

HOT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



Volume 3
September 30, 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ President's Letter
- ▶ Lattes & Leadership Recap
- ▶ Upcoming Luncheons
- ▶ PDS Summary

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT

[Tonia Norman](#)

Retired
TxDOT

VICE PRESIDENT

[Laura Friello, PE](#)

Project Manager
Carver

SECRETARY

[Adeliza Ramirez, PE](#)

Engineer
Volkert

TREASURER

[Seles Johnson, PE](#)

Senior Transportation Engineer
Atkins

IMMEDIATE

PAST PRESIDENT

[Ashley Williams](#)

Research Administrator
CTR/UT Austin

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

[Cheryl Goodgame](#)

Senior Marketing Coordinator
Lockwood Andrews, & Newnam, Inc.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP

[Patty Trujillo, PE, MCE](#)

Senior Engineer
Atkins

GALA CHAIR

[Antionette Roberts](#)

Strategic Communications Specialist
AECOM

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

[Pooja Patel, PE, LGPP](#)

Civil Engineer
Kimley-Horn

MENTORING CHAIR

[Marwa Ayad](#)

Senior Project Manager
VRX Global

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[Christen Eschberger, PE](#)

Project Director
HNTB

[Shadi Hakimi, PE](#)

Transportation Engineer
STV

PROGRAMS CHAIR

[Andrea Bryant, PE](#)

Associate and Transportation
Design Team Lead
Freese & Nichols

RECOGNITIONS CHAIR

[Karla Madriles-Ortiz](#)

Transportation Design Engineer
Freese & Nichols

REGIONAL COUNCIL

[Jackie Sartor](#)

Business Development Director
Foresight Planning & Engineering



President's Letter

Greetings, WTS Heart of Texas Chapter members and friends. I hope that you are enjoying the beginning of fall weather and the many activities available this time of year.

The HOT Chapter has had a busy summer, providing you with offerings for networking, learning, and engagement.

Our Mentoring Program continued its series of monthly in-person and virtual meetings, which offered the mentors and mentees opportunities to learn and connect. The Professional Development Committee held the July Lattes & Leadership event with Anna Lan, the Transit-Oriented Development Manager for CapMetro. The August Lattes & Leadership session featured a conversation with Anna Martin, the Assistant Director with the City of Austin's Transportation and Public Works Department. Our Membership Committee hosted a members-only networking event on August 13th at Hopsquad Brewing. The Corporate & Agency Partnerships Committee hosted the CP/AP & Members Only gathering at Peached Social House on August 20th, where we recognized three exceptional women transportation leaders - Amanda Austin and Charon Williams of TxDOT and Liane Conte of the City of Austin's Project Connect. And, most recently, the Professional Development Committee on September 20th presented a day-long set of professional development training focused on the Tools & Technology for the Transportation Workforce.

Looking ahead, the chapter is planning two more monthly program luncheons. Join us again on October 16th to hear from City of Austin Council Member and Mobility Committee Chair Paige Ellis. The November luncheon will feature a panel from the TxDOT Austin District discussing the IH 35 Tunnel Project. Be on the lookout for the registration information for these events in the coming weeks. And, the Mentoring Program will present its graduation for the current mentoring class in October.

It's also that time of year for the HOT transportation community to begin thinking about nominating people and projects for the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter's annual recognition awards. Be ready to submit your nominations for the regional innovative transportation project, employer of the year, Rosa Parks Diversity Award, woman of the year, Ray LaHood Man of the Year, and chapter member of the year. Then, in December, chapter members will get to vote to decide the award winners, to be presented at the 2025 Awards and Scholarship Gala.

If you want to get the most out of your participation in the Heart of Texas WTS Chapter and in WTS International, please be sure that your membership is up to date. If you are not yet a member of WTS, please join WTS and encourage your friends and colleagues to become a member. Information on how to join can be found at <https://www.wtsinternational.org/mission/membership>.

The chapter will hold its biennial elections for the chapter's Executive Committee in November. We will send ballots to all paid chapter members and we encourage you to vote for your chapter leaders for the 2025-2026 term of office. Also, it takes a lot of great volunteers to make our HOT Chapter activities happen, so please get involved. Our committees are always looking for new members and innovative ideas. If you have any questions about WTS or the HOT chapter, please do not hesitate to contact me or anyone else on our board.

There is a lot going on in transportation, in the WTS HOT Chapter, and in the larger community this time of year. I encourage you to stay engaged and make your voice heard. In particular, please make sure that you are registered to vote in local, state, and federal elections and exercise that important right either through early voting or on election day by selecting leaders who will serve you and the greater good. I look forward to seeing you at one of our future events.

Sincerely,

Tonia Norman



SCHOLARSHIP CO-CHAIRS

[Brittani Kaim](#)

VP, Dir. of Comm. & Public Involvement
WSP

[Stephen Johnson, PE](#)

Project Manager, Central Texas
Transportation Leader
Garver

STUDENT LIAISON CHAIR

[Madelyn Krieger, EIT](#)

Engineer
Freese & Nichols

TRANSPORTATION YOU CO-CHAIRS

[Ashley Martinez, PE, LGPP](#)

Civil Engineer
Kimley-Horn

[Kelly Rees, PE](#)

Transportation Engineer
Kimley-Horn

June Lattes & Leadership



Summer B. Lawton, South/Central Texas Office Leader at HNTB

The June Lattes & Leadership event featured an inspiring talk from Summer B. Lawton, South/Central Texas Office Leader at HNTB. Summer shared valuable insights on understanding clients' needs, building strong relationships, and adding value in every interaction. She emphasized the importance of mentorship and succession planning while offering practical advice on setting achievable goals. The event provided great opportunities for networking and professional growth.

Members-only Networking Event

On a hot and humid August 13th, our Membership Committee hosted our second happy hour this year to cool off this summer! Hopsquad Brewing Co. was selected as our venue for an open-air and come-and-go experience. Members enjoyed uniquely hand-crafted pizzas, salads, and meatballs catered from the on-site food truck, Doughsquad, and cooled off with fun, frozen drinks and plenty of conversational seating perfect for small group networking. With the momentum of a successful season filled with heavily attended luncheons, professional development seminars, CP/AP programs, and happy hours propelling us into fall, the membership team will continue organizing events to engage with our community and industry partners in hopes to aid in the continued growth of our chapter. Be on the lookout for our upcoming fall and year-end holiday HOT events!



July Lattes & Leadership



Anna Lan, Transit Oriented Development Manager, CapMetro

Anna Lan is embracing her role as the Transit-Oriented Development Manager for CapMetro, as we learned from her at the July Latest & Leadership event. She spoke about her career path along the way, including her time in Asia where she had the opportunity to work on exciting projects such as prepping for the Beijing summer Olympics, a layered transit system in Hong Kong, and an underground transit hub in Singapore. Anna shared her current passion for providing transit options to the senior community, and provided career advice based on her experiences.

August Lattes & Leadership



Anna Martin, Assistant Director, City of Austin Transportation and Public Works Department

We were excited to hear from Anna Martin, Assistant Director with the City of Austin's Transportation and Public Works Department, at Lattes & Leadership in August. Anna shared her experiences in both the public and private sector, and the importance of networking, finding good mentors, and empowering people around you. She also shared the best advice a mentor had given her: "If you're really good at your job, you should ask for what you want and expect to get it."

Save the Date

Date:
Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Time:
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Location:
Maggiano's Little Italy
10910 Domain Dr, Suite 100
Austin, TX 78758



October Luncheon

City of Austin Council Member and Mobility Committee Chair Paige Ellis will discuss her career progression and past and upcoming Austin mobility initiatives.

[Register now!](#)

Date:
Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Time:
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Location:
Maggiano's Little Italy
10910 Domain Dr, Suite 100
Austin, TX 78758



November Luncheon

TxDOT Austin District Mobility 35 Program Manager Tommy Abrego and District Hydraulic Engineer Joe Goessling will present on the upcoming IH 35 Drainage Tunnel.

2024 Professional Development Seminar

Tools & Technology for the Transportation Workforce

We had a great turnout for the annual Professional Development Seminar on September 20, 2024 at Maggiano's! We were privileged to have an incredible lineup of speakers and panels from the public and private sector who each brought such valuable insights. Keynote speaker Shandon Richardson, Career Development Program Administrator at TxDOT, gave a very interactive presentation with great discussion on leveraging your strengths and insight into what TxDOT is doing to develop the workforce. In addition, we had some very strong panels this year with topics ranging from technology to social skills. We learned about AI and data improve processes, but in-person conversations often spark the most creativity and innovation. Shout out to the social skills panel for garnering the most laughs!



LEADERSHIP SKILLS PANEL:
Heather Ashley-Nguyen, PE; Karen Block; Lindsay Wood, PE; and Patricia Davis, PE



TECHNICAL SKILLS PANEL:
Valeria Arocho, Keven Pete, James Kuhr, and Melisa Finley, PE



TECHNOLOGY FIRESIDE CHAT:
Kristie Chin and Andrea Gold



KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Shandon Richardson



SOCIAL SKILLS PANEL:
Odette Tan, PE; Dawn Scheel, PE; Kate Wilder, PE; and Stephanie Russell, PE



TECHNOLOGY PANEL:
Tanya Acevedo, Katie Zehnder, Amy Atchley, and Darran Anderson

For more pictures of the event, visit our [online photo gallery](#).



CP/AP Awards Event

The WTS HOT Chapter CP/AP Awards Event brings together our corporate and agency partners and chapter members to celebrate women leaders in Austin who work to advance transportation in Central Texas. This year we honored three women leaders: [Amanda Austin](#), who is the Roundabout & Alternative Intersection Design (RAID) Lead for the TxDOT Design Division Project Delivery Section; [Charon Williams](#), who is the Director of Transportation Programs for TxDOT; and [Liane Conte, AICP](#), who is the Chief of Staff with City of Austin Project Connect. For more pictures of the event, visit our [online photo gallery](#).



AWARD WINNERS:

Charon Williams, Liane Conte, AICP, and Amanda Austin

Gold Circle of Excellence Award



Once again the WTS HOT Chapter has received the Gold Circle of Excellence Award.

The HOT Chapter has received Gold status every year since WTSI started the program in 2014.

Upcoming Events

2024 Upcoming

events

- Oct** 10/7-12 WTS Signature Leadership Training
- 10/16 Monthly Luncheon - City of Austin Council Member and Mobility Committee Chair Paige Ellis
- Nov** 11/14-15 WTS International Leadership Conference
- 11/20 Monthly Luncheon - TxDOT Austin District Mobility 35 Program Manager Tommy Abrego and District Hydraulic Engineer Joe Goessling
- Dec** TBD Holiday Networking Event

Corporate Sponsor Spotlight



Wendy Travis, AICP
Garver Southwest Regional Director for Transportation



As Garver's Southwest Regional Director for Transportation and a vice president for the firm, Wendy Travis, AICP, has paved the way for women in the transportation industry for nearly three decades. Wendy has been instrumental in growing Garver's Transportation Planning and Environmental Team to more than 20 experts spanning four states and now leads the firm's transportation efforts across one of its biggest markets: Texas. An expert in corridor planning, environmental studies, public involvement, program management, and much more, Wendy's work has shaped communities across the United States.

Wendy's impact on the transportation industry extends beyond her work with critical infrastructure projects. As the nation faces a shortage of engineering graduates, she recognizes the critical need to invest in tomorrow's engineering professionals. Wendy leads networking and professional development opportunities for women in the firm as a leader in Garver Connect, an employee-led initiative designed in part to support the firm through the recruitment and retention of female engineers. Additionally, she's passionate about STEM education and sparking an early interest in engineering in today's young learners. Through GarverGives, the firm's giving program, Wendy volunteered with the Bullock Texas State History Museum to lead STEM-focused activities for elementary students and served as a mentor for SafetyHack, a hands-on event led by TxDOT and Garver that challenged students from the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders to brainstorm and present highway safety solutions.



Lindsay Liggett, PE
Deputy Project Manager and Roadway Task Lead



Lindsay Liggett is a professional engineer with over 15 years of highway design experience at the schematic and PS&E levels. She received her B.S. and M.S. in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University and joined RTG as a Project Engineer in 2019. Lindsay currently serves as the deputy project manager and roadway task lead for the FM 324 schematic and PS&E project in Lufkin, which includes a realignment of the existing roadway and the addition of a half-mile long bridge that spans the adjacent creek and UPRR tracks. Lindsay also currently serves as the traffic control task lead for the US 59 Direct Connector project in Victoria and has also recently served as the roadway task lead for the SH 114 Super 2 project in Wichita Falls. She also helped develop the traffic control design for the I-10 widening project in Colorado County, the I-35 widening project in Wichita Falls, and the CapEx South project in Travis County.

Lindsay's involvement with the WTS Heart of Texas Chapter began when she received one of the chapter's first scholarships in 2006. She later became a member of the chapter in 2009 and has served in various capacities, including as Scholarship Committee Chair in the past and on both the gala and scholarship committees currently.

Lindsay is an original Austinite and enjoys running, hiking, exploring new places, and binging podcasts and audiobooks. She also enjoys spending time with her husband, Ben, and their two boys and can often be found cheering from the sidelines of a baseball or soccer field.



Isis Hernandez, PE
Transportation Engineer



Isis Hernandez is a 10-year transportation engineer with a passion to improve the way we move in our cities, and a passion to introduce and encourage careers in the transportation industry. Since 2021, Isis has been integral in facilitating a high school internship program with Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) and CapMetro – providing opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) for young people. Students receive hands-on experience in project planning and design, giving them an opportunity to be involved in their community, and to see how infrastructure is a huge part of connecting people to places. At the college level, Isis has participated in the UT at Austin School of Engineering Capstone Class, where she supported the students by providing scope, conducting student site visits, and attending their final presentations. Next up for Isis, seeing how she interests students in STEM in middle school.

Isis' experience is in transit and roadway/highway engineering. In her design work, she knows how to find solutions that lead to a quality design in a timely manner. Isis has been a member of WTS since 2015.

PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



DBE



AGENCY PARTNERS



AGENCY AFFILIATES

