

# Living Community

September 19th, 2019



## 2019 Annual Awards & Scholarship Dinner



THE  
**PRADO**  
AT BALBOA PARK

**WTS**

*Advancing Women in Transportation  
San Diego County Chapter*



Thank you for joining us at the  
**WTS San Diego County Chapter**  
*2019 Annual Awards & Scholarship Dinner*



## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

*6:00 PM*

*Registration & Champagne  
Check-in*

*6:00 - 7:00 PM*

*Cocktails*

*7:30 PM*

*Dinner &  
Awards Ceremony*

### **Opening Remarks & Welcome**

Linda Culp, SANDAG

### **Evening Toast**

Bethany Dawa, T.Y. Lin International

### **Message from the President**

Brianna Pilkinton, Burns & McDonnell

### **Transportation YOU**

Jim Starling, Jacobs

Amanda Olgeirsson, Kleinfelder

### **Scholarship Presentation**

Mimi Morisaki, Rick Engineering

Bethany Dawa, T.Y. Lin International

### **Award Presentation**

Danielle Zhang, Caltrans, District 11

Julie Froelich, Jacobs

Debbie Leung, IBI Group

### **Keynote Address**

Sunnie House, Principal and Founder,  
Sunnie House Strategies

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<b>Scholarship Chair</b>	Mimi Morisaki
<b>Scholarship Co-Chair</b>	Bethany Dawa
<b>Transportation YOU Chair</b>	Jim Starling
<b>Programs Chair</b>	Lisa Madsen
<b>Programs Co-Chair</b>	Mary Elizabeth Westrum
<b>Professional Development Chair</b>	Wendy Casdorph
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<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	Allison Woodworth
<b>Student Chapter Liaison</b>	Morgan Wolfe
<b>SDSU Student Chapter President</b>	Alondra Ramirez Sinhoui
<b>Regional Council Liaison</b>	Nensi Lakrori





# ***Award Winners***

**Sharon Cooney, Chief of Staff**  
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

**Don Murphy, Associate Director**  
IBI Group

**Fehr & Peers**

**Nadia Nuñez, Community Manager**  
A Reason to Survive (ARTS)

**San Elijo Lagoon Double Track**

**18th Street Complete Street**

**Fiber Optic Communication Network  
Expansion Through Partnerships**

**Meghan Cedeño, Associate Engineer**  
City of San Diego

**Kimberly J. Becker, President & CEO**  
San Diego County Regional Airport Authority

**Member of the Year**

**Honorable Ray LaHood  
Award**

**Employer of the Year**

**Rosa Parks Diversity  
Leadership Award**

**Innovative  
Transportation Solutions**

**Alternative Modes &  
Active Transportation**

**Technology for  
Transportation**

**Pursuit of Excellence**

**Woman of the Year**





# *Honorary Speakers*

## **Master of Ceremonies**

### **Linda Culp**

Ms. Culp is a Principal Planner with the SANDAG. She oversees the agency's active transportation and rail planning activities, and serves as SANDAG's Bikeway Corridor Director, including implementation of more than 40 bicycle/pedestrian projects that are part of the Regional Bike Plan Early Action Program. Linda also oversees the development plans and manages projects for the coastal rail corridor. Linda has been with SANDAG for 27 years and holds degrees in geography and public administration from West Virginia University.



## **Keynote Speaker**

### **Sunnie House, PE**

Ms. House is the Founder of Sunnie House Strategies. In this role, she is advising CEOs and business leaders on a variety of business management practices to develop strong entrepreneurial operations to achieve success. She is also providing leadership coaching, and developing accountability and empowerment, branding and marketing, inclusion and diversity, and a variety of other programs for her clients.

As a professional civil engineer, she has been responsible for securing and delivering over \$3 billion worth of complex infrastructure projects in the Western United States while serving as an executive for several global infrastructure consulting firms.

Sunnie believes in giving back to her professional community and has served on the boards of several professional and non-profit organizations for more than three decades, including President of WTS International. She was honored by WTS San Diego as the "Woman of the Year" and by the WTS Los Angeles as one of "Top 25 Most Influential Women in the Los Angeles Region Transportation Industry".







# *Honorary Speakers*



## **Evening Toast**

### **Bethany Dawa, PE**

Ms. Dawa is a Surface Transportation Group Leader for T.Y. Lin International's San Diego office and the task order manager for the Project Management Consultant team assisting SANDAG with the delivery of the Mid-Coast Transit Project. Ms. Dawa has 19 years of civil engineering experience and has spent the last 16 years designing and managing public infrastructure projects, including bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT), active transportation, multimodal facilities, freeway interchanges, heavy and light rail grade separations, local roadways, utilities, and drainage studies. Her focus is on staff management and development, project management, and business development. Over the last decade she has served for five years in executive positions on the Board of the San Diego County chapter of WTS and is currently co-chairing the Scholarship Outreach committee. Originally from Indiana, Bethany holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Purdue University.

## **2019 Transportation You Mentor**

### **Amanda Olgerisson, PE**

Ms. Olgerisson is a licensed Civil Engineer specializing in construction management at Kleinfelder Construction Services. After graduating from UC Davis in 2011, Amanda was hired by Kleinfelder Construction Services (formerly Simon Wong Engineering) to serve as a consultant for Caltrans District 11's Division of Construction. Over the next six years working with Caltrans, she honed her skills and knowledge of transportation construction as an Office Engineer and Lead Field Inspector on a variety of projects focusing on asphalt pavement, including rehabilitations, widenings, and realignments all over San Diego County.

Her assignments since then have included working with the County of San Diego on their Building Better Roads initiative, and, most recently, for the City of Chula Vista where she is currently serving as Resident Engineer on a large-scale street rehabilitation project. Amanda's favorite part of working in construction management aligns with her reasons for joining WTS - having the opportunity to build relationships and work closely with a diverse group of people while tackling interesting and challenging projects.







# President's Message



You may have heard how we got our name, WTS. It stands for Women's Transportation Seminar, but we stand for so much more. Back in 1977, when our organization was founded, women were discouraged from participating in professional associations unless the activities were deemed educational. So, a group of pioneering women came up with the plan, and the name, which stuck. Once established, they did what we still do today... support and challenge one another, forge partnerships, and strategize over important projects and transportation topics. Of course, there is an educational component, but the real value comes from our connections and powerful network.

Today, our WTS San Diego County Chapter is one of the strongest professional organizations in our region. We are a part of a vibrant and growing organization that connects more than 40,000 transportation professionals internationally. Through our networking opportunities, professional development programs, technical education, and unparalleled access to industry and government decision makers, WTS is turning the glass ceiling into a career portal. The industry today looks very different than it did when we were founded. Women lead public agencies and firms, they manage groundbreaking projects and plan infrastructure solutions that shape our landscape for generations.

Wherever you look, women are represented, from the air to the sea

and everything in between. Our talents are being used to shape livable communities, but we still have work to do. WTS San Diego County is striving to reflect and encourage diversity, inclusion, and access, by engaging all facets of our transportation industry.

Our region and our industry are changing, but our mission to strengthen the transportation industry through the advancement of women remains steadfast. WTS San Diego County has a tremendous team of talented volunteers working to provide opportunities and access for our members. We have accelerated our commitment to the future of our workforce through SDSU student chapter support, Transportation YOU, and by awarding scholarships to six remarkable young women who we believe are the bright future of our industry. We are committed to maintaining a connection with our history, by reinvigorating our advisory board and engaging with past executive board leaders. And this evening, we recognize and celebrate our current San Diego County transportation all-stars!

Congratulations to our 2019 award recipients who collectively demonstrate excellence, inclusivity, and innovative transportation solutions that make San Diego County a great place to live, work, and play.

To our WTS San Diego County Chapter members, volunteers, sponsors, partners, and friends, thank you for your contributions toward our chapter's success. WTS San Diego County will be leaning on our diverse support network, our board of directors, and our broader community to fuel our mission in this moment. Most importantly, this is an exciting time for transportation, and there are always more seats at the table. We hope you'll get on board to help turn our current momentum into a legacy. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your chapter president and I hope you enjoy your evening.

Brianna Pilkinton  
Burns & McDonnell  
WTS San Diego County Chapter President

# 2019 Annual Awards & Scholarship Dinner

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# Transportation YOU

This June, WTS San Diego sponsored myself and my mentee, Lucy Ren, who will be a freshman at Duke University this fall, to attend the TransportationYOU Youth Summit in Washington, DC. Lucy and I both had an incredible experience meeting women from all over the country involved in various aspects of the transportation industry. The weekend was full of inspiring moments that showed mentees and mentors alike that careers in transportation can provide both personal fulfillment and positive impacts on communities.

Here's a recap written by Lucy about her experience at the Summit: After learning that I had been selected by WTS San Diego to attend the 2019 Transportation YOU Summit, I felt like I had gotten the Golden Ticket. A 5-day trip in Washington D.C. to learn about careers in transportation and attend exciting events with accomplished women? Who wouldn't be jumping up and down at the idea of that?

On June 25th, I rolled my blue paisley suitcase into the San Diego Airport at 4AM and met up with my wonderful mentor, Amanda. Aside from our grogginess from waking up so early, we felt nothing but excitement as we embarked on this journey together. After two flights and a ride on the Metro, Amanda and I found ourselves in the lobby of the beautiful Mayflower hotel. I didn't think it was possible for a 5-day event to bring me out of my shell and boost my confidence, but it did. At dinner on the first day, I volunteered to stand up and deliver my impromptu elevator pitch in a room of about 50 women. With a refreshed sense of initiative, I found myself asking thoughtful questions at panels with the Secretary of the Federal Highway Administration, Congressional staff members, and administrators at the Reagan Airport. Maybe this sense of empowerment came from me sitting in a Senate conference room chair and introducing myself over a fancy microphone system. But I digress.

Our jam-packed schedule brought us to the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center, where we got a glimpse into the exciting future of transportation. I watched in fascination as the hydraulics lab made waves and made use of robotic arms. I got a closer look at self-driving cars and a crash testing center, and I even got to try a bicycle simulator. Later, my teammates and I observed the dynamics of an intersection to identify its flaws and propose strategies for improving it. As my fellow mentees and I explored DC together, we let our creative, competitive, and goofy sides show. We visited the Department of Transportation and learned about its crisis management center. We got to tour Capitol Hill and tried to spot a Senator at the Russell Senate Building. We competed in an Amazing Race around the National Mall, where we sang songs and completed challenges. The days flew by and before I knew it, my team was already giving our project presentation with recommendations for improving an intersection. When I looked into the audience, I could see the proud faces of our mentors and the encouraging smiles of our mentee friends.

I won't forget all the amazing women I got to know through conversations on the bus, at dinner in Georgetown, and in the engineering building at George Washington University. I was so glad to learn about their unique stories and pathways to the transportation industry. Whether she worked in bridge design, public relations, government, or traffic engineering, every single mentor I spoke to was encouraging, inspiring, and eager to help. From what I've gathered, that's the spirit of people who work in the field of transportation. It's all about service, awareness, and improvement. It seems that working in transportation stems from a desire to help others and uplift a community. I started out with curiosity about certain transportation modes and came back with a readiness to look into different careers relating to transportation. At the Summit, I gained knowledge about the transportation industry, I gained wisdom about being a professional woman, I gained amazing friends and role models, and most of all, I gained confidence in my ability to make an impact. Each kindhearted, capable woman who attended the Summit will play a role in keeping people safe while they get around, and we're all better for it. The future looks very bright indeed.

Lucy and I would like to thank WTS San Diego's Transportation YOU committee and the Summit organizers for selecting us to embark on this unique and rewarding adventure!







Uptown Bikeway - Eastern Hillcrest  
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South Bay Rapid - Segment 2  
Chula Vista, CA



West Mission Bay Drive Bridge  
over the San Diego River  
San Diego, CA

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# 2019 Scholarship Judges Panel



**Ann Fox, PE**

**Deputy District Director -  
Planning & Local Assistance, Caltrans**

Ms. Fox is Caltrans District 11 Deputy District Director for Planning and Local Assistance. Her 25 years of experience has focused on the development of transportation corridors through short and long-term strategic visioning, project design and management. Ann received her civil engineering degree at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. She is a Professional Engineer and member of WTS.

**Carolina Martinez**

**Policy Director, Env. Health Coalition**


Ms. Martinez is the Policy Director at Environmental Health Coalition. She works with residents in low income communities of color to advocate for climate and land use policies that respect their priorities, improve health, and are consistent with environmental justice principles. Caro is a proud Colombian immigrant with M.A.s in Urban Planning and Latin American Studies.



**Amanda Young-Rigby**

**Council Member, City of Vista**

Ms. Young-Rigby, known as the hardest working City Council Member in Vista, is also an active volunteer in her community. Elected to the Vista City Council in November 2012 and re-elected in 2016, she is recognized in Who's Who Among American Women and was named to the list of 100 Strong, Smart, Bold Women in San Diego County by Girls, Inc.





# 2019 WTS San Diego County Chapter Scholarship Winners



## High School Scholarship Winner

### Emily Otsuka

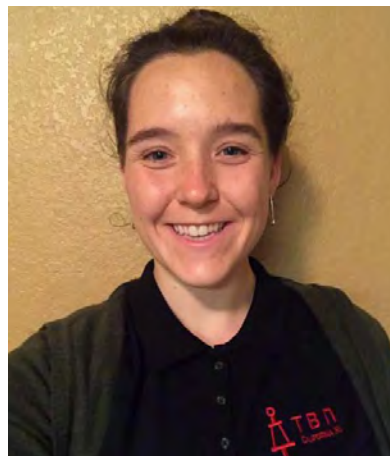
Emily is a graduating senior at Patrick Henry High School and will be attending UCLA in the fall to pursue her Civil Engineering degree. Emily is active in the Society of Women Engineers, ACE Mentor Program, and the Patrick Henry High School Environmental Club.

## Undergraduate Scholarship Winners



### Ciera Aldava

Ciera is a civil engineering student at San Diego State University and will be graduating in May 2020. Ciera enjoys working in the transportation field because she appreciates being able to see the difference that transportation engineers can make in the community.



### Hannah Rebello

Hannah is a civil engineering student at San Diego State University. Hannah is a San Diego native and chose to study Civil Engineering because of the academic challenges and public service aspects. She has grown to love the practicality and technicality of transportation design within civil engineering.



### Gelareh Faraji

Gelareh transferred from Miramar College to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering at San Diego State University. Gelareh is looking forward to becoming an effective person for society not only by being an engineer, but also by being a trustworthy source and leader for future students in the transportation field.



# 2019 WTS San Diego County Chapter Scholarship Winners

## Graduate Scholarship Winners



### **Anagha Katthe**

Anagha is a graduate student pursuing a Masters degree in Civil Engineering with a focus on transportation at San Diego State University. Anagha earned her BE in Civil Engineering from DSCE University in Bangalore, India and is passionate about learning new innovative technologies that aim to improve safety, mobility, and reduce congestion.



### **Julia Tuer**

Julia is a graduate student pursuing a Masters degree in Public Administration at San Diego State University. Julia is currently the Executive Assistant to the CEO and Clerk of the Board at San Diego Metropolitan Transit System where she assists with government relations and legislative advocacy efforts. Julia recognizes the importance of the public transportation industry and is passionate about being part of its future.





*Congratulations*  
TO ALL THE AWARD WINNERS!

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# 2019 Annual Awards Judges Panel



**Margaret Bornyasz**

**Operations Manager, ECORP Consulting, Inc.**

Ms. Bornyasz is a Senior Ecologist/Operations Manager for ECORP Consulting, Inc. She is a 30+ year resident of San Diego and a graduate of SDSU and UC Riverside. Margaret has served as an environmental consultant and a project biologist for a full spectrum of project types and for Owners such as Caltrans, SANDAG, US Navy, and many of the local municipalities. At ECORP, she is responsible for operations of the San Diego office, oversight and mentorship of staff, and technical work including management of environmental programs and completing tasks related to regulatory permitting.

**Jeanene 'Chili' Cilch**

**Senior Transportation Planner, Caltrans**

A 28 years Caltrans veteran, Ms. Cilch is a Senior Transportation Planner overseeing the Planning Support, Value Analysis (VA) & Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Branch for District 11's Division of Planning and Local Assistance. In 1992, she developed and taught a UCSD extension course on the Principles of Transportation Demand Management. While managing the District's Park and Ride program, she negotiated partnerships with local non profits to provide onsite staffed donation collection centers. Chili is considered one of the few Caltrans experts on the Value Engineering/Analysis methodology.



**Nensi Lakrori, PE**

**Professor, SDSU**

Ms. Lakrori is a full-time lecturer in the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering at San Diego State University and is a current vice-chair for the WTS Pacific Southwest Regional Council. In 2014, she chartered a student chapter of WTS at San Diego State University, the fourth WTS student chapter in the country, and the first in California. For nearly a decade, Nensi worked in design and delivery for transportation and rail related projects in Michigan, Indiana and Southern California. She is a registered P.E. in California, holds a LEED AP Building & Construction accreditation, as well as OSHA 10 certification.



# ***2019 Annual Awards Judges Panel***



**Kimberly Hayford**

**Director of Service Planning, NCTD**

Ms. Hayford is responsible for service planning, scheduling, and performance monitoring and reporting. Previously she managed NCTD's Capital Improvement Program and grants department. She has a Masters in Planning from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of California, Berkeley. She participates as a mentor in the WTS Mentorship Program and served as a panel member for the 2018 WTS Legislative Program.

**Angela Shafer-Payne**

**Vice President & COO, SDCRAA**

Ms. Shafer-Payne is a long-tenured executive of the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, where she has held various leadership positions since she began work there in 1995. Presently, she oversees air side, terminals and land side operations, aviation security and public safety, ground transportation, and facilities management. Ms. Shafer-Payne received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Airport Administration from the University of North Dakota and she holds an Instrument Rated Pilot's License.



**Renita Mollman, PE**

**Vice President, Burns & McDonnell**

Burns & McDonnell is a full-service engineering, architecture, construction, environmental, and consulting solutions firm. As a Vice President, Ms. Mollman oversees her firm's California offices, including Brea, San Diego, Los Angeles, and the Bay Area. Her technical background includes a focus on the aviation market, which encompasses both aircraft hangar design and airfield design projects involving airfield planning, airport airspace layout, and airfield pavement and drainage design.



**Antoinette Meier**

**Principal Regional Planner, SANDAG**

Ms. Meier is responsible for leading SANDAG's innovative plans, policies and services for congestion reduction and mobility improvements in the San Diego region. Antoinette oversees the operations of regional commuter services, including managing one of the largest van pool programs in the nation. She also leads marketing campaigns like Bike to Work Day and fosters partnerships with transit agencies, local jurisdictions and the region's largest employers to promote sustainable transportation choices to the region's commuters. Antoinette has a Master's Degree in City Planning and is an AICP certified planner.



## MEMBER OF THE YEAR

### *Sharon Cooney, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System*



Sharon Cooney is a leader both in her position as Chief of Staff at San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and as a WTS leader. She embodies WTS' goals of furthering the development of women in transportation. Sharon is a self-made advocate for transportation in San Diego, and as the Chief of Staff and the second in command, she is constantly taking on projects that ensure our communities are at the forefront, while providing more efficient transit opportunities.

Through her work at MTS and among industry peers, Sharon is an accomplished professional who has helped guide the way for many emerging transportation leaders. As a woman in a leadership position, Sharon actively seeks opportunities to contribute to industry advancement for women. In the past year, Sharon has been heavily engaged with the WTS community, closely collaborating with WTS to ensure her knowledge and expertise is shared with current and potential members. Sharon is very strongly involved in the local chapter. She was a host and speaker at the 2018 WTS Annual Conference, at the WTS Legislative Breakfast, at a WTS San Diego County Chapter Lunch Program, and supported WTS as a VIP guest at the bowling fundraiser.

Sharon Cooney is supporting women in the transportation industry through professional

development, mentoring, and strategic positioning of women. She has cultivated opportunities for the advancement of women in high leadership positions at MTS, supported successful appointments of key female staff for placement in the TCRP ambassador program, and encourages regular attendance at WTS events and other professional development programs. Sharon serves on multiple transportation-oriented committees as a subject-matter expert. She has also been imperative to the success of two of San Diego's largest infrastructure projects ever accomplished, the Trolley Renewal Project (\$660 million) and the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension Project (\$2.1 billion).

Sharon is also leading the agency's efforts in implementing a new Fare Collection System that will adapt to emerging technologies. In the housing arena, she overhauled the agency's real estate policy in 2018 and in June 2019 secured Board's approval for a redevelopment project at the Grantville Trolley station that will provide hundreds of units of affordable and student housing. Finally, she led the development of the Transit Optimization Plan, which aimed to create a network of services that would attract more riders to the system and to reverse a several-year decline in ridership and fare revenue. Under her leadership, MTS completed the plan changes in 2019, and is finally seeing the first increase in ridership.



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Track Project, San Diego, CA



# HONORABLE RAY LAHOOD AWARD

*Don Murphy, IBI Group*

Don Murphy is an Associate Director at IBI Group with a passion for intelligent transportation systems work and is well-known for his transit technology expertise. He is a long-time supporter of WTS and its mission to advance women in transportation. Don exhibits the values of WTS and encourages his female staff to participate in WTS and network with colleagues on a personal and professional level. He makes sure his staff attend WTS programs and events and he never misses the annual gala in September.

He is a mentor without the label; he consistently looks for opportunities to elevate women at IBI and makes sure they are taking the appropriate next steps in their careers. Don has long supported women's professional development and advancement at IBI by encouraging his female staff to strengthen their project management and technical skills. He consistently invites his junior female staff to meetings and sit at the table and offer their opinions, equal to his and others. Don also advocates for his female staff for lead roles on projects.

He has been known to put his female employees' best interests at heart and provide unbiased feedback. One female mentee said, "He makes sure that you're thinking about your future, the kind of work you enjoy doing and [the kind] you don't. He does all this to make sure you're putting your talents in the best place for yourself and the company. He'll look for opportunities to give you work that's in line with your passions." Throughout the years, Don has mentored many WTS members, many of whom went on to hold significant local WTS chapter positions and even national WTS positions. Individuals in the San Diego region include but are not limited to: Tuere Fa'aola, SANDAG; Debbie Leung, IBI Group; Monique Chen, Chen Ryan Associates; Ty Manzo; Sutra Research & Analytics.

Beyond his professional interests and accomplishments, Don is passionate about stoking enthusiasm and curiosity in our future transportation leaders. Every year, he guest lectures about emerging transportation technology and mobility for the Transportation Planning class at UC San Diego. During the holidays, Don and his wife adopt a large family and donate meals, pantry staples, clothing, and toys. Don has been known to go to multiple stores to find the "right" LEGO transportation set and one year made sure to include an authentic train engineer's cap to go with a child's Thomas the Tank Engine set.





# MCTC



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## MID-COAST TROLLEY PROJECT



The Mid-Coast Trolley project will improve mobility in the San Diego region, extending the San Diego Blue Line 11 miles from the Old Town Transit Center to the University City community.

**Subcontracting opportunities are still available!**

An estimated \$150 million in contracts  
will be awarded to SB and DBE firms.

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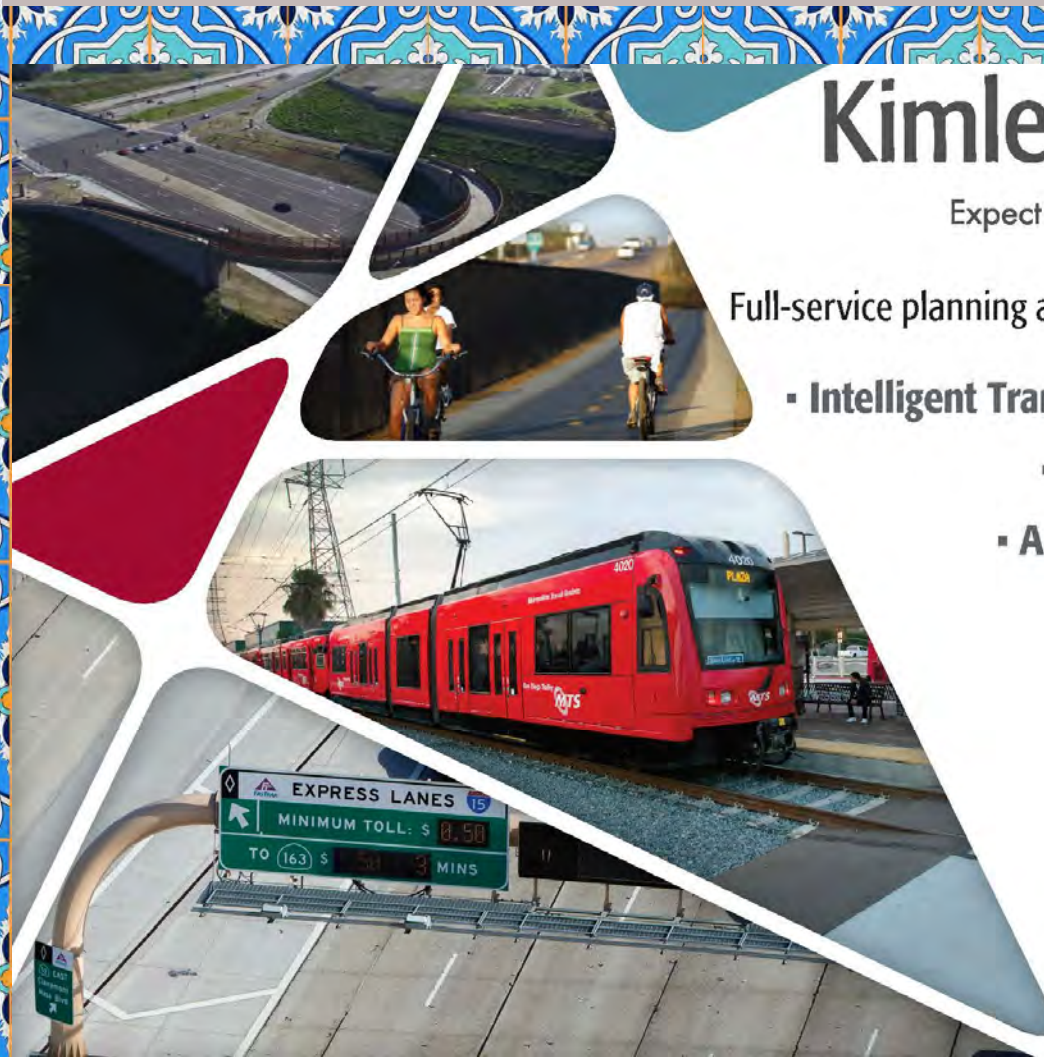
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# EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

## *Fehr & Peers*



Fehr & Peers is an employee focused company and places a heavy emphasis on professional development. Our programs include: early career mentorship, year-long intensive one-on-one mid-career mentorship, senior staff coaching, internal training opportunities, support for external opportunities such as attendance at local and national conferences, and support for professional society memberships. Fehr & Peers strongly believes in continuing education for all employees. All staff are encouraged to join and become involved in a professional society and the costs are reimbursed by Fehr & Peers. Many staff are members of at least two professional organizations and many of our female staff have held leadership roles in their selected organizations (25% currently).

Fehr & Peers has 14 offices in 7 states (Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Washington, D.C., and Florida). Company wide, current staff is very gender balanced, with a 52/48 female/male ratio. Each of the 13 offices has an operations manager, 9 of the 13 offices are managed by women. The San Diego office currently has a 71/29 female/male ratio and has been managed by a woman for the past four years. Company wide, one-third of leadership positions are held by women. The regional Principal in Charge position has been held by a woman for the last three years. The positions of CFO, Controller, Director of Human Resources, and Director of Professional Development are also held by women.

Fehr & Peers maintains a strong commitment to affirmative action in hiring and promoting at all levels and recently underwent a large leadership transition across the company with half of those role promotions (over 18) undertaken by women as part of a continued effort toward accelerating career opportunities and long-term succession planning. Fehr & Peers has over 50 active WTS members across the firm, including five within the San Diego office. Fehr & Peers is active in all WTS Chapters where they have an office.

Locally, our staff has been involved in mentoring female transportation professionals through several mentoring programs including participating in the WTS mentoring program. They have also provided paid internships to San Diego State University and UC San Diego students for the past several years, including a female intern from San Diego State University who recently transitioned to full-time. In the San Diego office, three of the four most recent hires are female, ranging from entry-level to mid-career.





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# ROSA PARKS DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

## *Nadia Nuñez, A Reason to Survive*



Nadia is the Community Manager at A Reason to Survive (ARTS), a creative youth development organization in National City, and the first Latina woman to hold this position at the organization. She spearheaded a collaborative partnership with the City in 2016 to deliver a network of innovative bike racks in support of the City's strategic plan related to smart growth and equitable transportation access. The bike rack program has since evolved into a recent bike corral project, and the ARTS Center now offers an internship, which includes building these bike rack prototypes for various bikeway projects across the City.

In a City of disadvantaged communities, many residents do not have access to vehicles and must rely on other modes of transportation. By supporting biking as a means of transportation, this program is providing opportunities for many people in the City. Nadia has proven herself an extraordinary community champion, nonprofit leader, and project manager through her efforts to advance transportation equity and infrastructure expansion by incorporating creative arts in transportation design. In the past year, Nadia has developed the unique program at ARTS, called the

Community ARTS Design Challenges: internships for women, minority high school students and recent graduates that advance life skills and career readiness outcomes. Of the 60+ students that have completed the internship, 8 have been women. The female interns she's worked with on the transportation projects have gone on to pursue opportunities in higher education and the local workforce. Nadia has maintained communication and offered mentorship guidance long after the individuals have completed the program. As she continues to encourage young women to pursue their dreams and instill life and career skills, she is contributing to efforts to reduce the wage gap in the City, which is 26% higher for males than females.

The program has also expanded to involve a unique mix of high school students and community members from diverse backgrounds in a series of design charrettes intended to incorporate active transportation and transit into the design of transportation projects in National City. Nadia is an adept facilitator with a knack for fostering cross-sector collaboration. Her ability to engage local elected officials and businesses, as well as community leaders, youth, and families speaks to the versatility she has demonstrated over the years across the high-value civic infrastructure she's worked on, particularly those that have improved transportation and community outcomes.



# INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

## *San Elijo Lagoon Double Track Project*



Partners: AECOM, ASM Affiliates, BRG Consulting, Caltrans, City of Encinitas, City of Solana Beach, Everest International Consultants, Flatiron, HDR, Hill International, Ninyo & Moore, Pacific Railway Enterprises, Project Design Consultants, SANDAG, Skanska, Southwest Strategies, Stacy & Witbeck, STC Traffic, Tourney Consulting. The San Elijo Lagoon Double Track Project added 1.5 miles of second mainline rail track and replaced an aging timber rail bridge on the Los Angeles – San Diego (LOSSAN) coastal corridor. The purpose of this transportation initiative was to meet future increases in passenger and freight rail services, which are estimated to double by the year 2030. Double tracking this portion of the corridor was a key part of meeting agency goals of double tracking 94 percent of the LOSSAN rail corridor by 2035. The project was the first to utilize the Construction Manager General Contractor (CMGC) delivery method (Segment 2 of the I-5 North Coast Corridor), allowing multiple projects in the design and construction phases. The project was implemented through a politically sensitive coastal community and an environmentally sensitive lagoon area in the cities of Solana Beach and Encinitas using innovative solutions during the contracting, design, environmental permitting, preconstruction, and construction stages of the project. Women who held key positions on the project team include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Alexandra DeVaux – SANDAG Project Manager                                  | 12. Jeanine Soriano – Flatiron                      |
| 2. Cheryle Hodge – SANDAG Environmental Planner                               | 13. Janet Lee – AECOM                               |
| 3. Kiran Kaur – SANDAG Environmental Planner                                  | 14. Kim Smith – Caltrans                            |
| 4. Robyn Wapner – SANDAG Sr. Legislative Affairs Representative               | 15. Sue Scatolini – Caltrans                        |
| 5. Tedi Jackson – SANDAG Public Outreach                                      | 16. Catherine Blakespear – Mayor, City of Encinitas |
| 6. Kara Kong – SWS Public Outreach Consultant                                 | 17. Karen Brust – City Manager, City of Encinitas   |
| 7. Ingrid Eich – HDR Inc. Environmental Consultant                            | 18. Stephanie Kellar – Engineer, City of Encinitas  |
| 8. Sharon Helsens – HDR Inc. Project Controls                                 | 19. Jennifer Ryan – formerly NCTD                   |
| 9. Pam Wells – HDR Inc. Designer  | 20. Christine Chung – formerly NCTD                 |
| 10. Megan Hamilton – BRG Permitting Consultant                                | 21. Senator Christine Kehoe – State of CA           |
| 11. Jeaneth Santos – Office Engineer AECOM Construction Management Consultant | 22. Margaret Lee – formerly Everest Consulting      |

The success of the SELDT Project is a testament to the visionary leadership of many women in the Transportation industry in San Diego. Every woman in this project deserves recognition. Nothing is more evident that a project is a success than when the local community makes that claim. They lived through the pains of construction and at the ribbon cutting ceremony were very appreciative of the project team and the huge benefits that have transformed Cardiff for generations to come.





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# ALTERNATIVE MODES & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AWARD

## *18th Street Complete Street*



This community driven project directly addressed active transportation needs in a disadvantaged community. The City of National City is one of the lowest income areas within San Diego County and the community is among the 10% most disadvantaged in the state. Vehicle ownership is very low and the demand for alternative modes and active transportation is high.

The project improvements were originally identified by the community through a series of community bike rides, walk audits, and community meetings that supported the City's Bicycle Master Plan and the S.M.A.R.T. Foundation Plan (the City's first Active Transportation Plan). The project completed the second east-west bikeway in the City and has enhanced safety and accessibility for children biking and walking to Lincoln Acres Elementary and Granger Junior High. The project is part of a larger initiative by the City of National City to complete a comprehensive network of low stress bikeways and pedestrian enhancements to meet the needs of its community.

Several women were involved in the project. Leslie Deese (City Manager at the time) worked with City Engineer, Steve Manganiello, and the consulting team to secure necessary grant funds. Jennifer Koopman was the consultant contract manager. She worked with a consulting team that included five additional women engineers and environmental

experts to prepare grant applications, preliminary engineering documents, environmental clearance, and construction plans, as well as to support the City during construction. 18th Street is a corridor that many bicycle riders of all ages use to go to school, parks, and church, among other destinations; the high volume of cars between Wilson Avenue and Highland Avenue demanded that additional bicycle safety features be added to this corridor to be adequate for all riding levels. Jennifer worked with the City, MUTCD, and Kimley Horn's traffic experts in installing bicycle boxes successfully in this corridor along with other safety features. Children and families now have an alternate mode of transportation corridor to get to their everyday destinations. The project was built in three phases west to east, beginning from Wilson Avenue to National City Boulevard (funded with SANDAG Active Transportation Grant), the second phase was constructed from National City Boulevard to Palm Avenue (funded with HSIP), and the third phase was from Palm Avenue to Granger Avenue (funded with State ATP).



# TECHNOLOGY FOR TRANSPORTATION

## *Fiber Optic Communication Network Expansion Through Partnerships*

In 2017, SANDAG, MTS, NCTD, and Caltrans District 11 entered into an Inter-agency Fiber Optic Cable Sharing Agreement. This agreement enabled these regional agencies to share spare capacity in each of their fiber optic cables along transportation corridors throughout San Diego County resulting in a “Win-Win-Win” for all four of the public agency partners on this important regional project. Sharing spare cable capacity maximized the benefit of existing fiber optic infrastructure allowing partner agencies to expand their information networks and connect formerly isolated transportation facilities located along 31 miles of highway, railroad, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and managed lanes corridors in San Diego County.

The purpose of the technology is to increase network reliability and enhance the performance of all the system applications that operate over the network, including high definition real-time video surveillance, electronic messaging, vehicle detection, link up fare collection, traffic management systems and data management servers. It also creates a redundant communication path for Positive Train Control and wide area network communications systems and creates the infrastructure for future transportation applications that are on the technological horizon, such as V2X technology.

There were eleven women involved in this project, including Dinara Ussenova, Francine Jimenez, Robin Rhoads, and Susana Tello from SANDAG, Sandy Bobek, Monica Coria, Karen Landers, and Heather Furay from MTS, Fariba Ramos and Karen Jewel from Caltrans, and Jennifer Dunkleburder from NCTD.

Each agency is extending their network system via collaboration with other agencies and entities. Instead of spending tax dollars installing new costly infrastructure, each agency is connecting fiber through strand exchange, saving substantial amounts for each agency. This is an innovative solution to expand each agency's network in today's limited funding environment.







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# PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

## *Meghan Cedeño, City of San Diego*

Meghan began her career in the geotechnical field but found herself wanting to serve her City through her passion for active transportation and her enthusiasm for bringing communities together. After six years in the industry, against all odds but with the support of her close family, she went back to school, got her second master's and started over, telling herself "just because something wasn't right for you doesn't mean you failed."

Now having been at the City of San Diego for four years, she has worked diligently to create a transportation system that addresses all modes and would meet the needs of everyone in the community.

An avid cyclist, Meghan helped identify opportunities for more dedicated and/or protected bicycle paths on various community plan updates to encourage more cycling for people of all ages and abilities.

Meghan has been a major contributor for various projects with the City's Planning Department, including several neighborhood community plan updates. Meghan primarily focuses on reviewing transportation related issues for discretionary permits and general conformance with long-range planning strategies and has led the El Cajon Boulevard Complete Boulevard Plan and the Mission Boulevard Public Spaces and Active Transportation Plan. Meghan also developed an internal bicycle safety program for the Planning Department in conjunction with City of San Diego Risk Assessment personnel and regularly maintained the Mobility Section webpage. Meghan is a huge proponent of mode shift and active transportation in the San Diego region. She not only talks the talk, but walks the walk, commuting by transit and bike every day, at times 2 hours each way. She has been an active member of WTS since 2014, served as the Programs Co-Chair from 2017-2018, and currently sits on the executive board as Secretary.

She embodies and promotes the guiding principles of WTS. Meghan encourages young women to pursue their dreams and aspirations, and guides them through their career decisions as a mentor with APA. She openly discusses her mid-level career change and the challenges she faced starting over in a new field, so that others can relate and navigate those struggles knowing they are not alone. Her mentees have continued their careers in the field and speak highly of their time with her. One of her past mentees said "I'm grateful for having Meghan as a role model and mentor. Her continuous support and advice have helped me navigate important decisions in my career."





# WOMEN OF THE YEAR

*Kimberly J. Becker,*

*San Diego County Regional Airport Authority*

Kimberly J. Becker, CAE, CM, President & CEO of the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, is a 21st century aviation leader and an inspiration for women in transportation. Kimberly Becker walks the walk as far as supporting women in transportation. One of Becker's highest priorities is the Airport Authority's Small Business Development Program. This program ensures that local, small, women-owned, veteran-owned and other under represented companies have every opportunity to do business with SAN. The goal is to create a level playing field that attracts businesses of all sizes and provides opportunities for workers of all genders and ethnicities.

This program has created new opportunities for women and women-owned businesses. In her words, "women have literally been building and improving the airport over the past 10 years." The recently adopted five-year strategic plan included gender diversity as a major goal for 2022. Her seven-member executive team has three women, including herself. As she says about that, "It's a start."

Becker also hosts an annual Women's Leadership Luncheon to SAN to bring senior women leaders together in an informal setting to talk about various issues that women face in getting ahead in the work world. The Airport Authority

also commits time, resources and energy to student and veteran-oriented programs to close the gender gap and engage young minds in the aviation industry. Student oriented programs are populated with a careful eye to balancing by gender and other ways that accurately reflect San Diego's diverse community. "Take Flight: Shaping the Future of Young Diverse San Diego Global Leaders in the Aviation Industry" is a quarterly, half-day seminar in which high school and college students come to SAN, participate in panel discussions with aviation professionals, take a tour, and then have opportunities to meet and talk to professionals one-on-one. The student oriented programs were created and are implemented with an eye to further advancing the cause of women in aviation. Realizing that most people, especially women, aren't likely to develop a passion for aviation without being exposed to it, these programs are, as she says, a start. Because she knows that when someone gets a taste for the aviation industry, as she did, "jet fuel gets in your veins."

She has spent her 30-year career in increasingly responsible positions in the male-dominated aviation industry. Notably, Becker is championing the Airport Development Plan, centered around the replacement of Terminal 1 and major airfield improvements to make the very most of the constrained 661-acre site. In addition to her numerous career achievements, Becker is now working with regional leadership, transportation and transit agencies, and other entities to address the long-standing challenge of forging a better transit connection to SAN. Under Becker's leadership, SAN has also worked with SANDAG and MTS on near-term transit solutions to enhance the trolley-to-terminals connection to the Middletown station, as well as the Santa Fe Station downtown and the Old Town transit center.







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