

# Access to Opportunity through Equitable Transportation

## Speaker Biographies

**Carrie Cihak** is the chief of policy for the King County Metro Transit Department in Washington State. Leading evidence-based practice and academic partnerships for one of the largest public transit agencies in the United States, she guides the agency's focus on mobility outcomes and impact, particularly for people with low incomes. Previously, she served for eight years as chief of policy for the King County executive, where she was responsible for identifying the highest-priority policy areas and community outcomes for leadership focus and for developing and launching innovative solutions to complex, controversial, and cross-sector issues. She has served as sponsor for the county's nationally recognized work on equity and social justice and architect of several county initiatives, such as Best Starts for Kids. Cihak also served for eight years as a senior-level policy and budget analyst for the King County Council and as lead staff for the King County Board of Health. She is trained as a doctorate-level economist and served as a staff economist on international trade and finance for President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. She is currently a research affiliate at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and was their first government policy fellow in 2017–18.

**Samuel Jordan** is the president of Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC). Jordan founded BTEC in 2016 to complete the Baltimore Red Line light rail project and recover its transformative economic benefits for the Baltimore and the African American, Hispanic, low-income, and transit-dependent communities adversely affected by the project's cancellation in 2015. He has conducted community livability, issue organizing, and skills training programs in Baltimore and Washington, DC, over the last 12 years. As an adviser to the DC Department of Transportation, Jordan was honored by the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association in 2013 for his community livability tool, Community Livability Outreach Advisors. A signatory of the Baltimore Red Line Community Compact and founder and executive director of the Ward 7 Development Advisory Council, Jordan served as an outreach and planning volunteer on the Red Line light rail project from 2007 until its cancellation in 2015. More recently, he acted as a community resource in the Transportation and Climate Initiative. In this capacity, he represents BTEC, transit advocates, and their communities in shaping the initiative's "cap-and-invest" mechanism for addressing transportation's role in disproportionately pollution-burdened "frontline" communities across the state. Currently, BTEC is taking the initial steps to establish a regional transportation authority by amendment to the Baltimore City Charter.

**Andrés Martínéz** is director of policy and communications for Conexión Américas, where he works closely with the executive director and senior leadership to maximize the organization's influence and impact on relevant public policy issues at the local, state, and national levels. Before joining Conexión Américas, Martínéz worked at the Texas Civil Rights Project in Austin, coordinating civil rights lawsuits aimed at positively affecting policy and defending the civil rights of minority and low-income Texans. In Nashville, Martínéz also serves on the board of directors of Nashville Pride and the Oasis Center. He was also elected by the Metropolitan Council to serve on Nashville's new Community Oversight Board, which he currently chairs. Martínéz holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in public policy from the Hertie School in Berlin.

**Christina Plerhoples Stacy** is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she specializes in urban economics and inclusion. Her work focuses on the intersection of economics and urban spaces and how housing, local economies, health, and crime interact. Stacy is currently leading a randomized controlled trial of an unconditional and conditional cash transfer program aimed at reducing youth violence and studying whether and how local zoning reforms can increase housing supply. She is also leading an effort to measure the spatial mismatch between job seekers and employers using big data from Snag, the largest online job search engine for hourly workers. In addition, she recently managed an effort to measure inclusion in US cities. Currently, she leads the development of a transportation inclusion index for metropolitan regions throughout the US, with the goal of producing a tool cities can use to equitably track and improve transportation. Stacy is also coleading an evaluation of the new markets tax credit program, and she is part of a team evaluating Economic Development Administration investments. She recently completed an evaluation of the cost effectiveness of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Work demonstration. Stacy earned her bachelor's degree from Boston College, master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and doctoral degree in agriculture, food, and resource economics from Michigan State University.

**Colleen Synk** oversees communications, evaluations, and trainings as the operations coordinator for the Michigan Safe Routes to School program at the Michigan Fitness Foundation. She is passionate about bringing her background in collective impact strategies and community-led programming to her role as a grant coordinator advising communities through the planning and engagement requirements in the federal aid process. Synk holds a bachelor's degree in exercise science from Michigan State University and a certificate in food systems, the environment, and public health and master's degree in health education and health communication from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.