

# Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) December 2023 Meeting Minutes

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**Conference Date and Time:**

December 6, 2023 (10:00 AM EDT – 5:00 PM EDT)

December 7, 2023 (10:00 AM EDT – 2:00 PM EDT)

**Hybrid Conference Location:**

Virtual Conference conducted via Zoom for Government Webinar

In-Person at the U.S. Department of Transportation Event Center (Washington, D.C.)

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## Day One

### TRACS Member Attendance

Committee Members		
Edward Abel	Laura Karr	Patrick Preusser
Brian Alberts	Jim Keane	Reggie Reese
Johanna Cockburn	Thomas Lamb	Adam Sharkey
Beverly Edwards	Brian Lapp	Justin Sobeck
Rebecca Frankhouser	Raymond Lopez	Lisa Staes
David Harris	Rachel Maleh	Gardner Tabon
Molly Hughes	Santiago Osorio	
Donna Johnson	Ashley Porter	

### Federal Support Attendance

FTA	Contract Support	Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center)
Joe DeLorenzo	Justin Bouyer	Jeff Bellone
Jeremy Furrer	Kim Devilla	Meghan Boydston
Sara Richmond	Sam Rosenblatt	Don Fisher
Veronica Vanterpool	Abigail Wolfgram	Michael Green
Bridget Zamperini	Stephanie Rhoades	Sean Laffey
		Gina Melnik
Additional FTA Attendance		
Valerie Beck	Frank Hackett	Mary Leary
Gibran Abifadel		

### Public Attendance

Public Attendees		
Sharen Janzen	Elaine Luo	Thomas Kuczynski
Christian Vasquez	Jason Snyder	Michael P. Ralsky
Gal Geffen-Frenkel		

## Day One – Introduction

The goal of the meeting was to bring together Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) members in person and virtually, and for TRACS members to discuss their draft reports and recommendations to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), provide feedback to strengthen these recommendations, and acquire general consensus on the recommendations.

The meeting opened with remarks from Bridget Zamperini, TRACS Program Manager; Joe DeLorenzo, Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) and Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for TRACS; and Veronica Vanterpool, FTA Deputy Administrator.

Jim Keane and Lisa Staes, the TRACS Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively, provided an update on TRACS activities to date and the committee's overall progress since the hybrid meeting in June 2023. During the last six months, each subcommittee (Reducing Bus Collisions, Cyber and Data Security Systems, and Advancing Rider and Worker Safety) leveraged guest speaker presentations and members' professional experiences in the communities they represent to revise its preliminary recommendations. Jim and Lisa also outlined the goals for this December meeting to members.

## Reducing Bus Collisions Recommendation Review and Discussion

TRACS member and Reducing Bus Collisions subcommittee lead Gardner Tabon, EVP Systemwide Accessibility & Chief Safety Officer at Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, began with an overview of the past subcommittee meetings before leading a discussion of the subcommittee's draft recommendations. The main discussion themes among TRACS members were:

- Baseline training curriculum
- Guidance for hours of service, advanced service management, and establishing a positive safety culture
- Bus design standards and research
- Federal funding for bus safety improvements
- Marketing and communications related to safety
- Service management
- FTA's Bus Compartment Redesign and Bus of the Future initiatives
- Leading indicators of hazardous spots for bus collisions

In addition, TRACS members discussed ensuring that their recommendations did not include potentially punitive actions toward bus operators.

## FTA Safety Data Management Presentation

Gibran Abifadel, Transportation Data Analyst from the FTA Office of System Safety, led a discussion on FTA Safety Data Management. He began by explaining the National Transit Database (NTD) and how this applies to transit safety data used by FTA. His presentation discussed:

- State Safety Oversight Reporting (SSOR) Tool
- Major Event Reports (S&S-40 form)

- Non-Major Summary Reports (S&S-50 form)
- Requirements for State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) under 49 CFR Part 674
- FTA Safety Advisories and their use as a data collection method.

Gibran explained that FTA uses Safety and Security Data for a wide range of program activities, products, processes, and performance metrics. The Rail & Bus Safety Data Reports present industrywide transit safety performance data to the public to help the industry identify areas for research, training, or assessment, as well as providing transit agencies with industrywide context for safety performance management.

## FTA Research Presentation

Mary Leary, FTA Associate Administrator for Research, Innovation, and Demonstration (TRI), began the presentation by describing the strategic goals of both the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and FTA and how FTA’s research supplements USDOT’s strategic goals to enhance safety.

Her presentation’s key points included:

- Current trends and challenges regarding rates of fatalities and injuries for transit worker assaults and derailments
- FTA research programs, including:
  - Safety Research Demonstration Program
  - Safety Standards Development Program
  - COVID-19 Demonstration Program
  - Strategic Transit Automation Research (STAR) Plan
  - Cybersecurity Assessment Tool for Transit (CATT)
  - USDOT Intersection Safety Challenge
  - Bus of the Future Program

Mary explained that next steps include collaborating with stakeholders and aligning these research initiatives with the USDOT and FTA goals to create a Safety Research Roadmap to guide future research.

## Cyber and Data Security Systems Recommendation Review and Discussion

TRACS member and Cyber and Data Security Systems subcommittee lead Brian Alberts, Senior Director of Safety and Advisory Services at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), began with an overview of the past subcommittee meetings before leading a discussion of the subcommittee’s draft recommendations. The main discussion themes among TRACS members were:

- FTA’s cybersecurity role
- Rules, regulations, and guidance on cybersecurity
- Cybersecurity integration into transit agencies
- Cybersecurity products, services, and vendor procurement guidance
- Cybersecurity research, resources, and learning materials.

The full committee confirmed the subcommittee’s drafted edits that were discussed. It also prompted discussions about identifying existing gaps in current cybersecurity systems, across varying transit systems, such making cyber-attack reporting scalable to various agencies; developing hard copy paper versions of safety checklists instead of solely digital versions; and the involvement and cost of cybersecurity insurance.

## Advancing Rider and Worker Safety Recommendation Review and Discussion

Advancing Rider and Worker Safety subcommittee lead and TRACS member Raymond Lopez, Deputy Executive Officer of Corporate Safety at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, began with an overview of the past subcommittee meetings before leading a discussion of the subcommittee’s draft recommendations. The main discussion themes among TRACS members were:

- Research and development of a standardized conflict de-escalation training course and/or self-defense training course
- Consistent and accurate data collection, improved reporting, and sharing research data among transit agencies
- Improved security features for vehicles and facilities such as barriers and silent alarms
- Supportive community partnerships and involvement
- Research to advance understanding of customer and worker safety and how transit safety committees can provide support

Due to structural differences between smaller and larger transit systems, there was also discussion about how to define best practices when there may be varying needs and challenges based on the location or size of the system.

## Q&A and Closing Remarks

Bridget Zamperini, TRACS Program Manager, closed the meeting with a summary of the next day’s activities and reminders for room assignment changes, and expressed gratitude for the engagement of the TRACS members throughout the sessions.

## Day Two

### TRACS Member Attendance:

Committee Members		
Edward Abel	Laura Karr	Patrick Preusser
Brian Alberts	Jim Keane	Reggie Reese
Johanna Cockburn	Thomas Lamb	Adam Sharkey
Beverly Edwards	Brian Lapp	Justin Sobeck
Rebecca Frankhouser	Raymond Lopez	Lisa Staes
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Sharen Janzen	Elaine Luo	Thomas Kuczynski
Christian Vasquez	Jason Snyder	Michael P. Ralsky
Gal Geffen-Frenkel		

## Day Two – Introduction

Bridget Zamperini, TRACS Program Manager, started Day Two of the meeting with welcoming remarks, and the TRACS members were provided an opportunity to discuss their affiliation and background.

### FTA Safety Initiative Update

Joe DeLorenzo, TSO Associate Administrator and Chief Safety Officer and TRACS DFO, gave an update to TRACS members on how their efforts help to inform FTA actions. One of the inputs for FTA's Safety Risk Management (SRM) program have been, and will be, the recommendations from TRACS. Key priorities for TSO are:

- Reduce assaults on workers and riders
- Publish Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans final rule and updated National Safety Plan
- Use data to inform safety and oversight decision-making

Joe shared the timelines for FTA's regulatory updates, and highlighted how TRACS's work has informed the Transit Worker Hours of Service and Fatigue Risk Management Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), and the initiation of FTA's planned Transit Worker Public Safety Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) and Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection (RWP) NPRM. Joe also reviewed key safety advisories where TRACS input was supportive, such as:

- Safety Advisory 23-1: Bus-to-Person Collisions
- Safety Advisory 22-4: Suicide Prevention Signage on Public Transit

In addition, Joe mentioned the Cybersecurity Assessment Tool for Transit (CATT), which assists small and mid-sized transit agencies in self-assessing their cybersecurity preparedness. FTA is collaborating with DHS's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to provide secure means for transit agencies to report incidents, phishing attempts, malware, and vulnerabilities.

### Subcommittee Breakout Sessions

Following the FTA Safety Initiative update, the three subcommittees moved into breakout sessions to refine their respective recommendations and build upon the feedback each subcommittee received from the full committee the previous day. These breakout sessions involved discussion of each subcommittee's topline recommendations to FTA and the possible actions that FTA could take to implement such recommendations.

The Volpe Center support team will incorporate updates from these breakout sessions into each subcommittee's report to FTA prior to TRACS members' approval and submission of reports to FTA.

### Public Comments

Following the subcommittee presentation and discussions, members of the public were given the opportunity to share their comments. The following summarizes the public comments:



**Gal Geffen-Frenkel, Regulatory Manager, CorrActions:** Gal commented on driver fatigue and how current solutions for detecting and preventing fatigue related accidents have limitations. Gal commented that CorrActions has demonstrated its ability to detect fatigue with a smartwatch or smartphone. Gal stated that this would help prevent accidents in real time and optimize the hours of service and employee shifts according to commercial and safety needs.

## Conclusion and Action Items

Prior to closing the meeting, Bridget Zamperini, Mike Green from the Volpe Center, and TRACS members discussed next steps and upcoming activities to finalize and submit the committee's reports.

Mike provided an overview of the timeline for the Volpe Center support team to incorporate TRACS members' feedback and solicit their approval of the updated reports in early 2024. Bridget discussed the process for submitting the reports to FTA in early February and the publication process for the reports. She also previewed the second tasks for each subcommittee, as follows:

- Reducing Bus Collisions: Define the barriers for agency implementation and determine how FTA can support agencies in implementing mitigations.
- Cyber and Data Security Systems: Research and identify safety concerns regarding Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs), Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and public transit interactions, and recommend FTA actions and policies to mitigate those hazards.
- Advancing Rider and Worker Safety: Develop recommendations that define transit accessibility hazards, best practice mitigations, and how FTA can support safe and accessible transit.

Work on these tasks will begin in the spring of 2024. The TRACS members will have one year to develop recommendations supporting these focus areas.