



Advancing women
Advancing transportation
› Connecticut

Transportation Mini-Series

October 16, 2025

Event Information:

Topics:

- » Slow Down Skills: The Non-Negotiables of Strong, Sustainable Leadership
- » Turning Down the Temperature: Strengthening Collaboration Across Advocacy, Policy and Practice
- » Innovating Transportation
- » Empowering Leadership and Growth
- » Shaping the Future of Transportation

Date & Time:

Thursday, October 16, 2025

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Location:

Double Tree Hilton Hotel
42 Century Drive
Bristol, Connecticut 06010

Plenary Session

Turning Down the Temperature: *Strengthening Collaboration Across Advocacy, Policy and Practice*

The goal of *Turning Down the Temperature: Strengthening Collaboration Across Advocacy, Policy, and Practice* is to focus on communication and coordination, not policy debate or political advocacy.

Our intent is to:

- Highlight common communication breakdowns between advocates, policymakers, practitioners, and the public.
- Share practical strategies for building trust and collaboration across roles.
- Surface constructive models for dialogue that *help transportation decisions succeed*.

The conversation is designed to be nonpartisan and solutions oriented. Each panelist is invited to speak from their professional perspective and real-world experience. We will not be taking positions on specific legislation, endorsing particular advocacy campaigns, or framing any participant as a political actor.

Moderator:

- » Kate Rozen, Toole Design

Panelists:

- » Aimee Berger- Girvalo, State Representative
- » Matt Hart, CRCOG, Executive Director
- » John Moritz, CT Mirror
- » Jay Stange, Active Transportation Advocate
- » Josh Bernegger, Chairperson, CT Police Chiefs Association (CPCA)

Moderator: Kate Rozen, Toole Design



Kate is a transportation planner focused on advancing sustainable, people-centered mobility through active transportation, policy strategy, and community engagement. She specializes in electric bicycle program design and evaluation, multimodal planning, and equitable access to transportation options.

At Toole Design, Kate supports public and private sector clients by leading stakeholder engagement, analyzing mobility networks, and contributing to the development of bike and pedestrian infrastructure plans that reflect community needs and environmental goals.



State Representative Aimee Berger-Girvalo

State Representative Aimee Berger-Girvalo was elected in November 2020 to represent the 111th District in Ridgefield. She is currently in her third term. Aimee is a graduate of UMass Amherst.

Throughout her career, she has managed multi- million-dollar restaurant and retail businesses, worked as a preschool teacher, public school special ed paraeducator, and a behavior therapist serving children on the autism spectrum and their families. Raised by a mother who served as an Army nurse during the Vietnam War, Aimee has been civically and politically engaged since childhood, serving as an advocate for those in need for as long as she can remember. Aimee serves as Chair of the Transportation Committee and as a member of the Public Health Committee and the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee.

Additionally, she is the chair of the Transportation Bonding Subcommittee. Aimee is a member of the Bipartisan Women's Caucus, the Climate Caucus, and the Intellectual and Developmental Disability Caucus.

A resident of Ridgefield for more than 20 years, Aimee has two beautiful children: a daughter who graduated from college and works in the nonprofit world, and a son who is attending college in Rhode Island.



Matt Hart, J.D., MPA, CRCOG

Matt Hart is the Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), which serves 38 municipalities and a population of 976,248 in greater Hartford.

Matt is an experienced executive who champions high performance government, collaboration, and innovation. He is passionate about public service, management, and leadership. His current policy priorities include housing attainability, Vision Zero (safety for all road users), environmental planning, and economic vitality.

Previously, Matt served as the Town Manager in West Hartford and Mansfield, Connecticut. He is a veteran of the US Army and teaches Local Government Leadership & Management at UConn's School of Public Policy.

Matt earned his JD and MPA from UCONN, and his BA from SUNY Potsdam. He loves all things local and regional government and can often be found in his spare time cycling or hiking the capital region's scenic trails.



John Moritz, CT Mirror

John covers energy and the environment for CT Mirror, a beat that has taken him from wind farms off the coast of Block Island to foraging for mushrooms in the Litchfield Hills and many places in between. Prior to joining CT Mirror, he was a statewide reporter for the Hearst

Connecticut Media Group and before that, he covered politics for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette in Little Rock. A native of Norwalk, John earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science from Temple University.



Jay Stange, Transportation Consultant

Jay Stange is an active transportation consultant and road safety advocate who lives in West Hartford, CT, with his wife and two kids. A former high school math teacher who believes good nutrition and exercise are critical for successful students, he volunteers to support elementary and middle school bike buses in the Capital Region. His professional clients include Shoreline Greenway Trail and the

New Haven Coalition for Active Transportation. Jay serves on the Vision Zero Advisory Task Force for the Town of West Hartford. Since arriving in CT in 2020, he's worked on numerous bills at the Connecticut General Assembly, including initiatives supporting affordable housing and transit-oriented development, automated traffic enforcement, and equitable bus fares.



Joshua Bernegger, CT Police Chiefs Association

Chief Bernegger began his law enforcement career with the Naugatuck Police Department in 1997, retiring as Deputy Chief of Police after serving for 21 years. Chief Bernegger was hired by the Watertown Police Department in 2019 to serve as Deputy Chief of Police, and was appointed as Chief of Police in 2021.

Chief Bernegger holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Eastern Connecticut State University and a Masters of Business Administration from Post University. Chief Bernegger is a proud graduate of Session #255 of the FBI National Academy, and holds Municipal Legal Traffic Authority certification through the Connecticut Transportation Institute. Chief Bernegger has focused his decision-making around three areas of emphasis: 1) The wellness of his officers and staff, 2) the wellness of the community he serves, and 3) traffic safety.

Under his leadership, the Watertown (CT) Police Department earned consecutive “Serve-well, Be well” awards from the Connecticut Police Chief’s Association, as well as Connecticut’s top tier of professional law enforcement accreditation.

Chief Bernegger currently serves as chairman of the Connecticut Police Chief’s Association’s Traffic Safety Committee, and is an appointed member of Connecticut’s Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee. Chief Bernegger also serves as a member of PAARI’s Public Safety Council and is an active participant in the Litchfield County Opioid Taskforce. Chief Bernegger is proud to have Watertown selected as a pilot community for the *Community and Law Enforcement for Addiction Recovery (CLEAR)* program in Connecticut.

Track 1 – Innovating Transportation

AM Session 1

Critical Crossings: Major Bridge Projects Over Connecticut's Rivers

This presentation will discuss rehabilitating and preserving Connecticut's major river crossing bridges through the CTDOT Major Bridge Program. The CTDOT Major Bridge Unit, together with CHA, will illustrate the importance and success of this important collaborative initiative to extend the service life of critical transportation structures across Connecticut.

With a focus on the rehabilitation of the Dexter Coffin Bridge, located in central Connecticut, the presenters will discuss innovative rehabilitation techniques such as the use of Ultra-High-Performance Concrete (UHPC). UHPC was first used on the Dexter Coffin Bridge to encase the bottom flange to address flange local buckling, negative moment strengthening, and pack rust. The purpose of this rehabilitation is to extend the service life of the structure and increase the load rating capacity through a bridge rehabilitation.

The presenters will also share examples of collaborative and innovative techniques used on other bridges, including:

- Bulkeley - 9-span stone masonry and reinforced concrete arch bridge
- Founders -11-span multi-girder bridge
- Bissell -14-span multi-girder bridge
- Tomlinson - six approach spans and one movable truss span I-84 Flyover in Hartford – 9-span curved steel box girders
- Mohegan-Pequot Bridge - 7-span steel girder bridge
- Big Foot/Little Foot - two 3-span post-tensioned concrete multi-cell box girders

All of these examples involve bridge rehabilitations, which involve repairing, strengthening, or upgrading an existing bridge to extend its service life and ensure its safety and functionality. All are also critical river crossings in the state.

Presenters:

- » Susan Mendola, CTDOT
- » Jen Pixley, P.E., CHA



Susan Mendola, CTDOT

Susan Mendola is a Major Structures Project Engineer with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. She has over 10 years of design experience with the Division of Bridges, serving originally as a Design Engineer with the State Bridge Design Unit and currently as a Project Engineer with the Major Structures Unit.



Jen Pixley, P.E. , CHA

Jen Pixley, P.E. is a Project Manager and Project Engineer at Clough Harbour and Associates, LLP. (CHA). with over 10 years of experience in design and project management on bridge rehabilitation projects. She currently manages and also serves as the technical lead on projects for the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Major Bridge Unit and Consultant Liaison Engineering (CLE) Program.

Jen is a licensed Professional Engineer in Connecticut and is currently managing key bridge rehabilitation projects including the Founders Bridge, Bissell Bridge, and Big Foot and Little Foot Bridges. She also led the CHA design team on the recently completed Dexter Coffin Bridge Rehabilitation project. Her expertise spans all phases of project delivery, from bridge inspection and design to construction oversight.

Track 1 – Innovating Transportation

PM Session 1

Visualizing the Future for Greater Hartford:

Advancing Mobility through the Greater Hartford Mobility Program (GHMP)

The Greater Hartford Mobility Program (GHMP) represents a bold, \$16 billion investment in the future of transportation for the region. Building on the foundational work of the Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS), the GHMP encompasses a suite of transformative infrastructure projects designed to improve connectivity, safety, and multimodal access across the region.

This presentation will provide a comprehensive overview of the GHMP's evolution, beginning with the historical context and planning milestones that shaped the program's vision. Attendees will gain insight into the status of the Core Components—including City Link, River Gateway, Founders Gateway, and the Route 2 to I-91 Direct Connection—each representing a critical node in the region's mobility network.

We will explore the engineering and planning progress of these major projects, from traffic baselining and cost risk analysis to environmental reviews and staging strategies. The session will also highlight a selection of early action projects, showcasing how smaller-scale interventions are already delivering tangible benefits and laying the groundwork for broader system integration.

Through visualizations, data insights, and strategic framing, this presentation will illustrate how GHMP is not only reshaping infrastructure but also redefining how Greater Hartford moves, connects, and grows.

Presenters:

- » Christian Nielsen, ENV SP, AECOM
- » Desirae Valentin, RSP I, ENV SP, AECOM
- » Ginger Manning, AECOM
- » Marc Foster, P.E., AECOM

**Christian Nielsen, ENV SP, AECOM**

Christian Nielsen, is a technical DPM and planning lead for the Greater Hartford Mobility Study/ Program (GHMS/P) with more than 8 years of planning experience, spending almost half that time working on Greater Hartford. Christian is a transportation planner and sustainability professional based in western Massachusetts. He holds master's degrees in Regional Planning (MRP) and Sustainability Science (MS3) from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst as well as a certificate in Climate Change, Hazards, and Green Infrastructure Planning. His experience includes preparing short- and long-term planning documents with a focus on improving the effectiveness of transportation systems.

**Desirae Valentin, RSP I, ENV SP, AECOM**

Desirae Valentin is a transportation planner with AECOM and has served as the DPM for the Greater Hartford Mobility Study/Program (GHMS/P) since 2022. She holds a Master's in Regional Planning (MRP) from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has more than 8 years of experience in public and private planning sectors. Before joining AECOM, she worked for a non-profit housing developer and served as the housing development coordinator in Chelsea, Massachusetts focusing on residential rehabilitation and construction, state and federal grant administration, and public engagement. At AECOM, Ms. Valentin supports the development of short- and long-range transportation planning documents, with an emphasis on equitably enhancing transportation systems.



Virginia (Ginger) Manning, AECOM

Ginger Manning is the Public Involvement Lead for the Greater Hartford Mobility Program (GHMP). For the past eighteen years she has specialized in public outreach for the transportation sector and supports complex public outreach projects with highly effective stakeholder communication, from public hearings, workshop and event planning to website development, and outreach material design and copywriting.

In addition to the GHMP public outreach efforts in Greater Hartford, she currently manages public outreach for CTDOT's I-91, I-691, Route 15 Interchange Improvements, in Meriden, CT and supports the Route 8 Design Build Project in Seymour, Ansonia, Derby and Shelton. Past CTDOT projects for which she led noteworthy public outreach initiatives include the high-profile I-84 Waterbury Widening Project; the Rochambeau Bridge Reconstruction Project in Newtown and Southbury; and the I-91 Charter Oak Bridge Project in Hartford, East Hartford, and Wethersfield.



Marc Foster, P.E., AECOM

Marc Foster is a Civil Engineer with over 12 years of experience in designing rural and urban infrastructure projects, including freeways and local roads, and multi-use trails. He has worked with multiple state DOTs, municipalities, and the Federal Highway Administration across several states. His expertise includes geometric highway design, 3D corridor modeling, plan preparation, and construction staging.

Marc currently serves as the Lead Highway Designer for the Greater Hartford Mobility Study/Program, where he specializes in geometric design and 3D modeling using OpenRoads technology.

Track 1 – Innovating Transportation

PM Session 2

Understanding Local Impacts During Major Interchange Reconstruction

Jacobs used big data technology in an innovative way to understand the impacts to the adjacent road system during significant lane capacity reductions from construction on a major interstate highway. The interchange of Interstates 90/95 is currently under construction in the towns of Newton and Weston Massachusetts. Two recent construction stages required Interstate 90 to be reduced from three lanes to one lane in both directions for an entire weekend. The StreetLight data platform captured metrics such as vehicle travel times, volumes, and speeds for mainline as well as secondary roadways in the area. Volume and speed metrics were captured for the major collectors and arterials and compared to historic metrics. One interesting finding is that drivers appeared to be very well-informed of the lane closure. This was evidenced by higher-than-average volumes on arterial roads further away from the construction zone, and relatively small increases in volumes on exit ramps adjacent to the lane closure compared to the decrease in volume on I-90.

This presentation will spotlight this innovative method of collecting and using data to understand travel metrics and impacts to local communities during a major construction project. It will showcase the data captured from recent lane closures for the I-90/95 project, including the diversion routes of drivers, origin-destination patterns, travel times, and volume and speed metrics. Information will also be presented about the platform we used to gather the near real time data and how it can be used to optimize construction windows and plan better detours.

Presenter:

- » Erika Lindeberg, P.E., PTOE, RSP1 (Jacobs)



Erika Lindeberg, P.E., PTOE, RSP1, Jacobs

Erika Lindeberg is a Senior Project Manager and Traffic and Safety Engineering Group Lead at Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., a global leader providing services in advanced manufacturing, cities and places, energy, environmental, life sciences, transportation, and water. Within the transportation group,

Erika leads the Traffic Engineering and Highway Safety team for the northeast. She manages multiple highway safety engineering projects and is the lead traffic engineer on various projects including large scale major highway interchange reconstruction from New Jersey to Maine. She also performs quality assurance, business development and staff hiring and mentoring. Prior to joining Jacobs in 2022, she worked for 28 years at the Connecticut Department of Transportation including her last five years as Principal Engineer in the Division of Traffic Engineering.

She is a licensed Professional Engineer and has earned certifications as a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE) and Roadway Safety Professional (RSP1). Erika currently holds several positions in professional engineering organizations including secretary of the WTS (Advancing Women in Transportation) Connecticut chapter; secretary of the ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) Connecticut section; Chairperson of the Regulatory/Warning technical committee for the NCUTCD (National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices); and a member of the TRB (Transportation Research Board) Pedestrian committee. Erika has served UCONN as an adjunct professor and she also volunteers to assist a senior civil engineering design team.

Track 1 – Innovating Transportation

PM Session 3

I-84 Danbury Flex Lane

The session will discuss this innovation transportation solution along a major highway corridor i.e. I-84 in Danbury. This project came out as a break-out project during the I-84 Danbury PEL Study.

The concept proposes to use the existing highway footprint and allows the use of the median left shoulder for travel in the peak commuter travel direction.

Technology elements will be implemented to support the use of the Flex Lane.

Presenters:

- » Kevin Burnham, P.E., CTDOT
- » Sharat Kalluri, P.E., PTOE, PMP, CDM Smith



Kevin Burnham, P.E., CTDOT

Mr. Burnham is a Transportation Supervising Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation in the Consultant Design – Major Projects Unit with 40 years of experience in planning, engineering, and implementation of transportation infrastructure.

He is the Project Manager responsible for the I-84 Flex Lane development and the Greater Hartford Mobility Program's City Link and River Gateway pre-NEPA activities. Prior to his tenure with CTDOT, Mr. Burnham worked at the Connecticut Transportation Institute at the University of Connecticut; the City of Hartford, Connecticut, as their Director of Public Works and Traffic Engineer; and as a consulting engineer for TransCore and GM2.



Sharat Kalluri, PE, PTOE, PMP, CDM Smith

Sharat Kalluri is a Senior Project Manager at CDM Smith with over 30 years of experience in transportation planning and design on a variety of roadway projects including local, state and federal programs.

He is currently serving as the Consultant Project Manager for the I-84 Flex Lane project in Danbury.

Track 2 – Empowering Leadership & Growth

AM Session 1

Exploring Career Paths in Transportation: *Public and Private Sector Partnerships*

Join us for an engaging session that will begin with an interactive audience poll, followed by panelists who will share their personal career experiences and viewpoints. This conversation will spotlight the unique opportunities and key takeaways from working in both public and private transportation sectors. The goal of this session is to equip attendees with valuable insights to help make informed career choices and inspire long-term commitment to the transportation industry. The session will conclude with a Q&A, giving the audience a chance to ask questions and further explore these career pathways.

Moderator:

- » Alicia Leite, WSP

Panelists:

- » Kim Lesay, CTDOT
- » Erika Lindeberg, P.E., PTOE, RSP1, Jacobs (Bio previously featured)
- » Sharon Okoye, PMP, CTDOT
- » Jacob Argiro, P.E., HNTB



Moderator: Alicia Leite, WSP

Alicia Leite holds the position of Assistant Vice President at WSP USA. She manages strategic projects for WSP's Advisory Services Organizational Transformation team, providing clients across the country with services such as strategic planning, organizational development, process

improvements, decision-making framework design, organizational structure and governance, workforce assessments, procurement advisory, and communication strategies. Alicia is also the Local Engagement Leader for WSP's Connecticut offices.

Before joining WSP, Alicia worked at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) for 10.5 years, serving in roles including Transit Manager in the Bureau of Public Transportation, where she oversaw planning, marketing, and customer experience for bus and rail services. Previously, she was Supervising Transportation Planner for the Customer Experience Unit, Assistant to the Public Transportation Bureau Chief, and spent nearly two years as the department's Legislative Liaison in the Commissioner's Office. Her early years at CTDOT involved working as a Transportation Planner, participating in the launch of Connecticut's first Bus Rapid Transit System, CTfastrak, and CTrail Hartford Line service.

Alicia completed the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) in 2018 and currently serves as an APTA ELP National Mentor. She is also a mentor for the WTS Connecticut Chapter's Mentor Program. Alicia earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Western Connecticut State University and a master's in public administration from the University of New Haven. She was also recognized in Mass Transit Magazine's 40 Under 40, class of 2022.



Kim Lesay, CTDOT

Kimberly Lesay has over 30 years of experience in the transportation industry. She started her career as a Connecticut Career Trainee in the Office of Environmental Planning, performing field work and compliance inspection, working her way to eventually become a supervisor.

She spent 18 years with the Department before transitioning to the private sector. While at BL Companies, Kimberly served as a Senior Project Manager and led environmental and permitting issues for multiple markets including Public Infrastructure, Commercial/ Retail Development and Energy Sectors. She became a principal at the firm and was responsible for projects in multiple states including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey.

Kimberly returned to the Department to become the Assistant Planning Director of Environmental Planning and now holds the position of Bureau Chief of Policy & Planning. She leads over 140 team members responsible for regional and statewide planning efforts ranging from data collection and management, modeling and forecasting, statewide and environmental planning, as well as the Highway Safety Office. She prides herself in breaking down silos, improving processes and supporting her teams to improve transportation for our residents and those traveling through it.

Kimberly is a graduate of the AASHTO Executive Institute, the State Aspiring Leaders Executive Development Program, and is an Advisory Board member for WTS. She holds a bachelor's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Connecticut.



Sharon Okoye, PMP, CTDOT

Sharon Okoye is a Senior Transportation Engineer for the Connecticut Department of Transportation with over 30 years of varying experience, including extensive project management experience with federal aid programs and asset life-cycle planning for the Department's Public Transportation system.

Ms. Okoye led the development of the Department's first Tier 1 Transit TAMP and Tier 2 Group TAMP, completed in 2018.

Sharon currently serves as President for the Connecticut Chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, an organization that enhances workforce development, connects talent to opportunities, and uplifts all lived experience in the transportation industry. Sharon serves as Program Manager for Connecticut's Summer Transportation Institute Program, which provides oversight of local universities in administering two-week summer program for high school students to pique interest in transportation-related careers. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Southern New England Chapter of the Project Management Institute.

Sharon has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP).



Jacob Argiro, P.E., HNTB

Jake serves as the Office Leader for HNTB's Connecticut office and has more than 25 years of experience providing overall management and operations in civil/transportation engineering.

Currently he oversees an office of approximately 80 transportation professionals in the Rocky Hill office of HNTB. His experience includes project management, design and planning projects for highways and interchanges, rail, and transit. As a consultant, he has worked predominantly for CTDOT his entire career working with every unit in the Bureau of Engineering and Construction, as well as the Bureau of Rail and Transit. Over this time, Jake has worked on a number of notable projects in Connecticut including Walk Bridge, CTfastrak, the Hartford Line, the Mixmaster (New Mix) interchange and the Northbound Gold Star Bridge rehabilitation.

Track 2 – Empowering Leadership & Growth

PM Session 1

Leading with Purpose

The panel discussion will delve into the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) agency-wide inaugural Strategic-Plan which consists of employee satisfaction and retention. The panel discussion will focus on personal stories related to Leading with better collaboration and teamwork, Speak Truth to Power, and Mastering the Art of Managing Up.

This presentation aims to provide the audience with valuable guidance and insight based on story telling. There will be 3 scenarios for each area of consideration where the panelist will speak on their own experience, lessons learned, then engage the audience to gain insight on their approach based on the scenario presented.

The panel will have representation from CTDOT and leaders from organizations who have partnered with CTDOT, including women who completed the WTS Signature Leadership program, attended roundtables and share the impact of WTS. The panelist discussion will include inspiring storytelling for the audience and strategies that can help them and their teams on “Building a Team so strong, that you don’t know who the Leader is”.

. Moderator:

- » Trish Chastanet, PMP, CTDOT

Panelists:

- » Dylia Turley, CTDOT
- » Nicholas Rougeau, CTDOT
- » Haley Ferraiolo, Anchor & Crest



Moderator: Trish Chastanet, PMP, CTDOT

Trish Chastanet is a visionary leader with a proven track record in leading high-performing teams and developing innovative solutions. As a skilled Supply Chain and certified Project Management Professional with 11+ years of experience in procurement, strategic planning, supply chain management, and transportation, she brings a wealth of knowledge from her professional experience working in the private and public sector.

Trish has extensive experience in driving transformative change, strategic thinking, negotiating contracts, executing agreements, managing supplier relationships, and implementing cost optimization measures.

Trish is a graduate of the American Public Transportation (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) class of 2024 and serves as an APTA ELP National Mentor. Trish is a graduate of the WTS International Signature Leadership Program, class of 2024. Trish holds a bachelor's degree in International Business and master's degree in Technology Management from Central Connecticut State University.

Trish served as the 2025 COMTO CT Program Committee Chair where she spearheaded an inaugural 6-month Leading with Purpose Mentoring Program for transit professionals.

Trish enjoys engaging with transit professionals on finding opportunities to improve Public Transportation, and outside of work she loves outdoor adventures and competes in Spartan Races.



Nicholas Rougeau, CTDOT

Nicholas Rougeau is a Transportation Planner with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Nicholas began his career leading field operations for Governor Lamont's re-election campaign in New Haven and its suburbs.

In 2023, Nicholas entered the transit industry, where he draws on his community outreach experience in the political arena to forge and bolster relationships between Connecticut DOT and partner organizations. He has worked on a variety of projects, including Commuter Bus Operations, managing Park & Ride Lots, and, most recently, as Program Manager of the Statewide Insurance Consortium and lead Transportation Planner for the Veterans Stand Down Event. He has led with a focus on streamlining processes, equal access, strategic planning, and delivering high-quality transit services to Connecticut residents.



Dylia Turley, CTDOT

Dylia Turley began her career in transportation in 2002 first as a School Bus Driver for First Student in her local town of Manchester and then for Glastonbury School Bus Company. While working as a driver she also worked for Delta Airlines in different roles (Ticket Agent, Gate Agent and Baggage Claims) at Bradley International Airport for a year.

Dylia then went to work at *CTtransit* in 2008 as a Bus Operator. Through hard work and a desire to excel, she moved to the Supervisor ranks in 2013; and into the Superintendent of Transportation position in 2014. This last promotion was due to the need for additional leads as the new era started with the start-up of CT/ostrok.

Dylia is a Transportation Planner at the Connecticut Department of Transportation and works on in-house procurement projects, leading The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP), and provides support on the expansion of the Digital Bus Fare Pilot program. Dylia has recently been elected as the Treasurer of Connecticut Institute for Community Development (CICD) Puerto Rican Parade and is also part of the WTS Mentor Program.

Haley Ferraiolo, Anchor & Crest



Haley Ferraiolo is the Founder and Lead Career Coach at Anchor and Crest Coaching and Consulting. She has over 15 years of experience in global transportation and logistics at Fortune 100 companies including Amazon, Unilever, and PepsiCo.

Most recently, she served as Head of Carrier Performance and Escalations at Amazon, leading strategy and partnerships with over 40,000 3rd-party carriers across North America.

At Unilever, she managed outbound and international transportation, including semis, ocean freight, and freight forwarders, and earlier in her career at PepsiCo, she built expertise in supply chain leadership and operations. Haley's greatest passion has always been developing people and building high-performing teams. That passion inspired her to found Anchor & Crest, where she now helps professionals and leaders grow their influence, land the right opportunities, and thrive in their careers with clarity and confidence.

Track 2 – Empowering Leadership & Growth

PM Session 2

STEM on the Brink: *Bridging the Gap by Securing the Future of Transportation Infrastructure*

The transportation industry is facing a national security crisis. In our industry, the demand for scientists and engineers strains the ability to deliver on our projects putting our aging transportation infrastructure at risk for the next natural or man-made disaster. This demand stems from a significant labor shortage resulting from students not pursuing STEM degrees following high school combined with the Boomer generation retiring from the industry.

Secondary education curriculum is bounded by material to meet aptitude testing requirements. Unfortunately, this constrains educators from introducing or exposing students to STEM professions available in the AEC world, specifically in transportation. We, as professionals, have the opportunity to supplement the students' education by being influencers of our industry.

From mentoring to career shadowing, speaking at high schools to tapping current high school clubs for joint activities, there are numerous avenues to engage students. For instance, outreach via student engagement is an opportunity for students to develop leadership skills when we partner programs together. High schools have limited

resources and are eager to welcome STEM professionals from the industry to shed light on the myriad professions available and share exciting project experiences that will inspire the next generation of STEM professionals. In this session, we will explore why high school student engagement is critical, innovative ways to get in front of educators, and what resources are available to support your outreach effort. We will highlight some outreach best practices and examples of creative outreach activities bridging students to professionals in the transportation industry.

. **Presenter:**

» Marilyn Zenko, Terracon



Marilyn Zenko, Terracon

Marilyn Zenko is a Senior Associate for Terracon Consultants, Inc. She has been with Terracon for over 12 years. As an archaeologist and environmental planner, Marilyn shares her passion for mentoring students from her experience in the industry.

Marilyn's impact in STEM Outreach spans over a decade of dedicated service from her early leadership in the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Phoenix Post, where, as the Post President, she prioritized STEM outreach and launched the Post's first STEM Open House geared towards high school girls, to her current role with the Philadelphia Post, where she organizes K-12 STEM initiatives aligned with the SAME Strategic Plan.

In her community, Marilyn serves on the Board for the North Museum of Nature and Science in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and volunteers as a STEM Sister for the museum. In addition, Marilyn serves as a community member as a STEM Subject Matter Expert for the Manheim Township School District Guidance Advisory Council. She serves as a speaker for the High School's Annual Engineering Day and Freshman Academy programs.

In 2025, Marilyn was awarded the prestigious National STEM Outreach Champion Award from the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME). This national recognition honors Marilyn's unwavering commitment to advancing STEM education and outreach. As Chair Elect for the SAME National STEM Outreach Community of Interest, Marilyn continues to lead with passion and purpose, inspiring the next generation of STEM professionals across the country.

Marilyn is a proud mother of three adult daughters! Her oldest daughter works as an Environmental Planner for an engineering firm in Pennsylvania. Her middle daughter is a 2024 civil engineering graduate from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and works as Geotechnical Engineer in Connecticut, and her youngest daughter recently completed her freshman year of college.

Track 2 – Empowering Leadership & Growth

PM Session 3

Driven to Lead: *Breaking Barriers behind Eighteen Wheels*

This session will dive into the personal experiences and challenges faced by women in trucking.

Presenter:

» Alissa Ranno, DIA Complete Services



Alissa Ranno, DIA Complete Services

Fifteen years ago, Alissa Ranno climbed into the driver's seat as the first in her family. Now, she is proud to lead a woman-owned trucking company that's breaking barriers and inspiring change.

Alissa has extensive experience in on and off-road construction in CTDOT projects. She has been a major part of the construction and deconstruction of our roadways including plowing. She has worked on projects to build hospitals, community buildings and schools. She will be able to share her experience delivering goods throughout New York City and the impact that her business has had. Throughout her experience, she has been able to see a missed opportunity in the education of drivers and she would like to be a part of reshaping the standards for drivers moving forward by aligning with organizations in the transportation industry.

Track 3 – Shaping the Future of Transportation

AM Session 1

The Value of Meeting Community and Families

Where They Are for Projects and Studies: *How the new Mix PEL Study is Reconnecting the Community through Education*

This session explores the transformative power of meeting communities and families where they are, using the New Mix PEL Study in Waterbury as a dynamic case study. Rooted in a community-centered approach, the PEL Study reimagines how STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education and other learning events can be delivered to foster deeper connections, opportunities, and engagement in historically untapped neighborhoods.

Participants will learn how the New Mix PEL project team collaborated with local partners including schools, families, cultural institutions, and grassroots organizations to co-design learning experiences that reflect community interests, values, and lived experiences. The session will highlight strategies for reducing barriers to participation, such as offering multilingual programming, creating accessible learning spaces in familiar locations, and honoring cultural knowledge as a foundation for STEAM exploration. Attendees will examine how STEAM education can serve as a bridge between schools and communities, building trust, curiosity, and collective agency. The

session will also feature practical tools and frameworks that project leaders and teams can adapt to their own contexts.

This session demonstrates that when education is embedded within the fabric of the community, students and families are more likely to engage, persist, and thrive. Join us to discover how community- driven partnerships can transform STEAM learning into a shared journey of discovery and empowerment and enhance a project.

Moderator:

- » Kafi Rouse, CTDOT

Panelists:

- » Jonathan Dean, P.E., CTDOT
- » Kimberli Owens, HNTB
- » Gabby Strain, HNTB



Moderator: Kafi Rouse, CTDOT

Kafi Rouse is the Head of Strategy for Culture, Engagement, and Inclusive Communications at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), a position she assumed in January 2024. Previously, Kafi served as CTDOT's Chief of Communications, where she grew and led the Communications and Customer Care teams. She also oversees the CTDOT Diversity Council and Opportunity Advisory Committee and represents the agency on the Governor's Council on Women.

and Girls, the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and the Connecticut Food Policy Council.

Prior to CTDOT, Kafi was Vice President of Public Relations and Marketing at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and Director of Marketing and Public Affairs at UPN/CW 27-Viacom, where she hosted and produced the award-winning public affairs television programs, "Studio UPN Live!" and "Here and Now on The CW with Kafi Rouse. "

Kafi holds a Master's in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from Harvard University along with Graduate Certificates in Organizational Behavior and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Leadership, and a Bachelor's in African and African American Studies and Speech Communications from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Jonathan Dean, P.E., CTDOT

Jon Dean is a Transportation Supervising Engineer in the Division of Highway Design at CTDOT and the Project Manager of the New Mix PEL. A Groton, CT native,

Jon has over 17 years of experience at CTDOT, where he manages several PEL studies and associated breakout projects that are examining ways to improve safety and mobility for travelers in the near and long term.



Kimberli Owens, HNTB

Kimberli Owens is a Senior Public Engagement and Communications Specialist with HNTB, where she leads community-centered outreach for transportation projects and studies across New England.

She currently serves as the task lead for the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for the reconstruction of the Interstate 84/Route 8 interchange also known as the Mixmaster or New Mix in Waterbury, Connecticut. In this role, Kimberli manages youth and family outreach initiatives, including STEAM-related programming that connects classroom learning with real-world transportation planning.

She also leads outreach for the Burlington Winooski Bridge Replacement and Intersection Improvements Project in Vermont, where the team is partnering with local schools to engage students in shaping their community.

Kimberli is passionate about creating accessible engagement opportunities that meet people where they are and amplify the voices of communities and families in infrastructure decision-making. In addition to her public engagement work, she is a classically trained singer and voice teacher, using the art of singing to foster connection, build confidence, and inspire others to find and use their voices.



Gabby Strain, HNTB

Gabby Strain is a Berlin, CT native who grew up driving by CTDOT's Newington office but never thought she would find herself working in transportation. She attended the University of Connecticut, earning her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction through UConn's Neag Program.

Gabby began her professional career as a high school English teacher before transitioning into the world of transportation communication and public involvement. She still uses her teaching skills to connect with and inspire the Waterbury community through New Mix STEAM outreach and learning events. In addition to her role as Public Engagement and Communications Specialist at HNTB, Gabby serves as the office's social engagement team lead and enjoys planning office outings to help build connections among colleagues.

Track 3 – Shaping the Future of Transportation

PM Session 1

Co- Creating a Fair Automated Traffic Enforcement

Safety Device (ATESD) Program: *Ensuring Speed*

*Cameras and Red Light Cameras Make Roads
Safer Without Harming our Most Vulnerable
Communities*

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is working to ensure our roadway safety efforts are fair to all Connecticut residents. The new Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Device (ATESD) Program was designed to empower Connecticut municipalities to improve roadway and pedestrian safety within their communities impartially. It introduced not only new technology but also a new process, co-creation, to develop a program that centers the people who have been historically overburdened with policing and traffic management efforts. This new process is our success story.

Hear from CTDOT officials who partnered with community members, elected officials, and municipalities to co-create the process for Connecticut cities and towns to install the red light and speed cameras all while ensuring the most vulnerable communities do not bear the burdens or costs of this new program. In addition to how this initial process still influences the current review/selection process. This is Connecticut Public Act 23-116.

Moderator:

- » Kafi Rouse, CTDOT (Bio previously featured)

Panelists:

- » Elizabeth Keyes, JD, MPA, CTDOT
- » Ryan Pothering, P.E., CTDOT



Elizabeth Keyes, JD, MPA, CTDOT

Elizabeth Keyes is the Chief of Legal and Regulatory Affairs at Connecticut Department of Transportation and has more than 15 years of state experience that spans all three branches of Connecticut government. Most recently, Elizabeth spent eight years as Legal Counsel to the Senate Majority Caucus in the General Assembly.

In that capacity, she served as legal advisor to the President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader, reviewed and recommended action on pending bills, and assisted in developing, drafting, and negotiating legislation, including major caucus policy initiatives.

From 2011 to 2014, Elizabeth was the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner at the Connecticut Department of Public Health where she developed a passion for health law and policy. While at DPH, she managed the legislative program and oversaw the promulgation of agency regulations. She acted as a liaison to the Governor's Office and other state agencies and worked with community partners on department-initiated activities.

Following her graduation from law school, she had the great privilege to serve as a legal clerk in the Connecticut Appellate Court. She also previously worked as an intern in the Office of United States Senior District Judge Peter C. Dorsey.

Elizabeth was born and raised in New Haven. She holds a BA from the College of the Holy Cross and began her career in state service as a legislative aide to then-Senate Majority Leader Martin M. Looney. She received a dual JD/MPA from the University of Connecticut in 2009. She is admitted to the bars of Connecticut and New York. Elizabeth and her husband, John, live in Wethersfield with their two sons.

Ryan J. Pothering, P.E., CTDOT



Ryan Pothering is the Transportation Supervising Engineer for the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) at the Connecticut Department of Transportation. He has served in this role since 2021. Ryan joined CTDOT in 2013 working for the Safety Engineering Unit in the Department's Division of Traffic Engineering, managing projects dedicated towards reducing fatalities and serious injuries statewide. Prior to joining CTDOT, Ryan worked as a consultant for one year in Boston.

Ryan was born and raised in Charleston, South Carolina. He holds a Master's in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and is currently pursuing his MPA through UConn. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Connecticut. He has completed the AASHTO Management Institute and will be completing the Connecticut Transportation Leadership Program later this fall. Ryan is also an instructor for Local Traffic Authority 101 training through UConn's Training and Technical Assistance Center. Ryan lives in Berlin with his three-year old German Shepherd-Husky mix, Cosmo.

Track 3 – Shaping the Future of Transportation

PM Session 2

Walking into the Future: Revitalizing Historic Neighborhoods Through Walkability and Biking Infrastructure

Fuss & O'Neill will present the roadway and streetscape improvements project for the historic downtown of Norwalk, centered around Wall Street, Belden Avenue, Burnell Boulevard, and Main Street. The project is part of the City of Norwalk's downtown redevelopment strategy and is currently in the Semi-Final Design phase. Our presentation aims to provide insights into a multidisciplinary project prioritizing alternative transportation modes, specifically walking and biking.

Presenters will dive into:

Public Outreach: Central to this project is the active involvement of community members invested in the Wall Street Corridor. We have conducted in-person design charrettes and public meetings to gather feedback, ensuring the design reflects the community's needs.

Roadway / Traffic Design: The project incorporates significant traffic design improvements, including modifications to traffic signals and the transformation of Burnell Boulevard from a one-way to a two-way street. Establishing a festival street on River Street and improving the transit bus hub is critical to enhancing pedestrian accessibility. The proposed bike infrastructure will link to the citywide bike trails, while improvements such as raised intersections, shortened crosswalks, and wider sidewalks will boost pedestrians' visibility, equitable access, and connectivity.

Streetscape: The transformation of River St into a vibrant festival street will foster a sense of community. Wall Street design also incorporates outdoor dining and gathering spaces, resilient green spaces, streetscape improvements, and architectural arches that enrich the pedestrian experience.

Presenters:

- » John Guzze, P.E., Fuss & O'Neill
- » Greg Wilson, PLA, WEDG, Fuss & O'Neill
- » Sylwia Tanski, EIT, CNU-A, Fuss & O'Neill
- » Jim Travers, P.E., City of Norwalk
- » Garrett Bolella, P.E., PTOE, RSP1, City of Norwalk

John Guzze, P.E., Fuss & O'Neill



John Guzze, is an Associate in Fuss & O'Neill's Transportation Department in Manchester, Connecticut. John has been leading roadway, streetscape, and safety improvements projects throughout Connecticut for several years.

Drawing on his practical background designing parking solutions, bikeway facilities, intersection improvements, and streetscape enhancements, John leads and creates practical and constructable solutions for Connecticut municipalities. John works closely with his clients, listening to their concerns and making sure he understands their needs: both current and future needs. He then leads teams to design context-sensitive improvements that create safer passageways for all roadway users.

Greg Wilson, PLA, WEDG, Fuss & O'Neill



Greg Wilson is a Landscape Architect with Fuss & O'Neill's design studio. With more than 10 years of experience, Greg has created original designs for educational facilities, athletic complexes, and mixed-use developments.

He has experience with master planning, construction administration, public engagement, and graphic design. Greg sees potential in empty or underutilized spaces and has the creativity and talent to bring about transformation. The following highlights recent, relevant experience.

Sylwia Tanski, EIT, CNU-A, Fuss & O'Neill



Sylwia Tanski is a Transportation Engineer in Fuss & O'Neill's Transportation Department and serves as the team lead for the roadway (municipality) design team. She helps develop and implement context-sensitive designs that incorporate safe passage for all users while considering long-term functionality and user experience. Sylwia is particularly passionate about working in urban settings, focusing on walkable street designs that provide amenities within a short distance and accommodate various modes of transportation, including walking, biking, and public transit. Over the years, Sylwia has been involved in numerous roadway, streetscape, and safety improvement projects throughout Connecticut, and she continues to expand her skillset.



Jim Travers, P.E., City of Norwalk

Jim Travers, is the Director of Transportation, Mobility, and Parking for the City of Norwalk. Jim provides a wealth of knowledge to the traffic and transportation planning for one of the State's fastest growing municipalities. Prior to his tenure in Norwalk, he served as the Bureau Chief of Transportation, Traffic, and Parking for the City of Stamford, and before that

he was the Executive Director of Transportation, Traffic, and Parking for the City of New Haven. He is a CT-ITE Transportation Leadership Award recipient, and he is most proud to have led efforts for the adoption of Complete Streets Legislation and Design Manuals in all three of the municipalities he has served. Additionally, he also led the adoption of Stamford's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, as well as Norwalk's Transportation Master Plan. These guiding documents help to improve the roadway for the most vulnerable users.

Furthermore, Jim has modernized parking operations and facilities in each of these municipalities. From installing state of the art parking options to significantly updating aging infrastructure, Jim's innovative vision and strategy has generated a positive impact while insuring financial stability for each institution.

In addition to Jim's tenure in Transportation, he also has 20 years of progressively responsible experience in organizational development within corporate structures, and non-profit organizations. His background in business and public administration is well-suited to the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead as Norwalk's urban revitalization focuses on innovation, housing, and jobs, all while connecting people to their community.



Garrett Bolella, PE, PTOE, RSP1, City of Norwalk

Garret Bolella is a Connecticut native and alumni of the University of Connecticut with a Bachelors in Civil Engineering and a Masters in Transportation and Urban Engineering.

Garrett is a Professionally Licensed Engineer (PE) in State of Connecticut and has a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE) and Roadway Safety Professional (RSP1) certification.

Garrett currently serves as Assistant Director of Transportation, Mobility and Parking for the City of Norwalk. Garrett leads a team focused on traffic safety, sustainable economic growth, and community building. Under Garrett's leadership he is directing numerous transportation and neighborhood development projects, most notably a \$30 MM revitalization of the City's Historic Downtown, as well as drafting the City's first Complete Streets ordinance, policy, and design and implementation guide.

Prior to his work in Norwalk, Garrett served as Lead Traffic Engineer for Stamford's Transportation Bureau. During his tenure in Stamford, he constructed a nationally recognized Community Connectivity project "Boxer Square Plaza," oversaw the design of the City's first modern roundabout and finalized the City's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Garrett also has significant experience in transportation planning as a consultant for private clients and municipalities throughout Fairfield, Connecticut and Westchester County, New York. He is an active member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and currently serves on UCONN's T2 Center Safety Circuit Rider Advisory Committee.

Track 3 – Shaping the Future of Transportation

PM Session 3

Permission Slip Not Needed: *Field Trips That Inspire Bold Transportation Decisions*

What happens when we turn off the presentations and Teams calls, and organize field trips for municipal planners, engineers, first responders, elected officials, the media, and stakeholders who are simply curious about what could be? By taking field trips to communities known for their bold transportation decisions, including Cambridge, MA, Stamford, CT, and Hoboken, NJ, project teams and volunteer groups are building the collective understanding of infrastructure that integrates walking, biking, transit, and safer streets.

A recap of this Ride Island project experience can be viewed here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4VtHSA_dDY&t=362s

Learning Objectives

This panel explores the purpose, technical considerations, and outcomes associated with field trips for the grown-ups.

Presenters:

- » Shawna Kitzman, AICP, RSP1, Toole Design
- » Bari Freeman, Bike Newport
- » Sarah Roy, CTRides



Shawna Kitzman, AICP, RSP1, Toole Design

Shawna is an award-winning project manager who connects people, places, and ideas. Working with clients throughout the Northeast, she leads plans related to roadway safety, and any effort that makes it easier for people to walk, bike, and take transit.

With a background in planning, communications, and fine art, Shawna seeks projects that unite creative engagement with economic development and social well-being. She serves as a board member for several Connecticut organizations that increase transportation access and safety.



Bari Freeman, Bike Newport

Recognizing the potential for Newport, RI, to be a more bike-friendly city, Bike Newport was founded in 2011. Driven by the belief that safer streets and multi-modal transportation are essential to thriving, connected communities, the organization has become an innovative and trusted local organization with statewide impact.

With a background in nonprofit leadership, communications, and community organizing, Bari brings a holistic approach to solving complex transportation challenges. She believes in the power of collaboration, partnerships and grassroots momentum, and that change happens when more people are empowered to participate and lead.



Sarah Roy, CTRides

Sarah Roy grew up in Rhode Island, has lived all over New England, and lived car free until she was 28 years old. Over the course of her career, Sarah co-founded 2 successful businesses and was the executive director of a Main Street organization.

She currently works as an Outreach and Engagement Specialist at CTRides, where she enjoys helping people embrace walking, biking, and taking public transit instead of driving alone.

Sarah is also one of the founders of CT Transportation Nerds, an ad-hoc coalition of people who are passionate about livable streets, sustainable transportation, and connection to community. In her free time, Sarah enjoys stand-up comedy, podcasts, long walks and bike rides, traveling, and spending time with her husband, son, and two cats.