



2024 VOLUME 1

March 29, 2024

HOT Chapter Newsletter



> Heart of Texas

Advancing women
Advancing transportation

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings!

Another year has passed and the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter continues to move forward in fulfilling our mission to advance women and advance transportation. Everything that we accomplish together is possible because of the support of our members, active participants, corporate and agency partners, speakers, and volunteers. Thank you all!

In 2024, we have a full calendar of opportunities for us to learn from and with one another in the Heart of Texas transportation community. We kicked off the year with our Annual Business Meeting in January, when we provided a WTS 101 overview at the international and chapter levels and reviewed chapter activities in 2023. We also welcomed five new members to the HOT Chapter Board of Directors: Pooja Patel (Membership), Marwa Ayad (Mentorship), Antionette Roberts (Gala), Karla Madriles-Ortiz (Recognitions), and Shadi Hakimi (Professional Development Co-Chair). In addition, Andrea Bryant moved from Recognitions Chair to Programs Chair. We celebrate their willingness to step up to serve the chapter, and that of our continuing board members. You can find all board member contact information in this newsletter and on the chapter website: www.wtsinternational.org/chapters/heart-texas.

The February program luncheon featured a panel of local officials to discuss the impact of the SH 130 corridor on area growth, development, and transportation. In March, we heard from the City of Austin, CAMPO, and Movability on transportation demand management initiatives to provide regional transportation solutions. The chapter kicked off its 2024 TransportationYOU activities by participating in Girl Day at UT-Austin; chapter volunteers provided opportunities for the students to run tests on a friction track and race a physics balloon car. The scholarship committee is busy finalizing the 2024 Friends of WTS Scholarship screening process, with the chapter awarding these scholarships at the gala in April. And the Mentoring Program got underway in March with a virtual speed matching exercise. The group of thirteen mentor/mentee pairs will meet at the kickoff meeting on April 5th and hold monthly virtual or in-person professional development sessions.

We have more great activities planned in the coming months. Get ready for our first regular membership mixer on April 3rd, featuring what is



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Senior Engineer
Atkins

GALA CHAIR

Antionette Roberts

Project and Office Administrator
DKS Associates

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Pooja Patel, PE, LGPP

Civil Engineer
Kimley-Horn

MENTORING CHAIR

Marwa Ayad

Senior Project Manager
VRX Global

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO-CHAIRS

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Project Director
HNTB

Shadi Hakimi, P.E.

Transportation Engineer
STV

PROGRAMS CHAIR

Andrea Bryant, PE

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HNTB Corp.

TRANSPORTATION YOU CO-CHAIRS

Ashley Martinez, PE, LGPP

Kimley-Horn
Civil Engineer

Kelly Rees, PE

Kimley-Horn
Transportation Engineer



sure to be a fun night of trivia competition. Our student chapter liaisons will be meeting with the UT-Austin WTS Student Chapter on April 10th to discuss opportunities for the students to get engaged with the WTS HOT Chapter. The April 17th program luncheon will feature Caroline Mays to update us on the TxDOT Long-Range Transportation Planning Process. And do not forget our 20th Anniversary Scholarship and Awards Gala on April 26th. You still have time to register at [WTS HOT Gala Registration](#). The registration deadline is April 12th. We look forward to gathering with you to recognize our chapter award winners, celebrate our scholarship recipients, raise funds for the WTS Heart of Texas Foundation and the WTS Foundation, and enjoy one another's company.

As we look further ahead in the schedule, the May 15th program luncheon panel will discuss the future of transportation workforce development. The June 19th program luncheon will bring us up to speed on technology developments in the trucking industry. Finally, the Professional Development Committee is working to schedule the summer series of Lattes & Leadership conversations with transportation leaders. Stay tuned for these event registration opportunities and other information in your inbox in the coming weeks.

On behalf of the WTS HOT Chapter members and those who attend our events, I express my gratitude to the 48 Corporate Partners, 4 Agency Partners, and 4 Agencies Affiliates that have pledged their support of the chapter for 2024. We recognize them by their logos at the end of this newsletter. Thank you!

If you are not currently engaged with the various committees that put all these great activities together for you, please consider volunteering to serve. Contact me or any WTS HOT Chapter board member for more information on how to get involved.

Best wishes for a safe Spring season,

Tonia Norman
President



Advancing women
Advancing transportation
> Heart of Texas



Megan Ruiz, Project Manager, Jacobs

Jacobs



Jacobs highlights Megan Ruiz for her participation in WTS, supporting women, leadership within Jacobs, and efforts within the transportation field. Megan Ruiz is a project manager and the Central Texas Environmental Group Lead for Jacobs. She brings over 20 years of experience on transportation projects nationwide, with specializations in Cultural Resource Management, Community & Public Engagement and Environmental Planning.

Jacobs is a strong supporter of WTS with Platinum Level Corporate Sponsorship at the local level and Strategic Corporate Partnership at the International level. The Jacobs Austin office has a long history of active participation in WTS-HOT chapter.

Jacobs commitment to Inclusion and Diversity is exemplified by the Jacobs Women's Network (JWN). The JWN is an employee network providing a sustainable and progressive platform for women to develop talent, broaden access to opportunities, drive career growth, and reach untapped potential. JWN-Austin events include lunch and learn presentations by local leaders within Jacobs and a book club which recently read Atomic Habits by James Clear.

Mallory Scates, Senior Project Manager, Freese & Nichols



Mallory Scates joined Freese and Nichols in January 2024 with over 10 years of experience in the transportation planning industry. Serving as a Senior Project Manager, Mallory has successfully practiced parking and traffic engineering and planning on a wide variety of parking and transportation planning and traffic operations projects



for both public and private sector clients. Mallory's expertise focuses on her practice of parking and transportation master planning for municipalities, higher education systems/universities, health care systems, and corporations. She also provides professional engineering consulting services to clients on projects including shared parking studies, pedestrian and vehicle circulation, traffic management, traffic impact analyses (TIAs), and traffic signal operations. In her free time, Mallory is a mom to 3 daughters and 2 dogs, spending much of her time playing dress up and going on walks. Mallory's family is active in their church and her daughters' schools. From Atlanta, GA, Mallory is an avid Atlanta Braves fan and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets alumna.

JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING

2024 Annual WTS HOT Chapter Business Meeting

The January luncheon meeting each year provides an opportunity for members and others interested in the chapter's activities to hear from the chapter leadership on the status of the chapter. On January 17, 2024, Chapter President Tonia Norman and Vice President Laura Friello gave an update on the accomplishments of the chapter in 2023 and provided a financial report for the year. The chapter also celebrated the members of the board who completed their service to the

[continued](#)

2023 Chapter Initiatives

- **Strategic Focus Areas for 2023**
 - Strengthen succession planning for WTS-HOT Board
 - Engage past leadership
 - Coordinate with Texas chapters
 - Enhance networking opportunities for members
 - Identify community needs for access, equity, and opportunity within WTS
 - Provide greater access to WTS
 - Highlight the Transportation YOU program
 - Establish performance metrics for WTS and our programs
 - Identify HOT data on women in transportation
- **Continue to Increase Scholarship Outreach**
 - Support our future leaders in transportation
 - Fund more students
- **Refresh the Mentoring Program**



chapter in 2023. The chapter thanks Lisa Loftus-Otway (Gala), Kat Streff (Membership), Lynn Isaak (Mentoring); and Laurie Simmons (Programs) for all their hard work, leadership, and dedication to the mission of WTS as committee chairs in 2023.

The chapter leadership also took the opportunity to provide a WTS 101 overview to those who may be new to the organization – and for those of us who’ve been around for a while and may need a reminder. There have been a lot of changes lately in the WTS organization – at both the international, chapter, and regional levels. Click [here](#) to review the presentation slides from the Annual Business Meeting.

2024 Chapter Initiatives

- **Strategic Focus Areas for 2024**
 - Committee contacts and outreach
 - Strengthen succession planning for WTS-HOT Board
 - Engage past leadership
 - Continue to coordinate with Texas chapters
 - Diversification of panels, speakers, and outreach to other groups
 - Membership materials and Social Media
- **Continue to Increase Scholarship Outreach**
 - Support our future leaders in transportation
 - Fund more students
- **Revitalization of TransportationYOU Program**
 - University of Texas Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day
 - Ann Richards School Outreach and Mentoring
 - GirlStart presentations



WTS 101: Chapter Level

Heart of Texas Chapter

Organizational Structure:

- Board of Directors
 - Executive Committee (elected bi-annually)
 - Committee Chairs (appointed to one- or two-year terms)
- Committees (made up of volunteers like you)

Events:

- Program Luncheons
- Awards & Scholarship Gala
- Lattes & Leadership
- Professional Development Seminar
- Mentorship Program
- Membership Mixers

WTS Heart of Texas Foundation

Board of Directors

- HOT Chapter Leadership
- Directors at Large

Mission and Activities:

- Fundraising for the scholarship program and TransportationYOU activities
- Providing local scholarships for women in transportation fields of study
 - Friends of WTS Chapter Scholarships
- Sponsoring chapter TransportationYOU activities



FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

SH-130 Corridor Growth Panel

The WTS Heart of Texas Chapter was honored to host the SH 130 Corridor Growth Panel at our February luncheon. The panel, comprised of leaders from our Central Texas communities, discussed how they are working to stay ahead of the explosive growth along SH 130. Since opening to the public nearly 20 years ago, the construction of SH 130 has fueled record-breaking residential and industrial development for our eastern communities, most recently with the \$17 billion, 1200-acre Samsung semiconductor chip manufacturing campus in Taylor.

Panelists included Sereniah Breland, City Manager for the City of Pflugerville; Russ Boles, Commissioner, Precinct 4, Williamson County; Brandt Rydell, Mayor of the City of Taylor; and James Lovett, Vice President, Public Affairs for the SH 130 Concession Company.

Due to the tax base, jobs and economic development that has resulted from SH 130, panelists said that there is nothing better for the communities along the facility than investment in the roadway.

Mayor Rydell, who shared that he is a fifth-generation Texan, recalled that the City of Taylor had some fear surrounding the Samsung factory investment when it was first announced, sharing the details on how Samsung identified Taylor as an option for its new location. He reflected on his conversations in the early days of the talks with Samsung and his efforts to determine what good government would look like in the decision-making process, and what would be best for the community.

continued



Mayor Rydell, along with Commissioner Boles, discussed the investments in transportation infrastructure that have been made to support the plant's operation. They shared that Samsung considered the commitment to these investments in determining a site location, so schedules on roadway construction that would connect the plant to SH 130 were accelerated. Mr. Boles concluded that "nothing bad has come from a road."



Mr. Lovett described the southern section of SH 130 as the "next frontier," commenting that while the first few years of the initial SH 130 investment were quiet, the facility has experienced significant growth in use in recent years. He shared that the SH130 Concession Company has plans to pull off the shelf when widening or additional lanes are needed along the roadway.

City Manager Breland served as the panel's moderator and brought her perspective on growth from the City of Pflugerville to the discussion.



Commissioner Boles said that he is constantly considering the future, asking what the next phase of investment should look like. He noted that there are still some big projects looking in and around the area, and they need both workforce and roadways to solidify desired development. He shared that SH 130 strengthens both of these key elements.

The panelists agreed on the importance of the relationships between their communities in building connections, learning from each other and building on both successes and challenges that the surrounding communities have faced.



Transportation Demand Management Panel



The WTS Heart of Texas Chapter welcomed a panel of speakers for our March luncheon who discussed Transportation Demand Management (TDM), which includes strategies that provide travelers with effective choices to improve travel reliability. Participants talked about TDM efforts, such as increasing carpools and transit usage and changes to traffic routes and work from home patterns. The panelists included Nirav Ved, Data and Operations Manager with CAMPO; Jacob Barrett, TDM Program Manager for the City of Austin Transportation and Public Works Department; and Lonny Stern, Executive Director of Movability.



Ved discussed CAMPO's Regional TDM Plan, to implement TDM strategies around the six-county Central Texas region. Some of the plan's strategies include essential worker outreach and targeting congested corridors, like Parmer Lane.

Barrett talked about the evolution of Get There ATX, the City of Austin's TDM brand, and the launch of their new website with an integrated trip planner. The City of Austin is also submitting for an EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant to hopefully fund

even more TDM strategies, such as increased bus service throughout the region, implementation of mobility hubs and enhanced park and rides and full-scale public campaign to encourage behavior change using incentives. The goal of these programs is to make it easier for the public to choose alternative travel over single occupancy vehicle use during peak travel periods.

Stern talked about the efforts of Movability, the region's transportation management association, and how the group works with local businesses to offer TDM programs to the business's employees. Movability's GoGrant program funds community microgrants to focus on projects that promote active and non-single occupancy vehicle trips. In addition, they are launching a SchoolPool effort to help parents find carpools in their community as a means of reducing queuing during school pickup and drop-off times.

With Austin set to go through more than 10 years of roadway and transit construction, the panelists agreed that TDM will become vitally important to the region and that everyone has a part to play in reducing demand on our transportation system.

UPCOMING EVENTS

REGISTER NOW FOR THE WTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE!



CONNECTING CULTURES • CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

WTS CONFERENCE 2024 | NEW ORLEANS, LA



Speed Racers! Girl Day 2024

WTS Heart of Texas partnered with UT Austin’s national award-winning STEM Girl Day recruitment program to give K-8th graders a chance to explore STEM through grade-appropriate, hands-on activities hosted by scientists, engineers, astronomers, mathematicians and other STEM enthusiasts.

At the WTS HOT booth at Girl Day, about 500 students raced toy cars down a friction ramp, then designed, created, and built cars using craft tubes, bottle caps, and balloons to learn about friction and propulsion. WTS TransportationYOU was among 161 organizations sponsoring activities in the STEM fields.

2024 Statistics:

- 9,844 K-8th Grade Registrants:
 - 86% Girls,
 - 31% Latina/Latino,
 - 8% African American,
 - 29% Asian,
 - 85% from Central Texas,
 - 6% from Greater San Antonio,
 - 9% from Greater Houston,
 - 2% from Dallas / Fort Worth,
 - 2,235 (24%) Girl Scouts
- 161 companies, non-profits, colleges, student organizations, research groups & community partners
- 159 hands-on activities, shows, demonstrations and information areas
- 1,800 high school, college, alumni, corporate and community volunteers
- Since 2002, over 17,500 volunteers have contributed over 78,000 hours to excite over 93,000 elementary and middle school girls about STEM!



Of the students who participated in UT Girl Day 2024:

- 80% said they gained an increased understanding of STEM
- 90% said they experienced a welcoming and inspiring STEM community
- 82% felt an increased sense of belonging on the UT Austin campus

THANK YOU to all of our volunteers who made the event a success!

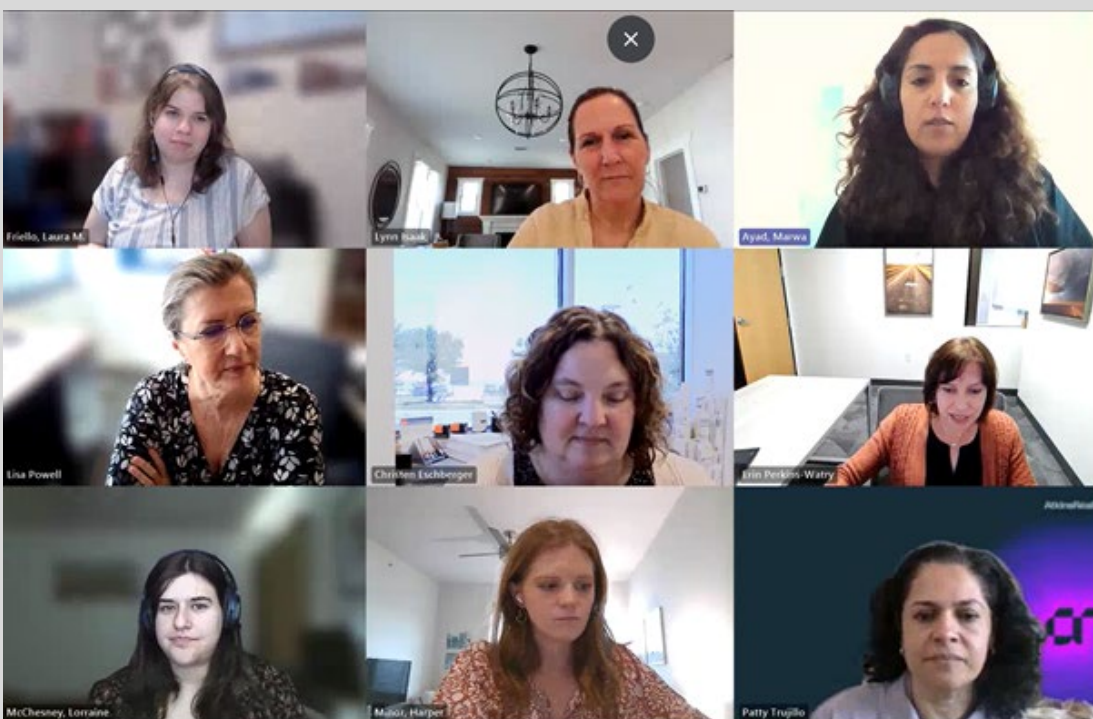
2023 MENTORSHIP WRAP UP

The WTS HOT 2023 mentoring program, which paired transportation young professionals with seasoned industry veterans, was a resounding success, yielding six dynamic mentor-mentee pairs. Throughout the program, these pairs navigated various aspects of the transportation sector, from infrastructure planning to sustainable mobility solutions. The seasoned professionals provided invaluable guidance and insights, drawing from their wealth of experience, while the young professionals brought fresh perspectives and enthusiasm for innovation. Together, they tackled challenges, explored opportunities, and fostered a culture of collaboration and continuous learning. The program's success was evident in the professional growth and development achieved by each mentor-mentee duo, as well as in the broader impact on the transportation industry's talent pipeline. This initiative not only empowered the next generation of transportation leaders but also facilitated knowledge transfer and ensured the industry's continued evolution and excellence.



2024 MENTORSHIP KICK OFF

The 2024 WTS HOT mentoring program in transportation recently launched with a dynamic Speed Matching virtual event held on March 18, 2024, serving as an introductory meeting prior to the official kickoff. This event brought together a diverse group of transportation young professionals and seasoned industry experts, setting the stage for meaningful mentor-mentee connections. With the groundwork laid during this engaging session, participants eagerly anticipate the upcoming kickoff meeting scheduled for Friday, April 5, 2024. The program boasts an impressive lineup of 13 mentor-mentee groups, poised to embark on a journey of collaboration, growth, and knowledge exchange. Forecasted to conclude in October 2024, this initiative holds promise for significant professional development, fostering a vibrant community of learning and mentorship within the transportation sector.



UPCOMING EVENTS



WTS HOT Chapter
Members Only Event

Trivia Night

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 3RD** Austin Beerworks-
Sprinkle Valley
10300 Springdale Road

TRIVIA STARTS AT 7 PM

MORE INFO:
membership@wtshotchapter.org

WTS Advancing women
Advancing transportation
Heart of Texas

casite

Bike & Brunch

AT TOWN LAKE

Family Friendly

**SATURDAY,
MAY 4, 2024**

Arrive: 9:30 a.m.
Start: 10:00 a.m.
Tacos: 11:00 a.m.

Meet at Sand Beach Park Tables
111 Sandra Muraida Way, Austin, TX 78703

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS GALA

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO OUR

20th Gala

**WTS HOT Chapter Annual
Scholarship & Awards**

**A BLACK-TIE FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT WTS
HEART OF TEXAS FOUNDATION**

Friday April 26,
2024
Cocktail Hour
begins at 6:00 PM

Hyatt Regency
Austin 208 Barton
Springs
Austin, TX 78704



2024 Upcoming

events

Apr 4/3 Members Only Trivia Night
 4/17 Monthly Luncheon
 4/26 20th Annual Scholarship & Awards Gala

May 5/4 Bike & Brunch
 5/8-10 WTS International Annual Conference
 5/15 Monthly Luncheon

June 6/19 Monthly Luncheon
 TBD Lattes & Leadership
 6/25-29 WTS Capital Summit

July TBD Lattes & Leadership

Aug TBD Lattes & Leadership
 TBD CP/AP Members Only Event

Sept TBD Professional Development Seminar

Oct 10/7-12 WTS Signature Leadership Training
 10/16 Monthly Luncheon
 TBD Bike-n-Brunch

Nov 11/14-15 WTS International Leadership Conference
 11/20 Monthly Luncheon

Dec TBD Holiday Networking Event

PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



DBE



AGENCY PARTNERS



AGENCY AFFILIATES

