

2026 National Rail Crossing Conference

April 6-9

Atlanta, Georgia

Georgia Tech Hotel &
Convention Center

Preliminary

AGENDA

Subject to change



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Monday, April 6, 2026

3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. | Foyer
Registration

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor
Welcome Reception, Cocktail Hour

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor
Welcome Reception, Dinner

All are welcome, including spouses, to meet with your fellow attendees and colleagues as we prepare for a full day of informative sessions that begins Tuesday morning. The cocktail hour and dinner are business attire and will be held in the main conference room. The Executive Planning Committee members are slated to provide welcoming remarks.

Jason Mobley, Georgia Department of Transportation

Jim Dahlem, Federal Railroad Administration

Frank Frey, Federal Railroad Administration

Matt Bond, California Public Utilities Commission

Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Tuesday, April 7, 2026

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Foyer
Registration

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Foyer and Conference Room A
Exhibitor Booths

Please visit our exhibitors.

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor
Breakfast

Breakfast is included for all registered attendees.

8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. | Grand Ballroom
Welcoming Address and Safety Briefing

The Executive Planning Committee will welcome attendees, go over any housekeeping items, and provide a safety briefing for all attendees.

Jason Mobley, Georgia Department of Transportation

Jim Dahlem, Federal Railroad Administration

Frank Frey, Federal Railroad Administration

Matt Bond, California Public Utilities Commission

Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Keynote Speakers – Setting the Stage

You'll hear our keynote speakers open our event and discuss the latest trends in the industry as told from the leadership perspective.

David Fink, (*accepted*)

Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration

Sean McMaster, (*invited*)

Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

Russell R. McMurry, (*accepted*)

Commissioner, Georgia Department of Transportation, and
President, American Association of State and Highway
Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Learn about the latest crossing safety trends and outreach initiatives.

Rachel Maleh, Executive Director, OLI

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Foyer

Mid-Morning Break

Refreshments will be provided and please visit our exhibitors.

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Overview of Traffic Signal Preemption

Understand how preemption is used at crossings near traffic signals. This overview will cover when preemption is used, how the preemption timing is determined, and new industry practices in use.

Nicole Jackson, Benesch

Karen Hankinson, Olsson

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor

Lunch

Lunch will be provided and please visit our exhibitors.

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

International Update

Hear from our partners around the globe on the latest in crossing safety. We'll have representatives from six countries on four continents including Australia, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

Dr. Natalie Pelham, ONRSR, Australia

Mr. Maximilian Sunekel, DB, Germany

Tomoyuki Minami, Japan Central Railways, Japan

Moderator: Allan Spence, Chair of the UIC Global Crossing
Network (GLCN)

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom
Humped Crossing Database

Explore the new humped crossing database used to identify locations where low-profile vehicles may be at a higher risk of getting hung up and stuck on crossings. Also, see the latest in research on how FRA has built this database using LIDAR.

Francesco Bedini, Federal Railroad Administration

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. | Foyer
Afternoon Break

Refreshments will be provided and please visit our exhibitors.

3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom
Diagnostic Review Process

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) has developed a diagnostic process that emphasizes collaboration, technical expertise, and regulatory alignment. Rather than prescribing rigid procedures, UDOT empowers diagnostic teams—comprising UDOT staff, railroads, local roadway authorities, and other stakeholders—to apply their professional judgment in identifying safety improvements and operational needs.

Tyler Schmidt, Utah DOT
Travis Bailey, Olsson
Lance Kippen, Olsson

4:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom
Autonomous Train Operation Technology

Learn about the latest development utilizing self-propelled, zero-emission, battery-electric rail vehicles to transport freight without train locomotive engineers, autonomously, along the freight corridor, including negotiating through grade crossing locations.

Frank Frey, Federal Railroad Administration
David Kelly, Parallel

5:00 p.m. | Atlanta
Dinner on Your Own

Enjoy Atlanta! For information on the arts, entertainment, sports, and culinary scene in the area, please see the Explore Georgia website at:

<https://exploregeorgia.org/city/atlanta>

Or scan the QR Code:



Wednesday, April 8, 2026

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Foyer
Registration

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Foyer and Conference Room A
Exhibitor Booths

Please visit our exhibitors.

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor
Breakfast

Breakfast is included for all registered attendees.

8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. | Grand Ballroom
Housekeeping

The Executive Planning Committee will recap and wrap-up the previous day, plus repeat the safety briefing for all attendees.

8:15 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | Grand Ballroom
Quick Hits to Start the Day

Grab your coffee and listen to some short but noteworthy presentations. Each topic will be a 10-15 minute overview, with 10 minutes at the end for questions of the panel

- Inventory Updates
Todd Meyer, NCDOT + **Jim Dahlem**, FRA
- Left-turn gates
Matt Bond, California Public Utilities Commission
- Trainfo blocked crossing detection
Gareth Remple, Trainfo
- Questions from the group

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. | Grand Ballroom
AASHTO Updates

Hear the latest from AASHTO, and how states are working with partner agencies and railroads to improve safety at crossings.

Shayne Gill, AASHTO

9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | Grand Ballroom
Florida Rail Safety Coalition

Learn about a unique partnering initiative that Florida DOT has initiated, and how this can be a model for other states.

Kelli Phillips, Florida DOT

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Foyer
Mid-Morning Break

Refreshments will be provided and please visit our exhibitors.

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Class I Railroad Updates

Hear an overview of Class I crossing safety programs and priorities, and they'll also be an opportunity to ask questions for the panel.

Cherita Hunter, NS

Chris Keckeisen, UP

Will Roseborough, CSX

French Thompson, BNSF

CN (*invited*)

Annka O'Brien, CPKC

Jeff Moller, AAR

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Rail Bikes

Learn about perspectives relating to existing state rail policies, guidance documents, and operational procedures addressing Rail Bike activity, with a focus on how rail bikes operate through passive or active highway-rail grade crossings.

Frank Frey, Federal Railroad Administration

Stephen R. Connolly, West Virginia DOT

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor

Lunch

Lunch will be provided and please visit our exhibitors.

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

Autonomous Vehicles and Rail Crossings

You'll learn about the latest in research and development, regulatory issues, and safety data trends with the growing use of autonomous vehicles and how they interact with rail crossing.

Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

Top 100 High-Risk Crossing Initiative – Nationwide with FRA & State Partners

Hear an overview of FRA's initiative to address safety at high-risk crossings nationwide.

Jim Dahlem, Federal Railroad Administration

Frank Frey, Federal Railroad Administration

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Foyer

Afternoon Break

Refreshments will be provided and please visit our exhibitors.

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

Design of Intersections and Pedestrian Treatments for Light Rail

Learn about the unique and complex design that went into the Maryland Purple Line light rail currently under construction. This presentation will share how preemption was used at intersections, how pedestrians were incorporated into the design, and new innovative equipment and technology will improve safety on this new light rail transit corridor.

Rick Campbell, Benesch

4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

Overview and Updates to the Section 130 Program

This overview will show new updates to the funding program, what projects are eligible, how states can most effectively use the program funds, and noteworthy-practices from around the country.

FHWA

4:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

Hoy A. Richards Career Achievement Award Presentation

This award recognizes a career of exemplary achievement milestones in improving safety at level-grade crossings.

Presented by: Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

6:00 p.m. | Fox Theatre - Atlanta

Evening Reception and Networking Event

Come join us for our cherished, long-standing tradition of the National Rail Crossing Conference. Our signature evening event is an opportunity for attendees, spouses, and invited guests to network and unwind after a full day of learning. This year the executive committee is pleased to host this gathering at Atlanta's iconic and historic Fox Theatre, one of the city's most treasured landmarks. Come take part for an evening featuring complimentary food and beverages, scheduled events, and a welcoming atmosphere that captures the energy and charm of Atlanta.



Thursday, April 9, 2026

7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Foyer

Registration

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. | Restaurant, Ground Floor
Breakfast

Breakfast is included for all registered attendees.

8:00 a.m. – 8:10 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Housekeeping

The Executive Planning Committee will recap and wrap-up the previous day, plus repeat the safety briefing for all attendees.

8:10a.m. – 9:10 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

“Money, Money, Money” – FRA Grant Programs

After hearing this week about projects, new technologies, and best-practices, now learn how to pay for those improvements. You will gain an understanding of the various grant programs offered by FRA, including who can apply for them, what types of projects are eligible, and what prior years' programs have yielded.

Jenny Zeng, Federal Railroad Administration

Jenny Mancino, Federal Railroad Administration

Reagan Morgan, Federal Railroad Administration

9:10 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Research Update

Learn about the latest research in rail-highway crossings going on at the USDOT Volpe Center. This will provide a great snapshot into what new technologies or practices are under development and may be coming to a crossing near you in the future.

Marco DaSilva, USDOT Volpe Center

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Foyer

Mid-Morning Break

Refreshments will be provided.

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Pedestrian Crossing Safety

Learn about the latest in pedestrian safety accident trends at crossings and what types of countermeasures are being used to mitigate the risks. Also, you'll hear how our partners at NHTSA have been working to improve pedestrian safety.

Jim Dahlem, Federal Railroad Administration

Matt Bond, CPUC

Teona Edwards, Federal Transit Administration

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. | Grand Ballroom

Open Session – Odds & Ends

This is your chance to ask questions of any topic that was not covered, or to revisit a topic already discussed. This could be anything such as (but not limited to) Quiet Zones, Emergency Notification System (ENS) Sign, Grade Crossing Handbook, GXAPS, Reg Reform Updates, AREMA, etc..

Moderated by: Executive Planning Committee

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Grand Ballroom

Closing Remarks

The Executive Planning Committee will recap the event with closing remarks, and they'll talk about updates for the next workshop and other upcoming events.

Jason Mobley, Georgia Department of Transportation

Jim Dahlem, Federal Railroad Administration

Frank Frey, Federal Railroad Administration

Matt Bond, California Public Utilities Commission

Allan Rutter, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

12:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Lunch will be on your own. Please travel safely and thank you for attending.

To see a list of the presenters and bios, please visit

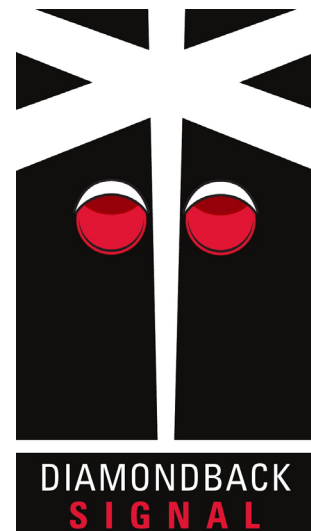
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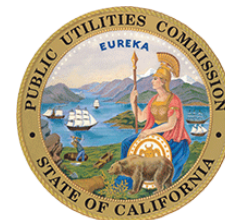
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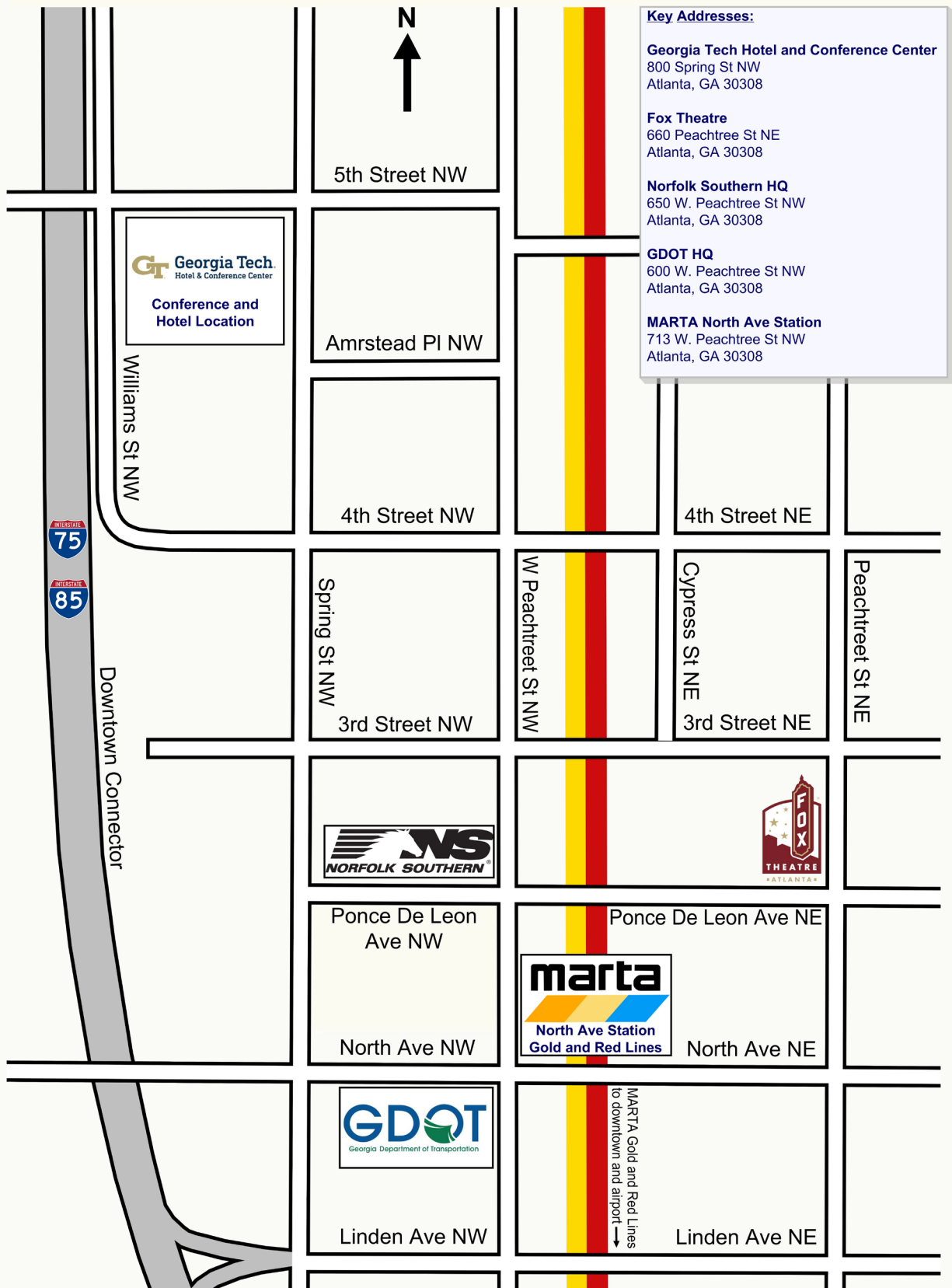
**Thank you to the following organizations and their staff for
their help in planning the Conference:**



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration**



Conference Vicinity Map



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Thank you for attending!



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nationalrailcrossingconference.org

