

GRASP 2019

Date: 08 November 2019

Time: 08:00 – 11:00 (UTC -5)

Location: Webinar/Teleconference

Meeting Details

On November 8, 2019, the Volpe Center (USA) hosted the 8th meeting of the Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention (GRASP). The GRASP working group has met since January 2014 in an effort to share information about efforts to prevent railroad trespass and suicide incidents and to mitigate the consequences of these events.

Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Participants
08:00 – 08:20	Welcome and introductions	Scott Gabree, USA (facilitating)
08:20 – 08:35	Update and review of GRASP data collection effort	Danielle Hiltunen, USA
08:35 – 09:15	Updates from Canada and Netherlands with Discussion	Christine Triggs, Canada Roald van der Valk, Netherlands
09:35 – 09:45	Break	All
09:45 – 10:45	Updates from Sweden, UK, and USA with Discussion	Helena Rådbo, Sweden Ian Stevens; Simon Abernathy, UK Scott Gabree; Mike Grizkewitsch, USA
10:45 – 11:00	Further discussion and adjournment	Scott Gabree, USA (facilitating)

Members Attending

Naomi Frauenfelder (Aus) ²	Helena Rådbo (Swe)	Rachel Maleh (USA) ¹
Anjum Naweed (Aus) ^{1,2}	Joe Slatter (UK) ¹	Jeff Moller (USA)
Christine Triggs (Can)	Ian Stevens (UK)	James Payne (USA) ¹
Anne Silla (Fin)	Francesco Bedini (USA)	Monica Shaw (USA) ¹
Grigore Havarneanu (Fra)	Scott Gabree (USA)	Jo Strang (USA) ¹
Roald van der Valk (Ned)	Michail Grizkewitsch (USA)	
Tore Dyrhaug Mo (Nor) ¹	Danielle Hiltunen (USA)	

Regular Members Absent

Brian Mishara (Can)	Ariane Ally (UK)	Stephanie Chase (USA)
Maria Christina Fiorentino (Ita)	Ann Mills (UK)	Starr Kidda (USA)
Isabelle Fonverne (Fra)	Ann Doucette (USA)	Andy Martin (USA)

¹First time participating in a GRASP meeting

²Participated in a second call on November 18, 2019

Notes

Below are notes from the 2019 Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention (GRASP) annual update meeting. Members present on the call were provided time to discuss recent efforts by entities in their country to address rail trespass and suicide. These notes are not intended to be a verbatim record of the call, but rather to capture main concepts discussed by the participants. The notes below have been reviewed and approved for release by the GRASP members who provided the update.

GRASP Data Review Update

Update provided by Danielle Hiltunen (USA), Volpe

- The goal of the GRASP data collection effort is to identify the similarities and differences in rail suicide and trespass incidents, reporting practices and prevention efforts among members.
- Overall, data sources for fatalities are seen as generally reliable for fatalities, but injury data can be less so. Injury data can be more difficult to collect due to lack of information.
- Some uncertainties may exist within the data. For example, intent determinations may change over time after an investigation, which can change number of fatalities and injuries reported.
- Members felt that the following information is most valuable to collect after an incident occurs:
 - Precise incident location – Helpful in identifying where to implement various mitigations. In some cases, where the person is found may be used instead, or police may tag the incident from their vehicle, away from the collision site.
 - Demographics – Useful for identifying target populations for suicide prevention campaigns.
 - Behavior and physical action – Useful for identifying potentially suicidal individuals so that rail employees or law enforcement can intervene.
- Members also indicated what information would be helpful to collect that is not currently collected. Note that this list includes information that may be collected by some countries/carriers, but not by others:
 - Information related to distraction (earphones)
 - Precise location information
 - If mental health facilities are located near railroad property
 - Proximity of the incident to the individual's residence or mental health clinic
 - Route taken to access the tracks, and closest access point
 - More accurate behavior and physical action data
 - Interviews of persons who tried to commit suicide at railways but survived (why they chose this method, the exact location, etc.)
 - Combining data with other factors, such as weather conditions

- Formal evaluations are not always available when a new countermeasure is implemented, or data may be internal to carriers and not shared with the public, or other carriers.
- A document summarizing lessons learned from countermeasures implemented in member countries was seen as a potential next step for using the data in a way that is most beneficial to members.

Australia

Update provided by Naomi Frauenfelder, TrackSAFE Australia (during a second call on November 18)

- TrackSAFE partnership with Lifeline continued to promote their 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services using billboards and posters across the rail system. This campaign, the “Pause.Call.Be.Heard” campaign, was presented to riders in train stations. University of Melbourne completed an evaluation, and 26% of commuters surveyed noticed/remembered seeing campaign materials within the last month. Of those, 78% said that the campaign increased the likelihood that they would consider using Lifeline services for themselves and/or others.
- During the campaign, there was a 12% decrease in rail suicides in Victoria. Although this cannot exclusively be attributed to the campaign due to the many other factors that impact these incidents, their hope is that the campaign has had a positive impact.
- Based on the success of the partnership with Lifeline, the Victoria Department of Transportation also supported the 12-month media campaign “Pause.Call.Be.Heard” onto smart devices being used within the rail environment using geo-tagging, popular social media platforms and websites. The campaign achieved a 0.40% click-through rate to Lifeline’s website, above industry benchmarks. Additionally, the audio and video campaigns are achieving a 99.94% completed view/listen rate. The campaign will run from February 2019 to January 2020. TrackSAFE is currently working with other states to extend the poster campaign onto smart devices.
- Suicide Prevention Roundtables were held in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and West Australia. Priorities for 2020/2021 include:
 - Digitization of ‘Pause.Call.Be Heard.’
 - Advocacy
 - Suicide awareness videos –Toolkit
 - Enhance rail network responses to persons in distress
- 2019 Rail R U OK? Day (April 11) reached its highest levels of participation, reaching 51,000 rail employees from Australia and New Zealand. Each organization carries out its own activities, and this year’s included morning teas, BBQ’s, free massages for employees, trivia, team building exercises, and special visits from therapy dogs. There were also numerous reports from rail employees sharing their own stories of being supported by co-workers and of reaching out to others to ask, “Are you ok?”

- In the weeks leading up to Rail R U OK? Day, TrackSAFE and R U OK? sent an interactive digital device – a question mark named Quentin – across Australia and New Zealand to encourage individuals to connect within at the workplace and generate meaningful conversations. A second Quentin will help to reach even more employees leading up to 2020 Rail R U OK? Day.
- Based on Professor Naweed’s work at Central Queensland University, TrackSAFE working with Everymind, is developing a Safe Language Kit, a guide for the rail industry to discuss suicide in a safe and respectful way. The goal is to change how people talk about suicide, and reduce stigmatizing language regarding suicide and mental health.
- TrackSAFE commissioned Phoenix Australia to develop an e-learning training program called “Coping with trauma” to help employees (e.g., train drivers) before, during and after a potentially traumatic event.

Update provided by Anjum Naweed, Central Queensland University

- A current project, “Practical and Operational Challenges for Tackling Railway Trespass and suicide in Australia” aims to review and apply an international perspective to current practices in the prevention/management of trespass and suicide on urban rail systems, including the language used around these events.
- Data collection included organizations from across Australia and New Zealand, including Queensland Transport & Main Roads, Queensland Rail, KiwiRail, Public Transport Victoria, VicTrack, Transport for New South Wales, Public Transport Authority – West Australia and Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure – South Australia. Preliminary analysis revealed several themes, including communication and information sharing, incident prevention and mitigation, and culture.
- Data were collected from an audience of over 100 participants across the organizations, and comprised a variety of industry professionals and subject matter experts who work in and around rail trespass and suicide management. Audiences were asked about barriers they have in their state and organization for suicide and trespass. The project seeks to uncover how language affects how incidents are coded, the choices people make, and cultural attitudes. Within the rail industry, employees may feel like they won’t be taken seriously if they talk about trauma. Rail regulator handbooks and documentation may use undesirable language to describe these events.
- One key finding from this project is the use of language, and the issues identified related to how the nomenclature and various terms like “suicide” and “self-harm” are being used. Although these terms are defined differently, they are often used interchangeably. This may affect the way suicide is understood in the industry, as well as the way these incidents are categorized or what actions may be taken.
- There seems to be a greater prevalence of physical barriers and hotspot identification compared to other measures that might be targeted toward mental health. There is a tendency for signage to be the same for trespass and suicide. This can result in conflicts between trespass and suicide messaging. For example, school safety campaigns can include the message that the rail is lethal,

which conflicts with Lifeline messaging. The idea of lethality may make the rail more attractive for people with suicidal ideation. These mixed messages to different audience may create added complexity and unpredictability to these incidents.

- Staff training is not happening as much as would be desired, and there are issues with the way responsibility for these incidents is viewed. For example, drivers can be treated more like perpetrators, rather than individuals involved in an event that is outside of their control. Many may even turn to drugs and alcohol to cope.
- This work is still underway as of November 2019, though the work is being used to inform and input into a Safe Language Kit being developed for the industry by TrackSAFE. One goal is to take these issues to the rail regulators, and begin to revise policies and education once the research is published.

Canada

Update provided by Christine Triggs, Toronto Transit Commission

- TTC oversees Toronto buses, streetcars, para-transit service, and subway.
- TTC has been experiencing a 5-year increase in suicides (including attempts) since 2014. Their numbers have increased from about 22 on average per year to about 30 – 35 on average per year. In 2016 – 17, the number of suicides was especially high.
- TTC has focused on increasing opportunities for intervention. Since 2004, they have trained frontline subway staff to identify individuals at risk and perform interventions, and have now expanded that training to other employees, such as track patrollers and janitorial staff. They are also looking at other opportunities to train all staff members on general suicide awareness, since many of them are also system users.
- This training has evolved from a gatekeeper training program to general mental health awareness training, including psychological first aid. Their goal is to enhance the knowledge and confidence of employees to make suicide interventions.
- TTC is updating its suicide awareness and intervention training. Considering a 4 – 7 hour training for suicide intervention for their staff based on their role.
- In September 2019, TTC launched a communication campaign, to encourage customers to support individuals in distress. This was inspired by Network Rail's *small talk saves lives* effort. The posters (seen below) encourage customers to tell a TTC staff member if they see someone who may be in need of help. They worked with focus groups and experts to craft a message that was hopeful and presented in a way that would be well received by the population in need. Employees have had a positive response to this campaign.



- A continuing challenge with this effort is how to effectively track interventions. While many are tracked, TTC believe that the numbers are quite a bit higher and are exploring ways that they may encourage reporting of these interventions by employees.
- In 2011, the TTC partnered with the Distress Centres of Greater Toronto) in providing Crisis Link. Crisis Link is where all subway/SRT platforms have a pay phone near the Designated Waiting Area with a free direct dial feature to the Distress Centres of Greater Toronto. Crisis Link connects those contemplating suicide with a trained counsellor to help de-escalate the situation and connect them with further help. When Crisis Link is unable to de-escalate the situation, the TTC activates safe platform protocols through its control centre. TTC updated the poster about the support service this past September (see below). Crisis Link receives on average 4 calls with suicidal ideation per month. Since 2011, 75 – 94% of calls could be de-escalated without involvement from Transit Control or emergency services.



- TTC launched an initiative with Toronto Distress Centres partner to provide a mental health support volunteer presence in stations for those who witness an incident – Crisis Link Outreach. Customers and employees have approached volunteers after an incident occurs to talk about how they feel, warning signs, and where to get help.
- TTC delivers mental health communication campaigns jointly with mental health agencies, including video on station TV's such as Big White Wall – an online mental health and wellbeing service offering self-help programs. They are also planning a promotional event with Canadian Association of Mental Health (CAMH) and Purina on the benefits of therapy dogs.
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has broadcasted mental health segments. This topic is getting more positive attention lately in the media. TTC been less visible in mental health in the past but is now changing to be more visible to the public.
 - Big White Wall – Breaking Down Mental Health Stigma with a Blank Canvass
<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1572638787816>
 - TTC Suicide Prevention – Breaking the Silence About Subway Suicide
<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1601432131894>
- In the past, TTC had used vague language to inform the public that an incident had occurred. They are moving away from this policy and are also no longer using coded language when there is an incident, and refer to it as a “Personal injury at track level.”
- TTC has had contact with media, and are mindful about the media communication of the subway as a means for suicide (e.g., may not always be fatal).
- TTC do not see hotspots in their data; incidents are evenly spread across their system. For this reason, they tend to implement countermeasures broadly across the system without a particular area of focus.

Netherlands

Update provided by Roald van der Valk, ProRail

- In the Netherlands, 11% of all suicides take place on the rail system. They have areas with very high train frequency, in some places every two/three minutes, making it similar to some high frequency transit systems.
- ProRail tested a publicity campaign with the goal is to encourage interaction between passengers. The thought behind this is that it will create a “social safety net” for vulnerable people, and ensure that passengers are more alert about their surroundings.
- The first pilot took place at four stations, every two days for five weeks. The campaign team included rail staff, mental health experts and volunteers. This initial effort received positive feedback from both passengers and local government. Results show that fewer incidents took place at those stations than over the past five years; a similar reduction was not seen at other stations on the network. The reduction in incidents appears to be stable thus far.
- The campaign is now being presented to local councils (government) to increase involvement and reach more people.
- ProRail would like to roll out national campaign because this strategy helps communities to address the problem at its core.
- ProRail uses automated (AI) analytics to predict trespassing, but not for suicide prevention specifically, as they don’t separate suicide from non-suicide incidents.
- Mental health services are also provided to give people in need a place to go, and then fast track them to getting help in the system. This reduces the potential for a wait to get help.
- Suicide intervention training has included staff in areas where people can isolate themselves.
- ProRail is looking into how to track interventions more effectively. ProRail is considering to give employees more feedback on what the data is used for, to help motivate reporting. This understanding that their efforts are being used to reduce the number of incidents is one way to encourage action.
- The question, “How many lives do we save?” was asked. The UK responded that it is difficult to answer because it is difficult to separate out from what’s happening in society.
 - The US responded that they struggle with telling carriers that if the number of suicides do not drop immediately, it doesn’t mean that they were not successful. The UK noted that their numbers held in place, and they can now use that as a benchmark. They can now add more mitigations and explore what impact that has. The US added that in the US, there is a need to normalize data, for example by population, to understand what is really going on. All participants agreed that while normalization of data is necessary and helpful, it is challenging to capture the range of variables that may impact these rates.
 - A participant from Sweden noted that they are the infrastructure manager for roads as well as rail. If they slow vehicle speed limits, theoretically a number of lives are saved

based on mathematical models that they use. They want to apply the same type for formula to rail, but it is very difficult.

- A member from the UK added that tracking interventions can be a measure as to the potential for people to complete suicide on rail. Interventions can be seen as potential suicides. UK are exploring if social media listening can be used to understand what's going on, to temper activities, and have a better understanding of when incidents may be likely. For example if there is a halfway house that shut down and numbers are going up, they may be able to make correlations.

Sweden

Update provided by Helena Rådbo, Trafikverket

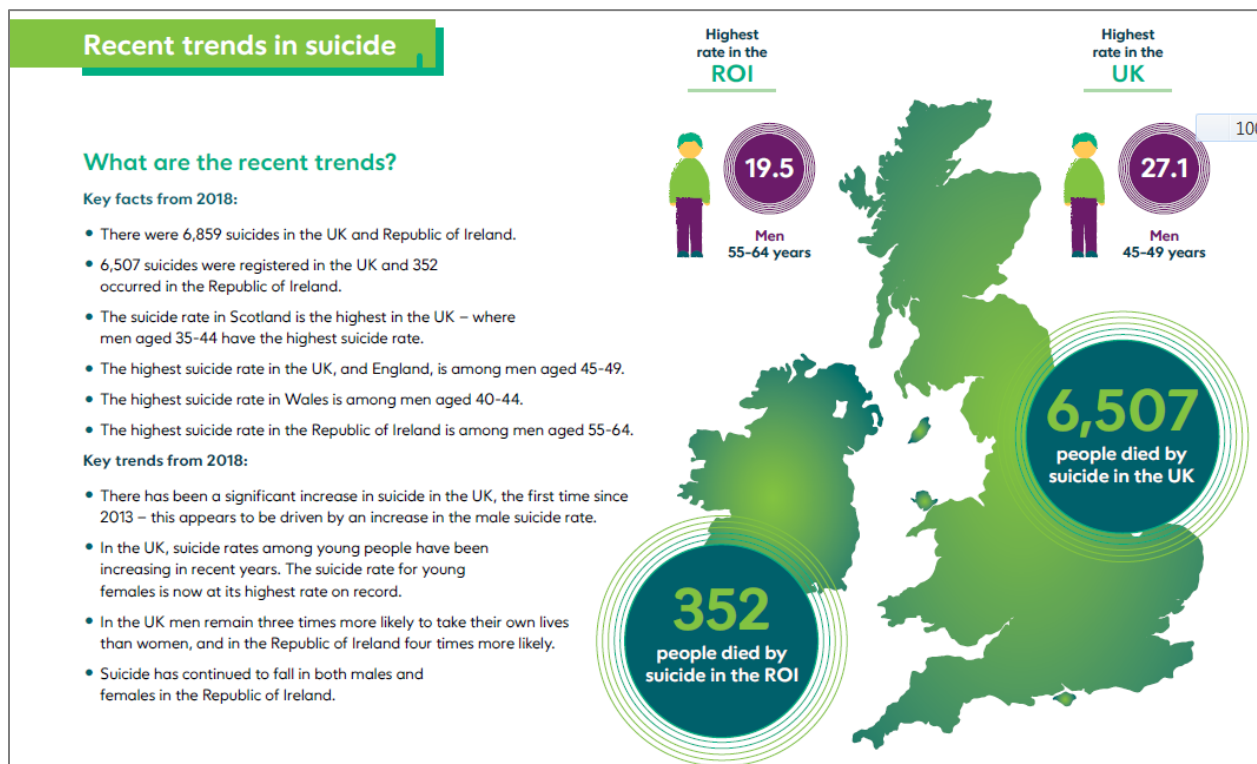
- Vision Zero Goal – to reduce fatal accidents, including suicides. Their safety goal is to reduce fatalities on the railways by 50% from 2010 to 2020. While the safety numbers had been trending down, recent years have shown another increase and appear as if the goals are unlikely to be achieved during the stated timeline.
- Most of the incidents are due to suicide, and less to trespass.
- Sweden found that 60% of the incidents occur on only 6% of the network. This makes it possible to prioritize locations where mitigations can be tried.
- One current prevention strategy is fencing. Fences are 2m high, and designed so that people can't climb on them. So far there are fewer incidents where the fences are located, although some have occurred close to the ends of the fences. It was also noted that it is important to consider wildlife when putting up fences, so as not to disrupt certain patterns of movement.
- They are now looking to understand how to implement the fences throughout the city, although some towns decided to pay for nicer looking fences.
- Intelligent CCTV is also being installed (57 cameras in 26 locations) that send an alarm to the train control center. These are co-located with fencing, and are not implemented on platforms.
- Thermal cameras detect human activity, trigger a warning to train control center, and activate other day/night cameras immediately. The train control center contacts the emergency call center and stops the train traffic/reduces train speed. The emergency call center then contacts the Police/Rescue services and ambulance/hospital.
- The thermal cameras have a built-in redundancy, have high reliability and are not dependent on local surveillance because of availability via web-based access. Day/night cameras give a clear picture within 500 meters.
- When there is an alarm, people monitoring can see what's happening on the cameras in real time. For example, if they see the person leave, then they let the trains run. They try to make it easy for workers to make these decisions based on what the cameras show.

- Sweden emphasized that it is important to review the whole process from the triggering of the alarm until resuming the train traffic.
- Anti-trespass grids are also in place at various locations: The end of platforms; beside level crossings; end of fences, and end of tunnels.
- Sweden’s societal collaboration strategy uses a broad approach, involving community members, such as police, fire/rescue services and health authorities. If a suicidal person is suspected to be near or on railway property, a temporary shutdown can be requested so that the person can be located, removed from property, and taken to safety where they can get help. In 2018, 300 people were removed from rail property. These may be assumed to be people who could have potentially taken their lives on the rail system.
- In Sweden, almost all incidents at crossings are suicides vs accident. They try to focus more on stations and where there are crossings near stations. It’s difficult to find good solutions for crossings, but gatekeeper training could be helpful.

United Kingdom (UK)

Update provided by Ian Stevens, Network Rail

- An overview of overall suicide in the UK was provided (shown in the figure below).



- In 2018, the proportion of suicides that occurred on the rail system fell slightly; in the years prior, the rate had been trending upwards. Increases in suicide, generally, have been largest for women and youth.
- Network Rail is making more interventions over time. They trained 20,000 rail staff (out of 180,000) and in areas of high risk about 1 in 6 employees are trained. They are trying to change the idea of the rail system being a possible means for suicide and aim to dissuade people from considering taking their life on the rail system by making clear that someone will be there to stop them.
- Current fencing mitigations include right-of-way fencing, platform end fences, and mid-platform fences that provide barriers between slow and high-speed services to separate platforms. This seems to be bringing suicide numbers down where installed.
- Security collaboration – having a physical presence at some locations has been key for preventing rail suicide in Great Britain. Platforms have “guards” at peak times, which is less costly than the costs associated with a suicide. Trespass and welfare officers have also been introduced where there are high numbers of suicides. Those staff talk to staff and passengers to help build a community around working together to prevent suicides.
- Network Rail believe there has been a displacement of incidents. Incidents at manned location have reduced, but there has been an increase in those at level crossings. This suggests that while the targeted mitigations are working to prevent incidents at the identified locations, they are not solving the problem.
- Anthropological studies are underway to understand high-risk locations. They perform these studies when rates hit a certain, unacceptable, level and they want to know more about what might be driving this increase.
- Samaritans partnership is scheduled to end in March 2020, new arrangements will be put in place from April 2020 which will see the rail industry team up with both Samaritans and a mental health charity going forward.
- It was noted that the rail industry generates a large amount of suicide prevention collateral, which it shares with third parties wherever it can.
- Hotspot/risk assessment – Network Rail is working with local authorities and has produced a guide for authorities about how to address rail related suicides.
- Small Talk Saves Lives – This effort is a passenger-focused mitigation, which encourages passengers to look out for other passengers who may be struggling and in need of help. They are currently in Phase 3, which includes branding road vehicles (e.g., maintenance vans) as well as stations and billboards to encourage involvement. Phase 4 is being developed now and includes videos to promote this effort.
- Research and development efforts are starting to explore social media listening. They are monitoring when someone posts about a rail incident and will also explore conversations about events that may result in increased rail suicide risk (e.g., the closing of certain services).

Samaritans representatives are going out to stations after an event to help those who need it. They are also investigating persuasion techniques from around the world to understand how this can be applied to suicide prevention. Results from this effort are expected in February 2020.

- The rail industry identified mental health support that was made available to help individuals coming to rail environment with mental health issues. They estimate that 75% of users have some mental health issue and feel that a mental health focused partnership (not exclusively suicide) may be a good path forward.
- Network Rail is working with a popular TV program on a new campaign, “Britain get talking,” on a major television network in Britain. The aim is to prevent loneliness, and get people to check in with one another. They are also investing in promoting Small Talk Saves Lives in TV, movies and social media (e.g., a Small Talk Saves Lives video is seen alongside the movie The Joker).
- Network Rail’s suicide prevention website is available to the public to increase awareness about what is being done to address the issue.
- They also launched a “Million hour challenge” campaign to get staff to contribute hours of volunteer time to organizations like Samaritans. Network Rail like to see their staff volunteer and this was a good way to encourage staff to participate in this important work.
- A question was raised about Network Rail’s escalation process and how this is working. Network Rail has seen smaller numbers since implementing the escalation process. When they see the first suicide at any location, the local authority will gather information on that individual. After the 3rd attempt or suicide, Network Rail goes back to the local authority with information about what they can be doing to prevent additional incidents. They can provide the community or authorities with a list of things that can be done to prevent rail suicide; anything they are not currently doing are expected to help the situation. The goal is to get ahead of these events using other mitigations. Anthropologists can then go into that community to understand what is happening if an area proves resistant to initial mitigation strategies. Authorities often don’t know about the problem, and are unfamiliar with what’s going on in their communities in terms of suicide. They have looked into using facial recognition technology to identify individuals at risk, but received pushback from the government.
- There have been instances where anthropologists have identified issues that can be addressed by the railroad. For example, bodies being carried away from the scene were easily viewed by people in shops above the rail, which was traumatizing to those who looked on. In another example, ethnographic research revealed that the demographics of the individuals portrayed in a recent campaign were too dissimilar from the demographics of the intended audience for the message to resonate. They were then able to change their materials to better reach their target demographic.
- Network Rail is also becoming involved in land development because land use comes into play socially. For example, a mental health facility was being built near the rail, and the railroad objected to the location. While they were interested in ensuring that individuals had access to care, they wanted more thought put into the location of these services relative to the rail system.

- In terms of intervention training, they would like to have the maximum number of people trained to perform interventions. A full day course is not possible, because it requires taking people out of work, and they are already understaffed. The 2-hour course has worked well for the Underground. This may be a path forward for Network Rail in the future, though they believe that the full day course is most effective.
- They have a recognition program in place to encourage staff intervention reporting. They recognize individual staff members in letters, in presentations, and rail safety awards. (Awards are based on having training and appropriately delivering training.)

Update provided by Simon Abernathy, Transport for London (presented by Ian Stevens)

- In 2017/2018 the London Underground network experienced a peak in the number of suicide attempts made on its network since 2003 (when data records began). In response, London Underground created the Suicide Prevention Team. Their first step was to understand the data and identify potential mitigations against this deeply concerning trend.
- The team found that people were making attempts on the Underground because they wrongly believed it was a quick and certain means of ending life (in fact, most people survive, often with life changing injuries). Incidents are also widely reported on by the media potentially encouraging further attempts and giving a false impression the most attempts result in fatalities.
- Data analysis did not reveal any significant trends about when the incidents take place (e.g., season, day or time).
- “Hotspot” locations did not really exist. Instead, they tended to be self-reinforcing – when people believed a station was a “hotspot” this appeared to increase activity. This was because a proportion of suicidal individuals identified these locations and would travel to them.
- A range of potential mitigations was examined, including infrastructure and ambience changes. However, all the research and evidence suggest that the only credible and immediate solution was training staff to be able to identify possible suicidal behaviors, make a non-physical intervention (i.e., ask if someone is ok and look after them if needed) and then contact British Transport Police who have powers to direct vulnerable people to medical help.
- To design the Intervention Strategy the team undertook the following:
 - Reviewing incidents using CCTV to gain a full understanding of suicidal behavior.
 - Working with leading industry practitioners on suicide prevention, including charities, academics, and the rail industry to understand best practice.
 - Developing a 2-hour training course for station staff covering the basics of:
 - Identifying suicidal behavior
 - Talking to someone they were concerned about
 - How to move them to safety
 - Who to call to complete the intervention successfully

GRASP 2019

- Creating the LifeSaver Award to recognize individuals who had made a best practice suicide intervention and encourage proactive intervention.
- By the end of 2019 over 50% of London Underground station staff (around 3,000 people) have completed the 2 hour training in addition to another 600 staff working for the wider Transport for London organization.
- Interventions with vulnerable people have increased dramatically. London Underground now regularly intervenes with over 9 out of 10 vulnerable people successfully. It is extremely rare for an individual to complete a suicide attempt on the network.
- Training was achieved without the use of overtime or stopping the service. The 2-hour course is run at a wide range of training locations and times across London, which gives plenty of opportunity for staff to attend without impacting station operations.
- Despite the increase in incidents involving suicidal people (alongside a general increase in the suicide rate in the United Kingdom), the number of people being killed or seriously injured continues to fall. In 2018/19 the number of completed suicide attempts fell for the first time in five years, it continues to fall into 2019/20.

United States of America (USA)

Update provided by Scott Gabree, Volpe Center

- Trespass and suicide continue to be the leading causes of death on the rail systems in the USA. Unlike much of Europe, the leading cause of death is non-suicide trespass with between 400 and 550 fatalities each year. Suicide is still a significant problem with between 250 and 325 fatalities per year. We know that these data are somewhat skewed, for example every undetermined verdict or unreturned verdicts is listed as trespass, but the amount of skew is still unclear. Ongoing work at the Volpe Center, funded by the FRA, is seeking to shed more light on these data quality issues.
- Published review of FRA-based trespass and suicide data (2012 – 2014) to reveal trends/insights that explores timing, location, actions and other factors to identify patterns in the data: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L19581>
- Published a review of publicly available information about railroad countermeasures to prevent suicide. Volpe realized that many railroads were quite unaware of what other railroads were doing to prevent suicide and wondered why. We found that while there is some information available, suicide prevention measures are often not discussed publicly, perhaps by design. This paper provides a summary of what is known about these efforts and attempts to discuss effective ways to talk about these efforts in a safe manner: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L19856>
- Published a paper about suicide intervention training. This paper leans heavily on the lessons learned from other GRASP members, particularly from the UK and Netherlands. Our paper provides a summary of lessons learned from these groups and offers key considerations,

decisions and factors for how a US rail carriers may effectively implement a similar program of their own: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L20488>

- Selected countermeasure implementations include:
 - Suicide Intervention Training – There are several rail carriers in the USA who have implemented training programs to recognize warning signs of suicide and intervene. Metra, a commuter rail in the Chicago area, has the most advanced program having been in place since 2016. They have been quite pleased with this effort and continue to expand. Other commuter rail carriers, such as Metro North in New York and Tri Rail in Florida are trying similar efforts.
 - Volunteer Training – A group out of Nevada, which is in the Western parts of the US, have implemented a somewhat similar training program, but with community volunteers. These volunteers are trained in how to respond if they see someone acting as if they need help or in an area they should not be. One successful intervention recorded in the first year of training.
 - Dedicated National Suicide Prevention Help – Many rail carriers advertise the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number on their systems. While not in effect yet, our government recently approved a three-digit number, 988, to be reserved for suicide prevention help. This may provide an easier way to connect with these services and increase volume. We expect to work with this group/service more once this is fully implemented.
- In October 2019, Metra, a commuter rail operator in Chicago, Illinois, hosted a meeting called Breaking the Silence. This is the second time they have hosted this type of event, which is focused on rail suicide prevention. The meeting included presentations from a survivor of suicide, the regulator (FRA), rail safety experts, operation lifesaver, transit safety experts, and an international perspective from the British Transport Police. It was an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to come together to talk about what they are doing to address rail suicide.
- At that meeting Operation Lifesaver (OLI), a national rail safety education group, launched materials aimed to help the media responsibly talk about rail suicide incidents. Volpe worked with OLI to develop two products – a first to help guide OLI state coordinators in their conversations with the media (and to help them understand the importance of the language they choose to use), and another that state coordinators can provide to the media to help them to responsibly report on rail suicide and trespass incidents.
- Volpe is also developing work with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) who oversee transit operations in the USA. Volpe is hoping to leverage what they are learning here and from work with the FRA to see what may be effective in a subway or transit environment. Initial work will focus on understanding data and exploring impacts of events on train crews.

Update provided by Michail Grizkewitsch, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

- FRA is testing a large-scale trespass detection and deterrent system using portable, stationary camera systems on drones.

GRASP 2019

- Using cell phone tower technology to narrow an individual's location, drone technology allowed for quick identification of the individual. This is faster and safer than on foot, for example an operator can see if a person is armed. This also allows law enforcement to recreate the incident. A drone can map the area in 3-D when there is a fatality to help facilitate the scene in 20 minutes rather than 4 hours. Total investigation time can be cut in half. Report of results will be coming out in few months.
- Drones can also be used to determine whether to shut down train traffic, depending on what the individuals doing (e.g., crossing the tracks versus walking along the tracks).
- The staff needed to operate the drones is currently two people, with one person flying and another person viewing camera visuals. However, this can be done with only one person. There is less staff required for using drones than without them.
- FRA released a National Strategy to prevent trespassing on railroad property that includes four strategic focus areas: data gathering and analysis, community site visits, funding, and partnerships with stakeholders.
- Overall, the US needs more data. Near misses are not officially tracked, and root cause data is needed. Although, some known trespass causes are convenience, crime, homelessness, and suicide.
- FRA is working more with communities at hotspots, and when there are special events where there may be an increase in foot traffic in the area.
- FRA is developing a grant for partnering with a suicide prevention group to implement a novel mitigation strategy.
- FRA is holding summits to talk about trespass and suicide at smaller locations in 10 counties around the US, rather than holding a national conference. The summits will raise awareness of the dangers of trespassing, find low-cost solutions to local trespassing issues, and discuss actionable ideas for innovative improvements at grade crossings. A main goal of this summit is to demonstrate how trespassing and grade crossing incidents touch all lives in a community, and reach community decision makers. Railroads often need community involvement and mental health professionals to address these issues. Once FRA confirms the dates and locations of the Trespassing Summits, a notification will be sent to the group.
- FRA launched a rail trespass dashboard that shares high-level trespass and suicide data with the public: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P1111>

Other Country Updates

Updates from other countries/groups who did not request a formal time to present.

Finland

Provided by Anne Silla, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland

- The Finnish stakeholders are planning to conduct a pilot training directed to the railway staff to recognize suicidal persons in the railway areas (i.e. gatekeeper training). The pilot training will be directed to conductors, ticket inspectors and (instructor) engine drivers who work in the metropolitan area of Helsinki (in short-distance railway traffic).

Additional Discussion

Below are any questions or thoughts that were discussed throughout the meeting that are not directed at any one particular country.

- Two opportunities were discussed as potential options to consider for an in-person meeting for GRASP:
 - London International Rail Human Factors conference June 2020.
 - Operation Lifesaver conference in November 2020 with the location to be determined.