American Public Transportation Association

BUSINESS MEMBERS BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Small Business Committee

Meeting Agenda

APTA TRANSform & EXPO 2026 · Chicago

Date	Sunday, October 4, 2026
Time	1:15 PM – 2:00 PM CDT
Location	Salon C5-6 (Lower Level), Hilton Chicago
Chair	Debra A. Hunter, PMP, Information Design Consultants Inc.
Vice Chair	Lora Byala, AICP, Foursquare ITP
Staff Liaison	Petra Mollet, APTA

TIME (CDT)	AGENDA ITEM	LEAD
1:15 – 1:20	**1 Welcome** – Introductions: Chair and Vice Chair – APTA Staff Liaison – Committee Objectives (page 2)	*Debra A. Hunter*
1:20 – 1:25	**2 Sharing Insight: Small Business Value to the Industry** – Summary (page 3)	*Lora Byala*
1:25 – 1:45	**3 Attendee Introductions** – About one minute each: name, role, company, and a fun fact	*All*
1:45 – 1:48	**4 Announcement: Business to Business Networking Breakfast** – Monday, October 5, 6:30 AM CDT, McCormick Place – All attendees: View the video and prepare your passport – Call for volunteers: Committee ambassadors (page 3)	*Debra A. Hunter*
1:48 – 1:50	**5 Townhall Scheduling** – Yes or no? – Format: webinar, open forum, or office hours? – Frequency?	*Debra A. Hunter*
1:50 – 1:52	**6 Call for Volunteers: Subcommittee Sign-Up by Objective** – Enhanced Visibility and Recognition – Strategic Resource Development – Business Growth Facilitation – Advocacy and Support	*Debra A. Hunter*
1:52 – 2:00	**7 Open Discussion and Next Steps**	*All*

Questions about this meeting? Please contact Debra A. Hunter at debrahunter@idcinc.net.

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP AND STAFF LIAISON



Debra A. Hunter, PMP

Chair · President & CEO, Information Design Consultants Inc.

Debra A. Hunter is a transit rider and the President and CEO of Information Design Consultants Inc. (IDCI), a firm that helps government agencies and transit authorities deliver their projects. She brings more than three decades in technology, including service with the Cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach and consulting with Price Waterhouse and Sierra Systems. Because work is more and more often organized into projects, she considers a competent project workforce critical to every organization. She serves as Adjunct Faculty in Project Management. She holds a Master of Science in Management Information Systems from Carnegie Mellon University and a B.A. in Political Science from UCLA, and she is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). She chairs the APTA Small Business Committee and serves as Vice Chair of the California High-Speed Rail Authority Business Advisory Council's Professional Services Committee.



Lora Byala, AICP

Vice Chair · President & CEO, Foursquare ITP

Lora Byala founded Foursquare ITP in 2006 and has led the company's growth from just herself, to a few employees in her living room, to more than 75 staff across several offices. As President & CEO, she is responsible for guiding Foursquare ITP's strategic direction, growth, company culture, operations, and more. She is a collaborative leader and a recognized expert in transit planning and strategic planning for sustainable transportation modes with nearly 30 years of experience in the transportation field.



Petra Mollet

APTA Staff Liaison · Vice President, Strategic & International Programs, APTA

Petra Mollet is the Vice President of Strategic and International Programs for the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). In that role, she leads APTA's strategic and business planning and directs the development of APTA's global strategy and international engagement. In a transportation career spanning over three decades, she is driven by a passion for realizing the potential of sustainable mobility to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities. Before she joined APTA in 2008, Petra was director of corporate development and the corporate office at the International Association of Public Transport (UITP).

COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

Enhanced Visibility and Recognition

Amplify the visibility and contributions of small businesses within APTA, the Transit Industry and nationally through targeted networking events and collaborative platforms.

Strategic Resource Development

Create and deliver practical business tools, educational resources, and innovative programs that provide tangible value to small businesses in the transit industry.

Business Growth Facilitation

Connect small businesses with procurement opportunities, strategic partnerships, and market expansion resources to drive sustainable business growth within the transit industry.

Advocacy and Support

Advocate for small businesses on key industry issues, providing guidance on navigating policy changes and promoting sustainable practices.

SHARING INSIGHT: SMALL BUSINESS VALUE TO THE INDUSTRY

Presented by Lora Byala, Vice Chair

Shifting federal transportation priorities and funding place pressure on APTA's role as the transit industry's leading advocate. Small businesses can help preserve that influence by demonstrating clear, measurable value to transit agencies and larger business members. The Committee's strategic reset therefore turns to a positive account of the value its members bring, while the Committee continues to advocate for small business interests.

What small businesses contribute

- **Innovation:** The industry needs innovation, and small businesses are positioned to deliver it. They prototype and test solutions quickly and apply test-and-learn practices that often become industry standards.
- **Dependable Delivery:** Many small businesses distinguish themselves through solid, reliable work, which carries value in its own right.
- **Specialized Expertise:** Small businesses bring deep expertise in specific transit challenges and close knowledge of regional needs and community dynamics.
- **Efficiency and Flexibility:** Lean operations yield cost-effective solutions, and operational agility lets small businesses adjust quickly as agency needs change.
- **A Broader Vendor Community:** Small businesses expand the vendor community, including women-, minority-, and veteran-owned firms with strong ties to the communities that transit systems serve. That connection grounds their work in direct insight into customer needs.

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS NETWORKING BREAKFAST

When	Monday, October 5, 2026, 6:30 AM – 7:45 AM CDT
Where	Vista Ballroom Foyer (South Building, Level 4), McCormick Place Convention Center
All attendees	View the video and prepare your passport before the breakfast.

The breakfast gives larger business members and transit agencies a venue for brief introductory conversations with small businesses about concrete opportunities.

Call for Volunteers: Committee Ambassadors

- Circulate and engage with attendees throughout the breakfast.
- Make introductions and help participants deepen their relationships, turning social interactions into economic opportunities.
- Attend the ambassador coordination meeting at 6:20 AM, ten minutes before the breakfast opens.

> **Recognition.** After the event, the Committee will publicly thank each ambassador. To prepare the recognition, each volunteer should provide a brief bio and a sentence explaining the reason for volunteering.

TOWNHALL SCHEDULING: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Should the Committee hold a townhall series?
- Which format serves members best: a webinar, an open forum, or office hours?
- How often should the Committee meet in that format?

SUBCOMMITTEE SIGN-UP BY OBJECTIVE

Members may volunteer for a subcommittee under one of the four Committee Objectives on page 2: Enhanced Visibility and Recognition, Strategic Resource Development, Business Growth Facilitation, or Advocacy and Support.