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The Fresno Bee



LOCAL

Fresno economic advocate Eager elected to lead state's Transportation Commission

BY TIM SHEEHAN

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Lee Ann Eager, president and CEO of the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation, was elected as chairwoman of the California Transportation Commission on Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2022.

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been elected chairwoman of the [California Transportation Commission](#), the agency responsible for directing money for highways, transit, passenger rail and other transportation efforts in the state.

Eager, president and CEO of the [Fresno County Economic Development Corporation](#), was appointed to the state transportation commission in June 2020 by Gov. Gavin Newsom for a term that runs through February 2024. She was elected to lead the commission by her fellow members at their virtual meeting Wednesday.

She is a fourth-generation Fresnan who graduated with honors from Fresno State with a degree in criminology, and later earned her law degree from the University of California, Davis.

Her term as chairwoman begins March 1, when she will succeed Hilary Norton of Los Angeles. Also on Wednesday, Carl Guardino of San Jose, a longtime member of the transportation commission, was elected vice chairman.

“My highest priorities are to continue the commission’s work toward enhancing equity and climate considerations in transportation funding decisions; bringing our state’s transportation system up to a state of good repair; and ensuring all areas of the state have efficient mobility options for people and goods movement,” Eager said. “I also look forward to maintaining our strong partnerships with transportation agencies, advocates and community members.”

For more than a decade, Eager has been among Central California’s leading advocates for the development of high-speed rail. As CEO of the economic development organization, she has worked on relocation efforts for businesses

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maintenance facility” for the statewide rail system. The maintenance facility was anticipated to provide at least 1,500 jobs testing, outfitting and repairing high-speed trains for the system. The facility initially generated significant competition among communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley more than a decade ago because of those jobs.

But while the rail agency sought proposals from communities back in 2010, decisions on where to build it have repeatedly been delayed as the project navigates an array of financial, political and scheduling obstacles.

In addition to her role with the Fresno County EDC, Eager is a board member for the [Transportation Institute](#) at Fresno State.



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Lifelong Valley resident Tim Sheehan has worked as a reporter and editor in the region since 1986, and has been with The Fresno Bee since 1998. He is currently The Bee’s data reporter and also covers California’s high-speed rail project and other transportation issues. He grew up in Madera, has a journalism degree from Fresno State and a master’s degree in leadership studies from Fresno Pacific University.

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