



2024 TTA State Conference, Expo and Rodeo

Below are some of the confirmed break-out sessions for this year's conference:

Monday, March 18th, 2024

Breakout Sessions

Micro Transit, Major Mobility

How VIA Metropolitan Transit is changing the game with on-demand service – Rm-209

Monday: 10:00-10:55 am (55 Min)

The fastest-growing sector for transit ridership in San Antonio is an on-demand service model VIA Metropolitan Transit launched in 2019, testing zone-based microtransit solutions that offer the convenience of rideshare at bus fare prices. Five years and four zones later, VIA Link service is heading toward 1 million trips as it continues an upward growth trend and 5-star rating from customers.

VIA Link is operated in partnership with RideCo to deliver modern trip options as part of VIA's "Keep SA Moving" plan for comprehensive transit improvements with innovation at the heart. VIA Link service replaced fixed-route buses with accessible vans in the upgrade to a more cost effective and productive operation with an eye toward growth. It was designed to address challenges in low-density areas with limited access to transit hubs, few public transit options, and underperforming bus routes resulting in long waits and travel times.

VIA Link is a transit success story. Since launch, VIA Link zones have produced over 790,000 trips, driven primarily by new customers traveling within the zone. VIA Link is proving right-sized transit solutions create opportunities for growth that complement traditional bus service.

Introducing microtransit service has resulted in significant cost savings for VIA, with operations in its first two zones delivering approximately 75% savings compared to an equivalent 20-minute fixed route service. Significant improvements to the passenger experience come with near-4X frequency compared to fixed routes and walking time reduced from 12 to 5 minutes.

Key Takeaways:

In this discussion, members from VIA and their partners at RideCo will discuss the on-demand model, its design, implementation, and performance in the region.

Attendees can learn how a large-footprint transit agency uses on-demand transit to solve mobility challenges in a cost-effective manner. The panel will discuss the impact of on-demand technology as an equitable and innovative solution for communities experiencing first/last-mile gaps. Attendees will learn key elements to successful on-demand deployment through a live example in the industry, including what to consider when planning deployment and the flexible range of service levers that can shape outcomes.

Presenters: TBD

Moving People – TxDOT's Vision for Transit and Active Transportation– Room 210-A

Monday: 10:00-11:30 am (90 Min)

TxDOT's Public Transportation Division is developing two statewide plans to provide mobility solutions within and between communities for people who use transit and active transportation (e.g., walk and bike). TxDOT is working with partners across the state, aligning with local and regional goals, to build a vision for the future. Hear about why the Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan and Statewide Active Transportation Plan matter and how to get involved so the SMTP/SATP support your agency and community goals.

Presenters: Tim Sorenson (CDM Smith), Theo Kosub (TxDOT), Jeff Whitacre (Kimley Horn), Greg Reininger (TxDOT)

Transit Supply and Demand Adjustments after the Pandemic – Room 210-B

Monday: 10:00 am -10:55 am (55 Min)

The team presents the latest data trends explaining the return of office occupancy, the change in Friday office occupancy, the trends in micro-transit, the adjustment of am peak services and day of week frequencies. Six case studies are presented highlighting both the new ridership records in several systems and the painfully slow return of riders in others.

Transit systems (ten bus peak to 1,000 bus peak) will find answers to frequently asked questions.

Presenter: Robert T Babbitt PLLC (Robert Babbitt and Kirk Scott)

National RTAP Resources for Rural Transit Agencies– Room 211

Monday: 10:00 am -10:55 am (55 Min)

More information is coming soon.

Presenter: Tribal Transit Program Manager, National Rural Transit Assistance Program

USDOT Drug & Alcohol Regulation Update (49 CFR Part 40) - Oral Fluid Drug Testing & More!– Room 212-A

Monday: 10:00 am -11:50 am (1 hour and 50 Min)

On 05/02/2023, USDOT's Office of Drug & Alcohol Policy & Compliance (ODAPC) published a final rule in the federal register, officially updating and changing 49 CFR Part 40, which is the official regulation for the USDOT's drug and alcohol testing program. The changes became effective June 1, 2023. Among other changes, this updated final rule amends the USDOT's regulated industry drug testing program to include oral fluid drug testing as an alternative to urine specimen drug testing. This additional methodology for drug testing will give employers a choice that will help combat employee cheating on urine drug tests and provide a less intrusive means of achieving the safety goals of the program.

Presenter: Robbie Sarles, President, RLS & Associates, Inc.

Managing People: Knowing Yourself and Others WILL Make it Easier– Room 212-B

Monday: 10:00-11:50 AM (1 hour and 50 Min)

Carl Jung said, "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." This session explores ways you can understand yourself and others better, so that your management style adapts to lead others with less tension and better results. Through discussion, exercises and demonstrations, you will be able to learn secrets that help you succeed in your relationships at work and home.

Presenter: Kristen Joyner, President, KJ Backpack, LLC

Building a Safety Culture with Countermeasures that Work– Room 209

Monday: 11:05-11:50 AM (45 Min)

Millions of workers drive or ride in a vehicle as part of their jobs, and motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of work-related deaths in the United States. All workers are at risk of crashes, whether they drive light or heavy vehicles or whether driving is a main or incidental job duty. Motor vehicle crashes are the 1st or 2nd leading cause of death in every major industry group. In 2021, 1,982 U.S.

workers driving or riding in a motor vehicle on a public road died in a work-related crash (38.2% of all work-related deaths). With driving being fundamentally one of the most dangerous tasks we do, building a culture of safety is non-negotiable.

Presenter: April Ramos, Program Manager, Roadway/Mobility, National Safety Council

Woman in Public Transportation Networking Forum– Room 210-B

Monday: 11:05 am -11:50 am (45 Min)

Women in any professional capacity are welcome to come together for a moderated discussion on the opportunities, challenges, achievements, and innovations women experience in the transit industry on a daily basis. Come prepared to share your stories and hear from your peers.

Presenter: Sarah Hidalgo-Cook, General Manager, SWART and Carmen Garcia, DART Board Member

FTA Bus Procurement Guidance and Oversight Review Updates– Room 211

Monday: 11:05 am - 11:50 am (45 Min.)

Please join FTA Region 6 for an overview of FTA's Updated Bus Procurement Guidance and hear the latest on FTA Oversight Reviews, including changes to the process, focus areas, and common findings and how to avoid them.

Presenter: Michael Doss, Regional Counsel and Gail Lyssy, Regional Administrator

Does Your Board have a Clue? – Room 212-A

Monday: 1:30-3:30 PM (2 hours)

We cannot assume that our board members know what we do, the services we provide, who we serve, or their role in achieving the agency's mission. Too often, board members are appointed to positions with little background or understanding about the agency or their role. This session is designed to help you and help them understand your agency, the services you provide, who you serve and their role.

This session will discuss the on-boarding process, the content and presentation of board packets, roles, and responsibilities and how to hold a successful Board Retreat.

Presenter: Kristen Joyner, President, KJ Backpack, LLC

Learn about the NEW Guide from the Center for Medicare Medicaid (CMS) and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Room 212-B

Monday: 1:30-3:30 PM (2 hours)

In September 2023, CMS released the Medicaid Transportation Coverage Guide, which outlines the agency's official guidance for the provision of NEMT. The Guide provides many items of note for transit agencies seeking to provide Medicaid NEMT. During this session, Robbie Sarles of RLS & Associates, Inc., will review key elements of the Guide, what it means for public transit, and how it can be a tool for transit agencies and state DOTs. Emphasis will be placed on the opportunities that this Guide provides to increase dialog with state Medicaid programs, brokers, and Managed Care Organizations regarding public transportation agencies' role in the provision of NEMT services. Ms. Sarles will also discuss federal efforts to develop new procedures for identifying the fully allocated cost of NEMT services.

Presenter: Robbie Sarles, President, RLS & Associates, Inc.

Managing Operational and Capital Costs in Rural & Small Urban Transit Systems– Room 209

Monday: 1:30-2:30 PM (60 Min)

In a time of seemingly constant cost inflation, Texas rural and small urban transit agencies need knowledge, practices, and tools to help with operational and capital cost management. This workshop takes the 2.5 days of workshop content developed by TTI with support of TxDOT, and covers:

- An overview of the Guidebook and Online course available for free.
- Foundational concepts in cost management (i.e., transit cost drivers, cost analysis and reporting).

- Managing directly operated labor and fuel costs.
- Managing vehicle costs, including maintenance and replacement.

Presenters: Michael Walk, Research Scientist and Program Manager, Transit Mobility Program, Texas A&M Transportation Institute-TTI and Kelly Blume, Texas A&M Transportation Institute-TTI

Risk Management Strategies for Public Transportation – Room 210-A

Monday: 1:30-2:30 PM (60 Min)

INSURICA is a national insurance brokerage that places over \$1 billion in annual premiums for clients across the country. Their Transportation Practice group has a niche focus within Public Transportation risk, and their team will share topics and resources that could benefit your transit system's safety planning and help to improve upon your upcoming insurance renewal. This work session is not a sales pitch, it's 60 minutes of information that can benefit your transit system provided to you by industry experts.

Chris Connacher is a Public Transportation insurance underwriter with RT Specialty. Chris will share market perspectives with you and answer questions related to liability insurance for public transit systems.

Segment 1 – Trends in Public Entity Transit Risk | Panel Discussion

Segment 2 – How Fleet Maintenance can prevent losses and claims

Segment 3 – Incident Investigation and Reporting – How do you handle incidents?

Segment 4 – Have you heard of a Self-Insured Retention (SIR) liability insurance program?

Presenter: Chris Connacher - Senior Vice-President, Public Entity Practice - RT Specialty, Kevin Riley, Transportation Safety & Risk Consultant, INSURICA, Stan Gregory - Property & Liability, Safety & Risk Consultant - INSURICA and David L. Cooper, Partner - INSURICA – Public Transportation Insurance Program (PTIP)

Growing Your Own Through Apprenticeship: A Joint Approach to Building Skills for the Frontline Workforce– Room 210-B

Monday: 1:30-2:30 PM (60 Min)

This breakout session explores the collaborative approach of apprenticeship programs in nurturing and developing talent for frontline roles. Participants will discover the benefits and strategies of cultivating a skilled workforce internally through apprenticeship, fostering growth, and addressing workforce development challenges.

Presenter: Jack Clark, Executive Director, Transit Workforce Center

The ADA's Requirements for Service Animals and Reasonable Modification of Policy – Room 211

Monday: 1:30-2:30 PM (60 Min)

Join Jess Segovia, ADA Guru, for an informative session on the ADA's requirements for Service Animals and Reasonable Modification of Policy. What is the definition of a Service Animal? How many can a passenger have? What are examples of a Service Animal creating a direct threat? All of these questions, and more, will be answered. And don't forget about when and how we must provide accommodations to passengers with disabilities. A truly informative session for all types and levels of transit professionals.

Presenter: Jess Segovia, Owner, ADA GURU

The ABCs of Disadvantaged, Minority, Small, and Women-owned Businesses – Room 209

Monday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 Min)

Join industry leaders and advocates in a dynamic panel discussion as they delve into the intricate landscape of disadvantaged, minority, small, and women-owned businesses. Explore the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for fostering inclusivity and economic empowerment within these often marginalized sectors. Gain valuable insights and practical solutions for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in entrepreneurship.

Moderator: Huelon Harrison, Owner and President, Legacy Resource Group **Panelists:** Raquel Olivier, CPA, MBA, Founder and President/CEO, Olivier, Inc. (MWSDBE) and Gabriel Beltran, DART-Dallas Area Rapid Transit

She's Driving the Future

Women leaders are delivering on the promise of modern mobility at VIA– Room 210-A

Monday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 Min)

VIA Metropolitan Transit is in its most transformative period since opening service in 1978 and moving quickly toward modern mobility with its Keep SA Moving plan, driven by a team led primarily by women. It's a testament to VIA's commitment to diversity in leadership and unique in our industry where women represent less than 35% of the transportation workforce.

With expertise in disciplines ranging from planning and engineering to communications and strategy, the women at the helm of VIA's Keep SA Moving project teams are powering major strategic initiatives, including the region's first Advanced Rapid Transit network, micromobility service model, and realigning of VIA's fixed-service routes.

Through dynamic, empowered leadership and innovation, VIA is fast-tracking transit improvements in the nation's seventh-largest city with the least-funded major transit agency in Texas.

Key Takeaways:

In this session, members from VIA's project leadership teams will discuss their roles and perspectives on how VIA developed the Keep SA Moving plan, is maintaining support for the projects through outreach and engagement strategies, and advancing an ambition timeline for completion of the region's first Advanced Rapid Transit network.

Presenter: TBD

Heavy Duty Battery Electric and Hydrogen Fuel Cell. Facilitated by Jeff Johnson of Model1 – Room 210-B

Monday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 Min)

2:40 pm -3:00 pm What's really available for Paratransit EV Options

Topic: Paratransit EV Options

Speaker: Jeff Johnson from Model1

3:00pm-3:20pm: San Antonio VIA

Topic: Receipt of Gillig Electric buses and previous experience with Proterra electric buses (2006)

Speakers: Eddie Bennett and Hector Aguilera from San Antonio VIA Maintenance Department

3:20pm-3:40pm: Dallas DART

Speaker: Marvin Hurt, Asst. VP of Fleet Engineering

How to Future-Ready your ADA Paratransit Services– Room 211

Monday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 Min)

This workshop will explore the future of ADA Paratransit and the importance of change management and how modernization is more than just a technical exercise.

Guest speaker Will Rodman from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute will share the transformative impact and benefits on productivity and on-time performance (OTP) for transit agencies throughout Texas that have leveraged new technologies to meet the needs of their modern riders.

Chris Mandrell, General Manager of Citibus will walk through his journey of transitioning from a legacy platform to a modern, cloud-based service offering, and share best practices learned along the way.

Sponsored by: SPARE

Presenter: Chris Mandrell, General Manager of Citibus

Tuesday, March 19th, 2024

Active Shooter Awareness and Preparedness – Room 209

Tuesday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 min)

Hear the behind the scenes stories of many of the most recent mass shootings, how they happened, how they were planned, how law enforcement responded, and important clues that could potentially prevent future such tragedies. The presenter has responded to two school shootings and the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. John was also present in Las Vegas when the Mandalay Bay shooting occurred, where he then served as an on-air Law Enforcement consultant for the Fox News Channel, CNN NBC, and other national news programs, giving him inside access to the crime scene. This access, in addition his having responded to numerous other critical incidents as an FBI Agent and police officer, gives John unique knowledge insights that he shares with his audience.

Key Takeaways:

- (1) Being able to protect yourself and family should an active shooter situation occur.
- (2) Warning indicators to identify those who plan such attacks.
- (3) Key steps to take during an attack to stay safe, and what to do afterward to recover.

Presenter: John Iannarelli, Speaker, Author and Consultant, FBI Special Agent (Ret.)

Bus Operator's Retention, Run Preferences, and Run-Life Conflicts– Room 210-A

Tuesday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 min)

This session will address the ongoing shortage of operators—especially the challenge of retaining bus operators. The session will be based on TTI's "Bus Operator Retention Analysis" study conducted for Capital Metro in Austin, TX. The session will offer attendees:

- A review of the challenge of bus operator retention and current trends.
- Potential elements influencing operators' decisions to stay with a transit agency.
- Factors contributing to the turnover of bus operators.
- Practical solutions aimed at reducing turnover.

The information presented will be based on data collected in 2023 from bus operator focus groups, interviews, and a survey with 160 respondents. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about the operators' preferred runs/shifts, desired weekdays/weekends for off and run, and preferences towards split and straight shifts. Attendees will depart with an enhanced understanding of how to "get to the bottom of" issues causing turnover among bus operators and potential strategies, initiatives, and policies that can enhance the retention of bus operators.

Presenter: Michael Walk, Research Scientist and Program Manager, Transit Mobility Program, Texas A&M Transportation Institute-TTI and Kelly Blume, Texas A&M Transportation Institute-TTI

State of Paratransit in Texas, Governors Committee on People with Disabilities – Room 210-B

Tuesday: 2:40 pm -3:40 pm (60 min)

The GCPD Transportation Subcommittee will participate in a "State of the Paratransit Industry. The GCPD will solicit open statements from paratransit providers to gain insight for the next Texas Legislative Session. "Best Practices" will be shared.

Presenter: Richard Martinez, Community and Business Outreach Specialist, Office of Diversity and Federal Compliance, VIA Metropolitan Transit, and Sarah Hidalgo-Cook, General Manager, SWART

We All Play a Role: Equity in Transit, from the Practitioner's Perspective – Room 211

Tuesday: 2:40 pm -4:10 pm (1.5 hours)

Have you ever wanted to hear from your colleagues and peers about how they approach equity considerations in their agency? Do you have interesting insights about how transit can be more/most equitable? This session is designed to give you the chance to learn from other practitioners and to share your insights. Following the format of an unconference (and after a brief foundational presentation led by the facilitator), this session will offer an opportunity for all attendees to propose equity-oriented discussion topics (e.g., measuring equity, fare-free transit, serving people experiencing homelessness) and/or vote on those that most interest them. Following the facilitated voting exercise, participants will join small group discussions focused on the top 2-5 topics (depending on interest and number of attendees) and select a group scribe to record notes from the discussion. At the end of 45 minutes of discussion, each group will report

out to the rest of the attendees with the goal of sharing 3 main takeaways and identifying another set of discussion topics for voting. The voting and group discussion process will occur a total of 2 times in a 90-minute session. The facilitator will prepare a voting system (e.g., Poll Everywhere or Google forms) to facilitate collection of ideas and note taking forms (via Google Doc) for each discussion group's scribes. All notes will be made available to all session participants via a public link.

Presenter: Zachary Elgart, Associate Research Scientist, Texas A&M Transportation Institute-TTI

Policies vs Day-to-Day Practices – Room 211

Tuesday: 2:40 pm -4:10 pm (1.5 Hour)

Transit agencies develop Rider's Guides and key policies for managing their daily operations. The expectation is that these policies are followed at all times. We all know that many times, we break our own policies by how we operate on a day-to-day basis. One driver does things her way, and another driver does things his way. Usually, these are not major policy violations, but they can cause problems for the transit agency. What is your policy for carrying grocery bags? What is your policy for wait times for passengers to come out and get on the bus? Do you allow solicitation on your premises? This workshop will cover the importance of matching practices and policies and how to make it work (and what happens if you don't!).

Presenter: Carol Wright Kenderdine, Consultant, Carol Wright Consulting

Statewide Training Discussions and Open Maintenance Forum– Room 212-A

Tuesday: 2:40 pm -4:40 pm (2 hours)

- Statewide Maintenance Training Opportunities
- Discuss subjects and needs for a statewide maintenance training program.
- Explore challenges, share insights, and collaborate on innovative solutions for urban transportation system maintenance.
- Open Discussions

Collaborate with peers on various topics; attendees can suggest topics via email @ (JJohnson@model1.com) or at the beginning of the meeting.

Feel free to attend and share with colleagues. Looking forward to valuable insights and discussions during the conference session.

Facilitated by Jeff Johnson of Model1.

Fleet Configurations for Paratransit and Other Demand Responsive Transportation Services– Room 209

Tuesday: 3:50 pm -4:50 pm (60 min)

More This session will cover the findings from TCRP Synthesis SB-38, Paratransit Fleet Configurations, which is in the final stages of being published as Synthesis 174. Through a national survey and case studies, the synthesis explores the propensity among differently sized transit agencies to maintain a uniform fleet of wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) vs. a mixed fleet of different types and sizes of WAVs vs. a mixed fleet of WAVs and non-accessible vehicles for their paratransit service.

Factors impacting these planning and purchasing decisions included purchasing and operating costs, delivery time of different types of vehicles, CDL requirements (given the industry issues with driver recruitment and retention), nimbleness in reaching certain pickup and drop-off locations and navigating steep grades, and capacity vs. demand. The presentation will cover the results of the survey and the successes, obstacles, and lessons learned from the case studies.

Through audience participation, the session will also explore the extent to which these factors and lessons learned also apply to other demand-responsive transportation services such as rural dial-a-ride and microtransit services where transit agencies provide the fleet.

Presenter: Will Rodman, Transit Mobility Program, Texas A&M Transportation Institute-TTI

Elevating Austin's Transit Experience with the AMP fare card– Room 210-B

Tuesday: 3:50 pm -4:50 pm (60 min)

Sensis worked with CapMetro of Austin to develop a new electronic fare card that leveraged the spirit and vibe of Austin as the "live music capital of the world. Learn the steps that Sensis underwent as they prepared comprehensive market research, developed the brand and the marketing, and conducted the launch, which was extremely successful.

Presenter: Karla Fernandez Parker, Managing Director, Sensis, and Daryl L. Weinberg, Transit Systems Architect, Capital Metro

