

APTA
HONORS
Celebrating
EXCELLENCE & LEADERSHIP

OCTOBER 1, 2024

Welcome to the 2024 APTA Honors celebrating excellence and leadership in public transportation!

We are honored to celebrate with you this year as we gather in Anaheim to recognize the industry's talent and potential. From executives and leaders who have helped distinguish our industry for decades to students and young professionals who are just embarking on their careers, the APTA Honors represent the best of public transportation's recent achievements, current innovations, and future aspirations.

The **APTA Awards** recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the public transportation industry in North America. Their ideas, improvements and vision have greatly propelled our industry. This year, we induct three industry icons into APTA's prestigious **Hall of Fame**, a special honor reserved for individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to public transportation and who have long and distinguished careers in the industry and with APTA.

This is the second year we will present the **Excellence in Inclusive Collaboration Award** which recognizes those agencies and businesses who have demonstrated excellence in inclusion, collaboration, and partnerships to deliver outstanding results and accomplishments enriched by diversity.

The **AdWheel Awards** recognize the marketing and communications successes of APTA's members, whose best practices raise awareness about the critical contributions of public transit's marketing professionals.

Leadership APTA is our industry's investment in a diverse, broad-based group of highly motivated and dedicated future leaders.

The **American Public Transportation Foundation** provides scholarships to deserving students interested in careers in public transportation.

We thank you and we celebrate and congratulate all our honorees!

Anaheim, California
2024 APTA TRANSform

Our gratitude to Genfare for sponsoring this publication.

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Excellence in Inclusive Collaboration

This award jointly honors a public transportation agency member, disadvantaged business enterprise member(s) and a private sector prime firm member who have demonstrated excellence in inclusion, collaboration, and partnerships to deliver outstanding results and accomplishments enriched by diversity.

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority; H.W. Lochner; and Jones Worley

After receiving its first FTA Capital Investment Grant of \$21.8 million, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), FL, chose an award-winning team to partner with on developing its new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, the SunRunner. PSTA asked H. W. Lochner to serve as the prime design consultant, and Jones Worley, an African American woman-owned DBE, to be the marketing communications consultant.



Jones Worley, with 34 years of branding experience working with 30 transportation authorities and airports from coast to coast, helped give PSTA's BRT a unique, culturally relevant identity with the name "SunRunner." The agency also helped create a logo that reflects the retro vibe of St. Petersburg, along with a fun tagline, "Beach to 'Burg." The agency, working in conjunction with local artists, used its knowledge of experiential design to apply the brand to SunRunner vehicles and stations.

Meanwhile, Lochner, an 80-year-old infrastructure services provider, handled the preliminary engineering, final design, and post-design services. Lochner's expertise allowed the new BRT service to transport customers more quickly and in style, thanks to its bus-and-turn lanes, branded stations with community artwork, lighting, and totems displaying real-time arrival information.

Since its launch in 2022, ridership on the line has grown swiftly: 3,800 riders on launch day, 10,000 riders in the first weekend, and 75,000 during the first month of operation. Within 11 months of operation, the SunRunner surpassed one million rides. In 2024, the SunRunner is one of PSTA's best-performing routes. Access to the service has been expanded through partnerships with key stakeholders, including the Tampa Bay Rays major league baseball team, the City of St. Petersburg, and local neighborhood organizations.

SunRunner has been an enormous asset to Pinellas County's busiest corridor. The planning, development, naming and branding, and pre- and post-launch strategies and tactics made the SunRunner a resounding success from ideation to rollout and ongoing operations.



We are extremely humbled to receive such high national praise for the SunRunner. We have always known that partnering with the private sector leads to success, and Jones Worley and Lochner were incredible partners with PSTA to bring the SunRunner to life. Receiving this award is a credit not only to our staff and the Jones Worley and Lochner teams but also to our board of directors, state and federal lawmakers, and the many leaders in Pinellas County and Tampa Bay who have supported our vision and goal to improve the community.

— Brad Miller
Chief Executive Officer, PSTA



Jones Worley is honored to be part of the PSTA and Lochner team that launched a service that will forever transform transportation in the Tampa Bay region. Thanks to PSTA's vision for collaboration in action, each partner had an opportunity to do what they do best to plan, build, and introduce Bus Rapid Transit to the public.

— Cynthia Jones Parks
President and CEO, Jones Worley



Lochner is honored to be recognized for this unique and important project. Our exceptional team of experts worked diligently to deliver this project and meet the needs of PSTA.

— Nick Benedico
Vice President & Southeast Regional Manager, Lochner



Distinguished Service (Local)

This award honors a public transportation decision maker, an elected or appointed official, or private citizen who has contributed to the public transportation industry on the local or state levels through policy, legislative initiative, and leadership.

Shannon Hardin

Shannon Hardin has served since 2014 on the City Council in Columbus, OH, and has served since 2018 as council president, when his colleagues made history by electing him the youngest and first LGBTQ person to hold that role. Hardin is focused on preparing the Columbus region for the growth of nearly one million new neighbors over the next 25 years with leadership across housing, transit, workforce development, land use, safety, and other issues.



Columbus is the 14th largest city in the U.S., and among the fastest-growing, but it typifies the sprawling, unsustainable, auto-oriented development pattern that fuels social and economic segregation. Hardin has been working to end Columbus' status as the largest city in the U.S. without advanced public transportation.

After chairing the council's Public Service and Transportation Committee, where he advanced tactical urbanism efforts, he co-chaired the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Insight 2050 Corridor Concepts initiative to plan for population growth through transit-oriented development.

He is leading the regional, interagency LinkUs initiative, which would transform mobility in central Ohio, and is campaigning for its passage as Issue #47 on this November's ballot. The plan would fund the Central

Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) to increase service hours by 45 percent; build out more than 50 miles of Bus Rapid Transit; and invest in more than 500 miles of greenways, sidewalks, and protected bike lanes.

Hardin has also helped support complimentary initiatives, from the COTA//Plus on-demand microtransit system, to the city's bold zoning reforms, which have dramatically increased housing capacity and allowable density along transit corridors.

For Hardin, transit is personal. His grandmother's home was demolished to make way for the interstate highway system, which decimated black neighborhoods.

Through his time on council, Hardin has championed many initiatives. He developed the "free college" Columbus Promise program, which addresses workforce gaps by enabling Columbus City Schools graduates to attend Columbus State Community College.

He crafted the "Reimagine Safety" legislative package that established independent Inspector General-driven investigations into police uses of force, reformed other practices, and made critical investments to address root causes of crime and scale nonpolice crisis response. Other achievements include doubling funding to Columbus arts organizations, decriminalizing marijuana, and various efforts to support small and minority-owned businesses.

Outstanding Public Transportation Business Member

This award honors an individual, employed by an APTA public transportation business member, who has made outstanding contributions to the public transportation industry.

Evalynn “Eve” Williams

Evalynn Williams, known affectionately as Eve, is the second-generation CEO and president of Dikita Enterprises, Inc. Energizing this small business, established by her father in 1979, Williams assumed leadership in 2010 following 27 years as CFO. Raised by entrepreneurial parents and immersed in family businesses from the tender age of 12, she has steered Dikita to quadruple sales and expanded its reach.



Despite Dikita’s focus on engineering and architecture, Williams views herself as a champion of humanity. When her father, Lucious Williams, surprised everyone by announcing her appointment as CEO at the company’s 30th anniversary, she embraced the challenge. Transitioning into the role, she chose transit as her passion, recognizing its role in empowering underserved communities and transit’s ability to connect people to opportunities.

Her journey led her to join APTA in 2005, where she has served on numerous committees, attended every conference, and helped others win, whether the prospect was a potential client or a fellow colleague. Of course, she picked up a little business along the way to keep the lights on!

Some of the many committees on which Williams has taken an active role include the Business Members Board of Governors (BMBG), where she currently serves as immediate past chair; the APTA Executive

Committee, Awards Committee, and Leadership APTA Committee, and many others, as well as several task forces, including the Revenue Task-force, where she is credited for making dues affordable for DBE members, and the CEO Search Committee, which is responsible for hiring the APTA President and CEO.

But her favorite and most passionate committee was the BMBG’s Small Business Committee (SBC). The SBC gave her two opportunities: one to bridge the gap between COMTO and APTA through collaborative networking receptions, and the other to connect APTA primes with DBEs through “Meet the Primes” events. As the host of Meet the Primes, a “speed dating network” that begins at 6:45 a.m. during APTA’s Mobility and Rail conferences, she was able to grow the attendance over the last 12 years from 50 to 250 people, especially during the Rail Conference. Additionally, she fought for 10 years for an award that had its debut in October 2023, the Excellence in Inclusive Collaboration Award, which recognizes a prime, a DBE, and a transit member.

Williams has a passion for fairness and equity. Having testified twice before Congress regarding the outdated Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program, she would like to think that she played a small role in the newly adopted rule published on April 9, 2024, where the personal net worth stipulations changed significantly, along with reciprocal certification rules.

Williams is fortunate to have two daughters who are enthusiastic about upholding the family legacy and establishing generational wealth. The thought of the legacy that her father initiated enduring through future generations fills her with overwhelming joy, knowing that one day, the transition will carry on and the legacy will live on.



Thank you, APTA, for this prestigious award and recognition.

— Evalynn Williams



Outstanding Public Transportation Board Member

An individual serving on the governing board of a public transportation system who has made outstanding contributions to the public transportation industry.

Arezou “Ari” Jolly

Appointed in 2015, Ari Jolly has served on the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), FL, Board of Directors for nine years. During that time, she has earned the trust and respect of her peers as evidenced by being elected secretary, vice chair, and subsequently chair of the seven-member board in 2021 and 2022. During her tenure, Jolly has immersed herself in all things transportation by being actively involved on APTA committees, and at conferences, events, policymaking, and industry recognitions.



Her steadfast leadership was pivotal on the Skyway Advisory Committee, whose recommendations led to JTA's internationally recognized Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C) program, a vision of safer mobility and increased innovation for public transportation. Additional achievements include her instrumental work in expanding Transit Oriented Development (TOD) policy by encouraging the adoption of TOD amendments to Jacksonville's comprehensive plan, and securing the passage of local option gas tax extensions in 2016 and 2021, which are projected to generate more than \$1 billion for Jacksonville and JTA for infrastructure improvements through 2051.

Jolly, also an arts and culture advocate, chaired a committee that oversaw the interior design and history murals at the new Jacksonville

Regional Transportation Center at LaVilla, JTA's state-of-the-art administrative headquarters and regional transfer station. As a former U.S. Navy officer, Jolly is passionate about veterans and their families. She is a tireless supporter of JTA Cares, an initiative to help people in need, such as the homeless and the unemployed, women in transition, Duval County Public Schools, local colleges and universities, and causes such as breast cancer awareness and testing, and stroke and diabetes prevention.

Jolly has been an APTA Transit Board Member since 2015 and serves on APTA's Transit Board Member Committee and its Executive Council. In the midst of her many demands as senior assistant general counsel at Florida Blue, JTA board member, and community leader, Jolly makes it a priority to ensure that everyone has equitable access to healthcare. Beyond her focus to ensure communities have safe, affordable, and reliable transportation, she was integral in implementing JTA's Wellness-On-Wheels program, which brings healthcare vaccines, screenings, and testing to underserved communities. Most recently, she was involved in implementing the "Stroke Bus" campaign, bringing pivotal health information and awareness to the Jacksonville community.



It has been an honor to work with Ari Jolly over these years. Her unwavering dedication to this industry and the communities of Northeast Florida is a true example of board leadership, and she has been essential in empowering the JTA to innovate and introduce transportation of the future to our communities. This award is very well deserved; the JTA is proud to have benefited from her leadership and expertise.

**— Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr.
CEO, Jacksonville Transportation Authority**



Outstanding Public Transportation Chief Executive Officer

This award honors a chief executive officer of an APTA public transportation system member who has made outstanding contributions to the public transportation industry.

Dawn Distler

With a career in public transportation spanning 37 years, Dawn Distler, CEO of the METRO Regional Transit Authority in Akron, OH, has demonstrated experience, expertise, and a commitment to excellence in leadership. Her journey in the public transit industry has been characterized by a relentless pursuit of innovation, a steadfast dedication to fostering inclusive environments, and a visionary approach to addressing the evolving needs of communities.



Distler began her career at Akron METRO, a role that built a strong foundation for her leadership career. She progressed from driver to SCAT (Paratransit) operations manager, showing dedication to efficiency and customer satisfaction while honing her skills in team management, budget oversight, and stakeholder engagement.

Transitioning to the Davidson Transit Organization in Nashville, TN, she assumed the role of general manager of operations and maintenance. There, she played a pivotal role in shaping public transportation in the region, spearheading initiatives to enhance service quality, expanding infrastructure, and integrating emerging technologies. Distler's tenure as the director of transit at Knoxville Area Transit further underscored her expertise in strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, and organizational management.

Returning to her roots at Akron METRO as CEO, she embarked on a mission to redefine the future of public transportation in her hometown.

Distler is an advocate for diversity and community engagement, and has played an active role in industry organizations including APTA, where she has held numerous leadership positions and contributed to shaping national transit policy.

She is involved in numerous local civic organizations and is committed to driving positive change and fostering collaborative partnerships to address societal challenges. Distler's legacy is reflected not only in her many achievements and accolades, but also in the enduring impact she has had on the communities she has served and the individuals she has inspired.

I am honored to receive this award. This recognition reflects the dedicated efforts of our entire team and the visionary support of our board. Our shared commitment to making public transit more efficient, accessible, and equitable drives us every day. Together, we are building a better future for the community we serve, and I am excited for what we can achieve next.

— Dawn Distler
CEO, Akron METRO RTA

Dawn's insightful leadership at METRO RTA has moved the organization through excellence in operations to a strategic, forward-thinking mindset of public transit as a core function of our regional economy. Her proactive approach to planning and transit development partnerships, along with people-centered transit route mapping, frequency, and technology makes METRO RTA a valuable partner in both economic and community development in Akron.

— Shammass Malik
Mayor of Akron, Ohio

Hall of Fame

This special honor is reserved for individuals whose careers and contributions to public transportation and to APTA have been significant, substantial and distinguished. Induction to the APTA Hall of Fame is a prestigious honor that recognizes outstanding achievements and a lasting legacy within the industry.

Carolyn Flowers

Carolyn Flowers grew up in Los Angeles, where she relied on public transit to get to school. Later, when embarking on an MBA, she envisioned a career in the finance department of a large corporation. But then, after a few years in the private sector, she transitioned to the public transit sector and has never looked back.

Flowers received recognition from the UCLA Anderson School of Business 75th Anniversary celebration for her public career service. She was chosen as one of the 100 most Inspirational Alumni for her inspired leadership in public transit. She was also recognized by the UCLA Black Alumni Association as the Tom Bradley Alumnus of the Year (an award named for the first black mayor of Los Angeles, who championed public transportation expansion in the city) for making valuable contributions to the Los Angeles community in her role as chief operation officer at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), where she would serve in leadership roles in finance and operations for more than 19 years.

From 2010 to 2015, Flowers served as the first woman CEO/director of public transit for Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), NC. She was a presidential appointee in the Obama Administration at FTA, serving as senior advisor and acting administrator. She then worked at AECOM, leading business development and strategy for public transit in the U.S.



and Canada. In February 2019, she joined InfraStrategies LLC as a partner, providing strategic advice and consulting services.

Flowers currently serves on several boards: MPact, Transit Cooperative Research Program, Oversight and Project Selection, and Eno Center for Transportation. She was previously a member of the APTA Board of Directors and the Women’s Transportation Seminar International board. She also served on the board of APTA’s North American Transit Services Association. She currently serves on two corporate boards: Mobico (formerly National Express) and Neology Corp. She also previously served on the boards of MV Transportation, Cubic Corporation, and Circlepoint.

In 2008, Flowers was named Woman of the Year by the Los Angeles Chapter of the Women’s Transportation Seminar. She also received the Ambassador Award for her volunteer work with the American Stroke Association and received a special recognition for public service from the Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce and was a recipient of the National Women’s History Month award from the Black Business Association of Los Angeles. In addition, she was honored by the Eno Center for Transportation in 2018 with its Friends of Eno Award.

Flowers is a graduate of Leadership APTA and the Eno Executive Leadership program.

“
The landscape for women in transit has evolved, from frontline and administrative roles to leadership positions leading large agencies. This shift reflects a broader industry and social progress toward recognizing and valuing diverse leadership. Carolyn’s tenure at CATS and her contributions to national transit policy through roles at FTA and in private-sector consulting further epitomize her commitment to advancing diversity, mentorship, and sponsorship with the transit community.

— Brandon T. Hunter
Director of Internal Communications, WeDriveU

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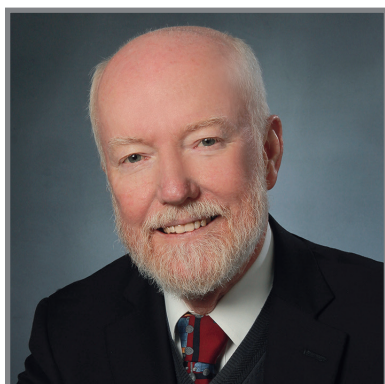
Hugh A. Mose

Hugh Mose began his nearly 50-year transit career when, in graduate school at the University of Maryland, he was introduced to the managers of several small public transit systems. Hired out of graduate school to manage the city-run transit system in Iowa City, IA, he knew in three weeks that transit management would be his career.

After five years at Iowa City Transit, he moved to Fresno, CA, where he served as assistant transit director, and then to Olympia, WA, where for eight years he managed Intercity Transit. Returning to the East Coast in 1995, he found his true home at the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) in State College, PA, where he worked as general manager until his retirement in 2014.

Mose has continued his industry involvement, undertaking consulting work and devoting time and energy not only to APTA, but to the American Public Transportation Foundation, the Transit Cooperative Research Program, the National Transit Institute, and other organizations.

From the outset, Mose has been committed to public transportation in every manner as an industry leader. From his earliest involvement with APTA he has been fully engaged—representing small transit systems, advocating for transit funding, supporting membership development, and serving for more than a decade on the APTF Board of Directors.



At Intercity Transit, Mose brought ADA paratransit in-house and then blended buses and vans into one comprehensive operation. Later, he led CATA to become the first transit system on the East Coast to have a 100 percent natural gas-powered bus fleet.

Examples of his role as innovator include implementing a 1990s version of first-mile, last-mile service, promoting one of the nation's most transit-supportive site plan review processes, and developing a unique apartment-based bus pass program that brought riders by the thousands.

His early work in Olympia led to Intercity Transit taking over and expanding the Dash shuttle, a free service that runs in downtown Olympia during the legislative session, and later, in State College, his work with the staff at Penn State resulted in CATA being invited to operate the campus bus service.

Mose was fostering diversity and inclusion long before those terms were in common use; and he continues to mentor APTF scholars and other young professionals.

As a transit manager, Mose worked tirelessly to respond to the needs of riders and other transit stakeholders, the public and the elected officials who represented them, and the employees who were making a career of public transportation.

Being the "face" of his transit agency has also led Mose to be a leader in his community. He has served as United Way board chair, Rotary Club president, chair of the State College Transportation Commission, and clerk of the board at a Quaker-directed retirement community.



Hugh Mose dedicated his career to improving the public transportation industry. For nearly 20 years, he developed ways to better discover State College, Pennsylvania, Penn State University, and the larger Centre Region. His innovative leadership helped make State College the nation's most transit-intensive small urban area. I am fortunate to call Hugh my friend and have greatly enjoyed working with him over the years. Thank you, Hugh, for being a loyal public servant and for your immense contributions to public transportation.

— Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA)



Hall of Fame

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Michael Schneider

Michael Schneider has enjoyed a 50-year career in public transportation, comprising executive leadership, program and project management, technical innovation, and thought leadership. His career has combined management and leadership roles at several of the industry's most prominent engineering and management firms, managing many of the world's most significant transportation and infrastructure megaprojects.



Schneider is co-founder and managing partner of InfraStrategies LLC, a global consultancy providing strategic advisory services, program management, and project advocacy services to public authorities and private organizations. Prior to forming InfraStrategies, he was senior vice president of HDR Inc., where he established and directed the firm's global strategic consulting practice and served as the firm's director of professional services. Earlier, he co-founded and served as chairman and CEO of InfraConsult LLC, a firm specializing in project development, program management, and public-private partnerships. He was with Parsons Brinckerhoff (now WSP) for more than 30 years, where he led the transportation business group, founded and chaired the strategic advisory practice, and served on the firm's board of directors for many years.

Schneider has been a member of the APTA Board of Directors and was founding chair of APTA's Public-Private Partnerships Committee. He

has been an active participant and leader in numerous professional organizations, including serving as the first man elected to the International Board of Directors of the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS).

He has worked in more than 20 countries, and on major public transportation programs in India, Mexico, Panama, and Israel. He led numerous projects focused on improving access and public transportation within the U.S. National Park System and served as project director for the landmark National Recreation Access. He led master planning work for Yosemite and Yellowstone national parks and provided transportation consultation for the Lake Placid and Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

Schneider is a frequent speaker at industry meetings and international conferences and has been a guest lecturer at several prominent universities. He has authored more than 150 papers and juried publications in the fields of infrastructure finance, project delivery, and management practices, and has provided background papers and supplied testimony on policy development to various congressional committees and the White House.



I've known and worked with Michael Schneider as a professional colleague, industry leader, and close friend, for more than 40 years. There are few people who have contributed more to such an incredible array of projects throughout the world than Mike, and there is no one more engaged in identifying, nurturing, and promoting young professionals. He has been a mentor and positive role model for hundreds of people over his career and has always brought a unique and enlightened focus on diversity and equity to public transportation. Mike is a leader, a consensus builder, and an unabashed advocate for global mobility. We celebrate his induction into the APTA Hall of Fame.

— Michael Allegra
Former CEO of the Utah Transit Authority
and member of the APTA Hall of Fame



Innovation

For demonstrating innovative concepts in the provision of public transportation services.

Calgary Transit Calgary, Alberta, CANADA

Calgary Transit's 'The Operator Zone' marks a significant advancement in employee engagement and communication. Launched in February 2024, the system allows frontline operators to make maintenance requests, provide scheduling feedback, and recognize peers. With a simple QR code system, The Operator Zone has positively impacted how Calgary Transit interacts with its operators, promoting a culture of safety, efficiency, and continuous improvement.



The Operator Zone is seamlessly integrated into Calgary Transit's entire fleet—buses, trains, and shuttles—via QR code stickers inside the cab. While using the platform is optional, it enables operators to swiftly report vehicle maintenance issues, hazardous conditions, and scheduling concerns, or to commend fellow operators for exceptional work, all from their personal devices.

This intuitive system enhances traditional logbooks and dispatch calls by providing an additional, easy-to-use channel for feedback. It speeds up the feedback process and ensures operators can communicate directly with management in real-time, making their voices heard more effectively.

The system is scalable and adaptable, allowing Calgary Transit to update forms and feedback mechanisms without needing new physical infrastructure. As the organization evolves, so does The Operator Zone, ensuring continued relevance and flexibility.

Since its launch, The Operator Zone has significantly improved Calgary Transit's operations. The increased accessibility of the system has led to faster response times to operational issues, enhancing service quality and safety. With quicker communication between operators and management, problems such as vehicle repairs and safety concerns are addressed more efficiently, reducing downtime, and increasing productivity.

The peer recognition feature in The Operator Zone has also been highly successful, fostering a positive work culture where operators regularly acknowledge each other's efforts. This feature ties into a broader Calgary Transit Honours Awards recognition program, further enhancing the sense of appreciation and community among staff. As a result, employee morale, job satisfaction, and overall performance have improved.

So far, nearly 3,000 reports have been received and actioned through The Operator Zone, highlighting the system's effectiveness in fostering a responsive and proactive workforce.

Much of the success has been in the platform's simplicity and cost-effectiveness, making it an ideal model for organizations seeking to improve communication and operational efficiency.

The initiative supports the public transit industry's broader goals of improving service reliability, safety, and employee engagement. By streamlining issue resolution, fostering feedback, and promoting employee recognition, The Operator Zone has helped support Calgary Transit's high operational standards.



The Operator Zone has redefined how we engage with our frontline staff, providing a powerful tool to improve communication, safety, and service quality. We're proud to be recognized for this innovation that reflects our commitment to both our employees and our customers.

— Sharon Fleming
Director, Calgary Transit



Innovation

For demonstrating innovative concepts in the provision of public transportation services.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation – Ride On

Rockville, MD

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), MD, Brookville Smart Energy Bus Depot is a first-of-its-kind integration of microgrid and electric-vehicle charging infrastructure, delivering sustainability, reliability, and resilience for the county's public transportation system.

The solar bus-charging infrastructure project, the largest in the U.S., supplies clean energy to MCDOT's growing Ride On electric-bus fleet.

Montgomery County has set aggressive goals for carbon reduction, and MCDOT is striving to meet these goals by transitioning to a carbon-free bus fleet. The Ride On project advances the county's goal to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2035, reducing lifetime emissions by more than 155,000 tons, while offering resilience to climate events and power outages.

The Montgomery County Department of General Services, Office of Energy and Sustainability developed the microgrid at the Brookville depot to support the electrical charging requirements of this new fleet.



As with many public transit systems, the Ride On system serves a population that does not always have reliable access to personal transportation and is dependent on the transit system for access to jobs, healthcare, education, and entertainment. Having a microgrid supporting the charging of electric buses leads to improved confidence that during major climate events and grid outages, the electric-bus fleet will continue to service routes.

The current microgrid system is designed to support up to 44 electric buses, with the ability to expand to 70 buses.

Innovation

For demonstrating innovative concepts in the provision of public transportation services.

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada – ZeroEyes

Las Vegas, NV

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) serves more than 52 million passenger trips annually in a region with 2.3 million residents and more than 40 million visitors.

Innovation is a core value at RTC, and the agency is committed to exploring new and innovative technologies to improve safety for passengers and employees.

The RTC was the first public transit agency to implement ZeroEyes, a cutting-edge software that detects firearms. This technology integrates with existing security camera systems to monitor transit facilities via live video feeds.

ZeroEyes uses artificial intelligence to process more than a thousand images per second and then alerts trained personnel in the ZeroEyes Operation Center if a firearm is detected. If a perceived firearm is deemed an actual threat, RTC's security team is immediately notified, and law enforcement contacted.

The software has already been tested, successfully identifying images of firearms and alerting the operations center. These instances included a toy gun, and a training gun used by local law enforcement.



Although these were not actual threats, ZeroEyes was able to notify the RTC security team.

Customers have expressed increased confidence in their safety, knowing that ZeroEyes technology can quickly alert authorities in the event of a firearm-related threat.

“ RTC prides itself on its ability to implement innovative solutions to transportation challenges. More than 150,000 individuals in our region depend on public transit every day, and we continually look for ways to improve the overall safety and security of the system. Artificial intelligence enables us to be more proactive and operationally efficient when faced with staffing and funding limitations.

— MJ Maynard
Chief Executive Officer, Regional Transportation Commission
of Southern Nevada

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Innovation

For demonstrating innovative concepts in the provision of public transportation services.

Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet)

Portland, OR

The LIFT paratransit team of the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet) implemented, in March



2024, a groundbreaking pilot program with Instacart, a delivery company that has revolutionized buying and delivering/picking up of groceries.

Harnessing the power of partnership, TriMet developed an innovative solution to address growing costs and increased demands for paratransit service. Instead of sending a paratransit bus and driver to pick up a customer, take them to the store, and then provide a return trip home, the agency could use Instacart to do the shopping and utilize the paratransit drivers for deliveries. It is a win for the agency and riders who depend on door-to-door transportation service.

The Instacart pilot is an example of TriMet's commitment to finding creative solutions to operational challenges. It has delivered results, in terms of rider convenience and satisfaction, as well as improved efficiency and cost savings for the agency. In the first six months of the pilot, TriMet saved more than \$350,000 in paratransit service costs.

The program's beginnings date back to 2020 and the early days of the pandemic when TriMet teamed up with Meals on Wheels to support vulnerable riders while helping keep operational staff who were facing possible layoffs. The effort evolved into a grocery delivery program for paratransit riders who were unable to leave their homes. TriMet noted significant benefits and cost savings but ended the service in late 2022

due to driver shortages and a need to return to ADA-mandated service.

TriMet then began the partnership with Instacart. The program allows the agency to reallocate resources more effectively, improving service delivery for essential trips and ensuring timely, reliable transportation for critical needs. Over one full year, the program is projected to save an average of \$1,525 per rider. If half of active LIFT riders, approximately 3,000 people, adopt the service, annual savings could reach \$4.5 million.

The Instacart pilot supports transit industry objectives through cost reduction, improved access and equity, operational efficiency, sustainability, rider satisfaction, and enhanced paratransit service. By aligning with those standards and leveraging a widely available, user-friendly platform, TriMet's Instacart program sets a precedent as a cost-effective solution to transform public transportation and better serve all riders.



This innovative approach is about freedom. By providing riders with home delivery of groceries, they can spend their time, energy, and resources on other activities. This is a win-win-win: an immediate, positive impact on riders' quality of life; freeing up valuable resources for other essential trips; and saving our agency money.

— Sam Desue, Jr.
General Manager, TriMet



Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement

For public transportation systems that have demonstrated significant leadership, are outstanding role models of excellence, and whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation.

CATEGORY: Providing 3 million or fewer annual passenger trips.

Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority

Birmingham, AL

The Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) serves more than 200 square miles in the greater Birmingham, AL, area. BJCTA connects people to essential destinations while focusing on excellence, sustainability, and innovation. The agency has established a reputation for operational excellence. This has been demonstrated in high-profile moments, such as successfully managing bus services for the 2022 World Games, where the agency handled large-scale transportation needs with precision and reliability. Using data analytics to optimize fleet management and decision-making exemplifies the agency's focus on efficiency, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.

BJCTA continues to adapt to its region's changing needs. It has addressed challenges such as driver shortages by deploying 11 new MAX microtransit vehicles. Under the new 70/30 Service Plan that reallocates 30 percent of services to microtransit, BJCTA is offering flexible transit solutions. Through partnerships with Via and the City of Birmingham, it has expanded night-time operations, improved accessibility, and added more service zones.



Community engagement is central to BJCTA's mission of "Connecting People to Places." The agency interacts with riders and stakeholders through initiatives such as the "No Rider Left Behind" campaign, quarterly townhall meetings, the Rider Rewards Program, and the new Customer Experience Ambassador Program, ensuring services evolve based on community needs.

BJCTA is also committed to sustainability, with a focus on transitioning to a zero-emission fleet. Its fleet includes compressed natural gas and electric buses, with plans to deploy hydrogen alternatives in the future.

Safety remains a top priority for BJCTA, with 24/7 monitoring of transit stations, and partnerships with local law enforcement, including the Birmingham Sheriff's Office. The MAX University safety workshops further reinforce rider and employee safety.

At BJCTA, workforce development is prioritized through training and retention initiatives such as the Maximizing Me Campaign and wellness programs including the Employee Assistance Program, and the MAX Foundation that provides an array of services including homebuyer assistance.

BJCTA is committed to making public transportation the preferred choice for the region, while continuously advancing its standards of excellence.



The Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority is in a well-placed position to make public transportation for the City of Birmingham efficient for anyone—not just for those who need it, but for those who may have other options.

— Randall Woodfin
Mayor, City of Birmingham



BJCTA Executive Director/CEO Charlotte Shaw is leading the agency toward a future where public transportation is not just a necessity, but a choice.

— Paul P. Skoutelas
President and CEO, APTA



Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement

For public transportation systems that have demonstrated significant leadership, are outstanding role models of excellence, and whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation.

CATEGORY: Providing more than 3 million and fewer than 15 million annual passenger trips.

San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans)

San Carlos, CA

SamTrans, San Mateo County, CA, is honored for its exceptional service improvements, operational advancements, and unwavering commitment to sustainability and community service.



One of the key factors behind the agency's success is its Reimagine SamTrans initiative. This comprehensive project to address the evolving needs of the community involved an in-depth re-evaluation of SamTrans services and routes. By incorporating feedback from riders, stakeholders, and local leaders, Reimagine SamTrans created a blueprint for optimizing and modernizing public transportation in the region. The initiative focused on making bus routes more efficient, improving frequency and reliability, and enhancing the overall rider experience.

Another major achievement is the agency's plan for transitioning from diesel-powered buses to an entirely zero-emission fleet by 2034. This ambitious move exceeds California's 2040 goal to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions in the transit industry. By prioritizing sustainability, SamTrans

is not only on a path to improving air quality and reducing pollution in the region but is focusing its early efforts on equity priority areas.

After the dramatic decline in public transit use during the pandemic, SamTrans has worked tirelessly to rebuild and restore its ridership base. Through targeted outreach, service enhancements, and safety measures, the agency has successfully attracted new and returning riders, with numbers now nearing pre-pandemic levels. This recovery is a testament to the agency's adaptability and dedication to meeting the needs of its community during challenging times.

Perhaps one of the most significant milestones for SamTrans is that, for the first time in many years, the agency is fully staffed. By prioritizing the recruitment and retention of bus drivers and mechanics, SamTrans has been able to stabilize its workforce, which was essential for implementing the Reimagine SamTrans initiative. The ability to attract and retain skilled employees allows the agency to provide consistent and reliable service, minimizing disruptions and ensuring that buses run on time.

This award serves as a reflection of the agency's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and service excellence. With continued efforts in these areas, SamTrans is well-positioned to serve the needs of its community for decades to come.

Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement

For public transportation systems that have demonstrated significant leadership, are outstanding role models of excellence, and whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation.

CATEGORY: Providing more than 15 million and fewer than 50 million annual passenger trips.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

San Jose, CA

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), CA, provides more than 25 million trips a year for bus, light rail, and paratransit service in Santa Clara County. VTA also serves as the Congestion Management Agency, building infrastructure that moves Silicon Valley forward.



VTA also serves as the Congestion Management Agency, building infrastructure that moves Silicon Valley forward. This includes the multi-billion-dollar BART Silicon Valley Extension of six stations and 16 miles of rail, which incorporates cutting-edge technology for a single-bore tunnel.

In recent years, VTA has experienced substantial challenges with continuing pandemic issues and fending off a significant cyber breach. The agency also experienced a devastating mass shooting at its Guadalupe Light Rail Division, which took the lives of nine VTA employees and continued to affect operations.

However, the VTA "family" has persevered. Because of, and despite these challenges, the agency has endured and excelled.

VTA has restored service to pre-pandemic levels, and ridership growth has propelled to top levels in the U.S. It doubled the number of driver training classes and reinstated workforce development initiatives

including apprenticeships in overhead line worker and track worker jobs. The agency also launched an initiative to empower and mentor women frontline workers, known as Women Innovating Transit (WIT). Members of the group have access to leadership training and discuss issues and resolutions for concerns and issues particular to women transit employees.

The agency enacted its first cybersecurity preparedness exercise to prepare stakeholders to identify, isolate, and solve potential cybersecurity threats and to build the defenses against cyber-terrorists and cyber espionage.

VTA also established a cutting-edge approach to employee support with the creation of a dedicated mental health outpatient facility providing trauma counseling and other services. The agency has become a leader in mental health awareness for employees and in building the organizational culture and climate to a level workers can be proud of.

In addition, VTA is prioritizing system rehabilitation, system maintenance, state of good repair, system safety enhancements, and the implementation of technology enhancements to improve and maintain the existing transportation network. In June, VTA broke ground on the Bay Area Rapid Transit Silicon Valley Phase II Extension Project, the largest transportation infrastructure project in the history of Santa Clara County. The project will integrate Santa Clara County with the greater Bay Area BART system, enhancing regional connectivity and providing numerous economic, environmental, and social benefits.



Every employee at VTA, from our maintenance workers and bus and light rail operators to middle managers, administrators, and executives, has worked extremely hard and been resilient over the past three years. We are immensely proud to receive this honor.

**— Carolyn Gonot
General Manager/CEO, VTA**



Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement

For public transportation systems that have demonstrated significant leadership, are outstanding role models of excellence, and whose accomplishments and innovations have greatly advanced public transportation.

CATEGORY: Providing 50 million or more annual passenger trips.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority Atlanta, GA

COVID-19 fundamentally altered the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA),



Atlanta, GA, but the agency rose to meet that challenge head on. MARTA did not lay off any employees and has steadily regained ridership and trust throughout the Atlanta region.

MARTA is currently advancing the largest capital expansion in its history. It has launched award-winning programs in key areas, and APTA annually recognizes its innovations and customer-focused initiatives with awards in safety, security, marketing, sustainability, and communications.

To improve operations, MARTA is investing \$748 million to replace its railcar fleet with 224 completely redesigned, passenger-centered cars currently under construction by Stadler. It has begun electrifying its bus fleet. The agency recently broke ground on the region's first Bus Rapid Transit line that will connect downtown Atlanta to Capitol Gateway, Summerhill, Peoplestown, and the Beltline, with connections to heavy rail at Five Points, Georgia State, and Garnett Stations.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are more than just aspirational words at MARTA. The agency plays a significant role in upholding and expanding the legacy of Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, who insisted

that the economic vitality and opportunity of the region be available to minority-owned firms. MARTA's DBE program ensures that contract dollars go to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses, and the agency regularly exceeds its annual DBE goals.

Over the past three years, MARTA has made huge advancements in sustainability. In 2021, it attained APTA Gold Level recognition. The agency also issued Green Bonds, raising more than \$369 million to fund environmentally sustainable projects. Contributing to ocean biodiversity, MARTA placed two retired rail cars in the Atlantic Ocean as artificial reef material.

MARTA's community relations program is deeply embedded in neighborhoods across its service area. The 38 rail stations and hundreds of miles of bus and rail lines are more than just lines and dots on a map. The agency has expanded vital programs to address food deserts and launched new programs to connect with the public to create a more vibrant, livable region, including the world's first and only transit-accessible "League of Stations," with soccer pitches and community programming through its Station Soccer initiative.

In 2023, to honor the legacy of hip-hop and Atlanta icons over the past 50 years, MARTA organized events and released limited-edition Breeze farecards featuring OutKast, Jermaine Dupri, Killer Mike, Ludacris, and TLC. The celebration culminated in a bus unveiling for Jermaine Dupri and SoSo Def's 30th anniversary. The largely social-media-focused campaign resulted in 671,306 impressions, 42,824 engagements, and 6,690 clicks.

MARTA's accomplishments across diverse departments are a testament to its employees and consistent focus on customer experience, innovation, safety and security, infrastructure development, and community engagement.



As we emerged from the pandemic, MARTA strengthened its commitment to enhancing transportation services in Atlanta across many different areas. By improving our transit system and prioritizing the needs of passengers, MARTA continues to play a vital role in connecting communities and promoting economic development in the Atlanta region.

**— Collie Greenwood
CEO and General Manager at MARTA**



2024 AdWheel Grand Award Winners

Best Marketing and Communications on Workforce Development

KC Streetcar Authority, Kansas City, MO

Lane Transit District, Eugene-Springfield, OR

AC Transit, Oakland, CA

Toronto Transit Commission, Toronto, ON, CANADA

California High-Speed Rail Authority, Sacramento, CA

Best Marketing and Communications to Increase Ridership or Sales

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, Burnsville, MN

Metrolink, Los Angeles, CA

Valley Metro, Phoenix, AZ

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority,
Los Angeles, CA

RideCo, Los Angeles, CA

Best Marketing and Communications Educational Initiative

Rio Metro Regional Transit District, Albuquerque, NM

Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority, Dayton, OH

Milwaukee County Transit System, Milwaukee, WI

Calgary Transit, Calgary, AB, CANADA

Q'Straint/Sure-Lok, Oakland Park, FL

Learn about the winning campaigns at apta.com/AdWheel.

Leadership APTA Class of 2024

Koffi A. Afko

Assistant Chief Mechanical
Officer
Metro-North Railroad
New York, NY

Bill Amarosa, Jr.

Vice President and Chief Officer,
Operations Support
MTA New York City Transit
New York, NY

Alesia K. Cain

Executive Account Manager
Clever Devices
Woodbury, NY

Sergio Callen

Vice President, U.S. R&T Market
Sector Manager
AtkinsRealis
Los Angeles, CA

Jasmin Charles

Subway Operations Manager
San Francisco Municipal
Transportation Agency
San Francisco, CA

Melissa Chrisman

Vice President of Marketing and
Communications
Trinity Metro
Fort Worth, TX

Derek C. Donnell

Manager of Transit Operations
Norwalk Transit System
Norwalk, CA

Sabrina Glenn

Senior Director of Transit
Services
RTC of Southern Nevada
Las Vegas, NV

Hitham Hamdon

Director of Business Operations
Golden Gate Transit
San Rafael, CA

David Hancock

Chief Capital Services Officer
Utah Transit Authority
Salt Lake City, UT

Zachary A. Hernandez

Director of Client Engagement
AlphaVu
Washington, DC

Jenny Kane

Director, Rail Contract
Management & Special
Projects
Metra
Chicago, IL

Steven L. King

Senior Project Manager
Orange County Transportation
Authority
Anaheim, CA

Mehul Kumar

Chief Information & Technology
Officer
San Mateo County Transit
District
San Carlos, CA

Anna Lan

T.O.D. Manager
Capital Metro Transportation
Authority
Austin, TX

Jason Lawrence

Chief Planning Officer
Charlotte Area Transit System
Charlotte, NC

Laurence Lui

Head – Service Planning and
Scheduling
Toronto Transit Commission
Toronto, ON, CANADA

Rachel A. Maloney

Manager, Bus and Special
Service Operations
Niagara Frontier Transportation
Authority
Buffalo, NY

Shawn S. Metcalf

Chief of Police/Director of
Safety, Security, and Training
METRO Regional Transit
Authority
Akron, OH

Emmanuella Myrthil

Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer
Southeastern Pennsylvania
Transportation Authority
Philadelphia, PA

Jairo D. Naranjo

Vice President
Chicago Transit Authority
Chicago, IL

Mike L. Roth

Deputy Chief Transportation
Officer
IndyGo
Indianapolis, IN

Katie Roth

Director, Arterial Bus Rapid
Transit
Metro Transit
Minneapolis, MN

Veronica Siranosian

Senior Vice President, West
Coast Transportation Director
of Growth
AECOM
Oakland, CA

Dr. Julius K. Smith

Vice President, Chief
Information Officer
Dallas Area Rapid Transit
Dallas, TX

Shangeeta Snape

Managing Director, Mobility,
Canada
Arcadis Canada
Toronto, ON, CANADA

Grant Sparks

Director of Statewide Transit
Programs
Virginia Department of Rail and
Public Transportation
Richmond, VA

Michelle Stewart

Senior Manager, Special Projects
Metrolink
Los Angeles, CA

Dustin J. Strandberg

Chief Maintenance Officer
Victor Valley Transit Authority
Hesperia, CA

Daria van Engelen

Commercial VP, North America
Luminator
Plano, TX

Inessa M. Vitko

Executive Director,
Transportation Operations
TriMet
Portland, OR

Tamika White

Deputy Director of Talent
Management
Pinellas Suncoast Transit
Authority
St. Petersburg, FL

Chen Zhou

Vice President
Jacobs Engineering
McLean, VA

2024 American Public Transportation Foundation Scholars

The American Public Transportation Foundation (APTF) aims to increase and retain the number of individuals choosing the public transit field as a career by providing scholarships and engagement opportunities to deserving students and transit professionals. Since its inception in 1988, the APTF Board of Directors has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships to more than 400 students. This year, the foundation achieved a new record: \$340,550 to 44 students and transit professionals who represent the future of our industry.

Juan Acosta Sequeda

Latinos in Transit/MV
Transportation Scholarship

Lourdes Alvarez

SPONSORED BY: Foothill Transit
Stephanie Pinson Scholarship

Nadia Bashier

Valarie J. McCall Scholarship

Mehtaab Bath

SPONSORED BY: Livermore Amador
Valley Transit Authority
Americans with Disabilities Act
(ADA) Scholarship

Robert Binder

SPONSORED BY: Foothill Transit
Raymond C. Miller Scholarship

Joseph Botti

APTA Staff Recognition
Scholarship (Hugh and
Janyce Mose)

Pietro Buffoni

SPONSORED BY: University of
Illinois Chicago
APTF Board Scholarship

Arthur Cacace

Dr. George M. Smerk Scholarship

Luana Chen

SPONSORED BY: Mineta
Transportation Institute
Mineta Transportation Institute
Scholarship

Shijie Chen

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Florida Public Transportation
Association Scholarship

Yu-Chen Chu

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Transportation Studies
APTF Board Scholarship

Casey Chung

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Transportation Studies
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Jorge Diaz-Gutierrez

SPONSORED BY: Hugh A. Mose, PE—
Transportation Consultant
APTF Board Scholarship

Sharón Duhaney

SPONSORED BY: Metropolitan
Transportation Authority
Shirley DeLibero Scholarship

Fizzy Fan

SPONSORED BY: Georgia Institute
of Technology
Fran Hooper Scholarship

Matthew Flores

SPONSORED BY: Ashley C. Lickliter |
Kimley-Horn
APTF Board Scholarship

Luis Garcia Chavez

SPONSORED BY: UCLA Institute of
Transportation Studies
Richard J. Bouchard/AECOM
Scholarship

Austin Gardner

SPONSORED BY: HNTB
Reba Malone Scholarship

Mercedes Grams

SPONSORED BY: C-Tran
APTF Board Scholarship

Rodrigo Gutierrez

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Transportation Studies
Jerome C. Premo Scholarship

Farhan Jarif

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Commission
Louis T. Klauder (LTK)
Scholarship

Ashish Ravi Joshi

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APTF Board Scholarship

Tyler Kleinsasser

SPONSORED BY: Bay Area Rapid
Transit
Bombardier Transportation
Scholarship

Jasmine Law

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Transportation Studies
APTF Board Scholarship

Zack Magallanez

APTF Board Scholarship

Morgan Mauldin

BMBG/Janie Wulkan Memorial
Scholarship

Jackson Mills

Donald C. Hyde Memorial Essay
Scholarship

Stephano Miranda

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Transportation
APTF Board Scholarship

Motahare Mohammadi

APTF Board Scholarship

Daniel Monzon

Nathaniel Ford Scholarship

Ian Murphy

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Regional Transit Authority
William "Bill" Millar Scholarship

Fatemeh Noorizadehsalout

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Illinois-Chicago, Urban
Transportation Center
APTF Board Scholarship

Michelle Overmeyer

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Transportation
Frank Litchanski Scholarship

Katie Persons

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Transit District
Dan M. Reichard, Jr. Scholarship

Md Hishamur Rahman

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Jacob Range

HBCU Scholarship

Rebecca Saavedra Swint

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Transportation Studies
James "Jim" Cowen Scholarship

Haniye Safarpour

APTF Board Scholarship

Jasmin Salvador

SPONSORED BY: City of Santa
Monica Department of
Transportation
Latinos in Transit/MV
Transportation Scholarship

Shlok Sooch

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Hanalei Steinhart

Anja Graves Scholarship

Alex Wang

Parsons Brinckerhoff/
Jim Lammie Scholarship

Micah Wilcox

APTF Board Scholarship

Devon Williamson

Jack Gilstrap Scholarship

Many thanks to the APTA committees that selected this year's APTA Honors award and scholarship recipients.

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Fort Worth, TX

Doran Barnes

Chief Executive Officer

Foothill Transit

West Covina, CA

Brandi Bird

Strategic Policy Advisor

Community Streetcar Coalition

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Jose Bustamante

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Business Development

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SVP National Bus and Facilities

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**American
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