
Debra A. Johnson

Letter of Interest

June 24, 2020

Gregg Moser
Krauthamer & Associates

RE: Chief Executive Officer/General Manager
Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD)

Dear Mr. Moser:

I am submitting my résumé for the position of Chief Executive Officer/General Manager for the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD). I bring a diverse professional background with extensive experience in the transportation industry that I believe will greatly compliment the needs of RTD.

I am a transportation leader who is passionate about the positive contributions that this industry makes to society. Americans may not all have balance footing in today's world; however, viable public transportation is a means by which one can be unleashed from his/her limitations and gain access to people, places and things. Viable public transportation is also a means that can aid in sustaining our planet, reduce our carbon footprint and greaten our stride to protect our environment.

As an accomplished executive with more than 25 years of progressively responsible management experience in transportation with a successful record of organizational development; strategic planning and implementation; transit service delivery; capital program delivery; fiscal management; labor negotiations and staff development, as well as diversity, inclusion and belonging, I am ready to take on a new challenge and lead the RTD. I am an ethical, results-oriented problem solver who possesses professional decorum, integrity and a high level of judgment. I pride myself on being a public servant because I genuinely care about people and the society in which we live...simply put, I enjoy helping others.

I am a 'person in the people business' and leadership is all about people and management is all about process. I am a firm believer that the two concepts are complementary and must be done in tandem to effectuate positive change. I am a transformative leader who wants to optimize the RTD's services, programs and its people—the most valued asset—is extremely appealing to me.

During my career, I have served in a variety of progressive management and leadership positions. I possess extensive leadership skills and have managed at multiple organizational levels from a Senior Government Relations Officer; Program Manager; Department Manager; Director; Chief Operations Officer to Deputy Chief Executive Officer. My responsibilities have included creating strategic and business plans, developing legislative programs, developing and implementing operating and capital budgets, organizing and executing business policies, processes and procedures, and building teams from disparate functional units. My professional experience also includes transit operations and service delivery and planning, project

management, activity-based budgeting, and creating positive collaborative relationships with policy bodies, stakeholders, executives, union leaders, employees and consultants.

I have had the opportunity to participate in many different areas of the transportation industry and in various management positions where I have:

- Coordinated and collaborated with legislative, regulatory and policy bodies, representatives of federal, state, regional and local agencies, elected and appointed officials, and other regional transit agencies' executives on behalf of my resident agency.
- Developed transit operational programs to improve safety and service quality and enhance the customer experience.
- Restructured organizational departments to improve business effectiveness, efficiencies and productivities.
- Created programs to develop staff for supervisory, managerial and leadership positions for sustainable growth of the organization.
- Pioneered management methods, techniques and technologies to improve organizational operations.
- Delivered significant and sustainable results in process analysis, productivity improvements, performance management and quality initiatives.
- Established programs to promote labor/management partnerships and manage employee relations matters effectively.
- Organized customer services plans and activities to improve customer relations, public involvement and stakeholders' participation with the agency.

I am extremely interested in opportunities where I can apply my expertise to grow an organization, the transportation industry as well as myself.

In the midst of COVID-19, cost constraints, fiscal concerns and transit ridership trends have dictated that agencies become more agile, creative and open to new ideas and continuous improvements. I will apply my extensive transportation experience throughout my more than 25-year career and leverage my strategies and leadership philosophy: 'Lead by example, be present in the moment, be personable, listen more than speak, and foster a work environment where employees want to do their best.'

I am ready to provide quality leadership and deliver industry and business best practices, which would be beneficial to the RTD's employees, residents and visitors of the service area and the entire Denver metropolitan area.

It would be my honor to serve as RTD's Chief Executive Officer/General Manager.

References will be gladly provided as well as any other information upon request.

Regards,



Debra A. Johnson

Attachment

DEBRA A. JOHNSON

PROFILE

Visionary with more than 25 years of diversified, progressively responsible experience managing cross-functional business processes for public transportation organizations. Recognized transportation executive who has established business systems, procedures and an environment of inclusion resulting in increased operational efficiency, strengthened financials and enhanced safety and service quality. Results-oriented leader with professional decorum, integrity and a high level of expert judgment. Effective problem solver and communicator with excellent motivational and team building skills with proven capability to build consensus amongst employees, labor unions, communities and stakeholders.

Executive Core Competencies

- Strategic Planning
 - Budget Management
 - Board Relations
 - Capital Program Management
 - Project Management
 - Team Leadership and Coaching
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Labor and Contract Negotiations
 - Crisis Communication
 - Public and Media Relations
 - Government Relations
 - Productivity Enhancements
 - Business Improvements
 - Organizational Development
 - Public/Private Partnerships
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Long Beach Public Transportation Company (Long Beach Transit)

May 2014 ~ Present

Long Beach, CA

Directs and administers all operating functions for a multi-modal transit agency servicing 14 cities and 23 million customers annually. Leads departments responsible for bus, paratransit and water taxi service delivery and planning; maintenance and infrastructure, transit police and security, strategic planning and project development, customer relations and communication; regulatory compliance and civil rights and Board relations. Directs activities of departments to ensure conformance with goals and objectives and eliminates impediments to peak performance. Oversees the development and enforcement of rules, regulations and policies on transit operational methods and procedures and maintains relationships with union officials. Co-develops the operating and capital budgets and oversees the effective implementation and governing of the \$130 million operating and capital budgets.

- Oversees the agency's response, actions and activities to address the COVID-19 pandemic
- Provides leadership and collaborates with the executive team to develop and retain highly competent employees who support the organization's mission, values and strategic priorities
- Creates a team environment of inclusion; holds team accountable to established charters, roles responsibilities; drives performance and celebrates team successes
- Develops and communicates a strategic narrative; encourages and promotes open communication; practices active listening and encourages feedback

**Chief Operations Officer (COO), Interim
Deputy Chief Operations Officer (DCOO)**
Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

July 2012 ~ April 2014
Los Angeles, CA

Directed overall functions for day-to-day rail and bus transit service delivery, maintenance, capital vehicle procurement, facilities, infrastructure, training and performance management for rail, bus, and contract services and parking program. Directed and coordinated operating plans and standards for improving the safety culture, employee development, labor relations and service delivery. Developed and oversaw the department's \$1.1 billion operating and \$310 million capital budget. Created, managed and implemented key organizational performance metrics. Delivered monthly organizational presentations to the Board of Directors; regulatory bodies; and local and regional transportation agencies. Provided monthly key performance indicators reports to the Board of Directors and other transit entities.

As the Deputy COO, led overall functions for day-to-day transit service delivery, maintenance, operations contracts, employee/labor relations, facilities, infrastructure, materials management, safety, and training and performance management for bus, contract services and paratransit. Oversaw Metro's parking management program; served as Operations' executive lead for smart card technology transition and station fare gate access control implementation. Managed and implemented daily service delivery key organizational performance metrics.

- Promoted a culture of safety by implementing a post-accident cross-functional matrix team that provided active response, accident/incident assessment and sharing lessons learned through the development of mitigation and accident prevention strategies with all staff
- Successfully created and implemented monthly Bus Operator Focus groups comprised of 22 Bus Operators, two from each of 11 bus operating divisions resulting in improved communication and employee engagement fostering two-way dialogue with executive staff, management and frontline employees
- Initiated and launched a "bus bunching" assessment of the highest ridership bus routes using global positioning systems and scheduling strategies to identify innovative solutions to enhance on-time performance, reliability and customer experience

Director – Administration, Safety & Training
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)

February 2007 ~ June 2012
San Francisco, CA

Responsible for the planning, development and implementation of the agency's strategic plans, performance monitoring, customer services, public hearing adjudication, benchmarking, and best practices research activities. Guided development of EEO and diversity programs and ensured compliance with federal, state and local small business requirements; directed materials management and procurement functions. Oversight of human resources operations; employee and labor relations; payroll; organizational development, absence management and employee wellness. Oversaw system and industrial safety, environmental compliance and emergency preparedness. Led strategic communications for legislative, political and community outreach programs. Directed accessible services and served as the regulator of taxi services for the City and County of San Francisco. Served as the Agency's Chief of Staff. Managed the Division's \$62 million budget.

- Served as Chief labor negotiator for eight independent contracts; bargained the successful labor contract with the Transport Workers Union, Local 250-A netting the Agency \$41 million in savings over three years and changed work rule language regarding employee part-time usage, scheduling, discipline process, grievance procedures, pay practices and union release time

- Spearheaded the merger and implementation plan for the incorporation of the Taxi Commission as a division within the SFMTA
- Developed SFMTA's first-ever Strategic Plan that provided a five-year vision for the organization; conducted informational briefings to over 3000 employees on the goals and objectives of the strategic plan
- Directed the implementation of customer service process improvements and the opening of a new, consolidated Customer Service Center. Process improvement process resulted in a 50% increase in customer satisfaction and a 25% reduction in average wait times for addressing customer issues

Executive Director/CEO, Acting

(July 2011~August 2011)

Planned, organized and directed all functions and activities of the SFMTA; directed the enforcement of all applicable laws, ordinances and regulations; with an operating budget of \$750 million and a capital budget of \$1.1 billion with a responsibility for the City and County of San Francisco's surface transportation network that encompasses pedestrians; bicycling; bus, rail (Muni) transit and paratransit; traffic and parking and taxi industry regulation.

Authority Secretary - Board of Directors

May 2006 ~ February 2007

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Washington, D.C.

Responsible for management and implementation of Board policies, procedures, activities and resources. Coordinated with corporate officers to execute WMATA's operational and fiscal objectives. Administered the public hearing process to expand Board-public relations and to ensure compliance of the Authority's Compact. Developed and recommended policies and procedures for staff relationships and communications with the Board of Directors. Represented the Board of Directors in matters related to stakeholders and community groups. Managed the maintenance and custody of Authority records and corporate seal as required by the Authority Compact.

- Reengineered the Board communication submission process to enhance organizational transparency and access to agency documents
- Created and implemented Authority-wide guidelines to ensure consistent and concise messaging to internal and external entities
- Established the Authority's first public centralized electronic system for document retrieval and review, resulting in a streamline process for document access for Board of Directors
- Coordinated Authority's advocacy efforts with Congressional representatives, National Capital Region delegation, District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia delegates, Homeland Security, FTA and NTSB.

Director - Communications

January 2003~May 2006

Directed internal and external strategic and emergency communication work plans and products that promoted public understanding and support for Authority activities, policies and programs. Developed annual office strategic programs and work plans, created office operating budget and directed communication-related matrix team projects and deliverables. Served as the coordinating office for stakeholders and community group relation and interaction.

- Established the first-ever Riders' Advisory Council which served as a conduit to the Board of Directors and represented the voice of the rider on service, operation and budgetary matters
- Developed and implemented first-ever bi-annual Town Hall Meetings which provided customers an opportunity to address the Board of Directors in a public meeting forum on a broad array of authority topics

- Created and implemented the Passenger Communications Team (PaCT) which comprised of management personnel who provided customers with travel options during significant service disruptions resulting in a 25% customer complaint reduction
- Created and administered “Metro Behind the Scenes” seminars for regional stakeholders, employers and event organizers to provide an overview of service plans during inclement weather; the program greatly enhanced the Authority’s image with stakeholders and business communities

Department Manager - Community Outreach
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

March 2002 ~ December 2002
San Jose, CA

Directed and coordinated community outreach activities for major transportation infrastructure projects and the current transportation network. Served as a liaison to the Board of Directors and other elected and public officials on project related activities; provided monthly presentations/reports to elected officials at Policy Advisory Board meetings.

- Successfully developed and implemented project-specific Community Working Groups which comprised of community leaders, local residents and elected officials; working group discussed, coordinated and addressed project alignments, community impacts and environmental justice issues for major light-rail projects
- Expanded outreach by disseminating project information in Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Mandarin and Portuguese and providing foreign-language translators at major public meetings

Other Positions Held:

Program Manager - Community Outreach
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

January 2001 ~ March 2002
San Jose, CA

Senior Government/Community Relations Officer
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)

February 1996 ~ January 2001
Oakland, CA

Consultant - Public Involvement
Moore, Iacofano, & Goltsman

October 1995 ~ February 1996
Berkeley, CA

Public Participation Specialist
CH2M Hill

September 1992~September 1995
Oakland, CA

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Public Administration
Bachelor of Arts, International Relations
Eno Center for Transit Leadership Executive Development
Leadership Long Beach, Executive Leadership Series
Leadership San Francisco

California State University – Hayward
University of California – Davis
Alumna
Alumna
Alumna

AFFILIATIONS

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Life Member
American Public Transportation Association, Emerging Leaders Committee, 2019–2021; Bus CEO Committee, Member; Legislative Committee, Member
California Transit Association, Executive Committee, 2007–2012 and 2016–present; Chair, Plans and Program Committee 2018–2020
Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, Northern California Chapter, President 2011–2012; Southern California Chapter, Member
Downtown Long Beach Alliance, Board of Directors, 2018–2022; Executive Committee, 2019–present
Gateway Cities Council of Governments, Transportation Committee, 2017–present
U.S. DOT Intelligent Transportation Systems Program Advisory Committee, 2014–2018
University of California– Riverside Extension, Design Thinking Advisory Board, 2019–present
Women’s Transportation Seminar, Los Angeles Chapter, Member
Zero-Emissions Bus Resource Alliance, Executive Steering Committee, Member At-Large 2017–2020

RECENT AWARDS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Women In Action,” Award, Los Angeles African American Women’s Policy Institute, October 2019
“Women Who Move the Nation,” Advocacy Award, Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, National, March 2019
“Community Service,” Award, Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Conference, March 2017
“Women Leading the Way,” Leadership Award (“Leading the Way in Improving Transportation and Infrastructure in Southern California”), Upgrade LA, February 2016
“Women Leaders of Southern California,” Outstanding Transportation Executive Leadership Award, Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, Southern California Chapter, March 2016