

Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) Meeting Minutes

March 29-30, 2016

National Association of Home Builders

1201 15th Street NW

Washington, DC 20005

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Attendance

TRACS Members in Attendance

Herman Bernal, Arizona Department of Transportation

Bernadette Bridges (TRACS Chairperson), Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)

Jeffrey C. Carlson, Via Mobility Services

Toby Fauver, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Attended March 29 morning session)

David Goeres, Utah Transit Authority (via phone – partial attendance)

David Hahn, American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

David Harris, New Mexico Department of Transportation

Susan Hausmann, Texas Department of Transportation

Jackie Jeter, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)

Timothy H. Kelly, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Metro)

Cheryl Kennedy, New York City Transit Authority (NYCT)

Vijay Khawani, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Paul King (TRACS Vice Chairperson), California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

Jeanne Krieg, Eastern Contra Costa Transit

Eric Muntan, Miami-Dade Transit

Rad Nichols, Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST)

Ronald W. Nickle, Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority

Alvin Pearson, Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA)

Harry Saporta, Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet)

Scott A. Sauer, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)

Nagal Shashidhara, New Jersey Transit

Brian Sherlock, King County Metro Transit, and Amalgamated Transit Unions

Edward Watt, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)

Victor B. Wiley, Florida Department of Transportation

Non-TRACS Members

Beth Bonini, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Daren Gilbert, California Public Utilities Commission

Kerry Legg, New Flyer

Lisa Staes, Center of Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida

Thomas Streicher, Strukton Rail (Amsterdam)

Jim Wincek, New York City Transit

FTA/Volpe Center

Brian Alberts, FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

James Bartell, FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

Candace Key, FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

Thomas Littleton, FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

Adrienne Malasky, FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

Sara Richmond, FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight

Lynn Spencer, FTA Office of System Safety

Dan Stillson, FTA Office of System Safety

Bruce Walker, FTA Office of Chief Counsel

Matthew Welbes, FTA

Jeffrey Bryan, U.S. DOT Volpe Center, TRACS Facilitator

Katherine Millette, U.S. DOT Volpe Center

Andrew MacDougall, U.S. DOT Volpe Center, Meeting Recorder

Welcome and Overview

The facilitator welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of the agenda, followed by a short welcome from the Committee Chairperson, Bernadette Bridges.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Executive Director Matthew Welbes welcomed the TRACS Committee Members and thanked them for volunteering to be on this committee. He stated that the work being done by the FTA supports the public in getting to school, going to the doctor, and making an hourly wage to support a family. He said the expertise of the TRACS committee is critical to moving safety forward, especially following the implementation of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which requires the FTA to enact a rulemaking that will help prevent operator assaults. Having made recommendations regarding operator assaults during the July TRACS meeting, he thanked Committee Members for giving the FTA a head start on the project.

TRACS and the FAST Act

Thomas Littleton, Associate Administrator of the FTA Office of Transit Safety and Oversight (TSO), welcomed the nine new members of the TRACS Committee to the meeting. He highlighted the importance of the FAST Act as a five-year funding bill, allowing FTA to hire additional manpower and to create a more robust program in a timelier manner.

He called 2016 the Year of Rulemaking, with much of the work from the past three years coming to fruition to serve as the framework for the future. He noted the importance in having finalized the State Safety Oversight (SSO) Rule, and highlighted several rules that were in their final stages of editing. Several Committee Members voiced their displeasure regarding the FTA's shift from focusing on fatigue to operator assaults, but he noted transit worker assaults needed to be addressed specifically because Congress issued a deadline.

He also noted the FTA's ongoing commitment to data collection, mentioning that data allows those in the industry to discover problems that had not yet been noticed. Data allows those in charge to act immediately when clear and present danger is evident and to inform rulemaking policies as preventative measures.

Closing remarks centered on culture, highlighting that many people think they know what safety culture means, but when talked through practices and reporting mechanisms, they balk at the protocol. Part of moving safety forward is having the industry recognize what things it can contribute to a successful safety culture. This culture change cannot and will not come from a rulebook or a training seminar.

Proposed Plans

The first presentation of the day was given by Candace Key, Acting Chief of the FTA's Safety Policy and Promotion Division, and Brian Alberts, Program Analyst and Policy Lead at FTA-TSO Office of System Safety.

They identified two plans currently in the rulemaking process as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21): the National Public Transportation Safety Plan (NSP) and the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) rule. The NSP will establish the FTA's safety goals, proposed safety criteria, voluntary minimum safety standards, and guidance on safety management systems (SMS), while the PTASP will be a transit agency plan for their proposed SMS implementation and compliance with the NSP and the Public Transportation Safety Program. The comment deadline for both dockets ended on April 5, 2016.

Key acknowledged that the national wellbeing is dependent upon safe, reliable public transportation as ridership is increasing in fiscally constrained times. The NSP will guide collective efforts to manage safety risks as a proactive approach to safety risk management. As a primary author on the PTASP proposed rule, Alberts spoke to the FAST Act requirement that each operator of a public transportation system that receives FTA funding develop a PTASP plan, or it could be drafted by each state if the agency requested. Each state would certify the plan, and each agency would certify annually that it has a plan compliant with that ruling. Each agency would be given one year to draft a plan from the day the rule goes into effect.

The Committee argued that stipulations within these rules would conflict with several rules already enacted. Specifically, within PTASP, the Committee voiced its concern that each mode of transportation (e.g. rail, bus) offers its own set of unique requirements which may be in conflict if governed by the same document. There were examples given of contractors and SSOs giving two different analyses of the same plan, forcing members of transit leadership into mediator roles.

Committee members also voiced their concerns about 49 CFR Part 674 (the SSO Rule) and its close proximity to the PTASP one-year deadline; that three years would not be enough to implement all that is required. It was agreed that the overall timeline would be taken into consideration.

Safety Culture

A pair of afternoon presentations highlighting safety culture and performance measures were orchestrated by Jeff Bryan, the facilitator.

Using several psychological models, he explained the complex relationship between safety culture and organizational development. He said that when something goes wrong, people often look at the immediate factors—drivers, pedestrians, etc.—but there are grander organizational issues that must be taken into consideration as well, such as maintenance, fatigue, training, and if the goals of a safety culture are effectively communicated.

Those in attendance spoke at length about transit culture, where distinctions are not often made between mistakes, human error events, and woeful misconduct.

Committee Members agreed that often times the success of a safety culture is hindered by financial and operational limitations. The safety of passengers and operators should not hinge on financial capabilities, though programs like refresher training courses are often the first to be cut when money becomes tight. Committee Members expressed feeling pressure from the public, the media, and politicians when attempting to incentivize workers. There was an agreement that behavior dictates a successful safety culture, and in turn operational success. Several Committee Members cited communication and engagement by management with first-line employees as reasons for behavior and attitude changes among workers.

Performance Measures

Much of the discussion surrounding performance measures focused on the deficiencies of the information collected by the National Transit Database (NTD). Members of the FTA spoke about building a new platform, using the recommendations of the Committee to shape what information is analyzed. In addition, the facilitator asked the Committee to consider what information would be helpful to move the Safety Management System (SMS) forward at the local, national, and state levels.

Committee Members were in agreement that lagging incidents on a small scale could hint at a leading indicator on a grander scale. There are also incidents that happen with no lagging indicators, leaving

leading indicators to hint at potential dangers. There are few direct causes for the incident that has already happened (lagging) and an infinite number of causes for the incidents that has yet to happen (leading) making proactive assessments of risk difficult. While the group recognized that leading indicators were essential for proactive, preventative measures, they also recognized the difficulty. One suggestion was to focus on the processes and procedures i.e., process safety, that if reliably followed, accidents would be prevented.

There was also interest from the Committee in collecting data regarding employee injuries. States are given the option to adopt regulations put forth by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), meaning some states do not collect information regarding employee injuries, though the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires reporting of certain injuries under their jurisdiction. The Committee expressed a great interest in sharing employee injury data to find potential correlations between injuries and the operation of a transit system.

Safety Management System (SMS)

FTA-TSO Office of System Safety Director Lynn Spencer gave a presentation on the SMS protocol the agency has adopted, highlighting the pilot with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) that has been conducted over the past year. She said the pilot has been very informative to the FTA, who will be putting out guidance documents, e-tutorials, and other training tools based on the information the administration has gathered.

She did highlight the complexities that come with implementing SMS, including the construction of policy documents that will outline how the SMS is organized. If the safety department carries most of the weight, they bear most of the responsibility; if the SMS group is positioned too low, they become the fallback program. She said that safety is owned by everyone, from management to maintenance staff. The responsibility of safety can't solely live within the safety department.

Committee Members cautioned her about jumping to conclusions due to the results of one pilot. They reiterated that each agency is unique, and that the final products may require more input from industry professionals. The Committee also confirmed varying levels of confusion on both the federal and agency side, whether through a lack of understanding or outright resistance. To prevent the guidance from coming across as prescriptive, it was recommended that the FTA contact SMS experts to critique the documents prior to wider distribution. She agreed to take that on as an action item, and reiterated that the teaching tools are meant for guidance in adaptation, not word-for-word implementation.

SMS Exercise

The facilitator began Day 2 by highlighting the topics of safety culture and performance measures, which the committee discussed the day before.

Each Committee Member was then asked to write their Top 3 safety concerns across all modes of transit. Of those concerns, Committee Members were asked to designate which concern would be most impacted by an improved safety culture, and which concern would be most impacted by data shared among agencies. Committee Members had the option of selecting the same item for both.

The following, in no particular order, were the most common concerns of the committee:

Safety Culture (Task 16-01)	Performance Measures (Task 16-02)
1. Adequacy and frequency of training	1. Safety violations
2. Preventable accidents	2. Left turn accidents
3. Mindset change regarding safety	3. Bus/Rail incidents involving pedestrians

The facilitator then asked the Committee Members and interested non-members to volunteer for one of these two subcommittees. Members of each subcommittee are:

Task 16-01 Safety Culture

Herman Bernal
Bernadette Bridges
Jeff Carlson
David Goeres
Georgina Heard
Jackie Jeter
Cheryl Kennedy
Paul King
Rich Krisak
Eric Muntan
Rad Nichols
Al Pearson
Karen Philbrick
John Samuelson
Scott Sauer – Chair
Ed Watt

Beth Bonini*
Tom Streicher*
Jim Wincek*

Task 16-02 Performance Measures

Toby Fauver
David Hahn – Chair
David Harris
Susan Hausmann
Tim Kelly
Vijay Khawani
Jeanne Krieg
Jeffrey Lau
Ron Nickle
Harry Saporta
Nagal Shashidhara
Brian Sherlock
Victor Wiley

Darren Gilbert*
Lisa Staes*

*** Denotes non-TRACS member**

Safety Culture Working Group

The first action item for the Safety Culture Working Group will be to explain safety culture, a definition which they will agree upon in the first couple of weeks. The Working Group will then be broken up into separate subgroups to begin working on ways to incorporate key safety culture concepts into an array of organizational structures while offering it the best chance to succeed. The working drafts will then be presented to the other members of the TRACS Committee before being finalized.

With ample research on safety cultures readily available, the Working Group will zero in on best practices for the industry and how organizational culture impacts safety culture. From there, the

Working Group will look at various organizations and industries to see how they look at safety culture and how it could be applied to transit.

Members of the Working Group plan to meet again in May or June.

Performance Measures Working Group

The Performance Measures Working Group was tasked with evaluating the data that currently exists in the industry. The Working Group determined that the data currently available through the National Transit Database is not sufficient and needs to be improved, as it has the potential to assist everyone.

The Working Group will discuss and research what other industries are currently collecting for their data while identifying best practices and better criteria. There will also be a delineation of data that is important to rail and bus, as the two modes operate differently and should be treated as such. Focus will then shift to how the FTA and transit agencies can benefit from this data, and what exactly the application will be. There was a belief among the Working Group members that the application must be web-based so agencies and groups can pull data and manipulate it for a better understanding of its meaning.

Members of this Working Group will meet again April 22 with their initial results before moving through the next steps. The facilitator cautioned the Working Group regarding their focus, urging it to identify what the functional requirements are, not necessarily how to implement them.