



Transportation Mini-Series

September 24, 2026

Event Information:

Topics:

- » ConneCTed Conversations: Connecting Transportation Professionals Across New England
- » ConneCTing through Innovative Project Solutions
- » ConneCTing through the Industry
- » ConneCTing with our State and Municipal Partners
- » ConneCTing with our Community through Hands-On Demonstrations
- » ConneCTing with Regional Leadership: Shaping the Future of Transportation

Date & Time:

Thursday, September 24, 2026

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Location:

Double Tree Hilton Hotel
42 Century Drive
Bristol, Connecticut 06010



Event Moderator:

Kristen Anderson Levesque

CTDOT, WTS CT Co-Chair Events Committee

Morning Plenary Session

Connected Conversations: *Connecting Transportation Professionals Across New England*

The 20th Annual WTS-CT Transportation Mini-Series Conference will open with a dynamic, talk-show-style plenary conversation focused on Leadership, Mentorship, and Sponsorship and the role each plays in strengthening the transportation industry.

The session will bring together experienced Northeast regional and CT-based transportation leaders for an engaging conversation about how leadership creates direction and opportunities, how mentorship provides knowledge, guidance, and support, and how sponsorship goes a step further by actively advocating for others and opening doors to new opportunities.

Through an interagency, interdepartmental, and intergenerational lens, the conversation will explore how professionals across different roles, disciplines, organizations, and career stages can work together to build stronger and more connected transportation communities.

Panelists will share perspectives and experiences on navigating career growth, developing talent, building meaningful professional relationships, and creating sponsored opportunities for others to succeed.

Moderator:

- » Sofia Eva Clark, HDR , WTS CT Leadership Committee Member

Panelists:

- » Meredith Avery, VHB
- » Jill Cahoon, AECOM
- » Kim Lesay, HNTB
- » Josh Morgan, CTDOT
- » Rebecca Williamson, Jacobs



Moderator: Sofia Eva Clark, HDR

With over 20 years of experience in public involvement, community engagement, and stakeholder relations, Sofia is dedicated to building strong partnerships that support successful project delivery. She has extensive experience working with clients, public agencies, community organizations, and project stakeholders to foster collaboration, build consensus, and address project challenges. Sofia's detail-oriented and proactive approach enables her to develop effective engagement strategies that encourage meaningful participation and ensure stakeholder perspectives are incorporated into project planning and decision-making. She is committed to creating inclusive, transparent processes that build trust and lasting relationships within the communities she serves.



**Meredith Avery, Senior VP, New England
Regional Manager, VHB**

Meredith Avery is the New England Regional Manager at VHB, where she oversees multidisciplinary teams delivering consulting services in transportation, environmental planning, engineering, and sustainability. With more than 25 years of industry experience, Meredith provides strategic oversight across VHB's diverse regional portfolio, ensuring quality client relationships and expanding market presence. Meredith actively serves on professional boards, including the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, and is committed to advancing diversity and inclusion. She holds a B.S. in Zoology from the University of New Hampshire and completed graduate studies at Tufts University.



Jill Cahoon, GISP, ENV-SP, Vice President at AECOM

Jill Cahoon leads AECOM's Transportation Planning team in New England and has worked in the industry for 26 years. Jill is a team builder who regularly collaborates with transportation planners and designers across the country identifying best practices and lessons learned, covering all transportation modes and focusing on coordination for the betterment of communities. Jill leads a team of 65 multimodal transportation planners and focuses on transit and safety initiatives that improve access to vital needs and opportunity. Jill is the Communications Chair for the New Hampshire Chapter of WTS and is active in WTS chapters across New England. She completed the WTSI Executive Level of the Signature Leadership Program in 2022 and is passionate about mentoring future leaders in the transportation industry.



**Kimberly Lesay – Practice Planning Consultant,
HNTB**

Kim Lesay is a Planning Practice Consultant at HNTB with more than 31 years of transportation experience. She previously served as the Bureau Chief of Policy and Planning and Assistant

Transportation Planning Director for Environmental Planning at the Connecticut Department of Transportation. At CTDOT, she advanced numerous initiatives, and consistently focused on bringing various disciplines, offices, bureaus, as well as State and federal agencies together to better communicate and collaborate. Kim is a recognized leader in the industry, she was named WTS Connecticut Woman of the Year in 2021 and is a graduate of the AASHTO Executive Institute. She holds a degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from UConn, is a proud mother of two grown children and serves on the Advisory Board for the Connecticut Chapter of WTS.



Josh Morgan, Communications Director, CTDOT

Josh Morgan is the Communications Director for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), where he leads the agency's external and internal communications, including its websites, social media, public involvement, and customer care call center.

Josh and the Communications Team translate highly technical transportation information into clear, jargon-free language and share it across the full range of channels people use to get information, from social media and traditional press to CTDOT's websites and digital platforms. This multi-channel approach, paired with partnerships with outside consultants and vendors that support the agency's work, helps ensure community members are up-to-date about the projects impacting their daily lives and have the information they need to stay safe on Connecticut's roadways.

Before joining CTDOT in 2022, Josh was the Communications Director for Norwalk, CT, the state's sixth-largest city. He has also worked in nonprofit marketing and communications and spent time as a print and broadcast journalist. Josh is a graduate of the University of Connecticut, where he earned a bachelor's degree in journalism. He is a native of Danbury, CT and currently lives with his family in Cheshire, CT.



Rebecca Williamson, PE

**Vice President, New England Transportation
Market Leader, Jacobs**

Rebecca (Becky) S. Williamson has over 35 years of experience in the transportation engineering industry. As the New England Transportation Market Leader, she works with the transportation discipline leaders to develop strategic growth and win plans for each transportation portfolio and helps to coordinate workload and pursuits throughout the Northeast. Over the years, Becky has developed strong client and industry relationships throughout New England. Becky's 30 plus years of experience in the transportation industry brings an extensive and varied background as a designer, project manager and principal-in-charge on multi-disciplined projects of all sizes. She is versed in all facets of transportation engineering and environmental permitting, has directed, and supervised all phases of design and construction, and provided senior leadership for multi-disciplined infrastructure projects. She graduated with distinction from Clarkson University with a B.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering and is a Registered Professional Engineer in each of the New England States. She is a long-standing member of WTS participating in the WTS-Boston leadership team for several years, including serving as President and sitting on the WTS International Board. She is currently President for the American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts (ACEC/MA), participates on the ACEC/MA MassDOT Partnering Committee, and is an ACEC MA Political Action Committee (PAC) Champion.

Track 1 – ConneCTing through Innovative Project Solutions

Session II

Weaving Embodied Carbon into the Project Narrative We Already Write

Embodied Carbon refers to the GHG emission generated by the manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of construction materials used in buildings, roads, and infrastructure.” (Carbon Leadership Forum).

Embodied Carbon is still a relatively new topic in the infrastructure world despite accounting for approximately 10% of GHG emissions globally. As the infrastructure industry begins to have increased data and guidance for calculating carbon, carbon management strategies will become more common.

This interactive learning session will begin with understanding what embodied carbon is and where it comes from in our projects. Then, we will dive into how to calculate embodied carbon on an example bridge project by going through the steps of a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and how Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) play a role in this process.

This presentation will end with an interactive game to show how common design decisions impact a project’s carbon emissions. Participants will work in small groups to make decisions about a sample project, including materials, layout, structural elements, construction methods, etc. to see how these decisions influence embodied carbon, cost, and schedule. This activity will illustrate how carbon management can be seamlessly integrated within a project and balanced with project budget and construction schedule to reduce costs and improve impacts to users.

.Presenters:

- » Cierra Naugler, VHB
- » Ken Donald, VHB



Cierra Naugler, Transportation Engineer, VHB

Cierra Naugler is a Transportation Engineer at VHB with extensive experience in scoping and design, construction inspection, and developing plans for transportation and infrastructure projects, including pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure, urban roadways, and bridge approaches. Cierra plays a key role in developing and applying VHB's Embodied Carbon Calculation toolkit, including the highway-specific calculations used on transportation projects. Cierra's focus is enabling every engineer to conduct life cycle assessments (LCA) within existing workflows, without adding undue burden on project teams or budgets. By integrating carbon into core processes rather than treating it as a standalone task, Cierra is helping shift VHB's business model toward lower carbon, higher value solutions.



Ken Donald, Project Manager and Carbon Reduction Lead, VHB

Ken Donald is a project manager in the structures group and serves as VHB's Carbon Reduction Lead who plays a prominent role in advancing sustainable infrastructure and life cycle assessment.

He contributes to national sustainability initiatives including presentations and publications through involvement with the American Society of Civil Engineers, Carbon Leadership Forum, American Concrete Institute, and the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Sustainability Committee. At VHB, Ken collaborates closely with clients, industry partners, and subconsultants to define and deliver outcomes where embodied carbon is systematically measured, managed, and reduced. This includes developing tools, guidance, and implementation frameworks that make decarbonization both technically robust and commercially practical.

Track 1 – ConneCTing through Innovative Project Solutions

Session III

Reimagining Regional Mobility: *Unlocking Hartford's Bottleneck through the Greater Hartford Mobility Program (GHMP)*

The Greater Hartford Mobility Plan (GHMP) represents a transformative approach to regional transportation planning, integrating advanced modeling techniques and data-driven methodologies to address complex mobility challenges. The region's transportation network faces unique congestion issues, exacerbated by geometric constraints, including closely spaced interchanges, left exits and entrances, and capacity bottlenecks. This presentation delves into the technical innovations and operational analyses that underpin the GHMP, offering valuable lessons for transportation professionals.

Key topics include:

- Post-COVID Travel Volumes and Patterns: Analyzing shifts in travel behavior to ensure the model reflects current conditions.
- Travel Demand Model Refinement: Developing and recalibrating the base-year Travel Demand Model (TDM) to align with observed 2024, post-COVID travel dynamics.
- Integration with Micro-Simulation Tools: Exporting origin-destination patterns to conduct detailed operational analyses of critical corridors.
- Calibration and Validation: Ensuring model accuracy through rigorous comparisons of observed and modeled traffic flows, enhancing confidence in predictive capabilities.
- Operational Insights: Leveraging model outputs to identify actionable strategies for improving mobility, reducing congestion, and supporting future infrastructure investments.

The GHMP exemplifies how integrated modeling frameworks can provide a comprehensive understanding of regional mobility dynamics. Attendees will gain insights into the technical processes, challenges, and successes of implementing a robust, data-driven mobility plan that prioritizes efficiency and sustainability.

Presenters:

- » Casey Hardin, PE, AECOM, Moderator
- » David Mancini, PE, CTDOT
- » Danielle C. Wong, HNTB
- » Ashley Berthaume, AECOM
- » Joshua Johnson, PE, CDM Smith



Casey Hardin PE, AECOM, Moderator

Casey Hardin has 17 years of experience in transportation planning and engineering. His diverse background enables him to manage and lead multi-disciplinary teams and projects.

He is AECOM's Surface Transportation Market Leader for New England, overseeing traffic engineering, structural engineering, civil/highway engineering, and transportation planning. Casey has worked on previous iterations of this project for 13 years and believes with all his heart that it will be built before humans colonize the Moon.



David Mancini, PE, CTDOT

David Mancini is the Greater Hartford Mobility Program Chief overseeing the implementation of numerous multi-modal projects and initiatives in the Hartford region. He is a professional engineer with 30+ years of experience working for the Connecticut Department of Transportation. He has served in several capacities throughout his career including design, administration and management of large-scale transportation projects, manager of the Consultant Selection Office, and chairperson for the CTDOT's negotiation committee.



Danielle C. Wong, HNTB

Danielle C. Wong is a communications and public engagement leader in the civil engineering and construction industry. She combines expertise in stakeholder engagement with a strong background in data protection and reporting, ensuring transparency and compliance in complex projects. A former elected official and public servant, Danielle brings unique insight into community priorities and governance, making her strategies both inclusive and impactful.



Ashley Berthaume, AECOM

Ashley Berthaume demonstrates deep expertise in traffic engineering, specializing in capacity and operations analysis across multimodal corridor studies. Active in the GHMP traffic modeling program since 2020, Ashley organizes the extensive 2024 data collection effort and outlines the approach for developing both the travel demand model and VISSIM models to support multiple core component projects. She evaluates roadway and intersection operations and design for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles, ensuring balanced, context-sensitive solutions. Her technical portfolio includes rigorous analysis of signalized and unsignalized intersections, on- and off-street parking, and curbside areas, leveraging tools such as Synchro and VISSIM to translate complex data into actionable operational and design recommendations.



Joshua Johnson, PE, CDM Smith

Joshua Johnson, PE, is a traffic operations engineer at CDM Smith with more than 20 years of experience delivering planning, operations, and safety solutions for transportation agencies across the country. He specializes in freeway and corridor planning, traffic analysis, and microsimulation modeling, with extensive experience applying microsimulation-based tools to evaluate transportation investments and operational strategies. Joshua has supported several major transportation projects in Connecticut over the last few years, including serving as traffic lead for the I-95 Greenwich PEL Study, lead VISSIM modeler for the I-95 Fairfield/Bridgeport PEL, and senior modeler for the Greater Hartford Mobility Program.

Track 1 – ConneCTing through Innovative Project Solutions

Session IV

Advancing Transit Resilience Through Heat Mitigation Strategies

Advancing Transit Resilience Through Heat Mitigation Strategies

Extreme heat is no longer an occasional disruption but an increasingly significant challenge for transit agencies, affecting daily operations, workforce safety, customer comfort, service reliability, and long-term asset performance. As temperatures rise and extreme heat events become more frequent, transit providers must balance immediate operational responses with strategic investments that strengthen resilience across their systems.

This interactive panel brings together transit operators from CTtransit and Metro-North Railroad alongside resilience practitioners to explore how agencies are adapting to the realities of a warming climate. Through audience engagement and real-world agency perspectives, panelists will discuss the operational impacts of extreme heat on employees and riders, changes in ridership and customer expectations, strategies for maintaining safe and reliable service, and improvements to stations, bus stops, and other passenger facilities that enhance the customer experience.

Building on these operational perspectives, the discussion will examine industry best practices, capital investments, and scalable resilience strategies being implemented across the country. Attendees will gain practical insights into protecting frontline employees, improving rider comfort, strengthening service reliability, and prioritizing investments that prepare transit systems for future climate conditions.

Attendees will leave with actionable lessons and proven approaches for advancing heat resilience through both day-to-day operational practices and long-term infrastructure improvements

Presenters:

- » Alicia Leite, HNTB, Moderator
- » Elizabeth Hotetz, MTA Metro-North Railroad
- » Emily Korman, HNTB
- » Patrick Cooney, CTTransit



Alicia Leite, HNTB, Moderator

Alicia Leite is a Project Manager with HNTB Corporation in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, specializing in transit planning, customer experience, and strategic transportation initiatives. In this role, she supports public transportation agencies in delivering innovative, customer-focused solutions that enhance mobility and service delivery.

Prior to joining HNTB, Alicia served as an Assistant Vice President at WSP USA, where she was a member of the Advisory Services Organizational Transformation team. She led strategic initiatives for clients across the country, helping organizations navigate complex transformations through planning, change management, and operational improvement strategies. Before transitioning to consulting, Alicia spent more than a decade with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), where she held several leadership positions within the Bureau of Public Transportation. As Transit Manager, she oversaw statewide transit planning, marketing, and customer experience programs for both bus and rail services. Previously, she served as Supervising Transportation Planner for the department's Customer Experience unit, leading initiatives focused on improving the rider experience across Connecticut's public transportation network.

During her tenure at CTDOT, Alicia also served as Assistant to the Bureau Chief of Public Transportation and spent nearly two years in the Commissioner's Office as the Department's Legislative Liaison, coordinating transportation policy and legislative affairs. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Transportation Planner and played a key role in the implementation of two transformative transit projects: CTfastrak, Connecticut's first bus rapid transit system, and the CTrail Hartford Line passenger rail service.

Alicia is an active leader within the transportation industry. She is a graduate of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program (Class of 2018), serves as an APTA Emerging Leaders Program National Mentor, and was recently appointed to a two-year term on the APTA Emerging Leaders Program Committee. She also mentors emerging professionals through the WTS Connecticut Chapter Mentoring Program and serves as a guest speaker for the COMTO Connecticut Chapter Mentoring Program.



**Elizabeth Hotetz, Director of Station Operations,
MTA Metro-North Railroad**

Elizabeth has advanced through a range of front-line, operational and leadership roles since joining the railroad in 1998 as a ticket seller. She went on to serve as supervisor of materials from 2004 to 2006 before moving into customer- and station-focused management. In 2018, she became district manager of station operations, a role in which she oversaw station performance and customer experience across a large territory. She was appointed assistant director of station operations in 2021 and director of station operations in 2023. Throughout her career, Elizabeth has brought deep operational knowledge, a customer-focused perspective, and a steady commitment to improving the rider experience across the Metro-North system. She has applied her business acumen to every facet of station operations, from revenue collection and

ticketing systems to capital project planning and customer experience enhancements. She has overseen the installation and servicing of ticket vending machines, directed the training of new ticket sellers, and instituted safety audits that have reduced incidents across the system. Recently, her role was expanded to encompass oversight of all maintenance and construction activities across more than 100 train stations and employee facilities. Elizabeth is a builder of people: She has coached managers into confident leaders; empowered staff to take pride in their work; and inspired teams to see the bigger picture of how their work affects the daily lives of thousands of commuters. Her work has elevated Metro-North's standards and set a powerful example for women in transportation.



Emily Korman, AICP, HNTB

Emily Korman, AICP, is a Resiliency Planner at HNTB, based in New York City. Trained as an urban planner and climate adaptation professional, she leverages her background in environmental policy, geospatial analytics, and capital planning to create plans, projects, and programs that adapt the built environment to climate change. Before joining HNTB, Emily served as Resiliency Capital Planning Manager at NJ TRANSIT, where she was responsible for developing and implementing the Agency's long-term capital strategy for protecting New Jersey's public transit system from severe weather and climate change impacts. Prior to joining NJ TRANSIT, she served as the Assistant Director of Data, GIS, and Research at the New York State Office of Resilient Homes and Communities (RHC), where she supervised quarterly grant reporting, maintained disaster recovery program data, and supported research initiatives designed to quantify the Office's impact on communities affected by Hurricanes Irene, Lee, and Sandy. Emily earned her bachelor's degree in Environmental Analysis & Policy from Boston University and a master's degree in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Michigan.



Patrick Cooney, CTTransit

Patrick Cooney is the Assistant General Manager of Transit Services at CTTransit and has more than twenty years of experience in the public transportation industry. Throughout his career, Patrick has held a variety of leadership positions within transit operations, including Division Manager of the Stamford Division from July 2019 through January 2024 and CTfastrak Division Manager from January 2024 through January 2025. As CTfastrak Division Manager, Patrick focused on improving on-time performance and overall service reliability. During the first six months of 2024, CTfastrak achieved an on-time performance of 83.0%. Patrick attributes this achievement to a strong team, recognizing that operators, supervisors, superintendents, law enforcement agencies, and community members each play a crucial role in delivering reliable transit services.

In January 2025, Patrick was promoted to Assistant General Manager of Transit Services, where he provides leadership and oversight across transit operations and supports the continued development of safe, reliable, and customer-focused service. Patrick attends numerous transportation conferences and participates in a variety of professional training programs, workshops, and industry development opportunities. He strongly believes in teamwork and professional development and is committed to developing and supporting his team members so they can achieve their full potential and provide the highest level of service to the riding public. In his spare time, Patrick enjoys attending professional sporting events, watching movies, and viewing documentaries.

Track 1 – ConneCTing through Innovative Project Solutions

Session V

From Hydraulics to Policy: *How Water Resources Professionals Shape Transportation Decisions*

Transportation professionals are often encouraged to participate in professional organizations, yet many struggle to connect that involvement to real project decisions or career advancement. This session reframes these organizations as active drivers of engineering practice, with a focus on how water resources professionals influence transportation outcomes.

Using coastal bridge design as a unifying example, the presentation shows how technical research, standards development, and floodplain policy intersect to shape decisions related to scour, hydraulic modeling, and regulatory compliance. It connects the roles of organizations such as TRB, AASHTO, ASCE, ASFPM, and WTS to the guidance and criteria professionals apply in practice.

Drawing on experience across national, state, and local organizations, the presenters distinguish between participation that builds awareness and participation that contributes to tangible outputs, such as guidance development, committee work, and technical publications. Strategies are provided to help attendees align involvement with their technical focus, career stage, and leadership goals.

The session includes a brief interactive component to help attendees identify one organization and one action they can take to increase their level of engagement and visibility.

Participants will leave with:

- A clear understanding of how professional organizations influence real transportation design decisions
- One actionable step to move from passive involvement to meaningful contribution

Presenters:

- » Dr. Maura K. Boswell, HDR
- » Donald Hendon, HDR



Dr. Maura K. Boswell, HDR

Dr. Maura K. Boswell serves as the East Region Coastal Lead at HDR and has more than 20 years of experience providing expertise in coastal engineering and urban waterfronts planning and design. She has focused her interests the last 15+ years on resilient coastal shorelines and projects concerned with managing coastal flooding and sea level rise, including providing expertise on development of Nature-based Solutions design guidance documents. Maura's interest in understanding and applying the latest technical research, combined with her experience locally, nationally, and globally, allows her to provide the most up-to-date approaches to coastal resilience design. As the Vice-Chair of the EBC Ocean and Coastal Resources Committee and as a member of the Board of Directors for the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, Maura's professional interests service allows her to maintain a rich technical network and advocate for science-backed policies that enable successful design and implementation of resilient projects along our coastlines.



Donald Hendon, HDR

Don is a H&H/Coastal Project Manager with HDR focusing on the design and analysis of transportation hydraulic infrastructure in riverine and coastal environments. He gets excited designing hydraulic structures and countermeasures, performing scour analyses, modeling vessel hydrodynamic effects, and storm surge modeling.

He is active in WTS, the Mississippi Engineering Society, ASCE and is the VP for Friends of the MS River Basin Model, a non-profit making a children's science center out of the largest physical hydraulic model ever built.

Track 1 – ConneCTing through Innovative Project Solutions

Session VI

Completing the Norwalk River Valley Trail:

A Multi-Partner Approach

This session will explore how the Wilton Pedestrian Infrastructure and Property Study is advancing the next critical segment of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT), a planned 30-mile regional trail in southwest Connecticut. Focusing on a 1.5-mile gap between Wilton and Norwalk, the project demonstrates how municipalities, regional agencies, private stakeholders, and trail advocates can work together to deliver multimodal infrastructure that supports economic development, public health, and community connectivity.

Presenters will share the study's interdisciplinary approach, spanning transportation planning and preliminary design, economic analysis, environmental assessment, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory coordination to evaluate route alternatives and develop a preferred alignment. The session will highlight how the trail improves access to employment centers, downtown destinations, and regional transit connections while addressing complex constraints related to rail crossings, flooding, and adjacent land uses.

The presentation addresses how the NRVT supports broader municipal, regional, and statewide goals for walkable communities, active transportation, tourism, workforce mobility, and quality of life. Attendees will gain practical insights into balancing safety, implementation feasibility, environmental considerations, and stakeholder priorities in trail and active transportation projects. This case study

offers transferable lessons for partners seeking to advance transportation investments through collaborative planning and data-driven decision-making.

Presenters:

- » Andrea Gartner, Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) Executive Director
- » Matthew Pugliese, CTDECD, Deputy Commissioner
- » Shawna Kitzman, AICP, RSP1, Toole Design
- » Hilary Ho, HR&A Advisors, Inc.



Andrea Gartner, NRVT, Executive Director

Andrea Gartner is a lifelong Fairfield County resident and community development leader with decades of experience advancing regional initiatives in economic development, arts and culture, historic preservation, and placemaking. She helped establish the Ridgefield Playhouse and Ridgefield Historical Society, expanding the Boys & Girls Club, and serving for 15 years as a Historic District Commissioner. As Executive Director of CityCenter Danbury, she helped lead downtown revitalization efforts, including the creation of the Downtown Revitalization Zone, attraction of Naugatuck Valley Community College, launch of the Danbury Innovation Center, and development of arts-based public initiatives. Since 2022, Andrea has served as Executive Director of the NRVT, advancing regional trail connectivity and multimodal transportation projects. She also serves on the Danbury City Council.



Shawna Kitzman, AICP, RSP1, Toole Design

Shawna is an award-winning project manager and speaker who connects people, places, and ideas. She leads dynamic stakeholder engagement and planning for Safety Action Plans, active transportation plans, as well as transit and trail projects. She approaches her work through the lens of social and gender equity, with the philosophy

that all people deserve safe and equitable access to our streets. With a background in planning, communications, and fine art, Shawna seeks projects that unite creative engagement with economic development and social well-being. She volunteers to increase transportation access and safety, serving on boards for WTS Connecticut, The Rideshare Company, and Watch For Me CT.



Hilary Ho, HR&A Advisors, Inc.

Hilary works with public sector agencies to advance transformational economic development initiatives that center equitable growth. Drawing on her experience in urban analytics and community development, her work at HR&A spans economic and fiscal impact assessment, real estate financial feasibility, and helping clients identify

where targeted investment can unlock redevelopment potential and deliver public benefit.



Matthew Pugliese, CTDECD, Deputy Commissioner

Matthew J. Pugliese was named Deputy Commissioner and Chief Investment Officer of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) on January 1, 2024. In this role he oversees all real estate, capital project, brownfield and community development initiatives in the department. Matt joined the department in 2022 to help launch the Community Investment Fund 2030 program, and \$875 million-dollar, five-year program fostering economic and community development in historically underserved communities across the state. Prior to joining DECD, Matt was the Associate State Director of the Connecticut Small Business Development Center and held leadership positions at UConn and nonprofit organizations. Matt served three terms on the Town of Old Saybrook's Board of Selectmen and is a past chair of the town's Economic Development Commission.

Track 2 – ConneCTing through the Industry

Session II

What Got Us Here Will Not Get Us There:

Future Strategies for Women's Workplace Success

Historically, women have faced numerous barriers to workforce advancement. While significant progress has been made, with more women reaching upper organizational levels, much work remains. Balancing personal commitments with careers continues to be a challenge, though there is now greater sharing of domestic responsibilities. Blending work and life continues to evolve and can present new barriers to advancement.

This panel will explore the new challenges women face and strategies to overcome them. Featuring women who have ascended to the highest levels in their fields, the discussion will cover their experiences, industry changes, and anticipated future challenges.

Key questions include: How do we make space for others and avoid being bystanders? How do we leverage failure to create success? How can we create a personal “board of directors” for our development and that of others in our network? How do we step out of our comfort zone and take risks that will set us and others on the path to success? Join us to learn what it takes to reach the next level in your career

Presenters:

- » Marilyn Zenko, Terracon, Moderator
- » Erika Lindeberg, Jacobs
- » Janet Keiser, Terracon
- » Tracy Fogarty, CTDOT



Marilyn Zenko, F.SAME, Terracon Consultants, Inc.

Marilyn Zenko is a Principal for Terracon Consultants, Inc. She has been with Terracon for over 13 years and is recognized for building strong client relationships, advancing strategic growth initiatives, and fostering collaboration across teams to achieve business success.

Through her leadership, she helps connect clients with solutions that support Terracon's commitment to technical excellence and outstanding services. Developing programs and mentoring staff are what fuels her passion in empowering others to grow in their respective fields.

A dedicated leader outside of Terracon, Marilyn is an active member and Fellow for the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) where she recently completed her term as President for the Philadelphia Post. Developing People is one of SAME's Strategic Goals which she embodies through her commitment to STEM outreach efforts serving on the national SAME scene as Chair-Elect for the K-12 STEM Outreach Community of Interest (COI) and Past Chair for the College Outreach COI. Her involvement with SAME reflects her passion for supporting engineering and environmental professionals while mentoring others and advancing industry collaboration.



Erika Lindeberg, PE, PTOE, RSP1, Jacobs

Erika Lindeberg is a Senior Project Manager and Traffic and Safety Engineering Group Lead at Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. 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 Connecticut chapter; treasurer of the ITE 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 also volunteers to assist a senior civil engineering design team at UCONN.



Janet Keiser, PE, PTOE, Terracon

Janet Keiser is a nationally recognized transportation and infrastructure professional with more than 30 years of experience leading complex, multi agency programs and shaping strategic direction for major engineering organizations. As Vice President and National Business Sector Director at Terracon, she oversees the firm's

Transportation & Infrastructure portfolio, guiding national strategy, growth initiatives, and operational performance across divisions and service lines. Known for her ability to unite multidisciplinary teams and drive enterprise level outcomes, Janet has built a career at the intersection of technical excellence, strategic leadership, and client partnership. She is a trusted advisor to state and regional transportation agencies and a champion for elevating organizational capability through mentorship, collaboration, and inclusive leadership practices. A long standing advocate for advancing women in transportation, Janet has held numerous leadership roles within WTS at both the chapter and international levels, contributing to programs, scholarships, and industry engagement efforts. Her commitment to developing future leaders extends across the organizations she serves, where she is recognized for cultivating talent and creating pathways for growth.

Janet is a licensed Professional Engineer and Professional Traffic Operations Engineer with degrees from The Cooper Union and Texas A&M University. Her contributions to the profession have been recognized through multiple awards, including ASCE Central New Jersey's Engineer of the Year.



Tracy Fogarty, PE, CTDOT

Tracy Fogarty is a Principal Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) in the Division of Traffic Engineering, where she leads the Traffic Project Design Unit. With over 30 years of service in Traffic Operations and Traffic Project Design, she strives to motivate staff and promote collaboration in improving safety, enhancing traffic operations, and

modernizing Connecticut's transportation infrastructure.

For a wide range of statewide construction projects, Tracy leads engineers in the design and review of traffic engineering elements including signs, pavement markings, traffic signals, temporary traffic control, and traffic analyses. She also guides staff responsible for administering the specific service sign program, sign asset management, and railway highway grade crossing improvement projects. She and her team develop state guidelines, detail sheets, and specifications that support consistency in the state and compliance with Federal requirements.

An advocate for on the job training and knowledge sharing, Tracy supports CTDOT's summer engineer and engineering intern programs. She is a licensed Professional Engineer in Connecticut, serves on CTDOT committees, and participates in national professional organizations including the AASHTO Committee on Traffic Engineering and the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA).

Track 2 – ConneCTing through the Industry

Session III

Inspiring the Future of Transportation

This session will be a panel discussion about inspiring the next generation of transportation professionals. The session will include discussion of how current transportation professionals can help recruit the next generation.

Presenters:

- » Erika Lindeberg, CTDOT, WTS CT Secretary, Moderator
- » Katherine Yale, PE, CTDOT
- » Brenda Zhou, PE, PhD, Central Connecticut State University
- » Carrie Titolo, CTDOT
- » Sam Zagorski, Jacobs
- » Mary McCarthy, T2 Center



Erika Lindeberg, PE, PTOE, RSP1, Jacobs

Erika Lindeberg is a Senior Project Manager and Traffic and Safety Engineering Group Lead at Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. 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 Connecticut chapter; treasurer of the ITE 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 also volunteers to assist a senior civil engineering design team at UCONN.



Katherine Yale, PE, CTDOT

Katherine serves as the chair of the Student Outreach and Scholarship committee for WTS Connecticut, where she works with other volunteers to plan programs to introduce K-12 students to careers in transportation as well as run the Chapter's annual scholarship program and organize fundraisers to raise funds for the scholarship program. Katherine works as a Project Engineer at CTDOT in the State Highway

Design Unit, leading a group of design engineers as they work on complex roadway design projects. Outside of work, Katherine enjoys baking, collecting seashells, and volunteering with 4-H.



Brenda Zhou, PE, PhD, CCSU

Dr. Bin (Brenda) Zhou is a Professor and the Civil Engineering Program Coordinator at Central Connecticut State University (Central) and a PE in the State of Connecticut. She earned her Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 2009. Her area of expertise is transportation planning and engineering, with a focus on quantitative analysis and modeling techniques.

In recent years, Dr. Zhou has dedicated herself to STEM outreach initiatives that promote STEM education among youth. In collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), WTS Connecticut, and private industry partners, she implemented the National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI), which was renamed the Connecticut Summer Transportation Institute (CSTI) in 2025. The outreach programs aim to strengthen high school students' STEM skills, increase their awareness of career opportunities in the transportation industry, and encourage them to pursue transportation-related academic pathways. She has also contributed to other similar projects and serves as a faculty advisor for the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) student clubs at Central.

In 2018, Dr. Zhou initiated community-engaged capstone projects in Central's Civil Engineering Program through the design, construction, and donation of timber pedestrian bridges to local communities. To date, these student-led projects have resulted in the successful completion of eight timber bridges, providing students with valuable experiential learning opportunities while strengthening partnerships between Central and surrounding communities.



Carrie Titolo, CTDOT

Carrie is a Special Advisor to the Commissioner for Strategic Partnerships and Projects at CTDOT, serving as a key liaison across the agency to drive action on priority projects, workforce development initiatives and strengthen relationships with community organizations and educational institutions. She holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from UConn. Prior to joining state service, Carrie worked as a communications professional in the nonprofit sector with extensive experience in public relations, brand strategy, fundraising and crisis communications. In her free time, Carrie enjoys cooking, baking and reading. She is an avid runner and loves spending time with her husband and nine-year-old twin boys.



Sam Zagorski, Jacobs

Sam is a 2026 Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) graduate and an Engineer in Training with Jacobs who is passionate about traffic engineering and safety. While attending CCSU, Sam was the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Student Chapter President from 2024 to 2026.

Sam was a nontraditional student who originally graduated with an Anthropology B.A. in 2016 and returned to school at 29 specifically to become a transportation engineer.



Mary McCarthy, Executive Director, UCONN (T2) Center

Mary is the Executive Director of the CT Training and Technical Assistance Center at UConn and has been with the Center for 25 years. She is responsible for the strategic direction and day-to-day management of T2 Center efforts in providing professional development and technical assistance to Connecticut's state and municipal transportation community. She is passionate about supporting the incredible crews working to improve the safety and efficiency of Connecticut's transportation system and proud to lead the team of incredible professionals doing this important work.

Track 2 – ConneCTing through the Industry

Session IV

Turn Communication into Influence

Expertise alone doesn't create influence; communication does. This high-impact, tactical session equips women with practical tools to elevate how they show up, speak up, and get heard, focusing not on speaking more, but on speaking in ways that drive decisions, impact, and career growth.

Participants will begin by identifying and eliminating the specific verbal and nonverbal habits that quietly undercut their credibility in professional settings. The session then moves into the application of high-impact language shifts that signal authority and decisiveness, while teaching attendees how to use strategic communication timing and positioning to increase their visibility and ownership of ideas.

Furthermore, participants will learn to recover gracefully from common influence-robbing moments using specific, practiced scripts.

Presenters:

- » Kenya Rutland, KJR Consulting, LLC
- » Heather Axelrad, CTDOT



Kenya Rutland, Principal and Chief Enthusiasm Officer, KJR Consulting LLC

Kenya is a passionate and trustworthy consultant who increase the confidence, motivation, and performance of others. He is a persuasive facilitative leader who uses his keen business acumen to build commitment and accountability among staff at all levels of any organization. Kenya has 24 years of experience delivering results-oriented consulting and facilitation to a diverse client portfolio. He holds certifications in various learning and organizational development topics and continues to supplement those through his commitment to lifelong learning. He is also an avid golfer and die-hard fan of the Yankees, 49ers, and Lakers.



Heather Axelrad, CTDOT

Heather Axelrad is a seasoned instructor with over 20 years of experience in leadership development, curriculum design, and coaching across Connecticut state government. Currently serving as the Curriculum Manager for the CTDOT Office of Staff Development, she oversees agency-wide supervisory training and leadership programs, following 16 years as a Pretrial Services Supervisor and instructor with the Judicial Branch. Backgrounded in clinical counseling with a master's in Marriage and Family Therapy, Heather is passionate about professional growth, actively supports the WTS mission of advancing women in transportation, and enjoys traveling, concerts, and spending time with loved ones outside of work

Track 2 – ConneCTing through the Industry

Session V

Four Generations, One Transportation Industry

Today's transportation workforce spans four working generations and many teams feel the friction: different communication styles, feedback expectations, definitions of "professionalism," and assumptions about work ethic or technology use. This interactive session moves beyond stereotypes to focus on practical, inclusive strategies that help us all connect, collaborate, and thrive across generations while supporting WTS's mission to advance women's careers and strengthen the transportation industry.

Opening with a quick "generation snapshot" (Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, Gen Z): what each group often values at work, how they prefer to communicate, and what they need from leaders and teammates. Then participants will apply the ACORN approach (Accommodate differences, Create workplace choices, Operate flexibly, Respect, Nourish retention) to real-world scenarios drawn from transportation workplaces, like feedback frequency, meeting tech etiquette, and schedule/urgency misalignment.

Attendees will leave with a simple "connection toolkit," including how to begin a conversation for cross-generational one-on-ones and strategies for setting team communication norms.

The goal: help transportation professionals build stronger teams, improve retention, and create more equitable access to opportunity across career stages and life experiences.

Presenters:

- » Caroline Cianni, CDM Smith, Moderator
- » Marissa Pfaffinger, PE, CTDOT
- » Shawna Bartkus, GM2
- » Laura Francis, SCRCOG
- » Margaret Johnston, CDM Smith

**Caroline Cianni, CDM Smith, Moderator**

Caroline Cianni is a Lead Marketing Writer and Proposal Specialist with CDM Smith, specializing in mega pursuits, strategic positioning, and win strategy development for complex transportation and infrastructure projects across the country. She is also an expert in designing and delivering high-impact presentations and client interviews, coaching teams to communicate effectively, connect with audiences, and perform their best in critical pursuit situations. Based in East Hartford, Connecticut, Caroline is an active member of WTS Connecticut and is passionate about professional development, mentorship, and advancing collaboration across the transportation industry. She was honored to receive WTS CT's 2024 Member of the Year award. Outside of her role at CDM Smith she enjoys playing golf, being outside with her kids, solving cold cases, and everything from the 90s.



Marissa Pfaffinger, PE, CTDOT

Marissa Pfaffinger, PE, is a Principal Engineer with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), serving in the Project Development Unit within the Division of Highway Design. In this role, she helps lead the development of transportation projects from concept through initiation, with a focus on improving the safety, mobility, and functionality of Connecticut's transportation network. Marissa has represented CTDOT at the AASHTO Leadership Institute and has previously joined WTS CT at TMS as a panelist. She is a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and has built her career in transportation engineering and public-sector project development. Marissa is passionate about public service and transportation and brings a valuable perspective on building a career, contributing to a changing industry, and working across generations in the transportation workforce. Outside of work Marissa enjoys being outside - playing golf and skiing.



Laura Francis, SCRCOG

Laura Francis serves as the Executive Director of the South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG), leading regional planning, transportation, and intergovernmental initiatives that support more than half a million residents across south-central Connecticut, including the City of New Haven.

With over 30 years of public service experience, she has a distinguished record of improving governmental operations, advancing major infrastructure and

sustainability projects, and forging effective partnerships across municipal, state, and federal levels. Laura has championed major regional collaborations in government administration, transportation planning, public safety, emergency management, and environmental stewardship. She has served on numerous state and regional boards—often in leadership roles—including Connecticut Municipal Development Authority, Sustainable CT, the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), the Council of Small Towns (COST), the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM), the DEMHS Region 2 Regional Emergency Planning Team (REPT), the Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC), and the South Central Workforce Alliance CEO Board.



Shawna Bartkus, GM2

Shawna Bartkus is a Vice President and Director of Marketing at GM2 Associates, Inc., bringing more than 25 years of A/E/C industry experience. She leads the firm's marketing and business development efforts and has played a key role in securing major projects and expanding GM2 into new markets. As Vice President, Shawna works closely with GM2's leadership team to support strategic growth, strengthen internal processes, and advance the firm's culture. An active industry leader, Shawna is a former President of WTS Connecticut and has served on the State Board of the ACE Mentor Program of Connecticut. She established WTS Connecticut's Mentor and Scholarship Programs and helped launch its Transportation Mini-Series, now in its 20th year. Shawna's leadership mantra is simple: it's all about people. She believes strong relationships, collaboration, and investing in others are the foundation for successful projects, organizations, and careers.



Margaret Johnston, CDM Smith

Maggie Johnston is a Transportation Engineer II for CDM Smith with 1 year of full-time experience. She focuses on highway and roadway design, which can range from drafting conceptual ideas, pavement preservations, or even cost estimations. She joined CDM Smith because of their emphasis on sustainable and resilient solutions within their projects.

As a CDM Smith employee, she incorporates innovation and project-based learning into her work to ensure it's delivered on a fast-paced timeline without lacking quality. When she's not working, you'll find her playing rugby for the local women's team, The Hartford Wild Roses. She is looking forward to being a new member of WTS to better support women in transportation, while also benefitting from the professional growth, connections, and opportunities that WTS provides.

Track 2 – ConneCTing through the Industry

Session VI

Professional Organizations:

The Pipeline to ConneCTing the Next Generation of Transportation Professionals

Professional organizations play a critical role in developing the current and future workforce, fostering industry collaboration, and creating opportunities for professional development and growth. As the transportation industry faces workforce shortages and an evolving talent landscape, professional organizations are increasingly serving as the pipeline for ConneCTing the next generation of transportation professionals to meaningful careers, leadership opportunities, and industry networks. This session will explore how organizations can work together to strengthen the transportation industry through coordinated outreach, member engagement, and leadership development initiatives.

Leaders from WTS-CT, COMTO-CT, CT-ITE, ACEC-CT, CSCE-YMG, CMAA-CT and NAATSHO are invited to share successful approaches for attracting and retaining members, engaging young professionals, and building pathways for students and emerging professionals to enter, advance, and thrive in the industry. Panelists will showcase programs, events, committees, mentorship opportunities, networking initiatives, and other strategies that have successfully increased engagement and participation within their organizations. Through examples from real-world activities and events, attendees will gain insight into how these efforts contribute to a stronger, more diverse, and sustainable professional community.

In addition to highlighting best practices, the session will provide attendees with a better understanding of the value professional organizations bring to individual career growth from the early career stage and the transportation industry as a whole. Participants will learn how active involvement in professional organizations can expand professional networks, develop leadership skills, create mentorship opportunities, and open doors to career advancement.

A key outcome of the session will be an opportunity to extend the conversation beyond the panel and conference. The organizations represented will have an opportunity to identify new or extend current opportunities for collaboration with each other to maximize resources, expand outreach efforts, and deliver greater value to the industry. By sharing ideas, resources, and successful approaches, the panel will encourage continued collaboration and connection among professional organizations beyond the conference.

Presenters:

- » Obesebea Aye-Addo, CTDOT, Moderator
- » Dr. Tamara Smith, AECOM, COMTO President
- » Sandeep Aysola, PMP, PTP, RSP1, CT-ITE
- » Kevin Hussain, AI Engineers, ACEC-CT
- » Arianna Antonucci, CTDOT, CSCE-YMG
- » Karina Massey, PE, CCM, Jacobs, CMAA-CT
- » Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT, WTS President
- » Brian Hurlock, CTDOT, NAATSHO Vice President



Obesebea Aye-Addo, CTDOT, Moderator

Obesebea N. Aye-Addo is a Transportation Engineer with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Division of Traffic Engineering, where she has 10 years of experience in traffic operations and transportation engineering. She holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in civil engineering and is currently pursuing her Professional Engineer (PE) licensure.

Beyond her technical work, Obesebea is passionate about leadership, mentorship, professional development, and creating opportunities for the next generation. She currently serves as Secretary of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) Connecticut Chapter, Co-Chair of the Leadership Committee for WTS-CT, and a member of the WTS-CT Mentorship Committee. Through these roles, she works to foster connections across the transportation industry, encourage emerging professionals to engage in leadership, and help build a stronger workforce.

Obesebea is particularly passionate about connecting people, creating pathways for professional growth, and giving back through mentorship and service. She believes that professional organizations play an important role in bridging the gap between today's transportation leaders and the next generation of professionals by providing opportunities to network, learn, lead, and make meaningful contributions to the industry.

As a moderator, Obesebea brings together her technical transportation experience, commitment to professional organizations, and passion for leadership and mentorship to help facilitate meaningful conversations and connections within the industry.



Dr. Tamara Smith, AECOM, COMTO President

Dr. Smith is an accomplished infrastructure and transportation professional with more than 24 years of experience in the industry. She serves as an Associate Vice President and Senior Project Manager at AECOM, where she supports complex transportation programs and initiatives across the region.

She is a member of the ACEC/CT Executive Board and chairs its Membership Engagement and Belonging Committee. She is also a member of WTS Connecticut Chapter and has served as a member of its Leadership Committee. In 2022, she received the WTS Connecticut Rosa Parks Leadership Award in recognition of her contributions to advancing equity, access, and opportunity within the transportation industry.

She is currently the President of COMTO Connecticut, where she has been involved for more than six years in several leadership capacities, including Treasurer, Vice President, Scholarship Committee Chair, and member of the Executive Board.

Through her involvement with professional organizations, Dr. Smith works to strengthen collaboration across the transportation industry, support students and emerging professionals, advance workforce development, and build stronger connections among public agencies, private-sector organizations, and industry partners.

She is a committed advocate for strengthening the transportation profession through mentorship, sponsorship, advocacy, and expanded access to opportunity.



Sandeep Aysola, PMP, PTP, RSP1, CT-ITE

Sandeep Aysola is an accomplished transportation professional with more than two decades of experience in transportation planning, traffic engineering, project management, and public-sector transportation operations. He has deep

expertise in project management and project delivery, including project planning and implementation, technical and operational management, legislative and governmental budgeting processes, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning.

Most recently, he served as the Director of Transportation, Traffic and Parking for the City of New Haven, CT, where he was responsible for overseeing the City's vast transportation, traffic, and parking functions. Prior to his tenure with the City, he worked in senior consulting positions, providing leadership on a wide range of infrastructure projects.

Mr. Aysola holds graduate degrees in Environmental Management from Yale University and Civil Engineering from the University of Virginia. He is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), Professional Transportation Planner (PTP), and Roadway Safety Professional (RSP1).

He has been actively involved with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), the American Planning Association (APA), and the Transportation Research Board (TRB). Mr. Aysola currently serves as President of ITE Connecticut and as a Commissioner on the Board of the New Haven Parking Authority (NHPA). His previous professional leadership roles include serving on the Executive Committee of ITE's Transportation Safety Council, where he chaired the Vision Zero Standing Committee, as well as serving as a member of the TRB's Highway Capacity and Quality of Service (AHB 40) Subcommittee.



Kevin Hussain, PE, AI Engineers, ACEC-CT

As a Vice President at AI Engineers, Kevin Hussain supports our Digital Transformation, DEI&B, New Technology and Business Development for all our AEC Services. He's also the Project Manager for large infrastructure condition assessment projects in New York City, ensuring seamless operations and effective management of this vital department. With over 20 years of experience in project management, inspection, design, and

construction administration,

Kevin brings a wealth of expertise to his role. He has spearheaded the integration of innovative technologies such as UASs (Drones), 3D Laser Scanning, AR/VR, Mixed Reality concepts, and 3D Printing to enhance project efficiency and outcomes for numerous clients.

Kevin's extensive experience includes project management and inspection of complex bridges across multiple states, including CT, NY, RI, MA, VA, and GA. His responsibilities encompass reviewing, preparing, and completing insurance compliance, subcontracts, inspections, CAD sketches, traffic control coordination, and expedited report processing. Kevin has been actively involved in all phases of bridge design projects, from schematic development to bid phase services, and possesses expertise in load rating, stormwater management, sewer design, and permitting.

His meticulous approach to construction administration ensures rigorous quality control, from shop drawing approval to as-built documentation. Kevin's strategic vision and proactive leadership in business development have also been instrumental in identifying and fostering strategic partnerships that drive AI Engineers' growth and success.



Arianna Antonucci, CTDOT, CSCE-YMG

Ariana Antonucci is a Civil Engineer in Facilities Design at the Connecticut Department of Transportation, focused with site design. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech.

Ariana is actively involved in Connecticut's engineering community and currently serves as Past President of the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers Younger Members Group (CSCE YMG). During her time with YMG, she has worked to strengthen connections between the organization and ASCE student chapters throughout Connecticut, expand outreach to students and young professionals, and create opportunities for the next generation of engineers to become more engaged in the profession. She has also helped organize technical, professional development, networking, and social events that foster connections and encourage continued involvement in the engineering community.

Ariana also serves as Events Committee Co-Chair for WTS Connecticut, where she enjoys creating opportunities that connect students, young professionals, and industry members. She is passionate about building strong professional networks and creating pathways for the next generation of engineers to become active leaders in their organizations and communities.



Karina Massey, PE, CCM, Jacobs, CMAA-CT

Karina R. Massey, PE, CCM, is a Project Manager with Jacobs with nearly a decade of experience delivering transportation, infrastructure, water, and facility projects throughout Connecticut. She has served on the leadership team of the Connecticut Chapter of the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) since 2019 and currently serves as Secretary.

Karina is a CMAA Emerging Leaders Program graduate and Distinguished Young Professional of the Year 2024. She is passionate about workforce development, mentorship, and creating opportunities for students and young professionals to engage in the engineering and construction industries.



Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT, WTS President

Katie Hedberg-Klose is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinating Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), where she leads efforts to ensure ADA compliance in the public right-of-way and across CTDOT transportation facilities. She provides technical guidance and coordinates closely with other Connecticut agencies, municipalities, and the public to advance transportation access and mobility. At CTDOT, Katie serves on the Complete Streets Committee and Highway Standards Committee. She also serves on the state's Vision Zero Council as sub-committee co-chair and is a board member of the ADA Coalition of Connecticut.

Katie holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with a minor in Architectural Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Before joining CTDOT, she worked in the private sector with a focus on traffic engineering and transportation planning. A dedicated leader in the transportation community, Katie currently serves as President of the WTS Connecticut Chapter and is a Past Chair of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Committee on Younger Members. Outside of work, Katie enjoys traveling and spending time outdoors with her husband and their three golden retrievers.



Brian Hurlock, CTDOT, NAATSHO Vice President

Brian Hurlock is a Safety Advisor with the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Vice President of the National Association of Transportation Safety and Health Officials (NAATSHO), and a Strategic Advisor to the Employee Safety Network (ESN). He previously served as NAATSHO's Northeast Region 1 Director and was recently elected to serve as the organization's next President. Through these national leadership roles, Brian strengthens collaboration among federal and state transportation leaders and safety and health professionals while advancing initiatives focused on employee safety, professional engagement, and workforce development.

Brian brings more than 25 years of public safety experience to these roles, providing him with a practical, frontline perspective on emergency preparedness, incident response, employee protection, and organizational resilience. He is a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician, EMS-Instructor and holds numerous licenses and professional certifications across the emergency medical services and fire service fields.

Brian also contributes to national transportation research through his service on three National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) panels addressing serious injury and fatality data, behavior-based employee safety programs, and construction workforce conditions. His work at CTDOT encompasses occupational safety initiatives, employee training, emergency preparedness, peer support and mental health, work zone safety, and programs designed to strengthen employee protection and organizational readiness. Through his work with CTDOT, NAATSHO, AASHTO, FHWA, NCHRP, and other transportation partners, Brian is committed to advancing the safety profession, developing future leaders, and strengthening the pipeline for the next generation of transportation professionals.

Track 3 – ConneCTing with our State and Municipalities

Session II

Counting Bicyclists and Pedestrians:

The HOWs and WHYs

This session is envisioned as a short presentation about Texas' Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Exchange (<https://mobility.tamu.edu/bikepeddata/>) - the largest state nonmotorized count program and repository in the country, collecting counts since 2016 in over 1200 count locations in TX - as compared to bicycle and pedestrian counting occurring on CT trails through the CT Trail Census (https://cttrails.uconn.edu/ct_trail_census/). The discussion will tease out what each of these distinct programs (in distinctly different geographies and environments) can teach the other, and encourage the audience members to share their experience with best practices and new technologies to count active transportation users. Ultimately the count data is showing demand for bicycle and pedestrian (and other personal transportation modes) and helping guide fact-based decisions about infrastructure and policy. What is the state of the art in active transportation count technology and how are/should we be using the data?

Presenters:

- » Holly Parker, Texas A& M Transportation Institute
- » Rob Benz, PE, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- » Aaron Budris, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)
- » Bruce Donald, Chair, CT Greenways Council
- » Dr. Phil Lasey, Texas A&M Transportation Institute



Holly Parker, Texas A& M Transportation Institute

Holly is an Active Transportation Planner and Transportation Demand Management Certified Professional (TDM-CP) at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, where she works as a Research Scientist. Holly has over 28 years of professional experience in the sustainable transportation space, and is also a life-long cyclist, pedestrian and transit user.

Holly served Lane Transit District's Commuter Solutions Program while that agency built one of the nation's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems in Eugene, OR, then crossed the country to initiate one of the first university sustainable transportation programs at Harvard. She then created and ran a similar program at Yale, became an active transportation consultant and worked for a bikeshare technology startup.



Rob Benz, PE, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Rob has spent the past 35 years "playing in traffic." He received a B.S. and a M.S. degree in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University and has held academic positions as an Adjunct Professor at Texas Southern University and at Prairie View A&M University. His professional interests include transportation data management and analysis, pavement marking, safety, planning, and bicycle and pedestrian activities. He is currently a research supervisor for the planning department of the Houston District of the Texas Department of Transportation. He leads the statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Exchange project to

measure and monitor non-motorized transportation in Texas. Recently, he led a Houston-Galveston Area Council study to determine the most efficient use of current technology to count bicycles and pedestrians based on local factors.



Aaron Budris, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)

Aaron Budris works closely with member municipalities, environmental nonprofits, and state and federal agencies to fix environmental harm done in the past, and to minimize future environmental impact. With a background in natural and cultural resource management, conservation, and planning, he advances projects that address the region's most pressing environmental challenges including watershed management, open space preservation, resiliency, and multiuse trail development, including coordination of municipal efforts to construct the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail.

Aaron co-founded the CT Trail Census program in 2016 as a pilot program administered by NVCOG with a grant from the CT DEEP Recreational Trails Program. Since then, the statewide program has grown considerably, and shifted to be administered by UConn, but Aaron continues to serve on the project management team and oversees the technical aspects of the trail user count program. Aaron has a B.A. in Anthropology and an M.S. in Geography from Central Connecticut State University.



Bruce Donald, Chair, CT Greenways Council

Bruce joined the East Coast Greenway Alliance in 2016 as the Tri-State Greenways Coordinator, serving CT, NY & NJ. In 2020, he became Southern New England Manager, leading greenway advocacy efforts in CT, RI and Central MA. Previously he served as president of the nonprofit Farmington Valley Trails Council for 14 years.

In 2014, Bruce was appointed Chairman of the Governor's Connecticut Greenways Council, which coordinates all state stakeholders in planning, implementing, and funding the greenway system through the Connecticut Recreational Trails Grants Program for the Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection. That program has distributed over \$41 million to 179 projects to date. His strong advocacy to the CT Legislature has secured \$10M/yr through 2028 for this valuable program. His current portfolio of funded ECG projects totals \$201 million. Bruce currently is a Director of both Bike/Walk CT and the CT Outdoor Recreation Alliance and serves as President of the Air Line State Park Trail Alliance, and as advisor to many other boards of directors and technical advisor to a variety of design studies.



Dr. Phil Lasley, Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Phil leads data analysis, tool, and web app development efforts for a variety of Texas A&M Transportation Institute's sponsors. Phil has actively worked with federal, state, and local transportation agencies to create simple and easily-understood solutions and visualizations that foster data-based and inclusive decision making to get the biggest bang from our transportation bucks.

He also managed and coordinated congestion- and mobility-related projects within TTI's Policy Research Center (PRC), providing policy research, information, and educational materials to the Texas State Legislature. Dr. Lasley also serves as an adjunct lecturer on the graduate faculty in the Department of Multidisciplinary Engineering and in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning at Texas A&M University.

Phil has developed extensive expertise in several areas, including non-motorized mobility; mobility analysis and congestion theory, measurement, and mitigation; data visualization; destination access and location choice theory; and freight mobility. His work in the bicycle and pedestrian areas led him to non-motorized data quality management and developing several quality assurance/quality control techniques that can be used with major data collection efforts. Currently, Phil manages the Texas Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Exchange, the largest state nonmotorized count repository in the nation.

Track 3 – ConneCTing with our State and Municipalities

Session III

Advancing Inclusive Customer Experience in Transit

Advancing Inclusive Customer Experience in Transit explores why understanding customer needs, abilities, and lived experiences is fundamental to planning and delivering successful transit systems. The presentation illustrates the wide range of needs riders bring to a transit system, and how those needs can change across contexts and over time. It then introduces the concepts of accessibility, universal design, and inclusive design, and how they can be applied to advance the customer experience. The presentation delves into journey mapping as a hands-on method for systematically tracing the rider's experience from trip planning through arrival, identifying where barriers emerge, where the system can present challenges for different riders, and examples of where targeted improvements can make the greatest difference. Throughout, the session reinforces that customer experience is a shared responsibility, requiring empathy, coordination, and collaboration across disciplines and project phases.

Presenters:

- » Emily Gallo, AICP, ENV SP, HNTB, Moderator
- » Alicia Leite, HNTB
- » Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT, WTS President



Emily Gallo, AICP, ENV SP, HNTB

Emily Gallo, AICP, ENV SP, is a recognized leader in inclusive infrastructure and mobility, with two decades of experience in the transportation industry. As Vice President, Director of Infrastructure and Mobility Equity at HNTB, she assists agencies, policy makers, and HNTB teams in addressing challenges and opportunities in inclusive infrastructure. Emily previously worked as Chief of Staff at NYC DOT and the NYC

Taxi and Limousine Commission, and as a policy analyst in the NYC Mayor's Office.

Emily is committed to giving back to the transportation industry through leadership in professional organizations. She serves as Chair for Mission Advancement for Urban Land Institute (ULI) New York, and on the boards of the NYU Rudin Center for Transportation, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, and is an appointed member of the Urban Design Forum's Local Circle. She previously co-chaired ULI NY's Infrastructure Council and was on the Board of Directors for WTS Greater New York Chapter.

Her contributions have earned her recognition as one of *City & State New York's Responsible 100* in 2024 and the *2023 WTS Greater New York Member of the Year* award. She graduated cum laude from Yale University and received a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design.



Alicia Leite, HNTB

Alicia Leite is a Project Manager with HNTB Corporation in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, specializing in transit planning, customer experience, and strategic transportation initiatives. In this role, she supports public transportation agencies in delivering innovative, customer-focused solutions that enhance mobility and service delivery.

Prior to joining HNTB, Alicia served as an Assistant Vice President at WSP USA, where she was a member of the Advisory Services Organizational Transformation team. She led strategic initiatives for clients across the country, helping organizations navigate complex transformations through planning, change management, and operational improvement strategies. Before transitioning to consulting, Alicia spent more than a decade with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), where she held several leadership positions within the Bureau of Public Transportation. As Transit Manager, she oversaw statewide transit planning, marketing, and customer experience programs for both bus and rail services. Previously, she served as Supervising Transportation Planner for the department's Customer Experience unit, leading initiatives focused on improving the rider experience across Connecticut's public transportation network.

During her tenure at CTDOT, Alicia also served as Assistant to the Bureau Chief of Public Transportation and spent nearly two years in the Commissioner's Office as the Department's Legislative Liaison, coordinating transportation policy and legislative affairs. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Transportation Planner and played a key role in the implementation of two transformative transit projects: CTfastrak, Connecticut's first bus rapid transit system, and the CTrail Hartford Line passenger rail service.

Alicia is an active leader within the transportation industry. She is a graduate of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Emerging Leaders Program (Class of 2018), serves as an APTA Emerging Leaders Program National Mentor, and was recently appointed to a two-year term on the APTA Emerging Leaders Program Committee. She also mentors emerging professionals through the WTS Connecticut Chapter Mentoring Program and serves as a guest speaker for the COMTO Connecticut Chapter Mentoring Program.



Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT, WTS President

Katie Hedberg-Klose is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinating Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), where she leads efforts to ensure ADA compliance in the public right-of-way and across CTDOT transportation facilities. She provides technical guidance and coordinates closely with other Connecticut agencies, municipalities, and the public to advance transportation access and mobility. At CTDOT, Katie serves on the Complete Streets Committee and Highway Standards Committee. She also serves on the state's Vision Zero Council as sub-committee co-chair and is a board member of the ADA Coalition of Connecticut.

Katie holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with a minor in Architectural Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Before joining CTDOT, she worked in the private sector with a focus on traffic engineering and transportation planning. A dedicated leader in the transportation community, Katie currently serves as President of the WTS Connecticut Chapter and is a Past Chair of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Committee on Younger Members. Outside of work, Katie enjoys traveling and spending time outdoors with her husband and their three golden retrievers.

Track 3 – ConneCTing with our State and Municipalities

Session IV

Building Public Trust: *Community Engagement for Successful Infrastructure Projects*

This session will include a short presentation on the importance of community engagement with an infrastructure project, followed by a panel of municipal leaders sharing their successes and setbacks in community outreach.

Misinformation and lack of understanding can derail infrastructure projects. Clearly communicating the benefits of a project, explaining how to use new infrastructure, and answering stakeholder questions can improve buy-in and combat the circulation of inaccurate information. Presenters will share real-life experiences of community engagement, including times when things did not go well and when they did. Participants will learn why this step is important and the best practices for outreach.

Presenters:

- » Amy Watkins, Watch For Me, Moderator
- » Emma Petersen, Town of Manchester
- » Jim Travers, City of Norwalk
- » Mark Moriarty, City of New Britain
- » Rich Donovan, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)



Amy Watkins, MPH, Watch For Me, Moderator

Amy Watkins, MPH is the program manager for Watch for Me CT, a pedestrian and bicyclist safety campaign funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in partnership with Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center. Amy earned her Masters of Public Health at the University of Connecticut and has worked for 25 years in community health education.



Emma Petersen, Town of Manchester

Emma Petersen is the Principal Comprehensive Planner for the Town of Manchester, Connecticut, where she leads long-range planning initiatives, plan development, community engagement, and data analysis that help shape the town's future growth and development. She holds a Masters in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Florida, where she was a recipient of the WTS Connecticut Maggie Walsh Leadership Legacy Scholarship, as well as a certificate in Geospatial Information Analysis. Her work brings together planning, data, and community perspectives to translate complex issues into practical strategies for the community.



Jim Travers, 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 guide documents help to improve the roadway for the most vulnerable users.

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.



Mark Moriarty, City of New Britain

For more than 20 years, Mark Moriarty has served as the Director of Public Works for the City of New Britain, overseeing a broad range of municipal services, including streets and parks, water, sewer and stormwater utilities, solid waste management, traffic operations, fleet services, and capital projects. Through this work, he has developed extensive

expertise in public infrastructure, transportation, and municipal operations, with a particular focus on Complete Streets and traffic safety in urban environments.

Under Mark's leadership, New Britain's investment in Complete Streets infrastructure is approaching \$100 million. These investments have transformed neighborhoods throughout the City, improving mobility, safety, accessibility, and overall quality of life. In conjunction with its Complete Streets initiatives, New Britain has developed a bicycle network of more than 50 miles, as well as a growing network of dedicated multi-use trails connecting residents to neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other destinations throughout the City.

In recent years, New Britain has placed an even greater emphasis on traffic safety and protecting vulnerable road users. Through the City's Vision Zero initiative, which focuses on eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, New Britain has achieved a 47 percent reduction in serious injury and fatal crashes over the past five years. These efforts reflect Mark's commitment to creating safer, more accessible, and more sustainable transportation systems for residents of all ages and abilities. Beyond his work with the City of New Britain, Mark serves in several statewide and regional leadership and advisory roles. He is a member of CTDOT's Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Watch for Me CT Board, the BRRFOC Executive Board, and the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification Board. Through these roles, he contributes his experience and perspective to efforts

focused on transportation safety, active transportation, sustainability, and the future of public infrastructure throughout Connecticut.

While Mark has served New Britain for more than two decades, his commitment to improving the City has not diminished. His continued involvement in local, regional, and statewide initiatives demonstrates a longstanding dedication to innovation, public service, and shaping the future of urban infrastructure. His leadership and commitment to making New Britain a safer, more connected, and more livable community are helping position the City for a bright future.



**Rich Donovan, Naugatuck Valley Council of Government,
NVCOG**

Rich Donovan is the Deputy Executive Director and Integrated Mobility and Community Planning Director for the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. In these roles, Rich leads a team of planners working with the nineteen member municipalities on issues related transportation, land use, and the important connection between these two planning areas.

Over the past five years with the NVCOG, Rich has worked hard to identify regional transportation priorities, coordinate investments, and advance the principals of vision zero in the region. Originally from Connecticut, Rich and his wife Allie spent many years in the DC area before moving to New Haven with their dogs Vino and Moka.

Track 3 – ConneCTing with our State and Municipalities

Session V

Strengthening Collaboration Through a Transportation Planning Charrette

In a world where change is relentless, the leaders who thrive aren't necessarily those with all the answers, but those who have trained themselves to respond with agility. This session focuses on mastering six Change Reflexes that transform exhausting, manual reactions to uncertainty into automatic, resilient adaptability. Participants will begin by exploring the fundamental shift from manual effort to automatic adaptability, learning how this transition provides a sustainable foundation for long-term resilience. By discovering their natural change style, attendees will gain insight into how their innate tendencies build strength, while also identifying the specific friction points that emerge when they are under pressure. The session further dives into a comprehensive set of reflexes organized across three critical response zones, internal, directional, and external, demonstrating how each one supports stability during upheaval. Finally, the workshop concludes with a practical commitment: participants will choose one recurring daily moment to practice one or more of these reflexes, ensuring they become a repeatable habit.

Presenters:

- » Joann Fryer, Fuss & O'Neill
- » Jennifer Babowicz, Fuss & O'Neill
- » Matt Skelly, Fuss & O'Neill
- » Stephanie White, Fuss & O'Neill
- » Sylwia Tanski, Fuss & O'Neill



JoAnn Fryer, Fuss & O'Neill

JoAnn has been a leader in the transportation industry for more than 30 years, beginning her career in 1991 after earning a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of New Hampshire.

Since joining Fuss & O'Neill through its acquisition of CLD Consulting Engineers in 2017, she has advanced to Senior Vice President and Transportation Market Leader, where she oversees client relationships, strategic growth, and transportation initiatives across New England.

As a respected industry leader, JoAnn was the founding President of WTS New Hampshire, was named the 2025 WTS-NH Woman of the Year and the 2026 New Hampshire Engineer of the Year and remains actively involved in organizations including ACEC-NH, WTS, NH Society of Professional Engineers, and APWA.

She also co-chairs the NHDOT/ACEC-NH Consultant Quality Initiative Committee and champions inclusion and belonging through Fuss & O'Neill's IDEA program, reflecting her longstanding commitment to advancing the engineering profession, fostering collaboration, and creating a more equitable industry.

Jennifer Babowicz, Fuss & O'Neill



Jennifer is an experienced engineer specializing in traffic engineering, transportation planning, and roadway design. Her technical expertise includes traffic signal and signal system design, maintenance and protection of traffic, traffic impact studies, transportation planning and analysis, and complete streets initiatives. She possesses extensive knowledge of Connecticut Department of Transportation processes and procedures, including the production of digital contract plans, technical specifications, and supplemental contract documents. Throughout her career, Jennifer has collaborated closely with state agencies, municipalities, and private-sector clients to successfully deliver a wide range of transportation and planning projects.

Matt Skelly, Fuss & O'Neill



Matthew has a wide range of experience in traffic impact analysis, feasibility and planning studies, transit planning studies, traffic calming, traffic signal design, and roadway design. His expertise includes transportation planning, traffic assessment studies and traffic signal design. Matthew is familiar with Massachusetts and Connecticut Department of Transportation procedures and permitting processes, as well as roadway and traffic signal construction practices. Computer application experience includes SYNCHRO, HCM, AutoCAD, MicroStation, and Arcview GIS.

Stephanie White, Fuss & O'Neill



Stephanie has more than 20 years of experience and has been involved in all facets of the planning, design, and implementation process. Her expertise includes downtown urban revitalization, placemaking, urban design, ecological-based planting designs, park master planning, housing, education facilities, and new urbanism techniques. Stephanie has been a team member on multiple award-winning design projects recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects. With a keen sense of design and attention to detail, she seeks to deliver creative and sustainable solutions to every design challenge.

Sylwia Tanski, Fuss & O'Neill



Sylwia 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.

Track 3 – ConneCTing with our State and Municipalities

Session VI

CTDOT Statewide Active Transportation Plan

CTDOT is finalizing its updated Statewide Active Transportation Plan (ATP), a roadmap for improving safety, accessibility, and connectivity across Connecticut through a Complete Streets and Safe System approach to active transportation infrastructure on state roadways. While the ATP focuses on state-owned facilities and regionally significant bicycle and pedestrian connections, CTDOT recognizes that a successful statewide active transportation network depends on strong local bicycle and pedestrian networks that connect communities to regional and statewide destinations.

This presentation will highlight how CTDOT collaborated with municipalities, Councils of Governments (COGs), and other regional stakeholders throughout the planning process to identify needs, refine recommendations, and better understand local challenges and opportunities. In Spring 2025, CTDOT and HDR conducted day-long tours across Connecticut's eight COG regions, giving municipal representatives the opportunity to share firsthand concerns related to safety, connectivity gaps, maintenance responsibilities, funding challenges, and implementation barriers along state and local corridors.

Throughout these tours and broader public and stakeholder engagement efforts, a consistent message emerged: municipalities need greater transparency, stronger coordination, and additional technical and financial support to advance local active transportation projects. In response, the ATP includes recommendations for guidance documents, prioritization tools, coordination strategies, and implementation resources intended to strengthen collaboration between CTDOT, regional agencies, and local governments while, helping transform statewide goals into implementable local and regional projects.

Presenters:

- » Emily Barnoski, PE, HDR
- » Anna Bergeron, CTDOT
- » Paul Ashworth, CTDOT
- » Christopher Roberts, CTDOT



Emily Barnoski, PE, HDR

Emily is a transportation engineer with 14 years of experience leading multimodal planning and traffic engineering projects across the United States. She is dedicated to advancing safety and mobility through innovative planning and context-sensitive design.

Over the past two years, Emily has served as Project Manager for the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Statewide Active Transportation Plan, leading the development of a comprehensive statewide framework that embeds Complete Streets and Safe System principles into the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of active transportation facilities on state roadways.

Through this work, she is helping shape a more connected multimodal transportation network that supports walking, biking, and rolling for people of all ages and abilities.



Anna Bergeron, CTDOT

Anna is the Supervisor of the Active Transportation Unit at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). With more than 20 years of service at CTDOT, she has extensive experience advancing multimodal transportation projects across the state.

In her current role, Anna leads the Active Transportation Unit, overseeing initiatives that improve walking and bicycling accommodations and promote safe, accessible, and connected transportation networks. She works to ensure that multimodal infrastructure and Complete Streets principles are considered in the planning and design of state transportation projects throughout Connecticut.



Paul Ashworth, CTDOT

Paul is a transportation planning professional with the majority of his experience working with municipalities and communities to find transportation and land use solutions that best serve the public while ensuring local economic prosperity.

Currently serving as ConnDOT's Bicycle & Pedestrian coordinator, Paul started the ConnDOT employee bike club and is a firm believer that experience outside of a vehicle can change lives.



Christopher Roberts, CTDOT

Chris is a Transportation Planner with the Connecticut Department of Transportation , where he works on active transportation planning initiatives that support safe, efficient, and sustainable mobility throughout the state.

He studied Urban Planning at Central Connecticut State University and has a background in land use, municipal, and regional planning.

Track 4 – ConneCTing with our Community through Hands-On Demonstrations

Session II/ Session III

Safe Routes to School: *Bicycle and Scooter Training*

Participants will experience one of our In-school bicycle safety trainings through a series of stations followed by a discussion on current SRTS trends and opportunities

Presenters:

- » Bridget Moriarty, CTDOT, Moderator
- » Colin Horan, CTDOT
- » Greg Brown, CTDOT
- » Anna Bergeron, CTDOT
- » Paul Ashworth, CTDOT
- » Christopher Roberts, CTDOT



Bridget Moriarty, CTDOT, Moderator

Bridget Moriarty is the current Safe Routes to School (SRTS) State Coordinator at the CTDOT. She strives, with the support of her team, to make the SRTS program accessible to all students k-12 so that they can walk, bike, and roll to school safely and comfortably. She hopes that kids learn that being active and taking responsibility for their own safety is empowering and fun.



Colin Horan, CTDOT

Colin Horan is a Transportation Planner with the Project Planning Unit at the Connecticut Department of Transportation. He has been with the Department since graduating from Bucknell University in 2023. Currently, Colin is also pursuing a Masters of Geography at Central Connecticut State University with a concentration in Urban Planning and GIS.



Greg Brown, CTDOT

Greg Brown is a Transportation Planner with the CTDOT Bureau of Planning, Technology & Innovation, where he supports the planning, development, and delivery of Active Transportation and Complete Streets initiatives. He plays a key role in supporting the \$62 million Community Connectivity Grant Program (CCGP) and the \$20 million Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP), managing municipal grant-funded construction projects and performing technical design reviews and prioritization studies focused on improving safety and accessibility for all roadway users—particularly vulnerable road users. With more than 25 years of experience in civil engineering, federal disaster recovery, real estate investment research, coaching, and grant administration. Greg has managed over \$2.7 billion in FEMA Public Assistance grant funding across the United States and its territories. His career includes structural engineering, large-scale real estate development oversight, market research leadership, and extensive project management in both public and private sectors, bringing an interdisciplinary perspective to his work in transportation safety and multimodal planning.

Greg holds a BS in Civil Engineering and a BA from Bucknell University, along with an MBA and a Master of City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Anna Bergeron, CTDOT

Anna is the Supervisor of the Active Transportation Unit at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). With more than 20 years of service at CTDOT, she has extensive experience advancing multimodal transportation projects across the state. In her current role, Anna leads the Active Transportation Unit, overseeing initiatives that improve walking and bicycling accommodations and promote safe, accessible, and connected transportation networks. She works to ensure that multimodal infrastructure and Complete Streets principles are considered in the planning and design of state transportation projects throughout Connecticut.



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Christopher Roberts, CTDOT

Chris is a Transportation Planner with the Connecticut Department of Transportation , where he works on active transportation planning initiatives that support safe, efficient, and sustainable mobility throughout the state.

He studied Urban Planning at Central Connecticut State University and has a background in land use, municipal, and regional planning.

Track 4 – ConneCTing with our Community through

Hands-On Demonstrations

Session IV/Session V

ADA Toolkit and Empathy at the Intersection

Participants will experience one of our accessibility training simulation through a series of stations with mobility devices followed by a discussion

Presenters:

- » Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT, WTS President
- » Mary McCarthy, Executive Director, UCONN (T2) Center
- » Shawn Barry, Safety Technical Associate, Safety Circuit Rider Program , UCONN (T2) Center
- » Jason Hughes, Safety Technical Associate, Safety Circuit Rider Program , UCONN (T2) Center



Katherine Hedberg-Klose, CTDOT, WTS President

Katie Hedberg-Klose is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinating Engineer at the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), where she leads efforts to ensure ADA compliance in the public right-of-way and across CTDOT transportation facilities. She provides technical guidance and coordinates closely with other Connecticut agencies, municipalities, and the public to advance

transportation access and mobility. At CTDOT, Katie serves on the Complete Streets Committee and Highway Standards Committee. She also serves on the state's Vision Zero Council as sub-committee co-chair and is a board member of the ADA Coalition of Connecticut.

Katie holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with a minor in Architectural Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Before joining CTDOT, she worked in the private sector with a focus on traffic engineering and transportation planning. A dedicated leader in the transportation community, Katie currently serves as President of the WTS Connecticut Chapter and is a Past Chair of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Committee on Younger Members. Outside of work, Katie enjoys traveling and spending time outdoors with her husband and their three golden retrievers.



Mary McCarthy, Executive Director, UCONN (T2) Center

Mary is the Executive Director of the CT Training and Technical Assistance Center at UConn and has been with the Center for 25 years. She is responsible for the strategic direction and day-to-day management of T2 Center efforts in providing professional development and technical assistance to Connecticut's state and municipal transportation community. She is passionate about supporting the incredible crews working to improve the safety and efficiency of Connecticut's transportation system and proud to lead the team of incredible professionals doing this important work.



Shawn Barry, UCONN (T2) Center



Jason Hughes, UCONN (T2) Center

Afternoon Plenary Session

ConneCTing with Regional Leadership:

Shaping the Future of Transportation

How should Connecticut plan and invest in transportation infrastructure when the way people work, travel, and move is changing? This forward-looking panel brings together representatives from Connecticut's Councils of Governments, the City of New Haven, CTDOT, and FHWA for a candid discussion about the future of transportation and infrastructure.

Panelists will explore the impact of AI and emerging technologies, changing travel patterns, aging infrastructure, federal funding, transit investment, regional mobility, and evolving approaches to project planning and delivery. The discussion will challenge traditional assumptions and consider how Connecticut can move beyond individual projects to create a more connected, resilient, and multimodal transportation system.

The conversation will ultimately ask: Are we building the transportation system we need for tomorrow or continuing to rebuild the system we inherited?

Moderator:

- » Shawna Bartkus, GM2

Panelists:

- » Jennifer Brady, PE, FHWA
- » Laoise King, Deputy Commissioner, CTDOT
- » Patrick Carleton, MetroCOG
- » Matt Hart, CRCOG
- » Haley Simpson, City of New Haven



Shawna Bartkus, GM2, Moderator

Shawna Bartkus is a Vice President and Director of Marketing at GM2 Associates, Inc., bringing more than 25 years of A/E/C industry experience. She leads the firm's marketing and business development efforts and has played a key role in securing major projects and expanding GM2 into new markets. As Vice President, Shawna works closely with GM2's leadership team to support strategic growth, strengthen internal processes, and advance the firm's culture. An active industry leader, Shawna is a former President of WTS Connecticut and has served on the State Board of the ACE Mentor Program of Connecticut. She established WTS Connecticut's Mentor and Scholarship Programs and helped launch its Transportation Mini-Series, now in its 20th year. Shawna's leadership mantra is simple: it's all about people. She believes strong relationships, collaboration, and investing in others are the foundation for successful projects, organizations, and careers.



Jennifer Brady, PE, FHWA

Jennifer is a Transportation Specialist with the Federal Highway Administration CT Division. She has over 25 years of experience in the fields of metropolitan planning, safety, traffic engineering, project management, and multi-modal transportation planning and is a licensed professional engineer in Connecticut. Her experience also includes work to advance Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act initiatives including competitive grants and resiliency planning. Prior to working for FHWA, Jennifer was the Office Leader for a civil engineering consulting firm and served as the Transportation Director for Connecticut's largest Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).



Laoise King, Deputy Commissioner, CTDOT

Laoise (pronounced Lee sha) King comes to the CTDOT with more than 20 years of experience in local government and not-for-profit organizations.

Most recently, Laoise served as Chief of Staff for the Mayor of Norwalk, CT. As Chief of Staff, Laoise managed all administrative functions for the City of Norwalk at the direction of the mayor. She also provided guidance to elected

officials on policy and planning as well as working closely with the City's State and Federal delegations to achieve the City's legislative agendas and secure funding for municipal projects.

Prior to coming to the City of Norwalk, Laoise served in various capacities in local government and non-profit sectors. She worked as Vice President of Education Initiatives at United Way of Greater New Haven where she was a member of the senior management team and was responsible for the design and management of community investments, partnerships and programs related to education. Before joining Unity Way, Laoise served the City of New Haven as Assistant Corporation Counsel, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Mayor and finally as Chief of External Affairs for the New Haven Public Schools. Laoise also advised the Mayor on public policy matters, implemented Mayor's Office initiatives, and assisted the Chief of Staff in day-to-day operations of the City.

Born in Ireland, but raised in Connecticut, Laoise returned to Connecticut in 2005 after living in Colorado for ten years. In Colorado, Laoise worked as an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Denver. Laoise received her Juris Doctor from University of Denver College of Law and her B.A. degree from University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Laoise and her family love to travel - they have traveled to South America, Central America, Europe, and Africa, but her favorite place to go is to their lakeside cabin in Minnesota near where her husband grew up.



Patrick Carleton, AICP, Deputy Director, Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments

Patrick Carleton is the Deputy Director for the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments (MetroCOG). MetroCOG is the regional planning agency for the Greater Bridgeport Region, assisting member municipalities with transportation, transit, environmental, and regional planning, and regional economic development initiatives. As Deputy Director, Patrick helps oversee agency operations while directing and coordinating comprehensive and project specific planning for the Region and assisting with the implementation of shared services to better serve the municipalities, their staff and the residents of the region. He received a Master's of Public Administration from the University of New Haven and a Bachelors' Degree from the University of Connecticut.



Matt Hart, JD, MPA, Executive Director, CRCOG

Matt Hart began his tenure in 2022 as the Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the largest of Connecticut's regional planning organizations serving 38 municipalities and a population of 976,248 in the greater Hartford region. The CRCOG region is well-situated between New York City and Boston, and is rich in diversity, history, and natural resources. CRCOG's team of professional staff work to promote responsible land use, sustainable transportation systems, economic vitality, and quality of life. The organization also advocates for its capital city and member towns and provides various shared services to facilitate governmental efficiency.

Matt is an accomplished manager and leader with broad experience in local government. He values open government, innovation, and teamwork, and has a passion for leadership and public service. Matt has championed regional solutions to improve service delivery and to promote equity and sustainability throughout his career.

Previously, Matt served as the Town Manager in West Hartford, Connecticut, where he helped lead the community through the COVID-19 pandemic. Matt also assisted the Town Council with supporting the town's business community, improving customer and constituent service, and developing sound fiscal strategies designed to address budgetary and operational needs.

Before West Hartford, Matt served as Town Manager in Mansfield, Connecticut, where he played a critical role in developing Storrs Center, a mixed-use, New Urbanism project located adjacent to the University of Connecticut's main campus. Matt began his local government career with the town of Windsor, Connecticut, where he had an opportunity to learn many progressive management practices and principles. In addition, Matt has experience working in the private sector and is a veteran of the US Army and US Army National Guard.

Matt is currently an adjunct faculty member with the University of Connecticut's Department of Public Policy, which has recognized him for his contributions to the field of public administration and the school. He is also an active member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and the Connecticut Town and City Management Association (CTCMA).

Matt earned his Juris Doctor (JD) and Master's in Public Affairs (MPA) from the University of Connecticut, and his bachelor's degree in political science from the State University of New York at Potsdam.



Haley Simpson, Director of Transportation, Traffic and Parking, City of New Haven

Haley Simpson is the Director of Transportation, Traffic & Parking for the City of New Haven. In this role, she oversees transportation planning, traffic safety, parking operations and initiatives aimed at improving mobility throughout the city.

A New Haven native, Haley has built her career in public service and community development. Prior to her current role, she served as Deputy Chief of Staff to New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker and as a Project Manager with The Glendower Group, the development arm of Elm City Communities. Haley earned a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and a Master of Business Administration from Southern Connecticut State University. She is currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration at the University of Connecticut. Outside of her professional work, Haley remains active in civic and community organizations. Her work reflects a continued commitment to public service, leadership, and the New Haven community.