

**Statement of
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before the
Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection
Committee on Homeland Security
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Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking member Lungren, and other members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). I am pleased to have this opportunity to update you on transit security and how the U. S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) initiatives in that area support the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) transportation security mission.

FTA and Transit Security

America’s transit systems are dynamic, interconnected, and composed of over 6,000 local systems. Unlike airports, these systems are also inherently open, and therefore difficult to secure. In New York’s Penn Station alone, more than 1,600 people per minute pass through its portals during a typical rush hour. The combination of open access and large numbers of people makes transit systems an inviting target for those who seek to cause the United States harm. The deliberate targeting of the public transportation systems in Tokyo, Moscow, Madrid, and London by terrorists underscores this point.

FTA, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), other Federal and state partners, and the transit industry have built a solid foundation for security in the years following the attacks of September 11 by focusing on three security priorities: public awareness, employee training, and emergency preparedness. After September 11, 2001, FTA undertook an aggressive nationwide security program and led the initial Federal effort on transit security. The initial response included conducting threat and vulnerability assessments in 37 large transit systems, 30 of which carry almost 90 percent of all transit riders. The assessments at that time gave us a comprehensive view of transit system readiness, vulnerabilities, and consequences, and identified the three important priorities that continue to form the fundamental baseline of DOT’s transit security initiatives: employee training, public awareness, and emergency preparedness.

Today, under Executive Order 13416, FTA, in partnership with FRA and DHS, continues to build upon these priorities as they provide focused benefits to the dynamic, open nature of America’s transit network. Employee Training develops the skills of 400,000

front-line transit employees who are the eyes and ears of the transit network and first line of defense against terrorism. Public Awareness programs such as Transit Watch educate passengers to be mindful of their environment and how to react should they see something suspicious. Emergency Preparedness programs build local, collaborative relationships within communities that allow for quick and coordinated response in a crisis. Over the last five years, we have learned that terrorists adapt and change their strategies in response to security measures. But regardless of where an attack comes from or how it is devised, security training of employees and the awareness of passengers can help to prevent or mitigate it.

In 2002, to help guide transit agency priorities, FTA issued a “Top 20 Security Action Item List” to improve transit safety and security operations, particularly with regard to employee training, public awareness, and emergency preparedness. In a joint effort coordinated with the Mass Transit Sector Coordinating Council, FTA, and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Security Action Items for transit agencies were revised in 2006.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) mandates several steps to move transit security forward through collaboration among federal, state, local, and private entities. In September 2005, FTA and two agencies within DHS -- TSA and the Office for Domestic Preparedness, now the Office of Grants & Training (G&T) -- signed the Public Transportation Security Annex to the DOT/DHS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on security. The MOU recognizes that DHS has primary responsibility for transportation security and that DOT plays a supporting role, providing technical assistance and assisting DHS when possible with implementation of its security policies as allowed by DOT statutory authority and available resources. The Annex identifies specific areas of coordination among the parties, including citizen awareness, training, exercises, risk assessments, and information sharing. To implement the Annex, the three agencies have developed a framework that leverages each agency’s resources and capabilities.

With the Annex in place as a blueprint, FTA, TSA and G&T have established an Executive Steering Committee. Since 2005, the Executive Steering Committee has interacted with DHS, DOT, FRA and transit industry leaders. This committee oversees eight project management teams that spearhead the Annex’s programs. Each of these programs advances one or more of FTA’s three security priority areas (public awareness, employee training, and emergency preparedness). We have been implementing the Annex energetically since its inception.

The eight teams are as follows:

1. Risk Assessment and Technical Assistance Team

The Risk Assessment and Technical Assistance team is using a risk-based approach to transit security, working toward one industry model for conducting transit risk assessments. The team issued the “TSA/FTA Security and Emergency Management Action Items” and is developing the Next Generation Security and

Emergency Management Technical Assistance Program Master Plan to identify and prioritize industry security needs.

2. Transit Watch and Connecting Communities Team

The Transit Watch and Connecting Communities team is reinstating and expanding these two FTA programs, which foster public awareness and coordinated emergency response. The initial roll-out of Transit Watch helped to institute this program at many transit agencies across the country. The next phase of Transit Watch, recently released, includes a focus on unattended bags, Spanish language materials and emergency evacuation instructions. Twelve new Connecting Communities forums are scheduled for 2007; the second forum is being held this week in the National Capitol Region, at WMATA's Turner facility in New Carrollton, Maryland.

3. Training Team

The Training team is developing new courses on timely security topics such as security design considerations and National Incident Management System (NIMS) for transit employees, and also working towards developing one integrated security training curriculum.

4. Safety and Security Roundtables Team

The Safety and Security Roundtables team works on direct stakeholder outreach. They are responsible for planning two roundtables each year for the safety and security chiefs of the 50 largest transit agencies and Amtrak. The roundtable format emphasizes peer-to-peer informational exchanges among the participants. The last roundtable was held in Newark, New Jersey in December 2006 and the next roundtable is tentatively scheduled for Chicago this spring.

5. Web-based National Resource Center Team

The Web-based National Resource Center team is developing a secure library site for information on best practices, grants, and other security matters. Access to the National Resource Center will be available to security chiefs of transit agencies.

6. Emergency Drills and Exercises Team

The Emergency Drills and Exercises team is updating the program to incorporate DHS Exercise program guidance. The scope of this effort includes both tabletop exercises and regional field drills.

7. Annual Plan and Grant Guidance Team

FTA lends its subject matter expertise to the DHS Infrastructure Protection grant process. In the context of the MOU Annex, FTA is also able to leverage its longstanding working relationships with transit agencies to help TSA vet security initiatives.

8. Standards and Research Team

The Standards and Research team's primary focus is the development of industry security standards. This is a critical area because it provides transit agencies with

consistent industry benchmarks and recommended practices. Leveraging the success of the FTA, FRA and American Public Transportation Association (APTA) process for developing standards in other areas, FTA is proceeding closely with its Federal partners to develop standards in key areas such as infrastructure protection, risk assessments and emergency preparedness.

I would like to add that FTA also supports security projects through its Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program. Under this program, transit agencies are required to spend at least 1 percent of their annual formula fund allocation on public transportation security, or to certify that they do not need to spend 1 percent of their allocation for such purposes. For transit agencies in Urbanized Zone Areas (UZAs) over 200,000 in population, only capital projects are eligible to count towards the 1 percent security threshold. SAFETEA-LU usefully expanded the definition of capital projects to include security planning, training and emergency drills & exercises. In contrast to TSA's broad statutory authority for security in all modes of transportation, FTA has limited statutory and regulatory authority on security matters, and does not have a dedicated security grant program. Historically, FTA has assisted transit agencies in improving their security practices through training programs, research, technical assistance and oversight activities. FTA and FRA continue to work together to improve passenger rail and rail transit security. FTA will continue to use all of these resources, in close collaboration with TSA and G&T to improve transit security.

Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking Member Lungren, and other members of the Subcommittee, I want to assure you that FTA has, and is, using all of the resources and capabilities in its toolbox to strengthen the joint security initiative formalized in the September 2005 Public Transportation Security Annex to the DOT/DHS MOU. The MOU Annex expands that toolbox. Since September 11, 2001, transit security has benefited from exceptionally strong partnerships, and genuinely collaborative initiatives, among the industry, different agencies and departments, and the MOU Annex captures that spirit of cooperation.

Please also be assured that the FTA will continue to strengthen public transportation security. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress to achieve the goal of protecting our Nation's public transportation infrastructure. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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