



NORTHEAST TRANSPORTATION WORKFORCE

CENTER

Environmental Work in the Transportation Sector

CAREER PROFILE

NAME: David Sorrell

TITLE: Manager, Mobility Solutions Programs & Transportation Demand Admin.

DEGREE: Public Administration

COMPANY: University of CA at Berkeley Parking & Transportation Department

The UC Berkeley Parking and Transportation Department provides a full range of parking and transportation services, serving a diverse community of more than 35,000 students and 15,000 faculty and staff seven-days per week. The Department strives to improve the quality of life for the UC Berkeley community by providing safe, convenient and well maintained parking and transportation options, while promoting and facilitating alternative modes of transportation. Parking and Transportation is dedicated to delivering transportation systems that complement long-term growth and development, and enhance and protect the physical attributes of the campus and surrounding areas. We are committed to provide professional and highly responsive customer service.

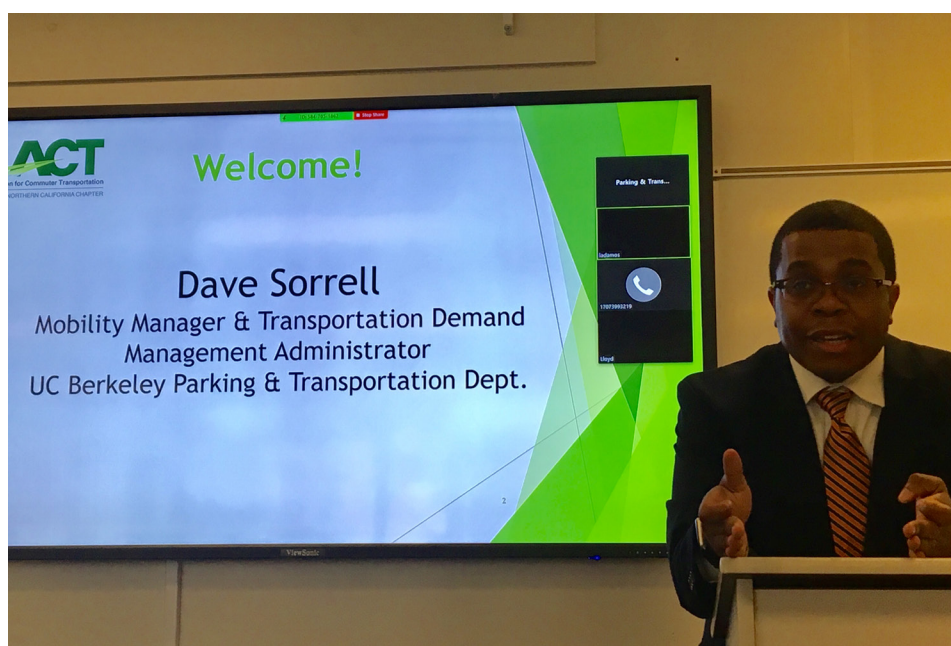
Q.What is your current role at the organization?

A.I am the manager of UC Berkeley's Transportation Demand Management Program. I have been here for about two years now and I oversee all of the partnerships, the programs, the communicating and marketing regarding

transportation for the entire campus. Our campus has about 40,000 students—so at any given time, I am overseeing a program for roughly 60,000 people. We have about 5,400 parking spaces currently, but in the Fall, we are going to lose about 500 of those spaces—so with a rapidly decreasing parking inventory, I have to get out the word about service changes and alternative programs, and overall, make commuting to campus a little easier.

Q.How did you get to this point in your career?

A.I have been in transit and transit demand management for ten years. I have had an interest in transit since I was a child. My parents exposed me to public transit as a kid, mainly because we didn't have a car. It just allowed me to learn how to read a map early and come up with directions on how to get from one place to another. I also developed a skill to learn public transit in Chicago. I learned not only the



CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) system quickly, but figured out the Pace Bus Suburban system, quickly and at a relatively young age. That love of transit at a young age pretty much set me up for the path that I took to get to where I am today.

I learned about cities and I learned about construction, architecture, and buildings during my childhood because it was what I was interested in. When I was in high school they didn't offer anything along the lines of transit or geography, or anything that really pertained to urban planning or urban studies. My first job was actually constructing playgrounds as an engineering intern. While doing that, I took classes in history and government, learning about the background of Chicago politics (including the "Machine"), Federal Government and politics, and getting that knowledge base—this gave me

some background about how cities operate.

I got my undergraduate degree from Northern Illinois University in 2008. My area of study was in public administration—local government—I wanted to be a city manager. I kind of put transit off to the side because my school did not offer a planning program. But during this time, I took classes in GIS, local government, policy, and family psychology. I took geography courses related to the local sector but also had the background in local government—and I worked internships in city government. This gave me the information I needed to know.

I started out in grad school. My first go-around was in local government and public administration and it did not work out. I ended up transferring to a new grad program in organizational development and

leadership at Olivet Nazarene University (outside of Chicago). When I started this program, I also started working in transit. In 2009, I worked as a rideshare coordinator for Pace Suburban Bus, in which I oversaw the social media marketing arm as well as some of the operational day-to-day stuff. I built out the social media program in conjunction with their primary page, and oversaw a regional employer grant. I was the ride share coordinator there for about four years. I did a lot with carpooling, van pooling, and learned a lot more about TDM and ride sharing. I also participated with the Association for Commuter Transportation—which I am still a part of today. At the time, I did not fully know what TDM was until I did a leadership academy program in 2013.

After four and a half years of doing TDM, our department had a reorganization. I was taken off of the rideshare program. But, I remained on board as the Service Analyst with Multimodal and TDM programs under the research and development for three years before I left for the Bay Area. When I was in my new role, I still did a lot of outreach with the marketing department, became an app tester for Ventracard and provided a footprint by helping rewrite Pace's Title VI program as well as their service standards analysis.

I took a job with the San Mateo county transit district



in late 2015. I was only there for seven months because they were going through a reorganization. While I didn't get the mentoring and necessary training that I needed from my bosses, in seven months I was able to lay the groundwork for improving standards and metrics for grant-funded shuttle services, community programs, and worked with schools in San Mateo to improve transit service—all while applying the same knowledge, approach and skills that I had learned from Pace.

After, I worked for a company in San Jose called Altrans—which focuses on TDM consultation and shuttle programs (among others) in the Bay Area. I was brought on as one of their TDM program managers for a hospital in Oakland. That was fun because I had never built a program from scratch before. I did this for about a year, and then a colleague told me about an opening at UC Berkeley. I decided to just put my resume in because I had known about UC Berkeley's TDM program for many years. I started in April 2017.

Q. Were there any experiences that helped to best prepare you for the work that you do?

A. Taking transit while young helped me understand the communities I served. One cannot be an effective planner or TDM Manager without

experiencing the process that your colleagues, employees, or clients go through. Whether or not your commute is done by car, bus, train, bike, or even ferry, it helps gather empathy for the people you're directly impacting.

It also helps that, in my first job in high school as an engineering intern and in later internships, I learned to listen actively. Communicating with your clients, employees, even your direct reports, helps you identify blind spots, get a perspective of their successes or failures, and helps me better understand the world around me.

When it comes to managing, having great leaders as your bosses helps you prepare. In the years I was at Pace, ALTRANS, and at UC Berkeley, I had great bosses who have helped me become my better self – they challenged me to think critically, take in new concepts that I wasn't familiar with, and to trust that I can do the job effectively and guide me if I have questions.

These same skills I've applied to my own employees, because I could trust that they can make magic, and I am proud of the skills they've brought to their respective jobs.

Q. What skills have you gained in the work?

A. Definitely working partnerships. My director has helped me get a better handle on how to do programs

on a small and large scale, and to be strategic regarding the right things to say and the right things to do. Collaborating with him has been incredibly helpful regarding building my strategic plan and collaborating with campus and community organizations and partners to create programs that work for the campus and the UC Parking & Transportation department.

I have also gained leadership skills, people skills, and technical skills. All are being developed as we speak, day by day. I would also say that part of this is being relatable to students and meeting them where they are at. It is being flexible and being able to realize that the times and methods have changed for communication. It's about learning these changes and using what I have learned to make sure that I can reach out to the students. Also, being patient with contractors, colleagues, and even my students.

Q. What do you enjoy most about your job?

A. I have learned from every job that I have ever taken—and I like to pay this forward. I want to spread as much knowledge about TDM as possible and to "Make transit awesome". I really enjoy being able to train future geeks like myself and my interns gain a lot of experience by working in my office.

I love that we were able to be the first university in the

state, if not the nation, to be able to provide a subsidized year-long bike share program for students who are first generation Pell grant kids, also DREAM recipients. This not only is of great benefit to a student who could really benefit from a bikeshare program, but it also gets the entire student body on board with the bikeshare program—by getting students to sign up for bike share and make this program work, they can spread the word and ditch their car (or an Uber for that matter).

Q. What are some of your own personal characteristics and values that make you a good fit for this type of work?

A. Leading with a passion and making wise, ethical choices is necessary for all types of public service positions; however, a passion for transit, public service, an ability to objectively problem solve, and being a good communicator helps me tackle the problems that we face. Being a transit planner in a non-traditional transit setting I can still see my role in the whole mobility spectrum, knowing I'm doing a part to help curb climate change, increase programs to underserved communities, and improve the quality of life (at least to my students).

Being introverted and having to come out of my shell is a challenge that I face often; and having the confidence to say the

right words can be tough, but manageable.

Q. What is something that you want people to know about the work that you do?

A. Every day, I ensure that I make transit awesome for everyone and provide the resources to make transit accessible and affordable for everyone.

You don't necessarily have to get a degree in planning to

be in TDM or a transit planner. Some experience in working with the public is needed, a little understanding in government, marketing, and data is helpful too.

The key about working in TDM is knowing that the mobility spectrum is large and that the efforts in bringing technology, policy, and political will can help us get out of our cars and “go further, faster.” ➔



Overview of Position as it Relates to Transportation

The Berkeley campus continues to have excess demand for parking on campus. The Transportation Demand Manager (TDM) is responsible for creating, marketing, and managing alternative transportation programs to try and get faculty, staff, and students out of their cars yet still able to easily get to and travel around campus. This position is a key position for the success of the Department of Parking & Transportation (UC Berkeley Parking and Transportation).

Transportation Demand Managers

TDM managers have an array of responsibilities including but not limited to: the development and distribution of TDM marketing materials, conducting commute-related outreach at orientations and other events where transportation and parking might be limited by location, assisting with community outreach, and developing and promoting community transportation initiatives. In terms of program administration, TDM managers are responsible for creating and monitoring the progress of program goals, responding to internal and external TDM information requests, participating in committees and task forces, along with developing and maintaining partnerships, assisting in TDM research, data collection/ analysis and developing initiatives and best practices.

The Transportation Demand Manager is responsible for creating, marketing, and managing alternative transportation programs with the goal

of people to easily access and travel around the UC Berkeley campus without cars. In his work, David: creates, markets and promotes the campus TDM program, is responsible for program administration, as well is in charge of data collection and analysis on the UC Berkeley campus.

About University of California at Berkeley Parking and Transportation

“The UC Berkeley Parking and Transportation Department provides a full range of parking and transportation services [to] more than 35,000 students and 15,000 faculty and staff in the City of Berkeley. It is the mission of the department to improve the quality of life for the UC Berkeley

community by providing safe, convenient, and well maintained parking and transportation options, while promoting and facilitating alternative modes of transportation.”

Source: pt.berkeley.edu/node/77

Transportation Demand Management

“Every day, I ensure that I make transit awesome for everyone and provide the resources to make transit accessible and affordable for everyone. You don't necessarily have to get a degree in planning to be in TDM or a transit planner. Some experience in working with the public is needed, a little understanding in government, marketing, and data is helpful too.”

—David Sorrell

Overview of General Skills and Requirements

Most people who work as a TDM have a Master's degree in Transportation Planning or a related discipline. It is required that a person who is a TDM has: demonstrable experience in managing teams; experience of successfully delivering technically challenging transportation planning projects; knowledge and experience in transport modeling; strong technical and report writing skills; and an analytical mind and background. Additionally, some companies require other qualifications such as professional accreditation related to the field of TDM.

Types of Projects Carried Out at UC Berkeley Parking & Transportation Department

Gold Status for Bike Friendly University

This project took the school from [silver to gold status](#) under the Bicycle Friendly America program.

Next Steps for Mobility at California

This project looked at how to allow [electric scooter share companies](#) to operate on campus and throughout the city.

Key Skills

- ▶ **Reading Comprehension** – Reading work-related information.
- ▶ **Complex Problem Solving** – Noticing a problem and figuring out the best way to solve it.
- ▶ **Critical Thinking** – Thinking about the pros and cons of different ways to solve a problem.
- ▶ **Active Listening** – Listening to others, not interrupting, and asking good questions.
- ▶ **Judgment and Decision Making** – Thinking about the pros and cons of different options and picking the best one.
- ▶ **Coordination** – Changing what is done based on other people's actions.
- ▶ **Active Learning** – Figuring out how to use new ideas or things.
- ▶ **Systems Evaluation** – Measuring how well a system is working and how to improve it.
- ▶ **Systems Analysis** – Figuring out how a system should work and how changes in the future will affect it.
- ▶ **Time Management** – Managing your time and the time of other people.
- ▶ **Monitoring** – Keeping track of how well people and/or groups are doing in order to make improvements.



Abilities Needed for Success

- ▶ **Written Comprehension** – Reading and understanding what is written.
- ▶ **Oral Expression** – Effective spoken communication.
- ▶ **Written Expression** – Effective communication in written form.
- ▶ **Deductive Reasoning** – Using rules to solve problems.
- ▶ **Inductive Reasoning** – Making general rules or coming up with answers from lots of detailed information.
- ▶ **Oral Comprehension** – Listening and understanding what people say.
- ▶ **Problem Sensitivity** – Noticing when problems happen.
- ▶ **Fluency of Ideas** – Coming up with lots of ideas.
- ▶ **Near Vision** – Seeing details up close.
- ▶ **Originality** – Creating new and original ideas.
- ▶ **Information Ordering** – Ordering or arranging things.
- ▶ **Visualization** – Imagining how something will look after it is moved around or changed.

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