



WTS CT Newsletter

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CHAPTER VISION: OFFER A WTS CHAPTER THAT PROVIDES EXCEPTIONAL BENEFITS TO ITS MEMBERS IN THE AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CAREER SUPPORT, MENTORSHIP, AND STUDENT OUTREACH; OFFERS LEADERSHIP, EDUCATIONAL, AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES; ADVANCES WOMEN IN THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY; AND STRIVES TO FUNCTION IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE MANNER, WITH INTEGRITY AND A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY.

A Message From the Incoming WTS CT Executive Officers

Happy Holidays!

The Women's Transportation Seminar Connecticut Chapter (WTS CT) is pleased to announce our new executive officers for the 2025-2026 term. We are excited to build upon our success and enhance opportunities to further advance women and transportation in Connecticut. WTS CT has been recognized for bringing the most relevant and key transportation-related topics to Connecticut, providing networking opportunities with key industry representatives, educating tomorrow's leaders, assisting deserving college students with WTS scholarships, as well as encouraging high school and middle school students to pursue careers in the transportation field. In 2024 WTS CT was recognized as a Gold Status Chapter by the WTS International Circle of Excellence, **the highest status WTS International awards.**



In 2024, WTS CT hosted over 30 different events, including our 18th annual Transportation Mini-Series Conference which has seen over 200 attendees in the last few years, brought back our mentorship program, continued our revamped Leadership Program, awarded six different scholarships, and celebrated accomplishments in the CT transportation industry. **We were also able to double scholarship values for 2025!** WTS CT's newly elected officers are also looking forward to supporting the WTS International Pillars of Success which include Expanding Membership Modes of Transportation, Increasing Chapter and Member Engagement, Adding Value for Small Businesses, and Ensuring WTS Resiliency.

President, Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT

Katherine Hedberg-Klose is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinating Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). In her role, Katie coordinates with units in all Department Bureaus, with other State Agencies, as well as the Council of Governments and Connecticut Municipalities. She is the co-chair of the Equity Sub-Committee of the Vision Zero Council and a board member on the ADA Coalition of Connecticut.

Katie graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) with a minor in Architectural Engineering.

Katie volunteers her time serving nationally as the Immediate Past Chair on the Committee of Younger Members of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). She also enjoys traveling, attending concerts, and spending time outdoors. Katie lives in Old Lyme with her husband and their three golden retrievers and cat.

Vice President, Steph Bogue, EIT, RSP1, HNTB

Steph Bogue is a Transportation Engineer at HNTB. In this role, Steph has experience in both highway and roundabout concept design and analysis. They also have a background in transportation safety and improvement studies, traffic signal



design, and traffic impact studies.

Steph has been an active member of WTS CT since joining in 2019. They served on the Diversity Committee in 2019 and were the Diversity & Membership Committee Chair from 2020 to 2022. One of their favorite accomplishments while serving as the Chair was initiating the annual DEI Series and Coffee & Conversations events.

Steph graduated from the University of Connecticut with their Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. They obtained their Road Safety Professional (RSP1) certification in 2022. Additionally, Steph is involved as a member with CT ITE. Outside of work, they enjoy playing tennis, golf, and spending time with friends. Steph resides in West Hartford with their 4 year old dog, Murphy.

Treasurer, Sarah Gendreau, EIT, HNTB

Sarah Gendreau is a Rail & Transit Engineer at HNTB in Rocky Hill. Throughout her time, she has gained experience in track drainage and geometry design along with various concepts design plans ranging from truck parking to high-speed rail.

Sarah has been an active member of WTS CT since joining in 2022. Serving as the Secretary has been a rewarding experience and an insightful look into the collaboration and coordination of an organization.

Sarah graduated from Central Connecticut State University with her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. Outside of work, she enjoys playing disc golf and video games and spending time with friends and family.

Secretary, Erika Lindeberg, PE, PTOE, RSP1, Jacobs

Erika is the Northeast Group Lead for Traffic and Highway Safety and a Senior Project Manager at Jacobs. She supervises traffic



and highway safety engineers and is currently managing several highway safety projects. Prior to joining Jacobs in June 2022, she worked at CTDOT for 28 years.

She has a MS in Civil Engineering with a transportation concentration and a BS in Civil Engineering both from the University of Connecticut. Erika is registered as a Professional Engineer in Connecticut and is certified as a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE) and RSP1. She is a member of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Pedestrian Committee (ACH10) as well as an incoming chairperson of a technical committee of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD). She is a member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and has been the WTS CT Leadership Committee chairperson for the past two years. Outside of work she enjoys spending time with her golden retriever Toby and traveling with her husband.

Immediate Past President, Lisa Slonus, PE, VN Engineers

Lisa is the Transportation Division Manager at VN Engineers. Lisa is registered as a Professional Engineer in Connecticut. She has a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Connecticut and is pursuing a Dual Master's in Engineering and Master of Business Administration from University of Hartford. She is a member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and has been the WTS CT President for the past two years. She is passionate about WTS CT's mission to advance women in transportation.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Navigating Pathways: Cultivating Equity, Inclusion, and Resilience in Transportation and the Great Outdoors

In March, the Membership & Diversity Committee hosted Joseph Dickerson's thoughtful reflection on the importance of diversity and accessibility in outdoor spaces and the opportunity (or lack thereof) for diverse communities to find their spark of joy in nature, where we started diving into to the challenges and opportunities present in the current environmental justice landscape. We followed it up with a series of three Coffee & Conversation events over the rest of the year where we discussed accessibility factors affecting equity in the great outdoors, what we, as transportation professionals, can help address these challenges, and how we can take what we learned from this reflection and incorporate it into all our projects.

CACT Legislative Program

February 21, 2024

WTS CT partners with the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) on an annual basis to provide a chance to hear upcoming legislative efforts for Connecticut's transportation industry and advocate for public transportation and public transportation customers with CTDOT and CT legislators.

At 2024's program we gathered virtually to hear updates from CTDOT Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto, Greater Bridgeport Transit Chief Executive Officer Steven Demichele, and Estuary Transit Executive Director Joe Comerford.

ANNUAL AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

April 18, 2024
St. Clements Castle,
Portland, CT

WTS Connecticut Chapter's annual awards and scholarship dinner highlights individuals, firms, and projects that have helped transform the transportation industry and our Chapter.

Congratulations to our winners:

Woman of the Year: Amy Watkins, Connecticut Children's Medical Center

Member of the Year: Ariana Antonucci, Connecticut Department of Transportation

Employer of the Year: Connecticut Department of Transportation

Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership: Stephany Santos - University of Connecticut

Innovative Transportation Solution Award: CT DOT District 3 - Project No. 0102-0368 Merritt Parkway Rehabilitation in Westport and Norwalk

Honorary Member: Debra Goss, Connecticut Department of Transportation

Scholarship Recipients:

Jennifer Vazquez,
Ellie DeSantos, Lilana Carrion, Ameenah Abdullah, Sruthi Mantri, Oluwaseun Olufowobi



WTS International Annual Conference

May 8-10, 2024
New Orleans, LA

WTS International hosted the 2024 Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, a place renowned for its rich heritage, exquisite cuisine, and lively music scene. Their biggest event of the year hosted over 1,000 attendees, all meeting to explore the relationships transportation builds in communities—issues of equity, access, and innovation.

This year's theme, The Crescent City: Connecting Cultures, Connecting Communities, was an embodiment of the city. With its strategic location as a gateway to global commerce, New Orleans served as the perfect backdrop for the week's journey of learning and collaboration. Save the date for next year's conference in Toronto, May 7-9, 2025!



STEM Night

February 2, 2024
Cora J. Belden Library
Rocky Hill, CT

WTS Connecticut and CT CMAA - Connecticut Chapter of Construction Management Association of America held their successful annual #STEM Night. Thank you to all 16 exhibitors who had some creative and fun hands-on activities and demonstrations to teach participants about careers related to science, technology, engineering, and math. With the theme of Exploration into Transportation, Engineering, and Construction, students were encouraged to pursue STEM-related careers.



“It was great to have so many volunteers from CTDOT including Darryl the Barrel Dog! We were able to show exhibits for ADA Compliance, Work Zone Safety and Bridge types in a fun interactive way for kids!” - Katie Klose

Hiking Socials

Members experienced the Spring blooms along the multi-use trail around the West Hartford Reservoir while connecting with colleagues and enjoying the fresh air! The hike was about 3.6 miles long and was led by Jim Kulpa. It was a beautiful day and a great way to start a spring morning!

May 19, 2024
MDC Reservoir #6
West Hartford, CT



A picture perfect morning was spent at Bluff Point State Park in Groton where the views, and the company, didn't disappoint! This approximately 3.6 mile hike rounded out another great year of WTS CT hikes led by Jim Kulpa.

October 6, 2024
Bluff Point State Park
Groton, CT



Chapter Leadership Development

“Attending the 2024 Chapter Leader Summit was my first time in Chicago and an incredible experience to share with other WTS members from across the US and Canada! I was inspired by the WTS International (WTSI) and WTS Foundation (WTSF) leadership teams and the variety of topics presented. Deputy Commissioner Karen Kitsis also spoke at the event... This conference also allowed me to connect with other WTS Chapter leaders to learn what makes their chapters unique and share about our Connecticut chapter. Being able to travel with Obe and Alex allowed our group to attend as many sessions as possible and learn more about each other’s leadership style. As 2025 marks the start of my WTS CT presidency, I feel confident to lead with the tools and resources gained from Chapter Leader. “ - **Katie Klose**

November 14-15, 2024
Chicago, IL

“Attending the WTSI Chapter Leader Summit gave me the chance to learn more about WTSI and WTSF. I was also able to get more insight into how other chapters run programs, share my experiences at WTS CT and make connections networking with local and national chapters. I am looking forward to serving as a committee chair for the first time next year following this training opportunity!” - **Obesebea Aye-Addo**



“As a new Committee chair having the opportunity to attend WTSI Chapter Leader training was very rewarding and eye opening. It is always great when you can collaborate with others and get new ideas and perspectives. I look forward to using this training and networking as a way to improve our chapter and continue to be an ally.” - **Alex Klose**



Summer Social

September 12, 2024
WeHa Brewing & Roasting Co.
West Hartford, CT

WTS CT members enjoyed tasty brews and appetizers and great company at the annual summer social. The Student Outreach and Scholarship Committee raised \$350 with a Plinko game to win gift card prizes.



CTDOT Open House

March 20, 2024
CTDOT,
Newington, CT

WTS CT celebrated Women’s History Month at CTDOT on March 20th at CTDOT Headquarters. Each committee shared updates for what their focus is and how new members can get involved and volunteer. CTDOT’s Deputy Commissioners King and Kitsis also spoke on behalf of the Department’s commitment to supporting women and diversity in the transportation industry. CTDOT was the first state DOT to become a partner in WTS International’s State Level international partnership program and continues to support WTS.



18th Annual Transportation Mini-Series

October 17, 2024
CCSU,
New Britain, CT

The 18th Annual TMS had over 200 attendees and partnered with the CCSU Career Center for a clothing drive! WTS CT members and TMS attendees donated two full boxes of clothes. The silent auction and gift card tree raffle raised \$2,500 for the WTS CT Scholarship Fund!

The programming for the day kicked off with an address from the CCSU Provost, Dr. Kimberly Kostelis. Following, WTS CT honored our first Honorary Member, Dr. Stephany Santos.

The morning plenary session focused on transportation safety in Connecticut and was moderated by Jason Hughes, UConn T2 Center. Panelists included Amy Watkins, Watch For Me CT; Alec Slatky, AAA Northeast; Sargent John Acampora, CT State Police; Rob Smith, CTDOT; Laura Francis, SCRCOG; Luke Bittenwieser, City of Stamford; and Jennifer Brady, FHWA. During the session, attendees learned more about the Safe Systems Approach, Vision Zero, some of the critical transportation safety challenges being faced by state and local law enforcement agencies, and support of communities in CT through education and funding resources.

Throughout the day there were eight break out sessions:

- Active Transportation Accommodations at Innovative Intersections presented by Smith Siromaskul and Ellen Simpson from HDR and CTDOT's ADA Transition Plan 2024 Update presented by Katherine Hedberg-Klose from CTDOT.
- Data Driven Roundabout Intersection Screening Study presented by Michael Cipriano, CR-COG; Roger Krahn, CRCOG and Joe Balskus, VHB.
- CTDOT's Transition to Zero Emission Buses presented by Rahmane Camara, CTDOT.
- RIDOT's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Progress presented by Catherine Burns, Jacobs and John-Paul Verducci RIDOT.
- Define Success on Your Terms: A Masterclass presented by Michelle Lemoi from Elevate - Women In Construction (WIC), LLC
- "Tap & Ride" a USDOT Funded Pilot Program presented by Samantha Savvidou and Mikaela Marcotullio, CTDOT; Luis Martinez, North East Transportation; and Brendan Geraghty, River Valley Transit
- A Candid Conversation: Overcome Barriers Holding Women Back in the Workforce presented by Sofia Clark from HDR
- AASHTO's Approach to Enhanced Workforce Development presented by Michael Culmo and Chris Wall from CHA
- Presentation Do's and Don'ts presented by Michael Bright and Alison Messina from CTDOT.

During the lunch program WTS CT honored our second honorary member, Joseph Dickerson.

There was a special update from WTS International Board president Bridgette Beato who was introduced by CTDOT's Deputy Commissioner, Karen Kitsis who is also serving on the WTS International Board.



WTS Northeast Region Conference

January 26, 2024
Virtual

“Safe Travels, Strong Women: A Transportation Symposium” Person-power: Getting from Point A to Point B and everywhere in between!

Kristen Levesque from CTDOT served as a panelist with Martina Haggerty, Senior Director of Local Innovation for PeopleForBikes in Providence, RI and Nicole Fox, Active Transportation Lead for Fuss & O’Neill in Manchester, NH. The panel was moderated by Kathy Kern from WTS of Maine and the discussion questions centered around programs in place that created better infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians. The panel discussion was a wonderful mix

of existing and proposed programs and subsequent projects that have been created to improve active transportation from the perspective of an advocacy group, a transportation consultant firm, and a state agency.

WTS offered the opportunity for rich conversation and highlighted the opportunities for learning from the success of others, valuing the perspective of vulnerable road users in the design process and the need to evaluate both obstacles to improved access and funding for maintenance concerns.

The 90-minute conference session discussed specific programs and projects in the New England area.

Student Outreach

On Saturday, March 2nd, the Student Outreach Committee attended the annual Women Take Flight Event at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks. Nancy Rolfe and Katherine Yale talked to girls and their families about how WTS supports women in the transportation industry. They also helped the girls build slider gliders that they were able to test in the museum. It was a fun day celebrating women's contributions to the transportation industry.

Trivia Night

WTS CT teamed up with the Connecticut chapter of ITE for trivia and craft beers. Trivia masters Carl Duesler (CDM Smith) and Matt Skelly (Fuss & O’Neill) stumped the minds of most with their wide variety of topics and some transportation-related questions. The top teams took home coveted prizes.

March 7, 2024
Alvarium Beer Co.
New Britain, CT



ADA 34th Anniversary Celebration Event

October 2, 2024
Walnut Hill Park,
New Britain, CT

CTDOT honored the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 34th Anniversary on Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at Walnut Hill Park in New Britain, Connecticut. This year’s celebration broke down classroom walls, offering participants an outdoor experience to learn how individuals are improving accessibility in communities and what resources are available. This event had nearly 100 attendees and 15 exhibitors and was partnered with the ADA Coalition of Connecticut, WTS CT, and CT ITE.

Speakers covered initiatives from the local, state and federal levels and included from the City of New Britain Mark Moriarty, Director of Public Works, Erik Barbieri, Director of Parks & Recreation and Melody Rivera the Vice Chair of Commission on Person with Disabilities. CTDOT Deputy Commissioner’s Karen Kitsis and ADA Coordinating Engineer Katie Hedberg and Federal Highway Administration Connecticut Division Administrator John McAvoy.

The event’s keynote speaker was Phillip Magalnick who is an accessibility advocate and Co-Chair of the Stamford ADA Advisory Council. Mr. Magalnick highlighted the importance of accessible transportation as the foundation of independence for people with disabilities. He spoke about his personal experiences and challenges as a person with a vision impairment and how accessibility must be integrated from the start rather than being looked after. Magalnick closed the speech with a message to those with disabilities to have their voices heard and to challenge everyone to be accessibility champions and make an inclusive and accessible community for all.

In addition to ADA Coalition of Connecticut, WTS CT, and CT ITE, many others from the industry organized exhibit booths highlighting different resources available. For accessible transportation featuring Greater Hartford Transit District, New Horizons Village, and The Kennedy Collective. CT State Independent Living Council provided resources for individuals with disabilities and accessible voting. ADA product samples were provided by ADA Solutions, Detectable Warning Systems. UConn T2 Center provided resources and tools available to municipalities and provided their manual wheelchairs, goggles for various visual impairments, and walking canes so participants gained a deeper understanding of the importance of accessibility and experienced using a mobility device in the build environment. CTDOT featured several interactive displays, including the Customer Experience, Safe Routes to School, the ADA Transition Plan, accessible parking, curb ramp construction and GIS database tools for curb ramps.



Career Nights

WTS hosted three Career Night events with CMAA: March 28th at the University of Hartford, April 1st at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and April 3 at Central Connecticut State University. Students were invited to speak with professionals about career paths, job and internship opportunities, interviews, resumes, and innovative projects. The events were attended by more than 40 students and 20 volunteers from WTS and CMAA.



WTS CT Announces 2024 Advisory Council

The WTS CT Advisory Council is a select group of senior transportation professionals that provide guidance to the CT Chapter Officers and Board.

Donna Shea, CT Training & Technical Assistance (T2) Center

Catherine Young, Connecticut Airport Authority (Retired)

Kim Lesay, Connecticut Department of Transportation

Kristin Hadjstylianios, Western Council of Governments



“It was great expanding WTS CT’s reach to the US Coast Guard Academy in New London with Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers (CSCE) Younger Member Group (YMG). It has been a long time goal of CSCE YMG to host an event with the CGA student chapter and with WTS’s help it was possible. A great opportunity for overlapping organizations to appreciate the unique civil engineering opportunities CT has to offer! With the cadets we were able to connect them about resources with CSCE and WTS post graduation and enjoy bowling on campus!”



Jennifer Brady, Federal Highway Administration

Frederick Hedberg, Robinson & Cole

At the Advisory Council Meeting on October 10th WTS CT celebrated Amy Jackson-Grove and her years of service on the Advisory Council from 2011 to 2024.



Leadership & Mentorship

The leadership committee had a very busy year – putting on an event almost every month in 2024.



- Two life coach professionals lead virtual discussions related to “Accelerate Your Growth as a Leader” and “Building Your Personal Brand” with follow-up discussions.
- Two engaging in-person book clubs regarding the books “How Women Lead” by Sharon Hadary and Laura Henderson and “When Women Lead” by Julia Boorstin.
- There were two well attended leadership/mentorship senior leader roundtables at CTDOT headquarters in Newington. These gave attendees a chance to hear from leaders in both a large room setting and during smaller group discussions with discussions related to professional challenges, industry trends, leadership styles, and personal interests as well as mentoring opportunities.

“I found the branding workshops very helpful. I am just starting a leadership role in my job and it helped me to think about what kind of brand I want.”



- The April 2nd session featured CTDOT senior women leaders from different bureaus who discussed their career paths, work at CTDOT, and ideas regarding mentoring opportunities:
 - Karen Kitsis and Laoise King, Deputy Commissioners
 - Kim Lesay, Bureau Chief Policy and Planning
 - Elieen Ego, District Engineer District 2
 - Kelly Cain, Finance
 - Amy Martinez, ROW
 - Tracy Fogarty, Principal Engineer Traffic Engineering
 - Mary Baker, Principal Engineer Bridge Safety
 - Marisa Pffanginer, Principal Engineer Project Development Unit
- The July 31st session featured representatives from WTS CT 2023 Hartford level corporate partners who discussed their career paths, work in the private sector, and ideas regarding mentoring opportunities.
 - Jill Cahoon, AECOM
 - Barbara Wells, CDM Smith
 - Sandra Stravola, HDR
 - Emily Hallo, HNTB
 - Robin Bousa, VHB
 - Bob Gomez, VN Engineers
 - Sharmistha Ghosh, WSP



Volunteer Appreciation

WTS CT wouldn't have been able to host all our events and programs without our committee chairs and committee members. These volunteers spend countless hours supporting WTS's mission to advance women's careers in the transportation industry.

If you are looking to get involved, let 2025 be your year! Volunteer on a committee or help at an event – there are opportunities available at any time duration that works with your schedule. Contact any of our committee chairs to learn more information.

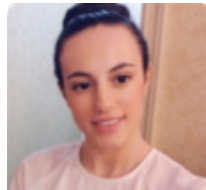
COMMITTEE CHAIRS



Ariana Antonucci, CTDOT



Obe Aye-Addo, CTDOT



Belinda Hoxha, WSP



Alex Klose, Town of East Lyme



Amber Saleh, RHS Consulting



Katherine Yale, CTDOT



Thank You to Our Corporate Partners

Without the support of our corporate partners in 2024, our chapter would not have been able to have over 30 events this past year.

In 2025, WTS CT is releasing a revamped program which will include additional benefits, recognition, and include a new public agency partner level and renewals.

For over 20 years the price levels have stayed the same and with the increase in costs with venues, increased amount of programs and scholarships, we have adjusted level pricing. We hope with the additional benefits and recognition, our current partners will continue to support us and we can welcome on others. Additional information on how to become a partner is available on our website:

<https://www.wtsinternational.org/chapters/connecticut/corporate-partners>

Thank you to WTS International's Pinnacle & Strategic Partners:
HNTB, AECOM, HDR, Jacobs, & WSP
WTS International's State Level International Partnership:



Thank You to our WTS CT Corporate Sponsors.
We appreciate your continued support!

HARTFORD LEVEL



CONSTITUTION LEVEL



MOUNTAIN LAUREL LEVEL



WHITE OAK LEVEL



ROBIN LEVEL



See you in 2025!

Upcoming events:

Holiday Social - January 9 - Wood-N-Tap Newington

Annual Awards - April 17

<https://linktr.ee/wtsconnecticut>

