

## Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Safety  
Training

2-3

FTA Announces \$4  
Million to Support  
Human Trafficking  
Awareness and Public  
Safety Initiative

4

FTA Issues Safety  
Bulletin on Between-  
Car Barriers

5

Coming Soon: FTA  
Program Oversight  
Tool Enhancements

6

TRACS Meeting Held  
March 26-27, 2019

7

Data Spotlight: Rail  
Transit Events by  
Probable Cause

8

TSO Profile

9

Upcoming TSO  
Speaking Events,  
Workshops, and  
Webinars

10

### Message from the Acting Associate Administrator

Dear Transit Colleagues,

This month I would like to highlight FTA's \$4 million public safety initiative to address human trafficking and crime prevention within our nation's transit systems. Many Americans are unaware of the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States, and that transit often plays a role in the movement and potential identification of victims. [FTA's initiative](#) supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's human trafficking initiative, working with transportation stakeholders across all modes of transportation.

FTA is providing two transit-focused funding opportunities to identify innovative strategies, develop technical resources, and increase public awareness of human trafficking and other crimes.

The funding demonstrates FTA's commitment to increase transit safety by partnering with members of the industry to identify solutions that have the potential to make a wide-spread impact. Further details on both Notices of Funding Opportunity are provided in this month's issue. I also encourage you to sign DOT's Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking [pledge](#) to demonstrate your commitment to combatting this terrible crime.

As FTA's Chief Safety Officer, I value the experience and ideas our transit partners bring to the table to address critical transit safety issues. Last month, FTA reconvened the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS), welcoming five new and several returning committee members representing diverse transit backgrounds. I look forward to receiving the committee's recommendations on transit safety technologies and innovations that FTA can help support.

In March, I also attended the American Public Transportation Association's Legislative Conference with other members of the Office of Transit Safety and Oversight and participated in the Federal Procedures, Regulations, and Funding, and Financing and Tax Policy Legislative Subcommittee meetings. It was a pleasure to hear from members of the transit industry on important policy initiatives, including the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation. It is FTA's intention to provide as many [resources](#) as possible to support the successful implementation of these plans. Please reach out to my PTASP Implementation Team or me directly with your ideas on how we can best support you.

Sincerely,  
Henrika Buchanan



Henrika Buchanan, Acting  
Associate Administrator for  
Transit Safety and Oversight

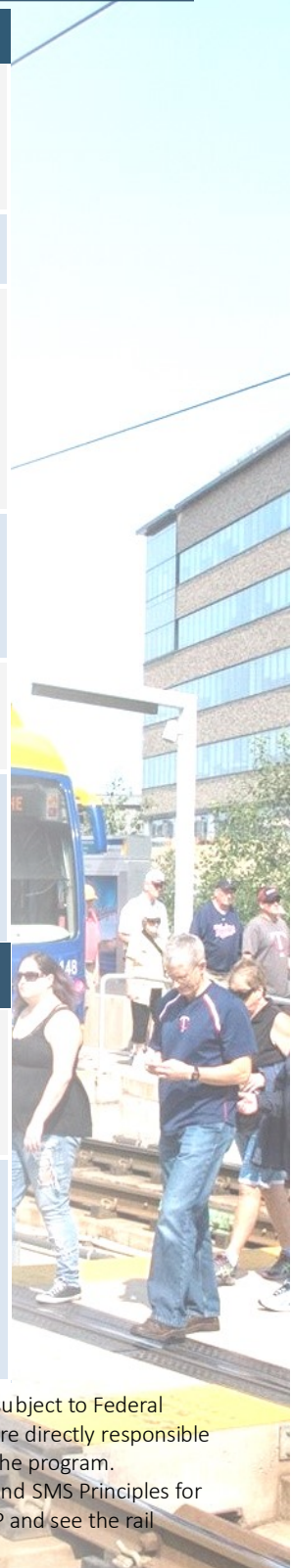
## Upcoming Safety Training

FTA sponsors several safety training courses, including those listed below. The [complete schedule](#) of training courses offered through September 2019 is available on FTA's safety website. Please contact the FTA-sponsored [Transportation Safety Institute \(TSI\)](#) at (405) 954-3682 for safety training registration and course information. Individuals may contact FTA's Safety Promotion Team at [FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov](mailto:FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov) to request an [Individual Training Plan](#) (ITP). Participants in the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program have three years to complete their ITP requirements.

Courses Required by the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (RAIL)*		
Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies	Charlotte, NC Los Angeles, CA Ft. Worth, TX	May 7-10 Jul. 9-12 Jul. 23-26
SMS Awareness (eLearning)	On demand at <a href="http://tsi.dot.gov">tsi.dot.gov</a>	Available 24/7
SMS Principles for Transit	Ft. Myers, FL Pittsburgh, PA San Francisco, CA Chicago, IL San Bernardino, CA	May 20-22 Jun. 12-14 Jun. 19-21 Jun. 26 - 28 Jul. 31-Aug. 2
SMS Safety Assurance	Virtual live training	Apr. 30 Jun. 5 Jul. 17
Transit Rail Incident Investigation	San Carlos, CA Philadelphia, PA	May 6-10 Jun. 3-7
Transit Rail System Safety	San Francisco, CA Landover, MD Chicago, IL Portland, OR	Apr. 29-May 3 Jun. 10-14 Jun. 17-21 Jul. 15-19
Voluntary Courses for the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (BUS)**		
Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation	Landover, MD Indianapolis, IN Charlottesville, VA	Apr. 29-May 3 Jun. 3-7 Jun. 24-28
Transit Bus System Safety	San Jose, CA Appleton, WI Oklahoma City, OK Seattle, WA Ronkonkoma, NY	May 20-24 Jun. 3-7 Jun. 3-7 Jun. 24-28 Jul. 22-26

\*Applies to SSOA personnel and contractors who conduct safety audits and examinations of public transportation systems not subject to Federal Railroad Administration regulation, as well as rail fixed guideway public transportation system personnel and contractors who are directly responsible for safety oversight. Other safety personnel, including those from bus agencies, are encouraged to participate voluntarily in the program.

\*\*The voluntary bus program also includes Effectively Managing Transit Emergencies, SMS Awareness, SMS Safety Assurance, and SMS Principles for Transit. If you would like to participate in the voluntary program please contact [FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov](mailto:FTASafetyPromotion@dot.gov) to request an ITP and see the rail schedule above for course availability.



Training, cont. from pg. 2

Additional Courses		
Bus & Rail Courses (In Person)		
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	Phoenix, AZ	Jul. 15-16
Instructor's Course for Transit Trainers	Boston, MA Orange, CA Burlington, VT	Apr. 29-May 3 Jun. 17-21 Jul. 15-19
Reasonable Suspicion and Post-Accident Testing Determination Seminar	Culpeper, VA Clemson, SC Chicago, IL	May 10 Jun. 21 Jul. 19
Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance	Culpeper, VA Clemson, SC Chicago, IL	May 7-9 Jun. 18-20 Jul. 16-18
Transit Industrial Safety Management	Atlanta, GA Boston, MA	May 13-17 Jun. 3-7
Transit Safety & Security Audit Course	Orlando, FL	Jun. 26-28
Transit Supervisor Certification Course	San Luis Obispo, CA Gaithersburg, MD	May 13-17 Jun. 10-14
Transit System Security	Chicago, IL Everett, WA Boston, MA	May 6-10 Jul. 15-19 Jul. 29-Aug. 2
Transit System Security: Design Review	Salt Lake City, UT Phoenix, AZ	May 21-23 Jul. 17-19
eLearning Courses (Web Based)		
Curbing Transit Employee Distracted Driving	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Fatigue and Sleep Apnea Awareness for Transit Employees	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Rail Nomenclature	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7
Bus Nomenclature	On demand at tsi.dot.gov	Available 24/7

## FTA Announces \$4 Million to Support Human Trafficking Awareness and Public Safety Initiative

Every year millions of men, women, and children are sold into prostitution, domestic servitude, or forced labor around the world. Transit plays a critical role since trafficking victims are often moved using public transit, due to the low cost and limited interaction with officials. Therefore, transit agencies and employees, transportation leaders, and the public are all crucial in identifying, reporting, and preventing potential trafficking situations. FTA recognizes the need for increased public awareness and training to equip the transit industry with safety resources and strategies to take action against human trafficking and prevent other crimes that may occur on transit or in transit facilities.

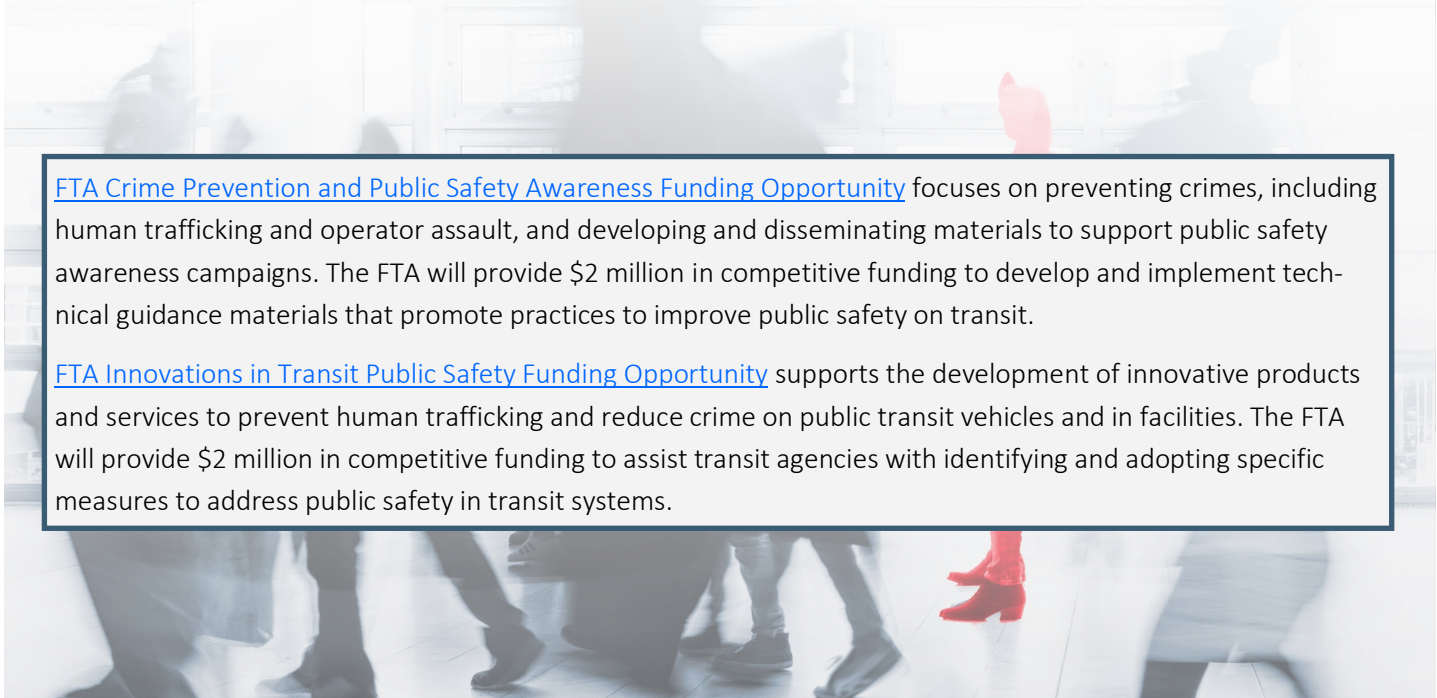
In support of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) [Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking](#) initiative, FTA [launched](#) a \$4 million public safety initiative to enhance public awareness programs and develop innovative strategies to address human trafficking and other public safety issues within transit systems. Through two funding opportunities, FTA will solicit innovative, sustainable, and replicable solutions that increase transit safety and empower transit employees and passengers to recognize and report potential instances of human trafficking.

State DOTs, state and local governments, transit providers, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to submit project proposals under two competitive funding opportunities—Crime Prevention and Public Safety Awareness, and Innovations in Transit Public Safety. The deadline to submit applications for both is May 28, 2019.

Prospective applicants must [register](#) and [submit](#) completed proposals electronically. Review the [application instructions](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information on the application process.

FTA hosted informational webinars to discuss both funding opportunities and answer questions. The webinar [recording](#) and [presentation](#) are available on FTA's webpage. You can submit questions regarding the funding opportunities to [FTAPublicSafety@dot.gov](mailto:FTAPublicSafety@dot.gov).

The U.S. DOT is committed to preventing human trafficking on all modes of transportation, including on our nation's public transit systems. For additional transit-focused human trafficking information, [videos](#), and resources, visit [FTA's Human Trafficking](#) and [U.S. DOT's multimodal human trafficking](#) webpages.



[FTA Crime Prevention and Public Safety Awareness Funding Opportunity](#) focuses on preventing crimes, including human trafficking and operator assault, and developing and disseminating materials to support public safety awareness campaigns. The FTA will provide \$2 million in competitive funding to develop and implement technical guidance materials that promote practices to improve public safety on transit.

[FTA Innovations in Transit Public Safety Funding Opportunity](#) supports the development of innovative products and services to prevent human trafficking and reduce crime on public transit vehicles and in facilities. The FTA will provide \$2 million in competitive funding to assist transit agencies with identifying and adopting specific measures to address public safety in transit systems.



## FTA Issues Safety Bulletin on Between-Car Barriers

On April 18, 2019, FTA issued a Safety Bulletin providing safety considerations associated with between-car barriers (BCBs). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires rapid and light rail transit systems use BCBs to protect blind and low-vision passengers from potential falls, such as mistaking the space between railcars as a doorway and stepping off the platform between cars onto the track bed.

ADA BCB regulations do not prescribe a standard design or specification for BCBs, and compliance may not sufficiently mitigate the safety risks for gaps between railcars. Therefore, FTA encourages State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) and rail transit agencies (RTAs) to assess BCB safety risks and mitigations currently in place, and explore ways to capture, track, and analyze incidents and near-misses associated with BCBs. RTAs may also consider BCB inconsistencies across fleets and platforms that impact their effectiveness, and BCB-related concerns when procuring new railcar vehicles or building new stations and facilities.

In May 2018, a visually-impaired passenger failed to detect a BCB and fell through a 10-inch gap onto the track bed. In response, FTA issued a Request for Information (RFI) to SSOAs to gather information on gaps between railcars and RTA compliance with ADA BCB requirements.

FTA received responses from 31 SSOAs that oversee the 65 RTAs in the SSO program. The RTAs operate 77 rail transit modal system with BCBs required for 27 (or 35 percent) of the systems. FTA used the RFI to document current practices in the industry and related concerns or accidents within the past five years. Over the last five years, SSOAs reported only one safety incident.

The [Safety Bulletin](#) is available on FTA's Safety Guidance webpage. Please direct questions regarding this issue to [Candace Key](#), Director for the Office of System Safety.





*Clockwise from upper left:*

FTA's Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Safety Oversight Team celebrates the certification of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission's State Safety Oversight (SSO) program and SSO certification on March 18, 2019

FTA's Director for the Office of Safety Review, Kimberly Burtch (center) with SSO Program Managers Tim Braxton (left) and Maria Wright (right) at FTA's SSO certification celebration.

FTA's Acting Administrator, K. Jane Williams (left), and Acting Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight, Henrika Buchanan (right), participate in the panel for the Federal Procedures, Regulations, and Funding, and Financing and Tax Policy Legislative Subcommittees at the APTA Legislative Conference in Washington, DC



## COMING SOON: FTA Program Oversight Tool Enhancements

FTA's Offices of Program Oversight and Information Technology are modernizing the Oversight Tracking System (OTrak), the official repository for program oversight data. The enhanced OTrak system will use Appian®—the same platform as [TrAMS](#)—to provide new and improved functionality to better support FTA's oversight mission.

For the first time, FTA recipients will have access to the system to complete key oversight tasks such as updating recipient contact information, uploading information request responses, submitting corrective actions, and requesting closure of findings. Recipients will also be able to view the status and progress of a review, as well as determine the status of findings and corrective actions.

These new functionalities will increase the efficiency and accountability of FTA's compliance review process. FTA is targeting recipient access during the FY 2021 review cycle after gathering additional requirements, testing, and providing training. Stay tuned for additional information and training opportunities over the next year at industry events, review workshops, and on-site recipient oversight reviews. Contact [David Schilling](#) for additional information.



## TRACS Meeting Held March 26-27, 2019

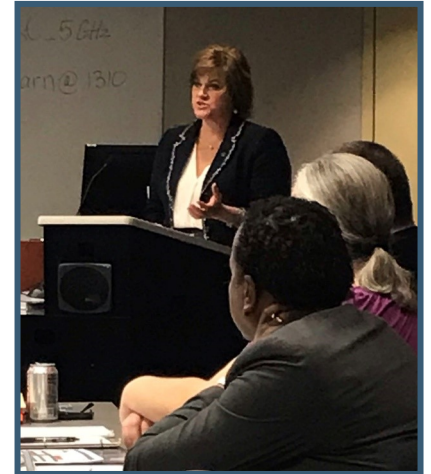
FTA held a [Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\)](#) meeting on March 26 and 27 at the National Highway Institute in Arlington, VA. This was the group's first meeting since FTA [re-established the committee](#) through a [new charter](#). TRACS is FTA's federal advisory committee that provides information, advice, and recommendations on transit safety to the agency. [The committee](#) is comprised of transit professionals, including State Safety Oversight Managers and operations managers, as well as safety, policy and research experts.

FTA's Acting Administrator, K. Jane Williams welcomed the committee and tasked the committee to review and assess emerging technologies and innovations that have the potential to significantly improve safety in public transportation. In addition, she provided her perspective on how past TRACS research and recommendations have informed important FTA regulatory decisions and safety measures.

Over the past decade, TRACS has advised on critical safety issues, including evaluating the best State Safety Oversight models, improving the collection and analysis of safety data, and developing a framework and recommendations to implement Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans.

At this meeting, the committee reviewed [25 Safety Focus Areas](#) and will evaluate three areas to provide recommendations on safety technology innovations that FTA can implement in the public transportation sector: employee reporting systems, roadway worker protections, and suicide and trespassing incidents—the leading cause of transit fatalities.

You can review the [meeting presentations and agenda](#) on the TRACS webpage. Meeting minutes will be available on the website within 90 days of the meeting date. You can submit written comments or suggestions to [TRACS@dot.gov](mailto:TRACS@dot.gov). The next TRACS meeting will be announced in the [Federal Register](#) and should occur later this year.



FTA's Acting Administrator, K. Jane Williams, welcomes committee members at the TRACS meeting



FTA's Acting Administrator, K. Jane Williams, with the TRACS committee members and members of FTA's safety staff

## Data Spotlight: Rail Transit Events by Probable Cause

The Transit Safety and Oversight Spotlight includes a “Data Spotlight” to share safety data trends and highlight data sets that may help the industry identify safety performance targets for their [agency safety plans](#).

This month, we focus on the probable causes of rail transit events as reported by State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs). Additional data is available in FTA’s [Rail Safety Data Report](#). Questions? Please contact FTA’s [Paulina Orchard](#).

FTA requires SSOAs to investigate or require the investigation of any event exceeding the thresholds defined in the [SSO Rule](#).<sup>\*</sup> SSOAs report the probable cause of each event to FTA as part of their annual report. This analysis groups probable causes into the five categories shown in the table to the right.

Between 2007 and 2015, **Public Behavior** accounted for more than half (51 percent) of events and slightly less than half (47 percent) of reported injuries. Most of these public behavior events were collisions at grade-crossings. For a more detailed look at these events, please see the [March Data Spotlight](#).

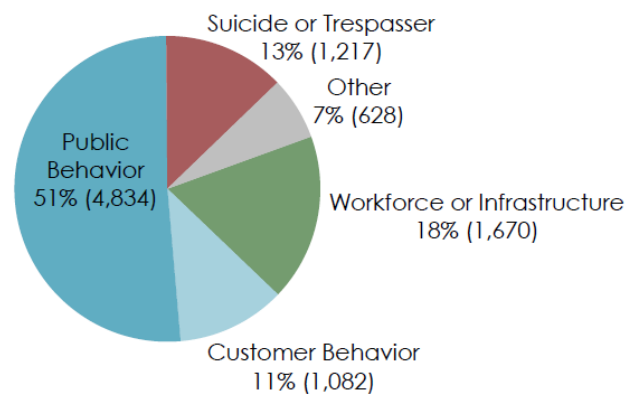
**Suicide or Trespasser** events accounted for about 13 percent of events but resulted in 62 percent of fatalities. The May Data Spotlight will examine these events in greater detail.

**Workforce or Infrastructure** issues accounted for nearly one in five (18 percent) of events between 2007 and 2015. Thirty-two fatalities and 1,435 injuries (nearly one quarter of all reported injuries) resulted from these events.

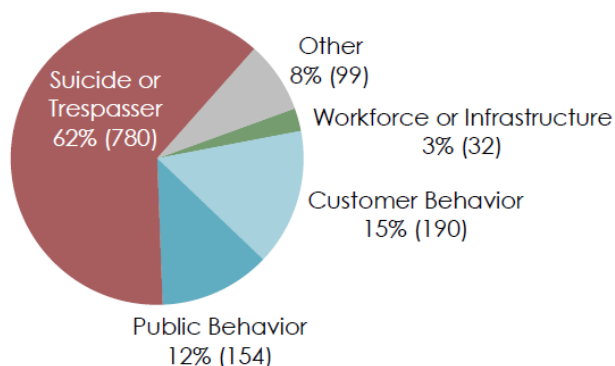
**Customer Behavior** and **Other** causes accounted for the remaining 18 percent of events, accounting for nearly one in four (23 percent) of all fatalities and about one in five (21 percent) of reported injuries. These include events such as assaults and homicides on transit agency property or customers slipping and falling in transit stations.

Probable Cause Category	Description
Workforce or Infrastructure	Substandard condition of transit agency vehicles and infrastructure or employee rules compliance
Customer Behavior	Actions of customers
Public Behavior	Actions of the public, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and people in other motor vehicles
Suicide or Trespasser	Suicide attempts and trespassing incidents
Other	Causes that do not fit in the categories above

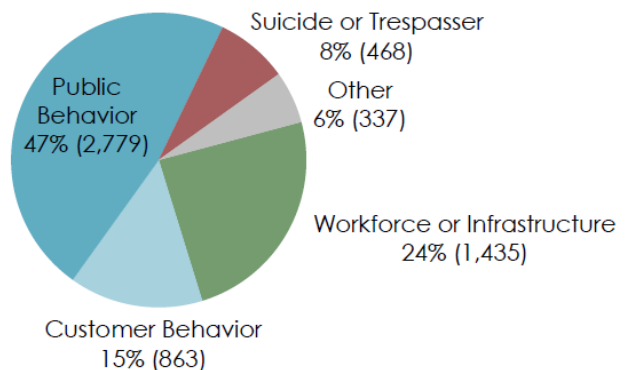
**Rail Events by Probable Cause, 2007-2015**



**Rail Fatalities by Probable Cause, 2007-2015**



**Rail Injuries by Probable Cause, 2007-2015**



<sup>\*</sup>49 C.F.R. Part 659 was in effect during this period.



## TSO Profile

*This month's profile includes a Q&A with Erin Powell, a Regional Safety Officer in the Office of Safety Review.*



Erin Powell , Regional Safety Officer,  
Office of Safety Review

**How would you explain your job to someone you've never met?** I currently work with FTA leadership to develop the processes and plans to execute the new State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) Triennial Audit Program.

**What is your favorite part of your job?** I enjoy being a part of a team that is building and executing a new regulatory program. It is fun because there aren't many opportunities presented in life to shape the implementation of a program from the ground up. I love being at the forefront of transit safety because it's meaningful and also exciting to be directly involved with a team that will improve transit safety.

**What were you doing prior to this role?** Prior to working in FTA's Office of Transit Safety, I worked in the FTA Office of Capital Project Management that oversaw the construction of major capital projects. I also served as an Air Force Civil Engineer and worked on U.S. military construction programs in Japan.

**What led you to work in transit?** I fell into transit, literally. Four years ago I had several engineering job offers in a variety of fields, such as a Wastewater Engineer or Military Construction Engineer. My position as an Oversight Engineer at FTA had the best commute, and ultimately I couldn't have picked a better agency or field as I transitioned away from my job as an Air Force Civil Engineer. I absolutely love the FTA mission because it speaks to my beliefs on building more sustainable communities.

**What are some current projects or initiatives that you or your team are working on?** Our team recently finished the certification of the 31 SSO programs and I served as the SSO Program Manager of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC). In that role, I coordinated with the WMSC to ensure their SSO program met the certification requirements under the SSO Final Rule. Currently I'm helping to build the future of SSOA compliance audits under the new requirements of the FAST Act. One of my major projects is developing an Auditor's Guide, which outlines the questions and findings FTA will ask and issue during triennial SSOA Audits.

**What is your favorite form of transportation and why?** My favorite form of transportation is transit of course! I like transit because it connects communities in ways that cars do not and builds better communities that improve lives.

**What are your hobbies and interest outside of work?** I enjoy skiing, hiking, taking care of my kids, and watching Avenger movies.

**SAVE THE DATE****Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Workshops**

The workshops will focus on the minimum requirements needed for agencies to comply with the PTASP rule (49 C.F.R. Part 673) and provide Safety Management Systems implementation strategies. Additionally, the workshops will discuss how to begin creating Agency Safety Plans, including the identification of key stakeholders to coordinate Agency Safety Plan development.

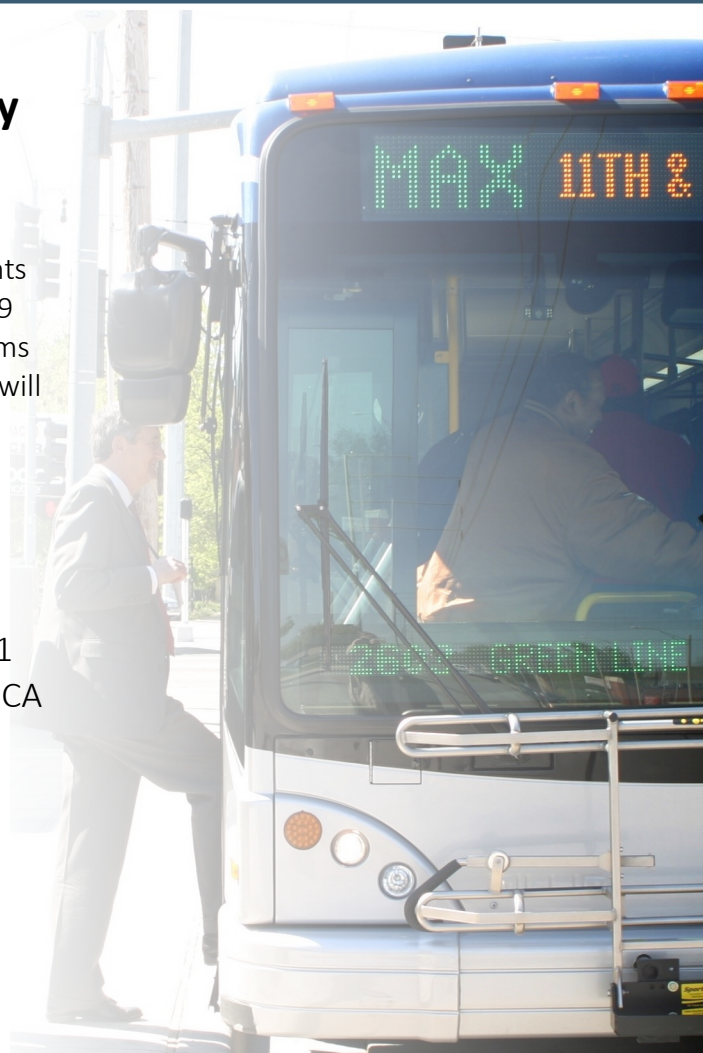
***Bus Only:***

July 23-24	August 6-7	August 20-21
Atlanta, GA	Chicago, IL	San Francisco, CA
<i>Hosted by GDOT</i>	<i>Hosted by CTA</i>	<i>Hosted by FTA</i>

***Rail Only:***

September 23  
Washington, DC  
*Hosted by FTA at the Joint SSO & RTA Workshop*

Registration information coming soon



**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

<https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/transit-safety-oversight-tso>

**Upcoming TSO Speaking Events****APTA Security Roundtable**

May 18  
Louisville, KY

**2019 Mobility Conference:**  
**APTA's Bus & Paratransit Conference**

May 21  
Louisville, KY

**CTAA Expo**

May 22  
Palm Springs, CA

**2019 APTA Rail Conference**

June 23-26  
Toronto, ON