
POLICY
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SANTA ROSA
2026
SANTA ROSA
PEOPLE
IDEAS
SOLUTIONS
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS
CONFERENCE
GUIDE

This Is More Than a Conference.
This Is the Beginning of Something Extraordinary.

It started with a simple idea:
What if we created the conference we had always dreamed of attending?

A place where passionate people come together—not simply to listen to presentations, but to challenge assumptions, exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and learn from the things that didn't go as planned.

A place where experience meets imagination. Where the smallest idea can spark the biggest breakthrough. Where we can speak candidly about our challenges, learn from one another's journeys, and discover that the solutions we've been searching for may already be taking shape in the minds of the people sitting beside us.

And then, a group of passionate people came together to make it happen.

Together, they built something different. Something designed not just to inform us, but to inspire us to act.

Over three days, we will share what works. We will be honest about what hasn't. We will challenge one another to think differently, dream bigger, and imagine possibilities that may once have seemed out of reach. And then we will do something even more important.

We will begin charting the course to make those possibilities real.

Because Mobility Transformed was never meant to be just another conference.

The true measure of this gathering won't be what happens in these meeting rooms. It will be what happens afterward—in our agencies, in our communities, and in the lives of the people we serve.

We didn't come together simply to talk about the future of accessible mobility.

We came together to build it.

The transformation doesn't end when this conference closes.

It starts here. It starts with us.

And it starts now.

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OPENING GENERAL SESSION

Alexander Valley Ballroom

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH | **12:00 – 1:00 PM**

Mobility TRANSFORMED STARTS NOW



PEOPLE • IDEAS • SOLUTIONS

Join us to launch Mobility Transformed and set the stage for three days of inspiration, innovation, and collaboration to shape the future of paratransit and accessible mobility.

PEOPLE
Stronger communities through accessible mobility.

IDEAS
Bold thinking for real-world solutions.

SOLUTIONS
Turning innovation into lasting impact.

THE FUTURE OF PARATRANSIT AND ACCESSIBLE MOBILITY

Starts Here.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5TH

SESSION 1

Eligibility & Access — Chalk Hill Room — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Beyond Compliance: Using Eligibility as a Strategic Tool for Better Service, Sustainability, & Rider Success

Session Description:

ADA eligibility is often treated primarily as a compliance process: receive an application, make a determination, and issue a decision. But eligibility can do much more.

This session explores how agencies can use eligibility as a **strategic mobility-management tool**—producing better information about rider needs, strengthening conditional eligibility, connecting customers with appropriate mobility options, improving service planning, managing demand, and supporting long-term paratransit sustainability. Panelists will bring perspectives from planning, regulatory compliance, agency mobility services, and regional accessible transportation to examine how a strong eligibility program can simultaneously improve compliance, customer outcomes, and system performance.

Speakers: Tim Payne, David Rishel, Amy Hockman, Delores Lopez, Karen Hoesch
Moderator: Sarah Boden

Elevating the Customer Experience — Sonoma Mountain — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Beyond the Ride: Creating Exceptional Experiences for Riders with Diverse Disabilities

Session Description:

Exceptional accessible transportation requires understanding the tremendous diversity within the disability community. Physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual and developmental, neurological, communication, and non-apparent disabilities can affect every part of a trip differently. Combining national research, disability expertise, frontline transit training, and practical agency experience, this session will examine what riders actually encounter—and how better data, service design, employee training, and communication can create transportation experiences that are predictable, respectful, safe, and responsive to individual needs.

Speakers: Russell Nikiforuk, Pall Beesla, Heidi Ganum, Dr. Yochai Eisenberg, Dr. Ashley Wiley Johnson, Kristi McLoughlin, Zachary Lawton, Michael Walk
Moderator: Eric Liddle

Leadership & Workforce — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 2 — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Boardrooms to Bus Stops: Building Executive and Board Support for Accessible Transportation

Session Description: Accessibility initiatives rarely fail because no one can identify a good idea. They often stall because accessibility has not become an **organizational priority with executive and board-level ownership**.

This session brings together former and current transit board leaders, disability advocates, and senior accessibility professionals to explore how accessibility moves from a specialized program into executive strategy, governance, budgeting, operations, and organizational culture. Panelists will discuss how accessibility leaders communicate with boards and executives, build internal champions, connect accessibility to customer experience and organizational performance, and ensure that riders with disabilities have meaningful influence where major decisions are made.

Speakers: David Rishel, Diane Shaw, Denise Figueroa
Moderator: Flora Castillo

Operational Excellence & Innovation — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 1 — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Accessibility Upstream: Improving Fixed-Route Service to Reduce Paratransit Dependency

Session Description:

Paratransit demand is shaped long before a reservation is made. Bus stops, boarding environments, securement space, wayfinding, customer information, operator practices, and real-time accessibility information can determine whether a rider is able—or willing—to use fixed-route service. This session explores how agencies can invest "upstream" in fixed-route accessibility to expand mobility choices, reduce avoidable paratransit dependency, and improve the overall travel experience for people with disabilities.

Speakers: Nicole Payne, Eileen Collins Turvey, Andi Howell, Tom Wall
Moderator: Todd Hansen

Technology, Funding & Compliance — Russian River Valley Ballroom — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Telling the Mobility Story: Building Public and Political Support for Paratransit Funding

Session Description: Paratransit is often discussed publicly through the lens of cost per trip, even though mobility also supports healthcare access, employment, independence, community participation, and aging in place.

This session will examine how transit leaders can communicate the **evidence, outcomes, and public value** of accessible mobility to governing boards, community stakeholders, funding partners, and public officials. Perspectives will span local government affairs, statewide transportation planning, major-system operations, economic-impact analysis, and national transit policy.

The goal is not political campaigning; it is helping agencies present clearer, evidence-based information about what accessible transportation costs, what it delivers, and the consequences of different funding choices.

Speakers: Randy Johnson, Jameson Auten, Nicole Payne, Art Guzzetti
Moderator: Mark Aesch

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5TH

SESSION 2

Eligibility & Access — Chalk Hill Room — 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Meeting Riders Where They Are: Community-Based Eligibility, Travel Training, Conditional Eligibility & Mobility Services

Session Description: Eligibility does not have to be a stand-alone administrative determination. Done well, it can become the entry point to a broader conversation about **how an individual can travel successfully**.

This session explores community-based eligibility, functional assessment, conditional eligibility, travel training, mobility management, and connecting customers with transportation options beyond a binary "fixed route or paratransit" decision. Panelists representing agencies of different sizes and national accessible-transportation practice will share approaches for meeting riders where they are, identifying functional barriers, and helping customers use the mobility option that best fits their needs and abilities.

Speakers: Justin Rossman, Angelica Magana, Kristi McLaughlin, Denise Capstran Donovan, Michael Bozarth

Moderator: Lisa Womack

Operational Excellence & Innovation — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom — 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Expanding Capacity Through Partnerships: Integrating Supplemental Service and Transportation Providers

Session Description:

Growing demand does not always require a larger dedicated paratransit fleet. Agencies are increasingly expanding capacity through TNCs, specialized providers, community transportation, small transit systems, and even nontraditional partnerships that reduce the need for some trips altogether. This session examines how to build a broader transportation ecosystem around traditional paratransit while protecting accessibility, accountability, rider experience, and regulatory compliance.

Speakers: Charlie Clark, Andi Howell, Rachel Cohen, Todd Hansen, Andre Colaiace

Moderator: Jess Mooney

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5TH

Tech, Funding & Compliance Russian River Valley Ballroom 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Funding the Mandate: Building a Sustainable Financial Future for ADA Paratransit

Session Description:

ADA paratransit is a federally required service, but the financial model supporting it is under increasing pressure from rising demand, labor and operating costs, customer expectations, and changing mobility options.

This executive-level conversation will bring together two very different perspectives on financial sustainability: a major transit-agency CEO responsible for balancing mobility, customer expectations, and limited public resources; and a transportation-company CEO whose career has centered on transformation, restructuring, operational performance, and organizational change.

Rather than focusing only on how to find more money, the conversation will ask a harder question: **What must the paratransit operating and financial model look like if it is going to remain sustainable for the next decade?**

We have intentionally kept this panel small because we want it to be a substantive conversation about transformation, not another discussion about how expensive paratransit has become.

Mark Aesch brings an especially important perspective because he has actually led an organization through fundamental change. When he took over in Rochester in the wake of the Rochester decision, he inherited an agency that had to rethink how it operated, measured performance, managed resources, and demonstrated value. He knows firsthand that transformation requires more than cutting costs—it requires questioning longstanding assumptions about how the business should work.

Debra brings a similar transit leadership perspective from RTD, where she has been driving organizational transformation around community value, customer excellence, employee ownership, and financial success.

And then there is Harry, whose experience goes well beyond transportation. In addition to the transformation he is now leading at MV, his work with the U.S. Treasury Auto Task Force and the restructuring of General Motors gives him an extraordinary perspective on what it looks like when an industry reaches the point where incremental improvement is no longer enough.

If the traditional financial trajectory of ADA paratransit is not sustainable, what do we actually have to change? Not how do we shave another percentage point off the budget—but what assumptions, operating models, incentives, partnerships, measures, and business practices have to be fundamentally reconsidered?

Speakers: Harry Wilson and Debra A. Johnson
Moderator: Mark Aesch



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Get your questions answered and explore how their solutions can support your program goals.

CONNECT

Build relationships and identify potential next steps for future collaboration.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH
4:45 – 6:00 P.M.

ALEXANDER VALLEY BALLROOM

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH
MORNING PANEL DISCUSSION

Alexander Valley Ballroom

Breakfast Served
7:00 – 7:45 AM

Panel Discussion
8:00 – 9:00 AM

The Silver Wave IS COMING

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America is getting older — and the transportation implications are enormous. Join our expert panel for a thought-provoking conversation on how transit agencies, partners and communities can prepare for the silver wave with innovative solutions, strategic planning and a focus on equity, independence and quality of life.

PEOPLE

Understanding the changing needs and expectations of today's and tomorrow's riders.

SOLUTIONS

Exploring innovative approaches, services and partnerships to expand access and meet growing demand.

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Aligning transit, healthcare, aging services and community partners to create more connected systems.

OPPORTUNITIES

Turning demographic change into possibility — building a more inclusive, accessible and age-friendly future for all.

TODAY'S IDEAS CAN HELP BUILD A
More Connected Tomorrow.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6TH

SESSION 3

Eligibility & Access — Chalk Hill Room — 9:15 a.m. -10:45 a.m.

The Unintended Impacts of Innovation: Planning for Demand-Induced Growth in ADA Paratransit Eligibility

Session Description: Innovation can make paratransit dramatically more attractive: easier booking, improved reliability, same-day or on-demand options, better technology, and greater customer choice. Those improvements are good for riders—but they can also change behavior, increase utilization, and create new interest in ADA paratransit eligibility.

This session examines the **demand side of innovation**. How should agencies forecast eligibility growth when service becomes more convenient? How do new service models affect applications and utilization? And how can agencies innovate without creating capacity and financial pressures they did not anticipate? Panelists will share lessons from systems pursuing modernization while simultaneously managing eligibility, demand, customer expectations, and sustainability.

Speakers: Michael VanDekreke, Ross Silvers, Matthew Weidner, Elizabeth Wiesner
Moderator: Sarah Boden

Elevating the Customer Experience — Sonoma Mountain — 9:15 a.m. -10:45 a.m.

Building Mobility Partnerships: Language Access, Cultural Responsiveness, and Community Trust

Session Description:

Accessible transportation is only truly accessible when people can understand it, trust it, and feel confident using it. Language, culture, disability, age, technology access, and previous experiences with public institutions can all influence whether someone successfully connects with transportation. This session explores how agencies can move beyond translation and traditional outreach to build trusted community relationships, culturally responsive customer service, and mobility programs designed around the people they serve.

Speakers: Justin Rossman, Angelica Magana, Jarice Rodriguez, Javaun Garcia
Moderator: Kim Petty

Leadership & Workforce — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 2 — 9:15 a.m. -10:45 a.m.

Promising Practices for Building a Strong Accessible Transit and Paratransit Workforce

Session Description: Accessible transportation depends on people—operators, technicians, reservationists, dispatchers, schedulers, eligibility professionals, customer-service representatives, travel trainers, supervisors, analysts, contract managers, and leaders.

This session moves beyond the traditional discussion about filling vacancies to examine how agencies can build a **stronger accessible-transportation workforce**. Panelists will explore recruitment, retention, career pathways, frontline leadership, changing workforce expectations, disability-friendly hiring, and how agencies can make transit a place where people build careers rather than simply take jobs.

Speakers: Daniel Whitehouse, Mary Liz McNamara, Michelle Witman, Nick Davidson
Moderator: Shayna Gleason

Operational Excellence & Innovation — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 1 — 9:15 a.m. -10:45 a.m.

From Reactive to Predictive: Using Data and Analytics to Improve Paratransit Performance

Session Description:

A dashboard can tell you what failed yesterday. The real opportunity is using data early enough to prevent tomorrow's failure. This session explores how agencies can move from descriptive reporting to predictive and prescriptive decision-making—forecasting demand, identifying emerging service risks, understanding travel patterns, coordinating resources, and using analytics to improve performance before riders experience the problem.

Speakers: David Hatch, Lewis Lowry, Heidi Ganum, Sean Powers
Moderator: Mark Aesch

Technology, Funding & Compliance — Russian River Valley Ballroom — 9:15 a.m. -10:45 a.m.

Smarter Operations: Using AI and Automation to Enhance Scheduling, Dispatch, and Customer Service Without Losing the Human Connection

Session Description:

AI and automation are rapidly moving into everyday paratransit operations—from scheduling and dispatch to eligibility, customer communications, forecasting, analytics, and service recovery. But technology creates value only when it solves a real operational problem and improves the rider experience.

This fast-paced session will bring together multiple technology and operating perspectives to examine where automation is delivering measurable value, where human judgment remains essential, and how agencies should evaluate new tools without simply adding another layer of complexity.

Speakers: Chad Ballentine, Rob Bryans, Sam Haas, JoLynn Dixon, Stephanie Doughty, Sean Powers
Moderator: David Rishel

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH

INNOVATION Showcase

IDEAS TODAY.
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11:00 AM – NOON

THREE INNOVATIONS IN EACH ROOM | 20 MINUTES EACH

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FIND YOUR INNOVATION!

EXPLORE INNOVATIONS BY TOPIC IN THESE ROOMS:

Eligibility & Access Innovations
Chalk Hill

Elevated Customer Experience
Sonoma Mountain

Operational Excellence & Service Innovation
Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 1

Technology, Policy, Funding & Compliance
Russian River Valley Ballroom

MOBILITY TRANSFORMED

The Future of Paratransit and Accessible Mobility Starts Here

2026

THE FUTURE WON'T FIT IN OUR CURRENT MODEL.

So Let's Build a New One.

PEOPLE

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A MORE CONNECTED TOMORROW



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED 12:15 – 1:15 PM

Alexander Valley Ballroom

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6TH

SESSION 4

Eligibility & Access — Chalk Hill Room — 1:30p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Beyond the Visible: Assessing and Supporting Riders with Hidden Disabilities and Neurodivergence in Paratransit Systems

Session Description: Not every transportation barrier is visible. Autism, ADHD, intellectual and developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, psychiatric disabilities, sensory-processing differences, and other non-apparent disabilities can affect communication, executive functioning, orientation, decision-making, sensory tolerance, and the ability to respond when something unexpected occurs.

This multidisciplinary session explores how eligibility professionals and transportation agencies can more accurately assess functional ability and better support riders whose needs may not be readily apparent. Panelists will connect functional assessment, neurodivergence, real-world operations, and large-scale eligibility practice to help agencies move beyond diagnosis or appearance and understand the conditions under which a person can **safely, reliably, and independently travel**.

Speakers: Kristi McLaughlin, Dr. Ashley Wiley Johnson, Jarice Rodriguez, Arthur Hulscher
Moderator: Stephen Kuban

Elevating the Customer Experience — Sonoma Mountain — 1:30p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

From Input to Impact: Building Community Engagement That Shapes Accessible Transportation

Session Description:

Transit agencies routinely ask riders and communities for feedback—but meaningful engagement is measured by what happens next. This session explores how agencies can move from collecting comments to giving riders genuine influence over policy, technology, service design, accessibility investments, and customer experience. Panelists will share approaches to reaching voices traditional engagement may miss, using lived experience as expertise, connecting community feedback to internal decision-makers, and closing the loop by showing participants what changed because they engaged.

Speakers: Haleema Bharoocha, Justin Rossman, Charley Cohen
Moderator: Jeff Maltz

Leadership & Workforce — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 2 — 1:30p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

From Operations to Influence: Building the Next Generation of Accessibility Leadership in Paratransit

Session Description: Many of the industry's strongest accessibility leaders did not begin their careers with "accessibility leader" in their title. They came through operations, planning, paratransit, customer service, consulting, and management—building credibility by solving real problems and eventually influencing policy, organizations, and the national industry.

This candid conversation will examine how the industry identifies, develops, mentors, and advances the next generation of accessibility leaders. Christian Kent and David Rishel will explore the skills that matter beyond technical ADA expertise: operational credibility, communication, executive presence, relationship-building, courage, mentorship, succession planning, and the ability to translate complex accessibility issues into organizational action.

The session will also challenge established leaders to consider their responsibility for creating opportunities, opening doors, and intentionally developing the people who will lead after them.

Speakers: Christian Kent & David Rishel

Operational Excellence & Innovation — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 1 — 1:30p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Designing for Productivity Without Sacrificing the Rider Experience

Session Description:

Paratransit agencies face intense pressure to improve productivity and control costs—but efficiency gains only matter if the service remains reliable, understandable, and acceptable to riders. This session brings together agencies and operating partners using different technology platforms to examine how scheduling, routing, pooling, provider management, and operational discipline can improve productivity while preserving customer trust.

Speakers: Cassandra West, Elizabeth Wiesner, John Lewis, Rob Bryans
Moderator: Tanya Castle

Technology, Funding & Compliance — Russian River Valley Ballroom — 1:30p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

More than a Ride: Building Healthcare Partnerships That Improve Funding, Mobility, and Health Outcomes

Session Description:

Transportation is frequently the link between a patient and healthcare—but transit agencies often bear the cost of trips that generate value across the healthcare system.

This session will examine how transit, healthcare providers, specialized mobility companies, Medicaid and human-service systems can build partnerships that improve access to care while creating more sustainable funding models. Panelists will explore healthcare transportation as a social determinant of health, assisted and specialized transportation, Medicaid partnerships, patient discharge and care coordination, and the opportunity to better align who benefits from transportation with who helps pay for it.

Speakers: Kim Petty, Eileen Collins Turvey, Dr, Molly Shane, Carrie Diamond
Moderator: Eric Liddle

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6TH

SESSION 5

Eligibility & Access | Chalk Hill Room | 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Know Your Rider: Turning Eligibility Data into Better Mobility Choices

Session Description: Agencies collect an extraordinary amount of information during ADA eligibility: functional abilities, mobility-device use, communication needs, environmental barriers, conditions of travel, and circumstances under which a rider may or may not be able to use fixed route.

Then, too often, all of that information gets reduced to a single field: **eligible, conditionally eligible, or not eligible.**

This session explores how agencies can turn eligibility information into **actionable mobility data**—supporting conditional eligibility, individualized service, travel training, trip-level decision-making, rider accommodations, technology integration, and better mobility choices. The conversation will examine both the opportunities and the responsibilities involved in using rider information more intelligently.

Speakers: Chad Ballentine, Jarice Rodriguez, Sam Haas, Sean Powers
Moderator: Steve Yaffe

Elevating the Customer Experience | Sonoma Mountain | 3:30p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Connected & Confident: Helping Riders Navigate the Digital Paratransit Experience

Session Description:

Digital tools can make paratransit easier—online reservations, apps, text notifications, real-time vehicle information, digital payments, and self-service trip management. But technology only improves the rider experience when customers can understand, access, and confidently use it. This session explores how agencies can modernize the digital paratransit experience without leaving behind older adults, people with disabilities, riders with limited digital literacy, or customers who still need human assistance. Panelists will share practical approaches to technology adoption, rider education, accessible design, and creating a seamless experience across digital and human service channels.

Speakers: Charlie Clark, Cole Samaroo, Derek Fretheim, Charley Cohen
Moderator: Dmitriy Vanchugov

Leadership & Workforce — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 2 — 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Building a Culture of Accessibility: From Agencies to Employees to Community Partners

Session Description:
Accessibility cannot live in one department. The strongest transportation organizations build accessibility into how employees are trained, how leaders make decisions, how projects are designed, how operations respond to customers, and how agencies engage with disability communities.

This session explores what it takes to move from accessibility as the responsibility of an ADA office or paratransit team to accessibility as an organization-wide culture. Panelists will examine internal champions, employee engagement, disability employee resource groups, leadership expectations, accessibility built into planning and operations, community partnerships, and how riders and people with lived experience help agencies identify barriers staff may never see on their own.

Speakers: Eileen Collins Turvey, Chris Pangilinan, Erin McAuliff
Moderator: Ron Brooks

Operational Excellence & Innovation — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 1 — 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Connecting the Mobility Ecosystem: Integrating Services, Technology, and Partnerships Across Communities

Session Description:

Riders do not experience transportation in organizational silos—but our services, technology, funding, and data often operate that way. This session explores how agencies and regional partners can connect paratransit, microtransit, human-service transportation, assisted rides, mobility management, and other services into a more seamless mobility ecosystem. Panelists will share lessons from national research and real-world regional integration efforts focused on coordination, shared technology, one-call/one-click access, and making the system easier for riders to navigate.

Speakers: Todd Hansen, Mark Evanoff, Daniel Whitehouse, Kristin Lam Peraza
Moderator: Chris Margaronis

Technology, Funding & Compliance — Russian River Valley Ballroom — 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Beyond Compliance: Monitoring ADA Paratransit Performance, Managing Risk, and Driving Continuous Improvement

Session Description: ADA compliance should not be something an agency discovers through a complaint, lawsuit, or federal review. High-performing programs build systems that continuously monitor service, identify emerging risk, investigate patterns, initiate corrective action, and measure whether interventions worked.

This session will examine how agencies can connect complaints, denials, missed trips, trip lengths, call-center performance, contractor data, capacity indicators, and operational metrics into an active **risk-management and continuous-improvement system**—moving beyond proving compliance toward preventing systemic failures before riders experience them.

Speakers: David Rishel, Mike Greenwood, David Hatch
Moderator: Davd Chia

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Cocktails & CONVERSATION

THINKING DIFFERENTLY *with* MARC MOLINARO

Former FTA Administrator



Friday, November 6th

5:15 – 5:45 PM

Alexander Valley Ballroom

Immediately preceding the Networking Reception



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH
NETWORKING RECEPTION

Alexander Valley Ballroom

Appetizers Will Be Served

5:45 – 6:45 PM

Santa Rosa WINE MIXER

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Join fellow attendees, speakers, partners and friends for an evening of great conversation, local wines and community as we continue to build partnerships and move accessible mobility forward — together.

PEOPLE
Build new connections across the industry.

IDEAS
Share insights and spark new collaborations.

PARTNERSHIPS
Strengthen relationships to support a more accessible and connected future.



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TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITIES.

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Mobility Transformed

THE FUTURE OF PARATRANSIT AND ACCESSIBLE MOBILITY STARTS HERE

ALEXANDER VALLEY BALLROOM

WHAT IF DRIVING WAS NEVER AN OPTION?

Reimagining a World Where Everyone Can Move Freely



FEATURING

Anna Zivarts

Author of *When Driving Is Not an Option* and Founder of the Nondrivers Alliance

SATURDAY MORNING

BREAKFAST WILL BE SERVED
7:15 AM – 8:15 AM

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2026

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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7TH

SESSION 6

Eligibility & Access — Chalk Hill Room — 10:00 a.m. – 11:30a.m.

Beyond the Bus Stop: Reimagining ADA Paratransit Eligibility Through Pathway Review, Open Sidewalks, and Environmental Accessibility Data

Session Description: ADA paratransit eligibility has traditionally focused on the functional abilities of the individual—but a person's ability to use fixed-route transit is also shaped by the environment between their origin, destination, and the bus stop. Missing sidewalks, steep grades, inaccessible intersections, construction, distance, and other pathway barriers can make an otherwise accessible trip unusable.

This session explores how agencies can bring pathway review, Open Sidewalks, environmental accessibility data, and operational knowledge into more informed eligibility decisions. Panelists will examine how better environmental data can strengthen conditional eligibility, improve consistency, support trip-by-trip determinations, and help agencies distinguish between individual functional limitations and barriers created by the built environment.

Speakers: Matthew Weidner, Dr. Anat Caspi
Moderator: Dwight Sanders

Elevating the Customer Experience — Sonoma Mountain — 10:00 a.m. – 11:30a.m.

AI Behind the Ride: Using Automation to Improve Efficiency, Operations & Customer Service

Session Description:

Artificial intelligence and automation are rapidly moving from experimentation into everyday paratransit operations. Agencies are using new tools for scheduling, dispatch, customer communications, analytics, workflow automation, eligibility, and service management—but successful implementation requires more than adopting technology. This session examines where AI and automation can meaningfully improve efficiency and customer service, where human judgment remains essential, and how agencies can evaluate whether technology is solving real operational problems rather than simply adding complexity.

Speakers: Dr. Manish Shirkgaokar, Elizabeth Wiesner, Sean Powers
Moderator: Stephen Kuban

Leadership & Workforce — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 2 — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Building Accessibility into the Accessible Transit and Paratransit Workforce

Session Description: Transit agencies devote tremendous attention to making transportation accessible—but are our workplaces themselves equally accessible?

This interactive session examines what it takes to create workplaces where employees with disabilities can successfully apply, onboard, communicate, perform their jobs, request accommodation, use technology, advance, and lead. Panelists will explore physical and digital accessibility, inclusive communication, workplace culture, disability awareness, recruitment and hiring, accommodations, employee training, and the difference between complying with employment requirements and intentionally building an organization where disabled professionals can thrive.

The session challenges an important assumption: accessible service and accessible employment should be part of the same organizational mission.

Speakers: Pia Dimayuga, Eileen Collins Turvey, Mary Liz McNamara
Moderator: Ron Brooks

Operational Excellence & Innovation — Dry Creek Valley Ballroom 1 — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Paratransit 2.0: Designing Service Delivery Models for the Future

Session Description:

Traditional paratransit was designed around a dedicated fleet, advance reservations, and a fairly uniform service model. Today, agencies are experimenting with on-demand options, taxis and TNCs, integrated mobility platforms, flexible service tiers, and customer choice. This session explores how agencies are redesigning paratransit around a broader portfolio of service options—and what it takes to modernize without sacrificing accessibility, reliability, or equity.

Speakers: Rachel Cohen, Erin McAuliff
Moderator: Chris Pangilinan

Technology, Funding & Compliance — Russian River Valley Ballroom — 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Contracting for Outcomes: Managing Paratransit Providers for Quality, Efficiency, and Equity

Session Description:

A paratransit contract can contain hundreds of requirements and still fail to produce the outcomes riders and agencies need. This session examines how agencies and providers can move beyond contract administration toward **outcome-based partnerships** that align incentives, clarify accountability, manage risk, encourage innovation, and improve customer experience. Agency, provider, and consulting perspectives will explore procurement design, meaningful KPIs, compensation structures, corrective action, performance incentives, equity, and what both sides wish they understood before the contract was signed.

Speakers: Lisa Womack, Nick Davidson, Tim Payne, Susan Starwalt
Moderator: W.C. Pihl

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APTA PARATRANSIT TASK FORCE WORKGROUPS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2026
1:00 – 3:00 PM

Join your colleagues for focused discussions on key paratransit topics. These workgroups provide an opportunity to share insights from the conference and help inform the ongoing work of the **APTA Paratransit Task Force.**

Eligibility and Certification Work Group

Assessment practices, consistency, neurodivergence, conditional eligibility, and rider communication.

CHALK HILL BALLROOM

Best Practices in Paratransit Operations / Customer Satisfaction

Operational excellence, customer experience, and strategies to improve service delivery.

SONOMA MOUNTAIN BALLROOM

Fixed Route Service: Barriers & Impediments to Accessibility

Identifying barriers, best practices, and solutions to improve accessibility on fixed-route systems.

DRY CREEK VALLEY BALLROOM 2

Contracting and Partnerships

Innovative models, partnership opportunities, and effective contracting strategies.

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY BALLROOM

Re-examining the Paratransit Model

Exploring new approaches, service models, and emerging trends to meet future mobility needs.

DRY CREEK VALLEY BALLROOM 1

ALL ARE INVITED!

Transit agency staff, community partners, riders, and all conference attendees are welcome to participate in any workgroup.

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