

Sahar Shirazi

Principal



Sahar Shirazi has 10+ years of experience and is an expert in policy and planning, with a focus on the intersections of emerging mobility, environmental sustainability, and equity. Prior to joining Nelson\Nygaard, Sahar worked for WSP and the State of California's Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). While at OPR, Sahar rewrote the Statewide General Plan Guidelines, introducing new best practices, tools, performance metrics, and guidance, including new recommendations and case studies for engagement, community health, and social justice. She led AV and Smart City policy for the state, including coordination with the Federal and local governments, industry partners and academia, among other major initiatives. She also served as the OPR lead for the Governor's Zero Emission Vehicles team and international climate team, working with global partners on climate change and equity issues. Before her work in California, Sahar served as a policy analyst for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), where she served as a team lead for the national TIGER grants program and place-based initiatives. She worked broadly across transportation policy areas including federal legislation and regulation, resiliency and sustainability, and interagency coordination.

EDUCATION

Masters of Public Policy, Mills College, Oakland, CA, 2011
B.A., English Literature, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, 2007

EXPERIENCE

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc.

Principal and Emerging Mobility Sector Co-Lead, 2021–Present

- **San Jose Emerging Mobility Action Plan, City of San Jose, CA:** The City of San Jose seeks to create an equitable mobility action plan, centering social and racial equity and incorporating community engagement. Nelson Nygaard is leading the project team in understanding the historical inequities in the mobility landscape, engaging with the community to determine challenges and gaps, and co-creating solutions utilizing emerging mobility to respond to community needs. The action plan will create a racial equity framework as well as recommendations for projects, programs, and policies to improve mobility access and equity for historically less served populations in the City.
- **IndyGo MOD study, Implementation Lead, Indianapolis, IN:** Sahar is the implementation lead for a study to develop a mobility-on-demand strategy for IndyGo, including identifying, evaluating, and supporting procurement of a microtransit pilot. Sahar is working with the team to analyze the goals, use cases, and feasibility of microtransit in locations around the region, and preparing an implementation plan for the pilot. Future study tasks include the development of an evaluation strategy for both the proposed pilot and future mobility-on-demand deployments.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

WSP, San Francisco, CA

Policy and Planning Lead, AV's and Emerging Mobility, 2018–2020

- **Emerging Mobility Studies, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA):** Project Manager. WSP is building on previous coordination with SFCTA to research and recommend effective pilot strategies, equity considerations, environmental goals, and procurement practices for emerging mobility

programs in San Francisco. Through case studies, interviews, trends research, and analysis of potential effects on established emerging mobility guiding principles and evaluation metrics, WSP is providing recommendations and support in a pilot procurement toolkit for SFCTA. As Project Manager, Ms. Shirazi coordinated behavioral and travel research across peer cities and academics, relationships with private providers, and meetings with public sector agencies to understand and recommend the options and potential equity impacts for various pilot programs to meet San Francisco's needs.

- **Innovative Mobility Strategic Planning and Services, Utah Transit Authority (UTA):** Project Manager. The Utah Transit Authority is working with WSP to create an Innovative Mobility Strategic Plan to help align their vision and goals with internal and external opportunities. WSP is also helping UTA develop and pilot a Mobility as a Service program for new and existing transit riders to reduce private vehicle dependency and enhance economic equity, a microtransit program to test use cases such as first and last mile connectivity, and—in partnership with UDOT, autonomous vehicle demonstration projects. As project manager, Ms. Shirazi organized the project team, wrote strategic plans and guidance, reviewed legislation and research, helped create and launch pilots, and facilitated coordination amongst various partners, stakeholders, and potential funders
- **Mobility Action Plan, City of West Sacramento:** Task Lead, Subject Matter Expert. The City of West Sacramento seeks to analyze, plan, and implement innovative mobility projects to align city and regional goals around climate change and equity with internal processes and external projects. Ms. Shirazi was engaged in the project vision and development, analysis of local and regional challenges and gaps, equity assessments of mobility hubs and networks, creation of a smart mobility readiness plan, and the final mobility action plan for implementation.
- **Shared Mobility Work Plan, MDOT and Maryland Transit Authority:** Project Manager. WSP conducted a comprehensive review of shared-use mobility providers and technologies to help MDOT and MTA evaluate the potential to integrate them into the transportation system to address inequities in access and mobility.. As Project Manager, Ms. Shirazi helped MDOT MTA research emerging mobility providers, examine geographies, demographics, and needs, and analyze legislation and regulations to develop a Shared Mobility Work Plan that identifies opportunities and challenges of integrating transit with emerging shared-use service models, providers, and technologies in targeted areas of the region.

Office of Governor Edmund G Brown, Office of Planning and Research, Sacramento, CA
Senior Planning Advisor, 2015-2018

The following are highlights of Sahar accomplishments:

- OPR Lead, Governor's ZEV Team: Collaborating with agencies across State to integrate policy goals into ZEV mandate through planning, programming, and project level coordination, focused on intersection of ZEVs with AVs and TNCs.
- Manager for General Plan Guidelines: Update; researching, writing, editing, coordinating with agencies, and conducting statewide outreach for new statewide guidance documents
- Lead, World Bank and California MOU: Writing of MOU, collaboration on Global Platform for Sustainable Cities program, writing and implementation of workplan for GHG reduction in Chinese regions, coordination with Under2Coalition, and management of stakeholder and partner participation
- Team Member, Land Use and Transportation: Updating and implementing statewide policies to reduce VMT, reduce GHG emissions, and enhance equity
- Team Member, Global Climate Action Summit, Transportation Team: Collaborative effort to integrate ZEV, shared transport, active transport, and automation into international climate event
- Lead, Autonomous Vehicle and Smart City Policy: Coordinating with agencies, local and national governments, national partners, industry, and academics to research, test, and implement policies. Tracking and coordinating participation in legislative issues such as AV START Act. Serving on research teams with UC ITS centers. Focus on equity considerations, demographic analysis and behavioral change levers, and research into long term implications of travel trends.

- Lead, Smart City Collaborative: Partnership with Transportation for America and 22 cities across US, creating policy, pilots, and programs for shared (TNC), connected, and automated vehicles
- OPR Lead, Interagency Working Group for Shared, Connected, and Autonomous Vehicles: Working across California agencies to integrate goals and objectives into agency work around autonomy, TNCs, and EVs, with a focus on increasing equitable outcomes.
- Team Member, Big Cities DOT Team: Coordinating and collaborating with transportation officials from largest California cities, assisting as liaison between cities and State as needed.
- Lead, Big Cities AV Subgroup: Identifying and working through issues related to connected and autonomous vehicles and TNCs with California cities
- Local Assistance Provider: Coordinating and aiding state agencies and local communities on land use and transportation issues

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Office of the Secretary, Washington, DC
Policy Analyst/Presidential Management Fellow, March 2012- Feb 2013, Sep 2013-Jan 2015

- Policy Office Lead for Partnership for Sustainable Communities: A national initiative to connect planning, land use, transportation, housing, food policy, and environmental decision making; supported by DOT, EPA, HUD, and USDA
- Policy office lead for recovery and resiliency coordination across agencies
- Lead on demographic research and trend analysis for “Beyond Traffic 2045,” US DOT’s Long Range Transportation Report
- Lead on Bike and Pedestrian Team’s Road Safety for Transit Patrons Initiative
- Policy office lead on Transportation Alternatives guidance for MAP-21
- Team lead for \$3.6 billion TIGER grant program, including grant evaluation, recommendation, implementation, and oversight of projects. Program lead for performance measures for all TIGER projects
- Policy office lead for numerous transportation economic development and public benefit studies and contracts
- Policy office lead on DOT-wide Strategic Plan
- Leadership team member for Secretary’s Ladders of Opportunity policy working group

Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC
Policy Lead, Presidential Permitting Initiative, 2013

- Coordinated Implementation of Presidential Memorandum for environmental review and permitting across 14 federal agencies including
DOI, USACE, USCG, DOT, USDA, ACHP, HUD, EPA, DOD, and DOC
- Policy lead on IT development and tools across agencies, common data standards, coordination with other Presidential initiatives
- Worked directly with senior leadership (Deputy Secretary and Director level) across agencies and within Executive Offices (CEQ, OMB, OSTP, and DPC)
- Co-wrote 120-day cross agency plan for implementing Presidential Memorandum
- Planned and engaged in stakeholder outreach sessions

Ignite California, San Francisco, CA
Program Facilitator, 2010-2011

- Created and administered political curriculum to low-income women of color in East Oakland, including writing 2nd semester system wide curriculum, now used in national programs

Planning Division, City of San Rafael, CA
Planning Consultant, 2011)

- Conducted quantitative and qualitative research and analysis on travel modes, average miles traveled (VMT), and behavioral preferences of San Rafael residents
- Examined local zoning codes and provisions, road, bicycle, and pedestrian conditions, connectivity of paths, and land use around proposals around transit area
- Assembled Master's Policy Report, including short term and long-term recommendations to reduce annual VMT through land use and transit planning

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Green Collar Jobs Campaign, Oakland, CA
Policy Fellow, 2010

- Designed, researched, and wrote policy recommendations report to address issues of gaps in gender representation in green job programs

AWARDS

- Innovation Award, Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO), 2019
- Ignite Honors, honoree 2017
- Excellence Award, US DOT Reauthorization team, 2014
- Excellence Award, US DOT TIGER team, 2014

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Publications

- Shirazi, Sahar, author, "Brown, Female, and on the Bus: A Personal Journey into Transportation Policy"
- Shirazi, Sahar, principal author, "Can we Advance Social Equity With Shared, Electric & Autonomous Vehicles?"
- Shirazi, Sahar, contributing author, "Active Transportation in an Era of Sharing, Electrification and Automation"
- Shirazi, Sahar, principal author, State of California General Plan Guidelines
- Shirazi, Sahar, contributing author, Five Years of Learning from Communities and Coordinating Federal Investments
- Shirazi, Sahar, principal author, Safer People, Safer Streets

Presentations

Sahar has presented on transportation equity, climate change policy, women in policy, the future of transportation, performance measurement, and various topics at national and international events, including

- Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley
- Urbanism Next Conference, Portland, Oregon
- 3 Revolutions Conference, Davis, California
- Verge Conference, Santa Clara and Oakland, California
- Shared Use Mobility Summit, Chicago, Illinois



Sahar Shirazi
Principal

- Smart Cities Collaborative, Denver, Colorado and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Cities, New Delhi, India and Singapore