



WTA

**Whatcom Transportation Authority
Bellingham, WA**

**GENERAL MANAGER
\$144,808 - \$170,363**

(2020 COMPENSATION)
Plus Excellent Benefits

Apply by
October 4, 2020
(First Review, Open Until Filled)

PROTHMAN



WHY APPLY?



Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is an innovative, well-run transit agency with a dedicated team of employees and a supportive Board of Directors.

The agency is highly regarded in the community for its organizational integrity and the quality of services provided. WTA is fiscally sustainable with healthy cash and reserve balances. The new General Manager will have the opportunity to positively shape the future of WTA in one of the most vibrant, beautiful areas in the Pacific Northwest.

THE REGION

Whatcom County is located in the northwest corner of Washington State. With its proximity to Mt. Baker, beautiful Puget Sound and the world-renown San Juan Islands, it is an extremely desirable place to live and work.

Situated just south of the Canadian Border, Whatcom County (population 229,000) is made up of several rural communities and smaller towns, as well as Bellingham (population 90,000), the county seat. Bellingham—home to WTA's headquarters—is located about 90 miles north of Seattle and 51 miles south of Vancouver, British Columbia.

Bellingham enjoys a wide variety of lively community events, including a Farmers Market, food and music festivals, and recreational races for runners, kayakers, skiers, cyclists, and more. Bellingham is home to an award-winning school system, and a historic downtown area that consists of restaurants, art galleries and specialty shops, along with a mix of brew pubs, wine bars and cafes. Nearby institutions of higher learning include Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Northwest Indian College and Whatcom Community College, all of which call Bellingham home.

With 15,000 students, Western Washington University (WWU) is the largest employer in Bellingham, as well as a major contributor to Bellingham's liveliness and culture. WTA enjoys a strong partnership with WWU, with their students accounting for 40% of WTA ridership.



The county's largest employers are educational, health care and government organizations. However, its robust economy also supports a mix of small and medium sized businesses, including firms specializing in engineering and technology.

Whatcom County is a recreational haven. Skiers, hikers, kayakers, cyclists, boaters and other adventurers enjoy unparalleled access to the outdoors. The county also supports a thriving cultural community, with a lively theater and music scene and an eclectic mix of museums and annual festivals.

Bellingham's climate is typical for the Pacific Northwest. While cloudy and rainy days are not uncommon, Bellingham receives less annual precipitation (36 inches) than Miami, New York City or Boston. A typical winter may bring one to five days of snowfall. More commonly, however, winter highs are in the 40s and 50s. Summer days are often warm, sunny and temperate with highs in the 70s and 80s and cooler temperatures at night.



THE ORGANIZATION

WTA's mission is to enhance their community by:

- Delivering safe, reliable, efficient, and friendly service.
- Offering environmentally sound transportation choices.
- Providing leadership in creating innovative transportation solutions.
- Partnering with our community to improve transportation systems.

WTA provides public transportation services throughout Whatcom County. Services include fixed routes, paratransit service and a vanpool program. WTA serves the City of Bellingham, as well as the smaller towns and communities of Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, Birch Bay, Lummi Nation, Sudden Valley, Kendall, Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas. WTA also cooperates with Skagit Transit in neighboring Skagit County to provide service between Bellingham and Mount Vernon.

WTA is composed of seven divisions overseen by the Executive Department: Finance, Fleet and Facilities, Human Resources, Information Technology, Marketing and Community Relations, Operations and Planning. WTA has an operating budget of \$37.2 million and employs about 270 FTEs, including bus operators, mechanics, customer service representatives, route maintenance workers and administrative personnel. Of those 270 employees, 171 are transit operators.

Most of WTA's funding is from a 0.6 percent sales tax which is collected within its Public Transportation Benefit Area (most of Whatcom County). WTA properties include agency headquarters in north Bellingham, downtown's Bellingham Station, Cordata Station, Ferndale Station and Lynden Station, as well as approximately 1,000 bus stops and 140 bus shelters. WTA's fleet is comprised of 61 full-size buses, including eight hybrid electric buses, 43 paratransit minibuses, 21 vanpool vans and 39 administrative and shop vehicles. WTA's fixed route service features 27 routes, including a network of four high-frequency corridors within Bellingham. Service runs seven days a week. In 2019, WTA provided 4.6 million fixed route boardings, or 15,100 per weekday. In 2008, WTA was recognized by the Federal Transit Administration for achieving the highest annual ridership increase in the nation.

WTA is governed by a 10-member Board of Directors composed of nine elected officials from jurisdictions throughout Whatcom County, plus one non-voting member representing labor. Board relations are positive and productive, with Board Members expressing strong support for the work of the General Manager, staff, and the service provided to the community. WTA's General Manager, Pete Stark, is retiring after having been the General Manager since 2014. Before becoming the General Manager, Mr. Stark served as the Fleet and Facilities Director since 1996.

THE POSITION

The Board of Directors is seeking a collaborative, innovative and visionary leader to guide the Board and staff to provide transit services that meet the transportation needs of a diverse community within urban and rural areas of the county. Working under the direction of the Board of Directors, the General Manager is responsible for the leadership, management, and administration of Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), including accomplishing WTA's mission and vision, as established by the Board of Directors. The General Manager supervises the Finance Director; Fleet and Facilities Director; Human Resources Director; IT Director, Operations Director; Planning Director; Marketing and Community Relations Manager, and an Executive Assistant II. For a full job description, please view the attachment found [here](#).

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- **COVID Response:** Navigating through the current pandemic including service changes, staff and customer safety and fiscal management, as well as planning for future service delivery and ridership.
- **Long-Range Transit Plan:** Overseeing the development and implementation of WTA's first 20-year Long-Range Transit Plan. This plan looks well beyond COVID and addresses the balance of service needs for all regions as Whatcom County grows over time.
- **Climate Action Initiatives:** Seeking and initiating fiscally responsible opportunities to maximize service delivery within local and state climate regulations.
- **Financial Stability:** Maintaining the agency's strong fiscal standing, while exploring creative expenditures that may enhance strategic service planning initiatives.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

Education and Experience:

A bachelor's degree in a job-related field of study from an accredited four-year college or university is required, along with five (5) years of leadership and management experience in a public or private agency. The selected candidate will have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of public transportation service delivery and labor relations experience. An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to perform the essential functions of the job will be considered. A graduate degree in business, public administration, or a related field is preferred.

The selected candidate must have a valid Washington State driver's license at time of hire and maintain licensing during length of employment. Candidates must maintain an acceptable driving record (in accordance with WTA's Establishing General Driver's License Requirements) and must submit a five-year driving abstract. Candidates must pass a comprehensive background check (in accordance with RCW 43.43.830 through 43.43.840, Child / Adult Abuse Information Act) as well as a credit check.

Necessary Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

- A demonstrated track record of innovation and strategic thinking to lead the agency through the current COVID pandemic and into the future.
- Comfortable with the use of technology and its use to improve service and safety, and willing and able to introduce and advocate for change where it improves service delivery.
- Experience working in a collaborative leadership environment with a Board of Directors and executive staff.



- A history of advocating for diversity and inclusion and demonstrating a sensitivity to diversity with staff and customers.
- Experience seeking creative ways to maximize fair and efficient service to the urban areas, university, colleges, and rural areas.
- Ability to develop relationships and engage with other governmental leaders on the local, regional, state, and federal level to assure that public transit and transportation is planned and conducted in a coordinated and efficient manner.
- A willingness to be visible and engaged in the community to maintain an understanding and stay abreast of what is going on throughout the entire county.
- Demonstrated tenure and readiness to make a long-term commitment to WTA, willing to lead the agency into the future and successfully carry out the strategic vision of the agency.
- Demonstrated success in the leadership of a multi-tiered organization.
- A thorough understanding of finance and fiscal responsibility.
- Experience working within an organized labor environment.
- Strong communication skills, and the ability to interact with executives and line staff as well as citizens/customers. The ability to "listen to understand" and respond with empathy and respect, depending on the situation.
- Ability to develop and empower a collaborative leadership team. Willing to allow staff to participate in decision making and provide recognition to staff.
- Ability to work within a varied political environment and be respectful of differing opinions and ideas.
- Skill as a strategic thinker, and able to guide the Board and staff through forward thinking planning while articulating his/her vision for the agency.

- Willing to be visible in the field to gain an understanding of the operations and culture of the organization.
- The ideal candidate will engender him/herself with staff professionally and personally, acknowledging the work commitment needed to carry out the mission of the agency, but respect and promote a healthy work/life balance personally and for staff.

Please visit:
www.ridewta.com



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$144,808 - \$170,363 DOQ**
- Medical insurance with full family coverage. Employee contributions range from \$0 - \$240 per month (2020 rates).
- Employer paid family dental and vision insurance.
- Life insurance at two times annual salary.
- Long-term disability insurance.
- Washington PERS
- 6 paid holidays per year.
- 24-37 vacation days per year based on length of service.
- 12 days of sick leave accrual per year.
- WTA bus passes for family members.
- Assigned vehicle or car allowance.

Whatcom Transportation Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **October 4, 2020** (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 "Whatcom Transportation Authority, WA – General Manager", and click "Apply Now", or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in.



www.prothman.com

371 NE Gilman Blvd., Suite 310
 Issaquah, WA 98027
 206.368.0050