

WTS
Minnesota Chapter
2025 Annual Report

March 2026



> Minnesota

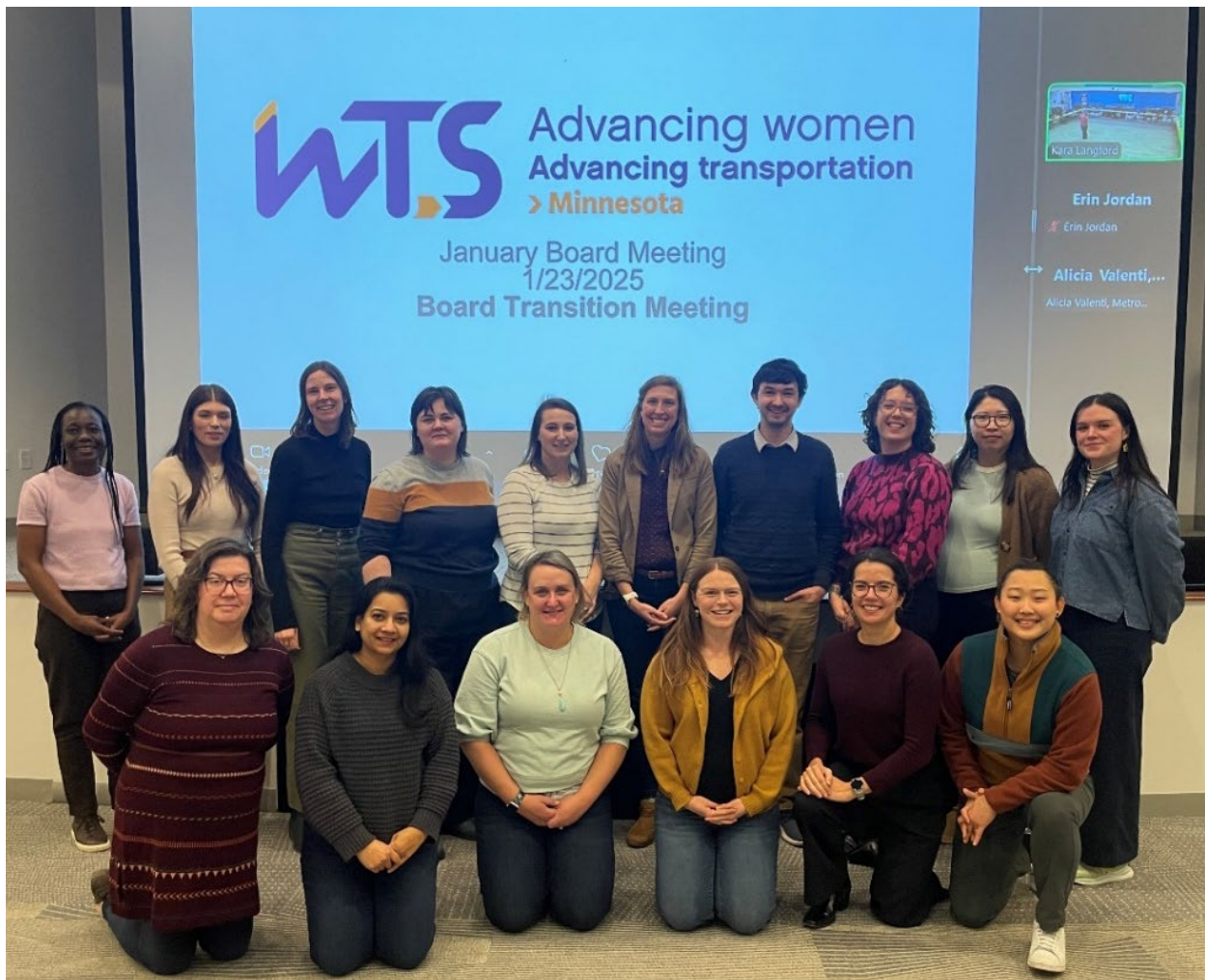
Advancing women
Advancing transportation

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WTS Minnesota Mission

Transforming the transportation industry through the advancement of women.



2025 WTS Minnesota Board Members

Message from the President

The 2025 WTS Minnesota Board of Directors is pleased to provide our members with the chapter's 2025 Annual Report. The report provides a summary of the chapter's activities, growth, and accomplishments over the past year.

The 2025 board included 11 directors, 18 committee chairs, and one Central Region Council member. Their collective energy and leadership allowed us to explore new initiatives while continuing to strengthen our established programs. There is so much to be proud of and share about WTS in 2025. This year's highlights include:

- **Meaningful monthly programming:** Our monthly programs continued to provide educational, welcoming, and fun events. I am grateful to the program committee and DEI committee, along with the presenters, tour guides, and other volunteers who made it all possible. My personal favorite program was the Book Club on the Borealis event!
- **Memorable annual events:** My thanks to our special events committee, scholarships and recognitions committee, and volunteers who beautifully coordinated both of our largest events of the year. These signature events remain pillars of our chapter, fostering strong connections and opportunities to celebrate achievements across our community.
- **Dedicated mentorship:** The 2025 Mentorship Program paired 38 participants into 19 mentor-mentee relationships, offering a year of one-on-one career support complemented by group events, check-ins, and resources from the Mentoring Committee. The program continues to strengthen professional growth and industry connections across our membership
- **Continued student outreach:** Transportation YOU program delivered another year of learning and exploration. The 2025-2026 program included 11 mentors and 35 mentees participating in project tours, career exploration, and hands-on activities. Our chapter sponsored two students and one mentor to attend the WTS Capital Summit in Washington, DC.
- **Expanded leadership:** In 2025, we were delighted to welcome Lyssa Leitner to the Advisory Board as our newest past president. Thank you, Lyssa for your continued support of our chapter!
- **Advisory Board updates:** Throughout the year, we engaged industry leaders and Advisory Board members in discussions about the future of the Advisory Board and how it can best advance our goals and meet the needs of our members. These conversations informed new strategies, and we look forward to continuing to roll out changes in 2026.

The support from our board, committee chairs, volunteers, and members not only sustained our momentum but strengthened my own connection to the chapter and our industry. A special thank you to our Corporate and Public Agency Partners. Your partnership has been instrumental in advancing our mission and supporting the programs and services we provide.



Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Jordan".

Erin Jordan, PE

WTS Minnesota 2025 Chapter President

Board of Directors

PRESIDENT

Erin Jordan, SEH

VICE PRESIDENT

Alicia Valenti, Metro Transit

PAST PRESIDENT

Lisa Elliot, Minnesota Department of Transportation

TREASURER

Kara Langford, SRF Consulting

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Ashley Hudson, Bolton & Menk

MARKETING DIRECTOR

Megan Day, HGA

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Erin Daly Davenport, Alta Planning + Design

PROGRAMS DIRECTORS

Karen Scheffing, Bolton & Menk

Ella Rasp, Stantec

SCHOLARSHIPS & RECOGNITIONS DIRECTOR

Kaitlyn Denten, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

Committee Chairs

DEVELOPMENT

Sylvie Guezeon, Student at Humphrey School of Public Affairs

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Joanne Cho, Stantec

Priyam Saxena, WSP

MEMBERSHIP

Ian Girardeau, SRF Consulting

MENTOR PROGRAM

Sara Hage, HNTB

Jamie Bents, WSP

Rory Talbot, HNTB

PROGRAMS

Zoey Mauck, Metropolitan Council

Margaret Donahoe, Transportation Alliance

REGIONAL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

Morgan Abbott, Metro Transit

SOCIAL MEDIA

Kate Hvizdos, Bolton & Menk

SPECIAL EVENTS

Greta Kurtz, Metro Transit

Ellie (Yu) Tian, HDR

TRANSPORTATION YOU

Megan Danielson, Kimley-Horn

Cassie Pinta, TKDA

Mario Ratnaraj, HNTB

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Angie Bolstad, KLJ Engineering

WEBSITE

Sara Allen, Washington County

Advisory Board

Morgan Abbott, Metro Transit

Andrea Arnoldi, Kimley-Horn

Kristin Asher, City of Richfield

Margaret Donahoe, Minnesota Transportation Alliance

Chelsey Hendrickson, Kimley-Horn

Gloria Jeff, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Jessica Laabs, Kimley-Horn

Lyssa Leitner, Washington County

Scott McBride, Bolton & Menk

Amber Nord, Isthmus Engineering

Sara Pflaum, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Katie Roth, Metro Transit

Fay Simer, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Molly Stewart, SRF Consulting

Kristin Thompson, Metro Transit

HunWen Westman, City of Saint Paul

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee for the Minnesota Chapter of WTS meets monthly and develops content for programs and trainings, and advocates to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the transportation industry.

The DEI Committee's mission is to develop skills and knowledge within WTS-Minnesota members to be advocates in individual workplaces to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the transportation industry and to increase and support diversity within WTS-Minnesota membership, leadership, and program participants to better reflect our communities.

As a part of this mission, the DEI Committee has been very active in implementing programs that expand knowledge of issues related to underrepresented groups within the transportation industry. This past year, our committee has held a series of events that have highlighted these groups and educated members.

While navigating some of the unknowns in 2025, the DEI Committee started the year by revisiting the workplan to reorganize and refine our goals and visions to better serve our transportation community. One of the committee's priorities was to revise the workplan to collaborate and partner with local organizations and entities to mutually support each other's initiatives, bring attention to DEI issues and topics within our communities, and further connecting people with others with similar interests and resources.

One of the core focuses for our committee in 2025 has been to create a safe and inclusive space for members and WTS event participants and to share information with our transportation industry personnel. Two main informational events our committee led this year were related to immigrations rights and MnDOT's DBE program.

Descriptions of DEI Committee events are listed in the Program section of this report.

Membership

2025 was a strategic visioning year for Membership in WTS Minnesota. The Membership Director and Chair stopped to reflect and gather input from the Board in early 2025 about the history of membership retention and goals for new members moving forward. Through polls and conversations, we focused on increasing student membership and membership from less “traditional” roles in the industry, along with retaining existing members.

To grow student membership, the Membership Director and Chair established connections with academic programs and student organizations at Minnesota colleges and universities with transportation related interests. We started to utilize these contacts to share upcoming program announcements and invitations to join the organization in Fall 2025, and look forward to continuing those connections in 2026. We also planned a Career Shadowing Day for students that had to be postponed from Fall 2026 and will take place early in 2026.

The Membership Director and Chair also started to organize a Membership Committee for the chapter to launch in early 2026. Based on lessons learned from the Iowa WTS Chapter, the Membership Committee will help organize student communications, a Member Appreciation Event, and other ongoing efforts to keep members engaged and introduce the organization to new audiences.

Mentorship

The Mentoring Committee organized a 2025 mentorship program focused on assigning mentor pairs to meet individually paired with some large group events. Our program develops one-on-one mentoring relationships through WTS for one year, with goals of supporting individuals' career goals and developing new industry partnerships. Most of the work happens between mentors and mentees in monthly mentoring meetings. The mentoring committee sets up the partnerships, kicks off the year with expectations and support, hosts a summer social event, and wraps up with a concluding event. We check in with mentoring pairs through the year and provide support where needed. We had 38 participants that were matched into 19 mentor/mentee pairs.

The 2025 program kicked off with an in-person introduction event in March 2025. As partners built their relationship over the year, we had a summer social event in July 2025 at La Doña Cerveceria, where we socialized, introduced our partners around the group, and enjoyed snacks and beverages. We opened registration up to the greater WTS community after mentors and mentees signed up so we could support more networking among our members – this has been a practice for the past few years and it has been a good vehicle to introduce our partners to more industry connections and to recruit mentors and mentees for the next program year. Many of us celebrated our year together at the WTS Holiday Party in December 2025, gathering for one last time. We anticipate sending out a survey in early 2026 to our 2025 participants, asking what they liked in 2025 and what could be adjusted in the program for more effective mentoring (we anticipate increased mentee/mentor support in 2026 from the committee, as an example).

Additional details on Mentor Program events are listed in the Program section of this report.

Programs

JANUARY 2025 | 2025 HONORARY MEMBER EVENT – FIRESIDE CHAT WITH HEATHER LEIDE

WTS recognized Heather Leide, MAC’s Airport Development Director, with a fireside chat about the intersection of career and leadership. The event featured opening remarks from MnDOT Commissioner Nancy Daubenberg and was moderated by last year’s honorary member, Metro Transit General Manager Lesley Kandaras.



Above: Fireside Chat with Heather Leide

FEBRUARY 2025 | POLITICS IN TRANSPORTATION/ENGINEERING (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACEC)

Held jointly with the Minnesota Chapter’s ACEC-Emerging Professionals committee, WTS members and friends gathered at Urban Growler to listen to a panel discussion about politics and engineering with Minnesota State Representative John Koznick and Senator Ann Johnson Stewart. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and listen to strategies each panelist had regarding infrastructure funding and how proposed legislation might affect the engineering industry, how to get involved with your local representatives, and other issues that were important at the Capitol this session.



Above: Politics in Transportation Program

MARCH 2025 | NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE PANEL

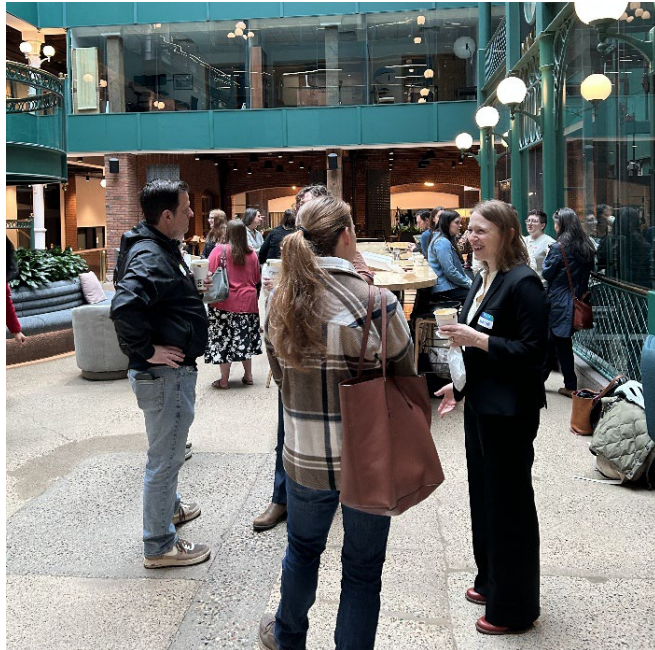
WTS hosted an engaging panel on the experiences of neurodiverse people in the workplace, including people with ADHD, depression, anxiety and other differences in how they think, learn and act. Panelists shared their experiences with neurodiversity, including the ways neurodiversity has benefitted them at work as well as the challenges it has presented. Attendees gained understanding of neurodiversity and how to support coworkers, colleagues, friends and family who navigate the world through a different lens.



Above: Neurodiversity in the Workplace Panel

MARCH 2025 | MENTOR PROGRAM KICK-OFF EVENT

The mentoring kickoff event was held on March 25, 2025 with the goal of introducing program participants and establishing mentoring relationships. The time together began with refreshments and snacks in a networking setting. The participants gathered in a meeting room and then participants introduced themselves to the group. The mentoring committee gave an overview of the WTS mentoring program and expectations, tips for mentoring, and responsibilities for mentors and mentees. The event allowed for ample time for each mentoring pair to meet one on one to learn more about each other, ask questions, talk about goals of the mentoring relationship, and establish logistics for meeting. The pairs came back together in the group to share about their partner and their discussion, and the pairs set their first mentoring meeting dates. Mentoring pairs were to meet monthly on their own after the kickoff meeting.



Above: Coffee and Connections

APRIL 2025 | COFFEE AND CONNECTIONS – QUARTERLY NETWORKING

The Programs team hosted a networking event at FRGMT Coffee where members met for breakfast, coffee and mingling.

MAY 2025 | SCHOLARSHIP AND RECOGNITIONS RECEPTION

On May 21st, more than 150 WTS Minnesota members and guests gathered at the Como Conservatory in Saint Paul to honor the 2025 Scholarship and Recognition Award recipients. The event celebrated emerging and established women in transportation, with expanded scholarship opportunities made possible through a continued partnership with the Minnesota Society of Engineers and Surveyors (MSES). WTS also recognized individuals who embody its core values of collaboration and inclusivity by advancing access and equity for women and other underrepresented groups in the field. A full event description and photos can be found in the scholarships and recognition section.



Above: Book Club on the Borealis

MAY 2025 | BOOK CLUB ON THE BOREALIS

WTS Minnesota hosted an exciting half-day tour to Red Wing, Minnesota to experience the newly opened Borealis Amtrak train service with fellow professionals! Participants enjoyed a scenic train ride to Red Wing, followed by a walking tour and technical presentation of the MnDOT Hwy 63 Eisenhower Bridge over the Mississippi River. The event also included a book club discussion on *When Driving is Not an Option*, by Anna Ziverts and free time for lunch in historic downtown Red Wing. Participants were invited to delve into projects, discuss the latest transportation literature, and enjoy MN's finest in train travel!



Above: Book Club on the Borealis

JUNE 2025 | CAPITAL SUMMIT

In June, Morgan Ellis and two Blaine High School mentees attended the 2025 WTS International Capital Summit in the Washington, D.C. area. Their trip included visits to major transportation agencies and facilities—such as the Maryland State Highway Administration, WMATA's command center and train simulator, the National Air and Space Museum, and Baltimore Washington International Airport. They also enjoyed sightseeing activities, including a Potomac River cruise and a Capitol tour with access to the House Gallery. Throughout the trip, the students engaged actively, asked many questions, and bonded during evening activities like a transportation themed door decorating contest. Additional information about these activities can be found in the Transportation YOU section.

JUNE 2025 | FAMILY FRIENDLY HAPPY HOUR AND CONCERT

WTS members and friends gathered at Como Lake Pavilion to mingle and enjoy the fresh air. After the happy hour, attendees had the opportunity to stick around and hear a chapter member perform with the City of Lakes Community Band

JULY 2025 | SAINTS GAME (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MSES AND NCITE)

Take us out to the ball game! Our WTS members and friends had a great opportunity for a night of networking and baseball spectating with MSES, ITS-MN, and NCITE at the St. Paul Saints baseball game.

JULY 2025 | MENTORING NETWORKING SOCIAL

The mentoring group hosted a summer networking social event, held at La Doña Cerveceria in July. The event was advertised to the greater WTS community and friends as well as the mentoring group to provide additional networking opportunities and to help recruit for the 2026 mentoring program. Attendees enjoyed snacks and networking.

AUGUST 2025 | COFFEE AND CONNECTIONS

The Programs team hosted a networking event where members met for breakfast, coffee and mingling. This event was hosted at SK Coffee.

AUGUST 2025 | BOARD RECRUITMENT EVENT

Prospective new members gathered for a meet and greet and regular board meeting at the Bolton and Menk downtown Minneapolis office. People who were new to WTS were encouraged to connect with an existing board member and ask questions about their role. This was a chance for people to try out a board meeting and determine what role would be best for them. A happy hour followed to continue the networking and discussion.

SEPTEMBER 2025 | UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION: LGBTQIA+ IDENTITIES AND ALLYSHIP TRAINING

This interactive training was designed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to create a more inclusive workplace and be better allies in our communities. Participants learned skills in effective allyship within their organizations and will be equipped with the tools and practices to support an inclusive workplace. The curriculum covered language key to understanding the LGBTQIA+ community and emphasizes ways to challenge biases. The training empowered individuals to become allies and advocates for their LGBTQIA+ colleagues and community members. Around 20 individuals participated in this event which was hosted by Queermunity in Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood.



Above: Understanding to Action Training

SEPTEMBER 2025 | MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR DESIGN TOUR: UNIVERSITY & 4TH TOUR

Hennepin County and project partners led a two-mile walking tour that highlighted key features of the University Avenue and 4th Street SE corridor improvements in Minneapolis. This collaborative effort with the City of Minneapolis, MnDOT, Metro Transit, and the University of Minnesota transformed the corridor between I-35W and Oak Street. Participants were able to learn about new protected bike lanes, ADA-compliant intersections, modernized signals, and improved transit access. Participants were also able to hear directly from project managers and explore design elements, learn about construction challenges, and future connections.



Above: Multimodal Corridor Design Tour

OCTOBER 2025 | METRO B LINE TOUR EVENT

Participants in this event got an exclusive look at the future of bus rapid transit in the Twin Cities! Project leaders Frank Alarcon and Alicia Valenti provided a guided tour of the new B Line Arterial BRT route. This was a unique opportunity to learn directly from the experts about the planning, station design, and engineering that shaped this transformative project.

NOVEMBER 2025 | NETWORKING EVENT

Members gathered at Punchbowl Social in St. Louis Park to network and enjoy refreshments before the holiday busy season began.

NOVEMBER 2025 | KNOW YOUR RIGHTS EVENT (DEI)

WTS members and the DEI committee joined special guest speaker Anastassia Bukingolts, a local immigration attorney, for a *Know Your Rights* presentation on immigration for people who live and work in Minnesota.

DECEMBER 2025 | DBE INFORMATIONAL SESSION (DEI)

The DBE Certification Program underwent significant changes in October and November 2025. The DEI Committee organized a lunch and learn with Sean Skibbie, Director of the MnDOT Office of Civil Rights, to learn more about how these changes would impact DBE certified businesses in Minnesota.

DECEMBER 2025 | HOLIDAY PARTY

The sold out 2025 Holiday Party was held on December 4th at the Lumber Exchange Building in Downtown Minneapolis. The most anticipated professional event of the season, the party featured a prize drawing for members, as well as a 50/50 cash raffle and silent auction that raised more than \$5,000 for WTS scholarships.



Transportation YOU

2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

On January 30, Transportation YOU mentors and mentees went on a field trip to the Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP) Airport led by Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) employees. Students toured the airfield, field maintenance building, and the MSP fire station, and attended a Q&A with female MAC leaders.



Metropolitan Airports Commission Field Trip

In February, T YOU mentors Alanna Pohlman and Morgan Ellis led an in-person lesson on speed networking and college preparation. The 2024-2025 school year ended with a celebration in April where the group played a “Year in Review” activity, reflected with their mentors, and enjoyed a special treat.

CAPITAL SUMMIT

In June, Morgan Ellis, along with two Blaine High School mentees, traveled to the Washington, D.C. area to participate in the 2025 WTS International Capital Summit. Some highlights included visiting the Maryland State Highway Administration, the National Air and Space Museum, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) command center, Baltimore Washington International Airport, and WMATA's driver training facility with a train simulator. From the tourism side, the group went on a boat cruise on the Potomac River and had a tour of the capital, including access to the House Gallery where the House of Representatives meets when in session. The girls asked lots of questions on all the tours and had



BWI Field Trip during the Capital Summit

the chance to bond back in the dorms, where they had a transportation-themed door decorating contest to prepare for in the evenings.

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

The 2025-2026 Transportation YOU year kicked off in October with 11 mentors and about 35 mentees, who gathered at Blaine High School. The first lesson included an overview on the program, presentation from two students who attended the Capital Summit in D.C., and an exciting round of get-to-know-you bingo.



Gold Line BRT stop at the Union Depot

In November, Andrea Arnoldi, Architecture Lead, arranged and co-led a Gold Line Extension Bus Rapid Transit tour with Morgan Abbott, Deputy Project Manager. The group met at Metro Transit Woodlane Park-and-Ride Station in Woodbury, where they toured the facility, then hopped on the bus. As the group rode the Gold Line, Andrea and Morgan shared behind the scenes details of the planning, design, and construction phases of the project. The tour ended at Union Depot in Saint Paul, where we enjoyed lunch in the waiting area and reflected with mentors.

The theme for our December TYOU lesson was career exploration. Emily Twomey (Kimley-Horn) and Emma Verkuilen (Washington County) led the first part of the lesson, which covered topics such as types of college degrees and career paths relating to transportation. The second half was spent decorating transportation themed cookies while mentors were able to answer questions related to career and college paths from their mentees.

2026 SCHEDULED EVENTS

Upcoming events for TYOU include a field trip to Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) office of Materials and Road Research, a digital delivery lesson, field trip to St. Thomas University and Kimley-Horn office visit/panel, and an End of Year celebration in May.



Transportation cookie decorating

Scholarships and Recognitions

On May 21st, over 150 WTS Minnesota members and friends gathered at the Como Conservatory Rain Forest Auditorium in Saint Paul to celebrate the 2025 Scholarship and Recognition Award recipients. Through our scholarship program, WTS is proud to support the burgeoning careers of young women entering the field of transportation as well as career growth for established professionals. For the second year in a row, the chapter expanded its reach by partnering with the Minnesota Society of Engineers and Surveyors (MSES). In partnership with MSES, we were able to award two additional scholarships. With our annual recognition awards, we are also thrilled to celebrate individuals who exemplify WTS's core values of collaboration and inclusivity, dedicating themselves to creating access and equity for women and other underrepresented groups in our field.

PAST PRESIDENT AWARD

Lisa Elliot (Minnesota Department of Transportation)

Lisa Elliott is the Environmental Assessment Supervisor in the Office of Environmental Stewardship. She oversees the environmental review team, aquatic resource team, and protected species team to ensure regulatory compliance during the environmental review process. The Environmental Assessment Unit is located at MnDOT Central Office in St. Paul and provides technical assistance statewide. Lisa holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder, and Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota. She joined MnDOT in 2017, and previously worked in consulting. Outside of work, she enjoys hanging out with her husband and two kids (7 and 4). Family bike rides are the current favorite activity.



MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Carrie Desmond (Metro Transit)

Carrie Desmond serves as Metro Transit's Manager of Electric Bus Infrastructure. She was first introduced to WTS as an undergraduate scholarship recipient. When she joined the workforce she joined WTS as a member and started volunteering with the Chicago Chapter. Since then she has served in a variety of roles including supporting Scholarships, Recognitions, Special Events, Transportation You, Development, Conference Planning, Mentor Program, and Membership.



WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Marie Cote (SRF)

As Chief People Officer of SRF, Marie oversees Human Resources, ensuring the SRF workplace is inviting, collaborative, and inclusive. She focuses on recruiting, engaging, developing, and retaining SRF's greatest asset, its people. Marie also oversees all administrative and technology operations, and all employee-led committees, including Women's Plus, Staff Engagement, Social, DEI, Community Outreach, Health and Wellness, and

Rising Professionals. She has led numerous initiatives to enhance diversity and equity in the engineering industry, particularly for people of color and women.

For the past three years, she has facilitated and sponsored a series of events at SRF called Courageous Conversations, which celebrates and acknowledges DEI in the workplace. Over the course of her 32-year career, Marie has managed many complex transportation planning and traffic engineering studies that included rigorous project management and intense stakeholder facilitation. Her strong management and leadership skills have enabled her to successfully balance project management and delivery with staff development and engagement.

Marie represented SRF in the 2023 Inclusive Workplaces Cohort (IWC), led by the Center for Economic Inclusion and the Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County. This Executive Leadership Cohort was developed to accelerate employers' abilities to advance racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within their organizations. In May 2024, she was also featured as one of five members of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber Executive Women's Council panel on Women Leading in Male-Dominated Fields, where she shared her perspectives on driving change within the engineering industry.

In her free time, Marie enjoys cooking, which allows her to tap into her creative side and bring together friends and family through delicious food. Recently, Marie became a grandmother and is thoroughly enjoying her new role!



WOMAN TO WATCH AWARD

Erin Blaylock (Washington County)

Erin Blaylock (formerly Clarkowski) is an engineering project manager at Washington County. She went to the University of Minnesota Duluth and, inevitably due to her family lineage, earned a degree in civil engineering. She started her career on Kimley-Horn's transit team, and spent most of her time on the Gold Line BRT design team. Erin was interested in advancing the coordination skills she developed from working on large transit projects, so she made the jump to Washington County to become a project manager in 2022. Erin has enjoyed the diversity of initiatives she touches in her role at

the County and is known by her peers for strong communication skills and someone who always follows through. She is a third-generation civil engineer and owes her success to her family, mentors, and colleagues.



EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Alta Planning + Design

Alta Planning + Design was nominated for Employer of the Year in recognition of its strong commitment to recruiting, retaining, and advancing women in the transportation industry. Guided by a mission to create healthier communities, Alta has fostered an inclusive workplace where women thrive at all levels of the organization. In its Minneapolis office—where women comprise 60% of staff—the firm has demonstrated exceptional support for work-life balance through flexible schedules, expanded parental leave, and an improved lactation policy

shaped by employee advocacy. Women also hold a majority of leadership roles across key practice areas and management positions. Through mentorship, professional development, and active engagement with WTS, Alta continues to champion women’s growth and leadership in the field.

ROSA PARKS DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

*Advancing Women in Transit Chairpersons
(Metro Transit)*

Advancing Women in Transit is an Employee Resource Group (ERG) in support of women employees at Metro Transit. AWT was formed with the desire to help women within Metro Transit thrive. Our goal is to promote

connectedness among women employees and to facilitate “driving forward thinking,” a process that develops skills, instills confidence, and encourages women to seek advancement. The goal of AWT is to help make Metro Transit inclusive, diverse, and reflective of our community. New members are welcomed year-round from all divisions of the Metropolitan Council.



INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS AWARD

Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Metro Transit is the primary transit agency in the Twin Cities region, operates two light rail lines, seven bus rapid transit routes, and dozens of local and express bus routes. In 2023, Metro Transit provided nearly 45 million rides. The Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit began service on March 22, 2025, and provides fast and frequent service along the 10-mile route between St. Paul and Woodbury. This is Minnesota’s first BRT line that operates primarily within bus-only lanes. Funding was made possible by the Federal Transit Administration, Ramsey and Washington Counties, and the State of Minnesota. Not only did Gold Line open on schedule, but also under budget!



HONORABLE RAY LAHOOD AWARD

Steve Barrett (Metro Transit)

Steve worked at MnDOT for nearly 20 years before joining Metro Transit as the Construction Manager for Gold Line BRT in 2021. Steve feels very fortunate to have worked on many large and interesting projects including Hwy 100 Reconstruction, I-35W Crosstown Commons, I-694/Snelling/TH10 Interchange, I-35E MnPASS, I-35W Downtown to Crosstown, and the Gold Line BRT. Throughout his career he has been led, influenced, and supported by many intelligent and creative women leaders. He has also been blessed to work alongside talented women engineers, inspectors, and other professionals on his projects. As the years and projects go by, it has become apparent to Steve that building strong teams is the most important part of his job and he is honored to be recognized for helping others.



WTS MINNESOTA GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Nastaran Tork (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities)

Nastaran Tork is a Ph.D. student in Transportation Engineering at the University of Minnesota, where her research focuses on sustainable transportation systems and urban freight delivery. With a background in engineering, data analysis, and algorithm development, Nastaran is passionate about developing innovative solutions to improve urban mobility, reduce congestion, and advance low-emission transportation. She is an active member of the transportation research community and is committed to promoting equity and innovation in the field.



DONNA ALLAN UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Rishika Kundu (Macalester College)

Rishika is a student at Macalester College, majoring in Computer Science and Geography. She is passionate about leveraging technology to strengthen transportation systems and improve their resilience. Over the 2024-2025 school year, she interned with Metro Transit, working at the intersection of data and mobility. In summer 2025, she interned as a Transit Data Analyst at Arcadis in Seattle. Rishika is especially committed to using technology to connect underrepresented communities—both locally and internationally—to greater opportunities through equitable and accessible transportation networks.



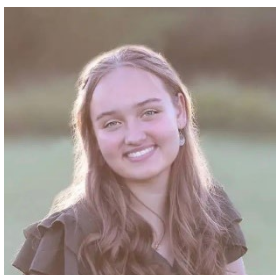
KATHERINE TURNBULL LEADERSHIP UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Melayna Marchman (Minnesota State University Mankato)

Melayna is a dedicated Civil Engineering major with a strong passion for building sustainable and innovative solutions for the future. Receiving this scholarship is a tremendous honor that reflects Melayna's commitment to academic excellence, hard work, and community engagement. This recognition motivates her to continue growing as a future engineer and to contribute meaningfully to developing resilient and impactful infrastructure.

DAN MEYERS HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

Maren (Holy Family Catholic High School)



WTS/MSES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

Lauren Konrath (Wild Rose High School)

Lauren is located in central Wisconsin and is planning to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth in the fall of 2025. Lauren is majoring in Chemical Engineering and minoring in Environmental Engineering. Her passions lie with the environment, with her mission being to create more sustainable and efficient fuel solutions in order to protect the environment.



WTS BOARD UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Clare Fischer (South Dakota School of Technology)

Clare is a civil engineering student at South Dakota Mines and Technology. She is also a member of the cross country and track and field teams. Clare enjoys concrete research and structural engineering. She has completed two internships in aviation, roadway design, and transportation and is excited to return to Minnesota this summer with Kimley-Horn. Clare loves the great outdoors and visiting National Parks.



WTS/MSES ADVANCING WOMEN IN TRANSPORTATION GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Shelley Pacheco (University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs)

Shelley Pacheco was a first-generation graduate student at the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs (where she graduated in May of 2025), dedicated to advancing equitable policies and working collaboratively with communities to ensure a more just future. She served as a Graduate Research Assistant at the Institute for Urban and Regional Infrastructure Finance (IURIF), where she supported public outreach efforts on distance-based fees.

Conferences

WTS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In May, over 20 WTS-Minnesota members attended the first WTS-International conference held outside the U.S., in Toronto. Sessions covered diverse transportation topics—biking, light rail, ferries, coastal resilience, community engagement—as well as equity, leadership, and work-life balance.

Equity discussions highlighted how race and gender affect transit experiences: women, gender-nonconforming people, and people of color ride more often but face longer travel times and higher harassment rates. Solutions include better lighting, frequent off-peak service, and flexible nighttime drop-offs. Leadership sessions stressed the benefits of diversity at the top and the need for inclusive behaviors. Speakers encouraged leveraging strengths, supporting teammates, and investing in mid-career growth while maintaining focus—multi-tasking isn't always efficient.

Overall, the conference was energizing and inspired attendees to bring these conversations beyond WTS into the broader workplace. The conference also confirmed that our WTS-Minnesota Chapter maintained its Gold Circle of Excellence status, which is the top tier recognition for WTS-International that recognizes chapters that excel in delivering value to members and advancing WTS's mission of equity and access for women in transportation.



WTS/ITE CENTRAL REGION CONFERENCE

The WTS Central Region Conference was hosted in Indianapolis, Indiana in June 2025 and was jointly held with the Great Lakes Region of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The event featured technical sessions, leadership development workshops, and networking opportunities. Highlights included the Student Leadership Summit, the GLITE Race, a lively scavenger hunt supporting the ITE Endowment Fund, and the WTS Members Happy Hour, which offered connection and networking. We are happy to support attendance to bring back new ideas and refreshed energy to support our chapter!

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

In November 2025, our Chapter President and Vice President represented our Minnesota chapter at the virtual WTS Leadership Summit, joining chapter leaders from across the U.S. and Canada. This year's theme, *Inspiring Growth: Guiding Chapters Toward Resilience and Innovation*, focused on equipping leaders with practical tools and fresh ideas to strengthen their chapters. The three-day virtual summit featured skill-building sessions on membership, elections, and event planning; dynamic leadership conversations with keynote speaker Cassandra Rouse, WTS 2025 Woman of the Year; a multi-modal industry panel spanning aviation, transit, ports, bridges, and rail; and regional breakout discussions centered on expanding membership and enhancing modal diversity.

Financial Report

INCOME

Membership Dues	\$6,223
Monthly Programs	\$2,593
Holiday Party	\$7,379
Scholarships & Recognitions Event	\$3,950
Corporate and Public Partnerships	\$41,000
Miscellaneous Revenue (Savings Account Interest, etc)	\$1,656
FY 2024 Revenue Roll Over	\$15,500
TOTAL	\$78,301

DONATIONS TO SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Scholarship Donations - Individual Donors	\$1,000
Scholarship Donations – Holiday Party Fundraiser	\$6,015
TOTAL	\$7,015

EXPENSES

Monthly Programs	\$5,271
Travel/Board Member Training	\$15,364
Transportation YOU Capital Summit**	\$7,573
Supplies/Communication	\$2,356
Membership Development	\$174
Professional Development Fees (AICP)	\$1,254
Insurance	\$1,175
Scholarships & Recognitions Event	\$9,906
Holiday Party	\$15,395
Transportation YOU	\$1,671
Mentoring Program	\$156
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	\$879
TOTAL	\$61,174

**Paid for by the Foundation Account

Corporate and Public Partners

All the accomplishments in this report would not be possible without our Corporate and Public Partners. WTS Minnesota's Corporate Partnership Program began in 2012 with just one firm. In 2025, we reached **23 corporate and three public partners** who committed a combined **\$41,000**. Those contributions have greatly advanced the chapter's educational, scholarship, and leadership programs. WTS Minnesota recognizes that financial backing is only possible with strong voices expressing why this is a valuable organization, so we thank the following organizations and their people for their support in 2025.

ADVOCATE LEVEL PARTNER



SUPPORTER LEVEL PARTNERS

TKDA
Terracon
HR Green
Michael Baker
Stonebrook

SMALL BUSINESS/DBE PARTNERS

Isthmus
Precision Testing
Zan
Minnesota Transportation Alliance
Rani
Professional Engineering Services

PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS

Minnesota Department of Transportation
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Advancing women
Advancing transportation