



CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

Job Announcement

About Pierce Transit

Pierce Transit improves people's quality of life by providing safe, reliable, and accessible transportation services that are locally based and regionally connected.

Founded in 1979, Pierce County Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation (Pierce Transit) is a nationally recognized leader in the public transportation industry. Pierce Transit covers 292 square miles of Pierce County containing about 70% of the county population. Serving Washington's second largest county, Pierce Transit provides four types of service: Fixed Route, Paratransit (SHUTTLE), Runner and Rideshare that help get passengers to jobs, schools and appointments.

The agency provides a vital link in the regional transportation system by making connections with King County through express bus services. Pierce Transit is a municipal corporation, not part of the City of Tacoma, Pierce County or Sound Transit.

Pierce Transit is currently governed by a ten-member Board of Commissioners. The Board is currently made up of elected officials representing Pierce County, Tacoma, Lakewood, Puyallup, University Place and the smaller cities and towns in Pierce County. The governance structure allows for a non-voting union representative. The Board is responsible for adopting policies that govern the operation of the transit agency and its services and employs the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to carry out the day-to-day management and administration of the agency.



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Pierce Transit's Sustainability Commitment

- In the 1980s, Pierce Transit was among the first transit agencies in the nation to move most of its' fleet to running on clean, compressed natural gas (CNG).
- Today, 61% of Pierce Transit's bus fleet runs on CNG, 37% are diesel-electric hybrids, and 2% are electric.
- In 2018, Pierce Transit began a concerted effort to move a portion of its' fleet to battery electric buses. The agency currently has six electric buses.
- Pierce Transit has signed onto the American Public Transportation Association's Sustainability Commitment, committing to sustainable environmental practices.
- Pierce Transit has an internal Green Team, which establishes sustainability outcomes and develops best practices, for example, upgrades to LED lighting, which reduced the agency's carbon footprint by 14 metric tons.

Riders and where they are going

43% have no working vehicle

67% use ORCA card

29% from households with annual incomes below \$30,000

Trip purposes include:

45% commute to and from work

33% medical appointments

47% shopping and errands

37% fun, recreation and social

14% commute to school/college





About the Position

Pierce Transit is seeking a strategic and visionary Chief Planning Officer (CPO) to lead the agency's long-range planning, service development, and community-focused planning initiatives.

The Chief Planning Officer provides executive leadership for agency-wide planning functions and plays a critical role in shaping Pierce Transit's future through strategic planning, service design, transit development, and community engagement. The CPO ensures alignment between the agency's long-term vision, operational priorities, and the evolving needs of the communities served.

This position reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer and serves as a member of the Executive Leadership Team. The CPO

works closely with executive leadership, the Board of Commissioners, regional partners, and community stakeholders to guide policy development, strategic initiatives, and service planning decisions that support Pierce Transit's mission and long-term sustainability.

The Chief Planning Officer oversees key functions including transit development, strategic planning, and community development and engagement, ensuring an integrated and forward-looking approach to service delivery and system growth.

Key responsibilities include:

- Serves as a strategic advisor to the CEO and Executive Leadership Team on long-range planning, service development, and policy direction.
- Leads the development and implementation of agency-wide strategic plans, service plans, and system expansion initiatives.
- Oversees transit development and planning functions, including service design, route planning, and performance analysis to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.
- Guides data-driven decision making through the use of market research, customer insights, and performance metrics.
- Represents Pierce Transit in regional planning efforts and collaborates with local, regional, and state partners on transportation initiatives and funding opportunities.
- Leads community development and engagement efforts related to planning initiatives, ensuring alignment with community needs and agency priorities.
- Advances Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and other strategic partnerships that support economic development and community connectivity.
- Advises the CEO and Board of Commissioners on policy matters, planning strategies, and initiatives with agency-wide impact.
- Participates in agency-wide strategic planning, organizational initiatives, and executive-level decision making.
- Oversees division budget development and management, ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources.
- Leads, mentors, and develops staff, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and accountability.



The Ideal Candidate

Pierce Transit is seeking an experienced and forward-thinking planning executive who brings a strong combination of strategic vision, technical expertise, and collaborative leadership.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success leading complex planning initiatives within a public agency or similarly complex organization and will be skilled in balancing long-term strategy with practical implementation.

In addition, the ideal candidate will demonstrate success in the following areas:

- Strategic and long-range planning
- Transit planning, service development, and system design
- Data-driven decision making and performance analysis
- Policy development and implementation
- Building strong partnerships with local jurisdictions, regional agencies, and community stakeholders
- Leading and managing multidisciplinary teams
- Navigating complex political and public environments
- Advancing innovative approaches to transportation planning and service delivery
- Community engagement and inclusive planning practices
- Organizational leadership and cross-functional collaboration
- The successful candidate will be a strong communicator and relationship builder who can translate complex planning concepts into clear, actionable strategies that support Pierce Transit’s mission and long-term success.

Desirable Qualifications

A Bachelor’s Degree in urban planning, transportation planning, public administration, or a related field and nine years of progressively responsible experience in planning, transit development, or strategic planning, including supervisory experience.

Experience working in the public sector or transportation industry is highly desirable.

An advanced degree in planning, public administration, or a related field is a plus.



Salary and Benefits

The annual of the salary range for this position is \$208,318.44 to \$263,589.28. The salary offered will depend on experience and qualifications. Pierce Transit offers a generous benefit package including medical/dental, retirement, life and disability insurance, paid holidays, vacation and sick leave and optional deferred compensation.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Persons interested in this position must submit a cover letter and a current resume.

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360-956-1336. The position will remain open until filled; however, the screening process will move quickly. Please submit your application materials as soon as possible but no later than May 26, 2026 by visiting www.karrasconsulting.net and clicking on “view open positions.”

Pierce Transit is an equal opportunity employer, values workplace diversity and seeks to create an environment and culture that embraces employee differences. All qualified applicants are considered in accordance with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status or veteran status or any other legally protected status. We will provide assistance in the recruitment, application and selection process to applicants with disabilities who request such assistance.