

Mark Wardlaw

September 11, 2022

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The Prothman Company

Subject: Executive Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Dear Recruitment Team,

I am very excited to provide my resume and supplemental essays for your consideration as the Executive Director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring my experience to the Agency's efforts to preserve and enhance the Tahoe region. As a native Nevadan, a graduate of the University of Utah, and a former Mammoth Lakes resident, the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains are the places where I developed my love and respect for the environment.

For the last two decades, I have brought executive leadership to diverse local government organizations, achieving vibrant and economically and environmentally sustainable communities. I am forward-thinking, results oriented and accomplished in building strong relationships with elected and appointed officials, staff, public agencies, customers and community stakeholders. I would bring a collaborative and open-minded perspective and approach to working with the Governing Board: understanding the Board's priorities, implementing them through an aligned and actionable budget and work program, and strengthening the governance team.

Throughout my career, I have developed consensus and partnerships with agencies, stakeholders, and the private sector, all with different goals across a broad range of interests. With the County of San Diego and the Town of Mammoth Lakes, I successfully embraced the "triple bottom line" to balance environment, economy, and society in my work with governing bodies, their commissions and stakeholders. This included working with leaders of the US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Army Corps of Engineers, San Diego Association of Governments, and tribal communities in crafting and implementing land use and transportation plans and environmental analysis and mitigation programs as well as the San Diego North County and South County Habitat Conservation Plans.

Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe region are special places and this is truly a rare opportunity to address the challenges and opportunities facing the Agency. Given my experience, values and passion for public service, and my deep commitment to sustaining the environment and communities, I am confident I can make a positive contribution to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the communities it serves. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Mark Wardlaw

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Professional Summary

Public Agency Executive successful in leading small and large organizations in diverse communities and achieving organizational excellence. Accomplished and adaptable leader with political acumen, a clear sense of initiative and purpose, and ability to face diverse challenges during periods of high growth as well as economic downturn. Expertise in fiscal budgeting, performance management, mentoring staff, organizational development, and building high-performance teams with diversity and inclusion. Skilled at creative problem solving, facilitating internal and external engagement and consensus, translating conceptual models into specific strategies and actions, planning and executing multi-faceted programs and projects, and providing responsive customer service. Experienced supporting and implementing COVID-19 and hepatitis-A public health emergency responses, disaster preparedness and continuity of operational services.

Work Experience

City of Walnut Creek, CA - February 2021 to November 2021

Community Development Director

Led a team of 40 providing housing, long-range and transportation planning, current planning, code compliance, and building functions with an annual budget of \$12.5 million. Implemented City Council priorities including economic development and COVID-19 recovery, a comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan update, Housing Element update, and development permitting services and process improvements.

County of San Diego, CA – September 2012 to January 2021

Director, Department of Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Led the 232 person department in administration, long-range planning, current planning, land development engineering, building, and code compliance divisions with an annual budget of \$46.9 million. Highlights of accomplishments include:

- **Performance, Accountability and Transparency** – Completed the successful organizational and cultural development of the newly formed PDS. Established performance and project management systems and process improvements to increase quality and reduce time and costs of services, empower staff to perform at higher levels, and improve customer service and public transparency. Recognized for “Excellence in Leadership” by the Chief Administrative Officer for the collective improvements made by PDS that gained the trust and support of the Board of Supervisors.
- **Land Development and Strategic Planning** – Guided integrated County and inter-agency teams in the evaluation and decision-making of land development and strategic planning projects. Fundamentally changed how land use permit applications are managed, evaluated, and presented to the public, Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, including team rehearsals of

presentations to the Commission and Board. The Board of Supervisors approved 100% of the PDS items presented. Accomplishments include:

- Climate Action Plan, CAP annual report and Electric Vehicle Road Map.
- Regional Transportation Plan, Vehicle Miles Traveled Study Guide and Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Active Transportation Plan.
- Form-based codes, community plan updates and the Local Coastal Plan.
- Housing Affordability Strategy, Housing Development & Production Portal dashboard and initiation of the Housing, Public Safety and Environmental Justice Element updates.
- North County and South County Habitat Conservation Plans.
- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements.
- State required Sustainable Ground Water Management plans.
- Large scale master plan communities and residential, commercial, industrial and wind/solar energy permit applications.

Town of Mammoth Lakes, CA - March 2005 to September 2012

Community Development Director

Led a team of 11 providing current and long-range planning, building, and code compliance services with an annual budget of \$1.6 million. Highlights of accomplishments include:

- **Budget and Administration** – Established a performance-based budget and operating plan to deal with the impact of the Great Recession. Achieved a 100% increase in permit fee revenue collection and established inter-departmental workgroups and performance measures to increase efficiency. Achieved a \$1M annual increase in transient occupancy tax revenue collection for short-term rentals.
- **Land Development and Strategic Planning** – Led staff teams through the successful public and multi-agency revisioning of the future of Mammoth Lakes and development of an integrated strategic policy and implementation framework. Results include Town Council approval of:
 - 2007 General Plan Update, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Trails System Master Plan, Mobility Plan, Wayfinding Plan, and Zoning Code Update.
 - Shady Rest, North Old Mammoth Road, North Village, Sierra Star, Snowcreek, and Downtown Neighborhood District Plans.
 - Destination Resort Community and Economic Development Strategy.
 - Capital Facilities and Financing Plan and fee adjustments.
 - Airport Layout Plan Update and Air Service Forecast.
 - Approval of eight major complex and controversial specific/master plans and the Snowcreek Development Agreement providing a \$30 million benefit to the community.

City of Culver City, CA – November 1998 to March 2005

Deputy Community Development Director & Planning Manager - 2002 to 2005

Deputy Community Development Director - 1998 to 2002

Led a team of 15 providing current and long-range planning services with an annual budget of \$2.1 million. Highlights of accomplishments include:

- Led negotiations, approval and delivery of the Town Plaza Project, a \$60 million, 140,000 square foot infill entertainment-retail project. Responsible for completion of Redevelopment Agency projects: two public parking structures, a city-wide branding and graphic wayfinding program; a \$1.5 million,

30,000 square foot public plaza with commissioned public art; pedestrian, traffic signal and crosswalk improvements; and a Neighborhood Traffic Management Program protecting surrounding residential areas. The project was completed on time and under budget and has exceeded all performance expectations.

- Led teams in creating a new clear, concise, and user-friendly zoning ordinance, and represented the City in proposed regional projects including the expansion of the Los Angeles International Airport and proposed annexation of the 70-acre West Los Angeles Community College.

Centre City Development Corporation, San Diego, CA – July 1990 to November 1998

Principal Planner - 1993 to 1998

Senior Planner - 1990 to 1993

Project manager for the 500-space “Park It On Market” Gaslamp Quarter garage. Team member for the siting and development the 40,000-seat PETCO Park, shared public parking plan, and \$12.1 million parking revenue bond in downtown San Diego. Project manager for Bay-to-Balboa Park link and College Station light rail transit station alternatives. Secured the \$5.0 million ISTE A grant for Santa Fe Depot Plaza improvements. Team member for the Centre City Redevelopment Project Area expansion, Centre City Community Plan, Master EIR, and certification of the Local Coastal Program by the CA Coastal Commission.

City of San Diego, CA - January 1987 to July 1990

Senior Planner, Office of the City Architect - 1989 to 1990

Associate Planner, City of San Diego Planning Department - 1987 to 1989

Advised the Mayor’s 24-member Blue Ribbon Centre City Planning Committee and prepared the Centre City Community Plan, the Centre City Transit Ordinance, Parking Ordinance, and Planned District Ordinance. Prepared the Balboa Park Master Plan/Community Plan with the Parks and Recreation Department.

City of Overland Park, KS – June 1985 to January 1987

Assistant Planner and Urban Designer, Department of Planning and Research

Implemented Downtown Design Guidelines, advised the Downtown Business Association, and supported the development of city-wide urban design guidelines.

Education

Master of Environmental Planning, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, 1985

Bachelor of Science, City Planning (emphasis in architecture and urban design) University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, 1983

**Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Executive Director
Supplemental Essay Questions**

- 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.**

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring my experience to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA) efforts to preserve and enhance the Tahoe region. As a native Nevadan, a graduate of the University of Utah, and a former Mammoth Lakes resident, the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains are the places where I developed my love and respect for the environment.

My education and career have allowed me to develop expertise integrating regional and city planning and redevelopment with protection of the environment. This has been particularly true of my efforts and accomplishments with San Diego County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

Building on the success and momentum of TRPA, and the foundation established by the EIP, RTP, and destination stewardship efforts, requires a focus on partnerships, funding, implementation and continued innovation. This is a perfect fit with my background and successful track record of establishing and building partnerships with agencies and stakeholders and finding common ground to orchestrate results.

For the last two decades, I have brought executive leadership to diverse local government organizations achieving vibrant and economically and environmentally sustainable communities. My career focus has always been sustaining nature and creating great places to live, work, and play.

Climate change is now the most pressing issue affecting the environments, societies, and economies of the world. The vision, mission and regional focus of TRPS on climate change, conservation, transportation, work force housing and the regional destination economy is holistic and acknowledges that they are inextricably linked. I share TPRA's vision and direction.

TRPA has a solid reputation and I see this as an extraordinary opportunity to lead a mission-based organization that is committed to achieving real and impactful positive change to increase sustainability in the Tahoe region. As executive director and a servant leader to the organization and Tahoe community, I can share what I have learned through the breadth and depth of my experience

This is the perfect time in my career to join TRPA. I'm ready for a challenge that speaks to the issues I care about most and look forward to returning to the Sierra Nevada, the place my family considers home.

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

Throughout my career, I have worked closely with a variety of governing boards and their appointed commissions providing responsive support, recommendations, and management. I have learned from experience when working with a Governing Board the most important goals must be communicating clearly, establishing trust, and focusing on results. Let me explain.

Communicating clearly is the foundation for success and the path to building trust and understanding the Board's expectations and priorities. The composition and structure of the Board is large and uniquely complex and each member will have their own communication style, making the relationship between the Board and the Director all the more important.

My approach is grounded in listening to gain in-depth understanding through clear and consistent communication - both formal and informal - in formats that work best for the Board. I carefully consider the perceptions and implications of the information staff provides to the Board and the public. I communicate equitably with Board members and always practice a "no surprises" approach.

Establishing trust is another crucial goal to achieve with the Board. I establish trust by demonstrating on a daily basis the core competencies of leadership, the values of integrity, stewardship of what is entrusted to us as staff, and a commitment to excellence. I also earn the Board's complete confidence in our work knowing that their priorities will be met. Lastly, I reinforce the organization's commitment and sense of working together to further the mission and vision of the organization.

Focusing on results is the third goal to achieve with the Board. With many TRPA plans in place or under development, I would continue the positive momentum of TRPA by:

- On boarding with speed and conviction,
- Engaging deeply with external agencies, and
- Empowering the people and teams who are responsible for the work.

My collaborative style and open spirit is well-suited to this approach. I have successfully led and managed large and complex organizations. I have also directly supported teams by anticipating questions, testing options and thoughtfully preparing for public, external agency, and Board meetings and actions. I also look to future results seeking continuous improvement, innovation, and identifying future risks and changing conditions that require our attention.

Woven together, these three goals establish a solid fabric for a successful working relationship between the Board and Director.

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 the your experience successfully building and maintaining relationships with a variety of external agencies.

I have extensive experience working effectively with tribal authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, special districts, cities and counties, and state and federal agencies. I'll share two examples that highlight my experience and approach.

San Diego County Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs): The unincorporated area of San Diego County is large with more than 100 external agencies providing services. In 1998, the County, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and US Fish & Wildlife Service established the first three HCPs. The partnership made significant progress in funding, assembling and managing the first HCP and its intended 98,300-acre preserve.

A decade later, each agency had serious disagreements about preserve assembly, management, and covered species. Disputes were negatively affecting the first HCP and put the future of the second HCP in doubt: the stakes were high and the situation was difficult.

I reached out to both agencies to establish an executive team to define our issues, find common goals, and support one another. We engaged an expert outside consultant to support our team effort and agreed to: raise issues early; find the best possible outcomes for all parties; empower and support our working teams; and establish a dispute resolution process when we were unable to reach agreement. This effort required a high degree of patience, understanding, empathy and persuasion. Ultimately we collectively reestablished the partnership and received the Board of Supervisors direction to continue with the second HCP.

Mammoth Lakes Destination Resort Strategy: the Town of Mammoth Lakes has a resident population of 8,000 people, and a peak winter population of 40,000. I led the successful public and multi-agency revisioning effort to become a more balanced destination resort community.

15 separate external agencies and non-governmental organizations provide services to the community. Their independent services and plans were disjointed and interests groups competed for limited resources, affecting our ability to make a collective impact.

I purposefully built strong relationships with US Forest Service, Caltrans, college and school districts, special districts, Mammoth Lakes Housing, Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and Mammoth Lakes Tourism. We collectively identified shared agency goals and objectives and identified opportunities to leverage land, capital facilities, operations and funding resources.

Together we developed the overall destination resort strategy that led to the subsequent approval of district plans, the capital facilities and financing plan, and private master/specific plans with certain public amenities, affordable housing, trails and public access to Inyo National Forest. These foundational partnerships are still making progress. For example, the Mammoth Lakes multi-use facility and "The Parcel," a 450-unit affordable housing project are underway.