

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

04/30/2025

2. Department

High Speed Rail Authority

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Engineering Services Branch, Planning and Engineering Office

4. CEA Position Title

Director of Engineering Services

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose.
(2-3 sentences)

The CEA is the High-Speed Rail Authority's Chief Engineer and oversees the Engineering Services Branch. It provides oversight of technical engineering and capital program planning in accordance with the Authority's Program Management Plan (PMP), including project design and project management of all pre-construction activities. It provides leadership to a multi-functional integrated team of Authority and consultant staff on a variety of engineering technical issues related to program and project management of all pre-construction activities. The incumbent serves as an expert advisor, develops and implements policy, exercises political acumen, and works effectively with diverse internal and external parties, including the Authority's Board of Directors (Board), the Executive Team, and other administrators.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Chief of Planning and Engineering

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one*)

- ☒ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- ☐ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*): The CEA will have frequent contact with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and executive management team as a result of its responsibilities directing and managing the critical pre-construction activities of the project.

8. Organizational Level (*Select one*)

☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☒ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The CEA provides oversight of technical engineering and capital program planning in accordance with the High-Speed Rail Authority's (Authority) Program Management Plan (PMP), including project design, program, and project management of all pre-construction activities. The incumbent provides leadership and oversight to a multi-functional integrated team of Authority and consultant staff on a variety of engineering technical issues related to project planning and delivery. The incumbent confers and coordinates with various directors and office chiefs on engineering technical and administrative matters related to project delivery activities. The incumbent plans, organizes, and directs assignments and handles the most difficult technical and administrative problems through coordination of staff and resources. The incumbent serves as an expert technical engineering advisor and makes recommendations on changes in policy and procedures, proposes procedural guidelines and standards for work performed, and implements recommendations.

Specific examples of duties include developing policies, procedures, plans, manuals, and other guiding documents and establishing best practices and standards related to engineering services, project development, and planning and management. This policy development role is critical to the success of the Authority's mission as the policies control the construction activity of the project.

Furthermore, the CEA plans, organizes, and directs successful delivery of construction packages by providing leadership and direction to the project sections (Northern/Central Valley, Merced to Madera, Poplar to Bakersfield, Central Valley/Southern) interdisciplinary teams of environmental, engineering, right of way, third party and utilities, and public outreach subject matter experts. The CEA also manages and oversees the development of project work plans for each project section and maintains accountability by ensuring that proper Authority governance is followed related to Stage Gate and Configuration Management processes. For example, the CEA:

1. Oversees engineering activities and end products necessary to successfully plan, procure, design, and construct the Authority's capital projects.
2. Oversees preliminary engineering and project design for procurement, technical concepts, technical review of design-build submittals, system integration, public utilities management, and railroad interfacing.

In its project development role, it advances the coordination of pre-construction activities and the necessary work to support construction, including right of way acquisition, advancing preliminary engineering, utility relocation, and securing third party agreements. For example, it:

1. Originates, organizes, and directs successful delivery of future project packages by developing scope, cost, and schedules for early works and civil construction contracts.
2. Develops and coordinates project resource plans.
3. Develops best value solutions and implements cost reductions.
4. Evaluates Early Works workload, cost estimates, and schedule for the Program Baseline.

The CEA also organizes the work and staff of the Engineering Services Branch and provides functional program engineering oversight of all aspects of the Authority, including field activities. Additionally, it directs subordinate managers and establishes management control systems and performance targets.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☒ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The CEA is the Authority's Chief Engineer and is responsible for the development of logical capital projects that comprise the totality of the high-speed rail system, and their implementation across the stages of project delivery, including planning, environmental clearance and permitting, and design. This assembly of projects is developed in collaboration with the Statewide Regional Director to clearly distill and delineate early works projects as well, a critical item in the timely delivery of all projects.

Early Works are critical to the success of the department. These Early Work activities require the Authority to work with various third parties to acquire right of way and relocate utilities located in the system's path. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), in a report released on February 21, 2025, noted that the project's initial segment encountered significant schedule delays and cost increases caused by prolonged disagreements with third parties. The Authority has now begun designing extensions to the initial segment and has implemented new project management procedures for these extensions that, if followed, could help to ensure that it completes necessary Early Works before advancing to construction.

However, the OIG stated that "while effective management of these new procedures may help prevent some of the costs and delays associated with moving into construction too soon, the procedures do not fundamentally improve the Authority's ability to get third parties to engage in what can be a time-consuming process." Therefore, it is imperative for this CEA to effectively manage what is within its scope of control, while the Authority continues to improve its third-party negotiation, acquisition, and utilities relocation approval process so projects do not continue to fall further behind schedule.

As a result the CEA plays a critical role in, and is essential to the success of, the Early Works program and serves as an expert advisor to the Chief of Planning and Engineering by providing recommendations for successful execution of engineering responsibilities, or supporting the contract manager and maintaining and managing task-related documents and correspondence; verifies deliverables for quality assurance; and recommends acceptance. Also, in the absence of the Chief of Planning and Engineering, the CEA serves as the engineer in responsible charge for the Authority, responsible for activities and approval of end products necessary to successfully plan, engineer, procure, design, and construct the Authority's capital projects, which is essential to moving the high-speed rail (HSR) project forward.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The Authority has undergone a significant change in management, funding, focus and in organizational structure in the past six months as a new CEO began. The Authority also received a federal funding boost of \$3.1. billion in 2023; however, the new federal administration has expressed skepticism toward the Authority's mission, and the Federal Department of Transportation announced in February its intent to audit the Authority's expenditure of federal funds. Furthermore, the Governor's Office noted in January that the project is an economic development opportunity for the Central Valley.

As a result of these headwinds and changes, the Authority has undertaken an executive-level reorganization aimed at streamlining responsibilities and activities to ensure that the Authority is properly positioned to meet the challenges. As a result the reorganization has been flattened out with the Authority's primary functions (construction, infrastructure, planning and engineering, program safety, project controls, rail operations, etc.,) reporting directly to the CEO. The Planning and Engineering Office consists of a Chief of Planning and Engineering position at its helm, a Director of Planning and Sustainability overseeing the Planning and Sustainability Branch, a Director of Environmental Services overseeing the Environmental Service Branch, and a Director of Engineering Services Branch (this CEA) that will oversee the Engineering Services Branch. Currently, the Engineering Services Branch does not have a Director as the other branches of the Planning and Engineering Office do, and one is needed for consistency across the branches and efficient oversight of technical engineering and capital program planning.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The CEA develops, implements, and revises policies governing the engineering functions of the Authority's project. Specifically, the CEA is the principal policy maker for several critical Authority functions:

- 1) For example, the CEA is principal policy maker responsible for the Stage Project Delivery (SPD) policy. The SPD is the Authority's method for managing scope, schedule, budget, deliverables, and technical implementation of all capital projects. It is intended to enhance visibility and transparency of projects by enabling effective oversight, accountability, and control of key project decisions and Configuration Management. It is critical to the success of the project because it applies criteria to determine whether a project should advance to the next stage, drives alignment of critical project elements and scope definition through the Configuration Management process, governs the systematic refinement of cost estimates and schedules at each stage, and assesses the risks and benefits of moving to the next stage.
- 2) The CEA is also the principal policy maker for governing the development and interpretation of engineering standards for Authority projects that are incorporated into Design and Bid packages. Specifically, the CEA develops policy for maintaining the vast numbers of technical memorandums, guidelines, policies, and procedural reports before their inclusion into the Authority's new centralized document control system.
3. The CEA is also the principal policy maker for developing and implementing policy governing the adaptations of several nationwide rail building and operating standards to the Authority's needs. For example, the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) Manual for Railway Engineering provides guidance on the engineering of railroads, including freight operations up to 70 mph and passenger trains up to 90 mph. However, AREMA's guidance varies in scope and detail from international high-speed rail systems, necessitating additional standards for high-speed operations. The CEA is responsible for developing and implementing policy integrating AREMA into the high-speed rail environment.
- 4) The CEA is also responsible for developing and implementing policy governing the integration of guidelines and standards set by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in its planning and engineering processes. AASHTO provides key standards for design, construction, and maintenance of transportation infrastructure, including railroads and highways. However, like the AREMA guidance, the Authority must integrate AASHTO's guidelines, particularly for elements related to civil engineering, track design, and alignment, into its high-speed rail project. The goal of the policy is to enable and govern how the Authority combines AASHTO with other international and high-speed rail-specific standards, in addition to the CalTrans Highway Design Manual, the Federal Project Development and Design Manual (PDDM), the Design Procedures Guide, and the California Building Code.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Director of Engineering Services Branch is the Authority's Chief Engineer and reports to the Chief of Planning and Engineering and has a broad scope and nature of decision making through being responsible for supporting the Program Delivery Pillars, which underpin the activities of the Functional Support Groups, and developing, maintaining, and interpreting engineering policies related to infrastructure. A program pillar is a core principle, theme, or foundational element that supports and guides a program's objectives, strategy, and implementation. The project has seven primary program pillars consisting of Mobility and Connectivity, Sustainability, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Technological Innovation, Equity and Accessibility, Funding and Financial Viability, and alignment with state and federal transportation policies.

The CEA is responsible for the Authority's infrastructure design guidance documents and advises on engineering and design. The CEA is the final engineering and design authority over all infrastructure engineering issues and verifies that designs comply with established Authority requirements related to infrastructure. Specifically, the CEA's scope includes:

1. Coordination of pre-construction activities including right of way acquisition, preliminary engineering, and utility relocation.
2. Developing, publishing, and managing engineering policy related to infrastructure design and engineering, project development, cost estimation, and construction;
3. Originating, organizing, and directing successful delivery of project packages;
4. Maintaining staff and consultant pools and allocating engineering resources to the Program Delivery Pillars according to their Resource Plans;
5. Communicating and coordinating with the system's numerous engineering stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the FRA, and others.

The CEA is differentiated from the Chief of Planning and Engineering in that the Chief has overall responsibility for several functions, including Planning and Engineering, Environmental Programs, and Planning and Sustainability, whereas the CEA is focused on Engineering and Project Development and is the Authority's Chief Engineer. While the CEA reports to the Chief, it also independently exercises political acumen and works with diverse internal and external parties, including the Authority's Board of Directors, the Executive Team, and other administrators.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The CEA reviews, develops, revises, interprets, and implements current and new policies governing the infrastructure engineering and project development functions of the Authority's project. The CEA is the principal policy maker for several critical policies including the stage project delivery process, the branch document control process, and the integration of AREMA and AASHTO standards and other standards noted in section 26. The OIG report section "Pre-Construction Activities for the Merced and Bakersfield Extensions" and "Persistent Delays in Securing Agreements with Third Parties Require New Solutions," released on 02/21/2025, noted that while the Authority has implemented new project management procedures they do not "fundamentally improve the Authority's ability to get third parties to engage in [the process]. Therefore, the CEA, as the responsible party for pre-construction activities, must revise or develop policies to resolve the conditions noted by the OIG. Similarly, the CEA will have to revise current branch document control policies as the Authority moves forward with the implementation of its centralized Document Control system. Furthermore, policy revisions will be necessary to maintain the integration of AREMA and AASHTO standards.