

Jeanie Ward-Waller



JEANIE WARD-WALLER

September 11, 2022


Executive Director Hiring Committee
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
PO Box 5310
Stateline NV 89449


Dear TRPA Executive Director Hiring Committee:

With over 15 years of experience in the public, non-profit, and private sectors leading both coalitions and teams to envision and implement strategic change, I bring an ideal skillset and background to guide TRPA as the next executive director.

Over five years in state government I rose rapidly through the Caltrans leadership ranks to direct one of three major Department programs. My education, credentials, and insight as a licensed engineer earn me respect in an engineering-driven organization and demonstrate my ability to deliver complex projects. As an advocate my strength was in cultivating strong relationships and organizing coalitions to leverage the power of many diverse organizations toward a shared set of priorities.

My strengths are exemplified through the following career achievements:

- Creating new programs to invest tens of billions in federal and state transportation dollars in transformative projects that address climate change, enhance quality of life, and improve public health for all communities;
 - Managing institutional change within the second-largest state government department in California toward sustainability and equity goals;
 - Directing five divisions and over 500 staff at Caltrans to implement the new strategic direction through research, planning, projects, and programmatic changes; and
 - Leading large, diverse coalitions to influence major new transportation, housing, and climate laws, policies, and funding programs.
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TRPA and the Tahoe region are facing difficult and compelling challenges and need leadership that will focus the agency and its broad coalition of partners on implementation of solutions. I am passionate about Tahoe, intrigued by the challenges, and ready to help deliver meaningful change that will enhance the region.

I appreciate your consideration of my candidacy and I look forward to the opportunity to interview and discuss this important role with you.

Sincerely,

Jeanie Ward-Waller

Elizabeth (Jeanie) Ward-Waller, PE, MEng, MPhil

Policy expert in sustainable, equitable transportation and livable communities. Proven champion of systems change in state government and implementer of innovative policy, program, and project-level solutions. Recognized as a leader of collaboration across sectors, who cultivates effective relationships and negotiates compromise on challenging problems between government, NGO, and private sector partners.

Areas of expertise:

- Executive Leadership
- Organizational & Systems Change Management
- Program, Project & Budget Management
- Strategic Relationship Building
- Transportation Policy & Finance
- Social & Racial Justice
- Civil Engineering
- Multimodal Transportation
- Climate Change & Environmental Policy
- Sustainable Development
- Public Speaking
- Research & Technical Analysis

Education

University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

Master of Philosophy in Engineering for Sustainable Development (2010)

Dissertation: *Overcoming barriers to sustainable transport in US cities – A case study of cycling in Philadelphia*

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA

Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering - High Performance Structures (2005)

Brown University, Providence, RI

Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering – Structural (2004)

Professional Experience

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Sacramento, CA

Jan 2020-present

Deputy Director for Planning and Modal Programs

- Direct five headquarters divisions with over 500 staff and oversee delivery of a multi-billion-dollar portfolio of federal and state transportation investments in rail, transit, local roads, active transportation facilities, airports, research, planning, and technical assistance
- Lead an executive team of division chiefs and direct reports in strategic management of programs responsible for long-range planning and systems change across the statewide transportation network
- Founded and oversee the Caltrans Office of Race & Equity, provide policy leadership for Department work on equity and disadvantaged community engagement
- Serve on Caltrans Executive Board and advise the director, chief deputy director, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), and Governor's Office on policy decisions that affect the agency
- Develop and strengthen relationships with federal, state, regional, and local agencies, academic institutions, NGO partners, industry leaders, and other critical stakeholders

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Redding, CA

Sept 2019-Jan 2020

Acting District 2 Director

- Oversaw all aspects of Caltrans operations, maintenance, planning, project delivery for five-county northeast region of the state, including emergency response and incident management
- Led and managed an executive team of six district deputy directors and more than 300 staff
- Developed and strengthened relationships with local, regional, and state agency partners, local. elected officials, tribal government leaders, community and NGO partners, and other stakeholders
- Served on Caltrans Executive Board and advised the Director on issues impacting District 2

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Sacramento, CA

Sept 2017-Sept 2019

Sustainability Program Manager

- Managed Director's Office Sustainability Program staff team, including provision of budget, positions, and resources to advance the sustainability goals in the Department Strategic Management Plan

Elizabeth (Jeanie) Ward-Waller, PE, MEng, MPhil

- Provided strategic input to Caltrans districts and divisions for implementation of Sustainability priorities
- Coordinated with other state agencies, internal and external partners on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts related to the transportation sector
- Established California Walk Bike Technical Advisory Committee to solicit input from external partners
- Acted for Deputy Director for Sustainability as needed

California Bicycle Coalition, Sacramento, CA

Apr 2015-Aug 2017

Policy Director

- Directed policy team to implement CalBike's agenda: increased funding for bikeways and sustainable modes of travel, prioritizing low-income communities, mainstream bicycling, and protect bicyclists rights
- Secured and delivered grants, and cultivated relationships with funders
- Led broad, cross-sector coalition in advocacy to increase investment in transit and active transportation in Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017
- Analyzed/took positions on transportation, climate change, social justice bills and budget proposals
- Served on agency advisory committees; facilitated and participated in advocacy coalitions

Safe Routes to School National Partnership, Sacramento, CA

Jun 2012-Apr 2015

Senior California Policy Manager

- Directed coalition advocacy for funding and effective delivery of the Active Transportation Program
- Secured and administered grants, cultivated relationships with funders and program managers
- Coordinated outreach, technical assistance, and resources for Safe Routes network partners and disadvantaged communities to access active transportation funding
- Advanced legislation and budget proposals for safe routes to school and active transportation, Cap-and-Trade Program funding for sustainable communities and multi-modal transportation

Ride America for Safe Routes, Washington, DC

Jan 2012-Dec 2017

Founder/Executive Director

- Planned and led a three-month, 5200 mile, cross country bike advocacy tour and other events
- Established non-profit organization with a mission of bike safety education
- Fundraised \$20,000 to benefit two national non-profit organizations and cover event expenses

LeMessurier Consultants, Cambridge, MA

Jun 2005-Aug 2009

Structural Engineer

- Delivered efficient structural design solutions for large-scale buildings, responsible for conceptual through final design and detailing duties for uniquely complex construction projects
- Managed full time on-site inspection of and in-field design changes for construction on projects
- Coordinated structural, mechanical, architectural systems with multi-disciplinary consultant teams
- Took initiative to include sustainable design in LeMessurier's consulting services – achieved LEED AP accreditation and advised colleagues and senior staff

Boards, Certifications, Recent Awards

- Professional Civil Engineer (registered 2018 in California)
- Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional
- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Council on Active Transportation Steering Committee Member
- Pacific Southwest Region University Transportation Center Advisory Council Member
- City of Sacramento Active Transportation Commissioner
- Civic Thread Board of Directors, President
- Women's Transportation Seminar Sacramento Chapter Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award 2021
- Streetsblog California 'Streetsie' Award for Tireless Statewide Advocacy 2015

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Executive Director Application
Supplemental Questions - Jeanie Ward-Waller

1. Please tell us why you are interested in this position and why it is a good time in your career to come to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The TRPA Executive Director can make transformative change in the Tahoe Basin and across Northern California. She can build and strengthen partnerships with local groups as well as with the state, Bay Area, and Sacramento regions and implement policies and improvement projects for residents and visitors to Tahoe. The challenges that the Tahoe region is facing are very compelling. Solutions must be cross-sectoral to move the needle on climate change, environmental protection, transportation, housing, and equity. As an experienced transportation leader and coalition-builder, I can address these challenges and opportunities with creative new solutions and collaborations.

Under strong leadership, TRPA can shift the agency's focus from planning to implementation. Emerging state and federal investments in transportation, housing, and climate solutions can be leveraged to great advantage for the region. My deep knowledge of these programs and funding opportunities and my broad network of federal, state, regional, and local partners could engage to accelerate implementation of essential plans and projects. After over ten years of leading diverse coalitions working at the state policy level in Sacramento, I am ready to lead at a regional level, to work more directly with the communities I serve, and to help deliver real change to all stakeholders.

I bring a unique skillset to the challenges faced by TRPA. Starting out my career as a structural engineer built my strong foundation in the construction industry on large-scale building projects, with credentials and insight that I utilize to bridge the chasm between planners and engineers. I have spearheaded ambitious efforts at Caltrans to bring the Department into the 21st century: leading the rapid growth of the Sustainability Program to achieve the Department's climate action goals; creating the first-ever Caltrans Office of Race and Equity and Racial Equity Action Plan; and developing (in record time) the new Clean California Local Grant Program to beautify and enhance public spaces. I oversee five divisions and over five hundred employees that are responsible for setting the agency's strategic direction. I lead the Caltrans implementation of federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds to advance state climate, health, and equity goals. I am very proud of the progress toward transportation sustainability and equity that I have championed for California, and now am ready to tackle new challenges.

I love the Tahoe basin. Since I moved to Sacramento ten years ago I have spent dozens of weekends and vacations in Tahoe trail running, backpacking, skiing, mountain biking, and rock climbing. I am passionate about protecting the environment and improving quality of life for the people of the Tahoe region. As TRPA Executive Director, I would enlarge that passion.

2. When working with an agency's Governing Board, what three things do you feel the Executive Director should strive to achieve?

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I have over a decade of experience working with governing boards and commissions for organizations with a broad range of roles and sizes, from the statewide California Transportation Commission to small non-profit boards of directors. I have established, recruited, and staffed governing boards as well as chaired several boards, and understand the importance of a well-functioning and engaged governing board from the perspective of both a board member and staff. Through my experience, I believe the following three elements are critical to an executive director working effectively with an organization's governing board:

The executive director must develop and maintain strong relationships with each individual board member. She must understand the experience and perspective each member brings to the organization and their priorities relative to the organization's mission. I have the experience and energy to build and maintain these relationships.

An executive director must achieve the right balance of engagement with the governing board that ensures board members are well educated on issues and involved in development of solutions while also respecting the time they commit to the organization. The executive director must understand how and when each board member wants to be engaged in order to best utilize their time in and outside of meetings.

The executive director must negotiate conflict within the governing board and have a deep commitment to reaching compromise in the interest of making mature decisions and taking action on hard issues. TRPA has a large, complex, and politically-sensitive portfolio. The executive director's negotiation skills are critical to ensure the organization can progress toward achieving its mission with the guidance and full support of the governing board.

3. This Executive Director must build strong relationships with leaders in over 100 organizations in Tahoe and the surrounding region. Please give an overview of your experience successfully building and maintaining relationships with a variety of external agencies.

Throughout my career I have demonstrated success at building trusted partnerships with diverse stakeholders in government, non-profit, academic, and private sectors while working to advance policy change to make the transportation system more sustainable and equitable.

In my leadership work at Caltrans over the last five years, I have cultivated a strong network of national, regional, and local transportation agency partners, environmental and equity advocates, community-based organization directors, academic and industry leaders, and especially close working relationships with leadership at state transportation, housing, and environmental protection agencies. Through direct outreach and collaboration on implementation of new programs and major policy changes, I have created forums for productive dialogue, innovative ideas, and critical feedback. A recent example is my leadership of Caltrans's implementation of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which involved identifying and coordinating with over a dozen program working groups, including several hundred external agencies. I regularly communicated with the Transportation Secretary

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and Governor's Office to provide updates and solicit input on decisions. By leading this effort with clear objectives, process, and opportunities for feedback from the working groups, I garnered trust from the external partners. We are making great progress in implementing all of the significant new federal programs to ensure California benefits optimally from this transformative investment.

Prior to joining Caltrans I was a highly effective policy advocate and coalition leader as CalBike Policy Director and Safe Routes Partnership Policy Manager, and forged broad coalitions of diverse partners to work collectively to advance shared priorities. I developed trusted relationships with legislators and executives at state, regional, and local government agencies to reach compromise on new state laws and effectively implement new programs. I was instrumental in the creation of the Active Transportation Program—the first transportation program in California tasked with implementing statutory goals on social equity and public health. I led a coalition of 80 diverse organizations to successfully increase dedicated active transportation and public transit funding in the landmark transportation funding package Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). We secured unprecedented investments in transit and active transportation and the inclusion of climate adaptation and complete streets provisions in SB 1, advancing a multi-benefit fix-it-first approach in California transportation. In other efforts, I collaborated with a coalition of equity, housing, and transportation organizations to influence spending of Cap-and-Trade auction revenues to advance a holistic approach to combating the climate crisis, and succeeded in establishing continuous appropriations for three critical and unprecedented transportation and housing programs: Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, Low-Carbon Transit Operations Program, and Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities.