



Executive Director

Reports To: Three Member Elected Board of Commissioners
Base Salary Range: DOE(\$125,000 - \$135,000)
Direct Reports: Ten (10)
Total Staff: 89 employees (87.5 FTEs)
Total Revenues all Sources (2010): \$60m (includes \$21.8 in capital grants)
Total Capital Projects (2010): \$32.1m

The Mission

The Port of Bellingham's mission is to fulfill the essential transportation and economic development needs of the region while providing leadership in maintaining Greater Whatcom's overall economic vitality through the development of comprehensive facilities, programs, and services. In so doing, the Port pledges to work cooperatively with other entities — within the framework of community standards — and to be a responsible trustee of our publicly owned assets.

The Region

Covering slightly over 2,000 square miles in the beautiful northwest corner of Washington State, Whatcom County is a refreshing hub of natural scenery, robust businesses, and exceptional educational institutions, with a strong sense of community. Bellingham is the largest city and the county seat of Whatcom County and offers breathtaking views of Bellingham Bay and the San Juan Islands. The county lines sprawl east well into the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and the Cascade Mountains. Whatcom County is home to acres and acres of rural farmland and the region is supported by a strong agricultural industry.



A number of public and private schools are located in the County providing primary and secondary education to the region's students. Whatcom County is also home to institutions of higher education including Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College, Trinity Western University, Whatcom Community College, and Northwest Indian College.

The region is rich in culture and the arts. Museums, festivals, fine dining, and gourmet coffee are in abundance as are the outdoor leisure of farmers' markets and parks. Additionally, the county offers a wealth of recreation opportunities attracting many outdoor enthusiasts as visitors and residents. Skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing can be enjoyed at nearby Mt. Baker; miles of trails provide pristine hiking and biking destinations; and the proximity to local lakes, rivers, and Bellingham, Lummi, and Samish Bays make opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and world-class recreational boating nearly endless.

Whatcom County enjoys a mild climate, accumulating only 36 inches of precipitation annually, with summer temperatures averaging in the low 70s and winter temperatures averaging in the low 40s. The County's location is conveniently accessible to many areas: to the north is Vancouver, BC and the internationally recognized Whistler, BC resort area, and to the south is Everett and Seattle, WA. The region has enjoyed a spike in tourism activity due to the 2010 Winter Olympics and is prepared to continue its economic growth.



The Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham has a rich history, beginning with its formation in 1920 and evolving with the region to meet present day needs. Operating and administrative divisions of the Port include real estate, marine services, marine terminals, aviation, planning and development, facilities, administrative services, environmental, and executive. Recognizing its extensive reach throughout the local region, The Port of Bellingham believes in bringing community visions to reality and in creating a sustainable local economy that balances the values of environmental stewardship and of meeting the needs of a growing community. The Port is committed to developing projects and programs that stimulate the economy and add new jobs and has created funding plans that support capital investments, economic development projects, and jobs creation initiatives that expand the community's employment base.

The Port of Bellingham is a countywide special purpose district that operates the Bellingham International Airport, Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Fairhaven Transportation Station, Squalicum and Blaine Marinas, and numerous diverse business and industrial developments throughout Whatcom County as well as a network of public parks, trails and boat launches. In addition, the Port acquired 137 acres of waterfront property in downtown Bellingham from Georgia Pacific in 2005 when the company deactivated its local mill. Since then, the Port has been working on a new master plan to rezone 220 acres of waterfront property from industrial to mixed use.

A non-partisan, elected, three-member Board of Commissioners establishes Port of Bellingham policy and holds twice-monthly public meetings.



The Position

Serving as the chief executive officer of the Port of Bellingham, the Executive Director is responsible for all activities of the Port and provides direction and management promoting the mission, vision, values and strategic goals of the Port. The Executive Director role offers career-defining potential, working within a committed community in an ideal region. This position has unique influence and access to many exciting partners in the Pacific Northwest, within an organization that has demonstrated its success in serving the citizens, environment, and businesses of the Whatcom County region.



The Executive Director oversees the implementation and administration of Port Commission-established policies and, along with the senior management team, assists the Commission in defining a shared vision. Additionally, the Executive Director advises the Commission on challenges to the Port's ability to achieve its goals. The Executive Director works with the Commissioners and senior staff to develop and implement strategic plans and operational goals that support the Port's objectives and mission and leads staff and other stakeholders in adopting the plans to ensure their success.

The Executive Director shares responsibility for maintaining excellent working relationships between the Port and local, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as partners within Whatcom County's economic development community. Furthermore, he/she will represent the Port to the external community including tribal representatives, community leaders, citizens, and the media. Finally, the Executive Director administers the Port's financial affairs, including policies, budgets and financial guidelines in collaboration with the CFO.

Ideal Candidate Profile

We seek an inspired leader who is committed to promoting the Port's mission of fulfilling the essential transportation and economic development needs of the Whatcom County region. The ideal candidate brings an understanding of the private sector and potential mutual benefits derived by utilizing the unique capabilities and assets of the Port to serve the community.

Possessing strong business acumen, the ideal candidate will be well prepared to manage the diverse business operations of the Port, as well as be politically astute without being politically involved to navigate the many partners and stakeholders invested in the Port's work. We seek an individual who can maneuver through complex political and institutional situations effectively and anticipates and plans for reactions accordingly. He or she will be a strong community- and civic-minded individual who possesses a social conscience, and understands the unique position the Port holds in the County.



The selected candidate will bring demonstrated leadership skills with a collaborative, entrepreneurial spirit. We desire an individual who can design creative, effective strategies to promote the Port's visibility throughout the community. The selected candidate will have experience creating partnerships with external organizations including non-profits, workforce development agencies, economic development entities, cities and other jurisdictions.

The selected candidate will bring a proactive, long-term focus to strategic planning and a demonstrated understanding of complex financial models. She/He will be driven, ambitious, and optimistic while consistently demonstrating diplomacy, discretion, and tact.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate highly developed communication skills – public speaking, written, and one-on-one - with a strong ability to connect with all levels of people, particularly within the general public and establish himself/herself as an open and transparent public figure. He/She will have strong interpersonal skills, knowing when to lead and when to listen.

The Port employs a loyal, experienced staff, and the new Executive Director will bring energy, enthusiasm and respect to leading this group in the future. The selected candidate will be collaborative and committed to building consensus, while inspiring, motivating, and developing staff to ensure effective and efficient Port operations. The Executive Director will set the tone by exemplifying consistent values and high ethical awareness, honesty, and fairness in the workplace.



Issues & Priorities

Expanding Opportunities throughout Whatcom County: Given that Bellingham and Blaine are waterfront communities with significant Port property holdings much of the Port's work focuses in or near these two cities. However, the Port's jurisdiction covers all of Whatcom County. The new Executive Director will work with the community, the Board of Commissioners, and his or her senior staff to identify job-creation opportunities to expand the operations of the Port into other parts of the County.

Relationship Building: The new Executive Director must spend the time necessary early in his or her tenure to begin building effective working relationships with a broad and diverse group of constituencies. This will include the Board of Commissioners, Port staff, labor representatives, City, County, and State officials, Port tenants, members of the Port's advisory groups, representatives from area Native American Tribes, members of the media, business and civic leaders throughout the County, leaders at all levels of the education community, and peers at other economic development organizations serving the County.



Bellingham International Airport: By the time the new Executive Director joins the organization, a multi-million dollar airport runway project will be nearing completion. However, the full impact of this project will only be realized over the course of the coming years as current and new air carriers expand their schedules, the terminal is upgraded and enhanced, new parking facilities are planned and constructed, and new potential tenants are identified, cultivated, and signed to occupy Port-owned property adjacent to the airport. The Executive Director will work closely with his or her senior staff to design the most efficient and effective approach to realizing the Port's vision for the airport and the surrounding properties.

Waterfront District Brownfield Redevelopment Master Plan: The Port has been working for some time on crafting a comprehensive growth and development plan for the waterfront area of Bellingham. The new Executive Director must quickly get up to speed on the planning that has already taken place, then play a leadership role in working with the City of Bellingham, the Waterfront Advisory Group, and other stakeholders to complete the plan and begin implementation.

The 220 total acres in this planning area include 137-acres acquired from Georgia Pacific in 2005 as well as a mix of Port, City, and privately owned property adjacent to downtown Bellingham. Acquiring and redeveloping this property is truly a historic opportunity for the Port and the community.

Community, Government, and Public Relations: The new Executive Director will lead and direct the Port's community and public relations efforts. He or she must be an active contributor to community activities and organizations, attend and address meetings of service clubs and other civic organizations, and work closely with elected officials at the City, County, State, and Federal levels.

Minimum Qualifications

A Bachelor's degree in Business, Public Administration, or a related field is required and an advanced degree is preferred. A minimum of seven years in progressively responsible leadership roles is required. Candidates must have experience leading an organization, division, department, or operating unit of significant size and scope.

Candidates who possess experience in marine services or maritime related businesses, transportation and logistics, shipping, aviation, economic development, workforce development, large-scale commercial or industrial real estate development, or environmental services, are preferred. Additionally, candidates with experience reporting to or working closely with elected officials are highly desirable.

To Apply

The Port of Bellingham is a progressive and equal opportunity employer actively promoting diversity and inclusion within its workforce. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. To do so, please send a cover letter and resume as soon as possible and no later than May 24, 2010 to:

Waldron & Company

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Please visit www.portofbellingham.com for more information or call Ed Rogan of Waldron & Company at 206.441.4144 if you have questions.

