



Advancing women
Advancing transportation
> Washington DC

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

WTS WASHINGTON, DC CHAPTER

FOR MEMBERSHIP REVIEW AND COMMENT

VERSION DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2023

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Chapter Board and Advisors

Officers				
President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary	Immediate Past President
Katie Kraft, Thompson Coburn LLP	Sophie Guiny, InfraStrategies	Shelley Wynne, Dewberry	Katie Masetti, Mead & Hunt	Neela Babu, WMATA
Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs, and Volunteers				
Communications, Newsletter and Social Media		Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship		Diversity
Chair Vacant Deputy Chair Ellie McCurdy, VHB		Chair Shelley Johnson, Sharp & Company Deputy Chair Cherie Gibson, HNTB Volunteers Morgan Bassford, Sharp & Company Alyssa Saleh, HNTB		Chair Robyn Jackson, DDOT Deputy Chair Rebecca Moser, Arlington County Audra Bandy, Fairfax County DOT Volunteers Roxanne Feige, Atkins Global Marie Louis, WMATA Cipriana Thompson, Toole Design
Holiday Party		Legislative		Membership
Chair May ElKhatab, Burns Engineering Deputy Chair Chetna Sinha, Gannett Fleming		Chair Rachel Roberts, Airlines for America Deputy Chair Kerry O'Hare, O'Hare Infrastructure Strategies LLC Volunteers Nadia Anderson, Inrix Kate Roetzer, WMATA Abigail Wolfram, Guidehouse		Chair Adrienne Ameel, Kimley-Horn Deputy Chairs Becca Sulla, Kimley-Horn Rachel Hensler, Kimley-Horn
Mentoring		Professional Development		Program Logistics
Chair Lindsey Robertson Lentz, Evans Consulting Ruochang Huang, Jacobs Engineering Deputy Chair Volunteer Ann McGrane, NVTC		Chair Cerasela Cristei, EXP Deputy Chair Khatereh Vaghefi, Parsons Volunteer Madonna Gadelseed, EXP		Chair Elizabeth Patel, FHWA Ellie McCurdy, VHB Deputy Chair Yolonda Jordan, FHWA
Recognitions		Scholarship and Fundraising		Transportation YOU
Chair Jamie Rosen, WMATA Deputy Chair Stacy Weisfeld, FTA Volunteer Anne Patrone, WMATA		Chair Alanna McKeeman, Foursquare ITP Deputy Chair Regis Stinson, Dewberry Volunteers Anita Beier, Retired Diana Levy, WMATA		Chair Barbara Moreno, WSP USA Deputy Chair Laura MacNeil, DDOT Volunteers Kyla D'Sa, Kimley-Horn Amanda Ishikawa, WSP Meghan Powell, VHB Marcela Moreno, Community Transportation Association of America Alejandra Feigueroso, HNTB
Advisors				
Avital Barnea, California State Transportation Agency Jamie Rennert, FRA		Brittney Gick, Texas A&M Transportation Institute		Susan Gygi, WSP

WTS-DC 2022-2023 Corporate Members

Thank you to the WTS-DC 2022-2023 Corporate Members! Your support helps sustain our chapter, including the programming and scholarships we offer!



President's Message

Dear WTS-DC Chapter Members and Friends,

I am delighted to reflect upon the achievements and milestones of our chapter over the past year. The dedication and hard work of our members, committees, and leadership have been truly outstanding, and I want to express my gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support.

In yet another year marked by unprecedented challenges, we remained steadfast in our commitment to advancing women and transportation in the Washington, DC region. We continued to offer a wide range of professional development programs, networking events, and educational initiatives, all while navigating the continuing complexities brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of our key successes was providing opportunities for our members to connect with local and regional leaders in the transportation industry. Through virtual sessions and in-person gatherings, we engaged with prominent figures such as April Rai, Neil Pedersen, Stephen Gardner, Polly Trottenberg, and Randy Clarke. These interactions enriched our knowledge and fostered meaningful connections within our community.

Our commitment to sustainability and professional growth was evident through our programming. We tackled important topics like gender bias and equity in transportation, explored the evolution of bicycle-friendly infrastructure, and delved into electric vehicle policy – all initiatives that have contributed to a more inclusive and forward-thinking transportation sector.

Collaboration has been a cornerstone of our chapter's activities, as we partnered with fellow transportation and professional organizations to offer insightful programming on transportation policy, sustainability, supply chain issues, and diversity and inclusion. These collaborations expanded our reach and amplified our impact.

Our outreach programs, such as the Mentoring and Transportation YOU programs, have continued to thrive. We matched a record number of mentor-mentee pairs and engaged with high school students, introducing them to the exciting possibilities within the transportation industry. These efforts ensure that we are nurturing the next generation of transportation leaders.

As we closed out the year with our annual Holiday Party, we had the privilege of celebrating the season with over 275 guests. We were honored to have industry leaders, including US DOT Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg, FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez, and FRA Administrator Amit Bose, among others, in attendance. It was a testament to the strength and influence of our chapter.

I am immensely proud of what our chapter has accomplished, and I attribute our success to the tireless efforts of our 12 board committees. Their dedication to organizing events, fostering diversity and inclusion, providing mentorship, and recognizing local leaders has been exceptional. It's no surprise that our chapter received the Gold Circle of Excellence Award from WTS International.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our members, corporate supporters, and friends for your continued commitment to WTS-DC. Your support is invaluable, and it drives our mission forward. To our advisors, board members, and Executive Board, your dedication and contributions have been instrumental in our achievements.

I am filled with excitement and optimism about the future of our organization. Together, we will continue to advance women and transportation, embracing professionalism, inclusion, and collaboration as we shape the future of the transportation industry in the Washington, DC region.

With gratitude and anticipation,

Katie Kraft
2022 WTS-DC Chapter President

Treasurer's Report

Table 1 - Operations Budget as of December 31, 2022

Revenues	Actual 2022
Holiday Party Revenues	\$11,253.88
Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship: Corp. Membership Dues	\$78,500.00
Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship: Program Sponsorship	\$1,000.00
Diversity Committee Revenues	\$208.00
Legislative Committee Revenues	350.00
Membership Committee Revenues	\$10,430.00
Professional Development Committee Revenues	n/a
Recognition Committee Revenues	125.00
Mentoring Committee Revenues	n/a
Other Programs Revenues	\$16,188.51
Total Revenues	\$118,055.39

Expenses	Actual 2022
Holiday Party Expenses	\$27,045.15
Communications/Outreach Expenses	\$1,224.00
Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship Committee Expenses (to Scholarship Fund)	\$7,850.00
Corporate Membership Expenses (to WTS International)	\$6,841.00
Diversity Committee Expenses	\$416.00
Legislative Committee Expenses	n/a
Membership Committee Expenses	\$3,395.00
Professional Development Committee Expenses	\$724.35
Program Logistics Committee Expenses	319.61
Mentoring Committee Expenses	\$118.63
Recognitions Committee Expenses	\$963.54
Scholarship and Fundraising Committee Expenses	\$0.00
Transportation YOU Committee Expenses	\$272.64
Other Program Expenses	\$28,828.80
Administrative Expenses	\$5,041.14
2022 WTS International Conference and Leadership Training Expenses	\$12,701.95
Total Expenses	\$95,741.81

Table 2 - 2022 Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet	January 1, 2022	December 31, 2022
Cash Balance:	\$134,474.56	\$205,418.22
Other Assets:		
Cash Reserve Account*	\$98,985.00	\$45,464.36
PayPal	\$9,041.78	\$5,960.19
Accounts Receivables:	\$19,000.00	\$0.00
Accounts Payable:	\$256.88	\$0.00
Ending Balance	\$261,244.46	\$256,842.77

*Financial Policy updated in October 2022.

Table 3 - 2022 WTS-DC Scholarship Fund

Scholarship Fund	Balance
Starting Balance	\$50,303.32
Total Amount Raised	\$21,599.27
2022 Corporate Member 10% Allocation	\$7,850.00
2022 Transportation Rock Stars	\$0.00
2022 Sponsored Scholarships	\$11,000.00
2022 Holiday Party Scholarship Donations (Scholarship Tree)	\$2,314.27
Individual Contributions	\$435.00
Total Amount Distributed*	\$16,000.00
Ending Balance	\$55,902.59

*Pending 1 scholarship recipient check not cashed as of 12/31/22.

Executive Board

The WTS-DC Executive Board is comprised of five members: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Immediate Past President. In 2022, the officers serving on the board were:

- President: Katie Kraft
- Vice President: Sophie Guiny
- Treasurer: Shelley Wynne
- Secretary: Katie Masetti
- Immediate Past President: Neela Babu

As President, Katie Kraft guided and led the organization. She set goals and objectives for the organization in conjunction with the Executive Board and the members. Katie was also responsible for presiding at meetings and events, and for communicating with the board and the membership. In general, the president provides leadership and direction for WTS-DC and has the authority to sign official documents on behalf of the organization.



Photo 1. Katie Kraft, WTS-DC President



Photo 2. Sophie Guiny, WTS-DC Vice President

As Vice President, Sophie Guiny supported the President. She was also responsible for organizing meeting invitations and sending out the agenda prior to board meetings and the annual meeting. The Vice President oversees programming for the chapter, which includes coordinating with other committees on topics, dates, times, and locations for events.

As Treasurer, Shelley Wynne had charge and custody of the WTS-DC accounts, both for the operations account and for the scholarship account. She was responsible for coordinating the budget, preparing monthly financial reports, preparing the annual financial reports, handling all donations, and

maintaining financial records. In addition to the President, the Treasurer has the authority to sign contracts and invoices on behalf of the chapter.



Photo 3. Katie Masetti, WTS-DC Secretary

As Secretary, Katie Masetti served as the guardian of all WTS-DC Corporate records. She was responsible for keeping the minutes for all meetings and for maintaining the website.

As Immediate Past President, Neela Babu served as an advisor to the Executive Board and a historian of previous chapter activities. She was also the chapter representative to the WTS Northeast Region Council. In 2022, Neela also managed the officer election process.

The Executive Board collectively works to make decisions pertaining to running the chapter. All five officers work together to check in with committees, recruit volunteers for the Board, engage with members, and act as ambassadors for WTS-DC.

Board Meetings

In 2022, WTS-DC board meetings were held on the following dates:

- Monday, February 7
- Monday, March 14
- Monday, April 11
- Monday, May 9
- Monday, June 13
- Monday, July 11
- Monday, August 8
- Monday, September 12
- Monday, October 10
- Monday, November 14
- Monday, December 5



Photo 4. Shelley Wynne, WTS-DC Treasurer



Photo 5. Neela Babu, WTS-DC Immediate Past President

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chapter held the majority of its 2022 meetings virtually, via Zoom. The Executive Board and representatives from each committee were expected to attend at least eight of the 11 board meetings. For a quorum to be established, at least three of the five executive board members needed to be present and at least six of the committees needed to be represented. Committees submitted monthly committee reports before each meeting. The Treasurer also submitted the monthly report detailing the Chapter's finances. These reports were compiled along with the board meeting agenda and distributed by email prior to the meeting.

2022 Annual Meeting

The WTS-DC 2022 annual meeting was held at the start of our November board meeting. The primary business of the annual meeting was to vote on the WTS-DC 2021 Annual Report and the meeting minutes from the 2021 Annual Meeting. All members were invited to attend by Zoom; members also had the option to vote in advance or by proxy. Once a quorum was established, the membership voted to approve the annual report and annual meeting minutes. Members were invited to comment on any other business and then the meeting adjourned. The WTS-DC 2021 Annual Report can be found on the chapter website [here](#).

2023 Officer Elections

Every year, WTS-DC elects four officers for the following calendar year: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. In the fall of 2022, the Executive Board presented a slate of candidates for those four positions for 2023. To facilitate anonymous voting, the election was held using an online system called Election Runner, which emailed each chapter member (who had been a member in good standing for at least 30 days prior to the election) a unique link to their ballot. The ballot listed the candidate slate and, for each position, presented the option for a write-in. Members voted for one person for each position. Per the WTS-DC bylaws, at least 10 percent of the membership must vote to establish a quorum. The response rate in the election exceeded that threshold, and the membership voted on the following officers to lead WTS-DC in 2023:

- President: Katie Kraft
- Vice President: Sophie Guiny
- Treasurer: Cerasela Cristei
- Secretary: Ellie McCurdy

Neela Babu will serve as Immediate Past President in 2023.

Committee Reports

WTS-DC has 12 committees that contribute to the overall function of the chapter. The responsibilities of each committee are described below along with a summary of their accomplishments in 2022.

The year started with an enthusiastic Strategic Planning meeting in late January. The committees assembled and set goals for the year.

Communications, Newsletter and Social Media Committee

In 2022, Ellie McCurdy (VHB), as Deputy Chair, led the Communications, Newsletter and Social Media Committee with assistance from the WTS-DC Executive Board. The committee handled the chapter's Constant Contact email lists and developed all Constant Contact e-blasts for the chapter. The committee also managed the newsletter development and publication process and sent a total of four e-newsletters in 2022. The newsletters contained a wide range of transportation-related topics, summaries of chapter member-wide or invitation-only events, recognition of various national issues, and recognition of members, scholarship recipients and award winners. The committee continued to manage and curate content for the chapter's social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, ensuring more consistent use of social media best practices.

The Communications, Newsletter and Social Media Committee works with the Executive Board and committees to provide regular communications to chapter members and friends. The committee has an active presence on social media as they curate content for the chapter's social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The committee is also responsible for publishing a bi-monthly newsletter, which includes a president's message, summaries of recent events, corporate member spotlights, and other articles written by members.

Analytics are as follows (as of December 31, 2022):

Emails:

- Total e-blasts sent: 50
- Total e-newsletters sent: 4

Social Media:

- Total social media posts: 98

Facebook:

- Posts: 31
- Shares: 2
- Post reach¹: 771 users

LinkedIn:

- Posts: 32
- Post shares: 36
- Post clicks: 279

Twitter:

- Tweets: 35
- Post impressions²: 13,000
- Post engagements³: 545
- Post likes: 47

Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship Committee

The Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship Committee's responsibilities for corporate membership include: developing and updating the corporate membership benefits brochure; maintaining the list of corporate members; acknowledging contributions; recruiting new corporate members; recommending and, with the concurrence of the Executive Board, establishing corporate fundraising goals; and ensuring that the corporate membership logos and banner are up to date. Additionally, the committee is responsible for managing program sponsorships, which are donations for specific programs run by WTS-DC.

The Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship Committee was led by Shelley Johnson (Sharp and Company) as Chair and Cherie Gibson (HNTB) as Deputy Chair. Morgan Bassford (Sharp and

¹ Post reach: Number of users who saw our posts

² Post impressions: Number of times people saw our tweets

³ Post engagements: Number of times people engaged with our tweets, which includes all clicks anywhere on the tweet (including on hashtags, links, avatar, username, and tweet expansion), retweets, replies, follows, and likes)

Company)) supported the committee as a volunteer.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the committee continued recruiting corporate members virtually, focusing on scholarships and virtual event benefits offered by the chapter. The committee recruited three new corporate members, upgraded the contribution levels of two members, and exceeded the 2021-2022 corporate membership contribution levels.

The WTS-DC 2022-2023 Corporate Membership offerings are shown in Table 4. The 2022-2023 WTS-DC Corporate Members are listed in Table 5.

Table 4 - 2022-2023 Corporate Membership Offerings

Benefits	Gold \$3,500	Silver \$2,000	Bronze \$1,000	Public Sector Agency \$750	W/M/DBE* \$500
Complimentary ticket(s) to the Annual Holiday Party	3	2	1	1	1
Logo prominently displayed at all Chapter events	X	X	X	X	X
Logo to appear in Chapter e-blasts	X	X	X	X	X
Verbal recognition at all Chapter events	X	X	X	X	X
Acknowledgement on Chapter website	X	X	X	X	X
Special name tag designation at all Chapter events	X	X	X	X	X
WTS assigned membership	1	1	1	1	1
WTS floating membership	1				
Corporate spotlight article in Chapter newsletter	X				

Table 5 - 2021-2022 Corporate Members by Membership Type (as of 12/22/2022)

Organization	Membership Type	Fee
AASHTO	GOLD	\$3,500
APTA	GOLD	\$3,500
HNTB	GOLD	\$3,500
Jacobs	GOLD	\$3,500
NIC*	GOLD	\$3,500
Thompson Coburn LLP	GOLD	\$3,500
AECOM	SILVER	\$2,000
Atkins	SILVER	\$2,000
Burns Engineering	SILVER	\$2,000
Dewberry	SILVER	\$2,000
Gannett Fleming	SILVER	\$2,000
ITS America	SILVER	\$2,000
Mead & Hunt	SILVER	\$2,000
STV	SILVER	\$2,000
VHB	SILVER	\$2,000
WSP USA	SILVER	\$2,000
Flatiron*	BRONZE	\$1,000
Foursquare ITP	BRONZE	\$1,000
Guidehouse	BRONZE	\$1,000
HDR	BRONZE	\$1,000
InfraStrategies	BRONZE	\$1,000
RK&K	BRONZE	\$1,000
Toole Design	BRONZE	\$1,000
WRA	BRONZE	\$1,000
Delon Hampton & Associates	W/MDBE/SWaM	\$500
PrimECS*	W/MDBE/SWaM	\$500
Sharp & Company	W/MDBE/SWaM	\$500
TOTAL		\$50,500

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee was led by Robyn Jackson (DDOT) as Chair and Audra Bandy (FHWA) as Deputy Chair. Marie Louis (WMATA) and Roxanne Feige (Atkins Global) served the committee as a volunteers.

The committee collaborated with five other WTS chapters – Central Virginia, Charlotte, Hampton Roads, North Carolina-Triangle, and South Carolina – to offer a virtual diversity and equity

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee seeks to promote diversity and inclusion in the transportation industry for users and providers alike, regardless of age, ability, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic circumstances. The Diversity Committee's activities and efforts through the year promote the WTS-DC belief that every industry, including transportation, benefits from diversity and embracing diverse backgrounds and points of view will guide us towards more innovative and equitable transportation solutions that work for everyone.

Elevating Inclusion Excellence
Featuring Dr. Katrina Hutchins

Dr. Katrina Hutchins, affectionately known as "Dr. K", is the President & CEO of Re-source Solutions, a personal and professional growth and development company.

WTS Advancing women Advancing transportation

Joint Chapter DEI Event
CENTRAL VA | CHARLOTTE | DC | HAMPTON ROADS |
NC TRIANGLE | SOUTH CAROLINA

event featuring Dr. Katrina Hutchins and titled *Elevating Inclusion Excellence*. This event is discussed in more detail in the [“Events”](#) section of this Annual Report.

Photo 6. Elevating Inclusion Excellence with Dr. Katrina Hutchins

Holiday Party Committee

The Holiday Party Committee is responsible for organizing the Chapter's largest event of the year: the Annual Holiday Party in December. The committee coordinates with several other committees to plan the event, including the Scholarship and Fundraising Committee, whose awardees are recognized at the event; the Recognitions Committee, whose awardees also are recognized at the event; the Corporate Relations and Program Sponsorship Committee, to identify potential program sponsors and coordinate with corporate sponsors regarding complimentary tickets; and the Program Logistics Committee, on ticket sales.

In 2022, the Holiday Party Committee was led by May ElKhattab (Burns Engineering) as Chair and Chetna Sinha (Gannett Fleming) as Deputy Chair.

The
 Holiday
 Party



Photo 7. Holiday Party Committee chairs, May ElKhattab (left), Chetna Sinha (right) at the 2022 Holiday Party

Committee worked throughout the year to plan and execute the chapter's annual holiday party. The committee collaborated with the Scholarship and Fundraising Committee and the Recognitions Committee to showcase the chapter's 2022 award winners and scholarship recipients at the event.

Following the success of the 2021 WTS-DC Holiday Party, the annual WTS-DC Holiday Party and Annual Recognition Awards Ceremony was again held in the Ballroom of Hotel Monaco-DC on Tuesday, December 6, 2022. 2022 had our highest number of sold tickets to date (over 275 tickets).

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee was led by Rachel Roberts (Airlines for America) as Chair and Kerry O'Hare (O'Hare Infrastructure Strategies, LLC) as Deputy Chair. Nadia

Anderson (Inrix), Kate Roetzer (WMATA) and Abigail Wolfgram (Guidehouse) supported the committee as volunteers.

The committee kept the chapter abreast of legislative happenings in 2023 by providing content for the chapter's newsletters. In all, the committee contributed three articles, including two legislative updates on the hot topics in the DC transportation sphere, including the implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, nominations, appointments and confirmations, grant awards and announcements.

The Legislative Committee works to inform WTS-DC members about critical legislative issues that affect the transportation industry and to strengthen the relationships between WTS-DC members and representatives on Capitol Hill. The committee typically hosts at least one event each year and contributes newsletter articles about legislative matters.

The committee organized two events focused on legislative topics. On April 7, the committee hosted a panel discussion on "Gender Bias and Equity in Transportation". On November 3, the committee held a joint event with YPT-DC on "Moving the Needle on Electric Vehicles". These events are discussed in more detail in the "Events" section of this Annual Report.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is responsible for maintaining up-to-date membership records, preparing welcome packets for new members, sending renewal emails to chapter members, and answering any membership-related questions. They provide additional support to the Program Logistics Committee by confirming that everyone who purchased a member ticket for one of our events is a WTS member, and they support the Communications Committee to ensure that our membership email lists are up to date.

The Membership Committee was led by Adrienne Ameel (Kimley-Horn), as Chair, and Rachel Hensler (Kimley-Horn) and Rebecca Sulla (Kimley-Horn) as Deputy Chairs.

In 2022, WTS-DC continues to maintain one of the largest memberships of all the WTS chapters. Our membership consists of approximately 250 members who

indicated WTS-DC as their primary chapter.

Month	Membership Count
January	199
February	210
March	214
April	222
May	225
June	226
July	228
August	235
September	244
October	259
November	250
December	244

Membership committee efforts focused on reconnecting members after the pandemic and planning an event for members only. On Tuesday, October 11, 2022, on the rooftop of the Millennium Building, the Membership committee hosted the Membership Social Hour. The Membership committee hopes to continue the member only event in the future. In 2023, the Membership committee will focus on WTS-DC Chapter membership retention.

Mentoring Committee

The Mentoring Committee matches industry leaders with emerging professionals in a mentor-mentee relationship. The committee facilitates learning experiences around professionalism in a friendly, interactive environment. In addition to the one-on-one matches, group events hosted by industry experts and professionals in various transportation sectors who share career lessons learned provide additional opportunities for connection and learning.

Ruochang Huang (Jacobs) and Lindsey Robertson Lentz (Evans Consulting) served as Co-Chairs of the WTS-DC Mentoring Committee in 2022. Ann McGrane

(Northern Virginia Transportation Commission) served as Deputy Chair.

Twenty pairs participated in the 2022 program – our largest group ever. The applicants were matched based on their work experience, interests, sector of

employment, and personality-communication style. Each pair was encouraged to meet at least once monthly on their own and attend group events throughout the program year. Mentors and mentees participated in regular check-in surveys to ensure the pairs met regularly, continuing to build their partnerships.

The kick-off meeting for the 2022 Mentoring program was held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was held on April 20th. Over 75% of program participants joined this critical meeting, where we introduced mentors and mentees and set expectations for the 2022 program. As with prior years, the program expectations included a requirement to meet with your mentor/mentee once a month, for mentees to attend a majority of the program group events, a commitment to confidentiality and professionalism, and a request to address any mentor/mentee issues with the co-chairs. During the kick-off meeting, the co-chairs also explained the program's format. The program committee organized one monthly event, alternating between formal professional development events hosted by experts and industry leaders, networking happy hours, and program check-ins. Throughout the program, the committee members supplied monthly topics, resources, and discussion questions to help mentors and mentees connect on various career and industry topics.



Photo 8. Mentoring happy hour; from left to right: Ellie McCurdy, Tigest Fantahun, Audra Bandy, Erin Donovan, Abigail Wolfgram, Polly Hansen, Ann McGrane, Lindsay Valentino, Becca Sulla, Sean Rousseau, Lindsey Robertson Lentz, Nancy Connor, Ruochang Huang

On June 29, the committee held the first professional development workshop on Strategic Networking. This virtual event was hosted by the Mentoring Committee, with program Co-Chair, Lindsey Robertson Lentz as the facilitator. The engaging session began with participants introducing themselves and sharing their worst networking experience. The session continued with instruction around building a network through connecting with those who give you energy, engaging with people from whom you can learn personally or professionally, and aligning yourself with groups that will help maximize your opportunities. Participants then completed an assignment to help them create and deliver a compelling introduction or “pitch.”

Mentors and mentees then had the opportunity to practice their pitches in breakout groups so they could solicit feedback to refine their messaging.

The second professional development workshop in September focused on an issue with which many professionals struggle - Advocating for Yourself. The committee engaged Jessica Sussman, Principal of Adult Learning at Evans Consulting, for this workshop. With the objectives of building self-confidence, empowerment, and effective communication skills, Jessica dispelled some common myths around personal advocacy. Jessica led participants through an activity and breakout discussions, where they had the opportunity to build and practice the skill of personal advocacy. Building this critical skill can help them ensure that their accomplishments lead to career progress, empower colleagues to give the needed support, and guarantee their needs are communicated and addressed.

Building upon lessons learned and feedback from the 2021 mentoring program, the committee built check-in sessions for mentors and mentees this year. Prior to the meetings, mentors and mentees completed a check-in survey to assess the progress of their mentoring relationship, identify any issues, or share any resources. This survey ensured that the virtual conversations were productive and supportive. These meetings brought together mentors and mentees separately to assess program success, address any issues, ensure participants had the resources they needed, and provide an opportunity for mentors and mentees to share best practices to build deeper connections. These meetings created space for the mentors and mentees to support each other within the program and to create pathways for tools and resources.

As all mentoring program professional development workshops, kick-off, and check-in meetings were held virtually to increase flexibility; our in-person networking events became critical to helping participants build connections with others in the program. As the program's 40 participants lived and worked throughout the DMV, the committee used polls to assess the best dates, times, and locations for these informal events. Participant feedback during the program led to reconsidering the happy hour structure from a sit-down event to a more flexible and open format that allowed mentors and mentees the freedom to engage in conversations with several people.

At the beginning of each month, the committee members sent an email to all program participants that focused on a professional or career development theme. The monthly outreach included resources, tools, or information on a topic and discussion prompts to help seed conversations. In months when we had a

professional development workshop, the resources and questions focused on the workshop topic. These suggestions were shared as optional recommendations that mentors and mentees could choose to employ. Some of the monthly themes included mentoring relationship expectation development, goal setting, and resources to continue to develop and practice your personal pitch.

Professional Development Committee

In 2021, Cerasela Cristei (EXP) and Khatereh Vaghefi (Parsons) served as the Chair and Deputy Chair, respectively, of the Professional Development Committee. Jeff Parker (WSP) and Nadiya Kutishcheva (Sharp & Company, Inc.) supported the bike tours as volunteers, and Madonna Gadelseed (Dewberry) supported the committee as a volunteer.

The Professional Development Committee provides opportunities for members and non-members to advance their careers through educational, informative, and skill-developing events. They collaborate with other committees to organize joint events to support career development.

The committee worked to provide unique and useful professional development opportunities for area transportation professionals. The committee organized four events in 2022.

On March 16, the Professional Development Committee hosted the chapter's first hybrid format event with Neil Pedersen, the former executive director of Transportation Research Board (TRB). On October 18, the committee hosted its seventh annual event with the Virginia Department of Transportation. The event explored VDOT's technological and strategic innovations.

The committee also organized much-needed opportunities for members and non-members to get outdoors. On April 30, the committee hosted an outdoor bike event in Washington, D.C. And on November 5, the committee held a joint 12-mile bike tour with COMTO-DC and WDCSITE.

These events are discussed in more detail in the "[Events](#)" section of this Annual Report.

Program Logistics Committee

The Program Logistics provides support to other committees and groups who are hosting Chapter events. They support event organizers by helping to identify venues and caterers, and by providing advice on contracts. The committee works with the event planning committees, assists with planning the events and with catering and venue coordination when required for in-person events. The committee arranges registration on Eventbrite before events. For in-person events, the committee handles name-tags, registration, and works with walk-in attendees to purchase tickets at or after the program and assisted with event set-up.

The Program Logistics Committee was led by Ellie McCurdy (VHB) and Elizabeth Patel (FHWA) as Co-Chairs.

The committee provided logistical support for all public events hosted by WTS-DC that required tickets in 2022. The committee worked with the event planning committees, assisted with planning the events and determining the best hosting option for virtual events. Committee members were responsible for registration on

Eventbrite before events and ticket purchases and adjustments if needed after the program.

For in-person events, the committee assisted with event set up. For virtual events, the committee also worked with the planning committees to ensure Zoom meeting information was e-mailed to registrants before the event. They attended tech run-throughs for applicable virtual events when the WTS-I Zoom account was used.

Table 6 - WTS-DC 2021 Events (excludes Mentoring Program events, Transportation YOU programs, and Board meetings)

Date	Event	Description	Format	Number of Registrants
February 24	Coffee Chat with COMTO President and CEO April Rai	Open Event	Virtual	18
March 16	Journey to Becoming TRB Executive Director: Conversation with Neil Pedersen	Open Event	Hybrid	15 (in-person); 4 (virtual)
April 7	Gender Bias and Equity in Transportation	Open Event	Virtual	54
April 21	Anything But Normal: Recognition Winners on Recent Years and Future Hopes	Open Event	Virtual	22
April 30	Meet the Neighborhoods: Bicycle-friendly Evolution of the DC Area	Open Event	In-person	13
May 6	Executive Women's Roundtable: Amplify Leadership for the Hybrid Workplace	Invitation Only	Virtual	24
June 9	A Conversation with USDOT Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg	Open Event	In-person	89
July 14	A New Era for Passenger Rail: A Conversation with Amtrak's Leadership	Open Event	In-person	128
September 14	Cocktails and Conversation with WMATA GM/CEO Randy Clarke	Open Event	In-person	97
September 27	WTS-DC and WDCSITE Joint Event: Transportation Policy and Sustainability	Open Event	In-person	55
October 11	WTS-DC Membership Social Hour	Members Only	In-person	45
October 18	WTS-DC Annual VDOT Event: Tech Fluency – Adapt, Innovate, Evolve	Open Event	In-person	82
October 25	Elevating Inclusion Excellence featuring Dr. Katrina Hutchins	Open Event	Virtual	61
November 3	Moving the Needle on Electric Vehicles: Joint Event with WTS-DC and YPT-DC	Open Event	Virtual	29
November 5	Meet the Neighborhoods: Bicycle-Friendly Evolution of the Arlington Area	Open Event	In-person	22
December 6	WTS-DC Holiday Party 2022	Open Event	In-person	281

Recognitions Committee

The 2021 Recognitions Committee was led by Jamie (WMATA) as Chair and Stacy (FTA) as Deputy Chair. Anne (WMATA) supported the committee as a volunteer.

The Recognitions Committee is responsible for handling the Chapter's solicitation, nomination, evaluation, and certification of its annual awards.

Rosen
Weisfeld
Patrone

For the second year, the Recognitions Committee held a panel of previous Recognition Award recipients. The event was held via Zoom on April 21, 2022, and was titled "Anything But Normal: WTS-DC Recognition Award Winners on the Past Few Years & Future Hopes". This event is discussed in more detail in the ["Events"](#) section of this Annual Report

In 2022, the Recognitions Committee solicited nominations for six award categories. The Committee surpassed its goal of at least two nominees in every category, with a total of 28 unique nominees / 29 nominations. The Committee then organized a selection panel to review the nominees and select a recipient in each category. The Committee then coordinated between the selection panel and the WTS-DC Executive Board to finalize the recipients who were then notified of the awards. The Recognitions Committee also coordinated with other committees to collect materials for the program, coordinate complimentary tickets for the recipients, and address other party logistics. All of the recipients attended the 2021 holiday party where they were presented with the awards. The committee will also write a newsletter article in early 2022 about the recipients and complete the nomination forms to nominate all of the recipients for the WTS-I Recognition Awards.

Our 2022 recipients included:

- WTS-DC Member of the Year Award: Cerasela Cristei, Director of Design, EXP

- WTS-DC Woman of the Year Award: Monica Backmon, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

- WTS-DC Honorable Ray LaHood Award: Stephen Gardner, Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak

- WTS-DC Employer of the Year Award: Dewberry, Fairfax, VA

- WTS-DC Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award: Mugdha Tipnis, Vice President, WSP

- WTS-DC Innovative Transportation Solutions Award: WMATA Equity Toolkit, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority



Photo 9. 2022 WTS-DC Recognition Awards presentation. Left to Right: Dave Mahoney (Dewberry), Shelley Wynne (Dewberry), Monica Backmon, Randy Clarke (WMATA, award presenter), Laura Moeini (WMATA Equity Toolkit), Melissa Kim (WMATA Equity Toolkit), Stephen Gardner, Cerasela Cristei, Mugdha Tipnis, Anne Patrone (WMATA, Recognitions Committee), Stacy Weisfeld (FTA, Recognitions Committee), Jamie Rosen (WMATA, Recognitions Committee)

Scholarship and Fundraising Committee

In 2022, the Scholarship and Fundraising Committee was chaired by Alanna McKeeman (Foursquare ITP). Regis Stinson (Dewberry) served as Deputy Chair, and

The Scholarship and Fundraising Committee is responsible for both awarding scholarships and raising funds for scholarships. Each year, the committee plans the calendar year for the annual scholarships, seeks out potential applicants, convenes the review panel, seeks Board approval of the scholarship recipients, and notifies the recipients and coordinates with them on the logistics of accepting their awards. The committee is also responsible for coordinating complimentary membership for awardees and for completing the WTS-I scholarship applications.

Diana Levy (WMATA) and Anita Beier (retired) supported the committee as volunteers.

The Scholarship and Fundraising Committee had another great year. We received \$13,000 in named scholarships – a record! – from six generous sponsors organizations. After a highly competitive application review process, the selection panel selected to award scholarships totaling \$19,000 to a group of seven deserving women.

At the
 WTS-DC
 2022
 Holiday

Party, due to the generosity of the attendees and thanks to the efforts of several WTS-DC board members who volunteered their time, the Committee raised over \$2,300 in donations through the scholarship tree.

We were pleased to see so many previous scholarship winners at the Holiday Party and hope that this year's awardees will also stay involved with WTS-DC for many years to come. We wish them much success as they complete their education and embark on what we are confident will be impactful careers in the transportation industry.



Photo 10. Scholarship winner Aliya Mejias meets William Proctor of RATP Dev, the organization that sponsored her scholarship

Table 7 - 2022 Scholarship Fundraising Sources

Source	Supporting Committee	Amount Raised
Transportation Rock Stars	Corporate Membership	n/a
Corporate Membership Dues Allocation	Corporate Membership	\$7,850.00
Holiday Party Scholarship Donations	Holiday Party	\$2,314.27
Named Scholarships	n/a	\$11,000.00
Other donations	n/a	\$435.00
Total		\$21,599.27

Transportation YOU Committee

The Transportation YOU committee was led by Barbara Moreno (WSP USA), as Chair, and Laura MacNeil (DDOT), as Deputy

The Transportation YOU Committee partners with local high schools in Washington, D.C. and is a hands-on, interactive, mentoring program that offers young girls (and boys) ages 13-18 an introduction to a wide variety of transportation careers.

Chair. Brandon Buckner (FHWA), Kyla D'Sa (Kimley-Horn.), Meghan Powell (VHB), Amanda Ishikawa (WSP), Nadia Anderson (Inrix), Stephanie Maher (National Express Transit) and Alejandra Felgueroso (HNTB) provided invaluable support as committee volunteers.

Understanding robotics is key for anyone looking to build a career in engineering, and the students at McKinley Tech and Dunbar High Schools are not exceptions. Robotics naturally lends itself to Automated Vehicle (AV) technology, so

Transportation YOU worked with staff at both of those schools to supplement their existing lesson plans with some fun AV guest speakers.

First up on March 14, was Tiffany Dubinsky, a Statewide Transit Planning Manager at the Virginia Department of Rail and Transportation. She spoke to over 40 engineering students at McKinley Tech about her AV work in the state and the region. One of the most exciting parts of the lecture was when she discussed the applications that AV has for public transit and showed clips of local jurisdictions using AV technology on their local shuttle transport systems, which ignited a lively discussion for the future engineers in the classroom.



Photo 11. Tiffany Dubinsky speaking at McKinley Tech

Next on the calendar were the series of presentations about electric vehicles for engineering students at Dunbar High School on March 15. Laura Garcia, Director of Automotive Programs at Northern Virginia Community Colleges' Alexandria campus, kicked off the event by speaking about the maintenance, repair, and safety protocol aspects of working with electric vehicles and high-charge batteries. And she would know! Not only is Ms. Garcia in charge of automotive programs at NOVA, which includes a course specifically about EV hybrids, but she is a master automotive technician herself. Ms. Garcia explained the intricacies of hybrid motors and the simplicity of electric vehicle motors—as well as how high voltage batteries are manufactured and perform in the field.

Deepak Gopalakrishna, Vice President at ICF International, followed with an introduction to the concept of scenario-based planning and described different futures that could result from wide-scale adoption of electric and autonomous vehicle technologies in our everyday lives. Students, we were told, still had vivid pictures of those potential future scenarios weeks afterward -- a helpful reminder of how impactful it can be for students to see and hear from transportation professionals in their classroom.

The Transportation YOU Committee of WTS-DC has developed long-standing relationships with three high schools within the District of Columbia, McKinley Technology High School, Cardozo Education Campus, and Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. This academic year, the TYOU Committee was honored to be invited to play a larger role in one of those schools by becoming an advisory board member for the two National Academy Foundation (NAF) Academies of Dunbar High School: the Dr. Charles R. Drew Engineering Academy, with 136 students in 9th through 12th grades; and the Information Technology Academy, with 16 incoming freshmen students.

Building on her existing role as Dunbar's liaison for the Transportation YOU committee, Deputy Chair Laura MacNeil is now taking on advisory board member responsibilities to meet monthly, and share perspectives, ideas, and resources as an industry professional to ensure that student experiences within the NAF Academies align with the trajectory of their prospective industry. This expanded role within the NAF Academies at Dunbar High School also expands opportunities to leverage the professional resources within the WTS network and better integrate them into students' academic schedules and curriculum. The engineering academy's focus on providing work-based-learning events for students aligns well with Transportation YOU's ability to connect students with female role-models in the transportation industry, site visits to construction projects and office experiences, subject-matter experts, and college tour opportunities.



Photo 12. Dunbar High School

For its fall events the WTS Transportation YOU Committee decided to focus on engineering, and teamed up with international engineering firm, WSP for two in-person events.

First up on October 14, WSP employees Mugdha Tipnis, Vice President, Local Business Leader, Transportation, and Jeff Parker, Lead Traffic Engineer and Director, presented to almost 50 first year engineering students at McKinley Tech High School. Each speaker discussed in-depth how they became interested in



Photo 14. Barbara Moreno, Jeff Parker and Mugdha Tipnis at McKinley Tech

15 Dunbar High School engineering students at their DC office to learn about construction management and modeling on November 16. Jameelah Muhamad-Ingram, Lead Structural Engineer & Deputy Project Manager, Shaun Pratt, Vice President and Project Director, and Andy Immroth, Senior Supervising Architect, at WSP spoke to the 11th grade students about their work on the WMATA Bladensburg Bus Garage project in Northeast DC (not too far from the high school itself). Students received a detailed walk through of the project including descriptions of each role on the project from Architect to Electrical Engineer, construction methods and a timeline (with photos!) of the project phases completed so far. Students and WSP staff held a lively discussion of the ins and outs of project management and how to plan to be a future engineer.

engineering, why they enjoy working for their current company, and what projects they're involved with now. The students came ready with questions about the day-to-day tasks of engineers, and each received some WSP swag as a parting gift.

WSP continued their support of WTS and the Transportation YOU program by hosting



Photo 13. Dunbar High School students at WSP's offices

Events Throughout the Year

Coffee Chat with COMTO President and Chief Executive Officer April Rai



Photo 15. COMTO CEO April Rai

On February 24, 2022, attendees from across the transportation industry gathered virtually over Zoom for WTS-DC's Coffee Chat with Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) President and Chief Executive Officer April Rai. April's name was familiar to many attendees because, prior to her appointment to COMTO, she served as Deputy Executive Director for WTS International.

April shared how her career took her to her current CEO position, which was not a role she had envisioned for herself growing up in Southern California. She started her career in government affairs and healthcare, which ultimately led her to become CEO of National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) where she met a Board member named Sara Stickler. A good illustration of the importance of networking and serendipity, when Sara was asked to become CEO of WTS

International, she asked April to join her. Together, they worked through a major restructuring and expansion of the organization.

April shared that she feels privileged to be a steward of COMTO's 50-year legacy and its future. Among the initiatives she is spearheading is a complete refresh of the data on where COMTO members are in their careers. This will lead to a State of COMTO report the following year to assess whether members are progressing in their career. April noted the importance of supporting organizations that empower minorities in transportation, such as COMTO and WTS, to get everyone a seat at the table and make diversity and inclusion truly meaningful in the industry.

During a lively Q&A session, April and the audience also discussed health and wellness and work-life balance, a key theme for Black History Month in 2022,

qualities necessary to be a leader, and the importance of giving and receiving mentorship and sponsorship throughout one's career.

WTS-DC is grateful to April Rai for sharing her time and insight with WTS-DC members and friends.

Gender Bias and Equity in Transportation

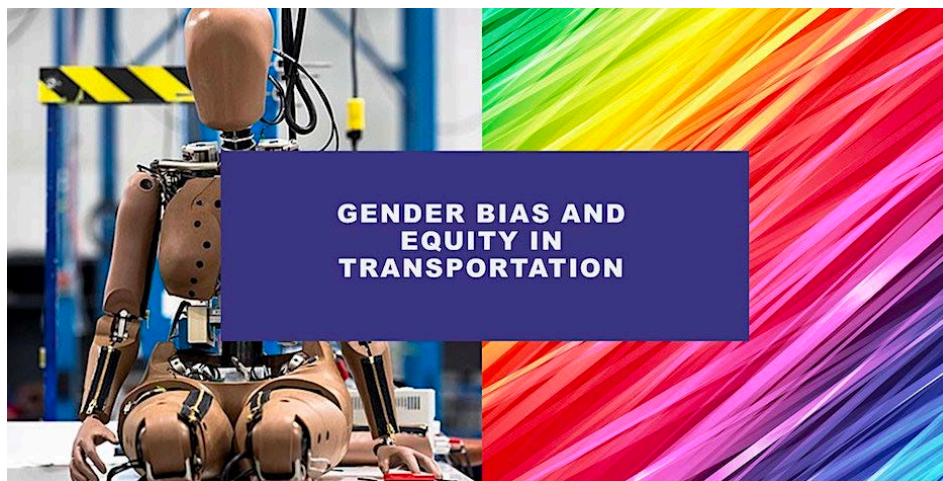


Photo 16. Gender Bias and Equity in Transportation

Women are 73 percent more likely to be injured and 17 percent more likely to die in a vehicle crash than men. Fifty-five percent of transit riders are women but buses and subways are not currently and haven't been designed with

women in mind. Hang straps can be difficult to reach and strollers can be challenging to load or unload in a short period of time at a stop. Additionally, harassment and violence is an ongoing concern for female passengers of all ages. These are just a few of the issues that our panel discussed at WTS-DC's April 7, 2022 event on gender bias and transportation systems here in America and internationally.

The event featured former Congresswoman Susan Molinari who is the Co-Chair of VERITY NOW and Natalie Draisin who is the Director, North American & United Nations Representative at the FIA Foundation. The wide-ranging conversation was moderated by automotive regulatory transportation policy expert Catherine McCullough. The conversation was highlighted on social media with the hashtag #WTSAdvancingEquity.

When it comes to safety and vehicle crashes, Susan explained that federal regulators have continued to use crash test dummies that are an appropriate size for the

average male and do not take into account that the average American woman is 5.4 inches shorter and 27 pounds lighter than the average male. As women frequently have shorter legs, they sit closer to the steering wheel in order to reach the pedals. As a result, they are 80 percent more likely than men to suffer severe leg injuries in a crash. Additionally, due to differences in neck musculature between men and women, women are significantly more prone to whiplash in a crash.

Natalie explained that worldwide, women experience transportation differently. There are racial disparities and differences in the experience of low-income women vs. higher income women. Further, the possibility of gender-based violence is ever present. Research has shown that based on 16,600 interviews in 22 countries, 80-90 percent of women have been harassed in public. Natalie noted that high levels of harassment and other abuse in public transportation can limit women's willingness to travel. Proactive measures need to be undertaken to address these real issues. She gave an example of what is happening in Bogota, Columbia where buses have been designed with two long rows of seats facing each other so that passengers can have a better view of what is going on around them, thereby providing an increased sense of safety.

As the conversation turned to the reasons why gender inequity is still so pervasive in 2022, Natalie noted that transportation systems mirror world power systems, meaning that men still sit in the proverbial driver's seat when it comes to passing laws and devising regulations. Susan agreed and remarked that the "father knows best" mentality continues to be ubiquitous. While there have been advancements in recent years with more women in leadership positions, the month's panel discussion demonstrated that there is still much to be done.

WTS-DC thanks Congresswoman Susan Molinari, Natalie Draisin, and Catherine McCullough for sharing their time with WTS-DC members and friends.

Exploring the Bicycle-Friendly Evolution of the DC Area – WTS-DC's Eighth Annual Bike Tour

WTS-DC held its eight annual spring Professional Development bike tour on Saturday, April 30, 2022, and attendees rolled their bicycles through the ever-changing streets in northeast Washington, DC. We observed improvements to many existing bicycle facilities in the neighborhood and new additions to the bike network. Two main improvements were noticeable during this year's tour compared to previous years: the number of streets with designated bike facilities has increased and both drivers and bicyclists seemed to be in sync.



Photo 17. Participants in the DC Bike Tour; from left to right: Jeff Parker, Shirley X, Khaterreh Vaghefi, Mike Goodno, Katherine Kortum, Elsa Arias, Cerasela Cristei

The route selected did not include the cycletrack on Pennsylvania Avenue, the segment most favored by our past participants; instead, we explored several Northeast DC neighborhoods and the bike infrastructure that connects them.

Some of us arrived at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the starting point of the tour, earlier than the rest of the group and humbly stepped inside. It was a good opportunity to admire the architectural feat of this edifice that hosts more than 80 chapels

and oratories that represent more than 22 nationalities and ethnicities and reflect the rich heritage of America.

When the group was whole, we started the ride on Michigan Avenue towards the Chuck Brown Memorial Park. The ride was on sidewalks, bike lanes, and local streets with no designated bike facilities. No matter the facility, the ride felt safe and enjoyable.

In the midst of the friendly neighborhood streets the monument to the late guitarist known as the “Godfather of Go-Go”, DC’s homegrown funky, jazzy music genre was majestic but friendly.

We biked through the park and continued on streets to reach the Union Market. The facilities were generous and safe, and we stopped for a quick water and stretching break.

The ride continued on the Eckington segment of the Metropolitan Branch Trail. The trail was very well appointed for bicyclists and pedestrians alike and the adjacent walls were decorated with colorful murals that added to the spectacular effect of the spring vegetation on the sides of the trail.

The tour ended back at the starting point where some of the participants continued to ride in two separate groups. One group rode on the new bike lanes installed along Eisenhower Ave and the new segment of the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

This year's tour was a reminder of the definition and importance of complete streets and a life exhibit of the intersection of culture, arts, technology, and engineering. We saw first-hand that any design will ultimately be integrated in the surrounding cultural environment and when well planned and executed it makes for an environment that enhances the quality of life. Planners, engineers, and artists can be proud of a job well done that will withstand time and serve generations to come.

WTS-DC thanks Mike Goodno for dedicating his time, talent, and knowledge to our chapter!

Chatting with Neil: A Lesson in Leadership and Loving What You Do

Neil Pedersen may only be known to some from the message he writes in each TRB Annual Report Program and the picture that accompanies it. Maybe some have had the opportunity to meet Neil during the week-long TRB Annual Meeting, but I believe everyone knows that Neil leads the team that makes the TRB Annual Meeting (and everything else that TRB does for our profession) a reality. On March 16, 2022, WTS-DC members and friends sat down with Neil for a small group discussion about his path to leadership at TRB.

Neil Pedersen has been Executive Director of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) since 2015. In that role, he provides executive direction and leadership to TRB's technical activities, including its annual meeting of over 14,000 transportation professionals, its 180 technical committees, its conferences, and its publications; its peer reviewed policy consensus studies; and its multimodal cooperative research programs. Prior to joining TRB, Neil spent 29 years at the Maryland Department of Transportation, where he served the last eight years as State Highway Administrator and Governor's Highway Safety Representative.



Photo 18. Neil Pedersen and Moderator Cerasela Cristei

Neil's "relationship" with transportation began when he was eight years old and witnessed the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike. He was curious not only about the construction process but also of the impact it had on communities. This curiosity grew when an old church in Brooklyn, a church where his mother used to be a member, was displaced by the approach to the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge. The development fractured the community and separated once-close neighbors by a half-hour bus ride. Despite the upheaval, Neil recalled the story's happy ending — a new and better church was built to replace the old one.

While in graduate school in 1975 at Northwestern University, Neil was told, not asked, by his advisor to attend a TRB meeting in Washington, DC. Without means but with a dedication to his advisor, Neil and five of his classmates drove from Evanston, Illinois to Washington, DC and slept on the floor at the home of one of his classmates. (An early form of AirBNB, maybe?) Nearly 3,000 people attended the meeting, which overwhelmed Neil but also sparked his decades-long professional love affair with TRB. True to form, Neil has remained involved with TRB ever since.

During his talk, Neil acknowledged the many crossed paths that helped shape his career. He shared stories about his work with Paul Wiedefeld, GM/CEO of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (who was in the audience at this event), while Neil was planning director of the Maryland State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and Paul was planning director for the Secretary's office in Maryland. Neil reminisced of the times when he and Paul held breakfast meetings at a downtown Baltimore restaurant for less money than most pay for a Starbucks today. It was heartwarming to hear Neil speak of the professional and personal interactions that contributed to his career development.

Neil volunteered with TRB for many years. In 1982, he joined the Statewide Multimodal Planning Committee and eventually became its chair in 1996. Through this committee, Neil developed friendships with planning directors from 12 different states, and their shared ideas helped them develop better solutions to the problems at hand. The rest, as they say, is history — Neil rose up through the volunteer ranks, took on more responsibilities by chairing committees, and eventually became Chair of the TRB Executive Committee in 2011. When Neil retired from MDOT SHA around that same time, TRB approached him to be part of a TRB research program called the Second Strategic Highway Research Program. In 2015, Neil became the Executive Director of TRB.

Neil shared some of his proudest accomplishments at TRB. Neil noted that TRB has become more diverse and—more importantly—has increased its focus on

addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the programmatic level. He applauded TRB's strategic approach and focus on planning for the next decade and beyond. I left the conversation with a renewed professional focus. Like Neil, I must always strive for what I want, even when it may seem impossible, understand what needs to be done, and focus on accomplishing my mission.

Neil encouraged participants to become (and remain) involved in TRB. Neil's response to the question "why" was simple — professional development. Participating in TRB is one of the best opportunities for transportation professionals of all ages and levels of experience to place themselves at the intersection of ideas and advancement in the industry around the globe. Professionals who dedicate time to TRB create lasting professional relationships and contribute to the betterment of transportation. What could be better than that?

WTS-DC thanks Neil for his continuous support of WTS-DC, for generously giving his time to our chapter, and for donating venue space at TRB for this event.

Anything but Normal: How WTS-DC's Recognition Award Winners Reflect on the Past Few Years and Their Hopes for the Future



Photo 19. 2021 WTS-DC Recognitions Award Winners Matt Welbes, Liz Field, Alex Carroll, Diana Mendes and Adrienne Ameal

The Recognitions Committee was honored to hold a panel event featuring WTS-DC 2021 Recognition Award winners on April 21, 2022, discussing the topic 'Anything But Normal: WTS-DC Recognition Award Winners on the Past Few Years & Future Hopes.' Panel participants included the following award winners: Matt Welbes, Executive Director, Federal Transit Administration - Honorable Ray LaHood Awardee; Liz Field, Vice President of Project Implementation & Construction, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority - Woman of the Year Awardee; Diana Mendes, Corporate President of Infrastructure and Mobility Equity, HNTB - Rosa Parks Diversity Awardee; and Alex Carroll, Complete Streets Program Manager, City of Alexandria - Innovative Transportation Solution Awardee (for Commonwealth

Avenue Complete Streets). Adrienne Ameal, Senior Transportation Engineer, Kimley-Horn, Past President of WTS-DC, and Member of the Year Awardee, moderated the conversation.

The panelists had a frank and open discussion about their challenges and triumphs over the past few years, from the difficulty of supporting onsite staff to the importance of celebrating the milestones and successes as they moved forward in a virtual world. They spoke about making themselves accessible and open to staff as senior staff and leading by example to maintain work/life balance and a focus on mental health across the team. The conversation covered the need to stay flexible, pivoting to accommodate new priorities and changes in circumstances, while taking advantage of the 'new normal' to reflect and be more attentive to what's going on around us.

Questions from the audience ranged from asking how mentoring and networking can be successful in a virtual environment to what advice the panelists would give young professionals. There were questions about performance management and career-building in the new work environment, and the panelists provided interesting insights on all of these topics. The final question to the panel, asking them about their hopes for the future of transportation, ended the session on a forward-looking note. While the panelists all agreed we would need a crystal ball to see whether transportation as we know it will ever go back to where it was, they celebrated the possibilities this opened up in the field. There was agreement that levels of federal funding, the experiences we've had, and learning from people in communities that are traditionally underserved offer important opportunities to envision a different world of transportation. Most of all, the panelists hoped we could hold on to the practices we had started during the pandemic, prioritizing time with loved ones and focusing on mental and physical health.

Both organizers and attendees agreed it meant a lot to hear how the panelists learned from and adapted to the changes of the past few years and how those experiences have shaped the way they lead. The Recognitions Committee looks forward to future discussions where our award winners can speak about the things that are important to them and get the chance to interact with WTS-DC members.

WTS-DC thanks Matt Welbes, Liz Field, Diana Mendes, Alex Carroll, and Adrienne Ameal for dedicating their time and sharing their stories with WTS-DC members and friends.

Executive Women's Roundtable: Leadership for the Hybrid Workplace

WTS-DC's ongoing Executive Women's Roundtable (EWR) series met virtually on May 6, 2022, to discuss the topic "Amplify Your Leadership Style for the Hybrid Workplace." The interactive workshop was co-led by Julie Nickerson and Kristin Bloomquist. Nickerson is an Industrial-Organizational Psychologist who focuses on effective culture, leadership, and teams to help people and businesses accelerate. Bloomquist is the founder of Bloom Mentoring, which provides individualized career coaching and leadership development.

This invite-only event brought together top-ranking women in the transportation industry in a facilitated forum to discuss common issues and interact with collaborative tools and frameworks that can be used with their teams to help create a better hybrid experience for employees. Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete a survey about return to work and their greatest challenges in the hybrid workplace. The session kicked off with a review of those survey results, with most participants indicating their hybrid plan in practice is a mix of three days per week in the office and two days per week remote.

Nickerson and Bloomquist then led the group through various hands-on exercises using MURAL, a digital workspace for visual collaboration. Participants assessed and evaluated the risks to people and the risks to work that come with the hybrid workplace, explored what a day in the life of a remote worker versus an office worker looks like, and discussed the essential leadership traits for the hybrid environment—showing empathy and compassion, ensuring there is ample opportunity for connection and collaboration, and building team trust.

The session provided ample opportunity for open discussion, information sharing, and lessons learned among all participants in both small breakout rooms and as a group.

As more businesses return to the office and transition to hybrid policies as the normal way of working, it's important that organizations and leaders take proactive steps to design an inclusive hybrid work culture and find the right balance that meets their organizational priorities and employees' needs.

WTS-DC thanks Julie Nickerson and Kristin Bloomquist for their facilitation of the workshop!

Leading the Infrastructure Decade: A Conversation with US DOT Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg

There's never been a better time to work in transportation. When Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg sat down with moderator Beverley Swaim-Staley, retiring President and CEO of Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, and the WTS-DC chapter at the Hotel Monaco in downtown DC, she repeated this sentiment multiple times. She's seen many changes and a lot of industry growth throughout her career – from developing the nation's first Vision Zero program as commissioner of New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) to serving in the Obama Administration as Assistant Secretary and Undersecretary for Policy at US DOT and working in the Senate under Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Majority Leader Charles Schumer, and Senator Barbara Boxer – but she still lauded this moment as an unparalleled opportunity.

In her prepared remarks and throughout the conversation, Deputy Secretary Trottenberg described the resources available in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to tackle our toughest challenges around safety, state of good repair, equity, and climate. She particularly discussed opportunities to address the nation's roadway fatality epidemic, a problem that disproportionality affects people of color and tribal communities. While recognizing that we have a long way to go, she was optimistic about nation-wide cultural shifts on safety, the Administration's National Roadway Safety Strategy, and new programs in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, such as the locally-focused Safe Streets and Roads for All program. As the conversation continued, the Deputy Secretary highlighted that one priority is for women to feel safe working in all sectors of the transportation industry, including the Merchant Marine Academy and the trucking industry. While on the topic of trucking, she acknowledged the issues related to the supply chain and the challenges experienced by people across the country. She highlighted the work performed by the administration and noted that it is an ongoing effort with highly capable leaders in charge.

Taking the conversation in a personal direction, Beverley Swaim-Staley asked Deputy Secretary Trottenberg how her career path prepared her for her current role. She highlighted the learning opportunities in each of her diverse career experiences, including how her time at NYCDOT taught her the nuances of local government. On the topic of mentors and advocates, Deputy Secretary Trottenberg said she was fortunate to have many mentors and other examples of exceptional professionals throughout her career. She also commented on the value of her peer network to whom she has been able to turn for advice. Deputy Secretary Trottenberg touted the



Photo 20. From left to right: Shelley Wynne, Sophie Guiny, Deputy Secretary Trottenberg, Adrienne Ameal, Beverley Swaim-Staley, Neela Babu

value of WTS saying that it is an organization that provides mentors and role models while also giving members the opportunity to develop their own peer network.

During the Q&A, audience members asked about rising costs in construction, the use of data across the industry, vision zero lessons learned from her time at NYCDOT, and equity. Deputy Secretary Trottenberg stated that equity, climate change, job creation, and safety are all priorities for the administration and are incorporated into everything US DOT is doing, from grants to internal efforts.

When asked to share a final piece of wisdom, Deputy Secretary Trottenberg looked back at these experiences and described the confidence she's gained along the way – from underestimating her knowledge of the industry to now trusting her ability to learn new things and make decisions. She recognized that women aren't always socialized to self-advocate for leadership roles but encouraged WTS's "generation of bright stars" to trust themselves and step up to the incredible opportunities in front of us.

WTS-DC thanks Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg and Beverley Swaim-Staley for generously sharing their time and insights with our chapter.

A New Era for Passenger Rail: A Conversation with Amtrak's Leadership

There was an energetic buzz in the National League of Cities' conference room ahead of the event jointly organized by WTS-DC and Women in Government Relations (WGR) on the future of passenger rail. The event was an opportunity to hear directly from Stephen Gardner, Amtrak's CEO, and Amtrak's top female leaders on the exciting times ahead for Amtrak as the organization prepares to receive historic levels of funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Four panelists joined moderator Caroline Decker, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs and National Rail Business Director at WSP, in person at the event: Laura Mason, Executive Vice President–Capital Delivery, Nicole Bucich, Vice President, Network Development, Qiana Spain, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, and Tracie Winbigler, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Attendees joined in person and via Zoom. In keeping with the hybrid nature of the event, Stephen Gardner participated in the conversation virtually.



Photo . From left to right: Qiana Spain, Nicole Bucich, Caroline Decker, Tracie Winbigler and Laura Mason

Mr. Gardner kicked off the conversation with some introductory remarks. He noted that rail has, since the 1960s, focused on moving goods, not people, even though the U.S possesses the largest rail network in the world. He emphasized Amtrak's opportunity to rethink this network to connect more people and make passenger rail more competitive with other modes. With the historic commitment from the federal government to passenger rail, Amtrak will focus on three priorities -- rebuild Amtrak's business post-pandemic, leaning on a new generation of leaders that will define the future of Amtrak; modernize assets, leveraging \$22 billion in funding under the IIJA; and expand the network through partnerships with USDOT, states and host railroads.

The conversation then turned to the panelists, who each outlined their background and role at Amtrak. It was interesting to note that all four women had joined Amtrak relatively recently, just before or during the pandemic.

Qiana Spain highlighted the major hiring efforts ongoing at Amtrak, which are being supported by initiatives to improve employee retention. She discussed Amtrak's emphasis on improving culture and empowering employees, as well as focusing on increasing diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Traci Winbigler discussed how excited she was about the future, and how her team was working hard at putting in place new processes to ensure accountability as Amtrak receives unprecedented levels of federal funding. She noted that while the

funding amounts are large, they are only a down payment on what will be needed to transform passenger rail, and that inflation is an issue to be monitored.

Laura Mason noted the need to transform public sector delivery so it becomes more effective, looking at newer delivery mechanisms to make projects faster, cheaper and less risky. There are three major capital investment portfolios slated for IIJA funding: fleet and facilities (with a complete revamping of the fleet, from the Acela to long-distance trains, and upgrades to associated maintenance facilities), infrastructure (including landmark projects such as the B&P Tunnel in Baltimore, and Gateway) and stations (with the opportunity to transform passenger experience in DC and Chicago, among others).

Nicole Bucich previously worked for the Northeast Corridor Commission and is looking to build relationships throughout the country to expand Amtrak's network. She discussed the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) launch of a new Corridor Identification Program, which will provide overarching guidance for the future expansion of the national passenger rail network, and will support the allocation of funding.

When asked what he hoped his message would be five years from now, Stephen Gardner concluded the discussion by emphasizing the fact that the IIJA funding was only a small part of what was needed to recover from decades of deferred investment in passenger rail. So, his hope is that over the next five years, Amtrak will build enough momentum by delivering, among other things, new routes and an improved passenger experience to convince Congress and future administrations to continue investing in passenger rail.

WTS-DC thanks Stephen Gardner, Laura Mason, Nicole Bucich, Qiana Spain, Tracie Winbigler and Caroline Decker for generously sharing their time and insights with our chapter. WTS-DC also thanks WGR for planning this event with us and National League of Cities for hosting the event in its state-of-the-art hybrid conference space.

Supply Chain Turmoil and Congestion

On August 10, members and friends of WTS-DC, the Transportation Research Forum (TRF-DC), and Young Professionals in Transportation (YPT-DC) gathered together at the Reason Foundation for the 13th annual WTS-TRF-YPT summer event. Three speakers shared their thoughts on the timely topic of supply chain disruptions: Dorothy Robyn, public policy consultant; Andrew Petrisin, Supply Chain Advisor at the U.S. Department of Transportation; and moderator Professor Thomas Corsi, Academic Director, MS Supply Chain Program and Michelle L. Smith Professor of Logistics at the Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland.

Dorothy Robyn highlighted the impacts of the motor carrier and freight rail industries' deregulation in the 1980s, which were both successful, as the increased competition provided incentives for innovation and led to lower shipping rates.



Photo 21. Attendees and panelists at the annual WTS-YPT-TRF event

Andrew Petrisin noted that USDOT has limited power over a siloed, privately-operated supply chain. The main role that USDOT has been able to play is that of convener, encouraging information sharing through regular calls between ports, shipping companies, and freight railroads. This has helped facilitate the flow of cargo from ports.

Panelists noted that companies had gotten carried away with “just in time” logistics and stretched the supply chain by expanding the number of suppliers.

They had largely ignored the risk of failure, which materialized in the wake of the COVID pandemic, when demand increased as supply contracted for key components like semiconductors.

The lesson learned is that companies will have to adapt to supply chain risk, while the federal government should focus on the national security implications of supply chain issues, rather than re-regulation. While the high shipping rates contributed to the overall inflation (and record profits for shipping lines), spot rates are beginning to decline.

Panelists also noted that the disruption at US ports was likely exacerbated by the fact that they have invested less in automation and are less efficient than their European and Asian counterparts, largely due to labor issues. There was a lively Q&A session, which continued after the official end of the event, as speakers and attendees discussed potential policy outcomes and industry responses to supply chain issues.

WTS-DC thanks TRF-DC and YPT-DC for their continued collaboration on this annual joint event, the Reason Foundation for donating the event venue, and Ms. Robyn, Mr. Petrisin, and Professor Corsi for sharing their time and knowledge with our attendees.

Conversation and Cocktails with WMATA GM/CEO Randy Clarke

On September 14, members and friends of WTS-DC gathered together at La Vie on The Wharf to welcome Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Randy Clarke to town. Guests enjoyed stimulating conversation, craft cocktails, and a beautiful view of the Potomac.



Photo 22. From left to right: Neela Babu, Sophie Guiny, WMATA GM Randy Clarke, Katie Kraft and Shelley Wynne

Mr. Clarke joined WMATA as GM/CEO in July 2022. He's not just Metro's GM/CEO; he's also a customer who uses the service every day. The insight Mr. Clarke gets from his daily rides helps him lead Metro to innovate and improve on behalf of customers.

Before joining Metro, Mr. Clarke served more than four years as President and CEO of Capital Metro in Austin, Texas, where he helped secure one of the country's largest voter-approved transit referendums in U.S. history. The initiative,

called Project Connect, resulted in a multi-billion-dollar infusion for CapMetro's capital program.

At the event, Mr. Clarke spoke about his priorities and vision for Metro and even answered a few questions from the crowd! I'm sure everyone would agree -- the evening offered the ideal combination of social interaction and professional connection.

WTS-DC thanks WMATA GM/CEO Randy Clarke for attending the event and speaking to the WTS-DC members and friends in attendance. WTS-DC also thanks corporate sponsors VHB and Thompson Coburn LLP for sponsoring the event!

Focusing on Transportation Policy and Sustainability: Joint Event with WDCSITE

On September 27, 2022, the WTS-DC Chapter hosted a joint panel event with WDCSITE at the ITE Headquarters in DC. The event included discussion on topics on transportation policy and sustainability in DC and abroad with panelists Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) Andrew Wishnia, Rachel Aland, Freight Program Manager with the Coalition for Reimagined Mobility, and Neelima Ghanta, Capital Region Planning Leader and Senior Project Manager at HNTB. Dr. Alice Grossman, Associate Research Scientist in the Center for Advancing Research in Transportation Emissions, Energy and Health at Texas A&M Transportation Institute, moderated the event.

Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) Andrew Wishnia spoke about the importance of electing more women to Congress and supporting individuals focused on climate policy initiatives. He stated that this is an exciting time for policy and climate change with the current funding status in the United States. Rachel Aland, Freight Program Manager with the Coalition for Reimagined Mobility, spoke about intermodal exchange to better plan shipping programs. She also spoke about how the United States is moving forward by creating a supply chain

task force and acting on supply chain management issues. Neelima Ghanta, Capital Region Planning Leader and Senior Project Manager at HNTB, presented on her time spent in New Zealand and spoke about how her experience helped change her view on the importance of transportation sustainability. She said that New Zealand has put policies in place for new transportation infrastructure to give a reduction in greenhouse gases.

WTS-DC thanks WDCSITE for collaborating with our chapter on this informative program!



Photo 23. Sustainability event panelists (from left to right) Neelima Ghanta, Rachel Aland, Andrew Wishnia and Alice Grossman

Rooftop Reconnection: WTS-DC's Membership Social Hour

After a two-year hiatus, the WTS-DC Membership Committee was happy to host the second WTS-DC Membership Social Hour on Tuesday, October 11. New and seasoned WTS-DC members gathered on the rooftop of the Millennium Building to connect (and reconnect) with one another. They enjoyed food and drinks provided by the chapter. Perfect weather and spectacular views of the city helped make this social hour one to remember.



Photo 24. Membership committee members Becca Sulla, Adrienne Ameel and Rachel Hensler

Thank you to corporate sponsor Thompson Coburn LLP for providing the venue. The Membership Committee hopes to make this an annual event!

Combining Forces with the VDOT NOVA District for "VDOT Tech Fluency - Adapt, Innovate, Evolve"

On October 18, the WTS-DC chapter hosted its eighth annual event with the NOVA District of Virginia Department of Transportation. More than 50 people attended the event in person, and 15 people attended virtually. Catherine McGhee, VDOT Chief Deputy Commissioner, was the keynote speaker for the event. Joining Ms. McGhee were panelists Denise Cantwell, P.E. (VDOT NOVA District - District Construction Engineer), Houda Ali, P.M.P. (VDOT NOVA District - Assistant Director, Transportation and Land Use for Fairfax & Arlington Counties), Angel Tao, P.E. (VDOT's NOVA District - Prince William Preliminary Engineering Manager), and Candice Gibson, P.E. (Engineer for VDOT's Office of Strategic Innovation).



Photo 25. Left to right: Angel Tao, Candice Gibson, John Lynch, Denise Cantwell, Houda Ali, Jennifer Estrella, Kia Davis, Monica Bathia, Cerasela Cristei, Khatereh Vaghefi, Karen Hardy, Hala Abdo, Madonna Gadelseed

The keynote speaker, Cathy McGhee, carries a wealth of industry knowledge that will continue to place VDOT as a leader in transportation innovation and technology. She has more than 30 years of experience in traffic engineering and system operations, intelligent transportation systems, and data and performance measurement. Cathy received her bachelor's degree from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, and her master's degree from the University of Virginia, both in civil engineering. She has held a professional engineer's license in Virginia since 2004. After two years of work as an engineer, Cathy decided to make a change. After finishing graduate school, she received an assistantship at Virginia Transportation Research Council and there, she found her home.

Currently, Cathy is working on developing a new structure for VDOT, combining the divisions of traffic engineering and traffic operations into one division: traffic operations. This division will help the Department prepare for what the future will bring with respect to connected and automated vehicles. The Integrated Corridor Management Technology will introduce better ways to manage the current and future system demands.

At the event, Cathy spoke about the electric grid and the goal of installing electric vehicle charging stations at every 50 miles on the alternative fuel corridors (the interstates). Each charging station will have four ports at 150 KW each – high speed charging stations. When this goal will be accomplished the program will expand beyond the interstates, into communities. Cathy believes that innovation is going to continue to be really important in delivering a transportation system that meets the needs of everyone over the next few decades.

In addition to VDOT's Deputy Chief Commissioner and the panelists, we also had in the audience VDOT Northern VA District's District Engineer, John Lynch, his Deputy District Engineer, Bill Cuttler, as well as his Deputy District Administrator, Monica Bhatia. We were happy they attended and are thankful for always supporting WTS-DC events.

The panelists addressed many interesting topics, including:

What are some of VDOT's most interesting technological accomplishments that happened during the past few years?

- Flashing yellow arrows at high-risk intersections – low cost and high impact by reducing the number of crashes at intersections.
- Virtual meetings.
- Incorporating technology into everyday activities including construction inspections.
- Accepting electronic submissions and signatures.
- Using crowdsourcing to better manage snow removal operations.
- Progressive Design-Build – the first implementation in NOVA – the I-95 and Route 123 interchange improvements project.

What is the latest news from the Office of Strategic Innovation? What is your favorite transportation research topic/pilot project?

- There is collaboration spanning the entire NOVA District when it comes to innovation in different program areas, the connected vehicles ecosystem at the forefront. VDOT is building strong relationships with the municipalities and the large business owners to gain support in promoting and implementing the program.
- VDOT has championed innovation through the VDOT Voices Series. VDOT created innovation labs where ideas were shared, tested, and implemented. Success stories are then shared district-wide and wider.
- The innovation toolshed and idea driver are collections of tools and techniques for innovative processes and ideas.
- The Regional Multimodal Mobility Program (RM3P) program – leverages the use of real time data to measure the success of agency's goals for safety, reliability, and mobility in the NOVA area.

- Artificial Intelligence based Decision Support System (AI DSS) will be a tool for the transportation operators to ensure a coordinated multi modal and multi-agency response related to weather events and or congestion events. This program will be able to predict the disruptions to the transportation network and what the impacts of those disruptions are expected to be.
- VDOT has a commuter parking information system that analyzes historic and real time data to provide reliable predictive parking availability and to incentivize the public to select their travel modes based on real-time reliable information. Dynamic management of the demand is aptly labeled the fourth renewable energy.

Do you have a suggestion for a good book in leadership? What are some of the key lessons you learned from that book?

- Fail More: Embrace, Learn, and Adapt to Failure as a Way to Success by Bill Wooditch
- How Women Rise: Break the 12 Habits Holding You Back from Your Next Raise, Promotion or Job by Sally Helgesen and Marshall Goldsmith
- Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ by Daniel Goleman
- Crucial Conversations Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High, by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, and Ron McMillan

In a few sentences, what advice would you have for women who want to move into leadership positions in transportation and/or advance their careers?

- Don't fire your career goals early on and fall in love with your job. Set the road map with whatever you need to get there and never forget to advocate for yourself.
- Keep learning; never stop.
- One does not need to be great at math and be great all the time to be a successful professional.
- Have a mindset that you belong; transportation is for you; take up space in the room and help others take up space in the room.

WTS-DC thanks the NOVA District for its continued collaboration on this annual event and our keynote speaker, Cathy McGhee, and all our panelists!

Moving the Needle on Electric Vehicles

Congress' passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) reflects a fundamental shift in how the US approaches and funds its transportation systems. The \$1.2 trillion law includes one of the largest-ever investments in electric vehicles in US history. And eligible entities are charged with doing so in ways that are not only innovative and impactful, but collaborative and inclusive.



Photo 26. Moving the Needle on Electric Vehicles Event Panelists

In real time, eligible entities from the public and private sectors are working on implementation, which means navigating a changing political and practical landscape and working on initiatives that in many ways feel futuristic based on EV adoption. The new landscape is ripe with questions about what this refocus means in theory and practice, specifically for those working to implement programs and related projects. On November 3, 2022, WTS-DC and YPT-DC co-sponsored a virtual panel featuring industry leaders who are driving EV adoption around the country.

WTS-DC President Katie Kraft opened the panel, and legislative committee member Nadia Anderson, PhD, laid the foundation for the conversation based on professional experience in the fields of energy and transportation. Leslie Aguayo, Climate Equity Program Manager at The Greenlining Institute, started the conversation reminding attendees of the Biden-Harris Administration's focus on equity and the importance of substantively engaging members of the community. Cherish Smith, Director for Energy and Sustainability and Infrastructure at Guidehouse, shared insights into the world of public-private partnerships and the role of utilities in transportation electrification. Jannine Miller, Director of Planning at the Georgia Department of Transportation, rounded out the conversation by sharing how her home state is working to support EV adoption and the rollout of related infrastructure.

The panel members also touched on top-of-mind issues, including the supply vs. demand dichotomy for EV charging infrastructure and the role of various stakeholders, including advocates and the utilities. Our discussion concluded with remarks from each panelist regarding ways to engage new communities and how to measure the impact of both new and existing programs focused on electrification. While each panelist came to the conversation with their respective points of view, all agreed that we're past the "chicken and egg" question and need to work in new and different ways to meet shared goals of an inclusive and sustainable transportation landscape.

WTS-DC thanks all our panelists for participating in the virtual discussion!

Fall Bike Tour: A Professional Development Event with WTS-DC, COMTO-DC, and WDCSITE

In harmony with many jurisdictions in the DMV area, WTS-DC held its second bike tour of the year on Saturday, November 5, in spectacular weather conditions. This time, the event was a joint organizational effort with COMTO-DC and WDCSITE.

The tour was oriented towards professional development, and it started with an hour-long panel discussion featuring Christine Sherman Baker (Principal Planner and Vision Zero Program Manager at Arlington County), Christine Mayeur (Vision Zero Specialist at DDOT), and Shari Schaftlein (Director, Office of Human Environment at FHWA).



Photo 27. Participants in the Fall Bike Tour

The 12-mile ride served as an engineering, planning and construction educational tour and also a test ride for the inexperienced bikers in the group. We are so excited that these bike events inspire and empower new users of the great bike and pedestrian facilities being planned,

designed, and built in our area.

The tour meandered around several notable planned projects, including the Army Navy Drive Complete Street and 23rd Street South Realignment projects (Arlington County), the Long Bridge Project (VPRA), and the Boundary Channel Drive Interchange Improvements project (VDOT & Arlington County). Jeff Parker (WSP), the tour leader, talked about the pedestrian and bicycle facilities planned for each project. The tour also visited some recently completed projects, including the South Clark Street two-way cycle track and the short path connecting the Richmond Highway Trail to the Four Mile Run Trail.

Jeff challenged the group to think about bicycle stress levels for the different types of facilities encountered and the ADA considerations, focusing on the specifics of implementing them well and their importance (like having detectable surfaces to identify the difference between sidewalks and bike lanes at the same elevation). Several participants worked on the planning and designs for the projects we visited, and they shared their knowledge with the group. Educative and informative discussions during the ride made the event enjoyable for everyone – receiving in situ and firsthand information about projects that we may get to implement in the near future.

Several other projects were mentioned during the ride. Unfortunately, we did not have time to visit all the great projects happening in the area, such as the second entrance to the Crystal City Metro station on Crystal Drive, the 18th Street Realignment preliminary proposal (improved sidewalks/bike facilities), and the Arlington National Cemetery Southern Expansion & Roadway Realignment (includes a new multi-use trail adjacent to the cemetery, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and a new tunnel between the cemetery and its new maintenance compound).

WTS-DC thanks WDCSITE and COMTO-DC for collaborating with our chapter on this event. WTS-DC also thanks Jeff Parker (WSP) and our panel speakers for adding information and perspective to the scenery of our bike ride!

Annual Holiday Party

The annual WTS-DC Holiday Party was held at the Ballroom at Hotel Monaco (Washington, D.C.) on Tuesday, December 6, 2022. With over 275 tickets sold (our highest number to date), the Chapter welcomed many members, friends, and guests from throughout the transportation industry.

This year's Holiday Party had as honorary guest speaker, Jennifer Mitchell, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, who was also the president of WTS-DC in 2006 and 2007 (Photo 25). The award announcers were Kate Mattice, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC, Photo 26) and Randy Clarke, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).



Photo 28. Federal Railroad Administration Deputy Administrator Jennifer Mitchell



Photo 29. NVTC Executive Director Kate Mattice announced the scholarship award winners

Additional special guests in attendance included US DOT Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg, FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez, FRA Administrator Amit Bose, US DOT Director of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Implementation Katie Thomson, WTS-I Board Chair Jannet Walker-Ford, WTS-I Board Vice Chair Bridgette Beato, and WTS-I President/CEO Sara Stickler.

The 2022 chapter Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award, Employer of the Year Award, Innovative Transportation

Solutions Award, Honorable Ray LaHood Award, Member of the Year Award, and Woman of the Year Award were recognized and honored at the event. These awards were presented to the following recipients during the 2022 Annual Holiday Party:

- Rosa Parks Diversity Award: Mugdha Tipnis, Vice President, WSP

- Employer of Year: Dewberry
- Innovative Transportation Solutions: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority WMATA Equity Toolkit
- Honorable Ray LaHood: Stephen Gardner, Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak
- Member of the Year: Cerasela Cristei, Director of Design, EXP
- Woman of the Year: Monica Backmon, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority



Photo 30. WMATA General Manager Randy Clarke presented the chapter Recognition Awards

These individuals and organizations made extraordinary contributions to the transportation industry as leaders, role models, mentors, and benefactors and they generously support WTS in a variety of ways. Our WTS-DC Recognition Award recipients are shown in the Recognitions Awards section below.

In addition to honoring our award winners, we also recognized seven deserving students as recipients of WTS-DC Scholarship Funds. These scholarships are funded through the annual WTS-DC Scholarship Donation Tree, fundraising programs over the course of the year, and direct contributions from members and industry partners (North American Transit Alliance, Dewberry, HDR, Kimley-Horn and Associates, RATP Dev and WSP USA). These scholarships are a way to support our industry's future. (See the Scholarship Committee report for more details on our scholarship awardees).

The Scholarship and Fundraising committee and its volunteers worked with great enthusiasm to raise donations throughout the evening at the annual appearance of the Scholarship Tree. A total of \$2,314.27 was raised for the Chapter's Scholarship Fund. WTS-DC would like to thank the organizations and individuals for their contributions. This support allows us to continue providing scholarships to deserving female students in transportation related disciplines at area universities and colleges.

Recognition Awards

WTS-DC honored the following individuals, entities, and transportation projects this year. The Recognition Award recipients received their awards at the WTS-DC Holiday Party on December 6, 2022.

Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award

The Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award honors an individual or organization that has made significant contributions in promoting diversity and cultural awareness within their organization, the transportation industry, or in a project or activity that supports the goals and mission of WTS. The recipient is selected based on the following criteria: exhibiting extraordinary efforts or initiatives in facilitating professional opportunities for women and minorities; and contributing significantly to promoting diversity, inclusion and multi-cultural awareness within his/her/the organization, the transportation industry, or in a project or activity that supports the goals and mission of WTS.

In 2022, WTS-DC honored **Mugda Tipnis**, Vice President, WSP, with the Chapter's Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award. The chapter honored Mugda for championing continuing education, professional development, women in leadership, and diversity and inclusion programs in the industry. Mugdha has strong industry knowledge through her active involvement with several professional associations including: WTS, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), APTA, and COMTO, among others.



Photo 31. Rosa Parks Diversity Award Winner Mugdha Tipnis (center right), WTS-DC President Katie Kraft (left) and WTS-DC Recognitions Committee Chair Jamie Rosen (right)

Employer of the Year Award

The Employer of the Year Award honors an organization (company, non-profit, association or government agency) for recruiting, retaining and advancing women. The recipient is selected based on the following criteria: an organization that includes women in executive and senior positions and leading major initiatives; an organization that has career development plans and succession programs in place for women to advance within the organization; an organization that provides continuing development for its female employees through professional education, professional organizations, and professional development opportunities; an organization that encourages women students to enter the transportation field by providing internship opportunities; and an organization that supports WTS through memberships, sponsorships, and employee involvement at the local and international levels.



Photo 32. Employer of the Year Award Winner Dewberry, WTS-DC President Katie Kraft (left) and WTS-DC Recognitions Committee Chair Jamie Rosen (right)

WTS-DC honored **Dewberry** as the recipient of the Chapter's Employer of the Year Award. Dewberry has excelled in its efforts as an employer to include women in its leadership development, client management, and project management training programs. Dave Mahoney, Executive Vice President, Operations Unit Manager for the Transportation Market Segment, and Shelley Wynne, Transportation Project Manager and WTS-DC Treasurer accepted the award.

In 2022, Dewberry employees formed the Empowering Women Employee Resource Group (ERG) with the vision to safeguard that women's voices and contributions are welcomed, respected, elevated, and celebrated. This ERG helps

foster an inclusive community that empowers women and allies to connect, contribute, and grow professionally while raising awareness of challenges in the workplace.

Established in 1956, Dewberry is headquartered in Fairfax, Virginia, with more than 50 locations and 2,000+ professionals (32% women) nationwide.

Innovation Transportation Solution Award

The Innovative Transportation Solution Award salutes an innovative transportation project led by a woman. (Only completed projects are considered for the award.) The recipient is selected based on the following criteria: the purpose of the transportation initiative, solution, project, or policy and the number of women involved from initiation to completion; the key elements of the project and how the female project manager successfully implemented those elements; a description of how female project manager successfully met and overcame challenges; and how the project achieved its purpose.

WTS-DC honored **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority** and the WMATA Equity Toolkit, as the Chapter's 2022 recipient of the Innovative Transportation Solution Award. The Equity Toolkit is a virtual library of guidance and datasets that help Metro factor transit equity into projects, planning, reporting, and decision-making.

The Toolkit offers definitions and standards for WMATA employees to follow when applying equity to their projects, as well as data tools for equity-lens analyses and a virtual community for users to get support. The project manager, Laura Moeini, accepted the award.



Photo 33. Innovative Transportation Solution Award Winner WMATA Equity Toolkit (Melissa Kim and Laura Moeini, center), WTS-DC President Katie Kraft (left) and WTS-DC Recognitions Committee Chair Jamie Rosen (right)

Honorable Ray LaHood Award

WTS-DC honored **Stephen Gardner**, Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak, as WTS-DC's 2022 Honorable Ray LaHood Awardee. Stephen is guiding Amtrak as the company recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and enters a transformational era of

The Honorable Ray LaHood Award honors a man who is a leader in transportation and has contributed, directly and by example, to the advancement of women and minorities in the transportation field. The recipient is selected based on the following criteria: a man who is a leader in transportation and has made an outstanding contribution to the transportation industry; a man who has directly contributed toward the advancement of women and minorities through programs or opportunities in the transportation field; a man who has led by example, seeking out opportunities to advance and advocate for women in his own organization, and who has actively ensured that women are able to compete for key positions of authority within that organization; and a man who through his career achievements and support of women in the industry has advanced the reputation and credibility of women in transportation.



Photo 34. Honorable Ray LaHood Award Winner Stephen Gardner (center), WTS-DC President Katie Kraft (left) and WTS-DC Recognitions Committee Chair Jamie Rosen (right)

modernization, service expansion, and growth, with a strong focus on diversity, equity and more women in senior leadership roles.

Stephen had served as President of Amtrak since December 2020. He previously served as Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operating and Commercial Officer along with several prior executive positions within the company, beginning in 2009.

Member of the Year Award

The Member of the Year Award honors a WTS -DC member who has made extraordinary contributions to the success of WTS. The recipient is selected based on the following criteria: a member who has shown an extraordinary commitment to the goals and growth to WTS-DC by working effectively in support of WTS goals; a member who has promoted the reputation of WTS within the transportation industry; a member who has worked effectively to strengthen communication between local and international WTS levels or between chapters; and a member who has done an outstanding job of revitalizing or expanding a chapter or any of its functions.



Photo 35. Member of the Year Award Winner Cerasela Cristei (center), WTS-DC President Katie Kraft (left) and WTS-DC Recognitions Committee Chair Jamie Rosen (right)

The chapter celebrated **Cerasela Cristei**, Director of Design, EXP, as WTS-DC's 2022 Member of the Year. Cerasela exemplifies dedication to the chapter and WTS. She has served as the Chair of the Program Development Committee for many years. Mentoring and coaching are her passion, and Cerasela is dedicating a large portion of her spare time to helping young professionals define their career paths.

Cerasela Cristei is the Director of Design at EXP. She is the past president of the American Society of Highway Engineers Potomac Section. She is also the past Chair and current Chair of the Curriculum and Programs Committee of the George Mason University Civil Engineering Institute – Board of Advisors.

Woman of the Year Award

The Woman of the Year Award honors a woman who is an outstanding role model and has contributed to the advancement of women and minorities in transportation. The award is intended to reach beyond WTS-DC membership. The recipient is selected based on the following criteria: a woman who is a leader in transportation and has made an outstanding contribution to the transportation industry; a woman who has directly contributed toward the advancement of women and minorities through programs or opportunities in the transportation field; a woman who through her career achievements and support of women in the industry has advanced the reputation and credibility of women in transportation.

WTS-DC honored **Monica Backmon**, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, as the Chapter's 2022 Woman of the Year. Bringing more than 20 years of public and private sector transportation experience, Monica has led NVTa since 2014.

She oversees the region's long-range planning, prioritization, and funding of regionally significant projects bringing multimodal transportation solutions to Northern Virginia. As of July 2022, NVTa is advancing 122 regional multimodal transportation projects, totaling nearly \$3.12 billion, for congestion reduction throughout the region.



Photo 36. Woman of the Year Award Winner Monica Backmon (center), WTS-DC President Katie Kraft (left) and WTS-DC Recognitions Committee Chair Jamie Rosen (right)

Scholarship Awards

Undergraduate Scholarships

Tiquisha Harris received a \$2,500 WTS-DC scholarship. Tiquisha is pursuing a bachelor's degree in human resources management at the University of Maryland Global Campus, where she has been on the dean's list since 2019. Tiquisha has worked for WMATA for 13 years, helping one of the largest transit organizations in the nation recruit and retain talent. Tiquisha also serves on the board of directors for the Young Professional Development Corporation.



Photo 37. Tiquisha Harris

Nasima Sadr received a \$2,500 scholarship sponsored by the North American Transit Alliance. She is pursuing a bachelor's in civil engineering from George Mason University. Nasima has interned with transportation engineering firms and is an active member of multiple professional organizations. Nasima and her team secured first place in the 2021 Virginia Water Environment Association (VWEA) Student Design Competition, working on a stream restoration project.



Photo 38. Nasima Sadr

Isabella Bernard received a \$2,000 scholarship sponsored by Kimley Horn. Isabella is pursuing a bachelor's in architecture and civil engineering from the Catholic University of America. Isabella is a member of multiple professional organizations, and has interned with several construction companies. She is the recipient of various awards and scholarships, including the Gilbane Construction Company Engineering and Design Scholarship Award and Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, Jr. Military Engineering Award.



Photo 39. Isabella Bernard

Graduate Scholarships



Photo 40. Valentina Farias

Valentina Farias received a \$2,000 scholarship sponsored by HDR. She is pursuing a PhD in transportation engineering at George Mason University. Some of the projects Valentina worked on include beta-testing of a phone application to replace ineffective phone call surveys, research on retrofitting EV charging supply in condominium buildings, and research to enable access to information sharing and lessons learned on technologies and policies.



Photo 41. Zihan Ma

Zihan Ma received a \$2,000 scholarship sponsored by Dewberry. She is pursuing a PhD in civil engineering from the University of Maryland. Her passion is transportation safety. Zihan developed a series of algorithms and procedures to identify and quantify pedestrian crossing behavior with high precision and accuracy. In 2016, Zihan coauthored a study on positioning technology of mileage piles based on multi-sector information fusion, which was published in the Journal of Highway and Transportation Research and Development



Photo 42. Bhagyashree Panda

Bhagyashree Panda received a \$2,000 scholarship sponsored by WSP. She is pursuing a master's in civil engineering from the George Washington University and works as a teaching assistant at GW's School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Her most recent research is on an equity framework in the EV sector, which is also a topic of her future thesis research. Bhagyashree is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and the Transportation Research Board.



Aliya Mejias received a \$2,000 scholarship sponsored by RATP Dev. She is pursuing a master's in landscape architecture at the University of Maryland, College Park.



Aliya is interested in the intersection of landscape architecture and transportation. Aliya is a board member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and Terps for Bike Lanes. In 2021, she volunteered



Photo 43. Aliya Mejias

as a committee member of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4C Vision Zero Committee in the District of Columbia.



Photo 44. From left to right: Bhagyashree Panda, Aliya Mejias, Diana Levy, Regis Stinson, Alanna McKeeman, Nasima Sadr, Isabella Bernard, and Valentina Farias

Other Chapter Activities

WTS International Annual Conference

In support of chapter members' continued professional development, each year WTS-DC provides an opportunity for board members to apply for funding to attend the WTS Annual Conference. The Chapter sent four chapter members to the 2022 WTS-I Annual Conference in Seattle in person: Barbara Moreno, Audra Bandy, Brittney Gick, and Shelley Wynne.

WTS International Chapter Leadership Training

In November 2022, WTS-I held its annual leadership training in Kansas City, Missouri. Chapter members Cerasela Cristei, Neelima Ghanta and Ellie McCurdy attended the event, which featured updates from WTS-I and workshops on the various aspects of being a chapter leader. There were also opportunities to socialize with and learn from members from other chapters.

WTS Washington, D.C. Chapter

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