

Statement of Interest | **Andisheh Ranjbari**

I grew up in a large city with severe traffic congestion. Having faced long queues of vehicles, air and sound pollution, crazy driving maneuvers, accidents, and tired and angry drivers every day on the streets, made me become a big fan of public transit; and I believe many more people would switch to transit if there was a satisfactory service in place. Moreover, there are seniors and people with disabilities who could not drive, or those who simply dislike driving, and all would very much appreciate a high-quality high-coverage public transit system.

Over the past seven years, I have been working toward improving public transit from different aspects, and being influenced by the ever-increasing demand for intercity travel and the pressing need for a viable intercity public transportation system, I am now working on a new public transit solution for accommodating future intercity travel demand in a way that no other mode has done so far. Existing modes such as air, rail, and bus services have respective limitations, and none can address high-speed, high-capacity, and high-accessibility at the same time. “Flexpress” is our proposed flexible and high-speed intercity transit service that is conceived and designed to accomplish these three major operating characteristics, and so, is believed to fill the present service gap. I have been working on this idea for more than two years now, and have recently gave a couple presentations and invited talks at different meetings and conferences which have received great support from the community, local government and many professionals and stakeholders. My passion and commitment to solve public transit problems resulted in being recognized by American Public Transit Association (APTA) as “A promising leader who will shape the future of public transportation industry”, and I was awarded the American Public Transit Foundation 2015 Parsons Brinckerhoff Jim Lammie scholarship.

During this time working on Flexpress, along my involvements in leadership roles in ITE and WTS local chapters, I got the opportunity to meet with many local- and state-level transportation leaders in Arizona, and benefited from their support and constructive feedbacks to improve my work, as well as their insights for my professional career. I learned that in addition to substantial technical research, an important part of bringing Flexpress and any other new/improved concept into reality is policy developments, regulations and management. And I believe that Eno conference will help me gain insights in those areas at local, regional and federal levels and learn about creating possibilities and managing situations, which would benefit my current research, as well as any other research that I might pursue in future.

Moreover, as I prepare to develop a career in transportation and enhance my network of professionals, I further understand the importance and advantage of networking with professionals and leaders both within my immediate interest and other related disciplines -specially because of the interdisciplinary nature of the transportation field-, and learn from their experiences, perspectives, and knowledge. Looking at previous years’ conference agenda, I am excited about all the possible training and networking opportunities at Eno conference and have no doubt that it would be a fantastic experience for me, and help pave the way for my professional growth, by developing my knowledge, enhancing my leadership and management skills, and enabling me to network with professionals and leaders from different disciplines, as well as other graduate students, who certainly have their own unique perspectives to make a difference in the field of transportation and will be the future leaders of this industry.