Advancing women
Advancing transportation
› Atlanta

SUMMER/FALL 2026



From community service and professional development to networking and leadership opportunities, WTS Atlanta has had a dynamic and impactful season. As we continue an exciting fall, this edition highlights the people, programs, and events that are shaping our chapter and the transportation industry. Discover the leadership journeys of our Chapter President and Mentor-Protégé Program Committee Co-Chair, and meet some of the emerging professionals making their mark in transportation. Read about our community outreach efforts through volunteer initiatives supporting the FIFA World Cup. See how we strengthened connections with transportation leaders across Metro Atlanta. Finally, learn about upcoming events, member opportunities, and ways to stay engaged with WTS Atlanta in the months ahead. We hope you enjoy this edition and feel inspired by the many ways our members continue to lead, serve, and advance transportation throughout our community.

WTS ATLANTA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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To become a Corporate Sponsor in 2026, contact Iris Ortiz, WTS Atlanta President at iortiz@hntb.com

Advancing women
Advancing transportation
› Atlanta

Message from the President

Fall is here, and somehow, 2026 is coming to an end... At WTS Atlanta, however, we are not slowing down. The final months of the year are filled with opportunities to connect, celebrate, and continue advancing our mission together.

The highlight of the season will be our Annual Scholarships and Awards Luncheon, our Chapter's largest event of the year. This year, we will award nearly $30,000 in scholarships to deserving students and recognize industry and Chapter leaders whose contributions are making a difference in transportation and in our community. We will also celebrate an important milestone for our Chapter as we introduce the 2027–2028 WTS Atlanta Board of Directors, the leadership team that will guide WTS Atlanta into its next chapter.

As my term as President ends, I have found myself reflecting on just how much we have accomplished together. I am especially proud that we have expanded our Community Service & Outreach programs, established new student chapters at Kennesaw State University and Clark Atlanta University, strengthened professional development opportunities through programs such as our Mentor-Protégé Program, and provided numerous opportunities for our members to build relationships with one another and with leaders across our industry. None of these accomplishments happen because of one person. They happen because of our dedicated Board, committee chairs and members, sponsors, volunteers, and everyone who chooses to show up and be part of WTS Atlanta.

And that may be what I am most proud of: the community we have built together. As we prepare to transition to new leadership in 2027, I am incredibly optimistic about what comes next. Our incoming Board will have the opportunity to build on a strong foundation while bringing new ideas, new energy, and their own vision for the future. I hope each of you will continue to support them with the same enthusiasm and generosity you have shown me and our current Board.

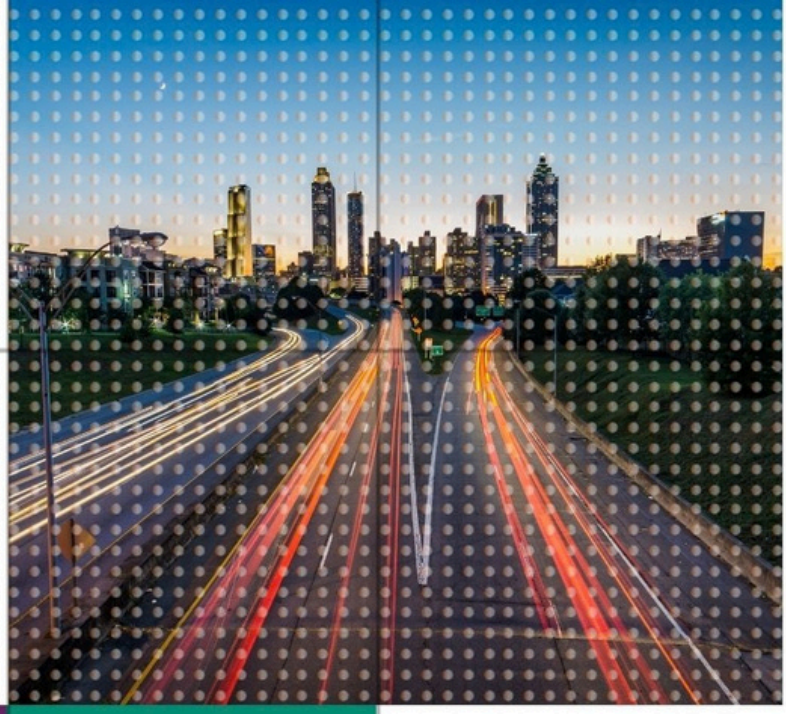
For now, we still have plenty to celebrate together. I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events and, especially, at the Annual Scholarships and Awards Luncheon.

With gratitude,



Iris Ortiz
WTS Atlanta President

WTS Advancing women Advancing transportation › Atlanta



Congratulations to our chapter members for making the 2026 *Engineering Georgia* "100 Influential Women in Georgia Engineering" and "35 Under 35 Women to Know in Georgia Engineering" Lists

28
WTS Atlanta members in the "100 Influential Women" list

6
WTS Atlanta members in the "35 Under 35" list

WTSI

Leaders in the list include Malika Reed Wilkins, PhD and Melissa Mullinax.

WTS Atlanta Board

Members in the list include Iris Ortiz, Amanda von Oldenburg, Dania Aponte, Tonia Brown, Ligia Florim, Beth Ann Schwartz, and Faye Lyons-Gary.

Meet the Board & Committee Chairs Series

Alisha Smith, Director of Projects and Planning for the Town Center CID



Alisha Smith

WTS Atlanta Chapter
Mentor Protégé Committee
Co-Chair

Path to Transportation

Alisha started her professional career in the landscape architecture field working for an architecture firm. Navigating into the urban design realm led her to concentrate in downtown renovations/ improvements, creating greenspaces, and looking at how people move through spaces and interact with their communities. This field of knowledge expanded into connecting communities by looking at various modes of transportation to meet the needs of the people. It is Alisha's philosophy that, "Everyone has places to go - long distances or short. We can all get to where we need to be by working together to create an optimal system."

Current Role in WTS Atlanta

Alisha currently serves as the co-chair of the Mentor Protege Programgm with Maria Yesenia Trejo.

A Moment that Reinforced Her Passion

Working at the Town Center CID is where she had the realization, "I love what I do." In this role she has the opportunity to serve as a convener for the community, bringing together county, state, and local stakeholders to work toward a shared vision. When she thinks back to her beginnings as a landscape architect, she realizes there is a strong connection between that work and what she does today. Landscape architecture traditionally operates in the in-between spaces—the spaces between buildings, roads, interstates, utilities, and other elements of the built environment. Her role at the CID is very much the same, but on a broader level. She sits in a space where she gets to think big about how these individual elements can be brought together to create a cohesive, thriving community. Although she is no longer focused on selecting plant species or designing individual landscapes, she still looks at places through the lens of organization and function. She thinks about what will make an area more vibrant, what will encourage economic growth, and what will attract people and create a sense of place. Ultimately, you cannot create a meaningful vision for a community without recognizing that one of its most important components is how people move to, through, and experience a space.

A Moment She Felt on the Right Track

Alisha is blessed to say that moments when she feels truly unstoppable happen on a continuous basis. For her, that feeling comes from knowing that she has the support of an organization, and Board of Directors, that share her values and are committed to improving the quality of life for the community they represent. However, feeling unstoppable doesn't mean that every situation is easy. Some of the most challenging moments in her career have been ones that required the most determination. Alisha advises that, "when tough situations arise, being prepared by having a deep understanding of the circumstance, or people involved, provides the confidence to push the envelope on ideas and initiatives."

Meet the Board & Committee Chairs Series

Iris Ortiz, AVP, Senior Project Manager and Associate Vice President at HNTB Corporations



Iris Ortiz

WTS Atlanta Chapter President

Path to Transportation

Iris started in Transportation, back when she was an undergraduate student pursuing her degree in Civil Engineering. She got an internship with FHWA Headquarters in Washington, DC in 1996, which led to a co-op student assignment at the FHWA Puerto Rico Division. She made the decision to go after a master's degree in Transportation, and the rest is history! Iris has experience working in Washington, DC and Boston prior to her move to Atlanta. She started her career out doing transportation planning and finance work before eventually becoming a project manager. She advises that being open to every opportunity that comes your way is what helps you find work that you truly enjoy. Those experiences have been fundamental to her growth in Transportation.

Current Role in WTS Atlanta

Iris serves as the WTS Atlanta Chapter President. She has been a member of WTS after a co-worker of her invited her to a membership meeting. Since then she has participated in multiple WTS chapters and has worked in multiple committees. Iris leads the WTS Atlanta Chapter and collaborates with the dynamic chapter board members and committee chairs to set and achieve the WTS Atlanta objectives.

A Moment that Reinforced Her Passion

Iris's passion is reinforced almost every day in her work. Every day brings an opportunity to appreciate and feel love for what she does. Whether it is getting a grant application to the finish line or being part of a large team that helps a client get a project from development and procurement to construction, helping her clients and helping them achieve their goals gives her great satisfaction. Outside her job, being part of WTS also brings her a lot of joy. It gives her an opportunity to give back and support other women's growth in the transportation industry.

A Moment She Felt on the Right Track

A moment Iris felt right on track was back in June 2024 when she learned that Tennessee DOT had been awarded almost $394 million for a bridge replacement project. This was a "drop the mike" moment for her. She led the team that wrote the grant and spent many hours (long days and weekends) working on this grant application. Also at that time, she was going through major changes and challenges in her personal life. It showed her that she is strong enough to push through hard times and that hard work pays off. Not only was Iris able to deliver on her work but she overcame those personal challenges which made her feel truly unstoppable.

2025 EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

Program for Public Sector Professionals

By: Whytne Stevens



Participating in WTS Atlanta's Program for Public Sector Emerging Professionals over the past year has been very impactful for me. Throughout this program I've been able to learn more about the transportation industry while participating in activities such as site visits, the Scholarship Luncheon, and the Transportation YOU committee. These activities have shown me how to engage with an industry at a variety of levels, from professional development for oneself to uplifting the next generation of transportation professionals with resources and knowledge sharing.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of this program has been being able to meet and connect with women at all professional levels and in various parts of the transportation industry. Connecting with fellow women in the field has shown me how people are pushing past barriers while making a way for others to succeed as well. One place this is most evident is in the Mentor-Protege program where mentorship has been a two-way street. My mentor and I not only talk about my career growth and professional development but also life outside of work and personal development. This has reminded me to stay centered and tend to life outside of work, allowing me to show up as best I can in both my professional and personal life.

I'm grateful of the opportunity to join WTS through this program and look forward to continuing participating in this organization. I would encourage more early and mid-career professionals to consider this program, especially if you are new to the transportation field like me.

2025 EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

Program for Public Sector Professionals

By: Imani Moon



Being selected as an Emerging Professional for 2026 has honestly been amazing. I've loved making meaningful connections and getting exposed to so many different sectors within transportation that I wouldn't have known about otherwise. Walking into a new group can be intimidating, but the women of the WTS Atlanta chapter welcomed me with open arms from day one.

My first trip with the chapter was the Savannah Port Authority Tour. That long drive from Atlanta to Savannah ended up being a blessing in disguise. It gave me the chance to really get to know other members of the chapter. Months later, I joined the Mentor-Protégé program, which has helped me build even deeper relationships with women in the transportation field. My mentor, Vida Mannings, has been incredible from sharing everything from work-life balance tips to marriage advice.

Overall, I'm so grateful for this experience. Programs like WTS are so important for young professionals just starting out. Personally, I was looking for a group of women who could nurture and guide me as I found my footing in transportation, and I found exactly that. Every woman I've met through WTS events has taught me something I've been able to add to myself, whether it's their confidence or their leadership style. Because of that, I've grown so much more confident and I'm learning to take up space instead of shrinking myself.

I'm looking forward to continuing my membership with WTS Atlanta and pouring into other young professionals entering the transportation field.

PAST EVENTS

WTSI Signature Leadership Training



By: Iris Ortiz





Photos of WTS chapter members at leadership training.

WTS Atlanta was well represented at the 2026 WTS International Signature Leadership Training, held on September 15-18 in Dallas, TX. Four WTS Atlanta chapter members participated in the program: Sara Lynch (Arcadis), Amy Williams (HNTB), Roz Tucker (ARC), and Sunny Abree (Terracon).

The Signature Leadership Program is designed to prepare women to help guide the future of the transportation industry, offering separate Mid-Career and Executive Leader tracks focused on strengthening leadership, management, decision-making, and other critical professional skills.



PAST EVENTS





Photos of WTS chapter attendees at leadership training.

In their own words:

"The training was a fantastic opportunity to reflect on my strongest leadership qualities and how to use those to drive momentum within my company and WTS Atlanta." Sara Lynch, Arcadis

"The 2026 WTS International Signature Executive Leadership Training equipped me with fresh perspectives, meaningful connections, and practical leadership insights. Through Dee Baker Amos' framework and the experiences shared by executive leaders, I was reminded that leadership is not just about where you are today, but how you prepare for tomorrow. Thank you to WTS for bringing together an incredible community of women committed to growing and advancing together." Amy M. Williams, HNTB

We are thrilled to celebrate Sara, Amy, Roz, and Sunny for investing in their leadership journeys and representing WTS Atlanta among transportation professionals from across the country.

PAST EVENTS







Photos of attendees at leadership training.

PAST EVENTS

FIFA World Cup / MARTA Ambassadors - June & July 2026



By: Holly Painter & Iris Ortiz



Photos of WTS Atlanta volunteers serving as MARTA Ambassadors at various stations.

This summer, over 20 members of the WTS Atlanta Chapter volunteered as MARTA Ambassadors during the FIFA World Cup matches hosted in Atlanta. Joining volunteers from other local transportation organizations, including COMTO Atlanta, WTS members welcomed visitors from around the world and helped them navigate the region's transit system.

Stationed at key MARTA locations throughout the city, volunteers provided information on traveling to matches at the Atlanta (Mercedes-Benz) Stadium, accessing FIFA Fan Festival events, purchasing fare cards, and navigating transit connections across the Atlanta region. Their support helped thousands of visitors travel with confidence and enjoy a seamless experience while attending one of the world's largest sporting events.

The MARTA Ambassador program highlighted the power of collaboration among Atlanta's transportation professionals, including WTS, and demonstrated the essential role public transportation plays in connecting people to major events. WTS Atlanta is proud of the members who generously shared their time, expertise, and enthusiasm to help showcase Atlanta's hospitality and world-class transit network to a global audience.

PAST EVENTS















Photos of WTS Atlanta Chapter volunteers serving as MARTA Ambassadors at various stations.

PAST EVENTS



Photo of WTS Atlanta Board members.

PAST EVENTS

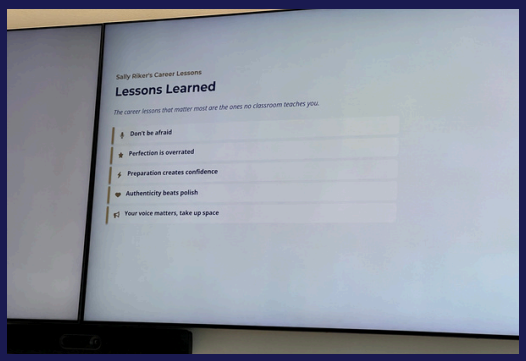
Public Speaking with Sally Riker

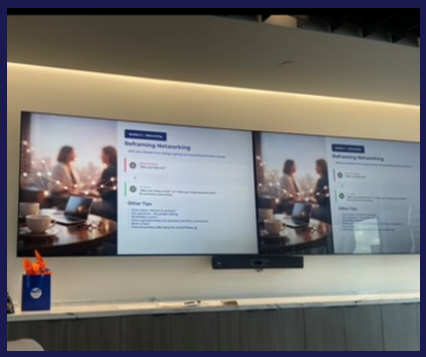


By: Iris Ortiz



On July 15, 2026, the WTS Atlanta Chapter once again welcomed Sally Riker, VP of Strategy & Growth, Atlas to facilitate a fabulous professional development workshop. *Present with Purpose* - "Building Confidence for Communicating in Professional Settings" provided enhanced knowledge on the impact and importance of public speaking. The Program was structured around Presentation Confidence, Managing Nerves, Conversation Starters, Meetings, Reframing Networking, and Client Interactions. Sally's professionalism and experience created an interactive atmosphere for the WTS Atlanta Chapter members who used this workshop to ask questions and perform workshop activities.





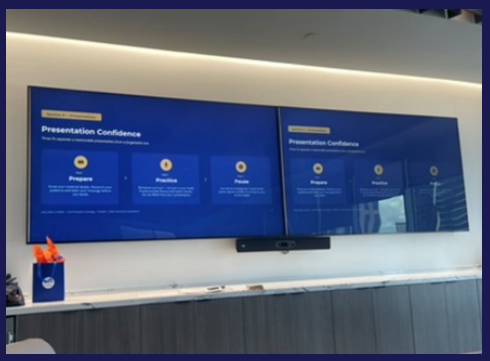


Photo above: Sally Riker, VP of Strategy & Growth at Atlas

PAST EVENTS

North Fulton County Happy Hour with True North 400 and ACEC GA



By: Iris Ortiz



Photos of attendees mingling during Happy Hour at Hyde Brewing

On August 12, WTS Atlanta, True North 400, and ACEC Georgia co-hosted a happy hour in North Fulton County, the last of a series of events designed to bring networking opportunities outside the perimeter (OTP), where many of our members live and work. Thank you to local leaders and guests who took time from their busy agendas and joined us (Sara Leaders, PE, Ann Hanlon, Alexandra Valdes, Kali Boatright).

Thank you Kristin Rome Winzeler and Chandler Baker for co-sponsoring/co-hosting the event. Attendees had the most amazing time catching up with colleagues and making new connections. And thank you Sherl White, DBIA and Mackensie Barbee, PE for all your work planning and executing the event!

PAST EVENTS

















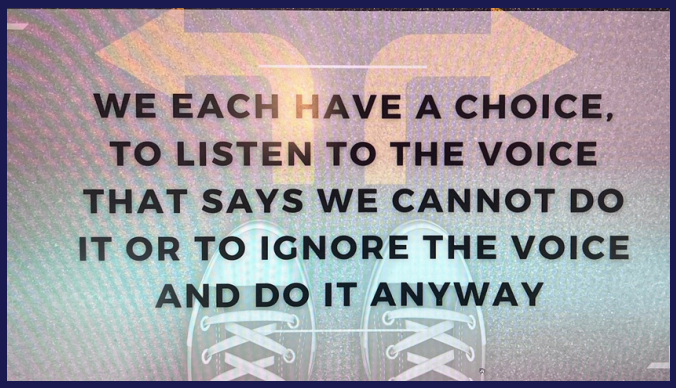
Photos of attendees at Hyde Brewing

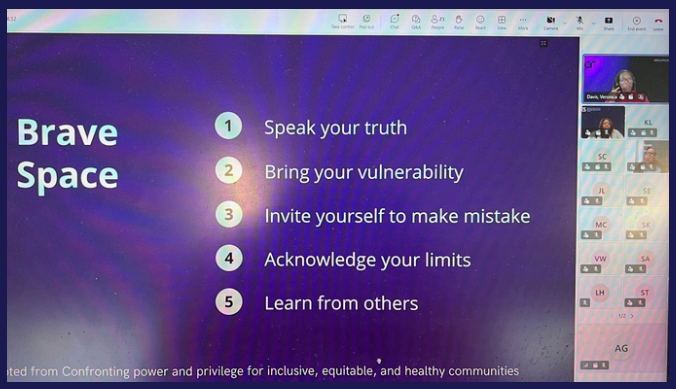
PAST EVENTS

Book Talk with Veronica Davis



By: Keri Lee





Photos of virtual book talk session.

The Access & Engagement Committee was honored to host author Veronica O. Davis on August 18th for a virtual discussion on her book *Inclusive Transportation, A Manifesto for Repairing Divided Communities.* Davis highlighted the historical inequities in transportation planning and shared practical strategies for creating systems that better serve all communities. Her insights sparked meaningful conversation about how transportation professionals, community leaders, and residents can work together to reshape mobility in ways that repair past harms and support thriving, connected communities. Thank you to everyone who joined us for this engaging session.

PAST EVENTS

Transportation YOU - August 2026



By: Martika Johanson-Murray



Photos of WTS Atlanta Transportation YOU students.

On August 31st, WTS Atlanta kicked off the 2026 Fall Semester of Transportation YOU! We saw some familiar faces, and welcomed new students to our program. In our session we shared upcoming details related to the TYOU Scholarship and our Fall calendar meeting dates. Additionally, our 2026 Capital Summit recipients, Keylam and Allyson presented to the class their experience from the Summit. We closed out our August meeting with a little speed career networking activity. Each group heard a little background about some of our mentors, ask additional questions related to their professional journey, and seek advice that they could apply in high school & beyond.

We are extremely lucky to have dedicated volunteers supporting our chapter. Thank you Ruthie Jones, Angela Nguyen, P.E., Trang Mai, AICP, Whytne Stevens, and Tonia Brown for joining us!

PAST EVENTS

Transportation YOU - September 2026



By: Martika Johanson-Murray



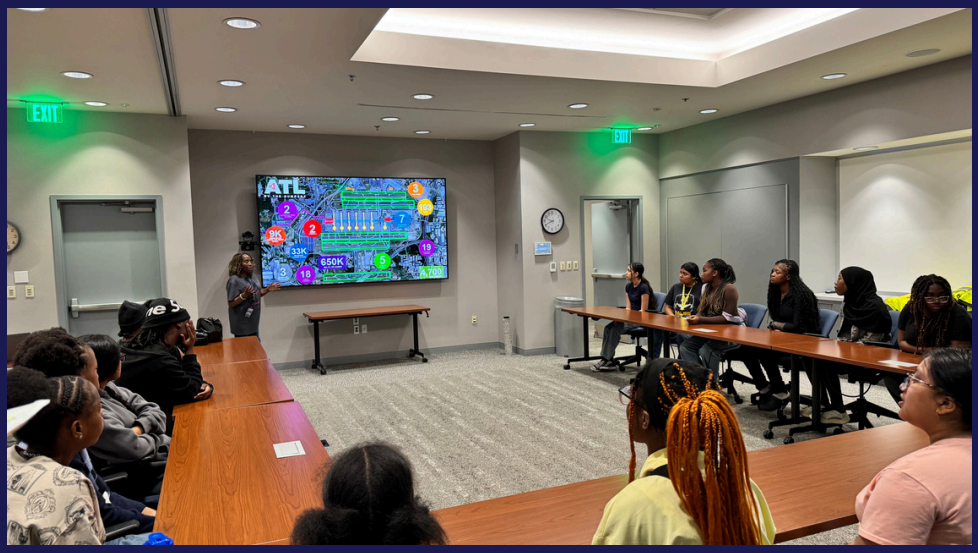
Photo above: An ATL Plane Train in the maintenance yard

On September 16th, WTS Atlanta Transportation YOU teamed up with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) for an exclusive behind the scenes tour for our young scholars at Mays HS. We learned about some of the various projects taking place (Concourse D, new South Parking Deck) and learned about how planes get from gate to runway by reducing routes that cross active runways.

We then went to the Plane Train Maintenance Yard and learned about operation, what it takes to service the cars, future employment opportunities and how they are powered. Next we visited the control room with all the SCADA monitors. We also had the opportunity to watch planes land in front of us, from Radar Hill.

Lastly, we had an interactive lunch and learn session with amazing women that shared their career journeys with our group. No two paths were linear, nor approached the same path. However, they all were open to aviation, had mentors and champions exposing them to new professions, and excelled in academics. All important takeaways for our TYOU group. Thank you to Ms. Shelley Lamar and her team for bringing this amazing unique experience to life.

PAST EVENTS













Photos of TYOU students on the tour.

PAST EVENTS

Multimodal Exchange Breakfast



By: Iris Ortiz



WTS Atlanta hosted another fantastic Multimodal Exchange event on September 30th!

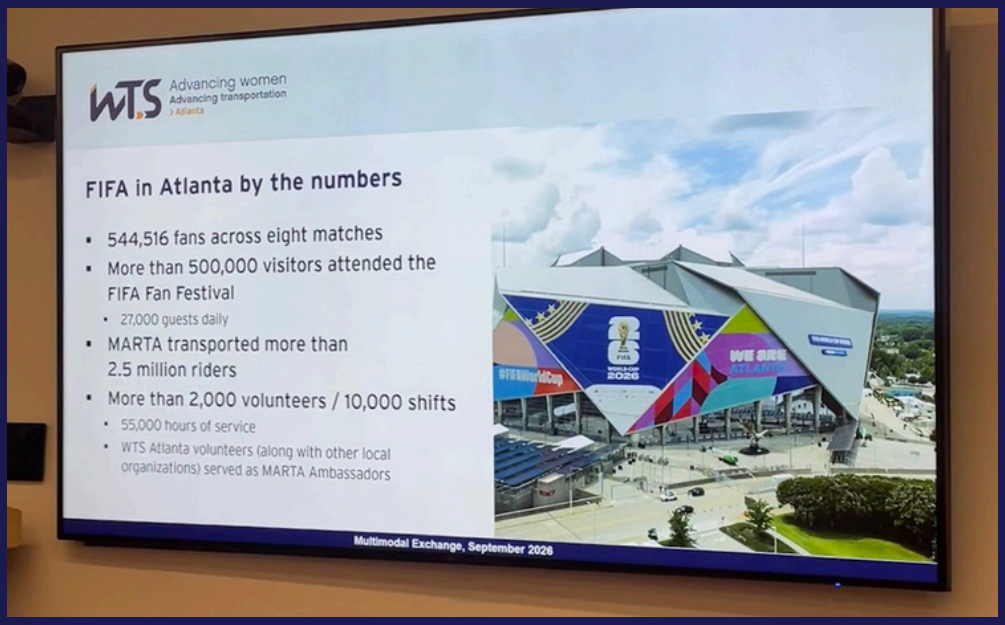
Every year, this event brings leaders from ARC, the Atlanta Beltline, the City of Atlanta DOT, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, MARTA, and SRTA/Georgia TEA and it demonstrates the importance of collaboration across transportation agencies in the region. There was no shortage of exciting topics: ARC's LINK trip, reflections on the FIFA World Cup, the new Georgia TEA, the ATL Spoke service and the future of the Atlanta Beltline.

Grateful to our panelists, Jannine Miller, Lenor Bromberg, PE, F.ASCE, Ricky Smith, Jonathan Hunt, Joe Iacobucci and Eric Johnson for sharing their perspectives and to everyone who joined us.

Photo left: The multi-agency panel which includes representatives from ARC, SRTA/GTEA, Atlanta Beltline, MARTA, H-JAIA, and City of Atlanta DOT
Photo top: WTS Atlanta Board members and multi-agency panelists

PAST EVENTS













Photos from Multimodal Exchange event.

PAST EVENTS

I-20/I-285 West Interchange Project Tour



By: Sherl White & Iris Ortiz



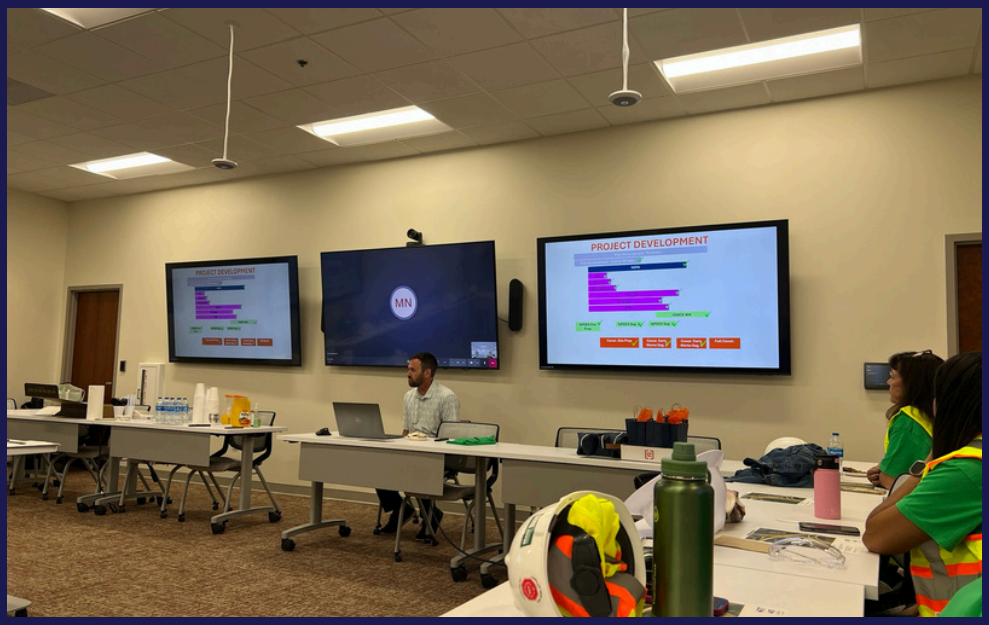
A special thanks to CW Matthews Contracting for conducting a field tour of the West Interchange Project for our WTS Atlanta Chapter members on October 2, 2026. This project will reconstruct the I-285/I-20 West Interchange and add additional lanes along I-285 and I-20 in Fulton and Cobb counties. In 2025, the American Transportation Research Institute ranked this interchange as the 10th-worst truck bottleneck in the country. As a GDOT P3 project, the benefits include improving traffic flow, reducing congestion, and enhancing operations at this system-to-system interchange. Substantial completion is anticipated for 2030 with enhanced mobility for motorists and freight throughout the western Atlanta Metro area.

This project is the recipient of the WTS Atlanta 2026 Innovative Transportation Solutions award, in recognition of sixteen women leading key project functions and who helped advance environmental review, permitting, community engagement, and construction milestones.

Photo left: View of I-285 and I-20 construction

PAST EVENTS













Photos of attendees at WIC project tour.

PAST EVENTS













Photos of attendees and project escorts at WIC project tour.

PAST EVENTS







Photos of WIC project tour.

PAST EVENTS

IBTTA Women in Tolling (WIT) / WTSI Workforce Development Webinar

By: Iris Ortiz

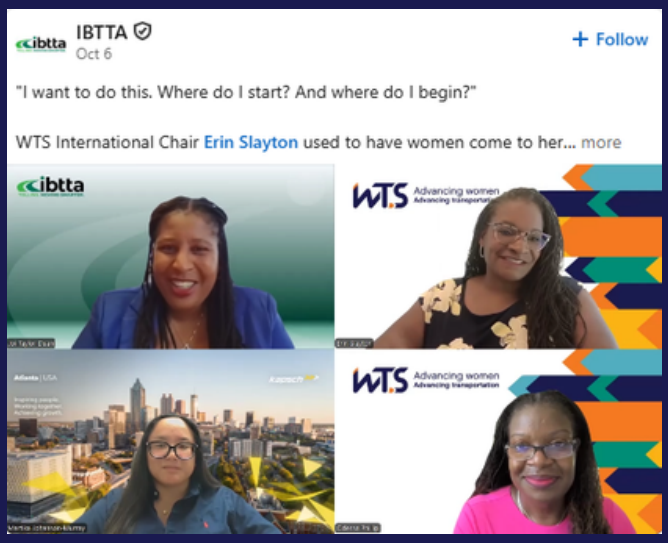
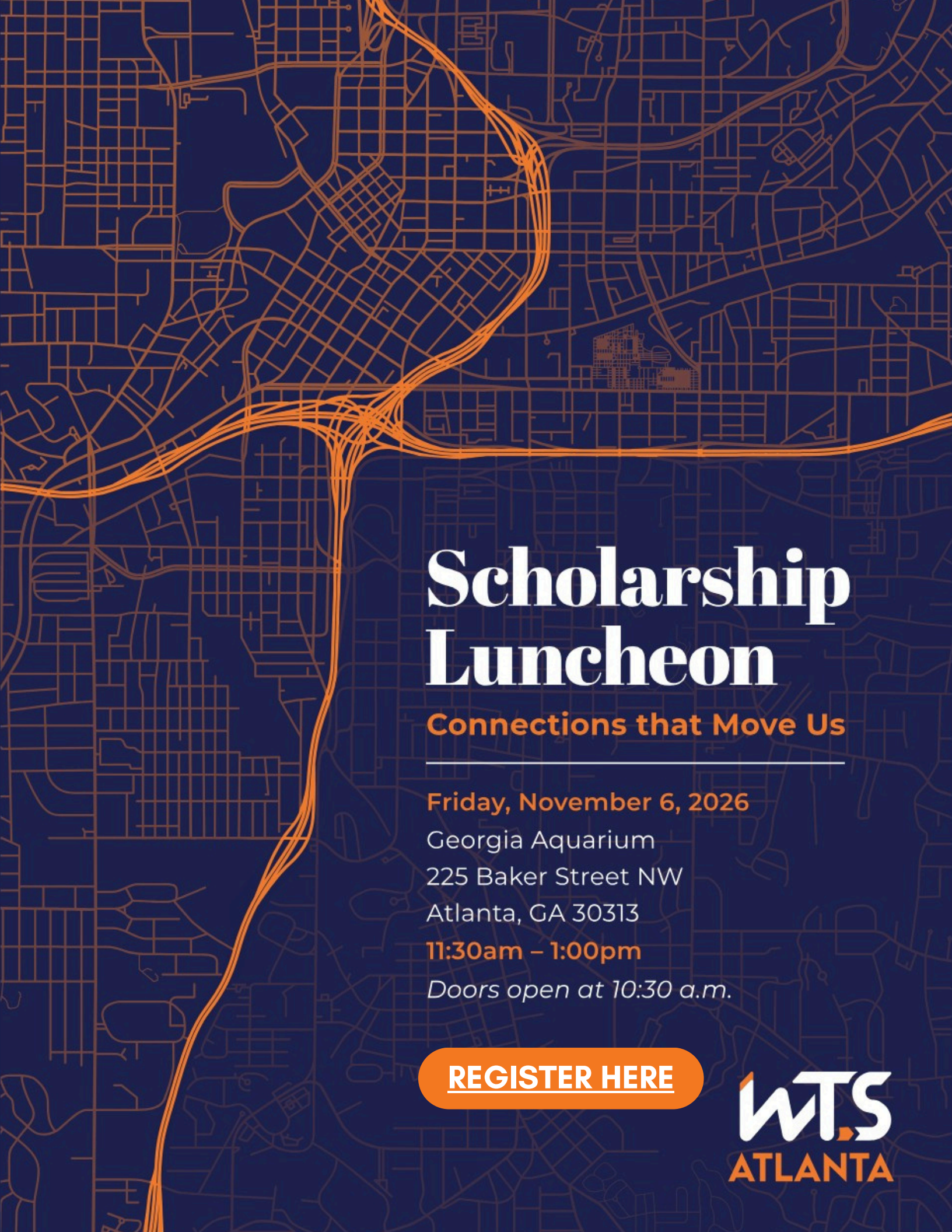


Photo above: WTS Atlanta Chapter Transportation YOU chair, Martika Johanson-Murray participating in virtual meeting.

Thank you International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) and the Women in Tolling (WIT) Council for featuring WTS Atlanta Transportation YOU chair Martika Johanson-Murray on this joint WIT/WTS webinar on Workforce Development. Investing in the next generation is one of the most important things we do at WTS Atlanta, and the Transportation YOU program is a model for engaging high school students introducing them to the many career opportunities available in transportation.

In addition to sponsoring students to attend the annual Capital Summit in Washington, DC, WTS Atlanta will once again award a Transportation YOU Scholarship at our 2026 Scholarships & Awards Luncheon. This scholarship has not been awarded since 2020, and we are thrilled to bring it back!


Scholarship Luncheon
Connections that Move Us
Friday, November 6, 2026
Georgia Aquarium
225 Baker Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30313
11:30am – 1:00pm
Doors open at 10:30 a.m.
REGISTER HERE
WTS ATLANTA

HELPING MAMAS
ATLANTA

Volunteer Event

Saturday, November 14, 2026 | 2150 Northmont Parkway, Duluth, GA | 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

REGISTER HERE

Donation Drive

Critical Need Items:

Diapers (sizes 2–6) , Pull-ups, Baby hygiene products, Bibs, Blankets, etc.

Drop-off Locations:

CERM (Nov 2 - Nov 13) | MARTA (Nov 4 - Nov 13) | HNTB (Nov 11 – Nov 13)

DONATION DRIVE DETAILS

WTS Advancing women Advancing transportation › Atlanta

2026 WTS Atlanta Upcoming Events Calendar

January	February	March
Future Cities (1/17) Membership Meeting (1/28)	Black History Month Event - Guided tour of Atlanta History Center by Dr. La'Neice Littleton (2/26)	ACEC Introduce a Girl to Engineering (3/21) Dress for Success Clothing Drive (3/23 - 3/27)
April	**May**	**June**
WTS Atlanta/Clayton County Happy Hour (4/9) Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport Tour (4/17)	WTS Annual Conference (5/5-7, Los Angeles) Habitat for Humanity Build (5/9)	Midyear Membership Townhall (6/27) MARTA Ambassador/WTS Collaboration for FIFA
July	**August**	**September**
Workshop w/ Sally Riker (7/15) MARTA Ambassador/WTS Collaboration for FIFA	WTS/ACEC/True North 400 Happy Hour (8/12) Access & Engagement - Virtual Presentation w/ Veronica Davis (8/18)	Multimodal Exchange Event (9/30)
October	**November**	**December**
West Interchange Project Tour (10/2) GDOT Board Breakfast (10/15) Moo Moos & Mimosas (10/17)	Scholarship and Awards Luncheon (11/6) Helping Mamas (11/14) Marietta Community Food Center (11/24)	PAWS Atlanta (12/5) Annual Holiday Party (12/10)

View Events Here

Not a member yet? Join at Membership | WTS (wtsinternational.org)

Member Opportunities

WTS Atlanta Mission

WTS Atlanta seeks to close the workforce gap in the Atlanta regional transportation industry by promoting lifelong careers in transportation for women. By attracting, retaining and advancing women in the industry, WTS Atlanta will be the most recognized network of transportation subject matter experts.

Get Involved!!

There are many ways to get involved this year! From joining a WTS Atlanta committee to participating in local events throughout the year. If you were unable to attend this year's membership event, take a moment to view the presentation below.

Want to learn more about our amazing benefits, like professional and leadership development, networking, educational programming, volunteering and mentorship, and events? Please contact our Vice President of Membership, Amanda von Oldenburg at Amanda.vonOldenburg@atkinsrealis.com.

View Membership Presentation Here

Volunteer Sign up Sheet



Connect with WTS Atlanta

We love connecting with our WTS community on social media. Please follow, like and share WTS Atlanta! Also, check out our industry **job postings here.**

Not a member yet? Join at Membership | WTS (wtsinternational.org)

Member Opportunities

WTS International Vision

Equity and access for women in transportation.

WTS International Mission

WTS attracts, sustains, connects and advances women's careers to strengthen the transportation industry.

Get Involved!!

Check out these WTS International events for 2026:

WTS International Chair's Reception at TRB Annual Meeting

WTS Workshops & Webinars

WTS International Annual Conference

WTS Capital Summit

WTS Signature Leadership Training

WTS Chapter Leadership Summit

For more information on these events:

View Events Here

Not a member yet? Join at Membership | WTS (wtsinternational.org)



Track our progress on the donation thermometer here:
Fundraising Wall | WTS Foundation | GiveSmart Fundraise

In 2024, the WTS Foundation awarded approximately $800,000 in scholarship across all Chapters and at the WTSI level. WTS Atlanta awarded $17,500 in scholarships in 2024.

The WTS Atlanta Chapter has awarded 68 scholarships since 2010, and a total of $100,000 in scholarships since 2020.

Thank you for your donation and support!

Connect with us on our LinkedIn Page

Out with OLD...IN with the NEW
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