

Preparation Instructions for FTA Final Reports

Those completing reports on behalf of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are no longer responsible for the final design of their reports because of a recent shift in process. Final design is now the responsibility of FTA. FTA will produce these final reports in PDF format and will place them on the FTA website at http://www.fta.dot.gov/about/research_reports_and_publications and at other locations on FTA's website.

The following formatting instructions provide guidance to contractors, grantees, and others responsible for preparing and delivering final research reports to FTA in electronic format. The purpose is to foster *uniformity* in FTA reports for ease of information retrieval, technical merit, clarity of writing, quality control, and processing in information systems, as well as for assuring permanent access and delivery of FTA reports and documents.

Compliance with these formatting instructions is **required**. Also, all final reports must be compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (described in more detail below).

To further promote efficient spending in the Federal Government, Executive Order 13589 directs agencies to provide written information electronically and limit the publication and printing of hard copy documents. If it is determined that a report will also be printed, printing is the responsibility of the FTA project manager or the author, but FTA will provide the design and files necessary for printing if requested at the time of final report submission.

General

Reports must be submitted electronically in two formats: one file using Word 2007 or later and one file as a PDF. Spelling, definition, and compounding of words should follow *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition. Measurements may appear in both SI (metric) and U.S. customary units, with the measurement unit of the original research followed by the equivalent conversion in parentheses.

Order of Appearance

Reports must include each of the following elements in the following order:

- Title Page
- Report Documentation Page (Standard Form 298), submitted in a separate Word file, as found at http://www.fta.dot.gov/research/program_requirements
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Foreword (optional)
- Acknowledgments
- Abstract
- Executive Summary
- Main body of text, separated into titled sections and subsections as appropriate; numbering should not be used for subsections
- Appendices (if needed)
- Glossary (if needed)
- References

Text

- Layout: 8.5" x 11", portrait orientation, 1" margins all around
- Font: Arial, 11 pt
- Alignment: Left, one column
- Spacing: Single
- Paragraph indents: None
- Headers/footers: None (other than page numbering, if desired)
- Headings – do NOT number sections/subsections, do not use full capitalization:
 - **First-Level Head**
 - **Second-Level Subhead**
 - *Third-Level Subhead*

Tables & Figures

Tables and figures should be included within the text and appear immediately after the paragraph in which they first are indicated, when possible. Titling should be as follows:

- **Table 5-1 Example of a Table Title** – Bold type; capitalize each word as appropriate; number corresponding to section (5-1, 5-2, etc.); no punctuation after table number
- **Figure 3-1 Example of a Figure Title** – Bold type; capitalize each word as appropriate; number corresponding to section (3-1, 3-2, etc.); no punctuation after figure number

Illustrations, Photographs & Videos

- Each chart, figure, photo, illustration, and table must have a distinct title and be numbered in sequence within the report section, e.g., Figure 2-1, Table 3-6.
- Each image requires Section 508-compliant alternative text (see below).
- Illustrations and photographs must be submitted separately in an image file format (TIF, JPG, AI, or EPS) and must include all sources and photo credits, if applicable. Written permissions for use should be retained by the report author.
- **Images must be at least 72 ppi** (pixels per inch). **For reports that will be professionally printed**, all images **MUST** be a minimum of 300 ppi at the size the image will be displayed on the page.
- Cover illustrations or photographs must be representative of the report's content and include no writing on the image. **The cover image must be in color with a resolution of at least 300 ppi, measured 8''w x 6''h.** The correct accreditation for the image must be provided. Written permission for use should be retained by the report author.
- Videos must be submitted separately in a video file format (MPG, MOV, WMV, or AVI) and must include all sources. Written permissions for use should be retained by the report author. A written script of any video(s) must be included for 508 compliance purposes.

References

- Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page on which they are cited (not as endnotes).
- Within the text, references should be numbered sequentially in the order of their appearance, in brackets with an Arabic numeral, e.g., [22]. References should not be denoted with superscripts.
- In the References section at the end of the document, references should be listed in number order using a consistent format (author name, date, title, publication, volume, page numbers). For example:

[1] Bengston, D. N., J. O. Fletcher, and K. C. Nelson. 2003. Public policies for managing urban growth and protecting open space: Policy instruments and lessons learned in the United States. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 69, 271–286.

Alternative Text Guidelines (Section 508 Compliance)

Alternative (alt) text is text associated with an image that conveys the same essential information as the image, providing a written description of the image.

Alt text for all images must be submitted as a separate Word file with each figure distinctly referenced, e.g., Figure 1-1 is a photograph of

The following guidelines should be used when writing alt text:

- Alt text should describe all the important information in the image but not every physical detail, only what is important to its meaning and understanding.
- Alt text should begin with the figure number and a word that describes the type of image, e.g., “Figure 5-1 is a graph of”
- Alt text for images that contain detailed information, such as a technical diagram, chart, or graph, must include all relevant data, unless already described in the page text. If described in the text, the alt text should briefly describe the image followed by “as described in the text.”

Report Summary

All reports must be accompanied by a 1–2 page (maximum) summary of the information contained in the report. The summary should include the following information:

- **FTA Report Title**
- **Background:** In 1–2 paragraphs, provide information detailing the history of the problem and the rationale for conducting the research or for the content of the report.
- **Objectives:** In 1 paragraph, briefly explain the objectives of the research or content of the report. Specific objectives should be cast under the overall objective(s).
- **Findings and Conclusions:** A one-sentence summary of the findings and conclusions should be at the start of this section, followed by 2–4 paragraphs about the findings and conclusions of the report, particularly as they address the issue(s) raised in the objectives section.
- **Benefits:** In 2–3 paragraphs, discuss the value of the findings in terms such as: How will the findings be used? Are they already being used? How will they affect FTA business? What are the safety, economic, and/or efficiency benefits?
- **Project Information:** Include the following at the end of the summary:

This research project was conducted by (*name of Principal Investigator*) of the (*contracting organization*). For more information, contact FTA Project Manager (*name of FTA Project Manager*) at (*FTA Project Manager phone #, e-mail address*).

These instructions can be found at

http://www.fta.dot.gov/research/program_requirements.

Questions regarding report formatting guidelines should be directed to your FTA project manager.

FTA Report Preparation Checklist

Report Title:

FTA Project Manager:

Final Output: PDF ONLY PDF and PRINTED

Required Report Components

- Title page
- Report Documentation Page (in Word)
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Acknowledgments/Foreword
- Abstract
- Executive Summary
- Main Body
- Appendices (if needed)
- Glossary (if needed)
- References

Illustrations & Photos

- All images 72 ppi or higher (300 ppi or higher if report will be professionally printed)
- 508-compliant alternative text for all illustrations and photos provided in separate Word file
- Illustrations/photos submitted separately in image file format (TIF, JPG, AI, EPS) with sources (and credits for photos, if appropriate)
- Cover image at least 8"x6" at 300 ppi with no writing on image
- Source, permission, and photo credit for cover image
- Videos submitted separately, with sources and written permissions
- Written script of video

Tables & Figures

- Distinct title for each table and figure
- 508-complaint alternative text for all figures in separate Word file
- Charts and tables submitted separately and include all data points

Report Summary

- 1–2 pages (800 words) max
- Background
- Objectives
- Findings & Conclusions (with single summary sentence)
- Benefits
- Project Info