



The Equity Newsletter | March 21, 2022

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY? WOMEN ARE MORE THAN A MONOLITH

In commemoration of Women’s History Month, the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging is continuing its *How Do You Identify* series. This interactive and educational discussion series is designed to nurture staff belonging through conversations about identity and equity, while highlighting the diversity of the MTA workforce.

This month’s theme, *Women Are More Than a Monolith*, will center on women of various intersectional identities and their experiences navigating society, political arenas and the workplace. We will gather **in-person** on **Tuesday, March 29th**, from **12:30 PM – 2:00 PM** at **1SVN 2nd Floor Atrium**.

We encourage you to join us for this interactive and engaging conversation.

The SFMTA Office of Racial Equity and Belonging presents:

How Do You Identify? Women Are More Than A Monolith

An Interactive Discussion featuring Guest Speakers from across the Agency



March 29, 2022
12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

**1 South Van Ness Ave.,
2nd Floor Atrium
San Francisco, CA 94103**

Open to Staff from 1SVN, Flynn,
TMC, 7th Street, 10th Street
and 15th Street

This is an in-person event. Masks are required. Contact equity@sfmta.com for more information.

**Interested in Speaking at Future *How Do You Identify* Events?
Contact the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging**

The Office of Racial Equity and Belonging is looking for speakers to participate in our upcoming *How Do You Identify* events. If you are interested in being a speaker or want to nominate someone, please email equity@sfmta.com and CC Jeremy.Brooks@sfmta.com by the respective deadlines listed below:

- Speakers for **Middle Eastern Heritage Month: April 4**
- Speakers for **Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month: May 2**
- Speakers for **Pride: June 6**

CELEBRATING WOMEN STAFF AT THE SFMTA

What does it mean to be a woman in transportation?

It means that as a woman, I have a voice in a very important aspect of transportation movement in my city.

Being African and [having] moved to San Francisco...in the 80s...I consider myself as a native of San Francisco. I started my career in 2002 as a Transit Operator...and in addition, I was a Transit Supervisor. My Transit Operator experience has shaped my way forward as Black professional...I believe that Transit Operators are the true representative of SFMTA. As a Black professional in public transportation, I feel that I stand on a great foundation. From my experience as a [Transit] Operator, I know firsthand what being underserved looks like and most importantly, I never thought it was possible to be sitting here today as a Transit Manager but now that I'm here, I feel it's my duty and responsibility to make sure to assist others by improving the customer experience of our daily ridership and providing equitable access to opportunities to everyone.



Omozele Biggins
Training Manager IV
Transportation &
Training Instruction

What do you love about being a woman?

It means that I am a very special being, that was blessed to give life through childbirth and excel as a special being, being a woman today.

What does racial equity mean to you?

It means that everyone, regardless of race will be treated equally.



Kate Toran
Director of Taxi,
Access & Mobility
Services

What does racial equity mean to you?

To me, racial equity is the commitment and ongoing practice of seeing the divine beauty in all humans, of learning and understanding the historical context of diverse groups and of working to correct past injustices. It is the most important work that we can be doing, and I'm so thankful for the leadership of Josephine and the [Office of Racial Equity and Belonging] team.

What do you love about being a woman?

As a lesbian and a person who identifies as gender diverse, I am honored to participate in Women's History Month, and I love my two mom/ two daughter family that I am blessed to have helped create.

What does it mean to be a woman in transportation?

When I think of women in transportation, I go back to Harriet Tubman and her role as the conductor of the Underground Railroad, and understanding that transportation is about liberation and freedom, especially for those who have not had full access.

WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH CABLE CAR RECAP

The Office of Racial Equity & Belonging (OREB) and Transit, Cable Car Division are partnering on the design of a series of racial equity-themed cable cars. This initiative will include staff connection and volunteer activities to decorate a series of culturally affirming, commemorative exhibits on racial, ethnic, identity, ability and awareness themes.



On Monday, March 14th, 2022, women across the MTA workforce gathered for an inaugural staff connection, appreciation and networking ride with guests from our MTA Board of Directors. Women staff representing various divisions and scopes of work gathered to explore the launch of the Cable Car exhibit, before participating in a ride around the city.



The gathering launched with a welcoming from Fred Butler, Josephine Ayankoya, Jeff Tumlin and Julie Kirshbaum, which included celebratory remarks for our colleague, Catrena Brown, who recently made Cable Car history when she became the fourth Cable Car gripwoman in over 150 year of history. Check out *The San Francisco Standard's* [recent video feature](#) on Catrena Brown ! Catrena Brown operated the ride with Cable Car Conductor Ismael Afonso.

Along the ride which included music, laughing and bonding, attendees intercepted Gripwoman Willa

Johnson (pictured right) operating another Cable Car route (with Conductor Kevin Grady). Ms. Johnson made history as the second Cable Car gripwoman in our agency's history.



As Chair Gwyneth Borden reflected at the March 15, Board of Directors [meeting](#) (item 6), "It was wonderful to see so many amazing women operators and grip women and others across SFMTA. We only wish more people could have actually been there because it was such an amazing day, and it was a wonderful show of support of women in SFMTA, and it never made me prouder to be part of this family."

Thank you to every woman who joined the Women's Herstory Month Cable Car inaugural ride, as well as the women who submitted a photo and quote to support the decoration efforts of the cable car."

Special thanks to:

- **MTA Board of Directors (MTAB):** Christine Silva, Chair Gwyneth Borden, Vice Chair Amanda Eaken, Director Sharon Lai and Director Stephanie Cajina
- **Transit Division:** Catrena Brown, Fred Butler, Frank Zepeda, Val Lupiz, Arne Hansen, Ismael Afonso, Cable Car Division, Julie Kirschbaum, Leda Rozier, Myra Phillips, Douglas Lee, Jasmin Charles, Lanair Haynes, Romarr Pitcher, Brent Jones
- **Communications, Marketing & Outreach:** Creative Services
- **Streets Division:** Daryl Robinson, Nilesh Ram and Kimberly Burrus
- **Taxis, Accessibility & Mobility Services:** Kate Toran
- **Human Resources:** Romika Williams and Kimberly Ackerman
- **Office of the Director (including OREB):** Jeremy Brooks, Josephine Ayankoya, Jeffrey Tumlin

We are excited to continue curating staff belonging and appreciation with our year of Inaugural Cable Cars!

Share Your Input & Get Involved with the Racial Equity Cable Cars

The Transit, Cable Car Division and Office of Racial Equity and Belonging will be hosting a series of staff meetings to finalize the theme and design of forthcoming racial equity Cable Cars, including:

- **April** | Middle Eastern Heritage Month
- **May** | Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- **May** | Cinco de Mayo
- **June** | Pride
- **June** | Juneteenth

These meetings will be scheduled between **Thursday, March 24 to Friday, March 25** and held virtually via Microsoft Teams. If you would like to participate in one of the upcoming meetings, please email Fred.Butler@sfmta.com and cc equity@sfmta.com. If you are interested in joining one of the inaugural rides, or want to nominate staff to attend, you can email the same contacts to RSVP.

CELEBRATING WOMEN STAFF AT THE SFMTA



Michele Brewster
Transit Fare Inspector
Supervisor/Investigator
Sustainable Streets, Proof of
Payment

What do you love about being a woman?

"Being a woman is comprised of multi-faceted characteristics—endurance, wisdom, knowledge, sensitivity, strength—all accented with grace and femininity."



Kate McCarthy
Public Outreach &
Engagement Manager
External Communications,
Marketing & Outreach, Public
Outreach & Engagement
Team

What does racial equity mean to you?

"Social Mobility requires transportation mobility. Centering my work on operationalizing transportation equity is a means to address social mobility and access for the communities we serve in San Francisco and the Bay Area."



Jasmin Charles
Subway Operations Manager
Transit Operations

What does it mean to be a woman in transportation?

"Transit Operations is a male dominated industry from the front line staff up to upper management, and being a woman in transit sometimes means being the only woman on a team, project or with a group. As a woman in transit, I stand strong and do not waiver from providing my input, voicing my opinions or striving towards change."



Ammee Alvior
Deputy Senior Operations
Manager
Transit, Transit Management

What do you love about being a woman?

"As women, we wear many hats for many people on any given day. But through it all, we thrive! I am grateful to be a confident, courageous, compassionate and resilient woman."

JOIN THE OREB TEAM! APPLY FOR THE OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND BELONGING FELLOWSHIP

Applications for the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB) Fellowship are due next **Friday, March 25th**. Thank you to all staff who have already applied!

[Staff can submit applications to the OREB Fellowship through the online application.](#)

We look forward to welcoming new members to the OREB team!



The OREB Fellowship is a 12-month networking and professional development program for staff across all SFMTA divisions. The 2022 cohort will be the first of many to gain verifiable work experience supporting racial equity projects through participation on multidisciplinary teams that represent the diversity of the SFMTA workforce.

Staff working swing shifts, OWL shifts and early morning shifts will be accommodated, so anyone interested is encouraged to apply by the March 25th deadline.

CELEBRATING WOMEN STAFF AT THE SFMTA



Katherine Trajano
Welder
Transit, Potrero Division

What does it mean to be a woman in transportation?

"Being a woman in transportation maintenance represent a path to equality. The physical characteristics under the welding hood shouldn't matter. It's the quality of my repair that transports passengers safely."



Aleta Washington
Division Manager, Islais
Creek
Transit Operations

What do you love about being a woman?

"I take pride in being a disciplined woman who is always striving for better in the face of adversity and willing to stand up for what I believe in no matter the cost."



Grace Kong
Performance and Analytics
Manager
Office of Chief of Staff

What does racial equity mean to you?

"Going beyond diversity towards more meaningful and authentic inclusion and belonging."



Sienna Dunn
Transit Supervisor
Subway Operations

What does it mean to be a woman in transportation?

"Leadership comes with respecting our team members. Being a woman in the transportation sector means breaking generational gender barriers while paving the way for a limitless future."

MISS AN EQUITY NEWSLETTER? CATCH UP ON THE OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND BELONGING WEBSITE



The [Equity Newsletter section](#) of the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging website contains a complete archive of previous publications of *The Equity Newsletter*. All publications are available in accessible PDF format.

Visit [SFMTA.com/Equity](https://sfmta.com/Equity) for additional information about racial equity work at the agency!

The Equity Newsletter provides key updates regarding the SFMTA Racial Equity Action Plan as well as information about equity work at the agency (including upcoming events, trainings and suggested educational resources) to the SFMTA workforce, Board of Directors and stakeholders.

The Equity Newsletter is published by the
Office of Racial Equity & Belonging: equity@sfmta.com