

Blair Schlechter: law became a vehicle for greater transportation involvement



Blair Schlechter (Attorney and WTS-LA member), Photos by John Livzey, 2017

Sometimes the law is a portal, a launching pad to use one's training in another discipline. For attorney and WTS-LA member Blair Schlechter, the law provided fantastic training, experience, and opportunity. Working successfully for a firm and on his own, as a lawyer Schlechter prepared a brief for the United States Supreme Court (that resulted in a victory), turned around a high-profile lawsuit that saved his client more than \$1 million, and launched a successful law practice in only two years. But he wanted more.

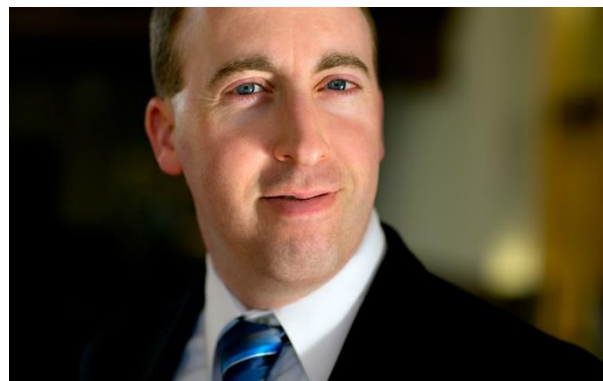
"Over the past couple of years, I have been getting more involved in transportation policy and planning in a number of ways, including being part of WTS, having contributed to the Hyperloop project, and now continuing to explore the intersection of transportation and technology, including the development of autonomous vehicles and smart cities."

And Blair is putting that involvement to good use. He now holds a position that will allow him to combine his passion for transportation with his collective skills, knowledge, and experience.

"I am now the Director of Economic Development and Government Affairs for the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce. And that involves three basic areas of responsibility: 1) government relations, including tracking important projects in the area, advocating for business and taking positions on important legislation; (2) attracting and retaining businesses in the area; and 3) connecting people and businesses to economic opportunities. Transportation is also a big part of my role."

Whatever happens in Beverly Hills is often seen globally. So, his work is clearly in a very large fishbowl. But Schlechter takes it all in stride.

"In addition to attracting business and spurring economic development, there are a number of transportation projects that I am working on. There's a subway coming into Beverly Hills along Wilshire Blvd., as well as a project to reconstruct Santa Monica Boulevard. So, there will be quite a lot of transportation on my plate."



Without question, Schlecter has his work cut out for him. And every day brings a multitude of challenges and rewards. But while he keeps his nose to the grindstone, he is also always careful to keep an eye toward the future.

“Right before I joined the Chamber, the City of Beverly Hills announced an autonomous vehicle program. It’s very exciting and everyone wants more information about it. So, I’ve been getting more and more involved in the world of autonomous vehicles and their application in urban areas and specifically Beverly Hills.”

No matter what his role, Schlecter believes WTS-LA will always be a part of his efforts, and with good reason.

“In terms of transportation, there are a lot of innovative things going on in LA County. It’s a great place to be. So when I asked people what transportation organization I should join, WTS-LA was *the* unanimous answer. So I joined. It’s been great to be involved. WTS-LA is a great organization and I believe the chapter will be of critical importance in the future.”

Sometimes the law is a portal. For attorney, Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce Director of Economic Development and Government Affairs, and WTS-LA member Blair Schlecter, the law provided fantastic training and experience. And now it’s providing him the unique opportunity to use his training, skills, and passions to help Beverly Hills and the surrounding area grow.