Transform Vietnam

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Transform Vietnam with Open Data Revolution

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Apart from providing commercial services, we at **Enlightened Data** proudly contribute free services to the community. Below, we share one of our latest effort — a project that not only builds data, but also builds bridges for the betterment of Vietnam.

GTFS Data for Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC)

Client: Community at large

Methodology:

- **Data collection:** web scraping and advanced GIS routing
- **Data processing:** custom code and scripts
- **Data validation:** using GTFS standards and API checks

Background

Twenty years ago, I was a young civil engineer and lecturer at Vietnam National University, HCMC University of Technology leading students to the Mekong Delta to **build concrete bridges for poor communities**. We ate simple meals, slept on the ground, bathed in rivers, and drank homemade rice wine — just to help children cross monkey bridges safely to reach school.

Twenty years later, I no longer live or work in Vietnam — but I still build bridges. Not in Tra Vinh, but in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City. Not with concrete and steel, but with **code and data**. This time, I built a **GTFS Bridge** — Generic Transit Feed Specification — a digital foundation to help HCMC step into the future of smart mobility.

Did you know?

Apps like Google Maps, BusMap, Transit App, etc. all need GTFS data to work.

But while Google and BusMap have some data, **our own city departments don't**.

When I asked former students (now working at the Department of Transport), colleagues, even HCMGIS, everyone shook their heads: *"We don't have the GIS data needed for GTFS."*

So I rolled up my sleeves and did it myself.

I wrote the scripts. I scraped the data from public websites. I processed everything alone.

It took **almost a month**, the same time it took to build those concrete bridges decades ago. But this time, there were no civil engineering students, no local officials, no community volunteers.

Meanwhile, in Ha Noi, the World Bank funded GTFS development in a three years (and it's still incomplete). But HCMC — proudly to be Vietnam's economic powerhouse, innovation hub, and free trade zone — still had nothing.

Now, I've created the first **draft GTFS dataset for HCMC**. Click here to download a zipped Geodatabase that contain bus and metro stops & lines in HCMC

With GTFS, you can:

Map bus and metro networks with one click (or a few lines of code)
Integrate data into navigation apps, TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) research, transport models, social equity analysis
Advance Vietnam's digital transformation in urban and transport systems

As our ancestors said:

"Without flour, you can't make paste." *Vietnamese proverb*

In the digital age, **data is the flour**. With data, we build bridges. With bridges, we create hope.

A Call to Vietnam's Government, Researchers, Developers, and Data Owners

We at **Enlightened Data** invite you — **government agencies, researchers, urban planners, developers, students, and data owners** — to **join the Open Data movement**.

Share your datasets. Use Open Standards. Contribute to Vietnam's **Open Data Portal**.

Why?

Because **open data powers innovation**. It helps us solve real-world problems, from traffic congestion and air pollution to public service access and urban equity.

If one volunteer can build a GTFS bridge alone, imagine what **we can build together**.

The bridge is built. Whether we cross it — **depends on all of us**.

Let's **open the doors to data** and **unlock the future of Vietnam**.

The GTFS bundle for HCMC is published at EnlightenedDataGitHub.

"Open data is not just about transparency. It's about empowering people, driving innovation, and building a better world."