

# Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS) Meeting Minutes

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*March 26-27, 2019*

*National Highway Institute*

**1310 North Courthouse Road**

**Arlington, VA 22201**

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## Attendance

### TRACS Members in Attendance

**Scott Sauer**, TRACS Chairperson, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)

**Pamela Fischhaber**, TRACS Vice Chairperson, Colorado Public Utilities Commission

**James (Jim) Hickey**, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

**Elayne Berry**, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

**Brian Sherlock**, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)

**David Harris**, New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT)

**Eric Muntan**, Miami-Dade Transit

**Timothy (Tim) Kelly**, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Metro)

**Joyce Rose**, WSP-Parsons Brinckerhoff

**Victor Wiley**, formerly of Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA)

**Herman Bernal**, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

**Karen Philbrick**, Mineta Transportation Institute (phone)

**Ron Nickle**, Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) (phone)

### Non-TRACS Members

**Lisa Staes**, Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR)

**Senanu Ashiabor**, Intermodal Logistics Consulting

**Paul King**, California Public Utilities Commission

**Travis Knepper**, Trapeze Group

**George Moberly**, Trapeze Group

**Velvet Fitzpatrick**, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

**David Mayer**, Washington Metrorail Safety Commission

**Marcelo Bravo**, Rail Solutions

**Stephen Berry**, Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) (phone)

**Narayana Sundaram**, American Public Transportation Association (APTA) (phone)

### FTA/Support

**Candace Key**, FTA, Office of Transit Safety & Oversight (TSO)-10 Director

**Donna Aggazio**, FTA, Stakeholder Engagement Manager

**Michael Coplen**, FTA, Safety Policy and Promotion Division (TSO-12) Division Chief

**Kara Waldrup**, FTA, TSO-10 TRACS Program Manager

**Jim Bartell**, FTA, TSO-10 Policy Program Analyst

**Nazy Sobhi**, FTA, TSO-10 General Engineer (Human Factors)

**Morvarid Zolghadr**, FTA, TSO-10 Policy Program Analyst

**Richard Wong**, FTA, Office of Chief Counsel (TCC)

**Jeremy Liu**, Guidehouse

**Alex Druy**, Guidehouse

**Mindy Forsyth**, Guidehouse

**Kristen Fredrich**, Guidehouse

**Jane Reagan**, Guidehouse

**Kim Wilson**, Accel Solutions

**Trecia Warnholz**, Accel Solutions

**Note:** Presentations and slides are available on the TRACS website:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/transit-advisory-committee-safety-tracs>

## Welcome and Overview

Ms. Candace Key, Director of the Office of System Safety with TSO, opened the committee meeting by giving welcoming remarks and introducing TRACS staff and contractors.

The TRACS Program Manager, Ms. Kara Waldrup, gave a brief overview of the two-day agenda. She led an icebreaker activity where members paired with another member and gave a brief introduction. The group reconvened and each participant introduced their partner to the larger group.

Two committee members were present via phone and presented their own introductions to the group.

## Presentation: TRACS Legislative/Rulemaking Update

Mr. Michael Coplen delivered a presentation on rulemaking updates, TRACS Recommendations and Report Inventory, and an overview of TSO Roles and Responsibilities. The presentation provided an overview of FTA's safety authorization and rulemaking and a summary of the ten published TRACS reports covering a range of topics. Mr. Coplen also provided an overview of how TRACS contributes to FTA's mission and goals. Ms. Key and Mr. Wong provided answers as to Safety Management System (SMS) integration within rail transit, the status of previous TRACS recommendations, and current statutory policy.

## Presentation: TRACS Framework and Task

Ms. Kara Waldrup provided an overview of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and the FAC Objectives. She gave a summary of the TRACS organization and responsibilities, as well as voting rules and assessing consensus. She also established the meeting ground rules for the duration of the committee meeting. Ms. Waldrup previewed the TRACS Task of reviewing emerging technologies and recommending public transportation innovations in safety that FTA can implement in support of the public transportation sector. She also reviewed the two conference objectives: first, to identify two safety focus areas from the 25 areas identified by the FTA, and second, to establish a prioritized list of technology evaluation criteria. Ms. Waldrup emphasized that the focus areas and criteria should be applicable to rail transit, nationwide, and the committee should use the four National Safety Plan performance measures as their parameters for determining a technology's impacts on safety (included in detail in the accompanying presentation.)

Discussion ensued among members centered on the focus of rail transit and concern about the exclusion of bus transit from the task. Committee members Joyce Rose and Brian Sherlock voiced

dissent in accepting the task as solely focused on transit rail and cited the charter's language of "public transportation" not transit rail. Additional arguments included the higher frequency of injuries and fatalities that occur during transit bus operations and the greater exposure (use) rate of the public to transit bus operations. The TRACS Chairperson, Mr. Scott Sauer, encouraged members to consider that many of the 25 safety focus areas apply to both rail and bus and its possible that recommendations addressing transit rail may also appropriately address bus or be minimally modified to also address. Committee member David Harris presented a counter point that of that FTA's decision to exclude transit bus from the task indicates that transit bus is a relatively safe mode of transportation.

Ms. Candace Key emphasized the FTA Acting Administrator's guidance is for the recommendations to focus on transit rail because of its higher risk for large scale catastrophic events to occur.

By conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Sauer commented that the recommendations should focus on transit rail as per the task, but the recommendations may be applicable to transit bus as well or with minor modification be applied to transit bus.

## Presentation: Safety Data Analysis

Ms. Lisa Staes from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) presented a briefing on FTA's Safety Data Analysis. Her presentation provided an overview of SMS risk-based decision making, data centric analysis of heavy rail, light rail bus, and demand response operations. She also described how SMS plays a role in FTA's policy making and gave a description of the methods used to identify transit areas of risk. The areas of greatest risk were identified under heavy and light rail, bus, demand response, focus area identification, stakeholder engagement, and potential priorities based on the data analysis. She also presented charts that provided data on safety and security events. Ms. Staes included a review of the National Transit Database (NTD), the extensive stakeholder engagement that was performed under during the development of the safety data analysis.

## Guest Speakers

### Ms. Angela Dluger, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight, FTA

Ms. Angela Dluger provided a brief update on safety priorities of the FTA and TSO. A new rule that is a key part of FTA's safety policy will take effect July 2019 and will help transit agencies better understand compliance and how to create their safety plans. Ms. Dluger praised TRACS for its contribution to important FTA safety initiatives, including examining SMS principles to help provide recommendations for safety oversight models. Ms. Dluger closed by providing a warm welcome for Acting Administrator Williams.

### Ms. K. Jane Williams, Acting Administrator, FTA

Acting Administrator, K. Jane Williams, welcomed TRACS members, both returning and new, and thanked them for their time and commitment to the FTA mission. She stressed that safety is DOT's number one priority and that TRACS' efforts will help to create greater public confidence and improve the safety of the nation's public transportation systems. Acting Administrator Williams highlighted an important FTA milestone from the previous week – the final State Safety Oversight (SSO) Program achieved certification. With this certification, FTA has successfully worked with the 30 states with rail

transit systems to strengthen and certify all 31 SSO Programs in advance of the safety deadline. Acting Administrator Williams stressed that emerging technologies play a key role to improve safety and that TRACS identifies technologies that have the most promising impacts to improve safety. Several members expressed concern to the Acting Administrator about the task focus on rail only. The acting Administrator expressed appreciation for some members' preference to include transit bus as part of the task and would consider the possibility. She also expressed concern about tasking such a broad scope of activities for the committee to accomplish within the charter timeframe.

## Presentation: Risk-Based Analysis

Ms. Lisa Staes continued her presentation on risk-based analysis and focused on methodology and findings. As part of the data analysis effort, the research team used multiple National Transit Database (NTD) reports, the 2017 National Household Travel Survey (NHTS), and the 2016 National Highway Statistics Report (NHSR)) to generate the data presented in this assessment. Ms. Staes also described how the data led to the 25 safety focus areas identified as priorities. Stakeholder engagement remains a priority for work within FTA, and the research team has remained engaged with working groups and industry stakeholders.

## Presentation: Safety Risks and Potential Mitigations

Ms. Lisa Staes provided a briefing on safety risks and potential mitigations in preparation for the following day's breakout groups and discussions. She highlighted several emerging transit safety innovations and presented some complexities to consider in the evaluation of technologies. Her presentation introduced several emerging technologies that aim to address collision events, transit assaults, and human factors. In addition, Ms. Staes informed the committee of active FTA supported research initiatives and pilot projects related to the committee's task.

## Closing Day 1: TRACS Work Plan and Discussion/Committee Member Q&A

Mr. Scott Sauer recapped the day's session topics, delivered the TRACS Work Plan, and previewed the following day's activities and expectations. The work plan includes 3 work groups, each focused on developing recommendations for one of the three focus areas. The committee discussed considering the unique skill sets of its individual members to formulate well-rounded work groups. Committee member David Harris presented an alternative option to breaking into 3 work groups which would be to work as one large work group to tackle each task sequentially rather than simultaneously. This is because of the committee's smaller membership than during previous charters. In the end, no final determination was clearly made and the chairperson and vice-chairperson will continue developing the long-term work plan giving consideration of both methodologies and convey further details about the pathway forward.

## Public Comments

Following the work plan discussion, the committee opened the floor to public comments. Please see public comments included in the attachment.

## Day 1 - Close of Business

Ms. Kara Waldrup reviewed the intended meeting outcomes and invited the committee to take copies of the presentations with them to further review that evening. Mr. Scott Sauer made any final administrative announcements and the meeting adjourned concluding day 1.

## Welcome Day 2

Ms. Kara Waldrup welcomed back attendees and reviewed the agenda for Day 2. Mr. Alex Druy recapped the Day 1 meeting minutes. Ms. Kara Waldrup briefed that following the Chair's certification of the minutes, FTA would post them to the TRACS public website.

## Breakout Groups – Working Towards Objectives 1 and 2

Day 2 of the committee meeting focused on accomplishing Objectives 1 and 2, defined below. TRACS members were split into two breakout groups, and each group focused on one of two objectives for 45 minutes each. Objective 1 was to develop a rank-ordered list of five potential focus areas from the list of 25 provided by FTA, and Objective 2 was to expand on an initial list of technology evaluation criteria and prioritize them. Each breakout group was moderated and facilitated by a TSO-10 staff member and contractor. The two groups then reconvened and the TRACS Chairperson led a large group discussion to identify the final list of focus areas.

### Objective 1: TRACS Safety Focus Areas

The three TRACS Safety Focus Areas identified by the committee are:

1. Trespasser and Suicide Fatality Prevention
2. Right-of-Way Worker Protection and Equipment
3. Employee Safety Reporting Program (renamed from Close-Call Reporting)

A fourth area, Employee Security/Assault Protection, was identified as an area of significant interest to committee members as well. The TRACS members agreed to consider this fourth area if one of the three identified above does not have enough available data or input to adequately evaluate it.

### Objective 2: TRACS Technology Evaluation Criteria

The safety criteria that the TRACS members identified as highest priority are:

1. Potential impact to safety
2. Cost/economic considerations
3. Potential impact to service (e.g., operations, etc.)
4. Readiness of the technology to be implemented
5. Ability for the technology to further SMS
6. Risk-based safety data quality
7. Systems integration
8. Technology management

## Public Comments

Following the large group discussion, the committee opened the floor to public comments.

TRACS then heard from the public and took their comments and questions into consideration. The discussion included identifying which previous TRACS reports could be used as data input and talking about the application of the technology evaluation criteria to the safety focus areas. Members discussed the importance of not duplicating existing efforts related to the focus areas. The Chairperson cautioned against not using such reports as input for the committee to consider.

It was noted during the discussion that Volpe and the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) are conducting studies related to employee safety reporting systems.

Please see the attachment where additional public comments are captured.

## Day 2 - Close of Business

Objectives 1 and 2 (Three Safety Focus Areas and Final Criteria) were unanimously agreed upon by TRACS committee members. The group will continue to refine its final evaluation criteria in future conversations. The group will respond to the email survey on date preference for future meetings.

FTA expressed its appreciation to TRACS members for serving on the committee and is looking forward to supporting the TRACS program as its work progresses.

The TRACS Chairperson did not have any additional final administrative announcements and the meeting adjourned.