



# Bridging Technology and Business Needs:

How Norfolk Southern Transformed  
Its Tax Fixed Assets System



# Executive Summary

Norfolk Southern transformed its income tax operations by migrating from the legacy PowerTax system to PowerPlan's [Tax Fixed Assets](#) (TFA) solution in just 12 weeks, addressing critical bottlenecks that were impacting the management of its asset portfolio. The cloud-hosted TFA solution eliminated slow navigation and manual processes, reduced forecasting time from days to minutes, and empowered users with self-service reporting capabilities through [Data Hub](#). The successful migration achieved the program goals on budget and on time, will yield significant operational improvements for Norfolk Southern's Tax department, and frees the IT team to focus on more strategic items rather than maintaining a legacy solution.

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

### Norfolk Southern

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#### HEADQUARTERS

Atlanta, GA

#### COMPANY TYPE

Railroad

#### FOUNDED

1827

#### OTHER POWERPLAN SOLUTIONS:

Data Hub

Project and Fixed Asset Accounting

Lease Accounting

Capital Budgeting and Forecasting

#### 2024 REVENUE

\$12 billion

#### TOTAL ASSETS

\$43.7 billion

THE TURNING POINT:

# Operational Shifts and System Challenges

**For Norfolk Southern, two paths were converging. On the first was a company-wide strategy to modernize data management. On the other was the clear need to address a growing list of limitations felt by its tax department within one of the company's critical legacy tax systems.**

While PowerTax addressed the team's needs when implemented in 2009, the system was no longer meeting the tax department's demands or efficiency expectations in 2024.

The team faced slow navigation and tedious manual processes. Queries and reports took excessive time to run, and database management was a growing concern. "We had to write custom logic to work around some of the system issues. It added complexity and stretched the limits of the system's functionality," shared Charles Ellis, Manager of Accounting Systems at Norfolk Southern.

These challenges had business-wide implications: delayed project approvals, inefficient workflows, and heavy reliance on IT and systems administration for reporting and data access. Norfolk Southern sought a solution that could increase efficiency, simplify processes, and align with its broader cloud transformation strategy. At the core, the company needed a new way to manage tax depreciation and book-to-tax reconciliation.

**PowerPlan's Tax Fixed Assets (TFA) emerged as the answer.**

# A Solution That Bridges Business and IT

A modern software solution must cater to the needs of multiple business functions, not just the end user. As someone who spans both the accounting and systems administration sides of the business, Ellis saw TFA's potential to deliver across the organization.

## For the Tax Organization: Empowering Strategic Insight and Agility

- **Forecasting in minutes, not days:** TFA streamlines long-term depreciation and deferred tax forecasts with just a few clicks, enabling faster scenario planning and strategic decision-making.
- **More confidence with better data:** Native integration with tools like Power BI and Excel using Data Hub allows users to easily import data into tools they are familiar with, enabling real-time analysis and visibility.

**"The business is excited about compiling their own data. It helps with transparency and decision-making."** Charles Ellis

## For Systems Administration and IT: Reducing Burden, Increasing Confidence

- **Enterprise-grade security:** Comprehensive enterprise security featuring threat detection, identity and endpoint protection, cloud and network security, compliance certifications, and proactive risk and incident management brings peace of mind for Norfolk Southern's IT team.

- **Cloud-hosted architecture:** Gone is the need for in-house maintenance and custom logic. With PowerPlan managing the infrastructure, Norfolk Southern's team is empowered knowing the system is scalable and always up to date.

**"Our transition to PowerPlan's TFA solution has been a significant success from an IT standpoint,"**

says Zaineb Muneeb, Manager Info Sys Dev – SAP, Norfolk Southern. "The move to this cloud-based platform has eliminated the need for infrastructure maintenance, allowing our team to focus on strategic initiatives rather than system upkeep. TFA's SaaS delivery model has proven to be both secure and scalable, aligning perfectly with our enterprise architecture goals."

## Spanning Both Worlds: Where Business and Technology Meet

- **Real-time support and expertise:** A dedicated PowerPlan team supports both tax-specific and technical needs.
- **Speed and simplicity of migration:** A quick migration from PowerTax ensured minimal disruption to daily operations.

## THE MIGRATION:

# Fast, Collaborative, and Seamless

Norfolk Southern set clear goals for the migration:

- 1 Complete it within 4 months,
- 2 Stay on budget, and
- 3 Ensure a smooth rollout.

With a structured, collaborative approach with their PowerPlan **Professional Services** team, the project succeeded across the board. From design workshops, to build cycles and configurations, to data migration and training, the project was completed on time in 12 weeks.

Ellis says it was the true partnership between Norfolk Southern and PowerPlan that allowed the project to run so smoothly. "Communication was outstanding," he says. "It was the quickest, smoothest implementation I've ever done. I haven't seen anything like it."

**"The migration itself was impressively smooth,"** adds Muneeb. "PowerPlan's structured approach enabled us to complete the transition within the projected window, with minimal disruption to operations."



# Outcomes & Impact

The migration delivered immediate, tangible benefits for Norfolk Southern:

- **Improved user experience:** Users, even new ones, find TFA intuitive and easy to navigate.
- **Streamlined reporting:** Data Hub empowers users to run and create their own reports, rather than relying on system administrators.
- **Reduced IT burden:** PowerPlan's support and cloud hosting simplify administration.
- **Ongoing value:** Quarterly releases allow the tax team to get new functionality more quickly, without having to wait years for a full-system upgrade.

But perhaps the most transformative outcome was how the project bridged the gap between business and IT. Ellis played a pivotal role in translating technical requirements into business value, and vice versa.

**"It's not just about upgrading, it's about aligning everyone around the value,"** Ellis says. "To drive a successful implementation, you need to bridge the gap between business and IT—translate technical concepts into business language and business needs into technical requirements. PowerPlan supported us every step of the way, helping ensure both sides were understood."

The success of the TFA migration also shaped Norfolk Southern's approach to future implementations, including its S/4HANA ERP transformation.





**“Having gone through the successful TFA migration, I now know exactly what to look for in a smooth rollout,”**

Ellis says. “It set a new standard and has made the PowerPlan integration component of our ERP upgrade significantly smoother and more predictable.”

## Looking Ahead

Norfolk Southern plans to deepen its interaction with Data Hub, empowering the tax team to use it more extensively. As the team continues to realize the benefits of new processes and ongoing innovations provided by TFA, they will explore additional opportunities for improvement and innovation.

**“I want to say TFA is worth the effort, but it was hardly much of an effort,”** Ellis says. **“So instead, I’ll say that without a doubt, it was well worth the experience—and well worth the value that it’s providing every day to Norfolk Southern.”**

To learn more about Tax Fixed Assets and request a demo, visit [PowerPlan.com/TFA](https://PowerPlan.com/TFA).



Scan or visit [PowerPlan.com](https://PowerPlan.com)  
to learn more.

PowerPlan began with a simple realization: The more fixed assets an organization has, the more challenging it is to manage them financially and to strategically understand how compliance requirements impact the treatment of each asset. Our founders saw ERPs and EAMs alone didn't capture enough data to optimize decisions, so they built the first software platform that combined granular financial and operational asset data from every corner of the organization; filling the gaps ERPs and EAMs could not provide. For more information, please visit [powerplan.com](https://powerplan.com).

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