



# Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletter

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## Message from the Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues:

It is officially spring, and I hope that you have been enjoying the warmer weather. With the 2023 conference season underway, TSO attended several industry events around the country. In late February, Division Chief Jeremy Furrer spoke at the South West Transit Association Annual Conference in Aurora, Colorado and in early March, Deputy Associate Administrator Angela Dluger addressed the Teamsters Passenger Transport Division Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. These in-person events are valuable opportunities for FTA and the transit industry to discuss how we can work together towards our shared goal of creating safer transit systems across America.

Transit riders are often vulnerable to roadway users before and after using public transportation. In February, the USDOT announced a [National Roadway Safety Strategy Call to Action Campaign](#), and FTA is asking transit agencies to commit to the Call to Action. Thank you to all the agencies that joined the campaign. I also want to thank the American Public Transportation Association and the Community Transportation Association of America for their early adoption of the campaign. This effort reinforces that it is everyone's responsibility, including FTA and the transit community, to reduce serious injuries and deaths on our roadways and encourages commitments from transit agencies from across the country. Read more about the campaign on page 4.

Earlier this month, FTA hosted a [webinar](#) on the new [Cybersecurity Assessment Tool for Transit \(CATT\)](#). The webinar included a demonstration of the tool and a Q&A session. The tool aims to develop and strengthen public transit organizations' cybersecurity programs so they can better identify risks and prioritize mitigation activities. If you have any questions about the CATT, please contact [Raj Wagley](#), General Engineer in the Office of Infrastructure and Asset Innovation.

Lastly, in late February, FTA hosted a fiscal year 2023 Oversight Tracking System (OTrak) recipient pilot group kickoff. OTrak is FTA's system of record for program oversight data. For the first time, FTA recipients will have access to the system to view oversight reports and submit information directly to FTA. This includes submitting corrective actions and viewing and downloading oversight final reports. The pilot participants will help FTA identify and fix any user issues prior to the full launch in October 2023.

As always, I look forward to our work together to create a safer transit system for riders and workers.

Sincerely,  
Joe



**Joe DeLorenzo**  
Associate Administrator for  
Transit Safety and Oversight  
and Chief Safety Officer, FTA

## FTA at Transit Industry Events



Top photo clockwise: Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen and Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo spoke at the APTA Legislative Conference; Division Chief Jeremy Furrer at the South West Transit Association Annual Conference; and Deputy Associate Administrator Angela Dluger addresses the Teamsters Passenger Transport Division Conference.

FTA recently attended multiple industry events.

In late February, Office of System Safety, Safety Policy and Promotion Division Chief Jeremy Furrer attended the [South West Transit Association Annual Conference](#) in Aurora, Colorado. He spoke at the general session about cybersecurity awareness, transit worker assault, FTA's rulemaking efforts and the National Roadway Safety Strategy. He also spoke with Transportation Security Administration staff on a safety and security panel and provided updates on recent FTA safety activities.

In March, Deputy Associate Administrator Angela Dluger traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada for the [Teamsters Passenger Transport Division Conference](#) where she discussed the latest FTA safety updates.

In mid-March, Associate Administrator Joe DeLorenzo and Office of Program Oversight Director Hope Jensen participated at the [American Public Transportation Association \(APTA\) Legislative Conference](#) in

Washington, DC. They provided a safety update and an overview of grant reviews and findings at the APTA Federal Procedures and Regulations Subcommittee Meeting.

See presentations from these events and other FTA conference presentations on FTA's [webpage](#).

## How Transit Agencies Can Prevent Human Trafficking

In 2018, Shirley Russell, a bus driver for Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, was on her regular bus route when she noticed men harassing a 14-year-old girl. She sprang into action and [stopped a possible abduction](#) by getting the girl to board the bus and then shutting the bus door. Shirley's quick thinking illustrates how transit workers can help prevent human trafficking across the country.

Human trafficking survivor Shamere McKenzie shared at the USDOT Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking Public Meeting in 2019, "Before I was forced by my trafficker to drive, we would take the Metro-North train from New York to work in strip clubs in Connecticut. At least four of us would take the train. Each dressed in skimpy outfits and stiletto heels around 11 a.m. each day. It was obvious we were not going or coming from a dance club. We were instructed to catch a date on the train (get someone to purchase sex). This was not difficult."

These two instances illustrate how transit workers and riders can help prevent human trafficking nationwide and how traffickers utilize public transit to exploit their victims.

According to the "Combating Human Trafficking in the Transportation Sector," USDOT's [Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking 2019 final report](#), some strategies to prevent human trafficking include comprehensive policies, training and campaigns for public awareness. In addition, the report stresses the importance of leadership and frontline transit workers and the critical roles they play, whether that means establishing a reporting protocol or recognizing human trafficking characteristics while using public transit.

Transit agencies can review the recommendations for local transportation authorities and the Quick Implementation Guides for Transportation Stakeholders from the [Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking 2019 final report](#). Lastly, anyone can call the National Human Trafficking Hotline (888-383-7888) or 911 if they suspect a human trafficking incident. For more information, visit the [Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety Initiative webpage](#) or watch the [Human Trafficking Prevention in Tribal Communities Webinar](#).

## Meet the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety Member: Jim Keane



**Jim Keane**

General Manager, Operations Safety,  
Port Authority of New York and New  
Jersey

The Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) provides information, advice and recommendations on transit safety to the U.S. Transportation Secretary and FTA Administrator. TRACS is comprised of a diverse panel of professionals representing a variety of stakeholders and interest to cooperatively address transit safety issues.

**What is your background within the transit industry?** My first experience working in transit was a summer job at the Port Authority Midtown Bus Terminal in Manhattan as a Red Cap. I helped bus passengers move their baggage to and from their buses. It was a great learning experience that provided me with the opportunity to assist people traveling and those unfamiliar with the New York metropolitan area. The temporary summer job became permanent, and over the years I held various operational and supervisory positions.

**Why did you join TRACS?** TRACS has always interested me as it provides the opportunity for transit safety concerns that the Secretary of Transportation and FTA Administrator identify to be reviewed in depth by people that have day-to-day responsibility for safely operating transit services. I appreciate the wonderful opportunity to serve not only on TRACS, but also as TRACS Chairperson.

**What do you look forward to most as part of TRACS?** I look forward to working with fellow transit professionals from across our nation to address rider and worker safety, reducing bus collisions and cyber and data security systems for transit. As the TRACS Chairperson working closely with Vice Chairperson Lisa Staes, we will collaborate with our committee colleagues working on the three subcommittees to address these significant areas of concern and develop meaningful recommendations for improvements.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** Exciting! My family immigrated to the U.S. and where we had come from did not have any public transit at the time. My first memory of using public transit was when I was a child traveling with my mum and sister to visit the Palisades Amusement Park in Cliffside Park. I was amazed by the speed and how easy it was to get from place to place.

**What has been your most significant achievement to date?** My most significant achievement for myself and so many of my colleagues would be the rebuilding of the World Trade Center Site and Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) World Trade Center Commuter Railroad Terminal. Just when we thought we had everything moving towards completion, Superstorm Sandy impacted our region causing significant damage. Sandy's storm surge flooded the two PATH tunnels connecting the World Trade Center to Jersey City's Exchange Place Station and I was tasked to coordinate and closely collaborate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Navy, a specialized Navy contractor, the Fire Department of the City of New York, Johnson City Fire Department, Port Authority and PATH staff. Working with such a dedicated team of professionals focused on removing flood waters from the below river tunnels was truly an honor. We got the job done safely without any injuries working in challenging conditions.

**What made you interested in pursuing a career in public transportation safety?** When I first started working at the Port Authority bus terminal, I witnessed a fatal accident that caused me to question and reflect on how these events could have been prevented. That incident, coupled with several coworkers being injured on the job, caused me to develop a greater interest in safety with a hyperfocus on accident prevention. Public transportation has many moving parts and it requires many dedicated people to work together. As I have often discussed with my colleagues, it only takes a nanosecond to be injured, but it takes many years to recover and, in some cases, a full recovery is never seen. Focusing on doing things thoughtfully and correctly the first time can ensure we all return home safely to our loved ones.

## National Roadway Safety Strategy Announces Call to Action Campaign



On February 3, 2023, the USDOT launched the [National Roadway Safety Strategy \(NRSS\) Call to Action campaign](#). The campaign encourages stakeholders to commit to specific actions in 2023 to reduce serious injuries and deaths on roadways.

The Call to Action campaign marks the first anniversary of the NRSS, a comprehensive approach to significantly reduce serious injuries and deaths on the Nation's highways, roads and streets. Through the NRSS, USDOT is committed to a national vision of zero roadway fatalities and identified priority actions in pursuit of five Safe System approach objectives: [Safer People](#), [Safer Roads](#), [Safer Vehicles](#), [Safer Speeds](#) and [Post-Crash Care](#).

The Call to Action campaign invites stakeholders across the public, private and non-profit sectors to embrace and commit to specific actions supportive of the NRSS vision of eliminating roadway fatalities. Specifically, the Call to Action campaign encourages stakeholders to share how they are: taking steps to actively reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries on America's roads and streets; expanding the adoption of a Safe System approach and a Zero Fatalities vision, and transforming how our Nation thinks about road safety and fatalities. Transit agencies had until March 17 to make a call to action commitment. For more information, visit the [NRSS Call to Action webpage](#).

## FY2023 Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) Safety Training Available

[Registration](#) is open for the fiscal year 2023 TSI safety training courses for transit personnel. These courses also support FTA grantees subject to the [Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCTP\) regulation](#) with initial training and refresher training requirements.

- [FTA Safety Training Page](#) — outlines training requirements and available training courses. Contact [FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov](mailto:FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov) for more information about course offerings, Individual Training Plans, credit for non-FTA sponsored coursework and other safety-training related matters.
- [FTA-Sponsored Training Courses](#) — provides information on FTA-sponsored FY2023 training delivered by the TSI.
- [TSI Course Schedule](#) — includes TSI safety training courses for transit personnel to support FTA grantees subject to the [PTSCTP](#) regulation with initial training and refresher training requirements. In addition to PTSCTP bus and rail courses, training includes courses for bus, rail, general transit safety and transit crime prevention and emergency management. The availability of in-person TSI courses depends upon each host's local guidance. Contact TSI at [TSI@dot.gov](mailto:TSI@dot.gov) or 405-954-3682 for more information. TSI can verify the status of scheduled courses and assist with any other course-related questions.
- [Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative Related Training](#) — offers virtual Assault Awareness and Prevention (AAP) and Violence in the Transit Workplace (VTW) courses, provided by the National Transit Institute (NTI). The AAP and VTW courses support the FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative. Transit agencies can also use the AAP course to fulfill the new [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirement](#) for de-escalation training. Contact NTI at [nti\\_info@nti.rutgers.edu](mailto:nti_info@nti.rutgers.edu) or 848-932-1700 with any questions.





# Urbanized Area Size Changes and Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Requirements

This article provides information for transit agencies that serve an urbanized area (UZA) that changed size based on the 2020 Census. On December 29, 2022, the Census Bureau published a [Federal Register Notice](#) announcing urban areas based on the 2020 Census. Among transit agencies that are required to have an Agency Safety Plan (ASP) under the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation (49 CFR Part 673), three transit agencies that previously served large UZAs now serve small UZAs, while ten transit agencies that previously served small UZAs now serve large UZAs.

## What does a UZA size change mean for an agency?

If the UZA(s) an agency serves changes size, this may affect its PTASP requirements. Most of the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law changes to the PTASP requirements](#) apply to transit agencies based on the size of the UZA(s) they serve and whether a transit agency receives federal assistance under the Urbanized Area Formula Program (49 U.S.C. § 5307).

## How does an agency identify the UZAs it serves and their size?

Consult the National Transit Database's [2021 Annual Database Federal Funding Allocation](#) file, which shows which UZAs transit agencies serve. *Note: This file does not reflect recent UZA population changes based on the 2020 Census. Visit the [Crosswalk of 2020 Census Changes/Population](#) table to check the size of the UZA(s) an agency serves.* A small UZA is an urbanized area with a population of less than 200,000. A large UZA is an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more.

## How do the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law PTASP requirements differ depending on UZA size?

These requirements apply to agencies that must have an Agency Safety Plan (ASP) under the PTASP regulation. The table below lists the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's new PTASP requirements for agencies serving small UZAs and for agencies serving large UZAs.

<b>Transit Agencies Serving Only Small UZA(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop or update the ASP in cooperation with frontline employee representatives.</li> <li>Address strategies to minimize exposure to infectious diseases, consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or state health authority guidelines.</li> </ul>
<b>Transit Agencies Receiving 49 U.S.C. § 5307 Funding and Serving One or More Large UZA(s)</b> <b>* If an agency serves a large UZA, even if it is not the primary UZA or the agency is not headquartered in that UZA, that agency must meet the requirements for an agency serving a large UZA.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Safety Committee that is convened by a joint labor–management process and consists of an equal number of frontline employee representatives and management representatives and is responsible for the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approving the ASP and any updates to the ASP;</li> <li>Identifying and recommending risk-based mitigations or strategies necessary to reduce the likelihood and severity of consequences identified through the agency's safety risk assessment;</li> <li>Identifying mitigations or strategies that may be ineffective, inappropriate, or were not implemented as intended;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Continued from page 5

### Transit Agencies Receiving 49 U.S.C. § 5307 Funding and Serving One or More Large UZA(s)

- Identifying safety deficiencies for purposes of continuous improvement; and
- Establishing performance targets for the agency's risk reduction program.<sup>1</sup>
- Establish a risk reduction program.
- Ensure that the agency's comprehensive safety training program includes maintenance personnel and includes de-escalation training for maintenance personnel, operations personnel, and personnel directly responsible for safety.
- Address strategies to minimize exposure to infectious diseases, consistent with CDC or state health authority guidelines.

### What resources are available to help agencies develop or update their ASPs?

The [PTASP Technical Assistance Center](#) (TAC) Resource Library provides resources to help agencies develop and update their ASPs, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#), an [ASP Checklist for Bus](#), [ASP Checklist for Rail/SSOA](#), [templates](#) and an [ASP Directory](#) that provides links to peer ASPs that agencies may review for reference. The PTASP TAC also offers voluntary ASP reviews. For more information or technical assistance, call 877-827-7243 or email [PTASP-TAC@dot.gov](mailto:PTASP-TAC@dot.gov).

- [FTA's 2020 Census: Resources and Information webpage](#)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law webpage](#)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Updates to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Requirements](#)
- [Webinar: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Changes to Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan \(PTASP\) Requirements](#)
- [Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan FAQs for New Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Requirements](#)

<sup>1</sup>Performance targets for a risk reduction program are not required to be in place until FTA has updated the National Public Transportation Safety Plan to include the performance measures required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

## FEMA Transit Security Grant Program Applications Now Open

The [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) Transit Security Grant Program](#) applications are now open until 5:00pm ET on Thursday, May 18, 2023. The grant provides funding to eligible public transportation systems to promote sustainable, risk-based efforts to protect critical transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism, major disasters and other emergencies. For fiscal year 2023, the program will provide \$93 million to eligible public transit systems.

The application review process is outlined in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity Fiscal Year 2023 Transit Security Grant program](#).

To learn how to apply for the grant program, visit the [Transit Security Grant Program webpage](#).

## FTA Employee Spotlight: Vanaaisha Pamnani



**Vanaaisha Pamnani**

Program Analyst, Office of System Safety,  
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

**How would you explain your job to someone you have never met?** I am a program analyst who helps develop and promote safety policy and guidance for transit agencies to ensure that public transit systems are safe for those who use them, operate them and cross paths with them.

**What were you doing before this role?** Before this role, I worked in the media and legal field. I was an assistant producer for an entrepreneurial reality pitch show and worked as a legal assistant for an intellectual property law firm.

**What's your favorite moment of your professional career so far?** My favorite moment in my professional career was connecting with entrepreneurs on the reality pitch show. It was refreshing and inspiring to see how entrepreneurs came up with ideas to improve access and equity within their respective industries.

**What was your first time using public transit like?** My first time using public transit was when I was five years old. I was with my mom, aunt and cousin and we took Amtrak from San Francisco, California to Seattle, Washington. I remember being in

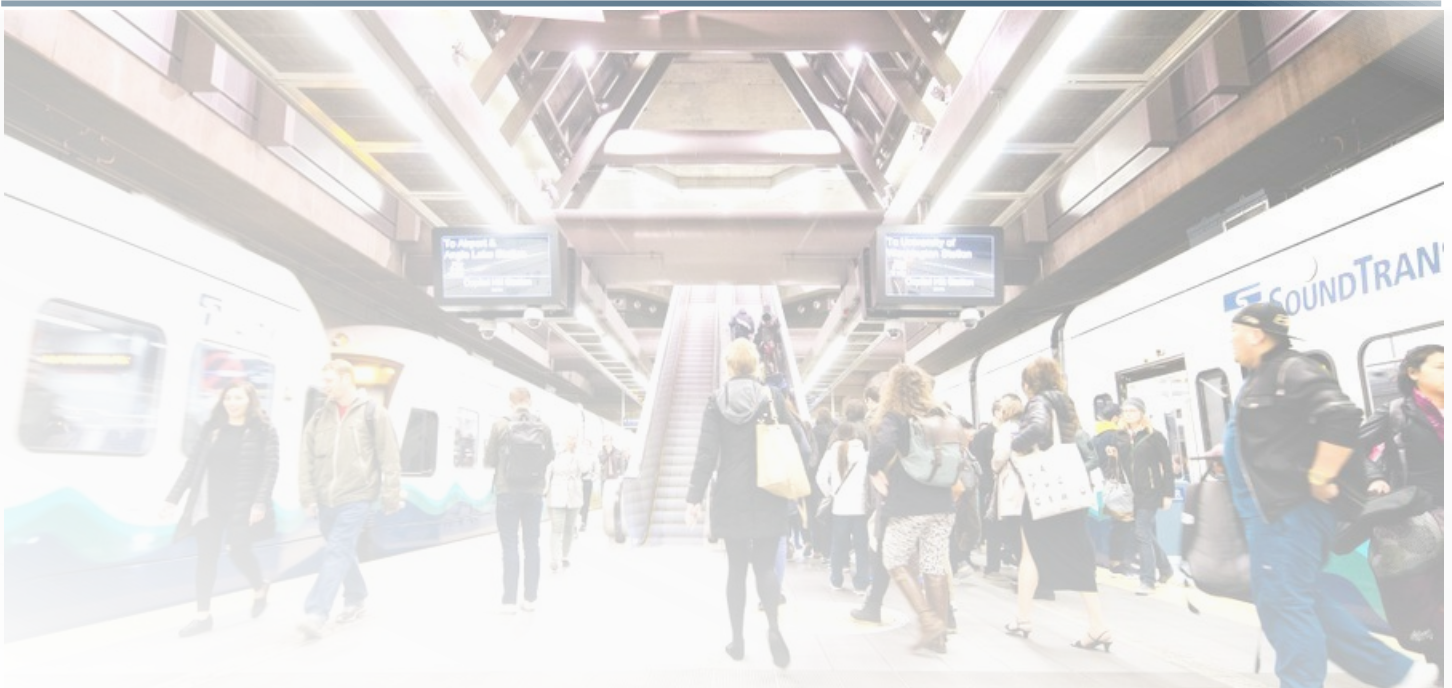
awe of the sleeper car and took in the views of the Pacific Northwest.

**What people or experiences have shaped you?** Working as a student assistant at the Cross Cultural Centers at the California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo opened my eyes to how advocacy can create change (for the better) and as a result, sparked my interest in policy and public service.

**What fictional family would you like most to join?** I would most like to join the Baker family from the movie "Cheaper by the Dozen" because it would be fun pulling elaborate pranks with my siblings.

**If you could take a month to travel anywhere, where would you go?** I would like to travel to Spain because I love the culture, food, art and architecture.

**If you could only pick three foods for a month, which foods would you choose?** Sushi, tacos and Sweetgreen salads.





U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Transit Administration**

Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Transit Safety and Oversight  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Access the [FTA Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight Newsletters](#).

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## Upcoming FTA TSO Office Speaking Engagements

### [Lifesavers Conference](#)

April 2–4, 2023 | Seattle, WA

### [APTA Mobility Conference](#)

April 23–26, 2023 | Minneapolis, MN

### [CTAA Expo and State DOT Roundtable](#)

May 21–25, 2023 | Oklahoma City, OK

### [APTA Rail Conference](#)

June 11–14, 2023 | Pittsburgh, PA

## Save the Dates: SSO Quarterly Call

May 17, 2023 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

August 16, 2023 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

November 15, 2023 | 3:00–4:30 pm ET | Virtual

*The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. Grantees and subgrantees should refer to FTA's statutes and regulations for applicable requirements.*