



Olympia, Washington

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

\$155,000 - \$170,000 DOQ

Plus Excellent Benefits

Apply by
September 14, 2025
(First Review, Open Until Filled)

PROTHMAN



THE REGION



Thurston County is located in the heart of Western Washington's South Puget Sound region, between the Cascade Mountains to the east and the Pacific Ocean

to the west. With a population nearing 310,000, the county offers natural beauty, abundant recreational opportunities, and a balanced lifestyle. Centrally located just 60 miles south of Seattle and 100 miles north of Portland, the county is well connected to major urban centers while retaining a distinct sense of place and community. The area enjoys a mild, year-round climate that allows residents and visitors to enjoy outdoor activities such as boating, hiking, biking, skiing, and snowboarding throughout the seasons. Thurston County also features an extensive system of public parks, trails, and nature conservation areas. Nearby destinations, including Mount Rainier National Park and Olympic National Park, offer exceptional opportunities for hiking, climbing, and wildlife viewing.

Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is a Metropolitan Planning Organization engaged with federal transportation funding based in Olympia, Washington. Olympia serves as the Thurston County seat, the capital of Washington State, and the region's economic and cultural center. Olympia's historic downtown is home to a variety of independent shops, restaurants, galleries, and theaters, while the city's Westside functions as a regional commercial hub. Olympia, along with the neighboring communities of Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Rainier, Tenino, and Bucoda, form a network of distinct yet interconnected towns that contribute to the county's diverse identity.

Thurston County's economy is anchored by state government and supported by a diverse range of sectors including healthcare, education, construction, agriculture, and a vibrant creative economy. Regional planning and investment are accelerating growth in the local food system and expanding opportunities for artists, makers, and entrepreneurs. The region is also home to The Evergreen State College, South Puget Sound Community College, and Saint Martin's University, which help sustain a highly educated workforce and foster strong connections between research, community engagement, and planning.



Joint Base Lewis-McChord, located just northeast of the county, also plays a significant role in the local economy and the region's cultural diversity. To learn more about Thurston County, please visit www.experienceolympia.com, and see TRPC's regional "The Profile" by clicking [here](#).

THE AGENCY

Operating on a 2025 budget of \$6.5 million with a staff of 20, TRPC conducts regional planning and studies on topics such as transportation, growth management, and environmental quality, delivering tools and analysis to local jurisdictions and decision-makers. Guided by an annual work program, TRPC is funded through member assessments, core transportation federal and state funding, and grant funding.

TRPC is governed by a Council composed of elected and appointed officials representing 23 members, including cities, towns, and special purpose districts across the region. Council members meet monthly to set policy direction, guide the agency's strategic planning, and oversee operations.

Established in 1967 to foster intergovernmental cooperation and efficient regional planning, TRPC operates as a public entity under RCW 36.70.060. Since 1967, TRPC has evolved to support comprehensive efforts in transportation, land use, environmental planning, and economic development. TRPC maintains a central role in managing regional information resources, including maps, data, modeling, and community engagement forums. These tools help inform public and local government decision-making on shared regional challenges and opportunities. TRPC's work is guided by its [mission, vision, and values](#) including sustainability, collaboration, equity, fiscal responsibility, and long-term vision to ensure well-coordinated regional growth and enhanced quality of life for all residents.

THE POSITION

Under the direction of the Thurston Regional Planning Council's governing board ("Council"), the Executive Director serves as the agency's chief executive officer, providing strategic leadership, operational oversight, and policy guidance to advance the agency's mission.

The Executive Director is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing work programs in transportation, land use, and environmental planning. This includes developing and managing the agency's budget, overseeing contracts and grants, and supervising internal operations such as human resources, information technology, and intergovernmental coordination.

The Executive Director also fosters regional collaboration, supports policy development, and leads the implementation of both short- and long-range strategic plans. This role involves directing day-to-day operations, managing financial and legal compliance, and overseeing staff recruitment, development, and performance through the Management Team.

The Executive Director also represents TRPC to external stakeholders, builds partnerships with public and private organizations, and fosters a workplace culture rooted in communication, innovation, equity, and continuous improvement, while promoting Council values and maintaining the agency's strong local, state, and federal reputation.

For the full job description and to view all responsibilities, please view the attachment found [here](#).



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Thurston County is a fast-growing and urbanizing area, and the next Executive Director will need to navigate a complex regional landscape, balancing the needs and priorities of urban and rural partners. With strong leadership, TRPC can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the region by strengthening regional collaboration and developing the data and solutions that will inform the region's response to increased pressure on our existing transportation, economic, social, and environmental systems.

- TRPC membership includes a diverse mix of large and small jurisdictions, tribes, educational providers, special use districts, and community service providers. In recent years, we have seen more turnover in local leaders, including long-time champions for TRPC. The incoming Executive Director will need to build trusting relationships with member representatives and staff, and cultivate a work program that ensures all members continue to receive value for their participation.

- TRPC's budget is grounded in local member assessments and programmatic funding for the agency's core transportation programs, but 30 to 40 percent of its annual revenue comes from competitive grants and support contracts, which means the agency will need to continue to identify and secure new project work to maintain current staffing and service levels.

- TRPC's programs rely heavily on state and federal funding, and the agency also helps coordinate and direct federal funding to local projects led by its members. The Executive Director will need to track, navigate, and communicate the impact of changing priorities and requirements at the federal and state level, and position the region to take advantage of (and create!) new opportunities that align with the region's needs.

- The incoming Executive Director will lead a talented, dedicated, multigenerational staff, and will need to continue to cultivate opportunities for leadership and professional development within the agency and build a strong and supportive workplace culture to maintain the agency's reputation as a highly desirable and competitive employer.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a collaborative, visionary leader with the ability to build consensus, guide strategic direction, and effectively manage a mission-driven agency. This individual will be committed to fostering a culture of respect, innovation, and inclusion while engaging meaningfully with staff, Council members, regional partners, and the broader community.

The successful candidate will be an experienced executive with a strong background in managing people, programs, and complex public processes. This person will bring demonstrated expertise in regional transportation, land use, and environmental planning, and have experience working with local and state governments, tribal entities, and diverse communities. A record of fiscal stewardship and experience supporting or managing boards is essential.

The ideal candidate will have the ability to identify opportunities, navigate challenges, and translate big-picture goals into practical, results-driven outcomes. This will require an understanding on how to facilitate productive, sometimes difficult conversations with tact and transparency, and serve as a neutral convener trusted by stakeholders across jurisdictions.

Internally, the Executive Director will lead with humility and integrity, cultivating an inclusive and supportive workplace. Staff at TRPC value a leader who is accessible, approachable, and communicative. The ideal candidate will maintain an open-door policy, hold regular meetings, and demonstrate transparency in decision-making. The next Executive Director will nurture TRPC's collaborative team environment and encourage professional growth through recognition, mentorship, and development opportunities.



Externally, the ideal candidate will be an engaged and visible presence in the community. This person will be a strong public speaker and effective storyteller who listens actively, builds relationships, and represents the agency with credibility and enthusiasm. A clear commitment to TRPC's mission and an ability to advocate for the agency's work across diverse and complex regional perspectives are essential.

An active commitment to equity and inclusion will guide the selected candidate's internal and external engagement. This includes fostering inclusive hiring practices, building diverse teams, and ensuring all staff feel respected and empowered. The Executive Director will advance equity within the agency and region by using data to identify disparities, ensuring policies reflect community needs, and engaging historically underserved communities through consistent, thoughtful outreach.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- A bachelor's degree in urban/regional planning, public or business administration, government, transportation management, environmental studies, political science or a related field. An advanced degree in a related field, and executive management training is preferred.
- Eight (8) years of increasingly responsible experience working in high-level public policy development, regional/intergovernmental relations, urban and regional planning, transportation planning, environmental planning, or related fields, including demonstrated history of grant preparation and oversight, and leveraging new resources.
- Four (4) years of successful experience managing and leading high-performing professionals.
- Any demonstrated combination of experience and education that provides the applicant with the required knowledge, skills, and abilities will be considered.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$155,000 - \$170,000 DOQ**
- **Work-Life Balance:** TRPC supports a flexible work schedule, telecommuting, and membership to an Employee Assistance Program. While TRPC offers schedule flexibility, this is not a fully remote position.
- **Retirement:** Employees are participants in the [Washington State Public Employees' Retirement System](#) (PERS) and Deferred Compensation Plan.
- **Health Insurance:** Employer-paid health insurance for individuals and generous coverage for dependents through [Washington State's Public Employees Benefits Board](#) (PEBB).
- **Paid Leave:** 11 paid holidays, including 1 floating holiday, and accrued paid time off.
- **Cost of Living Adjustments:** Eligible for annual cost of living adjustment.

For more information on the benefits provided, see the TRPC Benefits Sheet [here](#).



**For more information on the
Thurston Regional Planning Council,
please visit:**

www.trpc.org

The Thurston Regional Planning Council is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **September 14, 2025** (first review, open until filled). Applications, supplemental questions, resumes and cover letters will only be accepted electronically. To **apply online**, go to **www.prothman.com** and click on "Open Recruitments", select "**Thurston Regional Planning Council, WA – Executive Director**" and click "**Apply Online**" or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters, and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in. Cover page bottom row, page 3, and page 4 photos courtesy of Experience Olympia & Beyond.



www.prothman.com

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