



## Memorandum

**To:** Todd Muck, Deputy Executive Director  
**From:** Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner  
**Meeting Date:** June 27, 2018  
**Subject:** 2018 WTS International Conference

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On May 16-18, 2018, I attended the WTS International Conference in San Diego, CA. This was an excellent networking opportunity with transportation professionals around the country. Sessions I attended included the following:

- **Tour: Cross Border Xpress (CBX) and Otay Mesa Port of Entry**
  - CBX is an enclosed pedestrian skywalk bridge exclusively for Tijuana Airport passengers who cross the U.S./Mexico border as part of their trip. The CBX skywalk bridge connects the San Diego suburb of Otay Mesa to the Tijuana Airport, providing an alternative to the San Diego Airport, whose operations are geographically and temporally constrained, situated in downtown San Diego.
    - The CBX was a privately funded/ financed \$120 million project whose operations are mostly covered by parking/rental car/concession fees.
    - Originally conceived of in the 1980's, once funded and permitted (by two nations as well as the State of California and other oversight bodies), it took two years to construct and opened in 2015.
  - The freight border crossing at Otay Mesa currently includes four separate checkpoints – Mexican customs, Passport control, US customs and finally the CHP/Caltrans/CA Air Resources Board checkpoint looking for polluting vehicles, outdated registration tags, or vehicle imbalance. Trucks spend several hours in line even if they are not pulled over for random checks.
    - Caltrans and San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) have a project to streamline the border crossing for goods movement at a new facility east of the current facility. The new project, "Otay Mesa East", was funded through the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program.
- **Equity and access for women in transportation**
  - A panel of leaders in the transportation industry kicked off the conference with advice to attendees on how to be an advocate for women in transportation field. They discussed the barriers and challenges that women face in the workplace and recommended developing relationships, networking, mentoring, volunteering, and questioning assumptions and social norms. The speakers stressed the importance of pushing for inclusivity and diversity in meetings and committees.
  - The lunch keynote speaker, Lauren Leader-Chivee, discussed the disparity of women represented in political bodies throughout the country, noting that despite the fact that

US women's academic achievements have bypassed men's for the last 30 years (women earn more undergraduate degrees than men in every field except engineering), the US is #96 worldwide in the equity of women's representation in politics. She encouraged attendees to become more active politically and presented her project, "All In Together" (<https://aitogether.org>), an organization "committed to ensuring women's voices are fully represented in political and civic life".

- **Funding and Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

- One panel discussed road user charges(RUC), a.k.a., vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees.
  - Oregon is the only state in the US that has implemented a VMT program substituting for the gas tax (in 2015), following a long study period that included two pilot projects. Their current program uses both a GPS device and one that is more low-tech, just counting mileage, and they're reviewing the new technology options on the market.
  - Other states have done pilot programs, including California which completed its RUC pilot program last year. Delaware led a pilot program across 16 states plus the District of Columbia for the I-95 corridor that also looked at interoperability with toll roads and variability in gas taxes across state lines.
  - Colorado's pilot program (completed in 2017) explored the rural and urban impacts of RUC, finding that while rural drivers may drive more miles, generally they drive less fuel-efficient vehicles than their urban counterparts. Since the RUC program would credit any paid fuel taxes back to the motorist, most rural drivers may see a positive impact from participating in a RUC program.
  - All speakers stressed the importance of outreach and communication/ education on the project's needs and goals, and the security protocols that will protect users' identities.
- A second panel comprised of Californians discussed self-help efforts, Senate Bill 1, Regional Measure 3 (a Bay Area toll measure), public private partnerships and other funding mechanisms. They also discussed looming challenges, including how automated vehicles and ride sharing services are impacting mobility and land use, especially parking.

- **Transforming California – A Future of Resilience and Sustainability from the High-Speed Rail Authority**

- This panel discussed how the CA High Speed Rail project will help the state enact the vision of reducing greenhouse gas emissions via a modal shift to rail.
- Even before operations on the rail line begins, the mega project is incentivizing its construction teams to upgrade their equipment to state-of-the-art, more fuel-efficient equipment, which should also help them be more competitive on future projects.

The program of the conference is available on the website,  
[https://www.wtsinternational.org/assets/1/7/WTS\\_final\\_program\\_2018-web3.pdf](https://www.wtsinternational.org/assets/1/7/WTS_final_program_2018-web3.pdf).