

Transit Worker and Rider Assaults – Research Underway and Agency Best Practices

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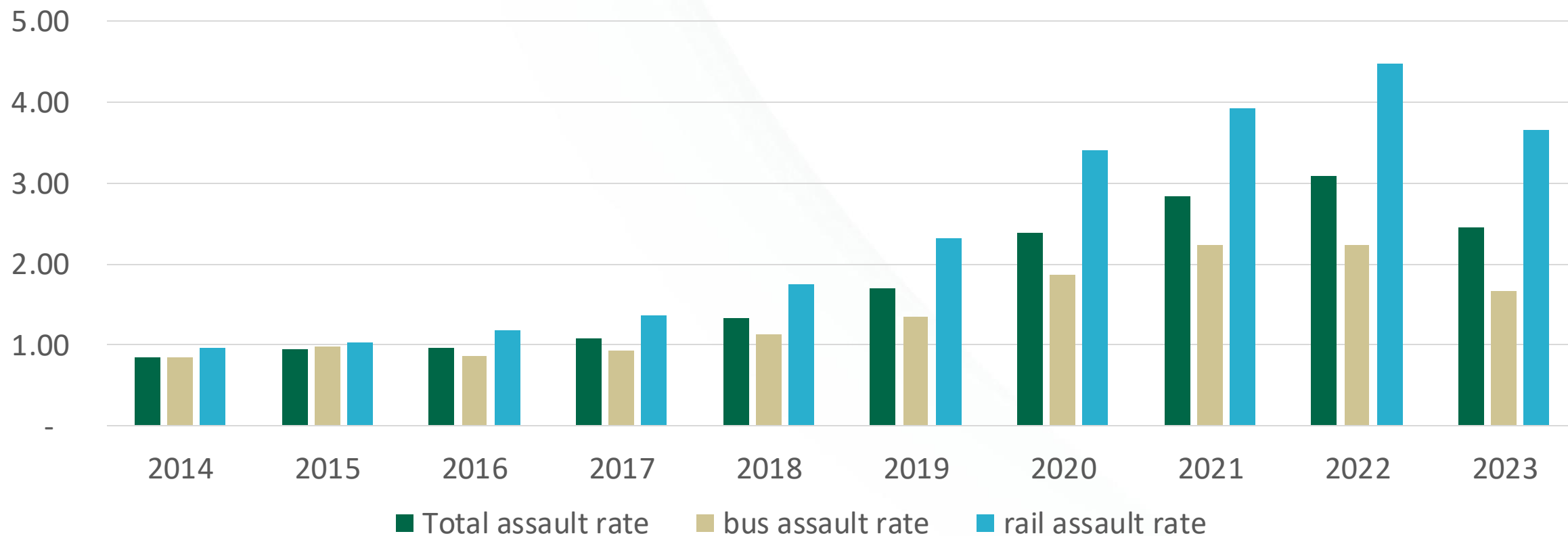
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Outline

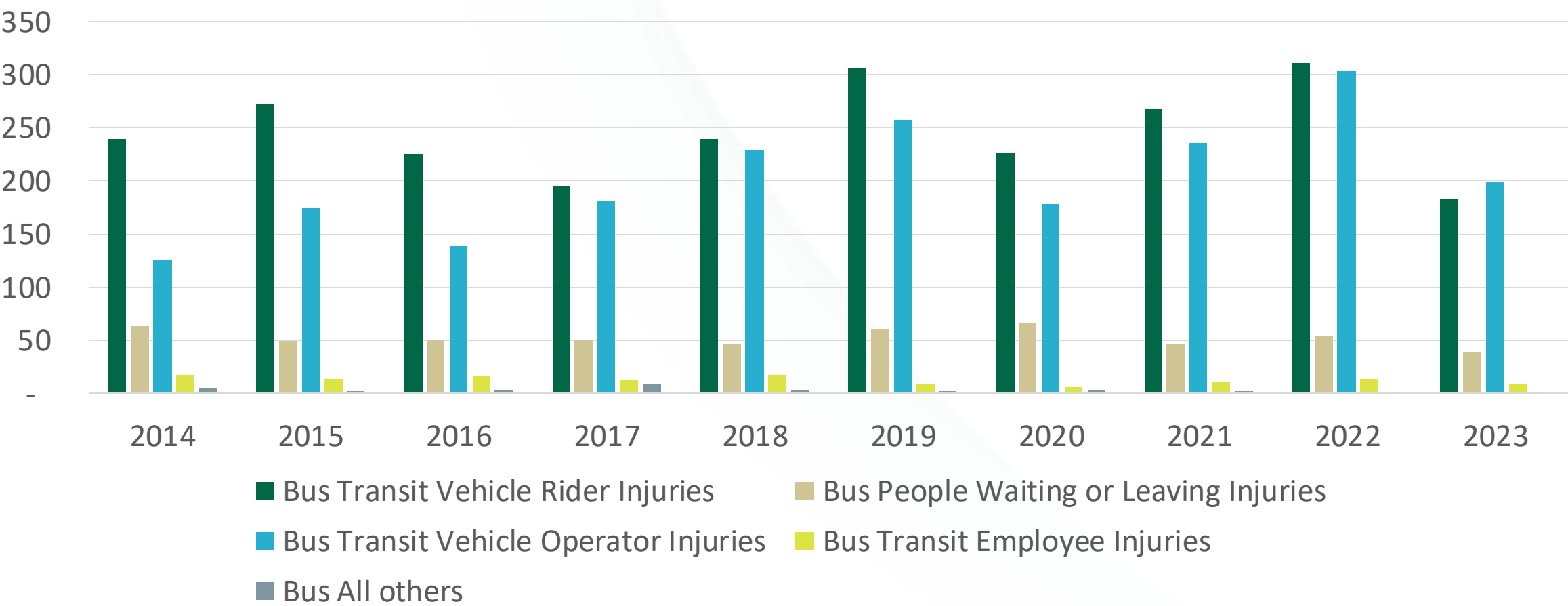
- Brief Data Presentation
- CUTR Research Underway (USDOT and FTA)
- General Strategies with Sample Programs
- Transit Agency/Community Highlight

Transit Assaults All Modes – Rate / 10 million UPTs

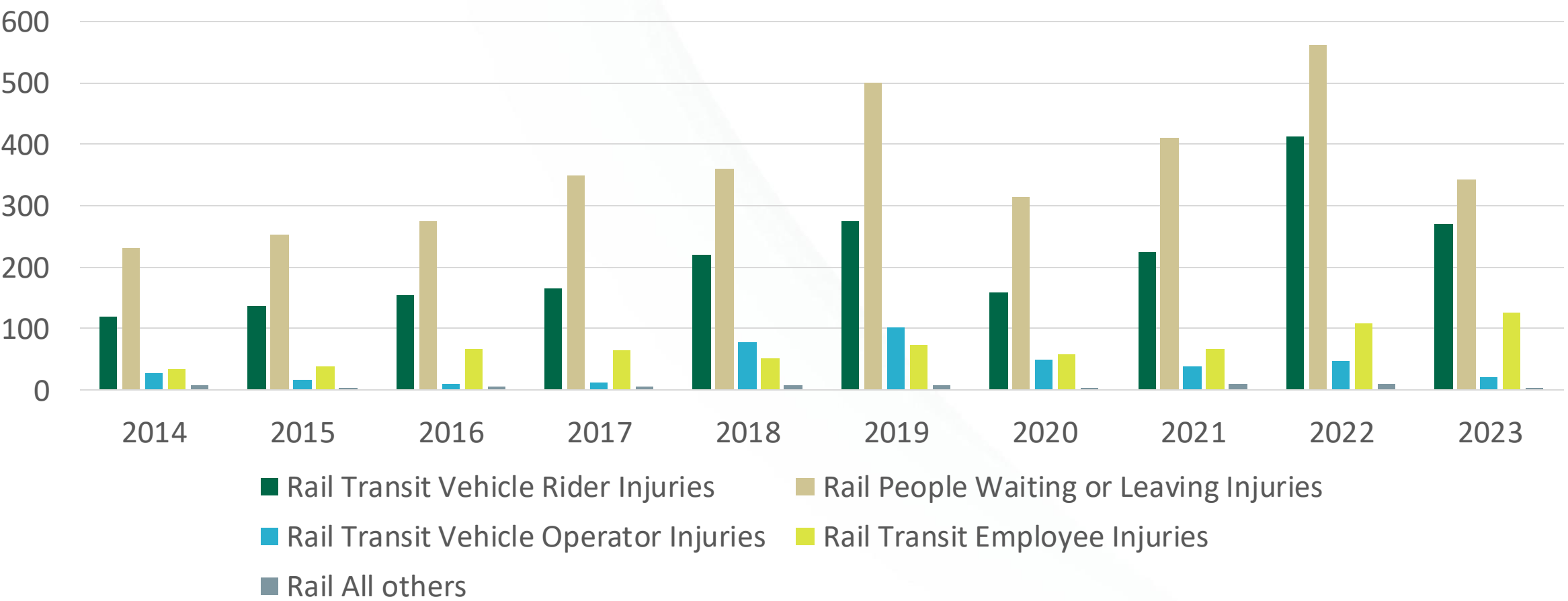
Assault rate per 10 million unlinked passenger trips



And by Person Type - Bus

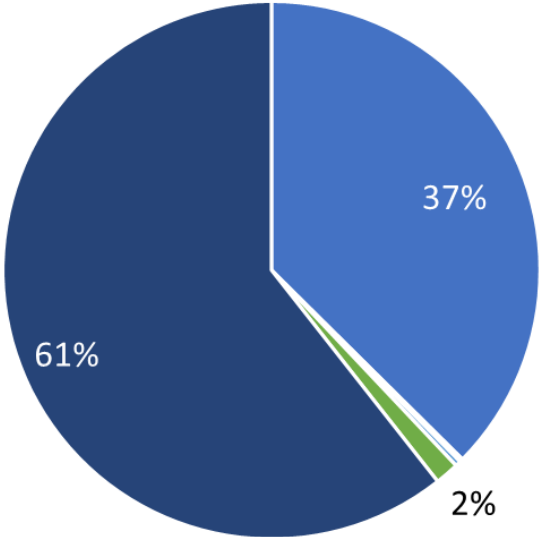


And by Person Type - Rail



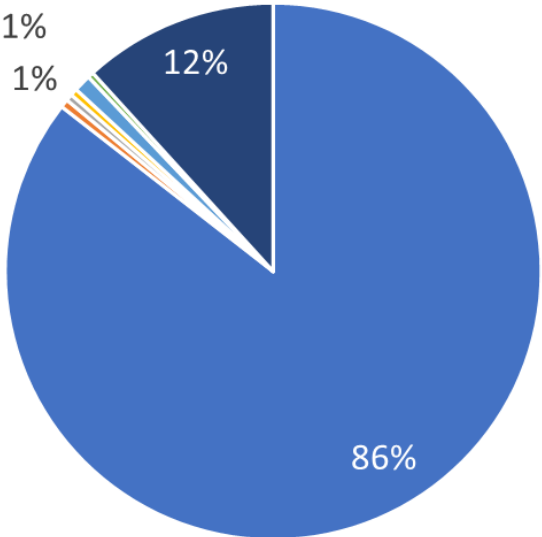
Assaults by Location – Rail and Bus

Rail



- In or on vehicle
- On right-of-way
- Revenue facility: other
- Revenue facility: transit station
- Non-revenue facility
- Other
- Revenue facility: parking facility

Bus



- In or on vehicle
- On right-of-way
- Revenue facility: other
- Revenue facility: transit station
- Non-revenue facility
- Other
- Revenue facility: parking facility

CUTR Research Underway

FTA – Examining Transit Assault Causation and Presenting Stakeholder-driven Mitigation Strategies and Tools to Reduce Assault Risk

Mineta UTC - Understanding the prevalence of mental health and behavioral distress in transit assaults and presenting targeted response and mitigation methods to reduce victimization trends

Examining Transit Assault Causation and Presenting Stakeholder-driven Mitigation Strategies and Tools to Reduce Assault Risk

- Identify Key Issues and Documented Strategies
- Review Assault Data and Assess Data Quality and Accuracy
- Document and Assess Mitigation Strategies
- Outreach Materials and Tools
- Propose Pilot Demonstrations (Potential Phase II)
- Partners – Mineta Transportation Institute, International Transportation Learning Center

Understanding the prevalence of mental health and behavioral distress in transit assaults and presenting targeted response and mitigation methods to reduce victimization trends

- Literature and Industry Practices Review
 - National assault victimization trends
 - Mental/behavioral and/or drug-related indicators
- Transit Agency Case Studies
 - Identify community-based solutions
 - Partnerships with mental health and/or homelessness coalitions
 - Strategies designed to de-escalate or address assault/potential assault occurrences associated with mental/behavioral issues or individuals who are homeless/unsheltered
- Syntheses of Practice

Research Implications

- Increased industry awareness of successful practices
- Increased industry awareness of mental health presentation and how to effectively respond to those presentations
- Reduced mental/behavioral health-related transit assault events and corresponding injuries and fatalities
- Improved community perceptions of transit as a safe mobility alternative
- Recommend technologies or other treatments to pilot

Case Study Locations

- AC Transit
- Ann Arbor – The Ride
- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)
- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)
- Dallas Area Regional Transit
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- Metro Transit, Minneapolis, Minnesota (MetroTransit)
- Miami Dade Transit
- New Jersey Transit
- Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT)
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)
- TriMet
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
- River Cities Public Transit (rural)
- Confederal Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (tribal)

Mitigation Strategies/Practices

**Societal
Challenges**



**Community-
based Solutions**

Methods

- Community Campaigns and Engagement
- Mental Health and Homelessness Coalitions
- Educating Riders
- “Unarmed Outreach”
- Increased Policing
- Station Design or Operational Modifications

Community Campaigns and Engagement

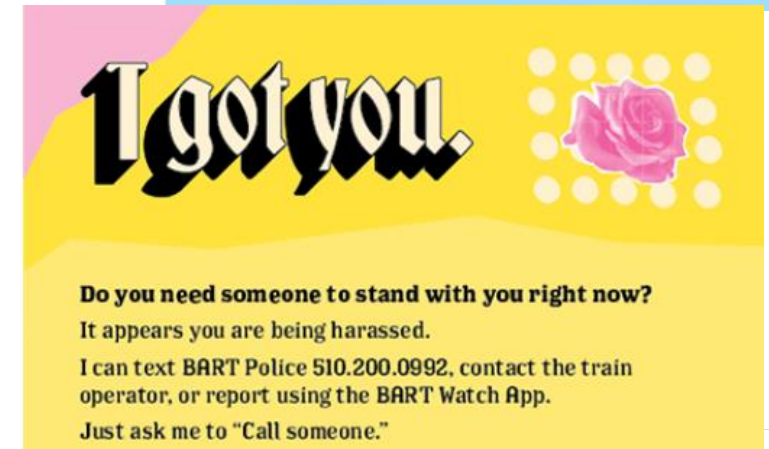
- BART – Not One More Girl Campaign/Phase II just began
- Chicago – “Blueprint” and CTA – “Meeting the Moment”
- MBTA – Sexual Harassment Awareness Campaign w/victim assistance resources
- MARTA – Ride with PRYDE and Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) to reduce on-board violence
- Miami-Dade – Anti-violence Initiative to reduce group violence
- TriMet – incentives for reporting assaults and vandalism

Mental Health and Homelessness

- DART – working with Downtown Dallas, Inc. and Dallas Police Department in expanded law enforcement partnership – connects people who are homeless to support programs and resources
- COTA Strategic Response Specialists Team - change agents who also serve vulnerable populations and proactively address homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health challenges
- Denver RTD Transit Police Outreach Program – mental health co-responder team (collaboration with Mental Health Center of Denver with financial support from Medicaid)
- Denver Homeless Navigator Coordinator (contracted with Jefferson County Mental Health) and Homelessness Awareness Program

Educating Riders

- BART Bystander Intervention Cards (“I got you.” and “You got me?”)
- Updated and communicated Rider Codes of Conduct:
 - Miami (Passenger Safety Rules)
 - Kansas City
 - King County (Ride Right)
 - TriMet (Rules for Riding)
 - NJ Transit “Ride Kind” campaign
- Rider outreach
- Anti-harassment/-sexual harassment campaigns



Protect your phone!

- Especially near train doors and while waiting on the platform.
- Put it away or at least secure it when approaching stops.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.



Unarmed Outreach/Ambassador Programs

- LA Metro Transit Ambassador Program through contract with Strive Well-Being, Inc. – community-based offering trauma-informed and rider assistance solutions and crisis intervention services (over 300 ambassadors in program)
- SEPTA – Unarmed Outreach Services: Safety, Cleaning, Ownership, Partnership, and Engagement (SCOPE) Initiative – targets improved mental and physical health of SEPTA employees and riders
- BART – expanded use of ambassadors, hired community-based groups as elevator and underground restroom attendants
- Cap Metro (Austin) – Community Intervention Program

Increased Policing – Facilities/Vehicles

- LA Metro Operation Safe Travel
- New York City Transit – SOLO patrol initiative
- TriMet – increased transit police presence
- BART – hired additional sworn officers

Station Design or Operational Modifications

- CPTED-based:
 - BART - 4,000 additional cameras, improved lighting at stations and parking areas
 - Charlotte Area Transit - railyard lighting study followed by enhanced lighting in the yard
 - WMATA - practices built into fare gate replacement projects and Station Platform Rehabilitation I – IV projects
 - TriMet – station designs that incorporate CPTED
 - In general: improve lighting, remove obstacles on platforms/stations that can conceal individuals, use transparent enclosures or seating/waiting areas, keep stations and platforms maintained and clean
- Operational modifications: BART shorter trains/increased frequency (nights/weekends)

Transit Agency and Community Highlight

Chicago's Blueprint

CTA's Meeting the Moment

Highlight: A Community-based “Blueprint”

- *A Blueprint for Creating a More Just and Vibrant City for All – Chicago*
 - Working group of over 400 addressing challenges across 77 Chicago communities
 - 11 issue-focused subcommittees and 14-member executive committee
 - Education, health care, housing, workers’ rights and labor, immigration, public safety, economic vitality, arts and culture
 - Mobility and transportation disparity across topic areas
 - Recognition that all areas are inter-related

Recommendations to Create Safer Communities

“Implement a holistic approach to improving safety on transit. Everyone should feel safe riding public transit in Chicago, especially the city’s most vulnerable riders.”

- Enhance safety, security, and cleanliness at stations and on buses and trains with new programs and personnel, such as a transit ambassador initiative.
- Partner with RTA and transit operators to host a cross-sector safety summit that includes social service providers and identifies holistic solutions to safety, security, and cleanliness issues.
- Respond to non-violent emergencies and mental health crises on public transportation through humane, “treatment-not trauma” responses.
- Publish transparent performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of investments to improve safety and security on the transit system.

CTA Improvements – “Meeting the Moment”

- Enhanced safety and security for riders
- Recently renewed CPD agreement for volunteer, off-duty patrols
- Onboard security guards – increased from 200 to 300
- 50 two-person teams with K-9 units
- \$2M invested in programs to prioritize outreach at transit facilities
- Completed “Refresh and Review” station improvements at 28 stations / biennial power washing 145 rail stations
- Video monitors in “Customer Assistance Booths” with real-time monitoring
- Rail – fully equipped with HD cameras

Positive Outcomes – 1 Year After Implementation

- Overall transit crime was down 9% year to date (August 2023), and 21% compared to July 2022,
- Violent crime was down 13% year to date, and 21% versus July 2022
- Ridership and fare collections continue to increase

Final Thoughts

- Hazard Identification/Risk Assessment/Risk Management
- Understand Ridership Implications
- Control the Message/Perceptions - Impacts
 - Ridership
 - Employee Hiring/Retention
- Society Challenges – Victimization Trends
 - Need for Community-based Solutions

FTA and Other Resources

- [FTA Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Sample Safety Risk Assessment Matrices for Bus Transit Agencies \(pdf\)](#)
- [Sample Safety Risk Register for Bus Transit Agencies \(Excel file\)](#)
- [Guide to Developing the SRM Component of a PTASP](#)
- [PTASP Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [Preventing and Mitigating Transit Worker Assaults in the Bus and Rail Industry \(TRACS Report 14-01\)](#)
- [Protecting Public Transportation Operators from the Risk of Assault \(FR notice\)](#)
- FTA's [Enhanced Transit Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative](#)
- FTA Special Directives on Required Actions Regarding Transit Worker Assaults (October 2022)
- [TCRP Synthesis Report 157 – Transit Safety Risk Assessment Methodologies](#)
- [TCRP 193 – Tools and Strategies for Eliminating Assaults \(User Guide\)](#)
- Underway: TCRP Project A-48 – Mitigation Strategies for Deterring Transit Assaults
- Training offered by FTA, the National Transit Institute, National RTAP, and other sources



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