



Trains, Planes,
Automobiles: The
American Transportation
Project, 1937-2023

TRANSIT

MUNUC 37

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

I am excited to welcome you onto the cabin, cart, and cab of Planes, Trains, Automobiles: The American Transportation Project, 1937-2023. I am Harper Schwab, and I will be your chair for MUNUC this year!

I am a fourth year at UChicago double majoring in Data Science, and Human Rights. I was born in Northern California and moved to North Carolina when I started middle school. While I cannot fly a plane or conduct a train, I have been driving since I was 16, which makes me more than qualified to be your chair. Outside of MUNUC, I compete with the college Model UN team, and I am also a CD for ChoMUN, UChicago's collegiate conference. Outside of MUN, I spend my free time looking for live music, working various jobs, and going on adventures around Chicago.

For conference, I would like to stress the importance of creating and maintaining a collaborative and inclusive committee environment throughout the days of the conference. Model UN is a chance to learn and work together and it is collaboration and leadership that will prove to be successful in committee above all else. As for the subject of debate, it is important to remember that social, political, and historical norms of the time of committee will not be tolerated by Victor, Sophia, or I in the front or backroom. Delegates should approach the committee from the perspective of the modern day, and work towards transforming how American transportation works throughout the ages.

Given the dynamic nature of the topic, we want to ensure that the format of the committee is as clear as possible. If it ever is unclear in the background guide, please reach out to us! I am most excited to see

how delegates find ways to build their portfolio through the different topics and am preparing transit puns as you read this.

As always, feel free to contact Sophia, Victor, or I with any questions or concerns about the committee. And please take a look at MUNUC's wonderful resources to learn more about Model UN and the Crisis style that we will use throughout the weekend. We look forward to seeing how the committee will progress through debate and the backroom as we learn what can be done while moving at a speed faster than walking.

See you soon,

Harper Schwab

hwschwab@uchicago.edu

CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTERS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to The American Transportation Project, 1937-2023. My name is Sophia Ktsanes, and I will be serving as one of the Crisis Directors of this committee.

I am a third-year at the University of Chicago studying Political Science, Quantitative Analysis, and Russian. I am also a cadet in the United States Air Force and have a passion for language and travel. I have experience participating and running various crisis committees at both high school and collegiate levels, but I am particularly thrilled to run this topic with you all in the coming year.

This committee has a unique structure as our sessions will be divided across three different time periods, each focusing on a different sector of the American transportation system. In the backroom you will have the opportunity to utilize your character's background and resources to pursue your desired ends, and while the generalities of your role will remain the same you will be expected to effectively translate those goals and adapt yourselves to new circumstances.

It is critical that we as a committee remain cognizant of the time periods we are acting in. We expect you all to adhere to the values of this conference, and respect the views and beliefs of others without exception. We also recommend you spend time familiarizing yourself with the material in order to facilitate the best discourse possible. That being said, I would challenge you all to think beyond the restraints of history, and work to shape the world in new ways.

I am very excited to engage in scandal and intrigue with you all. If you have any questions about expectations, preparation, our slate, or anything else under the sun, please do not hesitate to contact me at sktsanes@uchicago.edu.

See you all soon!

Sophia Ktsanes

Dear Delegates,

Get ready to hitch a ride, hijack, and hitchhike on Planes, Trains, Automobiles: The American Transportation Project, 1937-2023. My name is Victor Brown, and I will be one of your CDs for MUNUC this year!

I'm a fourth-year at the University of Chicago studying Data Science and Computer Science. The more astute amongst you may ask, what does Model UN have to do with either of those majors? The answer is absolutely nothing. As a frequent driver, a friend of someone with their pilot's license, and someone familiar with three different train systems across two continents, some would call me overqualified for this momentous role. Besides staring at a computer for hours on end, I am one of the managers of UChicago's hottest student run café: Harper Café (@realharpercafe on Instagram) where you can find me chatting up regulars and playing Pitbull on aux.

The entirety of my ChoMUN, MUNUC and competitive Model UN Team involvement can be traced back to the phrase "You want to stay in a free hotel for the weekend?" during my first year from my co-exec (and roommate) Harper Schwab right before ChoMUN. As someone who has experience in both hosting and competing, I understand the stress that comes with competing. However, nothing is more important than ensuring that you and your fellow delegates are inclusive, kind and respectful of all ideas. We will be looking above all for thoughtful collaborative interactions throughout the weekend.

I want to emphasize that social, political, and historical norms of the time of committee will not be tolerated by Harper, Sophia, or me neither in the front nor in the backroom. There is no excuse for any kind of offensive, racist, homophobic, or prejudiced behavior of any kind.

We understand that the style of the committee is slightly more involved, and as a result we want to ensure that our explanation is as clear as possible. If it ever is unclear in the background guide, please reach out to us! I can't wait to become one with the triform of transportation, as I'll have used all three kinds of transportation from the time of writing this to conference thanks to a flight home to Austin, the 12 hour drive from Chicago to New York, and the daily New York City subway commute!

Please feel free to contact Harper, Sophia, or I with any questions or concerns about the committee, and please take a look at MUNUC's wonderful resources to learn more about Model UN and the Crisis style that we will use throughout the weekend. Otherwise, we can't wait to watch you knock our socks off this year, and we're prepared to cover any fines the TSA, Department of Transportation, or a police officer throws your way!

Fly, ride and drive to your heart's content,

Victor Brown

victorfbrown@uchicago.edu

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

Frontroom

The frontroom of Trains, Planes, Automobiles: The American Transportation Project, 1937-2023 will operate in accordance with standard crisis directive procedure. At the start of every crisis cycle delegates will respond to a 'break' acted out by committee staffers which shall describe a set of problems that committee members must solve. By handwriting directives, committee members will create in writing their personal solution to solve the problems laid out in the crisis break. Proposed moderated caucus' will allow delegates to speak on their solutions and determine potential collaboration. Unmoderated caucus will provide time for directive mergers. Upon the elapsed unmoderated caucus, delegates will be expected to submit a merged directive to the dias. Following submission, delegates will have the opportunity to propose for, and against speeches and voting procedure. Finally, after voting staffers will return to the committee room to act out the next crisis break.

Delegates can additionally expect timed crises, where a time limit will be set on the passing of merged directives for particularly pressing matters to committee. During these timed crises, some rules of procedure may be adjusted, with all changes clearly communicated to committee members.

Above all else, the dias expects teamwork, collaboration, leadership, and respect to be at the forefront of all personal actions. Additionally, the dias expects that all members work to create a lighthearted atmosphere throughout the weekend and is willing to make adjustments to ensure enjoyment and growth throughout all sessions.

Backroom

This committee will operate on a two-pad system for the duration of the weekend. On each notepad delegates will carry out two separate goals for their personal character called an “arc”. Generally, these actions should be purposed towards disrupting the committee and shaping the issues that committee is focused on.

The two-pad system dictates that delegates will have one back room notepad with crisis staffers at all times, with exchanges occurring roughly every 40-30 minutes. Speed and pace of note collections will be communicated and adjusted throughout the weekend in accordance to comfort of the delegates and pace of the committee arc. Joint personal directives (JPD) are backroom notes which are completed with three or more delegate’s input. JPDs are traditionally more concise and mimic the nature of a directive rather than a personal crisis note. JPDs are submitted with a committee member’s crisis note on a separate sheet of paper. If needed, examples of crisis notes, JPDs and further explanation can be provided by committee staff, before or during the conference. Feel free to reach out to any dias member by email listed in the background guide or committee website.

Timeline

Throughout the weekend, committee members will switch the position of their characters except for name and position title. Meaning character organization shall change throughout the weekend. This is to accommodate the untraditional nature of the committee topic. For example, “Jane Doe, Logistics Coordinator, Ford Motor Company Board of Directors”, could become Jane Doe, Logistics Coordinator, Ted Stevens Board of Directors”

Committee will operate in chronological order of historical events: General Motors Board of Directors, 1937, Ted Stevens Airport Board of Trustees, 1988, Norfolk Southern Board of Directors, 2023.

As a throughline, delegates' arcs and frontroom directives from each day will have an effect on the next, making each topic, while distinct, contribute to the American Transportation Project. For example, delegate Jane Doe, Logistics Coordinator may focus on their backroom arc in the General Motors arc on establishing modern GPS technology.

When the topic switches, the delegate may continue with their GPS related actions. The change of powers between each topic will be relayed to each delegate using a provided note at the start of a topic change committee session.

Expectations Regarding Special Mechanic

The time and location of the committee will change at the start of each day of substantive session, with Thursday, Friday, and Saturday all corresponding to the three committee topics. An outstanding delegate arc will consist of direct connecting goals between all three topics that attempt to change the "American Transportation Project" direction.

If there are any questions on the committee mechanic, feel free to contact committee staff and we shall ensure clear instruction is provided.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

On the penultimate day of 1936, workers at General Motors started a strike at Fisher Body No. 2, a plant in Flint, Michigan. They shut off their machines and sat down, beginning a protest against unfair working conditions and demanding GM recognize the United Automobile Workers union as their bargaining agent in negotiations. The United Automobile Workers union, also known as UAW, was founded in 1935 to improve conditions at GM. Unbeknownst to those participating in the strike at the time, they were about to revolutionize American labor relations¹.

Forming a union was met with fierce opposition from GM, who initiated spying campaigns and fired those who attempted to organize. After the formation of the UAW, organizers began planning strikes to draw attention to their working conditions. Taking inspiration from sit-down strikes from fellow European auto workers, they decided to sit in the factory to force GM to stop production. A sit-down strike allowed workers to prevent “scabs” (a term used to scornfully describe those who work despite a strike) from taking over unmanned machines. As a result, strikers relied on food and support from their family members, significant others, and the public.

The strike was initially peaceful, but the president of GM refused to negotiate with the strikers as he wanted them to leave the plant before striking a deal. The management was also wary of sending in police to arrest the workers due to concerns that expensive machines in the plant would be damaged. After almost two weeks of the sit in protests the police attempted to restrict food delivery into the plant. In protest, strikers launched car parts, and water from fire hoses at the police from inside the plant. Police officers

¹ Meyersohn, Nathaniel. “How an Auto Workers Strike 87 Years Ago Transformed America | CNN Business.” CNN, September 17, 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/17/business/sit-down-uaw-strike-america/index.html>.

retaliated by firing buckshot and tear gas back at them. Dozens were injured, and the retaliation finally ended when strikers got control of the gates to the plant and the police retreated.²

Michigan governor Frank Murphy called in the National Guard in an attempt to maintain peace, but he famously refused to order them to use any force against the workers striking.

*Michigan Governor Frank Murphy (middle) conversing with then-UAW President Homer L. Martin (left) and head of United Mine Workers of America John L. Lewis amid mass auto strikes.*³

² Cathy Gentry. "Flint Sit-down Strike." Sloan Museum and Longway Planetarium. Accessed August 11, 2024. <https://sloanlongway.org/flint-sit-down-strike/>.

³ Harris & Ewing. "In auto strike limelight. Washington D.C. Labor Secretary Frances Perkins with Governor Frank Murphy of Michigan were in another conference today with labor leaders in an effort to settle the auto strike situation." right: Homer L. Martin, of the Automobile Worker's Union; Governor Frank Murphy, and John L. Lewis, Head of the CIO." (1937), Library of Congress. <https://picryl.com/media/in-auto-strike-limelight-washington-dc-labor-secretary-frances-perkins-with>

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

U.S Labor

In the 1920s, the labor movement's strength was diminished by business boosterism and conservative Republicans. When the Great Depression hit, union membership in the state declined, and strikes were increasingly rare between 1920 and 1933. Thus, the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 revived the labor movement. This act gave workers the right to join unions, and activists seized this opportunity to restore the creation of labor unions. In 1934, there were notable campaigns and strikes across the nation.

The most significant strike of the decade happened on May 9, 1934, in Washington, Oregon, and California. Longshoremen organized a walkout that shut down ports for almost 3 months, creating a supply crisis for Alaska and Hawaii and freezing trade along the entirety of the West Coast. While this occurred, San Francisco and Seattle both had strikes, with at least one union death in Seattle in battles between strikers and police. This strike was victorious for the longshoremen's union and a significant boost for unionism on the West Coast.⁴

Several others took inspiration from this strike. Teamsters used this momentum to expand their representation from primarily Seattle to representing truckers from the Canadian border to the Mexican one. Other notable groups that were inspired include loggers, sawmill workers, sailors stewards, pilots, and several others.

The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 also revitalized the labor movement, reinforcing the NIRA's promises and granting workers and unions expanded rights. However, an internal conflict

⁴ Gentry, "Flint."

developed, often referred to as "labor's civil war," as unions divided themselves into several different groups based on ideological differences and engaged in fierce battles for membership and contracts. Despite this, organized labor continued to strengthen in the 1930s.

Unions became more than just improved wages and working conditions; they became an important hallmark of democracy as they challenged the notion that providing voting rights was sufficient. Membership symbolized progress, and it expanded to more than blue-collar workers, including teachers, retail employees, and hospitality workers.

Like the American people, the Great Depression couldn't weaken the labor unions. The organization and legislation passed in the 1930s laid a proper foundation for the labor movement and remain relevant to this day.

Gm History

General Motors (also known as GM) started as a holding company for Buick on September 16, 1908, by William C. Durant. Durant was known to be a skeptic of automobiles, believing that the loud sounds of the engines combined with the foul smell of burnt fuel, and as a result, he refused to let his daughter ride in an automobile and was the largest seller of horse-drawn vehicles at the time. However, when there was a public outcry about weak regulation of gasoline-powered horseless carriages, Durant decided to take on the opportunity to improve the safety of this mode of transportation⁵.

Durant bought Buick and used his prior funds from Durant-Dort Carriage Company, which had made him a millionaire, to fortify Buick's finances. In 1909, GM acquired several companies, including

⁵Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "William Crapo Durant." Encyclopedia Britannica, April 24, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/money/William-Crapo-Durant>.

notable names such as Cadillac and Oakland, which was the predecessor of Pontiac. Durant also attempted to buy Ford but fell short by \$2 million. After overleveraging GM in making acquisitions, Durant was removed by the board of directors in 1910 by request of the bankers who backed the loans that were responsible for keeping GM in business. GM then became reincorporated in 1916 as a public company by an initial public offering.

Durant co-founded Chevrolet with Louis Chevrolet, a famous race driver in November 1911, and by 1917 Chevrolet was successful enough for Durant to reacquire a controlling interest in GM with the backing of Pierre S. du Pont. On May 2, 1918 Chevrolet Motor Company was consolidated into GM and Durant regained control of General Motors. However, in 1920 du Pont removed Durant and replaced him with Alfred P. Sloan, an American business executive in the automotive industry.⁶ As a main competitor to Ford Motor Company, GM decided to differentiate themselves. This led to the establishment of annual model changes, creating the perception of “dated” previous years’ models. This allowed GM to create a market for used cars. GM also established a pricing strategy that had Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick and Cadillac priced from least to most expensive.

Sloan, the GM President at the time, acquired Vauxhall Motors and an interest in Yellow Cab Manufacturing in 1925. The president of Yellow Cab Manufacturing Company, John D. Hertz then joined the board of Directors of GM.⁷

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Gary Hoover. “The Greatest Businessman in American History: Alfred P. Sloan, Jr..” Business History - The American Business History Center, August 1, 2022. <https://americanbusinesshistory.org/the-greatest-businessman-in-american-history-alfred-p-sloan-jr/>.

Society

Despite the lack of disposable income, the American people still found ways to entertain themselves. A big part of the entertainment industry was listening to the radio, and by 1938, around 80 percent of American households had them⁸.

Listeners preferred broadcasts that contrasted greatly with the depression, such as soap operas, sporting events, and comedy programs. To shed their troubles, there was also swing music, which allowed Americans to get lost in the music.

In a less healthy but more traditional way of avoiding problems, Prohibition ended in 1933, which meant that the legal sale of alcoholic beverages was now possible. This led to people flocking to cocktail lounges and barrooms to make up for 13 years of illegal drinking.

Despite lack of accessible funds, Hollywood movies were still the rage, especially now that they were being produced in color. Notable films included “The Wizard of Oz”, “Casablanca”, “It’s a Wonderful Life” and “Gone with the Wind”. “Gone with the Wind” remains the highest grossing film of all time, with a worldwide gross of \$4.3 billion adjusted for inflation⁹.

Economy

Overview

The economy in the 1930’s was anything but enviable. Following Black Tuesday, the stock market crash on October 29, 1929 marked the end of economic prosperity for the United States, and the beginning

⁸ History.com Editors. “1930s: Music, Movies & Great Depression - History.” History.com. Accessed August 11, 2024. <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/1930s>.

⁹ History, “1930s.”

of a much darker chapter. Historians claim that the stock market crash was inevitable, citing uneven purchasing power and wealth distribution in the 1920's, agricultural hardships, and the instability of World War I.¹⁰

Agricultural Hardships



Dust Storm approaching Spearman, Texas, Spring 1935¹¹

Agricultural hardships were caused by natural disasters, namely the Dust Bowl. The Dust Bowl occurred as a result of severe dust storms that destroyed the ecology of American prairies. A “perfect storm” of severe drought and failure to prevent wind erosion as a result of settlers led to the intense destruction of

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹“Dust Bowl 1935.” MyEyeSees, 2008. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/myeye/page9>

the land. The effects of World War exacerbated the damage, decreasing the supply of wheat, driving prices up, and encouraging farmers to increase their cultivation dramatically, which led to overfarming¹².

Natural Disasters

The Dust Bowl was not the only natural disaster that caused intense economic damage to the United States in the 1930s, as the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane struck the southeastern United States in September. This was the most intense Atlantic hurricane on record at the time regarding barometric pressure, leading to severe economic damage. All in all, damage to crops, infrastructure, and housing totaled \$100 million, which, adjusted for inflation, accounts for just about \$2.3 billion in 2024 dollars.

Despite Roosevelt's focus on domestic policies, many argue that World War II was responsible for ending the great depression¹³. As World War II came to an end, the United States economy was in full boom. Americans who had been encouraged to save during the war were saving an average of 21% of their disposable income by 1945, a far cry from a 3% average in the 1920's. As U.S factories shifted from wartime to peacetime production, automobiles began being produced at an incredible rate to keep up with increased demand. Car sales quadrupled between 1945 and 1955, popularizing automobiles in pop culture.

The United States reached its most prosperous years following World War II. Gross National Product (GNP) skyrocketed to \$300 billion by 1950, a \$100 billion increase from just 10 years prior. By 1960, it was up to \$500 billion, solidifying the United States' position as the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world. This booming economy led to an increase in optimism nationwide.

¹²Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Dust Bowl." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 9, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dust-Bowl>.

¹³Ibid.

Government

Herbert Hoover, the president of the United States at the beginning of the great depression was heavily criticized for a perceived slowness to respond to several events that led to economic downfall. Hoover's political opponent Franklin D. Roosevelt called this the "hear nothing, see nothing, do nothing government". Capitalizing off of this criticism, Roosevelt promised to use the power of the federal government to create the New Deal, a set of policies that hoped to restart the economy. The American people, desperate for economic recovery, voted him in with a sweeping victory. Roosevelt supported the nation's banks by providing money and then he proposed several other reforms. Within 6 months, Roosevelt and Congress were able to pass 15 major laws in an attempt to reshape many aspects of the American economy¹⁴.

Roosevelt's Inaugural Address

Roosevelt's government also established the Civilian Conservation Corp, a program designed to give employment to millions of young people on environmental projects. This was considered a highly successful part of the New Deal program, with achievements including planting more than three billion trees and constructing shelters and trails in more than 800 parks nationwide. These accomplishments did a lot for the confidence of the American people, and were one of the most successful parts of the New Deal.¹⁵

With this growing confidence of the American people, Roosevelt doubled down on the New Deal with The Second New Deal. This was due to the fact that despite restoring American confidence, his initiatives did not end the depression. These new policies were even more aggressive, and hoped to put an

¹⁴ History, "1930s."

¹⁵ History.com Editors. "Civilian Conservation Corps." History.com. Accessed August 11, 2024.
<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/civilian-conservation-corps>.

end to the years of the depression endured. Roosevelt created the Works Progress administration, which created jobs for unemployed people by building public works such as post offices, schools, highways and parks. Roosevelt also passed the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, and arguably one of the most famous acts in American history, the Social Security Act of 1935.¹⁶

The Social Security Act of 1935 created a federal safety net for unemployed, elderly, and disadvantaged Americans and was best known for paying benefits to retirees older than age 65 based on payroll tax contributions.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt Signing the Social Security Act Into Law, 1935¹⁷

¹⁶ History, "1930s."

¹⁷ Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:IBM thrived thanks to the New Deal, Computer History Museum, Mountain View, California, USA (49502013527).jpg," Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:IBM_thrived_thanks_to_the_New_Deal,_Computer_History_Museum,_Mountain_View,_California,_USA_\(49502013527\).jpg&oldid=899584407](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:IBM_thrived_thanks_to_the_New_Deal,_Computer_History_Museum,_Mountain_View,_California,_USA_(49502013527).jpg&oldid=899584407) (accessed September 5, 2024).

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM: TED STEVENS

Aviation

Starting in fifth century China with the invention of kites, humans have long looked to the sky and their feathered counterparts to fly.¹⁸ Famously, in the 15th century Leonardo da Vinci drafted plans for flying objects, and in the following century Tito Livio Burattini developed a four winged glider which was, however, never able to support the weight of a person.¹⁹ In the same century the father of aeronautics, Francesco Terzi, developed a lighter than air aircraft from copper foil.²⁰

While slow at first, the development of aircraft and flying objects became a larger discipline particularly when hydrogen was discovered in 1766. The discovery of hydrogen, lighter than air gas, soon hydrogen balloons were studied and hot (non hydrogen) air balloons were developed. This led to the first unmanned hot air balloon which made its maiden voyage in Annonay, France in 1783. This provided promise for the possibility of lighter than air aircraft which drove the advancement of air travel for nearly a century.

With the invention of the internal combustion engine in 1860, the main problem with hot air balloons, maneuverability, was pushed back against. Thus, the world's first airship was born. Using hydrogen or helium gas airships were able to carry cargo and passengers long distances. In 1899, Ferdinand von Zeppelin started to develop the first Zeppelin style airship which contained two engines and revolutionized airship travel across the world.

¹⁸Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology. "History of Aviation." Spartan College, November 1, 2021. <https://www.spartan.edu/news/history-of-aviation/>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid

Many major cities at this time developed infrastructure to support the future of airship travel, including New York City. Early plans for the former world's tallest building contained a mooring mast and circling light for airships to park and unload passengers and cargo.²¹

The age of airships came to an end in 1937 in Lakehurst, New Jersey. The Hindenburg was the largest airship in history, designed specifically to make transatlantic flights in between the United States and Germany, and to be filled with helium. Upon its second voyage, it was filled with hydrogen due to export restrictions on Germany during the time. While attempting to land in New Jersey, the airship erupted into flames killing 35 of the 97 people on board the aircraft.

Before the destruction of the Hindenburg in 1900 and 1902, two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright from Dayton, Ohio, developed and tested numerous glider and kite models using a wind tunnel and many devices which measure drag and lift. In 1903 the Wright brothers took their findings and inventions to Kitty Hawk North Carolina and successfully completed the worlds first manned heavier than air flight.²²

As soon as flight technology developed, it was co-opted for military use, which heavily shaped warfare during World War I and particularly World War II. While not an official branch, the United States Air Force dates its beginnings to 1912.

At this point however, aircraft could only go so far. Long distances had to be split up for refueling and breaks. Piston engine planes starting in the United States could only cross the Atlantic to Africa and

²¹Christopher James Botham. "The Empire State Building's Mooring Mast." On Verticality. February 18. <https://www.onverticality.com/blog/empire-state-mooring-mast>.

²²"Taking Flight With the Wright Brothers." National Geographic Kids. June 14, 2019. <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/wright-brothers>.

Europe between 10-15 hours whereas modern jet engines can make the same distance in 10 or less.²³ The first jet engine was flown in 1939 bridging that gap, making up for literal lost time.

It took a while for the jet engine to develop further and become the mainstream method of commercial flight travel. Since the invention of the jet engine, steady improvements have been made, including the invention of the Boeing 747-400 in 1988. The 747-400 made the need for consistent refueling stops less pertinent, leaving some airports, such as Ted Stevens, more obsolete.

One other important invention in the history of aviation is the Concorde jet. The Concorde jet was the first supersonic jet and completed its first voyage in 1973.²⁴ Flying at over Mach 2, the aircraft reduced the time between New York and London by roughly three hours. The aircraft was built as a collaboration between France and Britain. However the aircraft was very expensive to build which made it unprofitable and the flights were dangerous with the engine failure of Air France Flight 4590 causing the death of 113 people. Due to these factors, Concorde jets were discontinued from use in 2003.²⁵

Alaska

Roughly 15,000 years ago, humans first crossed the Bering Land Bridge into Alaska, and the North American continent. This first migration was the genesis for human life in the western hemisphere.²⁶ This early history proved to develop a rich and distinct culture throughout the Americas with known permanent settlements dating back to 4000 years ago.

²³"Flight Times by Piston and Jet Engines from New York | The Geography of Transport Systems." TransportGeography. November 12, 2017. <https://transportgeography.org/contents/chapter5/air-transport/air-travel-times/>.

²⁴Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Concorde." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 9, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/Concorde>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶"Alaska's History." National Park Service. May 16, 2024. <https://www.nps.gov/anch/learn/historyculture/alaska-s-history.htm>.

And today, 229 distinct Indigenous cultures still exist in what is now the state of Alaska, demonstrating the rich, vibrant, and storied history of indigenous populations.

Between the first migration of humans onto the continent, there were four documented points of contact and “discovery” namely: in 1741 Vitus Bering led a Russian expedition onto Alaska at what is now known as Kayak Island; in 1778 when Captain James Cook sailed into what is now known as the Cook Inlet, and was forced to turn around due to ice; in 1780 when a Japanese whaling ship ran aground near the Aleutian Islands, the rats found on the ship made way for land and populated what is now known as “Rat Island;” in 1784, the first Russian settlement in Alaska was founded on Kodiak Island.²⁷

In 1867 The United state purchased Alaska for \$7.2 million dollars (equivalent to \$129 million today). Following this point many Americans moved to Alaska in search of gold, particularly due to the Homestead Act of 1862.²⁸ The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed heads of household or those 21 years or older to claim a 160 acre plot of land as long as they were citizens of the United States and would not aid enemies of or fight against the United States. As a whole, this act pushed 10% of all land under the public domain to be settled in the United States.

Anchorage: Local Indigenous Populations

Dena’ina Elnena is the name first given to the land that Anchorage now sits by the Dena’ina Athabascan people. The original names of landmarks and natural areas describe many of their qualities, such as Nuch’ishtunt, roughly translating to “Place Protected from Wind” which is the place known as Point Woronzof.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Beatrice and Us, “About the Homestead Act - Homestead National Historical Park (U.S. National Park Service).”

²⁹ Ibid.

Living in the region, Dena'ina people would commonly eat berries both fresh and preserved as well as other plants along with fish and other game in the area. Treating plants similarly to blooded animals, indigenous peoples would conserve and protect, only taking, killing, and consuming what was necessary. Understanding the world



around their home was vital to indigenous life in the region, a respect and deep knowledge praised today:

“Our culture has all the tool passed on from our ancestors: we are meteorologists, diplomats, artists, architects, linguists, botanists, biologists, midwives, and astronomers. The essence of being Native is ingenuity and creativity.”

—Dena'ina Steering Committee quote from "Dena'ina Elnena, A Celebration," page 32.³¹

The Dena'ina language, like many Indigenous languages, is polysynthetic meaning that entire sentences can be spoken in one word, such as nuntnghe'it meaning, 'I will see you again.'³² Language is one primary way that cultures preserve identity as the world changes. Ensuring that local indigenous populations

³⁰Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:Wpdms shdrf020l cook inlet with arms.jpg," Wikimedia Commons. Accessed September 17, 2024.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Wpdms_shdrf020l_cook_inlet_with_arms.jpg&oldid=836238344.

³¹ "Dena'ina Athabascan Culture." U.S. National Park Service. August 29, 2022.

<https://www.nps.gov/laci/learn/historyculture/denainaculture.htm>.

³²Ibid.

are supported and uplifted is important to prioritize as many governments as possible and organizations overlook the people who lived in regions before settlers from Europe and Asia arrived.

Anchorage: Landscape

Within 50 miles of Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, sit roughly 60 glaciers and six mountain ranges. Lakes and ponds dot the landscape within and around the city. And fresh and saltwater wetlands are both found around the city.

Earthquakes are known to occur within the region, including the 1964 Alaska earthquake which lasted for three minutes and had a magnitude of 9.2 on the Richter scale, the second-largest earthquake in history.³³ Thousands of aftershocks lasted for three weeks after the initial shock, with the latest benign recorded a year after and some areas of earth were permanently raised by 30 feet.³⁴

With a shifting natural landscape, Alaska is home to a bio-diverse, dynamic, and impressive landscape drawing large crowds for eco-tourism. However, much of the natural beauty is at risk due to the city's location with many reports listing the harms of urban runoff and industry on the surrounding landscape. With a unique position, providing economic support and traffic to the area, and significantly contributing to the pollution and carbon emissions, Ted Stevens Airport must decide what its ecological future should bring to the amazingly beautiful area.

History of Ted Stevens

Ted Stevens International Airport was approved to begin planning and construction in 1948 and finished in 1953. By 1960, it was known as the air "crossroads of the world" and was used for many

³³"DHS&EM | The 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake History." Alaska.gov. April 13, 2022.
https://ready.alaska.gov/_64Quake/History.

³⁴ Ibid.

international stopovers.³⁵ The airport provides economic support to the city's residents, with one in ten jobs in Anchorage being attributable to the airport.³⁶ Airports within Alaska itself are vital, with "only 2 percent of Alaska's land mass is accessible via roads, and 82 percent of Alaska's communities are not connected to the road system"³⁷

The nickname "crossroads of the world" was attributed to Ted Stevens during the Cold War due to the airport's physical, political, and geographical position. The use of the airport at the time allowed eastern US and European flights not to enter Soviet airspace when traveling to eastern regions of Asia.³⁸ However, as Soviet airspace began to open, the need for stopovers in Anchorage decreased, creating an identity crisis for the airport. Decisions at this point had to be made on the focus of the airport, possibly turning to different market opportunities in Asia or promoting the local beauty of Anchorage.

Statement of the Problem

Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage, Alaska used to be one of the world's largest and most utilized airports and has been reduced to a cargo hub and a refueling airport for flights across the Pacific. Throughout the Cold War, the airport served as an area of particular interest for many as one of the most common routes would fly around or through Soviet airspace. However, As the new Boeing 747-400 was developed in the mid-1980s and the Soviet Union began embodying Mikhail Gorbachev's open door

³⁵. "Airport Overview." AEDC. Accessed August 10, 2024. <https://aedcweb.com/tsaia/airport-overview/>.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸Kimery Lynch. "Anchorage Airport: The Hidden Link Between the US, Europe, and Asia." Asia Matters for America, June 8, 2022. <https://asiamattersforamerica.org/articles/anchorage-airport-the-hidden-link-between-the-us-europe-and-asia>.

and transparent policy concept of glasnost³⁹, the extended range of the Boeing 747 no longer needed to refuel at Ted Stevens and instead could fly non-stop over Siberia.

This change brought a loss of over 1.2 million dollars to Ted Stevens Airport and Alaska as a whole. Slowly, over time, the number of commercial and passenger flights to Ted Stevens decreased until it was reduced to what it is now—a hub for charter planes and cargo shipments. Devastating both to the airport and the surrounding community of Anchorage, Ted Stevens Airport needs swift action to ensure it can operate well into the future and prop up the local economy.

While the initial concerns of running Ted Stevens Airport surround economic and often political issues, many of the issues facing the delegates will turn into discussions of the airport's vital role both in Anchorage and Alaska as a whole, but also as a current steppingstone between the Americas and the USSR and Asian continent.

³⁹Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "glasnost." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 10, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/glasnost>.

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

Freight Trains in the United States

Up until the early 1970s, freight trains dominated the shipping industry. However, the development of an interstate highway system forced the freight industry into bankruptcy, unable to compete with the expedited efficiency of trucking. Rail companies were subsequently pressured by investors to deregulate and privatize the industry. As a result, many monopolization controls were removed in 1980 and over a hundred companies were consolidated into a mere six incredibly powerful firms.

Additionally, financial control of the industry was transferred away from the government in favor of allowing interested private parties to bid for shares. These conglomerates were able to build, control, and operate on their own infrastructure with little to no oversight from the government or accountability to taxpayers. This lack of transparency allowed monopolized firms to pour over hundreds of billions into the industry, with no controls as to where that money was going or for what purposes. And in turn, this led to a great deal of corruption and infringement of the law.

With this privatization, responsibility for regulating safety was left to the Federal Railroad Association (FRA), an intentionally underfunded and understaffed agency with very little insight into daily rail operations. A government report found that the FRA's inspectors "have the ability to annually inspect less than 1 percent of the railroad activities covered in regulation. As a result, railroads have the primary responsibility for safety of the railroad system."⁴⁰ Additionally, some freight trains carry hazardous materials, and neither the FRA nor anyone else knows what trains are carrying or where these trains are at any given

⁴⁰ GAO-14-85. *Improved Human Capital Planning Could Address Emerging Safety Oversight Challenges*. U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013.

moment. The massive shift in ownership and regulation allowed the freight industry to destroy the market, cut corners, infringe upon labor laws, and endanger people and the environment.⁴¹

Norfolk Southern

One of these major firms is Norfolk Southern, founded in 1827 and responsible for connecting the Eastern United States to the Midwest. Norfolk Southern's rail system covers over 21,500 miles across 22 states, with connections to 20 seaports and lake ports as well. In recent years, the company has incorporated new data systems and technology into its network in order to better facilitate administrative and logistical processes.⁴²



⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Christopher Dinsmore, "Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific to share tracks." BLE-T. Virginian-Pilot. October 4, 2004. <https://ble-t.org/news/norfolk-southern-canadian-pacific-to-share-tracks/>.

*Norfolk Southern Freight Train in Ohio, 2018*⁴³

Once boasting the lowest accident rate across all U.S. rail companies, in the last twenty years Norfolk Southern has fallen behind their competitors in this respect. From 2018 to 2022, Norfolk Southern averaged “0.88 accidents per million miles, which is slightly above the average...”⁴⁴ Despite the company’s claims to have made similar “investments in safety systems and technologies,”⁴⁵ as their counterparts, Norfolk Southern has seen a comparatively shrinking workforce and increased workload. Documentation filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission by Norfolk Southern shows a decline from 30,000 to 18,100 employees in only ten years, a disparity that has created far greater fatigue and human error according to union leaders at the company.

Given that roughly 60% of Norfolk Southern’s accidents, a total of 144, were attributed to human error in 2022, investigators have begun paying greater attention to the rail company’s procedures. The National Transportation Safety Board launched a special investigation into the company’s safety policies and organizational structure, sending five teams to scrutinize significant accidents involving Norfolk Southern.⁴⁶

⁴³ Wikimedia Commons contributors, “File:Norfolk Southern freight train (23 November 2018) (Miamisburg, Ohio, USA) 2 (45328343374).jpg,” Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Norfolk_Southern_freight_train_\(23_November_2018\)_\(Miamisburg,_Ohio,_USA\)_2_\(45328343374\).jpg&oldid=922331488](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Norfolk_Southern_freight_train_(23_November_2018)_(Miamisburg,_Ohio,_USA)_2_(45328343374).jpg&oldid=922331488) (accessed September 17, 2024).

⁴⁴ Phil McCausland. “Norfolk Southern once had the lowest accident rate of major U.S. rail companies. Now it’s above average.” NBC News, March 16, 2023. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/norfolk-southern-accident-compared-rate-major-rail-companies-rcna74767>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Economic State of Affairs

As major railway firms felt increasing pressure to squeeze margins and please investors, profits began to supersede safety as a priority. During a hearing at the Surface Transportation Board in 2017, railway executive Hunter Harrison outlined the guiding principles he had been employing in his rail operations. Harrison controversially ranked safety as his fourth priority, following behind service, cost control, and asset utilization. He then comfortably admitted to the board members that he had “blood on his hands,”⁴⁷ a statement that was considered widely and aptly reflective of the industry at the time.

To cut excess costs, Harrison introduced a new methodology that grew to dominate the freight rail for the following decades: Precision Scheduled Railroading. This model involves aggressively pursuing efficiency through extreme means such as facility closures, locomotive retirement, and massive worker cuts. Harrison was notoriously ruthless in his efforts, looking for “...even the smallest ways to cut costs, from tearing up unused tracks to eliminating...overnight stays for train crews,”⁴⁸ Though company executives and Wall Street investors were able to prosper from the heightened efficiency, it came at significant cost to everyone else in the industry.

Social and Political Implications

These cost cutting measures had an undeniably negative impact on laborers, communities, and the environment. Colloquially called “bomb trains,” cars carrying combustible cargo pose a serious threat if derailed or abused. It would only take 22 cars of liquefied natural gas to create the same energy blast as the

⁴⁷ Mitchell Thompson. “Blame Canada for US Rail Bosses’ Incredibly Dangerous Railroad Management.” Jacobin, December 22, 2022. Blame Canada for US Rail Bosses’ Incredibly Dangerous Railroad Management

⁴⁸ Dan Schwartz and Topher Sanders. “The True Dangers of Long Trains.” ProPublica, April 3, 2023. <https://www.propublica.org/article/train-derailment-long-trains>.

nuclear warhead dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. Cargo is not monitored by the RFA regardless of its hazard risk, creating a significant threat to human life and nature since routes and stops don't account for these materials.

Beyond the risk of derailment, explosion, or implosion, these trains pose a threat when stopped as well. Freight trains may be required to stop on the tracks for a multitude of reasons, such as mechanical issues, inspections, or passages. Precision Scheduled Railroading also mandates the operation of far fewer trains, just with more cars extending up to three miles long. The tracks were not initially laid to accommodate for this length, and as such they extend beyond the sidings and block roadways and traffic at much higher rates—and some of which can be blocked for more than one day.

These blockages cause mass disruptions in civilian life, forcing people to be late for work and school. People have resorted to climbing underneath these stopped trains, which has resulted in “Pedestrians trying to cut through trains [being] disfigured, dismembered, and killed...”⁴⁹ Beyond the direct deaths they have caused, the stoppages also delay fire engines and ambulances for emergency services. This phenomenon is common enough to have created a plethora of lawsuits against rail companies for neglectful and wrongful deaths.⁵⁰

In terms of labor, Precision Scheduled Railroading has cut staffing to dangerously low levels. For the average 150-car-long train carrying hazardous materials, the mandated number of people required to operate that locomotive was reduced from only 2 people to a mere 1. Though trains have historically required at minimum an Engineer and a Conductor, now only one person will be charged with operating

⁴⁹ Topher Sanders and Dan Schwartz. As Rail Profits Soar, Blocked Crossings Force Kids to Crawl Under Trains to Get to School.” ProPublica, April 23, 2023. <https://www.propublica.org/article/trains-crossing-blocked-kids-norfolk-southern>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

these locomotives and resolved all issues that arise single-handedly, involving walking from the lead car to the problem area and back again, a potential four miles.

Inspectors investigating Norfolk Southern's organization and safety policies reported that "...railcar inspectors used to have five to eight minutes to check a car's wheels and brakes for problems like leaky bearings or damaged components...Now they often have between 30 seconds and a minute," (Fung et al, 2023) Additionally, an abundance of unlawful workplace termination cases display a "...pattern of retaliation against workers...who report safety violations or injuries," (Fung et al, 2023). This kind of hostile and punishing work environment leaves the industry open for far more opportunities for disaster.

Many have said that the United States has been lucky thus far. The rate of derailments has been creeping up again in recent years, and experts are making bleak predictions that the next disaster may be in a populated city center where consequences would be devastating. One has summarized the general consensus of concerns saying that "There's going to be a freight car that hasn't been inspected in 90,000 miles that comes off the track...and either explodes or leaks poisonous gas out. It's going to take something like that, and a lot of deaths, and then all of a sudden everybody's going to care," (VICE, 2021).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Incident

On February 3rd, 2023, a Norfolk Southern freight train 150-cars long and 18,000 tons carrying hazardous materials derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. The cause of the crash was attributed to a wheel bearing that had overheated and started a fire, veering the unbalanced train off the rails. Track diagnostic sensors known as wayside detectors had malfunctioned, failing to transmit the high temperature reading to Norfolk Southern (alert monitor communications center) and subsequently to the crew members. As such, operators remained unaware of the situation until alarms on board sounded, and by the time they attempted to brake the train it was too late. In addition to these delayed communications, the lack of awareness of the train's length, weight, and toxic cargo created dangerous preconditions for disaster.⁵¹

Roughly 30 hours before the train derailed, the engineer who inspected the train in Decatur, Illinois expressed concerns about its proportions to the yardmaster, who dismissed them in favor of appeasing higher-ups. In their defense, Norfolk Southern stood by that dismissal citing that federal agencies do not regulate train configuration and that internal policies for such configurations were met.⁵²

⁵¹ "Failed Wheel Bearing Caused Norfolk Southern Train Derailment in East Palestine, Ohio." NTSB. June 25, 2024. <https://www.nts.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/NR20240625.aspx#:~:text=NTSB%20investigators%20said%20that%20the,of%20this%20small%20Ohio%20town.>

⁵² Schwartz and Sanders, "True Dangers."

The Response

After the crash, 2,000 residents were evacuated and first responders dispatched. Law enforcement assisted in the evacuation efforts and worked to contain the leaking toxic materials. Officers made the decision to facilitate a controlled burn in the hopes of avoiding a spontaneous more detrimental explosion. The detonation ended up producing massive clouds of toxic smoke that billowed up into the atmosphere, devastating the local environment.



Smoke resulting from the derailment⁵³

⁵³ Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:Smoke from the fire on the night of the accident (v0wn4mB).jpg," Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Smoke_from_the_fire_on_the_night_of_the_accident_\(v0wn4mB\).jpg&oldid=773949754](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Smoke_from_the_fire_on_the_night_of_the_accident_(v0wn4mB).jpg&oldid=773949754) (accessed September 17, 2024).

The ecological impact to East Palestine's marine, atmospheric, and terrestrial habitats was fatal. Hospitals received scores of patients and dispatched personnel reporting symptoms of poisoning. Wildlife recovery efforts were instituted, and a wave of political and media teams flooded the area. Afterwards, the National Transportation Safety Board compiled a final report on the crash following investigations. They found that the lives of first responders were unnecessarily endangered, and poor strategic decisions were made that led to injury.⁵⁴

The Issues

Some of the controversies surrounding this event involve regulation in government and private spheres. Regulating the lengths of train cars, the time allotted for inspections, staffing size and shift requirements, the amount and routes of trains carrying hazardous materials, and the amount of time trains can block intersections in specific areas are under contention. Additionally, empowering the FRA to monitor trains and cargo at all times and allowing workers a way to confidentially report to regulatory agencies without fear of retaliation are other avenues of research.

This list is not exhaustive. Lessons can be learned from a comparative analysis between case studies from other sectors and time periods of the transportation industry. The Norfolk Southern Board of Directors must face these issues with all they have learned and observed thus far, and come to a resolution for the residents of East Palestine and the United States of America.

⁵⁴ Leigh Martinez. "Environmental Disaster from East Palestine, OH Train Derailment." PennFuture. February 23, 2023. <https://www.pennfuture.org/Blog-Item-2023-East-Palestine-Ohio-Train-Disaster>

CHARACTER BIOS

Due to the dynamic nature of the committee, Names and positions have been chosen to allow for ease of transition between topics. Kindly refer to the Committee Structure and Mechanics section for more information.

Alex Morgan, Chief Strategy Officer

Alex Morgan, from Detroit Michigan always felt they were meant for strategy since they have never lost a match of the hit board game, Stratego. That being said, they had an early start in the automotive business helping their parents at the family repair shop. Primarily taking to growing their customer base, Alex would travel around town diagnosing peoples car troubles and directing them to the “Morgan fix-er-up”. This direct strategy is precisely what made their humble family shop the largest chain in Detroit. Soon moving to the corporate world, Alex began to apply out-of-the-box strategies to grow businesses across the United States, eventually catching the eyes of General Motors.

Jordan Taylor, Chief Operations Officer

Jordan Taylor grew up in Kansas City, Missouri and was first seen managing an army of ants when they were six years old! Excelling in school, Jordan eventually went to the University of Chicago Law School to better understand the order of society. Fresh out of law school, Jordan took their talents to the next level, the corporate level. Working at various companies including US Steel, Jordan honed their talents till the point they received an offer they couldn't refuse: General Motors. Having always loved cars, Jordan quickly took the job as the COO of GM and the rest is history.

Casey Parker, Chief Technology Officer

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Casey Parker always loved technology and was known for dismantling the home radio to the dismay of their parents. Drawn to the comedic voices of Jack Benny and Fred Allen Casey couldn't help but be curious how those voices were transmitted. And what they found out was they transmitted a mess on the living room carpet. However it started a long journey to being an engineer and eventually attending management school. Throughout this process they networked with higher ups working at General Motors and eventually gained a position. Years later, after a long grind of promotions and long nights, the CTO position was placed in Casey's lap. Now they just need to move their pillow out of their office.

Cameron Lee, Chief Financial Officer

Cameron Lee was born in the New York Infirmary for Women and Children just a few blocks away from wall street in New York City. Almost by blood connection, Cameron was seen playing with coins instead of blocks at four, and was able to balance a checkbook by 10. Going to school to learn about trading soon Cameron was a stockbroker nearby to where they were born. However, the long hours eventually wore them thin. Cameron pivoted to helping organizations. And due to their portfolio and clients, an easy choice was General motors. After making a few phone calls, and mailing a resume Cameron made the career pivot they dreamed of, looking at a large ledger filled with parts, cars, and payroll. La dolce vita.

Jamie Brooks, Information Officer

Jamie Brooks was always good at apologizing. To both parents and teachers, Jamie always apologized. Jamie was so good at it that when they were caught stealing a candy bar from the corner store in their hometown of Detroit, Michigan, all they had to do was make a grand statement on the frailty of the American political society and the store owner gave Jamie another candy bar, and then closed the store for

the rest of the week. Recognizing this unique talent Jamie began to address public relations with Detroit businesses and surprisingly, each one grew in revenue. However, there was one lie that Jamie was caught in, and it was a wager with Alfred P. Sloan Jr. the CEO of General Motors. Long story short, Jamie didn't drive a GM vehicle and now must work for the company free for at least six months. This didn't bother Jamie, and surprisingly it was the truth.

Taylor Reed, Chief Human Resources Officer

A self proclaimed people person, Taylor Reed always felt home in Human Resources. In high school in Cornwall CT Taylor was literally the talk of the very small town. Setting up an advice stand by the library was how Taylor first earned a paycheck. Advice soon turned towards advocacy as Taylor made sure that those who came with grievances were addressed. Using their Mothers connections within General Motors they soon got a job within the organization in their HR department. After many years of clocking in and clocking out, Taylor now can say that they are the most important resource to all of the humans working at General Motors. That is, unless you are a union representative.

Avery Corgan, Chief Marketing Officer

Eye-catching, relatable, and actionable was the phrase Avery Morgan long used to describe the best marketing strategies. Born in Los Angeles, Avery grew up watching the stars of the silver screen in the golden age of Hollywood. By first sneaking onto filming lots and volunteering to make their name known, Avery eventually made a great suggestion of guerrilla marketing for an upcoming drama, reenacting scenes from the movie in public. This drew the attention of the public, making the opening night the largest in studio history. This momentum drew the attention of General Motors and Avery was soon swept up with a salary, pension, and insurance with the large motor company.

Dakota Hayes, Vice President of Compliance

Always a stickler for the rules, Dakota Hayes was a perpetual hall monitor in elementary school. Her parents always had Judge Judy playing on the television, and young Dakota became enthralled with lawsuits and loopholes. This propensity for regulation followed Dakota throughout her young career in New York City, where she excelled in navigating through blurred lines and gray areas. She helped her company avoid fines left and right, keeping people and practices in line. In recent years, however, Dakota's job has gotten much more difficult. With company policies straying further and further from federal regulations, having to reconcile this growing disparity has turned Dakota into a habitual ibuprofen user with no easy end in sight.

Kendall Blake, Co-Director of General Counsel

Kendall Blake loves the rain of the pacific northwest and not much else. Growing up in Portland Oregon, Kendall did what was logical, working at their parent's law firm and slowly working up to partner. Finally, for once in their life they did something some would consider out of left field, move to Detroit. In Detroit, Kendall reinvented themselves, joining the ranks of General Motors on their legal counsel team and falling in love with botany and would work to produce award winning pumpkins weighing over 2,500 pounds! However, that did not dissuade their legal career with General Motors.

Quinn Bailey, Director of International Affairs

Quinn Bailey, born in San Francisco, California always was interested in the unknown world. Having the amazing opportunity to travel across the pacific, Quinn fell in love with the possibility of different culture, cuisine, and cars. "Why drive on the right side, when you could be left?" Quinn always seemed to say. This love of cars and international travel brought Quinn to study at the University of Tokyo in international business. With the intense and rigorous program at the university Quinn soon found that

jobs simply fell in their own lap. Resulting in multiple jobs across Asia and Europe, all of which lead to a job with General Motors to scale their business and manufacturing internationally and lower cost of vehicle parts through pure, international, business.

Sydney Hunter, Mayor (of Flint, East Palestine, Etc.)

If there is one thing to say about Sydney Hunter it is that she lives, breathes and eats Flint, Michigan, literally. When she was a child, she put dirt from her backyard in her mouth. But in all seriousness, she loves her hometown. Which is why it is no surprise that when she finished her political science degree at the University of Michigan, she moved back home and joined the ranks of local government. During her time as mayor, Sydney has promoted the expansion of public parks, revitalized the downtown, and pushed for more business to move in. And with General Motors being a large employer in the city the new strike has brought a lot of press to her door.

Brian Paulson City Manager (of Flint, East Palestine, Etc)

Brian Paulson was always an optimistic person. A star cheerleader at his small-town high school in Arkansas, Brian carried the pep team, student government, and school band on his back. His strong sense of allegiance and loyalty landed him an early career in the military, working as a logistics officer around the world for twelve years. While stationed in Korea, Brian and his partner adopted their daughter Ji-woo. The family returned to the states after Brian's service, where Brian entered the political space as a war hero. Using the skills he had acquired as an officer, Brian quickly found work in city planning and urban management. Drafting budgets and implementing policy recommendations was often tedious work but gave Brian a sense of purpose and fulfillment knowing he was building a better city for his family.

Eva Whitlock, First Ward City Council

A natural people person, Eva's mom once said she could "charm the birds off the trees". Crediting it to her southern upbringing New Orleans, no one knows more about the importance of making connections than Eva. She hasn't paid for a single dinner in the past year as she charms restaurant owners effortlessly, and this personality extends seamlessly to the political world. In her most famous performance, she convinced a climate change denying politician to not only vote but sponsor an environmental bill, leading to extreme confusion all around. Eva fights for her people, and manages the tightrope walk of representing both the capital interest and the personal interests of her voters in Flint, Michigan. The only limit to Eva's persuasion is the 24 hours in a day, which she makes good use of.

Alejandro Rodriguez, Second Ward City Council

Alejandro Rodriguez's first experience in politics was running for student council of Fern Bluff Elementary School in Austin, Texas. When he lost by one vote, he vowed to herself to never let himself lose again. He got 2 jobs, and spent almost \$3,000 campaigning for his 4th grade student council position. Unsurprisingly, he won by over 80% and there's been no looking back since. Alejandro's network is as expansive as it comes, and what he lacks in being personable, his determination and grit makes up for twofold. Having moved to Flint in the early 1920's, he kept his (almost) pristine election record when he won the election to be the Second Ward City Council representative. Alejandro is the most useful political connection you could have as a friend, and the biggest nightmare to have as an enemy, so pray you stay on his good side.

Ethan Gray, Environmentalist

Ethan Gray's first love was his pet snail Turbo. Ever the inseparable duo, they would explore the forests of Portland, Oregon and Ethan would record his findings in his weathered blue notebook. His militant environmentalism emerged in his teens, as they stumbled across a logging group cutting down

Ethan and Turbo's favorite tree. Enraged by the extreme disregard for the beauty of nature, he swore to avenge the crimes against nature committed by profit driven corporations. A notorious figure, he unites politicians and corporations out of fear for his determination to get what he wants. As Flint, Michigan has become polluted with the byproducts of industrialization and manufacturing, Ethan has vowed to hold corporations accountable for their actions. As he upholds Turbo's dying wish to fight until his last breath for the environment, he's not the hero the environment needs, but the one it deserves.

Bryan Ardon, Journalist

Growing up in St. Louis, Missouri, Bryan Ardon was voted "class gossip". Unbothered by this, he decided to put some money where his mouth is and figured that if he was good at something, he might as well get paid for it. Bryan started in the tabloids business, but several high-ranking newspapers quickly recognized his talent for getting the scoop, and he moved up in the ranks of the newspaper world. Those familiar with his skill set would be wise to keep their mouth shut, but Bryan is undeterred by anyone unwilling to talk, because in his words "when someone doesn't want to talk for money, there's three others that'll do it for free." Bryan's instincts have brought him to Flint, Michigan, where he'll tell anyone who'll listen that "there's a story brewing here".

Anusha Pai, Lawyer

Anusha Pai has been told by every one of her English teachers that she "would make a great lawyer." Blessed with the obliviousness to ignore the backhandedness of that compliment, and the determination to do anything she puts her mind to, she graduated top of her class at her hometown law school of UChicago Law and has made her name as the youngest lawyer to ever win a settlement of more than \$1 million. Intentionally mysterious, she's taken on cases of every kind of law and won them all. With an eye for upcoming lawsuits, Anusha has moved to Flint recently and knows that there's money to be made on either

side of the labor movement. The law works hard, but Anusha works harder and no logical fallacy goes unpunished when Anusha is on the case.

Nancy Qi, Investor

Bank of America knew Nancy Qi was special when she expertly refinanced her family's mortgage while sitting in a booster seat at the age of 7. Money talks, wealth whispers, but there's nothing quiet about the way Nancy navigates the financial markets. Fellow investors, investment bankers, and even CEO's have offered ludicrous amounts of money for Nancy's secret resources that see her turn larger profits than considered humanly possible, but the only secret resource is her brain. Nancy Qi is calm, cool and collected and defies any expectations about her being as volatile as the stock market. With several investments made recently in GM, Nancy's dedication to knowing her investments inside out has led her to relocate to Flint, Michigan to keep her stellar investment record as pristine as always.

Benny Simmons, Union Organizer

As a kid growing up in Queens, Ben Simmons loved superheroes. Everyday he wore his spiderman costume and every night his batman pajamas. Benny's moral compass developed strong and early, from tattling on the school bully to reprimanding kids who cut in line. When Benny got his first job in the food service industry as a teenager, he saw another side of injustice. Wage theft, labor laws, and corporate greed infuriated the young man, and kickstarted his career as a union organizer. Jumping from case to case, company by company, Benny worked to protect the little guy, like he always wanted. This work was incredibly fulfilling for Benny, but with every victory came an even darker enemy. Battling supervillain conglomerates with capitalizations higher than some countries was no easy feat, but Benny was up to the challenge.

Easton Stotch, Alderman

Easton Stotch grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he was deeply influenced by the vibrant local culture and community spirit. His family, active in local arts and festivals, instilled in him an appreciation for community involvement from a young age. He pursued urban planning at the University of Louisiana, further leading his community with a bright attitude and iconic sense of humor. As an alderman, Easton has been dedicated to improving Baton Rouge's green spaces and enhancing public transportation. Known for his calm demeanor and creative mind, Easton's an approachable fellow who takes pride in actively listening to his constituents, especially when it comes to the concerns of blue-collar workers.

Juan Moreno, Alderman

After moving to the United States at the age of 10 after growing up in Puerto Rico, Juan always knew that it mattered more about who you know than what you know. Juan is an extrovert's extrovert in every sense of the word, which makes him the perfect person to come to for an odd favor. Looking for someone who knows a guy? Juan is your man! His enthusiasm is his best trait, and he works tirelessly day in and day out. Juan's tenure as an alderman is best characterized as working for the people, and he'll stop at nothing to ensure that he does everything he can for his constituents. The concerns of the working man are especially of paramount importance to Juan, which is why he's a part of this board.

Carl Weathers, VP of Strategy

Born in the Lone Star State in Odessa, Texas, Carl spent the vast majority of his childhood playing board games with his 3 siblings after long days out on the ranch. It didn't take too long for his siblings to realize that even though he was the youngest, he could expertly outmaneuver them in any way to get exactly what he wanted, during board games or in life. Luckily, Carl's heart has never let him utilize his quick-thinking skills for anything malicious, but he wakes up every morning ready to make new decisions for his

company. This one time cowboy traded in the reins and spurs for a suit and tie, but don't be fooled by his appearance, his authenticity shines through the corporate attire.

Dale Petronis, Union Organizer

Hailing from Gary, Indiana, and raised by a family of dedicated steelworkers, Dale Petronis witnessed firsthand the volatile nature of a labor-intensive industry. And by the time he reached adulthood, he doubled down on protecting blue-collar communities by organizing unions across Indiana. Dale made a real name for himself—at first by virtue of his surname and familial backing, but soon because of his relentless drive and knack for connecting with individual families. He eventually expanded both his location and purview, aiding labor coalitions across the entire Midwest and engaging with unions of public schools, hospitals, and correctional facilities. As of today, Dale is definitely recognized for his signature style of steadily and meticulously advancing workers' rights and conditions rather than what he calls “caped crusader antics”; with wars of attrition being his specialty, he at bottom approaches obstacles with honor and sharp foresight.

Kiki Albatross, Economic Analyst

Kiki Albatross grew up in Fort Lauderdale, where she showed a natural talent for math from an early age. This gift eventually led her to a successful career in economic analysis. She studied hard and earned her master's and DBA from the University of South Florida, diving into the weeds of economic theory and how it maps onto the real world. After graduating, Kiki didn't just move on—she stayed connected to academia, teaching as an adjunct professor at her former school. She loved sharing what she'd learned with students and getting them excited about economics. Eventually, Kiki decided to strike out on her own and start a consulting business. These days, she's a go-to expert for companies longing for some sweet, to-the-point economic advice. In fact, what attracts Kiki to the auto industry is precisely this straightforward,

“numbers don’t lie” style of thought. Of course, this general ideology doesn’t at all preclude the Fort Laudy native from a forward-thinking, intuitive mindset.

Bill Moore, Co-Director of General Counsel

Bill Moore grew up in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, loving two things: debate and watching NASCAR. Who would’ve thought that mix would lead to a career in car law? As a kid, Bill was quick on his feet in debates. He did so well in fact that Vanderbilt took him in for college and law school. And that’s where he figured out how to combine his love for cars and law. After school, Bill jumped right into the world of auto law, and truly by this point without a second thought. He worked his way up with a solid conceptual vision, and now enjoys his everyday life at General Motors. For Bill, it’s not just work—the man he really does love what others may consider bureaucratic work. Even when he’s off the clock, Bill’s still into cars. You’ll probably find him watching NASCAR, collecting that childhood adrenaline in his free time.

Celeste “Green Queen” Falcone, Chief Sustainability Officer

Hailing from the windswept deserts of New Mexico, Celeste Falcone’s journey into environmental stewardship began with a childhood fascination for local ecosystems. By age 14, she had successfully petitioned the local government to preserve a rare sand dune habitat, truly heeding her life’s calling from a young age. A Rhodes Scholar with a PhD in Environmental Science from Cambridge University, Celeste became a pioneer in sustainable urban planning, designing eco-friendly transit systems that transformed polluted cities into green havens. After earning the apt nickname "Green Queen" in corporate circles, Norfolk Southern recruited her to lead their ambitious environmental reform, tackling climate challenges in rail transport with her signature mix of grit and green-thumb genius.

Hari Cuomo, Rail Historian-in-Residence

Born in a caboose during a freak snowstorm in the lovely Durango, Colorado, Hari Cuomo was destined for railroading lore. By age 10, he had memorized the operational histories of every Class I railroad in North America. His passion for rail heritage saw him write numerous bestsellers, including *Iron Titans: The Rise of America's Railroads*, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize nomination. With a wardrobe of vintage conductor hats and a reputation for reciting train schedules from the 1870s, Hari serves as Norfolk Southern's Rail Historian-in-Residence, reminding the board of the lessons—and ghosts—of the past as they navigate the future of rail transport.

Dr. Dage S. Masher, Chief Safety Engineer

Dr. Masher's fascination with safety was born from chaos—literally. Growing up in an off-the-grid farmhouse, he survived a childhood full of bustling railroad traffic, unpredictable power outages, and the occasional runaway goat. A prodigy in mechanical engineering, he earned his PhD at just 26, where he became known for designing fail-safe systems for everything from roller coasters to nuclear reactors. At Norfolk Southern, Dage combines his love of order and adventure, spearheading innovations that prevent derailments, protect workers, and minimize disasters. This has rightfully earned him an in-house moniker of “Safety Swifty.”

Rhea U. Enesi, Chief Culture Strategist

Raised in the Bronx in a family of musicians, Unesi originally set out to conquer the world of music therapy, earning a degree in Ethnomusicology from UCLA. After helping Fortune 500 companies improve workplace culture through unorthodox team-building sessions that involved drum circles and even the occasional karaoke duel, she took on the quirky world of corporate consulting. Norfolk Southern hired Rhea to help harmonize its often discordant corporate culture. Using her unique background, she now focuses on fostering unity between executive leadership and frontline workers, ensuring that the symphony of the rail industry doesn't miss a beat.

Sergeant Gibby “The Gunner” Pepper, Chief Security Officer

“The Pepper’s” military career began in the jungles of Panama, where he led covert operations as a U.S. Army Ranger. Accurately nicknamed for his world-bending bicep muscles, Gibby later pivoted to corporate security, where his battlefield expertise found a new home. Tasked with protecting Norfolk Southern from cyber threats, cargo theft, and espionage, Gibby uses cutting-edge surveillance systems and an unyielding sense of justice to ensure the company’s operations remain untouchable. Despite his rugged persona, Gibby is an avid poetry enthusiast with something of a soft side, often quoting Frost during tense board meetings.

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