

# Transit Retreat: Mobile, AL March 4-5, 2026

## Content Overview:

This is a Retreat, not your typical “conference.” Come prepared to join your peers, national technical resource and association partners, vendors and more for small group, relevant discussion in a relaxed setting in downtown Mobile. Many people attend conferences and find the most value in the conversations held in the hallways and during networking events. This Retreat will capitalize on that mindset by strategically integrating networking events with relevant sessions on topics that you need to know. Each session is designed to be interactive, not just a static presentation. With a Retreat theme, expect session content to spill into the hallways and networking events, expect open conversation, expect engaging networking with opportunities to gain experience and share. Expect to return home refreshed and ready to address the challenges of today’s mobility environment.

### **Get to know your FTA Technical Assistance Centers and National Partners**

Curtis Sims, S & Associates Consulting, LLC

This interactive session is designed for attendees to learn about some of the best Associations and FTA Technical Assistance Center partners in the industry. Hear from the Transit Workforce Center (TWC), the Shared Use Mobility Center (SUMC) The Association of Mobility Managers, CALSTART and other National Partners. These partners exist to support transit and mobility providers throughout the country. Learn, ask questions, and hear about exciting projects, initiatives, grant opportunities and more.

### ***A Conversation on Safety Culture and Safety Planning***

JD Allen, AICP ATG | DCCM

The foundation of safety in transit extends beyond compliance—it begins with culture. With the adoption of 49 CFR Part 670 and the Safety Management Systems (SMS) framework, agencies are rethinking how human behavior, leadership, and communication shape safer outcomes. This session will unpack federal safety requirements, including Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP), and highlight best practices that go beyond regulation. Attendees will discuss how to cultivate a proactive safety culture that protects employees, passengers, and communities—making safety not just a rule, but a shared value.

### **Driving Forward with a Next-Gen Workforce**

Facilitated by: The Transit Workforce Center (TWC)

Engage with presenters from Introducing Youth to American Infrastructure (Iyai) and from the Transit Workforce Center (TWC) in exploring effective outreach, messaging, and career awareness strategies designed to attract young people in our communities into transit careers.

### **Mobility Innovation in Rural and Small Urban Communities**

Facilitated by: Shared Use Mobility Center

Speakers: Alvaro Villagran, SUMC

Hani Shamat, SUMC

This interactive workshop will have participants delve into what challenges, tools, and dreams they have in exploring innovative rural and small urban mobility projects. Participants should come ready to engage in interactive conversations with each other to approach real problems and collaborate in identifying ways to promote innovative mobility in their communities.

### **Mobility Innovation in Rural and Small Urban Communities**

Facilitated by: Shared Use Mobility Center

Speakers: Hani Shamat, SUMC

Suzanne Kalmbacher, Cecil Transit

Ann Simpson, Baldwin County Regional Area Transit System

Learn about the experience of Cecil Transit (MD) and The Baldwin County Regional Area Transit System (BRATS) (AL), two rural agencies awarded FTA's mobility innovation grants and how federal investments in demonstration projects have paved the way to reshaping transportation landscapes for communities who need it the most. This session will go over original approaches to on demand microtransit, with a focus on technologies, partnerships, and funding experiences that leveraged local and state funds to move from pilot to permanent. This session will also discuss the value of technical assistance and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing in promoting innovative mobility.

### **Opening Remarks and Rapid-Fire Vendor Intros**

This session will officially welcome all attendees to the Retreat. All vendors will submit a single slide that will be used as an introduction to the audience. Every 60 seconds a new slide will be displayed, and that vendor will have 60 seconds to introduce themselves and provide quick highlights on their company/product/service or other relevant information. This session is intended to provide all attendees with an opportunity to see who is at the Retreat so you can maximize your time with vendors. This is going to be fun!

### **A Conversation on Addressing Food Insecurity with Mobility Projects**

Facilitated by: Association of Mobility Managers

Speakers:

Tammi Hagen- Headwaters Regional Development Commission-Headwaters RTCC

Todd O'Neal - Southern Oklahoma Development Association

Join us as we highlight innovative projects addressing food insecurity through strategic coordination and cross-sector partnerships. Mobility professionals from Minnesota and Oklahoma will share the struggles and solutions they encounter in their work with unique partners in food access, offering practical insight into approaches that are making a difference.

### **Mobility as Support: Strengthening Transit through Coordination**

Facilitated by: Association of Mobility Managers

Speakers:

Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver - Arrowhead Regional Development Commission-Arrowhead RTCC

Tammi Hagen- Headwaters Regional Development Commission-Headwaters RTCC

Todd O’Neal - Southern Oklahoma Development Association

Kristi Winchester - Central Oklahoma Economic Development COEDD

This session explores what effective coordination really looks like in practice and why mobility management is a critical support system for transit—not a competing service or compliance function. We’ll unpack the difference between access and mobility, discuss the role of mobility management in age-friendly and livable communities, and address common misconceptions that can hinder collaboration. Real-world examples, including Minnesota’s Gomarty Project, will highlight how agencies can improve participation, communication, and outcomes through intentional coordination.

### **A Conversation on ADA Compliance and Federal Updates**

Ed Elam & Marcus Arnold ATG | DCCM

Ensuring ADA compliance is fundamental to creating accessible, equitable public transit systems. This session explores how integrating ADA standards into planning, operations, and outreach upholds the principles of equity, dignity, and independence for all riders. Participants will gain insight into current federal updates, best practices for maintaining compliance, and strategies that strengthen inclusive mobility across communities. Join the conversation on how ADA compliance not only fulfills legal requirements but also advances our shared commitment to accessible, connected, and thriving transit networks.

### **Supporting and Strengthening a Skilled Frontline Workforce – How to Use the Transit Core Competencies Curriculum**

Facilitated by: The Transit Workforce Center (TWC)

Explore Transit Workforce Center’s Transit Core Competencies Curriculum (TC3), with a newly updated foundational skills component. TC3 contains strategies and ready-to-use courseware and materials to support transit agencies in attracting and preparing new hires and other members of the frontline workforce, strengthening skills and elevating competencies to meet standards required for effective & safe performance in the industry.

### **Driving Success Through Servant Leadership**

Facilitated by: AL RTAP Michael Jackson, Troy University

In the fast-paced, people-focused world of transit, leadership is about more than managing schedules and vehicles — it’s about serving the people who depend on you. This keynote explores the principles of servant leadership and how they translate to the unique challenges of the transit industry. Attendees will learn how putting drivers, dispatchers, and passengers first leads to stronger teams, better service, and safer roads. Attendees leave with practical strategies to inspire, support, & lead from the driver’s seat.

### **Behind the Wheel of Emotional Intelligence**

Facilitated by: AL RTAP - Jane Goodson, Troy University

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a powerful role in how we lead, communicate, and serve others. In this session, we'll explore the foundations of EI and why it matters in today's workplace. Attendees of this session will gain insights into how emotional awareness can strengthen teamwork, improve communication, and support positive interactions with both coworkers and passengers.

### **De-escalation – policies and procedures discussion**

Facilitated by: Curtis Sims, S&A Consulting

De-escalation is a new term for the public transit industry. The Federal Transit Administration has issued a mandate requiring all transit agencies to establish and implement a comprehensive safety training program that includes de-escalation training. De-escalation Policies and Procedures training encourages Transit Managers and Directors to go beyond “checking the boxes” and evaluate policies and procedures to ensure they are clear, concise, and completely understood by all front-line transit workers. It is valuable to review whether the policy and/or procedure may be counterproductive to the objective as it was initially intended, and ineffective to the goal of creating a safe and calm working environment.

### **Building Transit Partnerships Through MOUs**

Facilitated by Jeremy Bell, National RTAP

This session will focus on strengthening rural and tribal transit partnerships through effective governance and the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between sovereign nations and neighboring transit systems. His conference session will explore how formal agreements can respect tribal sovereignty while fostering collaborative planning, coordinated service delivery, and shared resources to better serve rural and underserved communities. Participants will gain practical guidance on navigating intergovernmental relationships, honoring the governance structures of sovereign tribal nations, and building sustainable partnerships that enhance mobility access, funding opportunities, and long-term regional transit success.

### **GRECKo Test Kit Showcase**

Facilitated by: CALSTART

Speaker: Jacob Hall, Auburn University – McCrary Institute

The General-Purpose RF & Embedded Cybersecurity Test Kit (GRECKo) is a tool designed to provide transit security and testing teams with the materials required to perform comprehensive cybersecurity evaluations of vehicles and other transit systems in a single, easy-to-deploy, easy-to-setup box. The GRECKo kit is custom 3d printed to fit the tools and materials included. This inaugural iteration is made from hardened glass fiber material to

protect the contents during transit or shipping. The kit includes tools for CAN-bus analysis, RF testing, physical security testing, and general cybersecurity penetration testing.

### **A Riverside Chat with Transit Managers**

Facilitated by: NPMA

Speakers: Mark Hamilton - BeST Transit

Cody Slater – Alliance for Non-Profit Resources, Inc

Rich Schlameuss – Monroe County Transportation Authority

You spoke; we listened. Past attendees have said that we should have an open session where Transit Manager can share stories and have open dialog. In this session, we welcome 3 Transit leaders from Pennsylvania to highlight their systems, projects and coordination efforts. Pennsylvania has a robust State Transit Capital program and State operating funds for public transportation including the PA Lottery program for Senior Citizens and persons with disabilities. Transit benefits from the PA Lottery program through providing free fixed route service for seniors and discounted Paratransit service (called Shared Ride in PA) for seniors and persons with disabilities. The presentations will be brief so we can get right into open dialog!

### **One City, One Network: The Principles Guiding Mobile's Transit Redesign**

Facilitated by: Via

Speakers (TBC): Mayor of Mobile, Spiro Cheriogotis, Dan Berkovits, VP of Strategy, Via  
Before routes are redrawn or services are launched, the most successful transit transformations start with clarity: shared goals, honest data, and deep community engagement. In this workshop, leaders from Mobile will walk through the early planning phase of Mobile's transit network redesign—exploring how cities can rethink fixed-route, paratransit, and microtransit as one connected system rather than separate services. This session will focus on the foundational questions that shape long-term success: What outcomes matter most? How do you balance access, efficiency, and sustainability? And how do you bring riders, operators, and elected leaders along from day one? Attendees will leave with practical frameworks for setting a clear north star before launching a network redesign.

### **Vendor sponsored content: Modeshift**

Unleashing the Power of Flexibility and Innovation in Fare Collection. The Modeshift platform offers unparalleled flexibility in the administration of transit services, empowering agencies with tools for seamless fare configurations and enhanced reporting. This adaptability boosts operational efficiency and responsiveness to evolving transit demands. Discover how we can help you configure and launch your new fare collection system that will transform the world for both your operations and customers!

### **Future Ready Public Transit – Vendor content – Transit Technologies**

Transit Technologies provides intelligent web-based transit scheduling software. With Powerful and intuitive demand-response platform, the software enables transit, allows for more productivity and efficiency, and outstanding customer satisfaction.