



## Mineta Transportation Institute's **29<sup>th</sup> Annual Convocation Celebration**

A Virtual Ceremony Commemorating the 2021 MSTM Graduates



# CELEBRATION PROGRAM

- ◆ **Welcome**  
**Karen Philbrick, PhD**  
Executive Director, Mineta Transportation Institute
- ◆ **Graduation Wishes**  
**Norman Y. Mineta**  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation (Ret.)
- ◆ **Commencement Address**  
**Phillip A. Washington**  
Nominee for CEO, Denver International Airport
- ◆ **Remarks from Student of the Year 2021**  
**Anna Harvey (MSTM 2021)**  
Project Manager I, City of San Francisco
- ◆ **Celebratory Toast**  
**Dan Moshavi, PhD**  
Dean, Lucas College and Graduate School of Business,  
San José State University
- ◆ **Presentation of the Class of 2021 and Certificate Recipients**  
**Asha Weinstein Agrawal, PhD**  
Education Director, Mineta Transportation Institute
- ◆ **Celebrating Leadership Excellence and Closing**  
**Abbas Mohaddes**  
Chair, MTI Board of Trustees

# AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



## *Master of Science in Transportation Management*

Robin Blair  
(Giovanni) Carlo DiFabio  
Phuong-uyen Do  
Alex Eisenhart  
Ryan Fallica  
Lauren German  
Jose Gonzalez  
Anna Harvey  
Jesse Hudson  
Lisa Kunzman  
Linda Lee  
Lindsay Olofson  
Navraj Padda  
Elina Staviskaya

## *Student of the Year*

Anna Harvey



## *Certificate in High-Speed and Intercity Rail Management*

Jose Gonzalez

Rail Equipment Maintenance Instructor - Los Angeles County Metropolitan  
Transportation Authority

Anna Harvey

Project Manager I - City of San Francisco

Mohammad Issa Ibrahimi

MSTM 2022 Candidate

## *Certificate in Transportation Management*

Benyam Aghegnehu

Associate Transportation Planner - County of Santa Clara

Ryan Fallica

Transportation Engineer - California Department of Transportation

## *Certificate in Transportation Security and Emergency Management*

Alex Eisenhart

Communications Analyst - City of Dublin

Leonardo Fewell

For-Hire Vehicle Administration Manager - San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Linda Lee

Manager of Engineering Programs - Bay Area Rapid Transit

Navraj Padda

Assistant Transportation Superintendent - AC Transit



## HONORED GUESTS

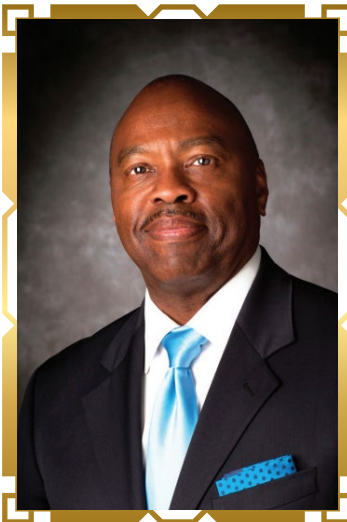


**Norman Y. Mineta**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation (Ret.)

Norman Y. Mineta is the President and CEO of Mineta and Associates, LLC and former U.S. Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Secretary of Transportation. For almost 30 years, Mineta represented San Jose, California, first on the City Council, then as mayor and then as a member of the U.S. Congress. In 2000, President Bill Clinton appointed Mineta Secretary of Commerce, and President George W. Bush appointed Mineta Secretary of Transportation, where he served until 2006.

Mineta has received numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy. While in Congress, he was the co-founder of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and chair of the National Civil Aviation Review Commission in 1997.



**Phillip A. Washington**

Nominee for CEO, Denver International Airport

Phillip A. Washington is currently the Nominee for CEO for Denver International Airport. He previously served as CEO of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). There, he managed a balanced budget in excess of \$7 billion and provided oversight of 1.2 million boarding passengers daily. Originally from the South Side of Chicago, Washington is a 24-year veteran of the United States Army. President Obama named him a White House Transportation Innovator Champion of Change, and he has also been recognized with the Eddy Award for Outstanding Leadership in Economic Development, Honorable Ray LaHood Award, the Judge Harry Pregerson Public Service Award, the Norman Mineta Award, the Defense Superior Service Medal, and others.

# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES



Welcome to the 29th Annual Mineta Transportation Institute Board of Trustees Awards Banquet and Convocation Celebration. Tonight we celebrate our candidates for the Master of Science in Transportation Management (MSTM) program.

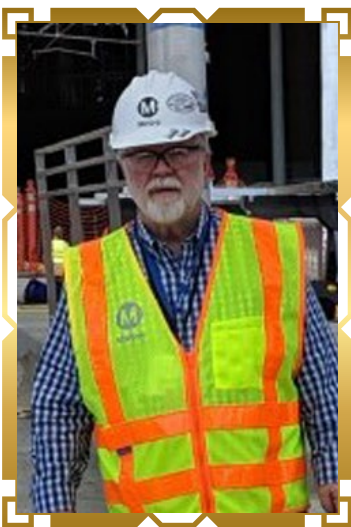
Our MSTM candidates have grit. Amid a year of significant change, these students have juggled career, family, personal lives, and the disruption caused by a global pandemic to achieve their goals. They have met each challenge with grace and in so doing have demonstrated their unwavering commitment, adaptability and resilience, and passion for educational attainment. Collectively, they exemplify why Money Magazine named San Jose State the #1 most transformative university in our nation.

We look to the distinguished Class of 2021 MSTM graduates to continue to persevere regardless of the circumstances, and to keep the nation's vital infrastructure moving. Because, as we saw so clearly during this past year, transportation carries us through even in the most harrowing times, serving as a vital lifeline to essential workers and others.

On behalf of the Mineta Transportation Institute Trustees and Staff, welcome everyone, and a special welcome to the Class of 2021—our transportation leaders of tomorrow!

***Dr. Karen Philbrick, Executive Director***

## MSTM GRADUATES



### **Robin Blair**

**Senior Director, Operations Executive Office-Liaison,  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation  
Authority**

Capstone: *NHTS: Finding Changes in Generational Travel  
from 1995-2017*

Robin Blair has worked for the LA Metro and its predecessor agencies for over thirty years. Robin currently serves as the Senior Director- Executive Office of Operations - Liaison Group. Robin's work on the Liaison Team focuses on coordinating many of the twenty-eight by 2028 regional transportation improvements in time for Los Angeles to host the Olympics. Robin's career has been concurrent with the region's initiation of the nation's largest transportation infrastructure construction and transportation funding programs.



### **(Giovanni) Carlo DiFabio**

**Freeway Service Patrol Program Manager, Metropolitan  
Transportation Commission**

Capstone: *Transit Consolidation Evaluation: Did the  
Soltrans Merger Make a Case for Future Transit  
Streamlining?*

Giovanni Carlo DiFabbio is a native Californian who grew up riding public transit in Vallejo, CA, with his disabled grandmother. He became interested in traffic operations as a teen volunteering as a Police Explorer. Later, he worked at the Vallejo Police Department as a Cadet assigned to the Traffic Division. Since 2015 he has worked on traffic incident management at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), coordinating the Bay Area Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program in partnership with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol. He is working on a pilot initiative to deploy FSP in a supportive role for a potential upcoming Regional Express Bus Network (ReX).



### **Phuong-uyen Do**

**Civil Engineer, Bay Area Rapid Transit**

Capstone: *Existing Bicycle Infrastructure in San Leandro: Opportunities for Improvement*

Phuong Do is a project engineer at Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District. She has worked on two BART extension projects and other BART facilities replacement projects. She received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Hawaii, Manoa. She is a licensed Civil Engineer in California. Since visiting a few countries in Europe and Asia and using their public transportation systems, she has enjoyed working on public transportation projects. She is a bicycle commuter and frequently utilizes public transportation.



### **Alex Eisenhart**

**Communications Analyst, City of Dublin**

Capstone: *Evaluation: How Effective Were SamTrans' Marketing and Planning Strategies in the Launch of Route FCX?*

Alex Eisenhart is a government communications professional who started out in the world of film and media production before transitioning into the public sector. He began his career in public health communications before becoming a Public Affairs Specialist for the San Mateo County Transit District, where his love for transportation brought him to MTI. His work in transit focused on press relations, crisis communications, creative content development, and campaign strategy. Today, he continues to expand his storytelling abilities as Communications Analyst for the City of Dublin, CA. Alex is eager to leverage his new degree to help advance sustainability initiatives through public awareness and community engagement.





### **Ryan Fallica**

**Route Manager, California Department of Transportation**

Capstone: *VMT: Exploring the Politics and Realities of Sustainable Growth in the Golden State*

Ryan Fallica is a licensed Civil Engineer with experience in Preliminary Project Studies, Roadway Design, Quality Assurance and Traffic Operations. After receiving his BS in Civil Engineering from San Diego State, he was hired as a Transportation Engineer at Caltrans in District 11 in San Diego. Outside of his passion for transportation, Ryan volunteers with local housing and climate advocacy groups in the San Diego region. In this work, he hopes to encourage an understanding of the place that transportation has in solving some of California's most significant problems, along with the opportunities that arise through new technology applications and planning methodologies.



### **Lauren German**

**Senior Rail and Transit Planner, WSP**

Capstone: *PRIIA Section 209 and the Pacific Surfliner: Evaluating the Impact of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) Section 209 Cost Methodology Policy on the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner Service*

Lauren German is a senior rail and transit planner with 13 years at the consulting firm WSP. She made a career and industry change in 2008, which put her "on the right track." Today, she works with a niche technical team in rail operations planning and manages rail projects of all types, which has allowed her to develop trusted relationships with various stakeholder and agencies in California. She hopes to expand her professional relationships and experience to a national level and be a part of more transformative transit projects.



### **Jose Gonzalez**

**Rail Equipment Maintenance Instructor, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

*Capstone: Practices and Methods of Responding to Rail Vehicle Service Interruptions*

Jose Gonzalez started his career in the transportation industry in 2010 as a Field Electronics Technician for AnsaldoBreda Incorporated. The firm manufactures rail vehicle rolling stock, and Jose worked on the Pasadena Rail Expansion project in Los Angeles, California. The years he spent working for AnsaldoBreda involved keeping the trains in service by overseeing warranty vehicle repairs, upgrades, inspections, and testing. This experience introduced him to the vast array of career opportunities in the transit industry and, along with his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, has offered him a foundation and platform to continue his transportation career pathway. He now works with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority as a Rail Vehicle Instructor.



### **Anna Harvey**

**Student of the Year 2021**

**Project Manager I, City of San Francisco**

*Capstone: Next Stop: Restoring Caltrain Service to San Francisco's Bayview*

Anna Harvey started riding buses to the end of their lines to see where they went as a teenager, and was basically lost as a transit nerd from then on. She studied civil engineering at UC Berkeley, and graduated thinking she was going to solve California's water crisis. Anna was lucky to find a job during the recession, and it turned out to be in rail design. Some forays into transportation funding and planning later, she is now happily ensconced at the City of San Francisco, making plans to bring heavy rail to downtown.



### **Jesse Hudson**

#### **Assistant Planner, City of Chico**

Capstone: *Evaluation of General Plan Goals, Policies and Actions: Direct/Indirect Benefits to Pavement Health*

Jesse Hudson works as an Assistant Planner for the City of Chico's Public Works Department. He has been working there for a year and a half, since leaving his work as an Environmental Planner at Caltrans. There, his work focused on the environmental process completed during the design phase of capital projects. Before starting this program, he completed his undergraduate degree in psychology and environmental planning at CSU - Chico.



### **Lisa Kunzman**

#### **Independent Contractor, The Kercher Group**

Capstone: *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the California State Fleet Zero-Emission Vehicle Policies: A case study of the California Department of Transportation Fleet*

Lisa Kunzman is a nationally recognized fleet management expert. Her experience includes asset management, quality assurance, and bringing new technology into the fleet. She began her career as a mechanical engineer after graduating from California State University, Fresno, then took on various leadership positions at the California Department of Transportation. She is an active leader in transportation organizations such as the TRB and AASHTO. Ms. Kunzman is regularly featured as a speaker to share her expertise at fleet and transportation conferences. She is looking forward to new role as a freelance consultant after the MSTM program.





### **Linda Lee**

#### **Manager of Engineering Programs, Bay Area Rapid Transit**

Capstone: *Challenges of Procuring and Managing Professional Services Contracts for Transportation Agencies*

Linda Lee has been working in the transportation industry for over twenty years, specializing in civil and roadway design. Some of her notable projects include the I-405 Project in Los Angeles, the Warm Springs Extension Project in Fremont, and the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project in New Orleans. Her interest in transportation started in Oakland, where she grew up navigating public transit, walking, and biking. She is currently a Program Manager at BART, managing a portfolio of civil, structures, and track projects for the Measure RR Program and a full-time mom/bus driver of two kids.



### **Lindsay Olofson**

#### **Maintenance Support Administrator, Bay Area Rapid Transit**

Capstone: *Smooth Streets for All or Municipal Favoritism: Public Perception of Oakland's Equity Driven Paving Plan*

Lindsay Olofson is a Maintenance Support Administrator for SF BART, where she coordinates the deadline-driven work of capital projects for the highly regulated maintenance department schedules. While she jokes that she didn't go looking for a career in transportation—rather it found her—this path has provided opportunities to channel her lifelong commitments to equity, public health, and the environment. She looks forward to helping her community thrive through continued work in public transportation.





### **Navraj Padda**

**Assistant Transportation Superintendent, Alameda Contra Costa Transit District**

Capstone: *Transit Solution for West Contra Costa County: An Evaluation of the LA Metro Silver Line*

Navraj Padda began his career with the AC Transit in 2011 as a Bus Operator. After driving for 6 years, he was promoted to Transportation Supervisor in 2017, where he took an active role in several projects, including detour planning and the restroom taskforce. He was promoted to Assistant Transportation Superintendent in 2021. Navraj received his Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences from UC Berkeley in 2002. He enjoys spending time with his wife and two children and is passionate about watching sports. He and his daughter are huge Harry Potter fans.



### **Elina Staviskaya**

Capstone: *Evaluation of Policy Making Issues in Regards to Commercial Driverless Ride-hailing Service Operations in the Pioneering States: California, Arizona, Michigan*

Elina Staviskaya is a communications professional with a background in tech and transportation. She is the former Head of Media Relations at Yandex.Taxi, Russia's leading ride-hailing service. She is currently pursuing a career in transportation policy with a focus on autonomous vehicles and smart cities.

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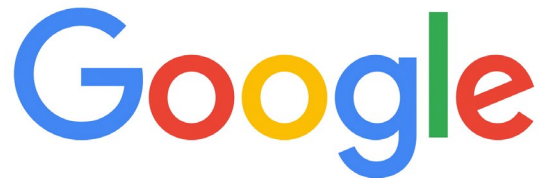
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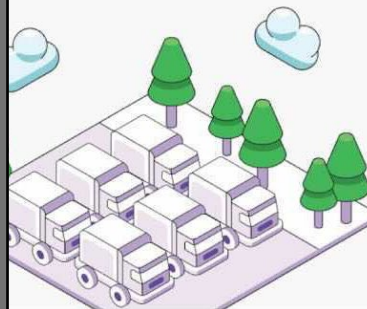
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InfraStrategies provides financial planning and strategic advisory services to public authorities and developers with a primary focus on funding and financing critical infrastructure development and mobility services.

We are pleased to continue our collaboration with the Mineta Institute and many of its partners as the industry works to restore fiscal sustainability during this unprecedented time for transportation providers throughout the country and around the world.





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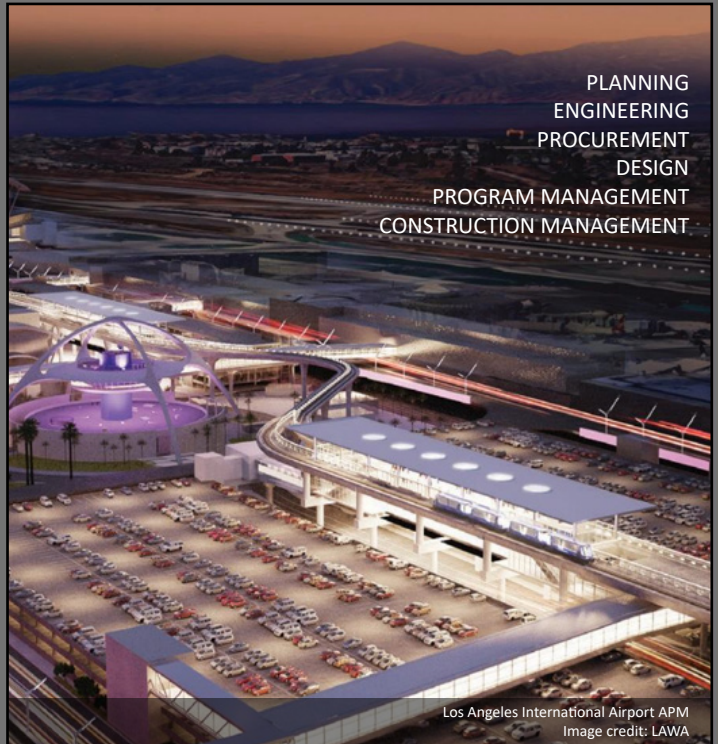
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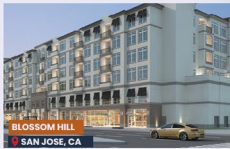


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**Congratulations to the  
Class of 2021**

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MTI respectfully thanks the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), San José State University, and the Lucas College and Graduate School of Business. Each has provided priceless support to MTI and its graduate program.



**@MinetaTrans #MSTMGrad2021**



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