

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

Executive Director

Profile



EDWARD J. COLLINS JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
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Introduction

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) seeks its next Executive Director. This Profile reflects discussions with Commissioners, staff, local officials, residents and other stakeholders. It describes the organization, the challenges that lie ahead for the successful candidate, and the professional and personal characteristics of an ideal candidate.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

The CMRPC, formed in 1963, is the designated regional planning entity for the Central Massachusetts region, which includes the City of Worcester and the surrounding 39 communities. The region encompasses the southern two-thirds of Worcester County. More information about the CMRPC may be found at the web-site. www.cmrpc.org.

Organizational Structure. The Commission is comprised of 71 delegates and 40 alternates appointed by the 40 member municipalities. The number of delegates for each municipality is based on population and ranges from one to four delegates. As the policy making body, the Commission holds four quarterly meetings a year.

The CMRPC has four standing committees. The Executive Committee is comprised of 12 members, six officers and six delegates representing each of the subregions. The Executive Committee meets monthly to review and act on administrative and business items. The Committee acts as the principal policy and administrative oversight body. The Transportation Planning Committee, Physical Development Committee and the Legislative Affairs Committee are comprised of member representatives and advise on a variety of topics and initiatives.

Regional Context. The region is diverse, extending from the urban core of Worcester, the second largest city in the commonwealth, through the suburban neighborhoods of the nearby towns, to rural fields and farms. It is a transportation crossroads for New England, located at the junction of four major interstate highways and three major railroads. It



is centrally located from the major urban areas of Boston, Springfield, Providence, RI and Hartford, CT. The total area of the region is approximately 960 square miles and has a population of approximately 556,000.

Worcester is home to seven colleges and universities. In addition to universities, the region is proud of its medical schools and facilities, including the University of Massachusetts Medical School and hospital system, Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. In recent years, high-tech and biotech firms have come to the region, taking advantage of the well-educated workforce.

CMRPC Services

The CMRPC collaborates with communities in order to bring a regional perspective and a coordinated approach to the planning and development that occurs in the region to address transportation, growth and development issues that extend beyond municipal boundaries. The ultimate goal of the agency is to improve the quality of life for those who work and live in the Central Massachusetts region.

Transportation. Transportation is one of the main focuses of The CMRPC. CMRPC provides staff for the federal and state Metropolitan Transportation Programs (MPO) for Central Massachusetts and maintains the districts' certification for federal transportation improvement funds.

Community Development, Regional Services and Geographic Information Systems. CMRPC provides technical expertise, assistance and resources to local governments to address specific land use, economic or environmental problems resulting from growth or decline. It provides regional services to assist various municipal departments in a variety of areas, such as procurement, consolidation studies, energy efficiencies and safety services.

Collaborations with Regional Stakeholders. The CMRPC has built strong working relationships and inter-local collaboration and cooperation with member communities, state and federal officials and legislative representatives. Additionally, The CMRPC has formed positive working relationships with not-for-profit and private organizations such as the universities, hospitals, chambers of commerce and others to involve those organizations on matters that impact all stakeholders in the region.

Finances

The CMRPC is funded primarily from a combination of State and Federal grant programs, and other sources of revenue. The CMRPC annually levies a per capita assessment against the forty member municipalities. In FY2015 the CMRPC's funding source allocation is 10% community assessments, 89% grants, and 1% other sources. Grants are provided by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, other Massachusetts departments and federal agencies. The FY2015 CMRPC budget is approximately \$2million.

Challenges for the Executive Director

- **Leadership and Management.** The Executive Director will need to be a leader and a manager. The Executive Director will need to represent the organization to engage Commissioners, staff, city and town officials in dialogue to formulate a strategic plan of how to achieve the goals, objectives and mission of the CMRPC. The Executive Director will need to develop working relationships with these officials, as well as key foundation and other not-for-profits involved with business and economic activity in the region.
- **Regionalization.** CMRPC has the opportunity to play a vital role in the development of the region. Some of the surrounding communities, true to the New England tradition of independence, are reluctant at times to participate in regional cooperation focusing more on shared services and may not be confident that the CMRPC has the expertise and/or capacity to provide necessary services. All of this exists in a time and region that is rapidly changing and needs an advocate for public policies to guide growth and development across a range of communities with sometimes differing priorities yet facing many of the same challenges.
- **Communication.** Well-developed communication skills are essential. Open, accurate and timely communication by the Executive Director with Commissioners, staff, boards of selectmen, city councils, county government, the press and the public must be an integral part of the culture and practice of the CMRPC. The Executive Director must be skilled and comfortable serving as a public spokesperson for the CMRPC and actively participate with the Commissioners to shape a strategic message to the member cities and towns, stakeholders and the business and development communities. The public communication role of the Executive Director is critical to maintaining a high level of confidence and trust in the CMRPC's mission.
- **Outreach and Promotion of the CMRPC.** It will be important for the Executive Director to be visible and "market" the broad range of planning services that CMRPC offers to municipalities and demonstrate that its services are an asset to the municipalities and the local economies. The Executive Director must reach out to the City of Worcester and towns, the business community and other stakeholders to build positive relationships and improve the understanding of all the CMRPC services. The Executive Director needs to be the face of the organization and be a regular visitor to member communities meetings. The Executive Director should engage with all stakeholders including the member communities, organizations such as colleges, businesses and not for profit groups, as well as elected officials across the region.
- **Staff Development.** The CMRPC has a highly educated and experienced staff of 25 including 20 planning professionals with different specialties. Effort will be required to continue to maintain an excellent collaborative



organizational approach to fulfilling the CMRPC mission. Maintaining staff morale, fully utilizing the considerable talents of staff and its high performance standard is critical to the success of the Executive Director and CMRPC. The Executive Director will need to delegate when appropriate and be an advocate for the work of the staff. The Executive Director serves as the Human Resources Director and has hiring authority for staff.

The Ideal Candidate

The CMRPC seeks an Executive Director who is an experienced manager in an environment of similar complexity who possesses strong organizational, planning, communication and community leadership skills.

The Executive Director should be willing to commit to a tenure long enough to build a multi-year approach to moving the organization forward. The Executive Director must work with the cities and towns to support regional discussion and solutions with the goal of producing sound outcomes. The following attributes have been determined important for the Executive Director.

The Executive Director must be:

- A professionally stable person with a record of tenure and consistent career growth. The CMRPC seeks a committed management professional willing to stay for a significant period and who is willing to take risks to improve the organization.
- Able and willing to play a highly visible role in the community. The ideal candidate must participate broadly across the leadership structure of the region and be a champion of the CMRPC. However, the Executive Director must adhere to the standard of absolute non-participation in political activities of any kind.
- Comfortable engaging directly with all stakeholders. The Executive Director must have sufficient direct engagement with the civic community so that he/she can gain a thorough understanding of the culture.
- Able to be a vocal and positive spokesperson for the CMRPC's mission and objectives at meetings, public

forums, state agencies and with the media. The successful candidate must be able to use the status inherent in the Executive Director's position to advance the organization's goals, objectives and mission.

- Able to communicate effectively and be the face of the organization across the region, working with member communities, other organizations and political leaders.
- Knowledgeable in the effective use of internet and technologically based communication and promotional media and platforms.
- Able to assume a strong organizational management role. The Executive Director needs to delegate, while maintaining accountability. The successful candidate must be direct, facilitative, and clear.
- Able to create and sustain a goal-oriented environment by establishing, maintaining and promoting effective policies and initiatives. The Executive Director should be a genuinely inclusive leader capable of highlighting the positive attributes, role, and successes of the CMRPC's mission to all stakeholders and staff
- Able to demonstrate unquestionable integrity in all interactions with Commissioners, staff, state, federal and local officials, businesses and residents.
- Familiar with highly participative local government environments and decision making processes with typical Massachusetts dynamics.
- Comfortable working with and managing an organization in a political context often characterized by vigorous discussions among well-informed stakeholders who are active in local decision-making processes.
- Have the ability to deal with planning, development, and environmental challenges in an integrated, balanced way and possess the skills and interest to identify and promote opportunities for collaboration.
- Able to work cooperatively with the Commissioners on the establishment of annual goals and objectives for the organization; update the Commissioners and staff on progress and actively participate in the annual review of results and operations.
- Effective at keeping Commissioners comprehensively informed, while staying detached from the political process and ensuring that staff maintains a similar detachment.
- An accessible, inclusive leader with a track record of bringing people together around complex issues, while developing consensus among user groups and individuals that some times have competing priorities.

Education And Experience

A Master's Degree in Planning or a related field and at least 7 years of experience in a leadership role, preferably in a community planning or transportation planning organization. AICP membership preferred. A candidate with a Master's Degree in Public Administration or other degree



will be considered based on the combination of education and experience. Experience with a government entity or another executive position that oversees the operations of a complex public entity governed by an elected/appointed regulatory or policy body that makes decisions in public is strongly preferred.

Process

A Screening Committee has been formed to review applications and conduct preliminary interviews. The Screening Committee is expected to review the applications of candidates recommended by the consultants in March and complete preliminary interviews by in April, with finalists being named in early May. Only the finalists' names will be released by the CMRPC.

Salary

Salary is negotiable based upon the candidate's background and experience but anticipated to be approximately \$110k, with an excellent benefit package and the potential for performance-based increases. The Executive Director will negotiate an employment contract with the Commission.

How to Apply

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in the recruitment of a new Executive Director.

Please send your resume with a cover letter addressing the job requirements to recruitment.umb@gmail.com. Materials must be submitted electronically. Please combine all of your documents in a single file, preferably PDF, and include **CMRPC** and your **LAST NAME** in the subject line. Deadline to apply is April 3, 2015. Should you have any questions regarding this opportunity please contact: Mary Flanders Aicardi, Associate, at 508-215-8992..

To learn more about the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at UMASS Boston, please visit: www.collinscenter.umb.edu