

Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. is an award-winning transportation expert and leading advocate for using autonomous vehicles (AV) and other advances to improve the quality of life for travelers throughout the nation. His proven track record as a change agent and visionary who embraces state-of-the-art technology and innovations has made him a highly sought-after advisor, consultant, and executive coach.

Ford began his stellar career at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York, where he learned every facet of the industry before he went on to become CEO of two of the 10 largest transportation authorities in the US - the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) in California, and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) in Georgia.

Those positions gave Ford the distinction of ushering in industry firsts – the first 100% transit smart card and multimillion dollar transit-oriented development at MARTA, and the first real-time smart parking app and oversight of a regional authority spearheading a multibillion development in San Francisco, to name a few. That expertise and forward-thinking was the compass that helped guide Ford when he was named CEO of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA). Since joining the JTA in 2012, Ford has been lauded for leading the total transformation of the mid-sized Authority from a local company focused on buses, roads, and bridges, into a best-in-class, regional organization that is held in high regard locally, nationally, and even globally.

One of the Ford administration's crowning achievements is developing an autonomous vehicle program centered on the JTA's Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C). This cutting-edge innovation was in the world spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic when the JTA partnered with autonomous vehicle providers to transport COVID-19 tests for Florida's esteemed Mayo Clinic. Phase I of the U²C, the Bay Street Innovation Corridor, is under construction, with full deployment of the autonomous vehicles scheduled for Summer 2025.

Ford served as the 2022 Chair of the prestigious Transportation Research Board (TRB), a division of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that promotes innovations, technology, and transportation research. He is a former chair of the influential American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Currently, he serves as National Ambassador, USA, for the Union Internationale des Transports Publics (UITP) Policy Board, on the Board of Directors of ITS America, on the Board of Advisors for UC Davis, Institute of Transportation Studies, and on the Board of Directors of TEAMFL.

Ford's influence extends beyond the national level, as evidenced by his participation in study missions to various countries. His global perspective, gained from providing consultation and advice about transportation policy, management, and sustainable infrastructure development in Australia, Canada, China, England, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Sweden, has enhanced his value to corporate boards and commissions.

In recognition of his immense dedication to enhancing transportation services with compassion and innovation, he received the 2023 Sharon Banks Award for Humanitarian Leadership in

Transportation earlier this year. Ford has received multiple awards and recognitions throughout his career due to his outstanding leadership, including the Honorable Ray LaHood Award from the Women's Transportation Seminar of Northeast Florida in 2022 and the "2020 Outstanding Public Transportation Manager" by APTA. In 2019, he was inducted as a "Thought Leader" by the Eno Center for Transportation, and in 2016, Ford was named a "White House Champion of Change in Transportation" by the US Department of Transportation for embracing innovations and improving the quality of all modes of transit, the same year that under his leadership the JTA received the "Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award" by APTA.

Always committed to the community he lives in, Ford serves on the boards of multiple non-profit organizations, including the Sulzbacher Center, Baptist Hospital, Jacksonville University's Davis College of Business & Technology, and Goodwill Industries of North Florida, where he served as Chair from 2021 to 2024.

Ford has an MBA from Jacksonville University's Davis School of Business. He also has a Bachelor's degree in Applied Science in organizational leadership from Mercer University and is a certified Master Executive Coach. He graduated from the Executive Development Consortium Program at Emory University and has completed executive training at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.