

## PM 4: AI Unleashed: Benefits and Risks in Transportation and the Workforce

*Magic Kingdom 4*

### MODERATOR



**Kome Ajise**

*Executive Director, Southern California Association of Governments and Board Member, Mobility 21*

Kome Ajise is the Executive Director of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization. In this role, he leads regional planning to achieve Southern California's unified environmental, transportation and housing goals. Kome has three decades of experience in regional planning and transportation, previously serving as Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of Transportation. He holds degrees in Regional Planning from University of Benin, Nigeria, and California State University, Fresno.

### PANELISTS



**Amer Battikhi**

*Executive Vice President & General Manager, Digital & Data, Jacobs*

Amer Battikhi is the Executive Vice President and General Manager at Jacobs for Digital and Data Solutions, bringing more than 20 years of experience in leadership and operations for engineering consultancy, technology and advisory business focused on large-scale capital programs. Under Amer's leadership, the unit is focused on expanding Jacobs' position in our clients' digital ecosystems and providing cybersecurity solutions by leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) and creating next-generation software and data solutions. Amer develops strategies and innovative approaches to commercialize digital and data solutions for the critical infrastructure and national security markets, helping transform the business into double-digit profitability and topline growth. Most recently, Amer was responsible for the development of the Jacobs 2022 - 2024 Corporate Strategy.

Previously, Amer served as Vice President for Growth and Sales for the People & Places Solutions (P&PS) Line of Business in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific and Middle East (APME). Amer was also the Chair of the P&PS Sales Council, responsible for developing the annual growth business plan, reporting on the quarterly performance for the line of business and coordinating collaboration for all Jacobs buildings and infrastructure growth globally. Prior to that, he was the General Manager of the Jacobs (CH2M) State and Local Government client sector for APME. His responsibilities included overseeing 1500 employees in 10 countries, for all aspects of operations including P&L and growth for the water, transportation, and buildings markets.

Amer has served as an Advisor to CH2M Chairman and CEO, where he delivered key strategic projects and initiatives around organizational transformation, accelerated growth strategies, technology integration, and business planning. Before that, Amer was the General Manager for the Water Market in MENA, leading all aspects of operations, working on program management, consulting, engineering, design, and O&M projects.

Amer has worked on a number of iconic projects including the Cadiz Aquifer Storage Program in Southern California, the Water Sector Reconstruction Program in Iraq, Qatar

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2022 FIFA World Cup program and Masdar, the world's first carbon neutral, zero waste and fully powered by renewables smart city.

Amer holds a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Colorado State University and has held several Board of Directors positions for CH2M Joint Ventures and holding companies.



**Dawn Jackson-Perkins**

*Chief People Officer, LA Metro*

Dawn Jackson-Perkins, JD, AWI-CH was appointed as Deputy Chief People Officer for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) in January 2024. In this role, she leads Metro's Human Resources, encompassing talent development, talent acquisition, compensation, pension and benefits, and employee and labor relations.

Dawn collaborates closely with Policy Administration and the Office of Civil Rights Racial Equity & Inclusion.

As Deputy Chief, Dawn oversees Next Generation Workforce Development initiatives, leadership programs, employee engagement, employee relations, the Metro HUB training center, and the SEED LA transportation infrastructure training program. She is committed to preparing LA Metro's workforce to deliver world class transportation options to LA County by fostering a culture of continuous development and learning throughout the organization.

At LA Metro, Dawn has overseen innovative efforts including the creation and expansion of the Helping Employees Access Resources (HEAR) Office, Metro's Voluntary Language Review Panel, and the expansion of access to childcare resources for employees. Dawn brings over a decade of experience in transportation with a broad background in government, civil rights, grants management, employment law, and law enforcement administration. She is an experienced and trusted advisor on Human Resources-related topics.

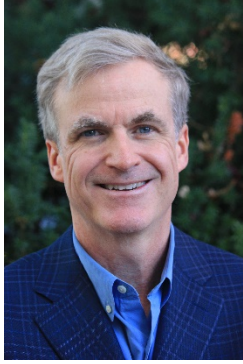
Prior to joining LA Metro, Dawn worked in various capacities for the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Law Office of Benjamin Taylor, the Law Firm Lipson, Neilson, Cole Seltzer & Garin, P.C, and several law enforcement agencies including Savannah Chatham-Police Department, Chatham County District Attorney's Office, and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

Dawn holds certificates from Harvard Business School Executive Education in Negotiations and Executive Human Resources. She is a subject matter expert in workplace investigations, holding a certificate from the Association of Workplace Investigators. Dawn received her BA from The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and her Juris Doctorate from Arizona Summit Law School.

In her spare time, Dawn enjoys cooking for large family gatherings and spending time with her husband and son.

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### **John O'Leary**

*State and Local Government Research Leader, Deloitte*

John O'Leary heads up State and Local Government research for the Deloitte Center for Government Insights. Prior to joining Deloitte, John served in several senior leadership roles for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including Chief Human Resource Officer.

A graduate of MIT, John's research explores the intersection of new technologies and the role of the public sector, including impact on the workforce. He is the author of numerous studies, including the 2025 study: "Scaling gen AI in US state and local governments: Opportunities, challenges, and the path to achieving large-scale value."

John has also served as a distinguished research fellow with the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and is the co-author of the best-selling book, "If We Can Put a Man on the Moon: Getting Big Things Done in Government."



### **Dr. Hamid Rezaei**

*Director, Emerging Technology and Transit Market, FlatironDragados*

Hamid Rezaei is a seasoned executive at FlatironDragados with over two decades of experience in the infrastructure design and construction industry. Currently, he is at the helm of the preconstruction phase for the Automated Transit Network (ATN), a portfolio pioneering Public-Private Partnership (P3) project in California and Georgia. Hamid's expertise has been cultivated through his previous roles with PCL, HPG Group and Government agencies where he led design and construction portfolio for a variety of projects across North America and beyond.

Known for his innovative problem-solving skills and collaborative project delivery approach, Hamid is deeply committed to advancing a diverse portfolio of transportation initiatives throughout the continent. He has a particular focus on major transit projects that utilize collaborative delivery methods and P3 models. His role involves building strategic partnerships with stakeholders to ensure the successful realization of complex infrastructure projects.

Hamid also brings substantial experience from his work with public agencies, where he oversaw multibillion dollar infrastructure assets. His comprehensive background, coupled with his dedication to excellence, continues to drive the successful completion of challenging and impactful infrastructure developments across North America.

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### **Dara Wheeler**

*Chief, Division of Research, Innovation and System Information, Caltrans*

Dara Wheeler is the Acting Chief Data and Artificial Intelligence Officer for Caltrans, where she oversees data and AI policy, governance, strategic plan development efforts, as well as future GenAI model operations and use case prioritization. Prior to this new role, Dara was the Chief Innovation Officer for the Research & Innovation program, where she managed the largest State DOT research portfolio in the nation. Dara has also played strategic roles leading rail and transit, has served as the Department's Chief of Staff, and spent a decade in the transportation planning program. She began her career working for two California governors, a legislative land use commission, and for the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

In addition to her California role, Dara holds several national positions, including: AASHTO Special Committee on Research and Innovation; Co-Chair of the AASHTO Innovation Community of Practice; Vice-Chair of the AASHTO Innovation Management Committee; and Co-Chair of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America's AI Committee as well as Co-Chair of the Workforce Development Community of Practice. Dara holds a degree in Political Science from San Diego State University and is a Certified Prompt Engineer.