A Virtual Event
TRB's 100th Annual Meeting

Although the world changed a great deal in 2020, transportation research remained essential. For its 100th Annual Meeting, TRB hosted an entirely virtual event—keeping the health and safety of TRB employees, contractors, and meeting attendees paramount—that took place over the month of January 2021.

The world’s largest transportation research conference had even greater reach this year—approximately 20,000 people logged on from across the globe to view more than 400 sessions and workshops, participate in committee meetings, and browse exhibits. Many of the sessions explored the meeting’s spotlight theme—Launching a New Century of Mobility and Quality of Life—as well as the crucial topics of the COVID-19 pandemic and of racial justice and equity in transportation.

At the Chair’s Plenary Session, Marcia McNutt, President of the National Academy of Sciences, addressed future transportation-related issues in science. Chicago Transit Authority President Dorval R. Carter, Jr., delivered the 2021 Thomas B. Deen Distinguished Lecture, titled Our Work Is Never Done: Examining Equity Impacts in Public Transportation.

Details and highlights appear on the following pages.

All screenshots taken by TRB staff members.

1. Contemporary artist Jim Hodges designed the sculpture of colorful glass fragments that greets travelers passing through New York City’s Grand Central-42nd Street subway station. The public art installation, titled I dreamed a world and called it Love, was one of the works addressed in the session Transit Interactions Reimagined: Art, COVID and Equity, which explored how transit agencies have responded to COVID-19 with art and inclusivity, collaborating with communities to make transit stations and environments safer and more inviting for everyone.

2. (Clockwise from upper left) Moderator Charles Brown, Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, and panelists Celeste Chavis, Morgan State University; Keshia Pollack Porter, Johns Hopkins University; Lincoln Edwards, University of Arizona; and Richard Ezike (center), The Urban Institute, shared knowledge on the ways in which Black, indigenous, and people of color experience restrictions, risks, indignities, and inequities while navigating pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and other transportation systems at a session titled Arrested Mobility.

3. The 25 students who received Minority Student Fellowships to present at the 2021 TRB Annual Meeting had a very different experience than previous attendees, but an “engagement challenge” checklist helped them get the most out of the meeting.

4. In her keynote address, National Academy of Sciences President Marcia McNutt examined TRB’s crucial role in the mission of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.
Committees

1. Hyun-A Park, Spy Pond Partners, guides a meeting of the Technical Activities Council (TAC) on the first day of the Annual Meeting. TAC supervises and facilitates the work of TRB’s more than 160 standing committees.

2. Oriana Aguas, University of Waterloo, delivers a presentation on modeling impacts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership on Canada’s trade infrastructure at a meeting of the International Trade and Transportation Committee.

3. Tracee Strum-Gilliam, PRR, Inc., cochairs a meeting of the Equity in Transportation Committee, along with Gloria Jeffs, Minnesota Department of Transportation (not pictured). The committee surveyed current research in transportation equity, planned upcoming events, and heard updates on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) activities, as well as on the U.S. Department of Transportation Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success program.

4. At a meeting of the Geospatial Data Acquisition Technologies Committee, David Unkefer, FHWA, participates in one of the group’s many discussions on topics from geospatial control to data acquisition using small unmanned aerial systems.

Executive Committee

5. Ashby Johnson, executive director of Texas’s Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, takes part in TRB Executive Committee deliberations. The Executive Committee devoted its policy session to examining the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobility and equity.
Executive Committee Leaders Take Helm

The 2021 TRB Executive Committee Chair is Susan Shaheen, Civil and Environmental Engineering professor at the University of California (UC), Berkeley, and codirector of the Transportation Sustainability Research Center, Institute of Transportation Studies, Berkeley. An expert and pioneer in future mobility strategies, Shaheen was among the first to observe, research, and write about changing dynamics in shared mobility and the rise of automated vehicles.

The first Honda Distinguished Scholar in Transportation at the Institute of Transportation Studies at UC Davis, Shaheen also served as the Policy and Behavioral Research Program Leader at California Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways and as a special assistant to the Director’s Office of the California Department of Transportation from 2001 to 2004.

Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr., CEO of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority in Florida, is 2021 Executive Committee Vice Chair. Over his four-decade career, Ford has championed multimodal transportation, walkable neighborhoods, public–private partnerships, and transit-oriented development.

Randell Iwasaki, Amazon Web Services, is a new member of the Executive Committee.

Sessions & Workshops

1. Toks Omishakin, California Department of Transportation, leads an opening panel discussion about perspectives on public health and transportation.

2. Trenna Terrill, University of Wyoming, conducts a workshop segment on a road safety toolkit for Indian tribes, one of seven presentations during the New Developments in Safety on Low-Volume Roads workshop.

3. KeAndra Cylear Dodds (top, right), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, presents a research paper on equity programs at Los Angeles Metro, part of the Advancing Transportation Equity lectern session. Other participants include (clockwise from lower right) Hannah Twaddell, ICF; Valerie Lefler, Feonix Mobility Rising; and Ipek Sener, Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

4. Dan Lamers (top, center), North Central Texas Council of Governments, presents his research paper, “Managed Lanes: The First 50 Years,” during the Managed Lanes: Adapting, Enduring, Anticipating lectern session. Other participants include (clockwise from upper right) Robert Poole, Reason Foundation; Suzanne Murtha, AECOM; Timothy Halle, Contra Costa Transportation Authority; Darren Henderson, WSP; and Charles Fuhs, Chuck Fuhs, LLC.

(continued on next page)
Sessions & Workshops (continued)

5 TRB Annual Meeting participants toured virtual exhibit spaces—such as the Cooperative Research Programs (CRP) booth, with CRP Director Chris Hedges at the entrance—to experience a bit of whimsy, a lot of creativity, and a hefty load of transportation research and information on airports, behavioral traffic safety, highways, and transit. (Design: Community Brand)

6 During the Air Carrier Business Models for Recovery and Post COVID-19 lectern session, John Heimlich (bottom), Airlines for America, presents his research paper, “Airlines for America Perspective.” Other participants include (clockwise from upper left) Katherine Harback, Institute of Health Economics; Kenneth Strickland, Raleigh–Durham Airport Authority; Torque Zubeck, Alaska Airlines; and David Clark, JetBlue Airways.

7 Presiding over the Transit Interactions Reimagined: Art, COVID, and Equity lectern session, Zipporah Lax Yamamoto, Los Angeles County Transportation Authority, provides background on her Zoom backdrop. The hand-painted mural, Hecho a Mano by Sonia Romero (installed in Mariachi Plaza Metro Station in the East Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights), highlights the neighborhood’s Latinx, Jewish, and Japanese influences, presenting legacies of community struggle and resilience through objects of significance. (Backdrop photo: Elon Schoenholz, courtesy of Sonia Romero)

8 Noelle Trent, National Civil Rights Museum, shares an image of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, where Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated on April 4, 1968. The site of the historic tragedy is now home to the museum. Trent participated in the lectern session titled The Influence of Discrimination and Civil Rights Laws on Shaping Our Transportation Systems. The panel discussed how discrimination impacts transportation and how the legal system, interstate commerce, and civil rights laws have been and are being used to minimize adverse effects and, ultimately, ensure access and equity within transportation systems.
Major Awards

1 President of the Chicago Transit Authority Dorval R. Carter, Jr., is the 2021 recipient of the Thomas B. Deen Distinguished Lectureship. Named in honor of TRB’s eighth executive director, who served from 1980 to 1994, the lectureship recognizes the career contributions and achievements of an individual in one of the areas covered by TRB’s Technical Activities Division. Carter is recognized for his leadership in the transit industry and legal community and for spearheading significant advances in public transportation.

2 Trustee chair, Pegasus Professor, and chair of the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Construction Engineering at the University of Central Florida Mohamed Abdel-Aty is the 2021 recipient of the Roy W. Crum Distinguished Service Award. Named for TRB’s former director, who served from 1928 until his death in 1951, the award recognizes outstanding leadership in transportation research or research administration. Abdel-Aty is recognized for his achievements in developing immediate practical applications for his fundamental and developmental research results, as well as for his broad contributions to transportation safety.

3 Martha Grabowski, McDevitt Distinguished Chair in Information Systems; professor and director of the Information Systems Program at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York; and senior research scientist in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, is the recipient of the 2020 W.N. Carey, Jr., Distinguished Service Award. Named for TRB’s Executive Director from 1967 to 1980, the award recognizes individuals who have given leadership and distinguished service to TRB. Since 1991, Grabowski has provided continuous volunteer service to TRB, the Marine Board, and the National Research Council of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

4 Rodney E. Slater is the 2021 recipient of the Frank Turner Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Transportation. Secretary Slater is a partner at Squire Patton Boggs LLP in Washington, D.C., the former U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and the former administrator of the FHWA. Named for its initial recipient, the award recognizes a distinguished career in transportation; professional prominence; and a distinctive, widely acknowledged contribution to transportation policy, administration, or research. Slater is honored for his influential career in the areas of aviation, surface transportation, and infrastructure, as well as for his commitment to the role of transportation in safety, mobility and access, economic development and trade, and the environment and national security.