



## **COMTO Toronto and Region celebrates 50 member milestone; expands national reach of COMTO's newest chapter**

*Diversity and inclusion effort grows alongside COMTO T&R momentum in Canadian transportation*

**Toronto, Ontario, Canada – December 7, 2020:** Today, the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (“COMTO”) celebrated the Toronto and Region (“T&R”) Chapter’s milestone achievement of 50 new members. Formally launched October 1, 2020, the Toronto & Region chapter is COMTO’s first outside the U.S., marking its first venture into cross-border programming.

Since launching, the T&R Chapter has actively pursued program deployment and membership development, welcoming members from across Canada and spanning the entire transportation industry. Members of all backgrounds and all professions in transportation belong in T&R, with every voice valued and welcome at the table. The chapter was founded by members from the Toronto Transit Commission (“TTC”) and New Flyer Industries Canada ULC (“New Flyer”).

“I could not be prouder of the team driving and developing COMTO Toronto and Region,” said Annette Safarlie, COMTO T&R President and TTC Director of Shared Services. “We set out to make a difference, and we did – and continue to do so – but there’s more work to be done. I extend a warm welcome to all new members, and look forward to connecting our industry leaders with the people, discussions, tools, and programs we need to more forward as a more diverse and inclusive industry.”

COMTO T&R is driven by three priorities: conducting outreach and giving back, encouraging students to pursue a career in transportation sector, and advocating for meaningful participation of underrepresented groups in transportation.

In the short time it has existed, COMTO T&R has spearheaded community outreach, industry collaboration, and conference program development, including participation with CUTA, CUTRIC, and WTS. Its first community outreach initiative involved a backpack drive that surpassed a goal of 150 to instead donate 861 backpacks full of school supplies to marginalized communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Greater Toronto Area. Recently, COMTO T&R announced its Holiday Angels Sponsor a Family Program (supporting Indigenous families in need of support), and will soon reveal its virtual winter speaker series. In 2021, the chapter plans to undertake scholarship development as well.

“We believe diversity moves the nation – and that no matter where you’re from – there’s a place for you to succeed in transportation,” said Freddie Fuller, National Chair, COMTO. “As our first international venture, the Toronto and Region chapter has illustrated passion, tangible action, and dedication to its mission. COMTO National congratulates Toronto and Region on its rapid ascent to 50 members, and looks forward to the critical dialogue it will continue leading as the Canadian transportation industry adopts and embraces greater diversity and inclusion from coast to coast.”

Today, COMTO has more than 34 chapters across North America, representing professionals from all modes of the transportation industry. For nearly five decades, it has delivered leadership training, professional development, scholarship and internship funding, advocacy, partnership building, and networking opportunities. In 2021, COMTO will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



COMTO welcomes people of all backgrounds, cultures, genders, and roles as members – every person working in transportation from operators to chief executives. COMTO membership categories include individuals, students, transportation agencies, corporations, academic institutions, non-profits, and historically underutilized businesses (“HUBs”), including disadvantaged business enterprises (or “DBEs”).

Benefits of joining COMTO Toronto & Region are fivefold. Members can anticipate:

- Programming: take in regular programming on diversity, inclusion, workforce development, and more (through events, speakers, and forums).
- Networking: meet industry peers and pros across the Canadian transportation industry, eager to learn and grow with likeminded goals around inclusivity.
- Learning: take in educational content and dialogue on all things diversity and transportation, and strengthen your toolbox to create and navigate a more inclusive world.
- Participating and leading: through panel sessions, guest speakers, industry forums, and more, seize the opportunity to participate in national discussion and shape the future of our industry.
- Supporting and elevating: through initiatives that support our industry and community, we can support, create opportunities for, and help to elevate others (through fundraising, community outreach, scholarship development).

For more on COMTO Toronto & Region, visit [comtotorontoandregion.ca](http://comtotorontoandregion.ca). To sign up as a member, visit the COMTO National website at [members.comtonational.org](http://members.comtonational.org).

### **About COMTO**

Founded in 1971, COMTO is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing success for underrepresented individuals in the transportation industry. With over 34 chapters in the U.S. and Canada, COMTO is driven by a mission to ensure opportunities and participation in transportation for minorities, veterans, people with disabilities, and certified MWDBE (minority, women, or disadvantaged-owned) businesses through leadership training, professional development, scholarship and internship funding, advocacy, partnership building, and networking opportunities. In 2021, COMTO will celebrate 50 years of ensuring the advancement of minorities in transportation and advocating for the communities they serve. For more information, visit [comtonational.org](http://comtonational.org).

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