



2021 VOLUME 2  
June 30, 2021

# HOT Chapter Newsletter



> Heart of Texas

Advancing women  
Advancing transportation

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Center for Transportation  
Research/UT Austin

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## PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Happy mid-year everyone!

As we begin the summer of 2021, things are beginning to look a little brighter (and more normal). With all the new guidance being released by our federal, state, and local governments, and as our communities are starting to open back up, the possibility

of seeing each other very soon is becoming a reality! We are beginning to explore options for a return to in-person events and will update everyone soon. We are beginning to explore options for a return to in-person events and need everyone’s feedback to help us move forward.

Our chapter has been busy this quarter. We kicked off this year’s Lattes & Leadership series and continue to bring you our monthly lunch events. As you read through this newsletter, keep an eye out for the recap of our latest virtual events.

The International Conference was held virtually in May with a Richmond, Virginia theme (Richmond was supposed to be our destination this year). Central Texas was well represented during this year’s conference. Our own CP Chair, Janelle Carey moderated the panel “The Texas Two Step – Getting to YES on Austin’s Transit and Transportation Referendums through Innovation and Engagement.” Panelists were Sara Hage, Associate Vice President, HNTB; Anna Martin, Assistant Director, Austin Transportation Department; Jackie Nirenberg, Community Engagement Manager, Capital Metro; and Julia Suprock, Senior Transportation Planner, AECOM. This panel focused on the re-assessment of the previously unsuccessful referendums, and the development of the Project Connect Vision to respond to the growth of Central Texas’ ever-growing population.

Heidi Corcoran, our Professional Development Chair moderated the panel “Get Collaborative! How Gender Equity in Transportation Can Advance Safety, Access & Mobility for All.” Presenters included voices from Minnesota’s new Gender Equity in Transportation Collaborative and include a public-private-academic perspective on how amplifying these often-unheard voices can benefit all communities and stakeholders. Although not a Texas-centric panel,



# COMMITTEE CHAIRS

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Cheryl Goodgame

Marketing Coordinator  
Lockwood, Andrews, & Newnam,  
Inc.

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP

### Janelle Carey

Transportation Planner  
HNTB

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### Brittani Kaim

Communications Marketing  
Manager, WSP USA

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### Yvonne Garcia Thomas, PE

Manager of Geotechnical  
Engineering, Raba Kistner

## MENTORING CHAIR

### Sylvia Shelton

Communications Manager  
CTRMA

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Heidi Corcoran

Mobility and Innovation Strategist  
Milligan Partners, LLC

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Research Scientist  
Center for Transportation Research  
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### Jamie Byers

Graduate Student  
UT Austin, Civil Engineering

## TRANSPORTATION YOU CHAIR

### Mary Jo Galindo

Senior Archaeologist  
Galindo Environmental Consulting,  
LLC



*President's Letter continued...*

this session focused on the many ways in which the transportation sector can help advance gender equity—something that will benefit everyone.

I'm proud to announce that we again received the Circle of Excellence Gold Award—the highest level of recognition a chapter can achieve for its yearly activity.

Looking ahead, I would like to mention a couple of events. We are planning our Gala to be held later this summer. It will still be virtual this year. Hopefully this will be our last time to bring it to you on-screen. In the fall we will be holding our Professional Development Seminar as well as the Corporate Partner/Member-only Event. More on those in the coming months.

Our committee chairs and executive board are planning for the rest of this year as well as looking ahead to next year's programs. Now that we are beginning to explore moving back to in-person events, it is a great time to get involved! Please reach out to the individual committee chairs, or anyone on the executive board and we will get you connected!

If you have any questions about WTS or the HOT chapter, please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone else on our board. Wishing everyone a continued happy, healthy, and safe 2021 and hope to see you all in person again soon!

All the best!

Ashley Williams

## CHAPTER CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE - GOLD

*WTS HOT Chapter is honored to have been named a GOLD Chapter in the WTS Chapter Circle of Excellence. Thank you to our leadership team, members, and sponsors.*



Advancing women  
Advancing transportation  
> Heart of Texas



## 2021 WTS HEART OF TEXAS CHAPTER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The chapter’s mentorship program is back for its third year.We look forward to seeing these young women pursue their interests!

### MENTEES

Amber McCullogh	Neel-Schaffer, Inc.
Caroline LaFollette	Friese + Associates
Lauren Osborne	Alliance Transportation Group, Inc.
Leanne Cantalupo	Garver
Lizette Saenz	Jacobs
Nan Jiang	DKS Associates
Ybette Ochoa	CDM Smith
Sally Amaye	WSP

### MENTORS

Dottie Watkins	CapMetro
Akila Thamizharasan	TxDOT
Sharmila Mukherjee	CapMetro
Scott Haywood	HNTB
April Sandoval	TxDOT
Brent Kyler	HNTB
Marisabel Ramthun	TxDOT
Charlotte Gilpin	K Friese + Associates

After a Covid-induced hiatus, the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter Mentorship Program is back for the third year. This year’s program will be fully virtual, and includes a group of eager and bright individuals.

As mentor-mentee teams had been established for the 2020 program, those participants were given first opportunity to re-join, with an overwhelming majority excited to continue on with the program. Mentor-mentee ‘matching’ occurred in March and April.

The inaugural event for the 2021 program took place in April with a virtual “Networking 101” hosted by Karen Block. After the mentorship chair provided some details on how the program will work, Karen kicked it off with her “9 Networking Nuggets” which included some valuable insights and tips on how to successfully network.

In April, our program participants met with Lynda Rife, owner of Public Involvement and Communications firm Rifeline. Lynda spoke about having a woman-owned business in a male-dominated industry and what advice she would have given her younger self. Lynda provided some great lessons for anyone who might be interested in owning their own business someday.

Many thanks to our executive board sponsors, Ashely Williams and Tonia Norman. If you have any questions or are interested in being a mentor or mentee for the 2022 program, please reach out to [Sylvia Shelton](#).



WSP STAFF HIGHLIGHT



WTS HOT Chapter Member and Gala Chair Brittani Kaim is WSP’s Southwest Texas public involvement (PI) lead based in the Austin office. An innovative communications professional, she has worked with the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, TxDOT, FHWA, NMDOT and others. Brittani is currently serving as the PI lead on the 183 North Mobility Project, managing all elements of community outreach and stakeholder engagement. She also leads WSP’s Online Public Engagement business line for WSP’s Communications and Public Involvement Practice and consulted on projects across the country during COVID-19 Stay at Home orders, including sharing best practices and/or leading projects with the Massachusetts DOT, National Parks Service, LA Metro and the United States Army Corp of Engineers. In 2020, Brittani’s virtual meeting skills were put to the test for the WTS HOT Chapter’s 16th Annual Scholarship and Awards Gala. Despite having to transition quickly from in-person to virtual, the gala successfully raised more than \$35,000 for future chapter scholarships.



WSP staff highlight continued on the next page...

JACOBS STAFF HIGHLIGHT



Jacobs is a strong supporter of WTS with a Gold Level Corporate Sponsorship at the local level and a Trailblazer Corporate Partnership at the International level. The Jacobs Austin office has a long history of active participation in the WTS-HOT chapter. Jacobs highlights Emily Weigand, P.E., PTOE for her participation in WTS through the scholarship committee and gala committee.



Jacobs’ commitment to inclusion and diversity is exemplified by the Jacobs’ Women’s Network (JWN). The JWN is an employee network providing a sustainable and progressive platform for women to develop talent, broaden access to opportunities, drive career growth, and reach untapped potential. Emily serves as a JWN-Austin Co-Chair. Emily is involved with Collectively and in the Jacobs global giving and volunteering initiative. JWN-Austin events she has hosted include lunch and learn presentations by local leaders within Jacobs and a book club (recently read *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* by Michael Baran and Tiffany Jana and currently reading *Invisible Women* by Caroline Criado-Perez). In 2019, Emily attended the JWN Global Summit in Dallas. Through Collectively and JWN, Emily has helped raise over \$13,000 during International Women’s Day 2021 for non-profit organizations through company matched giving opportunities and spread awareness of the company STEAM volunteer hour matching opportunity.

WSP STAFF HIGHLIGHT (CONTINUED)

WTS HOT Chapter Member since 2007 Jessica Rodriguez is a senior project manager located in WSP’s Austin office. She has served on the Gala and Scholarship committees throughout the years. She has over three decades of experience in the transportation engineering industry. Jessica served the Texas Department of Transportation for 11 years and the engineering consulting field for another 24 years. She has managed transportation projects across the state of Texas for TxDOT and for several County and City agencies in the Central Texas Region, including Hays County, Travis County, City of Austin, City of Pflugerville, and the City of San Antonio. She is currently working on the SL 360 at Westlake Drive project for TxDOT and recently completed work on the TxDOT Freight Infrastructure Design Considerations study.



NEW WTS HOT CHAPTER CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

We are delighted to announce the appointment of our new WTS HOT Chapter Communication Chair, Cheryl Goodgame, Marketing Coordinator at Lockwood, Andrews, & Newnam, Inc. Current Chair Brianna Frey, AICP, Senior Planner at Asakura Robinson will remain involved with the Communications Committee and has accepted the role as Board President for another local organization, the Red Line Parkway Initiative. Cheryl Goodgame has been a member of the WTS HOT Chapter since 2014 and has previously served as the Gala Chair. She has been serving on the Communications Committee since 2019, when Brianna began her tenure as Communications Chair. Thanks for all of your hard work, Brianna, and welcome to the board, Cheryl!



Cheryl Goodgame



Brianna Frey





## APRIL LUNCHEON

**Maria Milner, Austin Area League of Women Voters**

Maria Milner from the Austin Area League of Women Voters shared some of the suffrage history and talked about the contribution of women’s vote. She also mentioned transportation issues such as transportation access as a barrier to voting, transit-induced gentrification and disability transportation and how people can get involved to make a difference.

## MAY LUNCHEON

**Patricia Davis, Janae Spence, and Laura Dierenfield**

Patricia Davis from the City of Pflugerville presented on the 2020 Transportation present status and the upcoming transportation and park projects. She also talked about the future recreation projects coming up. We also had Janae Spence and Laura Dierenfield from the City of Austin who presented on the COA 2020 Transportation Bond projects. They presented projects with bikeways, trails, safe routes to schools, large capital projects and others.



Patricia Davis



Janae Spence



Laura Dierenfield



Steven Pedigo



Tiffany Melvin

## JUNE LUNCHEON

**Steven Pedigo and Tiffany Melvin**

On June 16th, the WTS HOT Chapter presented on the topic, “The Post Covid Economy: Texas and U.S. Strategies for Transportation’s Role in Competitive and Equitable Economic Growth. Steven Pedigo discussed the [Texas Metropolitan Blueprint’s](#) policy recommendations for securing Texas’ future prosperity and competitiveness and [NASCO’s](#) Tiffany Melvin discussed how Texas can engage economic growth in the U.S. and North American economies. Many participants asked questions about workforce development, state-level legislation, and how the transportation industry can get involved in such topics.



# Lattes & Leadership

**Lattes and Leadership will start in April 2021 and go through August 2021.**  
This start time is one-month earlier than in recent years.

As we finalize our guest speakers for the year’s program, we would love insight from our Membership. Please reach out to Heidi Corcoran, Professional Development Chair, at [profdev@wtshotchapter.org](mailto:profdev@wtshotchapter.org).

APRIL LATTES AND LEADERSHIP SUMMARY

On April 13, two HOT Chapter Scholarship Winners shared where they are now in their careers, and how they have become leaders in our industry. Lindsay Liggett won the Sharon D. Banks Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship in 2006 and Katherine Kortum won the WTS HOT Graduate Leadership Legacy Scholarship in 2012. Lindsay currently works at RTG and Katherine works at the Transportation Research Board.



Lindsay Liggett



Katherine Kortum

MAY LATTES AND LEADERSHIP SUMMARY

Maria Milner, Austin Area League of Women Voters

On May 26, Chapter members got the chance to hear from Therese Baer, President of Baer Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc. Therese was able to share with the group some of the challenges she faced with her business and career as females began to enter the A/E/C industry. She was also able to provide some great advice and insight on personal growth and also how men can help close the gap in our industry.



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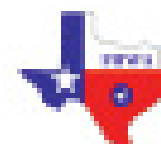
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