



Contacting the MSTM Alumni Association

Visit our web site:
www.MTIconnect.org
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In lieu of the 28th Annual MTI Banquet, a Virtual Celebration Will be Held at 6:00 P.M. on Friday, June 26, 2020.

See details at right.
www.mticonnect.org/convocation

Message from Dr. Philbrick about the 2020 Convocation

We are living in unprecedented times and amid one of the most challenging moments our country has ever faced. Our graduates have persevered. Now more than ever it is critical to come together as a community to recognize each and every one of our graduating students. And although we cannot come together in person, we can join in virtual celebration!



- **When:** Friday, June 26th, 6:00 to 7:00 pm PDT
- **Where:** The comfort of your chosen environment!
- **Link to join:** <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/95340880319>

The celebration includes award presentations and **individualized recognition of each candidate for the Master of Science in Transportation Management (MSTM).**



Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, an icon in transportation, MTI Board Chair Abbas Mohaddas and MSTM Education Director Dr. Asha Weinstein Agrawal will offer congratulatory remarks to the degree candidates. The Student of the Year from the Class of 2020, Michelle Louie, will be addressing the graduating class as well. Your alumni association president Olivia Rocha will be welcoming all of the students into the alumni association and presenting the 2020 Alumna of the Year Award to Ms. Rachel Donovan.

We invite all alumni, current students, graduates and their families to join us for this virtual celebration. Bring your beverage of choice and let's raise a glass to commemorate this important moment!

To all of our students who have worked so hard to reach this milestone: this night is all about you, your dedication, and your accomplishments!

I look forward to sharing this exciting experience.

Karen

Karen E. Philbrick, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Spotlight on our MSTM Graduates and Their Capstone Projects in 2020

By coincidence, in 2020 we have exactly 20 students completing their Master of Science in Transportation Management (MSTM) Capstone Projects. For the Capstone, students conduct independent research of a topic in transportation policy or management. See some of this year's capstone topics below.

- Ridership Evaluation: Is VTA Experiencing a Ridership Crisis on its Core Bus Routes? (**Rippal Kanda**, Management Analyst, Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority).
- Evaluation of Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's Project Delivery - Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit Construction Project (**Manual S. Borrayo, Sr.**, Communications System Analyst, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority).
- Evaluating whether the City of Oakland's E-Scooter Share Permitting Program's Outreach Efforts Addressed Community Concerns (**Michelle Ruan**, Associate Transportation Planner, California Department of Transportation).
- Empowering the BART Police Department While Fostering a Thriving Relationship between Its Officers, Their Command Staff and the Communities They Serve (**Iesha Gatewood**, Station Agent EDS, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit).
- Assessing the Effectiveness of MTC's Community-Based Transportation Planning (CBTP) Program at Closing Transportation Gaps for Disadvantaged Communities in the Bay Area, (**Patty Boonlue**, Environmental Planner, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority).
- An Evaluation of Bay Area Rapid Transit's Crisis Intervention Campaign to Prevent Suicides and Suicide Contagion on District Property, (**Hayley Deane**, Scheduling Analyst, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit).
- An Evaluation of the City of Palo Alto Provided Commuter Benefits, (**Lorraina Alvarez**, Utilities Customer Service, City of Palo Alto).
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of SamTrans' Route FCX: A Commuter Express Route between Foster City and San Francisco (**Michelle Louie**, Transit Planner, San Mateo County Transit District).
- Evaluating Customer Relations at Transportation Security Administration Checkpoints in United States Airports (**Brandon Barnett**, Lead Transportation Security Officer, DHS Transportation Security Administration).
- Data Privacy in Transportation: Rights and Protections for Consumers in the Ridesharing Industry (**Lemar Karimi**, Analyst, Wilson Sonsini).
- Evaluation of Random Drug Testing in the Trucking Industry: Is It Possible to Cheat? (**William Kang**, Rolling Stock Shop Scheduler, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit).
- Identifying Opportunities to Improve Caltrans' Employee Public Participation Procedures (**Courtney Williams Jr.**, Associate Transportation Planner, California Department of Transportation).
- An evaluation of Microtransit as Paratransit That Can Decrease Service Cost and Increase Service Quality, (**Kimberly Weaver**, Transportation Program Specialist, City County Association of Governments of San Mateo County).
- Railroad Crossing Safety—Section 130 Program Risk Assessment, Effective Treatments, and Quantified Risk Reduction (**Jonathan Huff**, Project Manager, California Department of Transportation).
- Evaluating the Process of "Sustainability Reporting" at Santa Clara Valley Transit Association, (**Abhipsa Mohanty**, Freelancer, Artykraft Private Limited).
- Is Seeking and Obtaining the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies' (CALEA) Accreditation a Beneficial Tool for Law Enforcement Agencies? (**Joshua Perez**, Background Investigator, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit).
- Evaluating BART's Fare Evasion Prevention Program through the Point of View of Station Agents (**Anthony Griffin**, Station Agent, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit).
- San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit Train Cleanliness Issues (**Juan Matta**, Manager of Transit Vehicle Cleaning, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit).
- Improving LA Metro Expo Line On-Time Performance, (**Latasha Sheridan**, LA Metro Manager Rail Operation Control Center).

**Welcome to the ALUMNI
Association! Visit us at
www.mtconnect.org**



Memories from 2019



More photos at www.mticconnect.org



BART Extension to Silicon Valley: Project Update from MTI Alumni



Author: Bernadette Lambert,
JD, MSTM, PMP ('16)

On June 13, 2020 Phase I of the newest BART extension opened amid fanfare live-streamed for the public sheltering in place – and MTI alumni (students and graduates of the Master of Science in Transportation Management (MSTM) program at San Jose State University) were a strong force in making it happen.

Constructed by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), the ex-

tension of BART into Silicon Valley is the result of a unique partnership between BART and VTA decades in the making. Guided by a 2001 Comprehensive Agreement, VTA will be the builder and owner of the extension, while BART will operate and maintain it as an integral part of the overall BART system. The agencies will continue their partnership under a specialized Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Agreement as each phase of the extension enters revenue service.

The Silicon Valley BART Extension is being constructed in two phases. The recently-opened Phase I consists of 10 miles of primarily at-grade trackway with 2 stations and has added 60 new railcars to the BART fleet. Phase II, which currently is undergoing preliminary design, will consist of 6 miles of primarily underground construction with 4 stations and a maintenance yard at the terminus.

It takes transportation professionals from a wide range of disciplines to deliver a project of this magnitude. As the list on the following page shows, MTI alumni are demonstrating their leadership in just about every field. Congratulations on a job well done!

Photos:

1. One of BART's new Fleet of the Future trains sits at the Berryessa Station platform waiting to take dignitaries for an inaugural ride to the Milpitas Station, on June 13, 2020.
2. At the Milpitas Station, participation in the opening celebration continued to be limited due to social distancing orders, but the event was live-streamed to allow participation online.
3. A ribbon-cutting among cheers marked the opening to the Silicon Valley BART Extension.



MSTM Alumni Play Key Role in Bringing BART to Silicon Valley

Many thanks to our MTI students and alumni for serving the community in key leadership roles and helping to make this project a success.

Ann Calnan ('12)
Manager, Environmental Programs
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Environmental clearance and biological mitigation

Bernadette Lambert ('16)
Program Manager, Silicon Valley BART Extension
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Inter-agency coordination; O&M agreement negotiation/ implementation

Brandi Childress ('08)
Media and Public Affairs Manager
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Community and media relations during planning and construction

Denise Patrick ('09)
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Construction/right-of-way safety oversight

Hassen Beshir ('07)
Acting Group Manager, Silicon Valley BART Extension
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Phase I turnover for service and Phase II preliminary engineering

James Chai ('03)
Transportation Engineering Manager
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency
Design and construction management

Jim Helmer ('03)
Professor, Mineta Transportation Institute
Former Director of San Jose DOT
Executive Director, LightMoves
Early planning and design

*Thank
You!*



Joe Basuino ('08)
Principal Right-of-Way Officer
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Right-of-way acquisition and relocation; O&M Agreement negotiation support

Julia MacRory ('17)
Survey and Mapping Manager
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Survey project controls, mapping and right-of-way acquisition support

Mehak Sainj ('18)
Management Analyst
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
ADA Accessibility and Environmental Impacts

Naomi Armenta ('14)
Senior Associate 2
Nelson\Nygaard
Vulnerable community outreach

Rippal Kanda ('20)
Management Analyst
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Transit Center Design (Way finding, real-time information, curb space assignments).

Rowena Ona ('17)
Technical Publications
Administrator
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Technical manuals and project deliverables conformance



William Kang ('20)
Shop Scheduler, Rolling Stock
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Railcar-maintenance process; improvements to accommodate service growth

Congrats to Rachel Donovan, 2020 MSTM Alumna of the Year!

As MTI MSTM Alumni Association President, it is my honor to announce Rachel Donovan as the 2020 MTI Alumna of the Year. Rachel received her MSTM degree in 2011. Rachel has been an active member of the alumni leadership team since graduation and served as our alumni president from 2015 to 2019. She continues to edit the newsletter and manage the alumni web site (www.mticonnect.org). We hope you'll enjoy the article about Rachel and her career, written by MSTM Alumni Vice President Donna Maurillo.

Olivia Rocha '15, MTIAA President



Rachel Donovan ('11)

2020 MTI MSTM Alumna of the Year (AOY)

Rachel Donovan – Climbing High in Her Career

By Donna Maurillo ('11)

If you cross a toll bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area and you see people in hard hats rappelling from the cables or climbing high above traffic, don't be alarmed. You are likely seeing a bridge inspection crew in action. Among them may be MSTM alumna Rachel Donovan. She is the only female bridge inspector at Caltrans currently rope access certified.

Rachel was one of seven children raised by a single mom. Originally from Kansas City, Missouri, the family moved to San Antonio, Texas, when Rachel was ten. Rachel's mom instilled a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility in all of her children. Rachel excelled in school, becoming high school valedictorian and earning acceptance at top universities, including Harvard, MIT, and Yale. She opted to attend Texas A&M University, with costs fully covered by merit-based scholarships. She studied civil engineering at Texas A&M, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees.

"I originally wanted to be a medical researcher. However, at one point, I decided on a career where I could be outdoors. Since I was good at science and math, civil engineering was a logical choice."

Rachel began her career as a student researcher at

the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) in College Station, Texas. After coming to work for the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in Oakland, California, Rachel engaged in planning and design work for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and traffic analysis for bridge and highway widening and intersection improvements. Rachel is a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) in two disciplines, Civil and Traffic. She led Caltrans to be one of the top Bay Area companies in the Team Bike Challenge, multiple years in a row, and was voted Alameda County Bicycle Commuter of the Year (BCOY) IN 2014.

Meanwhile, Rachel set her sights on joining the bridge inspection crew at Caltrans. "I had heard about this job for years, but there weren't many job openings," she said. Thankfully, as luck would have it, she was at a luncheon and heard that a position was available. Knowing that the door would close quickly, Rachel jumped on the opportunity.

... Continued on the next page.

Announcing: the 2020 MTI MSTM Alum of the Year!

... Continued from previous page.



“I love rock climbing and being outdoors,” she said. “And I’m not afraid of heights. So bridge inspection appealed to me. I applied and got the job. Currently, I’m the only woman at Caltrans who is rope-access certified. It’s physically demanding, and you have to be retrained and recertified every year.”

Rachel’s job as Area Bridge Maintenance Engineer requires checking every part of a bridge—from the top of the towers to the concrete footings.

“It’s a colossal job,” Rachel laughed. “Most of our work is based on visual inspection. You keep your eyes open for anything that looks out of place—deterioration, corrosion, steel deformation, concrete spalls, exposed rebar, damage from traffic impact, and other defects.” Rachel knows her way around each bridge, differentiating all the parts—girders, stringers, floor beams, how each bridge is laid out. That’s necessary so she can pinpoint exactly which area needs mending, so the repair crews can easily locate it. A single inspection may involve several weeks, checking every part of the bridge by climbing on ladders or walking on catwalks, using bucket trucks or Under Bridge Inspection Trucks (UBITs), 125-foot man lifts, boats,



“travelers” (carts

that run on rails underneath the bridge), and rope access (rappelling).

In her spare time, Rachel enjoys attending live music shows, reading, knitting, making art, hiking, running, going on bike rides, and swimming. Her husband is the bass player in the Jean Genies, a David Bowie Tribute band. Rachel also maintains an online foodie and activism group with an international following, called Let’s Go Vegan-ish. Rachel is very active with the MTI MSTM Alumni Association, and even has a new hobby because of it ... playing the ukulele. Rachel first became inspired to play ukulele at an MSTM alumni gathering where Walt Allen, former alumni president, brought ukuleles and encouraged everyone to try their hand at strumming a tune. She actively encourages colleagues to enroll in the MSTM program and is fired up about keeping the alumni network alive and strong.



For how many more years does Rachel think she can rappel from bridges? “Quite awhile, I hope,” she reflected. “Climbing

bridges is a good way to stay young!”

Does she plan to climb El Capitan in Yosemite? Her answer is emphatic. “Definitely not!” But if you look up at one of the Bay Area Toll Bridges, you may see her up there, for some years to come.

Congratulations on being chosen as our 2020 Alumna of the Year, Ms. Rachel Donovan!





Memories from One Year Ago! MSTM Class of 2019 Photo Courtesy of Mineta Transportation Institute. See www.mticonnect.org for photos of previous graduating classes and convocation ceremonies.

'til we meet again at the next MTI Banquet!

**2020 MSTM Alumni
Leadership Team**

Olivia Rocha ('15) -
President

Donna Maurillo ('11) -
Vice President

Rachel Donovan ('11) -
*Newsletter Editor and
Webmaster*

Members at Large:

Roger Bazeley ('07)

Walt Allen ('07)

Brandi Childress ('08)

Ward Thomas ('15)

Simon Oh ('16)

Bernadette Lambert ('16)

Want to join the team?

E-mail us at
mticonnect@gmail.com



Alumni, we would love to hear from you! Tell us what you have been up to since you graduated. Tell us about job promotions and career advancements so we can feature you in the Classmate Updates section. Send your update to:

mticonnect@gmail.com.