Biographies of Conference Speakers, Panelists, and Moderators

ZACK AEMMER

Zack is a PhD student studying Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Washington. He currently works in the Sustainable Transportation Lab on a variety of projects related to population synthesis, transit performance, and electric vehicle adoption. Zack previously worked as a transportation engineer for Transpogroup, and hopes to contribute to transportation research at the intersection of computer science and civil engineering.

JIM ALLISON, CAPITOL CORRIDOR JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Since October 2000, Jim Allison has been with the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) management entity for the Intercity Passenger Rail service operating in Northern California. Mr. Allison is the Manager of Planning for new capital/service projects, grant submissions, and phases of project development in the context of the Capitol Corridor route, but also at the Northern California Megaregional rail network level.

In addition to traditional railway project planning and some work in moving towards more sustainable fuels and improved bicycle access for passenger rail, Mr. Allison has been involved in technology forward implementation projects in passenger rail including on-train Wi-Fi, on and off-board information systems, and most recently travel integration (trip planning and payments) working with the State of California.

Prior to joining the CCJPA, for ten years Mr. Allison worked for the Bi-State Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in current planning, and later in transportation and air quality. Mr. Allison graduated from the University of California Davis with B.S. Degree in Environmental Planning and Management.
DR. SEAN BARBEAU, CENTER FOR URBAN TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Dr. Sean J. Barbeau (barbeau@cutr.usf.edu) is the Principal Mobile Software Architect for R&D at the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida. Dr. Barbeau has led many research projects designing, implementing, and evaluating intelligent real-time traveler information systems for mobile phones. He has over 50 peer-reviewed papers and conference presentations and 16 patented inventions. His research interests include multimodal information for mobile apps, location-based services, open-source software, standardized open data, and cybersecurity for mobile phones and transportation infrastructure. He is a founding board member of the non-profit Open Transit Software Foundation and MobilityData, a non-profit that manages the governance process for open transit (GTFS) and micromobility (GBFS) data. He holds a B.S. and M.S. in Computer Science from USF as well as a Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering from USF.

DR. CANDACE BRAKEWOOD, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

Dr. Candace Brakewood is an Assistant Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK). At UTK, she teaches a graduate-level course in Public Transit Planning and Operations and an introductory undergraduate Transportation Engineering class. Her research group focuses on public transit and new shared mobility modes. Prior to UTK, she served on the Civil Engineering faculty at the City College of New York for three years. She holds a PhD in Civil Engineering from Georgia Tech, dual MS degrees from MIT in Technology Policy and Transportation, and a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Johns Hopkins University.
Jennifer Z. Carver, AICP, serves as the Statewide Community Planning Coordinator for the Florida Department of Transportation Office of Policy Planning. Jennifer coordinates FDOT’s community/comprehensive planning and resilience planning efforts and has over 20 years of experience in planning and public engagement, including land use/transportation, resilience, hazard mitigation, coastal/environmental management, and parks & recreation. She has a Bachelor’s in Political Science & Spanish from Santa Clara University and a Master’s in City & Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Professor Graham Currie FTSE
Professor of Public Transport, Director Public Transport Research Group, Monash University Australia

Prof Currie is a transport research leader/ policy advisor and Directs the Public Transport Research Group (PTRG) at Monash University Australia. In 2015 PTRG was identified as one of the top 3 research groups in the world in this area. Graham has published more research papers in leading peer journals in this field than any other researcher. He is Chair of the Light Rail Transit Committee at US Transportation Research Board and a Board member of the Singapore LTA Research Advisory Board and the Swedish Centre for Research on Public Transport. He has won numerous research prizes including best research paper; 14th World Conference on Transport Research in Shanghai, he has won the William W Millar prize for best research paper at the TRB conference twice, the only person ever to do so. Graham is an elected fellow of the Academy of Technology Science and Engineering. In 2020 he was presented with the Transport Medal for outstanding contributions to transport by Engineers Australia. In 2021 he received a special commendation for Promoting Industry Engagement in Graduate Research, at the Australian Council of Graduate Research, National Awards.

Website: https://www.monash.edu/engineering/grahamcurrie#about
JUSTIN DENNIS, URBAN SDK

Justin Dennis is the Co-founder, CTO of Urban SDK. He leads the Urban SDK team of software engineers, data analysts, and technical project management to provide innovative data and analytics solutions for transportation, mobility, and safety planning. Recently, Justin was honored as Jacksonville Business Journal's Ultimate Technology Leaders 2021 and has been selected as a speaker at Move America, Transpo, AMPO and Venture Atlanta. He is an external advisor to University of Florida Transportation Institute and a graduate of Stetson University. He lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL with his wife, daughter and son.

JAMES DRAKE, SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

James Drake began his career with the Sacramento Regional Transit District as a temp in the Facilities Department in 2005 and was hired as an assistant planner in 2006 where he has progressed to the position of Principal Planner. His work has focused on service changes, ridership analysis, fare collection, Title VI, public engagement, and bus stops. During his time in planning, James has led several major service change projects, including major service reductions in 2010 as well as the Sac RT Forward network restructuring project in 2019. James holds a B.S. in Computer Engineering from the University of California, Davis, and one of his earliest projects at Regional Transit was developing a custom database for processing automatic passenger counter data, which was approved by FTA in 2010 for use in National Transit Database reporting. James’s other interests are in history, economics, business and law. He is a former railroad museum volunteer and has taken continuing education courses in accounting and environmental law.

DR. LILY (AGELIKI) ELEFTERIADOU

Dr. Elefteriadou is the Director of the UF Transportation Institute (UFTI), and the Barbara Goldsby Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Florida. Her research focus is traffic operations, traffic flow theory and simulation. She is the principal investigator of the US DOT-funded Regional University Transportation Center for Region 4 (Southeast Transportation Research Innovation Development and Education, or STRIDE). Dr. Elefteriadou has served as the principal investigator for several other federal and state projects, funded by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Federal Highway Administration, PennDOT, and FDOT. She has authored or co-authored more than two hundred publications and reports related to traffic operational quality and highway design, as well
as a textbook titled “Introduction to Traffic Flow Theory”. Dr. Elefteriadou has received several awards for her research, including the 2019 ASCE Harland Bartholomew Award for her work on I-STREET, the 2015 ASCE James Laurie Prize for her contributions to highway capacity analysis, the 2015 ARTBA Ethel S. Birchland Lifetime Achievement Award, and TRB’s Fred Burggraaff award for excellence in research in 2001.

TIAN FENG, FOUNDING CO-CHAIR, RESILIENT DESIGN COMMITTEE, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS CALIFORNIA

Tian Feng, FAIA, FCSI, is the BART District Architect and the founding co-chair of the Resilient Design Committee at the American Institute of Architects California. Feng has provided leadership in several climate resiliency initiatives at regional scale during the past decade, including serving as a research advisor to Resilient By Design, a research and design program for adapting sea level rise in the Bay Area. He has led BART’s work on climate resiliency through collaborations with state and regional governments including Bay Conservation & Development Commission, California Department of Transportation, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission, where he once served on its Advisory Committee to address regional environmental and transportation issues regarding policies and strategies.

CLEVELAND FERGUSON III, J.D., DHL, JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Cleveland Ferguson III is Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA). In this role, he is responsible for the legal, governmental, enterprise risk, system safety, business intelligence, economic development, and administrative operations of the Authority.

He previously served as the Deputy CAO for the Consolidated City of Jacksonville. In addition to providing strategic direction to city departments, he led the effort to expand the use of analytics, reform the delivery of citizen-based services and increase transparency into city operations, He also led the economic development P3 program that rehabilitated housing and infrastructure in some of the city’s not under-resourced neighborhoods.

Prior to joining the City, Cleveland served as a tenured professor of law and regularly consulted with local governments in the business, regulatory, commercial and constitutional law areas.
In addition to being consistently recognized for his award-winning teaching and scholarship, Cleveland has a distinguished record of board service in civic, nonprofit, legal and international associations. A lawyer by training, he represented clients in commercial and regulatory matters.

He is a member of Leadership Broward Class XXIII, Leadership Jacksonville (2010), Leadership Florida Class XXXIII, the 2017 ENO Transit Senior Executive Program and the 2017 APTA International Study Mission. Cleveland graduated from Nova Southeastern University (NSU) with a B.S. in legal studies, Florida State College of Law with a J.D., and was honored with a Doctorate of Humane Letters by NSU in 2018 and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

ANNA GARTSMAN, MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Anna Gartsman is the Director of Strategic Research at the Office of Performance Management & Innovation (OPMI) for MassDOT and the MBTA. In this role, Anna helps develop the strategic research vision and agenda for the agencies, and oversees a diverse set of transportation research projects to support development of innovative measurement frameworks, investigation of multimodal transportation patterns, and behavioral choice modeling.

Before joining OPMI, Anna was a researcher at the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, where she conducted analyses on transportation, housing, and economic development policy issues that affect the Greater Boston area. Anna has a Master’s degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice as well as Bachelor’s degrees in Computer Science and Linguistics from Northeastern University.

JESUS GOMEZ

Jesus Gomez became City of Gainesville Regional Transit System Director January 5, 2006. He was hired by the City in 1998 as a Chief Transit Planner. In 2000, he was appointed RTS Operations Manager and continued in that position throughout most of his term as Interim Transit Director which began in March 2005. He graduated from the University of South Florida in 1998 with a Master of Science in Civil Engineering while working for the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), and received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Zulia in Venezuela.

Jesus has led RTS’s efforts to improve service and increase the RTS budget from $7 million in FY1999 to $32 million in FY2021. He has been instrumental in obtaining federal, state and local funding and negotiated contracts with the University of Florida, Santa Fe College and several major employers in the Gainesville area to institute pre-paid transit programs. Through successful relationships with both the State Florida Department of Transportation and Federal Transit Administration, RTS has received capital funding to construct three major transit facilities (Rosa Parks transfer station, RTS administration, Operations and Maintenance Buildings, and Butler Plaza station) totaling over $44 million.
BREN DON HEMILY, SENIOR ADVISOR, TRANSIT ANALYTICS LAB (TAL) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Dr. Brendon Hemily serves as Senior Advisor for the Transit Analytics Lab (TAL) of the University of Toronto Transportation Research Institute. He is an independent consultant with 38 years of experience of working with the transit industry in both Canada and the U.S.A. specializing in transit policy, planning, management, and technology issues. He provided support to USDOT from 2007 to 2018 related to Transit ITS, use of ITS data and mobility on demand, and worked earlier in his career for 15 years at the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), where he was responsible for all research and technical activities. He is past Chair and Emeritus Member of TRB's Public Transportation Planning and Development Committee and is the current Chair of TRB’s Public Transportation Group.

JOSH JOHNSON, SPIN

Josh Johnson serves as a Senior Public Policy Manager for Spin, where he focuses on data policy and research, as well as supporting Spin's work with equity, accessibility, and transit partnerships. Josh also serves as co-chair on the Open Mobility Foundation's Privacy Committee and is a member of its Strategy and Provider Services Working Group Steering Committees. Additionally, Josh serves on the North American Bikeshare Association's Research & Data Committee, POLIS Network's Governance & Integration Committee, and the Mobility Data Collaborative's Executive Committee. Prior to joining Spin, Josh was the Advanced Mobility Manager for the City of Minneapolis, leading the City's work with micromobility, EV carshare, mobility hubs, and mobility-as-a-service, as well as its mobility data and curb mapping platforms.
MARY A. LEARY, Ph.D. – DEPUTY ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION AND INNOVATION

As the Deputy Associate Administrator for FTA’s Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation (TRI), Mary Leary leads a group of transportation specialists, engineers and a data scientist who work on FTA’s Public Transportation Innovation Research Program, overseeing the operational activities of the office, and providing strategic support to the Associate Administrator Karina Ricks. FTA’s research mission is to enable a robust public transportation network that connects communities and protects the environment.

Mary has held various managerial positions at FTA, including serving as the Deputy Associate Administrator for TRI since August 2017. She has seventeen years in Federal and nonprofit service, and led innovative teams on a range of projects from public transportation research, rides to wellness, United We Ride, and program evaluation and assessment; to transportation workforce development; accessible mobility; aging in place; and human services transportation, accessibility, and mobility technical assistance. Prior to going into the nonprofit and Federal sector, Mary was in the private sector where she managed teams that helped global and national corporations and the Federal Government apply innovative technologies and business process re-engineering solutions to improve their organizations. She changed careers in 2001 to give back to the community, and quickly gravitated to roles in the fields of aging, human services transportation, and accessibility.

Among other degrees, Mary holds a PhD from George Mason University (GMU) in Public Policy with a concentration in Organizational Informatics, and a Master’s certificate in Gerontology from GMU’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

JASON LEE, ORANGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (OCTA), PROJECT MANAGER – CAPITAL PROGRAMS

Jason Lee has over 20 years of experience managing capital projects from concept through construction. Most recent experiences include a climate resiliency study focused on the long-term climate risks that could impact rail infrastructure and passenger rail service.
DR. PRUTHVI MANJUNATHA

Dr. Pruthvi Manjunatha is the I-STREET Testbed Manager and a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Civil and Coastal Engineering. His experience has been in Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) infrastructure, Human Factors and Driver Behavior, Traffic Simulation, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), traffic operations and data management. He co-ordinates with the City of Gainesville and Florida Department of Transportation in the planning and implementation of I-STREET projects. He works with project PIs and industry partners to coordinate software, hardware and application efforts and ensures consistency and interoperability of various components.

DR. KAREL MARTENS

Karel Martens holds a master degree in Spatial Planning (1991) and a PhD in Policy Sciences (2000), both from Radboud University, the Netherlands. He is currently a Full Professor of Transport Planning at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, where he also heads the Fair Transport Lab.

Martens is an international expert on transport and justice. He has authored numerous publications on the topic, culminating in his book Transport Justice: Designing Fair Transportation Systems, which has been described by colleagues as “ground-breaking”, a “landmark”, and a “revolution”. Martens was one of the initiators of the COST Action on Transport Equity Appraisal (TEA), which brought together European experts to develop novel approaches to the integration of equity in the assessment of transport projects. The key result of this project is the recent volume Measuring Transport Equity, which Martens co-edited with Karen Lucas. Martens is currently WG co-leader and core group member of WISE-ACT, another COST Action, on the wider social impacts of autonomous and connected transport.

Martens’ work has resonated in the academy as well as in practice, as evidenced by numerous invitations for keynote lectures and masterclasses, among others in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, South-Africa, Canada, Israel, France, Sweden, and Germany. In 2014, Martens was elected Transport Professional of the Year in the Netherlands, in part because of his inspiring work on transport and justice.
Mehri “Mehrsa” Mohebbi presently leads the Transportation Equity initiative at the UFTI. She holds a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Cincinnati, College of Design, Architecture, Arts, and Planning (DAAP). She previously worked as an urban planner and qualitative researcher addressing health and social equity in transportation planning in different states across the country. Additionally, Dr. Mohebbi has extensive experience in designing and leading equitable planning processes and developing online and in-person community engagement methods. In the last few years, she has collaborated with national professional associations and served on different committees and task forces (such as American Planning Association (APA) Social Equity Task Force and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee). As of May 2020, she has been serving on the steering committee of a nationwide health equity initiative, the Planning for Health Equity, Advocacy, and Leadership (PHEAL).

Jeff Nelson is a public transportation leader who specializes in urban design, land use planning and economic development. As CEO/Managing Director for the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK), Mr. Nelson directs services including Metro fixed route bus, ADA paratransit, and the Channel Cat Water Taxi passenger ferryboat. During his 37 years as CEO his strategic focus has been on implementing cutting edge programs with an emphasis on economic growth, sustainability, technology, and workforce development. Under his guidance MetroLINK was awarded the American Public Transportation Association “Outstanding Public Transportation Award”. Other notable leadership recognitions include the Federal Transportation Administration’s “State Leadership Award”, numerous APTA “AdWheel” Awards, APTA “Bus Safety Gold Award”, Metro Magazine “Innovation of the Year Award”, Quad City Chamber of Commerce “Multi Modal” Award, the NAACP “Business Image Award”, and various community and civic sustainability awards for excellence in environmental planning.

Mr. Nelson has a unique ability to artfully maneuver through a multitude of environments and leverage a variety of resources to meet economic development expectations. Recognized as a progressive leader of exceptional skill and foresight, Mr. Nelson brings strong vision and leadership in the disciplines of sustainability, community growth, infrastructure and planning, creative public/private partnerships, and economic development. Nelson was an early adopter of alternative fuels, implementing Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) transit buses into the Metro fixed route fleet in 2002. Since that time the Metro CNG fleet has expanded to make up 80% of
the total fleet, and Metro’s fleet of eight battery electric, zero emission transit buses will expand to seventeen this winter.

His experience in creating sustainable communities using transportation investment as a catalyst for future development include transit multimodal facilities in the downtowns of Moline, East Moline, and Rock Island. Additional projects include the construction of a state-of-the-art 150,000 square foot “Operations and Maintenance Center” built to LEED Gold standards for the purpose of supporting a sustainable bus fleet and an energized workforce. Recently Mr. Nelson played an essential role in the planning, development, and construction of a $30 million public-private historic redevelopment in downtown Moline, which will support passenger rail service from Chicago to Moline. This multi-use property, otherwise known as the “Q” Multi Modal Station, consists of a 105 room “Element brand” hotel, retail and restaurant space, and a passenger rail waiting area. Mr. Nelson has served on a variety of community boards and committees throughout his professional career. He has been actively involved with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for three decades, serving in a number of leadership positions. Currently he serves as Chair of the APTA Board of Directors, a position he will hold through November of 2022. Other board affiliates include Chair, Quad Cities Manufacturing Lab; Board Trustee, Two Rivers YMCA; 2nd Vice President, Illinois Public Transportation Association; Vice-Chair, National Transit Institute at Rutgers; Moline Planning Commissioner; and Moline Police and Fire Commissioner. Mr. Nelson holds a B.S. in Political Science from Western Illinois University, a M.B.A. from St. Ambrose University, and is a graduate of the Kennedy School of Business “Creating Collaborative Solutions” program.

TOKS OMISHAKIN, DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS)

Toks Omishakin was appointed the 33rd Director of the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) by Governor Gavin Newsom and sworn in October 2019. Director Omishakin manages a $15 billion budget and nearly 22,000 employees who oversee 50,000 lane miles of highway, maintain approximately 20,000 bridges, provide permitting of more than 400 public-use airports, fund three of Amtrak’s busiest intercity rail services and provide transit support to more than 200 local and regional transit agencies.

Director Omishakin’s transportation vision for California features a safe, equitable, sustainable, and multimodal transportation system that builds on strong local partnerships. He and the leadership team established the 5 Priorities for the Department in 2019 and, in 2020, finalized a new Strategic Plan with a focus on Caltrans’ foundational principles of Equity, Climate Action and Safety. He also encourages a Caltrans culture of innovation and intelligent risk-taking, as
transformative innovation will be needed to achieve zero traffic-related deaths and reduce GHGs by 40% by 2030.

Having been immersed in the transportation industry for almost two decades, Director Omishakin came to Caltrans following eight years with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). There, he successfully established environmental, multimodal and planning policies to make TDOT one of the best state DOTs in the country. As Deputy Commissioner for Environment and Planning, he was responsible for an administrative and project budget of more than $300 million annually. He also led the activities of the divisions of Environmental Services, Long-Range Planning, Multimodal Transportation Resources, and the Freight and Logistics Division.

Prior to that role, he served as Director of Healthy Living Initiatives in the Nashville Mayor’s Office. In that capacity, he led development of Nashville’s Complete Streets Policy and helped establish a more balanced approach to transportation planning and design. This included spearheading creation of two bicycle sharing programs.

In December 2019, Omishakin became Chair of the Council on Active Transportation for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). This came after serving two years as committee vice chair and serving as inaugural chair of AASHTO’s Multimodal Task Force. He is on the Board of America Walks, Veloz, Mineta Transportation Institute and ITS World Congress and has advised the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis through its Transportation Council Board.

Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, Omishakin and his wife have two children. He is completing a Ph.D. in Engineering Management from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; has a master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Jackson State University; and a Bachelor of Arts in Engineering Technology from Mississippi Valley State University.

DR. LAUREL PAGET-SEEKINS

Laurel Paget-Seekins is a Leadership in Government fellow with Open Society Foundation working on a project on transit equity in the recovery from COVID. The project is focused on how change happens through relationships between agencies and communities.

Until December 2020 Laurel was the Assistant General Manager for Policy at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. She worked on service and fare policy with the goal to improve transit equity, including collaborating with community partners to lower fares for youth, add early morning service for shift workers, and decriminalize fare evasion. During the COVID pandemic she led a cross agency working group to make policy changes and plan for the constantly evolving future.

Previously Laurel was a Director in the Office of Performance Management and Innovation for the MBTA and Massachusetts Department of Transportation. She led a diverse interdisciplinary team that analyzed transportation data across the modal silos to address policy and operational challenges.

Before joining the public sector, Laurel was a post-doc fellow at the BRT Center of Excellence in Santiago, Chile and at the Technical University of Munich. She is the co-editor of Restructuring Public Transport through Bus Rapid Transit from Policy Press. She earned a BA from Oberlin College and a
master’s in City and Regional Planning and a Ph.D in Civil Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology.

Find her work at www.laurelintransit.com

DR. RAFAEL PEREIRA, INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED ECONOMIC RESEARCH (IPEA)

Rafael H M. Pereira works as head of the data science team at the Department of Regional, Urban and Environmental Studies at the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) in Brazil. His research looks broadly at how urban and transport policies shape the spatial organization of cities, human mobility patterns as well as their impacts on social and health inequalities. Rafael is particularly interested in the equity concerns underlying impact assessment of urban and transport planning policies and their effects on inequalities in access to opportunities. He received the 2017 Lee Schipper Memorial Scholarship from the World Resources Institute (WRI). In 2019, his work received the award for best PhD thesis in transportation by the American Association of Geographers (AAG) and the Young Researcher of the Year Award by the International Transport Forum (ITF/OECD). Since 2020, Rafael leads the Access to Opportunities Project where he and his team generate annual estimates of accessibility to employment opportunities, education and health services for Brazil’s largest urban areas, and develop new computational tools for transport accessibility and emissions modeling.

ERIC PETERSON, MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

Eric C. Peterson is a transportation policy advisor, currently addressing infrastructure funding and finance, public transportation, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail issues.

In his career he has played key roles in many major transportation improvement initiatives in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area and has held significant leadership roles on Capitol Hill, with national and regional transportation associations, and within the U.S. Department of Transportation where he was the first Deputy Administrator of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

Eric is a former Deputy Under Secretary for Travel and Tourism at the U.S. Department of Commerce and a former Executive Director of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. He also served for many years on the Arlington County, Virginia Economic Development Commission where he was Chairman of its Tourism Committee, and Chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority’s Advisory Board.
An active member of the Transportation Research Board Intercity and High-Speed Rail Committee (AR010) and the American Public Transportation Association’s Intercity and High-Speed Passenger Rail Committee and is the publisher of the committee’s e-newsletter, SPEEDLINES. He is the immediate past president of the Washington Chapter of the Transportation Research Forum.

Eric earned his undergraduate degree in Political Science from Nebraska Wesleyan University and his Masters degree from the School of Public Communication at Boston University. He is a research associate with the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, is associated with the George Washington University Institute for Corporate Responsibility, and is a member of the Eno Center for Transportation’s Board of Regents and a former member of the Eno Center’s Board of Advisors.

CHAD RIDING

Chad Riding is a Senior Transportation Planner at the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in its Division of Rail and Mass Transportation with 12 years of planning experience at Caltrans. Chad works on strategic management, legislative coordination, and research coordination for the Division. A chief focus of his work is building better connections in the planning practitioner and researcher communities. Chad’s interests in planning are in finding ways to bring diverse groups of stakeholders together and find common ground to implement change. Chad had a Master of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Florida.

ACEY ROBERTS, WGI

Acey Roberts, PE, leads the traffic systems group at WGI which includes traffic system design, TSMO, ITS and CV/AV efforts. He has over 20 years of experience in the deployment of traffic and safety solutions that advance technology in the marketspace while also meeting clients’ budgetary requirements. Acey has a national portfolio with multiple ITS America award winning projects and is currently focused on advancing AV and traffic operations systems to sharply reduce traffic accidents.
DR. DEBORAH SALON, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Bio: Deborah Salon is an Associate Professor of Transportation in the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University and Associate Director of the TOMNET University Transportation Center. Salon studies transportation in cities with the goal of better understanding of how these systems work, and how policies and smart investments might improve them. A common thread in her work is to inform policies that aim to reduce global automobile dependence, and Salon’s research has shed light on what determines car ownership and use levels, and has illuminated opportunities for policies and investment strategies to promote adoption of more sustainable transport modes. Dr. Salon holds a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of California, Davis. Before joining the faculty at ASU, she completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Columbia University's Earth Institute and subsequently held a research appointment at UC Davis’s Institute of Transportation Studies.

ANDREW SALZBERG, TRANSIT APP

Andrew Salzberg is an independent climate technology consultant and leads public policy at Transit, the largest public transportation app in North America. From 2019-2020, he was a Loeb fellow at Harvard, where he created the Decarbonizing Transportation newsletter. Before the Loeb fellowship, Salzberg created and held a unique executive role at Uber, where he created the first teams focused on partnerships with public transportation agencies and environmental sustainability. Prior to joining Uber, Salzberg worked at the World Bank on urban and transport development in China. He holds a Bachelor of Civil Engineering from McGill University and a Master’s in Urban Planning from Harvard.

JARED SCHNADER, CALSTART

Jared Schnader is the Director of Bus Programs at CALSTART and is based in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. He manages CALSTART’s growing portfolio of bus related programs for transit, school, and commercial, overseeing the deployment of zero emission buses across the country, providing guidance to Federal agencies on program development, working on policy making efforts to secure more funding for transit and school districts, and creating enabling programs for transit agencies and state DOTs to accelerate the adoption of zero emission buses.

Prior to joining CALSTART, Jared was the CFO and co-owner of the non-emergency medical transport company Emerald Coast Medical Transport in Panama City, FL, and is a certified wheelchair securement trainer. He was the General Manager of Shopbuses.com, a dealer
management software for the commercial bus industry, ran a transit bus manufacturing start-up in Alabama, and was a Business Educator in Peace Corps Ukraine.

Jared holds a bachelor’s degree in Finance from the University of Alabama. He is a member of MENSA, a member of the Northwest Florida Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and a Transportation Disadvantaged Board Member in both Bay and Walton Counties in Florida.

ADRIAN SHARE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE, BRIGHTLINE WEST

Adrian Share is responsible for overseeing the design and engineering of the rail system, maintenance depot and related rail infrastructure of the Brightline West line. Mr. Share is a 30-year transit veteran, who previously worked at Brightline Florida, overseeing the engineering, construction management and final delivery of the Miami to West Palm Beach segment as well as the engineering and environmental work of the West Palm Beach to Orlando segment for rail infrastructure. Prior to joining Brightline Florida, Mr. Share served as Florida District Leader and Program Manager at HNTB Corporation, and also as the Florida High-Speed Rail Project Manager from 2008 to 2011. Mr. Share holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Tulane University and also holds a Master of Business Administration from Northeastern University. He is a Professional Engineer in Florida and previously served as the Chair of the Transportation Committee of the Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers.

DR. CALVIN THIGPEN, LIME

Calvin Thigpen is the Director of Policy Research at Lime, where he conducts Lime’s internal research and oversees external collaborations, with the aim to better understand who uses micromobility, how and why they ride, and the impacts on the environment, equity, and other topics. Calvin has contributed to research reports on topics ranging from the impact of COVID-19 on shared micromobility to scooter parking behavior and solutions, as well as a variety of summary articles, which you can find on Lime’s 2nd Street site: https://www.li.me/second-street.

Calvin received his PhD in Transportation Technology and Policy at the University of California at Davis and worked as a post-doctoral researcher in the School of Geographic Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University. His areas of expertise include travel behavior research, survey design, and statistical analysis.
Dr. Kari Edison Watkins is the Frederick Law Olmsted Associate Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, GA, USA. Her teaching and research interests center in multi-modal transportation planning and the use of technology in transportation, especially as related to transit planning and operations. After a decade long career in transportation consulting, Dr. Watkins obtained a PhD at the University of Washington, where she co-created the award-winning OneBusAway program to provide transit rider information tools and assess their impacts on riders. Her current focus is on understanding and reacting to transit ridership changes and she is leading TRB’s Transit Cooperative Research Program A-43, Recent Decline in Public Transportation Ridership: Analysis, Causes, Responses. Dr. Watkins also serves as the Director of T-SCORE, a new USDOT University Transportation Center on the subject of Strategic Implications of Changing Public Transportation Travel Trends.

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