

Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS)

# December 2024 Meeting Minutes

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**Conference Date and Time:**

December 4, 2024 (10:00 AM EDT – 5:00 PM EDT)

December 5, 2024 (9:00 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		
Brian Alberts	Laura Karr	Ashley Porter (virtual)
Johanna Cockburn	Jim Keane	Reggie Reese (virtual)
Joseph D'Elia	Thomas Lamb (virtual)	Adam Sharkey
Beverly Edwards (virtual)	Brian Lapp	Justin Sobeck
Rebecca Frankhouser	Raymond Lopez	Lisa Staes
David Harris	Rachel Maleh	Gardner Tabon
Molly Hughes	Karen Philbrick	
Donna Johnson (virtual)	Patrick Preusser	

### Federal Support Attendance:

FTA	Contract Support	Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center)
Joe DeLorenzo	Justin Bouyer	Marvin Agyen
Jeremy Furrer	Kim Devilla	Meghan Boydston
Sara Richmond	Stephanie Rhoades	Jake Butler (virtual)
Richard Wong	Reid Unison	Leila Cesic (virtual)
Bridget Zamperini	Abigail Wolfgram (virtual)	Don Fisher
		Michael Green
		Maggie Harger
		Paul Jones III
		Sean Laffey (virtual)

### Public Attendance:

Public Attendees		
Stig Oliver Buch (virtual)		

## Day One – Introduction & Welcoming Remarks

The goal of the meeting was to bring together Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) members in person and virtually to discuss subcommittee goals, hear formal presentations, conduct working sessions, and receive feedback from all members on each subcommittee's draft recommendations.

Bridget Zamperini, TRACS Program Manager, initiated the meeting with welcoming remarks, a safety briefing, and roll call.

### Remarks from Matt Welbes, FTA Executive Director

Matt Welbes focused his discussion on the important work that TRACS accomplishes through its meetings, reports and recommendations. Since its inception in 2009, TRACS has written 16 reports that have included 124 recommendations. These reports and recommendations are crafted in a way that the FTA team can use and operationalize them to promote transit safety. For example, reports have emphasized a lack of safety culture across the industry and how this can lead to many preventable injuries and deaths, leading to specific and targeted actions that support reducing incidents. FTA is grateful for the many hours of thoughtful work that go into each report and recommendation.

### Remarks from TRACS Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Joe DeLorenzo, Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) and Chief Safety Officer

Joe DeLorenzo began with a discussion of how the Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO) safety work will continue into the next administration. On the regulatory side, accomplishments this past year have included new Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) rules. Next year, the focus will shift to implementation, including enforcement and technical assistance.

Next, Mr. DeLorenzo discussed the TRACS recommendations, specifically addressing themes of each of the three subcommittees. Overall points of communication included the following:

- Recommendations may be difficult to implement in government and take time and patience.
- It would benefit transit professionals to pay close attention to the new PTASP rule over the next year.
- Bus-to-person safety should be addressed as much as possible at the agency level.
- Educating operators and community members is equally important.
- Comments from the Hours of Service Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking highlighted a gap in FTA's data at the agency level.

Following the talk, there was a short question-and-answer session that addressed the topics of rulemaking, modal risk profiles for worker assault, Safety Management Systems (SMS) reports, and safety plans for rural communities.

### Presentation from Angela Dluger, Director, Sector Cyber Coordination, Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), USDOT

Angela Dluger, Director of the Office of Sector Cyber Coordination, which serves as the principal advisor to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), presented an overview of her office's role in enhancing cybersecurity within the Department of Transportation (DOT). She

underscored the increase in cyber threats targeting transportation systems, infrastructure, and communications, and emphasized that cybersecurity is inseparable from safety in the USDOT Strategic Plan.

The OCIO is the lead advisor on DOT cybersecurity, coordinating engagement across the DOT and collaborating with Federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the Department of Commerce (DOC). The OCIO works to develop a unified strategy for cybersecurity and assist in creating cyber risk assessments for the transportation sector. These measures all contribute to the strategic goal focused on enhancing transportation system resilience and preventing disruptions from cyber-attacks.

Additionally, the OCIO supports incorporating cybersecurity into the discretionary grant-making process and develops resources like cybersecurity self-assessment tools to help transportation organizations assess and mitigate risks. The FTA has published its own self-assessment tool aimed at guiding mid-size and small agencies in determining their cybersecurity posture.

Ms. Dluger concluded her presentation with a question-and-answer session. Key points are as follows:

- **Question:** Who has primary responsibility in determining cybersecurity directives?
- **Answer:** TSA has broad oversight of transportation security, but only specific rail and public transit providers have requirements.
- **Question:** Are there formal recommendations on how to report cyber incidents, particularly for smaller agencies?
- **Answer:** There is no formal recommendation, but the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) website has resources to support transit agencies. While CISA has expressed interest in supporting agencies reporting cyber incidents, unless the transit agencies are subject to TSA requirements, they are not required to report.
- **Question:** Is there a tool for small- to mid-sized agencies?
- **Answer:** In 2022, FTA deployed the Cybersecurity Assessment Tool for Transit (CATT). It is a pdf-style self-assessment document that poses questions to the user and is designed to identify vulnerabilities. Upon completion, the tool uses the input to highlight vulnerabilities on which the transit agency should focus.

### Update from Jim Keane and Lisa Staes, TRACS Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Jim Keane thanked the members and FTA support staff for their support. Lisa Staes then provided an overview of the program and acknowledged the time and effort from the members who meet regularly and often to align their work and discussions with the committee tasks. She also acknowledged the guest speakers that have attended the meetings and shared their expertise with the subcommittee members, helping them refine the recommendations. Finally, Ms. Staes announced a couple of changes that occurred since the June 2024 meeting. She noted that Joseph D'Elia, the newest TRACS member, is now an active member of the Reducing Bus Collisions subcommittee, and Brian Lapp is now serving as chairperson of the Reducing Bus Collisions subcommittee.

Mr. Keane closed by thanking Ray Lopez for his leadership as chairperson of the Advancing Rider and Worker Safety subcommittee, Brian Alberts for his leadership as chairperson of the Cyber and Data Security Systems subcommittee and Mr. Lapp for his leadership as chairperson of the Reducing Bus Collisions subcommittee.

## Reducing Bus Collisions Recommendations Review and Discussion from Brian Lapp, Subcommittee Chair

Brian Lapp started the session with a review of the subcommittee tasks. Its first task covered the mitigations to prevent bus-to-person and bus-to-POV collisions. Recommendations focused on these mitigations were submitted to FTA in February 2024. Currently, the subcommittee is focused on a second task that includes defining barriers for agency level implementation of these mitigation strategies. Over the past nine months, the subcommittee has discussed topics like operator burnout and Confidential Close Call Reporting Systems (C3RS). Following this discussion, Mr. Lapp outlined the subcommittee's history of guest speaker discussions and resources. He then addressed each of the following seven draft recommendations from the subcommittee, noting that a barrier to implementation may be a gap between operations and safety professional staff:

- Establish a safety training program specifically for senior leadership.
- Consider the unique scheduling practices currently common in the transit industry when finalizing Hours of Service (HOS) regulation.
- Ensure safety as a value is clearly communicated and quantified when researching best practices for bus design/retrofits.
- Increase education and awareness around how transit agencies can fund safety projects.
- Create a resource library of safety marketing materials for agency use.
- Publish a Request for Information (RFI) to identify best practices for involving safety departments in service management to ensure adequate recovery time.
- Fund a research project to identify best practices for agencies utilizing Confidential Close Call Reporting (C3RS).

Mr. Brian Lapp then discussed the next steps for subcommittee discussion:

- HOS regulations for Federal agencies.
- Increasing awareness of funding for safety-related projects.
- Involving safety departments in service management.
- Best practices for C3RS.

As Mr. Lapp concluded his presentation, the group engaged in an in-depth question-and-answer session. Topics and key points discussed during this session included the following:

- Utilizing the C3RS Program at Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) as a framework for a similar strategy for FTA.
- Extending safety training to senior management, most likely through the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI).
- Inviting labor leaders to be a part of conversations around safety and training opportunities.
- The expansion of the definition and content of safety to include psychological safety, in addition to physical safety.
- The relationship between hiring retention and an hours-of-service regulation.
- The diversity in scheduling practices across transit agencies.
- A transit agency example of scheduling practices, including consistency in establishing minimum working windows, maximum shifts, consecutive days off, and reducing the number of split shifts.
- Risk management systems to address driver fatigue.
- The relationship between the physical built environment experienced by operators and

driver fatigue.

- The age of the workforce (this point is discussed later in the Reducing Bus Collisions subcommittee breakout and was determined to receive less emphasis).
- Changes in commuting patterns since the COVID-19 Pandemic and its implications for transit agencies.
- The relationship between housing costs, driver commutes, and implications for individual wellbeing.
- Employment through ride hailing services by operators that increases hours behind the wheel.

## Cyber and Data Security Systems Recommendation Review and Discussion from Brian Alberts, Subcommittee Chair

Brian Alberts, the subcommittee chair, started the session with a review of the task on which the subcommittee is working: Research and identify safety concerns regarding Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and recommend FTA actions and policies to mitigate those hazards. Over the past several months, the subcommittee hosted several guest speakers and had lengthy discussions about this topic before compiling seven draft recommendations as follows:

- Provide guidance to agencies on addressing radio frequency concerns early on in the planning stages.
- Require the reporting of cybersecurity incidents that surpass the \$25,000 in damages limit.
- Include cybersecurity needs and risk models for automated vehicles.
- Research existing driver-assist technologies.
- Host a cybersecurity hackathon.
- Explore alternative approaches to automated vehicle testing.
- Create transit-specific evaluation metrics for cybersecurity.

Mr. Alberts then discussed the next steps for subcommittee discussion, which include:

- Determine the origin of the \$25,000 threshold, how it is determined, and if it needs to be updated.
- Further refine the idea of a hackathon and how transit agencies and FTA would be involved. Additionally, the group will discuss what other parties could be involved or open to participate.

## Advancing Rider and Worker Safety Recommendation Review and Discussion from Ray Lopez, Subcommittee Chair

Ray Lopez, the subcommittee chair, started the session reminding the members that his group has been tasked with developing recommendations that define transit accessibility hazards, best practice mitigations, and how FTA can support safety and accessible transit. He then reviewed the array of topics that the subcommittee addressed over the past nine months, which included the following:

- Sensory impaired riders
- Safety culture
- Training

- Technology and the human-machine interface
- Funding for safety
- Route planning
- Industry research
- Accessibility perspectives

Following this review, Mr. Lopez outlined the subcommittee's history of guest speaker discussions and resources and then presented the subcommittee's draft recommendations as follows:

- Prepare for and prevent thermal events in transit systems, which may have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities or vulnerable individuals.
- Improve accessibility on transit vehicles.
- Improve accessibility of transit stops and stations.
- Promote a safety culture among transit agencies to improve the safety and accessibility of transit systems.
- Improve accessibility of transit systems.
- Leverage technology to improve accessibility in transit systems.
- Conduct research to understand best practices for improving accessibility in transit systems.

The members discussed the first recommendation about thermal events at length, particularly the challenges associated with exhausting hot gases and smoke from the confines of the passenger compartments. Additionally, the members discussed how quickly the toxic gases pass through the vehicle, placing both the passengers and drivers at risk, noting a lack of best practices for evacuating people. They also discussed the need for fire resistant materials.

Mr. Lopez closed by saying that the subcommittee's outstanding work includes 1) a review of implementation suggestions associated with each recommendation and 2) clarifying questions from the members and the technical writing team.

### Subcommittee Breakout Sessions

The three subcommittees moved into breakout sessions to further refine the draft recommendations.

### Closing Remarks

Bridget Zamperini thanked the members for their contributions during the working sessions and reminded the committee members that Day Two begins at 9:00 AM EDT.



## Day Two

### TRACS Member Attendance:

Committee Members		
Brian Alberts	Laura Karr	Ashley Porter (virtual)
Johanna Cockburn	Jim Keane	Reggie Reese (virtual)
Joseph D'Elia	Thomas Lamb (virtual)	Adam Sharkey
Beverly Edwards (virtual)	Brian Lapp	Justin Sobeck
Rebecca Frankhouser	Raymond Lopez	Lisa Staes
David Harris	Rachel Maleh	Gardner Tabon
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Sara Richmond	Reid Unison	Leila Cestic (virtual)
Richard Wong	Abigail Wolfgram (virtual)	Don Fisher
Bridget Zamperini		Michael Green
		Maggie Harger
		Paul Jones III
		Sean Laffey (virtual)

### Public Attendance:

Public Attendees		
Stig Oliver Buch (virtual)		

## Day Two – Introduction & Welcoming Remarks

Bridget Zamperini, TRACS Program Manager, started Day Two of the meeting with welcoming remarks.

### TSO Data Presentation – Ivey Glendon, TSO-10 Chief of Safety Assurance and Risk Management

Ivey Glendon introduced the establishment of SMS as a linear process. This process includes understanding the currently accessible data, asking the correct questions, identifying patterns and trends, and finally creating a realistic inventory of safety risks.

Ms. Glendon then walked through the process that resulted in a notice for public comment posted in the Federal Register on October 31, 2024, on the National Transit Database (NTD) Proposed Reporting Changes and Clarifications for Report Years 2025 and 2026. Of interest to TRACS are changes to the cybersecurity reporting requirements. The proposed clarifications include clear guidance on cybersecurity reporting requirements and is open for public comment through

December 30, 2024. Ms. Glendon encouraged members to broaden their definition of infrastructure to include not just physical assets, but information technology as well.

The presentation then moved into the subject of “substantial damage,” since the notice also proposes to clarify how to apply the “substantial damage” threshold to cybersecurity events. Members also discussed whether the \$25,000 threshold for damages is appropriate for cyber events. The conversation then shifted to how transit agencies may address cyberattacks and what specifically constitutes a service disruption. It was noted that NTD guidance specifies that a service disruption would include disruptions of the normal operations of transit facilities, personnel, information, or computer/telecom systems.

Many TRACS members indicated that they were not aware of this notice in the Federal Register and would have appreciated some notice. The presentation and discussion ended with encouragement to continue conversations with NTD program managers about cybersecurity.

### Subcommittee Breakout Sessions

Following the TSO Data presentation, the three subcommittees moved into breakout sessions to continue discussions on sub-topic areas of interest. These breakout sessions were used to further refine the subcommittee recommendations.

### Advancing Rider and Worker Safety Update

TRACS subcommittee chair Ray Lopez reviewed the subcommittee’s themes but highlighted the subcommittee’s recommendation to “promote safety culture among transit agencies to improve the safety and accessibility of transit systems.” In particular, he focused on a recommendation to develop a national program for emerging professionals to gain skills and understand qualifications for careers in the transit industry. To support this theme, he made the following points:

- The draft report focuses on promoting a safety culture within transit agencies to improve both safety and accessibility.
- Partnerships with educational institutions, such as regional colleges, community colleges, and universities, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are important for developing safety professionals.
- FTA can expand existing certifications, specifically the TSI certification, to include a safety path. This may require allocating more resources to TSI to expand the curriculum.
- It is recommended to include front-line employees, like drivers, in the training process and potentially move them into certification programs.
- Hands-on experience can be provided through SMS liaisons, and agencies should focus on staff retention.
- FTA can reach out or encourage transit agencies to reach out to younger audiences, like high school students, to promote careers in transit safety, including working with local high schools to provide opportunities.
- Collaboration between TSI and other resource centers should be improved.
- There is an industry need for self-paced training options since existing courses are insufficient to meet the current demand. The subcommittee also recommends tracking the gap between training needs and availability.
- Improved communication tactics are needed, including targeting subrecipients and evaluating communication effectiveness. This includes copying subrecipients on award information, including them in planning meetings and utilizing existing networks.

Mr. Lopez also discussed the next steps and indicated that they may need to schedule two more subcommittee meetings before finalizing the recommendations.

### Reducing Bus Collisions Update

TRACS subcommittee chair Brian Lapp led a discussion of the subcommittee's refined recommendations. The main discussion points among the TRACS members included:

- FRA resources should be considered when evaluating best practices for scheduling and hours of service.
- It's important to take different variables into account that could have implications on day-by-day scheduling.
- Reaching out and educating the families of bus operators through educational resources is important, especially for those who work overnight.
- Agencies are willing and able to share best practices regarding how they include safety in design and procurement standards, but publicizing this information may be a challenge.
- Transit agencies should capitalize on opportunities to connect small transit agencies with larger transit agencies to share best practices on safety and design.
- Transit agencies could explore the option to utilize a timestamp button/feature on the telematic to document near miss events.

Mr. Lapp indicated that the subcommittee's recommendations are close to final, and they will be ready for submission to FTA in early February.

### Cyber and Data Security Systems Update

TRACS subcommittee chair Brian Alberts began with discussion of the subcommittee's recommendation themes. The main discussion points among the TRACS members were:

- Clarifying the reporting threshold for cybersecurity events as required by NTD including the financial threshold of \$25,000. This conversation was precipitated by the morning presentation from FTA on upcoming NTD changes.
- Including cybersecurity needs and risk models for automated vehicles.
- Researching existing driver-assist technologies.
- Recommending that FTA develop tabletop simulated cybersecurity exercises that allows agencies to test their cybersecurity capabilities.
- Exploring alternative approaches to automated vehicle testing.
- Providing guidance to agencies on addressing cyber communication system failures.
- Recommending that FTA research impacts of changing staff roles and workforce transitions in autonomous systems.
- Creating a reference page for cyber security jurisdictional oversight across Federal agencies.

Mr. Alberts also discussed the next steps and indicated that the subcommittee will be able to finalize the recommendations during the next subcommittee meeting.

### Public Comments

Following the subcommittee breakout sessions, non-members were given the opportunity to share their comments. Stig Oliver Buch from the public said that he was grateful to have had the

opportunity to listen to the meeting dialogue over the past two days.

### TRACS Next Steps and Future Tasking – Bridget Zamperini

Bridget Zamperini facilitated a brief discussion on the next steps. This meeting is the last time the full committee will gather prior to submission of the final reports to FTA by February 7, 2025.

FTA recently published a TRACS membership solicitation and received 75 applications for 24 spots on the committee. FTA will review the applications and nominate members for appointment. The Secretary of Transportation will appoint new members in 2025.

Subcommittee reports are due to FTA by February 7<sup>th</sup> (originally February 2<sup>nd</sup>), and drafts are requested a few weeks in advance so that TRACS members can provide comments prior to a committee vote.

### Closing Remarks

Bridget Zamperini closed Day Two of the meeting with an expression of appreciation for the productive dialogue throughout the meeting. Jeremy Furrer also shared his gratitude on behalf of FTA.