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**A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Date

2025-11-14

2. Department

California High-Speed Rail Authority

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

Planning and Engineering Office/Planning and Sustainability Branch

4. CEA Position Title

Director of Planning and Sustainability

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

Under the administrative direction Chief of Planning and Engineering, the Director of Planning and Sustainability (P&S) is responsible for advancing the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (Authority) implementation of the high-speed rail (HSR) program through the development and oversight of all Authority policies and procedures pertaining to planning and sustainability. The incumbent is also responsible for ensuring compliance to all state and federal laws, statutes, and Authority policies and procedures. The Director of P&S ensures contractors fulfill strategic and contractual obligations to the Authority for the successful delivery of HSR project on schedule and within budget. The incumbent will work closely and collaboratively with the Legislative Affairs Office, External Affairs and Communications Office, and Statewide Regional Office to assist in the implementation of various program functions.

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 Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and executive management team due to its responsibilities directing and managing all critical P&S initiatives for the Authority.

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 leads long-range and wide scope planning initiatives for the HSR network, such as routes, stations, station sites, and maintenance facilities. The incumbent provides leadership and oversight to a multi-functional integrated team of Authority and consultant staff on a variety of technical issues related to P&S. The incumbent confers and coordinates with various directors and office chiefs on 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, while serving as an expert technical advisor and makes recommendations on changes in policy and procedures, proposes procedural guidelines and standards for work performed, and implements recommendations of high political interest.

Specific examples of duties include developing policies, procedures, plans, manuals, and other guiding documents and establishing best practices and standards related to planning, sustainability, and compliance. This policy development role is critical to the success of the Authority's mission as the policies control the long term viability of the project.

This CEA will also be responsible for developing goals and targets for sustainable construction, rail operations, organizational practices, and tracking and reporting. In conjunction with the development of goals and targets, the CEA will also manage field project reviews to ensure compliance with sustainability policies and best practices.

Furthermore, this CEA is responsible for developing partnerships that will aid in aligning sustainability initiatives with ethical business practices and community engagement efforts to advance state policy goals, especially related to increasing ridership and revenue. This includes forging partnerships with public agencies at the local, state, and federal level, as well as private businesses within HSR stations and surrounding areas. Additional partnerships include regional partners throughout California, such as station area transportation, transit, and rail providers to further the modernization of the state rail system and ensure effective and efficient connectivity.

The CEA also serves as an expert advisor to the Chief Executive Officer, other executive management, and the Authority's Board of Directors. In addition, the CEA organizes the work and staff of the Planning and Sustainability Branch and provides all Authority aspects of functional program oversight, including field activities. Lastly, it directs subordinate managers and establishes management control systems.

## 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 of Planning & Sustainability, and is responsible for the development, maintenance, and implementation of policies, procedures, plans, manuals, and other guiding documents that comprise the totality of the HSR system. This CEA is pivotal in establishing the groundwork for the Authority's long term viability from a sustainable, social, and economic standpoint. The CEA creates programs that will deliver a sustainable HSR system and collaborates with policymakers and stakeholders to implement regulations that balance economic growth with ecological preservation.

Building the nation's first HSR system is essential for California to maintain its position as a global leader when it comes to economic standing, job creation, and efforts to combat the effects of climate change. This future-ready system, with high-speed trains that will be powered by 100-percent renewable energy, will ensure that Californians can move efficiently and effectively even as the state's population grows toward 50 million people.

This CEA, and the Planning & Sustainability Branch as a whole, serve as pivotal and key contributors to the Authority's overall mission to deliver the nation's first truly HSR system in a socially equitable, environmentally conscious manner. Sustainability is, and always will be, at the mission's core to deliver HSR to California. The Authority remains dedicated to the goal of creating the greenest infrastructure project in the nation, both in its operations and its construction. This CEA's core responsibilities consistently revolve around knowledge of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions to develop environmentally conscious policy and make decisions that reflect the Authority's commitment to deliver a system that serves as a model for sustainable rail infrastructure.

This is demonstrated by the CEA's interaction with the legislature, legal groups, procurement groups, control agencies, and relevant offices to incorporate renewable energy and sustainability provisions into contracts and conduct stakeholder outreach. This CEA also heavily considers the impact of renewable energy and sustainable solutions while overseeing feasibility studies, alternative analysis, and route selection.

## **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 organizational structure in the past year since a new CEO began. The Director of Planning and Sustainability was previously an exempt, Governor appointed position, prior to these organizational changes.

The Planning and Engineering Office consists of a Chief of Planning and Engineering position at its helm, a Director of Planning and Sustainability (this CEA) overseeing the Planning and Sustainability Branch, a Director of Environmental Services overseeing the Environmental Services Branch, and a Director of Engineering Services Branch that oversees the Engineering Services Branch. Currently, the Planning and Sustainability 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 the Authority's P&S efforts. The Authority has assessed the structure of the Planning and Engineering Office and determined this position is better suited as a CEA position in alignment with office structures across the Authority.

The need for a leader in the Planning and Sustainability Branch is critical to the Authority's commitment of delivering the nation's first truly HSR system that operates on 100% renewable energy. In order to continue delivering on the Authority's key sustainability efforts, this CEA is needed to continue direct oversight and leadership of sustainability practices at the Authority. This CEA will be responsible for a unique commitment to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions during construction and demonstrated activities, such as carbon sequestration projects and engine replacements, implementation of solar and battery storage resources to deliver renewable energy for operation, and widespread preservation efforts to mitigate impacts on natural habitats caused by the HSR project. This CEA is critical to ensuring these duties continue to be fulfilled in totality and commitment to these critical goals is not minimized or mismanaged.

### 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 Director of Planning and Sustainability develops, implements, and revises policies governing the P&S functions of the Authority's project. Specifically, the CEA is the principal policy maker for several critical Authority functions:

1) The CEA is the principal policy maker responsible for maintaining and updating the Authority's Sustainability Policy. This policy complements and reinforces the Authority's fundamental commitment to Californians and the goals expressed in pertinent legislation. The policy's objective is to minimize impacts to the natural and built environment, maximize safety and reliability, encourage compact, walkable land development around transit stations, encourage ridership and revenue, and help California reduce resource consumption, traffic and airport congestion, and energy dependency in a cost-effective manner over the system's entire life cycle. This policy outlines and defines sustainable infrastructure based on global best practices, stakeholder priorities, and California state regulations. It governs the totality of the Authority's sustainability practices to maintain and achieve sustainability-related commitments. This policy is highly impactful to the Authority, as it directly affects the totality of the HSR system, from pre-construction all the way through operation. The Sustainability Policy is pivotal to the success of the Authority, core to the department's mission, and is of extreme interest to the legislature, the Governor, the general public, stakeholders, and shareholders.

2) This position is the principal policy maker for the Authority's Sustainable Procurement Policy. The purpose of this policy is to advance the Authority's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) objectives in the procurement of goods and services in alignment with the priorities outlined in the Sustainability Policy. The policy aims to ensure that the Authority procures suppliers, consultants, and contractors whose values align with its sustainability principles, thereby encouraging innovation by promoting the delivery of environmentally and socially responsible goods and services. It also signals to the industry the Authority's commitment to ESG-focused procurement. This policy complements the broader Sustainability Policy and applies to all assets—past, present, and future—procured throughout the lifecycle of the HSR system. It ensures that products and services acquired during planning, design, construction, and operations support the Authority's sustainability goals and stakeholder expectations.

3) This position is the principal policy maker for the Authority's Climate Policy. This policy provides clarity to internal and external audiences on the Authority's stance on climate change and the mitigation and adaptation actions necessary to meet state Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction goals and maintain system resilience. The Climate Policy draws out greater detail on the specific relationship of the HSR system to climate change adaptation and mitigation and points to the activities the Authority will undertake to help the State of California reach climate change mitigation goals. This policy governs compliance with the Authority's commitments related to GHG emissions reductions and includes additional considerations related to climate justice and equity. This policy impacts the entire HSR system and future generations of Californians.

4) The CEA is also the principal policy maker for the Authority's Community Benefits Policy. This policy directs the Authority and its contractors to make every effort to engage in defined activities that will benefit communities and residents as much as possible during construction of the HSR system. The Community Benefits Policy governs how the Authority trains, develops, and hires contractors that assist with the HSR project, and promotes construction employment and training opportunities for those residing in economically disadvantaged areas and veterans returning from military service. These efforts have a deep effect on the current and future economic landscape of California, and will serve to mitigate the harms caused by geographically concentrated poverty, unemployment and underemployment in economically disadvantaged areas and among disadvantaged workers throughout the United States.

### C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

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

The Director of Planning and Sustainability is the Authority's subject matter expert on planning and sustainability, reports to the Chief of Planning and Engineering, and has a broad scope and nature of decision making. This position is responsible for supporting the Program Delivery Pillars, which are foundational elements and principals that guide the successful execution of the HSR program. One of the Authority's Program Delivery Pillars is sustainability and environmental stewardship, which aims to deliver an HSR system that aligns with California's climate goals and minimizes environmental impact. This position will develop, maintain, and interpret planning and sustainability policies related to the entirety of the HSR system's construction and future operation.

The CEA is responsible for the Authority's long term viability and advances appropriate Authority ESG objectives. The CEA is the final authority over all planning and sustainability issues and verifies that policies, plans, manuals, and procedures comply with established Authority requirements related to sustainability. Specifically, the CEA's scope includes:

1. Leads long-range planning initiatives for the HSR network. (routes, stations, maintenance facilities, service levels)
2. Develops, implements, and maintains planning policies and procedures, objectives, and performance metrics for the Authority.
3. Develops, implements, and maintains sustainability policies and procedures. Manages field project reviews to ensure compliance with sustainability policies and use of best practices.
4. Maintains staff and consultant pools and allocates P&S resources to the Program Delivery Pillars according to their Resource Plans;
5. Communicates and coordinates with the system's numerous stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Federal Railroad Administration, and others.

In addition, Governor Newsom has set some of the most ambitious environmental and climate goals in the world through the California Climate Commitment, including carbon neutrality, major reductions in GHG emissions, transitioning to clean energy, and building climate-friendly infrastructure. This CEA plays a pivotal role in helping meet California's ambitious environmental and climate goals by overseeing GHG emissions, tracking, and offsets, ensuring the HSR system contributes to the state's carbon neutrality; overseeing the creation of a renewable energy system for the HSR system; leading efforts to use zero-emission construction equipment and recycling or reusing construction waste; and promoting transit-oriented development around stations to reduce car dependency. This CEA oversees the Authority's Sustainability Report, which tracks progress toward climate goals and informs the public, governor, and policymakers.

#### 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 planning and sustainability functions of the Authority's project. The CEA is the principal policy maker for several critical policies including, but not limited to; the Sustainability Policy, Climate Policy, Community Benefits Policy. The Director of Planning and Sustainability is also responsible for various deliverables on other critical items that impact policy making issues such as the two statutorily mandated reports to the Legislature: a Business Plan, which is submitted in even numbered years, and a Project Update Report, which is submitted in odd-numbered years. Therefore, the CEA, as the responsible party for all planning and sustainability activities, must revise or develop policies to resolve conditions noted by the Authority's Board or the Legislature. Furthermore, policy revisions will be necessary to maintain best practices and ensure the long term stability of the HSR system.