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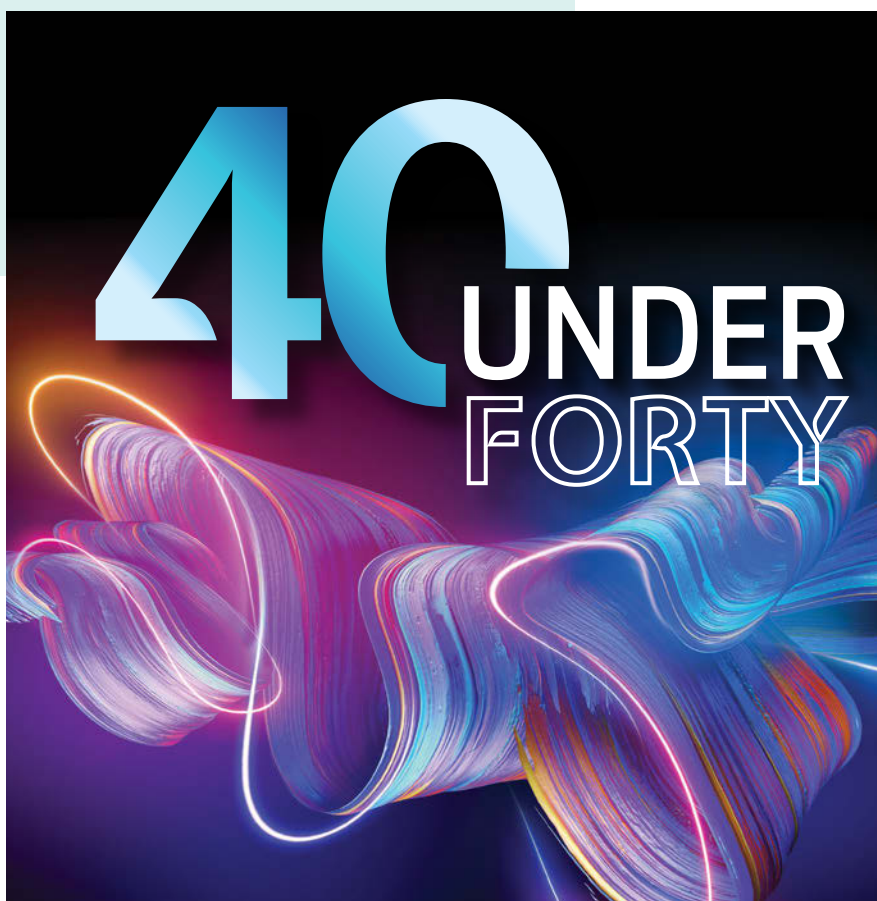
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Get to Know the New Class of 40 Under 40 Honorees

The magazine's 15th iteration of its signature recognition program spotlights the individuals pushing the transit industry forward.

Welcome to our 15th annual 40 Under 40 issue. *Mass Transit's* annual program launched in 2008 to highlight developing and established leaders from all corners of the transit industry. While their individual paths to appear in this issue are unique, they all share a common goal of delivering better mobility within their communities.

Our evaluation committee read more than 170 nominations and was tasked with finding the final group of 40 that you will read about within this issue. The 2023 40 Under 40 honorees represent a cross-section of disciplines, including professionals from engineering, operations, safety, planning, communications and government relations.

Approximately 33 percent of honorees work for engineering firms, 28 percent represent private companies in the industry and 40 percent of the honorees consist of individuals who work for transit or state agencies. This is a well-educated bunch, with more than half earning an advanced degree or professional certification. It is also a multi-lingual group, with more than eight languages spoken among the 40 honorees.

Beyond the foundations of education, the 2023 class is well practiced with honorees involved in some of North America's highest profile projects of the past few years. The group also has a high level of tech savvy, with honorees experienced in the increasingly digital-forward methods to deliver greater efficiency in operations, construction, fare and data management and even community engagement.

The transit industry is all about connections, which is why the 40 Under 40 program places value on honorees' efforts and time spent volunteering with associations, mentor groups and other non-profits. Dozens of these local and national entities have provided networking opportunities and personal development opportunities for this year's group of honorees.

Outside of work, you'll find this group to be comprised of an event planner, marathoners, a scuba diver, former college athletes, veterans and working parents who are sharing their love of the industry with the next generation of transit enthusiasts.

The team at *Mass Transit* hopes you enjoy reading about this year's class as much as our team enjoyed getting to share their stories. Please visit the 40 Under 40 page on our website, MassTransitmag.com/40-under-40; where you'll find additional fun facts, deeper first-person viewpoints and more information about their accomplishments.



Mischa Wanek-Libman

Mischa Wanek-Libman, editor in chief

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People & Places



The Honolulu rail system, Skyline, opened for service on June 30.

Photo: HART

Honolulu's Skyline opens for service

Honolulu's mostly elevated autonomous rail system, Skyline, officially opened for service on June 30. The first phase of the project will shuttle riders along an 11-mile segment and serve nine stations between Kualakai (East Kapolei) Station and Hlawa (Aloha Stadium) Station. The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) oversaw construction of the project and transferred control to the city and county of Honolulu in early June 2023. HART will continue working to build the next phases of the project, which includes the Airport Extension planned to open in 2025 that will connect Aloha Stadium with four additional stations to Middle Street – Kalihi Transit Center and the City Center Extension that will open in 2031 and add six stations to Civic Center.

[MassTransitmag.com/53065110](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53065110)

FTA awards more than \$100 million in disaster relief funding

► The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has awarded \$102.3 million in funding to 17 transit agencies, cities and planning councils in eight states and territories to help recover from recent natural disasters. The funding, provided through FTA's Public Transportation Emergency Relief (ER) Program, will help them repair damaged equipment and facilities and recoup costs for evacuation and rescue operations following floods, hurricanes and tornadoes that occurred in 2017 and 2020-22. FTA's ER Program aids public transit operators in the aftermath of a declared emergency or major disaster.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067732](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067732)

TTC and ATU Local 113 joint effort produces bus-of-the-future design concepts for improved operator security

► The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and ATU Local 113 have unveiled bus-of-the-future design concepts to improve security and provide a healthier working environment for bus operators. The joint effort is part of a Bus Design Innovation Program with ATU International and Centennial College. The design provides a complete barrier that shields a bus operator's workspace from the passenger compartment, as well as a new system that will improve air quality and the health of passengers and operators. The new designs, along with several others, were recently presented to the FTA and other transit systems in North America.

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WMATA will retrofit its Metrorail faregates with a new design aimed at combating fare evasion.
Photo: WMATA

Faregates with improved design installed at WMATA's Fort Totten Station

► New faregates being installed at Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Fort Totten

Station are being described as taller, stronger and more resilient as the authority continues efforts to reduce fare evasion. The new faregates are part of a systemwide rollout and include a design that has been improved on following months of testing prototype designs. The final product includes an L-shape door panel that extends over the faregate to minimize gaps between the openings. The faregates will be 55 inches tall versus the 28-inch height of existing gates and 48-inch height of the prototype. The new gates will have polycarbonate swing doors that are 200 times stronger than glass, lighter weight and more durable. The final design also includes more robust hinges and a more powerful motor to strengthen the door.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067104](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067104)

MDOT MTA Purple Line will open in the spring of 2027

► An agreement between the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit

Administration (MDOT MTA) and Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP) will see the 16-mile Purple Line open for service in the spring of 2027. Additionally, MDOT MTA has agreed to provide \$148 million to PLTP, which includes an increase of \$205 million paid during the construction period, less than a \$57 million reduction to payments made during the operations and maintenance period. MDOT MTA says the change in net compensation reflects months of collaboration to identify and mitigate delays and reach a resolution. MDOT MTA explains the change in the project's schedule reflects delays in utility relocation, constructing a complex project in an urban environment, the national workforce shortage, supply chain issues and "the unique history of the Purple Line Light Rail Project." The project's environmental clearance was reinstated following dismissal of a lawsuit brought by opponents of the project. The project also saw a replacement of its design-build contractor in 2022.

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The Hudson Tunnels in their current state.

Photo: Amtrak

FTA approves Hudson River Tunnel project to enter Engineering Phase of CIG program

► The Hudson Tunnel Project has been approved to enter the Engineering Phase of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program. This represents a significant advancement for the project, which entered New Starts Project Development through the CIG Program in July 2016. The Hudson Tunnel Project's sponsor, Gateway Development Commission,

will be able to incur costs for engineering activities, demolition and utility relocation, property acquisition and other non-construction costs, including procurement of specialized equipment and materials with the FTA's approval to enter the Engineering Phase of the CIG program. One noted change FTA included in the Hudson Tunnel updated project document was a revision to the maximum amount of a potential Full Funding Agreement. The original request was for \$7.408 billion, with the FTA moving the amount down to \$6.88 billion.

[MassTransitmag.com/53065461](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53065461)

Nova Bus to cease bus production in the U.S. in early 2025

► Nova Bus plans to close its Plattsburgh, N.Y., manufacturing facility by 2025, effectively exiting the U.S. transit bus market to focus its efforts within Canada. The Plattsburgh facility opened in 2009 and employs more than 300 people. Nova Bus, which is owned by Volvo, pledged to work closely with employees, as well as other Volvo companies to support Plattsburgh area employees impacted by the closing. According to Volvo Group, the restructuring is expected to make the Nova Bus operation profitable. Production in North America will be focused to the company's two Canadian facilities located in Saint-Eustache and Saint-François-du-Lac, Quebec. Volvo Group reports the restructuring of Nova Bus will have a SEK 1.3 billion (US\$122 million) negative impact on the group's second quarter 2023 income.

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Proterra files for bankruptcy protection

► Proterra Inc filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Aug. 7 in the District of Delaware. The company says the move is an “effort to strengthen its financial position through a recapitalization or going-concern sale.” The company operates three business lines, including Proterra Energy, which provides charging solutions, Proterra Powered, which provides battery systems, and Proterra Transit, which provides zero-emission transit buses. The company says its filing will maximize the value of each of its product lines. The company cancelled its scheduled 2023 Q2 earnings call that was scheduled for Aug. 9, 2023. A Bloomberg report said the company listed liabilities and assets of \$500 million each in its filing. In a statement following the Chapter 11 filing, Proterra said it intends to “operate in the ordinary course of business” as the bankruptcy process plays out.

[MassTransitmag.com/53068472](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53068472)

St. Louis to Chicago Amtrak trains start 110 mph operation

► Federal, state and local officials joined Amtrak and other stakeholders at Chicago Union Station to celebrate the start of 110 mph rail service between St. Louis, Mo., and Chicago. Amtrak’s state-supported Lincoln Service train on June 26 was the first train to make the trip between the two cities at higher speeds. The 110-mph service will save passengers 15 minutes versus the previous speeds of 90 mph and 30 minutes on the corridor’s initial speed of 79 mph before track, signaling and other enhancements to improve train speeds began. The \$1.96 billion project involved work to improve track infrastructure, signaling systems improvements and enhanced 212 grade crossings. Additionally, 39 crossings were closed and new stations were built in Dwight, Pontiac, Lincoln, Carlville and Alton while station upgrades were performed at Bloomington-Normal and Springfield.

[MassTransitmag.com/53064536](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53064536)

MORE NEWS AT A GLANCE

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority has awarded CDM Smith, Inc. a contract to advance accessibility improvements at three trolley stations.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067654](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067654)

► The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County has signed a \$26-million contract with GMV to expand its digital signage project in Houston, Texas.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067357](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067357)

► Hill International, Inc., was selected by Virginia Railway Express (VRE) to provide Program Management Consulting services for VRE’s Capital Improvement Program through an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity Contract.

[MassTransitmag.com/53065729](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53065729)

► The Huitt-Zollars and TranSystems team has been selected by Trinity Metro as the final design consultant for its TEXRAIL extension project.

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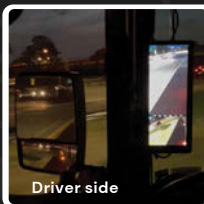


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People & Places

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Big Blue Bus



The city of Santa Monica's Department of Transportation (DOT) Director **Ed King** retired Aug. 9 after more than 46 years of service in public transportation. King spent the past 12 years as director for the city of Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, and most recently, the city's DOT. His tenure at the city is preceded by leadership roles at Long Beach Transit and the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority.

MassTransitmag.com/53063327

Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA)



The CCRTA Board of Directors selected **Derrick Majchszak** as its next CEO. Majchszak has more than 17 years of public transportation experience. He joined the CCRTA in 2017 as director of transportation before being promoted to managing director of operations, where he led 250 employees and contractors and managed a \$26 million budget.

MassTransitmag.com/53064002

Omnitrans



Omnitrans has named **Micah May** as the agency's new director of IT. As leader of the IT Department, May will oversee agency network systems infrastructure, cybersecurity, emerging technology and business continuity while managing the agency's IT team. Prior to Omnitrans, May served as deputy court executive office – technology CIO for the Superior Court of California County of San Bernardino and assistant deputy court executive officer for the Superior Court of California County of Riverside.

MassTransitmag.com/53063981

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) of Northern Illinois



The RTA of Northern Illinois has named **Rob Nash** as its new director of government affairs. Nash is charged with developing, leading and managing the federal, state and local legislative strategy of the RTA. Nash will help set and implement strategic legislative priorities to achieve the vision put forth in "Transit is the Answer," the RTA's regional transit strategic plan. He will also collaborate on developing long-term, system-wide regional funding solutions. Nash will work across internal departments and with the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, Pace and other stakeholders on legislation, coalition building and strategic communications.

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Mountain Metropolitan Transit (MMT)



Lan Rao has been named MMT transit division manager. Rao has been serving as acting transit division manager since July 2022. Prior to her role as acting transit division manager, she served as MMT's transit administrator. Rao started her career with the Transit Services Division of the city of Colorado Springs in 2008 and has been promoted multiple times, consistently taking on higher levels of responsibilities. During that time, Rao helped MMT rise from a near collapse during the Great Recession in 2009, where nearly half of MMT's services had to be cut.

[MassTransitmag.com/53065100](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53065100)

VIA Rail Canada



Mario Pélouquin began his role as VIA Rail Canada's new president and CEO on June 27. Pélouquin brings more than three decades of experience in the rail industry, a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities it presents and a demonstrated commitment to ensuring transportation services meet the needs of communities across Canada. Pélouquin will focus on enhancing VIA Rail's customer experience, expanding services to regional and remote communities and driving operational efficiencies.

[MassTransitmag.com/53065288](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53065288)

Valley Metro



Valley Metro has named **Darren Curry** its new chief maintenance officer (CMO). In his role as Valley Metro's CMO, Curry will be responsible for planning, developing and directing all aspects of the agency's Maintenance Division, including long- and short-range maintenance operations of all Valley Metro assets. Curry brings more than 36 years of experience in maintenance and transit. Most recently, he worked as the assistant executive director of transit assets and was responsible for leading the Metro Transit Assets Team at Metro in St. Louis, Mo.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067107](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067107)

Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)



The GCRTA Board of Trustees approved a new contract for CEO and General Manager **India L. Birdsong Terry**. The contract continues Terry's employment as CEO and general manager through Dec. 31, 2027. She has led the agency since Sept. 16, 2019. Terry will continue to oversee more than 2,100 employees and a \$292 million operating budget. She remains committed to transparent leadership, management accountability, sound financial oversight and connecting the community.

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Cyber Attackers are Coming for Transit Agencies, **Here's How to Strengthen Your Security Posture**

Protecting transit agency assets and those of the riding public can be bolstered by following cybersecurity best practices, setting response plans in place and being proactive.

BY DAVID AVERY

The demand from riders for convenient, reliable and efficient public transit systems has prompted transit agencies to implement new and innovative technologies as a catalyst for smart cities. Transit systems have continually implemented more and more technology, especially during the height of the pandemic, with riders pushing for contactless, mobile-based fare collection and modernized systems. With this smart city boom, rapid development and implementation of new technology into existing transit systems and operations, a vast amount of data is collected. Whenever sensitive data is collected and stored, there is an increased cybersecurity risk.

A Recent Increase in Cyberattacks

Earlier this year, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) cloud-based computer network was breached by a personal computer in Russia. It was later discovered this cyberattack was initiated by a former IT employee contracted by WMATA. The WMATA Inspector General's Office found the authority's increased reliance on technology had created long-standing security issues and increased vulnerabilities that could have included threats to train safety for a system that more than 600,000 people rely on every day.

More recently, the U.S. Department of Transportation reported a data breach in May that affected administrative systems processing employee transportation benefits. This breach exposed 237,000 current and former employees' personal information. While an investigation into this breach is underway, the transportation benefit system has been frozen.

Given recent events, it's clear why cybersecurity has become increasingly top of mind in today's transit landscape. The risk of a cyberattack is real, and it can be extremely damaging. From riders' personal information being leaked like payment details and social security numbers to the disruption of a transit system's operations and widespread outages, the negative impact is severe and can damage an agency's reputation, creating doubt from customers and having long-term effects.

While technology can bring cybersecurity risks, it's also incredibly beneficial and necessary for agencies to implement to meet customer demands, stay competitive and provide the best rider experience. Being proactive, following best practices and having plans in place in case of a threat are all ways to utilize innovative technologies while improving your cybersecurity posture.

Strategies to Mitigate Risks

The Transportation Security Administration requires freight railroads, passenger rail and rail transit owners and operators to "designate a cybersecurity coordinator,

report cybersecurity incidents to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within 24 hours and develop and implement a cybersecurity incident response plan to reduce the risk of an operational disruption.” Developing an incident response plan that details what your agency should do before, during and after a cyberattack is critical. In addition to developing a plan, conducting tabletop exercises will help ensure the plan is ready and will be successful. Finding an agency to help conduct these exercises brings additional challenges.

To be more proactive when it comes to cybersecurity efforts, larger transit agencies are hiring chief security officers and chief information security officers. While creating these positions within agencies is one of the best ways to strengthen the agencies security posture, they come with large salaries that some agencies cannot afford. If this is the case, the agency’s IRP is a good place to focus efforts. Additionally, cyber insurance is another way to be proactive and protect your organization against losses.

Another best practice for public transportation agencies is separating their information technology and operational technology networks to limit the attack surface and the potential number of affected entities in the event of a breach. Using a virtual local area network and network segmentation is crucial.

Agencies should also consider focusing cybersecurity efforts towards vendor partnership. Before diving into a partnership, agencies need to remember that vendors might have varying levels of cybersecurity compliance and, at the end of the day, it’s the agency’s responsibility to protect the data of customers. Agencies should ensure vendors are compliant with the latest cybersecurity standards like Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard and Systems and Organization Controls. It is up to transit agencies to do their due diligence in assessing their security vulnerabilities with third-party vendors to protect the integrity of their systems. To determine vulnerabilities ahead of time and address them before an issue arises, using tools like multi-factor authentication and network scanners are a must.

In a time where technology plays an

increasingly important role in public transit, prioritizing cybersecurity is critical. Through adopting proactive measures and prioritizing cybersecurity efforts, transit agencies can lower the risk of a cyberattack, improve their resilience and ultimately protect their riders. **L**

About the author



David Avery has been with South Central Transit Authority for 10 years and serves as director of IT overseeing infrastructure of Red Rose Transit Authority and Berks Area Regional Transportation Authority.

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MASS TRANSIT

PRESENTS

40 UNDER FORTY



Favorite Systems

Global transit systems provide aspirational goals

When asked about their favorite transit systems outside of their own systems, this year's group of 40 Under 40 honorees bucked a trend of the past few years by overwhelmingly citing global systems as opposed to North American systems. This could be a credit to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing ease of international travel, or it could be that a surprising percentage of this year's honorees, more than 20 percent, are immigrants or the children of immigrants and global travel has been an integral part of their lives. Paris Metro was the clear favorite among honorees followed by Transport for London and Stockholm Public Transport. In North America, Chicago Transit Authority, New York City Transit, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System and PATCO were named as favorites among this year's group of honorees.

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10%



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10%



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Age

Youngest **28** Average **36** Oldest **39**



#1

Paris Metro



#2

Transport for London



#3

Stockholm Public Transport



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RUMPA DEY, PE, PTOE
 Arizona Emerging
 Technology
 Leader/ Group
 Manager
 AECOM

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Rumpa Dey is an accomplished professional in the field of transportation engineering, serving as AE-COM’s Arizona and Utah emerging technology leader and group manager in the Phoenix office. She has spent her 15-year career dedicated to enhancing accessibility, mobility and safety through innovative technologies.

Dey’s passion for public transportation is rooted in her upbringing in Bangladesh, where her family relied on public transit due to financial constraints. Dey secured a scholarship and earned a bachelor’s degree in transportation engineering from Japan Nippon Foundation followed by a master’s degree from Arizona State University where she served as a research fellow.

Dey’s professional development journey includes completion of the Leadership in Engineering Administration Program by the American Council of Engineering Companies, as well as AECOM’s ‘Global Manager Development’ and ‘Elevate’ programs. She holds professional engineering licenses in multiple states and has been instrumental in designing and implementing emerging technologies to enhance transit efficiency, safety and security.

Dey and her team’s contributions to significant transit projects include the Valley Metro’s South Central Extension Light Rail, CapEx Light Rail project, Phoenix’s 35th Avenue Bus Rapid Transit

“ Be nice and kind, treat people the way you want to be treated and then success will come automatically.”

(BRT), Houston’s MetroRapid University Corridor BRT and Denver’s Colfax BRT. Her team’s designs, such as transit integrated traffic signals and corridor lighting, prioritize safety and eliminate confusion among various modes of transportation.

Beyond her technical expertise, Dey is dedicated to fostering the next generation of transportation professionals. She grew her team from one to eight employees in four years and she actively supports students and young engineers, collaborating with organizations to promote mobility and equity.

Dey’s commitment to sustainability and her role in initiatives like “Great-Place-to-Work” underscore her holistic approach to engineering. Her exceptional contributions have not gone unnoticed, and she has earned several accolades for her leadership and engineering professionalism.

FAST FACT: Dey is a licensed professional engineer in Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Hawaii.

[MassTransitmag.com/53068665](https://www.MassTransitmag.com/53068665)

Celebrating our transportation changemakers

We congratulate **Rumpa Dey** on being recognized by Mass Transit Magazine as part of its 2023 40 Under 40.

As the world’s most trusted infrastructure consulting firm, AECOM delivers innovative transit projects to bring communities closer together.

 [aecom.com](https://www.aecom.com)



Rumpa Dey, P.E., PTOE
 Emerging Technology
 Leader/Group Manager

AECOM Delivering a better world

For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10066051

Kimiya Rae Aghevli Darrell is vice president, transportation planner at WSP USA and is an emerging professional in the transportation planning, operations and safety field, performing for a variety of transit organizations in the mid-Atlantic region.

In her current position, she is responsible for the overall success of her team and brings a strong background in program analysis and project management, as well as strategic planning for transportation agencies and city governments.

She has made a name for herself as someone who challenges the status quo for how high-stakes transportation consulting and management of high-performing young professionals should be done: With empathy, compassion and a willingness to step back and listen.

Even with a packed schedule, she finds time to connect with her staff, engage with her community and prioritize her family. Her honest and open leadership style empowers her team, especially those who didn't come from "in-the-know" backgrounds, to use their diverse experiences and many strengths to better serve others. Her work is enhanced by her ability to know and understand the nuances of the issues at hand, whether it's a systemic failure in policy at the regional level or a colleague upset over a miscommunication at the office.

Her strong leadership skills, character and ef-

“ My role has given me the opportunity to appreciate everything it takes to keep a large transit system running efficiently and safely.”

orts towards the transit industry have already been noticed by others in the industry. Darrell has been recognized by the APTA with the Gold Award for Safety for Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration's Safety Rules and Compliance Program (SRCP) in 2015, WSP USA's Client Success Award for BaltimoreLink in 2018 and has been recognized for her work to support the development of APTA and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's report, "The COVID-19 Pandemic – Public Transportation Responds: Safeguarding Riders and Employees" (2020). She received the Association for Commuter Transportation 40 Under 40 award in 2020. Darrell received the Outstanding Team Builder Award from WSP in 2021.

FAST FACT: Darrell loves to entertain. Planning events and throwing parties fills her with unharnessed joy.

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KIMIYA RAE AGHEVLI DARRELL

Vice President/
Transportation
Planner
WSP USA

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FORTY

Kimiya Rae Aghevli Darrell

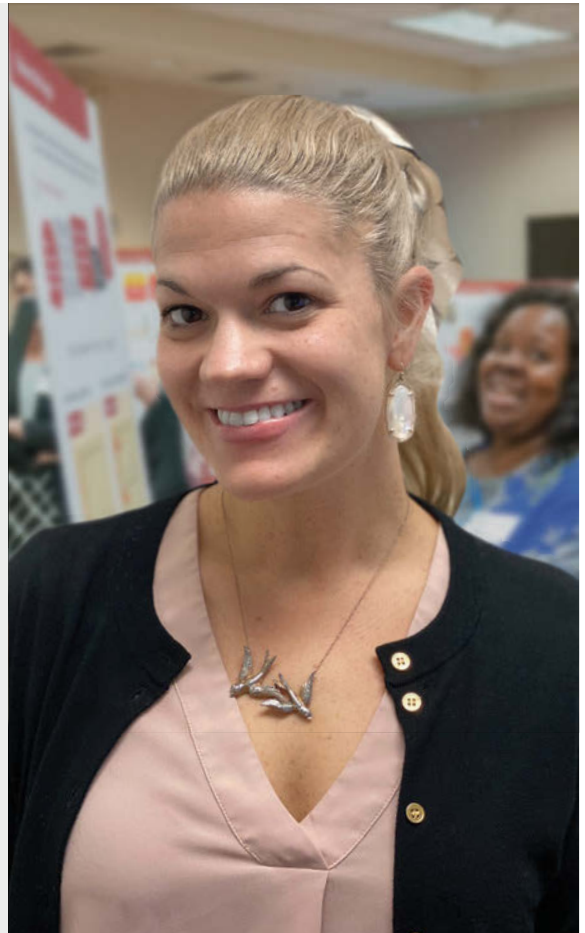
Congratulations, Kimiya, for your selection to *Mass Transit's* 40 Under 40!

This well-deserved recognition speaks to your commitment to excellence in project management, team mentorship, and advancing the role of public transit in supporting communities.

Leading with passion, patience, empathy and inclusivity, you inspire your team and build trust among clients and stakeholders to successfully deliver the benefit of public transportation projects to the people they serve.



[wsp.com](https://www.wsp.com)



For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10065640



JESSICA ALVAREZ, PTP
 Vice President
 and Senior Project
 Manager
 Foursquare
 Integrated
 Transportation
 Planning

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As one of Foursquare ITP’s Vice Presidents, **Jessica Alvarez, PTP**, helps set the direction of company operations and strategic planning. Additionally, she serves as a senior project manager and practice lead for Foursquare ITP’s bus rapid transit (BRT), Bus Priority and Corridor Planning service area, leading a team of transportation planners at various stages in their careers. During the past nine years at Foursquare ITP, Alvarez has worked on more than 80 transportation projects across 12 different states.

Alvarez has led the technical analysis for several high-profile projects, including serving as the deputy project manager of service design for the Better Bus Network Redesign in the Washington, D.C., region. For the project, Alvarez spearheaded the development of detailed market assessments and existing conditions dashboards and reports, helped create a redesigned bus network plan for the region that will address transit needs of the community and identified opportunities for extensive public and stakeholder engagement.

Over the past few years, she has shepherded new approaches to microtransit planning, including microtransit feasibility and implementation projects across the country. Alvarez has worked

“ Transit planning is an ever-evolving field, ranging from the introduction of new types of service to new technologies.”

with Foursquare ITP to write the microtransit and on-demand DRT guidebook for the National Center for Applied Transit Technology. She has presented at major conferences as a subject matter expert on microtransit, including at the WTS National Conference and Rail~volution (now Mpart).

For the last two years, Alvarez was the project manager for the Metrobus Annual Line Performance Report, working with a team of data scientists to create an elevated process that quickly synthesizes and visualizes important route level data across the system. She also recently worked with a team on the Charlotte Area Transit System Envision My Ride – Bus Priority Study and led the development of a comprehensive bus stop improvement plan.

FAST FACT: Alvarez’s first internship was with the city of Gainesville’s Regional Transit System.

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NEELA BABU
 Start-Up Manager
 Washington
 Metropolitan Area
 Transit Authority

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Neela Babu is the start-up manager for the Potomac Yard Metro Station in Alexandria, Va., which opened on May 19, 2023,

In her position, she works with various groups across Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to ensure their needs are met, especially for the operations and maintenance groups who will be working in the station for decades to come. Babu holds responsibility over testing, systems integration and commissioning activities to prepare the station to be ready for opening to the public. She also leads the safety certification process, managing all required documentation necessary to achieve required approvals to open the station for public use.

She has spent a lot of time with the DC chapter of the WTS International where she is currently serving as the immediate past president after being president in 2020-2021 and vice president in 2018-2019. In these roles, Babu worked to expand the breadth of the organization, specifically by engaging women at different levels in their careers and ensuring the chapter provided programming for all of them. Babu also serves as a WTS mentor and is an advocate of the chapter’s Transportation YOU program, which introduces transportation career options to high school students.

“ It is immensely valuable to have people around you who will work with you to achieve an objective and people who will teach you about their area of expertise.”

During the pandemic, Babu worked to increase the size of the organization and 10-plus new volunteers were added to the board. Prior to that, Babu’s dedication to the organization resulted in her winning the WTS-DC Member of the Year award for her role on the Program Logistics Committee alongside her co-chair Brittney Gick.

Beyond WTS, Neela is involved in the Metro Washington Chapter of ARCS, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing scholarships to U.S. graduate and undergraduate students pursuing degrees in STEM fields. She is also on the Advisory Board for the Engineering Leadership Program at Harvey Mudd College.

FAST FACT: Babu plays ultimate frisbee.

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As director of planning and marketing at Alexandria Transit Company (DASH), **Martin Barna**, MSTM, has revolutionized transit in Alexandria, Va., and helped the agency make groundbreaking strides in providing more useful fixed-route bus service for the Alexandria community. Since joining DASH in 2017, Barna has led the agency's planning team through unprecedented challenges and several ambitious projects.

Barna subsequently led the implementation process of the preliminary 2022 Alexandria Transit Vision Plan (ATV) network, known as the fare-free "New DASH Network," with a focus on the community, current and potential DASH ridership and a spirit of collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

The service changes associated with the New DASH Network represented the most substantial single-day service change in the agency's history. The agency successfully launched a completely redesigned network that provides the most frequent, accessible and convenient public bus transit service ever offered in Alexandria while simultaneously ceasing the collection of passenger fares. DASH's ridership in 2023 has not only surpassed pre-pandemic levels, but has also been the highest in all of DASH's 40-year history.

“ I've learned service frequency is the biggest key in determining the usefulness of service for most riders.”

Prior to working with DASH, Barna began his career in public transit in Northern California at the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), where he had worked under the leadership team of now-current Federal Transit Administration Administrator Nuria Fernandez in service planning and scheduling leadership roles. His work at VTA included leading the bus and light-rail service and operations planning for Super Bowl 50 at Levi's Stadium, which brought more than 70,000 visitors to the area, the Next Network bus network redesign project and a microtransit pilot project called VTA Flex. Immediately prior to joining DASH, Barna was responsible for the service delivery and quality assurance of Fairfax Connector, a system of more than 300 buses in Fairfax County, Va.

FAST FACT: Barna is a proud father of two sons, Ethan and Chase, who love riding buses and trains almost as much as their dad.

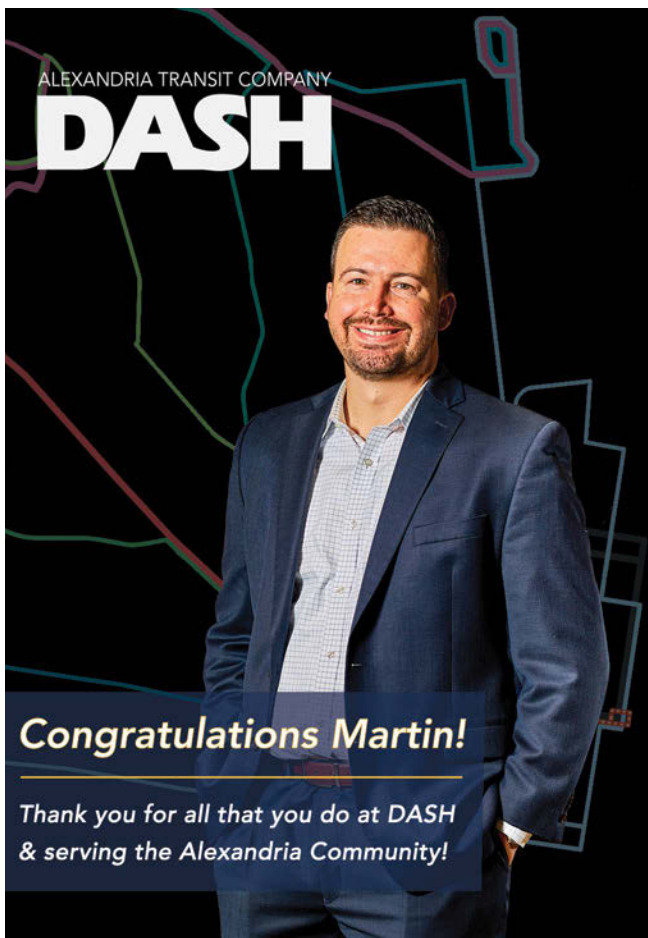
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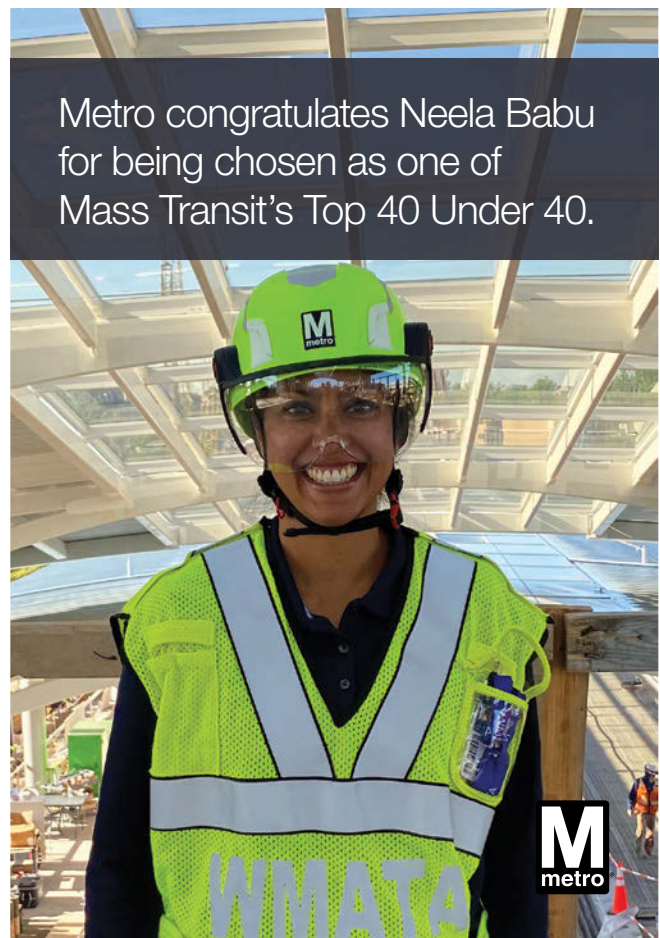
**MARTIN BARNA,
MSTM**

Director of
Planning and
Marketing
Alexandria Transit
Company

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FORTY



For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10261338



For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10261508



ANDREW ARNES

Customer Experience Manager
Pierce Transit



Andrew Arnes is the customer experience manager at Pierce Transit, where he is responsible for planning, organizing, managing and directing activities that promote positive customer experiences while working to strengthen the agency’s brand and reputation.

Shortly after Arnes joined Pierce Transit, the agency’s rideshare program faced significant challenges due to the pandemic, including a substantial decrease in ridership and the need to adapt to changing work schedules. Despite these obstacles, Arnes recognized an opportunity to transform one of the nation’s largest ridesharing programs and improve the customer experience. Under his leadership, the rideshare team worked tirelessly to revamp the program’s operational and service components, leading to significant improvements in efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Arnes has spearheaded several key initiatives during his relatively short tenure at Pierce Transit, including a fare analysis that resulted in a completely new fare structure, and the implementation of a part-time rider service and flexible daily rider service. He also secured a regional rideshare incentive program grant, designed and implement-

“ I appreciate the opportunity to make a positive impact on our customers and the community.”

ed new program technologies, and made several updates to the rider onboarding experience that simplified and streamlined the process of joining or starting a new rideshare group. In addition, Arnes transitioned all remaining customer forms online and implemented a new revenue and cost recovery management tool.

Andrew’s enthusiasm for the transportation industry goes beyond his role at Pierce Transit. He is also a vocal advocate for public transportation and its importance to the community, demonstrating his commitment to the industry’s growth and development.

FAST FACT: Colleagues say Andrew’s innovation in public transportation is evident in the way he continuously seeks to implement a customer first approach to organizational decision making.

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ANDREW BATSON, AICP

Chief of Bureau of Public Transportation’s Transit Planning and Project Delivery Division
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation



As chief of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation’s (PennDOT) Bureau of Public Transportation’s Transit Planning and Project Delivery Division since 2019, **Andrew Batson, AICP**, is responsible for planning, financing and delivering public transportation projects across Pennsylvania, with more than \$600 million in annual state/federal funding. He works with staff, consultants, planning partners and state and federal agency officials to ensure projects are designed and constructed and meet all state/federal requirements.

Batson has actively controlled costs on significant investments in transit infrastructure. He consistently monitors transit projects to assure projects are scaled appropriately and designed to meet current and future needs and assures that contractors and consultants are delivering projects that maintain operational sustainability.

Batson worked for 10 years as a consultant in the transit industry, where he worked on public transportation projects throughout the U.S. requiring a diverse set of technical skills. Project

“ Embrace new challenges, especially those that are outside your comfort zone.”

experience ranged from place-based feasibility studies for rail stations, bus facilities and transfer centers, to people-focused coordinated mobility plans and transit needs studies.

Batson’s high-level attention to detail and his ability to manage multiple complex projects has allowed PennDOT to advance long-standing transit facility projects to completion. These projects are modern facilities that benefit public transit riders as transit agencies can protect and maintain their assets to run reliable transportation service.

Batson has spoken at many transit industry events and is apart of several national research panels.

FAST FACT: Batson attended a performing arts high school.

MassTransitmag.com/53067806

Julian Bautista Rojas is a principal at Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates and is responsible for the financial and operational performance of the Austin office, as well as overall morale, staff development and hiring of the group. This includes mentoring and training staff and growing Nelson\Nygaard's presence in Texas and throughout the midwest and south.

Supporting his predecessor from the time of his hiring, he became an essential part in the mission to grow the four-person office. Bautista Rojas now leads a 16-person office of transportation planning professionals.

Before becoming a consultant in Austin, Bautista Rojas worked in the public sector in New York City. After immigrating and finishing grad school in the U.S., Bautista Rojas invested more than 10 years in the operations planning department at MTA Bus and New York City Transit. In this position, he managed major initiatives like the Queens Bus Network Redesign and the planning and implementation of the first two MTA Bus Company's bus rapid transit lines.

Outside of the office, Bautista Rojas serves on the board of the Austin Chapter of Young Professionals in Transportation, where he is committed to fostering a space for transportation professionals

Peter Calcaterra has worked during the 15-plus years of his career to establish himself as a strategic leader in multi-modal transportation planning, demonstrating expertise in various areas such as transportation technologies, policy development, public outreach and funding strategies.

As a transportation supervising planner for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT-DOT), Calcaterra is responsible for developing, implementing and overseeing innovative transit system projects and programs. These initiatives encompass planning for and executing a wide range of cutting-edge technologies in the areas of automated buses, battery electric buses, transit facility enhancements, transit-connected vehicle systems, bus rapid transit (BRT) systems and intelligent transportation systems.

Calcaterra played a pivotal role in helping to shape a 30-year, \$100-billion multi-modal strategic transportation vision plan for Connecticut that successfully led to a 40 percent increase in new capital program funding for transportation in the state over five years. He also managed the development and launch of an interactive online dashboard to track new project progress and spending, enhancing government transparency and accountability.

In the realm of innovation, Calcaterra is recognized as a national leader in automated bus technologies and connected vehicle systems. He

“ In my current role at Nelson\Nygaard, I am proud of the team my predecessor and I built. It was no easy feat to grow into a full-service, 16 people-strong office (I was hire No. 6).”

in Austin to collaborate and network while having fun. He also sits on the Leadership Academy and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committees of Latinos in Transit (LIT), where he supports LIT's mission of advocating equity, diversity and inclusion to enable the development and advancement of its members to executive positions, as well as other positions of influence in the mobility industry.

He currently works with public agencies all over the U.S., supporting efforts ranging from Project Connect work for CapMetro in Austin, to managing the Tren Urbano Extension Alternatives Analysis study for the Puerto Rico Integrated Transit Authority in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

FAST FACT: Bautista Rojas is a licensed civil engineer in Colombia.

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“ What I enjoy the most about my job is the fast-paced nature of the job and working with a variety of people and stakeholders to develop and complete projects and programs...”

is currently the technical lead managing the development of two groundbreaking FTA grant-funded research pilot projects involving automated, connected and electric bus technologies for operations on a BRT fixed guideway and on city streets. Both projects are North American firsts. Additionally, Calcaterra is playing an active role towards the early planning, development, systems engineering and design of Connecticut's first on-street BRT system.

Calcaterra's involvement extends beyond his agency, as he actively engages with various organizations to shape transportation policies on a broader scale. He participates in legislative task forces, chairs multi-state technical advisory committees and contributes to national panels and pooled fund studies focused on emerging transportation technologies and solutions.

FAST FACT: Calcaterra is an avid New Orleans Saints fan.

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JULIAN BAUTISTA ROJAS

Principle
Nelson\Nygaard
Consulting
Associates



PETER CALCATERRA

Transportation
Supervising
Planner
Connecticut
Department of
Transportation





BRAD CUMMINGS, JR.

Vice President,
Chief Business
Services Officer
Dallas Area Rapid
Transit



Brad Cummings, vice president, chief business services officer, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), has changed how internal service units are utilized by committing them to dedicate as much time and energy to delivering stellar customer service as they do delivering high-quality work products. Cummings has taught several agencies internal customer service skills, developed key metrics to measure the success of the efforts and reports on the successes through quarterly and yearly reports.

He helped procure the first public transportation contract for using autonomous vehicles at Valley Metro. At Jacksonville Transportation Authority, he issued the first solicitation with federal funds for autonomous vehicles in an additional first-of-its-kind progressive design-build, operate and maintain project. He has also led the procurement efforts on two light-rail extension projects, a streetcar project and a commuter rail project, utilizing design-build and CMGC delivery methods.

As chief business services officer at DART, Cummings is leading several internal service departments, including procurement, diversity and vendor management, materials management, innovation and social responsibility. Cummings is leading DART's collaborative care outreach

“ Be inclusive, start early, set expectations, and be accountable.”

program that will introduce a three-pronged approach to meeting the needs of those experiencing homelessness and/or behavioral health concerns on DART's system with multi-disciplinary teams that consist of a police officer, paramedic and behavioral health clinician. The project also has partnerships with multiple cities, a county and numerous nonprofits to provide a collaborative community approach addressing the needs of those experiencing homelessness and/or behavioral health concerns. Cummings has also increased minority and women-owned business participation on DART contracts to 54 percent.

Cummings is often asked to speak at industry events and has conducted peer reviews for other agencies to help improve their procurement practices and administrative needs.

FAST FACT: Cummings is an unashamed fan of Taylor Swift.

MassTransitmag.com/53067993



HAYDEN CLARKIN, EIT

CEO
TransitCon;
Product Manager
(Independent
Contractor)
Massachusetts
Bay Transportation
Authority



Hayden Clarkin's interest in transit began at a young age when he would join his grandfather, who was a bus driver, for rides to the Amtrak/Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) station in Providence, R.I., where they would watch trains arrive and depart. This early fascination has fueled his unwavering commitment to transit and his dedication to fostering vibrant urban environments today.

Clarkin pursued a dual major in German Studies and Civil Engineering at the University of Connecticut, which paved the way for a transformative six-month period studying public transport operations and urban planning at Universität Stuttgart in Germany. Back in the U.S., Clarkin held a planning internship in Central Falls, R.I., where he collaborated with civic leaders, including the mayor and school district, to establish the state's inaugural contraflow bike lane.

Following his academic pursuits, Clarkin ventured to the West Coast, where he worked as a “plangineer” and focused on transit accessibility for large projects. He says one of his favorite projects was leading a team in the development of an in-house app, which allowed field engineers to survey pedestrian infrastructure to measure ADA compliance.

Clarkin's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was the establishment of TransitCon. The event

“ Having a healthy network of peers you can call on and support is truly invaluable.”

aims to democratize the sharing of insights and ideas while fostering meaningful impact. The free, inclusive and accessible virtual transit conference platform provided a critical space for transit industry professionals and enthusiasts to convene during lockdowns.

Clarkin's influence extends into the digital realm through “The Transit Guy” persona. He leverages this platform to advocate for transit-centric urbanism, advocating for the removal of urban freeways, enhanced transit systems, elimination of parking minimums and the creation of car-free spaces.

Clarkin was recently selected to be part of New York University's Emerging Leaders in Transportation program and serves as a product manager in the digital rider experience for MBTA, contributing to inclusive and accessible transit services.

FAST FACT: During his tenure at the University of Connecticut, Clarkin was mentored by Dr. Norman Garrick, a founding member of the New Urbanism movement.

MassTransitmag.com/53068469

During **Jeff Kessler's** time at Keolis Commuter Services, the operator of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority commuter rail, he has helped transform the organization in several ways, having served the organization in both the Digital Solutions and Service Delivery teams. Kessler crafted a solution that provided customers with real-time updates twice as frequently and implemented a system that made Keolis the first North American railroad to share contingency storm schedules in an app-based format.

Kessler created the logic to deliver customers a "single version of the truth" in messaging. He updated digital templates for an enhanced ADA-compliant experience. Kessler overhauled Keolis' scheduling system data pipeline and building tools that have given the agency the ability to better plan, simulate and leverage schedule data to improve service across the network.

Kessler led the effort to transition to electronic job bidding for the railroad's 650 T&E train and engine crews in the midst of the pandemic. He led the initiative to become the nation's first railroad to provide dynamic seat availability metrics integrated into web timetables and to share

“ People of any age can make a difference in the industry.”

this information with third-party developers. He conceptualized and designed the industry's first multi-platform ticket verification solution, making Keolis' new fare gates the only fare gates to accept more than a dozen media providers and offering military members direct gate access using their Department of Defense IDs. Kessler successfully led the RailInfo initiative to digitize the railroad's operating materials.

Kessler serves on several industry forums, ranging from the Northeast Operating Rules Advisory Committee to the Operational Data Standard Working Group and has mentored more than a dozen students interested in pursuing transportation careers.

FAST FACT: Kessler has ridden the entirety of every rapid transit system in the contiguous U.S. and more than 80 percent of every commuter/regional rail route mile across the nation

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JEFF KESSLER
Director of Service Delivery Innovation
Keolis Commuter Services

40 UNDER FORTY

Dallas Area Rapid Transit congratulates Brad Cummings, Vice President, DART Business Services



Mass Transit's 2023 Top 40 Under 40

On DART's 40th anniversary, we celebrate outstanding employees like Brad Cummings. Our people make DART one of America's top transit leaders.

Congratulations, Brad!



For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10284141

KEOLIS



Keolis Commuter Services congratulates Jeff Kessler and all 40 under 40 awardees

For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10456029



ELYCE EMBERY

Specialized
and Accessible
Program
Specialist
Lane Transit
District

40
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FORTY

Elyce Embery joined Lane Transit District (LTD) in 2017 as a customer service representative and has ascended to a leadership role within the organization's RideSource services, an initiative that addresses vital transportation needs for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Central to Embery's responsibilities has been cultivating and nurturing the partnerships required to support RideSource and allowing for a synergistic pooling of resources that greatly benefits the community. Noteworthy endeavors stemming from this cooperation include services catering to veterans' transportation, a convenient shopper shuttle, in-home eligibility assessments and a volunteer transportation program in underserved rural areas.

Embery's leadership stood out during pivotal moments, including navigating the complexities of evolving Medicaid regulations and addressing the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. She championed innovative solutions that ensured individuals in need remained adequately supported. Her guidance illuminated the path toward strategic resource alignment and enhanced preparedness for unforeseen contingencies. Collaborating closely with Coordinated Care Organizations, taxi services, medical transportation companies and regulatory bodies, Embery orchestrated network adequacy during a critical period of driver shortages, preserving the high standard of service expected by the community. Despite the significant volume of trips, the number



AJ FARRIS, MUP

Planning and
Scheduling
Manager
Kansas City Area
Transportation
Authority

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FORTY

AJ Farris, MUP, began his career as a multi-modal planner with Olsson, where he worked to advance mobility solutions for cities throughout the Midwest. His design work and facilitation of public meetings led to the first multi-modal corridor in Kansas City, Mo., that connects historic neighborhoods, multi-family housing and medical campus with the urban core of Kansas City through safe active transportation.

After three years at Olsson, Farris was recruited to join the planning team at Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), where he now is the planning and scheduling manager after serving in the interim role for six months.

Farris assisted and managed the implementation of KCATA's Zero Fare System, Fixed Route Service Restorations, Public Engagement focused on ridership growth and route re-designs to bring service to underserved communities. His work contributed significantly to the KCATA winning the APTA "Outstanding Public Transportation System" Award in 2022.

In the five years Farris has been at the KCATA, he has made it his mission to ensure quality ser-

“ I've been fortunate in my life to have many great mentors and leaders who have pushed me out of my comfort zone to seek new challenges.”

of complaints remained minimal and customer satisfaction remained high.

Beyond LTD's immediate operations, Embery's work focuses on assisting vulnerable segments of the population who rely on accessible transportation for essential activities such as attending school, going to work, attending medical appointments and securing groceries. Embery finds personal fulfillment in enabling these essential trips and her dedication has permeated the entire organization. Her initiatives have not only improved service quality, but have also resulted in cost savings for LTD, permitting further service expansion.

Embery regularly engages with the community through educational presentations at schools and community groups and offers training to colleagues. Embery's leadership style is characterized by inclusivity, fostering an environment that values accessibility and belonging.

FAST FACT: LTD's RidSource service, which Embery manages, was able to operate more than 250,000 trips in 2022.

MassTransitmag.com/53068470

“ Always put yourself in a place to talk to others and learn.”

vice to all riders within the region. He has worked with elected officials and staff, in both Kansas and Missouri, to ensure access to healthcare, education, jobs and housing. He has overseen the recovery of a service that was devastated by the pandemic, and Farris has assisted with implementing alternative transit solutions that integrate with the fixed-route system to better connect communities.

Farris' work with transportation extends beyond KCATA to improve the community through focused efforts. He has been a featured presenter at APTA and American Planning Association conferences.

FAST FACT: Farris tries to read at least 20 books per year. His favorite genres are fantasy and science fiction.

MassTransitmag.com/53067919

In her role leading strategy and strategic partnerships at Cubic Transportation Systems, **Audrey Denis**' overarching goal is to expand transportation technology in as many places as possible, helping people get to where they need to go efficiently and safely and providing the tools for agencies and cities to tackle pressing challenges like congestion and carbon emissions. Denis believes equitable and accessible transportation is critical to thriving communities and will be central to addressing climate change and other key societal challenges.

Based in Washington, D.C., Denis is a non-driver and an avid transit rider herself. While she is passionate about public transit and how it can be a critical resource for connecting communities to opportunity, she also recognizes that being a non-driver isn't always a viable option based on where people live.

Building on her understanding and passion for mobility, Denis recently joined Cubic's executive leadership team, leading strategic partnerships. Denis focuses on building the right customer and

“ Commuting to work on the subway alongside my parents was a rite of passage.”

commercial partnerships to bring mobility technology such as contactless payments and traffic optimization to accelerate equitable transport for all. Unlocking the future of mobility requires industry alignment and close collaboration to deliver best in class customer experience and meet climate goals.

To enable this vision, Denis travels the globe speaking as a thought leader on digital mobility and mobility on demand. In 2022 alone, Denis participated in a number of global events, including presenting on digital mobility at ITS Europe, ITS Australia and CoMotion in Miami.

FAST FACT: Denis has taken public transit on six of seven continents.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067922](https://www.MassTransitmag.com/53067922)



AUDREY DENIS, MBA
Senior Manager,
Strategy & Strategic
Partners
Cubic
Transportation
Systems



AUDREY DENIS
Cubic Transportation Systems,
Senior Strategy and Partnerships Manager

CONGRATULATIONS!

Cubic Transportation Systems proudly congratulates Audrey Denis and her fellow Mass Transit 40 Under 40 honorees! Her invaluable contributions, passion and hard work have made a significant impact on the technology solutions that enhance mobility in cities across the world.

CUBIC
Advancing Mobility Together

cubic.com/transportation



ELIAS FISCHER, AICP
Transportation
Planner
HNTB Corporation

40
UNDER
FORTY

Elias Fischer has developed a reputation among clients and colleagues as a knowledgeable, dependable and dedicated transportation professional. Based in HNTB's Michigan office, he has exhibited a commitment to his role, spearheading regional transit brown-bag sessions and nurturing the technical skills of new team members. As a mentor on the planning team, he supervised HNTB's department intern program, facilitating connections between junior planners and project opportunities.

Fischer extends collaborative efforts to transit agencies across the nation as he helps to devise strategic plans, implement new technologies, craft successful grant applications and provide grants management support. His pursuit of technical excellence has elevated his standing as a distinguished transit planner, with impactful contributions to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan (RTA) and the M-1 RAIL Streetcar initiative. He authored two benefit-cost analyses for MDOT grant applications, resulting in combined awards of \$129 million in 2022, spearheaded the 2021 Regional Master Transit Plan for RTA and played a pivotal role in implementing the Detroit area's first dedicated transit lane with M-1 RAIL.

Within HNTB, Fischer's contributions extend beyond urban transit systems. He has taken a leadership role in developing MDOT's Statewide



JENNIFER E. C. JUDGE, P.E.
Track Section
Manager and
Project Manager
HNTB Corporation

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UNDER
FORTY

Jennifer E. C. Judge, P.E., is the track section manager at HNTB. She started her career in 2013 at HNTB with a strong desire to learn and grow as a rail track design engineer. She has taken on lead roles on numerous projects—like the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) Metro-North Railroad Walk Bridge Replacement, Amtrak's Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Reconstruction and Expansion and Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) Hudson Line to Penn Station New York Planning Study. Judge has developed a wide range of capabilities within the track discipline, including complex alignment design, trackwork design, dapping plans, detailed construction phasing, conceptual design/alternatives analysis and detailed corridor modeling.

Judge's hard work and commitment to the industry was recognized by Railway Age in their "Top 20 Under 40" list in 2021 for her breadth of knowledge, experience and achievement in the railroad industry. She also serves on the membership committee of Women's Transit Summit International – Greater New York Chapter, an organization dedicated to building the future of transportation through the global advancement of women.

Judge is also actively involved in the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way

“ Say yes to things that are outside of your comfort zone, especially when you have resources and colleagues you can lean on for help.”

Technology Plan for Rural Public Transit Agencies and overseeing the deployment of the statewide Mobility as a Service system.

Fischer's impact is further evident in his successful application for a Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) discretionary grant. This \$1.3 million grant will enhance trip planning tools in rural Michigan, using open-standard data to make transit information readily available.

Fischer's achievements have not gone unnoticed, as he was selected as one of 35 professionals for the APTA Emerging Leaders Program Class of 2024. He also participates in APTA's LGBTQ Resource Group, showcasing his dedication to fostering inclusivity and diversity within the industry.

FAST FACT: Fischer grew up in New York City, where he began traveling alone on transit at age 10.

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“ When in a foreign city I like to use their transit and collect a transit card, my most recent being the Budapest Metro.”

Association, serving on Committee 11 – Commuter and Intercity Rail Systems. She also recently participated in The Eno Center for Transportation – Mid-Manager Program.

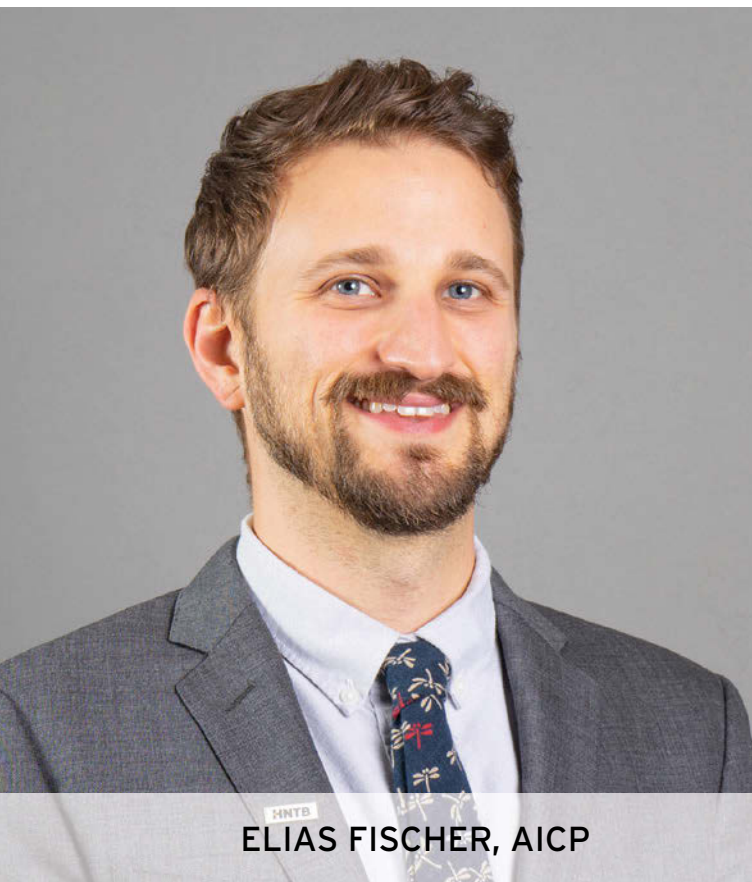
In her current position as the track section manager and a project manager in the New York Rail Department at HNTB, she has grown her roles to include being the deputy department manager, assisting the rail department manager in operations, delivery and sales. Judge has also assumed responsibility as a client service leader of MTA, where she leads a team focused on the MNR Business Unit in developing new relationships with the client and positioning the firm for future work.

FAST FACT: Judge has traveled to 35 countries. When in a foreign city, she likes to use their transit and collect a transit card.

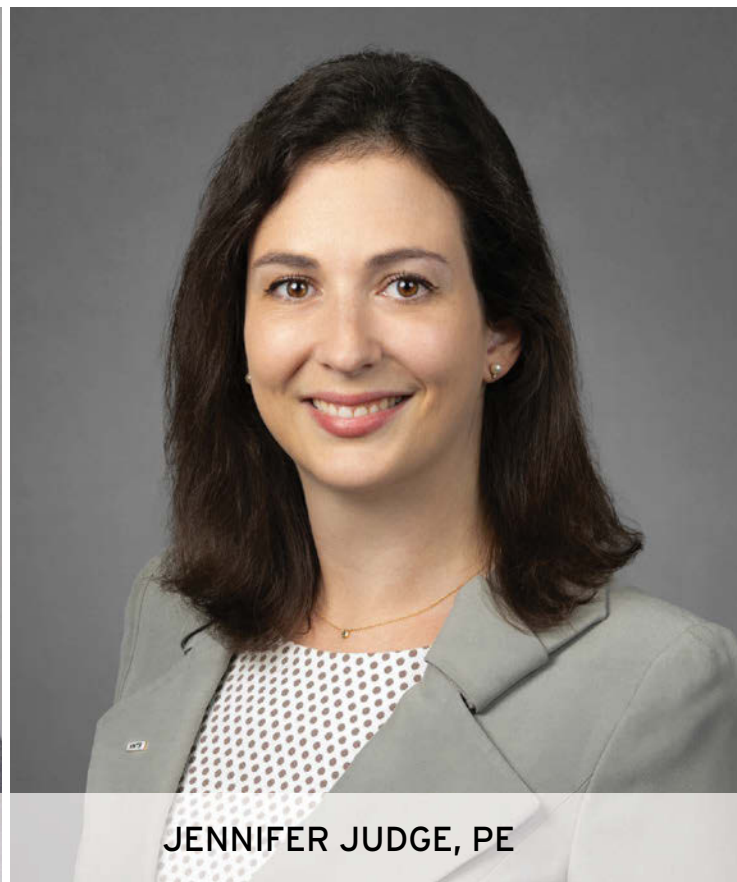
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CONGRATULATIONS

Jennifer and Elias for being recognized as two of
Mass Transit's 40 Under 40



ELIAS FISCHER, AICP



JENNIFER JUDGE, PE



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REINALDO GERMANO

Project Manager
Foursquare
Integrated
Transportation
Planning



As a project manager at Foursquare ITP, **Reinaldo Germano** works primarily in corridor planning, transit operations and regional and statewide planning projects. However, his knowledge extends into other areas, including transit facilities planning, transit technology, and public engagement. Additionally, Germano has mentored and trained junior staff in both skill-based tasks, as well as firm culture and policies. Colleagues note that even when not on the clock, Germano is dedicated to helping other planners network and increase their knowledge.

One of his most recent projects has been researching and producing a report for the American Public Transportation Association about the public transportation workforce shortage. Germano also led survey development and research efforts, developed reports and other deliverables and presented the report findings in several live and on-demand formats.

Colleagues say his strong presentation skills are also shown through his experience interacting directly with the public, including bus operators, such as when he served as a member of the on-the-ground outreach crew for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's communications efforts for surface lot rehabilitations. Germano manages a listserv designed to inform planners about planning-related happenings, networking happy hours,



JILL GIBSON

Transit Practice
Leader
Kimley-Horn



Jill Gibson brings more than 15 years of experience in capital planning development and project delivery to her role as transit practice leader at Kimley-Horn. Throughout her career, Gibson has left an indelible mark on transit planning initiatives for numerous cities and transit agencies, including leading the Kimley-Horn team serving the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), where she navigated the intricacies of planning services, stakeholder engagement, third-party concurrence and community outreach for VTA's Bay Area Rapid Transit Silicon Valley Extension.

At Kimley-Horn, Gibson's leadership continues, as she spearheads Caltrain's Corridor Crossings Strategy. She is crafting a comprehensive approach to grade separations along the Caltrain corridor with collaboration of 21 jurisdictions, regional transit agencies and stakeholders. These efforts are poised to facilitate the implementation of grade separation projects that enhance mobility and connectivity in the region.

Gibson's commitment to fostering equitable engagement is a central pillar of her approach. She brings together stakeholders, leveraging her relational skills to identify innovative transit solutions. This is evident in her involvement with projects like the Oklahoma City EMBARK Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternatives Analysis, which saw her facilitating collaborative efforts to assess existing

“ Being able to talk to people, stand next to them and listen was enough to connect with a community.”

job openings and events of interest to those in the planning profession in the Washington, D.C., area.

In Texas, Germano is currently serving as task lead for Houston Metro's organizational assessment, for which he is evaluating the agency's current state to provide recommendations to improve its efficiency and align operations with the agency's mission, vision and goals.

His experience with corridor studies goes beyond the U.S., as he has experience planning corridors in Brazil and has managed the largest online database of priority bus corridors, which under his management, was listed as a top planning website by Planetizen.

In Germano's five years with Foursquare ITP, he has been promoted twice.

FAST FACT: Germano is a Brazilian who doesn't like soccer but works in transit thanks to the World Cup.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067996](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067996)

“ It is important as a leader to cultivate a culture of curiosity and courage.

transit conditions and develop community-centric BRT corridors. Through meticulous coordination of public involvement efforts, meetings, surveys and studies, Gibson and her team created data-driven BRT alternatives that cater to diverse public needs.

Gibson's involvement in transportation associations further underscores her commitment to transit solutions for communities. She has served a five-year tenure on the National Steering Committee at Rail-Volution (now Mpact) and was a part of planning and presenting at the annual Transit and Community Development Conference. Additionally, her active participation in the American Public Transportation Association showcases her dedication to advocating for modernized mobility to cultivate thriving communities. Gibson's ability to foster collaboration and secure buy-in from a diverse range of stakeholders has consistently yielded successful outcomes that exceed expectations.

FAST FACT: Gibson reports having a lot of fun when she played the Grinch for NCTD's Coaster Holiday Express Train.

[MassTransitmag.com/53068659](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53068659)

For Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (IndyGo) Chief Public Affairs Officer **Lesley Gordon**, improving public transportation to better serve Indianapolis residents is much more than a career goal. It's a passion-filled hobby and dedicated lifestyle for a self-proclaimed transit enthusiast, as she commits daily to executing strategic outreach and essential communications for current and future public transit riders.

At IndyGo, Gordon leads all communications and engagement efforts, including establishing strategic partnerships that will advance the agency within the community. Colleagues say this is where Gordon really shines, noting her creativity and innovation as she takes IndyGo beyond the bus with the establishment of the IndyGo Cares community outreach programming, which includes Wellness in Transit and Food in Transit.

Under Gordon's leadership, IndyGo has added two new partners to its Wellness in Transit initiative who will address sexual health, mental health and homelessness. Gordon was also instrumental in securing another city partner for IndyGo's Food in Transit program who provide recipes, ingredients and cooking demonstrations free of charge, giving customers everything they need to cook a healthy meal for themselves and their families.

Tony Henderson is an engineer working with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)'s Transit Engineering Group. Throughout the eight years that Henderson has been with the SFMTA, he has quickly grown from having little background in transit to becoming a key leader in the agency's safety framework. Henderson is responsible for integrating transit safety into street design projects, as well as addressing transit safety concerns in the mixed-flow transit operating environment.

Henderson holds a degree in civil engineering from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. He is a licensed professional engineer in the branches of Civil and Traffic Engineering in the state of California and holds Professional Traffic Operations Engineer certification from the Transportation Professional Certification Board.

He is a major contributor to the development and implementation of the federally required Public Transit Agency Safety Plan.

Henderson's major accomplishments include:

Leading multiple collaborative approaches within SFMTA to ensure necessary policies, procedures and organizational structures work together to assist the agency to reach its SMS goals.

Building relationships across the multimodal agency to make sure all aspects of SFMTA's operations are considered when making changes to

“ We strive for perfect balance, but it's okay if it doesn't exist.”

Gordon has also shifted IndyGo's communications efforts and accomplishments, sharing IndyGo's successes and increasing awareness, which was particularly important when it came to promoting the agency's efforts as one of the first transit agencies in the nation to successfully launch bus rapid transit.

In her free time, Gordon continues her mission of expanding public transportation's reach for Indianapolis residents. She currently serves on seven boards of directors for organizations, ensuring each of them maintains inclusive practices and keeps transit accessibility at the forefront of their initiatives.

Gordon has actively pursued IndyGo's inclusive mission, as she ushered in two themed bus wraps in 2022: An LGBTQ+ pride bus and a Veterans bus.

FAST FACT: Gordon loves sharks.

[MassTransitmag.com/53067808](https://www.masstransitmag.com/53067808)

“ The best advice I would give someone starting their career is to be flexible and willing to learn something new.”

the street system. Through these relationships, Henderson has become the “go-to” person when something needs to be solved in the street network.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, Henderson pivoted his work to serve in a senior role in a multidisciplinary team tasked to implement employee protective measures while maintaining critical 24/7 transit service. Colleagues say Henderson's impact on supporting SFMTA's nearly 6,000 employees during pandemic cannot be overstated, especially in the early days of the pandemic when guidance was rapidly evolving and sometimes conflicted with prior guidance.

Colleagues say Henderson has proven himself to be highly skilled in working in a rapidly changing environment and has demonstrated the ability to make quick decisions and pivot as needed.

FAST FACT: Henderson has an adorable Bernedoodle dog named Wilbur.

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LESLEY GORDON

Chief Public Affairs Officer
Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation

40 UNDER FORTY



TONY HENDERSON

Engineer
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

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ADITYA INAMDAR,

AICP, RSPI, LEED AP

Urban Planner & Designer
Kittelson & Associates, Inc.



Aditya Inamdar is a seasoned professional in the fields of architecture, urban design and city planning. He focuses on creating urban design solutions that integrate mass transportation projects with the built environment to foster sustainable and livable communities. Inamdar strongly advocates for a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, involving community members and agency stakeholders to design and plan equitable places.

Originally from Pune, India, Inamdar's academic journey brought him to the U.S. where he studied urban design and city planning with a focus on public-private development and transportation infrastructure. He has more than 12 years of experience working on architecture, urban design and planning projects and has been a member of the Kittelson & Associates team since 2013.

Examples of notable projects Inamdar has led include the planning analysis and recommendations for bus rapid transit projects in Orlando, Fla., as part of the SR 436 Transit Corridor Study and the exploration of transit-oriented development potential for enhanced public transportation services in Northern Virginia. Currently, he is leading transit planning studies and TOD explorations in Denton County, Texas, and the East-West Corridor Study in Baltimore, Md.

Inamdar's contributions to the field extend

“ [Developing a] deep understanding of the places we work in is critical to building credibility and trust with the local community.”

beyond his professional endeavors in mass transit. He has been responsible for significant innovations, such as being the key member in the development of the Context Classification system for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Inamdar also led the creation of the FDOT Context Classification Framework for Bus Transit Facilities, guiding the planning and designing of bus transit facilities in different land-use context zones.

Inamdar actively engages in industry-related associations and organizations, such as the American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, Congress for the New Urbanism and Institute of Transportation Engineers.

FAST FACT: Inamdar has traveled on 33 different public transit systems across nine countries spanning four continents.

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BORIS LIPKIN

Northern California Regional Director
California High-Speed Rail Authority



Boris Lipkin has devoted the majority of his career to making high-speed rail in the United States a reality. He began work on California's transformative high-speed rail project in 2011 as a consultant, developing ridership forecasts, economic analysis, funding plans and strategies to access and secure funding for the project.

By age 30, Lipkin was appointed by former California Governor Jerry Brown to lead the development of high-speed rail in northern California as the northern California regional director. During his tenure, Lipkin led the successful certification of environmental clearance for almost 150 miles of high-speed rail in northern California from San Francisco to Merced.

Lipkin is well-known for his pragmatism in transforming the region's transportation network into a world-class system. He has worked diligently with regional partners to implement policies that advance high-speed rail initiatives and support regional readiness for when high-speed rail is operational, namely the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Plan Bay Area 2050.

In his executive leadership role within the state of California, Lipkin leads the Northern California Regional Office team made up of engineers,

“ Demonstrating that you are reliable, diligent and proactive will always go a long way to being asked to take on larger tasks and leadership roles.”

environmental and planning professionals and outreach and communications experts.

Lipkin is a regular guest lecturer at Stanford University, Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University and at other universities across the country. He was also a founding board member of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of Young Professionals in Transportation and served on the international board of directors as well.

He holds bachelor's degrees in business economics and geography from UCLA, where he graduated cum laude and a master's degree in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania.

FAST FACT: When moving back to California from Pennsylvania, Lipkin and a friend took the train cross-country.

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Manuel Martin Ramos, PE, ENV SP, is a senior rail engineer with Arup. As part of the position, he leads and manages key components of complex infrastructure and station projects. Ramos earned a Master of Science in Civil and Railroad Engineering from the University of Illinois while working as a graduate research assistant at the Rail Transportation Engineering Center.

Originally from Spain, Ramos believes there is a great opportunity to expand rail transit in the U.S. He strives to leverage innovation, digital transformation and technical excellence to help deliver public transportation projects that drive economic development and, more importantly, social equity and integration.

After joining Arup, Ramos quickly became a key contributor to several major rail projects, including the New York City Transit and Metro North Railroad Enhanced Station Initiatives. He also led the development of the Penn Station Capacity Improvement studies for New Jersey Transit, which resulted in new innovative track and station configuration concepts for the expansion of Penn Station.

In addition, Ramos is well connected in the

“ Transit is a catalyst for change, fueling economic development, connectivity and integration. The expansion and improvement of transit provides a great opportunity to shape a brighter and better world for all.”

industry as an active member of the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association, where he is part of two technical committees. He has also served as a technical reviewer for the Joint Rail Conference and has shared his technical knowledge and project lessons learned at many major conferences during the past decade. Ramos is described by his colleagues and clients as an inspiration.

FAST FACT: Ramos observed Volcán de Fuego in Guatemala erupt while standing less than 500 feet away.

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MANUEL MARTIN RAMOS

Senior Rail Engineer
Arup

40 UNDER
FORTY

J. Levi McCollum, CPM, ENV-SP, is the lead product owner at ETA Transit Systems and is described as someone who demonstrates an unwavering commitment to advancing mass transit and playing a major role in generating new solutions for the industry. In his current position, McCollum is responsible for managing the company's product roadmap and has made significant strides in shaping the future of mass transit with the development of cutting-edge solutions. Under his leadership, ETA has developed numerous advanced products that have substantially improved the efficiency, reliability and accessibility of public transit systems across the country.

McCollum's experience in the transit industry includes his previous role as the director of planning for Palm Tran, where he was instrumental in devising and implementing transit plans that led to improvements in ridership and customer satisfaction.

McCollum's former executive director at Palm Tran, Clinton B. Forbes, spoke of his dedication and creativity in his work at the agency, "His ability to generate higher ridership by reallocating resources demonstrated exceptional ingenuity and leadership skills. Levi's aptitude for anticipating challenges, executing solutions and following up with results further highlighted the invaluable contributions he made to our team."

“ I love using software to help transit professionals solve complex problems.”

Robert L. Codie, III, LeeTran's former director and current Lee County assistant county manager, added his praises to McCollum's career and hardwork: "His innovative strategies transformed LeeTran's approach to transit in southwest Florida because he was always at the forefront of innovation, technology and policy. McCollum leads with compassion, positivity and gratitude, which makes him a high performing leader. People follow him because he puts the needs of others first."

McCollum's dedication to the transit industry goes beyond his professional roles. He is an active participant in the American Public Transportation Association and contributes his expertise to working groups like the Open Data Standards and California Integrated Travel Project.

FAST FACT: McCollum is a PADI-certified scuba diver with Advanced Open Water Diver certification and has dived 100 feet deep off the coast of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea.

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J. LEVI MCCOLLUM

Lead Product Owner
ETA Transit Systems

40 UNDER
FORTY



JOSEPH MIRABILE

President and CEO
United Safety & Survivability Corp.

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Joseph Mirabile joined United Safety in 2011 and from the very beginning had a passion for seeking out solutions to problems faced by the transit industry. He was appointed president and CEO of the organization in 2016.

Mirabile has been responsible for many acquisitions during his time as president and CEO that continue to grow the United Safety safety products. During COVID-19, Mirabile led the creation of an active air purification unit specifically for rolling stock application that is now being used in public transit systems across North America.

Mirabile has made a career out of solving transit problems as they come. During the pandemic, he made advances to leverage United Safety's resources to help print 3D face shields for first responders and bus operators across North America to help keep them safe during the pandemic. Recently, Mirabile has been on a mission to revolutionize the bus seating market both for operators and passengers. To help protect the drivers' health, Mirabile has led the United Safety team to push for a way to create a safer and more comfortable ride for bus operators.

As an outcome to his efforts, the Infinity Rise Semi-Active Seat Suspension project launched in 2023 and is currently being piloted across the



AMEN MUKHLIS, P.E.

Senior Director
Engineering and Project Management
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Construction and Development

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Amen Mukhlis, P.E., is a senior director of engineering and construction for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Construction and Development, where he manages engineering design projects and capital construction projects aimed at building a better transportation system. The projects Mukhlis spearheads various types of projects, including flood resiliency and climate adaptivity in the MTA system, state of good repair and advancing accessibility, as well as multiple design and construction projects on behalf of the MTA.

In addition to Mukhlis' work for the MTA, he has also worked for and consulted for several engineering, construction and metro and rail operators. He has also managed several award-winning design and construction projects for the MTA, such as the 2019 national CMAA project of the year for innovative flood resiliency in Manhattan, the 2022 ACE award for the design of Fan Plant 7204, the 2022 CMAA Owner Managed project of the year.

Mukhlis loves to give to his community. He associates it with his life in Iraq and how a close

“ Maintaining a healthy work-life balance ensures I can continue to provide support while also taking care of myself.”

United States at major transit agencies, including Cap Metro, Oahu and Broward County.

Mirabile's latest efforts in his desire to address challenges facing the transit industry comes with a strategic partnership with ZeroEyes, a homeland security designated, A.I. weapon detection system. Mirabile is committed to enabling growth through innovation and technology within the transit sector. He is excited to see how United Safety can answer the problems that mass transit faces and will continue to look for and develop the best solutions for an industry that is paramount to the infrastructure of our country.

FUN FACT: At an early age, Mirabile was exposed to cars and motorcycles, which sparked a lifelong passion. He loved helping his dad fix cars.

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“ This desire to make a lasting impact drove me to pursue a career path focused on transportation engineering.”

community can overcome adversity. He volunteers his time to help the underprivileged and dedicates a great amount of time and resources helping new immigrant engineers and those who came from metro and rail backgrounds in their countries via mentoring and training that can make them ready for a job in the industry. In the past few years, Mukhlis mentored more than 50 high schoolers and 20 college students from unprivileged backgrounds, putting them at the path of success and the path of leaving an impact on their industry and community.

FAST FACT: Mukhlis has a strong affinity for the color black and collects fridge magnets from each of his travel destinations as a memento.

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Jim Nee's passion for the public transit industry began in 2003 when he began driving buses for the school he was attending, the University of Massachusetts Amherst's public transit service, UMass Transit. After graduating, he was recruited by the First Transit Management program, assisting on various projects throughout New England until landing a permanent assignment as the assistant general manager of operations at the Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport Shuttle.

Nee left First Transit to return to the public sector in 2014 and worked as the AGM of shuttles at the University of Maryland, College Park, overseeing a student-run operation. Nee went on to join the Longwood Collective organization in 2015 as their transportation manager, dedicating his time to enhancing Boston's Longwood Medical and Academic area. He was primarily responsible for the daily operational oversight of transportation contract (transporting 2.7 million annual passengers), budget developments, route design and efficiency, maintenance compliance, as well as enhancing public outreach and communications.

His efforts centered around improving reliabil-

“ My responsibilities are to the people of MetroWest and every day is filled with representing their needs at the local, state and federal level.”

ity, maintenance and overall quality of service by focusing on process improvements across the board all along the way. Nee made time to take seminars through the Eno Center for Transportation, was promoted to senior transportation manager and became the administrator of the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority, serving 16 communities in MetroWest Massachusetts in July of 2022.

In his role as administrator and executive director for MWRTA, he views the role as the opportunity of a lifetime to represent and advance the needs of MetroWest at the local, state and federal levels.

FAST FACT: Nee is a self-proclaimed nerd and has a deep love for Legos.

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JIM NEE
Administrator and
Executive Director
MetroWest
Regional Transit
Authority

40 UNDER
FORTY

Charlotte Obodzinski joined Pace Suburban Bus in 2008 as a service planner and has committed herself to the mission of Pace for the past 15 years. In 2014, she was promoted to oversee the implementation of Pace's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Program, which encompasses arterial and highway-based services and infrastructure, where she led the implementation of Pace's first arterial BRT project, the Pulse Milwaukee Line. The BRT route launched in 2019 along a 7.5-mile stretch between Chicago and Niles, Ill., and Obodzinski is overseeing the construction of the agency's second BRT line on Dempster Street, with two other lines in the planning phase for south suburban Chicago.

Additionally, Obodzinski played a crucial role in BRT projects along Chicagoland expressways. Notably, she was the planning lead for the I-90 Market Expansion Program, the largest service expansion in Pace's history. She also advocated for the construction of in-line BRT stations at key interchanges, resulting in the award-winning Barrington Road Interchange project in Hoffman Estates.

Obodzinski was promoted to department manager of Pace's Priority Project Management Office in January 2021, where she oversees two Project Management Oversight contracts and manages the planning and coordination of Pace's capital improvements, including the development of Project

“ Volunteering for roles at professional organizations such as APTA and APA has been extremely rewarding and has enabled me to forge relationships with professionals across the U.S.”

Zero—a plan to transition to a zero-emissions fixed-route fleet by 2040.

Outside of her work at Pace, Obodzinski is an active member of the transit community, serving on various conference steering committees and advisory commissions. Despite her expanding professional responsibilities and being a mother of two, Obodzinski finds time to mentor new professionals and collaborate with industry peers. Her dedication to improving transportation infrastructure in Chicagoland and promoting transit-supportive land use is evident and represents a valuable contribution to the industry and region.

FAST FACT: Obodzinski used a combination of bus, rail and vanpool services to reverse commute from Chicago to Arlington Heights, Ill., for eight years.

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CHARLOTTE OBODZINSKI, AICP
Department
Manager,
Priority Project
Management
Office
Pace Suburban
Bus

40 UNDER
FORTY



TOMMY OPLAND
Area Manager
Modern Railway
Systems

40
UNDER
FORTY

Tommy Opland's journey in transit construction is marked by his technical skills, dedication and leadership abilities. A veteran of the U.S. Army post-9/11, Opland earned promotions during his deployments in South Korea and Iraq. After transitioning to civilian life, he embarked on a path of educational and professional growth in the transit industry.

Opland pursued higher education at Boise State University while remaining a member of the Idaho Army National Guard. Juggling his commitment to his education and military duty, he graduated with a degree in construction management and achieved the rank of staff sergeant by the age of 26.

Opland joined Stacy and Witbeck in 2017, where his inaugural project involved the \$109-million Portland Streetcar Loop. His contributions were pivotal in overseeing the installation of a complex overhead contact system on a historic bascule bridge, which necessitated the creation of custom components.

He served as systems manager on Sound Transit's University Link Extension and was promoted to project manager on Sound Transit's Northgate project before transitioning to Modern Railway Systems (MRS) in 2018. At MRS, Opland assumed the role of managing various communications projects in San Francisco, where he maintained positive relationships with stakeholders and successfully guided projects to resolution. As area manager at

“ Being given the right tools, coaching and space to grow my skills and perform my job everyday was the recipe that allowed me to accelerate my career quickly.”

MRS, Opland now oversees a portfolio of Pacific Northwest transit systems projects valued at more than \$120 million.

Beyond his project leadership, Opland played a role in the development of MRS' Operations Training Initiative, which underscores his dedication to enhancing team capabilities in areas such as estimating, safety, quality and customer relations. He is also a key figure in internal communication efforts, ensuring all employee-owners understand the benefits of the ownership program.

Opland's colleagues classify his leadership style as confident, calm and logical. They credit him for striking a balance between active involvement in details and providing guidance as a senior leader.

FAST FACT: Opland is a veteran of the U.S. Army and pursued his education while continuing to serve in the U.S. Army National Guard.

MassTransitmag.com/53068604



OLUSEYI A. OLUGBENLE
Deputy Director,
Department of
Public Works and
Transportation
Prince George's
County, Maryland

40
UNDER
FORTY

Oluseyi Olugbenle is described as a passionate advocate for public service and a rising force for change in the transportation industry at both local and national levels. She possesses an unwavering dedication to improving the quality of life for those in her community by championing access to quality transportation as a fundamental human right.

Olugbenle's career includes time spent with the Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary's Office, State Highway Administration and as the deputy director and director of the Office of Planning and Capital Programming (OPP) at the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), where she continued her focus on transportation and the complex issues facing aging infrastructure and the lack of and unsafe transportation access affecting residents statewide. She also became the first Black woman appointed as a director in the MTA's OPP.

In her current role with the Department of Public Works and Transportation in Prince George's County, Md., she took on innovative initiatives, including a Transit Vision Plan and the introduction of the first real-time transit application in the county, to address issues with the county's increasing number of missed trips. Under her leadership, the county's fixed-route bus system reduced its vacancy rate from 30 percent down to 0 percent and she secured critical paratransit positions to

“ From project concept, procurement, design and construction, our office has learned the criticality of project delivery when implementing grant-worthy projects.”

meet the increasing demand for services.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Olugbenle actively contributes to the transit and transportation industry. She serves as vice president of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, Maryland Chapter and has received recognition for her leadership and commitment to the transportation field.

Beyond her industry involvement, Olugbenle has served the international community by leading a team to build a pedestrian bridge in Kabere, Rwanda. She is also a trusted Youth Mentoring Leader in her community and has actively mentored female students in transportation-related fields.

FAST FACT: Olugbenle is Nigerian-American and makes the best American (spicy) mac and cheese and Nigerian fried rice.

MassTransitmag.com/53068467

Ryan Richards joined Stacy and Witbeck in 2008 and has spent the past 15 years developing his competence across various dimensions of rail transit, from estimating and preconstruction to field engineering which encompasses walls, structures, trackwork and systems expertise. Following the acquisition of Modern Railway Systems (MRS), Richards became the first employee to transition to MRS with a focus on train signal systems project management. This move allowed Richards to lead in his role by bridging the gap between civil and systems construction.

Richards' ability to facilitate collaboration and communication between heavy civil and rail systems contractors emerged as a hallmark of his career. By partnering effectively with clients and subcontractors, he ensured project success and streamlined operations.

Richards has played a key role in several large transit initiatives, including the TriMet I-205 Greenline LRT extension in Portland, Ore.; the RTD West Corridor LRT Project in Denver, Colo.; the Michigan Amtrak East ITCS upgrade and the Mid-Coast Blue Line Extension in San Diego, Calif.

His work on the Mid-Coast Blue Line Extension is particularly notable because he earned his Executive MBA from the University of California Berkeley's Haas School of Business, while managing the intricate systems installations and rail

“ When problems arise, it is our job to propose solutions and ensure the project continues in a positive manner.”

activation for the project.

In line with his commitment to prioritizing project success, Richards consistently adopted a “project first” mindset and his recognition of the public's watchful eye on public transportation projects led him to cultivate positive client relationships and maintain public perception by proactively delivering solutions to keep the project on track.

Richards currently serves as the systems integration and safety and security manager for the Kansas City Main Street Streetcar Extension. His adept leadership has positioned the project ahead of schedule and on the path to success. Richards' journey exemplifies a commitment to excellence, a willingness to embrace diverse challenges and an ability to foster collaboration across disciplines to positively impact the rail transit industry.



FAST FACT: Richards was a Division 1 javelin thrower and 400-meter runner.

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RYAN RICHARDS
Systems Manager
Stacy and Witbeck
Inc.

40 UNDER
FORTY

Stacy and Witbeck **CONGRATULATIONS, RYAN RICHARDS!**
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For more information, visit www.MassTransitmag.com/10065974

CONGRATULATIONS, TOMMY OPLAND!
Thank you for everything you bring to MRS. We appreciate your commitment to the team and our clients!

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SANJAY PAUL, PH.D.

Area Traffic Business Class Leader
HDR Engineering, Inc.



Sanjay Paul, Ph.D., has established himself as a leader in his industry with 15 years of professional experience in providing multimodal solutions to both government and private clients. He is a licensed professional engineer, a certified professional transportation operations engineer, a certified professional transportation planner and a road safety professional and an area traffic business class leader at HDR Engineering, Inc.

Paul shows an extensive educational portfolio with his collected set of degrees, including bachelors, master's and doctorate degrees in transportation. He also graduated from the Leadership in Engineering Administration Program with the prestigious "High Achiever Award".

Paul's doctoral research on demographic evolution and proximity of walking, biking and mass transit revealed how future generations' household and employment locations choice will evolve. He assisted several key developments in Tempe, Ariz., with shared parking analyses and discovered that infrastructure for walking, biking and mass transit facilities can eliminate approximately 46 percent parking needs.

Paul's current projects consist of an array of positions and responsibilities within the transit industry. He is currently assisting Valley Metro with the preliminary engineering of a light-rail project to connect the Arizona State Capitol Building to existing light rail. As part of the project,

“ Success is a combination of hard work and opportunities. As a leader, forward the opportunities to the hard workers.”

he is incorporating intelligent systems, advanced detections and transit prioritization for the safe and efficient operations of transit, pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicular modes. Additionally, he is assisting Phoenix with the planning of a bus rapid transit" project on a 14-mile-long corridor as a general engineering contractor. He is working as an extended city-employee and collaborating with other consultants in analyzing different scenarios and identifying operational, mobility and societal impacts to the associated communities.

With his planning and engineering background and solid understanding of the unique characteristics of this railroad facility, Paul is helping bridge gaps among different entities, including ADOT, Maricopa County DOT, Surprise and BNSF for the success of this project.

FAST FACT: Paul has tripled his team size, from three to nine professionals, in the past 18 months, along with creating four new clients in the traffic business line at HDR.

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MICHAEL PIMENTEL

Executive Director
California Transit Association
Legislative & Regulatory Advocate
Shaw Yoder
Antwih Schmelzer & Lange



Michael Pimentel serves as executive director of the California Transit Association (CTA), a 220-member association that champions sustainable transportation solutions and funding for public transit projects. Under Pimentel's leadership, the CTA has achieved notable successes and navigated complex industry challenges.

Pimentel has played a pivotal role in promoting sustainable transportation and improving the quality of public transit systems across California. Pimentel's efforts have secured billions of dollars in funding for transit capital investments, highlighting the critical importance of public transit and its role in reducing vehicle emissions and enhancing transportation options.

Pimentel's accomplishments include his involvement in helping to secure nearly \$8 billion in transit capital funding through the FY 2022-2023 State Budget and his leadership to protect this funding from recession in the Budget Act of 2023-2024. His actions to protect this funding also secured flexibility to use this funding to address operations funding shortfalls that threatened transit service throughout California.

Pimentel's advocacy extended to legislative initiatives as well. He was instrumental in the passage of several bills, including SB 922, which expanded exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act for transportation projects and Senate

“ In the world of advocacy, your reputation – and others' respect for you – is everything.”

Bill 1 (2017) that increased various taxes to generate approximately \$1 billion in new, dedicated funding for California's transit agencies annually.

Pimentel helped to navigate the complexities of increased regulations and milestones related to zero-emission vehicles and operations. He collaborated with the California Air Resources Board on the development of regulations like the Innovative Clean Transit Regulation and the In-Use Locomotive Regulation, ensuring transit agencies' unique challenges were considered.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pimentel actively engaged with lawmakers and committees, advocating for the needs of transit systems and securing vaccine access for frontline transit workers. Additionally, he led a statewide advocacy campaign directed at Congress to secure emergency relief funding, worth a combined \$9.8 billion, for the state's transit agencies.

FAST FACT: Pimentel counts securing early access to vaccines for California transit workers among his highest achievements.

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Lex Powers is the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA) first director of information design and has been a champion at SEPTA for clearer, more accessible and more effective communication in transit since he started working as a long-range planner in 2017. In one of his earlier projects, he introduced the authority's frequency map in 2019, the first illustration of SEPTA's bus network where bus routes are shown by their frequency of service, allowing riders to easily see which routes come frequently enough for them to just show up and ride like a subway.

Powers began working to redesign and replace 200,000 signs, design a brand new, modern SEPTA website and launch a state-of-the-art app. He oversees the SEPTA Metro: Wayfinding Initiative, which will make SEPTA's physical and digital wayfinding and service communications accessible, regardless of language, familiarity or ability.

He has been invited to speak nationally and guide transit agencies and advocacy groups to

Elenna Salcido is a dedicated transportation planning manager at STV in Los Angeles, Calif., whose go-to tool for excellence has been her empathy, which she brings to every project with a genuine desire to enhance transit systems for the benefit of all users. Having grown up in Southern California, she understands the unique needs of transit systems in the vast Los Angeles County and its surrounding areas and firmly believes planners can make a positive impact in their local communities.

As deputy project manager for the Gender Action Plan at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (L.A. Metro), Salcido oversaw a team that participated in a groundbreaking study aimed at improving the transit experience for women, who constitute more than half of L.A. Metro's ridership. The plan provided actionable recommendations covering station design, fare policies and safety based on inputs from L.A. Metro staff, community-based organizations and transit agencies worldwide. Salcido's own experiences as a frequent L.A. Metro rider and her past struggles while working night shifts at a food service job brought a unique perspective to the project.

Another notable project she was involved with was the Hollywood Burbank Airport connectivity study, commissioned by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA). With the relocation of the airport's terminal, Salcido led a technical analysis that proposed short-, medium- and long-term solutions to enhance accessibility for travelers and airport employees through improved rail connections.

“ Whenever I get scared, I remind myself this is a rare opportunity. I didn't come this far to waste it.”

make similar improvements in their transit systems. He has positioned himself as a mentor in the Philadelphia community by guiding countless soon-to-be transit professionals and working to get them involved in advocacy and stakeholder groups. He has assembled a team of industry experts and community leaders – including hiring two recent chairs of SEPTA's Youth Advisory Council and the manager of partnerships at the Transit app in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, among others.

FAST FACT: Powers is an openly gay man and has prioritized mentoring young transit professionals that identify as women, LGBTQ+ or have identities underrepresented in transit.

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“ [I've enjoyed] the opportunities I have had to teach kids and young people what transit planning is and how there is an opportunity for them to shape their built environment.”

Currently, Salcido is a key member of the consultant planning team for the L.A. Metro's C Line Extension. Her role involves extensive community outreach to identify and mitigate potential project impacts, as the agency seeks to extend light rail transit service into the underserved South Bay region.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Salcido will serve as the director of APA Los Angeles Section starting in 2024, supporting planning professionals through continuing education, advocacy, networking events and knowledge exchanges between transportation planners and other disciplines. She is also committed to encouraging young women to pursue careers in transit planning and engineering through her involvement with Spark LA, a program focused on empowering girls and her engagements at Schurr High School and USC.

Additionally, Salcido has been an active member of the Los Angeles chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS), previously serving as the WTS-LA webmaster.

FAST FACT: Salcido fosters cats and has transported many of her wards on transit.

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LEX POWERS
Director of Service
Information Design
Southeastern
Pennsylvania
Transportation
Authority

40 UNDER
FORTY



ELEENNA SALCIDO, AICP
Planning Manager
STV

40 UNDER
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CRISTINA RUSSELL

Vice President of Business Development
Transdev

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Cristina Russell is an industry professional who has supported business development and operations for passenger transportation systems since 2010. She joined Transdev in 2018 as vice president of business development and is responsible for supporting Transdev's client relationships across the United States.

Russell is responsible for supporting Transdev's Operations Team to ensure continuous improvement through presentation of new and innovative ideas to benefit Transdev's public transit agency partners and has implemented initiatives to help Transdev become a valuable part of communities across the country. She also supports charitable organizations to feed and clothe those in need in the communities that the company serves and has experience developing strategy to pursue fixed route, paratransit, autonomous, microtransit and mobility as a service projects.

She has helped lead Transdev's successful renewal efforts for some of the country's largest public transportation contracts, including the city of Phoenix with two operating facilities and more than 350 fixed route buses, NICE Bus in Nassau County, N.Y., a public-private partnership with a \$100 million operating budget and Foothill Transit's Arcadia Facility with a more than 200 vehicle revenue fleet.

Russell worked with the Transdev team to develop the concept for a first-of-its-kind One Seat

“ I have come to realize working with a strong and reliable team is crucial for achieving personal and professional balance.”

Regional Ride program, eliminating transfer trips and significantly improving the quality of life for paratransit passengers in the California Bay Area. In recent years, she has also collaborated with several regions in California to develop and implement more cost-effective and customer-friendly operations. She has also led business development efforts for Transdev's autonomous vehicle operations for its transit division and worked with customers such as Livermore Amador Valley Transportation Authority (California) and Regional Transportation District (Denver) on their AV pilot projects.

She is committee member for CalACT and actively represents Transdev at CTA, CalACT, and APTA among other industry organizations.

FAST FACT: Russell won first place in the spelling bee for her elementary school in fourth and sixth grade.

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JONNY SIMKIN

CEO
Swiftly, Inc.

40 UNDER FORTY

Jonny Simkin is co-founder and CEO of Swiftly, Inc., a transit data platform for agencies to share real-time passenger information, manage day-to-day operations, and improve service performance. Agency colleagues say Simkin's passion, commitment and boundless energy have been instrumental in enhancing the efficiency and rider experience of transit agencies across the globe. Swiftly has partnered with more than 145 transit agencies of all sizes, in more than eight countries, to help improve the rider experience for nearly 2 billion annual transit trips.

Simkin helped secure more than \$27 million in funding and fostered the growth of a dynamic team of more than 75 dedicated professionals. Swiftly's commitment to its employee's growth and its alignment with the public sector's ethos are exemplified by team members transitioning to public sector agencies, solidifying Simkin's role in shaping the future of the transit workforce.

One example of Swiftly's impact on the industry and Simkin's collaborative mind-set is the partnership developed with Miami-Dade County, where the company's more accurate predictive arrival times at stops contributed to a 41 percent reduction in instances where passengers missed buses. The county estimates these advancements enhance the transit experience for approximately 8 million annual trips, catering to a wide range of passengers, including those without smartphones through Swiftly's text-to-ETA solution. Furthermore, Swiftly's data aids

“ There's nothing like seeing and experiencing the impact of your work firsthand and knowing that it truly is making the world a better place.”

are assisting Miami-Dade County in the design of more accurate and reliable schedules and to inform the county on where capital investments should be made to maximize its capital budget.

Beyond Swiftly's operational realm, Simkin has been a speaker at prominent industry conferences and panels, including APTA events, CoMotion LA and Miami, Rail~Volution and GIS in Transit, among others. Simkin's thought leadership and contributions have left an indelible mark on the discourse surrounding transit technology and innovation.

One of the more remarkable aspects of Simkin's journey is his unconventional educational background, which is not related to transit, but which sets an inspiring precedent for aspiring transit professionals. His success underscores the notion that it is not too late to transition to a career in transit and make a significant positive impact.

FAST FACT: Simkin was once ranked No. 2 in California for table tennis (boys under 17).

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Transdev Celebrates

Cristina Russell

VP Business
Development,
Transdev



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JAVIER RAMIREZ SALGADO

Program Manager
Hitachi Rail

40
UNDER
FORTY

Javier Ramirez Salgado has emerged as a standout figure within Hitachi Rail, showcasing a unique blend of exceptional skills and humility. His journey as an emerging transit leader is underscored by a combination of academic and professional achievements and a practical mindset.

Central to Salgado's success is his academic foundation. He earned a bachelor's degree and master's degree in civil engineering, with the latter pursued in Turin, Italy, providing him with a comprehensive grasp of transportation systems. Complementing his technical education is his MBA from Emlyon Business School in France. These qualifications are fortified by his linguistic prowess, demonstrated through his fluency in English, Italian, French and Spanish.

Salgado's potential was recognized early on by Hitachi Rail, leading him to participate in the Global Talent Development Program, a rigorous 12-month initiative designed to accelerate leadership and technical capabilities. Salgado's colleagues say his blend of academic rigor, practicality and humility made him a natural fit for his role as project manager on the Hurontario Light Rail Transit Project, Hitachi Rail's inaugural endeavor in Canada. In this capacity, he navigates the challenges posed by a culturally diverse team, partner organizations, subcontractors and clients.

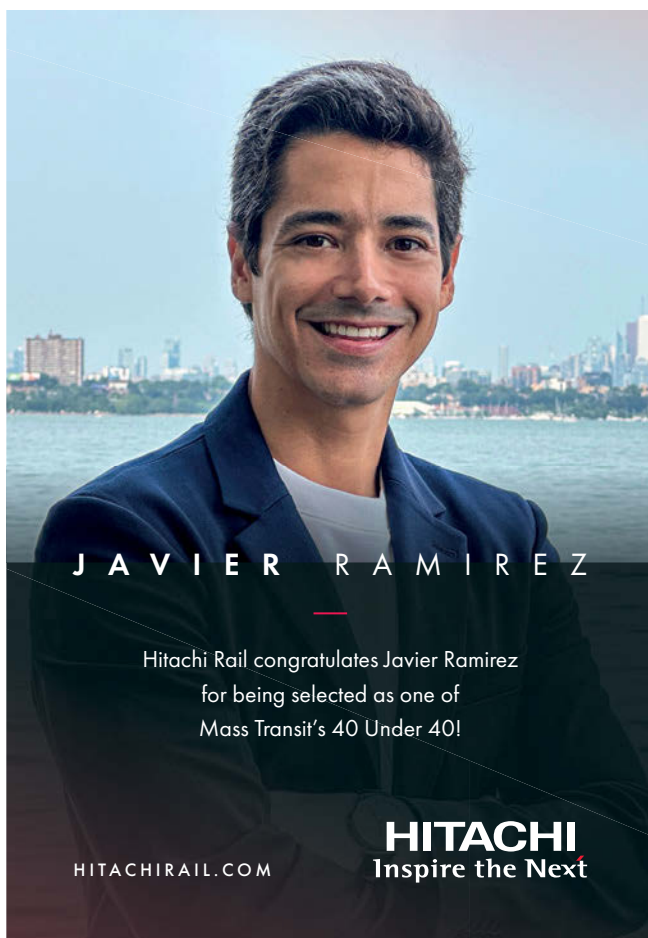
“ Being actively involved in projects that shape transportation infrastructure and positively influence.”

Salgado is credited with taking a proactive approach to problem-solving, regardless of complexity, which highlights his innate talent for breaking down issues, identifying solutions and harnessing collective input for effective resolutions. One example is his implementation of software solutions to streamline daily operations and manage subcontractor-related changes efficiently. This technology-driven approach has enabled Hitachi Rail to swiftly identify and address potential roadblocks in the project's execution.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, colleagues say it is Salgado's humility, dedication and unwavering determination that make him an outstanding ambassador for the transit industry. He actively contributes to discussions surrounding DEI, including LGBTQIA+ population. Furthermore, he has completed three full marathons and three 70.3 Ironman races.

FAST FACT: Javier is a polyglot and speaks English, Italian, French and Spanish.

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JAVIER RAMIREZ

Hitachi Rail congratulates Javier Ramirez for being selected as one of Mass Transit's 40 Under 40!

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Andy Wakefield is the current director of the Transit Operations Management Consulting Practice at Intueor Consulting. Throughout his tenure with Intueor, spanning roughly a decade, Wakefield has assisted more than 50 different transit agencies, all of various size and complexity, with IT strategic planning and technology system selection and advisory services.

Wakefield has helped manage the selection and implementation of more than \$150 million in transit technology systems and has saved agencies countless dollars through proper implementation planning, as well as procurement negotiations and advisory support with IT vendors and system implementers. Wakefield has helped evolve the industry through the generation of new concepts related to procurement approaches, as well as through the creation of advanced system requirements that push the market forward and impact the development of different products and services from system providers.

“ Every project I work on comes with its own set of challenges, which makes my job both exciting and difficult.”

He is an alumnus of the APTA Emerging Leaders Program (class of 2019) and is active on several APTA committees. Additionally, he has authored several white papers and research articles aimed at educating transit agencies on best practices related to zero-emission bus planning and rollout strategies, how agencies can leverage IT solutions to modernize business operations, and the benefits and impacts that fare free transit practices can have on riders, cities and regional economics.

FAST FACT: Wakefield is a licensed officiant and has performed over more than 20 weddings for family and friends.

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ANDY WAKEFIELD

Director, Transit Operations Management Consulting Practice
Intueor Consulting, Inc.

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BUS AND RAIL

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BUS AND RAIL

PROXmobile3

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BUS AND RAIL

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First tunneling machines reaches future L.A. Metro Wilshire/La Cienega subway station
This is the first of two TBMs that will reach this last station on Section 1 of the L.A. Metro Extension project.

Transit authorities to launch major new initiatives in coming years
Contractors should pay attention to sustainability and expansion initiatives coming their way to take advantage of opportunities.

SFMTA issues update on cable cars and Muni's historic fleet
The agency plans to phase in cable car service and F Line service thanks to the accelerated COVID-19 vaccine and a more optimistic outlook for federal funding for public transit.

DART's refinancing of Silver Line RRIF loan estimated to save \$190 million
The \$900-million loan was originally awarded in 2010 and the refinancing takes advantage that will help counter pandemic-related revenue losses.

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SECURITY NEWS

BART ambassadors mark one-year anniversary
The ambassadors are part of a larger shift within BART Police to find new approaches using unarmed personnel to respond to people in crisis, such as mental health emergencies, drug overdoses or people experiencing homelessness.

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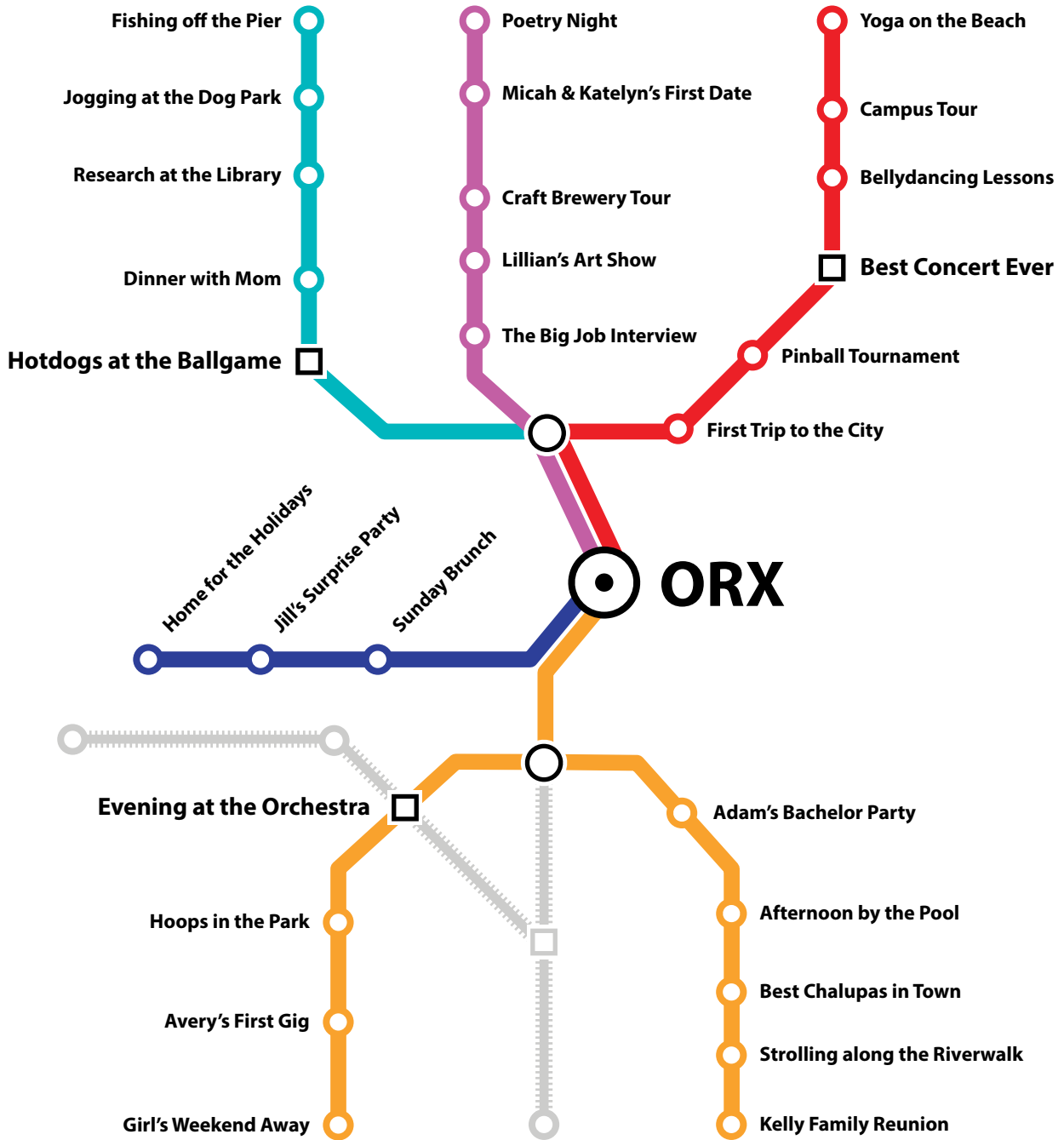
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