

Debra A. Johnson
General Manager and CEO
Regional Transportation District (Denver, CO)



Debra A. Johnson serves as the General Manager and CEO of Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD), the only multi-modal transit agency within the Denver metro region, encompassing 2,342 square miles and serving a population of over 3 million. She joined RTD in 2020, becoming the first woman to lead the agency in its more than half-century history. She previously served as Deputy CEO of Long Beach Transit, where she served from May 2014 to October 2020. Prior to that, Johnson served as the Chief Operations Officer at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), as well as other C-Suite positions at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). She began her career in the public transportation space at an engineering consulting firm, performing work on various capital improvement projects, and transitioned to roles in the public transit for Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and later the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

Johnson holds a master of arts degree in public administration from California State University, Hayward (now CSU East Bay) and a bachelor of arts degree in international relations from the University of California, Davis. A member of the WTS International Board of Directors, she also serves in leadership roles in several transit-related organizations, including the American Public Transportation Association and many of the association's committees, the American Public Transportation Foundation, the WTS International Board of Directors, and the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials Colorado (COMTO) Chapter Advisory Board. Additionally, she is a member of the Front Range Passenger Rail District Board of Directors, the Visit Denver Community Board, the Metropolitan State University of Denver Community Cabinet, the International Women's Forum of Colorado, the Denver Civic Ventures Board, and the Chief organization for women executive leaders.

As an active COMTO member for more than a quarter century, Johnson has been a member of the Northern California, Southern California, Washington, D.C., and Colorado chapters. She served as president of the Northern California chapter from 2011 to 2012 and as the executive advisor to the Southern California chapter from 2014 through 2020. A recipient of numerous accolades and awards over her distinguished 30-plus year career in transportation, Johnson was named by the Southern California COMTO chapter as one of 10 "Women Who Move the Nation" in 2019 for her work in women's advocacy and was awarded the Outstanding Transportation Executive Leadership Award – Women Leaders of California in March 2016.