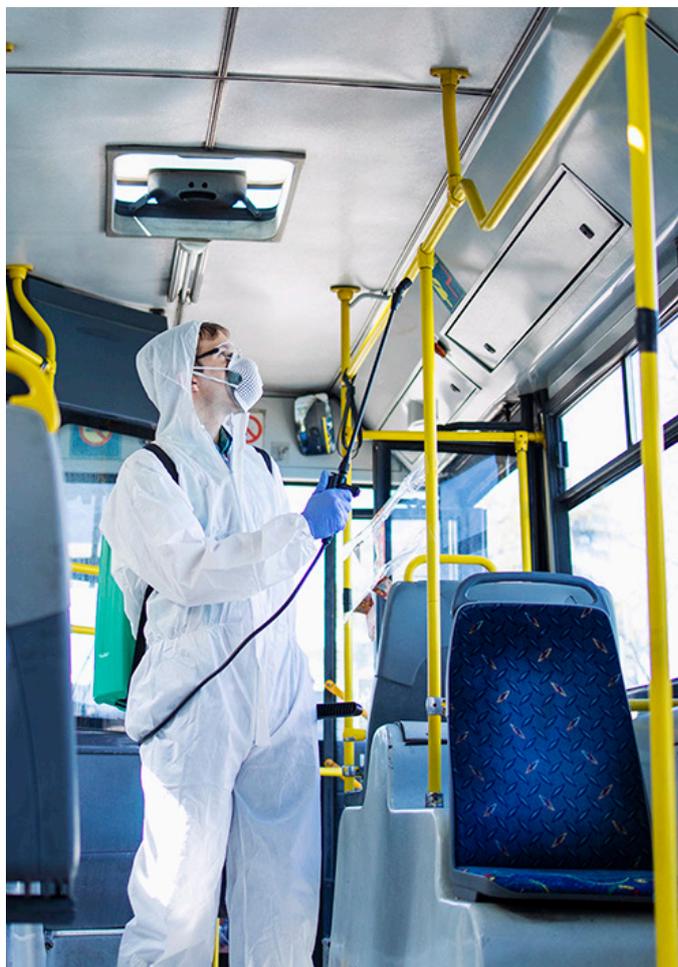
Fortunately, Optibus can assist your organization with each of these components to help restore public confidence in transit safety. For one, our [rostering module](#) can help optimize drivers' needs, schedules, and preferences – resulting in a greater work-life balance, better retention rates, reduced driver shortages, and, ultimately, more frequent, safe transit options available to passengers.

With a nationwide driver shortage, maximizing the effectiveness of your routes is an easy way to ensure your bus system's dependability, which translates into rider confidence.

By simply adding in a few rules and adjusting criteria via our platform, it can also automatically help ensure that drivers are properly trained in terms of all safety and cleaning procedures and protocols – and that adequate time is allotted for deep cleaning and disinfecting to take place between trips.

What's more, our [Geospatial Suite](#) (as mentioned previously) can not only help ensure safe, equitable transit access throughout cities – it can also help planners design routes around local COVID-19-related resources (such as creating new stops based on testing sites or vaccination clinics).

Finally, in terms of crime prevention itself, though our rostering module does not specifically address crime prevention measures, it does offer the ability to better manage and mitigate drivers' schedules – thus keeping them focused, energized, and alert – to create a safe environment for riders. In transit, safety is everyone's responsibility, but the driver is the face of transit. Support the needs of the drivers and those effects will trickle into every other aspect of the system, including riders' perceptions of safety.





Robert Betts
Director of Operations & Planning
[Marin Transit](#)

“ I think the fact that it’s web-based and that multiple members of our team can access the same data in the same application, and be able to collaborate on a timetable or a project, that’s invaluable. . . . What we really saw value in with the Optibus product is the ability to work with those various formats, to be able to integrate with very little friction, and to take on the mentality of supporting those integrations and other future integration needs. ”

4. Leverage Partnerships

When it comes to increasing ridership, collaborating with the right partners is truly a win-win on all ends. According to the FTA, “Partnerships with local governments, educational institutions, nonprofits, advocacy groups, employers, businesses, community organizations and other transit agencies on fare programs and trip bundling can improve ridership.”

By leveraging partnerships with like-minded organizations in your area, you can work towards a shared goal together – creating a better, more equitable overall transportation experience for passengers within the local community, while increasing driver satisfaction and retention.

At [Optibus](#), we have dozens of partnerships and satisfied clients that utilize our products to power transit in [over 500 cities worldwide](#). In the U.S. alone, some of our most notable partners include: The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) in California, Alexandra Transit Company (DASH) in the D.C. area, MV Transportation in Austin, Texas, and even shuttle services for Facebook and the San Francisco Airport (SFO).

Our client base is constantly growing, and with our dedicated, hands-on customer support here to help every step of the way – plus our reliable, fast, and easy-to-use software – our partners truly love working with us.



DASH



LADOT
TRANSIT



facebook



AVTA
Antelope Valley Transit Authority



SFO



MV



C.J. Bright
Evolving Mobility
[Keolis North America](#)

“ We’re able to investigate many different scenarios. We change preferences to really see how every little specific modification will impact the overall service. . . . I’m also surprised by the level of support from the team. Optibus takes our feedback seriously and will make changes based on what we say as the users. You know, they have the engineers, the algorithm experts, but at the same time they’re also listening to the guys on the front lines who are doing the schedules. It’s a great partnership. ”

5. How to Build Back Better

Last, but certainly not least, for the final recommended component of their report, the FTA notes that: “The pandemic and the changes it has brought to public transportation systems provides an opportunity to address equity, climate change and pursue transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities.”

We couldn’t agree more. As we all look to rebuild ridership in a “post-pandemic” world, we must focus on safeguarding a bright future, one with safe, sustainable, and equitable transit for all – and at Optibus, we’re proud to be doing our part to help make this a possibility.

Equity and TOD

As mentioned throughout this report, our [Geospatial Suite](#) facilitates data-driven decisions that significantly improve the accessibility, reliability, and performance of networks that affect the lives of millions of passengers – ultimately helping to increase transit equity for all.

It helps planners truly understand and visualize the community’s needs – using GIS data to determine where people want and need to go within cities – to connect them to local opportunities (such as work, school, health clinics, and otherwise).

When planners have a better understanding of passengers’ needs – and how they’ll get there – it helps them build more vibrant, transit-oriented cities, as well as urban hubs, that can directly impact and improve life within those cities.

It also helps progress toward racial equity. Residents of transit deserts are overwhelmingly from historically marginalized communities, some of which have been systematically denied services, and/or are low-income workers who cannot afford a personal car and rely on public transit for mobility. As such, increasing access to public transportation in these neighborhoods is a matter of social justice and racial equity.

Climate Change: Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Fewer Vehicles on the Road

In terms of addressing climate change and sustainability, Optibus is helping in several ways: by making public transit more appealing due to improved service quality and reliability, by optimizing transit networks, and by facilitating the transition to EVs.



Our platform makes transit services more efficient (for instance, by reducing non-service trips, such as when a bus runs with zero passengers in order to return to the bus depot or to start service on another route), resulting in fewer buses on the road, for less time.

This saves an estimated 1,860 miles per vehicle per year – or roughly 59 million miles, at an average of 0.64 pounds of CO2 emissions per passenger mile (as per standards published by APTA). Of course, better, more robust public transportation access results in fewer private cars on the road – which also leads to a lower carbon footprint.

Furthermore, Optibus is supporting our agency partners in their accelerated shift to electric and hydrogen bus adoption. Incorporating EV's into a mixed fleet is seamless with our planning tool. We offer the best EV planning and scheduling service in the industry that allows you to quickly adapt service needs as you gain more understanding of the operating capabilities of your electric fleet. This is one area where there is no competition, we are the best in the business.

All in all, by enabling public transit to become more frequent, reliable, and appealing to passengers – and facilitating the electrification of bus fleets – Optibus helps cities and towns across the U.S. (and around the world) reduce reliance on private vehicles and become more sustainable, resulting in the reduction of an estimated 100,000 tons of CO2 emissions annually.



Elizabeth Stayner
Transportation Planning Manager
[MV Transportation](#)

“ One of the reasons why our company chose Optibus is that it is a cloud-based SaaS platform. No additional hardware is needed, there's no software to purchase and continuously update. You're not tied to one machine in the corner of your office. You can do this from anywhere, on any type of device; If you're on a plane on a tablet and you need to tweak something or make some changes, or if you get a new idea. It is available anywhere with an internet connection. ”

Optibus: Transforming the Future of Mass Transit

By partnering with [Optibus](#), you can implement these strategies right away. Most importantly, your ability to address ongoing driver shortages, as well as shifting travel patterns, means you likely need a system refresh.

Let us show you how easy that can be using our [planning](#), [scheduling](#), and [rostering](#) software. We can even help you provide the required equity analysis for all of your other grant needs with our [Impact Analysis Tool](#) and [Geospatial Suite](#). As your partner, we want to continue to provide all of the care and support you need, while responding to the pandemic and planning for the future.

Conclusion

We hope you enjoyed reading this guide, and that it provided you with some helpful information as you navigate through the grant approval process. We wish you the best of luck in your efforts!

About the Author

Crissy Ditmore is Head of Public Policy, North America for Optibus. As a 15-year transportation industry veteran, she focuses on mobility for all. Crissy advances strategies that ensure the public good is maximized through the application of technology to enable policy. She is currently on the Board of Directors for Feonix Mobility Rising and serves on APTA's Technology Standards Policy and Planning committee. Formerly with Cubic, Conduent, and Enterprise Rideshare. Crissy holds a Master of Science in Project Management and is a 2019 Mass Transit Magazine Top 40 Under 40. She is the creator of the Mobility Minute weekly video series discussing mobility trends, where she is always #AllAboutThatBus.



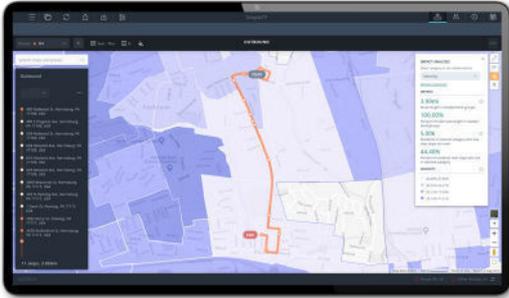
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Have questions? To request more information or to see a demo, send us an email: infousa@optibus.com.

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Optibus Solutions



Planning

Quickly create and visualize efficient routes, timetables, and running times



Scheduling

Optimize vehicle and crew schedules for better operations and lower costs



Rostering

Improve drivers' shifts and workloads to increase retention and satisfaction



Geospatial Suite

Visualize custom map layers to improve planning and transit equity



Electric vehicles (EVs)

Automated EV scheduling to help future-proof your operations