100% Safety for 66% Cost
Protect Everything That Runs on Rails...
And reduce costs by a third

Find out more
100% Safety for 66% Cost
Protect Everything That Runs on Rails...
And reduce costs by a third

Find out more
DeFazio Calls for ‘Transformative’ Federal Transportation Bill

REP. PETER DEFAZIO (D-OR), chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, emphasized his support of “a transformative 21st-century transportation bill” at an Oct. 14 session during APTA's 2019 TRANSform Conference.

According to DeFazio—a 32-year member of the House—previous transportation authorization bills dating back to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 followed the pattern set by President Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950s when he worked to help create the Interstate Highway System. "It's time to enter the 21st century," he said. “We all will need to be resilient and public transit will play a key role.”

DeFazio noted the need to reduce or eliminate the more than $90 billion nationwide backlog in funding for state of good repair. “The longer you wait to repair, the more the process will cost later,” he said.

His other priorities include strengthening support for Amtrak in both parties; establishing separate pots of money to help large and small public transit systems buy buses and “get more for your dollar”; and simplifying the Buy America project certification process.

DeFazio mentioned his support of a “fossil-fuel-free goal” for motor vehicles, beginning with reducing carbon emissions.

He called for increased support of all-electric and hybrid-electric public transit vehicles, including testing of a process that “cracks water molecules” to produce hydrogen and energy.

The session, “Congress and the Year Ahead in Transportation,” also included an off-the-record conversation with staff members of the committees that oversee public transit.

FTA Update: What’s Now, New and Next

FTA ACTING ADMINISTRATOR K. Jane Williams provided an overview of FTA initiatives and priorities at an Oct. 14 General Session during APTA’s TRANSform Conference. Joining her were FTA executives Matt Welbes, executive director; Bruce Robinson, acting associate administrator for program management; Henrika Buchanan, associate administrator for transit safety and oversight and chief safety officer; Robert Tuccillo, associate administrator for budget and policy; and Vince Valdes, associate administrator for research, demonstration and innovation.

Acknowledging the productive partnership between FTA and public transit agencies, Williams reinforced DOT Secretary Elaine Chao’s priorities of safety, innovation and infrastructure investment. “The future of transit depends on innovation,” she said. “Our ability to innovate and our leadership in the mobility discussion will ultimately determine the industry’s ability to remain an option in the transportation network.”

FTA is actively promoting opportunities to improve public transportation through innovation, she said, including investing $8 million in its Mobility on Demand program and announcing a notice of funding for its new Integrated Mobility Initiative (IMI).

“Through IMI, we are encouraging you to think big, including the use of robotic technologies like ‘smart canes’ that enable people with...”

FTA UPDATE CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

In the Spotlight in New York

The public transportation world came to New York City Oct. 13-16 to participate in APTA’s 2019 TRANSform Conference: a reimagined Annual Meeting. Read about conference sessions and see photos beginning on page 5.
Working Together, We Make Our Industry Better

Public transport makes it possible to keep us connected to our communities: To get to work, to get to school and wherever we need to be. APTA ensures that public transportation continues to be woven into the fabric of our lives.

We must build stronger coalitions locally—within our own states, with our state public transit associations and within our own communities with our elected officials, who can help advance our interests.

I am passionate about public transportation and my passion is fueled by the people we serve, most of whom we will never meet but whose lives are made infinitely better by the policies and programs we help shape. It is also fueled by the hope that this world will be healthy when my young grandchildren are grown up and out on their own. We can ensure that future today with the policies we create for tomorrow.

It’s a distinct privilege to be of service to APTA and the transportation industry during such an exciting and transformational time for public transit. I plan to build on the accomplishments my predecessor, David Stackrow, made this past year.

The new APTA Strategic Plan is aggressive and it’s impactful—just what our industry needs to navigate the transformation it’s undergoing from technological innovation to population growth and the shifts in our climate affecting the resiliency of our infrastructure.

I have given a lot of thought to how we will achieve the goals set out in our Strategic Plan. To secure more committed funding and overall support for public transportation, we must build stronger coalitions locally—within our own states, with our state public transit associations and within our own communities with our elected officials, who can help advance our interests. Growing our membership will allow us to amplify our voice as an association and achieve our goals.

I am inspired by the results of a process, more extensive than ever, to develop an ambitious set of federal surface transportation authorization law recommendations. We are ready to press Congress to provide $178 billion over six years for public transportation and passenger rail investment that will deliver effective mobility options in every community.

That critical funding will address three major areas: to cover the entire obligation of the more than $90 billion public transit state-of-good-repair backlog and funding for all Capital Investment Grant (CIG) projects in the pipeline over the next six years; re-establish a 40-40-20 capital investment ratio among CIG, State of Good Repair and Buses and Bus Facilities grants; and create a new Mobility Innovation and Technology Initiative to keep pace with our evolving mobility.

We must place equity at the forefront as we strive to keep pace with the speed of technology. Small and medium-size agencies need to stay current and relevant for their customers, just as large agencies that serve millions of passengers do. They can only do that with the support of their peers in the industry and the funding that will allow them to thrive.

And it is critical to both our industry’s survival and the opportunities we can provide to improve mobility through out our nation that we maintain a strong workforce that is ready for the future. As technology advances, there is an urgent need to provide our workforce with the skills and tools that will set them up for success.

Our operators and maintenance workers comprise 80 percent of the workforce at public transit agencies. Management and labor must engage in conversation to better understand the impacts of disruptive technologies on the performance and delivery of transit services. We must identify the new skills needed and develop training opportunities so we all can contribute and benefit from this transformation.

As we work to accomplish these objectives, safety and security will remain the underlying focus as our industry encounters new challenges. The public transit industry is now on par with Fortune 500 companies in regard to cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Everything we do runs on technology and, as a high-profile potential terror target, the industry must be able to guard against cyberattacks.

We are all working toward the same goals: to improve access to transportation mobility in our communities and we need to be open to all ideas and solutions, not just limited to the systems we know and use today, to get people where they need to go: safely, efficiently, affordably and with the least impact on our environment.

Together we will proactively anticipate, manage and leverage change, cementing our role in the vitality and staying power of our industry and the part it plays in our communities.

We are the leaders of the new mobility era, advocating to connect and build thriving communities. I am counting on all of you to renew your commitment, to feel the responsibility and take ownership for the success of public transportation.

Working together, we make each other better, we make our communities better and we make our industry better. Our future depends on it!
OmniRide to Start Service To New County

RESIDENTS OF STAFFORD COUNTY, VA, will have a new commuting option as of Nov. 4, when the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) begins operating OmniRide Express bus routes between a commuter lot in the county and L’Enfant Plaza in Washington, DC, and to the Pentagon.

To encourage passengers to try the new services—the first in OmniRide’s 33-year history to originate outside Prince William County, VA—the new routes will operate free through Dec. 31.

The two new routes are among 10 public transit and multimodal projects totaling $19 million, approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board as part of the Commuter Choice program to improve the commute on the I-395/95 corridor. Funding for the projects is being provided by Transurban, which will make an annual public transit payment to the commonwealth of Virginia.

PRTC Chair and Prince William Supervisor Ruth Anderson said. “People in our area need alternatives to driving alone on congested roads. Using toll revenues to enhance OmniRide’s existing bus services and adding new routes is going to help everyone’s commute.”

Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine added, “The Commuter Choice program illustrates the commonwealth’s commitment to creating safe, reliable travel choices across Virginia’s transportation system. Multimodal investments along this corridor support the commonwealth’s economic competitiveness and create a more seamless network for people to access jobs, education, healthcare and opportunity.”

Valley Metro Signs Bus Contract with MCI

VALLEY METRO IN PHOENIX HAS entered into a five-year contract with Motor Coach Industries (MCI), a U.S. subsidiary of NFI Group Inc., for up to 50 MCI D45 CRT LE and D45 CRT commuter rapid transit coaches. The first four vehicles are scheduled for delivery in summer 2020.

While the agency has operated heavy-duty transit buses by MCI’s sister company New Flyer on its regional routes, this order represents Valley Metro’s first purchase of MCI commuter coaches.

Tom Wagner, MCI vice president public sector, said the company consulted with advocacy groups including the National Council on Independent Living during the planning process and creation of the final prototype design.

Scott Wisner, bus services delivery manager, noted that the design of the new buses includes an area designated for mobility devices that will help riders more easily board and exit the vehicle.
HART Launches Bus Driver Safety Shield Installation

THE HILLSBOROUGH AREA Regional Transit Authority (HART) in Tampa, FL, and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1593 unveiled the first operator safety shield installed in a HART vehicle at a recent event for employees and the community.

“HART employees, whether behind the wheel or behind a desk, should have an expectation of going home to their loved ones,” said Benjamin Limmer, HART chief executive officer. “The safety and security of our employees and customers is always our number-one priority. The installation of the on-board safety shields reflects that commitment.” Limmer joined a HART operator, Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister and ATU Chair, to highlight the installation.

HART and the union collaborated with manufacturer AROW Global to select and approve the best protective option to cover operator space. Each shield is equipped with an interior that operators can slide-lock while in their seat compartment.

The agency’s maintenance team is working with the manufacturer to custom-fit each bus and van with the shields, which may include moving the farebox and other on-board equipment. The safety shields will be rolled out to the public on a regular schedule over the next few weeks.

The event also included the launch of the second phase of HART and ATU Local 1593’s “Ride with Respect” campaign: new on-board messages that reinforce security rules and riding etiquette, and warn against threatening or assaulting public transit operators.

APTA Board Approves Strategic Plan, Authorization Recommendations

AT ITS MEETING OCT. 12 in New York City, the APTA Board of Directors approved the association’s new three-year strategic plan for FY 2021-2023.

The board listed the four priority issues of the strategic plan:

1. Championing Investment and Supportive Policies;
2. Expanding the Reach of Public Transportation by Leveraging New Mobility Services and Technologies;
3. Developing Leaders and the Future-Ready Workforce and

Additionally, the board approved recommendations for the next federal surface transportation authorization bill, which would succeed the FAST Act when it expires next year. These include:

• Enact a long-term surface transportation authorization act funded by dedicated, sustainable revenues (e.g., increased federal motor vehicle user fees) that address the pending shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), and provide

$145 billion over six years to bring public transit systems to a state of good repair and meet growing community demands for increased mobility choices;
• Re-establish a 40-40-20 capital investment ratio among the Capital Investment Grants, State of Good Repair and Buses and Bus Facilities programs; and
• Create a new Mobility Innovation and Technology Initiative to introduce cutting-edge technologies and integrate new service-delivery approaches and mobility options in the transit marketplace.

APTA/NAR Study Examines Real Estate Value and Public Transportation


The report highlights the critical role public transportation plays in determining real estate values, revealing that commercial and residential real estate market sales thrive when residents have mobility options close by.

APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez was joined at the press conference by APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas, 2019 NAR First Vice President Charlie Oppler and 2019 New York State Association of REALTORS President Moses Seuram.

APTA and NAR leadership discussed how local communities benefit from regional transit investment through the lens of a changing retail landscape, as well as other factors affecting property values for homes and businesses located near public transportation.

After highlighting key findings from the study, the panelists took questions from media members in attendance as well as via phone.

Read the study at www.apta.com/real-estate.

APTA Releases 2019 Annual Report


The report describes David M. Stackrow Sr.’s major board initiatives during his year as APTA chair, as well as the association’s many accomplishments and activities during 2018-2019.


MV, Tripshot Partner with University of Denver

MV TRANSPORTATION AND Tripshot have partnered with the University of Denver (DU) to operate two new public transit routes designed to improve connections among the university campuses, Regional Transportation District light rail stations and surrounding neighborhoods.

MV Transportation operates the east-west routes, which entered service Oct. 16, under contract with the university. They serve a total of 11 stops; signage at each stop notifies riders about the Tripshot mobile app, which provides real-time location tracking for the bus along with route and schedule information.

“We are excited about our partnership with DU and appreciate the confidence they have placed in MV,” said Lisa Kellner, MV’s senior vice president for the Midwest Region. “We look forward to bringing new and innovative ideas that enhance the overall passenger experience as people commute to and from campus.”
TRANSforming Today’s Public Transit Agency In a Time of Rapid Change

FIVE NEW YORK MTA LEADERS
detailed the ways in which they are transforming their agencies at an Oct.
15 General Session during APTA’s TRANSform Conference, emphasizing transparency and openness, trust and reputation, customer and employee culture, and providing quality service that meets customers’ needs.

Andy Byford, president, MTA New York City Transit; Craig Cipriano, acting president, MTA Bus Company; Philip Eng, president, MTA Long Island Rail Road (LIRR); Catherine Rinaldi, president, MTA Metro-North Railroad; and Daniel DeCrescenzo, acting president, MTA Bridges and Tunnels, discussed challenges and opportunities facing their agencies. Dorval Carter, president, Chicago Transit Authority, moderated the session.

Public transit improvements require sufficient funding. Byford described how MTA’s historic $51.5 billion, five-year capital plan aims to take the entire system beyond a state of good repair to realize the “fastest, biggest upgrade in transit history.”

This investment, noted Cipriano, would help facilitate a bus network redesign, including more than 2,400 new buses, a move to zero-emission vehicles and all-door boarding, and depot and route improvements. Eng said the investment would address those issues that specifically cause delays to service at his agency—upgrading rolling stock, track, switches and signal infrastructure—and fund service expansion and access, including a third track on the Main Line corridor used by 40 percent of LIRR customers.

Rinaldi noted how the investment would improve access to Penn Station and provide for more Metro-North stations in the currently underserved Bronx. DeCrescenzo said that while his agency is already in a state of good repair, there is a pressing need to keep it that way. The priorities, he said, are to ensure service resiliency—particularly from weather—and to “move traffic safer and quicker, not just through tunnels and bridges, but as they approach and exit.”

Public transit improvements also necessitate disruption—and buy-in from customers. Byford stressed the need for agencies to be totally transparent and to manage customers’ expectations when disrupting service.

First, he said, make sure customers want the enhancements. Then, get out the message and reassure customers that “we will get it done and give you what you want, but we need your patience while we do it.” It cannot be emphasized enough, he said, to finish a project on budget and on time, every time. He suggested when proposing new projects to use previous successful projects as examples of how customers’ lives will be improved.

Eng echoed these sentiments. “Customers have to be able to see an end to disruptions,” he said. “They need to know what you are doing and why.”

The panel members were in agreement that providing a world-class public transit system is not possible without the employees to provide it—motivated by the mission of the agency.

“It’s not just about providing shiny things,” said Byford. “If your customers don’t feel valued it means nothing; and you can’t do that without bringing your employees along.” He described some of his employee-appreciation initiatives, including personally signing commendations and presenting employees with printed and framed comments they have attracted on social media.

Eng pointed to the need for agencies to adequately equip their employees: “I can’t ask my people to do more or do it faster or better without giving them the tools.” That way, each employee is empowered to take ownership of their own duties. “Fixing a pothole or broken step is as important to the customer experience as a new platform,” he said.

Rinaldi and DeCrescenzo spoke to the importance of providing an interesting and rewarding career path when attracting the future workforce to public transit, including allowing employees to move laterally and experience new facets of the agency.
Fernandez said her lifelong passion for public transportation was fueled by “the people we serve ... whose lives are made better by the policies and programs we shape.”

“It’s thrilling to see how public transportation agencies have embraced change, invited innovation and led so much transformation,” he said. “There is a willingness to experiment and a desire to write our own future.”

Skoutelas said the mobility space has become more crowded, making it essential for “us to work together, engage each other, support our colleagues and strengthen our cohesiveness as an industry and a family.”

Calling the industry’s transformation a journey rather than a one-time fix, he quoted a proverb that said if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. He called upon the audience to “go far together!”

APTA Immediate Past Chair David M. Stackrow Sr. presented three major milestones achieved by the APTA board during his year as chair:

- Approving a unified, industry-wide set of recommendations for a new multi-year surface transportation authorization bill;
- Advancing the new mobility landscape by leading a study mission to Germany, Austria and Finland to explore approaches to Mobility as a Service (MaaS) that could be beneficial in North America; and
- Developing a new three-year Strategic Plan to carry APTA, its members and the public transportation industry into an even more successful future.

“APTA needs to be a critical resource to help our members design, operate and maintain transit systems that are responsive, flexible and innovative,” Stackrow told the audience. Explaining that it all comes down to aligning the association’s time, resources and the work of its many committees—and not trying to be all things to all people—he said, “Good leadership requires choices.” APTA’s 2019 Annual Report, available at www.apta.com, provides more details about the association’s 2018-2019 accomplishments and Stackrow’s initiatives.

Saha asked Stackrow about Building A Solid Board-CEO Partnership, a book he co-authored while serving as APTA chair. He explained that, after chairing the boards of both the Capital District Transportation Authority in Albany, NY, and APTA, he wanted to share the lessons he learned and “leave something of lasting value” for future public transit leaders. In that same vein of giving, he added that all of his book royalties would be donated to support American Public Transportation Foundation scholarships.

Nuria I. Fernandez, the new APTA chair, thanked Stackrow for his leadership. She said her lifelong passion for public transportation was fueled by “the people we serve ... whose lives are made better by the policies and programs we shape.” She added that the public transit industry can ensure a healthy future for future generations tomorrow with the policies we create today.

In addition to pledging to build on the accomplishments of Stackrow, she described the following other priorities for her tenure:

- Build stronger local coalitions and grow APTA’s membership to amplify the industry’s voice;
- Ensure equity among small and large systems as APTA strives to keep pace with emerging technology;
- Maintain a strong workforce that is ready to seize new opportunities to expand mobility; and
- Advocate for a new six-year federal investment in public transportation and passenger rail.

“We are the leaders of the new mobility era,” Fernandez said, “[and] I’m counting on all of you to renew your commitment” and take ownership for APTA’s future success.

“By working together, we make each other better, our communities better and our industry better,” she said. “Our future depends on it and I can’t wait to get started.”

Fernandez shares more about her goals for 2019-2020 in a commentary on page 2 of this issue of Passenger Transport.
A Conversation with New CEOs: An Executive Roundtable

NEW TRANSIT AGENCY CHIEF

Executive officers engaged in a session during APTA’s TRANSform Conference. Highlighting the challenges, priorities and strategies in their new roles, and shared observations for building a successful organizational culture.

APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez, general manager and CEO, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), San Jose, CA, who opened the session, emphasized the importance of building effective networks. She also offered advice from her own experience early on: “Carve out time for yourself. I schedule one to two hours on Fridays just to think.”

Ferdinand L. Risco Jr., executive director of the Transit Authority of River City (TARC), Louisville, KY, served as moderator.

Clarelle DeGraffe, general manager & director of rail transit, Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation, Jersey City, NJ, emphasized the need to connect with the customer and take service to the next level. With so many customers communicating now through Twitter, she said, “we need to let our riders know that we hear them, we are listening and we are addressing any issues they convey.”

Carolyn M. Gonot, P.E., executive director, Utah Transit Authority, Salt Lake City—noting that she was in the beginning of her eighth week at the agency after working for two decades at VTA—talked about the various initiatives at UTA, the collaborative spirit at the agency, and TOD taking place.

India Birdsong, general manager and CEO, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, noted she was in the

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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From left: Alex Z. Wiggins, Eric Kaled, India Birdsong, Carolyn M. Gonot, Clarelle DeGraffe and Erika Mazza.

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More than 2,500 public transit professionals and business leaders gathered at the New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square for four days of forward-looking sessions at APTA’s 2019 TRANSform Conference: an Annual Meeting. Speakers included FTA representatives, House T&I Committee Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and congressional committee staffers, leaders from host systems New York MTA and New York City DOT, media leader Randi Zuckerberg and violinist and community activist Vijay Gupta.

Photos by Steve Barrett Photography, unless otherwise noted

APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez spoke at a general session during APTA’s 2019 TRANSform Conference in New York City.

FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams led the FTA Update General Session Monday afternoon.

Rsp. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, addressed a Monday afternoon general session.

The Broadway Ballroom was packed Tuesday morning for the APTA Honors event.

APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas and APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez recognized the outgoing chair and vice chair of the APTA Legislative Committee—Diana Mendes, second from right, and Leanne Redden, second from left, respectively—during the committee’s meeting at the conference.

‘Start Spreading The News’

More than 2,500 public transit professionals and business leaders gathered at the New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square for four days of forward-looking sessions at APTA’s 2019 TRANSform Conference: an Annual Meeting. Speakers included FTA representatives, House T&I Committee Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and congressional committee staffers, leaders from host systems New York MTA and New York City DOT, media leader Randi Zuckerberg and violinist and community activist Vijay Gupta.

Photos by Steve Barrett Photography, unless otherwise noted

APTA officials for 2019-2020, from left: Freddie Fuller, secretary-treasurer; Jeffrey Nelson, vice chair; Nuria I. Fernandez, chair; and David M. Stackrow Sr., immediate past chair, joined by APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas.

Host Eva Saha chatted with Skoutelas at the TRANSform Tonight “talk show” session Sunday evening.

Musicians from the “MTA Music Under New York” program served as the live house band for TRANSform Tonight.

The MTA Police Department Pipes and Drums kicked off the Monday morning session.


More than 2,500 people attended this year’s APTA conference.

Members of the APTA Executive Committee gather after the Oct. 12 APTA Board of Directors Meeting and Business Meeting of the Membership.
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Photos by Steve Barrett Photography, unless otherwise noted

APTA officers for 2019-2020, from left: Freddie Fuller, secretary-treasurer; Jeffrey Nelson, vice chair; Nuria I. Fernandez, chair; and David M. Stackrow Sr., immediate past chair, joined by APTA Chairman Polly Trottenberg, left, commissioner, New York City DOT, and Veronique Hakim, managing director, New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority, welcomed attendees at the Monday morning General Session and participated in the Wednesday Wake Up Breakfast program.

Outgoing APTA Chair David M. Stackrow Sr. passes the gavel to incoming Chair Nuria I. Fernandez.

MTA Chair and CEO Pat Foye greeted conference attendees during the TRANSform Tonight session.

Randi Zuckerberg, keynote speaker at the Monday morning General Session.

Former Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), senior policy advisor, Arent Fox, displayed APTA’s recommendations for the next federal public transportation authorization bill at the APTA Board of Directors meeting.

The Welcome Reception offered food, fellowship and live performances from more “MTA Music Under New York” musicians.

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VISA sponsored the Sunday night Welcome Reception.

The Products and Services Showcase spread out across three floors in the Marriott Marquis.

The American Public Transportation Foundation conducted a silent auction to raise funds for scholarships.

APTA greeted conference participants with an electronic billboard in Times Square.

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Panel Explores New Dynamics in Public Transit Ridership

CHANGES IN TRAVEL BEHAVIOR and mobility options are creating both challenges and opportunities for public transit systems across the country.

In an interactive session Oct. 15 during APTA’s TRANSform Conference, a panel of transit CEOs shared the diverse methods they are using to increase ridership, improve frequency and add more rider amenities.

Kevin Desmond, chief executive officer, South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority (TransLink), New Westminster, BC, who moderated the session, noted that the standing-room-only audience was evidence that ridership is an issue on “everyone’s mind.”

Randy Clarke, president & CEO, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Austin, TX, reported that ridership on his system is up, which he attributed to the fact that his agency recently launched a completely redesigned bus network. He stressed that good service, consistent frequency and clean vehicles are critical for rider experience. Another initiative that attracts riders, Clarke said, is that all schoolchildren ride free. This gives parents more freedom, independence and peace of mind.

Yann Leriche, chief executive officer, Transdev North America, Lombard, IL, compared public transit service in the U.S. and abroad, saying that ridership is increasing in Europe but on the decline in some areas of the U.S.

He listed several reasons for the disparity in ridership: public transportation investments in Europe are five to 10 times greater than in the U.S.; Europe has strong policies that reduce the share of space for private vehicles; and public transit enjoys a positive image in Europe.

“It’s cool in France and Germany,” he explained, “but you don’t see that perception much here in the states. We need to make transit sexy again,” he added.

Stephanie Wiggins, chief executive officer of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink), Los Angeles, said ridership on her system has almost doubled on weekends. Congestion on Los Angeles roads is so intense that residents want to get on public transit and explore the area “without hassles,” she said.

Her agency also is spreading the message about the health benefits of riding public transit. “Walking is better for your health … you’re more likely to walk more if you take the train … it’s good for the environment … all things that attract riders,” Wiggins explained.

Mark R. Aescht, chief executive officer, TransPro Consulting, Tampa, FL, told the audience that public transit agencies tend to measure ridership by the number of people in seats but, he asked, “Are we defining value this way?” What matters is customer satisfaction, he stressed, adding, “We have to keep the riders we have.”

Darnell Chadwick Grisby, director, policy development and research, APTA, cited last quarter’s ridership numbers (which APTA updates as up .46 percent. Just a few of the issues impacting ridership numbers, he said, include more people telecommuting and therefore not purchasing monthly bus passes, lowered bus speeds due to increased congestion and the continuing state of good repair backlog.

Citing results of a new APTA/National Association of REALTORS study, Grisby said real estate near transit stations is selling for higher prices, reaffirming the value of transit beyond ridership. However, the challenge is this can also displace some people with lower incomes, further impacting ridership.

He suggested tactical transit—the ability to provide inexpensive quick interventions, such as the placement of cones for bus lanes, can improve efficiency and service at a lower price point.

The session was sponsored by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.

Impressive Turnout for BMBG Meeting in New York

Approximately 35 members of APTA’s Business Member Board of Governors (BMBG), and an additional 50 APTA business members, met Oct. 13 during APTA’s TRANSform Conference. During the meeting, a contribution of $10,000 to the Houston Ballot Initiative was voted on and approved; APTF Corporate Sponsor Awards were presented; and a pre-view was given of the 2020 Business Members Annual Meeting, Jan. 29-31, Carlsbad, CA.

A Woman’s Place Is Leading Public Transit

Four powerful women working in public transportation—from left, FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams; APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez; Polly Trottenberg, commissioner, New York City DOT; and Veronica Hakim, managing director, New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority—spoke about how they started in public transit and their priorities and interests during the Oct. 16 Wake Up Breakfast: “TRANSformational Influence—Women and Power.” Williams worked in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush White Houses and on Capitol Hill before joining Maryland DOT and, later, FTA. Hakim said, “I just needed a job in 1987. I joined MTA New York City Transit and it turned out to be a job I love.” Trottenberg worked on public transit issues for members of Congress including the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and in the Obama Administration. The speakers agreed that women have experience in balancing multiple priorities and staying flexible. Proterra sponsored the breakfast, held in conjunction with WTB.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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Alex Z. Wiggins, CEO of the Regional Transit Authority, New Orleans, said that, while his agency is expanding, it’s still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. But he said he is invested in thinking about new modes and a more customer-oriented focus. He also said he has seen agency employees who “think we are all-knowing. I have to be humble enough to look to my staff for support and some of the answers.”

Erika Mazza, CEO-general manager, Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority, Flagstaff, AZ, stressed the need to be adaptive. She emphasized focusing on strong communication, recruitment, retention and safety.
On the Front Line: 21st Century Cybersecurity

THE PROCUREMENT SUMMIT at APTA’s 2019 TRANSform Conference launched Oct. 14 with a cybersecurity session that brought together some of APTA’s foremost assets: a former association chair; graduates of Leadership APTA; partners from government, the business community and a European public transit organization; and an APTA staff expert.

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Polly Hanson, APTA’s senior director of security, risk and emergency management, served as moderator. She outlined several no-cost cybersecurity resources developed by APTA, available at www.apta.com/security-resources. Hanson kicked off the discussion by introducing four graduates of the Leadership APTA Class of 2019—Donald Luey, William Benz, Tomika Monterville and Frederick A. Williams II—each of whom gave a presentation based on interviews with 24 public transit agencies. For every agency contacted, they assessed processes, vulnerabilities, employee education and agency culture and awareness to identify and defend against cyber-attacks. Their conclusions include:

- Cybersecurity is not just an IT responsibility but a priority for all departments;
- People rather than technology are the first line of defense, with everyone needing to understand threats and stay in contact with the security team;
- More sophisticated technology means greater vulnerability, such as cameras on vehicles, PTC and other broadband-dependent equipment;
- Communication is critical agency-wide to prevent attacks from going undetected for days;
- The supply chain of third parties, subcontractors and unknown suppliers to subcontractors represents new potential vulnerabilities, such as counterfeit equipment; and
- Cyber insurance is not a solution. The goal is to prevent breaches before they happen.

Sonya Proctor, TSA assistant administrator for surface operations, called cybersecurity a “fast-moving challenge that needs to be a priority at the highest levels of an organization.” She stressed the importance of C-suite buy-in, discussed the convergence of cybersecurity (effective firewalls and physical security [locked doors]) and urged attendees to take advantage of TSA’s non-technical, multimodal “Surface Cybersecurity Workshops,” available at www.tsa.gov/security-resources.

The morning session was sponsored by Nova Bus and Zuckerberg’s presentation was supported by the APTA Business Member Activity Fund.

Randi Zuckerberg

MORE THAN 2,500 ATTENDEES at APTA’s 2019 TRANSform Conference were welcomed to New York City the morning of Oct. 14 by dignitaries including APTA Chair Nuria I. Fernandez, APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas, New York City DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority Managing Director Veronica Hakim, MTA New York City Transit President Andy Byford, MTA Metro-North Railroad President Catherine A. Rinaldi, MTA Long Island Rail Road President Philip Eng and FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams.

Huelon A. Harrison, principal, Legacy Resource Group, Dallas, introduced the keynote speaker, Randi Zuckerberg. Zuckerberg, founder & CEO of Zuckerberg Media, entrepreneur, investor, bestselling author and tech media personality offered an enthusiastic and entertaining insight into her career. Zuckerberg talked about the importance of using technology to stay connected in a rapidly changing world, as well as the value of innovation and the need to put “big ideas out there and step away from fear.” She explained that many entrepreneurs have faced failure and rejection, warning that it’s how one responds to failure that ultimately determines success.

The morning session was sponsored by Nova Bus and Zuckerberg’s presentation was supported by the APTA Business Member Activity Fund.

APTA’S 2019 TRANSform CONFERENCE

Randi Zuckerberg

The Medicine of Music

Reaching People who are Homeless with Music And What Public Transit Can Learn

VIJAY GUPTA, WORLD-ACCLAIMED violinist, MacArthur Fellow and social activist, led the Oct. 16 closing event of APTA’s TRANSform Conference, performing classical pieces and discussing the importance of engaging with homeless people who occupy public transit facilities.

As founder and artistic director of Street Symphony in Los Angeles, Gupta employs music to connect with people in need, including people who are homeless. “The greatest gift you can give another is your attention,” he said. “Let’s not assume we’re always the expert in the room; rather, we need to see people for who they are and what they need.”

Gupta suggested that public transit agencies partner with local artists at the grassroots level to engage with people who are homeless. Artists could work with marginalized and displaced members of the community, who often are seeking safety or shelter in transit facilities, and share and humanize their stories via different media within the facility. “Bringing in artists can help shift the conversation— in public spaces—to present a different perspective on the problems and conditions faced by members of our communities,” he said.

The session was sponsored by HNTB Corporation.

Vijay Gupta led a thought-provoking closing session on how public transit agencies can engage and connect with vulnerable members of the community.
Scenes from the APTA Honors

The APTA Honors span the breadth of the public transit industry’s talent and potential—from students and young professionals who are just embarking on their careers to executives and thought leaders who have helped distinguish our industry for decades.
Ballot Measures, Congestion Pricing Keep Public Transit Moving

PANELISTS AT A SESSION ON creative funding opportunities for public transit focused on two main ways to look beyond federal sources: ballot measures and congestion pricing, for which revenues are a side benefit.

Henry G. Cisneros, four-term mayor of San Antonio and HUD secretary in the Clinton Administration, said transportation-related ballot measures receive major support among all ballot issues. He noted a measure, likely to appear on the November 2020 ballot, that would restore funds from an existing one-cent sales tax for the use of VIA Metropolitan Transit; the city had earlier allowed the tax revenues to be redirected to other transportation uses.

Scott Smith, chief executive officer of Valley Metro in Phoenix, described his role as “frontman” for his agency’s recent successful ballot efforts: in 2015, passage of a 35-year plan to generate an anticipated $31.5 billion to fund local transportation and, earlier this year, defeat of a measure that would have shut down a planned 5.5-mile light rail extension and prevented any future proposed extensions. Valley Metro relies on regional tax revenues, he said; it receives no state funding.

“How can public transit keep winning? Remember that every day is the first day of the next election,” Smith said. He stressed the importance of moving beyond facts and figures to share the “great stories in every community” related to public transit.

Another concern Smith noted was that the number of public transit projects seeking federal funds is increasing while “the pie is no bigger.” He recognized that developers and businesses provide funding for transit because they understand the benefits they will reap from their investments.

Joshua Cohen, campaign director for the APTA Center for Transportation Excellence, said 19 public transit-related ballot measures have already been announced nationwide for 2020. He cited the importance of bringing together stakeholders through multimodal efforts (such as funding for numerous public transit projects) and stressed that successful messaging campaigns are “expensive but worth it.”

Denny Zane, executive director of Move LA in Los Angeles, agreed with Cohen about the need for a coalition builder who can gather supporters into “a parade.” As key constituencies may have little in common with each other, he said, the coalition should be broad and the project both broad and consequential.

On the congestion pricing front, Allison C. de Cerreno, senior vice president, business operations and transformation officer for MTA Bridges and Tunnels, said her agency will oversee the program because it already is in charge of administering tolls at its structures. The Mobility Act, which includes congestion pricing, “has a dual goal: reduce congestion and raise revenues,” she said.

She explained that funding for the project is part of the MTA’s unprecedented $51.5 billion capital plan for 2020-2024.

Joshua L. Schank, chief of Los Angeles Metro’s Office of Extraordinary Innovation, said instituting congestion pricing—as a possible future option—would focus on increasing environmental awareness, equity and mobility rather than raising revenues. “People are trying to build so much, so fast, with limited resources,” he said. “We want to double the number of people not driving alone.”

The key to Schank’s philosophy: “Right now, we’re all paying for congestion with time and pollution. How about we do it with money?”

Allen Steps Down as CEO of VRE

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) Operations Board announced that Doug Allen, the agency’s chief executive officer since 2012, has stepped down. Before joining VRE, Allen worked for Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority in Austin, TX, part of a career of more than 30 years.

OAKLAND, CA—The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District announced the promotion of Michael Jones, who joined the agency as assistant general manager of administration in 2017, to deputy general manager. He earlier was chief human resources officer for Metra in Chicago and chief administrative officer for SYSTRA Consulting. Jones is a graduate of the Leadership APTA Class of 2012 and a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Council; Legislative; Procurement and Materials Management and Workforce Development committees and American Public Transportation Foundation.

SAN ANTONIO—The San Antonio City Council has appointed Athalie Malone to the VIA Metropolitan Transit Board of Trustees, succeeding Patricia Rodriguez. Malone is a past president and current member of the National Federation of the Blind and chairs the city’s Disability Access Advisory Committee.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA—Jennifer McNeill, vice president of sales and marketing for New Flyer Industries Canada ULC, has been named an honoree of Canada’s prestigious Clean50 list for 2020, which recognizes Canada’s leaders advancing sustainability and clean capitalism across 16 categories for outstanding contribution to the clean energy economy.

McNeill was named to the Clean16 as the category leader for manufacturing and transportation. She is a 25-year transportation professional who joined New Flyer in 2012 and serves on the boards of the Canadian Urban Transit Association and the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium.

SEATTLE—Zonar announced the appointment of Michael Gould as chief operating officer. He has more than 30 years of experience, serving most recently as senior vice president and general manager for technology consulting at Oracle.

“Gasoline/Diesel Fuel” —Purchaser reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularity in bidding on such basis as the Authority deems to be in its best interest.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion or national origin in consideration for an award.

BIDS/PROPOSALS

INVITATION FOR BID

The Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority will receive bids for Gasoline, Diesel Fuel, and Biodiesel until 11:00 a.m. EST, Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 1550 4th Avenue, Charleston, WV 25387 and then at said offices all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Any contract resulting from bids submitted will be subject to a financial assistance contract between the Authority and the U.S. Department of Transportation. All bidders will be required to certify that they are not on the Comptroller General’s list of ineligible bidders.

IFB documents may be obtained from the Purchasing Department, Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority, 1550 4th Ave, Charleston, WV. 25387, telephone 304-343-3878, fax 304-345-6876, email ctyler@rideonkrt.com. Proposals are to be submitted in a sealed envelope and marked, “Gasoline/Diesel Fuel”.
How would you like to work for a progressive transportation agency in one of the most beautiful and culturally vibrant areas of the country? The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has retained Search (which connects to Recruiting Services) to perform an external search for the Program Delivery Manager position. The VTA Program Delivery Manager is responsible for managing the projects and programs that support the Agency’s Business Plan, as well as coordinating with the internal and external stakeholders to ensure the successful completion of the projects.

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Imagine it. Delivered.

AECOM’s goal is to deliver innovative, state-of-the-art transit projects to bring communities closer together. With global resources available, our interdisciplinary staff can move a project forward from conceptual design to a functioning system, whether it be an iconic transportation hub or a metropolitan transit system. We move people.

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